

Creativity – A New Vocabulary

Edited by

Vlad Petre Glăveanu

Lene Tanggaard

Charlotte Wegener



Creativity – A New Vocabulary

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Creativity – A New Vocabulary

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Contents

<i>List of Figures and Tables</i>	vii
<i>Foreword: The Importance of Being a Vocabulary</i>	ix
<i>Notes on Contributors</i>	xi
1 Why Do We Need a New Vocabulary for Creativity? <i>Vlad Petre Glăveanu, Lene Tanggaard and Charlotte Wegener</i>	1
2 Affordance <i>Vlad Petre Glăveanu</i>	10
3 Business as Usual <i>Kristian Dahl and Lene Tanggaard</i>	18
4 Craft <i>Vlad Petre Glăveanu</i>	28
5 Difference <i>Vlad Petre Glăveanu</i>	36
6 Fear <i>Luca Tateo</i>	43
7 Language <i>Carolin Demuth and Vlad Petre Glăveanu</i>	52
8 Lostness <i>Charlotte Wegener</i>	61
9 Memory <i>Brady Wagoner and Vlad Petre Glăveanu</i>	69
10 Mess <i>Lene Tanggaard and Tue Juelsbo</i>	78
11 Mirroring <i>Charlotte Wegener and Gregers Wegener</i>	87
12 Pathways <i>Lene Tanggaard</i>	96

13	Perspective <i>Vlad Petre Glăveanu</i>	104
14	Power <i>Claus Elmholt and Morten Fogsgaard</i>	111
15	Reflexivity <i>Constance de Saint-Laurent and Vlad Petre Glăveanu</i>	121
16	Rhythm <i>Vlad Petre Glăveanu</i>	129
17	Rules <i>Tue Juelsbo</i>	137
18	Space <i>Nikita A. Kharlamov</i>	147
19	Stumbling <i>Lene Tanggaard</i>	156
20	Things <i>Vlad Petre Glăveanu</i>	164
21	Translation <i>Vlad Petre Glăveanu</i>	172
22	Upcycling <i>Charlotte Wegener</i>	181
	<i>Index</i>	189

Figures and Tables

Figures

2.1	Pile of bricks	11
2.2	The conventional and the non-conventional in object use	15
4.1	Easter eggs decorated by Larisa Ujică, Ciocănești, Romania	30
6.1	Building things as though they were abstractions and building abstractions as though they were real things	45
6.2	An altar made of bones in Fontanelle Cemetery	48
6.3	A shrine with a worshipped, anonymous baby skeleton in Fontanelle	49
6.4	A shrine with a worshipped 'The Triumph of Death', c. 1562, Museo del Prado, Madrid	49
7.1	Dongba pictographs show the role of women in Naxi society	53
9.1	'Mediocrity killed the rat', Manhattan stencil attributed to Banksy	71
9.2	Revolutionary graffiti on Mohammad Mahmoud Street (off Tahrir Square)	73
9.3	Graffiti of Khalid Said	74
10.1	Dirty window	79
11.1	The mirror room	93
12.1	Pathways in the snow	98
13.1	'Rabbit and Duck'	108
15.1	Demonstration in Paris	123
15.2	' <i>Nous sommes Charlie</i> ' (We are Charlie)	124
16.1	Votive plaques at the Inari shrine in Kyoto	133
16.2	Paper cranes at the memorial of Sadako Sasaki in Hiroshima	135
17.1	No Photography Allowed	142
18.1	Dane Street Beach, Beverly, MA, USA	149
18.2	Allgemeiner Lesesaal, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Haus Potsdamer Straße, Berlin, Germany	152
19.1	Stumbling	158
20.1	A jug	166

21.1	Translating a motif on a new egg (Niculina Nigă)	178
22.1	Hotel De Goudfazant in Amsterdam	183

Tables

3.1	Inventiveness – Creativity – Innovation framework	21
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Foreword: The Importance of Being a Vocabulary

This book has all the potential for being very dull. After all, to create a vocabulary for the various perspectives that try to make sense of creativity cannot be a creative act itself. Vocabularies are there to fix – rather than open – the minds of inquiring human beings. They set up standards – and standards can be the archenemies of anything creative.

Or so it seems. In the ordinary, common-sense ways of looking at vocabularies and dictionaries we look for certainty, seek clear and final definitions and meanings of concepts that are otherwise hard to understand, so that our own personal projects can be fortified by the power of the ‘true’ meanings. We strive for certainty – rather than creativity – in our searches for socially legitimised meanings. So, how can anybody invent the need for a book such as this one – *Creativity – A New Vocabulary* – as a contribution to our contemporary research and practices of being creative in everyday life by fooling around, playing to be serious in business and politics, and being charmed by the ever-creative journalists who invent new calamity stories and by other decorators of our life environments?

The answer is simple: there are *two* functions of searching for the generalised meanings of widely used concepts. Only one of these is that of giving us certainty – looking up *the* meaning of a word in a vocabulary may give the layperson certainty of the meaningfulness of the life one lives. This is the original, and ordinary, use of vocabularies, dictionaries, encyclopaedias and other authoritative sources of knowledge. In this function, the authorities – who have summoned the making of a vocabulary – exercise their social power on the laypersons who are expected to obey ‘the right meanings’ of the words. This function is the opposite of any creative act in human lives; it leaves the diligent user of such authoritative sources without any other option than to obey the laws set by the authorities. No innovation is possible, other than by command from the authorities.

Fortunately, human beings are resistant. They are not only ‘sloppy users’ of ordinary language (to ‘correct’ that, they might be sent to consult a vocabulary!), but also active resisters of the meanings of ordinary words in extraordinary contexts. How many times do we encounter

the intervention of a waiter into our intimate relations with delicious food in a restaurant who unceremoniously but politely asks 'Are you still *working on* your sushi?'. The deep response to such intervention is implicit resistance in anger – 'I am *enjoying* my meal, not working on it!' The waiter, who is obviously *working* on his or her job, might be sent to consult a vocabulary for the distinction between *work*, *dinner* at a restaurant and *enjoyment* – but his or her learning the meanings would not change the setting at the dinner. Your enjoyment of your dinner might be slightly tainted by the insistence that what you do is actually 'work'. You never thought you left your 'workplace' to go to another job – eating a dinner in a restaurant! And you resist such implications.

Creating a vocabulary of creativity, in this book, is itself an act of resistance. The authors resist the tendency to fix the field and close it for further inquiry. The field of creativity needs to remain open to new (creative) ways of inquiry. By elaborating the different terms used in creativity discourses – in science and beyond – the *second* function of a vocabulary is exemplified. This is – quite in opposition to the first – that of opening the mind to new perspectives in dealing with anything that comes into the general realm of the label 'creativity'. A *creative* vocabulary of creativity includes both new and old terms used in creativity discourses in ways that show how their meanings could be further expanded, how different terms are linked by their implications and how academics' talk of creativity can guide – but not determine – innovation in everyday activities.

So, to summarise, this book has all the potential for not being dull at all! But its actual functions are in the hands of its users. One can – in vain – search for 'the right' definitions in it. That would be a great deal of work, wasted in the wrong place. Or, alternatively, the user can thoroughly enjoy the nuances of meanings that contemporary creativity research in the social sciences has introduced into making sense of the still mysterious (for scientific psychology, at least) capability of human beings to innovate their life environments – and, through these, themselves. This is a book for those who like to fool around with ideas and bring them to new social practices. And that is the most enjoyable practice of them all.

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1

Why Do We Need a New Vocabulary for Creativity?

Vlad Petre Glăveanu, Lene Tanggaard and Charlotte Wegener

On creativity and coffee breaks

Elsbach and Hargadon (2006) note that organisations eventually may begin to experience long-term underperformance and lack of creativity and innovation owing to intense workload pressures and stress. Constant speed makes you move forward; however, it may be in the wrong direction (towards failures, or even accidents) or it may be a short ride (stress and burnout). Lebbon and Hurley (2013) reported survey research that found 44 per cent of employees feel unmotivated to work and pointed to the fact that, although US employees work longer hours and take less vacation time than employees working in the European Union, productivity remains at similar levels to those in the European Union.

Indeed, the constant separation between work and breaks might be a question of retrospective evaluation: did a certain activity contribute to recreation, foster important relationships or feelings of belonging – which in turn enhanced creativity, collaboration and performance? Is this activity work, then, or is it just a break from work?

Managers may try to restrict time spent on coffee breaks for efficiency purposes but employees will always move leisure behaviour outside the formal sites of managerial control (Stroeback, 2013). Likewise, managers may try to exploit the creative potential of coffee breaks and schedule break-like activities, but what is lost is precisely the informality of serendipitous interactions and free talk. In general, however, breaks are often considered to have an individual function; they allow employees to recharge but little consideration is given to the idea that social interaction during breaks also provides employees with a valuable opportunity to discuss difficult issues and exchange knowledge (Waber et al., 2010). From such an integrative perspective, coffee drinking and

coffee breaks are social practices not easily categorised as either work (meetings) or non-work (breaks).

This book was conceived during a coffee break. One of our colleagues had his PhD defence in the afternoon. In the morning, the three of us had met to plan new activities at the department. Some people are comfortable in these formal idea generation meetings, some are not. In fact, Paulus et al. (2006) showed that face-to-face meetings for brainstorming or innovation might be less productive than most of us believe. It is stimulating to be with people who have many ideas and who are good at articulating them; however, some people become more silent than they normally are and possibly relevant contributions may be lost in such circumstances. Their strength is the breaks. And, on that day, the break turned out to be a moment of genuine creativity.

On the way to the coffee room, Charlotte told Vlad and Lene that she had a piece of writing which remained unfinished for almost a year. Its title: 'Upcycling'. Would they read it and make suggestions on how to move forward? Both immediately accepted, finding the topic quite intriguing. Jokingly, we all agreed not only that we creatively upcycle things, but that creativity itself also often involves upcycling objects, ideas, actions, and so on. On our way to the defence, coffees in hand, the three of us talked about the titles of academic papers. Many titles are too long, even boring. We have noticed that the menu at fancy restaurants often uses only one word to evoke a feeling for each main ingredient – maybe we need more simple, but expressive, titles for academic papers? Titles that make us hungry to experience what is actually on the plate? How many words could we use? Very few. In fact, one word might do. Just like in a dictionary! 'A new dictionary...?' 'A new vocabulary...?' 'Creativity...?' 'Creativity – A new vocabulary!' The PhD defence was about to begin and the idea generation had to stop, or at least continue in silence. The result of that coffee break is this book. *A New Vocabulary.*

Things we do with words

In a paradoxical way for its own area of interest, the field of creativity research and practice often repeats the same kinds of words and concepts decade after decade. To mention just a few: divergent thinking, convergent thinking, cognitive processes, incubation, association, brainstorming and group-think (Thompson & Choi, 2006). In later years, we have witnessed new words gaining momentum such as globalisation, economic trends, competition, survival, accelerated changes and

complexity. These can be taken as signs of increased societal pressure on all of us to become more creative, to ensure the survival and growth of industries, economies and societies (Bilton, 2007). Is there a new vocabulary emerging and, if so, do we really need it? There are different angles to pursue in trying to understand these changes and, before introducing our alternative terminology, let's briefly consider two of them – consolidation and creative limitation. Both kinds of phenomena can explain why words and concepts are repeated in particular fields of research and also why this may limit our creative potential. In the end, vocabularies are never innocent...

Consolidation

Concepts unite to form a field of research. The process of consolidation is behind our tendency to repeat words and concepts and to stay within given frames, within a professional field or sub-culture. In creativity research, consolidation has been a high priority because of the somehow slippery character of the phenomenon of interest. There is no doubt that consolidating a research field requires some kind of consistency in the concepts used, not least in order to enable communication between researchers. This is something already shown by Berger and Luckmann in their popular book *The Social Construction of Reality*, from 1966. In this book, the two authors argue that the institutionalisation of social processes within a professional field grows out of habitualisation and customs, gained through mutual observation with subsequent mutual agreement on the 'way of doing things'. For many years, a cognitive-based terminology dominated the field of creativity research and many say it still does (Glăveanu, 2014); this has resulted in words from cognitive as well as personality psychology being used frequently, leading to the legitimisation of creativity as a cognitive process or personality trait. Equally, the new words entering our creativity vocabulary – such as industry, growth, economy and globalisation – are an indication of the fact that creativity is being studied progressively more outside of psychology, including in the applied fields of management and organisational science (Foss & Saebi, 2015).

Creative limitation

While the repetition of concepts is necessary for the actual institutionalisation and consolidation of a field of research, it may also unintentionally inhibit our creative thinking within that field. Too much familiarity and habituation, also in the form of repeating words and embracing the

same forms of argumentation over and over again, can lead to dangerous forms of group-think. This is usually how the process goes: 'Consideration of a new problem tends to activate frames for similar solutions from long-term memory, so people may tend to retrieve frames related to old solutions and attempt to adapt them to the new set of circumstances – a practice sometimes referred to as *satisficing*' (Santanen, 2006, p. 27). Satisficing and repetition of old patterns of thinking can sometimes be useful but they also endanger our creativity. From a critical angle, the field of creativity itself can be said to experience a long period of being 'locked' in its own terminology because of the success of years, even decades of consolidation.

Can we move beyond consolidation and creative limitation?

Consolidation and creative limitations are related phenomena when a field of research gains momentum and becomes stabilised through processes of institutionalisation. Considering these processes in their interplay and taking them seriously as a possible challenge to our field, this book tries to offer an alternative. What if instead of talking and, as a consequence, thinking about creativity using the same old terms or the new, popular concepts of today, we look for inspiration somewhere else? What if, in fact, it is in the odd or common words, or in words seemingly unrelated to creativity, that we find a more solid ground (conceptually and pragmatically) to theorise creativity? The outcome of this rather 'creative' exercise in this book is – we hope – a fresh, new perspective, perhaps a 'cool' (Nordic) gaze on creativity.

A few notes on concepts and categories

In research, the concepts we use to understand phenomena reflect processes of categorisation while, at the same time, many of the categories we create in psychology do not exist in the world as such. Categories are the researcher's constructs, chosen based on his or her preferences and experiences. As noted by Bowker and Star (2000), concepts and categories are always historically situated. They are learned as part of membership in communities of practice. When we give meaning to the world around us, we produce certain forms of organisation that, in turn, produce certain material arrangements, subject positions and forms of knowledge. These are 'the material and symbolic practices of conceptualization – the making of boundaries and categories to be deployed in research' (Edwards & Fowler, 2007, p. 110). Thus, although there is no

other way of being analytical and systematic, we should always remain critical when it comes to our own processes of naming, labelling and creating categories (Weick, 2006).

Categories are part of the research processes and cannot be escaped; however, we can experiment with them, deconstruct them or even try to dissolve them with the aim of adding new perspectives or reframing our studies. This is our intention with this book in relation to creativity. What does it mean to talk about creativity in terms of thinking or personality traits? Or in terms of societal progress and economic growth? What does it mean to always go back to the classic categories of person, product, process and press (Rhodes, 1961)? What would it mean to talk about it in terms of pathways, rhythms or spaces? What would that imply for the way we think about creativity and, importantly, for the way we (en)act it in everyday life?

Building on both the constructionist and pragmatism traditions (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; James, 1907), we consider language and vocabularies highly consequential for how we define, discover, assess, validate and practice creativity. For example, let's take the very common reference to the *creative person*. Studies of what makes people creative and what distinguishes creative people from others (less creative) have marked the very beginning of what we call nowadays the 'psychology of creativity' (Barron & Harrington, 1981). To this day, we find a vigorous literature, at least in psychology, dedicated to the creative person, his or her personality, cognitive styles and, more recently, his or her brain processes. We are, in other words, very often concerned with *who is* (or can be) a creative person. Yet, very few ask *what is* the creative person? Is it even appropriate to talk about creativity as a property or quality of people? What exactly 'in' or 'about' a person is actually creative? In everyday conversations, we might hear such and such being called highly creative (often in contrast to the speaker or simply the rest of us), but when we ask for details we will most probably learn about what the person does ('see, just the other day...'). Wouldn't it make more sense to talk about creative action rather than creativity as a personal attribute (Glăveanu, 2014)? How about if we dropped 'creativity' altogether, as a noun, and kept only 'creating', as a verb (Wagoner, 2015)?

This radical suggestion might belong to the realm of Borges's fantastic prose (see 'Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius' in his collection *Fictions*, 1962), but in practice we cannot do without nouns, without words, without categories. And they often, for better or worse, stabilise reality for us,

performing a kind of magic by which the thing I say (creativity) becomes something real, something I refer to in the world (such as the creative person). So, what is there to do?

We can become more aware of what words and categories actually 'do'; we can inquire more about *the power of vocabularies* and, if we get really annoyed, we can create our own! *Creativity: A New Vocabulary*. Aren't we, though, just replacing one set of terms with another? ... Yes, but different vocabularies have different pragmatic value. The first editor engaged in a similar exercise a couple of years ago, 'against' the traditional 4P model. What resulted was the 5As (if you are curious to know more, see Glăveanu, 2013). By the time the three editors finished their coffee break, a whole new alternative vocabulary had emerged. And when they talked to other colleagues from their university, more and more words kept being added. And many are still to come! For the moment, though, we all 'settled' for a small collection of essays. The instruction given to authors was rather straightforward:

Please think about a concept from your own area that is not usually associated with creativity but could help us develop a new way of understanding creativity as a dynamic, relational, developmental phenomenon.

Fear. Rhythm. Translation. Mess. Can they teach us anything about creativity? What about the seemingly 'opposites' of creating: memory, mirroring, rules? And then issues we don't often think about in relation to creativity: power, space, things... Is this just another vocabulary? Through the free, deconstructive and playful approach we all took in writing each chapter, the outcome might just as well be considered an '*anti-vocabulary*' of creativity. But perhaps this takes the critical attitude a step too far. We are not claiming here the birth of a revolutionary new language of creativity (in fact, as you will see in this book, as a group of authors, we are quite suspicious of revolutions as the prime markers of creativity). Quite the contrary, with only a few exceptions, you are probably very familiar with the concepts discussed in the following pages. By symbolically replacing some concepts with others we don't aim to establish a new orthodoxy or expect you, dear reader, to un-learn words and adopt ours in a rather Orwellian move. What we hope is that you will enjoy thinking about creativity in new ways, that you will find at least some of the terms we propose useful in practice and, above all, that you will learn to take all vocabularies – new and old – with a grain of salt. Why not start your own?

Reading this book

And while we are on the topic of de(re)construction, let's unpack the notion of a book a little. The implicit assumption shared by authors and readers alike is that a book begins with the first chapter and ends with the last one. Reading a book, you often gain momentum and, if you are lucky, you get the feeling that you won't be able to put it down until the very last page. Linear reading; often matched by linear ways of understanding what has been written.

Our hope is that you won't read this book in the same way. If we are to imagine now a 'how to' set of instructions, we would first invite you to pick up the book and observe its weight, its colours and images, the smell of printed letters on new pages (yes, you probably know the scent as well). Then, find the table of contents and have a look. Amused? Intrigued? A bit of both? Start from the concept you find most interesting or, if you are so inclined, the least interesting, then move to the one you think might be related to it, then the next one and so on. Make and follow your own pathway through this collection of essays (and, if you are wondering, 'Pathways' does happen to be a chapter!).

Some hypothetical itineraries:

- *The process journey*: 'Business as Usual', 'Lostness', 'Mess', 'Rhythm', 'Stumbling', 'Translation'
- *The materiality journey*: 'Affordance', 'Craft', 'Pathways', 'Space', 'Things', 'Upcycling'
- *The social journey*: 'Mirroring', 'Perspective', 'Power', 'Reflexivity', 'Rules'
- *The conditions of creativity journey*: 'Difference', 'Fear', 'Language', 'Memory'
- *The haphazard way*: Any chapter, in any order (we suggest from end to beginning)

No matter what path you take through the book, you will probably end up in a similar place. But the nature of the journey will be different. As you might notice, we deliberately didn't include a final chapter that brings all of these words together. We don't want to create a 'model' of creativity simply because we believe there is no single model for it, nor should we aim to have one (see also Baer, 2011). What we do have are different conceptions and terms for creativity, some better than others (or, rather, more useful), when tested against the ultimate proof of practice. We can only hope our proposed vocabulary will pass this test.

Maybe you will tell us if this was the case when we meet on a future coffee break. It's on us!

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2

Affordance

Vlad Petre Glăveanu

How many things can you do with ordinary bricks (see Figure 2.1)? Well, let's see: one can certainly try to build something, since this is what bricks are for. But what if you had only one brick? You could perhaps break it into little pieces and build a small house or a wall. Moreover, if you have little pieces of brick, you could draw with them on the pavement. And if the brick's shape can be altered, then why not dig a small hole (if it is not there already) and put a candle in? If you bring it in contact with a stronger source of heat, you might be able to cook on a brick, or use it to warm up the bed during winter. Or, even better, why not use it as a flower pot? If you have plenty of tiny things, you can 'hide' them inside a carved brick or, if you get really creative, use the space inside to hold a napkin, or a knife, or even a gun. And, speaking of guns, you can also use the brick to hit someone, or break a window (not that you would of course, except for self-defence). Or use it for pest control – not a very nice image but still a potential use. For more constructive purposes, you can use the brick as a hammer, or stand on it and make yourself taller in family photos. And, if you can stand or lean on it, maybe books can, too; here you go, the brick as a bookshelf end piece! Or as a door stopper, or as a means to keep a car from sliding down a steep slope. If you like martial arts, you can break bricks with your hand or head or, if you are more like me, watch someone else do it on TV. And, if you are artistically inclined, you can paint the brick or sign it and call it art (à la Marcel Duchamp). Finally, why not wear a brick around your neck – it is good exercise and an amazing conversation starter!

The brick test item belongs to the classic Alternative Uses Tasks proposed by Guilford (1967) as a measure of divergent thinking. Whether you are asked what you can do with a brick, a cardboard box or a paperclip, the principle is the same: generate as many ideas as possible. While



Figure 2.1 Pile of bricks

Source: Photo by Thegreenj, licensed under the Creative Commons.

the first ideas may be very common (in the example above, using the brick for construction), the later ideas are likely to uncover some new, unexpected uses (Lubart, 2003). If these uses are actually possible or valuable in some ways, they are labelled as ‘creative ideas’ (different from conventional ideas, useful but not very novel, or bizarre ones, original but not so useful – who wants to wear a brick around the neck?!). It is widely acknowledged, of course, that divergent thinking estimates creative *potential* (Runco, 1993), which is different from actual achievement. In other words, someone can be very skilled at answering this kind of task but this doesn’t mean he or she will necessarily be creative in solving real-life problems.

What makes this kind of question interesting then? Unlike the traditional concern for the qualities of the ideas proposed (scoring them for fluency, flexibility, originality, and so on), I find this task useful because it invites us to think about a material object (see also Chapter 20). Even if we don’t usually have a brick in front of us while answering – yet another limitation of test situations – we nevertheless get mentally to manipulate a brick and reflect on its physical properties. A brick is a solid object that can support things or people, can be broken, can absorb heat, can harm someone, can hold things inside, can be an obstacle or an ornament, and so on. Thinking about what can be done with a brick is not only about what we would *want* to do with it but, essentially, also

what we *can* do considering its material properties. In other words, it is very much about what the brick ‘affords’ us to do, a conclusion that turns creativity from simple ideation into concrete, situated action.

Affordances, a debated concept

What is an affordance? For James J. Gibson (1977, 1986), the psychologist who coined this term:

The affordances of the environment are what it offers the animal, what it provides or furnishes, either for good or ill. (...) something that refers to both the environment and the animal (...). It implies the complementarity of the animal and the environment.

(Gibson, 1986, p. 127)

The key concern for Gibson, as a founding father of ecological psychology, was the relation between person and environment (see also Chapter 18). Traditionally, these two elements have been treated separately in psychology, leading either to subjectivist accounts grounded in the experience of the individual or, on the contrary, to objectivist models that focus on the world as ‘real’ and external to the person. In an effort to cut across this Cartesian split, Gibson’s notion of affordances is deliberately relational. In his own words, ‘an affordance points both ways, to the environment and to the observer’ (Gibson, 1986, p. 129).

What objects afford us in terms of action is therefore neither dependent on their physical properties; nor completely relative to the perceptions or intentions of the human actor. On the contrary, affordances are described, simultaneously, by both terms. To take the example of the brick: we can break it into small pieces – but this depends both on the size of the brick and the strength of the person. Being broken would not be afforded by a brick the size of a house (in the absence of other tools, of course), just as it would not be a distinctive affordance for humans the size of a teaspoon. Moreover, although the possibility of breaking a brick exists, in principle, each time we have the chance to manipulate one, we will probably not perceive it as such because our activities have a different goal; for instance, building something, which specifically goes against destroying what we intend to use as ‘building material’. In this sense, affordances not only depend, in general terms, on the properties of objects and the abilities of human beings, they are also made salient in a contextual manner. Gibson, whose main interest was perception, famously proposed that we don’t perceive objects as a sum of qualities

(like solid or not, of a certain colour and shape, and so on) but, rather, in terms of what we can do with them – their affordances or, in my formulation here, *action potentials*.

Despite this clear benefit of representing a bridge built between the subjective and the objective, the person and the world, perception and action, affordance is both a debated and unfinished concept. The effort of theorising the phenomenon we call affordance did not begin with Gibson and his thinking was a continuation of, as well as a response to, predecessors such as Heinz Werner, Kurt Koffka and Kurt Lewin (see Niveleau, 2006). Furthermore, Gibson himself wrote relatively little about affordances and what he did write was, at times, contradictory (Jones, 2003). One of the most widely criticised assumptions in this regard refers to his hypothesis of ‘direct perception’ of affordances. Practically going against his own premise of how an affordance depends, simultaneously, on person and environment, Gibson claimed in the same book that ‘the affordance of something does not change as the need of the observer changes. The observer may or may not perceive or attend to the affordance, according to his needs, but the affordance, being invariant, is always there to be perceived’ (Gibson, 1986, pp. 138–139). In other words, the affordance exists ‘in the object’, for everyone to see, independent of who the observer is or what the context might be. This part of his theory naturally attracted considerable criticism. If we go back to the example of the brick we might say that, according to the idea of direct perception, the possibility of supporting things on its surface exists at all times and for all people. Even young children can notice and make use of it, without understanding what a brick is. But, of course, placing things on a brick is not what we usually use this object for. Building things with bricks requires more than one brick, or even bricks themselves; one has to develop a kind of mortar and use other specialised tools, none of which is obvious for ‘direct perception’.

The problem with an object-based notion of affordances is that it doesn’t take into account the role of culture. Humans live in a largely man-made world of objects that are effectively ‘introduced’ to them through socialisation processes from an early age. The affordances of these objects, connected to the way we use them, reflect the socio-cultural nature of our existence. The brick is not just a piece of matter whose properties are immediately transparent to observers: it is a *cultural product* or *artefact* (see Costall, 1995; see also Chapter 20). It is not only the case that some more ‘creative’ uses of bricks require the development of a complex material culture – think, for instance, about using carved

bricks as knife or tissue holders – but also making use of the affordance of constructing things with bricks is cultivated from early on when, for instance, children start interacting with Lego or other brick-like toys. Adults play a crucial role in this development, something that is not accounted for by Gibson’s person–environment dyad. Finally, culture not only sets up norms for using objects, but also restricts certain uses. Protecting and cherishing human life is a value in societies across the globe and this discourages us from commonly noticing the affordance of killing someone by hitting them with a brick. And yet, shared norms don’t regulate all our behaviours and they certainly don’t do it in the same way – this is how such violent uses are not completely foreign to any of us and they are depicted in movies, stories, books, and the like. Finally, context is again hugely important: protesters gathered in a square may, depending on circumstances, ‘see’ a pile of bricks differently than construction workers do (see also Chapter 13).

Beyond conventional uses of objects

The socio-cultural critique above contributes to our understanding of both affordances and of creativity. This is due to the fact that the alternative view (i.e. direct perception) not only makes people passive recipients of what is afforded by their environment, but also leaves unexplained the creation of new objects with new affordances. On the contrary, ‘from the perspective of sociocultural change, new entities with novel affordances are introduced into the culture, new affordances of familiar objects are realized, familiar affordances are sustained over time through continued use, and affordances fade from the scene through disuse’ (Heft, 2003, pp. 175–176). In other words, affordances are confirmed as a dynamic, contextual and relational phenomenon, in agreement with Gibson’s overall view. These reflections also help us complete the relation between person and the material world by adding cultural normativity to the model (see also Chapter 17). Figure 2.2 depicts this interdependence between intentionality, materiality and normativity in the form of three intersecting circles that create overlapping spaces (for more details, see Glăveanu, 2012).

In Figure 2.2, the space of the conventional is defined at the intersection between what the person *would do* (intentionality), *could do* (materiality) and *would do* (normativity). Unlike the relatively small space allocated to it in this visual depiction, the area of the conventional is in fact very wide and includes most of our everyday actions with materials and interactions with other people. In terms of affordances, this area is represented by what Alan Costall (1995, 2014) calls ‘*canonical*

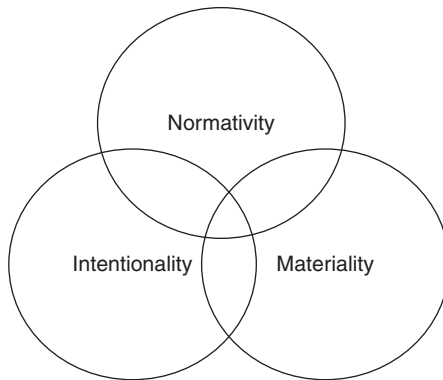


Figure 2.2 The conventional and the non-conventional in object use

affordances'. These relate to common and predictable uses of objects, such as chairs used for sitting, cups for drinking and bricks for building. The possibility of such uses is not only 'inscribed' in the materiality of objects, in the way they are designed, it is also supported by societal mechanisms (for instance, chairs are normally placed near tables, one is invited to sit, and so on). This is how we develop expectations about objects, something that shapes our own intentionality in relation to them. Because of this coordination between intentions, material properties and norms, the conventional is often associated with less creative, or even non-creative, action. Indeed, using chairs for sitting is hardly surprising and is often catalogued as mundane or habitual. This misconception derives from the fact that we tend to see affordances as 'static' potentials to use things in a certain way when, in fact, they are actively, and often creatively, made use of. The canonical affordance of building with bricks has been acted upon for millennia and there isn't anything every exciting about that; however, what is actually being built and the new technologies of building can lead to very diverse outcomes.

Nevertheless, we are more inclined to look for creativity in the 'marginal' spaces represented in Figure 2.2, those in which there is no perfect alignment between what we would, could and should do. For example, very often, actions considered creative come out of perceiving and acting on an affordance that was not salient before (i.e. the intention to make use of the object in that particular way was absent; a common problem for designers, see Norman, 2004). 'Discovering', in a moment of creative insight, that chairs can be glued to the wall in an art installation, or that bricks can become photo frames if carved

properly, uses existing affordances in non-canonical ways. Of course, in both these cases other things are needed to achieve the new use (such as glue, a chisel and a hammer, and so on), which comes to show that exploiting new affordances often requires transforming the material support in more or less radical ways. In this sense, even if intentions and cultural norms are convergent, materiality can be lacking. In some circumstances, it is precisely the materiality of the world that confronts us with a problem, a form of resistance to our intentions, prompting us to find new, creative solutions (chairs can break, bricks can be too heavy to carry, and so on). At times, as a response, we end up contradicting cultural norms related to the use of objects. If the brick is culturally a common, uninteresting object, we can wrap it up nicely and offer it as a funny gift or, if particularly wicked, place it under a Christmas tree!

Creativity (re)defined

Our thinking about creativity is incomplete, I would argue, without referring to affordances or, more broadly, trying to theorise the role and place of material objects within creative action. From the perspective developed here, creativity is not about generating ideas but, rather, about *expanding our action possibilities by perceiving or creating new affordances and exploiting existing affordances in new ways* (Glăveanu, 2012). Gibson had this intuition when he wrote that, ‘the fact that a stone is a missile does not imply that it cannot be other things as well. It can be a paperweight, a bookend, a hammer, or a pendulum bob. It can be piled on another rock to make a cairn or a stone wall’ (Gibson, 1986, p. 134). And the list goes on. Objects don’t allow us to do everything. A brick cannot fly us into space. However, we can certainly do more with them than what we know we can, what we assume, or what we usually do. Did you ever consider using a brick to serve drinks? As an ashtray? In weight lifting? Given the right circumstances, you just might!

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3

Business as Usual

Kristian Dahl and Lene Tanggaard

We are living in the autumn of our world, as our generations grow dumber and poorer than those of our parents. Our economy has been bled dry, organisations are collapsing and the Chinese are coming. The EU is slowly but surely being driven to its knees.

So goes the familiar requiem for the EU. The box is then opened, presenting us with the silver bullet: creativity, invention, radical innovation or some other term about doing something new. The silver bullet is placed in the revolver and the revolver in the hands of the saviour. The leader. *Pull the trigger.*

Many texts on creativity begin by stating that creativity and innovation are key to the survival of societies and industries in the 21st century (e.g., see Tanggaard & Stadil, 2014; Zhou & Hoever, 2014). However, if creativity is to play such an important role in businesses and societies, one of the big challenges facing us all currently must be to demystify creativity by challenging the myth of the ‘great’ man or woman that successfully pulls the creativity trigger. Accordingly, in this chapter, we suggest treating creativity as usual business, part and parcel of ordinary organisational life (see also Chapter 14).

Leaders around the globe appear to be a little tired of the creativity circus, too – but who dares to admit it? You cannot be a leader if you reject being creative and innovative; doing so would be to define yourself as a non-leader and, ultimately, as complicit in the impending downfall. So, if the leader’s job is to fire the silver bullet, we hope the right bullet is in the chamber. But we are not so sure this is the case. The gunpowder is wet. A new vocabulary is needed in the field of management

and organisational creativity. Our key suggestion here is to treat creativity as business as usual, in line with other research perspectives stating that novelty is overrated (Sawyer, 2012; Tanggaard & Wegener, 2015; see Chapter 11). We need another discourse of creativity and a new vocabulary. We have chosen a directly personal and provocative style to develop it. Please forgive us.

Towards business as usual

Learn from the great geniuses, hang out with artists and designers, walk in bare feet – or at least wear attractive clothes – think outside the box and generally avoid being conservative and leader-like.

This is the arts and humanities ultimate revenge on business.

You all should have gone to the art academy instead of business school, or at the very least trained to become psychologists – or just smoked more pot instead of being overachievers. Business has failed because it is being run as business as usual. Now the cure is being unusual, which means you have to make the leap over to our paradigm. Come over to the humanists, where we have the unusual for all of you 'usuals'! Once you have become unusual, go back to business and reshape it according to our vision.

Humanities as usual and wet gunpowder.

If those of us in the humanities really want to be innovative and creative in our attempts to contribute to innovation, the first step could be escaping from our own paradigm and perceptions. What if the solution is business as usual? What if we try to think of inventiveness, creativity and innovation as an organisational process that must be built up – no differently from a sales process, logistics process or any other trivial organisational leadership task. To explore this perspective, we initiated a qualitative study of how creating something new and turning it into something commercial can be seen as an organisational process similar to other central business processes such as production, sales, procuring and logistics. Our intention was to explore creating something new with a business perspective as our analytical starting point. This demanded two things: an analytical framework from the business world to work within and, subsequently, experienced leaders from the business world who could contribute their practical expertise.

The managers' perspective

We made an agreement with a group of MBA students about dedicating a two-day workshop to this topic. In this group, there were 18 MBA students who typically had ten years' management experience in large as well as small organisations.¹ The goal was to explore:

What management tasks do managers in a business process perspective see as most important at different managerial levels when trying to create something new and of value for the current business?

We focused exclusively on how managers see management tasks in relation to creating something new and of value to the business, and how this plays out at different organisational levels. Obviously, this is not without limitations. It gives priority to the manager's top-down perspective, it might overemphasise the importance of the manager (Meindl et al., 1985; Meindl & Ehrlich, 1987) and it clearly collides with all the perspectives that underline the creation of something new as an uncontrollable process (Stacy, 2003; see Chapters 8, 10 and 19).

In order to be able to understand the creation of something new in a business-process perspective, we needed to build an analytical framework that understands business processes in mainstream business thinking connected to both a horizontal as well as a vertical perspective.

A horizontal view on creating something new

The horizontal view is all about understanding business processes as a series of elements or partial processes which, when connected, either lead to a given result, or fail to do so because of a weak link somewhere along the line. This way of thinking is often connected to Porter's (1985) concept of the value chain. When we transfer this to the creation of something new, in a process perspective, we need concepts to denote the partial processes of which the creation of something new consists. Here, we found it helpful to use the Inventiveness – Creativity – Innovation (ICI) framework (after Juelsbo et al., 2015) as a guiding taxonomy (see Table 3.1).

We like this model because it represents a step towards taking the magic out of creating something new in a business perspective. It contributes to the conceptual understanding of the differences between ingredients that are often mixed together in an esoteric concoction. Inventiveness, creativity and innovation are now more clearly

Table 3.1 Inventiveness – Creativity – Innovation framework

	Inventiveness	Creativity	Innovation
Definition	The ability to respond in new and valuable ways in situations where this is necessary. It is the ability to act quickly, intelligently and with adaptability when the previous modes of action are no longer adequate (Langgaard, 2014).	The creation of new and useful ideas. Characterised by management of the production of ideas to ensure meaning within the specific context (Juelsbo et al., 2015).	'The multi-stage process whereby organisations transform ideas into new or improved products, service or processes, in order to advance, compete and differentiate themselves successfully in their marketplace' (Baregheh et al., 2009).
Purpose/goal	Create a breeding ground for new ideas. Wellbeing in the workplace.	Prioritise ideas, incorporate them into the project and manage the associated tasks. Link different ideas together.	Implementation of ideas.
Context	Inventiveness is present in all people and can be viewed as creative/innovative potential. It is closely linked with your professional competence and motivation in everyday practice, where ideas arise for solving tasks in new ways.	An identified creative potential that is converted into managed tasks. The good idea is prioritised, after which time and money are allocated for development and implementation.	A strategic perspective is typically adopted in this process: how does the idea fit into the organisation?

defined – making them easier to work with for non-artists. On the other hand, the model can also be read as a description of building blocks that can be combined in processes focused on innovation. Read from the top down and from right to left.

Business-process models or the very idea of the value chain is often critiqued for because they represent an overly compartmentalised view fit for a stable environment (Mintzberg, 2005) and thus ignore that interconnected sub-processes are often not clearly divided but rather overlapping and fluctuating. This critique also applies to the ICI model.

A vertical view on creating something new

In a vertical perspective, a business process must be managed at several organisational levels. In the literature, it is an established idea that it is a managerial responsibility to support, maintain and ensure the right focus on, and coordination of, the sub-processes of the business process (Hammer, 2007). At the same time, it is an important point that the job that managers must do when ensuring efficient business processes varies across organisational levels (Hammer, 2007).

The idea that leadership demands something different at different organisational levels is often called the ‘leadership pipeline perspective’ (Kaiser, 2011). In a special issue of *The Psychologist-Manager* on this topic, the Leadership Pipeline model was called ‘perhaps the biggest idea to affect leadership development and talent management over the past decade’ (Kaiser, 2011, p. 71). Publications by Freedman (1998), Charan et al. (2001) and Goldsmith and Reiter (2007) made the basic message about discontinuity known to the public; namely, that leadership at different levels demands different things from a manager and those managers often fail when promoted because they continue doing what ensured success at the lower leadership level.

If we accept these perspectives, a logical conclusion is that some of the same mechanisms may apply when attempting to understand the leadership of inventiveness, creativity and innovation. Hence, we asked the MBAs participating in the workshop to:

Describe what they see as the most important tasks that managers must do in relation to inventiveness, creativity and innovation at four different hierarchical leadership levels.

We asked the MBAs to use four generic leadership levels representing the leadership hierarchy common to many organisations. These levels were

inspired by the work of Charan et al. (2001), Dahl and Molly-Søholm (2012) and Freedman (1998):

- Leader of employees: Responsible for a group of employees and creating results through the professional work done by the employees.
- Leader of leaders: Responsible for leaders of employees and creating results through the management work done by them.
- Functional leader: Responsible for leaders of leaders and managing a large part of the organisation through them.
- CEO: Overall responsibility for the whole organisation and, ultimately, creating results through the work done by the whole organisation.

It is extremely important to differentiate between these different positions if we want a nuanced understanding of what goes on – or should go on – at different organisational levels. It is also very important to note that the exclusive focus in our analysis on the work the leaders do is not the same as saying inventiveness, creativity and innovation are reserved for the upper organisational echelons. On the contrary, our exploration is all about what leaders should be held accountable for if the aim is to enable inventiveness, creativity and innovation at the employee level as an integrated part of everyday organisational life. Of business as usual. With these considerations in mind, we analysed the materials from the workshop, i.e. the MBA students' work with our two models, the ICI-model and the Leadership Pipeline model, and condensed the meaning (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014), with an emphasis on the discontinuous, i.e. the unique aspects of each level of leadership.

The MBA students thus described the task for leaders at each level and the potential pitfalls that might kill creativity. Looking through the data, the following patterns emerged in the way leaders describe their tasks related to inventiveness, creativity and innovation:

- The *inventiveness field* progresses from leaders of employees, who must ensure that employees' daily work provides the opportunity for the regular experimentation and implementation of small everyday improvements, to the senior leadership level, which must insist that the organisation achieves a balance between operations and innovation. A closer look at the different levels of leadership also reveals some interesting patterns. At the bottom of the leadership chain, inventiveness is closely linked to high professional competency among employees; the leaders' task is to stimulate experimentation

as an integrated part of everyday work and operations. The leader is responsible for creating learning and ensuring that resulting errors are converted into a driver of further development. At the same time, it is important to establish zero-error zones in which experimentation is prohibited. This would typically be in areas that are highly regulated by law and where strict adherence to procedure is required due to high-risk work (think about some of the work that goes on in a control tower in an airport). The leader of leaders is responsible for ensuring that the leader of employees is able to execute such tasks and provide leadership support. At the top two levels of leadership, the most important issue is building an organisation in a strategic perspective to enable inventiveness. This requires support from the organisation's culture and performance management systems. The top level of leadership thereby builds architecture for inventiveness that the other levels of leadership translate into a practical framework that promotes employees' inventiveness in their daily work. It is at 'top-down' job to stimulate an organisation where 'bottom-up' inventiveness is possible.

- The *creativity field* progresses from the leader of employees, who must be able to identify new and useful ideas, which often emerge from employees' inventiveness or from customers, to the senior leadership, which is responsible for ensuring an organisational structure and process that collects the right ideas and converts them into strategic innovation initiatives. The interesting thing in this respect is that things often go wrong because leaders of employees lack the professional or strategic insight to assess the commercial or optimisation potential of an idea, thereby letting it die. Moving up to the next level of the hierarchy – leader of leaders – the task is to support, develop and hold the leader of employees accountable for creativity efforts. This requires the leader of leaders to set aside time for listening to new ideas and, together with the leaders of employees, assess their potential and develop the best ideas. These ideas and social practices are then transferred into the innovation structure. The innovation activities associated with some ideas can be initiated at employee level, while big ideas, crossing areas of operation, are lifted up to the managerial level. These are typically ideas that exceed the budget, are outside current strategic plans, or can be realised only with full senior management backing. The most important tasks here are to ensure that your part of the organisation has a culture and processes that generate, share and communicate ideas upwards, as well as horizontally. This includes ensuring that innovation takes place at the right level. Some types of everyday innovation processes require very little

discussion, while the more radical or particularly resource-intensive processes must be lifted up to the executive level and discussed as a possible strategic innovation initiative. The CEO's most important task is two-fold: taking ultimate responsibility for ensuring the organisation has leaders at all levels focusing on creativity, including its necessary structures and processes; and ensuring that the right creative ideas travel through these organisational structures and are converted into strategic innovation initiatives.

- The *innovation field* progresses from leaders of employees' management of professional specialists who spend some of their time, often concurrently with operations-related work, participating in innovation processes, to the CEO, who ultimately works to ensure that the organisation's business model is competitive. The leader of employees' task largely involves ensuring that the practical structuring of innovation work functions correctly; this is where the actual transformation from idea to tangible product or service takes place. One step higher up is the leader of leaders, who provides support to the leaders of employees in the innovation work. This often includes maintaining an overview of progress in specific projects and communicating their status. Another important task is being able to implement or drive transformations or improvements in operations to ensure capitalisation on the innovation work carried out. The challenges here are that you may not necessarily have ownership of the idea to be implemented and getting the organisation to do something new may require challenging habits or powerful occupational groups within your organisation. At the managerial level, innovation work also comprises two main tracks. One involves helping subordinate leaders drive the practical transition to new business models, or implementing the ideas developed in the innovation process. If these ideas are not guided all the way to implementation, the functional leader has failed. The second track involves working with the senior leadership to ensure that the innovation architecture is in place and enables all levels to act within it. The CEO is ultimately responsible for ensuring a functional leader level in the organisation that masters this task and, in a broader perspective, for ensuring an effective innovation strategy as an integrated part of the organisation's overall strategy.

Too much like business as usual

We've set out to explore how leaders perceive their job and responsibilities in relation to the creation of the new in a business context using the existing management hierarchy and a business process/value-chain

perspective as our points of departure. Unfortunately, the whole exercise resulted in a hierarchical model – the kind that can easily be used as the basis for a management control system... One of the biggest myths is that control and management are the No. 1 enemy of creativity because they just reproduce what already exists (see Bilton, 2007). The myth also goes that creativity is about everything outside the box and not inside it. Yet, the leaders that participated in this study maintained that you could do something wrong or fail fatally and inexcusably when trying to create something new for the current business. This collides with the idea that the new only emerges when we play in a safe space, shielded from critique. The model also became tediously normative with all the descriptions of basic tasks that leaders at different levels must perform for the sake of the organisation – not for the leaders' own sake. Creativity is supposed to be pleasurable and fun. What is worse, the leaders also said that things go wrong if everyone participates on equal terms – totally undemocratic Taylorism! And the employees aren't even included in the model. They are the ones who perform the practical inventiveness, creativity and innovation work, yet the leaders themselves don't even see this as particularly special. It's just a task they perform as part of everyday business – as with all other tasks that need to be done in order to keep the organisation going. And it is part of the leader's job to enable and ensure this happens. This study must be wrong – it is too much like business as usual.

Note

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4

Craft

Vlad Petre Glăveanu

Thomas Edison is credited with saying that ‘Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration’, suggesting thus that having a creative idea is not the only thing that matters, there is also a lot of hard work involved. He was, in this way, responding to popular beliefs that consider inspiration the real mark of the genius. In fact, the first conceptions of creativity were actually based on the idea of divine inspiration (Sternberg & Lubart, 1999) and the Ancient Greeks, for instance, metaphorically pointed to the muses as the source of true creation. While this image actually locates creativity outside of the person, it was following the Renaissance that genius became ‘internalised’ as biological and hereditary (Montuori & Purser, 1995). Today, such extreme views are avoided but the ethos of attributing creative qualities to the individual continues in research focused on creativity and intelligence, personality, thinking styles, neurological correlates, and so on. This kind of research typically uses ideation/divergent thinking tasks as a measure of creativity (more specifically, ‘creative potential’) and, since it rarely looks at what people actually do, it contributes to the classical separation between *inspiration* and *perspiration*.

But what is actually the role of perspiration or hard work for creative achievement? On the one hand, studies of accomplished creators in different domains repeatedly suggested that one needs at least ten years of preparation before making a big contribution to the chosen field (Gardner, 1994). On the other hand, the constant accumulation of knowledge or skills, through repetition, is often questioned (see also Chapter 9). Can ‘too much knowledge’ or ‘too much exercise’ lead, on the contrary, to reduced creativity? Both camps in this debate bring their own arguments but the question, formulated as such, is misleading. It is not a matter of how much knowledge one has, but how readily

accessible and flexibly organised that knowledge is (see Weisberg, 1999). Equally, it is not any form of repetition that is useful in building creative skills, but engaging in what Ericsson (2006) calls ‘deliberate practice’, which involves effortful activities designed to increase performance. What both these examples show is that high-level creativity requires expertise and this takes time, as well as a great deal of ... perspiration. And yet, surprisingly, when we think about great achievements such as Darwin’s evolutionary theory or Edison’s inventions related to electric light, we are more likely to ask ‘How did they get the big idea?’, rather than ‘How long did it take them to know their field?’, or ‘How many years did they use to write up and promote their ideas?’.

This, I argue here, is the result of an inclination towards understanding creativity in terms of *insight* rather than *mastery*. Both lay people and psychologists interested in creative phenomena, and even creators themselves, are generally keen to identify the ‘moment’ when creativity happens – the stage of ‘illumination’ in Wallas’s famous typology (see Wallas, 1926). It is no surprise, therefore, that very often creativity is metaphorically associated with a lit light bulb. However, without denying the role of insight, I consider such an approach reductionist at best, misleading at worst. What it does is actively obscure the stages of ‘perspiration’ that not only accompany but trigger creative thoughts. Learning, writing-up, checking and reformulating one’s ideas are not second-hand activities but essential parts of creating, and this applies equally to celebrated and mundane creations (see also Chapter 3). Creativity as mastery is the contrasting paradigm that doesn’t oppose but, in fact, integrates and expands our understanding of creative ideation. If the light bulb is the emblematic symbol of the first, ‘romantic’ view of creativity, craftwork can be the emblem of the latter. What does it mean though, theoretically and practically, to consider creativity a form of craft?

From creativity in craft to creativity as craft

Crafts involve skillful work, using one’s own hands as well as a wide range of materials, tools and techniques, leading to the creation of new things. The outcomes of craft are diverse and there is often no clear boundary between arts, craft and design. Examples of craft include weaving, embroidery, wood carving, rug making and ceramic work, among others. Although many of these are practised around the globe, there is always a cultural as well as individual mark in both the making process and the outcomes of craft.



Figure 4.1 Easter eggs decorated by Larisa Ujică, Ciocănești, Romania
Source: Photo taken by the author.

Take as an example the craft of decorating eggs in northern Romania. Figure 4.1 depicts some of the products of this activity, made with the help of the traditional technique, using warm wax and drawing motifs on the shell of the egg at different stages, before immersing in colour. While on the surface very similar, employing an established range of colours, patterns, and motifs (see Gorovei, 2001), each egg is unique in the combination of these elements and the more or less visible changes or additions made in the process of drawing (see Glăveanu, 2012; see also Chapter 21). Moreover, there are features of decoration that individualise this work and ‘locate’ it within a broader community context – in this case, the village of Ciocănești where black as a background colour is considered traditional.

There are a few distinguishable characteristics of crafts that contribute to the creativity of their outcomes. First, they often require *manual labour* and draw on a *flexible set of skills*. This is due to the fact that the conditions of work are always changing and the craftsman is often required to improvise in order to overcome practical challenges (see also Chapter 19). For example, eggs are not all the same size and shape; they are fragile objects and are difficult to draw on. In quilt-making, appliquéd quilts require a careful selection and organisation of pieces

in the creation of a general pattern, a process that involves multiple decisions and needs to consider, at each step, material constraints (Cooper & Allen, 1999).

Second, the products of craft belong to a recognisable set of outcomes while bearing the mark of individual and regional styles, something that makes each of them *unique*, even when the intention of the craftsman is to duplicate. Many are meant to serve practical and symbolic functions, and they often reflect a particular kind of aesthetics. For instance, the south Indian *kōlam* is a beautiful and intricate design, never really the same, rendered usually in rice flour on the threshold or the floor of houses and temples, and having a protective function (Mall, 2007). Despite the ephemerality of many craft products, they nevertheless endure as a material practice. And it is in this close relation to *materiality* that craft activities gain a distinctive note. Artisans engage in a dialogue with the objects they produce and often describe their work as being done by the object itself, guiding its own making (see also Chapters 2 and 20).

Finally, developing expertise is impossible outside a social context, and craft activities are acquired and practised in interaction with others. Learning in craft takes the form of *apprenticeships*, guided forms of participation in community settings (Rogoff, 1995; see also Chapter 11). Learning is here an ongoing process and it is undertaken through both observation, and trial and error. Moreover, the products of craft are not only made possible by social relations and exchanges, but are also meant equally to maintain and reflect them. Quilts in New Mexico, for example, are created in family contexts and made for immediate family, close friends or dreamed-of partners (Cooper & Allen, 1999, p. 17). Decorated eggs are kept by the family and placed on the table during meals at Easter. The making and use of craft is inseparable from *tradition* and it is this accumulation of expertise at the level of groups and across generations that makes crafts, simultaneously, continuous with the past and different from it. Take the example of Japanese *ukiyo-e* ('pictures of the floating world'), a genre of woodblock prints and paintings very popular in the 17th and 19th centuries (Kozbelt & Durmysheva, 2007). This traditional craft builds on ancient Buddhist conceptions and, in turn, has inspired important European artists such as Degas, Manet and Whistler. The vitality of this craft, as with many others, rests in its capacity both to 'keep' and to 'change' in the constant creation of a neo-tradition (see also Chapter 16).

Manual labour, skills, practice, material tools, apprenticeships, and tradition – all these characteristics of craft can easily be applied to

creative action in a variety of domains. The creativity of everyday life certainly reflects all these, and many of its processes and outcomes could actually fall within an extended definition of 'craft' (e.g., interior design, cooking, gardening, and so on). What about the arts and sciences? Metaphorically, one speaks about *craftsmanship* when referring to mastering a certain domain and knowing the tricks of the trade. But is this only a metaphor? What I am arguing here is that we certainly have at least an element of craft in most, if not all, other areas of creative production. And it is precisely this element that contributes to them actually being considered 'creative'. This is because, outside the specific knowledge and abilities required by high-level performance in art, science and technology, the medical field, and so on, the embodied, material, patterned and yet flexible ways of 'doing' things – craftsmanship – offers the real ground for a masterful performance. Creativity as mastery involves constantly perfecting one's craft.

What about routines and mindless repetition?

Our image of crafts and craftsmen is, of course, the product of centuries of reflection on the difference between knowledge, truth and authenticity, on the one hand, and technique, skill and manual work, on the other. The big divide between art and craft is an example of this. Collingwood (1938) believed the latter is the outcome of 'preconceived' ideas and that 'the craftsman knows what he wants to make before he makes it' (pp. 15–16). This accusation is not the only one of its kind. Craft is, for most, not synonymous with creativity but, if anything, the opposite of it: the realm of routines and mindless repetition. While this is certainly not an opinion shared by craftsmen themselves, it is not surprising to find many of them reluctant to take on the identity of 'creator' (Glăveanu & Tanggaard, 2014). The *ukiyo-e* artists focused on by Kozbelt and Durmysheva (2007) don't even mention originality or departures from tradition. In my own research with Easter egg decorators, there was a need to find the balance between continuing a tradition and adding or contributing to it. And yet craftsmen are aware that their work leads to unique products, admired by those around them. But if novelty happens, they rarely take credit for it directly: it is accidents, or the material taking over and imposing its own rules; for women drawing ornaments in rice, 'credit for innovation lies as much with the generative capacity of the *kōlam* (...) as with the creativity (...) of the practitioner' (Mall, 2007, p. 75).

The misconception of craft as the antithesis of creativity stems from a certain understanding of the relation between idea generation and idea implementation that prioritises the former over the latter. The old fallacy of believing that ‘the sculpture is already waiting in the marble’ makes researchers and lay people alike focus on having creative ideas (the sculpture), rather than working (the marble). What craftwork demonstrates is that there is no strict separation between the two. It is in and through making that insights emerge, are detected, fail, or lead to new developments. The craft of making things is not mechanical – if anything, because it always involves a certain amount of risk (see the notion of ‘workmanship of risk’ in Pye, 1968; see also Chapter 6). The spontaneity of being inspired and building an artistic or scientific ‘vision’ cannot be disconnected from practice, from material tools and their resistance to our visions, from the role our bodies play in generating any kind of novelty. In the end, creation is not the result of a disembodied, cerebral entity but becomes manifest precisely in practical action, in the development and application of *techne*, in craft itself.

Additionally, a pervasive misconception regarding the role and meaning of tradition contributes further to marginalising crafts. It is certainly true that repetition and stability are encouraged in a variety of folk activities but the tradition being ‘kept’ is neither static nor monolithic. Traditions change in order to continue and this is nowhere more obvious than in the work of craftsmen. Furthermore, all other forms of creative expression are ultimately rooted in tradition, whether we call it knowledge, conventions, norms, or the existing canon. Arts have their own traditions; science, as well. As Feldman noted, ‘creative thought (...) is, by definition, part of a cultural tradition – even when it breaks with tradition’ (Feldman, 1974, p. 68). Breaks with tradition are rare but not uncommon, even in craft. What we often fail to notice, though, is that such ‘revolutions’ are carried by and lead to the institutionalisation of their own ‘traditions’.

From creative thinking to creative making

What I have been advocating here is a way of relocating creativity from a paradigm focused on thinking, insight and revolutionary outcomes to one grounded in learning, traditions, mastery, and craftsmanship. Despite presenting them almost as opposites, these views are not incompatible, just as creative thinking is not the opposite of creative making. The latter integrates the former. However, instead of the fascination with one ‘big’ moment of insight, we are left with evolving

and cumulative insights, with the gradual transformation of people and things (see also Chapter 12), working within a frame set by material constraints. In this sense, I am using the overall metaphor of creativity as craft as a more comprehensive way of understanding creative phenomena. The consequences of separating thinking from making, idea generation from implementation, ideas from body, and creating hierarchies between them is counterproductive. This is how, for instance, we have now two relatively separate literatures, one on creativity ('getting the idea'), the other on innovation ('creating a change in the world based on this idea'). An integrative approach is long overdue.

Isn't this a rather romantic vision of crafts and of craftsmen? Aren't they limited by a need to preserve rather than create? Opposed to change? Working to sell their products and make a living? In some cases yes, but I am not making a one-to-one parallel between craft and creativity here. I am simply noticing deep similarities and highlighting the theoretical and practical significance of relating the two. For Richard Sennett, 'craftsmanship names an enduring, basic human impulse, the desire to do a job well for its own sake' (Sennett, 2008, p. 9). Can those who produce craftwork be our new prototype of the creative person?

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5

Difference

Vlad Petre Glăveanu

Creativity is rooted in difference. This simple statement doesn't seem, at least initially, to tell us much. Indeed, for something or someone to be creative it needs to be different from what existed before. Novelty and originality are found in most definitions of creativity (e.g., Runco & Jaeger, 2012), alongside effectiveness; so, in this sense, difference is placed at the core of our thinking about this phenomenon. However, all this suggests is that creative action results in some kind of difference. My aim is to argue that it also *originates* in difference and understanding this has deep implications for how we recognise, conceptualise, and foster creative expression. Indeed, I take difference to be the atom of creativity, a socio-cultural approach extensively discussed elsewhere (see Glăveanu & Gillespie, 2014). For the purposes of this chapter, my focus is on theorising difference and outlining those differences that are particularly productive for creative work; the tentative list I offer is, of course, a work in progress.

Difference is the result of processes of *differentiation*. As such, whenever we notice differences between objects, people, ideas, events, and so on, we should inquire into how these differences came about. It is often the case that creativity researchers consider difference in terms of the (material and/or symbolic) distance that exists between two entities. In this sense, differences are perceived as breaks with what existed before and the 'size' of the gap they create is often taken as a potential sign of creativity. It is one thing to design a new cup, another to create a completely new type of receptacle for holding liquids. But this is a static view. In fact, what exists and what is being created stand in close dialogue with each other and it is precisely because of this dialogue that the 'new' can be noticed, defined and appreciated. To gain a fuller picture of the role of difference for creativity, we need to adopt a developmental

perspective. And the developmental story of difference is intertwined with that of creativity.

Differentiating between self and other, between the 'me' and 'non-me' world in Winnicott's terms, is a great ontogenetic achievement, paving the ground for creative expression. This is possible because difference, once experienced, requires being managed by the child through the use of symbolic means. The transitional objects that stand for the mother (Winnicott, 1971) are the first instances of symbolic activity which, later on, will be fundamental for creative play. A second type of difference is thus added to that between self and other – the distinction between signs and objects. A broom can become a horse for the child who uses it as such. A form of detachment from the here-and-now is thus created, in play, with the help of imagination (see Vygotsky, 1933). As the child experiences the world, a process mediated by other people, he or she expands the range of material and symbolic tools available to transform both oneself and the environment. New forms of difference, between the present moment and an imagined or expected future, between what is possible and what is impossible, between one's wishes and the normativity of culture, and so on, become productive for creativity. And yet, despite the fact that we all experience such differences, we don't always do so creatively.

This is because difference is a condition of possibility for creativity, but it is not the only one. In other words, it is a fundamental, *necessary but insufficient condition*. To be creative one needs not only to recognise difference, but also to develop the ability to act on it and use it in concrete situations. At the same time, difference can also be blocking and we are all familiar with not being able to overcome the 'gap' between what we think and want and what others think and want, or what the material world is ready to offer us. Each person's 'style' of dealing with difference will be crucial in these cases. But, before reflecting further on this issue, let's unpack difference further with the help of a simple typology.

Difference between self and other

The difference between self and other has deep ontogenetic roots that have been widely discussed in developmental psychology. Developmentalists commonly describe the child's trajectory from egocentrism to decentration (see Piaget, 1973), from a state in which the self and its needs are overpowering and seek immediate gratification to one in which the child becomes aware that others also have a 'self'. Moreover, the child learns not only to see other as self but, conversely, to

understand his or her own self as an other would. This is made possible through social interaction and, in turn, makes possible the development of reflexivity and self-awareness (Mead, 1934; also Chapter 15). And, I would add, this is also the premise for the development of creativity (see also Glăveanu, 2015).

It is precisely because there is a difference between self and other and because we become able to take the perspective of others on ourselves and our action that we ultimately gain new insights and can discover novel aspects of reality (see Chapter 13). But is it ever possible to ‘take’ the perspective of another person? Surely, this is either a metaphor or an imaginative attempt. However, as argued by Gillespie and Martin (2014), position exchanges are, in fact, embodied acts, at least in early childhood, when children construct and alternate, in play, between different roles: doctor and patient, policeman and thief, parent and child, and so on. This material aspect should not be underestimated. The difference between self and other is not only productive for creativity because different people have different knowledge, skills, professions, life experiences, and so on, but also because they occupy different positions in space and thus see the world (even slightly) differently. As Bakhtin (1990) wisely noted, the other always has a surplus of knowledge, if anything because one cannot see ‘the back of one’s head’.

Difference between sign and object

It is in interaction with other people that we are introduced, from an early age, to the symbolic universe of our culture. Another form of distancing is key here – that between a sensorial, immediate experience of the world, and an experience mediated by signs and symbols, including language (Vygotsky, 1978; see also Chapter 7). The emergence of the capacity to symbolise is largely considered to mark the birth of creativity (Gardner, 1982; Winnicott, 1971). This is because the use of signs and symbols allows us to generalise, think in abstract terms, bring to mind the past and imagine the future. Naming objects, people, situations, helps us refer to them and communicate about them to others who share the same semiotic codes.

But, as we know from experience, communicating meaning is never straightforward and there are plenty of opportunities for ambiguity and misunderstanding. This is partially because of the ‘gap’ between objects (what is being signified) and our representation of them, including the words we use to name them (the signifiers). This difference can lead not only to confusion, but also to creative outcomes; Magritte’s art, for

instance, focuses precisely on the relation between object – word – representation (see Magritte, 1929 and also Chapter 20). The surrealism of Magritte creatively exploits such differences and his famous painting of a pipe under which is written '*Ceci n'est pas une pipe*' (This is not a pipe) vividly demonstrates that, although they 'stand' for each other, a drawing is not the object; conversely, the word 'pipe' itself is not the object either. The creative act of replacing one with the other problematizes, in this case, the taken-for-granted of our language and cultural conventions.

Difference between what was, is, and will be

Temporal differences also play a key role in creative expression. Despite attempts to 'locate' creativity in either persons or products (and thus reify it and make it static), a full understanding of creativity needs to start from observing it as a process, as a form of action (see also Chapters 4 and 12). This means studying creativity as it unfolds in time. Creators, arguably, constantly move between different dimensions of temporality, a movement made possible by the symbolic activity referred to. They are in dialogue with what existed before, in their field, in relation to the problem they want to solve, and so on, while relating to the past in order to move towards a desired future (more or less clearly specified). It is very often the case that great acts of creativity actually recover something from a distant past, and give it a new direction or revitalise it (see Chapter 22). At the same time, beside this societal level, creators also draw on their own life trajectory. Interviews with creative people from different domains (Glăveanu et al., 2013) shed new light on how their processes of creating are nurtured by what they have seen and experienced, including the routines of their daily lives. Finally, the temporal is revealed at a micro-genetic level when considering how, at each moment, creative work is shaped by what we remember (previous states), what we perceive and what we envision to do. In all these cases, it is not only continuities that are brought to the fore, but also contradictions and ruptures. Accidents and the unexpected become significant for creativity precisely because they 'segment' its temporal flow.

Difference between the possible and impossible

Humans not only imagine the future; they also actively construct representations about alternative futures, about the possible and even the impossible. The capacity to think about things or events that have not

happened yet, including ones that cannot happen – such as imagining you had wings, or could breathe under water – creates a tension that is highly productive for creativity. Arguably, most of our progress as a species originates in being able to imagine the (seemingly) impossible. The visionary literature of Jules Verne offers a testimony of this: we might not have wings but we can fly, even to the Moon; we might not be able to breathe underwater but we will create the technologies that allow us to explore the oceans. Creative work is work that constantly expands the space of the possible, in thought and in action. This, however, requires a category of the ‘impossible’ and its contents have fascinated us for millennia (think, for instance, about the efforts of mathematicians to formalise theories about phenomena that are not readily available to perception – such as n-dimensional spaces). Art and design are also fields in which the category of the impossible flourishes. One needs only to consider Escher’s constructions, or the many optical illusions catalogued as ‘impossible objects’. The difference between the real and the unreal/surreal establishes, here as well, the parameters of the creative space.

Difference between would and should

The difference between our wishes and aspirations and society’s conventions inspired Freud to write about civilization and its discontents (Freud, 2002). These tensions, frequently open conflicts, between individual and society have for a long time been considered the mark of the creative genius. This reinforced an essentialist, exclusivist and even pathological understanding of creativity and creative individuals (Montuori & Purser, 1995). It also ultimately depicted culture and its conventions as unitary and monolithic. On the contrary, what I refer to here as the difference between a person’s intentionality (would) and cultural normativity (should) is not an opposition but, rather, a disjunction that prompts the person to be creative. On many occasions, the solutions we find end up creating a dialogue and re-alignment between intentions and norms (see also Chapter 17). Either one or both of these terms change in the process. While we might not be able directly to transform societal norms, we are indeed agents in relation to our immediate cultural context. The difference between what we want to do and what we should do reveals the fact that our goals are dynamic and that culture is appropriated in flexible ways and enacted in communication with others. It is this difference that we need to navigate in our daily life – when, for instance, we want to leave work early, as well as in relations between groups – where it can be the engine behind

social movements leading to visible social change. In all these cases, the outcomes are often novel and, at least, potentially creative.

What difference makes a difference for creativity?

The last question to surface, picking up from the previous remark, is whether 'potentially creative' turns into 'creative' and, if so, under what circumstances. In other words, are all differences 'good' for creativity and, if not, what kind of difference makes a (creative) difference?¹

From the start, I want to restate the fact that difference doesn't need to be romanticised, or considered the ultimate solution for enhancing creativity. My claim is simply that there would be no creativity in the absence of difference. This applies at both the individual and societal levels. Just think about a world in which, for example, there would be no difference between self and other – we would all think in the same way, know the same things, have the same views, and so on. This is the essence of totalitarian regimes and totalitarian mind sets, struggling against a plural future (Montuori, 2005). In contrast, a future open to creativity relies on multiplying spaces where, initially, difference is recognised (which doesn't always happen, even when it is rather obvious!), then appreciated and valued, and finally built upon in a constructive manner. There is no one type of difference, from those mentioned above, that will, at all times, for all people and in all places increase (or hinder) creativity. This is not only because our psychological and social reality escapes simple forms of determinism; it's because the differences I referred to before are all present, *simultaneously*, within one and the same situation. Moreover, they are related to each other and make each other possible (see, e.g., the discussion about self – other differences and their role in the emergence of symbolism). It is, once again, not difference itself that 'creates', but people who *act on difference* in ways that widen or bridge its multiple 'gaps', integrate them further or, indeed, continue ongoing processes of differentiation.

Note

1. The author would like to acknowledge long and fruitful conversations with both Alex Gillespie and Ron Beghetto on this topic.

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6

Fear

Luca Tateo

What has fear to do with creativity? How can a highly valued process be related to such an ugly emotion? It sounds frightening. From an evolutionary point of view, fear is very useful. If you are a weak, naked primate and you hear a noise in the grassy savannah it might be time to start running. But if you are a slightly more civilized primate and you are thinking to start a family, living in a perennial state of fear will not help your marital status. You must find a more creative way to cope with everyday uncertainties (see also Chapter 8). The question of how mankind has been able to rise above a natural state of fear and build civilization has always been one of the fundamental questions of moral and political philosophy. Emotional experiences, such as fear, are common to all animal species, but emotions as immediate responses to environmental changes are binding us to the *hic et nunc* of an eternal present. We had somehow to develop different ways to cope with emotions in order to become what we are today as a species. Ethological evidence tells us that we share with other species some capacity for learning, using tools, modifying the environment, treasuring experience and transmitting knowledge apart from genetic selection. Nevertheless, it is certain that we are the only living beings, as far as we know, that are able constantly, voluntarily and collectively to construct and to deconstruct abstract and non-existing 'objects', such as divinity, love, society, ethics, and so on, in order to guide future-oriented actions (Valsiner, 2014). Can we call this creativity?

In the 18th century, the Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico (1668–1744) proposed a very interesting theory in this respect. He developed a complex view about the relationship between mind and culture (Vico, 1948 [1744]) in which he tried to explain how human experience led to the birth and historical development of civilizations. He imagined

the first human tribes dealing with scary natural phenomena, such as lightning and thunder, completely immersed in the overwhelming experience of the senses and unable to elaborate any rational explanation for these phenomena. Those primordial men were characterised by the strong embodied flow of their emotions; rationality and reflection were long to emerge. But one faculty was very powerful: imagination. Then they built an imaginative explanation for those things causing fear and uncertainty. They attributed thunder to the will of a gigantic, powerful being living somewhere above in the sky and they called him Jupiter. Vico believed that human knowledge is primarily anthropomorphic. What is unknown and far from direct experience also requires to be explained by larger causes. 'Because of the indefinite nature of the human mind, whenever lost in ignorance, man makes himself the measure of all things' (Vico, 1744/1948, p. 54). Thus, Jupiter became the prototype of all natural forces, an imaginative explanation for real events. At the same time, through attributing will and power to this imaginative entity, mankind started to detach the emotion of fear from the immediate and contingent events in the environment (see also Chapter 5). They also started to regulate their own behaviour – not with respect to a direct stimulus, but through a *sign*: it was the beginning of culture.

Imagination, signs and self-regulation

According to Vico, culture is nothing but the collective solution people developed to account for phenomena the real causes of which they could not understand. Once imagination has created a sign that represents the cause of fear, detaching it from the immediate experience of its presence, it can be used to self-regulate the behaviour in different conditions and can be communicated to other people in different situations. 'Human beings are unstoppable generators of signs – as they strive towards future objectives which, by their nature, are necessarily uncertain' (Valsiner, 2014, p. 25). Therefore, we produce and re-produce signs as an action upon the world in order to make sense and to manage uncertainty outside and inside us; we can call this capability *imaginative function* (Cocking, 2005). In this sense, fear, imagination and creativity are closely connected, to the extent that creativity as a socio-cultural category can build upon imagination as a higher mental function. From fairy tales to religious iconography, imagination has been used to promote or inhibit specific culturally valued or despicable behaviours. The feature of this semiotic process resides in the fact that meaning is

elaborated always in both linguistic and iconographic forms (see also Chapter 7).

One of Giambattista Vico's most important arguments is that, through imagination, we build things that we treat as abstractions, and build abstractions that we treat as though they were real things. The philosopher Georg Simmel (1858–1918) wrote: 'imagination produces a content that has a sense of its own, a logical coherency, a certain validity or permanency independent of its being produced and borne by life' (1918/2010, p. 15). The distinctive feature of human nature is the capability to create life forms (Simmel, 1918/2010) – e.g., divinity worship, marriage, money, art and burials – as self-regulatory systems through the complementary movement of abstraction and reification as key features of symbolic activity. This is why metaphorical and imaginative thinking are always present in human activities. Their relevance for our understanding of creativity is due to the fact that they subsume both a productive and reproductive role, acting as the cauldron from which life-forms emerge, crystallise, and decline in order for new ones to be formed.

Human activity creates universal and abstract representations of life starting from very situated individual actions. Such institutionalised representations of the world become traditions – that is, frameworks distanced from the individual, immediate experience – within which the meaning of individual experiences acquires sense in return (see Figure 6.1). 'Aspects of that "external" world generated on the basis of firmly shared ecological-cultural background conditions tend to become objectified and acquire the status of social realities' (Rommetsveit, 1992,

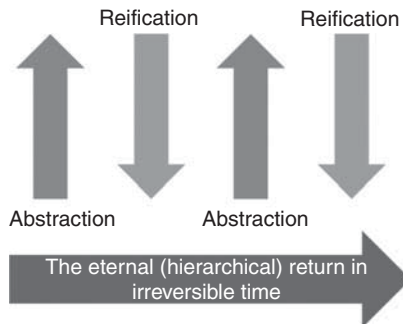


Figure 6.1 Building things as though they were abstractions and building abstractions as though they were real things

p. 22). From Santa Claus to the invisible hand of the market, everyday life is full of such entities that we, and our fellow humans, firmly 'believe' in (create their 'reality').

Religion and art provide us with wonderful examples of how fear and imagination work as regulatory systems through the continuous interplay between abstraction and reification. Just think about literary masterpieces such as St Johan's 'Apocalypse' or Dante Alighieri's 'Divine Comedy'. These authors created complex and powerful heavenly visions out of abstract religious concepts but, in return, those imaginative worlds became collective self-regulatory systems of signs for the people listening to the torments of the wicked or the joys of the blessed. Thus, imagination creates the conditions for experiencing the constraints and the affordances, the *dos* and the *don'ts*, the rights and the wrongs of our experience. As Simmel elegantly put it, our lives are characterised by a process of borders-creation, limiting ourselves in order to orient our existence towards the uncertainty of the future. But at soon as we create a border, a goal to reach, an obstacle to our goal, or a constraint to our freedom or drive, we are already setting the conditions to overcome it. Once we create damnation, we immediately evoke salvation. When we create sin, we already evoke redemption. Once we create monsters in our fairy tales, we create the conditions to destroy them; '[t]his [signifies] reaching out by life into that which is not its actuality, but such (...) reaching out nevertheless *shapes* its actuality' (Simmel, 1918/2010, p. 8). Images become the body of abstract concepts and, in return, they become abstract and universal ideas detached from the single work of art.

Fear, imagination and creativity: Some examples

The ultimate cause of fear for human beings is, of course, the finitude of the individual's existence. There is no stronger fear than that of dying. That is why this relationship between fear and creativity, mediated by imaginative processes, is fairly evident in religious and artistic productions related to eschatological topics such as death or war. We can look at the process of artistic creation and the final artefact in one of the most famous contemporary paintings: Picasso's 'Guernica' (Doyle, 2008). This masterpiece can be seen as a reflection on the meaning of art in front of life, violence and collective conscience. I use the term 'reflection' playing a little with the iconic and metaphorical meaning of the word. On the one hand, we have the most common narrative of the artist that creates the masterpiece in a few days, as photo-documented by

his mistress Dora Maar, after knowing of the Nazi and Fascist carpet-bombing of the Basque town. On the other hand, we have the narrative of how the large canvas resonated in the spectators of Spanish Republic's Pavilion at the Paris Exposition in 1937.

The second example I provide is meant to illustrate the relationship between eschatological themes and creativity at a different level. In this case, the imaginative process as the psychological foundation for creativity is represented by the Fontanelle Cemetery, a charnel house located in a cave in the tuff hillside of Naples, the hometown of Vico (see Figure 6.2).

In the early 19th century, during the urban reformation under the French rule of Naples, all the anonymous bones of poor people that had been buried around in the town or that had died during the 1656 Great Plague were moved and stockpiled in the cave. Until the end of the 19th century, new bones were periodically stored there, reaching the incredible estimated number of 60,000. In the same period, a spontaneous process of worship began. Lay people went into the cave 'adopting' an unknown skull, giving it a name (often revealed to the caretakers in dreams), bringing offers and praying for grace. Such acts of individual devotion soon became a tradition, so that small altars, boxes (see Figure 6.3) and wooden racks with flowers and candles gave shelter to the skulls.

The cult of devotion to the skulls lasted well into the 1970s, when the Church decided that it had degenerated into fetishism and ordered the cemetery to be closed. Nevertheless, the watchmen of the cemetery I interviewed, recently re-opened as an open-air museum, swore that the cult is still going on, even if sporadically. The Fontanelle Cemetery is an example of how individual imaginative processes, rooted in a specific cultural background, once reified and detached from the immediate experience of believing, can result in religious traditions which, in return, become a framework for the organisation of collective behaviour, e.g., promoting worship.

The third and last example is a very well-known historical commonplace in European Christianity: the medieval *Memento mori* (Latin for 'remember (that you have) to die'), a religious theory and practice of reflection on mortality, considering the vanity and the transient nature of all earthly life and pursuits (Hallam & Hockey, 2001). It developed as a widespread art theme, especially during the 16th and 17th centuries, through sometimes very complex systems of iconography – such as, for instance, the *Danse Macabre* and the *Triumph of Death* themes (Figure 6.4).



Figure 6.2 An altar made of bones in Fontanelle Cemetery

Source: Photo taken by the author.

One can barely figure out the powerful emotions that this painting by Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1526/1530–1569) raised in 16th-century lay people living in the whirlwind of the recent Counter-Reformation, the European wars and the Great Plague. An army of skeletons is massacring mortals while they are busy with their everyday activities. The imaginative work behind this iconic representation of death and caducity is acting as a promoter for ‘right’ behaviours and as an inhibitor of sin in view of a differed, fearful event. This effect is produced through the



Figure 6.3 A shrine with a worshipped, anonymous baby skeleton in Fontanelle
Source: Photo taken by the author.



Figure 6.4 A shrine with a worshipped 'The Triumph of Death', c. 1562, Museo del Prado, Madrid

Source: Image under public license, retrieved on January 3rd, 2015.

interplay between individual and collective imagination, during a continuous shift between abstraction from concrete images that represent abstract concepts and reification of ideas into embodied, iconographic signs. This is just one of the peculiar ways in which human beings have elaborated a complex system of signs, through which self-regulation and social regulation intertwine to form the basis of imaginative processes.

Conclusion

If imagination was just individual thinking through images, or a means to escape from everyday life, it wouldn't be much more than Sleeping Beauty dreaming of her prince, or Homer Simpson visualising a doughnut to escape from Marge's reproaches. The ubiquitous presence of imaginative processes in everyday activities tells us that there is something more at stake here. Imagination is linked to the need of making sense of eschatological events through signs. The fact that iconic and linguistic modalities always go together should lead us to pay considerable attention the role of imagination in psychological processes. Besides, imagination is related to experiencing both past and future, by bringing to mind something that is absent, whether it is no longer or not yet there. It is a way of treating things as if they were abstractions and abstractions as if they were real things. In this sense, imagination embodies signs as well as produces them. Once mankind has developed the capacity to imagine the cause of its fears, it has gained the opportunity to handle it by distancing from it – both to overcome fear itself and to use it as a way of regulating and effectively creating collective life.

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7

Language

Carolyn Demuth and Vlad Petre Glăveanu

The language of creativity

It is certainly fitting to have a chapter on language in a vocabulary book. The fact that how we talk (and write) about creativity relates closely to how we think about this phenomenon and act in relation to it is obvious (for more reflections on this issue, see Chapter 1). But there is something more we can learn from language if we look beyond the ‘language of creativity’ and into the phenomenon of language itself. Uncovering what this might be is the purpose of the present chapter. Interestingly, in doing so, we will be using language (again) to formulate and share our ideas. Language as a dynamic and dialogical process frames our approach and reveals the value of paying attention to language activities when it comes to creativity, and well beyond it.

What is the usual *language of creativity*? In science we often hear about novelty and value, originality, significance, innovation, giftedness, talent, genius, art, science, invention, inspiration, improvisation, imagination, divergent thinking, discovery, so on and so forth. What would a focus on language and its processes teach us about creativity? As we will see here, it would bring to the fore new terms such as dialogue, genre, centripetal and centrifugal forces, intertextuality, indexicality, games, and so on. The first vocabulary applies well to the creative person and his or her creative output; the second focuses our attention on process and context, both crucial for understanding and using language. But, before turning to these notions, let us start by unpacking further the bi-directional relation between language and creativity.

Creativity at the origin of language

Language can very well be thought of as the *prototype of creativity*. Indeed, language as a form of communication is one of the most creative things that exist. Of course, communication is not unique to humans. Bees, dolphins and apes, among other species, have also developed forms of communication – visual, tactile, chemical and auditory (Bradbury & Vehrencamp, 2011). However, this form of communication comprises a finite, limited number of things that can be expressed. Moreover, it doesn't show the same degree of flexibility and the emergent properties that characterise human language. A famous observation by Humboldt (1836/1999, p. 91) is illustrative here – our language involves 'infinite employment of finite means'. The intrinsic creativity of language use is not reserved for artistic work, in novels, poems or theatre plays. It is not primarily the act of pushing the boundaries of language in ways similar to those of the Dada movement in literature (see, for instance, 'How to write a Dadaist poem' by Tristan Tzara, 1924). Linguistic creativity is, first and foremost, the marker of daily communication.

There exist over 7,000 different languages according to the Ethnologue in 2015!¹ This number humbles even the greatest polyglots and can put in perspective other of humanity's 'creative products'. The intrinsic variety of these languages should also be noticed. From dialects to sign systems, from written symbols to character styles, linguists and anthropologists remind us of how culturally rich human culture is around the globe. Take, for instance, the example of a pictographic script commonly used by the Naxi, an ethnic minority in Southwest China (Ceinos Arcones, 2012, p. 154); it is also the only pictographic language still in use today. From left to right in Figure 7.1 we have represented the following: to mate, man and woman under the Naxi yin-yang, yak, and tiger; to consult, talk over; big, the vagina of a



Figure 7.1 Dongba pictographs show the role of women in Naxi society

Source: Reprinted with permission from P. Ceinos Arcones (2012). *Sons of Heaven, Brothers of Nature. The Naxi of Southwest China*. Kunming: Papers of the White Dragon. Copyright 2012 by Ceinos Arcones.

woman; ancestral home, a woman inside the house; a big tree, mother, a big woman.

Of course, as any living cultural artefact, languages come into existence, transform, ‘merge’, ‘split’, change and vanish. Usually, the latter happens when the community of speakers disappears or adopts other means for communication. Indeed, many of the over 7,000 languages we have today are spoken and understood by small communities, hard-pressed by the ethos of globalisation; the Naxi pictographs make no exception in this regard. But, rather than dying out, most languages transform, becoming hybrid creations whose history is closely linked to that of the communities who use them. It might therefore be more appropriate to talk about ‘*language practices*’ or ‘*language activities*’ rather than of ‘languages’ (which suggests a rather fixed sign system). Words are adopted and, often – especially with today’s expansion in the technological domain – new words are actively created to refer to new social phenomena (think, for instance, about the verb ‘to google’ or the noun ‘selfie’). The Cambridge dictionary even has a blog² that follows the development of new words in the English language. On 27 April 2015, the top word we found on their website was ‘e-juice’ or the liquid content in an e-cigarette (don’t feel bad if you never heard of it, newer words will soon come along).

In summary, there is a lot of creativity in language and this creativity becomes apparent if we consider that language is not merely an abstract sign system but primarily a social practice and an utterly dialogical activity that has the potentiality to be indexical, performative and phenomenological (Ochs, 2012), as we will discuss below.

Language at the origin of creativity

We argued above that creativity stands at the core of both the emergence and evolution of different forms of language practices, well beyond art. It is important to acknowledge now that the reverse also holds. In the absence of language there would be little, if any, creative action. And this is not because much of our creativity depends on words and linguistic exchanges, oral and written, but because the capacity to use language is deeply connected to our capacity to symbolise. Meaning-making processes are the essence of language and, through the acquisition and use of language, the essence of human creativity.

To understand this, it is helpful to look at how children learn language. The ability to understand and use language within the first two years of life has an enormous effect on development. Vygotsky

(1930/2004), for example, was of the opinion that, when the practical activity of the child becomes mediated by the use of signs and tools, it undergoes a major qualitative transformation. Being able to refer to something with the means of something else (e.g., to use the word 'mother' referring to the person of the mother), the child can distance him/herself symbolically from the here-and-now of perception and the flow of immediate experience. In doing so, the child also becomes capable, gradually, of planning ahead, to imagine, to solve problems and ... to create. This is because the 'links' between thoughts and words, the ways in which people organise their own mental activities, rather than being merely systematic or logical, have a formative, developmental and creative character (Shotter, 2008). The 'revolution' represented by the use of signs, first and foremost linguistic ones, to operate on oneself and the world around is at the origin of societal achievements, such as the development of science and art, and all other domains of creativity (see also Winnicott, 1971).

A key characteristic of language is *indexicality*, the feature of our utterances to point to something in the world. What we come to understand quite soon when we start reflecting on language, as Aristotle did (see Richards, 1932), is the fact that word, meaning and object are not linked by necessity. There is nothing in the actual object of a bottle that makes one call it 'bottle' (as, indeed, the two of us would rather call it *Flasche* in German and *sticlă* in Romanian) just as there is nothing in the word 'bottle' that brings us necessarily to the idea of bottle. In an alternative world, we might call a chair 'bottle' (or, indeed, in a delusional world or, why not, an artistic one). And this is crucially important for creativity. Saussure (1916/1974) referred to this as the arbitrariness of signs. We call it, here, the fundamental flexibility and openness of language. Noticing and exploiting (metaphorically, artistically, humorously, and so on) the difference between word, meaning and object is the marker of most (if not all) forms of human creativity (see Chapter 5; see also Glăveanu & Gillespie, 2014).

When children learn a language, however, they do not merely learn linguistic skills and symbolic abstractions but, first and foremost, *communicative-semantic skills* (Erneling, 1995; Shotter, 2008); i.e., to participate in what Wittgenstein (1953) called 'language games'. They learn how to use words (including intonation, gestures, and so on) in specific situations for specific purposes. There are countless creative ways of how words could be used as the interaction unfolds; i.e., there are countless creative ways in which the meaning of a given situation could potentially be co-created through language activity. The child has to learn

which ones are socially acceptable and appropriate in a given situation (see also Chapter 17).

Here, we see the circular nature of creativity and language: language activity is not only constructed (i.e., made up of grammatical structures, words and so on, all of which are built and delivered in real time with relevant prosody, timing and such), but also constructive (in the sense that it is used to build versions of psychological worlds, of social organisations, actions and histories) (Potter, 2012). Nevertheless, discursive co-constructions are not arbitrary; they are often constrained by the social expectations and cultural conventions that we have learned to apply. In other words, our creative act of constructing social reality and meaning-making through language is always interrelated with previously experienced ways of constructing reality together with others. We will elaborate on this in the next section.

It is important here to note that language – conceived of as an activity – goes far beyond mere words and symbols. It comprises prosody, gesture and mimicry, as well as the phenomenology of experiencing language (Bertau, 2014; Cresswell & Teucher, 2011; Ochs, 2012). Creativity and language alike can be considered a form of communication (in the end, through the creative act, a person communicates something to others) and a way of experiencing the world (the often neglected phenomenological aspect of the creative act).

Dialogue at the root of language and creativity

Language practices have no single or identifiable author (except perhaps those invented by sci-fi authors – but even these depend on the creativity of their users). Our propensity to discover who is ‘responsible’ for a certain creative artefact is put to the test by the study of language(s). And, through these lenses, we come to discover that our daily lives and the functioning of our societies are deeply marked by historical acts of collective creativity. Many of the most mundane (and yet indispensable) objects we use, the traditions and rituals that give texture to our existence, or the rhythms we enjoy listening, illustrate acts of truly distributed creativity (see Glăveanu, 2014). It is our individual and collective creativity that transforms language and adapts it to an ever-changing world, and it is language that facilitates creative expression through its ‘tensions’ between word and world. The *polysemy* of natural language (Ricoeur, 1973), the fact that there is never a perfect ‘one to one’ relation between word and world but a ‘one to many’ relation, is central for creativity (see also Chapter 21). But where does this

multiplicity come from? In order to understand this, we need to recognise the social nature of language, an aspect we haven't discussed much so far.

Language is not merely a tool we use for communication; it is a social practice that is always intertwined with the social practices of others. Self–other relations are crucial for the way we use language (think of how you talk to your friends at the pub and to your superiors at work) and for its acquisition (the child would not use the words 'mother' or 'bottle', or any word for this matter, without the social scaffolding provided by adults). Dialogue is, in fact, considered so important for both the theory and practice of language that we find, today, a growing number of *dialogical theories* that consider, starting from language, the dialogicality of the mind (Linell, 2009) and that of the human self (Hermans & Kempen, 1993).

One of the pioneers of this kind of thinking is uncontestedly Mikhail Bakhtin, the Russian philosopher, literary critic and semiotician. In his words:

Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions; it is populated – overpopulated – with the intentions of others. [...] language, for the individual consciousness, lies on the borderline between oneself and the other... The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes 'one's own' only when the speaker populates it with his own intentions, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions; it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own.

(Bakhtin, 1975/1992, pp. 293–294)

Language is dialogical, thus, in (at least) two ways. On the one hand, dialogicality refers to the situated inter-action of language activities taking place between two or more persons. On the other hand, however, and in a broader perspective, the dialogical nature of language goes beyond the dyad of self and other and its concrete setting. It refers, as Bakhtin reminds us, to the fact that our utterances draw on what we have heard or used before in other situated (inter)actions. Our own language is, in this sense, full of the 'voices' of others that we learn to inhabit, to combine and respond to. This defines the *polyphony* of using language to communicate, the conceptual match for the polysemy of words we have

referred to briefly. The multiplication of voices and meanings reflects the diversity of self–other dialogues we participate in, directly and indirectly, as members of a community of practice and a society.

By drawing on similar ‘forms’ or ‘patterns’ of language (e.g., ordering a meal in a restaurant, engaging in small talk at a conference or at a family dinner) we build traditions of language activities (see also Bertau, 2014). Bakhtin referred to these as *speech genres*. Linell (2009) further developed this idea and spoke of communicative genres to point out that language is more than speech. Brockmeier (2005) reminds us that, when we speak, we use countless genres without noting or suspecting that they exist at all. They are like the air we breathe or like water is for the fish. But we can also break out of these traditions when, for instance, we perform language activities in an unconventional way (e.g., telling a personal anecdote in a scientific talk). Bakhtin spoke here about centrifugal and centripetal forces. The first refer to the cultural canons that have a normative impetus on the language use of a person within a specific socio-cultural group. Centrifugal forces, on the other hand, allow for individual choice of language. Participants may, for instance, ‘try to question established genres, breaking them up, protesting by overtly flouting their norms, or creating new “crossover” genres’ (Linell, 2009, p. 53). The utterances of an individual are therefore neither entirely shaped by cultural conventions, nor an entirely individual creation. In that sense, utterances are always travelling through texts and contexts, something we can refer to as *intertextuality* (Linell, 2009). The same holds true for non-verbal genres that imply creativity, such as music or cooking.

The dialogical tradition has much to teach us about creativity. First and foremost, it points to the fact that, just like language activities (and through language activities), creativity is a dialogical act. In other words, it is never an act of the solitary self (the creator); neither is it a process that leads to absolute novelty and breaks with what existed before. Within creativity, self and other, conventions and innovations cross paths; this is something that makes creative products simultaneously individual and social, shared and unique. Polyphony, polysemy, and intertextuality – core features of language. Core features of creativity as well?

Order and spontaneity, in dialogue

What we discussed in this chapter points to the fact that, just like creativity, language use has a distinctive air of spontaneity. At the same

time, language is utterly orderly – both with regard to grammar and syntax, and with regard to socio-cultural conventions of language use. There are rules for addressing others, for what can or cannot be said, and for how things are told that apply to virtually any context we might find ourselves in, even when we are alone (see also Chapter 17). And yet, as we start a conversation, we can never be sure what exactly we will say a few minutes later (see Chapter 19).

Wittgenstein (1953) described language activities as people's spontaneous, living, embodied reactions in the ongoing flow of their contingently intertwined activity. To capture the simultaneously orderly and spontaneous nature of language, he used the metaphor of *language games*. For Wittgenstein, the origin of the language game can be found in ongoing interactions. When speaking, we engage in a 'living', embodied relation with other living beings. We do so not only by 'spontaneously responding to this living form, but by spontaneously responding to it *in anticipation* of what it might do next' (Shotter, 2008, p. vii, emphasis in the original).

This might be one of the deepest insights a study of language can offer creativity researchers. When creating, just as when we use language (and we use it always creatively in some sense), we are not only in collaboration with others (Barron, 1999), but also in dialogue with them. Creativity is fundamentally social because it responds to what others have done before and anticipates what can be done next, constantly expanding the boundaries of the possible. The creativity game, just as that of language, is a game of dialogue.

Notes

1. For the Ethnologue website, go to <http://www.ethnologue.com>.
2. To visit this blog go to <http://dictionaryblog.cambridge.org/category/new-words/>

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8

Lostness

Charlotte Wegener

Prologue

In his text, 'The social construction of validity', Kvale (1995) states that 'An attempt will be made here to demystify the concept of validity in social research by taking it back to everyday language and interaction' (p. 19). Then he tells the story of his own encounter with scientific language as a young student in Norway trying to memorise scientific English-Latin terms which did not belong to the Norwegian vernacular. I was really encouraged and entertained by his text and especially the introduction – a highly recognised social scientist not able to get a grip of core social science terms. This is, of course, not a story of intellectual inability. It is a story of how to connect scientific knowledge and everyday experience. He builds his argument from the basis of his own everyday experience. He writes:

Later, when traveling in the United States, I learned other meanings of the terms validity and reliability; for example, when cashing a check in the supermarket, I was told that my European driver's license was not valid as identification; when in an academic discussion, I was told that my argument was not valid. Or I heard that the information about the used car I was looking at was not reliable, nor was the car dealer known to be a reliable person. Here the terms valid and reliable belonged to the vernacular, important to the on-going interactions of everyday life.

(Kvale, 1995, p. 20)

This text is funny because it questions pretentious scientific language. It is instructive and helpful because it offers an alternative – that

scientific knowledge can be grounded in everyday experience and inform our everyday life. What I learned from Kvale is to include in my texts the epistemological process of knowing. A research account is not authoritative because it connects everything, synthesises and concludes. It might be authoritative because it reveals epistemological struggles. A researcher voice is authoritative because it is present in the creative act of being lost and getting to know something.

Lost

It is often said that we *acquire* knowledge, *gain* insight and *make* new discoveries. Rarely do we hear of scientific work being discussed in terms of *dropping something*, *letting go*, or *getting lost*. Inspired by Kvale, the following is a practical demonstration of a research process in which everyday experiences of lostness opened up the creative interrogation of scientific concepts (see also Chapter 10). The empirical material comes from a field study of elderly care the aim of which was to contribute to gaining new knowledge about how innovation processes are initiated and managed and, especially, how innovation competencies can be nurtured. It illustrates my quest for an adequate methodological and theoretical vocabulary while tracing innovation in the field with the help of the theoretical concept of ‘knot-working’. Knot-working is defined as the combination of different kinds of knowledge to achieve new insights; in learning, creativity and innovation, knot-working is seen as a core activity (Engeström, 1987; Tuomi-Gröhn & Engeström, 2003). Knot-working does not necessarily involve new factual knowledge. Rather, it is the act of combining knowledge in new ways; e.g., when people from different organisations or professions meet to solve a problem.

Trusting the theory and having the ambition to practice what I preach, I attended several welfare innovation conferences, theme days and workshops, all of which were structured to allow for knot-working – between researchers and practitioners, between different welfare professionals or between policy makers and citizens. I was eager to engage in knot-working. What happened, however, was practically the opposite. I sensed the theme of ‘being lost’ from one of my first days of fieldwork and documented it in my field diary:

My first innovation conference

Hundreds of welfare innovators are gathered in a former storage building at the edge of the town. Numbered, blue balloons are tied to

exhibit booths, each describing their own innovation project. I stroll around at random. At a health exhibit, a nurse offers to measure my blood glucose level, but my level falls below the lowest measurement unit, the nurse tells me. I don't know if this is good or bad. I spot an acquaintance that I haven't seen in some time; we hug and tell each other how great it is to meet again . . . until she sees some other acquaintances and moves on.

A toastmaster in a black dress with fishnet stockings enters the scene and blows a foghorn to start the presentation program at the stalls. We are instructed to look at our conference folders and choose the stalls we would like to visit. Every time she blows the horn, we must move on to the next stall on our list, looking for stalls with the proper numbered balloon floating over it. People move. The horn blows. People move again. The balloons with the stall numbers printed on them sway back and forth, making it difficult for me to see which stall I should go to. I do not always reach the designated stall until the next horn sounds. However, when the session is over, I find myself with a pile of brochures and business cards.

Now we are going to work through an innovation process in groups. My group's task is to identify an urgent issue in public schools and to develop new solutions to it. We must move on to the next step in the innovation process every time we hear the horn. The toastmaster instructs us in problem framing, idea generation, selection of the best idea and the action plan design. We generate post-its, group them into piles and end up producing a flow chart which we hang on the wall of the exhibition area using Sticky Tack. We can now proceed to exhibiting solutions.

It's lunchtime. The chefs are toned and wear black t-shirts. They make vegetarian and organic food on the spot. There are no chairs. Hyper-stimulated and increasingly feeling lost, I spot an empty back room area with a round sofa in the middle. I take a seat among paper sheets and crayons. Outside, the snow is falling heavily. Maybe I will not be able to get to the railway station? Maybe I can't get home! I grab my bag, rush to the lobby and ask the receptionist to call a cab. 'Unfortunately, this is not possible', she says. 'All taxi driving has been suspended due to the snowfall'. I fumble through coats and run out into the snow, coat in hand. Not a soul. I look back and notice another conference participant just rushing out. 'There might be a bus stop further down the road', she shouts, and we run side by side.

Just then, a bus comes wobbling by. We run and wave and the bus's rear end is slipping to the side as it stops in the middle of the road. We board the bus and throw ourselves into the seats, exhausted. The snowdrifts make it a two-hour ride to the railway station, and my traveling companion and I talk all the way.

Knot-working and not-knowing

The metaphor of knot-working shaped the design of the study, what I paid attention to and how I interpreted it. At a glance, knot-working seemed an appropriate metaphor to study what was going on. Soon, however, I lost track. Very few of the participants I talked to during fieldwork had stories of innovation through knot-working, and most did not even regard 'innovation' as a suitable depiction of the changes in which they were involved. The interviewees regarded innovation as a pervasive imperative but they did not know the meaning of it, or they struggled to reformulate it in order to avoid it undermining routines and values that worked well (Wegener, 2012; Wegener & Tanggaard, 2013; see also Chapter 3). I found that, as a researcher, I could easily become an advocate for an agenda I was increasingly worried about. I was, indeed, not the only person feeling lost in the innovation world!

The metaphor of knot-working was useful for explaining some empirical phenomena. But, basically, I could not relate knot-working and elderly care innovation with each other. If I clung solely to knot-working, my main finding would be a non-finding. I would be able to produce a neat story of cross-organisational and cross-professional collaboration deficiencies and thus suggest possible strategies to overcome employee inertia, or the much-researched 'resistance to change' (see also Chapter 14). Instead, I chose to drop the metaphor of knot-working, and eventually allowed myself to get lost in the landscape of innovation research and elderly care practice. I started to take part in activities that did not fit with my ideas of what knot-working might be; eventually, I almost forgot that I was studying innovation and just immersed myself in the activities that happened to unfold while I was present in the field (see also Chapter 19). Meanwhile, I read plenty of innovation studies and methodology literature, and produced two comprehensively written field diaries. I spent months together with intern students, mentors, teachers, managers and elderly residents. I was reading and writing passionately but I did not have a clue as to where this strategy would take me. To be honest, it did not look like or feel like a 'strategy' at all. I was no closer to elderly care knot-working or innovation. I no longer knew what I was studying.

Why am I here?

The following incident turned out to be my study's ultimate lostness story and, thus, also the focal point that heartened me decisively to go off-track:

In the living room, the resident Annie is wandering around. 'I am so confused. Why am I here?' she asks, continuously. Once in a while, the care assistant Helga or the student Peter respond to her:

Helga: It's because your husband passed away 18 months ago, and now you are here. Where do you live?

Annie: I live at Vestergade 201.

Helga: No, you live here, just down the corridor in room 6. Where do you live?

Annie: I live in room 6.

Helga: That's fine.

Later on, Annie addresses the student, Peter:

Annie: I'm so confused. Why am I here?

Peter: It's because your husband passed away.

Annie: What am I supposed to do?

Peter suggests that she watches TV and guides her to the sofa. Another resident, Elsa, sits down beside Annie on the sofa:

Annie: I'm so confused. I don't know why I'm here.

Elsa: I don't know either.

Annie: It's damn annoying.

Elsa: Yes, but I am here right next to you.

Though this exchange added no obvious insight related to my research questions about knot-working, creativity and innovation, I could not forget it. It did not make any sense. I saw it as irrelevant to my analytical work. Yet it touched me, and eventually forced me to return to this page in my field diary until I knew the dialogue by heart. I also investigated dementia and lost myself in a world of locked doors, caregiver intervention and wandering around when I started reading abstracts such as the one below:

The occurrence of episodes of getting lost was examined in 104 subjects with dementia who were assessed every 4 months over 5 years. Forty-three subjects needed to be brought back home at least once. Five subjects repeatedly got lost. Forty-six subjects were

kept behind locked doors at some point. The risk of patients with dementia getting lost is substantial and requires frequent intervention by caregivers. This risk is a major reason for institutionalization. (McShane et al., 1998)

Eventually, a reading of Lather's (2007) methodology of getting lost in the landscape of knowledge or the landscape of science gave me an analytical 'hook' – a means to channel my emotional engagement. Did these two ladies mirror a feeling exceedingly familiar to me? Did it hold any creative potential? Lather (2007, p. 136) argues that we should cultivate the ability to engage with 'not knowing' and to move toward a 'vacillation of knowing and not knowing'. Wandering and getting lost thus become creative methodological practices. It may seem cynical to capitalise on two old women with dementia, yet the experience of getting lost is all too human.

Most of the time, we try to knot-work, to make connections, to make sense. Dementia is a state of involuntary lostness. The researcher may also inadvertently get lost and confused (as I did at the innovation conference), but we can turn these experiences into a deliberate strategy. Based on Pitt and Britzman (2003), Lather calls it 'lovely knowledge' and 'difficult knowledge' (Lather, 2007, p. 13). Lovely knowledge reinforces what we think we want, while difficult knowledge includes breakdowns and learning to allow loss and feelings of lostness to become the very force of creativity. We are forced to act and think *differently*.

Concluding on the epistemological struggle

My disorientation at the innovation conference and Annie's state of confusion while sitting in front of the television turned out to be a gateway to widening my initial ideas of what was part of the study and what was not. I chose to aim for *difficult knowledge*. Researchers invariably begin their work expecting to see certain events occur, and may construct their research questions and fieldwork tasks around those expectations. Annie, in front of the television, was obviously part of my data but she did not fit in. *I* had to change because I wanted to include her.

As I sensed, she had the power to provide me with a lever for questioning not just the innovation enthusiasm in the organisational world, but also in much of the innovation literature. What I ended up concluding is that a great deal of research, and, indeed, many of the public and policy discourses of innovation we are surrounded by, fail

to ask basic questions regarding their key concepts. Research can thus be regarded as the mobilisation of certain concepts, subjects, and disciplines to represent and order what is occurring. We want more drivers for innovation, and we want fewer barriers to innovation. Following this premise, much research on public innovation involves pursuing innovation moments, finding less innovation than expected or desired, explaining what are termed 'barriers' to innovation and proposing measures to overcome these. The problem is that the innovation agenda does not leave time and space for getting lost. The imperative seems to be 'Forward, forward!' But where are we heading to and what is left behind? We might not be able to perform relevant innovations – in organisations *and* in ethnographic analyses and accounts – if we too eagerly head for pre-designed destinations; that is, for lovely knowledge. While 'knot-working' refers to the intentional combination of mainly cognitive resources, of finding one's way, making ends meet and conclusions clear, 'not knowing' refers to the unpredictability of bodily and affective experiences and to open-ended problems and possibilities. To allow for creativity in research, and in most of our daily life, we need to practise both.

Annie will never get a meaningful answer to why she is at the elder care centre. The fact: 'Your husband is dead' does not reduce her feeling of loss and of being lost. She will keep asking, 'Why am I here?' Don't we all ask the same question once in a while? I certainly did when I was at the innovation conference. It's damn annoying. However, being lost together – as Annie was on the sofa, in front of the television, and as I was in the bus while fleeing the innovation conference – is not a bad thing. In a tribute to Lather, Clarke (2009, p. 218) puts it this way:

What I personally value most about reading Lather is the doubled knowledge that I am both very alone and not alone in my existential engagements around research which takes the form of anxieties and terrors in the night.

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9

Memory

Brady Wagoner and Vlad Petre Glăveanu

When we think of memory, some kind of container for storing things or surface for inscribing information usually comes to mind. It is thought that experiences are put into or written on these surfaces as memories and then taken out when remembered in roughly the same form as they were put in. This conception dates back to Plato, who first described memory as a wax tablet in the mind, on which experiences were inscribed. In Plato's time, literacy was becoming a more widespread social practice and the wax tablet was one new technology that helped sustain it. The dominance of literacy since this time has contributed to the persistence of this *metaphor of memory* (Danziger, 2008), such that, today, we talk of memories metaphorically as being inscribed on a computer hard disk (rather than wax tablet), or inscribed in the brain as an 'engram' (literally 'that which is converted into writing'). If we follow this metaphor closely, then, creativity and memory have little to say to one another, because memories are understood in terms of their fixity and fidelity to the past, whereas creativity is conceptualised as just the opposite. In fact, only those that are able to 'forget' or stand outside tradition are seen to be truly creative, as the solitary genius image has it.

In contrast to this metaphor of memory and the implications it brings with it, we will argue that remembering is an active and creative process, which is *generative of new meanings*. The past is not simply reproduced but dynamically reconstructed by the person to meet present concerns and move towards an open future. Thus, memory becomes a playground for the meeting and mixing of different ideas, a framework for the construction of novel and useful products. This perspective was first articulated in psychology by Frederic Bartlett (1932/1995) who described remembering as 'an imaginative reconstruction' (p. 213) undertaken on

the basis of our past taken as a whole and of particular details of it retained in the form of images. Bartlett was also revolutionary in that he conceptualised remembering as both social and psychological. Social life provides both the basis (i.e., the requisite tools) and context (setting in which it occurs) for memory construction. Thus, as with creativity, remembering shapes individual and collective phenomena. In this chapter, we will focus on a collective phenomenon – street art – and how it illustrates remembering as a constructive and creative process.

The street artist: Delinquent or creative genius?

Street art is a polymorphous social object. For some, it is a clear example of vandalism, the pointless defacement of private or public property. For others, it is an illustration of free speech, the voice of the marginalised that comes to reclaim a space for itself in society. When its political message is delivered in clever, aesthetic ways, street art becomes a symbol of creativity.

There are, of course, notable differences between a quick tag, a repeated stencil and more elaborate graffiti images; nonetheless, each of them has at least the potential to surprise us and make us wonder about their author, their meaning and the circumstances in which they were made (see also Chapter 4). The fascination with street art and its unique culture have, in recent times, brought great popularity to some street artists, generating a curious *paradox* – while street art aims precisely to reverse the ‘high culture’ pretensions of art and ridicule the establishment, the visibility of some of its creators is due precisely to their incorporation into the world of art. The case of Banksy is notable here. While his (her, their?) identity has not been fully proven, despite several reports indicating different people from Bristol, Banksy became well-known not only as a graffiti artist and political activist, but also as a film director (see the ‘Exit Through the Gift Shop’ documentary, 2010). His work takes often the form of stencils that satirise the political, economic and social elites, and can be found in different parts of the world. Figure 9.1 depicts a common theme for Banksy, the rat, photographed in Manhattan in 2013.

Whether Banksy is a delinquent or a creative genius (or both) remains an open question. What is undeniable is the fact that his work attracts a great deal of attention and is now being sold for considerable amounts at auction houses in London and elsewhere. While the authenticity of many such works can be contested, Banksy did find ways to communicate with the public, including through a personal page (



Figure 9.1 'Mediocrity killed the rat', Manhattan stencil attributed to Banksy
Source: Photo by Piratilla, file under a Creative Commons licence.

banksy.co.uk) and a book (Banksy, 2006). If we accept the definition of creativity in terms of novelty and originality, as well as value (Mayer, 1999), then Banksy's artistic outputs are certainly described by the first two attributes. Are they socially *valuable* as well? Opinions are mixed and perhaps some might place this kind of creative expression under the category 'malevolent creativity' (see Cropley et al.,

2010) but, nonetheless, they have a special significance at least for a wide range of people. One might also point out how these graffiti works dramatise tensions already existing in society, which is the criterion Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1971) used to define art (see also Hedegaard, 2014, for an application of this approach to graffiti).

Is Banksy's work also one of memory? For many reasons, it is. First, its themes and messages address notable events or situations and, through this, add their re-presentations of social life to our collective memory. Moreover, the very re-presentation of these themes draws on culturally shared codes and images which are not created by the artist him/herself but transmitted and changed through social interaction. The image of the rat, depicted in Figure 9.1, is an emblematic symbol (within the Western world, at least) of the clandestine, marginalised or stigmatised and, through this association, it prompts identification processes in viewers of the stencil (is the rat the street artist, the viewer, a certain social group, all at once? and so on). Furthermore, the style of this work, what makes it (at least, allegedly) a recognisable 'Banksy', draws on models from the past, including from other artists and genres such as anime or caricature (see also Chapter 16). Equally, the techniques of rendering graffiti have not been invented by Banksy but, arguably, learned through repetition and continuous practice. Memory processes are at work whenever personal or social knowledge is used in novel ways, habits become crystallised, and events of the past are actualised by the author and transformed for his/her audiences. The street art of Banksy and its strong social message are not the product of a creative process that invents anew conventions and symbols but it becomes vivid precisely because it engages with what we, as viewers, know, have learnt or experienced. This *mnemonic foundation of creative expression* is not unique for graffiti, or for the graffiti of Banksy, in particular. The creativity of street art both draws on memory and, as we come to show next, carries it.

The creative memories of a revolution

A perhaps even clearer creative and mnemonic use of graffiti occurred during the 2011 Egyptian Revolution. Although there had been some graffiti in Egypt before (even some dating back to Pharaonic times), it was only with the revolution that it became one of the most important political tools (Awad & Wagoner, 2015). The Revolution brought with it a transformation of Egypt's major cities through paint and



Figure 9.2 Revolutionary graffiti on Mohammad Mahmoud Street (off Tahrir Square)

Source: Photo taken by Brady Wagoner.

the emergence of creative talents. Cairo, for one, was full of graffiti expressing solidarity (e.g., Egyptian flags, merged cross and crescent), empowerment (symbols of freedom and strength) and the occupation of public space (previously monopolised by the state; see also Chapter 18). These works often built upon *symbols* from Egypt's ancient and recent past. In Figure 9.2, a mummy is shown waking up, presumably after a long sleep, and shouting 'I'm free'. This image is juxtaposed with one of a person, whose eyes and mouth are covered by three hands to symbolise political censorship. There is also a contrast between the word 'die', with an arrow pointing to the covered face, and the word 'life', which was the first word in the Revolution's key chant: 'Life, freedom and social justice' (the word *aish* in Arabic means both 'life' and 'bread' – thus, in the motto it stands for both). Interestingly, in this graffiti and many others English is used instead of Arabic, suggesting that the artists intended to communicate their message to an international audience through consistently posting it on new media such as Facebook. Finally, the whole image is framed by the Egyptian flag carrying with it national pride and solidarity amongst Egyptians.

In addition to the use of memory by means of symbols from the past, there was also the memory of events and figures from Egypt's recent past. The revolutionaries used graffiti to remind the public of horrific

actions done by the authorities, to give a face to the many ‘martyrs’ killed during the revolution and, again, to clarify the revolutionary cause. One of the most common types of graffiti depicted images of martyrs and victims of police or military repression. For example, the many protestors who lost their eyes when a sharpshooter targeted them were commemorated in a large mural depicting each of the victims with a patch over their eye. Perhaps the most remembered victim is Khalid Said, who was brutally beaten to death by police in broad daylight, the summer before the revolution began, for uncovering police corruption. A Facebook site was started afterwards with the title ‘We are all Khalid Said’, which was used to organise the 2011 revolution. To this day, Khalid Said’s image remains a powerful symbol of injustice and police brutality. It continues to evoke strong sentiments and clarify the revolutionary cause to the public (in Tunisia, Muhammad Bouazizi’s image has served a similar role). Figure 9.3 shows a graffiti of Said’s face after being brutally beaten, much like the photo taken of it, which demonstrates the police’s said cause of death (i.e., a ‘drug overdose’) to be a lie. It is also interesting how Said is portrayed with angel wings and is



Figure 9.3 Graffiti of Khalid Said
Source: Photo taken by Brady Wagoner.

accompanied by an angel, signifying his place in heaven. Not only the image, but also the colours are eye-catching.

These examples argue that memory is not merely reproduced but reconstructed to promote action in the present and for the future. To do this, remembering is reconstructive, adapting, and elaborating the past to meet current demands. One could talk about graffiti as a device of importance in keeping, creating, communicating, and staging memory for the public. Memory remains contested and can easily be manipulated. Different social actors aim to impose their own way of representing the past. In this context, memories must be permanently *re-created*, much like the graffiti that is continuously erased by authorities and remade by the revolutionaries.

Creativity and memory, reunited

The case of street art makes a strong argument for how and why memory and creativity are inter-connected in the daily life of individuals, communities and nations. Psychologists, however, have rarely studied their relationship in these terms. At best, the psychological mode of inquiry proceeds by reifying processes such as remembering and locating them within the mind – in recent decades, the brain – of isolated, generic individuals (see also the critique by Billig, 2013). As such, instead of considering how and when people engage in *acts* of memory and creativity and what brings the two together (or sets them apart), a classic psychological approach would focus on the internal correlates of these acts (such as remembering words, or producing solutions to a problem) and study their co-variation. Models such as the associative memory framework for group creativity (Brown & Paulus, 2002) use this kind of empirical approach to outline the role of a conceptual network for finding and generating new ideas.

Our starting point is different. We considered here the articulation between memory and creativity within the situated activity of people and their social interactions. In fact, historically, remembering and creating have always been closely connected based on similar practical observations. Ancient Greeks considered Mnemosyne (Memory), the mother of the muses, and orators were trained first in the arts of memory and invention (Bauer & Glăveanu, 2011; Glăveanu & Wagoner, 2015). Nonetheless, an increasingly individualistic way of defining both these processes meant that, in subsequent centuries, and particularly from the Renaissance onwards, memory and creativity became dichotomised along the lines of past–future, copy–original,

repetition–spontaneity. From the invention of the printing press to the age of mechanical reproduction in art (see Benjamin, 1936/2008), technological advances contributed to the separation between reproducing and creating.

However, emerging pop culture built on mechanisms of mass production also opened the doors for a rapprochement. Today, we live in a world where *re-mix* and *re-use* constitute the very substance of communication and communal living (see also Chapter 22). Street art is only one example of this complex dynamic, revealing creativity and memory as two faces of the same coin. It also points to the fact that the relation between creativity and memory is expressed in action, individual and collective, and can only be understood within a broader societal context. Banksy's social commentaries and the art of Egyptian revolutionaries draw on the past and a shared history, always looking towards the future. The work of memory they perform is creative, at least inasmuch as it refuses simply to reproduce the past; their aim is to support reflection and change.

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10

Mess

Lene Tanggaard and Tue Juelsbo

This text is about mess, feelings of loneliness and loss, and their potential creative power. In a recent paper on collaborative writing, Wegener (2014) shares her experience with the reader on how a writing refuge almost turned into a prison. Having spent two days at the refuge, piles of papers with interview transcripts and field-notes were in a total mess. The themes in the writing seemed irrelevant and boring. Feeling lost, Wegener realised that she needed to break free and do something, and so she eventually decided to leave the research files behind and enjoy life in the sun outside the dirty windows in her room (Figure 10.1). She walked out along the beach and, when she came back, she began reading A. C. Bryatt's *A Biographer's Tale*, which she found by chance in her messy suitcase. The book was just meant to be a leisurely read and not intended to serve as a research tool and yet, soon, Wegener found herself writing a fictional dialogue with the protagonist Phineas from the tale about feeling lost and in need of creative inspiration (see also Chapter 8).

In the paper, Wegener writes up this dialogue, reflecting on the creative potential inherent in turning a fictional character into a dialogue partner and how the dirty window is an ancient, well-worn trope for intellectual dissatisfaction and scholarly blindness. In sum, Wegener turned the intellectual 'blindness' and the mess of her notes into one long reflection log on writing creatively with fictional figures (see also Chapter 15). Bringing or creating order, meaning and structure into a situation of mess, confusion or bewilderment is essentially what creativity is all about. Writing about mess as a driver for creativity implies more generally that our starting point is in the shift towards paying attention to the processes of *acting in everyday life* – rather than starting from the classification of products of human actions into classes of 'creative'



Figure 10.1 Dirty window

Source: By Ruth Hartnup, Flickr, picture used under a Creative Commons licence.

versus 'non-creative'. One cannot explain the process on the basis of its outcomes (Valsiner, 1987), but the outcomes can be explained by a direct look at the dynamic of ongoing activity and its immediate context (Tanggaard, 2014).

On why we might have ignored mess

However, the notion of mess does not really figure in many texts on creativity or its sister term, ‘innovation’. On the contrary, it seems that quite the opposite notion is gaining momentum; namely, the concept of *design*, proposing that creativity is something to strive for strategically and to work with methodologically. As noted by Ræbild (2015): ‘The notion of Design Thinking has, as such, been widely appropriated within fields of management and innovation as a whole, where countless publications have seen the light of day’ (p. 37). The term was coined by Tim Brown, CEO of the New York-based design consultancy IDEO in 2008 in a paper with the title ‘Design Thinking’, and Brown defines design thinking as ‘a discipline that uses the designer’s sensibility and methods to match people’s needs with what is technologically feasible and what a viable business strategy can convert into customer value and market opportunity’ (p. 86).

One of the reasons behind the great success of Brown, his company, and the whole notion of design thinking is maybe that it is an ambitious attempt to uncover what guides creativity and innovation. Brown identifies three consecutive design spaces – labelled Inspiration, Ideation and Implementation – and he sees design as led by problem-solving. Some of the methods include, in the Inspiration phase: asking questions, using user-centred observational research, mapping business constraints, cross-disciplinary involvement, sharing insights, creating narratives, addressing appropriate technology, integrate potentials, and synthesising possibilities. The Ideation phase incorporates: brainstorming, sketching, scenario-building, creating frameworks, sharing and communicating within the team, prototyping and testing. The Implementation phase comprises: presenting the case to the business and implementing newly obtained knowledge.

One could argue that design thinking has grown out of an attempt to systematise and map methods, which can be used by consultants and companies to strategically bring forth more creativity and innovation (see also Chapter 3). However, this attempt is, in some respects, counter-intuitive to the processes of creativity in everyday life and, as noted by Ræbild (2015), very few designers actually work guided by these methods. Citing Nigel Cross, chair and founder of the long-standing design journal *Design Issues*:

The working methods of innovative designers are, for the most part, not systematic, there is little evidence of the use of systematic methods of creative thinking, for example. The innovative designers seem

to be too involved with the urgent necessity of designing to want, or to need, to stand back and consider their working methods.

(Cross, 2011, p. 74)

The *dilemma* involved in trying to describe methods for creativity while creative processes in everyday life are more about working out of necessity without the need for a systematic methodology is what troubles us in the present context. Design thinking is very much a description of a consultancy approach to design while it does not cover the complexities and the mess of an actual designer's work practices (see also Chapter 4). Accordingly, our premise is that, in everyday life, creativity is more *about mess than about methodology*. It might even be the case that the notion of design distracts us into thinking that we can always design for creativity. On the other hand, novices and educational institutions often strive for methods and guidelines to help them get started and, ultimately, how can one learn to be creative if not by following methods outlining what others have done before? Is there a middle ground to be found here?

What is mess and what is its relation to creativity?

The design thinking approach described briefly above divides creativity into distinct phases starting with inspiration, leading to ideation, and ending with implementation. However, many innovators don't actually start up with a great idea or with feeling inspired. On the contrary, they work much more experimentally, in a kind of trial and error fashion. As an example, Pete Sims explains in his book *Little bets* (2011) how the famous and innovative American comedian Chris Rock practices night after night at a small club close to his home in New Jersey prior to developing his large-scale shows. He tries out his jokes and awaits the reaction of the audience. Only one out of 100 jokes generates the audience response the way Rock wants. Having practised time and time again, carefully noting the reactions of the audience, Rock manages to collect the best jokes for his show. Rather than coming out of the blue, the show develops gradually, taking shape in the course of sometimes more than a year and being based on *experimental creativity*, a kind of *fooling around* (Tanggaard, 2014).

Accordingly, practices of improvisation are closer to the everyday life creativity of comedians such as Chris Rock than being a matter of systematic use of methods for creative thinking. The messy picture of creativity that we are suggesting here does, indeed, ultimately question the widespread belief, in the Western culture at least, that the creative process starts from ideation. As Peter Sims has suggested,

creative processes are more likely the result of little bets – meaning a continuous moving back and forth, making errors, trying one more time and gradually making progress. And this is not only the case for comedians.

Empirical studies have shown, time and time again, that human practice is not guided by plans, as we often tend to think. Inspired by the work of the German pragmatist Hans Joas, who writes extensively about situated creativity in his book *The creativity of action* (1996, *Die Kreativität des Handelns*, 1992), it would be more in line with these practices to state that human cognition and learning are not isolated processes of mental adaptation but part of life itself. Joas regards life practices and human action as creative action. His pragmatic perspective resonates with that of thinkers such as George Herbert Mead and John Dewey, who rebelled against the idea that human actions are driven by an ends–means type of rationality. For Joas, it is not that people first make plans (mentally) and then carry out actions (in practice) with reference to the pre-formulated plan. Instead, ‘actors find themselves confronted with new situations that force them to come up with creative solutions – a process which cannot simply be captured by a functionalist logic’ (Joas & Knöbl, 2009, p. 522). The term ‘*situation*’ replaces an ends–means logic because it is the specific situation in which actions are undertaken that causes perception and cognition to arise and plans to be formulated – and that demands human creativity: ‘These situational challenges thus require new and creative solutions rather than the unwavering pursuits of goals and plans formulated at a particular point in time’ (p. 518).

Accordingly, working with a situated and messy concept of creativity draws on a different understanding of creative processes as built upon a human capacity for wise and creative action in unexpected situations, a capacity that is necessary in a world undergoing constant change. Creativity is an attribute of not just mental processes and divergent thinking, but also of a fundamental, corporeal, action-based capacity for adequately responding to the unexpected, a capacity for digging deep into failures to make things come alive in ways that were not always foreseeable (see Chapter 12); it helps *stabilise a world in constant flux*. In the words of Ingold, reflecting on the creative work required to build something:

Builders know all too well that operations seldom go according to the plan. Working in a fickle and inconstant environment, they have continually to improvise solutions to the problems that could not

have been anticipated, and to wrestle with materials that are not necessarily disposed to fall, let alone to remain, in the shapes required of them. Completion is, at best, a legal fiction. The reality, as Brand (1994:64) wryly observes, is that 'finishing is never finished'.

(Ingold, 2013, p. 48)

One of the authors recently underwent a house renovation that included having carpenters change the interior doors of the house. Sitting on the couch, writing, he overheard the youngest carpenter curse and swear as he tried and failed to get the new doors to fit the frames and odd shapes of the old house. All the plans and drawings came up short when they met the reality of crooked angles and unexpected details. As the carpenter eventually calmed down, he turned his rage into a constructive argumentative process with the material and simply began to speak to the wood. Slowly, he started trimming something here and carving a little there, all the while having the material as a silent but equal '*conversation partner*' (see also Chapter 20). Eventually, the door fitted perfectly in the old frame and he moved onto the next.

Accordingly, there is no finished plan to abide by for the manual worker and, when there is a plan (as is quite common!), it does indeed change along the way; for another current study of an actual building construction learning process, see Pedersen (2012). What we can learn from empirical studies such as the one undertaken by Pedersen is that creating and making a building is a complex process in which drawings, plans, and the actual construction process are constantly changed in light of economics, weather conditions, sickness among the team, new directions from the building contractors, so on and so forth.

So why use methods?

What we have learned from the above is that creativity is often an outcome of messy situations; more specifically, of attempts to bring a kind of order into a context where no order existed before. And if there is a plan, this plan is often conceived based on the requirements of the concrete situation. But what might then explain the huge market for creative thinking methodologies? If these are actually not in line with the usual requirements of creativity in real life, then why develop or use them?

The most relevant explanation is the one suggested by Ræbild (2015); namely, that schools need methodologies to teach upcoming designers,

for example, how to go about designing. Furthermore, the explicit formulation of these principles can also be used to gain some disciplinary status and recognition within a given field. However, this does not rule out the problem we might face if we confuse the recipe with the food, or the map with the real landscape. Methods might prevent us from finding something new, such as when we become blind to the actual landscape because of an obsession with following the prescribed route. At the same time, in a famous study on skills learning, Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) have shown that the novice is in need of roadmaps and guidelines to become skilled. The novice needs manuals and guidelines, while experts base their practice on intuition and work with their perception of what is needed in the situation, as exemplified also by Ræbild's (2015) studies on expert designers. Expert practice is not based on these rules and manuals and, sometimes, they actually have to be *forgotten* for the expert to work effectively. So, what might be done to solve this dilemma?

For Dreyfus (2001), one solution lies in making more use of *apprenticeship learning* than is currently seen in the educational system. As he argues, there are limits to explicit instructions because much creative ability involves developing a sense for the game as it is played. The researcher in training must learn to undertake qualified evaluations as to what counts as a good article, and the baker must be able to assess when the dough is sufficiently elastic. Developing such a 'connoisseurship', such a skill of assessment, has been described by pedagogy researcher Elliot Eisner (1991) as something that cannot be learned on the basis of formal rules alone. It is about developing a sense for quality, form, size, types of argumentation, and so on, and for playing the game; yet, there are limits to what can be achieved through explicit instruction. Instead, there is often a need for what Bourdieu, according to Kvale (1999, p. 180), called a 'wordless pedagogy'.

There is not just one method of learning to be a researcher, a baker, an architect, or a ballet dancer if learning is not understood as a mechanical means towards an end. Instead, we can speak of situational ability that can be communicated through participation in particular activities. Dreyfus writes:

It is only by being an apprentice to one's parents and teachers that one achieves what Aristotle calls practical wisdom – the general ability to do the right thing at the right time and in the right way.

(Dreyfus, 2001, p. 48)

According to this view, *learning to be more creative* is largely about gaining access to particular environments in which one can blossom. Learning is about learning something specific and developing practical reason so that one knows the appropriate actions needed to perform in concrete circumstances. Learning, in this sense, is primarily a socially ontological question that involves changing our lives, or participating in particular contexts and being able to do the right things at the right time (see also Chapter 11).

A legitimate objection to apprenticeship – not just as a metaphor for a given learning situation in which one learns from skilled teachers, but also as an actual pedagogical organisation – is that apprenticeship is unquestionably *elitist*. Not everyone can have the opportunities that, say, Niels Bohr had to become a Nobel Prize winner by working alongside other Nobel Prize winners. The modern Western school system is designed precisely to offer knowledge and professional practice to as many people as possible. The point is not, however, to argue for or against apprenticeship in the school system; it is more fundamentally to discuss apprenticeship as a form of practice that can – but does not necessarily – provide access to the potential to be creative.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, we have argued that the creative process is inherently messy and is largely the result of meeting and overcoming the challenges we face in everyday life. Often, things don't go quite as planned when, for instance, we schedule time for intensive writing or draft elaborate schemes for building houses; it is the situational ability of the writer or craftsman to *create order and structure* in the middle of the mess that ends up making all the difference. We therefore argue that we can benefit from paying attention to our everyday processes and problem-solving activities when going about writing and thinking about creativity. Creativity is thus more about mess than about methodology, but how do you establish a strong practice and train those situational abilities when you are just starting out?

Methodologies such as design thinking and structured checklist approaches can serve as the basis upon which an independent practice is established and from which it can spring. Combining methodological and formal education with apprenticeships might allow the student and designer-to-be to enter into a fruitful dialogue between the codified method and what the situation and context call for in the present moment. This is to be thought of both as the internal dialogue of the

learner and as a slow probing dialogue between the learner and the experienced master/practitioner (see also Chapter 4).

This situational ability also involves disobeying the rules and striking out when needed. This is mediated by socio-material affordances: what the situation and problem at hand lend you (see Chapter 2). We must train this ability to assess and respond in order to develop a fine-tuned sensing apparatus that can guide us in making informed decisions when certain combinatorial aspects in one context might not be applicable in the next. We must allow for mess and stumbling (see Chapter 19) in order to unfold our practice that can be – but isn't necessarily – guided by rules and methodologies. It is through *participation* in a situated social practice that one learns to be creative in that given context.

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11

Mirroring

Charlotte Wegener and Gregers Wegener

Prologue

Most definitions of creativity emphasise originality. The creative product is recognised as distinct from other products and the creative person as someone who stands out from the crowd. What tend to be overlooked are acts of mirroring as a crucial element of the creative process. The human ability to empathise and socialise is partly due to another, more fundamental ability to duplicate the stance of the other (see also Chapter 13). Through mirroring, we *attune* to other people and thus create *resonance* and *preparedness* for mutual creative exploration. In this chapter, we investigate the object and metaphorical value of mirroring for creativity theory across two different research fields – neuroscience and learning. We engage in a mutual (possibly creative) exploration of mirroring from ‘mirror neurons’ to mirroring in social learning theory. One of the most fascinating aspects of mirroring as a neurobiological and as a learning phenomenon is that it points to the embodied and unconscious aspects of social interaction. Thus, mirroring should not be reduced to the non-creative, mechanical repetition of the original, outstanding creativity. To mirror is a human capability built into our capacity to create. It started like this:

Act I: Trying to make ends meet

Charlotte: I am co-editing this book about a new vocabulary of creativity. I’ve just written a material about upcycling (see Chapter 22) in which I investigate the creative act of moving ideas from where they are known to where they are not. It argues that a creative act does not necessarily start from scratch and result in the invention

of something completely new. Instead, we can intentionally scan foreign domains for ideas with novel application potentials in our own, well-known domain. I wonder, what would I find in your domain of neuroscience with novel application potential for theorising creativity?

Gregers: I would say mirror neurons.

Charlotte: Mirroring it is then. Intuitively, this resonates well with a social learning perspective on creativity. As learners, we copy – or mirror – the work of others, and then, gradually make creative adjustments influenced by situated conditions and our own abilities and intentions (Wegener & Tanggaard, 2013). Since most perspectives underline the novelty criterion for something to count as creative, it is often emphasised that remembering, repeating or copying are not creative (see also Chapter 9). There may be, however, a need to study creativity without stressing novelty in order precisely to discuss what lays the groundwork for newness (see Tanggaard & Wegener, 2015). Let's investigate the *ultimate copying act* – mirroring. Please, tell me about mirror neurons.

Gregers: Mirror neurons are associated with what we can term 'the social brain'. Mirror neurons have attached great importance beyond the research field of neuroscience as a possible explanation for why emotions are contagious. Mirror neurons were discovered in experiments with monkeys studying the neural representation of movements. With advanced methods, including various types of brain scans, researchers have been able to demonstrate that humans possess a mirror neuron system resembling that of monkeys. More specifically, mirror neurons are a special class of brain cells that react not only when the individual performs a movement, but also when the individual observes someone else make the same movement (Cattaneo & Rizzolatti, 2009; Iacoboni & Dapretto, 2006). For example, when we observe someone smiling, our mirror neurons create a sensation in our mind of the feeling associated with smiling. In other words, our brain mirrors the movements of others, as if we ourselves had made them and gives us a preconscious feeling of familiarity. In fact, it may be perceived almost as a virtual reality simulation of the other person's actions.

Charlotte: How does this play out in practice?

Gregers: In a study of empathy between couples, the psychologist and neuroscientist Tania Singer (Singer et al., 2004) put the female partner into a magnetic brain scanner, so she could see her own and her partner's hand (but not his face). Electrodes were placed on their

hands, so the investigator could give them small, short electrical impulses – painful, but not violently nasty. The brain scanner measured what was going on in the woman’s brain. As expected, when she received the impulses, activities in areas of the brain which have long been known to do with the experience of pain were activated. Surprisingly, however, were the brain activities when her boyfriend got the electronic impulses. It turned out that she had activity in the same areas – pain experience – albeit slightly weaker than when she herself experienced pain. The woman had similar brain activity, which suggests that she mirrored her boyfriend’s pain when she saw that he was in pain. These results are conceptually important in neuroscience because they clarify a discussion about *empathy*, about the brain’s ability to reflect other people’s situation, which had been going on for a century. Mirroring is probably one of the most vital cultural forces and it has recently been explored intensely as a neurobiological phenomenon and acknowledged as one of the key foundations of our society (Nørretranders, 2013).

Charlotte: A great story but also a bit uncomfortable because of the pain. There seems to be a gender issue as well. Was the male participant emphatic, too, or did they not perform this experiment the other way round? Well, let’s not delve into these questions as they seem to lead us on a sidetrack. Sticking to the highway, I am sure that most social learning theorists would say that our ability to create institutions is the foundation for what we call society.

Gregers: Surely, this is far from merely biological properties. Yet, what this story illustrates is that neuroscience research now may be able to measure the unconscious and non-controllable human ability to mirror. By doing this, neuroscience also provides a possible biological foundation for our intentional ‘reflection’ of the people with whom we interact.

Charlotte: From my background in literature and music teaching, I would describe mirroring as a transitive verb which means reflecting; giving or showing a likeness of. In the arts, mirrors have often been used as symbols of wisdom and self-knowledge, and in Christian art the mirror came to represent the eternal purity of the Virgin Mary. But the mirror can just as easily involve narcissism, an unhealthy amount of self-centredness. The risk of a mirror image is encapsulated in the ancient Greek myth of Narcissus, the beautiful boy who falls in love with his own reflection in a lake. Narcissistic self-absorption and the reflection of another person should, however, not be regarded as mutually exclusive (see also Chapter 5).

When we mirror each other as human beings we unconsciously copy the gestures, ways of talking or attitudes of another person. Empathy is achieved by understanding the thoughts and feelings of self *and* others through attunement, decentering and introspection. According to music pedagogics researcher, Seddon, attunement is often conveyed through ‘mirroring’, a process in which the ‘other’ is recognised and validated but the ‘self’ is also validated:

In pedagogy, mirroring can be verbal, for example echoing or elaborating words used in an exchange. Empathetic intelligence in teaching and learning requires collaborating individuals to interact empathetically through mirroring and attunement, creating preparedness for exploration, risk-taking, concentration and rapport, taking into account shifts in intrasubjective and intersubjective experiences resulting in a creative act.

(Seddon, 2012, p. 134)

Through mirroring as exemplified here by music pedagogies, we attune to other people and thus create resonance and preparedness for mutual and creative forms of exploration.

Gregers: This is relevant far beyond learning in creative disciplines, as the mirror system probably assists in storing and distributing what could be termed a ‘common memory’ for humanity (see also Chapter 9). Thanks to the mirror system, knowledge may be evolutionarily integrated, and may be passed on from one generation to another (Reader, 2014).

Charlotte: In a social learning perspective, creativity involves the *mastery* of knowledge, skills and artefacts used within a given practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Thanking the mirror system would be regarded as too reductionist – it is surely a foundation, but the school system also plays a role, workplace learning, ideas about upbringing which are culturally specific, and so on. It is surely decisive, but without social institutions and language we would not be able to transfer complex knowledge and knowledge is not just passed on, this is a *dialectic* process (Lave, 2011). It feels very difficult to integrate these two paradigms. Do they address the same issues at all? However, we have promised to write this chapter for the book so we just have to make ends meet. Let’s turn this dialogue into a text and see what my co-editors think.

[We write a first draft of this chapter trying to convey a shared point of view in a traditional research article format and send it to Lene and Vlad.]

Act II: Taking the dialogue seriously

Charlotte: Hi, Greg, take a look at this mail:

Dear Charlotte and Gregers

I have now read your text on mirroring. I really like the idea of relating two different disciplines but it is not really to the point yet, sorry if I'm a bit critical. I would love not to be so. I hope my comments are helpful. Currently, the text seems more to be a collection of thoughts without a really strong theoretical foundation. I have pointed out where I see the problems. One way forward could be to show the dialogue between the two of you more directly in the text, as I feel you are right now on a compromise, slipping into a kind of determination where mirroring explains complex societal structures and phenomena. The mirror system is for sure an important foundation for this, but not the whole story and I'm quite sure you agree.

Best, and tell me to elaborate if necessary.

Lene

Charlotte: I know she's right, but I am annoyed. In our first version, we tried too hard to make ends meet and abandoned our dialogue. Let's start over and write a text that reflects our dialogue, which unfolded over several months. Let it tell the story of our curiosity and disputes. Mirror neurons in neuroscience and mirroring in social learning have both a concrete and metaphorical meaning, useful for our understanding of creativity as an embodied and social phenomenon in everyday life. But we can only tell this story if we acknowledge our different perspectives. We can use the mirror metaphor and let our two research paradigms reflect each other but we have to refrain from integrating them because this might trivialise both. Let's turn to neuroscience again. Tell me (and our readers) more about mirror neurons.

Gregers: I'd love to. What brain scans tell us is that we non-consciously imitate other's facial expression through muscle movement in our own face. These muscle movements affect our brain and the feedback from facial muscles to the brain tell the brain something about what you have learned emotionally from the

other's face (Rizzolatti & Craighero, 2004). Basically, there is a direct link between imitating a movement and experiencing the feeling that movement is expressing (Baird et al., 2011; Molenberghs et al., 2009). So, when someone smiles, we often (but not always) smile back before we even know of it. Our own facial expression creates the sensation of happiness in our brain. To imitate other peoples' movements and facial expressions are thus the first step towards being able to *understand the feelings of others*. These findings reveal a bit of those complex interactions that connect people in everyday life, how society and culture are continuously recreated – without us even noticing. It is often claimed that it is language and consciousness that bind us together, but the study of mirror neurons indicates that we are much more involved via biologically based phenomena, such as non-verbal and unconscious interactions (Brass & Heyes, 2005). When I emphasise the mirror neuron system as a basic biological foundation involved in social life, I actually suggest that we cross or even dissolve the arbitrary and rigid boundaries between disciplines.

Charlotte: Indeed, crossing disciplinary boundaries can foster creativity. In a social learning perspective, creativity arises from everyday activities such as this dialogue across disciplines. Learning and creativity have to be understood as actions and activities integrated or embedded in and across complex social and cultural contexts (Tanggaard, 2011). These activities might be non-verbal in the first place; however, without reflection and dialogue we might not be able to turn these bodily and unconscious experiences into intentional, creative reconstructions of these social and cultural contexts.

Gregers: This may be true. What the discovery of mirror neurons points to is basically the embodied and unconscious aspects of social interaction. These findings thus challenge the primacy of cognition in our interaction with the world. In other words, we produce our interaction with our social world in a direct, physical and biological sense. The identification with other peoples' body movements and our ability to react emotionally to others' facial expressions are essential in social interaction. These bodily actions are a prerequisite for our intuitive experience of each other as human beings and for our intuitive understanding of actions, goals and sensations, before there has been any intellectually-analytical activity (Cattaneo & Rizzolatti, 2009).

Charlotte: Social learning theory suggests that people make a conscious effort to reflect on their own activity and, through reflection, they may break away from their predetermined context for action. That is, they try out new ways of problem-solving through creative experimentation, always embedded in a social context (see also Chapter 10). *Embodied mirroring* and *analytical reflection* cannot be separated so sharply.

Epilogue

Gregers: Let's go to the AROS Museum and make an effort to integrate embodied mirroring and analytical reflection. The Danish-Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson's mirror room 'Surroundings' does actually provide a space for integration. At the entrance to the mirror room it says:

The many mirrors on the wall, surfaces, and ceiling create the feeling of an infinite space. A discord occurs – with our reason we experience the space as demarcated – with our senses, on the other hand we experience it as endless.

Mirroring involves both reason and senses; neither precedes the other. How do we conclude?



Figure 11.1 The mirror room

Source: 'Surroundings', an art installation by Olafur Eliasson (2011). Photo author: Gregers Wegener (2015).

Charlotte: One conclusion we can draw from this dialogue may be that *dialogue* itself is grounded in forms of mirroring through which creativity can emerge (see also Chapter 7). While reflecting on mirror neurons, I have struggled with trying to find application possibilities for the notion of ‘mirror’ within my present vocabulary. Within the established vocabulary of social learning, one would rather talk about ‘imitation’, ‘empathy’ or ‘reflection’. ‘Mirroring’ is, effectively, annoying. The term does not quite fit into what I know and yet it serves as a powerful metaphor that invokes a whole range of images in my mind (see also Chapter 8). As researchers – and as human beings – new vocabularies and the ideas they bring can help us continually recreate the familiar. While the use of any established notion within research in the social sciences and, even more, in neuroscience, I guess, might carry reductive tendencies, aiming at generalisations and closure, scanning a foreign discipline and seeing the familiar through the lenses of a ‘foreign’ idea does indeed evoke the feeling of an infinite space – just like Eliasson’s ‘Surroundings’. Your photo (Figure 11.1), like every other mirror image, is a (tiny) new creation in the world.

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12

Pathways

Lene Tanggaard

Have you ever thought about your everyday life as an accomplishment? As something involving creative action? Think for a moment about those most mundane, typical days: a rainy Monday on your way to work, or shopping in the supermarket – do these days require any creativity? Or what about those more spectacular days, those days standing out more clearly, such as when you asked your partner to marry you, or when your first child was born? While I'm not able to test your answers, my guess would be that you would not immediately see the typical supermarket experience as a creative one. Most often, we pay more attention to the spectacular and the extraordinary. We remember these extraordinary days more clearly than the routines and the habits of everyday life, such as eating breakfast or falling asleep. The exception to this would be when we travel to foreign places and eat different kinds of breakfast, at a different time, or fall asleep in hotel rooms with strange pillows that require 'improvisation' to become comfortable. However, the premise of this chapter is that *everyday life*, also in its mundane and habitual aspects, should become the focus of creativity research if we want to move this field of inquiry steps ahead and, not least, to broaden its focus.

Very often, creativity research is concerned with the study of what enables people to express themselves creatively; e.g., in an aesthetic manner, or by producing creative ideas and objects, stepping out of the proverbial box. For example, definitions of creativity often emphasise criteria for creativity such as novelty and value, as in the following illustration from Plucker & Baghetto: 'Creativity is the interaction among aptitude, process, and environment by which an individual or group produces a perceptible product that is both novel and useful as defined within a social context' (Plucker & Baghetto, 2004, p. 90). While the

effort to reach clearer definitions is ongoing, much current research focuses on illuminating what conditions lead to the production of creative outputs (Simonton, 2013). However, a careful study of the creativity intrinsic to mundane processes and to everyday life is rarely considered by creativity researchers. While the conduct of life in itself can be both novel and useful, the creativity involved in achieving this would probably not 'live up' to the usual criteria used in this kind of research.

Despite this relative neglect, an everyday life focus would help us understand creative processes in broader terms. One such term is precisely that of 'creative pathways', inspired by theoretical work related to the concepts of *situated learning* and *trajectories of participation* (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and Gibson's notion of *affordances*. In this chapter, I invite you to reflect on the weaving together of episodes, events and situations encountered in everyday life as a creative act. I furthermore argue that the term 'creative pathways', understood as those routes of everyday life left behind us or seen in front of us, illuminates the interdependence of individual lives and social situations within social practices. It contributes to a system-oriented, distributed model of creativity focused on the interdependence of mind and culture (Glăveanu, 2014), while still maintaining persons as a relevant unit of analysis in creativity research.

Pathways as a term

What I will do in the present chapter is suggest that researchers interested in creativity should begin to study how people go along creative pathways in ordinary life, outside the research lab, with its focus on divergent thinking and personality tests, and even outside the domain of the spectacular, of highly productive geniuses and their lives. For example, one relevant question for creativity researchers might be what people do when they create new pathways in their lives, or just try to maintain existing ones. Choosing pathways as a central concept, my intention is to focus explicitly on creativity not as an isolated 'thing' – e.g., divergent thinking – but as *concrete movements and ways of making* in everyday life. As such, I suggest that creativity research should focus its attention on the making of ordinary life in order to find out more about creative phenomena.

The idea of studying pathways is based on the notion that creativity is the particular dimension of *potentiality* in everyday life which is 'not yet there' and which cannot always be imagined beforehand. Indeed,



Figure 12.1 Pathways in the snow

Source: Uploaded by Jenny Downing on Flickr under a Creative Commons license.

creative actions are often only seen in retrospect, such as when we post routes we have run on Facebook, often proud of having run longer than expected. Accordingly, studies concerned with everyday life creativity need to follow processes and pathways as they are unfolding (see also Chapter 16). Indeed, they should not, committed as they are to studying the processes of something coming into being, solely base their conclusions on what is there already, such as abilities related to divergent thinking or personality traits.

However, what is a creative pathway? In general, pathways are created in the communication or correspondence between subjects (persons) and objects in the world, objects which afford certain actions rather than others (see, for instance, the pathways in the snow in Figure 12.1). For example, within the educational system, certain pathways of study are often available to students. An illustration of this can be found in Nielsen's (1999) study of music conservatory students in Denmark, showing how the students are likely to take either the concert pianist pathway, or the pathway of becoming a music teacher (in Nielsen's term, 'trajectory of participation'). To some extent, the students choose these pathways following their interest, motivation, and abilities, but these pathways are also already laid out for them as typical options reflecting certain combinations of courses, already existing pathways among former students and teachers.

As a student however, you would maybe experience the choice of a pathway of study as something quite unique, involving a certain amount of personal creativity and room for improvisation. All this implies that, for example, some parts of a music conservatory student's life are made and lived through due to a kind of improvisational, here-and-now creativity, while other parts of a student's life offer evidence of what can be called 'historical creativity' (accumulated within the stories of former generations and the curriculum that crystallises the former creativity of the students and teachers involved). Affordances for creative acts and the formation of creative pathways are defined when subjects do something in the world; their study requires us to move along these pathways ourselves. In this context, the term 'creative pathway' is closely connected to the term 'affordances', drawing on Gibson's work on this notion (Gibson, 1977; see also Chapter 2). The affordances of things create opportunities for movement and the establishment of creative pathways.

By studying creative pathways, we are able to overcome the strict separation between creative persons, on the one hand, and creative products, on the other (see also Glăveanu, 2014). Actually, this focus allow us to explore, simultaneously, *micro* and *ontogenetic change*; it both situates in time descriptions of creative action and brings to the fore the co-development of person and context, be it social or material. As Feldman notes, 'creative accomplishment, after all, is nothing if not a developmental shift (...). Creativity is quintessentially a developmental matter' (Feldman, 1999, p. 170). The reverse is also the case, since creative learning is the main driver of development across the lifespan (Tanggaard, 2014).

Considering the above, in the present context, creativity is understood and researched as potential coming about along creative learning pathways created by, and creating, affordances for action. These may be processes involving the improvisational creation of pathways in the here-and-now, or they may be creative pathways that constitute our life trajectory (Zittoun et al., 2013; Zittoun & de Saint-Laurent, 2015). There is a stringent need for such approaches in today's creativity research.

The case in point is that, when studying creative pathways, we are encouraged to focus on the unfolding of creativity in everyday life. In view of that, while studies of creative processes are nothing new, they seem to be less prominent today than just a few decades ago. Most current research on creativity tends to measure it retrospectively; e.g., counting the number of answers in divergent thinking tests, patents in companies, the number of citations among researchers,

papers published, or products that came into being, and so on. In this chapter, creativity is considered from a more *prospective* angle, giving creativity a forward reading, seeing it and studying it as a kind of making, resulting in things and new forms of practice which unfold as action proceeds (Ingold, 2013; Tanggaard, 2014).

The methodology of creative pathways

In order to study creativity as the creation of pathways, I argue, we need to study everyday life as it is lived in the streets, in the supermarket, in trains, in TV shows, at art galleries, in school, at work and when eating, drinking, at play, sleeping, and so forth (Brinkmann, 2012). This requires a *qualitative* approach which can study dynamic processes and processes that expand what is already there.

As such, when studying creative pathways, we need to follow them. It may be the pathways of a passenger in the train, a student making her way through the educational system, or a shopper trying to find ingredients for dinner in the supermarket. Or it may be the pathways left behind as new participants take over (e.g., in the educational system). Accordingly, pathways carry with them a history while being constantly in the process of being made, even when we are not aware of these processes. The pathways of passengers in the train, for instance, are an improvisational accomplishment, but the affordances for these are often given in advance through the design of the train, the space allocated to each person, the stops along the line, and so on. Additionally, in the supermarket, pathways are indeed already designed by marketers and managers who know how to persuade shoppers to buy more than needed, or to select particular products instead of others (see also Chapters 14 and 18).

Sometimes, things do break down, or we allow ourselves to think twice; e.g. when almost spilling one's coffee in the train. Normally, I would not even notice all the improvisation and constant coordination with my fellow passengers required in such moments, but reflecting upon this kind of episode prompted me to envision multiple pathways being created in the here-and-now. In particular, cultural psychologists point to the fact that 'from time to time, (...) people find themselves faced with some kind of *discontinuity*, break or rupture in their ordinary experience' and, in these circumstances, they employ symbolic devices 'that enable them to make a new adjustment to the situation or to "resolve" the problem' (Zittoun et al., 2013, p. 416). Approaching development in terms of creative processes associated with transitions

and pathways – rather than with fixed stages, or more or less universal routes to creative achievement – represents a much more contextual and meaningful way of situating human existence in culture. Any research focused on this would need to investigate the co-creation of pathways in the dialectics between persons and social situations affording particular acts, between paths already created and new paths being formed. And to study pathways in situations of breakdown, discontinuity or rupture might be particularly useful, as these situations often allow us to observe new paths in the making (see also Chapter 6).

Reflecting pathways: Where to go next?

Normally, many people would likely agree that creativity is all about transgressing and changing those practices we are part of, either gently and gradually, or rapidly and radically. Creativity involves doing something new – possibly something unexpected – and combining things in new ways relative to that which already exists. However, focusing on creative pathways, my point is that we can, indeed, study not only extraordinary creative achievements, but also those actions and paths involved in stabilising everyday life, making the train journey go ahead and ensuring coordination among people.

The above implies what could be termed an *extended perspective on creativity*, drawing on Nielsen's (2008) distinction between a restricted and an expanded perspective on learning. Rather than adopting a narrow perspective on creativity, restricting it to the measurement of divergent thinking and of particular outputs such as citations or the number of patents, an extended approach sees creativity as part of people's everyday living, as a process of making sense, regulating and orienting oneself, not delimited to any particular space or practice, but permeating everyday life as a whole. As such, focusing on pathways being created in everyday life, creativity researchers would likely become more aware of the creativity of ordinary situations, the affordances that make creativity possible, as well as the likely dialectics between creating what is new and drawing on what is there already (see also Chapter 9).

Only in this way can one avoid the worst pitfalls of today's obsession for creativity and innovation, in which a dichotomy is often made between 'business as usual' and 'challenge everything', whether in terms of how we undertake schooling, how business life operates, or how to live creative lives (see also Chapter 3). The trick is precisely to interweave these two 'modes' and tolerate the paradox of their *co-existence* in order to avoid romanticising radical innovation in such a way as to neglect

slower and more gradual change. By the same token, we must remember that what we consider radical innovation in one context may be regarded as entirely ordinary in another context; thus the need to always ask: creative (or innovative) where and for whom? In some cases, changing everything is creative while, in other cases, trying to impose stability can be the most creative pathway to choose. In this sense, creativity is conceptualised as based on inquiry, on people's creative actions when being part of and/or confronted by a world that is constantly changing and that we seek to understand or to control. Creativity is thus part of life itself, not the preserve of exceptional individuals. Creativity is part of thinking and acting in new ways in a world that demands our participation.

Accordingly, our focus should be on processes of creativity, underlining the movements and travelling that often go along with creating something new in our social practices. In the context of this chapter, this means that creativity cannot be regarded as a phenomenon reserved for exceptional individuals or creative elites. Everyone is fundamentally creative because creativity is that which keeps our lives interlinked and allows us to tackle unexpected situations in everyday life on the train, in educational situations, or in any other context. It is nevertheless clear that we can develop more of this creativity by learning to see it and by being encouraged to be creative. Accordingly, and as an alternative to the risk of 'novelty' fetishism when it comes to accounts of the creative process, the present chapter encourages us, first, to *describe and recognise* the actual processes of creativity, which don't always start with great ideas – and, not least, to describe the process of creativity from the creator's own perspective.

Conclusion

To conclude, I suggested here that creativity research needs to investigate, to a greater extent than before, the ordinary – rather than only the exceptional, or the explicit creation of what is new. Furthermore, I argued that 'creative pathways' is a term that may guide researchers interested in the simultaneous development of persons and social contexts. Pathways are created in ordinary life and the formation of these may involve creativity and the improvisational co-creation of opportunities for action. As such, studying pathways directs creativity researchers towards the potential for creating in everyday life and sheds new light of the processes of creativity itself. Furthermore, this approach adds materiality to the study of creativity as pathways are both there,

already materialised as existing ways of moving and doing things, while also being created in the here-and-now by persons acting in correspondence with the affordances of different social situations. All this is in line with recent *socio-cultural studies* calling for more process-orientation and a more explicit focus on materiality and social practices in creativity research.

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13

Perspective

Vlad Petre Glăveanu

What are the differences between how you perceive the world as an adult and how you perceived it as a child? To start with, there certainly is a difference in size. As a child, tables and chairs are the same height as you, bookshelves look enormously tall and you have to reach up for the doorknob. If you want to look out of the window, you probably need to climb on a chair or a pile of books. And, as you looked out of the window, the world appears bigger than you see it as an adult; cars, trees, people all miraculously grow and the pet dogs you know as small become the size of tiny horses. Now, this change of physical size is not the only transformation taking place. Seeing the world through the eyes of a child, you will probably find many things you don't understand (such as how cars work), things that scare you (the dark corners of your room at night), and things that bring you an immense joy unexpectedly (such as mother agreeing to get you some ice-cream after a walk in the park). Most of all, you are probably curious about all things around you – most of all, the things that you now, being an adult, stopped questioning. New words begin to sound funny and strange and the question 'Why?' is often on your lips. You find grown-ups ready to answer and explain things to you, but also those annoyed by your questions and those who end up ignoring you. You also have friends to play with and imagine, during the game, that every one of you is someone or something else. You can easily become an animal by walking on all-fours, or a doctor by placing the stethoscope around your neck. How strange and exciting is that? Imagining, as a child, that you are an adult!

The above is an exercise in perspective-taking. Children playing adult roles and adults imagining the world as children experience it. And it certainly is a creative exercise. In their games, children's role-play is highly flexible, as they constantly make up new rules on the spot

and negotiate them with others. Adults, despite having been children themselves at some point, make considerable efforts to resituate their perspective. As Kennedy rightfully notes, ‘childhood is both the most deeply familiar moment of the human life cycle and the great unknown’ (Kennedy, 2008, p. 1), at once a known and distant land we can only return to as adults. Indeed, despite great efforts in developmental psychology, including Piaget’s (1973) effort to explore children’s own conceptions of their world, our understanding of how children think is shaped by our own particular standpoint. This is how progressive, almost linear developmental trajectories are very common in psychology, placing the child on the road to becoming a fully social, logical and mature individual. It is rarely that we get to appreciate children’s knowledge *in its own right*, despite the fact that great artists often found inspiration precisely in this act of perspective-taking. Pablo Picasso is credited with saying that it took him four years to paint like Raphael but a lifetime to paint like a child. Freud (1908/1970), in a similar vein, made a parallel between creative writing, daydreaming and children’s play. For as difficult as seeing the world through the eyes of children might be, it is not impossible; the brilliance of Roald Dahl’s books resides precisely in how great he was at taking a child’s perspective on life.

The example above hopefully illustrates both the difficulties and benefits of taking new perspectives on ourselves and our environment. Engaging in this exercise facilitates the emergence of novelty in both thinking and action, since we are able to *de-centre* from one way of doing things and embrace *multiplicity*. Not having this ability would, in turn, deprive us of such possibilities and confine us to an egocentric view of the world, one that makes creativity impossible or, at best, accidental (since, to realise one is being creative, he or she ultimately needs to take the perspective of others on his or her work). Although I offered the example of clear and more or less conscious acts of perspective-taking – the efforts made by Picasso to draw like a child illustrate this point – micro-moments of building and changing perspective are much more common in everyday life. They are, in fact, the basis for developing a sense of self and relate closely to our capacity to use signs and symbols (see also Chapter 7). They are, ultimately, at the core of what makes us creative beings.

Perspectives and positions

It is not possible to theorise perspectives outside of action. This is because people build, enact, and reflect on perspectives in the course of

action, and in communication with others. The concept of perspective has a long history in psychology and philosophy. My use of this term here is inspired by the social psychological theory of George Herbert Mead (1934). Following pragmatism, perspectives appear as *action orientations* (Gillespie, 2006) that guide our perception and our doing. They accomplish this function by relating us to our environment. Indeed, perspective is a relational concept, as it is established 'between' person and world. Acting in the world from the perspective of the child is different than doing so from the perspective of an adult. This is because perspectives are simultaneously constrained materially (including by body size and physical abilities) and symbolically (through sign mediation, accumulated knowledge and expertise). Perspectives, in this sense, actively construct the world for us but they do so based on what is afforded by the world itself (see also Chapter 12). They give us a certain view of our environment that highlights some aspects of it and obscures others. To continue with the example of a child, young children might ignore a complicated piece of technology placed right next to them but react, in a very expressive manner, to the colours and sounds of a new toy. Their perspective of the world will make visible things that adults ignore, and vice versa. And it is not a matter of perception alone. As I have mentioned, perspectives relate to doing, to using objects, to acting within situations. Children are not only quick to notice toys, they notice *through* grasping and manipulating them.

This action focus is reinforced by the fact that perspectives are not simply semiotic constructions; they are not primarily ideas about things, but come out of material, bodily forms of engagement. A perspective is not a view from nowhere, something scientific research aims in vain to accomplish, in its pursuit of 'objectivity': it comes from the *positions* we occupy in the world. Being a child or an adult, a man or a woman, a doctor, teacher, or priest – these are at once social and embodied categories. They have associated with them not only roles, identities and representations, but also concrete spaces, tools and sets of constraints. The social worlds we live in are built upon the differentiation of positions where people actively position themselves in relation to others while also being positioned by others (sometimes with very negative consequences). Studies on positioning in psychology cover a wide spectrum, from the production of positions in discursive practice (the positioning theory developed by Harré and van Langenhove, 1998) to the more embodied exchange of positions reflected in children's games and other social activities (Gillespie & Martin, 2014). Independent of their focus – on language, symbols, or bodies – positions are eminently social in the

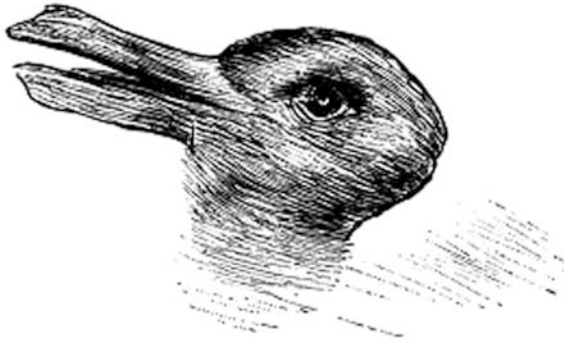
way they are constructed, adopted and changed. They are often institutionalised (e.g., professional positions such as that of a mechanic, chemist, designer, and so on), but they can also be defined in more general terms (e.g., being an actor and observer or audience). This difference is associated also with how easily one can adopt different positions (and thus develop new perspectives) and, most importantly, how easy it is to move between positions, a crucial process for creativity.

Moving between perspectives: The creative meta-position

It is not only essential for creativity to be able to develop new perspectives on oneself and the world, but also to consider self and world from multiple positions at once; in other words, the ability to *move between* perspectives and to *integrate* them. The argument here is that our reality will look (even if only slightly) different when seen from two or more positions. For example, an artist can be completely immersed in his or her work, applying paint on the canvas. From time to time though, the artist will step back and look at the painting in order to evaluate it, to see what has been done and what should be done further. Arguably, this is a good example of micro-changes in position with great consequences for creative activity (see also Glăveanu, 2015). It makes the artist alternate between a first-person perspective, engaged in doing, and a third-person, audience position, contemplating what has been done. What is important to notice is the coordination between these (physical and symbolic) positions and perspectives. Although they are enacted in turn, they feed into each other, effectively continuing and shaping the course of action. This is a well-documented dynamic not only in art (see Dewey's, 1934, discussion of the relation between doing and undergoing), but also in most other human activities. Becoming an audience to oneself, capable of seeing our action as others would (including a 'generalised other' – e.g. our group or our society; see Mead, 1934), leads to gaining awareness, a new understanding of the situation, and perceiving and exploiting novel affordances (see Chapter 2). But this is only possible if the two (or more) perspectives are related to each other in the process of integrating experience (Gillespie, 2006).

To offer a simple illustration of this basic mechanism, consider the famous ambiguous image presented in Figure 13.1. What do you see in it? A duck, a rabbit, both? Perceptually, the image can become for us, in turn, a duck facing left or a rabbit facing right, two different perspectives on the same 'object'. However, despite these shifts, we do know the image we see is one and the same. Being able to move quickly between

Welche Thiere gleichen ein-
ander am meisten?



Kaninchen und Ente.

Figure 13.1 'Rabbit and Duck'

Source: From the 23 October 1892 issue of *Fliegende Blätter*, the earliest version of this illusion; image in the public domain.

these perspectives allows us to gain the notion of a double or ambiguous figure of which this is but one (famous) example. These kinds of images, as a special class of illusion, are meant to make us reflect on the nature of our perception and the objects around us. The world invites multiple interpretations and this is an important conclusion for people who are ready to explore it creatively.

Thus, being able to develop new perspectives on the world not only expands our immediate possibilities of acting within it; it also fosters greater reflexivity in relation to objects, people, and events (see also Chapter 15). It facilitates the elaboration of what Hermans and Kempen (1993) call a *meta-position*. This requires taking distance from all the different positions we adopt (initially, at least, in succession) in order to consider them simultaneously and relate them to each other. At a micro-level, articulating the duck and rabbit perspectives within the same image requires a kind of meta-position but, more than this, developing a meta-position in this situation allows us to place ambiguous objects in relation to other objects of our everyday life and notice, perhaps, the fundamental openness of the latter. This meta-position can be summarised as 'things are not always what they appear to be', an important part of what I would call the creative attitude or mindset. In sum,

meta-positions synthesise the movement between different perspectives and have emergent properties – building them generates novelty, a condition of possibility for creative action.

Perspectives we take, perspectives we silence

The dynamic outlined above is essential for creativity. It also points to the fact that creativity is much more than generating new or divergent ideas as a purely cognitive exercise, taking place in the head. On the contrary, it involves at all times the dialogue and movement between different socially and materially defined positions. The developmental history of this dialogue is not hard to guess: it is because we interact with others, from infancy, that we are encouraged to understand their views and their action, and take their perspective on our views and our action (as well as material objects; see Chapter 20). Communication and interaction are the basis of this key achievement, leading to awareness of the self and opening up new possibilities to think and act in the world, often in a creative manner.

How can we exploit this in practice? For one thing, the benefit of engaging in *creative collaborations* with other people rests precisely in the possibility of expanding one's understanding of a situation by integrating another's point of view. This kind of dynamic has been extensively studied in the socio-cultural literature (see John-Steiner, 1992). Of course, differences in perspective are not always productive for creativity and can sometimes have a blocking effect but, in order to have a real understanding of their role, one needs to adopt a longitudinal stance and thus observe how difference is created and managed across time (see also Chapter 5). On other occasions, this difference might not be sufficiently large to lead to a creative breakthrough. People working in groups might, in fact, find themselves quickly agreeing with each other, instead of trying to diversify perspectives. This is how creative group-work techniques such as the six thinking hats of de Bono (1985) became very popular in various organisational contexts. What they basically do is invite people to participate within the situation from different positions (metaphorically represented by coloured hats) and thus formulate perspectives that emphasise certain aspects, such as emotions, facts, logic, or ... creativity.

Such methods try to set up creative work climates in which diversity is valued. Other settings in our society, however, often prioritise sameness over difference. Governmental offices, military camps and, unfortunately, schools, have often been criticised for this. It is not that

perspective-taking is absent from any of these contexts but that people are often encouraged to adopt a certain ('correct') perspective and dismiss others. In small and large groups, as well as at a societal level, relations of power are fundamental for legitimising positions and perspectives (see also Chapter 14). For a long time women, ethnic and sexual minorities had no position to speak from in order to fully participate in their society. Adopting a perspectival approach to creativity is therefore more than an intellectual exercise: it raises ultimately the *ethical* question of which perspective we are encouraged to take, and which we ignore or try to silence. The consequences of both are very obvious, and not only for creativity. Going back to the first example of children and their position in a world of adults: what would be the outcome of taking their perspective seriously, instead of dismissing it as immature or illogical (in other words, 'childish')? Picasso had his own answer in this regard.

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14

Power

Claus Elmholdt and Morten Fogsgaard

Contrary to creativity, power intuitively has a negative connotation (Pfeffer, 2010) and is often mentioned in connection with coercion and suppression, which limit opportunities and freedom of choice (Huxham & Vangen, 2005). Power in organisations concerns the effects of structures and processes on employee behaviour and attitudes (Pfeffer, 2010; Thompson & McHugh, 2002; Yukl, 2013). Power can certainly be used in negative ways. At the same time, power is a *precondition* for organising individuals to act in a collaborative manner in order to achieve shared goals (Fogsgaard & Elmholdt, 2014).

In this chapter, we will explore the dynamics of power in processes of creativity, and show its paradoxical nature as both a bridge and a barrier to creativity in organisations. Recent social psychological experimental research (Slighte et al., 2011) on the relation between power and creativity suggests that when managers give people the opportunity to gain power and explicate that there is reason to be more creative, people will show a boost in creative behaviour. Moreover, this process works best in unstable power hierarchies, which implies that power is treated as a negotiable and floating source for empowering people in the organisation. We will explore and discuss here the potentials, challenges, and pitfalls of power in relation to creativity in the life of organisations today. The aim is to demonstrate that *power struggles* may be utilised as constructive sources of creativity. It is thus a central point that power is not necessarily something that breaks down and represses. On the contrary, an explicit focus on the dynamics of power in relation to creativity can be productive for the organisation. Our main focus is to elaborate the implications of this for practice and theory in relation to management. We suggest that power hierarchies that are too stable – which implies that power is mainly used as a source

for keeping position and privileges intact, and preventing others from obtaining power – obstruct persons and organisations from actualising their creative potential.

The two faces of power: Suppressive and productive

There is no simple way to conceptualise power. However, one can see two general historical lines in the power literature (Clegg, 2002). The first reaches back to Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) and deals extensively with the question ‘What is power?’ This question is often described as a *power-over* perspective with a focus on power as a suppressive force. This view of power is centred around power structure – who possesses power, who or what is the target, and how can power be identified? Here, power is viewed as a resource for the few, a repressive phenomenon that dominates, oppresses, and robs others of freedom. As a consequence, an organisation contains a number of positions, each with associated power constellations. It is primarily a mono-centred understanding of power, a top-down perspective on the distribution of power. The other historical line asks the question ‘What does power do?’ This line of thinking can be traced back to Niccoló Machiavelli (1469–1527). It is often described as a *power-to* perspective, inquiring into the productiveness of power. It focuses specifically on how to exercise power and the effects it has on individual consciousness.

The point is that the effects of power as suppressive or productive are strictly contingent. For some people and in some situations, the effect of power may be experienced as positive while, for others, it will be negative. Power itself is not ‘over’ or ‘to’ in a transcendent way; it is ‘over’ and ‘to’ depending on the specific situation and the contingent position of the agents involved in the relation (Clegg et al., 2006). This analysis seeks to emphasise the systemic nature of power relations and, therefore, of politics and governance in organisations. Power in organisations is not limited to an employer’s power over an employee. Thus, technologies of power and control in the workplace are no longer conceived as purely repressive by those subjected to them, but also as the very mechanisms through which a coherent sense of self-identity comes into existence. Power is seen to be productive in that it *produces* the resources, particularly in the form of social practice, through which our sense of self is realised. In this perspective, power can produce creative processes and identities. To understand power and creativity means deciphering various forms of political economy in organisations. That is, the processes that organisational leaders use to establish and produce

power and structures of dominance, motivation, and rhetoric, which they then strive to legitimise (Clegg et al., 2006). Only through the use of power can leaders steer organisations through heavy storms and troubled waters. And only through the use of power can others resist and challenge this steering. Organisations are, above all, means of constituting relations between people, ideas, and things that would not otherwise occur. Therefore, organisations are arenas for power struggles.

The relation between power and creativity

As pointed out by Tanggaard (2014), it is misleading simply to juxtapose creativity with the stabilising systems of knowledge, routines, and management that give order to our activities within organisations. Creativity needs constraints. Moreover, organisations are in need of both efficient exploitation of existing knowledge and skills, and the ability to use this platform as an outset for exploring new and wiser ways of doing things. The concepts of *exploitation* and *exploration* were introduced by James G. March (1991) as a way to describe the paradoxical interplay of organisational needs for stability and change. Exploitation concerns utilising existing skills; exploration relates to creativity and opening new organisational opportunities. In this chapter, we define creativity as the production of novel and useful ideas, and innovation as the successful implementation of creative ideas within organisations (Amabile, 1996). Creativity is more than just new ideas; it is new practices (Hartley, 2005). At the same time, innovation is more than new products, processes, and services; it is value-adding newness in a very broad sense (Darsø, 2000). As such, creativity and innovation have to do with the explorative side of organisational change. James March emphasised the need for ambidextrous organisations that create positive results by having the power to utilise existing skills and explore new opportunities. ‘Too much exploitation will cause inertia and conservatism whereas too much exploration will potentially minimize efficiency, economies of scale, and learning by doing’ (March, 1991). Traditionally, power has been linked to the utilisation of existing skills through the direction and control of employees’ goal-directed behaviour (see also Chapter 3). Exploration, on the other hand, has been related to leaders facilitating employees’ freedom to explore, create, and innovate new ideas, services, and products. This common-sense notion of the exercise of power as suppressive and contrary to creativity and innovation will be contested and replaced by a more nuanced account in the present chapter.

Let us bring in a case from an earlier research by one of the authors on reproductive and innovative learning processes in the everyday life of apprentices at a dockyard (Elmholdt, 2004). The case reveals a piece of traditional Danish working-class culture where the power hierarchy was tight and stable, and based on seniority. The result was an organisational learning culture characterised by an outspoken imbalance between exploitation and exploration to a degree that caused inertia and conservatism. The apprentices were not encouraged to engage in explorative activities but were expected to be obedient and engaged in learning the skills of the trade. The journeymen were not particularly focused on explorative activity either. The focus of the management was stiffly directed towards optimising the exploitative use of the production plant and the existing skills. The case is set in the late 1990s, when the competition from Asian shipyards was fierce. Cutting costs and making the workers run faster was generally the cure prescribed by the management. The trade union fought for the benefits of the workers and looked with suspicion at all plans to cut costs; i.e., laying off workers and making the rest of the employees work harder and faster. The story ends in 2001, when the dockyard finally went bankrupt and closed down.

The interview quotation that follows is interesting, as it shows an exception from this general picture of exploitative activity and reproductive learning – a ‘*crack*’ in the power hierarchy that made creativity flourish for a brief moment. Not a complete removal of stabilising organisational systems and constraints, but a destabilisation of the normal power hierarchy. The momentary destabilisation of the power hierarchy was created by a situation where the journeymen went on strike. The apprentices were hired on a different agreement and had to continue working as usual. They came into work Monday morning eager to prove their worth and show the journeymen that they could stand on their own feet and do high-quality work. This quote is from an interview with a third-year apprentice:

Apprentice: When we put up the big pipes at the ships, we once used wooden blocks to stabilise the whole thing. I found out that it is much easier to use line instead. Using line, you can easily make adjustments, which are faster than hammering wooden blocks under the pipes.

Interviewer: How did you find out?

Apprentice: Actually, it was during the period when the journeymen went on strike. The cabinetmakers’ workshop was closed, so we did not have access to wooden blocks. That forced us to think on our own. I figured

that we could try with some line and weld on some iron. We did, and it worked very well. We have kept on using it ever since, and we can now see that others are starting to use it.

The case sheds some light on the complex dynamics of power and creativity. It is obvious that the stable power hierarchy at the dockyard defined a narrow area in which to engage in everyday explorative and creative activities. It is also reasonable to argue that the strike situation empowered the apprentices to engage in a broader range of explorative and creative activities, which resulted in the invention of a new and more efficient production method than before. The strike created a situation where order and disorder were juxtaposed, which opened a 'crack' for creative and innovative activities (Weick & Westley, 1996). But how can we explain the self-destructive conservatism displayed by the journeymen, and why did the apprentices so eagerly chase the empowering possibility of turning the strike into explorative and creative activity?

Recent social psychological research (Slighte et al., 2011) may help us answer these questions. The study by Slighte and colleagues suggests that the perceived possibility of gaining power by being creative may boost creative performance. The apprentices might have perceived the strike as a 'nothing to lose and all too win' situation. Through the creative act of finding a new solution to the problem of welding big pipes without using wood to block up the pipes, they were able to gain power. They gained the power of taking charge and the satisfaction of feeling competent and empowered in the situation, and they were recognised by the journeymen as the inventors of a more efficient line system for welding pipes.

An interesting point is that this dynamic only seems to work if the power hierarchy is unstable *and* low-power individuals perceive creativity as a way to gain power. In everyday work conditions, the apprentices were positioned as inferior status individuals and perceived themselves as such. The power hierarchy was relatively stable and, consequently, the apprentices showed little engagement in explorative and creative actions. However, 'when the power hierarchy is unstable, those lacking power hold the power to create' (Slighte et al., 2011, p. 896). One practical insight to draw from this is that managers may increase creativity by using their power to facilitate 'cracks' that destabilise organisational power hierarchies, and make it apparent that creativity is a functional way for employees to become more powerful.

The next question seems harder to answer. How can we explain the finally self-destructive conservatism displayed by the journeymen? Why

didn't the 'powerful' journeymen engage in broader explorative activities in their everyday practice, enabling them to find a creative solution to the pipe-welding problem? One possible answer could be that they actually did not perceive themselves as highly powerful but, rather, as vulnerable and in risk of losing their jobs. Therefore, they focused on defensive acts of keeping their current position and privileges, and did not perceive creativity as a way to gain increased power and security.

The key explanation for both our findings – the apprentices engaging in broadly explorative and creative activities during the strike, and the conservatism displayed by the journeymen going on strike in order to keep their privileges – is grounded in the assumption that individuals who perceive themselves as powerful think and act in ways that maintain and increase their power. In contrast, individuals who perceive themselves less powerful think and act to protect themselves against possible threat. The journeymen might have felt insecure and threatened by the fierce competition from the Asian dockyards. A feeling of insecurity and lack of power might trigger avoidance motivation, a focus on potential losses and a narrow attention focus (Förster et al., 2006; Keltner et al., 2003), which are often described as key barriers to creativity in organisations (e.g., Fredrickson, 2001).

Power and the unstable hierarchies of modern organisations

It is said that, in today's organisations, the era of the traditional controlling and coercive-based management strategies has passed (see Kolind & Bøtter, 2012). Modern people want to think for themselves and hence creativity, self-management, individuality, and freedom become key concepts within modern management (Neck & Houghton, 2006). In line with this development, it is often emphasised that leadership based on trust, rather than control, is the way forward in creating prosperity and efficiency in organisations (Thygesen et al., 2008). Concepts such as 'readiness for change' and 'power of innovation' flourish in the media as well as in the research literature, and employees make demands for meaningful work and attractive workplaces where they can achieve self-actualisation (Brinkmann, 2008). These modern ways of performing leadership power may certainly destabilise power hierarchies in ways that support creativity. However, this does *not* imply that power relations completely disappear, or that power and creativity are necessarily opposites, as argued above.

In order to grasp this increasing complexity, we need to extend the classical notion of power as forms of influence based on execution of control and sanctions (Clegg et al., 2006; Fleming & Spicer, 2014; Fogsgaard & Elmholt, 2014). This perspective does not fully embrace the performance of power in organisations today. Organisations were previously, as at the dockyard, characterised as largely hierarchical and bureaucratic. This form of organisation reinforced explicit, direct, and apparent power mechanisms (Fleming & Spicer, 2014).

Contemporary organisations, at least in a Scandinavian context, tend to be more democratic, organic, and dialogue-oriented (Schultz, 2014). The organisational structure has become more flexible and the boundaries more blurred. At the same time, power has been atomised; there is no longer an unequivocal centre or distinct structure. Furthermore, recent theories of power in organisations (Fogsgaard & Elmholt, 2014) suggest that the execution of power frequently occurs in tacit and indirect ways. The concept of power is thus *extended* to include discourses, strategic behaviour, and socialisation. Following this line of reasoning, which relates to the *power-to* perspective described above, power is understood as relational and not as an institution, structure, or specific location (Al-Amoudi, 2007). The execution of power in organisations is therefore not limited to, for example, an employer's power over an employee. Instead, it must be viewed in a larger perspective where the context, the formal and informal norms, and the discourses in which the employer and employee are embedded, are taken into consideration.

A great deal of research on power assumes that power positions are stable and secure with no possibilities of losing the privileged position (e.g., Slighte et al., 2011). However, power positions are often all but stable. Even in our extremely stable shipyard case, we saw how power positions changed and cracks of opportunity for creative actions opened. Power evolves between people and operates unnoticed in the form of discourses, structuring principles, and modes of conduct. In line with this, Gary Yukl (2013) points out that it is not only within the formal authoritative position in the organisation that individuals possess power. Every person in the organisation can, in his or her own way, draw on different power-bases related to, for example, specific skills, previous experience, personal dispositions, personal background, and so on. Interestingly, one could presume that for low power individuals, power instability in itself is empowering, leading them to act and behave as high power individuals. Subjectively, they may feel as if they have an immense amount of power in this situation (Slighte et al., 2011, p. 896), as exemplified by the apprentices' behaviour in the strike situation.

Positional power interacts in complex ways with personal power to determine a manager's influence on subordinates and organisational processes of creativity; managers relying too much on positional power are likely to experience resistance (Yukl, 2013). Managers need to take into account the local images of creativity, good leadership, social behaviour (discursive power) and organisational context when designing effective actions. Furthermore, hierarchy, power distance (structural power), personal characteristics and personality (personal power) are also relevant when leaders facilitate creativity. The effectiveness of power in relation to creativity depends not only on the power-bases used but, most of all, on the manner in which power is *co-created*.

Implications for organisational theory and practice

We have tried to argue here that the concept of power is useful when analysing creativity in an organisational context. It allows us to probe more deeply into the power processes that help constitute historical, and therefore arbitrary, limits for a wide range of acts and forms of consciousness in the organisation. By insisting that power relations contain not only repressive, but also explicitly productive aspects, the discursive understanding of power opens the way towards applying power constructively in the management of organisational creativity.

Our case-analysis of the dockyard showed that momentary 'cracks' in a relatively stable power-hierarchy might fuel creative action, especially if creativity is perceived as a way to produce positive change in the current situation. However, this case also shows that the relation between power and creativity is certainly *contingent* and depends also on how the current situation is perceived by the actors. An implication for practice seems to be that managers might increase organisational creativity by using their power to facilitate 'cracks' that destabilise organisational power hierarchies and empower persons to perceive creativity as an opportunity, rather than a threat.

As a final note, an interesting distinction emerged in the chapter between '*order*' and '*power*'. Because, by nature, organisations are stabilising systems, giving order to our activities is a fundamental aspect of organising and we need this order if we are to create – creativity needs constraints (see also Chapter 17). Discussing power makes us focus on the stability of the organisational order and on who can decide when and how it can be changed. In this sense, more fluidity in modern organisations can enhance creativity if individuals are empowered, but it can also harm if the organisations do not manage to preserve some

form of orderly functioning (see also Chapter 10). As with many other things, finding a balance in this regard is challenging but also extremely rewarding.

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15

Reflexivity

Constance de Saint-Laurent and Vlad Petre Glăveanu

Do we need reflexivity in order to be creative? Many would probably be inclined to see a connection between a contemplative attitude and creativity, an image deeply rooted in our (frequently) romantic conception of the genius (Montuori & Purser, 1995). Rodin's well-known sculpture 'The Thinker' embodies this association, but it also opens up the question of what the creator is actually reflecting on. Reflexivity, as commonly defined in dictionaries, suggests turning towards oneself and, in this sense, if we assume Rodin's 'Thinker' is engaged in an act of reflexivity, perhaps he is deeply immersed in thought about his own condition. Is he self-absorbed? There is a crucial difference to be made between reflection and reflexivity. The old story of Narcissus tells us he was so much in love with his own image, his own reflection (in the water), that he drowned trying to reach it. Turning towards oneself, in order to foster creative action, needs, on the contrary, to create a *distance* between observer and observed, not collapse these two positions.

Here lies the paradox of reflexivity and, at the same time, the feature that makes it essential for creativity. The observer and the observed are one and the same person and yet, to avoid self-absorption, they need to be differentiated. We can think about other people and objects in the world but, in order to reflect on oneself, the self needs to become other to itself. This accomplishment both draws on our interactions with others and defines us as social beings (Gillespie, 2006; Mead, 1934). Our definition of reflexivity is thus fundamentally social – being reflective is not a solipsistic (as in the case of Narcissus) or solitary (as in the case of Rodin's 'Thinker') act. Reflexivity implies being able to take distance and look at one's self or action from an external position. This external position can be the one of another person that we are either in dialogue with or whose views we have internalised, or even our own self as we know

it from the past or imagine it in the future. All these positions facilitate *de-centration*, preventing us from becoming trapped in unitary, singular and egocentric views of self and world. Ultimately, such de-centration makes us flexible, creative (Glăveanu & Lubart, 2014), and capable of agentic action (Martin & Gillespie, 2010).

Reflexivity is important for creativity because it builds on our ability to develop new perspectives on reality (see also Chapter 13), while turning these perspectives *back* on the self and our ongoing action. This marks the difference between creative potential (i.e., being able to generate different novel ideas) and creative achievement (i.e., using these ideas to understand things differently and act in new ways). Our argument here is that engaging in reflexivity not only generates new potential understandings of self and its situation, but prompts the person to imagine and act upon these possibilities. Through this, we are not only postulating the crucial role of others for developing a position of reflexivity, but claim that such a position is intrinsically related to (creative) action. Being reflective supports creative expression precisely because it goes beyond constructing a Narcissus-like ‘reflection’ of the self; it places *multiple* positions about self and world in active *dialogue* with each other. This dynamic is crucial for the work of artists, scientists and inventors, but it also permeates creativity in everyday life and in the social domain. The illustration that follows explores the link between creativity and reflexivity within society. It focuses on a tragic event that shook public opinion in France and internationally, occasioning unprecedented levels of social mobilisation, engaging a wide range of positions and generating a variety of (socially creative) perspectives and responses.

‘Je suis Charlie’

On 7 January 2015, two armed men entered the offices of the French journal *Charlie Hebdo* and, on their exit, left behind 11 dead and 22 wounded. The satirical journal had published caricatures of Mahomet in 2006, leading its main editor and most famous caricaturist, Charb, to be identified by several Islamist terrorist organisations as a priority target. In the days following the attack, a policewoman and the clients of a kosher shop in Paris became victims of similar acts of violence.

These events led to reactions of an unprecedented magnitude in France and to a unanimous condemnation of the attacks from the international community. The public response culminated on 11 January 2015, when the French president and 50 other heads of state walked in Paris, followed by millions of people. Not even the end of World



Figure 15.1 Demonstration in Paris

Source: By Oliver Ortelpa, image licensed under the Creative Commons.

War II had brought so many demonstrators to the streets of Paris (see Figure 15.1). Around the world, people showed their support through the slogan '*Je suis Charlie*' (invented by a French designer in the early hours of the tragedy), and by organising local gatherings.

Moreover, both professional and non-professional cartoonists started publishing commemorative drawings expressing grief and resistance: men with pens defying armed terrorists became a common sight in newspapers and on the web. The image in Figure 15.2 uses the same general theme, of the pencil, to show solidarity with the victims. These impressive acts of individual and collective creativity in the weeks following the event included, besides cartoons, music, videos, and written pieces that reflected on what had happened. Beyond mourning the dead, many of these creative acts also expressed the need of their authors to understand why one could die 'just for a drawing'. Through their actions, these authors gave new meanings not only to the tragedy, but also to the simple act of drawing. Furthermore, their creativity was both occasioned by and gave birth to reflective processes, whose dynamic is discussed in the next section.

Reflecting on Charlie

Despite a feeling of 'national unity' that swept the country, divergent voices soon appeared. Beyond the foreseeable debate on freedom of

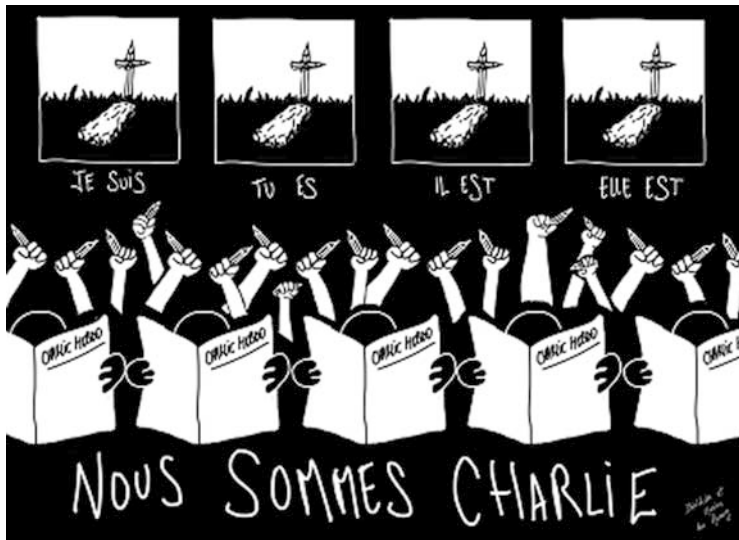


Figure 15.2 'Nous sommes Charlie' (We are Charlie)

Source: Marine des Mazery – homage by CESAN students; image licensed under the Creative Commons.

speech versus respecting others' beliefs, multiple lines of fracture started to emerge. Was it normal to march behind heads of state that would have jailed *Charlie Hebdo's* journalists in their own countries? Should we write new laws to prevent terrorism? Should we condemn those who did not show support to the journal? And what does it mean to be a laic country? As it soon turned out, marching together did not mean that people gave the same meaning to the events, especially in the poor suburbs such as the ones the terrorists came from. In the end, some people started saying that they did not feel, after all, that they were that much like 'Charlie'. While, for many, it was scandalous not to identify with the victims and 'become' Charlie, sadly, more than the dozen islamophobe attacks on mosques that followed the events did not cause the same outrage... Was this 'national unity' made against those who did not feel or think in the same way as the majority?

Although it is easy to ignore dissonant voices, especially in the wake of such a large movement of solidarity, it is undeniably necessary to engage with these different perspectives in order to avoid the sterile dichotomisation of the public sphere between 'us' and 'them'. Finding new solutions for society implies taking new perspectives on the world

and trying to understand what can lead some people to commit such terrible actions. Looking at ourselves *through the eyes of others* is a rare opportunity to see what kind of society our collective actions create for them and, thus, how we could change it. Unfortunately, not everyone takes such a position, and many even condemn the attempt to look at the world through the eyes of someone who did so much wrong, especially if it means considering them as victims, in one way or another. However, many attempts to become reflective were made, including one by a group of teachers working in schools from difficult areas. In the days following the attacks, they published a text in *Le Monde* entitled 'How could we let our students become murderers?' (for the original text in French, see Boussard et al., 2015). Their argument captures very well the dynamic of reflexivity and its connexion to creativity, as we now briefly explain.

In this article, the authors start by expressing their grief as they consider the journalists killed to be like brothers, sharing the same ideas and ideals. But, after hearing recordings of the terrorists talking to journalists, they realise that the other 'protagonists' of the attacks are also familiar to them:

If the crimes of these killers are unbearable, what is terrible is that they speak French, with the accent of suburban youth. These two killers are like our students. The traumatism, for us, is also to hear this voice, these words. This is what made us feel responsible.

Such a realisation prompts them to look at themselves through the eyes of their students: how else could they understand why their students would do such a thing? To do this, they start with a simple question: What do we look like for them? And they write:

But let us make the effort of changing the point of view, and let us try to look at ourselves as our students see us. We are well-dressed, have comfortable shoes, or at least we are very evidently beyond these material contingencies and we do not fantasise about the consumption goods our students dream of: we don't perhaps also because we would have the means to own them.

From a very basic observation – seeing that one is 'well dressed', just as you would notice after looking in a mirror – the authors move to a deeper reflection about what their appearance might mean to their students. They do not lose their own perspective – they still refer to their

own relation to 'consumption goods' at the end; neither do they ignore the perspective of their students. Instead, they build on the difference between them, which allows them to look at the situation from a new angle:

No one seems to want to assume responsibility. The responsibility of a state that lets imbeciles and psychotics languish in prison and become the toys of manipulators¹; of a school that we deprive of means and support; of a city policy that bounds and coops up slaves (without official papers, elector cards, names nor teeth) in suburban cesspools. The responsibility of politicians who do not understand that virtue is only taught through example. [...] So, let us open our eyes on the situation, to understand how we arrived here, to act and to build a society free from racism, anti-Semitism, a laic and cultivated society, more fair, free, equalitarian and fraternal.

This social critique ends with a proposition for the future: we need to open our eyes to the social conditions of others and how we might be responsible for them. But these teachers do not stop here; they also propose a new way of understanding the situation:

Those in *Charlie Hebdo* were our brothers, as were the Jews killed for their religion, Porte de Vincennes, in Paris: we mourn them. Their killers were orphans, placed in foster care: wards of the nation,² children of France. Our children thus killed our brothers. This is the exact definition of a tragedy. In any culture, it provokes a feeling that has not been evoked in the past few days: shame.

By using a cultural tool familiar to them – the genres of literature – they give a new meaning to the situation: it is a tragedy, because their students, the children of the state, killed their brothers, their ideological equals. This allows them to name and legitimise what they feel: shame. It also permits the integration of the multiple perspectives into a single narrative, making what happened more 'comprehensible' in some ways. But, most interestingly, their discursive move renders both perspectives inseparable and, through a powerful metaphor, allows people to rethink the notions of responsibility, belonging, and otherness. Instead of collapsing all perspectives into one – a single '*Je suis*' where dissonant voices are isolated outside the group – they create, through reflexivity, a metaphor that encourages all to be, in turn, reflective. It is a call to find new solutions to social issues, solutions that bear

the ethical mark of understanding self and other as interchangeable positions.

After Charlie

The attack on *Charlie Hebdo* and its aftermath illustrate both an unexpected crisis, and the individual and collective efforts made to overcome it. If creativity is required within situations where there is no learned or practised solution (Torrance, 1988), then the tragedy in France certainly qualifies as such a situation. It is perhaps too soon to appreciate fully whether many of the individual and collective answers to *Charlie Hebdo* are 'creative'; they certainly are unprecedented and, as shown, invite people to reflect on the events, on themselves and on the society in which they live. To answer such events by engaging in reflexivity, as citizens and as communities, is already a rather creative initiative. It avoids two other common but unproductive 'solutions': on the one hand, self-indulgence in a glorified image of the in-group and denying that society itself has any problems (a Narcissus type of answer); on the other, aggressively blaming minorities and other ethnic or religious groups for the tragedy (finding scapegoats). To be reflective means, here, to accept the complexity of self–other relations and to be able, simultaneously, to see *the self as other and the other as self* (see also Chapter 11). This is the basis for a creative way of dealing with this crisis and, perhaps, of making it a turning point towards a better future for all. The fact that neither revolutionary creative outcomes can be expected to emerge from situations such as *Charlie Hebdo*, nor easy solutions accepted by everyone, is specific for societal creativity (see Glăveanu, 2015). Collective problems are defined by the multitude of positions they involve and, as such, being creative in the social domain is intrinsically linked to being reflective and questioning one's own perspective.

But is there any use for reflexivity in creative action outside societal, inter-group, or inter-personal problems? *Charlie Hebdo* might seem like a rather extreme and particular example on which to focus. What about the activity of painters, of scientists, or of teachers and students in school, and so on? Regardless of domain, the need to engage with and understand the perspectives of others is always present. What reflexivity does it prompt us to look at our own position from the standpoint of others; in this way, reflexivity can help us envision new possibilities of action within any given situation. If creativity draws on noticing and acting on difference (see Chapter 5), then reflexivity helps us engage with difference creatively, without collapsing different positions into

a single perspective, that of the self, or dichotomising them, in a ‘us versus them’ dynamic. And, if the above is the case, then a key question emerges: how often do we become reflective about our relation to others and the world around us? And, more importantly, how can we support reflexivity in ways that are conducive for the creativity of both individuals and societies as a whole?

Notes

1. The investigations that followed the attacks revealed that prison had played an important role in the radicalisation of the killers.
2. Two of the killers were orphans, placed in foster care and made wards of the nation while still very young.

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16

Rhythm

Vlad Petre Glăveanu

To study the rhythm(s) of creativity – this sounds like a novel idea! Especially if we don't confine the notion of rhythm to music alone. The rhythm of creativity, as I discuss it here, doesn't refer to the melodic quality of accomplished compositions but, rather, to the rhythmic nature of our creative movement in the world. Did you ever consider the movement and sounds one hears in spaces where creative work is performed – not only art studios, scientific laboratories, but also schools and streets, squares and markets? Some are very noisy environments, others mostly silent but, in all of them, one can distinguish a certain regularity of activities and sounds, a rhythmicity of doing and perceiving, of acting and being acted upon. This regularity is paired with uniqueness, the distinct quality of each 'melody' of living and creating. The universe of sound we are immersed into often escapes us, when focused too much on the visual world (Hendy, 2013). And yet sounds, and the rhythms they create, are the essential markers of what makes our existence dynamic and temporal: *continuous movement*.

Rhythm is movement. At least, the etymological origins of the word tell us so. The Greek *rhythmos* referred to 'measured flow or movement', the Latin *rhythmus* to 'movement in time',¹ and most associations of these terms point to proportion, symmetry, arrangement, order, and so on. Since rhythm includes both structure and its transformation in time, it became a very important notion for the 'arts of continuity' such as music and poetry. For them, rhythm is a recurrent or repeated pattern, a beat, or an accent. But the same applies to movement outside the sphere of art. Our daily life has its own rhythm, as also do the activities of a society. The latter are often translated into social, economic and political indicators and are typically expressed using larger temporal units such as decades or generations (e.g., think about the recurrent

patterns of migration around the world and their wide spectrum – from seasonal to permanent). In contrast, the micro-rhythms of everyday life are more rarely documented, despite their vital significance for shaping our existence and our trajectory through the social world. A study of the life course in terms of rhythm, styles and motifs is necessarily, at one and the same time, holistic and developmental, individual and social (see Zittoun et al., 2013). Finally, there are other types of rhythms, from biological to astronomical, that frame the movement of people and societies. The fascination for their cyclical nature has been a dominant feature of pre-history and antiquity and survives, to this day, albeit in different forms, within religion and myths, collective practices and rituals, philosophy and art.

Human culture is defined by rhythm as a dynamic system that moves and changes along irreversible time (Valsiner, 2013). This rhythm is the essence of creativity, understood here not as a unique feature of special individuals but as a widely distributed process of making, transforming and renewing cultural forms (Glăveanu, 2014). My focus in this chapter will be precisely on the creativity of the cultural rhythms of human existence, both individual and collective; to illustrate them, I will draw on three different examples from Japan. This allows me to explore an expanded understanding of rhythm as movement and, in turn, capture three of its central characteristics: *regularity*, *uniqueness*, and *emergence*. It is particularly this last ‘property’, coming out of the intersection and coordination between multiple rhythms, in their regularity and uniqueness, that is a defining feature for creativity (see also Montuori, 2003). Indeed, to create is considered in this chapter to be a rhythmic movement though culture, a movement that is, simultaneously, deeply personal, highly expressive, and fundamentally shared.

Regularity

The patterned ways of rhythms, as they unfold, reveal their regularity. This regularity is associated with a relative stability over time, something that makes patterned movements distinguishable and invests their rhythms with an identity function. Ceremonials are a great example of re-enacted rhythms of great cultural significance. In the case of the tea ceremony in Japan, rituals go beyond a simple pastime for small social groups and become a national symbol (Surak, 2012). I had the pleasure of being introduced to such a ceremonial at the teahouse of the Hama Rikyu Garden in Tokyo. My friend and I ordered the traditional

powdered green tea – *Matcha* tea – which arrived in a beautiful bowl with a small confection and wooden stick on the side, as well as a brief information leaflet. The contents of this leaflet explained to us the proper manners of tasting *Matcha* tea.

The manners of tasting Matcha tea

<The tea ceremony is not performed>

The spirit of the tea is at the heart of hospitality.

What should you taste first? The confection or the tea?

The confection is all eaten before drinking the tea. It is because the taste of the tea becomes better. <Don't taste them alternatively>

How do you eat the confection?

Bring the confection toward you by putting it on the packet of paper (Kaishi). Cut it with small wooden stick and eat one piece after the other.

How do you drink Matcha tea?

Take the bowl with your right hand and place it on the left palm. In order to avoid the front of the bowl, turn the bowl clockwise twice. Then drink all the tea in three or four sips (the number of times is not important). When it is served, the visitor's side is the front of the bowl.

What do you do for the place where the mouth touched the bowl?

After drinking the tea, wipe the place where you drank from with your right thumb and index finger. Wipe your fingers on your Kaishi. Then turn the bowl back twice so that the front faces you and place the bowl in front of you <It is not necessary to perform them here>

And, with a feeling of gratitude, you look back at the bowl before returning to the place where the host served.

What appears to be a highly regulated activity reveals, in fact, the parameters of a cultural rhythm of serving and drinking tea. The places, times, behaviour, and attitudes of a tea ceremony are specified in advance and they gain 'thickness' through repetition, observation, and practice (see also Chapter 17). However, the movement itself, for as conventionalised

as it is, will never be identical for any two people drinking *Matcha* tea, or for the same person at different times. And this is because rhythms are regular and shared but they also bear the mark of uniqueness. This was certainly the case for me and my friend, both foreign to this ceremonial and, to a certain extent, to the cultural universe of rhythms that surrounds it. While we did our best to respect the instructions given, we also (creatively) appropriated them and infused the entire ceremonial with our own rhythm, a mixture of what we learned there and our past experiences of drinking tea. The regularity of a rhythm doesn't have to be prescribed explicitly within a culture; it most often accumulates over time through constant processes of socialisation (see also Bourdieu's notion of habitus; Bourdieu, 1984).

Uniqueness

The appropriation and personalisation of rhythms are unavoidable in the case of any cultural practice and the example of the tea ceremony can be complemented, in this regard, with another one concerning the use of votive pictures in Shinto shrines and, sometimes, in Buddhist temples. These votive plaques, called *ema*, have a long history in Japan (see Ashikaga, 1954; Reader, 1991), dating back to the early 8th century. The small wooden plaques, ornamented on one side, are the support on which visitors write their wishes in order to make them known to the gods or local deities. The motifs placed on an *ema* vary, but they can include a figure of worship, a religious or a cultural image; e.g., one of the signs of the 12-year zodiac cycle. Traditionally, the *ema* depicted a horse (which is also what the name in Japanese suggests), since in the Nara period a horse used to be donated to the shrine by supplicants. But, since this practice was not feasible for most of the population, a wooden, clay or paper representation of a horse became a popular offering in later centuries. Nowadays, visitors buy plaques at the shrine, write their wishes on them (usually not on the ornamented part), and leave them on shrine ground in specially designated places (see also Chapter 18). An illustration of this practice is offered (see Figure 16.1) from the Inari shrine in Kyoto, where the fox is a popular symbol, something visible also on the votive plaques.

The cultural rhythm of visiting a shrine or temple, the ceremonies performed there, the buying, writing, and hanging an *ema* are all common to locals and attract curious foreigners (such as myself). What caught my attention most, however, was the uniqueness of each votive plaque I saw at the Inari shrine. Despite some fairly common wishes written



Figure 16.1 Votive plaques at the Inari shrine in Kyoto
Source: Photo taken by the author.

on the back of the plaques – mainly by students praying for academic success (see also Reader, 1991), the front of the *uma* encourages people to draw their own motifs within the space of a stylised fox face. From smiley eyes to anime-like drawings and even the depiction of heroes such as Spiderman or famous actors, these votive plaques evoke, first, the creative aspirations of their authors, incorporated within a broader cultural rhythm – wish-making at the shrine or temple. This is not only an expression of individuality within regularity (after all, *uma* do have a pre-defined spatial and symbolic place in the life of the community), but also a vivid illustration of how patterned activities, including rituals and ceremonies, draw not on one but on multiple cultural and personal resources (see also Chapter 4). This multiplicity supports the last and most important feature of rhythms – their emergent quality.

Emergence

A rhythm is patterned movement, shaped by society and the routines of everyday life, while being at the same time unique and the basis for

creative action. How is this possible? The emergent or creative property of our daily rhythms derives from the fact that our movement is, simultaneously, personal and shared, unfolding within a complex environment marked by the rhythms of others (see also Chapter 12). This might not be always obvious to us while engaged in our own activity since, particularly in cases of creative work, we often get to experience what Csikszentmihalyi (1990) famously referred to as '*flow*'. This is marked by complete immersion, focus on movement and the enjoyment of it. But flow is certainly not a solipsistic state. On the contrary, observing activities that lead to us to being in flow we often come to realise the importance of other people. Think, for example, about bands playing jazz, or research teams working together in a laboratory. More and more nowadays, research is concerned with networked or collaborative flow (see Gaggioli et al., 2013), in which relations and their rhythm come to the fore, articulating individual emotions and motivations. The emergence that is at the core of collaboration relies heavily on the articulation, intersection, and hybridisation of rhythms, where the whole is greater than the sum of parts.

The last illustration of this dynamic in a Japanese context takes us back to the nuclear attack on Hiroshima, on 6 August 1945, and the sad story of Sadako Sasaki, a child diagnosed with leukaemia after the bombing, who died at the age of 12 (Coerr, 1977). She became a well-known victim of this tragedy, remembered for her determination to fold 1,000 paper cranes, based on an ancient Japanese legend that whoever accomplishes this will be granted a wish. After her death, this became a symbol not only of the suffering, but also the hope for peace following the disaster and, in 1958, a statue of Sadako holding a crane was unveiled in the Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima. One account of this story says that Sadako did not manage to finish the *origami* cranes and her friends continued her work. Today, children all over Japan commemorate her story by folding and sending paper cranes to the memorial (see Figure 16.2), in what became a small exhibition place used to display drawings and other small artistic products. Through them, people from Japan and abroad co-participate in a collective movement of great symbolic significance. The particular rhythm of creating an *origami* shape, repeated thousands of times, gains new, emerging properties when it encounters the creations of others, when personal action becomes communal (see also Chapters 9 and 15). This emergence doesn't stop at the level of meanings but also finds expression in the proliferation of artefacts produced and sent to the memorial. Through them, it is not only a rhythm that is being shared, but the possibility of creatively answering war, suffering, and death.



Figure 16.2 Paper cranes at the memorial of Sadako Sasaki in Hiroshima
Source: Photo taken by the author.

From rhythm to style

I have argued here that an exploration of rhythm is essential for understanding creative action in its patterned, unique, and emergent expression. The tea ceremony, the shrine votive plaques, and the Peace Memorial in Japan illustrate very well the simultaneously individual and cultural movements that contribute to building a shared, public life. From very mundane activities, such as serving and drinking tea, to sending one's wishes to the gods and hoping for a better, more peaceful future, the rhythms of individuals and communities intermingle, generating a complex picture of normativity and distinctiveness. What these rhythmic movements ultimately generate is a style, defined by Baerveldt and Cresswell (2014, p. 60) as 'the *coherent deformation* of a norm or convention' (see also Baerveldt, 2013). Style is usually considered of great importance in art and every artist knows that, in order to be recognised, he or she needs to continue being creative within the (often self-imposed) boundaries of a coherent body of work. The same applies to our existence as social and cultural beings. The rhythms of our life are both freeing and constraining; in fact, they allow us to be creative precisely because they are always related to the conventional. The notion

of style helps us transcend the long-established dichotomies between individual and social, stability and change, sharedness and uniqueness. While creativity is, in essence, movement, this movement leaves multiple 'traces' and crystallises in the form of style – accents within our own generative rhythms of creating.

Note

1. The Online Etymology Dictionary (<http://www.etymonline.com/>).

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17

Rules

Tue Juelsbo

In this chapter, I will explore how rules can aid the creative process. Often seen as limiting factors, whether self- or other-imposed, rules can also act as the foundation upon which the creative process is built; within rules, limitation can turn into opportunity. Indeed, it is my premise here that rules might not be antithetical to creativity and, instead, facilitate it. If there is no frame to create within, there can be no creativity; rules are meant to set these frames. As shown in this chapter, various creative practices have their own 'rules' where skilled creators cultivate habits and routines precisely in order to work creatively. This '*Janus head*' – the dialectic relationship between rules and creativity – will be explored from the perspective of a socio-material and distributed approach to creativity (Glăveanu, 2014; Tanggaard, 2013).

I will refer to rules in the following as either material constraints or social conventions and investigate the relation between rules and creativity from three different angles: self-imposed rules, social rules/norms of the chosen practice, and a combination of both. To illustrate these, I will explore three Nordic cases that revolve around rules either directly or indirectly:

- (1) Constraints – the recent tendency amongst fine art and documentary photographers to return to 'basics' using analogue cameras and black and white films;
- (2) Conventions – the recent 20th anniversary of the avant-garde filmmaking movement, Dogme 95; and
- (3) Constraints *and* conventions – the film 'The Five Obstructions' (2003) by Jorgen Leth and Lars von Trier, where rules and obstructions become the protagonists of creativity.

Rules and their relation to creativity

If we turn to recent research within the tradition of the cultural psychology of creativity, we notice that the notion of rules is integral to creative action. From an initial view of creativity as belonging to the domain of the arts, individual genius and general eccentricity, much research today focuses on creativity as economically valuable, highly contextual, and situated, learnable and observable (Amabile, 1996; Sternberg, 2006). We have largely moved away from the romantic notion of the ‘remote artist-in-a-garret’ who would let the muses fly through his (the artist was, historically, most often a male) open window at night, to ways of thinking and doing that are replicable and take place in the messy processes and practices we call everyday life (McWilliam, 2007; see also Chapter 10).

My claim here is that a focus on rules can help us further develop both research and practice. But we need to work with a nuanced understanding of rules: they can be both *constraints* (e.g., derived from the material and what is afforded to our action by the photographic camera, for instance) and *conventions* (social-imposed norms and the institutionalised manifestations of rules; e.g., in the Dogme 95 and ‘The Five Obstructions’). Rules have a strong connection to materiality but their constitution is highly dependent on a socio-cultural system in which rules carry normative value. Practice is often guided by an amalgam of these different types of rules and, to strengthen both creative practice and research, I suggest that we cultivate a heightened attention to these different rules in creative activities.

Time to be playful and serious

In the words of John Dewey, ‘to be playful and serious at the same time is possible, and it defines the ideal mental condition’ (Dewey, 1910, p. 218). Like any other good game, to achieve this state you need rules and boundaries. To participate in a game of football, for instance, you need to know where the corner posts go, who’s who in the rival teams and how to act on the field. Only then can you move to the edge of the box (Bilton, 2007; Tanggaard & Stadil, 2014) and participate fully. As the photographer Jan Grarup turns to old analogue equipment, he must observe and adhere to the limits of that particular camera. When there are only three knobs on the camera, you have to learn how to manipulate them – know the rules and what they afford you – in order to engage in serious play, as Dewey recommended.

However, within the field of creativity research, rules are seldom investigated, maybe because much psychological research on creativity is suffering from the ‘embryonic fallacy’ (Moghaddam, 2010; Tanggaard 2013). This implies that the individual is seen as the source of psychological experience and not much attention is paid to context, social practices, and materiality as constitutive dimensions of the creative process. I will venture that socio-materiality and distributed creativity (Glăveanu, 2014; Hutchins, 1996) in many ways can complement the previously mentioned focus on geniuses and, later on, creative individuals at large. Their concern for rules, affordances and materiality is of particular interest here.

Socio-materiality, rules, and creativity research

From the perspective of socio-materiality, a camera is not a passive medium for us to manipulate – it is very much a substantial component of creativity that actively *co-constructs or mediates* what the photographer is able to create. Elaborating on previous and current researches that sought to establish context, social practices and the environment as more than ‘a bowl to the soup’, a neutral container for individuals (Lave, 2011; Lave & Wenger, 1991), socio-materiality designates a heightened focus on the objects and artefacts we surround ourselves with (see also Chapter 20). The artefacts invite us to engage in certain practices and these practices become physical manifestations of the rules afforded, in turn, by them.

To explain how humans and artefacts interact dynamically in the practice of photography, we can turn to Gibson’s notion of affordances (Gibson 1979, see also Chapter 2). The analogue camera, using physical films that need to be loaded into it, affords us certain actions and not others, ‘affecting’ us in a similar manner to how we ‘affect’ it through manipulation. The constraints offered by the camera become subtle manifestations of material-imposed rules springing from affordances. In this way, the photographer and the chosen camera become an inseparable and interdependent whole (Latour, 2005). This intersection between human doing and knowing represents a flexible engagement with the world, entailing open-ended processes of improvisation with the social, material and experiential resources at hand (see also Chapter 12).

Having established a distinction of different kinds of rules related to material constraints and social conventions, that rules are not antithetical to creativity, and that we might benefit from going about creativity

research and creative practice with an attention to rules, I turn now to three Nordic cases. Time to see what is actually in the hands of photographers and moviemakers!

Picking up the camera

The scene is the kitchen of Jan Grarup, noted Danish documentary photographer, three-times winner of the World Press Photo and numerous other awards.

The table is dimly lit. Its rough wooden surface tells tales of years of use, and the various markings and stains whisper of early morning coffee and late night wine. On the table are a dog-eared passport, receipts and a few coins in the forefront – in the background you can see a MacBook computer, phones, several portable hard drives and wiring that crisscrosses from electrical outlets and onto the table to feed all the devices. In the middle of the picture you can see a range of different cameras. All in all, it looks like a standard photographer's working table. But next to Jan's iconic sunglasses is an open bag full of soon to be developed film. Analogue film cassettes in various formats placed in the middle of the digital set-up.

This picture of Jan's table struck something in me when it recently appeared in my Facebook feed. Why would one of the world's most sought-after war and crises photographers choose deliberately to (re)introduce analogue ways of working into his practice? This became the inquiry that informs the present chapter.

You can spot Jan's images in the *New York Times*, *Time*, *The Guardian* and *Newsweek* on a regular basis, where he is covering the monstrosities of war, famine and natural disasters. As other in-demand storytellers, he's making good use of the speed and ease of digital photography to send his images off to media agencies around the world. Being trained as an analogue photographer at the Danish School of Journalism from 1989 to 1991, Jan started out with a non-digital workflow but, as most newspapers and media agencies changed to digital equipment in the late 1990s, he followed suit. Today, most reportage and commercial photography is digital. Why, then, would a modern photographer opt to photograph in black and white and to use film? Why do some photographers deliberately choose to 'handicap themselves', as some voices in the photographic community would have it?

As I started researching the topic in trade journals and newspapers articles, and by talking to other photographers, I came to realise that analogue photography never really disappeared. Several of the world's

leading fine art and documentary photographers have recently been returning to 'basics' and picking up their old cameras.

Shooting analogue films, you manipulate a tangible thing – a celluloid strip of negative imprinted with light – and you work with an immediate sense of materiality. Digital photographers have, by and large, become digital symbol manipulators but, returning to old practices, we honour the fundamental knowledge of the tangible (see also Chapter 20). This fundamental understanding of how our tools work is important in helping us understand our craft and in understanding our world. Using a fully mechanical device doesn't allow you to have that technical detachment.

Using old equipment doesn't make Jan creative per se but I will argue that the choice of use holds significance if we look at it from an analytical socio-material stance. This self-imposed rule (using old cameras) leads Jan to play by the material-imposed rules, the affordances of the camera, *while* breaking some of the social-imposed rules (convention of the field; shooting digitally in the 21st century).

Playing by or breaking the rules of photography

Taking photos is, by and large, quite a simple process. All you need to create images is a sealed box with just a small hole, optics to concentrate the light coming into the box through the hole, and a light-sensitive medium inside the box to absorb the light. This goes for both analogue and digital photography where, respectively, a filmstrip or a digital sensor capture the light. These factors can be considered the laws of the material substrate any photographer operates by. Choosing a specific camera brings a different – or, at least, additional – set of rules to the game: the constraints or material-imposed rules of the chosen camera. These rules coexist with or are governed by the conventions of the field of photography and the norms of society – the social-imposed rules. It is they who inform us about what constitutes a good photo, what you can and can't photograph, how to photograph, and so on.

Picking up an old analogue Leica camera, you are struck by the heft of the deceptively small metal-body camera and how few buttons you can physically manipulate using it. In this sense, this camera affords you very little as a photographer compared with newer, digital models. The latter hold a plethora of possibilities for manipulation via complex menu systems in the camera and extensive post-production at the desktop of your computer afterwards. With analogue cameras, the devil



Figure 17.1 No Photography Allowed

Source: By Adam Foster, image licensed under Creative Commons.

is in the detail. However, instead of seeing this as a limiting factor, Jan Grarup describes how this old technology allows him to focus on the most important thing – getting the *good shot*. It lets him strive for perfection.

As shown in Figure 17.1, ‘No Photography Allowed’, one rule was broken (social conventions) in order for the tongue-in-cheek image to even exist, while others were necessarily upheld, such as the physical laws of the photographic act and the material-imposed rules of the camera (constraints).

Dogmas, chastity vows, and obstructions

I swear to submit to the following set of rules drawn up and confirmed by DOGMA 95. (...) I swear as a director to refrain from personal taste! I am no longer an artist. I swear to refrain from creating a 'work', as I regard the instant as more important than the whole. My supreme goal is to force the truth out of my characters and settings. I swear to do so by all the means available and at the cost of any good taste and any aesthetic considerations. Thus I make my VOW OF CHASTITY.

(Opening and closing statements from DOGMA95)

Those words marked the beginning of an era and a revitalisation of Danish cinema. When Lars von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg turned up on 13 March 1995 at the grand conference in Paris to celebrate the first 100 years of cinematography, they brought something more than just business cards. When Lars was invited to speak in front of the audience, he threw a stack of red pamphlets into the crowd announcing DOGME 95. The air had a whiff of revolution.

The DOGME 95 manifesto, with its ten rules to which any Dogme film must conform, was formulated to rebel against the expensive productions of the time that catered to mainstream taste. The Dogme brethren felt that filmmaking had become all about prestige and hard cash; they wanted to simplify production, letting the stories and acting take centre stage as they pledged to act according to the ten dogmatic rules they had established. Awards were won and a total of 31 films got the official DOGME certificate while numerous others in the period from 1995–2005 were inspired by the look, feel and simplicity of production in places as far away as Korea, Chile, and the USA. The directors and actors came to see the rules and vows as a form of liberation from the standards of heavy production – the established rules of the field at that time. In this sense, the *self-imposed rules* of simplicity and adherence to the manifesto helped the directors escape other, more ensnaring social rules and conventions of expensive movie financing. The new rules became an integral part of creative expression, instead of something to be endured by creators. As history will have it, self-imposed rules can gradually become the social convention or norm and, in turn, something to rebel against (by a new *avant-garde*). Thus, as more and more Dogme movies were produced, these rules became a genre and a standard of production in itself until the movement was officially dissolved in 2005.

Lars von Trier, one of the founders of the Dogme movement, later took this notion of rules and obstructions a step further when he turned to his old friend and mentor, Jorgen Leth. It was time for the rules to take over – to become the ‘syntactic pivot’ around which the argument was understood and a new film was created. Back in 1967, Jorgen had produced ‘The Perfect Human’, Lars’ favourite film, and Lars gave Jorgen a challenge: He was to remake ‘The Perfect Human’ five times and, each time, with a different obstruction/rule imposed by Lars von Trier.

‘Watching “The Five Obstructions” is at once like witnessing two chess masters playing dominoes and like spying on a series of therapy sessions’, as A. O. Scott from the *New York Times* put it in his review on 26 May 2004. As you watch an impeccably dressed Jorgen Leth sit in the slums of the red-light district in Bombay, eating a lavish dinner in front of a translucent screen separating him from a crowd of street children, you might find yourself agreeing with the reviewer. From the first challenge (remake the film in Cuba with no shot lasting longer than 12 frames), through the second (remake the film in the worst place in the world but do not show that place onscreen), and all the way to the fifth and last challenge, you truly feel like you’re watching two masterminds communicating and creating through the medium and via obstructions.

The creation of the ‘Five Obstructions’ was, in itself, a creative act. With rules as the pivot, it represented a break from the conventions of traditional moviemaking (see also Chapter 3). Usually, the director would try very hard to hide the different rules at play – both constraints and conventions – and, while the Dogme movement took a first step in the right direction with its manifesto (rebellious against the conventions of the field by using some of the material constraints, e.g., banning the use of artificial lights), ‘The Five Obstructions’ took it one step further. *The rules became the creation.*

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued for a renewed focus on the relationship between creativity and rules and, thus, for an extended view of creativity. Instead of limiting our view to the creative person or process (mostly idea generation), I argue that it is in the interplay between person and process, idea and object that new things and practices materialise. When creativity is seen as part of everyday life and ingrained in daily life practices, it becomes a process of making sense and going about one’s life

with practical wisdom (Sternberg, 1998). The subtle or explicit rules – constraints and conventions – with which we engage knowingly or unknowingly – as self-imposed, material-imposed, social-imposed or an amalgam – shape and guide our creative practice.

Cultivating a heightened attention to the different rules at play might help us orient ourselves as creative practitioners whenever rules become building blocks or frames, rather than a nuisance to be endured. As researchers, a heightened attention to rules can inform both our fieldwork and our own creative practice. In all these cases, the interplay between socio-cultural and material aspects, and how norms shape the affordances of artefacts, represent tensions to be explored further.

The photographer can't envision the perfect shot without actively getting out there and trying to capture it. It is by knowing the rules of the field and being sensitive to the socio-material affordances granted by the equipment that one learns to play the game – and to develop it further. These artefacts constitute important parts of the process of creativity and, in this way, creative processes and products are not thought of as separate entities but are viewed as an interdependent whole with various rules shaping this continuous *pas de deux*.

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18

Space

Nikita A. Kharlamov

I see, in front of me right now, my computer screen in my quaint office at Aalborg University and, on the screen, the virtual page in my Word processor. This page, comfortably, already has the abstract of this chapter on it, the abstract I prepared months ago. The page is no longer empty *space*, and now that these first sentences are in as well, I am decidedly protected from the dreaded ‘writer’s block’ by the neat justified lines of black text on white page.

‘Spaces have multiplied, been broken up and have diversified. There are spaces today of every kind and every size, for every use and every function. To live is to pass from one space to another, while doing your very best not to bump yourself’ (Perec, 1974/2008, p. 6). Georges Perec, this acclaimed weirdo of French literature, wrote an entire manuscript on space, a little book entitled *Species of spaces* (1974/2008). The first species in his taxonomy is, indeed, ‘The Page’ (Perec, 1974/2008, p. 9) – I can hardly think of something more Perecquian than referring, in writing, or more adequately, in typing, to *the page itself* on which filling a page with lines of text is discussed. Perec, whose entire thought seemingly converges on the activity of writing, writes how scribbling sequences of letters on an empty page of paper provides the said page of paper with an orientation, and the said lines with direction.

Filling a void (*space*) of paper with signs (*meaning*) – is an idea that directly resonates with Yi-Fu Tuan’s geographical thought. For Tuan, the essence of spatiality is humans transforming abstract, undifferentiated space into a fabric of meaningful places (Kharlamov, 2012; Tuan, 1977; see also Chapter 7). From a psychological standpoint, this is a crucial part of the process of development whereby human functioning proceeds by way of differentiation, articulation and hierarchical integration (Bibace & Kharlamov, 2013) – what Heinz Werner (1957) famously

labelled the ‘orthogenetic principle’ of development. This principle in the domain of organism–environment relationship is where what J. J. Gibson (1986) called *affordances* comes from (see Chapter 2).

Filling a void with meaning. Creating a *difference*. As Perceps not so much ‘writes’ as ‘conveys through’ his writing, meaning construction is an emotionally charged business – in his case, one laden with anxieties, nostalgia, yearning. The same meaning also ultimately escapes writing – as Marc Lowenthal notes, after an attempt is made to describe and communicate everything, ‘what always remains after such an effort, what remains uncommunicated, is misery’ (2010, p. 50). And yet, Perceps continued efforts to write and communicate the ‘infraordinary’, ‘the markings and manifestations of the everyday that consistently escape our attention as they compose the essence of our lives’ (Lowenthal, 2010, p. 51).

Poem on the wall

Let’s continue, for a little longer, operating with the notion of space where text could belong. Among the various spaces of this kind, urban walls are among the most ubiquitous, and among the most contested; in a Western city, walls and fences house signs, advertisements, posters, flyers and, of course, graffiti – not to mention the contested art of the Banksy variety.

*he’ll never give you balloons
but a good memory instead*

Read the first two lines of what I might call, provisionally, and with a nod to Stanley Fish (1980), a *poem*, written on the wall of the beach house at Lyons Park, also known locally as Dane Street Beach, in Beverly, Massachusetts (Figure 18.1). The anonymous producer of this inscription had used a tool (a spray can, most likely) to write an emotion-laden piece of language right into the fabric of publicly accessible urban environment. Another inscription in white paint visibly contests the poem in red. A Google Images search for the first line of the poem on January 2015 reveals that at least one person other than the present author has taken a photograph of the same scene, in what looks like summer, and posted the photograph online at a publicly accessible website.

The brick wall in this case has served several different roles. First, as an *object* in itself, a result of the human activity of building (a nod to



Figure 18.1 Dane Street Beach, Beverly, MA, USA
 Source: Taken by author, January 2015.

Heidegger, 1954/2008). But also as *space* in itself: a container for what beyond doubt was a result of creative *activity*; a space with an affordance for the said activity and, once it has an affordance, potentially also a trigger. Finally, the wall with the inscription has served as *catalyst* for further creative activity, of the independent photographers and for the present author. Human environment is formed through precisely such historically extended *layers* of materiality and activity – layers that are meaningful and significant, and that foster emotional responses and further communicative activities. What does it mean, however, to denote this space as a site of ‘creative activity’?

From extended mind to distributed creativity

A cluster of ideas upsets the common-sense understanding of creativity as a property of the creative ‘mind’, as something akin to personality traits. As Clark and Chalmers (1998) famously argued, what we alternatively call ‘cognition’, ‘mind’, or ‘consciousness’ is not contained inside the head of a ‘person’, but is *extended into* the environment, into the very space that surrounds us, and can only exist as a property of this organism–environment relationship.

Consider the face, this absolutely central facet of a human organism. It is well-known how the human brain is geared toward recognising faces even in some of the most unlikely shapes and scenes (witness the age-old tendency to ascribe facial features to hills and mountains, even on Mars). However, perform a simple experiment by looking at somebody's face (or a photograph, if you have no humans at hand) and then closing your eyes and trying to reconstruct the image of the face. In fact, it is a task next to impossible, no matter how much the Romantics would love to have it the other way around. Still, to the extent of the available abilities, skills, habits, experience and, perhaps, talent, it is possible for a person to attempt creating a representation of a face. On paper, for example, using words (The nose – is it narrow? Gaelic, perhaps? Or bulbous? Is there a nose bump in the middle? – and so forth), or maybe lines of ink or paint (see also Chapter 21). Indeed, some great painters have been able to create or reconstruct faces without looking, in the process, at any source material (though equally many more like to use sitters, photographs and sketches).

This little experiment is explained by the fact that, to the best of our current understanding, the human brain does not actually store an ongoing representation of the visual scene in front of the eyes like a computer stores a complete webcam image feed (one megapixel) in random access memory. The *world itself* serves as memory, accessible for updating online, as needed, depending on whatever concrete task the visual system and the psychological system is engaged in at any given moment (Land & Tatler, 2009, ch. 10).

It is a small and logical step from here to conclude that the very material space and its features – such as these words on my computer screen – are not an 'outcome' of a 'creative process'. It is not my 'mind' that first creates a meaning – a blueprint for writing or making or doing or performing – and then my 'body' effects a realisation of the blueprint and imprints its features on an external world. The *doing itself*, as part of being-in-the-world, or *dwelling* (Heidegger, 1954/2008; Ingold, 2000; see also Chapters 4 and 12) is the primary process in creativity, and not a 'mind' locked inside a person's head – or, for that matter, brain, as evident in elegant perceptual-action experiments with children (Rivière, 2014).

This 'dwelling' account of psychological functioning – and consequently, of creativity – implies that any activity, be it even the activity of reciting a well-learned poem, is much more here-and-now, spontaneous, constructive, even serendipitous than common sense would admit. It is no longer surprising in this light that remembering, imagining, and

predicting are, as neuroscientists have shown (Mullally & Maguire, 2014), tightly interconnected; indeed, *memory* itself is constructive and future-directed (see Chapter 9). If so, then, the world itself is also not a passive recipient of imprinting, but offers endless possibilities for *stumbling* (see Chapter 19).

The Staatsbibliothek experiment

I found a desk in a row of desks on a little balcony-like space that houses open access law books (Rechtswissenschaft). From this balcony, I face huge windows, a cathedral straight ahead, the house of the Berlin Philharmonic on my right-hand side.

Public libraries have different rituals and rules of access. The ones I have visited in the USA thus far were all open access. Philadelphia, PA – I actually used to have a Philly library card. San Francisco, CA. Nyack, NY. Boston, MA. (In all the years I spent in Worcester, MA, I haven't visited the public library once.) You could just walk in past the guards with whatever you have on you, no passes or registration needed, and proceed straight into the reading rooms and other facilities. In Aalborg, Denmark, I also simply walk in, no cards needed. But here, in Berlin, I had, first, to sign up for a library card to get past the guard post (staffed by two middle-aged women perched royally on elevated armchairs, overlooking the gates that open only for the library card holder).

An experiment: Watch *Wings of Desire* (Dauman & Wenders, 1987). (The original German title was *Der Himmel über Berlin*, *The Sky* (or *Heaven*) *above Berlin*.) Take a photograph (Figure 18.2) of the Berlin Library interior (make sure the photograph has a bit of sky in it). Retrace the steps of the angels.

The Berlin Public Library at Potsdamer Straße is just like much of Berlin itself. It has a great deal of open, empty space. Uncounted (by me) cubic feet of emptiness hover above the library floors. Even the men's room, as soon as the visitor passes a narrow dilapidated cubicle just past the door, opens into a wide, empty room covered with tiles, one wall completely devoid of anything but a faucet for filling the cleaning bucket. Right now, there are pockets of renovation around the library. The façade is being renovated (and there is a massive excavator rolling to and fro in front of the main entrance), and there is scaffolding inside as well. Still, the library is the *same*. As I watch the library scenes in *Wings of Desire*, I realise that my laptop sits atop one of the very desks that I see on the screen, illuminated by the same brown lamps (perhaps the



Figure 18.2 Allgemeiner Lesesaal, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Haus Potsdamer Straße, Berlin, Germany

Source: Taken by the author, February 2015.

light bulbs are energy-saving now). Almost 30 years later, laptops and cell phones on the desks might be the only signs that we're not in West Germany anymore. It is as if history itself has sedimented in this spacious edifice, even as all around it Walter Benjamin's storm of progress rages, propelling the Angelus Novus forward (Benjamin, 1950/1999, p. 249).

Perec says nothing about libraries in his 'Species of Space' except that readers read there (Perec, 1974/2008, p. 14). Yet, of all possible spaces, they might be among the most paradoxical in terms of their relationship with both history and creativity. Libraries exist to conserve and preserve in an unchangeable form, to solidify, to make perpetually accessible to the future generations. What can be more alien to both the *irreversibility of time* (physical and historical) and the *generation of novelty* (that is, creativity in the most basic sense of the term)? Still, it is the library where a learner, young and old, is often, even in the age of the Internet, sent to learn and develop. (Indeed, in many countries – such as Denmark and the USA – it is the public library where the poorest and least technologically enabled members of the public access the Internet.) This may be what Borges's man of the Library meant when he wrote that 'the Library

is limitless and periodic' (Borges, 1941/1962, p. 87, italics removed). Infinite, open, chaotic, and yet with a seeming regularity and orderliness (see also Chapter 10).

These paragraphs were *written in* the library, and are precisely an exercise in *stumbling*. Do they also *belong to* the library? Will they belong there in the future?

Spaces of creativity and creative spaces

In *The production of space*, Henri Lefebvre (1974/1991, p. 33; see also Shields, 2011) famously distinguished between *perceived space* ('spatial practice' in translation; the ultimate locus of Perce's 'infraordinary'), *conceived space* ('representations of space'), and *lived space* ('representational spaces'). The perceived, physical space of daily practices is 'trialectically' related to, on the one hand, the limiting, repressing plans and designs of urban planners and property speculators (conceived space – artificial, often not liveable, superimposed). On the other hand, there is the lived space of imagination, subversion, resistance, unplanned and unplannable novelty. Lefebvre and his Leftist followers often pointed to the inherent contradiction between the latter two dimensions, the contradiction that plays out in urban conflicts over, for instance, gentrification and displacement, and in social movements.

In recent years, since Richard Florida (2002) coined the term 'creative class', creativity entered the realm of conceived space as city managers and consultancies across the world raced to attract the said class. The jury is still out on the successes of the ensuing policies (Nathan, 2015), and much ink has been spilled over whether they also cause displacement, and even oppression, of the non-creative classes. Without going further into this debate, I would rather suggest that, in light of the idea of creativity as extended into, and even further, distributed (Glăveanu, 2014, Ch. 11) across, the physical and social environment, the very notion of defining a *particular space* as 'space of creativity' is misleading. Equally misleading is defining a person or a social class as 'creative' and then hoping to design a container – a 'creative city', for instance – into which this creative entity will fit.

Instead, we should explore the properties of the distributed relationship between humans and space – the relationship itself being creative, rather than space or humans alone. I conclude by taking Nathan's proposal that diversity of the city is key to its 'creativity' one step further by connecting it to *the original site of urbanism* – Georg Simmel's (1903/1997) metropolis, and by suggesting that much as the

metropolis – a fusion of people and space – is defined by its diversity and rhythm, for any space, or more accurately, human–space relationship to be creative, it has to bear the marks of *diversity* and *difference* (see also Chapter 5). In this sense, the metropolis may also be the original site of modern creativity.

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19

Stumbling

Lene Tanggaard

This chapter reflects on the experience of stumbling and how learning from such experiences in everyday life can make us more creative.

I will focus specifically on stumbling as an instance in everyday life leading to *learning* or resulting in *data*, which can be used for creative purposes. Examples of this include a conversation that sticks in our memory; a chance observation made at work, or in the local school; or an advertisement that provokes anger, without being immediately able to say why. When an experience constitutes an example of data, it is often because it seems so strange or awkward that we begin to reflect on it and learn from it (see also Chapter 15). Examples of stumbling data from everyday life are almost endless, showing that almost any event can provide us with valuable information (Latour, 2005).

In this sense, it is not bad to stumble. To stumble upon something is to be in a position to find out new things about the world we live in. It is through deviations or noteworthy events that the social world becomes evident, or an object to reflect upon. Deviation often fuels the imagination, and this may lead to a break with habitual assumptions about everyday life. *Imagination* is understood, here, as one of the most important dimensions in the process of turning instances of stumbling into creativity (see also Chapter 6). Imagination allows people and groups to think beyond the given, the here-and-now, to envisage alternatives, to create parallel worlds, or to travel through time, in the past or in the future. Imagination is both extremely individual – people imagine their unique futures – and deeply social, in its constituents (fed by media and other kinds of shared representations) (see Zittoun & de Saint-Laurent, 2015).

In order conceptually to understand the creative dimension of stumbling upon something, I will draw on the pragmatist epistemology

developed by John Dewey (1938). According to Dewey, most of our life is based on routine and habit (also referred to as ‘tacit’ or ‘silent’ knowledge); thinking and reflection become necessary only at the point where habitual life cannot continue unchanged. In this sense, imagining what might happen next, or thinking about what has happened, are necessary only when ordinary practices cannot continue as they were. These instances, though, which involve imagination, may be seen as an attempt to re-establish balance after an error, or to understand the nature of the apparent strangeness in order to be able to take action in response. According to the principles of pragmatism, all knowledge is connected to action, either directly (as in action research) or with respect to the development of ‘thinking technologies’ that enable us to deal with new situations in the future (Brinkmann, 2012).

In his numerous books and articles, Dewey diagnosed the problems inherent to *‘the spectator theory of knowledge’*. For Dewey, philosophical problems and positions – such as the spectator theory of knowledge – do not suddenly fall from the sky, but are ideas that grow out of the lives of communities (Dewey, 1920, p. v). Thus, he traced the dualisms of knowledge and action, ends and means, the ideal and the real, and theory and practice, to the birth of science and philosophy in Ancient Greek society, in which a sharp division of labour was instituted between, on the one hand, slaves and women who took care of the practical work and, on the other hand, free men, who could spend their time engaging with philosophy and purely theoretical thought. According to Dewey, it was the social separation of the working class and the leisure class that ‘became a metaphysical division into things which are mere means and things which are ends’ (Dewey, 1925, p. 124). This social, cultural, and economic division has subsequently influenced our philosophical ideas and has, in particular, given rise to the ‘spectator theory of knowledge’ (Dewey, 1929, p. 23): the theory that true knowledge arises through the passive observation of reality, which allegedly is independent of the observer.

Dewey was keen to demonstrate that this epistemological idea was not only wrong as a philosophical thesis, but also that it gave rise to problematic social consequences in its separation between those who know (e.g., those educated in theoretical forms of thinking) and those who do not know and need to be instructed appropriately by those who do know (e.g., people with practical forms of education). This separation should be replaced, Dewey argued, with a perspective that insists on the fact that different people know *different things*, and that everything we know – if it is to deserve the label ‘knowledge’ – must have



Figure 19.1 Stumbling

Source: By Fimp, under a Creative Commons licence.

some connection with practical action. We should define something as knowledge only if it allows us to derive some benefit for human experience. This applies to even the most abstract forms of theory. What we call theory, thought and reflection are forms of human activity that are required when our habits are disturbed and suffer a breakdown, as in instances of stumbling (Figure 19.1).

How can we stumble creatively?

In the above, knowledge is not something mirroring nature, or achieved by passively observing things; rather, it is something that arises when there is a disconnection between existing understandings of a phenomenon and the here-and-now encounter with the phenomenon we are trying to understand. To take a specific example: one day in the supermarket, you meet a friend. You have not seen her for many years. She says ‘Hello’ to you, but you do not immediately recognise her. The friend’s appearance has changed; she now dresses in a more grown-up way and her hair is shorter and turning grey. You might find it difficult to recognise her as the ‘same’ as before. As a result, even in only minor ways, you might have to change your assumptions about your friend; accordingly, new knowledge arises within the situation. You now know her as a different person, at least going by her appearance. Meeting her

again, you become curious. Has she also changed her political opinions? What about sports and music, which were her favourite topics of conversation years ago? Is she still with her husband and what about her job situation? In Dewey's sense, you now begin an enquiry, initiated by bumping into your friend by chance.

If you do not stumble on a regular basis – or, at least, are not aware of this happening, one of the most important things you can do in order for creative deviations to occur is to re-learn the joy of experimentation and *learning by doing*, including *learning by failing*. A renowned Danish fashion designer, Henrik Vibskov, frequently talks about the importance of 'learning through failures'. During a TV show quoted in Tanggaard (2014b, p. 6), he said 'Failures are my main means of learning'. According to Vibskov, mistakes can initiate a creative process because they point towards something that could not be imagined before venturing into the experience. This is the impetus that is familiar to many of us: contact with, or resistance afforded by, the materials with which we work gives rise to new ideas. Creative imagination is fundamentally relational, arising in the space between subjects and objects – even if immediate experience might give us the impression that good ideas pop into our heads seemingly out of nowhere.

Many large international companies take these findings into account, knowing that creativity cannot be provided on demand, but requires space and time for incubation. A famous example of this is Google's 20 per cent rule. For 20 per cent of their time, the employees at Google are allowed to experiment with their own projects. In his book *What Matters Now*, Gary Hamel (2012) mentions that many large American companies run similar schemes, because innovation is seen as a key ingredient in ensuring their survival. An innovative company, Hamel writes, is able to see itself and its environment as a portfolio of skills and assets which can be combined in an infinite number of ways to create new products and technologies. However, the problem is that many companies do not invest in ways of increasing employees' innovative skills. They operate a kind of innovation apartheid whereby only the chosen few are allowed to define themselves as inventive. They perhaps feel that they have enough ideas in the first place; but they forget to ask themselves how many of these are potential 'game changers'.

The point is that they should encourage 'wild ideas', permit experimentation and 'error', develop others' ideas and ensure that conditions allow for plenty of new proposals to be put forward. In his work developing a theory of innovation, Hamel discovered that innovators are not necessarily 'super sharp' or artistically gifted people; rather, they are

people who have developed a kind of routine in which they regard the environment as a sea of opportunities. They turn dogma on its head. They see more clearly. They utilise what they can and they tune into customers' feelings. In many ways, they are anthropologists who seek to explore every chink and crack, every opening that errors create in the space between dream and reality.

Experiments allow for unexpected discoveries. Many scientific discoveries are the result of the phenomenon I call 'stumbling'. This approach sees errors as positive. After all, we talk about '*coming across*' or '*stumbling across*' a great offer, or a good idea. Again, stumbling is a positive thing. To 'stumble upon things' (in this figurative sense) is a precondition for being able to see the world in interesting ways. It is when stumbling that we can break with the habitus that characterises most of our everyday lives. What we call thought is, from a pragmatic perspective, an attempt at redressing an imbalance caused by a failure or fault; to understand that which at first seems incomprehensible and to achieve more appropriate means of acting.

To benefit from instances of stumbling upon something, we must be open to the new data we encounter whenever we happen to run into new solutions (see also Chapter 8). To do this, we must keep our 'antennae out' and be curious about the world: this will often set the powers of our imagination in motion. Imagination is very often prompted by a break within our current situation, a kind of disruption resulting from what Peirce, cited in Zittoun and Cerchia (2013, p. 2), calls '“irritation” due to the suspension of belief in things as they are'. And yet, imagination starts quite concretely from things as they are and moves them further.

In talking of 'stumbling' or 'deviation data', I am also referring to the subject's transactions with an environment that he or she, at certain moments, 'happens to cross' and wonders at. This reiterates something I have frequently highlighted (Tanggaard, 2013, 2014a): creativity is, in fact, rooted in *socio-materiality*, an insight that takes its inspiration from a number of ontological and methodological considerations within Actor-Network Theory (Latour, 2005; Law, 2004), with particular focus on improvisation in distributed relations (Ingold & Hallam, 2007). The materials-related concept of creativity offers a sharpened awareness of the ways in which materials, objects, and environments suggest innovative measures and also provide an opportunity for innovation within social activities. The significance of material factors has been neglected in most of the existing psychological research on creativity. There has been a marked tendency to adopt an intellectual

understanding of creativity that is restricted to the individual person, where creative potential is often defined in terms of divergent thinking. In this sense, the environment plays a subordinate role, acting as the bowl containing the soup, but not being part of the soup itself (Guilford, 1950). The problem with such an individualised understanding of creativity is that we lose sight of the fact that environments are, in fact, constitutive for creativity (Glăveanu, 2014; Tanggaard, 2014a).

The ontological consequence of a materialised and relational view of creativity is that we are forced to move away from a dualism in which the individual subject is opposed to the object and, instead, examine the ways in which materials and environments invite people to innovate. This dialectic is a general characteristic of all social practice, and if we are to achieve a greater degree of analytical sensitivity as to how basic material conditions affect our ways of expressing ourselves creatively then, as Schraube (2009, p. 300) highlights, we should bear the following in mind: 'it is not only the subjects that do something with the things; *things also do something with the subjects*' (emphasis added).

Here, we can briefly turn to a contemporary illustrative example. The Danish-Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson – known, for example, for his temporary physical transformation of New York City through the work 'The New York City Waterfalls' – told of how ideas are not given to him, but actively taken from something and then embodied in a dialogical interchange as a continuation of his work with materials. In an interview with the Danish magazine *Weekendavisen* (Bonde, 2009), Eliasson talked about the need to manipulate ideas before knowing their value. The journalist asked the question 'How do you get your ideas?'

It is not that ideas are created in a vacuum which exists after finishing one work and waiting for a new idea to arise. Ideas are generated in continuation of previous work – as the result of a dialogue. I do not think that creativity comes from within; rather than having an idea, you embody ideas and, in this way, you are testing whether they are viable.

If we are to follow Eliasson's phenomenological description, ideas are not seen as coming from within or resulting from a definite moment of inspiration. Rather, they are embodied in our practical work in the world.

Certainly, our knowledge of the world is a practical affair, and it is something grounded in our habitual conduct. We *know how*, Dewey says, 'by means of our habits'; the knowledge involved 'lives in the

muscles, not in consciousness' (Dewey, 1922, p. 177). When we develop habits of dealing with the world, we develop an understanding of the world, which, therefore, cannot be ascribed to a disembodied 'mind' (see also Chapter 18).

Conclusion

This chapter is based on the premise that we must reflect on instances of stumbling in order to be more creative. This type of deviation may arise inadvertently, or be instigated deliberately (see Chapter 17). Once we become aware of errors and instances of stumbling in everyday life and begin to learn from them, we have the opportunity to make discoveries and create something new. This suggests an understanding of creativity that:

- (1) disregards a specifically harmonious view of the creative process in favour of one that may be characterised by failure, mistakes and the realisation that we need to re-think things;
- (2) celebrates the importance of making small, gradual steps and movements, rather than being an imagined hero who creates amazing things out of thin air; and
- (3) expands the pragmatist understanding of knowledge, in which creativity is theorised as that which makes a difference in practice by using new tools to manage specific challenges.

All of these emphasise the fact that creativity is a process and a phenomenon that is found in the *transactions* between subject and object, where ideas emerge from the materials with which we work.

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20

Things

Vlad Petre Glăveanu

We are born into a world of things: something that is undeniable. Things surround us, they give our life stability, accumulate over time but also change and diversify. Arguably, the most simple definition of creativity would be the process leading to the creation of new things, material and symbolic. In most cases, creative processes leave a 'visible' mark in the world, they generate or change things around us, but they can also take the shape of utterances or processes (see also Chapter 7). A dance performance can be a creative outcome despite the fact we would not commonly call it a 'thing' (although its recording might be considered one). Nonetheless, by and large, creativity involves a kind of *externalisation* or *materialisation* (Moran & John-Steiner, 2003). Individuals and their culture are connected to each other through things, in the constant dynamic between internalisation and externalisation, appropriation and transformation of the material world. But, of course, other people stand 'between' person and things (Vygotsky, 1997), those who make the things we use, who introduce them to us, who teach us or guide our action. It is virtually impossible – or, in any case, reductionist – to consider the relation between individuals and their material surroundings without taking into account the crucial part played by other people and by society at large. In other words, without understanding how things become, through (inter)action, objects and, ultimately, artefacts.

Surprisingly for creativity research, however, things, objects, artefacts are rarely taken into consideration (Tanggaard, 2013). And this despite a pervasive focus on products in recent definitions of this phenomenon and in the methodologies used for evaluating creativity (e.g., the consensual definition and consensual assessment technique proposed by Amabile, 1996). In fact, the interest of most psychologists working

in this area is placed on unpacking the ‘immaterial’ aspects of creative production: personality traits, cognitive processes, intelligence, motivation, forms of pathology, and so on. This largely disembodied, intra-psychological approach was challenged in recent decades by more and more studies focused on the social aspects of creativity (see the We-paradigm in Glăveanu, 2010), without really bringing materiality into the equation of creative production. The ‘new’ concern for communication and social recognition mainly remained at the level of language, representation and institutionalised forms of culture. And this despite a growing body of empirical evidence suggesting that, at least for creators themselves, material objects and their properties play an important role (for findings from five different creative domains, see Glăveanu et al., 2013). Indeed, materials support, shape, react to, resist and generally lead creative action. They appear, at least from a phenomenological perspective, to be actors in their own right. How are we to understand this?

In this section, I propose and discuss a basic (but surely not uncontroversial) distinction between things, objects and artefacts. This typology is proposed not as a tool to classify material reality (because materiality goes beyond these simple categories which don’t account, for example, for the body, microscopic structures below the level of our perception, and so on); rather, it is meant to capture the *relation* between us and materiality. In other words, this distinction refers to the nature of this relationship and suggests that we interact with material entities either *as* things, objects, or artefacts, depending on context. Importantly, the ‘status’ of the material entities we manipulate is not set in advance, but constructed during the interaction itself and thus open to change. Of course, the things around us can be considered and related to in a variety of other ways. For a scientist, a microscope is an instrument, for an economist it might be catalogued as a commodity, and so on (see also Chapter 13). My interest in the distinction between things, objects and artefacts comes from its relevance for theorising creativity. As will become obvious shortly, these conceptual categories are meant to engage with key issues in this area, such as conventionality, affordances and the flexibility of action.

The thing itself

The interrogation about materiality needs to start from the thing itself. At least, this is what philosopher Martin Heidegger thought in his essay ‘The thing’ (Heidegger, 1971). By focusing our attention on the



Figure 20.1 A jug

Source: By freegr, source: pixabay; image in the public domain.

'thingness' of a jug (see Figure 20.1), Heidegger was trying to get us to experience materiality before or in the absence of our usual cultural representations and scripts about what a jug is. Of course, one might wonder if this is ever possible, or if it is a useful exercise. When adopting a phenomenological approach we can, however, at least try to approximate what such an experience would be like. After all, during our first months of life we do encounter things in the world around us prior to language. But arguably, even then, things don't only exist outside us but are being introduced to us by others, positioned in front of or against us – in other words, for Heidegger, turned into objects. How do we relate to a jug then, as a thing?

First, we perceive its physical properties. We see it, as Heidegger noted, as self-supporting. Gibson's (1966) theory of direct perception can be interesting in this regard since it postulates that the affordances of objects are immediately available to us for as long as we can perceive them. This theory has been rightly criticised (see Chapter 2), especially

since what objects afford or not is largely culturally conditioned. Direct perception might inform us that the jug is a solid object that can be filled, lifted, broken, and so on, but this information will not help us use it 'as a jug'. For Heidegger, it was the *void* inside a jug actually doing the holding, not its sides or bottom, although these are usually the ones we notice and represent when thinking about the jug. In other words, the thingness of a jug, should we ever be able to perceive it, would surprise us because it contradicts or resists common uses or ideas about what a jug is. Material entities as things are fundamentally open to any potential use and appropriation by culture while, at the same time, imposing their insurmountable constraints. The jug can be lifted, thrown, put upside down, glued to the wall, and so on; all these actions are 'afforded' by it but, if we are not careful in handling it, the jug will break and this is an aspect of its material reality that is independent of our perception or will.

Objects and conventions

For Heidegger, a thing becomes an object when it is placed in front of us, either physically or as a mental representation; as such, it becomes defined by its '*over-againstness*'. My own distinction between things and objects is much simpler. If things confront us with their materiality in a rather direct, unmediated manner, objects are things culturally presented to us. They are the '*what for*' of things, their main function or functions decided upon by their makers, validated by society, and inscribed into the physical appearance of the object (see also Chapter 17). The jug as an object is a vessel used to carry and pour liquid. Its shape (the void inside, as well as its walls and bottom) affords this perfectly. Many jugs have a handle that allows easy manipulation by human hands. The bottleneck of many jugs, such as the one in Figure 20.1, makes it easier not to spill liquid accidentally and also facilitates the act of pouring. These are all what Costall (1995) calls *canonical affordances*. Jugs afford holding and pouring water or other liquids; these affordances are reflected by their material properties and taught to children from early on. As such, we can rightfully conclude that, as socialised individuals, we live in a world of objects rather than simply of things.

This is what Richard Shweder (1990, p. 2) referred to as the intentional world, populated by intentional objects – things that are made, bred, fashioned, fabricated, invented, designed, constructed. The things we have around us are not simply there but, as we tend to assume, are

there for a purpose. This is how we learn to inquire into what something is for when its 'function' is not obvious to us. Our constant meaning-making processes invest reality with both significations and purpose (Valsiner, 2013). This makes us highly efficient in navigating our environment but, occasionally, the same inclination to manipulate things as objects can restrict our creativity. Conventional uses and canonical affordances are easily perceived and enacted in everyday life. We develop *expectations* about how things are and how they should be used, and this makes our action and the actions of others quite predictable. If a jug is on the dinner table, I will probably assume it has water in it, or else I can fill it up with water. But are objects always used so uncreatively? Certainly not. In fact, the very meaning of 'conventionality' is highly contextual and it depends not only on culture, person, but also situation. If the jug I referred to before is in a glass case in a museum, I won't assume it is filled with water and I will certainly not want to fill it up. This corresponds to the conventions associated with being a museum visitor. Canonical uses are not set once and for all but are dynamic and changing, just as our (material) culture is. Moreover, objects themselves are never completely unambiguous and this requires, on our part, the capacity to improvise and, sometimes, deliberately go against the conventional.

The openness of artefacts

The openness to a myriad of uses turns objects into artefacts. The jug, in its thingness, remains the same, and the conventional uses of filling and pouring are there to be perceived but, alongside them, we can notice the jug's many other affordances. It can become a candle holder, accommodate an ant farm, turn into a lamp or a bird feeder, and so on. All these uses exploit the jug's basic affordance of holding but in less canonical ways. They make the jug a *creative object*. Indeed, the notion of artefact has artistic and cultural overtones (one expects to find artefacts in museums) but this is not how I use it here. Everything can become an artefact if we relate to it as such – if we go beyond singular, conventional uses and see them as one possibility among many. In order to do this, however, we need to decentre our perspective of what things are and envision what they might be.

Isn't every object already an artefact? Umberto Eco (1989, p. 21) famously argued that every work of art, for as 'closed' and 'finished' as it appears to be, is in fact an 'open work', available for (re)definition and (re)interpretation with each and every new 'reading' of it. We can

extend his argument about works of art. *Any* object is, to some extent, experienced anew every time we use it; there are, for example, no two times when we use a jug in the very same way. Of course, the creative quality of these new uses varies. To use the object as an artefact means, however, to use it in a *reflective* manner (see also Chapter 15). It means to envision other possibilities for action while perceiving or manipulating the object, even when this manipulation respects conventionality. The artefact is as open to our action as the thing is, with a significant difference: the thing invites immediate uses, based on physical, perceivable properties, while our interaction with an artefact is free from the here-and-now due to our capacity to symbolise and anticipate. In this sense, when we creatively manipulate material entities as things, the quality of being creative is necessarily attributed to our action and its products from the outside. We might be creative but we are not aware of this because we are too immersed in the action and the thing itself. Artefact use requires detachment and engages our capacity to imagine (Zittoun & Gillespie, 2015; see also Chapter 6).

Materiality and creativity

To create ‘is to act in the world, or on the world, in a new and significant way’ (Mason, 2003, p. 7). It cannot be thought of outside of the relation between person and world, both social and material. And yet, creativity theory is virtually mute when it comes to the issue of materiality. The focus remains on the mind, forgetting that the mind itself extends into the world in order to think, to remember, to create (see also Chapter 18). Objects are not just there for us to represent and manipulate symbolically; the materiality of the world sets practical constraints of which creators in any domain are well aware. At the same time, the things around us are fundamentally open to our action. We can, within the frame of existing physical constraints, use them for almost everything. But we don’t. Cultural conventions play a key part in this kind of ‘narrowing’ of possibility for what objects are (or, more specifically, what they are for). And yet it is precisely *culture* that can free our action and make it truly flexible. A thing can be acted on in many ways but all ‘trapped’ within the here-and-now of perception and movement. An artefact is acted on, at one and the same time, physically and symbolically.

This observation is important from a developmental point of view. While children are born into a world of things, from their perspective,

the adults around them actively guide them towards understanding and using them as objects. A jug might attract the child's attention and curiosity but the mother will most probably show it to the child first, name it and then demonstrate how it can be held. Children then go on to use the cups, bottles and jars in their play sets in a similar manner. But, through symbolic play, these cups, bottles and jars can acquire, once more, an openness that goes beyond what they are as conventional objects: if needed, they can turn into spaceships, or boats, or houses. They become artefacts. This achievement is made possible through interaction with adults. As Vygotsky noted, 'the path from the thing to the child and from the child to the thing lies through another person' (Vygotsky, 2004, p. 532).

A serious engagement with the issue of materiality in research requires us to observe the dynamic relations between people (children and adults) and their environment, and to try to theorise them. I have argued here that we engage with material entities either as things, objects, or artefacts, and that this has great consequences for creativity. What I am not implying, however, is a strict separation between these categories, or a hierarchy between them. Artefacts might be both outcomes and springboards for creative action but they would not exist as such if we didn't first learn to manipulate things as objects. Finally, we should not underestimate the role of things themselves for creativity (hence the title of the present chapter). When objects resist our action and surprise us, they often do so from their position as things. The 'thingness' of the material world often intervenes in creative action and, at times, it is precisely what gives it its creative turn. Relating to objects as things deconstructs our perception of what they are or should be. In this sense, *the path from object to artefact in creative work might actually lie through the thing.*

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21

Translation

Vlad Petre Glăveanu

What does translation have to do with creativity? For most of us, translation signifies the process of translating something from one language to another or, more generally, the process of moving something from one place to another. What is needed in both cases is precision. When translating a text, we generally aim to produce an equivalent ‘copy’, at the level of meaning, so that people who read the text in both languages are able to understand more or less the same thing. When we move objects from one place to another, we also expect them to remain intact, identical to themselves. Sameness and clarity are implicit requirements for any (efficient) act of translation; they are also, for many, the exact opposites of creativity (see also Chapter 11).

I have previously discussed how *difference* is a condition of possibility for creative expression (see Glăveanu & Gillespie, 2014; see also Chapter 5). My argument in this section is that translation always implies difference and thus, to some extent, creativity. Words, images, or objects are never the same when ‘translated’ and integrated into a new context. The very process of translation is essentially one of *transformation*; its outcomes are objects transformed, partially because of the process of translation itself, partially because of the new contexts they come to inhabit. Even two words that refer to the same thing might very well prompt different affective associations for speakers of different languages.

Why is the process of translation creative? To understand this we need to go back to the etymological roots of the word ‘translate’. The Latin *translatius* means ‘carried over’ or ‘carried across’. The essence of translation is, thus, movement and movement itself denies

sameness (see also Chapters 12 and 16). There are many processes at stake in the act of translation, some taking place as the translation occurs (e.g., interpretation, questioning, and so on), others following it. For Venuti (1998, p. 5), translations ‘inevitably perform a work of domestication’. Simultaneously, the translation is a new object for its context of origin and a ‘domesticated’ reality for its receiving context. This effect is easily exemplified by language but, in many other instances, the ‘domestication’ at work is not immediate; it requires further (creative) processes of adjustment and transformation. The Impressionists translated natural and city landscapes into new, bold images that were not immediately appreciated by the audiences of their time. They are, however, commonplace for most of us today.

In essence, the process of translation is one of *communication*. And, just as in the case of communication, a message is never identical for sender and receiver. People, messages, channels and contexts are all dynamic realities (Hook, Franks & Bauer, 2011) and this makes room for difference and ambiguity, which require creative solutions if communication is to continue. This is why we need to consider translations, just as we do communication, in a temporal perspective. Very often our focus is only on what has been translated (the outcome), in a static, a-temporal way. At best, we consider the process of translation itself, which can take minutes, days or years. But the creativity of translation doesn’t stop here. Once translated, texts or images become part of continuous processes of communication and feed into creative work. Ultimately, the very act of making sense of something, the basic process of *interpretation*, relies on translating that thing into codes that we can understand. Translation, just as creativity, is ubiquitous.

Translating words

Many of the reflections above concerning the nature of translation and its relation to creativity come out of a personal experience of translating poems from Romanian, my native language, into English. These are poems I had written some years before and wanted to share with friends interested in poetry.¹ Although I approached this task enthusiastically, I soon came to realise the complexity of translating poetry into another language – an effort constrained by the need to keep meanings, build similar images and, sometimes, reconstruct rhymes. Despite my best efforts, initially, to create poems in English that would be the

exact equivalent of their Romanian counterparts, this aim proved utterly impossible; for instance:

Melancolie

Cu degetele tremurânde,
Șterg iarna de prin poezie,
Împrăștiu ploile și reci și ude,
Și las albastrul veseliei crude
Cu ton de gri răzleț – melancolie.

Melancholy

With trembling hands
I'm wiping off
The winter from poems I see,
I chase the rain,
Too wet and cold
And only leave the blue of joy
A hue of gentle skies – melancholy.

At other times, it was clear that translating poems word-by-word would be meaningless and their translation needed to be, in fact, a complete *re-creation*. This was the case with one of my poems entitled 'Joc (Colaj)' – in English, 'Play (Collage)'. As the title suggests, this poem includes a playful alternation between two popular children's songs. In Romanian, the first one is usually sung to snails, asking them to come out of their shell, while the second is (or, at least, it was when I was a child) a common rhyme about a small fish from the Pacific Ocean that helps children assign roles in games of tag. For as familiar as these are to Romanian audiences, the two rhymes make no sense in English. However, they have their own local 'equivalents', such as *Mary Had a Little Lamb* or *The Itsy Bitsy Spider*. The result:

Joc (Colaj)

Melc, melc, codobelc,
Din Oceanul Pacific,
Scoțând coarne bourești,
A ieșit un pește mic,
Și s-a dus la Dunăre,
Iar pe coada lui scria,
Să bea apă turbure,
Ieși afară dum-nea-ta!

Play (Collage)

Mary had a little lamb,
The itsy bitsy spider,
Little lamb, little lamb,
Climbed up the waterspout.
Everywhere that Mary went,
Down came the rain,
Mary went, Mary went,
And washed the spider out.

Is the second poem a translation of the first? Many might say no, despite the fact that they have the same title; they are more like two versions of the same idea, built using the same construction principle. Nevertheless, they did come out of an effort to translate a poem from one language into another that ended up (re)creating it. This illustration of complete recreation might not be very common but the translation

of literary texts is full of similar stories of difference and creativity. Unsurprisingly, we find a growing interest in the past decades in the strategies of translators and their creativity (see the volume edited by Beylard-Ozeroff, Králová & Moser-Mercer, 1998). Authors such as Niska (1998) even talk about ‘translational creativity’, thus legitimising the work of translation as a creative type of activity. As arguments, the authors cited above point to the fact that a translator’s job is never reduced to the mechanical process of looking up words in a dictionary. A good translation goes beyond words and is concerned with meanings, the vividness of the text, as well as its cultural significance (see also Chapter 7). Each text is unique and, as such, each translation of it is equally *unique*. Answering critics who argue that translations are tied down by the source text and essentially re-creative in their activity, Kussmaul (1991, p. 93) notes:

Of course, translators are not as free in their productions as writers are, but in the first phase of the creative process they must have the same ability of recognizing a problem, of gathering relevant information and of forming initial hypotheses about possible solutions as any creative person.

What about creativity in non-literary translation? Do we still praise creativity in translation when it comes to translating food labels or school texts? What about legal documents? Having multiple versions of the same law applied differently because of differences in translation is surely not ideal. And yet, how does one read and understand the text of a law mechanically translated from one language to another, without accounting at all for the local (cultural and linguistic) context? Questions about creativity in legal translation are increasingly common (see Pommer, 2008; Šarčević, 2002). Scholars publishing in this area tend to agree that translators of legal texts can, and should, be creative while still respecting the constraints of their profession; moreover, they often need to be creative *in order* to uphold these constraints.

The debate as to whether translators are capable of balancing these different requirements (i.e., rigour and creativity, preciseness and expressivity) are part of what Venuti (1998) called ‘the scandals of translation’. Importantly, these scandals are not linguistic but cultural, economic, and political. This is because the act of translation needs always to be understood in a broader, societal context. In this context, one should pay close attention to what is being translated, how, and for what

purposes. Indeed, a focus on translation teaches us about more than language; it ‘occasions revelations that question the authority of dominant cultural values and institutions’ (Venuti, 1998, p. 1). A translation can make something more widely available but, at the same time, it can help us question it and see it as *one* instance among *other* possible alternatives. All this because, as repeatedly argued here, no translation is ever final or definitive.

Translating images

The essentially flexible relation between ‘originals’ and ‘translations’ is even more obvious in the case of images. For many centuries, the arts have tried to copy nature in representational works that strongly resembled their sources of inspiration. Ancient Greek sculptures often surprise us with how well they capture the anatomy and, above all, the movement and expressivity of the human body. Still life paintings – particularly the ripe, decaying fruits and flowers of the *vanitas* genre, reminding viewers of the transience of life and wealth – delight us with their attention to detail. Later on, societal transformations, including technological advances (such as the invention of photography) led, early 20th century, to the emergence of modernist currents in art (Dow, 1917; Meecham & Sheldon, 2000). Art began, violently at times, to break with its models and offer its own interpretation of nature and society. From the delicate colours of the Impressionists to the bright tones of fauvism and the elegant geometry of cubism, art stopped ‘translating’ reality *as is* and started focusing on it *as it appears to be* or *as it can be*. From reproduction to re-creation, the work of past and present artists can be considered in light of translation processes, actively connecting the external world with the interiority of creators and their audiences.

Art as translation. Perhaps a bold claim, since I am sure not all artists would agree they are ‘merely translators’ of a certain reality or state of mind. Many would even deny the existence of a ‘model’ to be translated into a new, artistic medium. But this view falls prey to the old Romantic conception of artists as the sole originators of their creations; the idea of *creatio ex nihilo* or God-like creation. Contemporary art and design, especially after the revolutionary movement of pop art, are much more comfortable, however, re-connecting with their sources, from everyday objects to personal experiences and memories. This is even more the case with craft or folk art. In Chapter 4, I referred, for example, to the practice of decorating eggs for Easter in Romania. This old tradition is

based on embellishing egg shells with motifs, geometric or figurative, often depicted in colours such as red, yellow and black (for details, see Gorovei, 2001). Learning and practising the craft requires thus not only drawing skills, but also knowledge of motifs which, in many cases, is transmitted within families from one generation to the next. The eggs decorated by others are important sources of inspiration and it is common even for experienced decorators to deliberately try to copy interesting patterns in order to keep them and use them later, in their own work. One such example has been captured with the help of a subjective camera, worn by the artisan, and it is included in Figure 21.1.

What the folk artist Niculina Niğă is trying here is to translate an existing motif, on the egg placed in front of her, on her own egg, initially with the use of a pencil. The difficulty of copying a pattern exactly is reflected by the frequent use of the rubber. The interview with Niculina, based on this segment of the video, explored her intentions and understanding of the situation. While an outside observer might find it problematic not to achieve a good translation of the model from one egg to the other, she was not concerned by this. In fact, her declared goal was to capture ‘the main idea’, not its details, and it was fine to make small changes to it since, in fact, they will be made in any case later on when, ‘from a single [model] I make several’. Translation, in this case, is not only meant to lead to new creations but it is, itself, a re-creation of the ‘original’ just like the ‘original’, in turn, *translates older motifs* in its own, unique manner.

‘Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote’

This is the title of a famous short story by Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges (1998). In it, Borges offers us a brief but vivid review of the work of Pierre Menard, a fictional 20th-century French writer. While reading this review, we learn about the many works of Menard and, in particular, about one of his greatest achievements, in the eyes of the narrator at least – the re-creation, line by line, of a few chapters from Cervantes’s *Don Quixote*. From the start, this statement can only intrigue us. Here, *Don Quixote*, the creation of Cervantes, becomes the work of Menard. He is not merely reproducing or copying the great work but, effectively, becomes its *author*. How is this possible?

Borges’s text raises, in his characteristic manner, meaningful questions concerning authorship, interpretation and historical context. His short story, I argue, is also very important for us in our understanding of the link between translation and creativity. This is because, in this narrative,

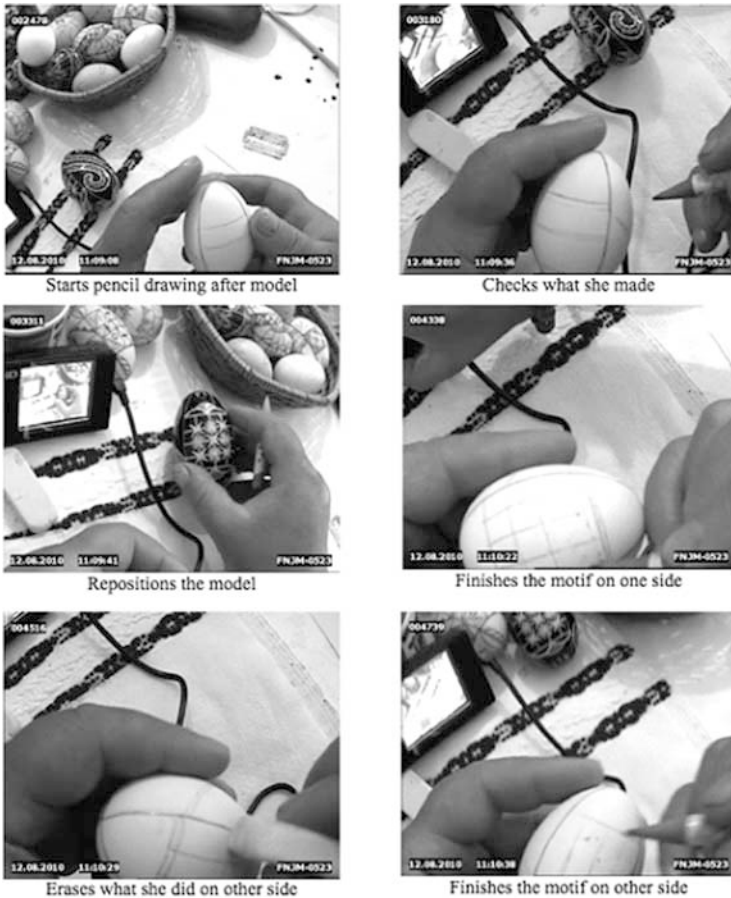


Figure 21.1 Translating a motif on a new egg (Niculina Nigă)
Source: Adapted from Glăveanu and Lahlou (2012, p. 159).

Menard is not simply translating the words of Cervantes from one piece of paper onto another.

Pierre Menard did not want to compose another Quixote, which surely is easy enough – he wanted to compose the Quixote. Nor, surely, need one be obliged to note that his goal was never a mechanical transcription of the original; he had no intention of copying it. His admirable ambition was to produce a number of pages which

coincided – word for word and line for line – with those of Miguel de Cervantes.

(Borges, 1998, p. 91)

His act of translation is, ultimately, one of creation. Menard did not copy words mindlessly; he wanted to experience them, to imagine alternative stories and meanings only to be able, in the end, to disregard them, returning to the exact text of Cervantes. Most importantly, *Don Quixote* was written in 17th-century Spain and is expressive of this origin; its meaning can only be different 300 years later, when Menard supposedly (re)wrote a few of its chapters. Too many things have happened, including the Quixote himself, to receive it in the same way. In this sense, Borges notes, ‘the Cervantes text and the Menard text are verbally identical, but the second is infinitely richer’ (p. 94). The ‘translation’ here surpasses the original not by being different but precisely by being *the same* at a different time and in a different place. What better, more poetic argument can we bring to support its vigorous creativity?

Note

1. Those interested to read some of the outcomes of my occasional, and not always inspired, poetic activity can visit www.vladglaveanu.ro

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22

Upcycling

Charlotte Wegener

Persistently, we take natural resources, turn them into valued products and, after a while, consider them trash and dispose of them. A sustainable alternative to this sequence is upcycling: the perfect mix between 'upgrading' and 'recycling'. To upgrade is to add value and to recycle is to reuse. In the simplest terms, upcycling is the practice of taking something that is disposable and transforming it into something of greater value. Therefore, when we upcycle, we create something better out of what is already at hand. Upcycling counters the argument that an object has no value once it is disposed of, or that it must be destroyed before it can re-enter a new circle of production and value-creation. In *Plastic bags: Living with rubbish*, Hawkins (2001) argues that disposal is the logic of mass production: 'Mass production of objects and their consumption depends on the widespread acceptance of, even taking pleasure in, exchangeability; replacing the old, the broken, the out of fashion with the new. The capacity for serial replacement is also the capacity to throw away without concern'¹ (cited in Emgin, 2012). Upcycling is based on sustainable consumption, and the main idea is to revitalise old material by placing it into new constellations and by suggesting new ways of using it while, at the same time, keeping its essence intact as a main value-adding feature of the process. Thus, upcycling is also concerned with re-assessing and recombining to pave the way for novelty and value creation. An upcycling motto could be: *Don't throw anything away. There is no 'away'*.²

Upcycling is not just a design approach. The upcycling processes and upcycled products demonstrate the interrelation between old and new, and even dissolve 'old' and 'new' as distinct categories in a way that is relevant for our general understanding of creativity in this book. In upcycling, the past is embedded in the present, and the future is

already here (see also Chapter 9). The short story is that creativity does not follow the logic of linear progression from new to old. The extended version is this:

A three-course dinner at the auto repair garage

I am attending a conference in Amsterdam. The formal conference programme has ended and the participants are heading for the conference dinner out in the city. We have been instructed to meet at a boat-trip sales booth by the canals. It turns out that we are going to reach the designated restaurant by boat. After some time, the city light vanishing behind us, we reach a wrecked wooden threshold, cross a trodden and withered lawn in front of an abandoned factory building and, finally, enter a tall, grey building. It is an industrial space with high ceilings, metal staircases to other levels and an open kitchen at one end of the space. The first thing that captures my gaze is a Ferrari Testarossa parked in a mechanic's cranes over an inspection pit. The next things are a table-for-two and a red Volvo Coupé from the 1960s. We cross a spacious, almost empty, hall with concrete floor and enter the backroom. Evidently, someone rode an Old Porsche 911 in here while still leaving space for long tables with seats, enough for all 50 of us. There are wine glasses behind glass in galvanised shelves and an entire wall covered with pallets which form the wine rack for hundreds of bottles. We are definitely in an auto repair garage. We are definitely in a restaurant too! During the excellent three-course dinner we keep talking of how it feels to be in this building and we keep noticing old material used in new ways. There are, for instance, enormous spotlights for working at night in one of the corners. A glass cubicle once used for workers' lunch breaks now serves as the front window to the chefs' busy work at the stove. The entire interior and each thing tell a story, twisted, ambiguous and revitalised in a new surrounding and serving new functions. These things are not re-cycled. They are *up-cycled* (for a similar example, see Figure 22.1).

Recycling is the destruction of, let's say, soda cans to make new cans. Upcycling is hundreds of can-lids crafted into purses and bags, and launched with a story of how the cans were collected in the slum, crafted into colourful items by women in a grassroots company run with the help of microloans, and how the money is used for the schooling of their children (see also Chapter 4). The purses, just like the restaurant interior and all other upcycled products, are modern while keeping the feeling of their previous life. They are highly aesthetic



Figure 22.1 Hotel De Goudfazant in Amsterdam

Source: By Frans Goddijn, 2015; image licensed under Creative Commons.

and useful but what really makes them cool and attractive is not only their appearance, but also the upcycling *story*. The remaking process and the ethical statement of embracing sustainable consumer behaviour is the commodity, not the thing itself. Upcycling makes the *relation* between the past and the future, not novelty itself, the main object of interest.

From cradle to cradle and ‘designing for abundance’

In order to further understand the upcycling practice and mind set, we must look at its history. The term ‘upcycling’ was coined by McDonough and Braungart (2002/2010) in their book on ecologically-intelligent design, *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things*. Upcycling is related to the ‘greener living’ phenomenon featuring the repurposing of things formerly identified as garbage. An upcycled product has a strong aesthetic appeal that is contemporary and innovative, and that has improved eco credentials. What makes upcycling distinct is precisely the incorporation of the transformation process in the product. Upcycled products are not just ‘better’ than the original, they also incorporate the aging process, telling stories such as ‘production with zero waste’, ‘small is beautiful’, and ‘start local, but think global’ (Earley, 2011). As explained by Richardson (2011), recycling rarely achieves the

aim of no waste because reprocessing materials requires energy and water, often resulting in a downgrading of the material's constitution. By reusing components, the need for recycling is reduced and, hence, materials, water and energy can be saved in the process. Thus, upcycling is both a practice and a mind set; a new way of thinking about and working with the lifecycle of things – both as a designer and as a consumer (see also Chapter 20).

Upcycling is the creation of something new out of something old, but it is first and foremost the *story* of the re-invention or re-habilitation *process*. Try googling upcycling and you will find upcycled houses made of old shipping containers, plastic bottles or wood-chips that are bi-products of other production sites. The constructors of the 'Junk House' present their strategy this way:

Using a combination of Google Maps and local contacts, the designers and clients scoured areas within a few square miles to find scrapyards, unofficial junk piles, strange surplus trash and more – they also polled friends, family and colleagues to collect parts like broken umbrellas and busted billboards.³

Google on, and you will find upcycled textiles for furniture and clothes, empowerment projects in the slum and an abundance of ideas for your own everyday upcycling practice, such as crafting paper, plastic bags or old household items into lampshades, coat racks and jewellery. You will even find upcycled Shakespeare (Iyengar, 2014)!

The recent upcycle trend goes even further and claims that we should not just aim at becoming carbon neutral. In their second book *The Upcycle: Beyond sustainability – Designing for abundance*, McDonough and Braungart (2013) address resource scarcity and sustainability primarily as a matter of *design*. This is a radical change from a mind set of deficit to one of abundance. Their overall message is that human beings are not parasites but creative partners with the Earth. They challenge the idea that the Earth is a loving, nurturing, maternal entity. In fact, they argue, 'Mother Nature is much more brutal and destructive than human beings. (...) Belief in Mother Nature's benevolence fuels the idea that people exist separately from their physical world, which is unspoiled and sacred' (McDonough & Braungart, 2013). What they want is to turn our understanding of the human role on Earth upside-down: Instead of protecting the planet from human impact, why not redesign our activities and actually improve the environment? We can have a beneficial, sustainable footprint, they argue.

The main necessity is a new ‘design-for-reuse’ approach, in which the total life of a product is considered at its conception (Richardson, 2011). Thus, designers can build *additionality* into products so they give more than they take. An abundance mind set encourages a cultural perception that a product is considered a modular assemblage of reusable parts and that every component has many incarnations. Many products are considered to be defunct and are thus discarded when the weakest component breaks down. This ‘from new to old’ mind set is, however, replaced with a design approach of component modularity that allows products to be deconstructed and reconstructed in many different ways, thus reducing the volume of materials entering waste and recycling streams. Limited supply and high demand, as well as the constraint of designing from a limited palette of parts, are seen as a positive challenge by designers. These ideas take us back to an understanding of creativity which dissolves the old–new distinction.

Ideas as modules

The idea of value creation based on things that are already there is present, however scarcely, in studies of innovation and creativity. Here, I will elaborate on a single term used in management studies: *knowledge brokering* (Hargadon, 2002; Hargadon & Sutton, 2000). This term is used to explain how successful innovators systematically make use of old ideas as the raw material for new ideas, thus stressing the role of interactions across organisations, professions and domains as a core business strategy to enhance creativity and innovation. Knowledge brokering encourages people to ‘use their in-between vantage point to spot old ideas that can be used in new places, new ways, and new combinations’ (Hargadon & Sutton, 2000, p. 58). A successful business innovation strategy is thus to capture ideas from a wide variety of sources, play with them, and imagine their use in other contexts (Tanggaard & Wegener, 2015) just as in upcycling processes.

Hargadon (2002) notes that many definitions of creativity and innovation recognise the presence of old ideas, yet this point is often downplayed in efforts to identify and describe the events that produce revolutionary change. As a result, he states, dichotomic pairs using such terms as *revolutionary* versus *evolutionary*, *radical* versus *incremental*, *discontinuous* versus *continuous* are common. The problem is however, that these descriptors often confuse the idea’s impact with its origin. With reference to Basalla, he argues that ‘revolutionary innovations often come from very evolutionary origins’ (Hargadon, 2002, p. 51).

In order to understand the processes of evolutionary revolution, he suggests that the relation between old and new can be better understood in a ‘small world perspective’ (Hargadon, 2002, p. 53). Drawing on social network theory, Actor Network Theory and ‘the small world phenomenon’ (Watts & Strogatz, 1998), he regards domains as communities with shared knowledge and schemas, inhabited by people experiencing their own domain as ‘a small world’. Thus, the creative act is the process of moving ideas from where they are known (and perhaps categorised as useless or trash) to where they are not. Sensitised to this gold-mining mentality, we can consciously connect to other ‘small worlds’, transport ideas from one domain to another, or scan foreign domains for ‘modules’ (ideas) with novel application potentials. Just as with the upcycling mind set, moving things from the category of garbage to the category of useful – a vital part of creating a new commodity (see also Chapter 13). Hargadon (2002, p. 55) coined his idea by quoting the science fiction author William Gibson who, when asked how he developed his futuristic visions, replied: ‘The future is already here, it’s just unevenly distributed’. What he did was to find interesting new technologies used in one domain, and imagine worlds in which everyone used them. Hargadon (2002, p. 55) concludes:

To suggest people think ‘out of the box’ is to suggest people can think without prior schemas and act without prior scripts. From a small world perspective, people don’t think out of the box, they think in boxes others can’t see.

Conclusion

Focusing on ‘old’ ideas and their reuse is not a denial of the newness and value criteria of creativity; rather, it is a reflection that opens up a situated perspective on both newness and value. Upcycling points to creativity as the ability to look into other worlds, reconsider value and envision future value. It carries the message that creativity is not a matter of newness and value per se; rather, when resources move and combine with other resources in other domains, ‘they become novel for their unfamiliar origins and valuable for their established elements’ (Hargadon, 2002, p. 55). Iyengar (2014), whom I cited earlier for the upcycling of Shakespeare, notes that the act of upcycling is both cheeky and reverent. It salutes qualities of the past and, at the same time, seeks to create a desired future. Upcycling is a kind of *nostalgic futuristic creativity*. As creative human beings, we can all pick up and transport ‘idea

modules' across domains and, accordingly, add to the upcycling spiral. There is an abundance of 'waste' matter out there ready to be rescued from recycling!

I practised the ability to transport modules across worlds. On my way home from Amsterdam, I wrote the story of the three-course dinner at the auto repair garage and saved it in a new folder which I named 'Upcycling'. It had no immediate application value. One year passed and it might have ended up as waste in the recycle bin on my desktop. It seemed to be of no use. What I eventually did, however, was to treat it as a module. I just needed to wait – and scan foreign domains (that is, my co-editors and *their* small worlds) in order to produce this chapter and write about 'ideas a modules'. Would you like to know the story of how it actually sparked the idea of the entire book? For this, you would need to go right back to the beginning and read the editors' chapter 'Why do we need a new vocabulary for creativity?' As any good story of creativity teaches us, we often need to look back in order to keep moving forward.

Notes

1. For the history of rubbish, see Susan Strasser, *Waste and want: A social history of trash* (New York: Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt, 1999).
2. <http://posters-for-good.tumblr.com/post/23043193776/dont-throw-anything-away>.
3. <http://dornob.com/billboards-umbrellas-junk-dwelling-upcycles-locaal-scrap/#ixzz3R9iXcolm>.

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Index

- action potentials, 13
 - see also* affordance
- affordance, 10–17, 99, 148
 - canonical, 14–15, 167–8
 - creating, 99
 - norms, 145
 - novel, 107
 - social-material, 86, 145
- anthropomorphism, 44
- apprenticeship, 31
 - learning, 84
- art, 32–3, 46, 55, 72, 107, 130, 135, 168–9, 176
 - Christian, 89
 - street, 70, 75–6
- artefacts, 13, 134, 139, 145, 164–5, 168–70

- Baerveldt, C., 135
- Bakhtin, M., 38, 57–8
- Banksy, 70–2, 76, 148
- Bartlett, F., 69–70
- Berger, P., L., 3
- Borge, J. L., 5, 152–3, 177, 179
- Bourdieu, P., 84
- Bowker, G. C., 4
- brainstorming, 2, 80
- Braungart, M., 183–4
- breaks, 1
 - coffee break, 6
 - non-work, 1
 - compare* work
- Brown, T., 80
- business-processes, 20, 22

- Cartesian split, 12
- categories, 4, 5
 - conceptual, 165
 - distinct, 181
 - embodied, 106
- CEO, 23, 25
- Chalmers, D., 149
- Clark, A., 149

- cognitive processes, 2, 3, 165
- cognitive, resources, 67
- collective behaviour, 47
- collective conscience, 46
- Collingwood, R., G., 32
- concept, 4, 6, 12–13, 20
 - abstract, 46, 50
 - of design, 80
 - of knot-working, *see* knot-working
 - network, 75
 - of perspective, 106
 - of power, 117–18
 - scientific, 62
 - of validity, 61
 - see also* participation; situated learning; exploitation; exploration; readiness for change; power of innovation
- consolidation, 3–4
- constructivism, 5
- context, 14, 21, 52, 70, 86, 92, 102, 117, 139, 173, 175
 - Japanese, 134
 - Scandinavian, 117
 - see also* creativity; culture; intertextuality
- convergent thinking, 2
- Costall, A., 14, 167
 - see also* canonical affordance
- craft, 28–35, 141, 176–7
- craftsmanship, 32, 34
- craftsmen, 32–4
- create, 5
- creative
 - action, 5, 36, 82, 98–9, 102, 109, 121–2, 134, 135, 138, 165, 170
 - class, 153
 - collaborations, 109
 - ideas, 11
 - imagination, 159
 - limitations, 3–4
 - making, 33
 - mind, 149

- creative – *continued*
 pathways, 97–102
 person, 5, 34, 52, 87, 90, 144
 potential, 11, 28, 41
 processes, 97–9, 145, 164
 space, 40, 153–4
 thinking, 33, 88
 thought, 33
- creativity, 6, 15–16, 26, 28–9, 32, 34,
 36, 39–40, 54, 59, 76, 78, 82,
 96–7, 102, 107–8, 113, 118, 122,
 138–9, 150, 161, 186
- differences, 41
 discourse of, 19
 experimental, 81
 extended perspective on, 101
 field, 24
 historical, 99
 the language of, 52–3
 malevolent, 71
 in a social leaning perspective, 90;
compare mirror neurons
 translational, 175
see also innovation, *compare* create
- Cresswell, J., 135
- Cross, N., 80
- Csikszentmihalyi, M., 134
- culture, 14, 40, 43–4, 70, 92, 130, 164,
 169
 human, 130
 learning, 114
 normativity of, 37
 organisational, 24
 pop, 76
 Western, 81
see also working-class
- Dada movement, 53
- de Bono, E., 109
- decentration, 37, 122
- deliberate practice, 29
- design spaces, 80
- design thinking, 80–1, 85
- Dewey, J., 82, 138, 157, 159, 161–2
- difference, 36–7
- direct perception, 13–14, 166–7
see also Gibson
- discontinuity, 100–1
- discursive co-constructions, 56
- divergent thinking, 11, 28, 82, 97–9
- Dogma film, 143
- Dreyfus, H., 84
- Dreyfus, S., 84
- Eco, U., 168
- ecological psychology, 12
- Eco, U., 168
- Edison, T., 28
see also memory
- Egyptian Revolution, The, 72–4
see also street art *under* art
- Eisner, E., W., 84
- Eliasson, O., 93, 161
- ema, 132–3
see also rhythm
- embryonic fallacy, 139
- empathy, 89–90
- Ingram, 69
- Ericsson, K., A., 29
- eschatology, 46–7, 50
- Escher, M., E., 40
- exploitation, 113
- exploration, 113
- Fear, 43–50
- Feldman, D., H., 33, 99
- fieldwork, 66, 145
- Florida, R., 153
see also creative class
- flow, 134
- Fontanelle Cemetery, 47–9
- forces
 centrifugal, 52, 58
 centripetal, 52, 58
see also Bakhtin
- free talk, 1
- Freud, S., 40, 105
- Gibson, J. J., 12–14, 16, 99, 139, 148,
 166–7
see also affordance; ecological
 psychology
- Gibson, W., 186
- Gillespie, A., 38
- Grarup, J., 138, 140, 142
- group-think, 2, 4
- Guilford, J. P., 10

- Hamel, G., 159
 Hargadon, A., B., 1, 185–6
 Hawkins, D., 181
 Heidegger, M., 164–5, 167
 Hermans, H. J. M., 108
 Hobbes, T., 112
- illumination, 29
 imagination, 37, 39–40, 44–6, 50,
 156–7, 160
 collective, 50
 imaginative function, 44
 incubation, 2, 159
 indexicality, 55
 infraordinary, 148
 Ingold, T., 82–3
 innovation, 18–22, 24–5, 34, 62–4,
 66–7, 80, 101, 113, 185
 field, 25
 power of, 116, 159
 radical, 18, 101–2
 revolutionary, 185
 inspiration, 28
 creative, 78
 phase, 80–1, 105, 160–1
 intentionality, 14–15, 40
 intertextuality, 58
 inventiveness field, 23–4
 Iyengar, S., 186
- Joas, H., 82
- Kempen, H. J. G., 108
 Kennedy, D., 105
 knot-working, 62, 64–7
 knowledge, 66
 brokering, 185
 difficult, 66
 lovely, 66–7; *see also* Lather
 Koffka, K., 13
 Kolam, 31
 Kussmaul, P., 175
 Kvale, S., 61–2, 84
- language, 54
 activities, 54, 56
 games, 55, 59; *see also*
 Wittengenstien
 polysemy of, 56
 practices, 54–9
 Lather, P., A., 66
 leadership pipeline, 22–3
 Lefebvre, H., 153
 legitimisation, 3
 Leth, J., 144
 Lewin, K., 13
 Lowenthal, M., 148
 Luckmann, T., 3
- Machiavelli, N., 112
 Magritte, R., 38–9
 management, 114
 coercive-based, 116
 control systems, 26
 field of, 18–19
 hierarchy, 25
 modern, 116
 performance, 24
 manual labour, 30–1
 March, J., G., 113
 Martin, J., 138
 Matcha tea, 131–2
see also rhythm
 materiality, 14–16, 31, 102–3, 165–7,
 169–70
 Socio-, 139, 160
 material properties, 12
 McDonough, W., 183–4
 Mead, G., H., 82, 106
 Memento Mori, 47
 memories, 69
 memory, 69, 75–6, 150–1
 Menard, P., 177–9
 meta-position, 106–7
 micro-moments, 105
 mirroring, 87–8, 93
 mirror neurons, 88–92
 Mnemosyne, 75
 multiplicity, 105
- narcissism, 89, 121
 Naxi pictographs, 54
 Naxi society, 53
 Nielsen, K., 98, 101
 Niska, H., 175
 normativity, 14–15, 40
see also under culture

- open work, 168
- organisational levels, 20–3
see also leadership pipeline
- organisational process, 19
- organisations, 113, 117
- origami, 134
- Orwellian, 6
- paradigms, 19, 29, 33, 90–1
- participation, 84, 86, 102
 trajectories of, 97–8
see also apprenticeship, deliberate practice
- Pedersen, M., 83
- Perec, G., 147–8, 152–3
- personality, *see* trait
- perspective-taking, 104–5, 109–10
- perspiration, 28–9
- phases
 ideation, 80–1
 implementation, 80–1
 inspiration, 80–1
- Piaget, J., 105
- Picasso, P., 46, 105, 110
- Plato, 69
- polyphony, 57–8
- Porter, M., E., 20
- positions, 106–8
 positioning in psychology, 106–7
- power, 111–13, 117–18
 positions, 117
 struggles, 111
 suppressive, 112
see also concept
- practices
 collective, 130
 creative, 137
 expert, 84
 of improvisation, 81
 material, 4
 methodological, 66
 ordinary, 157
 social, 103, 139
 symbolic, 4
see also language practices
- pragmatism, 5, 106, 157
- Ræbild, U., 80, 83–4
- readiness for change, 116
- recycling, 182, 184
- reflexivity, 121–2, 127
- research, 67, 134, 138
 account, 62
 action, 157
 creativity, 96–7, 99, 101–3, 139–40, 164
 experimental, 111
 neuroscience, 89
 on power, 117
 processes, 5, 62
 questions, 66
 scientific, 106
 social, 61
 social psychological, 115
- rhythm, 129–36
 rhythmos, 129
 rhythmus, 129
- Richardson, M., 183–4
- Rodin, A., 121
- rules, 137–45
 constraints, 138
 conventions, 138
 self-imposed, 143
- satisficing, 4
- Schraube, E., 161
- Seddon, F., A., 90
- self-regulation, 44–5
- Sennet, R., 34
- Shweder, R., 167
see also craftsmanship
- signs, 38, 44, 50, 55
 systems, 53
- Simmel, G., 45–6, 153
- Sims, P., 81
- Singer, T., 88
- situated learning, 85, 97
- skills, 84, 159
 communicative-semantic, 55
 existing, 113–14
 flexible set of, 30
 linguistic, 55
- Slighte, D., J., 115
- social learning theory, 93
- space, 147
 conceived, 153
 lived, 153
 perceived, 153

- speech genres, 58
see also Bakhtin
 Star, S. L., 4
 Stumbling, 156, 160
 style, 135
- temporal differences, 39
 temporal flow, 39
 things, 164–70
 thingness, 166, 167, 170
 totalitarian
 mind, 41
 regimes, 41
 traditions, 32–3, 45
 of language, 58
 religious, 47
 trait, 3, 5, 98, 149, 165
 translations, 172–9
 scandal of, 175
 transformations, 172
 translates, 172
 Tuan, Y.-F., 147
- upcycling, 2, 7, 181–8
- Venuti, L., 173, 175
 Verne, J., 40
 Vibskov, H., 159
 Vico, G., 43–5
 Vinterberg, T., 143
 vocabularies, 6
 anti-vocabulary, 6
 von Trier, L., 143–4
 Vygotsky, L., S., 54–5, 72, 170
- Wallas, G., 29
 Wegener, C., 78
 Werner, H., 13, 147–8
 Winnicott, D., W., 37
 Wittgenstein, L., 55, 59
 wordless pedagogy, 84
 work, 2, 30, 161
 artistic, 53
 craftwork, 29
 creative, 39, 40, 82, 109, 129, 134,
 137, 170, 173
 daily, 24
 everyday, 23, 115
 graffiti, 72
 group-work, 109
 hard work, 28
 high-risk, 24
 imaginative, 48
 innovation, 25
 management, 23
 manual, 32
 meaningful, 116
 operations-related, 25
 practical, 157, 161
 professional, 23
 representational, 176
 scientific, 62
 see also craftsmen; knot-working;
 fieldwork; open work
 working-class, 114, 157
 workmanship of risk, 33
- Yukl, G., 117