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Inspirations for a new sociology of art: A sociomaterial study of development processes in the Danish film industry

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Contents

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Chapter 1: Framework

Revising and redirecting dualisms: A sketch of potentials in the new sociology of art

> *"Taking art as revelatory or merely reflective of the political and socioeconomic trends in the societies at large is only the beginning of sociological analysis".*
> (Zolberg 1990, p. 195).

Introduction

In this introductory paper, I am going to outline the theoretical framework that informs the empirical papers, which compose my thesis. As all of the papers thematize dualisms in the literature on creative industries, and claim to transgress or progress these, the discussion in this paper will be centred on the question of how the new sociology of art enables such revisions. Thereby, the paper integrates the aims of clarifying how the empirical papers are connected and explicating the contribution of the PhD.

As the cultural sociologist Vera L. Zolberg suggests in her book *Constructing a Sociology of the Arts* (1990), sociological analyses need not restrict themselves to deem cultural production an outcome of social structures. Indeed, sociology of art has successfully revealed social causes that lie behind art. Yet, according to Zolberg, such analyses represent merely a first step on the way to establishing a

sociology, which thematizes art. A range of other possibilities may be opened by turning attention from social causality to the object of art. Hence, recently and tentatively, a novel perspective within the sociology of art has emerged; a new sociology of art, which aims to address artworks sociologically. This thesis embodies an attempt to progress this perspective.

To account for the setting of the theoretical discussion, I will start by introducing the empirical study, which the thesis is based on. In the following, main section I present the perspective of the new sociology of art and its potentials. To do so, I outline how this perspective has emerged and describe the central ideas in the sociomaterial sociology of art. Furthermore, I discuss how the sociomaterial approach can be used to readdress prevalent dualisms. This discussion will be centred on two basic dualisms in the literature on creative industries; the dichotomy of individual creators versus social causality and the dichotomy of studying either social relations around artworks or the artworks themselves. I suggest that the new sociology of art enables readdressing both of these dichotomies fruitfully. Hence, the proposal of the thesis is that social studies of cultural production in creative industries may be furthered in a productive direction by a sociomaterial perspective. As a final point, I will briefly sketch out the individual papers to give an idea of the specific issues with which the thesis deals.

Introducing the study

The empirical question, which the thesis addresses in the different papers, is how the process of development is organized in Danish film production. Development in film production characterizes the initial phase where an idea is constructed and transformed into a realizable film project. In practice, this creation consists in writing a synopsis and, later on, a manuscript for the film, because such drafts of the product are institutionalized as necessary devices for achieving funding to make the actual film. Hence, the focus area of the thesis is the process of manuscript writing in film production; an organizing process of developing projects.

Relevance – for practitioners and academics

The relevance of studying development work in film production has practical as well as theoretical motives. For the practitioners in the film industry, development embodies a crucial but uncertain phase in their work. The industry is highly selective of projects, which means that most ideas are not progressed and most manuscripts are never made into films. For example, the Danish Film Institute (DFI); the major investor in Danish film, grants manuscript subsidies for 60-80 feature film projects and production subsidies for approximately 25 projects yearly (DFI 2002, p. 6; cf. www.dfi.dk). These numbers indicate that there is an uncertainty as to whether a film project becomes realized even when resources have been spent on developing the project. In an interview study of young up-coming film directors' work life, which I conducted in 2004, the informants estimated that about 80 % of the time they worked on their own projects was spent on development; striving to get permission to make their films (Mathiasen & Strandvad 2005). This view on how time-consuming development can be, suggests that the development phase constitutes an important stage for filmmakers. Hence, for the practitioners in the industry, insight into the process of development is indeed relevant.

Academic research on the development of film projects is scarce. Most of the

available information regarding this phase of filmmaking consists in personal stories from interviews, 'behind the scenes' DVD-material, biographies, etc., which to a large extent comprise post-rationalizations about finished projects. In film studies, empirical research on the production of films has been marginalized as the discipline has been preoccupied with interpreting finished works (cf. Bordwell et al. 1985/2004; Frandsen & Bruun 2007). In sociological studies of cultural production, film has not been as frequent a study object as for instance music (cf. Inglis & Hughson 2005; Zolberg 1990). In organizational studies of cultural production, the same tendency as in sociology of cultural production can be identified; other media than film have been taking centre stage in the analyses (cf. Crane 1992; Peterson 1976). However, with the recent rise of an economic and political interest in the creative industries, film production has become a more popular subject in the social sciences (cf. Caves 2000; Florida 2002; Howkins 2001). In line with this tendency, a growing body of literature in the field of organizational studies of creative industries has used film as a case to illustrate issues about shifting institutional logics, network organizations, project-based careers and coordination in temporary projects (e.g. Bechky 2006; Faulkner 1983/2002; Faulkner & Anderson 1987; Jones 1996, 2001; Jones et al. 1997; O'Mahony & Bechky 2006). Nevertheless, these studies of how filmmaking is organized have not looked at the phase of development, but production processes and their end-results. Hence, the relevance of studying development of film projects is based in a lack of academic knowledge about this field.

In addition to this interdisciplinary relevance of producing empirical material on the subject, development work in film production is also a particularly interesting object for organizational sociological studies. As filmmaking is an explicitly collective art form, the process of development provides access to understanding the initiation and organizing of collaborative creative processes. Thus, from a view on cultural production, which aims at portraying the collective processes of making cultural products, development work in film production is an especially relevant study object.

Research – designed and in practice

To obtain empirical knowledge about the phase of development, I have used ethnographic methods; making observations, interviewing and reading additional

case material (cf. Lofland & Lofland 1995; Spradley 1979). This type of methods have been useful for studying that which I am interested in; namely, the micro processes of collaborative work. Moreover, quantitative information regarding this phenomenon is limited and most often nonexistent.

The research design of my study was to follow a number of different film projects during the processes of their development. Gaining access to this type of processes turned out to be rather difficult, which is similar to what other social scientists have experienced when studying on-set filmmaking by ethnographic methods (Bechky 2007; Soila-Wadman 2000, 2003). Hence, I spent the first half year of my research negotiating access with various producers. Eventually, in August 2006, two young producers accepted to let me study their work. Each of these producers located one project under development, which I could follow. In August-November 2006, besides initiating fieldwork in these two projects, I observed two industry meetings at DFI and made six supplementary interviews about the phase of development with experienced filmmakers; a scriptwriter, two producers and CEOs of film production companies, a film consultant at DFI, a project coordinator at DFI and a Teacher from the National Film School of Denmark. Furthermore, in October 2006, three experienced producers agreed to let me observe how they develop projects, and they provided me with one project under development each. Hence, I expanded my study to include these three projects. In this way, my study became a case study of five development projects that were carried out in five different Danish film production companies (cf. Ragin & Becker 1992). I finished my field studies between April and September 2007. Thereby, I was in contact with the projects approximately for one year, although this varied among projects.

Originally, I had expected to follow the progression of the projects until they were ready to go into production or were given up because they were declined finance by investors. Likewise, I had planned to study the projects by attending regularly held development meetings as a participant observer, along with making in-depth interviews. However, the projects developed quite unexpectedly, and I had to adjust my research methods to what was going on in these processes. Accordingly, my empirical material came to vary across the cases, which reflected the diverse courses of development which the projects went through.

One of the projects never managed to start. Accordingly, my data was restricted to several phone calls with the frustrated producer and two interviews about the

various reasons for failure of developments. Another project was quite far in its development when I was introduced to it; the shooting was being scheduled at the first meeting I attended. However, it collapsed due to a quarrel a few months later. I tried to reconstruct this process from internal e-mails, different versions of the script and interviews with the producer and the scriptwriter. The third project was in a very early stage of idea development when I started following the meetings in the project group. It was still at the point of constructing an idea a year later. In this case, I was a participant observer of the meetings that were held between the director and the producers, and I made additional interviews with the producers and director, plus reading what was written on the project. The fourth project was on the stage of first draft when I came into contact with the group. It went through the development phase and the shooting of the film during the year of my study and has become a finished film by now. In that case, the scriptwriter, the director and the producer did not schedule their meetings. Rather, they talked about the project on the phone or when they ran into each other at the production company. Accordingly, I followed the development of this project by making un-structured interviews with the producer every month as well as reading the written material on the project; the various editions of the script, funding applications etc. Furthermore, I made two interviews with the director and observed the meeting with the film consultant at the Danish Film Institute where finance for the production of the film was granted. The fifth project was progressed in a group that held regular meetings, some of which I observed. However, I stopped following this group because another researcher started studying the same project (see Redvall forthcoming).

An explorative approach

During my study, I did not operate with predefined theoretical hypotheses. Of course, I had certain assumptions about how the process of development would unfold, informed by my sociological background (cf. Gadamer 1960/1975; Gulddal & Møller 1999). However, I deliberately attempted to make sense of the informants' practices based on their own accounts rather than by applying readymade theoretical frameworks (cf. Becker 1974b; Blumer 1954/1986; Strauss & Corbin 1998). This explorative approach derives from my dissatisfaction with

the strategy of revealing social causality that works behind the backs of the involved. Let me illustrate this problem with an example.

In the study of young film directors' work life I had asked the informants about their parents' occupations and there seemed to be a clear tendency of social stratification in relation to successful career construction. Young directors with higher middle class parents, who supported the creative aspirations of their offspring mentally and financially, constituted the more successful cases, whereas young directors with working class backgrounds represented examples of being stuck in dead-ends and giving up the ambition of becoming film directors. Easily, I applied Bourdieus's theory of cultural distinctions to this tendency in the empirical material; arguing that the habitus which derives from class background was determining for the director's fates (cf. Bourdieu 1979/1984; Mathiasen & Strandvad 2005). Thus, Bourdieu's explanation had fuelled the formulation of my research question and became, unsurprisingly, confirmed by the answers.

However, the Bourdieuan explanatory framework did not acknowledge the young directors' own accounts of their ambitions. When Bourdieu's theory of social distinction was applied, the aspirants' explanations of deeply felt needs for self-expression were stripped off as a gesture to enhance the revelation of social causality. Rather than looking into why young people with various backgrounds are eager to tell stories in moving pictures today, the Bourdieuan framework reduced this issue to yet another illustration of how habitus becomes predestination. Hence, I felt that this perspective became a restriction as it all too easily transformed the empirical material into a validation of its predefined theoretical framework.

This example is not simply meant to debunk Bourdieu's concept of habitus as an explanation of creative aspirations. In fact, I find that the critical framework, which Bourdieu represents, sheds light on important aspects of work life in creative industries. Indeed, I think that social stratification is relevant to consider in relation to creative work. Yet, the example illustrates that predefined hypotheses may be a hindrance for producing an understanding of a study object. Whereas the framework from Bourdieu may be fruitful to describe why working class film director aspirants are unsuccessful, it becomes a constraint on the understanding of why young people want to make a career in a creative industry. My point is that a theoretical framework may be productive in generating an explanation of a phenomenon, but may also, very well, become an end result which is beforehand

attributed to the object under consideration, thereby restraining the investigation of that object.

For such reason, my theoretical approach was not chosen a priori and the themes which the thesis deals with have derived largely from the empirical material. As I set out to make an empirically based project, I aimed at generating analytical themes that would not simply suit a theoretical agenda but rather thematize aspects that were crucial in the filmmakers' accounts. This open, explorative approach implied that the research question of my study was rather broad and may have seemed vague to the informants. Moreover, the empirically based approach involved that the discussion topics of the analysis have encountered a variety of theoretical stances. Hence, the thesis is placed in an interdisciplinary field of cultural sociology, sociology of art, organizational studies of production of culture, creative industries research and film studies, and presents an eclectic theoretical framework.

Nevertheless, in the analysis, certain themes have been prioritized. As the empirical material to a large extent dealt with the manuscript; the evolving film product; the object of the work, this became the centre of my attention. Accordingly, in the analysis I began following the lines of the new sociology of art, since this perspective focuses on the artwork and its possible sociological implications. Gradually, my interest in this perspective grew and because of my increasing preoccupation with the potentials of the new sociology of art, the thesis may, at this point, look quite focused and theoretically unified. As the remaining section of this paper is explicitly aimed at constructing a unitary agenda in the thesis, the thesis may seem guilty of exactly that which I found to be unsatisfactory about the application of the Bourdieuan framework; reducing the empirical material to an illustration of a theoretical point. However, the theoretical argument of the thesis and its homogeneity is something which the analysis has produced; it is the outcome of my work and not inherent in the research design of my study. Although the conventions of the papers do not provide a representation of the messy process of selecting and analyzing empirical material, being confused about theoretical standpoints and choosing after much consideration, this does not mean that the process has been as straightforward as it may seem by now.

A new sociology of art?

In this section, I look into the origin of the term of the new sociology of art. After having clarified the argument for departing from classical sociology of art, three recent publications by the American sociologist Ron Eyerman and his colleagues that are affiliated with the Centre for Cultural Sociology at Yale University will form the basis for inspecting what has been called the new. In these publications the term of a new sociology of art is launched to describe an approach that focuses on how to address artworks sociologically. By making this proclamation of a new approach and its thematic course, these texts can be seen as having initiated, or at least named, the new sociology of art as an emerging tradition. Hence, I describe how these texts identify the problematic of incorporating artworks in sociological accounts as an agenda that constitutes a new approach to sociology of art.
Next, I discuss the theoretical perspectives which these texts suggest as solutions. In this discussion, I will make clear why I find that one of the perspectives is particularly interesting. Thus, I round off this section by proposing to take the new sociology of art in a sociomaterial direction.

Traditional sociology of art

Traditionally, a neglect of artworks constitutes a basic feature of the sociological approach to art. The institutional division between the humanities and the social sciences prescribes it as a task for the humanities to pay attention to the content of artworks, whereas the social sciences, on the other hand, are expected to be concerned with the social relations around cultural products, not the products themselves. Hence, sociologists have theorized about ‘art worlds’, ‘fields of artistic production’ and ‘cultural production’, without theorizing about that which these worlds, fields and social contexts are about; namely the objects/artworks/cultural products (Becker 1982; Bourdieu 1980/1993; Peterson 1976, cf. Zolberg 1990). Thereby, the sociological approach to art has consisted in demystifying the enchantment of art; exposing the social causes that work behind the assumedly autonomous aesthetic logic of art.

As indicated in the above, some of the most influential theories in sociology of art can be used to exemplify this sociological practice of revealing social causes behind cultural products, which implies neglecting the products themselves as anything but end results (cf. paper 3). Pierre Bourdieu, in a classical essay which I will return to later, defines the object of sociology of art to be the field of cultural production. According to Bourdieu, cultural products are the outcome of the workings of the field:

> *"What is called 'creation' is the encounter between a socially constituted habitus and a particular position that is already instituted or possible in the division of the labour of cultural production".*
> (1980/1993, p. 141).

Rather than perceiving cultural production as individual creation, Bourdieu points to the predispositions and possible positions, which he considers to be determining for creative work.

In Howard S. Becker's legendary writings on art worlds we find a somewhat different definition of the social origins of cultural production. Becker's starting point is his famous observation that art is collective action (1974a). This means that artistic production is seen as involving a number of activities, whose coordination should be studied by the sociologist. Accordingly, Becker suggests that artworks are the outcome of collective action:

> *"Works of art, from this point of view, are not the products of individual makers, 'artists' who possess a rare and special gift. They are, rather, joint products of all the people who cooperate via an art world's characteristic conventions to bring works like that into existence".*
> (1982, p. 35).

As this quote indicates, Becker's interest is in identifying the division of labour behind artworks.

The last example is Richard A. Peterson's production of culture perspective, which concentrates on demonstrating how cultural products are the function of

social processes. As Peterson writes in the first article that introduced this approach, the production of culture perspective is *"focusing [...] on the processes by which elements of culture are fabricated"* (1976, p. 10). In a recent article this centre of attention is restated:

> *"The production of culture perspective focuses on how the symbolic elements of culture are shaped by the systems within which they are created, distributed, evaluated, taught, and preserved".*
> (Peterson & Anand 1004, p. 311).

In an overview article, this broad interest in production is clarified:

> *"PofC [the production of culture perspective] can be described as an approach or perspective (but not a formal theory) oriented towards the study of culture, which conceptualizes the latter as a (usually incoherent) set of symbolic elements, whose content and form are understood as functions of the social contexts (or milieu) of their creation, manufacture, marketing, use, and evaluation".*
> (Santoro 2008, p. 9).

As these quotes illustrate, the production of culture perspective portrays cultural products as effects of the social causes, which can be located in various phases of the circuit of culture (cf. Du Gay et al. 1997).

In this brief overview of how artworks are approached by three representatives of sociology of art; Bourdieu, Becker and Peterson, it is apparent that the sociological custom is to look behind the product to find social relations. The product is only addressed to demonstrate that it can be seen as a result of social processes. In itself the product is not considered to be relevant for the sociological analysis; artworks do not constitute a study object in classical sociology of art. Rather, it is social dispositions, social positions, social divisions of labour and social contexts that produce artworks, which sociologists should attend to, according to Bourdieu, Becker and Peterson. Thus, even though the product is encountered by these theorists, it is not included in their theoretical frameworks; the artistic object is reduced to an outcome of social relations.

Towards a new sociology of art

Recently, the convention of neglecting artworks in sociology of art has been contested by cultural sociologists who have suggested taking the works of art into consideration. Thus, the idea of *a new sociology of art* has been announced by sociologists affiliated with the Centre for Cultural Sociology at Yale University: *The 'New Sociology of Art': Putting Art Back into Social Science Approaches to the Arts* (de la Fuente 2007); *Towards a New Sociology of Art Worlds: Bringing Meaning Back In* (Eyerman & Ring 1998); *Myth, Meaning, and Performance: Toward a New Cultural Sociology of the Arts* (Eyerman & McCormick 2006). As these telling titles indicate, the proponents of a new sociology of art describe this position by stressing its capability for enrolling art and meaning of art in its analytical approach.

Thus, the starting point for the new strand is an objection to the prevailing sociological stance, which highlights the social origin of cultural products:

> *"The sociology of art has for some time been dominated by the study of art worlds, an approach which explains art objects or artifacts in terms of the social organization of their production and consumption, that is, through contextualization. Exemplary American accounts in this tradition are Becker (1982) and Crane (1987). Pierre Bourdieu can be said to offer a European variant".*
> (Eyerman & Ring 1998, p. 77).

Another quote explains that such sociological approaches to art entail that artworks and their meaning are reduced to effects of social processes:

> *"For the past several decades, the sociology of the arts has been dominated by the production of culture perspective. […] From such a perspective meaning is either bracketed out entirely, as lying outside the competence of the sociologist, or considered as a function or outcome of that social organization which is the sociologist's proper concern".*
> (Eyerman & McCormick 2006, p. 1).

This quote indicates that the sociological custom when approaching art implies either completely ignoring the artwork or portraying this as a result of social practices. Yet, the proponents of the new sociology of art raise the question whether this is a fruitful strategy:

> *"Can the sociological investigation of the arts afford to ignore the artwork and focus primarily upon contextual factors?"*
> (de la Fuente 2007, p. 410).

By pointing out that the neglect of the product may have high costs, as certain aspects of cultural production may remain overlooked by leaving the product out of consideration, the proponents of a new strand suggest opening the door to ways of incorporating the artwork into the sociological outlook.

Thus, the three texts launch the proposal of a new sociology of art and embody a quest for a turn in the sociological approach to art. Now, which theoretical perspectives do these proponents of a new sociology of art employ to solve the problem of the neglect of art? How do the authors construct a novel position that overcomes the convention of neglecting artworks in classical sociology of art? In the following, I will sketch the theoretical routes that these texts apply to locate a new approach to sociology of art.

In my examination of the theoretical resources that these texts employ, it will become apparent that I find most of these theories do not succeed in carrying out the challenge, which the texts set up, of altering the sociological approach to art fundamentally. Mainly, my reluctance towards many of the solutions which are presented in these texts is related to the fact that they have been found by searching backwards in the history of sociology of art. In the titles of two of the texts it is suggested that the incorporation of art in the sociological approach is a matter of reinstallation; art is something which should be brought *back* into the picture. Yet, the issue of neglect derives from traditional theoretical treatments of art. Accordingly, I suggest that current theoretical developments may be more productive in generating directions for a new sociology of art.

Another reason why the three texts succeed only to a limited extent in formulating a programme for a sociology of art that incorporates artworks is due to the overview character of these texts. Rather than proposing a distinct approach,

the texts set out to recap a range of positions which touch upon the matter of artistic objects, though they point in different directions. As one of the authors write; *"the sociologists whose work I will be reviewing are theoretically and methodologically too diverse to be seen as a 'school of thought'"* (de la Fuente 2007, p. 410). This quote indicates that the text summarizes a scope of sociological positions which address the issue of artworks in various ways, instead of launching a distinctive position that focuses on the question of how to conceptualize artworks sociologically. Thereby, I find that the theories which are meant to assist in clarifying the position of the new sociology of art risk, on the contrary, confusing it. The distinctiveness of the new sociology of art is potentially lost in summaries of various positions.

Three examples of turning to the artwork

The earliest of the three texts; the review essay by Eyerman and his Swedish colleague Magnus Ring (1998), looks into the founding of sociology of art in Sweden. Starting from the observation that social organization of production and consumption of art objects has been taking centre stage in sociological approaches to art, Eyerman and Ring show how this perception has been contested in empirical studies, which point to pleasures that arise in uses of art. To capture this *"relationship between the production of artworks [...] and the production of meaning"* (ibdn., p. 80), Eyerman and Ring turn to the Frankfurt School writers, who suggest that meaning is inscribed in the object during production, and, on the other hand, the tradition of cultural studies, whose proponents have proposed a relative openness for interpretations of cultural products (cf. Adorno & Horkheimer 1947/2002; Du Gay et al. 1997; Hall 1980; paper 5). Next, Eyerman and Ring argue that art history has progressed significantly, while the sociology of art has been at a standstill. Hence, to advance the sociology of art, Eyerman and Ring suggest drawing on the achievements of art history. Following the British sociologist Robert Witkin's proposition for 'a sociology of the artwork', which aims to relate content and wider social structures, Eyerman and Ring suggest that works of art do not only reflect social relations; they furthermore embody a capacity to transmit meaning and thereby evoke social change (cf. Eyerman & Jamison 1998; Witkin 1995, 1997).

Eyerman and Ring's approach to the question of how to construct a new sociology of art, which is embedded in the tradition of critical theory, proposes meaning as the centre of attention. Artworks are portrayed as containers of meaning, which are filled during production and selectively unpacked during consumption. This conceptualization echoes the Marxist dilemma about to what extent the materialistic base determines the cultural superstructure, and to what extent culture has a relative autonomy (cf. Inglis & Hughson 2003). Hence, a clash is anticipated between the (imperative) intention that is engraved in cultural objects during production and the multitude of (subversive) interpretations that may be constructed during consumption of these products (cf. Mouffe 1979; Williams 1977). Moreover, and more crucially for the question about the status of artworks, both sides of this dualism of production and consumption assume that the work of art is only relevant as a symbol. The work of art is seen as a container that has the passive function of enclosing and transmitting meaning. Thus, the artwork is considered important, but only because of its content. In that way, the product comes to enter the spotlight, yet it remains black-boxed.

In the anthology edited by Eyerman and the music sociologist Lisa McCormick this conception of the artwork is continued (2006). Contrary to the production of culture perspective, which dominates Anglo-Saxon sociology of art, Eyerman and McCormick suggest including content, performance and meaning of artworks in the sociological approach to art (see Peterson & Anand 2004 for a response to Eyerman & Ring 1998 about that the production of culture perspective ignores meaning). Also in line with the previous article, Eyerman and McCormick point to developments in art history and the studies by Witkin to exemplify how content and meaning may be brought into focus; and the door to new directions in the sociology of art thereby opened.

The articles in the anthology fall in two quite distinct categories. On the one hand, empirical case studies describe the creation of specific works of art. On the other hand, theoretical discussions restate the views of some of the founding fathers of cultural sociology – Durkheim and Adorno – about why cultural objects are powerful. Revising the ideas of Durkheim and Adorno to construct a new approach seems to be informed by the rationale that it is possible to go back to a sociological practice of theorizing about artworks.

In Durkheim's analysis of religious life, representations of the totem are considered to be sacred. Hence, if this optic is transferred to artworks, they can be

seen as embodying an otherworldly force. Yet, Durkheim's analysis suggests that sacredness is a construct; the object is a symbol of belief; a holder of meaning. Thereby, it is not the artworks which are powerful, but the content which they have been attributed (Sherwood 2006; cf. Hennion 1995).

Similarly, Adorno suggests that cultural products are effective transmitters of power and meaning. Yet, Adorno also exemplifies how certain artworks differ from products of the dominating culture industry. In so doing, Adorno opens the way for studying how the meaning of works of art are interpreted and used (Eyerman 2006). Moreover, Adorno thereby enables studying how works of art may have various effects (cf. DeNora 2003). However, only one article in the anthology pursues this agenda of turning the status of the work of art from passive to active, seeing *"music as agency"* (DeNora 2006, p. 103). Unfortunately, this article presents an empirical study, the findings of which are not directly connected to the discussions in the theoretical articles. Thus, the anthology reinstates the view on artworks as carriers of meaning, cemented with the views of grand old theorists.

The final example is Eduardo de la Fuente's review of the state of affairs in sociology of art. In the main section of the article, de la Fuente examines five recent publications that propose various alterations to sociology of art: Jeremy Tanner's *The Sociology of Art: A Reader* (2003); David Inglis and John Hughson's *The Sociology of Art: Ways of Seeing* (2003); Tia DeNora's *After Adorno: Rethinking Music Sociology* (2003); Harvey Molotch's *Where Stuff Comes From: How Toasters, Toilets, Computers, and Many other Things come to be as They Are* (2003); and Howard Becker, Robert Faulkner and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's *Art from Start to Finish: Jazz, Painting, and other Improvisations* (2006). Whereas these books include a number of approaches, some of which represent classical sociological stances and some of which propose various new directions, a specific question is recurring across the texts, namely how to deal with artworks sociologically. Especially one way of framing this question is, I think, highly interesting. This is a re-conceptualization of the artwork, which alters the cultural object from being understood as a passive container of meaning to being investigated as an active participant.

In the introduction by Becker, Faulkner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, they propose that the artwork in the *"language of Bruno Latour [...] is an actant"* (2003, p. 6, in de la Fuente 2007, p. 421). However, the implications of this proposition are not clarified in the anthology, which is occupied with the question

about when artworks are considered to be finished. Rather, it is the British music sociologist Tia DeNora who personifies the Latourian perspective in de la Fuente's review. DeNora suggests that music has power; it acts, and because of what it does it is both valued and regulated. Accordingly, DeNora advocates a music sociology that investigates how music and the social are co-produced, which is an agenda that is adopted from Latour:

> *"Latour's notion of co-production offers lessons [...] For music sociology, the lesson is that [...] [m]usic is not simply 'shaped' by 'social forces' – such a view is not only sociologistic, is also misses music's active properties and thus diminishes the potential of music sociology".*
> (DeNora 2003, p. 39, in de la Fuentes 2007, p. 418).

DeNora's suggestion that music is not only reflective of social relations, but also productive of these, implies that it cannot be black-boxed as a transmitter of meaning. Hence, rather than seeing cultural products as passive objects for social forces, the status of the object it changed into an active participant in social processes. Not only does this turn in the analytical status of cultural objects imply that art is conceptualized fundamentally differently; it moreover opens the gates for a new sociological approach to art.

Artworks as active participants

When cultural objects are considered to affect people and evoke emotions, the interesting agenda for sociological studies become to understand these implications; how artistic products are involved in creating social relations. However, this does not mean turning the analytical approach upside-down by suggesting that music autonomously produces social relations. As DeNora writes:

> *"too often, music is thought of as a stimulus capable of working independently of its circumstances [...] I suggest that it is probably impossible to speak of music's 'powers' abstracted from their contexts of use".*
> (2000, p. x).

In this statement, DeNora clarifies that seeing music as an active participant does not entail a deterministic relationship where music is considered to compel its listeners to behave in certain manners. This observation is similar to the literary theorist Susan Sontag's remark that art is alluring:

> *"Art is seduction, not rape. A work of art proposes a type of experience designed to manifest the quality of imperiousness. But art cannot seduce without the complicity of the experiencing subject".*
> (1965/1966, p. 22).

To pursue the ambition of investigating the sociological implications of artworks as active participants, DeNora turns to studies in the field of music sociology:

> *"It is irony that, nearly without exception, discussions of music's affect have had little association with interactionist sociology's abiding commitment to the fine-grained, exquisitely practical detail of everyday life".*
> (2000, p. x).

As DeNora observes, seeing artworks as active participants composes an angle that has not been incorporated into interactionist studies, despite that this approach could be especially suitable for investigating empirically how artworks become constituents of social relations. To illustrate the fruitfulness of a micro-sociological, ethnographic approach to identifying the active role of artworks in social contexts, DeNora points to studies in the British cultural studies tradition, which have located music as an active ingredient in the formation of social groups (e.g. Willis 1978).

Moreover, DeNora presents empirical studies that exemplify how music becomes an active component of everyday life practices. For instance, a study of aerobic classes shows how music forms a crucial element in structuring the practices in these social contexts:

> *"Played at full volume throughout nearly the whole session, the musical features of aerobics are thus designed to provide much more than the all-*

> *important grounding of beats per minute. In aerobics, music is expressly designed to be placed in the foreground as a device of the body constitution and bodily organization, a device upon which body coordination and conduct may be mapped".*
> (2000, p. 92).

In this case, DeNora suggests that music cannot be seen as a background upon which social practices unfold. Rather, social practices are arranged according to the music. This, however, does not imply that the receivers are cultural dopes; *"class members are not passive recipients, acted upon by music, but are active sense-makers trying to [...] work with available materials"* (ibid., p. 95). Rather than imposing itself on listeners, the music is put into effect when its receivers use it. DeNora concludes:

> *"Thus, to say that music will 'cause' things to happen, that it makes the body do things or that its objective properties will automatically entrain the body in particular ways, is to miss the collaborative dimension of how music's effectiveness is achieved, for it is always in and through the ways that it is appropriated that music provides structuring resources – devices that enable and constrain the body".*
> (ibid., p. 96).

DeNora's research illustrates how cultural products can be studied sociologically by looking into their active engagement in social contexts. This composes an analytical strategy that differs from approaching the object by choosing between revealing social forces behind artistic production or scrutinizing the innermost meaning out of art. By investigating cultural objects in the way that DeNora outlines; as active contributors, their social effects become highlighted, as an alternative to revelations of their social origin or speculations about their inner meaning. Hence, the turn in the status of the object from passive containers of meaning to active participants in social relations is, in my view, decisive for formulating a new sociology of art.

In the texts I have just surveyed, I find that DeNora's work represents the most distinct, radical, ground-breaking and consistent approach to formulating an

account of this novel theoretical perspective. In this re-conceptualization, DeNora draws on work by the French sociologist Bruno Latour and even more so his colleague Antoine Hennion (cf. DeNora 2000). Thus, in the following I will describe the theoretical heritage that DeNora brings up.

A sociomaterial sociology of art

Whereas it is sociologists affiliated with the Centre for Cultural Sociology at Yale University who have proposed the name of the new sociology of art, French sociologists have made progress in that direction over the last three decades without categorizing their work under this title. Hence, in 1990, when Zolberg envisioned a sociology of art, which thematizes artworks, French cultural sociologists from Centre de Sociologie de l'Innovation at Ecole des Mines in Paris had already pursued that agenda in empirical studies. Zolberg cites Madeleine Akrich's study of network formations that arise with interpretations of an altarpiece, which shows how the altarpiece itself is recreated while it simultaneously is at the centre of constructing different interpretative networks (in Zolberg 1990: 92-7). A colleague of Akrich, Antoine Hennion, who conducted an ethnographic study of the creation of pop songs in music studios from 1977 to 1980, is only mentioned by Zolberg (cf. Hennion 1983a, 1983b/1989). Nevertheless, it is Hennion's work which has formed the tradition that DeNora draws on and to which I refer as the new, sociomaterial sociology of art.

Whereas Akrich' study was only published in French, and she turned her attention to technological innovation after this early encounter with cultural objects, Hennion has written extensively on sociology of art, although only a selection is translated into English (Gomart & Hennion 1999; Hennion 1983a, 1983b/1989, 1995, 1997, 2001, 2007; Hennion & Fauquet 2001; Hennion & Grenier 2000; Hennion & Meadel 1986, 1989). Hennion is a pioneer especially because he combines theoretical insights from science-technology-society studies (STS) with sociology of art. In an early article, Hennion explains about this transfer of theories from one sub-discipline to another:

> *"I am a sociologist of culture, but I work in the same center and draw on the same intellectual tradition as Callon (see, for example, Callon et al. 1984; Callon, Law, and Rip 1986) and Latour (see, for example, 1982, 1986), who are better known in the science studies community. Both sociology of science and technology and sociology of culture face the problem of 'the' object, scientific*

or cultural: what can a sociologist do with it?"
(Hennion 1983b/1989, p. 401).

The answers that Hennion gives to this question about how to conceptualize cultural objects sociologically will make the centre of my attention in the following.

Science and culture comparisons

Let me delimit my ambitions regarding the sociomaterial perspective before moving on. Hennion touches upon the vast question about how science and technology studies and sociology of culture may mutually benefit from each other. It is not my goal to deal with that issue here. Some cultural sociologists have addressed this question by making comparisons between studying creative work and scientific work (Brain 1994; Mukerji 1994). To do so, these writers have made reference to core texts in STS, for instance the famous study of scientific work in *Laboratory Life: The Social Construction of Scientific Facts* by Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar (1979), rather than going into Hennion's work. Hence, these writers call attention to similarities between the production of cultural products and the process of constructing scientific knowledge.

Similar to the production of cultural products, the construction of scientific knowledge is a process, which is often portrayed as a mystery that involves the acts of geniuses. However, in their ethnographic study, Latour and Woolgar show how facts are constructed in a laboratory. Instead of portraying scientific work as a purely social construction, they demonstrate how materials are part of the process of building facts; experiments are translated into inscriptions that are juxtaposed literature from outside the laboratory, which makes up the components of the scientific text that is the end result of the work. Thus, a scientific text contains a large number of preceding material practices, yet it closes off references to these to appear to be a fact (cf. Jensen 2003). If the features of this study are used as inspiration for studying creative work practices, it becomes highly relevant to study creative work ethnographically, which implies a critique of the genius myth, making it an empirical question what can be considered as an actor, investigating the idea of co-construction and adopting the vocabulary of networks, alliances,

attachments and stability to describe organizing processes.

Although such transference of inspiration from STS forms the basis for Hennion's thinking and is indeed relevant for generating a new sociology of art, it also entails certain risks. First of all, the use of inspiration from science studies could become an *application* of STS on culture. Thereby, the inspiration would come to contradict the characteristic feature of studies in the STS tradition of making close empirical descriptions. As the analytical framework would be given beforehand it could become a problem for the ambition of making it an empirical question how culture is produced.

Secondly, and following from the first issue, the inspiration from science and technology studies could lead out of the specific topic about sociology of art by embarking on comparative subject matters instead. In that way, the ambition of constructing a new sociology of art could become overshadowed by questions about the similarities and differences between science and culture. For instance, an issue could be whether the dissimilarity between discovering truth and inventing art is requiring dissimilar analytical approaches (cf. Galison & Jones 1998).

Finally, the discussions about how to use STS in relation to culture would address the issue of which subset of the growing body of STS to apply. For example, *Laboratory Life* represents a classical text in Actor-Network Theory, which has been contested and further developed by now (cf. Jensen et al. 2007). In that respect, cultural sociologists enter ongoing theoretical discussions in STS when they start applying theoretical tools from this body of research.

As these reservations illustrate, comparisons with science studies risk becoming a matter of applying science studies on art, thereby removing focus from the question about how to develop a new sociology of art. Accordingly, I focus on Hennion's studies of cultural practices and do not go into the many other inspirations which could be taken from the field of STS and put to use in cultural sociology.

Hennion's approach to sociology of art

As mentioned above, Hennion's early study was about the production of pop songs in music studios (1983a, 1983b/1989). Since then, he has researched radio programming (Hennion & Meadel 1986), advertising (Hennion & Meadel 1989), and last but not least music lovers (1997, 2001, 2007; Hennion & Fauquet 2001).

Besides these empirically analytical texts, Hennion has produced more theoretical and programmatic accounts of his perspective in a review of art history; *The History of Art: Lessons in Mediation* (1995), an overview article of sociology of art; *Sociology of Art: New Stakes in a Post-Critical Time* (Hennion & Grenier 2000), and a contribution to the founding of new directions in Actor-Network-Theory; *A Sociology of Attachment: Music Amateurs, Drug Users* (Gomart & Hennion 1999).

Hennion's agenda is equivalent to that of the proponents of a new sociology of art as his ambition is to develop an approach which does not reduce art to an effect of social relations. Accordingly, he advocates, with a catchphrase; *"a sociology of art, not against art"*, and clarifies this by stating that; *"sociologists are faced with the challenge of developing a sociology of art which is not, a priori and from the outset, hostile to art"* (Hennion & Grenier 2000, p. 345). As this quote illustrates, Hennion proposes, as the Yale sociologists, that a turn towards incorporating art is needed in sociology of art. However, to perform this turn, Hennion suggests a radical break with the previous tradition.

Thus, Hennion's starting point is to oppose the dominating hostile attitude toward artworks in sociology of art:

> *"With varying degrees of aggressiveness, sociologists of art have come out against the primacy of the work of art, either by attempting to denounce it as an illusion in equating it with mechanisms of belief (Bourdieu 1979) or, more simply, by ignoring the question of its value".*
> (1997, p. 415).

By the way in which Hennion captures the problem here, we see that it is not only the neglect of the product which he opposes. Even more so, Hennion contests the way in which artworks have been conceptualized, when they have been encountered by sociologists. This means that, in contrast to the Yale sociologists, Hennion does not merely locate a missing element in sociology of art. Rather, he contests the way in which art has been mistreated by sociologists who have reduced it to a function of social processes.

In Hennion's optic, the hostility towards art derives from a dominating critical tradition, which is aimed at revealing what lies behind artworks. He explains about this tradition:

> *"The key to the critical approach is the theory of belief which, from Durkheim to Bourdieu or Becker (which is indeed a lot of sociology!), has been mobilized continuously. For critical theorists, to analyse from a 'social' point of view the objects […] amounts to considering them as objects of belief […] they are reduced to mere tokens or signs deprived of any other value or raison d'etre than that of being mediums for our social games of identity and difference".*
> (Hennion & Grenier 2000, p. 343f).

Hennion's objection to the critical tradition concerns that artistic objects are seen as mediums for belief, which implies that they are understood as nothing but substitutes for social predispositions. By considering artworks as symbols that stand for meanings, the critical tradition totalizes its sociological outlook, Hennion argues. Artworks are derived of any other function than that of representing and transporting socially constructed beliefs. Hence, the critical perspective represents a sociologism, according to Hennion (e.g. 1995).

As the above quotes have illustrated, Hennion finds this critical tradition to be widespread. He traces the tradition back to Marx and Durkheim and identifies it in the writings of Becker and representatives of the production of culture perspective. Nevertheless, it is Bourdieu who personifies the critical attitude, which Hennion counters, and accordingly the Bourdieuan framework constitutes his primary opponent.

Versus Bourdieu on taste

One of the above quotes reads that Bourdieu attempts to denounce art as an illusion by comparing it to the mechanisms of belief (1997, p. 415). In another text, the implications of this Bourdieuan approach are emphasized:

> *"You think you love things, when no, it is your milieu, your origin, your formation that makes you appreciate them. Or even more, a la Bourdieu, it is the very mechanism of this illusion that forms the preference".*
> (2007, p. 102).

Here, Hennion illustrates how the critical framework, which Bourdieu represents, portrays taste for cultural objects as a social construct. According to Hennion, by portraying taste for specific objects as an illusion; a preference which covers up social factors, the Bourdieuan approach echoes the false consciousness theme. It is especially this skepticism towards informants' own accounts, and the implied supremacy of the sociologist, which makes Hennion conclude that the critical tradition is highly dubious. As an alternative, Hennion suggests that informants themselves are *"the primary sociologists of taste"* (ibid., p. 108; cf. Gomart & Hennion 1999).

In contrast to Bourdieu's claim that cultural taste can be seen as a signal of social status (1979/1984), Hennion proposes that taste is performative in the sense that it is a practice of doing. According to Hennion, taste is not already there, but created during use. Illustrated with the example of listening to music, Hennion explains:

> *"Music cannot be reduced to the factors that might cause it and circumscribe it, and the effect it may have is just as impossible to infer, it should be seen as something transitory, not as a given but as a 'new arrival', a relatively irreducible present: it happens, it passes – despite people's efforts to pin it down and bring it into line".*
> (2001, p. 2).

That music is irreducible and cannot be explained by decomposing it into social factors suggests that the practices of listening to music should be seen as a performance rather than an exercise of predefined dispositions. Thereby, Hennion proposes that the object transforms the taste as well as the performance of taste transforms the object:

> *"The 'object' is not an immobile mass against which our goals are thrown. It is in itself a deployment, a response, an infinite reservoir of differences that can be apprehended and brought into being [...] You have to do something in order to listen to music, drink a wine, appreciate an object. Tastes are not given or determined, and their objects are not either".*
> (2007, p. 101).

By showing how objects and tastes are mutually constitutive, Hennion approaches a central feature of his work, which is the issue of co-production. Hennion suggests that objects and the practices which they are part of are being co-produced, which means that the object is constituted by social practices as well as these practices are constituted by the product. This suggestion implies that cultural objects are considered to be influential at the same time as they are seen as becoming defined in use:

> *"Music acts and moves, in relation to other mediations; it transforms those who take possession of it and do something else with it. Conversely, it does not denote the same thing, depending on the situation and the time. This co-production, the co-formation of a music and those who make it and listen to it (with other activities) can be the subject of a more balanced sociology of music".*
> (2001, p. 3).

In other words, the notion of co-production may generate a promising sociological perspective, which ascribes agency to the object without thereby entailing an essentialist description of the object.

The active object

According to Hennion, the redefinition of artworks as active and mutable is a way of transgressing the dualistic choice of seeing artworks as results of social factors or possessing an inherent meaning. Thus, Hennion formulates the central question for current sociology of art in this way:

> *"The dilemma now faced by sociologists is how to incorporate the material character of works produced and devices used, without reverting to autonomous aesthetic comments, which in the past treated works of art as extractions removed from their social context".*
> (Hennion & Grenier 2000, p. 341).

As Hennion explains, the traditional alternative to the sociological approach, which portrays the object as resulting from social relations, has been to propose the direct opposition; an autonomous, unchanging object, which is unaffected by social relations. To pinpoint the question which this leaves sociologists with today, Hennion continues:

> *"Without reverting to essentialist arguments, is it possible to acknowledge the singularity of these products as events which are irreducible to either their origins or their effects?"*
> (ibid., p. 344).

That is, the problem which sociologists are confronted with is how to address the product without essentializing it and without reversing into reductionist social accounts. According to Hennion, this problem should be handled by sociologists by undertaking the task of addressing the specificities of the workings of concrete objects in empirical occurrences. Hence, the suggestion that Hennion makes is to look into situations where products are actively involved; *"this forces one to take the works more seriously – they 'do' something, they 'matter'"* (ibid., p. 345). Yet, rather than suggesting that products are immanent influential objects, Hennion proposes investigating specific events where artistic products are brought into becoming active participants; where social relations and objects are constituted simultaneously.

To clarify the workings of the product and the continuous transformations of the product, Hennion uses the concept of mediation. The notion of mediation attends to fundamental questions about the object; *"where do objects get their power from?"* (Hennion & Meadel 1989) and *"what does one have to go through to be?"* (1995, p. 235). By addressing these questions, mediation becomes the tool which Hennion employs to explain how the object is active and a construct at the same time. Thereby, mediation constitutes the most fundamental concept in Hennion's writings. He even suggests that is what sociology of art is all about; *"the sociology of art is a sociology of the intermediary"* (1983b/1989, p. 403). The concept of mediation is vital for Hennion's approach because it provides a way for transgressing the prevailing dualism between aestheticism and sociology by suggesting a novel approach to conceptualizing the object. Accordingly, Hennion

suggests that the concept of mediation represents a guiding notion, which outlines a way out of the dichotomy between doing subjects and passive objects; *"mediation opposes a critical counterpoint to thinking focused on the subject/object equation, to transcend its inadequacy and constitute its terms"*. (1995, p. 237).

Mediations

In short, mediation draws attention to how cultural products are constantly constructed by the involvement of numerous human and non-human participants, which is a productive affair that enables the products to generate effects. Mediation thereby characterizes alterations which are produced by mediators; human as well as non-human elements that are involved in the making of the product. Accounting for what he means by musical mediators, Hennion explains:

> *"I am talking of technical objects, material supports, carriers and instruments, but also discourse, practices, performance devices; all which a durable art requires"*.
> (1997, p. 416).

In his empirical studies, Hennion shows how music producers and the radio are examples of mediators (1983b/1989; Hennion & Meadel 1986).

The point, which Hennion emphasizes about mediators, is that they are constitutive for forming the object. Thereby, mediators are seen as actively involved, necessary parts of the production process: *"Mediators are not passive [...], but active producers"* (1997, p. 416). Rather than seeing mediators, such as materials, devices and collaborators, as passive elements which are put to use by a mastermind of creative production, Hennion suggests that these elements in fact construct the product. Thus, Hennion proposes that artworks do not derive from a vision, which is materialized with the help of various human and non-human assistants, but is created in the process of making these components work. Accordingly, artworks are the result not of general social processes, but of series of sociomaterial mediations. In the case of the popularity of Baroque music in France nowadays, Hennion explains:

> *"what we have here is an interconnected series of mediations – the availability of early instruments, scores which have stood the test of time, modern media seeking new sounds – creating an irreversible movement which none of them alone would have been able to achieve".*
> (1997, p. 424).

By pointing to the instruments, scores and modern media to account for the rise of Baroque music, Hennion exemplifies how it is specific mediations which make certain products gain strength.

However, when drawing attention to mediations that create artworks, Hennion is not simply interested in revealing social causality behind art. Sociological presuppositions make another enemy which Hennion is just as eager to contradict by pointing to a large, heterogeneous and specific network of human as well as non-human participants. Hence, with the concept of mediation, Hennion proposes a new perspective on creation, which consists in investigating:

> *"specific intermediaries, considered not as the neutral channels through which pre-determined social relations operate, but as productive entities which have effectivities of their own [...][Thereby] the notion of mediation enables sociologists to problematize creation differently. In order to acknowledge its social and historical nature, sociologists do not have to 'take away' creation from the great artists, and hand it to society [...] What they can do, however, is to [...] recognize that creation is far more widely distributed, as it takes place in all of the interstices between the multiple intermediaries involved in producing and appreciating art".*
> (Hennion & Grenier 2000, p. 351).

Thus, mediation is a way in which sociologists may describe the collective processes of making and consuming art as a distributed creation, where a heterogeneous network of human and non-human mediators generates the object, rather than restating the sociological claim that creative production is an effect of social factors.

Art as collective action involving human as well as non-human actors

In my reading, Hennion's proposal about investigating mediations can be seen as a furtherance of Becker's perspective on art as collective action. Actually, Hennion himself suggests this in a rather cryptical sentence:

> *"The challenge is to give Becker a micro-aesthetic-political twist by following aesthetic constituencies as they mobilize different mediators in support of espoused versions of musical authenticity and value, some more social, or aesthetic, or commercial".*
> (1997, p. 416).

I suggest that the twist which Hennion contributes to Becker's perspective consists in widening the scope of the sociological outlook. While Becker proposes identifying all the people who are involved in cultural production processes (1974a, 2003), Hennion takes the empirical sociological ambition literally by distributing agency to all actors, humans as well as non-humans. Yet, Hennion underlines that this distribution of agency requires empirical analysis; *"it must be strictly forbidden to create links when this is not done by an identifiable intermediary"* (1995, p. 248). To widen the scope of sociological analyses necessitates empirical studies that demonstrate how various elements become active. Accordingly, who and what constitutes an actor depends on the mediations in the empirical situation, not the analyst's assumptions and inventions.

Hence, in my opinion, Hennion's approach introduces an advancement of the empirical tradition from Becker. Hennion continues the ambition of investigating how cultural production is collaborative, which Becker has been legendary in propagating. Yet, at the same time Hennion alters this tradition by opening the perspective to include other elements than the human. Thereby, the sociological analysis of cultural production is released from concluding that cultural products are effects of social relations. Whereas the artwork in the perspective of Becker is seen as a joint product, made by all the people who cooperate (1982, p. 35), Hennion furthers this view by portraying the artwork as an assemblage of a heterogeneous network, which derives from a long process of gradual mediations.

In so doing, Hennion surpasses the sociologism of previous accounts, such as Becker's, by highlighting the series of human and non-human elements which the process entails.

Moreover, Hennion suggests that the artwork is not simply the end result of sociomaterial production processes, but also in itself constitutes an actor, in the sense that it affects those who encounter it. I find this re-conceptualization of the artwork to constitute Hennion's most important contribution to the sociology of art. However, in my view, this aspect is rather downplayed in Hennion's analyses of cultural production processes. Whereas his and DeNora's studies of the reception of music clearly identifies how the object moves its users (DeNora 2000; Hennion 1997, 2001, 2007), I do not see that the same attention has been given to both sides of co-production in the studies of production processes. Rather, the empirical analyses of creative production processes made by Hennion highlight the mediations that the product is undergoing (1983a, 1983b/1989; Hennion & Meadel 1986, 1989). Similarly, other sociological studies of processes of making art have called attention to the transformations that the object is undergoing to become an artwork (Becker et al. 2006; Yaneva 2003). These studies are clearly important as they make empirically grounded propositions about how works of art come into existence. In that way, they draw attention to one side of the co-production of artworks and the social relations around them, which is the construction of the object. However, at the same time the other side of this co-production; the social relations which are constructed in an ongoing interaction with the evolving object, is paid little attention in these studies.

Contribution to the sociomaterial sociology of art

In this thesis, I aim to contribute to the sociomaterial perspective on cultural production by investigating the organizational implications of mediations, some of which are constituted by the evolving product. In other words, I illustrate how the course of collaboration in creative production processes is affected by the evolving product. In that way, I aim to further this strand of research by thematising how the evolving product becomes an active part of the social processes during the process of development; how the product initiates mediations that affect the organizing of collaborative processes of making cultural products.

In so doing, I suggest that the activity of the artwork may not only be identified when it has become a finished object, encountered by a user, which is what Hennion has thematized in his studies of music lovers (1997, 2001, 2007). Based on empirical analyses of the development of film projects, I propose that the evolving product, even when it has not become a material object, has implications not only for individual human participants but even more so for their collaboration. In that way, I expand the sociomaterial perspective on creative production, firstly, by suggesting that the artistic object may not take the form of a material non-human, but can also be an idea; a non-material, non-human object, during its production, and still affect those who work with it. Secondly, I propose turning the sociomaterial perspective to consider creative collaboration; seeing the artwork as produced by, yet also partaking in, the collaborative development process. Whereas Hennion tends to treat the relationship between artworks and humans as a one-to-one encounter, I set out to study evolving products as parts of a collaborative process (cf. Eyerman & Jamison 1998), and I suggest that experiences of evolving products have social implications.

Revision of dichotomies – potentials in the new sociology of art

> *"dualisms [...] are the enemy, an entirely necessary enemy, the furniture we are forever rearranging".*
> (Deleuze & Guattari 1987/1998, p. 120).

A distinctive aspect of the new sociomaterial sociology of art, which Hennion pioneers, consists in that it revises prevailing dualisms. The papers in this thesis continue that approach. The empirical papers share the feature that they all take their departure in a discussion which is characterized by a dichotomy; and the paper aims to overcome this by means of empirical analysis. Hence, the papers represent productive ways in which unproductive dichotomies may be used. In that way, the thesis embarks on the task, which Deleuze and Guattari outline, of opposing dualisms.

While the papers deal with various debates that are marked by dualistic stances, two fundamental discussions run across the papers. That is, the dichotomy of individual creation versus social causality and the dichotomy of ignoring or interpreting artworks. In this section, I will illustrate how the perspective of the new sociology of art enables redirecting these two dichotomies.

However, before turning to the discussions, I will clarify how I use the new sociology of art to deal with ingrained debates, marked by oppositional stances. In my opinion, the new sociology of art embodies a productive approach to recurring and repetitive debates. Yet, I also believe that the revision of traditional discussions with dichotomous viewpoints represents a main motive for criticising the new sociology of art. Hence, I will discuss two critiques that can be raised against this perspective; that it is overly critical or uncritical. To illustrate these objections, and why I find that they are mistaken, I will start from the example of the opposition between art and sociology; the dichotomy, which the new sociology is a reaction to.

Not steering between, but moving beyond

An orthodox opposition in sociology of art is the dichotomy between aestheticism and sociology. Sociology of art is haunted by Bourdieu's famous statement that: *"Sociology and art do not make good bedfellows"* (Bourdieu 1980/1993, p. 139). According to Bourdieu, the unfriendliness between art and sociology consists in that artists accuse sociologists of disenchantment, reductionism, vulgarity and sacrilege, and sociologists to a large extent have confirmed these accusations.

According to Zolberg, this leaves sociology of art with two extremes:

> *"Whereas humanist scholars try to avoid the Scylla of reducing art to its social function, social scientists dread the Charybdis of a purified, defunctionalized, formalistic conception of art. In fact, however [...] if properly used, their approaches are capable of complementarity".*
> (Zolberg 1990, p. 12).

As Zolberg paints the picture, the extremes of 'reducing art to a social function' opposed to 'a purified conception of art' describe the state of art. However, a balanced view may be generated if they are combined in the right manner. By steering between the extremes a middle way is possible, Zolberg suggests.

However, Hennion finds this strategy of balancing dichotomies to be pointless:

> *"This 'Scylla and Charybdis' of aestheticism (music without society) vs. sociologism (society without music), as Zolberg puts it (1990: 12), is a false dilemma".*
> (1997, p. 416).

According to Hennion, the dichotomy of aestheticism versus sociology is an unproductive theoretical construct, which cannot be solved by trying to unite its defining oppositions. Instead, Hennion launches a radically different perspective on sociology of art. He suggests, that the 'false dilemma of aestheticism versus sociologism' has been *"allowed by the neglect of musical mediators [...] It is necessary to pay greater attention to them if we want to realize practically the*

'strong' constructivist program" (ibid., p. 416). By turning to mediators, departing from the prevailing theoretical dichotomy of sociology opposed to aestheticism, Hennion initiates a new way in sociology of art.

When Hennion rejects both standpoints in the classical opposition *and* the attempt to unite them, it may seem as an avoidance of the discussion. However, in my view, although Hennion is critical of both aestheticism and sociologism, he is obviously inclined to the sociological side. While he opposes the sociologism of previous sociological approaches to art, he does not deviate from the sociological principle of looking into how art is constructed. In fact, Hennion's critique of previous sociological accounts concerns that they are not radical enough; that they have not carried through the constructivism, which they have initiated. Whereas previous sociological accounts have emphasized the social components of art, they have not shown that art and the social relations around art are sociomaterial constructs. Hence, Hennion continues, and furthers, the constructivist sociological programme.

Thereby, Hennion uses the Scylla and Charybdis of aestheticism and sociologism to clarify how his position represents neither of them, nor a navigational manoeuvre of steering between them. Hennion's rejection of the balancing act which occupies Zolberg should, I suggest, be seen as a radical and productive strategy. As the literary theorist Barbara Herrnstein Smith proposes in her criticism of attempts to steer between various types of Scyllas and Carybdises:

> *"the navigational feat risks becoming not so much a steering-between as a steering-in-two-directions-at-the-same-time, with the alternate perils – of stasis or shipwreck – that such a project evokes".*
> (2002, p. 188f).

Smith suggests, in line with Hennion, that the balancing act of navigating between two extremes may not by the best way of handling an opposition. Rather, Smith proposes, again similar to Hennion, radical alternatives to orthodox views may provide a more fruitful strategy.

In the empirical papers, I am informed by this optic on dualisms. Hence, the papers discuss dichotomies and suggest alternative routes that do not attempt to balance out oppositional positions. Rather, the papers use dichotomies as a

background on which arguments, informed by the new sociology of art, are positioned. Thereby, the papers take their departures in dichotomies, and use them as tools for formulating new perspectives. When the papers decline dichotomies, they do so after having debated their premises and content. In that way, the papers refuse dichotomies, but do not sidestep them. Thus, the papers reflect the view that dualisms are an evil, but an entirely necessary evil.

Too critical/not critical enough

In line with the traditional sociology of art, Hennion opposes aestheticism. At the same time, he criticises the sociological tradition. And he rejects the ambition of navigating between these stances. Accordingly, it may seem as if his perspective is preoccupied with negating previous positions. Thus, on the one hand, the new sociology of art may seem overly critical as it aims to transgress dichotomies, such as aestheticism/sociology, by refusing both standpoints in the dichotomy as well as the attempt to balance them out.

On the other hand, the same approach to revising dichotomies may appear uncritical as it does not prescribe a stance other than that of empirical investigations. Hennion's critique of the critical tradition shows that he opposes the guidance of a normative, critical objective. Thereby, his approach may be accused of leading to a relativist, anything-goes position.

However, these critiques of the new sociology of art; that it is too critical or not critical enough, which both response to the strategy of revising dichotomies, do not recognize the ambition of this approach. Instead of remaining at a standstill by replicating already well-known oppositional positions, or striving to unite these positions in a conceptually instable construct, the new sociology of art pursues alternatives by means of empirical analyses.

Thus, Hennion characterizes his perspective as post-critical; suggesting that it is *"a positive analysis of the human and material mediators of the 'performance' and 'consumption' of art"* (Hennion & Grenier 2000, p. 348). By proposing a post-critical, positive analysis, Hennion aims to overcome the self-fulfilling prophecies of the critical tradition. Attending to specific mediators; human and non-human participants, proposes an attempt to go beyond findings which are a priori predicable from the researcher's outlook.

In his critique of Bourdieu, Hennion argues that the critical agenda prioritizes the sociologist's viewpoint over empirical investigation. Yet, this reservation about a normative starting point does not imply that the empirical analyses of the new sociology of art are made without lines of directions or that it cannot lead to critical conclusions. The approach, which Hennion advocates, aims to open the analytical spectrum by making its own propositions empirical questions. While this approach does not anticipate critical evaluations, its analyses may have critical implications. In that way, it is not uncritical, but neither beforehand dedicated to a critical conclusion.

When the new sociology of art embarks on transgressing dichotomies, it does so to facilitate empirical analyses of cultural practices. Hence, its critique of previous positions is aimed at generating a productive perspective, which is not restrained by ingrained dichotomies. Thereby, the revision of dichotomies embodies an attempt to overcome the beforehand-given choices in theoretical dilemmas; it is a proposal for furthering empirical analyses and thereby furthering theoretical developments.

The dichotomy of individual creation versus social causality

> *"In the sociology of both culture and science, eschewing "auteur" or "Great Man" theories of human creativity has been easier than trying to understand human thought and creativity in group rather than individual terms".* (Mukerji 1994, p. 147).

The idea of the creative genius, which is rooted in the Romantic conception of the inspired artist, holds that some individuals possess exceptional creative abilities (Negus & Pickering 2004). In a number of studies, sociologists have demonstrated convincingly that this myth of the creative genius provides an insufficient explanation of how creative products are actually being made (Becker 1982; Bourdieu 1980/1993; DeNora 1995; Elias 1993). Thus, in opposition to seeing artistic work as the materialization of a single person's vision, studies within sociology of art have shown how artistic work is dependent upon numerous social

factors such as educational systems, sources of financing, cultural policies, critics, exhibition and distribution institutions (e.g. Becker 1982; Bourdieu 1980/1993; Crane 1992; DeNora 1995; DiMaggio 1982a, 1982b, Du Gay et al. 1997; Faulkner 1983/2002; McRobbie 1998, 2002, 2004; Zolberg 1990; White & White 1965/1993). However, as the cultural sociologist Chandra Mukerji argues, in an introduction to science studies and cultural studies, debunking the myth of the creative genius; repeating the claim that creative work is not an individual deed, does not explain how creative production is collaborative.

Following Mukerji's argument, I would say that sociologists of cultural production have generated a position that is primarily defined by its opposition to the individualistic explanation of creativity. This means that sociologists have not merely opened a space of possibilities for considering collaborative practices in creative work by rejecting the individualistic explanation, as Mukerji suggests. Rather, sociologists have to a large extent filled this space with the exact opposite to the individualistic explanation; that is, social causality.

By substituting individual factors with social factors, sociological explanations of creativity have maintained the causal logic of the individualistic explanation; simply reversing it. In this way, the sociological approach to creativity has become severely delineated by its starting point as it holds on to the premises of the individualistic explanation. Thus, by rephrasing a mono-causal argument about what generates creativity, the sociological explanation has become as deterministic as the individualistic explanation which it opposes.

The position of Bourdieu, who has produced one of the most famous and widespread sociological theories on cultural production, may illustrate my point here. According to Bourdieu, the sociological perspective entails seeing artistic work as shaped by the social field (1980/1993; cf. DeNora 1995). Hence, Bourdieu asks the cunning question; *"But who creates the 'creators'?"* (1980/1993, p. 139), and clarifies; *"the question to ask is not what the artist creates, but who creates the artist"* (ibid., p. 147). In raising such questions, Bourdieu proposes that creators of cultural products are themselves socially created. Thereby, Bourdieu suggests that social causality determines cultural production, which is an argument that represents a straightforward rejection, and reversal, of the individualistic explanation of creativity.

Accordingly, Bourdieu's argument has been criticised from its loyal counterpart; the individualistic explanation. Critics from this stance have

maintained that Bourdieu's position implies *"sociologizing exceptionality away"* (Negus & Pickering 2004, p. 152). Hence, the solution which these critics have proposed is a return to the individualistic explanation; accepting that some individuals are more gifted than others, or at least that a very few are exceptional. In that way, a dichotomy between individual and social explanations has been installed as fundamental in the sociological debate over artistic production.

In film studies, a dichotomy between individual and social explanations has been predominant in the discussion over the *auteur*; the great director. This debate constitutes a parallel to the sociological question of creative production. Yet, at the same time, the auteur debate is founded in a concrete matter; namely who creates a film. Because of its foundation in the empirical question of authorship in film production, I find the debate over the auteur relevant to include here (cf. paper 2).

The concept of the auteur derives from film criticism, where it was invented in the 1950s and 60s. By installing the director as the central creative force in filmmaking the notion of the auteur meant that a creator of the work was found, which made film became comparable to traditional art forms. Thereby, the auteur figure established cinematic expression as an art form in its own right; the auteur raised film to the realm of art (Caughie 1981/1996; cf. Zolberg 1990).

Auteurism has been much debated in film studies, and the critiques can be roughly divided into two categories; a theoretical strand of critique and an empirical. The sharpest theoretical critique derives from the classic poststructuralist essays with the telling titles: *"The Death of the Author"* (1968/1990) by Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault's *"What Is an Author?"* (1969/1979). Both of these essays make the claim that the author is an invented subject position; Foucault used the label author-function to describe the author, while Barthes spoke of the author as being a fiction, an author-fiction. In Barthes' analysis, authoring of a text became handed over to its receivers. According to Barthes, a work does not have a foreclosed final meaning, but is open for multiple interpretations, which is a view that turns readers into producer and, simultaneously, dissolves the authority of the author, reducing it to a fiction. Foucault, in contrast to Barthes, did not declare the author do be dead, but portrayed the author as a historical notion that is upheld because it serves a function. An author, according to Foucault, is a nomination that enables categorization, which entails status distribution and inscribes meaning on texts. Thereby, authorship covers a historical need to explain causality with human

agents and not broader, heterogeneous factors.

Although these founding fathers of poststructuralism did not address the concept of the auteur, their theories have had a tremendous influence on the auteur debate (cf. Gerstner & Staiger 2003). In the auteur concept, the poststructuralist critique of the unified and autonomous subject found its prototypical antithesis. Hence, based on a poststructuralist standpoint, a theoretical critique was launched against the auteur, which deconstructed the concept completely.

The empirical critique is found in studies of film production, which have shown that the director is not the sole creator of a film, but dependent on various structures as well as the work of a number of collaborators. In contrast to the theoretical, poststructuralist critique, the empirically founded criticism of the auteur concept has not been concerned with dissolving the subject position of the auteur. Rather, the empirical critique has demonstrated that the auteur concept is inadequate as a description of film production practices. Thus, while empirical studies have invalidated the idea of the auteur, these findings have not implied a critique of the auteur concept as radical as the poststructuralist suggestion of suspending the concept altogether.

The empirical critique can be subdivided into two strands; one that points to social structures of film production and one which looks into the collaboration during filmmaking. The structural approach is Marxist inspired and highlights the mode of production to explain what gives film their character, for instance in descriptions of the studio system in classical Hollywood (Schatz 1988/2004; Spadoni 1995; Staiger 1981, 1985/2004). By pointing out industry structures that influence film production, these accounts contest the auteur notion. However, as in Bourdieu's structuralist approach, these studies which draw attention to industry structures in film production tend to make a deterministic account of the effects of the social structures.

Studies of collaboration in filmmaking have suggested an alternative to the auteur theory based on empirical descriptions of production processes. As the American professor in film studies Robert L. Carringer proposes in his historical analysis of the making of *Citizen Kane*, identifying collaboration entails that the creative function of the director is seen as distributed to several people; *"from the writer or cinematographer down through the ranks to the wardrobe manager and casting director"* (Carringer 1996, p. x). Accordingly, empirical studies of film productions have stressed the collaborative character of filmmaking by

demonstrating how decisive contributions are made by a large amount of participants (Carringer 1996, 2001; Lovell & Sergi 2005). However, these findings have been interpreted either as validation of the auteurist stance (Carringer), or have not been linked to a theoretical framework (Lovell & Sergi).

In that way, the auteur concept has become reinstalled in film studies despite both the poststructuralist critique and empirical studies which contradict the basic premises of the concept. For instance, a recent anthology by Danish film scholars portrays the director as a rational agent who is the creative origin of a film (Grodal et al. 2004). This intentionalist approach reinvents the auteur by underlining that the director has an original personality, which is evident in his films. Thus, the notion of the auteur is still thriving, although it may seem outdated from a constructivist standpoint; it is a concept that has undergone both a de- and reconstruction (cf. Burke 1992/1998; Gerstner & Staiger 2003; Wexman 2003).

Like the sociological critique of the myth of creative genius, the debate over the auteur illustrates that the issue of creative production is caught in an opposition between individualist and structuralist explanations. On the one hand, individualist explanations lay emphasis on extraordinary individuals such as *auteurs* that overrule social factors. On the other hand, structuralist explanations highlight social causes and leave no room for autonomous individuals. In my opinion, this opposition presents an unproductive dichotomy that paraphrases the grand actor-structure debate in sociology. At first sight, this opposition has only two stances which are mutually exclusive; subscribing to the individual or the social explanation. After a closer inspection, the question becomes how the dichotomy may be overcome by combining the two extremes; finding a middle way that incorporates both sides of the opposition, as for instance Giddens' structuralization theory proposes (cf. Giddens 1984).

However, I do not find that a combination of the two sides solve the problem of the dichotomy. On the contrary, I find that the dualism may be reinforced by accepting it as a premise for the discussion, because the discussion thereby primarily becomes concerned with how that dichotomy may be overcome. Thus, in my opinion, precisely the attempt to unite the two sides is a way of reinstalling the dualism. Instead, I propose posing the question of cultural production differently; asking how such work is carried out empirically. Hence, rather than making the discussion about creative production a paraphrase of the actor-structure debate, I suggest furthering the discussion by concentrating on empirical descriptions of

creative production practices.

Accordingly, I find that the new sociology of art provides a theoretical approach which is fruitful to advance the question of creative collaboration. By bringing the product into focus, the new sociology of art provides a perspective that turns creative collaboration into a matter of working with the product under development. That is, this perspective opens the way for looking at the relationship between the evolving product and its makers; seeing this as a dynamic relationship. Accordingly, collaboration is seen in relation to the product which it is about, rather than as a purified social interaction. Thus, I suggest placing the evolving cultural product at the centre of the analysis of creative production; studying the process of its development as a simultaneous and reciprocal progression of the product and the on-going collaboration of making it.

The dichotomy of interpreting or ignoring artworks

> *"If production studies run the risk of eliminating "culture" from the sociology of culture, researchers who focus on the content of cultural products run the risk of […] taking the "sociology" out".*
> (Peterson 1994, p. 184f).

When the new sociology of art suggests studying the cultural product sociologically, this suggestion enters into a discussion that is characterized by dichotomous stances. As Richard A. Peterson, the leading proponent of the production of culture perspective reasons sociological qualities become threatened when attention is paid to cultural products, because it turns focus to the content of the products, which is out of bounds for sociological analysis. Hence, Peterson suggests, it is better not to pay attention to artworks than to risk departing from the sociological track.

This argument derives from the viewpoint that artworks necessitate hermeneutics; that cultural products can only be studied by scrutinizing their inner meaning. Based on this view it is reasonable to argue that sociology of art can only study that which causes art whereas art itself subsumes under the faculty of the humanities. Accordingly, there seems to be only two possibilities in dealing with artworks; either they should be interpreted or they should be ignored.

Yet, I find this to be a false opposition. Why do artworks have to be interpreted to be studied? In my view, the new sociology of art opens the way for a different approach to artworks than that of hermeneutic inspection. The new sociology of art suggests that it is indeed possible, and fruitful, to enrol the product in social analyses of production processes as a participant equivalent to other actors. Thus, the optic from the new sociology of art enables identifying empirically how artworks play a role during their making and consumption; studying which effects the products have in the unfolding social processes which they form part of.

As one of the papers will illustrate (paper 3), I suggest following the tradition from the American pragmatist John Dewey to study artworks by means of the experiences they give rise to (1934/1959). The perspective from Dewey is in line with the new sociology of art as it portrays artworks as *doing* something to humans (cf. DeNora 2000, 2003). Dewey describes the experience of art as an alteration of doing and undergoing, which is an account that is paralleled in the work of Hennion who identifies a mixture of activity and passivity in the practices of music lovers (2001, 2007). Furthermore, according to Dewey, the clearest example of this double-edged experience of art can be found in the work practices of artists as they create an artwork and during this creation receive impressions of the evolving product. Hence, I suggest that the optic from Dewey provides a way of addressing the artwork sociologically in studies of cultural production.

Thus, while the British tradition of cultural studies has generated studies that identify how cultural products and their users are constituted simultaneously in consumption practices (e.g. Hebdige 1979; Willis 1978); I suggest that a similar co-production takes place in production practices. That is, I suggest a two-way, or perhaps many-way, relation between the cultural product and those who encounter it, not only when the product is finished and received by users, but also during its production where the evolving product is faced by its makers (cf. paper 5). Rather than seeing makers of cultural products as having intentions that are materialized in their work, I suggest that the makers of cultural products moreover act as receivers during their work processes. Intentions are thereby also formed by the producers' interactions with the evolving product.

In my opinion, the idea of taking the product into consideration does not break with a sociological approach. Actually, I think that sociological analyses of cultural production may benefit from addressing the products. Yet, I realize that this proposal raises the question about whether the sociologist can attend to artworks in

empirical studies without making interpretations and evaluations. This question embodies the danger of leaving the sociological realm by focusing on content of cultural products, which is what Peterson fears.

In the production of culture perspective, the ignorance of the product is explained by referring to those inevitable judgements, which the researcher makes about the product when attending to it. A quote from Max Weber is used to justify delimiting the scope of sociological analysis from the product:

> *"an aesthetic evaluation cannot be arrived at with the means afforded by an empirical approach and it is indeed quite outside its province".*
> (Weber 1949, p. 29, in DiMaggio & Hirsch 1976, p. 735f).

Weber's argument that a judgement of aesthetic qualities cannot be obtained by applying the tools of empirical analysis leads the proponents of the production of culture perspective to suggest that sociology cannot deal with aesthetic products.

Yet, another quote from the same text by Weber reads:

> *"whoever wishes to do empirical research in the history of art must be able to 'understand' artistic productions. This is, obviously enough, inconceivable without the capacity for evaluating them".*
> (1949, p. 33).

In this statement, Weber proposes that the study of art worlds necessitates an understanding of artistic products which depends on the ability of making aesthetic judgements. This argument; that artworks and a judgement of them are necessary in social studies of art, contrasts the idea of an empirical sociological approach which excludes aesthetic evaluations. Hence, the dichotomy of interpreting or ignoring artworks is found in the writings of Weber. Weber's suggestion of bringing the product into the sociological analysis of art entails exactly that which the proponents of the production of culture perspective oppose; interpretations and evaluations of content.

Weber's solution, which he presents a bit further on in the text, paraphrases his famous suggestion of separating the researcher's (artistic) judgements from the researcher's studies. However, excluding one's evaluations does not answer the

question of how the understanding of artworks could feed into the analysis. Hence, there seems to be a blind spot here regarding the question of what the sociologist is supposed to do with the product.

When the claim of the new sociology of art is made that the product can be incorporated into the analysis, it draws attention to this unsolved question of how the sociologist should use an understanding of the artistic product. The American sociologist of art Anne Bowler suggests:

> *"What is needed, therefore, is the development of a sociology of art capable of surmounting the traditional impasse that has existed between institutional and interpretive approaches to the study of culture and the arts. In practice, this means an approach capable of simultaneous attention to aesthetic issues and social structure".*
> (1994, p. 258).

Yet, this twofold agenda of paying attention to the content of artworks along with the social relations around them does not, I would argue, solve the question of how the artwork can be incorporated into sociological analyses. Rather, it maintains the separation of either studying the content of works of art or their social production. In addition, this agenda generates a micro-macro dualism, as the interpretative approach focuses on single cases while the institutional sociological approach is concerned with identifying general social structures.

In my opinion, the methodology of the new sociology of art surpasses the suggestion of simultaneously paying attention to aesthetic issues and social structures. As an alternative, the new sociology of art proposes investigating the effects of the product in social situations. Let me illustrate how such an approach makes it possible for the researcher to pay attention to the product in sociological studies, without turning to a hermeneutic analysis of the aesthetic content.

In my study I found it to be problematic that I am not very knowledgeable about film history. Sometimes the informants would ask if I knew this or that film; most of the time I did not and it made it difficult for them to explain what they were doing. In this way, my lacking knowledge about films was an obstacle in my study.

Yet, what seemed to be an even more significant 'sociological problem' was

my resistance towards making judgements of films. In the beginning of my study, I subscribed to the traditional approach in sociology of art of not paying attention to the artistic product under development; and certainly not making any judgements regarding works of art. However, as I became aware that all communication in the projects was based on judging products, I changed my way of approaching informants to conforming to this way of communicating. Thus, when they asked me *"what do you think"*, which was the opening paragraph in almost every encounter as I followed their work I stopped avoiding this question and started answering. At first, I answered politely that I found it to be quite good; later, I became more daring, giving more honest accounts of my impressions.

As I changed my attitude towards making judgements, my relations with the informants became more confident. Of course, this change could be explained by the growing amount of time I spent with them, but I think that my new way of engaging with their work contributed as well. In the two cases where I had the most interaction with informants, and had the most fruitful experiences of making empirical material, I also discussed their work and the made judgements regarding other films.

In that way, the capacity for evaluating artworks became, as Weber has suggested, a tool in doing empirical research of artistic production. The attendance to the artwork became a way of gaining a better understanding of the practices of cultural production. Yet, my interpretations and evaluations of the artworks did not thereby become a theme in the analysis. Rather, the sociological analysis dealt with the product by looking into the ways in which it was used by the informants. Thereby, the new sociology of art suggests an approach to the artwork which does not consist in making interpretations of the content, but identifying the ways in which it comes to have social implications.

Introducing the papers

As should hopefully be clear by now, the thesis constitutes an attempt to further the new sociology of art. Accordingly, the five papers, which make up the following sections of the thesis, present various ways in which I suggest that filmmaking may be approached from this perspective. Hence, the papers look at various aspects of the new sociology of art; the role of a mediator (paper 1), the organizing effects of the idea of the auteur (paper 2), the function of the artistic object in the collaboration (paper 3), the co-production of the evolving product and the project (paper 4), and the material aspect of creative work (paper 5). By making empirical analyses that concern these issues, the papers contribute to founding the new sociology of art as an approach that is capable of addressing cultural production processes.

At the same time, the order of the papers is chronological and in that way they do not only represent analytical angles in the new sociology of art, but also my encounter with this perspective. Thus, the papers illustrate how I started out from Becker's pragmatist view on collective production processes (especially paper 2), became occupied with Hennion's approach to artworks as active participants (especially paper 3), and has become interested in advancing this approach, for instance by combining it with cultural anthropology (especially paper 5). In that way, the thesis presents the new sociology of art as a perspective that can be put to use in combinations with other theoretical inspirations, rather than a delimited theory, which is only capable of repeating its own premises. Of course, this does not mean that anything can be included in the perspective of the new sociology of art. As the above sections have illustrated, the sociomaterial approach to sociology of art has clear theoretical, analytical and empirical implications. However, I find that one of the strengths of this perspective is that it forms a base from which journeys can be made; old problems may be revisited and new issues may be addressed.

While the first two papers are more classically sociological as they consider a human's job and a guiding notion that can be seen as a social convention, the following three papers are more unconventional in the sense that they bring in the material as an actor in the analysis. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the

papers are divided between a traditional sociological approach and a sociomaterial approach. The papers represent various ways of looking into the question of how creative development processes are organized by identifying whom and what is involved in these processes. Thereby, all of the papers demonstrate how the development phase of filmmaking is a process that consists in collaboration between several participants. By countering the assumption that creative work is an individual task, the thesis positions itself within the tradition of sociology of art and organizational sociology of cultural production. However, the papers also challenge the sociological outlook by pointing out that the interaction in creative work involves other participants than those normally considered social. Thereby, the papers can all be seen as falling under the category of the new sociology of art. The claim of the sociomaterial perspective in the new sociology of art is not that materials constitute the only interesting study objects. Rather, the proposal of the sociomaterial agenda is that a mixture of elements is involved in cultural practices; materials, humans, techniques, conventions etc., and that it requires empirical investigations to identify when, where and how these elements become active constituents of the processes in which they are enrolled. The papers reflect exactly this agenda as they present empirical analyses that exemplify ways in which humans, conventions and materials become mediators of evolving products as well as the social relations around them.

The first paper

"New Danish Screen: An organizational facilitation of creative initiatives: Gatekeeping and beyond" looks at how the central gatekeeper in the Danish film field; a film consultant at the Danish Film Institute, carries out this job. The paper begins from the opposition between the concept of individual creativity, which implies that the involvement of organizational representatives is often seen as a hindrance, and the concept of organizational creativity that portrays the participation of others as a help. Subscribing to an organizational sociological approach, the paper argues that the idea of individual creativity is inadequate. However, to assess the function of a gatekeeper, the paper does not apply the premise of organizational creativity that it should be seen as assistance. Rather, the paper opens this possibility and poses as an empirical question how the film consultant conducts this job. The analysis shows that the film consultant not only

selects projects, but is also involved in the progression of these. In fact, it is a requirement of the film consultant that applicants enter a dialogue about their projects. In this dialogue, the film consultant makes a number of recommendations which the filmmakers are expected to concentrate their work on. In this way, the film consultant becomes a collaborator in the process, as well as a gatekeeper. Hence, the paper suggests conceptualizing the involvement of the film consultant as a mediating function that transforms the evolving product, which is an interpretation that is inspired by the new sociology of art. The paper does not evaluate this intermediary function, but suggests that it transgresses and differs from the gatekeeper concept.

The second paper

“Organizing for the auteur: A dual case study of how the auteur notion is at play in debut filmmaking” addresses the notion of the auteur; the magnificent film director. Starting from the auteur debate in film studies, which is polarized between the auteurist stance that claims the existence of exceptional individual creators and the deconstructivist stance that opposes this claim, the paper suggests turning the discussion to consider the notion of the auteur itself instead of personifications of this notion. To do so, the paper proposes investigating how the notion of the auteur may be at play during the collaborative process of filmmaking. Thereby, the paper holds on to the critique of the auteurist claim, but avoids deconstructing filmmakers as creating subjects. Rather, the paper launches an empirical exploration of the effects of upholding the auteur notion. In two cases of filmmaking by debuting directors, the analysis identifies that auteurist expectations, held by the directors as well as the other participants in the processes, become an organizing principle. Furthermore, the analysis shows that these organizational effects of the auteur notion become a hindrance for the filmmakers; in the first case the director cannot choose which idea to progress, in the second case the director gets a nervous breakdown during the making of the film. Hence, the paper argues that although the auteur has been declared dead in theory, the notion of the auteur is thriving in the practices of the filmmakers and this leads to troubles for the directors as well as their collaborators.

The third paper

“In search of a sociology of art that is not against art: Bringing the evolving product into the analysis of production of culture” considers how the evolving product may be an active partaker in the process of its making. To conceptualize this active status of the product, the paper opens with a discussion of the dichotomy between the neglect of artworks in the sociology of art and the hermeneutic monopoly in humanistic approaches to art. The paper argues that neither of these traditions is suitable for investing the product sociologically. This proposition is informed by the new sociology of art, which criticises the tradition of sociology of art for ignoring the product when looking for social causalities behind artistic production. As an alternative, the new sociology of art suggests looking into the performativity of artworks; asking what the product does rather than what it is. To investigate what the product does, the paper suggests looking into experiences of the product as these may provide access to the co-production of the product and the social practices which it is entangled in. The analysis presents a case study of a development process where the evolving product plays an active role as it attaches the participants in the beginning and detaches them later on. Rather than understanding this activity of the product as material determinism, the paper argues that the product is a central part of the social practices, which at the same time progresses it. Hence, the paper proposes to conceptualize creative development processes as a co-production of the product and the sociomaterial network which alters as the product is being progressed.

The fourth paper

“Collaborative work and evolving products: A sociomaterial perspective on the development of film projects” looks at when and how the evolving product has an effect on the organizing of development projects. The starting point of the paper is the contrast between the neglect of the product in organizational analyses of production of culture and the sociomaterial perspective in organizational studies which aims to highlight connections between materials and people in organizational processes. The paper suggests an approach to cultural production which is in line with the sociomaterial perspective on organizational process, but furthers this approach by centring the analysis on the functions of the product in

establishing that network which composes a project. The analysis identifies three moments in the process of creative development where the product is decisive for the progression of the project. The first moment is externalization of the idea; that a materialized draft of the product is a necessity for advancing the work, not least because it enables collaboration. The second moment is making attachments; that the product is a mediator of the social relations in and out of the project, because all relations about the project go through the evolving product. The third moment is the postponement of closure; that the product may be kept open to facilitate further development of the project. The paper concludes that the evolving product is a vital part of the organizing of cultural production and suggests that it should be incorporated into social studies of cultural projects accordingly.

The fifth paper

“Creative work beyond self-creation: Filmmakers and films in the making” thematizes the issue of creative work, suggesting to see this as a matter of working with materials and techniques to generate transformations into fiction, rather than a mission exclusively of self-creation. The outset of the paper is the dualistic conception of creative work; seeing it as either an emancipative or an alienating practice, which the paper suggests has been prevalent. The paper argues that this dichotomous understanding of creative work is unfruitful because it reproduces itself, but even more so because it excludes the construction of alternative conceptions. Next, the paper sets out to initiate an understanding of creative work which does not reduce it to self-realization of self-exploitation. To do so, the paper brings in examples from the work of filmmakers. The filmmakers claim that their work entails a distinct energy and the paper argues that this attractiveness of the work cannot be explained by its self-creating possibilities alone. Rather, the paper suggests that the attractive characteristic of the work derives from what the work consists in; creating transformations into fiction. Hence, informed by the new sociology of art and cultural anthropology, the paper suggests characterizing creative work as technologies of enchantment. Moreover, the paper proposes that such techniques consist in mediations; fuelling mutations of the evolving product. Thus, the paper concludes that creative work exceeds the dualistic paradigm of self-creation; proposing that it should be seen as a transformative, sociomaterial practice instead.

Status of the papers

The first paper; “New Danish Screen: An organizational facilitation of creative initiatives: Gatekeeping and beyond” is accepted for publication in *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, presumably February 2009.

The second paper; “Organizing for the auteur: A dual case study of how the auteur notion is at play in debut filmmaking” is submitted to *Journal of Cultural Economy*.

The third paper; “In search of a sociology of art that is not against art: Bringing the evolving product into the analysis of production of culture” is submitted to *Cultural Sociology*.

The fourth paper; “Collaborative work and evolving products: A sociomaterial perspective on the development of film projects” is submitted to *Organization*.

The fifth paper; “Creative work beyond self-creation: Filmmakers and films in the making” is an invited submission to a special issue of *Journal for Cultural Research* about creative labor, edited by associate professor Fabian Holt, Performance Design, RUC.

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Chapter 2: Paper 1

New Danish Screen – an organizational facilitation of creative initiatives: Gatekeeping and beyond

Abstract

This article looks at how the film consultant directing the subsidy scheme New Danish Screen carries out this job. The aim of the article is to provide an understanding of the function of an organizational representative who succeeds in generating the making of innovative cultural products. The article illustrates how the job of the film consultant does not only imply choosing between different products but in addition entails involvement in the making these products. As a result of this, the article argues that to understand the job of the organizational representative the term gatekeeper should be connected to the concept cultural intermediary which highlights involvement in the production process.

Introduction

As creative industries have come to attract increasing political attention over the last decade, a quest for creativity and innovation has become articulated in public as well as academic debates (Du Gay & Pryke 2002; Hesmondhalgh 2005; Howkins 2001; Pratt 2005). However, the workings of initiatives launched to boost creativity have not received as much consideration as the notion of the creative industries (cf. Hesmonshalgh & Pratt 2005). Accordingly, it remains a good question how initiatives to enhance creativity are carried out.

During a multi case study of how Danish films are developed; how ideas are transformed into realizable projects, I encountered the operations of the Danish Film Institute. The Danish Film Institute is a state institution that is set up to advance Danish film; it is the main investor in the Danish film industry and, accordingly, the decisions of the Danish Film Institute are crucial for the industry. The Danish Film Institute distributes subsidies via three different funding schemes; a commercially oriented scheme, an artistically oriented scheme, and a scheme called New Danish Screen which is intended to generate innovative filmmaking. This article looks at how New Danish Screen is operated; outlining the contours and characteristics of the workings of an initiative which aims to increase creativity.

Filmmakers in my study spoke of New Danish Screen; and the Danish Film Institute in general, as making wrong choices, controlling developments and posing restrictions. However, the same filmmakers also spoke about assistance, encouragement and enabling inspiration. Accordingly, the article sets out to investigate if organizational intervention in creative developments can steer clear of falling into the pitfalls of limiting creative initiatives, hereby working against its own purpose. That is, this article looks at how a representative of an organization can meet and build up creative initiatives. Thus, by empirically elaborating the concept of cultural intermediaries, the article aims to contribute to the understanding of how organizational representatives can facilitate creativity.

Previous research

Relations between creative individuals and organizations have been portrayed as oppositional in organizational studies of creative industries as well as in film studies dealing with production systems (e.g. Adler 2004; Crane 1992; Hayes and Bing 2004; Lampel et al. 2000; Shone 2004). This opposition is grounded in the common understanding that creativity is an attribute of individuals, which places organizations as external to creative developments. However, this conception has been criticized in the sociology of art as well as in creativity studies and the literature on creative management and organizational creativity (sociology of art: Becker 1982; Zolberg 1990; creativity studies: Boden 1994; Kasof 1995; creative management: Bilton 2007; Bilton & Leary 2002; Davis & Scase 2000; Henry 2006; organizational creativity: Amabile 1988; 1998; Kantor 1988; Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995; Williams & Yang 1999). These accounts all reject the idea that creativity is an immanent, isolated, individual ability. Instead, they propose that creativity is fuelled by external influences and, accordingly, can be seen as a collective practice. In the following, I approach the function of the film consultant from this perspective on creativity.

Furthermore, before turning to the analysis, I will introduce the previous research on the Danish film consultancy system, set up the distinction between the concept of gatekeepers and intermediaries, and clarify the role of intermediaries to outline my approach.

The film consultancy system

Although New Danish Screen has not been studied before, its kin; the Danish film consultancy system, has been object of study in organizational analyses centring on its 'professionalization' (Boutaiba et al. 2005; Mathieu 2006). What these studies emphasize is that the official policy of 'professionalizing' the film consultancy practice is a lingo that does not solve the 'small world'-problems of the Danish film field and 'personal taste'-problems of the film consultancy job; the film consultants are recruited from a well-known social milieu and their decisions are

based upon personal preferences. However, these studies are based on official policy documents, an interview with the CEO of the Danish Film Institute and media coverage of two scandals; not interviews with the film consultants themselves or empirical investigation of the daily job performance of the film consultants. Hereby, the results of these studies can be seen as hypotheses of how the job might be carried out, but not an answer to this question. In contrast to these former studies, I set out to investigate how a film consultant enacts this role (cf. Baker & Faulkner 1991; Bechky 2006).

Gatekeeper versus cultural intermediary

In Collins Dictionary of Sociology gatekeepers are defined as *"individuals or groups in an organization who regulate either access to goods or services […] or the flow of information"* (Jary & Jary 2000, p. 239). Thus, the characteristic task performed by gatekeepers is judging and selecting who to let through to resources. The concept originates from the works of the social psychologist Kurt Lewin, who defined gatekeepers to be at play when *"an individual or group is 'in power' to make the decision between 'in' or 'out'"* (Lewin 1943/1967, p. 186). Lewin operated with the concepts of a channel, a gate and a gatekeeper controlling access through this gate. By this, Lewin underlined that gatekeeper is a powerful position as it involves deciding which subjects are selected for entrance to the channel.

Lewin's concept of gatekeepers was transferred to communication studies by David Manning White and it later spread to studies within the production of culture perspective (Crane 1992; Peterson 1994; White 1950). These studies have demonstrated how newspaper editors, book publishers, television producers; executives in cultural industries, select content from a variety of options. To explain this selection Lewin's typology has been applied.

Yet, a modification of Lewin's gatekeeper concept was suggested by the proponents of the production of culture perspective John Ryan and Richard A. Peterson, who launched what they called a 'decision chain model', based on their study of the music industry (1982; cf. Peterson 1994). The decision chain model points out that cultural products pass through a series of gatekeepers; at each stage decisions are made about whether the product can proceed and, if so, in which form.

Following from this, the British music sociologist Keith Negus has advanced the critique of the gatekeeper concept:

> *"the gatekeeper concept is limited by the assumption that cultural items simply appear at the 'gates' of the media or culture producing corporation where they are either admitted or excluded".*
> (2002b, p. 510, cf. 1997).

Imagining gatekeepers waiting for products to arrive at the gates, exclusively conducting the task of admitting or rejecting entrance is, according to Negus, a portrayal that can be criticised for its simplicity and romanticism (2002a). Instead, Negus suggests, cultural products are unfinished when gatekeepers become involved, and, accordingly, gatekeepers do more than simply select products. Consequently, Negus proposes replacing the gatekeeper concept with the concept of cultural intermediaries. In contrast to the gatekeeper concept that sees decision-makers in creative industries as external decision-makers, the concept of cultural intermediaries places these as internal co-producers.

The concept of cultural intermediaries was introduced by Pierre Bourdieu to mark out the amount of new professionals in the cultural industries, which is an expanding group that holds occupations of providing symbolic goods and services (1984; cf. Featherstone 1991/1998). This definition has been criticized for being too inclusive and unspecific an analytic category as it is based on a cluster of occupations; yet, it also points to the criterion that intermediaries create links between production and consumption (Nixon & Du Gay 2002; Negus 2002b).

In my employment of the concept I emphasize the co-operation of cultural intermediaries in the making of the product. This characterization is informed by the work of the French music sociologist Antoine Hennion who has announced that *"the sociology of art is a sociology of the intermediary"* (1989, p. 403, cf. 1995, 1997; Hennion and Grenier 2000; Hennion and Meadel 1986). Hennion opposes ideas of 'pure' artworks by drawing attention to various mediators; human as well as non-human, which are forming works of art. Hence, Hennion remarks about his study of music producers:

> *"The role of artistic directors is at once the most mysterious and the most characteristic".*
> (1989, p. 411).

That is, executives act as intermediaries; they choose and change content, nevertheless, this crucial function is often left unexplained.

Intermediaries in action

In their study of how organizational representatives judge creative potential in Hollywood pitching sessions, the organizational scholars Kimberly D. Elsbach and Roderick M. Kramer find that judgements of creative potential depend on two factors; the organizational representatives' use of industry prototypes along with the interaction between organizational representatives and pitchers (2003). When a decision-maker associates a pitcher with a positive industry stereotype, such as 'story teller' or 'artist', and when the interaction makes the decision-maker feel like a collaborator in the unfolding of the story, then the creative potential of the pitcher is judged to be high, and vice versa.

In his study of music production companies in the UK and the US, Negus, inspired by the writings of Bourdieu, demonstrates how studio executives, who are primarily white, middle-aged, middle-class men, select certain types of artists and exclude others for reasons originating in their own background dispositions: They choose to produce and promote rock bands over soul singers in spite of the preferences of the market, because of their own preferences which stems from youth experiences at colleges in the 60s when rock bands were a highly innovative and popular form of music (2002a). Although Negus does not operate with a similar distinction as do Elsbach and Kramer of applying stereotypical categories and feeling in sync with applicants, these aspects are in line with his Bourdieuan way of thinking, where they would be seen as effects of habitus. Both of these studies specify that intermediaries' actions are guided by their presuppositions. Thus, these studies indicate that interaction between intermediaries and creative individuals is determined by the preferences of the intermediaries.

Another way of approaching the actions of intermediaries is found in the work of Hennion. In his study of music producers, he portrays intermediaries as

representing the public to the artists by reacting to artists' work as an audience might do (1989). In this way, Hennion expands on the element of interaction, which Elsbach and Kramer sketch out, thereby emphasizing the experience-based and collaborative character of intermediaries' actions. By this, the work of Hennion points out that it is a two-way relation between artists and intermediaries; that is, intermediaries' preferences only form one side of the relationship (cf. 2007).

Following Hennion's line of thinking opens the way for seeing intermediaries' actions as more than solely a pursuit of their own interests. By this, it becomes possible to identify intermediaries in creative industries who conduct a form of management that enhances creativity (cf. Amibile 1988, 1989; Kantor 1988; Williams & Yang 1999). Thus, intermediaries can be seen as having a role similar to that of middle managers who facilitate knowledge creation, thereby acting as 'knowledge engineers', as described by the organizational scholars Ikujiro Nonaka and Hirotaka Takeuchi (1995; cf. Bilton 2007).

Accordingly, the approach in this article is to see the mode of intervention by an intermediary and its effects as an open empirical question, instead of viewing organizational representatives merely as guarding 'gates' which hinder creative individuals. This is not the same as suggesting that intervention of organizational representatives always has a positive influence on creative developments. Rather, it is an attempt to generate a balanced view from an empirical study of how the job of an organizational representative is carried out; aiming at *"a more sober assessment of these groups which avoids the pitfalls of either celebration or denunciation"*. (Nixon & Du Gay 2002, p. 498).

Method

The empirical basis for this article is a multi case study of the development of Danish film projects. Over a one-year period in 2006-2007, I followed five film projects under development by means of observing, interviewing, and reading case material such as synopses, scripts and funding applications.[1] In this study, I discovered that the film consultant played an important part in the project groups' work. Therefore, in this article, I look into how the film consultant of New Danish Screen defines this role.

After an introduction to the formal guidelines of New Danish Screen and its results until now, three pieces of qualitative data are analyzed to identify how the film consultant performs this role: Observations of two seminars where the film consultant of New Danish Screen introduces potential applicants to the workings of the scheme, and an interview I conducted with the film consultant. These data provide insights into the film consultant's construction of the role, as the film consultant in all three instances explicates in detail how the interaction with filmmakers proceeds, in the view of the film consultant.

Themes have been selected for the analysis based on the criterion of their relevance to understanding how the film consultant performs the job, and the selected themes have been systematized to illustrate the sequences in the interaction between filmmakers and New Danish Screen.

[1] This research was sponsored by The Danish Social Research Council (DSSRC).

New Danish Screen

Since the founding of the Danish Film Institute in 1972 so-called film consultants have been employed to apportion subsidies to filmmaking. The film consultants are a changing body of skilled filmmakers who are politically and financially autonomous, which is meant to guarantee qualified and impartial decision-making. Thus, the film consultancy system exemplifies the 'arms length principle' of Danish cultural policy (cf. Duelund 2002, 2008; Lov om film 1997).

From 1989 on, the consultancy scheme has been supplemented with another scheme called 60/40 (earlier 50/50), named after its form of financing where the Danish Film Institute pays maximum 40% of the film.[2] Allocation of funding in the 60/40-scheme is based on a judgement, made by external readers, of whether the film will attract a large audience (at least 175.000 spectators) (cf. Ministry of Culture 2007). Hereby, 60/40 is positioned as a commercial funding scheme in contrast to the artistically oriented consultant scheme.
Both schemes only fund feature films and every now and then they have been criticized for choosing safe and familiar projects, closing the eyes to experimental and unfamiliar projects (e.g. Danske Filminstruktører 2000). To help ensure a development of talents and new forms of expressions the Danish Film Institute ran a funding scheme solely for short films from 1994 to 2002. When the scheme was closed down, a new one was on its way to take over.

New Danish Screen (NDS) was launched in 2003 and slowly began functioning in 2004 after some start-up troubles concerning the making of co-financing agreements with film production companies (DFI 2004a; Brask Rasmussen 2005). In contrast to its predecessor, NDS is not exclusively subsidising short films but also feature films as the format is seen as a means to carry out its objective.[3] The declared aim of the scheme is to:

[2] In practice, though, this does not form a difference between 60/40 and the consultancy scheme as films in both schemes receive in average 39% of their budget from DFI (DFI 2006b, p.11ff). This percentage is lower than in the neighbour countries Sweden and Norway where respectively 60% and 70% of an average film budget consists of state subsidies (ibid, p. 8).
[3] NDS grants subsidies to film projects in four formats: less than 10 minutes, 25-30 minutes, 40-45 minutes and 75+ minutes (DFI 2004b).

> *"sustain and strengthen the dynamics and diversity of Danish cinema. It must be ensured that new generations of filmmakers do not revert to conventional, handed-down expressions, but constantly strive to push the limits and create new experiences for audiences […] New Danish Screen should harness the energy and momentum of talented filmmakers without steering them in certain directions".*
> (DFI 2004b).

Thus, NDS is targeted on developing talents, hereby aiming to ensure heterogeneity and innovation in Danish filmmaking.

In contrast to the consultancy scheme and 60/40, the judgements of NDS do not only take the film project into account but do also explicitly address the talent behind it. Applicants should be 'manifested talents'; emerging or experienced professional filmmakers, who are interested in developing their talent and trying out new ideas (DFI 2004b). Furthermore, NDS follows the line of thinking from Dogma95 about seeing restraining budgets and self-imposed rules of production as enhancing creativity (cf. Hjort 2005).[4] The financial basis of NDS is low-budget and no-frills; a feature film from this scheme costs around 10 million dk.kr (1,3 million euro/1,8 million US$), which is just over half the price of an average Danish feature film (cf. Brask Rasmussen 2005; DFI 2006).

At the end of 2006, the scheme had granted development subsidies for 50 film projects and production subsidies for 36 of these; 11 feature films along with 25 short films (DFI 2006a).[5] Only 3 feature films had been released at the end of 2006 – all with great success: *A Soap* won both the Jury Grand Prix/Silver Bear and the Best First Feature Award at Berlin film festival 2006. The 20% live-action (shot on video) and 80% animation *Princess* was appointed the opening film at Quinzaine des Réalisateurs at Cannes film festival 2006, and the blend of documentary and fiction *Offscreen* was selected for competition at Sundance Film Festival 2007.

[4] Dogma95 is a category for films made on a set of production principles known as the 'vow of chastity', which was invented by Lars von Trier and three other Danish directors in 1995. For further information on Dogma95 see Hjort and MacKenzie 2003 and www.dogme95.dk

[5] Development subsidies subsume, in this case, subsidies for manuscript writing and subsidies for further development such as research, rehearsals with actors, technical tests etc. The fact that NDS has granted production subsidies for 36 out of 50 projects, which have been granted development subsidies, is a higher frequency than usually for DFI. Before NDS was introduced in 2003, the consultancy scheme and 60/40 granted manuscript subsidies for 80 projects but production subsidies for only 25 projects yearly (DFI 2002, p. 6).

These achievements have made NDS a symbol of the hoped-for continuation of a successful Danish cinema. In the decade from the early 1990s, Danish film experienced what has been characterized as a 'wave of success' (e.g. Hjort 2005; Boutaiba et al. 2005; Mathieu 2006). This success was based on, firstly, that Danish film became recognized internationally for its winnings of festival prizes, and, secondly, that Danish film, together with French films, came to hold the highest home market percentage in Europe (30% in 2005, average 26% from 1999-2006) (DFI 2006c, 2007a; Miller et al. 2001). Although NDS does not meet the second requirement, as the films from the scheme are, so far, not seen by a wide Danish audience, NDS contributes to a revitalization of the success of Danish cinema with regard to the first criterion; international festival recognition (cf. DFI 2007b). Accordingly, the discourse about the scheme is optimistic, as this quote from a leading Danish newspaper illustrates:

> *"In less than a year New Danish Screen has become a brand for Danish film as good as 'Dogma', and all feature films from the scheme have been selected for the world's leading film festivals".*
> (Møller 2006, quoted in DFI 2006d).

Since NDS has come to symbolize a furtherance of the wave of success and is seen as an autonomous offspring from the Dogma wave, it has been converted into a high priority topic in the negotiations of the Danish film policy (DFI 2006d, 2006e; Kulturministeriet 2006).

Accordingly, whereas the scheme operated with around 100 million dk.kr (13 million euro/18 million US$) from 2003-2006, it has about 150 million dk.kr (19,5 million euro/27 million US$) at its disposal from 2007-2010 (DFI 2006e, p. 11; Kulturministeriet 2006, p. 5). In both periods, about a third of the finances come from the two national public service TV-channels; DR (Danish Broadcasting Corporation) and TV2/Denmark, while the rest of the money is provided by the Danish Film Institute.

NDS is governed by a steering committee that represents its shareholders.[6] The steering committee supervises and sanctions the decisions made by NDS in its daily working. The organizational composition of NDS is similar to the consultancy scheme; it is managed by a film consultant, who is assisted by two staff members; a producer examining the applicants' plans for budgets, logistics and time schedules, and a project coordinator who has a secretary function and keeps contact with applicants. In the case of NDS the film consultant is also termed 'artistic director' which emphasizes that this is a position of leadership along with artistic decision-making.

The tasks of this position is indicated in the guidelines for the scheme (DFI 2004b), and explicated in a job advertisement for a new film consultant (DFI 2007d). In the guidelines it is stated that:

> *"The artistic director evaluates the potential of applications both in terms of human resources and the project's merits".*
> (DFI 2004b).

This is elaborated in the job advertisement as a number of required qualifications are listed: The film consultant should be experienced in judging the potential of manuscripts as well as applicants' talent resources and their potential for developing and realizing projects. Furthermore, the film consultant should be experienced in project coaching, articulate in an unambiguous, specific and constructive manner, capable of forming an inspirational dialogue with applicants and have the integrity to make difficult decisions. Lastly, the film consultant should know about production conditions and possess abilities of leadership and collaboration (DFI 2007d). However, neither of these documents tells how the job is conducted in practice. To find out what practices the film consultant uses to conduct the job, it is necessary to look at what the film consultant says the job consists of and how it is carried out.

[6] The steering committee of NDS consists of DR's director of television drama, TV2's editor of television drama, the director of development at the Danish Film Institute and the CEO of the Danish Film Institute (DFI 2007c).

Gatekeeping and beyond – guarding entrance and guiding applicants

> *"In the old days you had a theory that, you know a very old-fashioned theory about the artist that – and when I say old-fashioned I mean like the 60s, the time of the auteur, the Golden Age [laughs] or I don't know if you should call it the Stone Age – that you created a piece, a piece that was created like some kind of grand organic delivery inside the head of the director, and he was the creator of the film. And when the idea had appeared inside the head it was really just about getting it out".*
> (Film consultant NDS).[7]

In earlier days, the film consultant explains, the individualistic conception of creativity dominated the perception of how films are made as creation was thought of as being the realization of a single person's vision. Sarcastically, the film consultant criticises this view for being outdated and unrealistic, stating that the making of a film is not a simple transplantation of an idea from the head of the director to the world outside. Rather, the film consultant represents an alternative to relying solely on the capacities of the director that consists in developing the project in collaboration with others.

Introducing the scheme

When explaining the scheme to potential applicants, the film consultant emphasizes that it is always a double-edged situation when meeting with filmmakers; and this starting-point should be acknowledged by all parties concerned. On the one hand, the relationship between the Danish Film Institute and Danish filmmakers is grounded in a mutual dependency and shared interest in maintaining Danish cinema. On the other hand, the relationship is based on a

7 All quotes from the empirical material are translated from Danish by the author.

fundamental inequality as the Danish Film Institute selects which films are to be made in Denmark with financial support from the state.

As the film consultant words it, the point of departure for all interaction with applying filmmakers is that the job of representing the Danish Film Institute is to be an *"executioner"*. Clarifying what this position signifies, the film consultant states that: "*They know that I am the lion"*. When filmmakers meet the film consultant, they face the person who is in a position to decide their fates. This guarding of entrance into the subsidy system; selecting who is to be included and who is to be excluded, gives the film consultant the role of being a gatekeeper. It is the judgement of the film consultant that determines which filmmakers should be given the opportunity to advance their careers and which filmmakers should be rejected that opportunity. The film consultant knows that this position is perceived as a feared decision-maker, for good reasons.

According to the film consultant, the prospects of making a film on the basis of the decisions made by the gatekeeper cause filmmakers to have ambivalent attitudes towards the person embodying this position. Thus, while this dreadful decision-maker may be met with a hostile attitude by the filmmakers, the attitude may also be flattering. According to the film consultant, this is inevitable and usually results in a jumble of feelings and contradictory stances.

However, the film consultant continues, these attitudes pose a hindrance to creative development because they centre on expectations of the decision-maker's preferences at the expense of the filmmakers own inclinations. By this, focus is shifted from the filmmakers' projects, which they intend to make with the support of the Danish Film Institute, to the relationship between applicants and gatekeeper, and the preferences of the gatekeeper. What the film consultant attempts to do is turn this around and bring the filmmakers' inclinations back into focus.

By this, the film consultant enacts the role of being gatekeeper by bringing its feared characteristics to light, then storing this issue in the background, modifying the gatekeeper function into something else. That is, the film consultant attempts to transcend the role of being a brutal decision-maker by stressing the creative development of the filmmakers instead. In this way, the film consultant does not conform to solely conducting the gatekeeping job; the film consultant strives to move beyond this function.

Making recommendations

Against the background of unequal power relations, the film consultant tries to establish a different kind of relationship with filmmakers than that of being an executioner. Actually, the creative director holds that the operation of NDS is meant to *"construct a creative space to talk in"*. That is, the task of making decisions about grants should be performed in such a way that it enables and favours creative interaction. The film consultant ironically explains to potential applicants: *"After all, my meetings have to be there, so they should preferably give some inspiration"*. Thus, instead of viewing the scheme solely as a limitation, the film consultant wants it to be seen as an opportunity for development. To fulfil this ambition the film consultant uses different means.

First of all, the film consultant advises potential applicants not to restrain themselves by holding on to ready-made conceptions of what constitutes a good film. This advice is given by telling a *'scare story'* of a novel filmmaker who wants to access the business and therefore would like to make a film that can pave the way for making another film:

> *"You want to show what you are capable of; that you are able to make a real film. This is not a good idea because they become the most boring. Abandon that idea. It is better to go your own way"*.
> (Film consultant NDS).

Applicants are advised not to make a film that lives up to the expectations of a proper film, because this ambition will lead to a dull result, according to the film consultant. Rather, applicants should discover their own idiom and demonstrate a willingness to sink deeper down into the material and move further on to develop their ideas.

The film consultant pushes potential applicants toward this stance by stating that *"you should challenge yourself"*. This requirement entails that applicants let go of what they think they know and prioritize seeking new experiences; moving into the unpredictable. According to the film consultant this demand is bound up with the requirement of the scheme, which is to *"bring talents a decisive step further in their development"*. As a consequence of this aim, applicants should

confront conventional thinking. However, this should not be seen as a blank cheque to do whatever is odd, since *"nobody is served by making a poor film [...] there should be something at stake"*. By appealing to the filmmaker's own interest in making a noteworthy film, the film consultant argues that they need to dedicate themselves to the project. Reading between the lines, the film consultant is saying that the filmmakers must be devoted and willing to open themselves to development to avoid making a failure. And the first step in the right direction is choosing which idea to pursue.

Frequently, the film consultant claims, applicants choose the wrong idea when seeking support from NDS. They make the wrong choice, because their decision is based on myths about what NDS will favour and because original ideas are characterized by an awkwardness that makes them seem unfitting. Nevertheless, it is these unfitting and awkward ideas that contain the original and promising material, according to the film consultant. Therefore, the advice is to avoid contrived ideas that are constructed on expectations of what others may prefer and seek inwards instead.

When applicants bring the wrong ideas to NDS, as they do all too often, the film consultant tries to investigate if there is another type of material beneath this idea. As the film consultant puts it: *"very often there is something more personal, hidden deep inside the desk drawer"*; that is, the interesting material has a personal quality and is located in the closet. The aim of the film consultant is to bring out this personal material; *"open the treasure chest a little"*. Revealing personal stories is a priority for the film consultant as these are considered to generate more interesting films. As a result of this line of reasoning, the film consultant tries to persuade filmmakers to bring out their hidden treasures.

One technique that is used by the film consultant to make filmmakers reveal more interesting material concerns how to present an idea for a film. Thus, the film consultant advises applicants to describe the idea *not* by portraying it as a completed work, but by telling about how they got the idea, which other ideas they had and what they do not know about the idea. This implies that applicants should not try to cover all that they do not yet know about the project. In fact, they should do just the opposite. The film consultant illustrates this point by saying that *"you should not place yourself to hide scratches in the paintwork as if you were selling a car"*. The analogy to car dealing exemplifies that the judgement of the film consultant will penalize applicants for polishing the surface layer of the project.

Rather than improving the looks of the project to make it give the impression of being ready to start, applicants should be honest and admit the state of the project, which is that it is imperfect and unfinished.

The film consultant reminds potential applicants that the object of consideration is not a finished film but ideas and potential; it is these intangible elements that will be judged. Applicants are encouraged to accept this:

> *"It is important that things do not become too finished because then they lose interest. It is in the unfinished things where the gold and potential is".*
> (Film consultant NDS).

Keeping the material unfinished is of great value, because it inspires further work, the film consultant explains. Furthermore, this tribute to unfinished things is an indirect request to present ideas in their provisional form to the film consultant.

However, the wish to be introduced to the project early on does not mean that the film consultant wants to be involved in the very beginning. This is underlined by pointing to the agenda of the scheme that is not to be *"product demanding"*, which has two interrelated implications. Firstly, this phrase indicates that the focus area of the scheme is not products per se but development of talents. As the film consultant explains there is *"no requirement of being successful"*, which means that NDS distributes risk capital that provides an opportunity to test new material at the expense of safe investment in conventional projects. Secondly, the point that the scheme is not product demanding implies that the initiative lies with the filmmakers.

Asked directly by a potential applicant: *"when should one approach you?"* the film consultant asks a cunning question in return: *"when does it solidify?"* This answer is two-sided; on the one hand an idea should not be too blurred and muddled when approaching NDS; on the other hand an idea should not either be so solid that it is unfit for further development. The filmmakers have to figure out themselves when such equilibrium is reached. To do that, the film consultant advises to form teams consisting of director, producer and scriptwriter. These teams should be cemented and have taken the first steps together before contacting NDS. These first steps include that the originator of the idea tells about it to the other participants instead of making it a solitary work.

At the point when a team has agreed upon an idea and needs resources to realise it they are ready to send an application to NDS. Once they do that, they can expect to receive a decisive evaluation and suggestions for improvement, which they need to take a stand on.

All in all, the recommendations that the film consultant gives potential applicants illustrate the manner in which they should approach NDS to obtain a positive response. Four recommendations outline this mindset that applicants should subscribe to when interacting with NDS: Applicants should abandon the ambition of making a real film; applicants should choose an idea from the hidden treasure chest of personal material; applicants should *not* present the idea in the same way as if they were to sell it; and, finally, an idea should not be finished when approaching NDS. Another way of saying this is that the film consultant should be let in during the creative development.

By this, the role of the film consultant is redefined to also imply involvement in the process of developing that which is to be judged by the film consultant as gatekeeper. Consequently, the film consultant oversteps the function of selecting candidates; moving into a position of being an intermediary that guides development and transfers the potential of applicants into innovative products. Still, this intermediary position is combined with the role of being gatekeeper as interaction with the film consultant is a requirement to be let through the gate. The result is that if the applicants do not subscribe to the mindset of being open to guidance from the film consultant they will most probably not be granted subsidies. To demonstrate this claim, it is worth having a look at which procedures are used in the interaction with and judgment of applicants.

The communication procedure

The film consultant evaluates applications by three criteria: Previous work by all three team members, the current idea, and applicants' ability to work on the idea. The first two parameters have to correspond in the sense that the project should make a progress compared with former projects made by the applicants. The third parameter concerns the filmmakers own judgement on where they are in the process; how they estimate when they should start which activities. All three criteria are pieced together in the decision made by the film consultant.

Before an application is sent to NDS, it is possible for potential applicants to arrange an informal talk with the film consultant to discuss interests. Yet, once an application for a specific project has been sent to NDS, the communication procedure becomes more fixed. When briefing applicants on the decisions of their requests for financial support, the film consultant uses a standard procedure:

The response is delivered in written form and has a standard format of going through the project, summing up what the film consultant sees as potentials and weaknesses of the project. The film consultant claims to always put an effort into formulating this letter of decision in a constructive manner. The letter concludes in a refusal or an invitation for a meeting.[8]

If applicants are invited in for a meeting, they are expected to speak their opinion on the comments they have received. Hopefully, this discussion will clarify if the film consultant is misunderstanding the filmmakers' intentions. The film consultant describes the intervention that is made as;

> *"very simple and very phenomenological, actually. I mean, it's not about digging in the mental life of people or something like that [...] it's very much based on what they have written".*
> (Film consultant NDS).

This characterization of the intervention as being oriented towards an exploration of the material, and therefore not a psychological process, is justified by pointing to the fact that the involvement of the film consultant is centred around taking a stand on the filmmakers' writings. Basically, the participation of the film consultant consists in commenting, raising questions and making suggestions for further development based on a reading of the written proposals from filmmakers. At their first meeting, the filmmakers and the film consultant agree on elements that the filmmakers have to work on before coming back. If the project seems promising enough, the filmmakers may furthermore be granted financial support.

Once the filmmakers have solved the tasks they were given at the first meeting with the film consultant, they send their new material to NDS and it forms the

[8] In the early days of NDS, every ninth application was given an invitation to a meeting, later it became every sixth, according to the statistic kept by the film consultant.

basis for another meeting. According to the film consultant, the standard procedure subsequently repeats itself *"in a practically compulsory neurotic way [laughs]"*. The film consultant estimates that 99% of meetings with filmmakers have this format: Applicants send their new proposal; the film consultant gives them a written response centring on potentials and weaknesses; a meeting is held to discuss the comments; and a new agreement is made, possibly including an allocation of further subsidies.

Upholding the standard procedure for giving feed-back to applicants has the benefit of making it possible for both parts to be well-prepared for the meetings. According to the film consultant this includes that: *"No unpleasant truths are to be said at the meeting, they are all delivered beforehand"*. To hand over critical comments before meeting is meant to avoid immediate unproductive feelings such as anger and rage from the meeting. If the filmmakers are in a defensive position it is *"not at all possible to have a conversation"*, the film consultant explains. Therefore, the filmmakers are given an opportunity to formulate a response to the film consultant before meeting.

Finally, the film consultant states:

> *"It takes an enormous demonstration of confidence and exposure of the creative people to enter a dialogue with me. And to make them feel that it can happen, well, it has to be done on a very respectful basis."*
> (Film consultant NDS).

It costs filmmakers an effort to overcome their reluctance to let the feared decision-maker join their creative process; and the standard procedure of communication is a tool which can assist this.

According to the film consultant, the function of becoming involved in the process does not entail a direct participation in the creative process. Thus, the film consultant states: *"it is not around this table the creative process takes place"*, and continues: *"creative decisions are not made here. Decisions are made when you get home"*. By stressing that it is up to the applicants to bring the project further in its development and make up their mind of what to do after the meetings, the film consultant is enabled to conclude: *"in all phases the initiative lies with them"*. Yet, although progression of the project is, indeed, conducted by the filmmakers and

not the film consultant, the film consultant is a participant in the process who is involved in forming the evolving product through acting as an intermediary. To identify this function, I close the analysis by turning to the practices of the filmmakers, thereby moving away from the self-perceived role of the film consultant.

When observing meetings internally in project teams applying for funding from NDS, I noticed that the film consultant's comments structured the discussions. Although the film consultant was not physically present, the topics raised by the film consultant were what the talks in the groups centred on. This did not imply that the filmmakers did not disobey the suggestions of the film consultant; on the contrary, filmmakers often disagreed and found their own solutions. However, the point is that that the issues which filmmakers addressed were those which the film consultant had called attention to. That is, the film consultant laid out a scope of possibilities in certain directions which the development of the projects followed. By this, the film consultant managed by defining the box in which developments of the ideas took place (cf. Bilton & Leary 2002; Boden 1994). Thus, the film consultant draws the boundaries of the potential developments of the project. This is not necessarily a bad function, but it is a dangerous function (cf. Foucault 1983/2000), and it is certainly different from simply opening or closing gates.

Conclusion

This article addresses the question of how the film consultant who directs the subsidy scheme New Danish Screen carries out this job. As the scheme is designed to generate innovative filmmaking, and has been successful in doing so, the article provides an understanding of an organizational representative who conducts an initiative to enhance creativity.

Based on previous research on decision-makers in creative industries, the article starts by explaining the difference between the gatekeeper concept and the concept of creative intermediaries. Whereas the gatekeeper concept highlights selection, the concept of the intermediary underlines involvement as it describes a position which links production and consumption. Thereby, these concepts point to two different dimensions of the work of decision-makers in creative industries. Yet, the article argues in favour of using and developing the concept of intermediaries as it opens the possibility of seeing decision-makers as doing more than simply guarding gates.

Furthermore, instead of assuming that a contradictory relationship exists between the filmmakers and the film consultant of New Danish Screen, the article poses it as an empirical question how this organizational representative deals with creative project groups. In this respect, the intermediary concept is a better equipped theoretical tool as it enables identifying 'positive' relations between the film consultant and the filmmakers, in contrast to the gatekeeper concept which is solely capable of describing selection.

The analysis is based primarily on three pieces of qualitative data, all of which are accounts given by the film consultant of the workings of the scheme. Accordingly, the analysis identifies how the organizational representative explicates the conduct of the job. By this, the article focuses on one side of the relationship, the part of the film consultant; although the practices of the filmmakers are included as a frame of reference for the analysis.

The analysis illustrates how the job of the film consultant not only consists in choosing which applicants to support but also involves participation in their work. When explaining the scheme to potential applicants, the film consultant recommends a manner in which the scheme should be approached that emphasises

openness to involve the film consultant. Thus, rather than exclusively acting as a gatekeeper, the film consultant strives to become accepted into the development process as a facilitator and sparring partner, thereby acting as an intermediary. To enable this redefinition of the gatekeeper position, the workings of the scheme are based on dialogue with the film consultant. This communication is shaped by a fixed procedure which is intended to enable and ease the film consultant's involvement in the creative process.

One implication of the film consultant's intermediary function is that the film consultant becomes involved at an early stage in the process. This is different from what the gatekeeper concept indicates as it operates with selection of finished items. In the case of New Danish Screen, the selected items are unfinished ideas that are being formed in interaction with the film consultant, which makes the intermediary function of the film consultant apparent.

Furthermore, the film consultant lay out a range of issues that the filmmakers are asked to address. Accordingly, the analysis illustrates that the involvement of the film consultant consists in guiding development processes in certain directions; drawing attention to specific issues and seeking to make the filmmakers address these. This intervention transforms the production process, but whether the influence has a positive or negative outcome depends on the relationship between applicants and intermediary. The cultural intermediary might interrupt the creative process or might actually fuel it.

The facilitating function of the film consultant is different from the role of decision-makers described in previous studies which have primarily highlighted their restricting actions. This difference may be due to that New Danish Screen represents a state institution, whereas the previous studies of decision-makers in cultural industries have dealt with executives in private companies. Thus, the film consultant is guided by a cultural policy rationale that prioritizes artistic invention, which differs from the economic rationale that guides private enterprises. Despite this, it may be possible to transfer some of the insights from New Danish Screen to other organizations to transform gatekeepers into facilitating intermediaries.

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Chapter 3: Paper 2

Organizing for the auteur: A dual case study of how the auteur notion is at play in debut filmmaking

Abstract

In this article, I transfer the question of the auteur from film criticism to filmmaking. Starting from the interactionist view that art is on-going collective action, I propose applying the auteur notion as a sensitizing concept to identify how the ideal of the auteur is brought into collective artistic processes. Based on a dual case study of the making of two Danish debut films, the analysis shows that the notion of the auteur is activated as a device that organizes the collaboration as the abilities of the director are the starting point and motive for the project. In this sense, the processes are organized for the auteur. Thus, I propose to conceptualize the auteur notion as an organizing principle.

"We are after all still director-governed and we have of course to be that in the Danish and European [cinema], it is our tradition that naturally the director is the most important person".
(Interview with Ole John, teacher at The National Film School of Denmark).

"I remember crisis. Again".
(Pernille Fischer Christensen, director of *A Soap* that won the Jury Grand Prix – Silver Bear and the Best First Feature Award at Berlin film festival 2006, about her years at The National Film School of Denmark, in John 2006, p. 198).

Introduction

Cultural industries have become a popular object of study in the social sciences over the last years (Howkins 2001; Du Gay & Pryke 2002). However, this has not given rise to a prosperous exchange with the traditions of cultural studies in the humanities (Hennion & Grenier 2000). Yet, this paper is based on the assumption that mutual inspiration and novel insights could be generated from crossing disciplinary boundaries.

In the paper, I set out to bring the notion of the auteur from film studies to use in a qualitative sociological study of the organizing of filmmaking processes. While auteur is a superlative that is used to categorize exceptional filmmakers, I do not intend to apply the auteur concept to evaluate the merits of filmmakers. Rather, I propose looking for actualizations of the notion of the auteur in the collaborative process of filmmaking. Hence, I suggest considering whether the notion of the auteur has been transferred to and embodied in filmmaking processes, no matter the quality of the films being made. In that way, I propose rethinking the auteur notion as a means of understanding how film production is organized.

To address this matter, the text employs an empirical analysis of the development of two film projects headed by young Danish directors, both making their debut. The analysis investigates how the notion of the auteur is activated, challenged and upheld in these two instances of collaborative creative processes.

The paper illustrates how the auteur notion becomes an organizing principle in the two cases. The auteur notion works as a device which is used to organize the collaboration processes. This use of the auteur notion ensures that the organizing of filmmaking conforms to the convention that the director is the most central person who gives the project its direction and character. However, this activation of the auteur notion also lays a heavy burden on the actual director, who may not be able to meet these expectations or may do so at a high personal cost. Because of that, the activation of the auteur notion is not only a functional organizing principle; it also poses a hindrance to the filmmaking process by isolating the director and personifying the project in the director.

An interactionist perspective on the notion of the auteur

Before turning to the analysis, I will outline my approach; firstly, by referring to the debate over the auteur in film studies, to explain how the approach in this text is different from the stances already well-known in that debate; subsequently, outlining the symbolic interactionist approach which the analysis is based on.

Although it has since been applied as a theory, auteurism was initially a polemical movement in film criticism in the 1950s and 60s. By definition, the concept of the auteur is an aesthetic category that delimits filmmakers of a certain quality. Accordingly, the most important task in auteur studies is to identify who are auteurs, categorizing certain directors as outstanding. The primary parameter used in this categorization is that an auteur must be the author who makes a personal imprint on the film. This entails the theoretical assumption that the director is the creative origin of filmmaking whose personality is traceable in the film. Accordingly, despite that filmmaking is a collective task; auteur studies consider the director to be the originator of a film (Caughie 1996; Wexman 2003). This assumption of the auteur as origin has been a target for severe critiques; however, it still prevails (cf. Burke 1992; Grodal et al. 2004; Lovell & Sergi 2005).

The critiques of auteurism can roughly be divided in two: A poststructuralist critique declaring the author to be dead or constructed; a fiction or an invented subject position, transferring authorship from the singular, intentional human agent to receivers or discourses of certain historical periods (cf. Barthes 1968; Foucault 1969; Gerstner 2003; Staiger 2003). Another type of critique derives from empirical studies that have highlighted the importance of industry structures, producers and collaborators, which demonstrate the inadequacy of ascribing films solely to their directors (cf. Carringer 1996, 2002; Schatz 1988/2004; Spadoni 1995; Staiger 1981, 1985/2004). Although these two types of critiques differ with regard to their foundation (theoretical/empirical investigating finished works/production processes), and how radical a critique they propose, both point to broader, heterogeneous factors to explain the origin of artworks. In this regard, I am informed by these alternatives to auteurism, especially the empirical studies of

filmmaking processes. However, both types of critiques are entangled in their relation to the auteurist stance.

Let me give an example from the empirically founded critique: The American professor in film studies Robert L. Carringer criticises the auteurist stance for being based on empirical fallacies:

> *"as a methodology it was untenable from the outset. Truffaut's cherished vision of the film director as Romantic artist battling alone to maintain a personal vision in an encroaching world would not hold even for his own films".* (Carringer 2001, p. 374).

Pointing to the empirical inadequacy of ascribing the making of a film to one person, Carringer engages in the question of the director's primary authorship. In his detailed historical study of the making of *Citizen Kane*, Carringer illustrates how this film is not a product of the individual artist Orson Welles, but an instance of successful collaboration.

However, Carringer ends his study by quoting from the director Orson Welles:

> *"Collaborators make contributions, but only a director can make a film".* (Welles in Carringer 1996, p. 134).

Thus, Carringer concludes that his study confirms Welles' auteurst claim that the director is the single element in filmmaking that is indispensable. In the same manner, Carringer proposes a methodology for collaboration analysis that consists in temporarily suspending primary authorship and then reinscribing a primary author (2001). As this demonstrates, Carringer is caught up in the question of primary authorship, which makes him insist that a collaboration analysis must either hold on to the primary author or it will dissolve agency, despite the empirical findings in his own study which demonstrate that agency cannot be limited to the director alone and that it is possible to identify the contributions made by a number of collaborators. By this, Carringer's approach is bounded by the alternative of either deconstructing of reconstructing the auteur. Confronted with this duality, Carringer chooses to contribute to upholding a concept which his

study has demonstrated is inadequate. The other alternative; a deconstruction of the auteur concept, is what the poststructuralist critique decides on instead; yet, this option still repeats the dualistic premises of auteurism. That is, this alternative is constituted by its opposition; the auteurist claim, which it dissolves.

Rather than addressing the question of authorship, I look at how the auteur concept; an evaluative aesthetic category from film theory and criticism, is drawn into filmmaking processes. Thus, I address the topic of the auteur by turning it into an empirical question considering how the concept is used in filmmaking practices. Accordingly, my stance can be seen as representing a post-critical position in the auteur debate (Hennion & Grenier 2000). That is, I seek to demonstrate how activating the notion of the auteur has various productive effects.

The theoretical grounding of the analysis derives from the tradition of symbolic interactionism, represented by Becker's work on art as collective action and Strauss' work on the concept of action (Becker 1974, 1976, 1982; Strauss 1993). The interactionist approach offers a perspective of seeing action and interaction as intertwined, which provides the foundation for addressing the question of how the notion of the auteur is enacted during collaboration.

Reversing the problem of primary authorship, Becker starts from the premise that art is an activity which involves a large number of people. Out of these, a few are believed to be talented and gifted, consequently they are entitled artists and perform what Becker calls 'core activities'. The rest of the involved are named 'support personnel' by Becker and they perform assisting activities. Artists and support personnel are connected via 'cooperative links' which describe the contributions others make that the artist depends on. Rather than concluding that the artist is the primary author, Becker holds that:

> *"The artist thus works in the centre of a network of cooperating people, all of whose work is essential to the final outcome".*
> (1982, p. 25).

That is, Becker lays stress on the crucial importance of all involved in the collaborative process and sees the artist as the effect of the network. This demonstrates that cooperative links between the artist and the support personnel are necessary for the performances of the artist; the links constitute the core which the artist embodies.

Becker's view on art as collaborative action is founded on the interactionist theory of action, which has been explicated by Strauss (1993). The interactionist theory of action, which Strauss elaborates from the writings of the pragmatist philosophers John Dewey and Georg Herbert Mead, is based on the assumption of ongoing action. Rather than seeing action as a singular and isolated occurrence, the interactionists view acting as a continuous performance that is always directed towards others and thereby embedded in interactions. For Becker, the interactionist perspective implies that what he calls 'art worlds' can be seen as formed by the collaboration; that artistic creation cannot be seen as in individualist terms. Thus, according to Becker, the premise that acting is intertwined with interaction, and this forms the basis for social structure, is also applicable to artistic work.

The symbolic interactionist perspective opens the way for seeing filmmaking as an ongoing collective activity. Furthering this perspective; stressing the symbolic dimension, I propose that the notion of the auteur can be influential in such ongoing collective activity; working as a principle; a device which organizes interaction. Thus, I suggest that the ideal of the director to deliver intention, origin, content, coherence, distinction, and quality of a film, can be seen as a notion which may become activated during the process of collaboration, and, by this, may have consequences for the collaborative process.

A study of the making of debut films

Two case studies of the making of Danish debut films form the basis for the analysis in this paper (cf. Becker 1992). I came into contact with these projects when the ideas for the films were being developed, and followed the projects over a year in 2006-2007 by means of interviewing, observing and reading documents about the projects. Over the year of my study, the two projects developed differently. Whereas one project demonstrated a year of continuous idea development, the other project ran though a year of manuscript writing, receiving funding, going through preproduction, production and editing of the film.

In the analysis, I use the concept of the auteur notion as a 'sensitizing concept', which is a type of concept introduced by the American sociologist Herbert Blumer, in opposition to definitive concepts (1954). According to Blumer, definitive concepts, which categorize theoretical abstractions that are tested against empirical cases, can be criticised for not being able to pin down and characterize the specifics of empirical instances. Instead, Blumer suggests working with sensitizing concepts that outline directions for research but do not close off definitions before empirical studies have been carried out. Seeing the auteur notion as a sensitizing concept; employing the working definition of the auteur notion as an ideal of director-founded filmmaking, I set out, in the analysis, to identify when this ideal is brought into filmmaking practices.

In other words, the auteur notion as sensitizing concept describes an abductive approach to research and theoretical development that contrasts with the strictly deductive procedure of applying definitive concepts and the solely inductive method of focusing on empirical data (cf. Peirce 1903).

The auteur notion in action

The auteur tradition was dominant in Danish cinema until the national National Film School of Denmark initiated a triadic collaboration model in the early 1990s (Bjerre & Nesgaard 2003; Wiedemann 2005). The school introduced the triad of director, producer and screenwriter to oppose the auteur tradition, which was seen as being unproductive because of its dependence on the director alone, causing conflicts between the director and the other contributors.

Nowadays, the triad has become institutionalized, not only in the education programme at the National Film School but also in the funding system at the Danish Film Institute; the major investor in Danish film distributing national subsidiaries. However, the auteur tradition subsists, although it is no longer the only formula for filmmaking. Thus, the following analysis sheds light on the co-existence of the collaborative model and the auteur ideal.

First, the analysis outlines the position of the directors in the two projects, A and B. Subsequently, the analysis turns to an account of the development of the two projects to see what consequences activations of the auteur notion have for the collaborative process of making a film.

Positioning the director

> *"I think that [director A] is extremely visual and odd in a way that I find is needed [...] [director A] is probably more an artist than a craftsperson [...] I mean it is very emotional for [director A]".*
> (Interview with producer A).

In project A, which is in the initial phase of developing an idea for the film when I get in contact with the group, the director is referred to as having a great potential by the producer. Asked to describe what that potential consists in, the producer explicates the talent of the director by pointing to visual abilities, oddity and an

emotionally founded artistic personality. Later on in the interview, the producer expands on this:

> *"I really think that [director A] is original [...] I mean [director A] has a kind of style, an own style, and I think it's very rare that you have that so early on in your career"*.
> (Interview with producer A).

As the producer explains it, director A has unique style, which is considered to be exceptional and valuable by the producer.

Although this director is not explicitly described as an *auteur*, the substance of that term is duplicated in the producer's description of the talent of the director. When director A is described as a unique talent with an unconventional visual style characterized by its weirdness, this description reflects the aesthetic qualities attributed to auteurs.

Director B is not spoken of as a talent in the same way as director A, but this does not mean that the auteur notion is not at play in this case; the auteurist abilities of director B form the premise for the project. In the pilot interview I make with producer B, before starting to follow the group, the introduction I get to the film project is that:

> *"the film is born by the director; it is director-driven so it is the director's own ideas that power the work"*.
> (Interview with producer B).

The producer explains that the director is the originator of the film, the driving force of the project, and the motive for making it. In other words, the importance of the director is unquestionable:

> *"The entire project is that it is [director B]'s film"*.
> (Interview with producer B).

As these quotes underline, the reason for making the film is to display the talent of the director. This raison d'être can be seen as activating the auteur notion, since positioning the director as motive power resonates with the auteurist conception of the director's primary authorship.

Director B is well aware that the film they are making is meant to show the director's authorship. To explain how this authorship can be obtained practically, director B says:

> *"I have a good sense of what I want and what I like, and that is important as a director because you are a kind of taste-machine. It is like a sieve that everything has to be poured into and those things that get through have my personal imprint".*
> (Interview with director B).

Director B describes the director as a tasting machine whose function is to select material and give all chosen material a distinct mark. Thus, the director acquires authorship from acting as decisions-maker regarding every part of the film.

Romantic auteurism

Going back to auteur criticism may help to clarify how the positioning of the director in the two cases can be seen as activating the auteur notion. Accordingly, two famous representatives of autuerism are briefly introduced in the following, since their ideas facilitate expanding on the empirical point about positioning the director as auteur.

One of the early exponents of auteurism is director and film critic François Truffaut, a member of the group around the French journal *Cahiers du Cinéma*, where the concept of the auteur was originally formulated. Truffaut sought to raise the status of films made by directors with a distinct visual style to the realm of art. Writing in 1954, Truffaut argued against a tradition which saw filmmaking as adaptation of literary works, a position he found was downplaying the visual side of films. In its place, Truffaut introduced what he termed a *cinéma d'auteurs* that valued cinematic expression as an art form in its own right. This appraisal of the

director's job implied that the director came to be seen as the central creative agent in filmmaking.

The American film critic Andrew Sarris adopted from *Cahiers du Cinéma* the idea that the director is the author of a film and began to propagate the concept of the auteur in the early 1960s. Sarris elaborated the inspiration from *Cahiers du Cinéma* by translating auteurism into an evaluative theory based on three criteria: The director should be technically competent, the personality of the director should be distinguishable and the director's style should be unfettered by industry structures. By an application of these criteria, Sarris constructed a hierarchical system to categorize American auteurs.

These early versions of auteurism share three basic assumptions: Firstly, that the auteur is the creator of the film, even though it is produced collectively. Secondly, that the personality of the auteur is expressed in the film. In other words, the personality of the director is inscribed in the film, so that it is recognizable and can be traced across the works of the auteur. Thirdly, that auteur films can be distinguished from non-auteur films on the basis of the two first assumptions, which implies a normative judgement in favour of auteur film (Caughie 1996).

Thus, in auteurism, the director is presented as an agent whose intentions are the causal explanation of a film. On the one hand, a film can be traced back to the director, while on the other hand a film shows the intentions and qualities of the director. Consequently, the auteur is portrayed as the sole author of a film, which is an assumption that resembles the Romantic vision of the inspired genius. Like Romanticism, auteurism presupposes the existence of an individual artist who possesses extraordinary abilities for self-expression (cf. Negus & Pickering 2004). By paraphrasing the Romantic conception of the artist as genius in installing the director as creator of the film, auteurism came to cement the status of film as an art form. Accordingly, the early forms of auteurism are also known as 'romantic auteurism' (Wexman 2003).

Activating the notion of the auteur

Both the positioning of director A as a unique talent and the positioning of director B as origin, motive, and decision-making-filter of the film, illustrate that the auteur notion is a point of reference for the two projects from their very beginning. In project A, the particular visual weirdness of the director is highlighted, which

resonates with the auteurist aesthetic evaluative criterion from Truffaut; that an auteur should have a recognizable distinct cinematic style. In project B, on the other hand, the decisive power of the director is emphasized, which represents the claim of the auteur as primary author; that the director is the originator of the film whose personality is accordingly visible in the film.

Both projects reproduce the three assumptions of auteurism about that the director is the creator of the film, the film expresses the individuality of the director and that filmmaking which lives up to these criteria is distinguishable and desirable. Thus, in the two cases, the notion of the auteur is activated from the outset as both are founded on an ambition of showing the talent of the director, which places the director at the centre and makes the abilities of the director the starting point as well as pivotal point of the project. Also, both cases share the auteurist assumption that the personality of the director becomes inscribed in the film. Moreover, the producers in the two cases describe this kind of filmmaking as a particular type, which they characterize as director-driven. Yet, the producers' admiration for this auteurist kind of filmmaking is expressed with varying degrees of enthusiasm that correspond with their own experiences, as will be evident in the next paragraphs.

Course of events in project A

As illustrated above, in project A, the producer considers the director to be a great talent, and this opinion forms the starting point for the process of developing a film together. When I got in contact with the project, it had been running for two months and there had been a couple of meetings. According to the producer, the meetings were going on as conversations. These conversations centred on the director, who was asked: *"What interests you? What do you feel like?"* (Interview with producer A). As such open questions lay the ground for developing a project, the meetings involved a lot of talk about various preoccupations, interests and thoughts of the director, the producer explained.

The first meeting I observe in the project group is based on a jotted brainstorm the director sends on e-mail a few days before. These jottings consist of thoughts about themes, locations, characters, elements, pictures and personal experiences that can possibly be put to use in the film. At the meeting, the primary concern of the producer is to find a scriptwriter to assist the director in developing a story line.

With this aim, after the meeting, the director contacts a prominent fiction writer, who nevertheless declines the offer. The next meeting is, once again, based on a sketchy writing of the director and centred on the producer's agenda of finding a screenwriter. In contrast to the previous meeting, this time the producer expresses optimism more explicitly, and additionally shows a growing impatience. The producer opens the meeting by declaring: *"It is a fabulous writing!"* An hour longer into the meeting this is followed by the suggestion: *"Couldn't you just start?"* (Observation notes from meeting). Both quotes exemplify that the producer encourages the director to get going. However, while on the one hand assuring the director that the project is on the right track, the producer on the other hand also attempts to push the director into making progress.

After this meeting, the director transforms the early writings into a synopsis that is sent to apply for funding from the funding scheme New Danish Screen at the Danish Film Institute. A few months later, the group receives an answer that concludes:

> *"It is, however, my judgement that you, despite the long time of your preliminary work, have not got very far in finding a narrative structure yet".* (Letter from film consultant at NDS).

The letter from the funding scheme is critical of the lacking narrative in the synopsis and does not hold out the prospect of granting subsidiaries yet, but invites the director in for an inspirational meeting.

Because of a travel, this meeting is postponed two months. In the meantime, the director changes the story in a new direction. Consequently, the idea of the synopsis has been left by the time the meeting is held. In view of that, the film consultant asks the director and the producer to send in a time plan for the next period of development of the project. But the director does not commit to specific deadlines and decides, after a couple of weeks, to withdraw the application. Thus, after a one-year process of development, the director and the producer start up a development process of another idea.

When evaluating this course of development that concludes with a withdrawal of the funding application, the producer refers to the artistic personality of the director. In this way, the auteur notion is activated as an explanation for the outcome of the process.

According to the producer, the director's artistic personality causes several difficulties for the director and this make the process troublesome: It is difficult for the director to stick to the same idea for a longer period of time, because the creative inclinations change constantly. It is difficult for the director to keep deadlines and fit into calendars and plans, because it is a very emotional thing to develop an idea. In addition, it is difficult for the director to participate in few and formalized meetings, because the creative process thrives in sparring with others which takes longer time and demands a more informal setting. All of these difficulties for the director are used by the producer as explanations of why the project did not make progress at the desirable manner and pace. Thus, by seeing the director as an artist, the producer can explain the problems of the project. And not only do such references to the artistic personality provide an account of the dead-end process, it moreover legitimates it. By activating the auteur notion, the producer can make allowance for the problems, as they come to be seen as caused by the very reason for making the project; the director's auteurist abilities.

Ironically, the director does not experience having those difficulties which the producer reports about. On the contrary, the director tells about an eagerness to engage in an idea for a longer time, expresses a wish for deadlines, and finds that formal meetings are convenient as they represent seriousness. Rather than speaking of difficulties, when accounting for switching ideas, the director says:

> *"But now I don't even know if that is the story I want to do any more [laughs]".* (Field notes from chat with director A at an industry event).

Whereas the producer justifies the withdrawal of the application by pointing to problems of the director, the director explains that occurrence by a change of interest. By this, the director does what the producer initially asked for, which was to figure out what you are interested in and feel like. The answer to this question is, paraphrasing and modifying what the director actually says, that the director doesn't even know which story to do any more.

So, while the producer points to artistically founded difficulties for the director when accounting for the unplanned development of the project, the director speaks of searching for what one would like to do. Both of these explanations activate the auteur notion. But whereas the producer tells a negative version of the artistic

personality's possible disadvantages, which can cause drawbacks in the development process, the director gives a positive account of living up to the expectations of being an artist, which nevertheless may lead to not being able to choose an idea.

By drawing attention to the actions of the producer and the director it can be seen that the artistic position of the director is constantly supported. That is, the director is persistently positioned as the artist, who has to seek very carefully what idea to pick. In particular, this positioning is initiated by the producer. Thereby, the director's artistic personality, which the producer complains about, is held up by the producer's own actions.

As the project is based on the director's talent, unpredictable inclinations become the indispensable foundation of the project. In other words, the project becomes organized around the expectations of the director's abilities. In that way, the project is governed by the auteur notion, and not only to the best. Thus, the explanation for the withdrawal of the funding application may not simply be the artistic personality of the director, but that the presumptions of this personality become a hindrance for the director and the project.

Course of events in project B

In contrast to project A, project B manages to progress to receive funding for making the film. When the shooting of the film is about to be begin, however, the director looses the nerve. The producer explains:

> *"[Director B] is completely, extremely nervous. [Director B] says 'I cannot sleep and we don't begin for two weeks, what if I don't sleep for two weeks?".* (Interview with producer B).

As the producer explains, the director is anxious about not being able to make the film. The producer assists the director in handling these worries by repeating a saying that was introduced to them by the film consultant, which is to *"work with your uncertainty"* (interview with producer B). To work with uncertainty is a maxim that the film consultant has launched to assure the director and the producer

that it is possible to put insecurity to good use. The producer and the director take on this approach and view it as a positive thing of being open towards the material.

However, halfway into the shooting of the film, the director has a nervous breakdown. This is caused by accumulated worry in addition to a personal disaster of the death of a close relative. The diagnosis that the director is given is stress; its symptoms are sleeplessness, anxiety attacks, and crying.

Although the director pleas for a halt of the project, the producer decides to continue after having consulted with the film consultant and the head of the production company. According to the producer, both of them reacted calmly and firmly when receiving the news about the director's breakdown, for instance the head of the company had responded: *"Oh, well […] It could as well have been that the set had burned down"* (interview with producer B). Instead of expressing panic, both of them advise the producer to tackle the problem and move on. The rest of the team replies in the same manner when the producer reports the situation to them, as most of them have experienced weirder film projects. This makes the producer conclude that the state of the director could have been worse: *"[director B] doesn't tyrannise, doesn't call in the middle of the night and terrorise others"* (interview with producer B). After all, director B is in a condition that does not harm anyone else.

So, the team continues making the film, although the director is more or less incapable of directing. The producer tells:

> *"There are some shots which [director B] does not take part in, where [director B] is just lying down next door, staring into space"*.
> (Interview with producer B).

In this way, the team shoots some of the scenes without the director being present. Other scenes the director is attending but rushing through. The producer explains:

> *"Normally, it is the director that wants to retake things, but in this case it is the photographer that wants to repeat scenes"*.
> (Interview with producer B).

Hurrying to finish, the director is content with the first result that comes along. In addition, the director proposes cutting out scenes to speed up the process and close earlier. As the producer describes it, this appeal creates a difficult situation:

> *"Last Sunday [director B] had a total collapse. [Director B] called and was very upset, spoke incoherently and suggested to kick out twenty scenes and finish the film in four days […] [Director B] kept repeating 'I can't stand it anymore'. [Director B] wanted a plan that allows for new breakdowns, but I said that we cannot make a plan with holes in it […] and I said that we do not cut out twenty scenes. But I was out of my mind on Sunday, because what happen if [director B] cracks? Do we then need to employ another director or are we to finish it without a director?"*
> (Interview with producer B).

Although the producer decides to ignore the protests of the director and continue the project, this is not an easy decision, because it questions the participation of the director. Still, the photographer and the editor agree with the producer on finishing the film if the director proves unable to do that.

When the producer has informed the director about this decision, it relieves the situation on the set. The editor starts to ask aloud jokingly: *"When are we to direct? If I'm going to make it, it has to be this way"* (interview with producer B). This questioning of the artistic leadership gets the director going, replying the editor: *"no, it has to be like this"* (interview with producer B). Yet, although the director comes to participate, performing the job of directing, this exchange of words also illustrates that when the director loses grip on the project, other members of the project team start to take over the job of the director. Rather than being indifferent, the team members take responsibility for the project when the director turns out to be unable to do that. By this, the position of the director is challenged, as the director tells: *"I begin to doubt whether [director B] is a real film director"* (interview with producer B). When the director turns out to be incapable of performing the task of directing and leading, the team takes the project in hand and makes the director's film. This is paradoxical in the sense that the raison d'être of the project is to make a film that the director is originating, but it is now being made by others.

At first glance, this situation clashes with the assumption of the auteur notion that the director has primary authorship of the film. Thus, it seems that the auteurist expectation of the director as indispensable would be overthrown when the director does not attend the making of the film. However, although the breakdown of the director poses a problem and makes the position of the director questionable, the producer turns it into an occurrence that has a positive influence and confirms the director's authority over the project.

When viewing the early results together with the photographer and the editor, the producer discovers that the director's shaky condition has become a source for the film:

> *"Of course it's unpleasant, but maybe it is not so bad. It has some human consequences, but it is good for the result".*
> (Interview with producer B).

According to the producer, the state of the director can be seen as causing a distinct character in the resulting film, which is positive. To see the director's troubles as beneficial for the project not only makes these problems bearable, it furthermore confirms the auteur notion that the project is founded on.

As this sense-making of the director's breakdown demonstrates, the project team sustains the auteur notion despite its unsteadiness. Even when the position of the director could have been overthrown, it is reinstalled and the permanence of the auteur notion thereby suggested. Despite the fact that others carry through the project, and the abilities of the director are questioned, the authorship of the director is not dissolved. That is, the absence of the director does not lead to dissolution of the director's central position in the collaboration. Thus, the auteur notion is upheld regardless of its indefensibility; the core function of the director is maintained regardless of the contributions made by the director in the unfolding collaboration.

A discussion of the notion of the auteur as an organizing principle

The two empirical cases illustrate how the auteur notion comes to be activated during the making of debut films. As these examples demonstrate, activating the auteur notion has implications for the collaboration. In the two cases, the auteur notion marks and transforms the collaborative process.

In the first case, in the early development phase, the producer activates the auteur notion by regarding the director as a great talent. When it turns out to be difficult for the director to meet these expectations, the producer makes allowance for the difficulties by explaining them as being caused by an artistic personality. Thus, the producer maintains the notion of the auteur as the governing idea of the project, despite its unintended consequences. This creates a situation that hinders rather than helps the director; the activated auteur notion comes to be a heavy burden which the director can neither lift nor get rid of.

In the second case, which takes place during the shooting of the film, the auteur notion is challenged fundamentally as it turns out to be doubtful whether the director is able to perform the task of executing the project. As the director cracks, the team undertakes the job of making the film, while the director stands on the sideline. Consequently, this could imply that the auteur notion would be rejected and substituted. However, the absence of the director does not lead to dissolution of the director's central position in the collaboration. Despite the fact that others carry through the project and the authorship of the director is questioned accordingly, the auteur notion is upheld as the basic logic of the project.

Thus, although both are cases that demonstrate directors who do not comply with the expectations that derive from the auteur notion, these cases furthermore illustrate that this notion nevertheless remain to guides the projects. The auteurist ideal is sustained as the empirical implications of the auteur notion are turned into examples of, rather than contraditions of, that ideal.

The analysis shows that the notion of the auteur is used to organize the making of Danish debut films. Consequently, I propose to see the notion of the auteur as a symbolic principle that is activated during the process of filmmaking, influencing

and transforming the collaboration, thereby functioning as an organizing principle. As the analysis shows, putting the auteur notion to use to organize the making of films has various consequences, not all of which are intended and beneficial.

It follows from this that the auteur notion can be seen as changing the interaction in the collaborative process into something that could have been different if this notion had not been brought into play. Accordingly, I suggest that if the auteur notion had not been activated in the two cases, the problems of the directors might not have occurred, or they might not have been as dominant.

This proposal of seeing the auteur notion as a guiding notion that has various effects, some of which are negative, differs from the traditional use of the auteur concept as an appraisal of the director's work. If one of the well-established perspectives in the auteur debate had been applied to the cases in my study, the empirical material could have been used to illustrate either the existence or construction of auteurs. However, instead of conforming to the stances in the auteur debate, I have changed the question of the auteur notion from addressing the distribution of authorship to deal with the development of film projects. Both cases portray dysfunctional directors, yet the projects are based on and maintain the idea that the director should originate and distinguish the project. Rather than concluding on this basis that the directors are auteurs or that they are not, I propose that the notion of the auteur is the principle by which the processes are organized; that the auteurist expectations govern the projects.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have transferred the question of the auteur from film criticism to filmmaking. Starting from the interactionist view that art is on-going collective action, I have proposed to apply the auteur notion as a sensitizing concept to identify how the ideal of the auteur is brought into such collective processes.

Based on a dual case study of the making of two Danish debut films, the analysis has exemplified that the notion of the auteur is activated as a symbolic principle that organizes the collaboration. The auteur notion comes to form the basis for the collaborative process since the abilities of the director are seen as the starting point and motive for the project. In this sense, the processes are organized for the auteur. Thus, I propose to conceptualize the auteur notion as an organizing principle.

Furthermore, I suggest that bringing the notion of the auteur into play transforms the collaboration from potentially being a unification of a number of collaborators' work to isolating the director as the most central agent in the project, which has critical implications for the collaboration. That is, the project becomes dependent on the director as the project comes to be identified with the director. Hence, positioning the director at the core of the project forms not only a heavy task for the director but also a complicated setting for collaborators.

For the director, it becomes nearly impossible to fulfil the expectations associated with the auteur notion as it prescribes the director to search for the utmost inner feelings to make up a project and imposes the fate of the project on the director. In the two cases, this personification of the project becomes a problem for the directors; to carry the project causes insecurity and anxiety which hinders rather than helps conducting the project.

For the collaborators, the activation of the auteur notion becomes a balancing act of, on the one hand, contributing to the project and, on the other hand, supporting the central position of the director; taking over without overruling the director. Consequently, as the two cases illustrate, the auteur notion is challenged as the directors do not live up to the auteurist expectations and other contributors conduct the task of leading the project. Nevertheless, in the two cases, this does not

lead to an overthrow of the notion of the auteur; on the contrary it is upheld despite its inconveniences.

These empirical examples point to that to gain an understanding of the processes of filmmaking the notion of the auteur should be taken into account as an organizational sociological concept. Thus, by combining the debate over the auteur in film studies with the interactionist approach in the sociology of art, I have aimed at contributing to both. From the interdisciplinary outlook of this paper, I propose that the notion of the auteur could be relevant to organizational sociological analyses of cultural production and, correspondingly, that the interactionist approach in the sociology of art could be applicable to a further development of the debate over the auteur in film studies.

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Chapter 4: Paper 3

In search of a sociology of art that is not against art: Bringing the evolving product into the analysis of production of culture

Abstract

As sociology of art traditionally reduces the cultural product to an outcome of social causality, or leaves out the product, this article is based on a quest for a sociology of art that opposes the hostility towards cultural products. The article pursues this aim of developing a cultural sociological approach which includes both sociality and materiality by means of an empirical analysis of a case about the development of a film project, which ends in a devastating quarrel and consequently no film. In the analysis, the evolving product is portrayed as a mediator of the social relations around it. The article suggests that the human participants are attached or detached to the project based on their experiences of the evolving product. Thus, the analysis proposes that the product and the social relations are being co-produced, and that this is overlooked if the product is not included in the social analysis.

*"**Interviewer:** Then there is a script which is called*
***Scriptwriter:** [interrupts] Now it's called Jungle Dance*
***Interviewer:** Jungle Dance, which you have made together [with the director]*
***Scriptwriter:** Yes. In the meantime, you see, I have received such; it is almost mean to show these [takes the laptop computer], but now I do it, in the meantime I have received such mails from [the name of the producer] [laughs], where he has worked out, now just you wait and see, now he has found the awesome title and that is Party On*
***Interviewer:** Oh, Party On*
***Scriptwriter:** Party On, now the name of the film has to be Party On*
***Interviewer:** Yes, okay?*
***Scriptwriter:** I'm kind of [shrugs his shoulders] [sighs], now he could finally get started on producing the film because a film without a title he just couldn't handle, but with Party On it was there. There it is, [mumbling: I'm going to] find what he sent me [laughs] [on the computer we see a title page in rainbow colours and big letters which say Party On] […] Let's have a look here [clicks some more on the computer] you have to see this, it's kind of sad in a way, though it's also a bit funny, because he has been sitting at home and made this kind of thing[…] 'Title proposal', yes, 'now I think, now it's there', something like that, cool enough, now he has been sitting at home and there: 'The year was 1993 and they changed the future: Party On – We Were Dancing'*
***Interviewer:** And then he has made that*
***Scriptwriter:** Then he has been sitting, creating this thing at home. Isn't it fantastic?*
***Interviewer:** Yes, but I have received a script with that on the front page*
***Scriptwriter:** Where this is on the front? [Laughs] That's funny".*
(Transcript from an interview with a scriptwriter about the process of developing a film script in collaboration with a producer).[9]

[9] All quotes from empirical material derive from a study of the process of making a Danish feature film which I conducted in 2006-2007. All quotes have been translated from Danish by the author. All names, titles, dates, and other identifiable feature have been left out or anonymised on request of the informants. Accordingly, the actual film project did not thematize rave music in Denmark in the early 1990s, but the birth of another scene.

Introduction

In their review of sociology of art, the French sociologists Antoine Hennion and Line Grenier suggest establishing *"a sociology of art, [which is] not against art"* (2000, p. 345). This proposal is based on the estimation that the dominating critical tradition of sociology of art places itself in opposition to its analytical object as it is preoccupied with revealing social causalities behind art. By holding on to the assumption that the social sciences cannot and should not attempt to address art, sociology of art traditionally neglects the artistic product deliberately, and puts social causes in its place.

In opposition to its critical predecessor, the new sociology of art seeks to shed light on the performativity of artworks. This means that the new sociology of art aims to demonstrate how the product is an active part of the social processes surrounding it. Thus, inspired by science and technology studies, the argument that Hennion and Grenier put forward is to include the product in sociological analyses of art by investigating the affiliations between the social and the material, looking into the co-construction of artworks and uses of art.

A number of recent studies have advanced this line of thinking about a new sociology of art (Becker et al. 2006; De la Fuente 2007; DeNora 2000, 2003; Eyerman & McCormick 2006; Hennion 1989, 1995, 1997, 2001, 2007; Inglis & Hughson 2005; Yaneva 2003). However, these studies tend to focus on the reception of artworks; for example by analyzing the power of music in everyday life practices (DeNora 2000; Hennion 1997, 2001, 2007). Complementary to this focus on reception, I would like to further the perspective of the new sociology of art by considering production processes. Such a turn has been proposed by others who have, nevertheless, only sketched its scope (Becker et al. 2006; Hennion 1989; Yaneva 2003).

Hence, I set out to make an empirical analysis of the process of developing an artistic product, in this case a manuscript for a film. The analysis fuses the new sociology of art approach with the production of culture perspective, which traditionally overlooks agency of the evolving product as it focuses on demonstrating how cultural products are the results of production processes (e.g. Peterson 1976). By looking at the relations between the evolving product and its makers, the analysis displays how the evolving product comes to play a vital part in the process of its making. As networks are established around the product, the

product becomes a mediator of the social relations which it simultaneously is the product of. Thus, the analysis indicates that the evolving product is important to include in studies of production of culture since the product and the social relations in the production processes are co-produced.

Thinking sociologically about the artistic product

A deliberate neglect of the artistic product has deep roots in the tradition of cultural sociology. From the time when the founding fathers of sociology defined the basic features of the discipline, cultural products have been seen as either providing access to a deeper level of social features or plainly irrelevant to study. Whereas Marx and Durkheim developed optics that reduced cultural products to effects of societal causes, inheritors of Weber have suggested that cultural products simply cannot be studied by means of sociological methods.

When Marx originated the idea that superstructural phenomena such as art merely reflect the basic economic structure of society, cultural products became noteworthy only in relation to the base (e.g. Lang & Williams 1972). Although the Marxist perspective has since been much debated, it remains a fundamental paradigm where cultural products are treated as somewhat determined by more basic social structures (Inglis & Hughson 2003). From Durkheim's work on religion derives another explanatory model of cultural products that also emphasizes hidden social causes behind these (Hennion 1995). Despite their differences, the Marxist and Durkheimian frameworks share the basic feature that cultural products are seen as medium for societal forces; not as something that holds a power in itself.

In the writings of Weber we find the argument that aesthetic evaluations cannot be reached by means of empirical sciences such as sociology (Weber 1949). This Weberian argument has been used by the originators of the production of culture perspective to draw a demarcation line between the production perspective and analyses of cultural products. Thus, proponents of the production of culture perspective hold that this perspective addresses the question of how cultural products are produced in contrast to analyses of cultural products that do not attempt to understand how these products are produced (DiMaggio & Hirsch 1976; Peterson 1976). By making this distinction an opposition between dealing with the product and its production has been established; implying that the sociological approach is to deal exclusively with the production side.

Hence, we can identify two sociological practices of confronting cultural products; looking behind or beside the product to find societal causality. Either way, the cultural products themselves, which the social processes are all about, remain overlooked. This remarkable sociologism is criticised by Hennion exactly for recognizing no more than human sociality (1995; cf. Gomart & Hennion 1999). Bourdieu's work is a clear and recent example of this tendency, according to Hennion. In fact, Bourdieu continues both the tradition of picturing the product as something that must be disclosed and the tradition of leaving the product out of the picture. On the one hand, Bourdieu suggests looking beyond the product to see which societal structures have caused its production; on the other hand, Bourdieu argues that cultural products lay outside the realm of sociology. In both ways, Bourdieu sustains the critical sociological approach to cultural products, which he, nonetheless, also recognizes as disenchanting, reducing and vulgarizing artworks (1980/1993).

If we accept the proposition of the new sociology of art that cultural products may not be unimportant for a sociology of the social practices in which they are entangled, the traditional approaches to the product in sociology of art become insufficient. That is, rather than exclusively seeking social causes behind the product, we should incorporate it into the analysis. However, if we hold on to the assumption that art requires evaluations; if criticism was indeed the only way to approach cultural products, bringing the product into focus would lead out of the realm of sociology. Thus, a sociological approach to the product; a sociology of art that is not against art, is needed.

Although proponents of the production of culture perspective have taken the Weberian argument about leaving evaluations out of sociological investigations to mean that artworks cannot be dealt with sociologically (DiMaggio & Hirsch 1976), this was not exactly Weber's point. Weber used art as an example to illustrate his broader view that value-relevant topics can be studied without making value-judgements about these (Weber 1949). By reference to studies of architecture, music and painting in the fields of art history and sociology of art, Weber showed how artworks can be treated empirically, leaving evaluations aside. Thus, according to Weber, it is indeed possible to study artworks sociologically.

Academic approaches to the content of artworks have been dominated by the interpretative approach to cultural products in the humanities. Yet, as the literary theorist Susan Sontag has proposed, there may be good reasons to question the

hermeneutic view that art needs to be understood by means of interpretation, seeking its internal meaning (1966). As an alternative to the hermeneutic monopoly, Sontag envisions an optic based on experiences of art. Thus, Sontag leaves the idea that the proper way of studying cultural products is by means of scholarly speculation. In its place she proposes an empirically founded ideal of studying the sensations of art. Exactly this turn away from finding the meaning of a cultural product as understood by the researcher to investigating its actual uses empirically provides the basic principle of the methodology of the new sociology of art (Hennion 1995; DeNora 2000, 2003).

Dewey's *Art as Experience* provides, as the title indicates, a further inspiration for the suggestion that art can be understood in terms of the experiences it leads to (1934/1959). According to Dewey, an experience of art consists in a mix of doing and undergoing. This means that an experience is not simply something which the subject brings about; it is simultaneously something which overwhelms the subject. In this sense, the experiencing subject is at once active and passive. Hennion, in his study of music listening, observes a similar mixture of activity and passivity in the experience of music, which consists not in doing something but making something happen:

> *"It is an active way of putting oneself in such a state that something may happen to oneself".*
> (2007, p. 109, cf. 2001).

Dewey emphasizes that experiences of art unites artistic performance and aesthetic perception. Moreover, he states that this is the case for both receivers and makers of cultural products. Receivers of cultural products make responsive acts and are thereby not submissive receptors. On the other hand, makers of cultural products perceive their work while shaping it, and in this sense they not only act as creators but also receivers. Again, Hennion makes a comparable point arguing that when artists discuss their work this is an effect of this work, not its cause (1995). In this way, Hennion as well as Dewey points out that it is a two-way relationship between the product and its user/maker.

Hennion calls the mutually constitutive relation between artworks and their users co-production, which underlines that the product is constituted during use,

just as users are constituted through using the product (2001). Thereby, Hennion steers clear of subscribing to an essentialist depiction of cultural products. In Hennion's perspective there are no 'works in themselves'. Instead, Hennion highlights that cultural products are at the same time outcomes of work and have various effects. Thus, the constructivist framework does not imply that cultural products are deprived of agency (cf. Gomart & Hennion 1999).

Informed by Hennion's writings, the British music sociologist Tia DeNora demonstrates empirically how music acts in various everyday life settings, for instance aerobic classes (2000). Moreover, DeNora explicates the status of the product by reference to Bruno Latour who claims that artefacts prescribe behaviour but do not compel users to behave in pre-scripted ways. Hence, according to DeNora, neither the product itself, nor social causality can account for the workings of the product. Rather, as also Hennion advocates, the focus area of our studies should be the co-production of products and users (cf. DeNora 2003). Consequently, to account for the workings of the product, DeNora suggests changing the research question from what the product *is* to what it *does*.

Despite the sociological inattentiveness to the product, DeNora holds that music is widely believed to have a transformational power, which is often considered to be either dangerous or healing (2000, 2003). Rather than attributing this status exclusively to music, I would add that a number of other media have been described in a similar manner. For instance movies and television have been portrayed as exercising an influence on their audiences (cf. Blumer 1933/1970; Fiske 1987). Yet, studies making this claim describe the performativity of cultural products in relation to reception, not production.

In the following analysis, I look at the co-production of a product and the collaboration around its making. The analysis takes its departure in Hennion's and DeNora's proposal that it is possible to include cultural products as active participants in sociological analyses. Yet, the analysis furthers the existing work in the tradition of the new sociology of art as it founds an empirical proposal of how the evolving product becomes an actor during its making. By looking into the simultaneous construction of the product and the social composition of the project, the analysis points to that the networks which are formed around the content of the product have effects on the progression of the project. Thus, the analysis aims to provide an understanding of the co-production of the social relations and the evolving product.

Introducing the case

Raves, *Jungle Dance* or *Party On – We Were Dancing*; the title of the manuscript changes as the development process moves on, is a case about a film project that ends with a devastating quarrel and consequently no film. The case derives from a study of development work in Danish film production, which I conducted in 2006-2007. Although the actual development process in this case took approximately two and a half year, I was in contact with the project only during the last half year of its duration. By means of interviews and documents, I have, however, tried to reconstruct the whole process. In consequence, the case consists of diverse material: Notes from my phone calls to the producer, observation notes from a meeting between the producer, the director and the production manager, semi-structured interviews with the producer and the scriptwriter about the process in retrospect, plus a number of e-mails, funding applications, contracts, reader comment, in addition to a synopsis and five different versions of the manuscript. Based on this material, I am going to tell the story of how the development process unfolds. Thus, my case is a process analysis showing the sequence of steps that finally leads to the breakdown of the project (cf. Abbott 1992).

How the evolving product attaches the project

As the producer explains the origin of the project, he was approached about making a film by a DJ who was playing at his daughter's birthday party. The DJ suggested that the birth of rave music in Denmark in the early 1990s; an era which he had been part of, should be made into a film by the producer. Based on this encounter, the producer held a meeting where the DJ and another pioneer of the Danish rave scene, who nowadays works as a scriptwriter, presented a proposal for the film. However, their proposal was refused by the producer, because, as he says: *"I don't want to make a music film, but a film about generations which can tell the young today something".* The producer wanted the idea about portraying a music scene to be transformed into a generally appealing story of relations between youth and adults. Based on this order, the scriptwriter went home and made a synopsis.

The scriptwriter explains that the story in the synopsis is based on his own experiences. Moreover, he had already written a draft of it for another film project, which was given up before this project got started. The story describes a teenage boy's introduction to the rave scene and becoming a DJ. Besides this, it describes the boy's troubled relationship with his new family as he is adopted when his mother, who he has been living together with, dies in the beginning of the story. In addition to the family trouble, the boy is confronted with problems and dilemmas regarding drugs, sex, violence and friendship. In the end, he manages to overcome the obstacles, makes a successful performance and is approached by a talent scout from a record company. His new father attends that performance and is proud of his son, which, finally, establishes a bond between them.

The scriptwriter explains about the synopsis:

> *"It is like very tightly constructed with a happy ending and it includes some of those elements from a usual sport film where you have to achieve [something] and you fight for that and in the end everyone is happy and congratulations and so on, right. And then, those are the elements which I am willing to give at that time; here you are; this is what will sell the tickets. There are some other areas*

where it is important to me that we like have a certain kind of authenticity towards the background that I have".
(Interview with scriptwriter).

According to the scriptwriter, the synopsis of the story was an effort to meet the producer as it shows how far he would go in making a widely appealing film.

In the copy of the synopsis, which I have been handed, the producer's comments are included. He writes that in general the synopsis is good, the characters work well, and that *"this can really become a fine 'coming of age' story"*. Yet, the producer also has some suggestions for revisions. Most of these are incorporated into the first draft of the manuscript, which otherwise follow the storyline of the synopsis. To give an example of the producer's comments and the scriptwriter's integration of these, the producer remarks that it is unclear how the boy becomes knowledgeable of music, and so the scriptwriter makes a scene in the manuscript where the dying mother and the boy are discussing music.

During this initial course of events, the scriptwriter and the producer collaborate, which the inclusion of comments demonstrates. Yet, this collaboration is mediated by the writings. When the scriptwriter makes a proposal, the producer comments on it, and the scriptwriter then modifies the proposal in adjustment to the comments. By this procedure, the interaction goes through the draft, which positions the evolving product in the middle of the collaboration as a mediator. Thus, rather than solely being considered a symbol of the screenwriter's and the producer's interests and visions, the evolving product can be seen as having effects on the process, deriving from the participants' experiences of the writings. Furthermore, the evolving product has the effect of attaching the participants. By having experiences of the evolving products, the participants link themselves to the project. In this way, a network is formed around the evolving product, which makes the product bring the participants together, constructing a network that consists of human participants as well as written materials. The construction of this network implies that a co-production can be identified; namely, a simultaneous progression of the product and formation of the social interaction around the product.

On the basis of the synopsis for the film, the producer starts approaching investors about the project. The Danish Film Institute (DFI); a state institution which is the major investor in Danish film, responds that the idea has potential and

the storyline is fine, although it lacks depth in its account of the troubles which the boy goes through. Moreover, the representative of DFI is interested in knowing which director the producer and the scriptwriter consider should make the film. The producer and the scriptwriter enter a dialogue with DFI and receive a subsidy grant to pay the scriptwriter to write the manuscript. After having read the first and second draft of the script, the representative of DFI replies that the story now seems to consist of a well-functioning coming-of-age story about the boy's relationship to the rave scene, along with a clichéd story about the family relations. Again, the reply concludes with an interest in the considerations about director candidates.

As well as the writings become a mediator in the interaction between the participants inside the project group, the synopsis mediates the group's relation to external stakeholders. Thus, the evolving product now gets the function of making further attachments; widening the network. Similar to the participants in the project group, participants from outside become involved by means of experiencing the writings. Thereby, the development of the project and the assemblage of an interest group around it are being co-produced once more. When for instance the representative of DFI evaluates the story to be promising, it gives weight to the project and ties DFI to it at the same time.

After nearly a year, the question of the director candidate starts becoming a hurdle as the representative of DFI finds it needed that a director is brought on board to proceed with the project. However, none of the candidates which the producer and the scriptwriter have been considering turn out to be interested when the producer contacts them. Finally, the producer announces that he has found the ideal candidate. When the scriptwriter hears the name he becomes upset. Previously, this director has made two films, both of which are produced by the producer who now wants him on board again. However, the scriptwriter dislikes these films. According to the scriptwriter, this event marks the turning point of the development: *"This is where the project tips. From then on it is downhill"*. The scriptwriter responds to the producer that he is not fond of the director. He gets one line in return saying: *"I trust him the same way I trust you"*. After that he does not hear from the producer for months.

This section has shown how the evolving product in the first part of the process brings the participants together, at the same time as it is being progressed. Despite their varying interests and intentions regarding the project the participants become

engaged in the evolving product and in that sense they are united by the writings. The next section will look at what happens with the co-production of the product and the participants' relations later on in the process.

How the evolving product dissolves the project

Approximately four months after the scriptwriter has lost contact with the producer, I am invited by the producer to observe a meeting about the project, which turns out to be the first meeting that is held between the producer, the director and the production manager. The producer opens the meeting by introducing the project, followed by the declaration: *"So now we have to figure out when we want to make it"*. To approach this question, the director asks about the scriptwriter: *"how fast does he write?"* And the producer answers: *"really fast"*. Based on this, they plan the making of the film, starting backwards form the date of its premiere in less than one year. The producer suggests that they start casting straight away.

After this meeting, nearly half a year passes where apparently nothing happens. I call the producer roughly every second week, and each time he explains that the project is postponed as he is occupied making and promoting other films. Eventually, he informs me about a meeting which I can attend. However, the night before, I receive a text message from the producer saying that the meeting may be cancelled. When I talk to the producer the next morning, he explains that the meeting is called off. *"A lot of things are happening"*, he says, *"it is a really exciting process, I just have to get through today."* The next time I reach the producer he reports that the project is temporarily closed down. Later, I discover that a series of events has been taking place in this period.

The scriptwriter explains that after not having heard anything from the producer for some months, he stopped by the producer's office one day and found him sitting next to a large file, which had the title 'Rave'. According to the scriptwriter, the file indicated that the project was in progress although he was no longer involved, and he suspected that the director and the producer might be writing a new version of the script. As the scriptwriter explains, he was interested in getting the best out of the situation so he tried to make his way back into the project group by asking if he could meet the director and start collaborating with him. The producer accepted this offer.

After a couple of weeks, the scriptwriter received an e-mail with three pages of comments from the director about things he wanted changed in the manuscript. The scriptwriter responded the director suggesting to meet to get in step with each other. When they met, the scriptwriter discovered that he liked the director, and they spent two weeks examining the script together page by page. Based on this review, the scriptwriter made a new edition based on all the comments of the director. After he had handed in this third edition he left for a vacation believing that this version of the script was now being sent to DFI together with a funding application for production subsidies.

However, the producer explains that he and the director felt that the two first editions of the script were not good enough and the third edition was not very different from these previous editions:

> *"Almost nothing is changed. I mean, some things are changed but not at all in that direction. And we're thinking what the fuck man, right".*
> (Interview with producer).

To solve the situation, the producer decided to hire the director instead to make him write another edition of the manuscript. So, the director made a version of the script, and in collaboration with the producer the director made yet another version of the script which they were satisfied with. The differences between the scriptwriter's work and the edition made by the director and the producer can be illustrated by quoting the first scene:

1st edition (made by the scriptwriter):

OVER BLACK SCREEN:

30 EXCITED TEENAGE-VOICES shout with joy ecstatically. As an audience on a football stadium. THE YELLS are mixed with the blunt, flat SOUND of fists against skin.

FADE IN:

EXT. SCHOOL YARD – DAY

A fight between two 16-year-old boys is ongoing. It is not a pretty sight; impure knocks, tearing in clothes, hyperventilation and screaming spectators. In short: Chaos.

ADAM is forced into a fence. He is a nice, bit nerdy boy in cheap clothes. He punches madly around himself, but hits almost nothing.

A longhaired boy with stretch-jeans and Metallica T-shirt is beating Adam to pulp. The spectators are on his side.

A TEACHER fights his way through the knot of kids. He reaches the longhaired boy the second he punches Adam right in the face with a hard fist.

The teacher tugs the boy away, but Adam holds on his T-shirt. It is torn into pieces. The boy spits at Adam.

The teacher pulls the boy away. The spectators PROTEST.

Just then THE BELL RINGS. All the kids start walking towards the short school building. Adam is left alone. His nose is bleeding. It drips onto his shirt.

ADAM:

Fuck!

Adam staggers in opposite direction of the school.

5th edition (made by the producer and the director):

FADE IN:
EXT. CHURCH YARD – AFTERNOON

A bell RINGS from a small, white chapel.

SIGN: HERNING SEPTEMBER 1993

CLOSE of Bente's grave stone. In the stone is carved. "Bente Andersen 1953-1993". ADAM stands with a bouquet of flowers and looks at the grave stone. His gaze is distant. ADAM is a pretty boy at 16. He is in stretch-jeans and Metallica-T-shirt.

At a distance stands CHRISTIAN. He is a very correct looking man at 45, dressed in a well-fitting black suit. Christian walks towards Adam. He is searching for words.

CHRISTIAN

I really think that your mom is feeling better where she is now.

Adam doesn't react.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

It was nice of your auntie that you could stay at her place until the funeral.

Adam puts the bouquet at the grave.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

I also think that you are going to feel well at our place in Copenhagen. You will have your own room and a new family.

Christian puts his hand on Adam's shoulder, but Adam pulls his shoulder away.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

You now have a younger brother who is looking forward to meeting you.

Adam doesn't respond.

Christian stands for a moment and looks irresolute.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Adam… We have to get the best out of this.

Adam nods.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

I'll wait in the car.

Christian walks towards the road. Adam stays for a moment and breaths deeply. Then he turns around and walks in Christian's direction.

These quotes from the opening scene in the two different versions of the manuscript show that the scriptwriter's story about an outsider boy, who finds an identity as a rave DJ, is transformed by the producer and the director to a story about family relations, where the personal development of the boy is altered to a shift in his sub-cultural affiliations.

When the scriptwriter returns from vacation, he still thinks that his third draft has been sent to DFI to apply for production subsidiaries. However, he soon discovers that his friend has received an e-mail from the producer's assistant, which says:

> *"All of us have been fiddling with the script and at the moment this is how it looks. Will you look at the language to see if it fits? Would you say things this way, etc? Feel free to throw in comments. Open game".*
> (E-mail from producer's assistant).

The friend of the scriptwriter calls him and reads aloud from a version of the script which is attached to the e-mail. Furthermore, the friend tells him that the deadline at DFI has been rescheduled, which means that the producer probably plans to send in their new version of the script.

The scriptwriter tries to contact the producer and the director. The first response he gets is an e-mail from the producer's assistant about the promotion of the film, addressed to him and his friend, saying:

> *"Hi wonder-boys. 'Hallo Danmark' would like to broadcast you next Tuesday. How about that?".*
> (E-mail from producer's assistant).

The scriptwriter is astonished. Then he receives an e-mail from the producer about the rewriting of the script:

> *"[The director] and I have spent all of last week revising all the versions, and [the director] has come up with some suggestions for a tighter design and especially development of the parents [...] We have also delved into the book by [the name of a writer who has researched the Danish rave scene] and have found some awesome slang".*
> (E-mail from producer).

The scriptwriter replies to the producer that he is furious.

On his computer, the scriptwriter shows me the drafts made by the producer and the director. Everything that has been changed, compared to the third edition, is marked with red, which makes it easy to see how much it is. However, it is not so much the amount of changes that upsets the scriptwriter as the character of the changes.

The scriptwriter gives four examples of why the script has caused his negative reactions. First, the story about the boy's development has been overshadowed by the family theme. For instance, the first scene now explicitly spells out the boy's relations to his parents, whereas the earlier versions portrayed these relations indirectly and subtlety. Secondly, the structure of the story has been altered. The story has been cut up and reconstructed; parts from the previous scripts are blended with the producers' and the director's ideas in the new editions. That scriptwriter complains:

> *"The only reason they made me make another edition was so that there could perhaps be some bits they could take out and use as Lego-bricks in their Frankenstein's monster of a manuscript."*
> (Interview with scriptwriter).

According to the scriptwriter, the new editions of the script are poorly composed as they mix a variety of elements with different inherent logics.

Thirdly, to expand his point, the scriptwriter shows me the title page from the last version of the script; in big rainbow coloured letters it says *Party On*. According to the scriptwriter, that title page demonstrates tastelessness and incompetence. Not only is the graphic style horrific, according to the scriptwriter, the new name of the film; *Party On*, also sounds more indifferent than the previous titles *Raves* and *Jungle Dance*. Finally, the scriptwriter points to the language in new editions of the script; the slang is incorrect and inauthentic. For instance the invective 'clubber bitch' is employed in the new versions of the script although it is a term that has never been used by the Danish ravers.

According to the scriptwriter, the changes in theme, structure, aesthetics and language of the script mean that the story now lacks the nerve which it originally had, and therefore he decides to abandon the project. The new editions of the script not only make it difficult for the scriptwriter to associate with the project; they turn him away from the project. Thus, the rewritten versions of the script break up the scriptwriter's relation to the project and in that way the evolving product comes to disintegrate the project group.

The scriptwriter contacts his union about the legal matters of rewriting his work and plans on taking the case to court. When the producer discovers that he is most

likely to lose a lawsuit filed against him for changing the script without permission from the writer, he decides to end the project. However, the scriptwriter informs me that he has since found out that the producer and the director are continuing their work; developing another rave film. The producer tells the same:

> *"So now [the name of the director] and I are developing the real story of rave [...] it is more dancing".*
> (Interview with producer).

When I leave off the project, this new project is in its initial development phase.

During this last part of the development process, the script is changed as the director becomes included in the project group. At first, the director is affiliated with the producer, and they work on the project without the scriptwriter. Then the scriptwriter and the director make an edition of the script in collaboration. However, the project ultimately collapses when the director and the producer write two editions of script, which the scriptwriter cannot accept. During this phase of development, the product and the social relations around it are again being co-produced. The third version of the script establishes an alliance between the director and the scriptwriter. However, this network is broken when the producer and the director makes a fourth and fifth edition of the script, which exclude the scriptwriter. As it is specific changes in the script that makes the scriptwriter turn the project down, the evolving product can be seen as a mediator that disintegrates the project group.

Discussion

In the above analysis, agency is ascribed to the evolving product as it is considered to attach and detach the project group. This attribution of agency to a cultural product contrasts with the sociologism of the tradition of critical cultural sociology, which solely acknowledges social agency. Yet, the claim that the product is active during its use does not imply material determinism; it is not a reversal of causality from social to material causes. Rather, the incorporation of the product is an attempt to make a sociological analysis that includes those artefacts which seem to be relevant empirically. Accordingly, it is the network that arises based in the evolving product which the description of the active product aims to capture, not some immanent agency of the product itself. In other words, the argument of the analysis is not that an autonomous product with intentions does something to the human participants; the analysis argues that the evolving product is a constructed material object which is experienced by the participants, and these experiences lead to attachments and detachments of the project. In this way, there are no 'pure' social relations in the analysis. Instead, the analysis portrays how the relations between the participants are mediated by the evolving product, thereby suggesting that the script is what makes them turn towards or against each other.

Going back to an example from the analysis may help to clarify this active status of the product. When the project crashes, the analysis proposes that the mere fact that the producer and the director overstep the division of labour by rewriting the script might not have had fatal consequences; it is because of *what* they write that the project breaks down. For instance, the shift in the title from *Jungle Dance* to *Party On – We Were Dancing* is pointed out by the scriptwriter to illustrate why he could not continue with the project. Hence, it is the scriptwriter's experiences of specific changes in the manuscript that make him abandon the project.

If the analysis had applied a strictly social optic on the breakdown of the project, it would have identified differing interests between the participants. However, the analysis has shown that the participants were well aware that they had differing visions of the film and that they actively aimed to join these. Thus, the analysis proposes that the actual changes in the manuscript are not simply results of the participants' intentions; the changes are also active producers of the

participants' intentions. When the evolving product is experienced by the participants this form their relationship to the project.

Accordingly, a sociological focus on the developing product facilitates both an understanding of how it is produced and how it produces the social relations around it. This co-production of the product and the social relations around it is missed if the sociological analysis ignores the product or reduces it to a result of social causalities. Hence, the new sociology of art proposes a productive and positive analysis which broadens our understanding of cultural processes.

Conclusion

Starting from the proposition that a sociology of art which is not against art is needed, this paper has looked into a case about the development of a film manuscript with the aim of investigating how the evolving product is at play during the process of its making.

Traditionally, in sociology of art, artworks are either reduced to effects of social relations or simply overlooked. Thereby, sociology of art embodies a sociologism and appears to be suspicious of art. In contrast to this critical tradition, the new sociology of art suggests that the product is relevant to incorporate in sociological analyses of social practices that involve cultural products. Hence, the representatives of the new sociology of art, Hennion and DeNora, propose to investigate the co-production of cultural products and the social relations around these. Inspired by science and technology studies, Hennion and DeNora demonstrate empirically how cultural products act when they are used by their audiences. Transferring this optic to the field of cultural production, this paper set out to show how a product may play a role during its own development.

Furthermore informed by the writings of Sontag and Dewey, the paper has argued that it is possible to study the workings of the product by looking into experiences of the product. This represents an alternative not only to the traditional approach in sociology of art, but also to the dominant hermeneutic approach to artworks in the humanities. According to Dewey, an experience of art consists in doing and undergoing in alternation, which applies to both receivers and makers of art. Thus, Dewey proposes that there is a two-way relation between artworks and their receivers/makers, which is a proposition that corresponds to Hennion's and DeNora's concept of co-production.

Based on the agenda of bringing the product into focus, the analysis has posed it as an empirical question what role the emerging product plays in the case. The analysis has shown that the writings attach the participants in the beginning of the process, but later it detaches the participants as the screenwriter cannot accept certain changes in the manuscript. Thus, the analysis has suggested that the writings mediate the relations between the participants as there are no relations that operate outside the evolving product; all social relations go via the product. Based

on their experiences of the evolving product, interested parties create or do not create a link to the project. In this way, a network is established around the product, which changes as the product is progressed. A series of shift in the composition of the network of the product is identified, and these shifts are seen as concurrent with and mutually influencing the changes in the evolving product. Thereby, the evolving product and the social relations are portrayed as co-produced; the script is developed into different editions by the participants, and the different editions of the script delineate the social relations around it as participants are either attached or detached to the project on the basis of their experiences of the content of the script. Thus, a two-way relation between the developing product and the social process has been identified in the analysis.

The analysis has advanced the ambition of the new sociology of art about calling attention to the co-production of products and the social relations around them as it presents an empirical illustration of such co-production in the case of the making of a cultural product. Since the analysis deals with effects of a product under development, rather than a finished product, co-production is highlighted, because both elements undergo observable changes during the development process.

Moreover, the analysis has furthered the implications of Dewey's concept of experience of art. Whereas Dewey portrayed experience as an individual occurrence, the present analysis shows how experiences of the emerging product are socially embedded. As a number of people are involved in the development of the manuscript, their various perceptions and modifications of the product are not taking place in a social vacuum but in relation to each other. In this sense, the experience of art during a collective production process has social consequences.

Finally, the analysis has readdressed the production of culture perspective, suggesting that the evolving product should be taken into account in sociological studies of cultural production. Turning the analysis of how culture is produced to include an active product does not entail a deterministic conception of the effects of the product where the agency of the product is imposed on the human participants. Rather, the perspective from the new sociology of art, which this paper has used to analyze production of culture, perceives the effects of the product as being enacted when the participants experience the content of the product. Hence, studying emerging products as agents in the social interaction about their development represents one way of creating a positive sociology of art which is not against art but enrol art as an actor in the social analysis.

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Chapter 5: Paper 4

Collaborative work and evolving products: A sociomaterial perspective on the development of film projects

Abstract

This paper investigates the organizing of cultural projects during the phase of their founding. Based on a qualitative study of development processes in the Danish film industry, the paper identifies three moments where the evolving product is decisive for the proceeding of the collaborative work: The idea has to be externalized to enable collaboration; attachments between collaborators are made via the evolving product; and closure of the product is postponed to enhance creative collaboration. Thus, the paper suggests seeing collaborative work in cultural projects as centered on the evolving product. By illustrating how an object under materialization has organizing consequences, the paper sketches a sociomaterial perspective for analyzing production of culture.

Introduction

Film industries subsist on the continual founding of projects. Ideas are created and attempted progressed, collaborations are initiated and hence projects evolve. For the industry and its members, the founding of film projects constitutes a crucial phase, which is an unsecure affair. While there are no official estimations of the number of ideas for films, the selection of manuscripts is measured in Denmark as the Danish Film Institute, which funds nearly all Danish films, grants production subsidiaries to only one out of every three projects that has been granted manuscript subsidiaries (cf. DFI 2002).

In this paper, I look into the process of establishing film projects. To do so, the paper is based on a study of the development of projects in the Danish film industry. Development characterizes the initial phase of filmmaking; the period from an idea for a film is launched until the project is ready to go into pre-production or, as is more often the case, the project is cancelled.

The question, which the paper addresses, is how projects in cultural production are organized in their initial phase. To approach this question, the paper suggests that the product under development may be an active part in the collaboration. Hence, the paper investigates how the emerging product becomes an active participant in the collaborative process of establishing the project.

The agenda of the paper is inspired by the sociomaterial turn in organization studies and sociology of art. Currently, both fields of research are experiencing a growing interest in distributing agency to material objects, which is informed by developments in science and technology studies (cf. Czarniawska & Hernes 2005; Hennion & Grenier 2000). In organization studies, a recent strand subscribes to the framework of actor-network theory, suggesting that organising processes can be seen as mutable networks that include humans as well as materials (e.g. Cwarniawska 2004), while the new sociology of art investigates specifically how cultural products affect their users (e.g. Hennion 2001). In this paper, I propose a cross-fertilisation of these strands; suggesting that the organizational question of how sociomaterial networks are established may be addressed by turning to the effects of the emerging product. Hence, the advancements of the new sociology of

art can be put to use to further the sociomaterial proposal in organizational studies about how organizing processes are initiated.

Whereas previous organizational studies that subscribe to a sociomaterial outlook have highlighted the active status of materials, this paper deals with a non-human object that is undergoing materialization. The idea for a film constitutes a borderline example of a material product because it is an intangible object that emerges as the human collaborators work on it. Hence, the paper furthers the sociomaterial perspective on organizing processes by investigating the organizational effects of an evolving product.

From social to sociomaterial analyses of production of culture

Traditionally, organizational analyses of cultural production focus on identifying social factors that influence how this type of production is organized. These analyses can be roughly divided in three categories; macro, meso and micro studies. The macro studies look at how cultural fields are structured by institutions such as educational systems, sources of finance, cultural policies, exhibition facilities, distribution channels and critics (e.g. Bourdieu 1980/1993; DiMaggio 1982; White & White 1965/1993). The meso studies concentrate on the organizational structure of cultural production companies (e.g. Becker 1982; DiMaggio & Hirsch 1976; Peterson 1994). The micro studies investigate the enactment of roles in temporary projects in cultural production (e.g. Baker & Faulkner 1991; Bechky 2006). What all of these studies have in common is that they identify socially constructed practices that characterize the organizing of production of culture.

The revelations of social constructions in cultural production have been useful for presenting an alternative to the myth of the creative genius. However, at the same time, studies which expose the social origins of cultural production have a tendency of entailing an analytical blind spot concerning that which is being produced; the evolving cultural product. Thus, in sociology of art, a critique has been raised against the deliberate neglect of the product (Hennion & Grenier 2000). This critique argues that while sociological studies of art call attention to social causalities, the artistic product is either ignored or reduced to an effect of social causes. In my opinion, the same critique applies to organizational studies that reveal how social factors influence cultural production. Like the sociological studies of art, organizational studies of cultural production recognize only social elements, and, accordingly, the product is overlooked or portrayed as an outcome of social structures (e.g. DiMaggio & Hirsch 1976; Peterson 1994).

As an alternative to the sociologism of previous analyses, the new sociology of art proposes changing the status of the cultural product from passive to active. Thus, the guiding research question in the new sociology of art is asking what the

product does rather than what it is (cf. DeNora 2000). Altering this question to address the organization of cultural production, I suggest looking into what the evolving product does to the organizing processes of establishing a project around it. In posing this question, agency is ascribed to the evolving product. However, this does not mean that the material becomes determining in the analysis. Rather, the active status of the evolving product is an attempt to create an analytical approach that identifies the two-way relation between the product and the social relations around it. Hence, I suggest that the organizing of cultural projects and the progression of the product are co-produced; mutually constitutive processes (cf. Hennion 2001).

An example of co-production of a cultural object and social processes is found in the French sociologist Madeleine Akrich's study of how the value of an altarpiece is transformed a number of times by various interpreters. To conceptualize the concurrent formation of the object and the social processes around it, she proposes:

> *"The object and the networks in which it is situated are indissociable […] since through this relative construction of an absolute, we have seen the simultaneous construction of the object and the networks".*
> (Akrich in Zolberg 1990, p. 97).

While Akrich shows that networks and objects are co-produced in consumption practices, I suggest that the evolving product can be seen as a vital actor in constructing the project of its making.

Looking into the organizing effects of the evolving product is an objective that is in line with the agenda of the sociomaterial strand within organizational studies as it advocates investigating how organizing processes are a matter of assembling networks that entangle both humans and materials (Czarniawska & Hernes 2005; Hernes 2007). Yet, rather than broadly pointing to networks which involve a variety of elements, this paper asks how the assemblage of sociomaterial networks that form cultural projects centres on the evolving product. Hence, the paper suggests a sociomaterial strategy for analyzing production of culture, which combines the proposal from the new sociology of art, about subscribing an active status to cultural products, and the ambition of the new strand within

organizational studies that aims at formulating a process perspective on organizing that include materials as well as humans. Yet, in this case the object is not a finished material entity, but an idea that is being transformed into an evolving product.

A study of development processes in Danish film

As indicated in the introduction, this paper is based on a qualitative study of development processes in the Danish film industry. Over a one-year period, in 2006-2007, I followed the development of five film projects in various Danish film companies (see appendix 1). I tracked these projects by means of interviewing the participants, observing meetings in the project groups and reading case material such as funding applications and various editions of the manuscripts for the films. Since the development in filmmaking consists in formulating a manuscript, which is the institutionalized device for receiving funding for the production of the film, the evolving product during the phase of development is the emerging script.

Ideally, the project groups were triads consisting of producer, director and scriptwriter, as this is the most common form of project group in the industry, not least because it is required to apply for funding from the largest investor in Danish film; the Danish Film Institute (DFI). However, in one case the producer did not manage to establish such a functional triad and another group did not include a scriptwriter but a development producer instead. Yet, the three remaining groups involved a producer, a director and a scriptwriter. In all cases, the project groups were anchored in a film production company where the producer was permanently employed, whereas the scriptwriter and the director were either hired on short-term contracts by the company (in four cases) or worked without being paid (the director, most of the time, in one case). Furthermore, all five project groups involved other interested parties. One group included the CEO of the production company, another group included a person who was familiar with the milieu which the film dealt with, and a third group tried to attach a fiction writer. Yet, the most crucial involvement of others was in all cases the enrolment of investors.

The five projects developed differently. One project never started. Another project had been ongoing for two years when I came in contact with it, but crashed in a quarrel half a year later. The third project was at the stage of idea development throughout the year I followed the group. The fourth project was on first draft of the manuscript when I started following the group, progressed quickly and had

been made into a film a year later. The fifth project proceeded as planned and is being filmed while I write this.

In addition to the five case studies of development processes, I conducted a number of supplementary interviews with experienced professionals in the industry about the practices of developing films. Five of these interviews will be employed in the analysis to broaden the view on how development processes proceed (see appendix 2).

Three situations where the product has organizing effects

The analysis looks at when and how the evolving product is an active part in organizing the processes of development. Accordingly, the analysis focuses on three moments where the product is decisive for the progression of the collaboration.

The first moment is the *externalization of the idea*; that the product has to be materialized before collaboration is possible. The second moment is *making attachments via the product*; that the product establishes connections between the participants in the project group and to external interested parties, which, simultaneously, make the project proceeds. The third moment is the *postponing of closure*; that the progression of the project is facilitated by keeping the product unfinished as long as possible. These three instances where the product becomes actively involved in the organizing of the project point to that success or failure of the project is not only a question of the social relations in the collaboration, but also a matter of bringing the product to use; making the product work in that collaboration.

Externalizing the idea: Enabling collaboration

> *"It can be, I mean, you can say, something creative can be very sensitive, right. If you have an idea which you know has got something, also something that is personal and like that, then every time someone talks about it, it hurts inside you, because it is you and it is yours. So then, it is about […] to make the project become a project in itself and have it removed from the personality, actually, like, so that you can talk about it as an object. It is the film that lies here [gesticulates; points at the table], it is really not me that lies exposed on the table, right".*
> (Teacher at the National Film School of Denmark, B4 in appendix 2).

Until an idea is externalized; before it comes into being in the world, it is difficult to isolate from the person who thinks about it. As the teacher from the film school explains, internally located ideas are delicate and difficult to collaborate on. Therefore, the teacher advises detaching the idea from the person. That is, the first step to enabling creative collaboration is to give the idea an existence of its own.

One of the cases of a development process provides an example that illustrates the importance of externalizing the idea (case A3, see appendix 1). This is a project where the idea kept slipping the plans of the participants. Throughout the year I followed the group, the idea kept changing as the director kept getting new interests. Half a dozen of ideas were debated in the group, but the director did not settle with any of these, and, consequently, the product was not progressed into a manuscript. When I ended the research, the group was initiating new ideas.

To clarify how this group managed to spend a year constantly developing ideas without progressing any of these into a realizable project, it is useful to have a closer look at the meetings in the group. The first meeting I observed in the group took its departure in a jotted brainstorm which the director had made. Based on cues in the brainstorm such as; *"death, desolation, bodily decay, sorrow, loneliness, pain. Accepting the thought of dying"*, the talk between the producers and the director dealt with various ways of moving towards these issues. The director explained that there was not a story connected to these themes yet, but the main character was to be a young woman. The producers suggested books and films which might inspire the director, came up with names on scriptwriters that the director could work with, and joined the brainstorming process, for instance by telling stories about relationships between people of different ages.

A couple of more meetings proceeded in the same manner. Gradually, the director formed a story-line about a young woman who encounters the topic of death. This story became a synopsis which was sent to DFI along with a funding application. However, the story also involved a transgender incident, and after the synopsis had been sent to apply for funding, the director discovered that the queer theme was more interesting than the element of death. Accordingly, the director started imagining a relationship where one part transforms gender. Two meetings were held in the group where the producers discussed with the director how a story on this topic could unfold; which milieu it could take place in, which angle the story could be seen from, whether it should be a love story or a film about gender politics, etc. Yet, these ideas were not made into a draft of the project. At the same

time, DFI asked the group to account for the progression of the project. When a plan of progression was to be formulated, the director backed out. Rather than advancing the product about transgender, the director was now more attracted to other ideas. Consequently, the group started working on new ideas and the funding application was withdrawn.

In this case, the producers were frustrated. Not only did the producers endorse the work of the director, the company had also devoted much time to meetings on the project, and furthermore had the film consultant of DFI showed an interest in the project. That is, the social setting was ripe for a product, yet an idea was not made to a manuscript. Despite dedicated talks at the meetings, the product did not evolve.

A scriptwriter, whom I interviewed, explained about this phenomenon, describing it as *"talking too much for too long"* (interview B3, see appendix 2). According to the scriptwriter, when developing an idea, it is essential to write. Until something is on paper, the product is too mutable. Moreover, a draft of the product facilitates progression as it is a stable entity which you can get an impression of and decide your mind on. Conversely, if an idea is not pinned down it is difficult to work on.

The scriptwriter's opinion corresponds to the film school teacher's advice that the product has to get an existence of its own before it is possible for the collaboration to proceed. Yet, the scriptwriter furthermore stresses that the idea should be brought to a material existence in the form of a written draft. That is, rather than externalizing the idea only by talking about it, the scriptwriter emphasizes the necessity of writing; transforming the idea into a material entity.

These accounts reflect the work in the project group that constantly shifted ideas. First of all, the group did not externalize the product from the director; the inclinations of the director guided the project rather than the opposite. Secondly, little was written on the project; in the beginning some jotted brainstorms and a synopsis, later nothing. In this way, the project did not become isolated from the director and it did not get an existence of its own. Hence, the product was difficult to collaborate on and hold on to.

In contrast to the above case about slippery ideas, one of the projects which managed to become realized was based on a novel (case A5, see appendix 1). Because of this starting point, the product had a material existence from the beginning and the discussions about the product took their departure in the already

existing story-line. Whereas the meetings in the previous case could be characterized as brainstorm sessions about how to approach various themes, the meetings in the group that were transforming a novel into a film focused on specific details in the story-line. For example, discussions in this group were concerning how a split between the motivation of career progression and altruism could be demonstrated, and whether a scene with the main character alone in a house could be left out. That is, the talks in this group were anchored in the substance of the draft, while the talks in the first group were about movable ideas. In this way, the writings of the product can be said to make the collaboration more focused, and by this it enables progression.

To advance this point, the externalized idea can be seen as representing a fixed agreement about the prospective product. In contrast to thoughts and talks, which are fluctuating, a draft stabilizes the idea (cf. Mukerji 1994; Latour and Woolgar 1979). By this, it stabilizes the alliance between the participants. Furthermore, the material entity of a draft manifests the detachment between the evolving product and the person who has made it. In this way, rather than seeing the externalization of the idea as a materialization of an individual's vision, which would be to rephrase the Romantic notion of the artist (cf. Negus & Pickering 2004), I suggest calling attention to that an externalized idea enables collaboration. That is, rather than being a finished work made by an individual, the externalized idea is a draft which facilitates the further, collaborative, work.

In the next part, the analysis will concern the attachments between the product and the parties that become involved in its development. It will be argued that these attachments are based in the product itself. Hence, I will suggest that attachments between an emerging product and interested parties depends on the experiences which the emerging product gives rise to.

Making attachments: Mediating collaboration

> *"So, there arises a fourth person in this collaboration which is the project".*
> (Producer and CEO of a film production company, B2 in appendix 2).

When a project group collaborates on a manuscript for a film they create it and the script is the outcome of this collaborative work. Yet, the emerging product is not

only the result of creative collaboration; it is also a partaker in this process. As the producer explains, the project becomes the fourth person in the triad; it becomes an actor in the process.

Considering the project an actor, equal to human actors, was reflected in the filmmakers' discourse. In one of the cases, a first meeting between a scriptwriter and a director was spoken of as a date: *"a 'do you want to be my girlfriend/boyfriend' meeting"* (A3, appendix 1). This metaphor of a romantic relationship points out that the choice of human collaborators is emotional and decisive. Yet, the same terminology of romance was used in another case to describe the relation between a project and a director:

> *"He was introduced to some other manuscript [...] It is always a marriage proposal in some way. And until you find the right partner in the form of a project for a director, or that the director himself brings in the right [partner], then you are waiting for that to happen".*
> (A1, appendix 1).

As this quote indicates, choosing to establish a relationship to a project is an intense and important matter, which resembles the characterization of founding relations amongst the human participants. Like the participants are selective about whom they engage with, they are also careful about what they become related to.

The discursive practice about considering the project in terms of a partner or a person in the collaboration shows that the project is compared to a human actor by the participants. Yet, the active status of the project is not quite the same as that of the human participants. The project represents the future product, which composes the raison d'être of the collaboration. Thereby, the evolving product has a distinct function, which consists in mediating the relations between the other participants (cf. Hennion 1995). That is, the product forms the substance which their relationships are about. In that way, the relations between the other participants go through the product. Thus, the product embodies the attachments between the participants and thereby it mediates the collaboration.

The mediation of the product is not a passive function; the product is not a neutral transporter of the human participants' ideas. Rather, the product modifies the collaboration by arousing experiences in the participants. These experiences

surpass the control of the makers of the product, and they are decisive for the course of the collaboration.

When accounting for their selection of projects, the producers emphasized the effects of the evolving product. According to the producers, the decision about entering a project is based on the feelings which the initial product gives rise to. One producer explained about the primary criterion in selecting projects: *"is something that moves you"* (B2, appendix 2). Another producer clarified this rationale about being affected by the product: "*to me it is kind of, well, a, some kind of intuitive process whether I am, like, turned on by it"* (B1, appendix 2). As this quote points out, the experience of the product is the principle by which the producers choose whether to engage in a project. If the product has an emotional effect on the producer then the project is selected for progression, and vice versa. Hence, the participants' engagement in the collaboration is based on their sensations of the project; not the intentions that lie behind. This illustrates that the enrolment of participants depend on the effects of the product. That is, the human actors choose to become connected to the project based on an experience of the product.

During the course of development, the evolving product is sensed repeatedly. Nearly all sensations of the product, which I observed, followed the same pattern. The experience of the product led to an evaluation that involved proposals for modifications. This way of encountering the product by commenting on it seemed to constitute the legitimate mode of relating to the project, not only for the participants in the project group, but for everyone that came across the project. Investors, colleagues, friends, future crew members and actors, experienced filmmakers, former teachers, family members and the sociologist; all became acquainted with the project by experiencing the evolving product, uttering their impressions and making suggestions for alterations.

In that way, the product becomes a mediator of the social relations externally as well as internally in the project group. In both instances, the connection to the collaboration goes via the product. Thus, to make a comment on the product based on an experience of it is simultaneously to form a relation to the project group. Connectedness to the collaboration is established, confirmed, changed or negated via the comments about the product.

Furthermore, the comments on the product fuel the process of development as the project groups use this feedback to advance their work. The comments on the

product represent a possibility for identifying the effects of the product; whether and how it is capable of initiating experiences. By paying attention to evaluations of the effects of the product, the project group is enabled to address the reactions of a future audience.

Hence, giving comments based on sensations of the product can be seen as a practice that co-constructs the product and the social relations around it. By facilitating progression of the product and broadening the network of the project at the same time, the practice of commenting illustrates how the production of the content and the formation of the project group are interdependent affairs. For instance, the scope of the product becomes altered and the project group becomes extended when previously uninvolved persons comment on the evolving product. Thus, external parties become internal participants as their suggestions are inscribed into the product (cf. Brain 1994). Moreover, the practice of commenting shows that the evolving product is at the centre of the sociomaterial network which composes the project. Comments are directly aimed at the material product, yet they furthermore create the social composition of the project. In this way, the product mediates the sociality as the social relations operate via the evolving product.

Based on the above analysis, it could be inferred that whether an idea is successful in the sense that it becomes a realizable product depends on, first, that it is externalized, and second, that it makes attachments between the participants in the initial triad and beyond this group based on those experiences which it gives rise to. In the portrayal of the evolving product as a mediator, the content of the product may seem rather stabile and the operations of the product rather straightforward; expanding the network to generate progression. Accordingly, the attachments which are made via the product may look like alliances that enhance the product, and the co-construction of the social relations and the product may seem like a colonizing attempt of cementing a specific version of the product (cf. Law & Singleton 2005). However, an additional moment should be added to this mapping of creative development processes. That is the postponing of closure; the maintenance of a mutability of the product, which is an additional part of the development process.

Postponing closure: Furthering collaboration

The postponing of closure describes a temporary refrain from cementing and settling with an idea. Keeping the product open; mutating it into various forms to investigate its limits and possibilities, constitutes a way of working with the evolving product that is used to advance the development. Whereas the moments of externalization and making attachments assume a linear progression from bringing the idea into existence and establishing relations, the aspect of postponing closure sketches a somewhat circular and iterative movement of continuing development. Hence, the postponement of closure calls attention to the processual character of creative processes, which counters the assumptions about making progress by stabilizing and expanding the idea.

To illustrate this point about that the product not only generates development by stabilizing and expanding but also by mutating, I will return to the first case which the analysis considered; the project group that spent a year constantly developing new ideas, apparently making no progress (A3, appendix 1). After one year of shifting ideas, the director started collaborating with a scriptwriter; *"a creative soul mate"*, and they discovered a theme, based on the previous ideas, which they were both interested in. Together they created a synopsis and the group began raising funding to progress this evolving product. Thus, rather than characterizing the one-year period of idea generation as a failure, it can be seen as part of a larger process which may become successful. That is, the abandoned ideas led to the progression of another product.

This interpretation of failures; to see them as steps on the way, was applied in all three cases that did not succeed (A1, A2 & A3, appendix 1). For example, the producer that did not manage to get a project going during the year of my study explained:

> *"failed projects are not negative stories to me, I think you have to develop really really lots of projects to like finish with some strong ones that are going to be realized".*
> (A1, appendix 1).

Of course, this explanation of the necessity of failures can be interpreted as a

sense-making justification of the producer's own lacking ability to succeed with development processes. However, if such suspicion is suspended, the producer's account makes sense as it describes failures as part of the process. That is, failed ideas transfer development processes to other ideas. This transformation through failures happened in all three cases that did not succeed. All of the unsuccessful projects were carried on in modified groups working on modified ideas. Hence, the failures did not finish the development processes; on the contrary they fed a continuation of development.

The processual view on development processes, which the informants in the unsuccessful cases called attention to, characterizes failures and transformations as unavoidable occurrences. Moreover, the process perspective suggests that such interruptions may be beneficial for the ambition of developing a unique cultural product. As the informants would explain, it is worth spending resources on development, if it leads to results otherwise not reachable. This understanding of development as a troubled but valuable process was, for instance, expressed by a film consultant when advising a director to "*not working against your fear but using it"* (in case A4, appendix 1). This meant daring to go through the unpleasant feeling of not being in control to arrive at new sides of the product. Rather than closing off the troubles of not knowing, uncertainty should be put to use in the process. The film consultant clarified the reason behind this advice:

> *"Actually nobody cares about something that is nice-looking and finished, so what it is about, is the humiliation which consists in opening op and saying 'I have an idea and I know something about it and there are lots of things I don't know about it'".*
> (B5, appendix 2).

The development of the product gains progression from an investigation of the unknown, according to the film consultant. That is, rather than jumping to closure of the product, the film consultant recommends the opposite; keeping it open to advance development.

The positive stance on postponing closure provides a contrast to the notion of linear progression from externalizing the idea to making attachments with the evolving product. However, the elimination of a linear progression model does not

mean that the moment of postponement opposes the moments of externalization and making attachments. To postpone closure does not imply that an idea is kept to oneself for a long time before it then, potentially, is brought into existence. On the contrary, the postponement of closure is entangled with the other moments as it facilitates the process of collaboration. By opening the possibilities of operating with a number of different versions of the product, the postponing of closure enhances the capabilities both of the moment of externalization and the moment of making attachments. The end result of the externalization of the idea may be improved by postponing closure, because the postponement facilitates broadening and clarifying the scope of the content. The creation of attachments may also benefit from openness of the product, since a mutable product enables multiplying the connections that are made to it. Conversely, if a draft is closed from the beginning of the process, it may not be able to create attachments; and accordingly it may not be possible to progress. Thus, externalizing, making attachments and postponing closure are simultaneous and interrelated parts of the development process.

In addition, the processual aspect underscores that the process of development literally consists in developing. As a director I met in one of the cases stated with a catchphrase: *"It is development or settlement"* (A5, appendix 1). Development is about constantly being in motion to progress the work. Even when the manuscript is finished it is not a final product; it is simply an institutionalized arrangement to prepare the actual making of the film. Thus, the phase of development aims to produce a device that can generate an end result; the script is important only because it furthers the process of filmmaking.

Conclusion

Based on an empirical study of development processes in the Danish film industry, this paper has suggested that creative collaboration is centred on the evolving product. The paper has argued that to understand the formation of projects in cultural production, the product under development should not be perceived as a passive outcome of the process. Rather, the paper has proposed to consider the evolving product as an active part in the formation of cultural projects. By investigating instances where the evolving product comes to play an active part in the organizing of film projects, the paper has illustrated how the product and the collaboration around it are co-produced. Thereby, the paper has pointed out that not only material objects, but also evolving material objects may have organizational effects.

The sociomaterial perspective on production of culture, which the paper has proposed, is constructed by combining the recent strand within organizational studies that is informed by actor-network theory and the new sociology of art perspective. The recent strand in organizational studies argues that organizational processes should be seen as formations of sociomaterial networks, and the new sociology of art investigates what cultural products do to those who experience them. The paper has turned the notion of ascribing agency to the cultural product to consider the question of how projects in cultural production are organized. Hence, the paper has addressed the question of how the evolving product is an active part of the collaboration around its making; which organizing effects the product has on the establishment of film projects during the phase of development.

The paper has centred on three instances in the process of development where the product becomes an active partaker in the collaborative process. The first moment is the externalization of the idea, which describes the detachment of the product from the person who makes it. Before the product is externalized it is difficult to work on. By externalizing the product, preferably in the material, written form of a draft, collaboration is enabled. Thereby, externalization is not so much a materialization of a single person's vision as it is a draft which generates further, collaborative work. Moreover, externalization stabilizes the project since a

draft makes the idea more difficult to change and the work more focused. Hence, the externalization facilitates the initial establishment of a project around an idea.

The second moment, which the analysis has looked into, is the attachments to the project which are made via the evolving product. As the product forms that which the social relations are about, it becomes a mediator of the links between the other participants. Thus, rather than seeing the social interaction isolated from that which it concerns, the paper has argued that the collaboration goes through the evolving product. By having experiences of the evolving product, attachments are made to the project. Hence, the evolving product is a mediator of those connections that constitute the collaboration. Furthermore, the paper has showed that the making of attachments to the project through the product is not only restricted to the initial project group, but extends to other interested parties as well. The practice of having a sensation of the product followed by commenting on it constitutes a way of relating to the project for everyone who encounters it. Hence, the project can be seen as a network that is centred on the project and widened as the product makes attachments by means of arousing experiences. In addition, the practice of commenting on the project co-produces the project and the product. While the network around the project is expanded when comments are made, comments are used as feedback to progress the product by the filmmakers. By paying attention to the reactions which the evolving product brings about, the filmmakers use comments to address the future audience. In that sense, the network and the product are coproduced when external parties become attached to the project at the same time as their reactions are inscribed into the product.

The third moment, which the analysis has thematized, is the postponement of closure; keeping the product open. This aspect of development contrasts the linear progression, which the moments of externalization and making attachments point to. The postponement of closure emphasises that development is a processual affair which involves mutations of the product. By revising the apparent failures, which the study entails, the analysis has shown that these can be seen as steps on the way of progressing development. The processual view on development suggests that to keep the product open may increase both the content of the creative product and the making of attachments. Hence, the postponement of closure is seen as a beneficial element in creative development, in contrast to rushing to closure of the product.

By bringing the emerging product into focus, this paper has proposed a

sociomaterial analysis of the establishment of projects in production of culture. In future studies, this analytical perspective may be a fruitful alternative to previous approaches to the organizing of cultural production which do not take that which is being produced into account. As the paper has illustrated, the product under development may be relevant for the social study of cultural production; in fact, the evolving product may be a key to understand how cultural projects are organized.

Appendix 1: Overview of empirical cases

	Case description	Data
A1	This producer did not manage to get a project going, although three different start-ups were initiated over a period of eleven months.	Notes from phone calls to the producer. Two interviews with the producer.
A2	This project did not result in a film, but ended in a disagreement over the content in the manuscript. The development process lasted two and a half year. (I was in contact with the project during the last half year of its duration). After the project stopped, the producer and the director started a new project based on the same theme.	Observation notes from a project meeting, notes from phone calls to the producer, interview with the producer, interview with the screenwriter. Two synopses of the film, five editions of the script, funding applications to DFI (for manuscript support and development support), return letters from DFI, comments from the distribution company and television-company, all e-mail correspondence in the project group.
A3	This project did not result in a film, but was undergoing constant idea generation during thirteen months. When the project was given up, the producer and the director launched a new project, which was based on collaboration with a scriptwriter.	Observation notes from four development meetings between the director, the producer and a development producer. Two interviews with the producer, two interviews with the development producer, one interview with the director, notes from phone calls and text messages with the producer, internal e-mails, including the director's brainstorms and the producer's comments, funding application to DFI (for manuscript support), the response letter from DFI. One synopsis of the film.

A4	This project resulted in a film. The development process took twelve months (I was in contact with the project during the last four months of the development phase and the following six months of the making of the film).	Seven interviews with the producer, two interviews with the director, observation notes from a meeting with the film consultant at the DFI, notes from phone calls to the producer. Three synopses of the film, eight editions of the script, three funding applications (for manuscript support, development support and production support), the return letters from DFI, a promo of the film and the final film.
A5	This project resulted in a film. The development process took approximately two years. (I was in contact with the project during eight months, when the first drafts of the manuscript were made, but stopped following the project because another researcher started following the same project).	Notes from a meeting with the producer and the scriptwriter, observation notes from a development meeting. Two synopses of the film, two editions of the script, internal comments and e-mails.

Appendix 2: Overview of supplementary interviews

Interview	Position of informant
B1	Producer and CEO of film production company
B2	Producer and CEO of film production company
B3	Scriptwriter
B4	Teacher at the National Film School of Denmark
B5	Film consultant at The Danish Film Institute

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Chapter 6: Paper 5

Creative work beyond self-creation: Filmmakers and films in the making

Abstract

This paper suggests that creative work exceeds the paradigm of self-creation as it constitutes a material practice. The prevailing paradigm of creative work is dualistic and portrays such work as either emancipating or alienating; self-fulfilment or self-exploitation. Both sides thereby subsume creative work under self-creation. As an alternative, this paper proposes that creative work is a sociomaterial affair. Hence, the paper argues that creative work cannot be reduced to self-creation, but is a matter of working with materials in collective processes. Moreover, the paper suggests that attractiveness of creative work is due to the character of the work. Thus, the paper proposes turning attention to that creative work practices consist in generating mediations; making transformations into art.

> *"**Interviewer**: Why do you want to become a film director?*
> ***Up-coming film director**: Unfortunately it is the only kind of work that makes sense for me. And sometimes I wish it could be something [else] because it would be so much easier if I worked with something else I think. But those times when I have been the most, I don't know, satisfied is such a big word, but content and happy to be alive and present has been when making film, in both ends of the project when I have been thinking 'wow, this, this is fantastic'".*
> (Quote from interview study of young Danish film directors; director A).

Introduction

Creative work is magnificent and troublesome. As the up-coming film director in the opening quote explains, creative work entails features that reflect both characterisations: On the one hand creative work, such as filmmaking, generates positive effects of happiness. On the other hand, creative work produces the negative effect of being unbearable. These contradictory characteristics of creative work have been represented in the growing body of literature on creative industries. One part of the literature focuses on the beneficial aspects of creative industries in glorious tales of the creative class and creative hotspots (e.g. Caves 2000; Howkins 2001; Florida 2002). In these accounts, such work is primarily described in terms of self-realization. However, another part of the literature composes a critical counterpart which highlights problematic aspects of creative work, such as insecure working conditions and underpayment (e.g. McRobbie 1998; cf. Hesmondhalgh & Pratt 2005). In these critical accounts, creative work is portrayed as a form of self-exploitation.

In my opinion, this polarization of perspectives on creative work constitutes an unproductive way of framing the subject. First of all, the schism between a positive and a negative approach easily turns the issue of creative work into a normative matter, rather than an empirical question. Secondly, the alternative of a positive or a negative account positions these perspectives as mutually exclusive, which makes the discussion repetitive and hinders the development of new approaches. Finally, and most importantly for the argument in this paper, both the positive and

the negative perspective emphasizes the self-formative dimension of creative work, thereby neglecting the other outcome of the work; the creative product.

In this paper, I start from the premise that the evolving product is not a side-effect of creative work, but its rationale, and I claim that it should be incorporated in the analysis accordingly. Hence, I suggest understanding creative work from a sociomaterial perspective as a matter of working with and on materials. My proposal is that focusing on interrelations between subjects and materials will provide an optic for analyzing creative work which looks beyond self-realization or -exploitation.

The paper is divided in three sections. First, I introduce the dualistic paradigm of self-creation which characterises accounts of creative work. I show that this tradition has historic roots in the writings of Marx and is nowadays represented in accounts that subscribe to Foucauldian frameworks. I round off this section by formulating my critique of the dualistic paradigm; arguing that it produces a reductionist portrayal of creative work as it overlooks sociomaterial features.

Secondly, I look at how agency can be ascribed to creative products. I start from accounts that thematize the attractiveness of creative products; the concepts of the flâneur and the voyeur that point to the pleasure which derive from film products, and Benjamin's concept of aura that gives an explanation of how pleasure of art is brought about. After that, I turn to the proponents of the sociomaterial perspective; Antoine Hennion, Bruno Latour and Alfred Gell, who propose, contrary to Benjamin's claim that reproductive techniques destroy the uniqueness of art, that it is techniques and other mediators which create the magic of art.

In the third section of the paper I develop this line of thinking by making an empirical illustration of how creative work can be seen as a sociomaterial practice. Based on Hennion's concept of mediations, I analyse the development of films as a process of transforming the evolving product by means of techniques of mediation. This empirical analysis portrays creative work as a collective process where the creation of the product is based on material conditions.

The paper concludes that the sociomaterial perspective exceeds the paradigm of self-creation. By bringing the evolving product into focus, the sociomaterial perspective looks at how transformations take place. In this optic, self-creation is an additional outcome of the working process, not its core. Thus, I suggest that the sociomaterial perspective furthers the focus on how the work of making creative

products is carried out by demonstrating how materials and techniques are assembled in creative work practices.

Two studies of filmmakers

The empirical basis for this paper consists in two studies of Danish filmmakers, which I conducted in 2004 and 2006-2007 respectively.[10] The first study is an interview study with fifteen up-coming Danish film directors that focuses on the question of why creative work; in this case film directing, is attractive even if the working conditions are not. The second study is an ethnographic study of the development phase of filmmaking; the period from an idea for a film is launched until the project is ready to go into production or is given up. Here, I followed the development of five film projects in different production companies over a one-year period by means of observing meetings between directors, producers and screenwriters; interviewing the involved parties; and reading case documents such as funding applications and drafts of the manuscripts. Whereas the first study raised the question of why creative work is attractive, the second study concentrates on the question of how creative work is carried out. Thereby the two studies shed light on both what filmmakers say creative work is about and what they do when they are working.

[10] The first study was conducted in collaboration with Sofie Birch Mathiasen and formed the basis for our master's thesis at the Department of Sociology at the University of Copenhagen. The second study was conducted for my PhD thesis at the Department of Organization at the Copenhagen Business School. All quotes from the two studies have been translated from Danish by the author.

The dualistic paradigm of self-creation

> *"**Interviewer**: Is there something I have overlooked, which you think is important I take in?*
> ***Up-coming film director:** No, I don't think so. What should that be? [13 seconds of silence] Yes, there is, there was just something I was thinking, yes. No, but yes, but I think, I think that, somehow I think that once you are in it, then I think there is so much necessity in doing it, in doing it and getting permission to do it. Once you have gotten that ambition or that thought one time, well, then I think that it is terribly difficult to let go of. I can see like, I think that it is actually what I think is the most difficult about it. […] The hunger for realising yourself in it, right. […] I think that is one of the slightly more ugly things in it, or more dangerous things, right. Because it may involve that if one does not succeed then one becomes bitter, right.*
> ***Interviewer:** Yes.*
> ***Up-coming film director:** And angry with one's life, if one does not succeed. That is kind of the other side to it. But then it is also fantastic when it does succeed, right"* .
> (Quote from interview study of young Danish film directors; director B).

From this quote it appears that self-creation is indeed an important aspect of creative work. The young film director claims that creative work is addictive as it entails a need for self-realization which may even become an obsession. The addiction to the work is upheld by the prospect of success, but the hope for success may lead to failure and disappointment. Nevertheless, in the end of the quote, the young film director maintains that the possibility for experiencing wonderful success in the work subsists. By drawing this conclusion, the young film director confirms the assumption that the work implies an attractiveness which surpasses critical reflection and forms a self-sustaining rationale.

To understand the obsession for realizing oneself in creative work, the paradigm of self-creation may be a relevant optic since it portrays creative work as an activity that preoccupies and forms the individual. As another young director

describes creative work: *"It costs an unreasonably lot, it costs your life, right"* (Quote from interview study of young Danish film directors; director C). Creative work is not just an activity; it becomes a dominating personal need. Accordingly, it seems relevant to conceptualize this work as the creation of oneself.

The Marxian legacy

The paradigm of perceiving creative work in terms of self-creation has deep theoretical roots and is characterized by the dualism of positive contra negative self-creation; self-fulfilment versus self-delusion. Since Marx introduced the fundamental difference between wage labour in capitalist society and the human species-being as *homo faber*, two differing approaches to interpreting creative work have been competing. On the one hand, creative work in neo-liberal Western societies can be seen as a version of capitalism that alienates humans from their needs and nature. On the other hand, creative work can be seen as a refuge from the capitalist wage labour system that provides access to a shared human nature, because it is a productive activity which is not conducted for an economic purpose (Engels & Marx 1976/1851).

Whereas some inheritors of Marx have emphasized the dystopian view, others have stressed the optimistic outlook on creative work. The dystopian view is represented by the Frankfurt school writers Adorno and Horkheimer who perceive cultural production under capitalism as an industry that deceives its consumers of exactly that which it promises them; emancipation from the trivial everyday life as wage labourer (1947/2002). Although Adorno and Horkheimer do not isolate the issue of work in the culture industry, their analysis implies that creative work can be seen as an alienated form of labour which enhances the capitalist mode of production and simultaneously destroys the sphere of art. Yet, Adorno and Horkheimer hold out the prospect of another form of creative work; artistic creation, which reveals and opposes the alienating character of the capitalist mode of production. Furthermore, the optimistic interpretation of creative work can be found in the writings of the situationist movement that portray creative work as an emancipative and subversive activity (Debord 1967/2004; Vaneigem 1967/2001; cf. Plant 1992). The situationists describe creative practices as subversive in contrast to the capitalist production of cultural products. By rejecting wage labour

and bringing artistic creation into everyday life, the situationists propose to turn creativity towards the goal of initiating a revolt against capitalist society.

Although Adorno and Horkheimer highlight the dystopian view on the culture industry whereas the situationists propose an optimistic outlook on creativity, both perspectives are based on, and reproduce, the same dualism. Thus, the internal opposition between an emancipative and an alienating form of creative work is continued by these inheritors of Marx.

In the tradition from Marx to the Frankfurt school and the situationist movement, the character of creative work is identified by the mode of production. Paid creative work under capitalism is considered to be entirely different from creative work as a voluntary activity that is carried out without an economic purpose. Thereby, the formation of the subject; the alienating or emancipative effects of creative work, is seen as determined by social and economic structures.

The Foucauldian legacy

Contrary to the structural macro approach which is prioritised in the Marxist tradition, recent explanations of creative work have applied the writings of the late Foucault that concentrate specifically on the formation of the subject (e.g. McRobbie 1998; Staiger 2003). In opposition to the Marxist diagnosis that wage labour under capitalism is inhuman because it eliminates the possibility for realization of the inner self, Foucault's approach is an exploration of how the subject is invented which emphasises that becoming a subject is not necessarily liberating. Thus, the self-creating aspect of creative work is highlighted in accounts that use a Foucauldian framework, but without automatically adding positive value to this.

Like previous accounts of creative work, the Foucauldian approaches split in two. On the one hand, Foucault's concept of governmentality has been used to make critical analyses of creative work by the British cultural theorist Angela McRobbie (1998). McRobbie applies Foucault's notion that government in neoliberal democracies is a particular form of power that produces subjects by affiliating itself with and propagating the interests of those who are governed (Foucault 1978/1991). Based on this perspective, McRobbie explains the motivation of young British fashion designers as self-government; a biopolitical and highly efficient mode of power where people govern themselves. In that optic,

the young designers' aspirations lead them to tolerate the insecurity which freelance design jobs imply. Thus, in accordance with other governmentality studies of work life under neo-liberalism, McRobbie's analysis is sceptical of work that is seen to involve self-realization as it is considered to be founded on a subjectivation which is not escapable (cf. Donzelot 1991; Rose 1996, 1999).

On the other hand, the American film theorist Janet Staiger applies Foucault's concept of self-aesthetics to portray creative work as a pleasure-based act of forming one's life (2003). Self-aesthetics; making one's life a work of art, is an idea which Foucault introduces in the second and third volume of *The History of Sexuality*: *The Use of Pleasure* (1984/1992) and *The Care of the Self* (1984/1990). In contrast to earlier work that primarily demonstrates how discourses and power techniques interpellate the individual and come to operate through the subject, as the concept of self-government exemplifies, the concept of self-techniques emphasizes how the individual relates to itself. Following this line of thinking, Staiger suggests seeing authoring as *an art of existence*; a technique of the self that consists in creating and recreating oneself as an acting subject. The appealing feature of this approach is, according to Staiger, that it opens the possibility for the subject of taking a number of different subject positions in the work; thereby overcoming the ensnaring subjectivation which makes the subject reproduce domination.

Going back to the quote in the beginning of this discussion, it should now be clear that creative work can be seen as a self-formative affair caught between self-exploitation and emancipation. According to the young film director, creative work is addictive and dangerous as it generates a hunger for self-realization in the work; yet these dangers do not outweigh the luring promise of a fantastic state of being if one succeeds. This quote nicely illustrates the dilemma of the dichotomous approaches to creative work as self-creation: Seen from the governmentality perspective, the young film director's description substantiates the claim that aspirations become a principle of self-government which leads to potentially harmful consequences. However, from the perspective of self-aesthetics, the quote shows that the goal of making one's life an aesthetic object is possible to aim for, even if there are obstacles on the way. Both descriptions portray creative work as the creation of oneself; yet, they make contradictory evaluations of this diagnosis.

Beyond the dualistic paradigm

In my opinion, the debate about whether self-creation is good or bad constructs an unfruitful way of approaching the issue of creative work. One reason is that the discussion does not address the central question of what criteria its decisive evaluations are based on. Hence, creative work is transformed to a topic that requires a theoretically based normative stance, which takes focus away from the empirical questions of what creative work consists in and how the implied subjects experience this. In addition, the ingrained dichotomy of the debate pushes creative work to be catalogued along the lines of one extreme or the other. Last but not least, the content of the work is mostly ignored. Instead of drawing attention to that which the work is about, both the negative and the positive interpretations portray creative work as a matter primarily of working on oneself. In doing so, the work is reduced to self-creation and the objects which the work concerns are excluded from the analysis.

In my view, the framework of self-creation may be useful to gain an understanding of certain self-formative features of creative work; however, it certainly does not address all dimensions. My claim is that although creative work may entail formative elements it exceeds the paradigm of self-creation, primarily because it is a practice of working with materials with the purpose of creating a product. Hence, I suggest turning attention to those aspects of creative work which surpass what is discovered by the framework of self-creation.

In the following section, I look into the conceptualization of agency of creative products to lay the foundation of an alternative approach to creative work. I use two perspectives as stepping stones that build up the relevance of thematizing materiality in creative work before introducing the sociomaterial perspective. First, I turn the concepts of the flâneur and the voyeur to indicate that a certain pleasure arises not only from film spectatorship but also during the making of films. Secondly, I discuss Benjamin's concept of aura, which draws attention to what technologies do to creative products. In opposition to Benjamin's view on the destructiveness of reproductive technologies, I propose the sociomaterial perspective which looks at the productive effects of technologies. Hence, I account for attractiveness of creative work by proposing that it is the work with materials and technologies which produces the magical aspect of this work.

The attractiveness of the work

> *"**Up-coming film director:** So when I stood there in the rain and the storm and our lamps were tumbling down and we were standing outside, and a tiny little car we had to make it in where the actors were sitting inside with heat lamps and all sort of things; there I stood and then I thought 'holy shit man, I am happy right now! Of course this is what I have to do'. I mean it was so obvious, [I was] thinking 'this is it. This is really the most exciting thing I have ever experienced.' [Laughs]*
> ***Interviewer:** Great.*
> ***Up-coming film director:** Completely soaking wet. It was simply so strange. And I think that it had a lot to do with that collaboration, that focus and concentration which arise while striving to arrive at something very specific. It is extremely interesting, I think. And I think it is really interesting observing everyone being totally, totally, totally like 'drhh' [: the sound of concentration] focused in one direction, right. Which ends with being, and you don't really know what it ends with and it is also, you are standing, floating 'woohoo' [: the sound of excitement], you throw yourself into it, kind of into deep water and are standing for a while and can hardly feel your feet. And really, that is also extremely exciting, you know, right. Kind of 'brh' [: the sound of worry] what is happening with this? It's great. It has some kind of very, very special energy to it. It really does".*
> (Quote from interview study of young Danish film directors; director D).

In the quote here, a young film director describes the first time of directing, which involves an account of the passion in the work. Approaches that focus on self-creation facilitate an understanding of what motivates creative work; why people are attracted to creative industries and why they want to go on with their occupations in these industries. Yet, as the quote here indicates, creative work is not only appealing because it provides a ground for acting upon oneself; in the case of filmmaking it is also a social experience. Moreover, the attractiveness of the work is about something else than its sociality, namely the making of the product; the evolving product, which, according to the young director in the quote, has a certain force to it.

Seen from the perspective of self-creation, the quote above can be read as a statement about the daring experience of nearly losing oneself in the work. As the young director explains, the excitement about the work consists in momentarily losing control; going with the flow of the process, not knowing exactly where it ends. Experiencing oneself in that situation can be understood as a specific type of self-creation; exceeding what one could have imagined by the challenging of oneself.

In my opinion, however, the pleasure of experiencing oneself in challenging and transformative situations occurs in work processes; and the establishment of these processes is a sociomaterial task. Going back to the quote, my point can be seen when the young film director describes the experience of temporarily losing control and the pleasure which that entails. The young film director attaches this emotional experience to the sociality of the collaboration in addition to the setting; the location for the shooting of the film and the technical equipment. By depicting these elements in the surrounding milieu as conditions for experiencing pleasure in the work, the young film director points out that the emotional experience is tied to a social and material foundation.

Clarifying this point, the young film director states that the quality of the work; the intense concentration and thrilling pleasure, arises "while striving to arrive at something very specific"; that is, during the pursuit of the aim of making the film. Thus, the work consists in making a particular product and it is in that activity of bringing the product into being the work gets its distinct character. Based on this account, the young film director concludes that the work contains a particular energy; an exceptional force of excitement.

The same pleasure for producers as for consumers?

To explain the energy in the work; the passion which is tied to the evolving product, one possible approach is to transport an analytical framework from the topic of film spectatorship to the issue of filmmaking. Film spectatorship has a long tradition of being conceptualized as a pleasure-based activity where the pleasure derives from the specifics of cinema. Even the most critical account of the film spectator's gaze; the film theorist Laura Mulvey's theory of how the male gaze is prescribed by the camera (1973/2001), maintains the premise that the visual cinematic experience is founded in pleasure. Two key examples of this approach to

film spectatorship are the concepts of the flâneur and the voyeur. In addition to characterizing the film spectator as a detached observer who takes pleasure in viewing how others are conducting their social lives, the concepts of the flâneur and the voyeur have been connected to descriptions of the space of cinema as an alternative to everyday life. Both Foucault's concept of heterotopia that characterizes a space of alternate ordering and Bakhtin's concept of carnival which depicts a momentary suspension of the ruling social norms have been put to use to typify the function of cinema (Bruno 1993; Denzin 1995). Thus, the figure of the flâneur or voyeur places the spectator in a context where trivial everyday life is dissolved and substituted with playful and joyful experiences. Thereby, the theories of cinematic spectatorship highlight the pleasure which receivers obtain and locate this sensation in the space of the extraordinary which cinema is said to provide.

If this optic is transferred to the production of films, filmmakers may be seen as subscribing to the same type of pleasure as receivers, and the place of production may be seen as a transgressive space of heterotopic social ordering (cf. Hetherington 1997). In this way, the filmmaker can be characterized as a flâneur or voyeur whose gaze not only generates a visual world but also takes pleasure in doing so. Furthermore, following this line of thinking, the production of films can be characterized as a spectacle. Drawing these similarities between consumption and production of cultural products makes it possible to identify creative work as pleasurable; an activity that gives access to the same experiences as those of consuming cultural products (cf. Du Gay 1996).

In my view, the concepts of the flâneur and the voyeur draw attention to a crucial aspect of filmmaking; the pleasure that is generated not from self-realization but from the material substance of the evolving product. However, I find that these concepts are inadequate to describe the productive activities of filmmaking. This is because they exclusively characterize visual practices of a distant and rather passive observer. Accordingly, I suggest that as well as the finished film makes visual pleasure obtainable for spectators, the product under development may provide the ground for the passion in the work of filmmakers. That is, the materiality of the film creates access to experiences of pleasure. Thus, my proposal is that the passionate work has to concern something; without materiality the intensity and necessity of the work cannot be upheld.

An auratic experience?

To understand how the product generates experiences, Benjamin's concept of aura offers a scheme of interpretation, which represents a classical way of accounting for the role of technology in creative production (1963/2001; cf. Gumbrecht & Merrinan 2003). According to Benjamin, the performance of an artwork is an authentic act that has its basis in ancient rituals, which gives rise to an aura of the artwork. In Benjamin's optic, the cause of aura implies that reproductive techniques eliminate the presence of the original and thereby the aura of artworks. Filmmaking, in contrast to theatre, is a key example which Benjamin uses to illustrate how the aura of the product is destroyed. As there is no original performance of a film, since the finished film is the result of editing, film production is inherently aimed at reproduction, and thereby its potential aura is destroyed.

Benjamin's concept of aura provides a springboard for explaining the active status of the evolving film product since it draws attention to the role of technologies. Thus, the sociomaterial perspective shares with Benjamin the basic premise that conduction of creative work implies a distinct, attractive and formative element that is founded in the work under construction. However, the sociomaterial perspective completely disagrees with Benjamin's analysis on the central question of the status of reproductive techniques.

In contrast to Benjamin's concept of aura that is a category which he reserves to non-reproductive forms of art, I propose that the force of creative work derives exactly from the assembling of materials and techniques in the work process. Such a sociomaterial alternative to Benjamin's argument is formulated by the French sociologists Antoine Hennion and Bruno Latour (1996/2003), and is also found in the writings of the British cultural anthropologist Alfred Gell (1999).

Technologies of enchantment

Hennion and Latour criticise Benjamin's concept of aura for being ambivalent; on the one hand aura is a nostalgic portrayal of a lost paradise that existed in former times, on the other hand aura describes an artefact with cult value; a symbol of a religious beyond. This double meaning makes the concept of aura highly dubious, according to Hennion and Latour. Moreover, they claim that artworks are not

destroyed but created by reproductive techniques. One example is music: *"first come infinite repetition, standards, schemes, variations, then come the works"* (2003, p. 94). A second example is the studio. According to Benjamin, the film studio ruins the immediate presence of the actor on the stage. However, according to Hennion and Latour, the camera and the editing are only two instances on a long chain of mediations. Their argument is that a stage performance involves as much technique as studio acting, because both types of creative work involve a series of technical operations. Thus, Hennion and Latour reverse Benjamin's argument when they propose that technique is at the core of works of art.

In accordance with Hennion and Latour, Gell proposes to consider art as a component of technology; that is, the outcome of a technical process. Yet, Gell furthers this line of thinking as he suggests that the technical process is what gives art objects their power (1999). According to Gell, the technical process casts a spell over us so that we see the world in an enchanted form. This process of enchantment is portrayed by Gell as a concrete activity of making use of materials and skills that are sometimes performed with virtuosity. Hence, Gell's approach can be seen as an optic that turns Benjamin's notion of aura upside-down, as technology creates the magic of art objects.

Returning to the quote that opened this discussion, the critique of Benjamin provides a basis for understanding the "very special energy" which the young film director declares that filmmaking entails. Whereas the concept of aura is an unclear term and a contradictory term to use to describe the power of film; the sociomaterial approach provides a perspective which considers the force of the work of filmmaking to be deriving from the use of technical and material artefacts. Thus, when the young filmmaker explains, in the beginning of the quote, that the film is made in a tiny car with heat lamps around it that are tumbling down as it is raining and storming, these physical features are central to the account of how the work has a certain energy to it. Not only is the physical setting creating a demanding job which is fulfilling to accomplish, the technique of filmmaking is also transforming a real situation into fiction which is an exciting process of enchantment (cf. Yaneva 2003).

Magic work

> *"Also that thing about when you are on a film set, right. It can be magical, magical, right. I mean, that you are on the set and it is evening and the light is fucking beautiful; around the place there is completely quiet and everyone is deeply concentrated, right. And then you have to make this one little thing work, right".*
> (Quote from interview study of young Danish film directors; director B).

In accordance with the previous director, this young film director describes the attractiveness of the work of filmmaking in relation to the material conditions under which the product is made and the collective attention to the creation of the product. Yet, the particular quality of the work is not equal to the ambience of the place where the film is being made; the atmosphere of a beautiful sunset and shared concentration. Rather, the distinct feature arises when the filmmakers work under these conditions.

Whereas the previous director spoke of a "very special energy" in the work, this young film director characterises the work as "magical". Thus, this director emphasizes that the distinct feature of the work is magic, which can be understood by reference to Gell's concept of enchantment. According to Gell, the techniques and skills which are used to make an artwork bring about a transformation that enchants the product. Thus, the magic of the work is not a mystical occurrence, as the concept of aura indicates; it is a feature that is constructed by means of technical equipment and competences. The young film directors' accounts resemble Gell's view as they explain that it is the work itself which is magical. In their accounts, the attractiveness of the work stems from the activity of constructing specific products; the exceptional and exciting experiences occur as this happens.

In the next section, I substantiate the claim that creative work may be seen as a sociomaterial practice. To do so, I use the case of the development phase in filmmaking. Development of the idea for a film is the part of filmmaking that involves the smallest amount of equipment and people. Hence, if the sociomaterial perspective is useful to gain an understanding of this phase in the work, I presume

that it may be relevant for understanding other parts and types of creative work as well.

The techniques of mediation

> *”**Director:** I want to place it in a single-family house area.*
> ***Producer:** Mmm [: the sound of understanding], the window blinds.*
> ***Director:** [Continues the description of the location], it gives a great pressure on the person who wants to change gender.*
> ***Producer:** Do you think it is more interesting with a woman that wants to become a man?*
> ***Director:** Yes […] Who could write it except the most obvious ones? [They discuss various screenwriters] I come to think of The Hours, that mood, perhaps.*
> ***Producer:** Yes, it could be close to that universe.*
> ***Director:** What do you think about that?*
> ***Producer:** It is close to what we have been talking about before. I think it’s great. But it’s a big job; it’s a big job how to convince us that she is a man”.*
> (Observation notes from a study of development processes in Danish film, project A).

The notes here stem from a development meeting between a film director and a film producer who have decided to make a project together. The meeting takes place nine months after they have initiated that process; no storyline has been written down yet. As the observation notes illustrate, the development meeting unfolds as a dialogue where the director presents ideas and the producer responds to them. The producer’s responses make the director go on with the exploration of the ideas for the film and in this way the dialogue between the director and the producer creates the fundament for the film.

In another project group, they are close to starting filming the manuscript after a year of development. To have their project green lighted, the group attends a meeting with a film consultant and the film consultant’s producer at the Danish Film Institute, which is the main investor in Danish film. At this meeting, the practicalities of the film are accentuated:

> *"**Film consultant's producer:** What about furniture, is there already some [on the location]?*
> ***Producer:** Yes, but it's trashed, it looks like the place was left in the middle of a war […]*
> ***Film consultant:** Remember you can do a lot with books from the recycling station […]*
> ***Film consultant's producer:** Get a concept with the photographer about the costumes. [Jokes and laughter about the clothes of the people in the film]*
> ***Film consultant:** And people are wearing the same clothes through the whole film.*
> ***Director:** Yes.*
> ***Film consultant:** It is only [the name of a character] who should [change and] have a yellow colour of deceitfulness on".*
> (Observation notes from a study of development processes in Danish film, project B).

As these notes indicate, the development of the idea for the film is not solely a discursive activity, but also a material affair of transforming existing things into fiction. To understand this mixture of activities that create a process of transformation which constructs the evolving product, it is useful to expand on the concept of mediation. In the sociomaterial perspective, as it is presented by Hennion, creative work consists in mediations (1989, 1995, 1997). The concept of mediation classifies a number of objects and activities: techniques, material supports, equipments, discourses, performance devices and practices; all of which are required for an art form to be executed. Hennion's argument is that these mediations create artworks. Thereby, the sociomaterial perspective opposes the view that mediations can be seen as symbols of something else; transfer mechanisms which only have the function of bringing for instance an individual's vision further on. Rather, Hennion suggest that mediations are active producers, which leads to the empirical question of how creative products derive from mediations.

A number of techniques

Furthering Hennion's concept of mediation empirically, the participants at the two development meetings use a number of ways of approaching the idea, which I suggest calling techniques of mediation. The reason for using this term is that the evolving product is formed by the ways in which it is approached. It is possible to identify a number of techniques of mediation in the two cases:

The presentational technique of mediation consists in presenting the idea by explaining about it. The director uses this technique when describing the idea. As the idea is given a body, it also gets particular contours and characteristics. Thus, the idea is formed in specific ways through the descriptions of it.

The associative technique is about making associations to the ideas that are presented. The producer in the first case uses this technique when replying "window blinds" to the director's proposal for a location. Similar to the presentational technique, the associative technique makes the evolving product more specific by taking it in certain directions.

The interrogative technique consists in asking questions about the ideas. For instance, the producer in the first case asks the director: "Do you think it is more interesting with a woman that wants to become a man?" By opening the possibility for dividing the components of the idea and assembling them in new ways, questions may produce turns and twists of the idea or confirm the shape of the idea by eliminating alternatives.

The intertextual technique is about making references to other stories. In the observation notes from the first case, the director mentions a film, which the idea resembles. During my field work, the participants furthermore made references to books, TV-series, stories from media news, personal experiences and the lives of friends and family members. Referring to already existing stories enables drawing a clearer picture of the idea under development. Thus, as the evolving idea is sketchy, references help constructing an understanding of it.

The material technique consists in materializing the idea by tying it to specific objects. For instance, the film consultant in the second case suggests that the project group use "books from the recycling station". By proposing that second-hand books are utilized in the film, these objects come to form part of the evolving product.

The human relations technique is about finding collaborators. By proposing

who could contribute to the project, attempted attachments are made from the idea to that person and the projects which that person has made. Accordingly, the discussion of potential screenwriters in the first case can be seen as an attempt to create various links to people, which outline different directions in which the idea may be taken.

Finally, the evaluative and advisory techniques consist in evaluating ideas and giving advices about how to progress these. The evaluative technique is used by the producer in the first case when judging that the idea is great, but it will be a challenge to make the story convincing. The advisory technique is applied by the film consultant's producer in the second case when suggesting that the group makes a concept about costumes. Such statements are indicators of support as well as points of orientation as to where attention should be called.

The techniques of mediation share the characteristic that they develop the evolving product by making it more concrete. By attaching the evolving product to stories, people and objects that were not part of the idea from the beginning, as well as clarifying the elements that characterize the idea and the internal structure of the idea, the techniques of mediation change the evolving product by concretizing it. Thereby, the techniques transform the idea from having a broad and vague scope to becoming defined and delimited. The techniques of mediation thereby shape the evolving product sociomaterially; socially as the techniques point out that the process is collective and materially because the process consists in bringing the evolving product into existence.

Concluding remarks

In this paper, I have argued that the dichotomous paradigm of good versus bad self-creation is a prevailing but reductionist way of approaching the issue of creative work. The reason why I find this paradigm of self-creation to be inadequate is that it reinforces the dualistic alternative of categorizing creative work as either emancipation or exploitation, which comes to overshadow empirical studies of the subject matter. In addition, my objection to this approach is that it reduces creative work to subjective development; work on one's self. This means that the object of creative work; the evolving product, is excluded from the analysis.

As an alternative, I have proposed the sociomaterial perspective. Contrary to the focus on the individual, which the paradigm of self-creation maintains, the sociomaterial perspective ascribes relevance and explanatory power to the interwoven material and social components of creative work. Thereby, the sociomaterial approach rephrases the question of creative work; making it an empirical question what this work consists in, instead of continuing the debate about theoretical stances on the matter of self-creation.

To account for the potentials in the sociomaterial perspective, I have given two examples of what this approach offers. First, I have looked at the attractiveness of creative work. Bringing theories of film spectatorship in as a tool for arguing that a certain pleasure arises from experiencing the product not only during the consumption but also during the making of films, I raise the question of how this effect of the work can be conceptualized. Whereas the classical explanation from Benjamin states that the aura of the cultural product is destroyed by reproductive technologies, the proponents of the sociomaterial perspective; Bruno Latour, Antoine Hennion and Alfred Gell, argue the opposite; namely, that technologies bring about the magic in creative work. Hence, the sociomaterial approach explains the pleasure of creative work by drawing attention to the technology of enchantment; the magic which the work practices create.

Next, I have shown how the evolving product is formed by mediations. Furthering Hennion's proposal that creative work is about making mediations, I suggest that in the case of development of films, the empirical instances of

mediations can be categorized as technologies of mediations. These techniques clarify the evolving product, often by establishing links to stories, people and objects. Thus, the techniques of mediation concretize the evolving product and by doing so they transform the product at the same time as they bring it into existence.

As the two examples of the sociomaterial approach illustrate, it is a perspective which is not restricted to deal only with the subjective aspect of creative work. Rather, the sociomaterial perspective has a broad scope that exceeds the paradigm of self-creation as it looks into the social and material components of production of culture. From this perspective, the production of the individual is considered a complementary outcome of the process of creative work. This means that the paradigm of self-creation can be seen as identifying one possible outcome of the process, but not the process of creative work as such. Calling attention to the pleasure or trouble of experiencing oneself in challenging and transformative situations does not explain how such situations are established; not does it account for what else they generate.

The sociomaterial view on the status of the individual in creative work can be elaborated by making a comparison to the status of the product. In the sociomaterial perspective, the product becomes an actor based on the assemblage of techniques, skills, people and materials that produce it. As the product derive agency from its constructedness, the active status of the product does not imply an ontology of 'the product in itself'; a sovereign work of art. Simultaneously, the sociomaterial perspective de-individualizes the process of creative work. In opposition to portraying creative work as an individual's vision, which is materialized with the assistance of support personnel, techniques and materials, the sociomaterial perspective demonstrate how the product is formed by the mediations which it undergoes. Thus, by suspending the notion of a pure original of the work, the sociomaterial perspective also deconstructs the idea of an originating creative individual. This deconstruction does not lead to a rejection of human agency; however, it widens the analytical focus from being centred on individual agents to incorporating series of sociomaterial mediations which creative work entails.

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Summary

This thesis looks into the development of film projects in the Danish film industry; how ideas are transformed into realizable projects. Based on a case study of the development of five film projects, which were followed over a one-year period, the thesis addresses the question about how development processes proceed.

The thesis presents a theoretical framework, which is centred on the emergent perspective of the new sociology of art. The distinctive feature of this direction in sociology of art is that the cultural product is seen as more than a function of social relations. By incorporating the product as an active participant in cultural practices, the new sociology of art identifies the co-production of cultural products and the social relations around them. Thus, the new sociology of art introduces a sociomaterial perspective on cultural activities. The thesis aims to further this perspective by means of empirical analyses of the development of cultural products.

Five papers make up the thesis. The first paper describes how a film consultant, who distributes money to filmmakers, acts a gatekeeper by selecting projects. Yet, at the same time, the film consultant transgresses this function by being actively involved in the formations of the projects. Hence, the paper suggests seeing the consultant as an intermediary who is not only choosing, but also forming projects. The second paper portrays how the idea of the auteur becomes an organizing principle in debuting directors' filmmaking. The paper shows how this use of the auteur notion becomes a hindrance for the director and the collaborators by personifying the project in the director. The third paper illustrates how the evolving product becomes an active participant in creative processes when the human participants experience it. As the evolving product gives rise to different sensations and reactions, it first attaches and since detaches the human participants in a case of a development process. The fourth paper looks at how the product becomes constitutive in three moments during its development. These moments are: 1. the externalization of the idea; that the idea has to be materialized to enable collaboration, 2. the making of attachments; that links to the project are created via

the product, and 3. the postponement of closure; that creative development is enhanced by keeping the product unfinished quite far into the process. The fifth paper shows how creative work can be seen as a sociomaterial practice that consists in transforming materials into art. The paper suggests that this feature makes creative work distinctive, which is an alternative to the prevalent paradigm of seeing creative work as either self-realization or self-exploitation.

The thesis makes an empirical contribution as the development of film projects has not previously been given much academic attention. Furthermore, the thesis contributes to the new sociology of art as it illustrates how the evolving product, before it has been materialized, forms an active part of the collective processes of cultural production.

Resume på dansk

Denne afhandling undersøger udviklingen af filmprojekter i den danske filmbranche, det vil sige hvordan ideer transformeres til realiserbare projekter. Med afsæt i et studie af udviklingen af fem filmprojekter, der blev fulgt igennem et år, stiller afhandlingen skarpt på spørgsmålet om, hvordan udviklingsprocesser forløber.

Afhandlingen præsenterer et sammensat teoriapparat, der tager udgangspunkt i det fremvoksende perspektiv 'ny kunstsociologi'. Det særegne ved denne teoridannelse er, at kulturproduktet ses som mere end en funktion af sociale relationer. Ved at inkorporere produktet som en aktiv deltager i kulturelle praksisser, identificerer den nye kunstsociologi co-produktionen af kulturprodukter og de sociale relationer omkring dem. Herved introducerer den ny kunstsociologi et sociomaterielt perspektiv på kulturelle aktiviteter. Afhandlingen søger at videreudvikle dette perspektiv igennem empiriske analyser af udviklingen af kulturprodukter.

Afhandlingen består af fem artikler. Den første artikel beskriver, hvordan en filmkonsulent, der uddeler penge til filmskabere, agerer som en gatekeeper ved at udvælge projekter. På samme tid overskrider filmkonsulenten dog denne funktion ved at være aktivt involveret i udformningen af projekterne. Herved foreslår artiklen at se konsulenten som et mellemled, der ikke kun vælger, men også former projekter. Den anden artikel skildrer, hvordan ideen om auteuren bliver et organiseringsprincip i debuterende instruktørers projekter. Artiklen viser, hvordan denne brug af ideen om auteuren bliver en hindring for instruktøren og samarbejdspartnerne, fordi projektet bliver personificeret i instruktøren. Den tredje artikel illustrerer, hvordan det fremvoksende produkt bliver en aktiv deltager i kreative processer, når det opleves af de humane deltagere. I et eksempel fra en udviklingsproces bliver de humane deltagere først sammenknyttet og dernæst opsplittet af produktet, eftersom det afføder forskellige oplevelser og reaktioner. Den fjerde artikel ser på, hvordan produktet bliver konstituerende i tre situationer under udviklingsarbejde: Disse situationer er: 1. eksternalisering af ideen; at ideen

skal materialiseres for at muliggøre samarbejde, 2. skabelse af forbindelser; at tilknytninger til projektet skabes via produktet, og 3. udskydelse af den endelige udgave af produktet; at kreativ udvikling øges ved at holde produktet ufærdigt længe i processen. Den femte artikel viser, hvordan kreativt arbejde kan ses som en sociomateriel praksis, der består i omforme materialer til kunst. Artiklen foreslår at dette kendetegn gør kreativt arbejde særegent, hvilket er en alternativ forklaring i forhold til det fremherskende paradigme, hvor kreativt arbejde ses som enten selvrealisering eller selvudnyttelse.

Afhandlingen giver et empirisk bidrag til et underbelyst felt, da udviklingsarbejdet i filmproduktion ikke tidligere har været genstand for megen akademisk opmærksomhed. Desuden bidrager afhandlingen til den nye kunstsociologi ved at vise, hvordan det fremvoksende produkt, endnu før det er materialiseret i sin endelige form, indgår som en aktiv del af de kollektive processer i kulturproduktion.

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