Practicing and Imagining

Tracing an Irreducible Relationship through Fiction Writing

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Abstract *The text considers the incommensurable relationship between practicing and imagining in the context of fiction writing. Outlining this relationship, we proceed to explain its conceptual grounding in practice theory and a processual understanding of sociocultural formations. Thereby, we highlight the necessity to look at individual sociocultural configurations to understand imagining and practicing in specific contexts. In the introduction, we thus exemplify this approach by discerning a case study from our own field, literary studies. Building on these considerations, we first trace the influence of writing and fictional worlds on practices and socio-cultural formations. Then we proceed to turn to the prototypical imaginary of authorship linking it to writing practices and the social affordances this practice prescribes. Subsequently, we connect this perspective to the overall structure of the collection and its contributions.*

Keywords *Fiction Writing; Imaginary; Imagination; Authorship; Practice Theory; Literary Field*

When individuals imagine, their imaginations are shaped by what they know from their own bodily experiences: what they have seen, heard, and sensed. Even if we imagine a world outside our own, we circle back to what and how we materially experience ourselves. For instance, fictional films and novels about life in outer space always contain (if the faintest hint of) a resemblance to lived human experience. Imagination is continuously shaped by bodily and socio-cultural configurations, and actors cannot fully go beyond their own perspectives; they can imagine what is not possible, but this impossibility is still rooted in experience and perception. In our imagination then, aliens have hands, eyes, noses, and even sensibilities like our own. Even if they have abilities that humans do not possess, they are still overwhelmingly imagined as social beings,

possibly with similar needs and intentions as their human counterparts. This example highlights how imagination and practices (i.e., actions and doings) form an incommensurable nexus that shapes perspectives, social interactions, and the medial representations of the world.

This collection tackles this relationship in individual case studies from a variety of fields exploring practices of imagination in different sociocultural and medial contexts. In February 2024, our Research Training Group 2589 "Practicing Place: Socio-Cultural Practices and Epistemic Configurations" hosted the conference "Practices of Imagination – Placings of Imaginaries" that provided a platform to discuss this nexus from an interdisciplinary perspective. The event provided the point of departure for the collection and showed how the question of imagining and practicing productively builds a bridge between the humanities and social sciences. Both imagination and practices need to be placed to become graspable since they are embedded in sociocultural frames that shape them. In our introduction, we would like to exemplify this by drawing on our own field literary studies. Thereby, we outline the foundational considerations that have shaped our collection and the contributions therein.

For instance, both, practices or imaginaries, may have completely different meanings depending on the temporal and spatial constellation in which they are placed. We view practices as routinized, bodily activities in line with what Andreas Reckwitz writes: "A practice is thus a routinized way in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described, and the world is understood" (250). It is interconnected to "forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' and their use, background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge" (250). In this outline, the relevance of imagining emerges as part of these interconnected, processual formations that constitute culture and social life. Thus, imagination is not static but interconnected to practices and also in itself an activity co-producing imaginaries, i.e., discourses, representations, practices pertaining to a particular "array of human activity" (Schatzki 11). Our goal in this introduction therefore is not to provide an overarching, universal theory of how imagination and practices work, but to suggest that it is more fruitful to focus on how imagination is practiced and how practices are imagined in diverse contexts. In this sense, we do not give a universalizing account of the contributions here but stress the importance of a processual approach to imagining as a practice. The practice-based stance that underlies this collection helps us outline and exemplify, from a specific perspective, how imaginations and practices can be approached and re-conceptualized. As an exam-

ple, we would like to consider a practice that often takes center stage in our discipline of literary studies: fiction writing.

As literary scholars, we share an interest in the manifold meanings and configurations of writing and how it is imagined. Above all, we consider how writing practices work and relate to imaginaries and believe that by analyzing the epistemological and practice-theoretical potentiality of imaginaries, we can better understand the profound relationship between imagining and writing. For literary studies, contemplating writing is an important endeavor considering the significance this practice holds for the field. Countless scholars have engaged with this topic and conceived various perspectives on writing. These perspectives bore theories underlying the role of writing for our approach to material environments. Reader-response theory, for instance, provides significant insight into the intertwined relationship between imagination and practice. After all, narratives decisively shape how societies and cultures imagine themselves and others.

In this introduction, we also contend that the practice-theoretical approach to writing can complement and extend previous approaches to writing literature. It can contribute a socially- and materially informed view that has been neglected in negotiating writing within literary studies. On the one hand, as we show in the introduction's second part, the reason for this neglect is the complex questions such a view raises; e.g., how to deal with the author that, according to Roland Barthes and the numerous scholars agreeing with him, is dead (Burke 19–20; Stougaard-Nielsen 270).[1] On the other, the relatively limited interest in the socio-practical conditions of writing simply stems from the perspective usually assumed in literary studies; frequently, literary authors focus on the result of a writing process (a text). While this is an interesting object of study that demands a variety of analytical tools and considerations, dealing mostly with the results of writing practices conceals the sociocultural processes and relationships producing these cultural artefacts. This perspective is not unique, as Ines Barner et al. (4–5) note that the humanities and even literary studies are increasingly paying attention to the

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1   Although Roland Barthes declared the author dead in his notorious essay 1967, his theory and a general insistence to turn away from their author has never fully prevented a theorization of authorship. "Whether deemed self-contradictory, too reductive, counter-productive, or simply products of their own time, Barthes and Foucault ensured that the question of the author would remain central to literary theory beyond poststructuralism," as for instance Jakob Stougaard Nielsen points out (284).

social relationality of cultural production; there is a trend to look beyond the "black box of authorships" (5; our translation). German literary scholars Carlos Spoerhase and Steffen Martus contend that we need to move from theory to theorizing. This means that writing must be considered a dynamic action requiring material prerequisites and pragmatic ascriptions, that is, readers must identify a particular textual genre to read a given text in a specific way (Geulen et al. 124–5).

In our introduction, we tap into these recent developments and explicate how literary writing can work as an example of how practice-based perspectives provide new angles. Before delving deeper into these observations, we first turn to writing as a practice that reshapes material constellations and inserts new imaginary worlds into discourses. Thereby, fictional narratives are capable of unsettling, deconstructing, and recalibrating the epistemological configurations that inform practices in general. By focusing on literary writing, we account for the embeddedness of practices and their contingencies in relation to material contexts. We explore these contingencies from different perspectives to approach what could be called the "irreducible entanglement" of writing practices and imagination.

Writing and Reading Imaginary Worlds

To begin with, it is helpful to consider how acts of writing work. It is a key part of the habitus of writing to think about, or imagine, the reader that the text is directed towards. Readers are omnipresent figures featuring in writing practices. From personal diaries to scientific journals, all texts have an imagined reader, even if this is only the authors themselves as they write. In other words, in the practice of writing, authors imagine themselves as readers and try to anticipate how this reader might react to the text. When analyzing the role of the ideal reader, Umberto Eco sees that "a text is created so that someone updates it, even when it is not expected (or not wished) for that someone to exist concretely and empirically" (78; our translation). Writing practices cannot be put in motion without imagining. That is, writers constantly imagine on at least two levels; they imagine the text, and at the same time the reader. For Eco, this ideal (imagined) reader is integral to the practice of writing as to "create a text means generating a strategy that takes into account the expectations from the other's reactions" (79; our translation). To write something is to be in constant dialogue between these two nodes, placing oneself in both positions.

Writing is not done in an isolated bubble but is prescribed by the style and conventions that each field demands. For example, academic researchers are in constant dialogue with their peers (through seminars, colloquia and publications) creating a community around the knowledge produced through writing and the practices that surround the socialization of the knowledge produced. The know-how of academic writing comes hand in hand with certain socialization practices that engage the community that is formed around the written text. Beyond the authors and their double role, any writing is always in dialogue with a community of other authors, previous publications, and the readers (imagined or not). This dialogue might greatly vary depending on the discipline, but it is always there. As authors, we are writers and readers of our texts, while simultaneously being readers of a community. This observation highlights that our habitus is constantly shaped by the knowledge written and produced by others. As imagination is an inescapable factor in the writing process, how these communities are affected by said imagination must not be taken lightly. Although imagination and materiality could be read in binary opposition, the two are deeply intertwined. Imagination can become a way to approach reality, for "[h]uman beings are able to create a model of the world in their thoughts, a representation that can have a close resemblance to reality. But imaginary worlds can also alter reality by simplifying it, embellishing it, or even making it frightening" (Es et al. 2). These "imaginary worlds" are a tool to approach specific environments and provide lenses or foci through which we can re-read, relate to, and approach material situations.

A prime example of this phenomenon is found in Julia Alvarez's *In the Time of the Butterflies* (1994), which narrates the life and assassination of the Mirabal sisters during the dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo in the Dominican Republic. In the postscript, the author declares "I wanted to immerse my readers in an epoch in the life of the Dominican Republic that I believe can only finally be understood by fiction, only finally be redeemed by the imagination" (386). Since she is writing a historical fiction, Alvarez constantly blurs the borders between fiction and history, exemplifying how fiction can help us understand historical events. Alvarez herself concedes that "what you will find here are the Mirabals of my creation, made up but, I hope, true to the spirit of the real Mirabals" (386). Imagining, writing, and narrating make up a set of practices through which Alvarez brings her reader into the world of the dictatorship writing from the perspective of the Mirabal sisters. Alvarez chooses to depict what she believes (and hopes) is the spirit of the Mirabals, her imagination takes the reader beyond the historical record of the sisters and offers a different path to the hero-

ine narration that has shaped the collective imaginary of the sisters (in, for example, different cultural products such as monuments, museums, films, and other novels). In her search for the "true" and "real" Mirabals, Alvarez finds, in imagining their everyday life, their intimacies, and social relationships, a new lens through which the reader can relate to these figures.

Alvarez's example of the interplay of fiction, historiography, and imagination is complemented by Toni Morrison's neo-salve narrative, *Beloved*. Highly notable in this novel is Morrison's coining of the concept of "rememory" (43). In a conversation with her daughter Denver, Sethe (the protagonist) explains how "[s]omeday you be walking down the road and you hear something or see something going on. So clear. And you think it's you thinking it up. A thought picture. But no. It's when you bump into a rememory that belongs to somebody else" (43). Beloved is the ghost of Sethe's child, who Sethe kills for fear of being caught by slave catchers. Most of the narration takes place inside the house that Sethe and Denver (and then Beloved) live in. The novel constantly hints that Beloved might be imagined by the family or might be real. Sethe's house is then the place of rememory for her, her family, and her community, and (in a way) Beloved is the corporality of those rememories. These rememories become part of the community as "[p]laces, places are still there. If a house burns down, it's gone, but the place—the picture of it—stays, and not just in my rememory, but out there, in the world … even if I die, the picture of what I did, or knew, or saw is still out there. Right in the place where it happened" (43). By imagining a place having rememories from somebody else, a rememory that surpasses the individual's existence, Morrison binds together communities, memory, and place; she creates a way to comprehend and problematize how communities relate to historically charged places, for it is not a coincidence that rememory is a key concept in a neo-slave narrative.

Through rememory, Morrison establishes new epistemologies related to place and memory. Because Beloved's story "is not a story to pass on" (324), rememory imagines a new relation to places and the unspoken. As Ashraf Rushdy concedes, rememory

is a nice addition to the vocabularies of both psychology and narratology-psychology because anamnesis becomes accessible to rediscovery as well as discovery, narratology because the word suggests the process by which narrative worlds are increations as much as re-creations, as much remimesis as mimesis. (303)

What we can see then is how "fiction, for Morrison, compels the reader to reimagine a concealed past as a reparative starting point, which not only summons the ghastly foundations of the Americas but in so doing, initiates conversations surrounding what was lost, established, and still owed" (Perez 190).

Through their imaginations, both Alvarez and Morrison call for us to review, reconsider and (re-)remember places and their stories. Both examples show how the practice of writing should not be understood as an imaginative exercise that has no repercussions on the ways we understand and conceive sociohistorical constellations. Both Alvarez and Morrison are aware of how literature and fiction can be the foundation of new epistemological practices through which we understand the world, and above all, it seems that for both authors, imagination is necessary to understand history.

Written imaginary worlds have many potentialities. Among these potentialities, "fictional texts, liberated from truth valuation, construct sovereign fictional worlds that satisfy the human need for imaginative expanse, emotional excitement, and aesthetic pleasure" (Doležel 42), but as the examples from Alvarez and Morrison have shown, fictional texts help us to problematize what we take for granted, re-think key aspects of our daily life, and read our world with another lens. Literature does not only create possible imaginary worlds but also has the potential to create epistemological frames through which we interpret and feel historical events, inviting the reader to take a new perspective through the foci provided by the imaginary worlds. These possible worlds might delve into the past (as biographies and historical fiction do) or might create alternative worlds and possible futures (like science fiction, and speculative fiction). They can become, then, answers to the questions we often ask about our world, about the way it works, and its dynamics. Their diversity shows the multiple ways in which imagination and reality are indivisible and intertwined.

The relation between the practices of imagination and writing, and material constellations is not a stable path, if anything, it might be better imagined as a whirlpool; imagination influences how we practice our world, but our world also influences our imagination, in an endless cyclical manner. Reading Kathleen Lennon's work on imagination, Es et al. highlight: "That we live in and with the world means that our imagination is conditioned by the communities that surround us and is conditioned by sociocultural contexts." (5) While it is true that "[i]ndividuals learn from the people around them to look at the world in a certain way and to interpret new experiences" (Es et al. 5), in our contempo-

rary globalized media environment, the reach of our contact with others (and their cultural objects) has achieved an unprecedented extent. Es et al. explain that

> it may be argued that the whole fabric of our imagination is shaped by a sociocultural context. It is culture that provides the building blocks for the composition of the fantasies and dreams that populate our inner beings. (8)

Cultural products are a key ingredient in what communities and authors can imagine, they expand our possibilities of imagination and create a circular movement in which imagination is fed by cultural products, and cultural products feed our imaginations. We do live in and with the world, but we also imagine in and with the world, and the possible worlds that literature creates.

Imaging Authors and the Practice of Writing

Departing from the observation that imagination and socio-material practices are irreducibly entangled, we would like to consider the practice of literary writing itself; what it affords, how it is shaped by an implicit knowledge influenced by power relations, and the imaginaries narratives support. While literary scholars focus predominantly on textual analyses, literary authors have traditionally addressed the production conditions of writing more. Naturally, their interest also lies with questions of when and where to write, how to finance it, and what obstacles to overcome. One of the most famous examples of an author tackling these kinds of questions is Virginia Woolf's essay, "A Room of One's Own." She was asked to write about "the true nature of woman and the true nature of fiction" (4) and used this opportunity to famously proclaim: "[...] a woman must have money and a room of her own" (4). Woolf effectively highlighted the predicament of female authors in her time. They rarely had access to the money or spaces to afford their writing. Woolf's observation provides an opportunity to address staging and performing authorship, an issue that is widely discussed in literary studies (see also Stougaard-Nielsen). We suggest slightly adapting common perspectives on the topic which tend to view authorship as a performance detached from the material conditions of writing practices. Rather, we want to highlight writing as a practice that needs socio-cultural affordances. Describing these affordances uncovers how imaginaries

of prototypical authorship conceal the very sociocultural relationships Woolf describes.

To begin with, Woolf places the practice of writing in a room and a gendered relationship; for her, men mostly write in rooms that cannot be afforded by women. This simple statement is an invitation to embark on a practically informed analysis of literary writing. It highlights the collective quality of practices (cf. Barnes; Gittel). Practice theories, as Reckwitz asserts, "highlight the significance of shared or collective symbolic structures of knowledge in order to grasp both action and social order" (246). In this case, Woolf uses the tacit, shared knowledge of her readers to evoke an image they recognize. This familiarity with the writing situation, be it implicit or explicit, lets Woolf's readers immediately understand why writers need a room. Practical knowledge substantiates the sedimented image of the writer as a secluded person in a room of their own, possibly sitting at a desk. Woolf connects this familiarity with the observation that the possibility to withdraw from others in a room requires money and social privileges. Thereby, Woolf stresses what is usually "unmarked" (Haraway 585) as writers and literary scholars alike rarely thematize the situatedness of the writer, the particular material constitution of their place.

Viewing writing as an embodied practice highlights the social prerequisites that Woolf addresses. A body needs a place to practice writing. This conclusion implies several other practical assumptions. Writing is a solitary, silent practice in a secluded space that affords the concentration necessary to compile a text. Woolf was certainly influenced by her upbringing in Victorian England where, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, writers, artists, and others working from home had fought the noisy disturbances infiltrating their homes from the streets (Picker 428). As John M. Picker writes in his article "The Soundproof Study," these were "silence-seeking professionals whose living and working spaces overlapped" (429). Considering the long cultural history of the connectedness of silence and what is considered intellectual work, the nineteenth century marks an important chapter as it bore the idea of a specialized room, a place dedicated to protecting the work of the author: the soundproof study. This "architectural tactic," as Picker writes, attested to a "drive for middle-class members to escape urban realities and attain a degree of separateness and self-definition within the home" (429–30). Picker's observation shows how domestic sounds were increasingly viewed as part of a property and were sought to be controlled and canalized; a development that was enhanced by the audio technologies in the late nineteenth century (Sterne 161). Drawing on these ob-

servations might seem unrelated to Woolf's statement. However, looking at it more closely, the practical knowledge encapsulated in "a room of one's own" condenses what writers are usually imagined to be (white, middle-class, male) and how this is connected to the cultural history of sound and domestic architecture shaping this practice to be a secluded action separate from the noisiness of everyday routines.

Imagination and practice go hand in hand. They are inseparable, enforce each other, and, when looking closer, blur the lines between themselves. Individuals speculate, imagine, and anticipate what a situation might require. They imagine things because they have a tacit practical knowledge of them. However, this relationship is not as neat as this might imply; it is an inextricably intertwined one, where it is unclear if a study needs to be soundproof because the practice requires it, or if groups imagine that soundproof studies need to be built. Considering the practice of writing should not gloss over the image of the secluded writer as an idealized version of the writing process that also serves political interests. Establishing the silent study as a workplace served authors and others working from home, offering a way to legitimize themselves as professionals (Picker 433). As Picker notes, the insistence on silence and seclusion by authors and others working from home also demonstrated their "unusual difficulty of distinguishing their newfound socioeconomic turf from their homes" (433). Separating the practice of writing thus meant establishing it as a professional activity distinct from other domestic routines. It meant building a "collective identity" (435) for authors, which also entailed prescribing how and where writing should happen.

To recognize how influential this prototypical model of authorship still is, it is valuable to consider writers who have consciously tried to undermine the bourgeois conception of writing. Time and again, authors who have challenged the stereotypical image of the intellectual writer have entered the literary field. Postmodern US author Kathy Acker is a prime example of an author who attempted to undermine the practical imaginary of writing. Being part of the countercultural writing scene of postwar New York, Acker quickly turned against an intellectualized understanding of writing as a bodiless, silent, and secluded activity. She published highly experimental novels and texts that included handwritten passages (reproduced in printed editions), images, and textual collages of excerpts from other authors. Acker is considered a pioneering feminist figure, also due to the way she staged herself as a bodybuilding, post-punk author (Casser and Viegener, "Get Rid of Meaning" 29–30). Like the performative techniques visual artists often employ, Acker

presented a public persona of herself and actively intertwined her bodily performance with her writing. "Kathy Acker appeared on almost all her major American book covers for well over a decade, an audacious and provocative performative gesture," Matias Viegener explains (81). This fact is unusual in itself considering that most avant-garde writers at the time did not appear on their book covers; they remained invisible (81). Acker's tendency to connect her writing practice with her body renders it a form of re-localizing fiction writing to reintegrate writing into the muddiness of life (see also Wark). Similar to Woolf, Acker marked what is usually "unmarked" (Haraway 585). The former insisted on the material affordances of writing, whereas the latter enacted what could be called a radical placing of her writing practice. In this context, placing does not denote an equation between biography and writing, but a conscious and performed marking of the embodied aspects of any writing.

In this regard, a series of images of Acker by photographer Kathy Brew is revealing because it encapsulates how Acker's authorial practice undermined the prototypical image of authorship. The series shows Acker on her motorcycle (Casser and Viegener, *Kathy Acker. Get Rid of Meaning* 116, 118); in its most famous photograph, Acker glances over her muscular, tattooed back into the camera. The motorcycle, tattoos, and muscles undermine the prototypical image of the writer as a white, male, bourgeois bookworm who resides in a secluded, silent study. Whereas nineteenth-century authors had to legitimize themselves by establishing the need to retreat from urban noise, Acker presents viewers with an antithesis to this image by drawing on practices that might be less associated with the middle class and women, such as tattoos, bodybuilding, and motorbikes. Returning to Woolf and her essay, one notices how practices and imaginaries change each other over time and become intertwined in an incommensurable relationship in which it cannot be unambiguously established what was configured by either. Class, race, and gender issues all feed into the image of the prototypical author, enabled through the tacit shared knowledge that defines how writing is practiced. At the same time, this knowledge is always partly rooted in representations of this practice. Thus, practicing and imagining cannot be thought of separately since they are both latently present in each other.

Drawing on the different ways of imagining writers and writing practices shows that practice theory can be a very fruitful approach to building a bridge between social sciences and the humanities. Especially, by contemplating the relationship between imaginary and practice, these disciplines can productively extend and complement each other's work and objects of study. In our

introduction, we have laid out how writing can be either approached by drawing on how literary texts shape imaginaries and thereby practices or by considering the practice of writing and its relationship to the imaginary of the writer. We showed how writing can be viewed from a literary studies standpoint that is informed by practice theory. In the following collection, we have similarly invited authors from various disciplines and backgrounds to consider this relationship in individual case studies that are grounded in their respective fields. Thereby, we account for the necessity to view practices and imaginaries as localized epistemic configurations that are processual and dependent on specific contexts and cultural histories.

The first section circumscribes the **Entanglements between Practices and Imagination** delving into the reciprocal relationship between imagination and practices in social contexts. First, Robert Schmidt analyzes the affordances of academic writing and outlines a practice-theoretical approach to this issue. Helen Hester descibes the interwovenness of social embeddedness and imagination underlining their interdependence. Her paper addresses how the situatedness of individuals shapes their capacity to imagine and go beyond the limiting factors of their social contexts. Above all, she warns against the danger of ignoring the situatedness as this will gloss over differences that are essential to "acting both with and for others." Similarly, Sofia Pedrini contemplates the relationship between imaging and the limits of this activity. In "Thought Experiments: Imagination in Practice," Pedrini analyzes the practice of thought experiments from a philosophical perspective. Anja Heron Lind then continues with a perspective from literary studies on the issue of architecture and gender related struggles. In her analysis of the relationship between the French theorist Luce Irigaray and speculative fiction, she considers space as a practical manifestation of specific imaginaries. She highlights how Arkady Martin's *Teixcalaan duology* exemplifies Irigaray's suggestions about sexual difference and the necessity to rethink space outside of patriarchal structures.

As our collection regards the relationship between practice and imagination, we have also invited a practitioner to give insights into her perspective on this issue. In her essay **"Life as Raw Material,"** German filmmaker Eva Stotz explains her work process and approach to what could be called an authentic mode of documentary narration. The second section **(Re-)Imagining Places and Social Institutions** focuses on the imaginations of larger organizations and their imaginary remaking in several case studies. First, Can Aydin's contribution delves into the imaginative re-shaping of wilderness in Joshua Whitehead's *Jonny Appleseed*. Subsequently, David Kempf's article carves out

the workings of collective imaginations in relation to Clifford Geertz's writings on cockfighting. Finally, two articles from literary studies conclude the collection. Nicole Schneider invites us to re-think the concept of public places through her analysis of Valeria Luiselli's novel *Lost Children Archive* (2019), the icons displayed in Ava DuVernay's 13th (2016), and *Netflix*'s series High on the Hog (2021). Lastly, Seyedeh Zhaleh Abbasi Hosseini analyzes the writings of Iranian novelist Azar Nafisi, focusing on fictional placemaking in relation to Tehran.

All contributions show the importance of a situated approach to imagining and practicing that considers the relevancy of place, be it the situatedness and limits of imagination (Hester, Schmidt, Pedrini), the imagination of architectures and its influence on actions (Lind, Kempf, Schneider), or the re-imagination of specific geographic locations (Aydin, Abbasi Hosseini). The political relevancy of these observations cannot be underestimated since imaginations and practices on the one hand structure social interactions, and on the other work to undermine and re-configure political and social structures. Thereby, re-imagining practices and re-practicing specific imaginaries open spaces in which dissent and protest can be articulated and enacted. Acker provided an example of how a performance countering an established practical imaginary can initiate a process of reflection and reconsideration. Certainly, such attempts do not necessarily mean a complete recalibration of practices and imaginaries. Yet, the question of how to change them remains one of the most interesting and perhaps most pressing issues, since societies are facing the need to adapt to new critical conditions like increasingly influential anti-democratic movements and a progressing climate crisis. Consequently, all the contributions presented here address the question of malleability concerning practices and imaginaries in some way or other; and they also find individual answers to this question. Regardless of the conclusion they draw, they all emphasize and confirm the value of considering the intricate relationship of how we concurrently act and imagine in specific contexts.

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