Chapter 4
Variations of interest, variations of space

Over the year, something else became visible: these material spaces did not stay the same. The photographs below render it clearly. They show the marks of eight months on the yard (figures 17a-b). During that time, the ping-pong table lost its central position, the fresco on the wall was repainted, benches were built with a wooden pallet, and more vegetation was planted. Apparently, caregivers together with the teens made the material spaces vary. But why and how did they do that? When I asked Baptiste about these spatial variations, he linked the workshops to the problem of boredom. He described it as follows:

> There comes a moment [when] we need to nourish again. Workshops really need to adapt, either because we [caregivers] are bored, or because the youth's group dynamic, who is there at that time, doesn't lend itself to a particular set-up of the activity. So it needs to adapt to the group and to our interest, that is, always keeping [caregivers'] curiosity regarding what we do for our care work. If we do the same thing again [and again], it is not interesting. So a break [from a workshop] is necessary for nourishing again, and for creating the willingness to resume it later.

The caregivers' interest in workshops and the teens' group dynamics had temporalities. At some point, variations were crucial for their interest not to fade into boredom. As in the previous chapter, with the badminton outing that failed, the team often questioned whether the teens were 'fed up' with an activity, causing their disinvolvement. But

caregivers also needed to maintain their own curiosity in what they were doing. It was necessary for them to turn towards new activities, or boredom risked impoverishing the care work. On one hand, Baptiste further nuanced, boredom was welcome within the frame of an activity, since these "floating moments" would "leave opportunities for teenagers to seize it [to do something with it]". This nuance recalls the framing of uncertain involvement in the previous chapter. But on the other hand, boredom was a problem in the long run, because, he added: "if the caregiver does not carry the wish for the workshop [anymore], the participants won't be wanting [to do it] after a while, if not from the outset." In short, the caregivers' lasting interest in the activities they led was a vital support for participants' involvement. Whereas in the previous chapters, I noted that participants' familiarity with living spaces or involvement in an activity emerged out of indifference, here a lasting interest had to forestall boredom over time. No interest could survive without variation, just as always eating the same meal would make you lose your appetite.

Figures 17a: The yard of the old townhouse in June 2013.

Figure 17b: The yard of the old townhouse in March 2014.

In this chapter I take up the challenge of exploring how variations of material spaces relate to the revival of interest. Teens' and caregivers' interest is a form of attachment that extended my research focus, from the very moments when their sensations manifested together through their engagements with objects, towards the collective of people and equipment that allowed their tastes to change over time, along with their evanescence and revival (Hennion, Gomart & Maisonneuve 2000: 143–145). The stories I assemble below cover longer periods of time compared to the daily scenes of interactions I have described so far. With these stories I examine how the team and the adolescents succeeded or failed to maintain their interest in activities, through several strategies aiming at enrolling one another in affinities current to the group. I recognize such strategies of enrollment in the hybrid arrangements of the building, in caregivers' exchanges about daily events, in their discussions with teens during community meetings or in their subse-

quent adjustments of chosen activities, and their interest also varied in a less formal manner in what we called 'waves'. By scrutinizing different spatial variations, it will come into view that sustaining interest often relies on slight, furtive forms of attachment, such as familiarity with the teens or their involvement in a moment. The smallest of these attachments nourished the care work: every little teen affinity could count for caregivers, no matter how small. It turned out, too, that sustaining interest could increase the importance of these modest affinities to the point of materializing them in the institutional place, keeping this place attuned to what currently mattered within the group.

A pragmatic view of interest

As I continued to ask questions about spatial variations, several caregivers emphasized how much they took shape between their interests and that of the teens. Berenice articulated it this way:

> We need to take pleasure in workshops because, if you do a workshop that you cannot carry with enough pleasure, then it doesn't work [teens do not get involved in it]. […] Meanwhile it is important to consider how we readapt it to teens. So it should meet the team's and the teenagers' interest. For instance, if one group of teens says there are not enough sports, then we can add some. And at the same time, some workshops always remain. … But, yes, for sure, that means that the spaces will vary accordingly!

A 'variation' was not just about caregivers' and teens' individual pleasure in the moment. Rather, a variation germinated with the emergence of an interest between certain caregivers, teenagers, and an ongoing or potential activity. Such an understanding meets a pragmatic view on 'interest'. Dewey (1983 [1916]; 2011 [1939]: 93) argues that an interest does not pre-exist "in" an individual or a group, but it develops as a relation between people and their aims, and encompasses the means for connecting them. An interest is not static, nor it is reduced to a psychological concern, but it's a practical, enduring activity that can also chafe against obstacles.

Remember Kevin who, at some point, despite the considerable deepening of his interest in care for animals, eventually ran away to roam the city. He was carried along by other aspirations, and by other means on which the team had little grip. But in their practice, the caregivers used particular mediations that allowed me to look, as Dewey proposes, at the concrete means and obstacles that contribute to the social process of realizing interests. Such interests are redefined in interaction with others, who then become involved. In this way, interest can progressively lead to a renewed situation.

In the day center, one such means for the collective realization of interests was a chart of the weekly program of activities. It was a big polystyrene panel, with movable activity labels fastened with bits of Velcro, and it stood on the mantle of a fireplace, right in the middle of the caregivers' office (figure 18). On its left side, the panel included about twenty workshops that had been previously done. They constituted a sort of reserve of activities that had proved to be of interest but were currently not planned. This side column was then an intermediary space for interests that came and went. Each year, in early September, the team held a meeting to revise the schedule. But the labels danced on that polystyrene panel during the year as well, passing back and forth across its columns, and in and out of the panel, depending whether they were of interest or not during a period of time. Each week, Berenice used the panel to adapt the program and she completed it with more details on a Word document. She then reprinted it and posted it on the door of the office, to make it easy to glance at. The chart enabled all to visualize the growth and demise of interests shared in the day center over time. It pointed to more unpredictable flows of appreciation that could come along the year, making one wonder how this would occur.

But Berenice mentioned another feature of interest. Some activities were permanent. They remained interesting on a stable basis. These everlasting interests in unchanging activities were indeed visible in caregivers' annual reports.[1] Amid the bunches of renewed activities that popped up every few years, some of them didn't change. Yet they

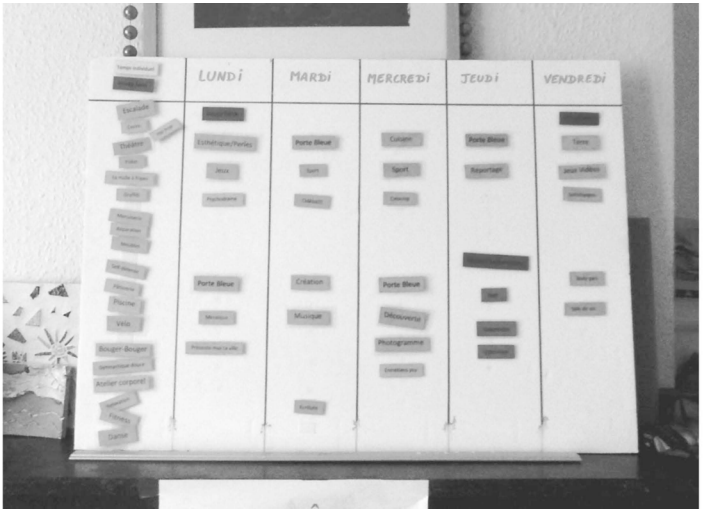
1 I analyzed these reports back to eight years prior to my arrival.

were able to be modified when needed. Horse riding was one of the activities that never fell out of fashion. Marion, the accompanying caregiver, reported numerous therapeutic aspects that manifested during sessions. She described how teens ventured into new bodily sensations, or wove special relationships with the horses. Year after year, several teens were always keen to sign up for it. But questions arose along the way. It happened, for instance, that Marion wondered about the strict framework required by riding instructors at the farm. Instructors didn't know about teens' particular troubles, which Marion saw as a good thing in a readaptation context. But at some point, the adolescents manifested a need for more flexibility towards them and their difficulties. Marion then adapted the framework by establishing a talking time at the end of each session, so that participants could express what they had gone through, and share it with the instructors. Thus, even with activities sufficiently interesting to secure a lingering spot in the weekly program, internal adaptations occurred throughout their realization.

Despite the permanence of certain activities, in this chapter my challenge is to understand how workshop modifications could grow big enough to bring about spatial changes. In order to maintain interest over time, caregivers and teens reoriented their approach towards new activities. For this, they followed particular processes. Callon and Law's (1982) examination of how interests take shape in scientists' practice is particularly helpful here. An interest may succeed or fail, they write, through "strategies of enrollment" (619), that is, specific processes of seeking out the interests of others, of attempting to make something of value to them. The submission of a paper to a scientific journal entails such strategies of enrollment, like when the content of the first paragraph illustrates a wider issue with a specific one. When scientists explore which journal to target, they too assess how each would better catch and transform readers' interests. Unfortunately, this transformation may not succeed. The editors may reject the paper, or they may give feedback that proposes to transform the authors' interest. An 'enrollment', then, denotes the actions and ruses through which a role is attributed to someone else who will accept it, if they become interested,

and these attempts can be reciprocal.[2] The notion of 'strategies of enrollment' refines my pragmatic view of interest: it enables a closer look into the variations I encountered in the day center, because it points to strategies operated in the aim of forming an interest that is liable to change. More than the social and practical processes Dewey signals, this approach to the transformation of interests is "precisely about how it is that the small become big (or vice versa), and why it is that some succeed while others fail" (ibid: 621). It thus points, too, to the constitution of certain social and material worlds, and to the dissolution of others. So what were the strategies of enrollment in the day center? How did caregivers' and teens' interests transform? And how did the variations of material spaces relate to these revivals of interest?

Figure 18: A tool for revisions during the year: the flexible chart on a polystyrene panel.



2 About this understanding of 'interest' as a translation process (or, roughly said, as an ensemble of relationships that entail the transformation of a social and natural world), see also Callon's (1986) famous analysis of the controversy about the decline in the population of scallops in St. Brieuc Bay.

Hybrid buildings

There was, of course, one tangible means that I could hardly ignore when looking for enrollment in shared interests: the buildings. Not the edifices of the old house or the new one in themselves, but that both were hybrid. The day just before the official inauguration, I came across two cleaning ladies hired by an external company. After having spent two days cleaning the whole new building, they could not help wondering, they told me with a mix of confusion and curiosity, "what is this building?! What is this institution that contacted our company? What do they do?" No typology of building they knew was recognizable in that hybrid structure. It is not a home, but its living spaces are central. It is not a cultural center, but it has workshop rooms of all sorts. It is not a school, but two of its rooms serve the atypical pedagogic setting of La Porte Bleue. It is not a hospital, but it has a nursery and consultation rooms. It is not a park, but it has a big garden with two benches, each flanked by a waste bin. But it is an institution, indeed; it has a secretary desk, waiting seats at the entrance, and several corridors. The cleaning ladies' wondering about the building brought to mind other newcomers' astonishment about its unusual and unidentifiable aspect, whether they were teenagers, new trainees or caregivers, delivery workers, or other external visitors. These buildings were typologically hybrid. This way, they avoided becoming spaces with conventional purpose. They worked with patches of different arrangements for situations that usually occur in different places.

But the thing was, the hybrid typology of these buildings didn't suffice to make room for variations of interest within the group. In a meeting for preparing the resettlement, while caregivers bent over the architects' plans and examined the rooms for distributing activities, several voices reminded that, anyway, the rooms should "remain open to change". This request didn't frighten the architects. From the start of the collaboration, they had been told that the team worked with ongoing questioning. Since the architects wished to equip the care center as best as possible, they accepted to leave the building partially undefined. Their strategy was to design rooms of diverse size, shape, light, acoustics, texture, and withdrawn or centrally located space. This diversity could make

this or that room better suitable to try in this or that workshop. Moreover, when the group settled in, they dispersed tools or materials among these spots, without strictly delineating a unique purpose for each of them. Rather, the different spots of the hybrid building were permeated with objects drawing fuzzy boundaries about the kind of activity that might be done here or there. The team gave these spots some vague names, too, offering clues about an imprecise ensemble of activities, like 'sport', 'creation', 'relaxation', 'media', etc. The rooms' diversity of shapes, together with their imprecise boundaries due to their contents and names, left them open to later variations by offering a diversity of options for setting up a workshop. The partially undefined building would then become even more hybrid according to new interests that would emerge over the course of the practice.

From there, a variation might be of very different scale, from small to more consequent interventions, and it might enroll more or fewer people and means. Note the following contrast between two workshops, both stemming from community meetings with teens. One aimed to explore the theme of 'adulthood' and was barely defined at its start. The first sessions would take form as meetings with all participants. They would browse through different themes about becoming adults, then decide on outings or other activities to engage with this topic. When caregivers discussed where to do that workshop, they looked for a 'convivial setting' that might help to cultivate interest in exchanges while making these meetings pleasurable moments. Caregivers first thought to do it in the living spaces, but these ones too easily led teens to "collapse on the couches" or to turn towards other potentially distracting opportunities. Instead they needed something more formal, but still providing pleasure. After considering several options, they decided that the bright room of the first floor would work – the room that was also chosen for the writing atelier in chapter three. Its central table would host the meeting, and the computers on the side could eventually be used for a little research. But it would work, with a small variation of

bringing in a tray with a teapot, cups, and cookies, placed in the middle of the table.[3]

In contrast, a gardening workshop drove far more consequences and spatial rearrangements. One morning, Louis, a technical worker of the institution, was assembling a shed in a corner on the terrace of the new building. On the other side of the garden, Sylvie, a caregiver, was weeding. When I approached her to ask about this gardening activity, she branched her answer out into a wealth of stories. It started with these flowers planted by an official gardener to make the place 'nice' for the inauguration. She strongly disliked these exotic ornamentals. So she discreetly pulled them out, she said to me in a slight laugh, and replaced them with the kind of flowers she liked. Meanwhile, this lured some teens to join her. They decided together to seed some vegetables that then grew, and Josie cooked them. But Sylvie needed to learn more skills for furthering that workshop, for better grounding the adolescents' interest. With another caregiver, they went to a one-day training in vegetable gardening. At that time, by chance they learned that Sami, the head of the institution's technical workers, was passionate about gardening and knew a lot about it. Since then, as soon as they had a question, they would call him. He, too, became committed to improving that spot and growing veggies. To Sylvie, every element in these stories counted. Especially since teens' interest in that garden was fluctuating over time, some new tools, the seeds, a shed, skills, Sami's advice, or Josie's cooking; all were necessary to keep it alive. Whereas a variation might suffice by enhancing a table with a tea set, here it gathered many ingredients that nourished participants' interest, along which the garden varied with its flowers, vegetables, sheds and equipment.

Departing from the partially undefined building, a variation could involve a bunch of social and material transformations, or minimal ones.

3 Such minimal interventions in spatial arrangements for heightening pleasure closely echoes Vogel and Mol (2014). They recount from the weight consultants they interviewed how material surroundings could contribute to cultivate pleasure in eating, as it would not be distracting (for instance with media) but attractive (as with a nicely set table).

It could enroll more or less people, means, and money. The aim was to create the right conditions for keeping caregivers and teens interested in their daily activities. Whatever its size, each variation increased the hybrid, unconventional aspect of the building, making it more specific to the appreciations and concerns that took shape within the group over time.

Intriguing daily events

But then, the strategy adopted in the arrangements and uses of the building left a blind spot: how did caregivers and teens translate their ideas or first-hand experiences into greater, broader interests? Meetings, to which I turn now, were a central means for that process. In the previous chapters I described how caregivers related everyday stories during their staff meetings, continually reshaping an informal knowledge about each adolescent, their familiar bonds, involvement in activities, and surprising changes, however piecemeal. Now I want to emphasize another path in which these daily exchanges resulted. The small, seemingly insignificant occurrences that caregivers related in meetings and daily chats were a fertile ground, too, for a growing revival of interest.

This became clear with the story of the staff's new resting room. In the new building, this room was designed as a 'break room' for the team. It catered to norms about workers' need for breaks during the day. But its location away from the living spaces, common office, and nearby hotspots posed a problem. The caregivers had to cross a corridor and go to an upper floor to reach it. So they did not go there. It was, they explained to me, "too disconnected from the life of the center", which was "not the way we work… At least, not for now". From what exactly did they refuse to disconnect when being away from the "life of the center"? Sylvie specified, "[The caregivers' office] is a crossing point where information circulates and we catch it. And if you're not there, you don't have the information. Well, you'll have it later in a meeting, but it's not the same." And she added, with a playful smile, "you don't

have the anecdote, you don't have the little gems." Sylvie pointed to an ongoing mode of communication in the care practice. When caregivers passed by in their office, they used to tell each other about situations that had just happened with the youths. These anecdotes enabled them to share much more interesting stories with colleagues, compared to the synthetic versions communicated in meetings, because fresh anecdotes led to spontaneous advice on how to improvise a right response to a youth and to their state of the day.

The staff break room foregrounded how much caregivers' closeness to daily events in the center mattered, and enabled them to work by discussing occurrences they'd just noticed. In chapter two, I wrote of the surprising minor changes to the familiar portrait that caregivers came to associate with each teen. I wrote of Safia's unusual attitude that contrasted with her earlier stillness. One of the unusual things she did was to take a dance step to one side as she encountered her image in a mirror. When she did it again another day, Berenice was around, who then started to do it with her. It turned into a funny moment that Berenice related during the next morning meeting: "I was behind, mimicking her movements and sometimes asked her to change to another move. […] It was so funny! I don't know what she had that day, but she was in a good shape! And fun, fun, really full of humor". The dance step story sparked interest among the staff, especially since Safia had barely started to engage outside of her quiet routines. The team then spoke about resuming a hip-hop dance workshop. A trainee was sufficiently skilled to lead it. They scanned some facilities where they might find a room. The idea was launched; they now had to test it. So the caregivers cultivated an interest by being around the adolescents in a familiar place, and by relating small but surprising occurrences to the team.

In workshops, too, caregivers identified potentially interesting events. A memorable one happened when the group of La Porte Bleue went out to a circus school. The next day, Maud reported that the teens had wrapped themselves in fabrics that hung from wooden beams. Her account captivated the team. "It was like a bodily constraint", she said, "but an interesting one". Her interlocutors fell silent. She pursued:

> With those fabrics, you can go up, put yourself inside, and it swings a bit because it is hanging. It's really like a cocoon… And this has such an effect! There is such a silence during these moments. The calming effect it may create is just astonishing. … And Martin loves this thing. And this is lasting – I mean, it's not for three minutes. He stays in it. Ingrid asked: And Kevin did it too?!

Her surprise was shared among the caregivers. They all knew too well that Kevin, who had not yet run away at that time, was most often unable to be still. Maud answered:

> Yes, but Kevin goes less than Martin, and he stays less long in it. And he hangs over it. His arms fall and his leg goes up like this [she throws her limbs in several directions]. Well, it's not exactly the same. But Martin, he really took to it! He put himself in it, like this, like a restraint, but in the good sense of that term.

The effect of the fabric supports intrigued most of the caregivers. The experience had lured in the teens, brought calm or fun according to each of them. The team then gauged if it might be possible to hang some fabric supports in a relaxation room of the new building. The teens' involvements with the fabric supports were small occurrences and they happened only a few times, yet even so, they were tasty ingredients for the caregivers. Of course, their interest was also due to their concern about the teens' frequent agitation and about bodily constraint, which is a sensitive matter for those who have experienced it in other psychiatric settings. Speculating about possibly good and calming constraints with agitated teens made the story even more interesting to the team. This special concern fostered a possible variation of their practice and to their material space.

Sometimes, though, the team took cues from other information than daily events occurring in the living spaces or in workshops. When presenting a newcomer prior to his arrival, for instance, ideas might grow. At a meeting, the psychiatrist spoke about Gery, a teenager who entered the following week. After explaining his troubles, particularly his learning disorders, he mentioned the boy's keenness on all things

mechanical. Bike repair was his specialty. The second he said that, all faces turned to Eric. All knew of his willingness to bicycle with the teens. Eric smiled back and clarified that he was not exactly a good mechanic. "Well", replied the psychiatrist, "but you could set up a bicycle repair workshop in which Gery would be the expert. I think he needs to be valued in concrete operations like that". That the teen's affinity could hold a therapeutic potential sounded like a good argument. Everyone agreed with the psychiatrist' proposal, which would then be put to the test once Gery was there. It thus happened that caregivers' interest for a new activity found roots in the taste of an adolescent that happened to match theirs, and even promised therapeutic potential.

Yet most of the time, their strategy of enrollment went through their noticing of small, intriguing occurrences in the daily life they shared. The teens' familiarity and their involvement in workshops nourished caregivers' anecdotes and staff meetings with unpredictable occurrences, with appreciations that could intensify in a moment. Here the team did not compare the adolescents' responses in order to better know them.[4] But they shared those daily events by linking them to issues that were of their proper concern or affinity. Caregivers' reports of those occurrences to the rest of the team comprised a strategy of enrollment that triggered the formation of new interests. This strategy gave to those small occurrences the possibility to drive changes in their practice and place.

Expanding zones, drawing boundaries

An important point about staff meetings was that caregivers related their notes about the teens in their shared office, where the latter were absent. The team spoke of moments they had experienced with the adolescents, yet without directly discussing these incidents with them. And, needless to say, teens and caregivers weren't always on the same wavelength.

4 See chapter two, 'Workspaces for informal knowledge' and chapter three, 'Relating involvement'.

The weekly community meetings, in contrast, allowed face-to-face exchanges. Teens and caregivers gathered to express and share all kinds of issues about their institutional life, and to propose ideas of what they would like to do. Caregivers valued new ideas that could alter some established customs in the facility. It would give, in their words, "a bit of fresh air" to their practice. The community meeting was another strategy of enrollment, through which the range of ideas that could become of interest in the group easily expanded. Meanwhile, these meetings also provided a keen taste of which ingredients were not palatable for the team or for the teens. Quite often, during these direct confrontations, the group had to redefine the boundaries of its zones of interest.

How did that happen? Each week, a new sheet of paper was pinned on a cork panel in the living space, on which everyone could list ideas for the next meeting. This piece of paper was a draft agenda that was then completed during the discussion, pinned back onto the panel, and later consigned to a binder.[5] Participants shared all kinds of subjects that concerned the organization of daily community life, often provoking a tense atmosphere among the teens. They regularly mentioned the material environment, too, in debate about its decoration, damages, or cleanliness. These uneasy moments seemed quite necessary, for they allowed the team's and adolescents' concerns to meet, clash, and be reshuffled.

To caregivers, the point was to do activities that were therapeutically interesting, that is, activities that induced teens to respond to a proposal, so that the team could work with these responses. To what extent a proposition should be framed as 'therapeutic' remained under debate within the team, as discussed in chapter three about the framing of minimal conditions of everyday activities. Caregivers might bring in ideas of their own taste, but always made sure that these proposals concerned the life of the group, like when choosing what to cook for the upcoming Christmas meal. The only limits were money and insurance conditions for risky outings.

5 I attended a dozen community meetings. To get a better sense of the issues at stake and their debates, I read about sixty archived reports going back to two years prior to my arrival on the field.

The teens, as far as I discerned, were not concerned by the therapeutic potential of activities. They mostly wanted to have fun, or at least a good time. Video games, sports, listening to music, accessing a punching ball or a computer, or where and when they were allowed to smoke, were rather their concern. As with outings like theme parks, paintball, go karts, or watching horror movies, some activities that they requested were denied, because caregivers deemed they could incite violent attitudes. Baptiste told me, "It's ok if they do it outside [during their time of not being in the center], but then I tell them that for a group of teenagers in psychiatry, it is not something easy to manage, and we would not encourage that".

But the teens also had their boundaries, which were debated in meeting after meeting. It could even happen that these limits launched a boycott. One day Martin, a youth, put an item on the agenda with which most of his fellows agreed: "no community meetings anymore". This was not so surprising to caregivers; for several weeks, few adolescents had brought an issue to the meetings. Most of them had "nothing to say". They asserted that issues in these meetings were just not interesting. Some caregivers recognized that "something had changed" in recent meetings, which they had also noticed spatially: teens and caregivers did not mingle anymore when sitting together, and they paid less attention to whether the 'broken circle' formed by their chairs enabled everyone to see and hear each participant. When facing the teens' stony silence, it was quite clear that the only way Baptiste was ever going to be able to handle the situation was by reawakening their interest. So he returned the teens' statement in the form of a question: "when is an issue interesting or not, to you?" Martin and other participants replied that "interesting stuff" should be of concern to most of the people attending meetings, and not be repeated over time. From there, some pending propositions could be reopened. They checked whether each issue concerned everyone, and whether it varied from previous subjects. The story of that blockage, though, makes plain that the community meeting was a core strategy in directly engaging the teens and in modulating the zones of interest and pace of their variations.

However, the extension of interests within the group and delineation of their boundaries wasn't only at stake during these meetings. The caregivers still had to carry out the actual realization of proposals. This required other strategies of enrollment. Some of the teens' propositions could start on the wrong track for sparking the caregivers' and other participants' interest, and therefore required adjustment along the way. This happened when some of the youths wanted to go visit a cemetery. The accompanying caregivers were at first rather cold about it, in part because other teenagers feared such a visit. But the proposers kept insisting. So caregivers found a compromise by pairing the visit with a storyteller. She used narratives to frame the walk with the theme of death and its possible evocations. It worked quite well, so the storyteller was hired for further visits to other sites to be practiced as storytelling walks. That variation in practice enabled the enrollment of participants who were at first reluctant.

It also happened the other way around, that the accomplishment of a proposition threatened a nascent interest along the way because it proved too demanding and long-lasting. One bunch of teenagers were initially very enthusiastic to improve two rooms where they had been dwelling. Choosing pieces and colors was exciting during the first sessions. But when participants had to keep painting walls and to remain concentrated while doing repetitive technical gestures, they grew weary. Caregivers had to constantly push to keep it going. They eventually achieved the work alone. They still remember having grown remarkably tired of it. The renovation made sense to all the participants, but their interest in the activity was far from easy to sustain from start to finish.

To sum up, the community meetings constituted another means for weaving interest between the team and the adolescents. Whereas in staff meetings, the team related small occurrences, here the strategy of enrollment implied more straightforward investigations that rendered palpable which interests might appeal to other members of the group or not. Face-to-face exchanges with the teens nourished variations of activities and their settings by extending their range, but also by drawing boundaries. Such extensions and boundaries of interest were then reassessed

through the realization of the selected activities. A corollary strategy to enroll more participants was to adapt the workshop along the way. But sustaining interest along a workshop completion could also fail, as with the wall painting, leaving the team somewhat wary of doing it again.

Waves

Not every interest was put on trial in staff or community meetings. Though at first it was difficult to decipher how it happened, interests sometimes spread within the group and drove spatial variations much more informally. In interviews with the caregivers and adolescents, I further distinguished a much more discreet strategy of enrollment. We came to call it 'waves'. Khalis, a portly and chatty teen, first introduced the concept. He had been coming to the center for almost a year, when I asked him about the variations he had noticed. His answer reminded me of the mobile hotspots in the living spaces and the contingent influence of their suggestions (chapter two), yet Khalis pinpointed *how* these familiar landmarks varied:

> Well, how to explain it to you? I will call it 'waves'. A new group is shaping, and this group comes to do other things or to use other spaces, and this makes a wave. … When I arrived, the group already there was often sitting. Or we went to the computer room. And then other teens arrived, and they preferred playing ping-pong, so we migrated over there. So, you see, each group will use the space differently. But, there are always guys remaining from before. … With the start of the school year, a number of teens left. For some of the newcomers, it was hard to communicate with the rest of the group who had already become acquainted. It must reshape a group. So it varies like that, by waves.

This was interesting. At first glance, a wave simply describes habits and appreciations that vary with the reshaping of the group of teens, while those already there would somehow mingle with newcomers. But to call it a 'wave' created a thought-provoking connection with the phenomenon of ocean waves. Since the early 1960s, Helmreich (2014) notes, oceanogra-

phers don't model waves as individual undulations anymore, but "as collections of superimposed waves, little and big, with different origins. A 'wave' might be made up of forces churned up by a hurricane a week ago, as well as by fresh energy from wind-swept ripples" (270). This means that there are different forces that blow on water, with older or newer origins. These forces put water in motion, sparking its movement as a particle detaches from its mass, from the flood, and the warp might meet the swell or vanish on the shore. Khalis probably resorted to 'wave' for its social analogy, as the word also denotes the spread of people, or of a particular interest, opinion, or style (as with the French New Wave cinema). But his depiction, I think, was no stranger to oceanographers' conception of sea waves in that both imply a renewal, with new layers building upon and mingling with previous ones. In the day center, if "there are always guys remaining from before", as Khalid said, if this group is always partially changing, waves never emerge on a *tabula rasa*. Newcomers follow departing teens, and some of them remain, so that familiar affinities within the group keep building upon existing ones, whether with older or newer origins.

When I told caregivers about Khalis' picture of waves, it found meaningful echoes among them. In contrast with the teens, caregivers spent longer periods of time in the center, so they recalled plentiful variations, such as moving activities, rebuilding furniture, repainting walls, replacing artworks, etc. They joked about a special sort of wave they knew all too well: when the yard became decrepit due to a tendency of neglect among the teens, which prompted the organization of a communal restoration of that spot. Their jokes about the yard now clarify the differences between the two photographs that opened this chapter. To the team, waves did not only mean an evolution of familiar habits, but they pervaded workshops as well, and they included all sorts of material rearrangements occurring now and then. Caregivers stressed that such waves made the place "lively", which is the focus of the next chapter. For now, it is worth noting that waves erode: they carry material variations.

Yet this statement doesn't explain through which strategy of enrollment a wave erodes; that is, how an interest spreads, grows and materializes in the place while forming a wave. The story of the *Stylistique* work-

shop helps to figure out how such an informal variation occurs. At the time we were still in the old town house, every Monday morning, the teenagers were offered the option of going to the *Esthétique* workshop in *L'Annexe*, three rooms in a row arranged for creative activities. Among piles of drawing paper, mosaic materials, and paintbrushes, a mirror was placed on a table in a corner, where participants could sit and put on makeup, apply nail polish, or style their hair. Six months later, that material space had changed, as had the workshop's name, now *Stylistique*. Whereas the corner table was still used for beauty activities, other tables were now dedicated to beads and the creation of clothes. With the move to the new building, this latent effervescence grew in an even more striking variation. There, the workshop was honored by its own room. It was arranged with a large mirror fixed on the wall, and contained several tables and shelves full of materials for beauty and dressing, whether it be for hair, clothing, or accessories. I looked into the meeting archives, but nowhere were these amplifications and installations recorded. I brought the question to Berenice, the caregiver who led the workshop. She recalled its variation from the early days in L'Annexe:

> Before we had this part with the cosmetics and hairdressing, and the other one with beads and jewelry. But then, at a certain moment, with several girls we got greatly involved in a project that had to do with customizing bags, scarves, etc. … And we staged a fashion show. We arranged the back room as a dressing room and we paraded in the two front rooms. And from there, we started to think about doing something related to the body, the sewing, and creativity. So it had turned into a mixture, Stylistique.
>
> So when the workshop evolved into Stylistique, I asked her, did this change relate to the teens involvement?

The idea of the 'wave' was familiar to us by that time, so it was no surprise that she picked it up in her answer:

> Yes, I think it was tied to the wave of that group of girls who, at that time, fully embraced everything that had to do with customizing [clothes], a bit more in sewing. But it was a mix – because, still before

> that, we added some beads, as Joris [a teenager] really liked it. Not only for jewelry, but he made crocodiles, dolphins, animal figures with beads. And then [when Joris left] we had no more teens who were especially interested in bead figures and it remained only jewelry creation. So we discarded the word 'bead', and added instead 'fashion design' [in French, '*stylisme*', so *Esthétique* became *Styli-stique*].

While Joris' taste for bead figures remained individual, and was discarded as soon as the youth was gone, the appetite of a group of girls for fashion design manifests how much a wave depended on relationships. A wave arises from social bonds and it needs them to gain sufficient strength. In this sense, participants' enrollment with a 'wave' inevitably passes through the impacts of interpersonal encounters, which occurred with the girls but not with Joris. In her novel *The Waves* (2000 [1931]), Virginia Woolf poetically amplifies our awareness of such interpersonal alterations. Through the course of the novel's narrative, six friends take turns telling moments of the life that they have shared. The continuity of voices is interrupted by depictions of waves at successive times of the day, giving an acute sense of the diverse states through which someone becomes relationally, from one moment to another, from one tide of feelings to another, whether waves ripple, splash, break, crush, drum on the shore, sweep over it swiftly, fall, withdraw, or fall again. The many lyrical pictures in the novel make readers feel how a person's state in the moment is not anecdotal, but part of interpersonal alterations with forces at stake. And the flow of successive waves emphasizes every state's evanescence. In other words, these depictions amplify an awareness of the fleeting sensations that alter someone when in relation with another and, in the same move, that deviate each one's concerns. Waves emerge through these alterations in interpersonal encounters. Back at the Stylistique workshop, this process became clear as Berenice continued the story. Enlarging the scope of these interpersonal alterations helped to settle the variation:

> After the fashion show, she pursued, other caregivers asked if we [Berenice and the participants] would continue, so that we could sell our objects to workers of the institution or relatives. So we also

> continued on because we were affirmed [by others] when making them, that [our creations] had become worthwhile.

However, although Stylistique had its heyday, Berenice mentioned as well that, "today, not that much is going on":

> It is nice for teens who want to go there", she said, "but there is less force and creativity than at that time.
> Well, this is inherent to waves, no? I replied. They entail force and creativity at the time the adolescents are in for it.
> Yes, but caregivers too, she reacted swiftly. I was very excited to be involved in that workshop for a while, but I couldn't do it like that for ten years. Repetition is a bit deadly. I cannot inject as much creativity and suppleness when I just repeat the same things. … For instance, at the present time I am greatly involved in the climbing workshop. I love it, because I see that teens get into it, and because I like to go outside and to see teens outside – there they are not the same people anymore! Well, I guess I also work with waves.

And that was her end of the story. So here is the wave's strategy of enrollment. Khalis already emphasized how familiar affinities varied with the partial reshaping of the group, mingling old and new habits. Coming to workshops, when Esthétique turned into Stylistique, it wasn't an abrupt change either. "It was a mix", Berenice said; the variation built upon a previous teen's involvement in bead creations and deviated, giving more room to sewing and jewelry and less to beads. In the course of that workshop, a wave of creativity formed, and grew stronger, while a taste for some specific activity spread within the group through interpersonal alterations, and then vanished as other waves came by. A wave is thus a temporary interest among several participants, including teens, caregivers, their ephemeral penchants, stuff at hand or the things they come to particularize, and sometimes external enthusiasts. A wave drives certain forms of strength and suppleness, and it causes material variations as participants' interests slightly deviate, rendering a space more specific to the group and to a period of time.

As such, waves capture a way of dwelling that follows teens' and caregivers' interests in quite an informal manner. That is, a wave sustains and transforms teens' and caregivers' interests through their ways of life in the place, since the way they live there (where they go, what they do, and with whom) deviates over time when the group reshapes and its members weave new interpersonal affinities.[6] And when a wave erodes, it carries a spatial variation that instils these specific affinities in the place's materiality. Seen this way, dwelling is not settling down, where the installation or occupation of a place is clearly defined. Perhaps 'strategy' is a too strong word for the subtle interplays of enrollment with a wave. The enrollment of participants and things in waves occurred when forces and alterations moved through mundane moments of daily life in the care center. Compared to the caregivers' exchanges and their debates with the adolescents, waves did not occur when reporting about those daily events, nor when teenagers were asked to express ideas in meetings. Here, the recreation of shared interests is directly bonded to the material suggestions of the living spaces that enabled the formation of contingent familiar bonds, and to the workshop framings that offered passages for participant involvement, increasing the teens' possibilities to develop certain penchants while leaving out others. Waves intimately rely on these daily affinities. When a minor attachment spreads into greater interest among the group members, a wave is a variation that increases the existence of that attachment – that gives more room to it figuratively and materially – in the ongoing care practice and its place.

6 Ingold (2011 [1995]) argues that 'dwelling' is a central constituent in the processes of building environment. These processes are always specific to a dwelling, whether by human and nonhuman beings. My descriptions sound very similar to his argument, except that in the day center, material transformation through dwelling is a great stake for a situated practice, and for this reason I would not hold it as a universal truth about situations across cultures, epochs, and species.

From the slightest attachment

The exploration of the variations of caregivers' and teenagers' interests leads us to a crucial turning point of this book. Whether occurring through the noticing and reports of intriguing occurrences to colleagues, discussions in community meetings, or informal waves, these strategies of enrollment outline 'interest' as a form of attachment that depends on slighter forms of affinities, such as everyday familiar bonds or involvement in workshops. Such inclinations are slighter because they happen in the moment, whereas an interest cements over time as it spreads within the group. A slight attachment can take the form of an opportunistic and contingent response an adolescent gives to a material suggestion in the living spaces (chapter one), or it can take shape as a passage into a state of greater attention, curiosity or bodily sensation in a workshop, however uncertain and unstable this involvement may be (chapter three). These day-to-day appreciations not only feed caregivers' informal knowledge, enabling them to craft particular therapeutic paths with the teens, but these penchants also have important consequences for care work, and for institutional life and its place. I will now end this chapter by considering these latter consequences.

Enrollment into a shared interest could erupt not only from slight attachments, but even from the slightest one. Next to the permanent workshops, whose variations remained internal, next to the typical tastes of adolescents that barely surprised the team (sports, music, and video games were common), and next to a youth's singular expertise that promised therapeutic potential (Gery's skills in bike repair), the slightest of attachments also manifested in a gesture (a dance step in front of a mirror); an alteration emanating in interpersonal encounters (as the one infusing a taste for fashion design); or in contact with some new thing (like when wrapping in a fabric support). These slight attachments could spark interests that might grow into new activities or spatial arrangements. I gradually came to understand that what truly mattered in the care work was not the realization of an interest in an activity and space *per se*, but rather how the slightest of teenagers' appreciation could nourish the care work. Every little affinity of a youth could count,

at every possible degree, if caregivers noticed their emergence in day-to-day interactions between the teens and their surroundings.

Indeed, I heard many propositions voiced that were, after all, never accomplished. Many emerging interests did not make the care practice or material spaces vary. At least during the year following the one I spent in the center, the hip-hop workshop was eventually not planned, and the fabric supports were never hung from the relaxation room ceiling. So what was the point of these failures? Were the caregivers too lazy, busy, or unconcerned by these zones of interests they encountered with teens and that environment? I do not think so. I see it rather as a particularity of that institution's enrollment processes: it was always a matter of cultivating an awareness of possibilities, even if all of them were not realized.[7] So the important point was not the realization of every spark of interest into practical or spatial variations. Anyway, the realization of these possibilities was limited; remember the flexible chart whose columns (especially the side one) were finite. Money and time obviously set limits too. Some caregivers told me they could not be incessantly inventive over time, or they would risk exhaustion. The important point for caregivers was to remain open to emerging possibilities, to cultivate their awareness of them, sometimes enrolling teens into this awareness too. Then, perhaps, would they experiment with the realization of a possibility in the care practice. It was caregivers' awareness of the sensitivity of each adolescent, even in its minimal expression, that ingrained their spaces and practice with care.

Although all possibilities didn't set off a strategy of enrollment, enough of them were realized so that the everyday activities and in-

7 In her study of dementia wards in the Netherlands, Driessen (2020) calls "sociomaterial awareness" (233) a sensitivity of caregivers to the ways in which the built environment enables residents to engage in better ways of living. The team continuously adjusts the environment according to day-to-day situations they deem problematic. In the day center, the caregivers' understanding of the teens' penchants as possibilities for becoming greater interests therefore appears as one sort of socio-material awareness. Here, this sensitivity is bonded to the stake of working with the appreciations that come to matter between teens and professionals.

stitutional place were attuned to interests current in the group. Slight attachments were thus not only consequent for the way the care work was done. These modest appreciations, when growing into interests among caregivers and teens, enabled them to make the institutional life and place specific to their attachments that consolidated, dissolved, and reconstituted over time. These variations rendered the activities and spaces interpersonally meaningful to the teens and caregivers. None of them were either interchangeable nor replaceable in the care work once they were caught in the particular world of these interpersonal encounters, daily occurrences, stories about them, and possibilities that emerged from them.

This chapter ends by calling attention to the subject of place-making along changing uses.[8] Here, this subject manifests from a sharp angle: when the place is materially and discursively rendered specific to the declining and rekindling of its dwellers' interests over time. The process departed from a building that was typologically hybrid and whose rooms' diverse purposes were partially undefined. Each variation that the team arranged with the teens increased the hybrid, atypical character of the building. Along with each individual, they cultivated the place's specificities in close relation to their present interests.

This collective particularization of the place, then, seemed never to happen in the manner of a *tabula rasa*. A variation through interest is not a 'change'. The latter implies a sense of renewing, of full replacement with something else. Quite the contrary, a variation was always a partial rearrangement of a spot. The caregivers' strategy of enrollment depended on their relay of unpredictable day-to-day occurrences, on smooth exchanges or tense confrontations in meetings with teens, and

8 Too many works in the social sciences could be cited about this subject, so let me restrict the scope to those that sharpened my view on such processes. I have already referred to Ingold (2011 [1995]) and Driessen (2020) above, but see also Gieryn's description (2002) of a university building that provides certain conditions of uses and remains open to its material reconfiguration, or Guggenheim's analysis (2013) of the conversions of sacred buildings. See also d'Hoop (2016) for an analysis of what I termed "design through use" (37) in four different psychiatric facilities.

on waves that built upon previous habits or involvements of the group members, which then mingled with new ones. In this way, a variation differs from an 'appropriation', which accentuates the making of one's own thing from something that initially belongs to someone else.[9] It follows, too, that sustaining interest requires an amount of time that can hardly be known in advance; variations occur over long periods of time, whose determinacy remains unsettled since they are strongly dependent on ever-varying groups, persons, and interests. The varying interests, and their evanescence though time, call upon us to dig further into the temporalities of attachment, and the spatial liveliness they carried.

9 As Segaud, Brun and Driant (2002: 27–30) summarize, core to the notion of 'appropriation' is the idea of psychological, moral or affective property of space by individual users. For a recent questioning of this presupposition, see Despret (2021 [2019]). In her investigation of birds' territories and of studies about them, she argues that animal appropriations of space through their bodily markings not only appropriate it, but also render themselves proper to it, blurring the distinction between their 'selves' and a place.