7 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

7.1 RESULTS

The discursive elaboration of a presumed specific creativity narrative in IT allows conclusions to be drawn about relevant actors, their intentions and motivations, corresponding representations, organisations, verbal and non-verbal forms of expression as well as contexts of justification, i.e., the specifics of creativity from the perspective of and with regard to IT.

A total of four current socio-cultural and economic currents preconditioned the contextual foundation for the analyses, which had to be taken into account, were accordingly considered in the course of the analyses. It is not my intention to provide conclusions or evaluations about these aspects. Even though my analyses of the creativity narrative in IT once again underlined their significance, the four contextualisations remain a means to an end in order to address the relevance of the topic and to simultaneously situate it in the actual state of things. They will subsequently be outlined in preparation of the representation of results.

Based on this contextualisation, five focal points were retrospectively selected as cornerstones of the analysis and further subdivided into aspects that are constitutive for the narrative. Applying a diachronic analysis, the *unique characteristics of Silicon Valley*, the *societal transformations and scientific currents of IT's self image* as well as an *account on the connection between artificial intelligence and creativity* were exposed and construed. Building on the analysis of the historically constituted creativity narrative in IT, I then outlined the way the meaning of this narrative and its immanent logics function and present themselves today. This was done by focusing on the *social organisation of a productive practice* and the *habitat and habitus*, hence including the non-verbal aspects of a discourse on creativity.

7.1.1 CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

The first current to consider is *the everlasting creativity as social norm*. Creativity is not a hype anymore but a matter of course, a social norm. I have illustrated this using the resolution of the so-called Business Roundtable as an example, according to which it now becomes a prime purpose of every company to promote the creative ability of every individual.

Secondly, the *creation of a digital world* is another relevant factor. The use of the concept of a digital world as a result of the fundamental digital transformation is becoming more and more widespread.[1] The inhabitants and visitors – hence its programmers and users – of this world have to care less about the existing framework developed by politics and society. Rather, they must abide by and take the rules of the IT game into account. Even if there are increasing calls for stronger regulations or even break-ups of large IT companies, this does show that awareness of the emergence of a world outside the state and controlled by IT companies is growing, but at the same time many of the apprehended structures already exist.[2]

Thirdly, *changing conditions of work and labour* have been identified as a crucial current. The way people work and the conditions under which they do so are being discussed and negotiated in ongoing lively and expressive discourses. In the course of digitalisation and the emergence of the digital world, the very concept of work is being questioned and renegotiated. From this it could be deduced that the likewise increasing and threatening automation of jobs thus once again reinforces the imperative character of an economic understanding of creativity. Because being creative appears as an effective solution to not become obsolete on the job market.

Fourthly, the *dawn of creative machines* is a context to be considered, i.e., the possibilities and limitations of an AI system to be by all or no means creative.

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1 Reckwitz, for example, also uses the term *digital world* in his most recent publication. Cf. Reckwitz, Andreas. Das Ende der Illusionen. Politik, Ökonomie und Kultur in der Spätmoderne. Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2019.

2 See journalist Carsten Knop of the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung in commenting the topic of digital sovereignty: Without digital sovereignty, we are threatened with a world in which a few companies or states determine the technologies and thus the parameters according to which we trade and shape change, discuss political issues, make decisions and develop ourselves as individuals in a self-determined or even non-self-determined manner. In fact, we are currently running the risk of entering such a world without having had a broad and open debate on the consequences in time.

It is therefore a subject of both semantic and ontological nature, which repeatedly pushes the boundaries of familiar discourses, as recent discussions within trans- and posthumanist discourses show.[3]

7.1.2 CONCLUSIONS OF ANALYSES

For the early phase of IT, the diachronic analysis initially pinpoints a specific but subtly implicit understanding of creativity that already resonated and had a constitutive effect on the development of IT. This refers in particular to those aspects of the creativity narrative that support the specific *otherness* of IT, such as the opposition to the economic East Coast mentality. From the very beginning, however, there was a simultaneity in IT between a liberal understanding of the market on the one hand and philanthropic ideas on the other, coupled with a robust self-image of fundamentally improving the world through one's own ability to do so, as Doug Engelbart's role shows, among others.

IT's incipient self-description as "being creative" leads to a new self-awareness and pride in its idiosyncratic form of creativity; a sense of superiority to *conventional* managers emerged. From IT's point of view, outsiders (hence the establishment) cannot understand the inside; while those being part of the inner IT circle pretend to know how things could be done better.

However, this is neither primarily about developing something new per se nor about serving a genuine *idea of creation*, but about uncovering, linking and exploiting potentials with existing trajectory paths, i.e., innovations. As has been shown, the role of creativity should not be underestimated in this. Initially, the aim was to strive for one's own creativity in a utopian sense, but due to the influence of the counterculture of the 1960s and appropriate technologies such as the computer and other small technologies, the appropriate infrastructure emerged to realise one's own utopia creatively and playfully for the purpose of improving the world.

Certainly, this approach was quickly appropriated by market-economic efforts and functioned as a valorisation and quasi-marketing product, all under the guise of the countercultures' liberal-artistic connotation of creativity:

3 This recently became true for German-speaking expert groups as well, cf. Loh, Janina. Trans- und Posthumanismus zur Einführung. Hamburg: Junius, 2018; Loh, Janina. Roboterethik. Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2019; Misselhorn, Catrin. Grundfragen der Maschinenethik. Ditzingen: Reclam, 2019.

The analysis further depicts a deterministic-normative picture of the creativity narrative in IT that offers freedom only within its own boundaries. The development of a specific *otherness* shows IT's lack to recognise the outside, hence anything which is not inherent to its own logic. The creativity narrative of IT takes on a constitutive role here, in that creativity still lives on a liaison with the concept of freedom by being clichédly attributed to art and artists or certain ideals of counterculture that are kept alive in stories and ascriptions. Using creativity as intermediary effectively cloaks the marketing aspect.

This is not new per se, even if it has now been examined specifically for IT. In Gerald Raunig's words, however, a certain paradox is noticeable. This paradox is already evident in the strong influence of both military interests in Silicon Valley (more general in IT-industry) and free-spirited ideas (the culture): technology is connectable to the military, and hippies' appropriate technology through the connotation of creativity whereby the usage of technology is morally justified, as exemplified by Stewart Brand's Whole Earth Catalog. Simultaneously, a new self-awareness of IT arose resulting in the already above mentioned but fundamental construction of an *outside* (the "non-creative") with the affirmative self-description as being creatively empowered serving as justification for such a differentiation.

Again, with the help of the concept of creativity, IT further focuses on the exploitation of potential and possibilities, which reaches a new peak by the rise of venture capitalism. The inherent idea of an iterative-contingent principle is of special interest with regard to IT's creativity narrative[4]. The iterative aspect, in turn, is not thought of as a temporal component (hence the repetition of the same process), but as a quantitative one: by spreading the risk over different, potentially innovative ideas, the chance of having success with at least one idea and using this investment to compensate for the others is increased. For IT creatives, this means a shift in the idea of what is understood as being creative and therefore of what being successful means. They are no longer successful when a new product or service actually works, but when such an idea has been successfully financed before it is actually implemented or even developed. The promise and potential became the true (quantitatively measurable) value. Here, too, the narrative of creativity is hence increasingly occupied with the outer façade. What's more is the fundamental simplicity of being capable to finally measure creativity in quantitative terms, hence

4 …whereby the concept of contingency does not refer to Luhmann here but is thought of in connection with him.

money: the more potential an idea, product or service might have and the better its story is, the higher the funding.

With recourse to IT's tendency towards the separation of being either inside or outside its sphere, a strong uniformity is recognisable that is promoted in particular by the quantitative approach of the creativity narrative, but at the same time it is also obscured.

For this reason, I have used IT's well-known implementation of a culture of error in the process of the analysis to highlight the importance of adhering to implicit rules and norms of IT. When a Yahoo employee enthusiastically tells us that he no longer distinguishes between work and private life, this shows the almost total monopolisation of labour. Sarcastic contributions by former employees who are asked to describe their "typical Silicon Valley day" again exemplify the discrepancy between inside and outside, or the propagated ideal state and individual reality. Although the ironic and sarcastic nature of the contributions hypothesise that at least some people are aware of this discrepancy, this does not seem to apply to the general assessment of the fundamental nature of IT. For it is implicitly assumed that a closed *inside* exists within which employees circulate from one tech company to another without the fear of falling from the inside to the outside.

The extreme example of a venture capitalist who did not obey to these internal yet unwritten rules and became socially isolated in the process only to finally committing suicide underlines the dogmatism in a drastic way – especially against the background of the (also contingent-iterative) error culture, according to which failures are a good part of the story of everyone's biography. As shown, it just cannot happen to be the wrong type of failure.

Finally, the discourse on artificial creativity complements the analysis of IT's creativity narrative with an independent and quasi-inverted logic: discussing artificial creativity is not just about using one's own creative potential or (institutionally speaking) expanding it through acquisitions or strengthening the potential of other third parties through products or services, but about *creating creativity*. For this, a more precise understanding of the term's technical perspective was necessary, and answers were sought and partially found in research on human creativity. This in turn led to a connection to ontological questions about the potential of an artificial consciousness and the resulting research into differentiating factors between humans and machines.

IT companies themselves, on the other hand, take a developmental approach: it is possible, they claim, to construct autonomous systems that produce novel and useful results that deserve the label "creative". Here, the influ-

ence of the IT-specific understanding of creativity, which is focused on quantitatively measurable results, becomes apparent. Even more so, the influence of the creativity narrative of IT on a general interpretation of creativity becomes apparent considering the amount and type of public and expert feedback on topics regarding the existence of artificial creativity.

Ultimately, however, technical feasibility is of secondary importance for the discourse. It is the power of the discursive truth that propagates the existence of artificial creativity that is of higher importance here. As part of the creativity narrative of IT, the phenomenon of artificial creativity is also subject to the assumption that the question of how this phenomenon is expressed is more relevant than the question of what artificial creativity actually is. Discursively speaking, something is creative if it appears to be creative. Accordingly, the creativity narrative is important in IT because its dominant position in the creativity discourse (which also includes the specific discourse of artificial creativity research) determines what can be perceived as (artificially) creative.

7.2 DISCUSSION

If creativity is perceived as a reification, hence a quantitatively measurable variable that is, moreover, a means to the end of cloaking the uniform character of IT and with simultaneous consideration of the four contextual currents (creativity as a social norm, the emergence of a digital world, changing conditions of work and labour and the emergence of potentially creative systems), it cannot only be discussed merely within the framework of a general critique of economics in consideration of a creative imperative. The influence of the creativity narrative of IT is, in my view, more extensive than that. Creativity acts as a mediator and justification for an industry that is totalitarian at its core, characterised by a clear dichotomy of inside and outside and committed to the logic of quantification.

7.2.1 THE IDEALISED IT SUBJECT AND THE TOTAL ENTERPRISE

Sociologist Erving Goffman coined the term *total institutions* for his field as early as the late 1950s.[5] But even if the term became widespread in the course, employing the term *total enterprise* is not without risk and certainly problematic unless it is preceded by some clarifying sentences. The problem lies not in the historical weight of the term, but in its possible intention. For some time now, large IT companies such as Google or Facebook have been the object of criticism from right-wing groups and conspiracy theorists such as the *Alt-Right* movement or extremist supporters of a so-called *white supremacy* myth. These groups accuse the corporations in question of censoring and, in their view, publishing and actively supporting *left-wing extremist positions* while blocking and deleting their own "conservative" views.[6]

However, no analysis of ultra-right Internet platforms is required to come across exaggeratedly populist lead stories that fuel fear by depicting a dystopian future scenario, as for example the conservative and moderate right-wing news website The Federalist did with the following heading and sub-headline: "Okay, Google: How Do You Prepare A Country For Totalitarianism? – To be ready for dictatorship, people have to embrace its habits and practices voluntarily, or at least show little resistance. Google is doing its part".[7] Hence, headlines and summaries alone already speak of totalitarian

5 Cf. Goffman, Erving. On the Characteristics of Total Institutions. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961.

6 A current example is the case of a former Google engineer who was given a platform on Fox News to argue that he had been fired for his "conservative" views and that Google is actively manipulating positions contrary to their own vision of the world – the accusations go as far as the allegation of vote rigging. However, the tv-show is silent about what the former quoted Google employee understands by conservative and what ultimately led to his dismissal: The employee was known as a supporter of the Alt-Right movement and wanted to collect money on the company's internal message boards for a bounty on the man who had assaulted a well-known right-wing radical on the day of Donald Trump's swearing-in ceremony as president. Cf. w. d. *Former Google employee accuses tech giant bias*, YouTube, posted by Fox Business, 6th August, YEAR, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=deAea89VI; Frauke Steffens, "Das Internet der Faschisten", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, last modified 7th August, 2019, https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/ausland/internet-der-rechtsextremen-rassisten-treffen-sich-im-netz16321835.html?printPagedArticle=true#void.

7 Cf. Robert Tracinski, "Okay, Google: How Do You Prepare A Country For Totalitarism?" *The Federalist*, last modified 9th August, 2017, https://thefederalist.com/2017/08/09/h

structures of companies such as Google in media, which are also read and quoted by right-wing extremist groups.

To the best of my knowledge, however, they do neither include the concept or narrative of creativity in their argumentation nor the notion of a *total enterprise*, which would otherwise not have been justifiable for the subsequent argumentation in terms of mutual semantic narrowness.[8]

In the digital society, data has become the leading currency, which leads to an infinite process of data production and increased competition.[9] The more data are produced and collected, the better measures of service provision and self-improvement can be applied.[10] This can be seen, for example, in the development of the healthcare sector. In a document about IBM's AI system "Watson", which is also used in oncology and other areas of medical technology, it is stated that in one's life, an average human being (in Western societies) generates 0.4 terabyte of clinical data, 6 terabyte of genomic data and 1100 terabyte of so-called exogenous data, e.g. behavioural, socio-economic or environmental factors.[11]

The growing amount of data suggests manifold possibilities of comparability between individuals. Data seems harmless. They appear as a means of a neutral and, above all, unadulterated description of reality, with no valorisation. On the basis of this quantification, individuals, by their patterns, are ordered into new hierarchies: not only is generated income relevant to top the hierarchy, but also the size of the volume of data produced.

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ey-google-how-do-you-prepare-a-country-for-totalitarianism/. The article itself makes an effort to appear balanced and profound through a long chain of arguments and numerous examples, though. But the substance of this article is not up for debate here; rather, it should be pointed out that a link exists between a notion of totalitarian structures at tech companies and right-wing supporters and whose recognition is necessary in order to clearly distinguish one's own argumentation from these currents.

8 There exists, however, a long research article of the Swiss online magazine *Republik* called *the total enterprise* ("Das totale Unternehmen") about the *management of power* of the Swiss company Migros, in which reports about *dependencies*, *lobbying* and *homeland identity* are released. Cf. Simon Schmid et al., „Das totale Unternehmen", *Republik*, last modified 17th January, 2019, https://www.republik.ch/2019/01/17/das-systematische-unternehmen.

9 Steffen Mau, *Das metrische Wir. Über die Quantifizierung des Sozialen* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2017), p. 26.

10 Cf. ibid.

11 IBM, internal document.

This is important because it ultimately generates discursive truths[12] that make quantification, hierarchisation and, ultimately, human *clustering* through the increasing use of digital technologies a real possibility.[13] With an abundance of data, we are made more calculable, but possibly we ourselves are also acting more calculable: the *quantification of the social* thus has the potential to produce a new regime of inequality, Steffen Mau notes in this regard.[14]

However, the idea of quantifiability and clustering is by no means new and can be found in an illustrative place in Florida's description of a concept on the creative class[15] and neither is the formulation of a criticism on this.[16]

IT, however, is no longer limited to digital spheres, but has the claim of general validity. Amazon, for example, is expanding into the physical book market and opened its first analogue book store in 2015, with a total of 17

12 IBM, internal document, p. 14ff.

13 For the mentioned example from medicine, the argumentation is that this creates a significant opportunity to collect and use factual patient-generated information in order to achieve a better treatment option. An article in the Harvard Business Review (HBR) uses a hypothetical patient to illustrate what such clustering of individuals may look like. Since the respective and hypothetical person is an African-American woman who lives below the poverty line, her risk of cardiovascular disease increases, as can be seen from various factors such as her gender and socio-economic status. The latter suggests that she is less likely to have insurance and is less likely to report symptoms (among other aspect) and is therefore more likely to die from a given disease. These are important clues for treating physicians - who, according to the HBR, are more likely to be male, white, and affluent. Cf. Olympia Duhart, "Why More Hospitals Should Prioritize Cultural Competency", *Harvard Business Review*, last modified 26th May, 2017, https://hbr.org/2017/05/why-more-hospitals-should-prioritize-cultural-competency#.

14 Mau, Das metrische Wir, p.286.

15 Florida's assessment of the concept of creative class would not be possible without indexes and clustering, as Charles Landry summarizes. He thus names exemplary: "the Talent Index measured as percentage of people with a higher degree or above; the Gay Index, a measure of over- or under- representation of coupled gay people relative to nation as a whole", to name just two examples. Cf. Charles Landry, "Lineages of the Creative City", *Creativity and the City, Netherlands Architecture Institute*, [accessed 25th August, 2019], http://charleslandry.com/panel/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2013/03/Lineages-of-the-Creative-City.pdf, p. 12.

16 Again, already in 2005 and with regard to the concept of Creative Cities, Landry critically points out that cities "tend to restrict its meaning to the arts and activities within the creative economy professions calling any cultural plan a 'creative city' plan, when this is only an aspect of a community's creativity". Cf. ibid.

stores in 2019.[17] Not only does the digital have an influence on the analogue[18] (as can be seen, for example, in the decline of small, owner-managed bookstores that had to close due to competition from online retailers), the digital is also increasingly being analogised itself.

Through data-generated quantifiability, IT organisations claim to know what is right.[19] At *Amazon books*, for example, the selection of books on site is determined by the algorithms of the Amazon webpage and the books sold there. Only what is successful is offered. This type of selection is called *curation*. In this case, this curatorial activity means that only items are offered that have received *4 stars & above* at Amazon, are *top-seller* or *new & trending* on amazon.com.[20] The Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ) notes that there is of course no place here for the unusual, and notes that everything from the customer to the e-book reader to the store customer just goes round in circles, reinforcing each other and creating a filter bubble.[21] On the shelf of the *100 books to read in a lifetime* are just two titles by non-English-speaking original authors[22] and the oldest book is (appropriately) George Orwell's 1948 novel *1984*. For the FAZ, this is the epitome of the bankruptcy declaration of independent reading and the display of the dominance of discoveries capable of majority support. With Foucault, Amazon uses user data to produce knowledge. Not only is access to knowledge restricted, (as the commentary on Google Books makes clear) it also produces specific knowledge that determines what is right and what is wrong, what is valuable and what is not. In the late modern era, technologies are extensively transformed into infrastructures of the special, they make singularities (speaking with Reckwitz) visible and fabricate them

17 Amazon, "amazonbooks", *Amazon*, [accessed 26th August, 2019], https://www.amazon.com/b?ie=UTF8&node=13270229011.

18 As can be seen, for example, in the decline of small, owner-managed bookstores that had to be closed due to competition from online retailers.

19 Well-known examples are recommendations like Spotify's "mix of the week" or Amazon's suggestions, which are based on patterns of user behaviour.

20 Cf. Andreas Platthaus, „Entdecke die Bücher, die Kunden lieben", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, last modified 17th August, 2019, https://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/buecher/amazons-buchhandlung-mit-1000-empfehlungen-ins-regal-16336766.html#lesermeinungen.

21 Cf. Ibid.

22 These are: Haruki Murakami's novel *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* and Marjane Satrapi's comic *Persepolis*. Cf. Platthaus, "Entdecke die Bücher, die Kunden lieben".

automatically,[23] because they can determine what is unique and special. If Google Books is an example, social media sites are another, even more concise one: under the guise of the creativity narrative in IT, which propagates uniqueness for the users of social media if only they act creative,[24] it is concealed that in reality it is about the greatest possible denominator, triggered by the desire for quantification, classification and comparability. A paradoxical situation evolves: out of the desire to be unique and special, only a minimal modification of what is already familiar arises, in order not to deviate too much from the creativity prescribed by IT and thus not to be successful in the sense of likes and followers. Attention is being sought.[25] Although this circumstance was criticised at a very early stage,[26] it continues to prevail. Attention is conformal, but presents itself differently, because the attribution of creativity conceals any conformity.

All this seems to happen under the aegis of the creativity narrative of IT, or more precisely: to become possible in the first place. The apparent voluntariness of the creative self-expression and the grateful acceptance of "curated" music lists, music videos, etc. happens at the price of surveillance and the provision of one's own data.[27]

This practice is also very efficient in working life, as Steffen Mau notes. In his critical analysis of technological surveillance in the working environment, Mau argues that thanks to the combination of data and technologies, a sophisticated control machinery has emerged, especially in the service sector of creative workers, which gains its effectiveness from not knowing whether you are being controlled or not.[28] Without calling it by its name, Mau describes

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23 Reckwitz, *Die Gesellschaft der Singularitäten*, p. 73.

24 If YouTuber reach a certain number of subscribers on their channel, YouTube (or rather Google) will send them a plaque including a letter referring to the recipient's unique creativity, which is why other people are interested in their content.

25 Here in the sense of Bernhard Waldenfels' *Phenomenology of Attention.* Cf. Bernhard Waldenfels, *Phänomenologie der Aufmerksamkeit* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2004).

26 For example, an article in the Guardian in 2012 states: "the Instagram [...] filters are the antithesis of creativity. They make all pictures look the same. They require no thought or creative input: one click and you're done." Cf. Kate Bevan, "Instagram is debasing real photography", *The Guardian*, last modified 19th July, 2012, https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2012/jul/19/instagram-debasing-real-photography.

27 However, many people are generally aware of the latter and view it critically, cf. for example Facebook's data scandal in recent years.

28 Mau, *Das metrische Wir*, p. 244.

the concept of the panopticon, which can be of use for the argumentation of this chapter.

The concept of Panopticon, introduced by Michel Foucault features the very aspect of a prison capable of supervising inmates without them knowing if they are currently under surveillance or not, resulting in an inmate's behaviour that acts on the assumption of constant supervision.[29]

In discussing digitisation, Byung-Chul Han developed the notion of the *Digital Panopticon*.[30] According to Han the *Digital Panopticon* supersedes the Panopticon of disciplinary society, working even more efficiently. The digital in general as well as social media in particular evolves into *Digital Panopticons* that keep the social under surveillance. In its beginnings, the Internet has been praised for its boundless freedom. To Han, now it is a means to social control. What makes it so effective is its permissivity.[31] Unlike in the Panopticon of disciplinary society, the inmates of the Digital Panopticon expose themselves voluntarily.[32] In the desire for attention and recognition, the

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29 Cf. Michel Foucault, *Überwachen und Strafen. Die Geburt des Gefängnisses* (Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 2015). For Foucault, Panopticism represents the generalised functional model of the ideal-typical prison of the disciplinary society - the Panopticon - designed by Jeremy Bentham. (cf. Ibid., p. 263). Its logic aims at the most effective control, organisation and governance possible of the individual's diversity (cf. Ibid., p. 264). Thus, it perfects the effects of disciplinary power (cf. Ibid., pp. 173-292), so that they can be extended to the whole of society (cf. Ibid, 268). The specific architecture of Bentham's Panopticons creates a special kind of observation that makes it irrelevant whether the individual is actually observed or merely feels observed. The Panopticon creates a permanent effect despite sporadic implementation (cf. Ibid., 258). Accordingly, the prisoner must never know whether he is under surveillance but must be sure that he can be monitored at all times (cf. Ibid., 259). The central effect of the Panopticon is thus the creation of the prisoner's awareness of being permanently visible (cf. Ibid., 258).

30 Byung-Chul Han, *Psychopolitik. Neoliberalismus und die neuen Machttechniken* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2016), p. 18.

31 Cf. Ibid., p. 26. Here, Han refers to Foucault again, who introduced the concept of permissiveness in his works on governmentality, as the permissiveness of disciplinary power is one of the central points of critique of studies of governmental on the concept of neoliberalism. Cf. only Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-1979 (Lectures at the College de France)* (New York: Picador, 2010).

32 Han's remarks cannot be adapted to this situation without criticism. Since Han's reference to Foucault operates in the context of poststructuralist subject-conceptions, his assumption of a voluntary self-exposure of individuals is, in my opinion, too shortsighted here. What remains unconsidered is how the disposition to this voluntary self-

Digital Panopticon does not create a sense of surveillance. On the contrary, it creates a sense of freedom.[33] Instead of being separated individually, the inmates are encouraged to communicate permanently through social media and, as a result, are revealing themselves.[34] *Smart power*[35] calls upon individuals to continuously communicate their needs, desires and opinions. They continually produce data about themselves. The voluntary nature of self-disclosure is what makes the Digital Panopticon so effective.[36] The consequence of this total networking and total communication[37] is a total compliance regarding the induced transparency. Han, in a thoroughly elevated and exaggerated way, considers psychopolitics as the end of free will[38]: through the mass generation of subject-related data, it is thus possible to influence the subject and its actions on a pre-reflexive level. Hence, it will be ultimately governable.[39] The beginning of this new type of control society was located in 1984 by Han: contrary to Apple's message, the year 1984 did not mark the end of the surveillance state. Instead, it was the beginning of a control society whose efficiency exceeded that of Orwell's surveillance state many times over.

In disciplinary power, the body was disciplined, yet now nobody sits in a panoptic cell anymore. One does not experience the observation physically,

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exposure in the subject emerges. Since the subject is always both a product and a generator of itself within the framework of the process of subjectivation, Han's reflections on the self-exposure of the subject remain somewhat naïve. Cf. Norbert Ricken, „Zur Logik der Subjektivierung. Überlegungen an den Rändern eines Konzepts", in *Techniken der Subjektivierung*, eds. Andreas Gelhard, Thomas Alkemeyer and Norbert Ricken (München: Wilhelm Fink, 2013), pp. 29 - 48. However, it seems fruitful to look at Hans' approaches in a more differentiated way in order to take the paradoxality of subjectivation and the possibility of influencing the psyche on a pre-reflective level into account, which Han dreads in the context of the Digital Panopticon. See Judith Butler, *Psyche der Macht. Das Subjekt der Unterwerfung* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2017), pp. 8-10.

33 Cf. Han, *Psychopolitik*, p. 55.

34 Cf. Ibid., p. 18.

35 Cf. Ibid., p. 27.

36 In fact, experience in the digital is different from experience in the analogue since it lacks embodiment. Han's emphasis on the freedom in the digital panopticon, which is not perceived as surveillance, should nevertheless be put into perspective as the potential surveillance situation has long since become a commonplace. Cf. Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*.

37 Cf. Ibid., p. 20.

38 I intentionally only refer to Han here, as the concept of the free will is a rather failing term in the context of Foucault's works and the poststructuralist school of thought.

39 Cf. Ibid., p. 67.

therefore it comes along more subtly; it can be hidden more easily. *Thanks* to the creativity narrative of IT however, the (imperative) desire for performance and recognition is observation and discipline at the same time. The first happens in order to get one's own performance reflected at all; the latter happens in the form of the performance evaluation predetermined by the narrative.

In a Digital Panopticon, communication now completely coincides with control.[40] The control is held by those who not only provide the infrastructure – the Digital Panopticon itself, so to speak – but also, through the dominant narrative of creativity, call for participation in this new kind of posed and simulated uniqueness. The creativity narrative equally feeds on the total structures of individual IT companies as it constitutes them. It is deceptive to the extent that it carries these structures subtly and hypocritically.

7.2.2 CREATIVITY AS A TOOL FOR CLOAKING HYPOCRISY

As pointed out and criticised above, data has become the leading currency in the digital world, and the growing amount of data allows for multiple possibilities of comparability between individuals. Critique is manifold and vigorous (though mostly entrenched in specialised discourses): Shoshana Zuboff speaks of surveillance capitalism and Byung-Chul Han, drawing on Foucault, proposes the notion of the digital panopticon. The reason why I mentioned these examples is the complex role the creativity narrative of IT has to play in here. Due to the suggestive power of the narrative, a utopia of freedom and uniqueness (or singularity, to speak with Reckwitz's terminology) is promised, which in reality implies the near opposite by means of the creativity narrative's constitution: namely quantification, and thus predictability, comparability, uniformity and economic efficiency. This in turn has an impact on the analogue world, such as when Amazon opens a physical bookstore whose inventory and recommendations are curated almost exclusively by algorithms, which in turn are traceable to quantifiable online ratings on books.

With this, the critique of capitalist economy as well as the critique of creativity and of the creative dispositive go hand in hand with a critique of certain usages of technology. Albeit criticism of economy and the role of creativity

40 Cf. Ibid., pp. 56f.

within differs in its various school of thoughts, interpretations and conclusions (where Boltanski and Chiapello fear the appropriation of creativity (and other originally positively connotated concepts such as openness to others or novelty)[41] by capitalism, Lazzarato claims that creativity cannot and will never be appropriated by capitalism, for example), they all highlight the importance of creativity, with newer approaches including the entanglement of technology (Reckwitz) or even include the inherent IT logic (Zuboff) – albeit in the latter's case without a distinct reference to creativity.

As shown, the creativity narrative equally feeds on the overall structures of individual IT companies as it constitutes them. It is deceptive in that it subtly and hypocritically sustains these structures by both invoking and evoking the predominance of IT communities (the *inside*) that in turn is based on tales and stories about connecting creativity to concepts like freedom, genius, and the thriving for one's own capabilities. All this happens under the banner of creativity as understood by IT.

The study from 2001 mentioned in chapter 2.2, which deals with the question of creativity in Silicon Valley, still distinguishes between technological and artistic creativity. However, this distinction no longer seems to apply in IT terms. It is vital to not fall into the misconception that IT (i.e., its actors and productive participants) is occupied with art in a wider sense. Rather, a quite simplified, abbreviated and effective concept of art regarding its publicity is used and referred to. Recourse is mostly made to artists and works that are generally known and enjoy great public popularity. Here, too, the logic of simplistic quantification takes effect in its final consequence: what is known and popular is what most people would describe as such. Interestingly, however, IT does not seem to succeed in emancipating itself from art (i.e., the popular term). Although the technologies they produce are shaking up all our lives and redefining them in parts, it remains insufficient as to what they themselves are capable of.

Although this dichotomy lives on and technological development has taken on a dizzying pace in recent decades (culminating in the emergence of the digital world, as illustrated in chapter 4), it is still a knighthood for the grandees of IT to be seen as artistic, to emulate the great artistic geniuses and to be conventionalised as creative geniuses themselves.

Why is that at all? One answer may lie in the nature of IT's creativity narrative. The iterative and contingent ductus of venture capital, in which there

41 Cf. Boltanski and Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, p.97.

is talk of success especially when something is seen as creative, and in which one receives financial support for a promise, for what is to become one day, not for what already is or actually will be. The economically infused charge of IT's notion of creativity needs the story, the promise; and the story in turn needs creativity to elevate itself, to charge itself with ideals that justify this elevation and separate an inside from the outside. If nothing else, the creativity narrative of IT is a proven and efficient means of cloaking: a garment thrown over the true figure, disguising its real intentions in the process.

I am not primarily concerned with ascribing or accusing blame. As pointed out, critique of the economy is diverse and heterogeneous, although it seldom or never chooses the whole range of topics that I believe are necessary for a contemporary approach to critique. For this, it would be necessary to take the different considerations and schools of thought on economics, creativity, technology and IT itself into account. Nevertheless, the question remains: what is it all for? Was it not actually once about something completely different when the term creativity was mentioned? It is about an artistic creativity as a counter-design, which actually should no longer be called that because of the appropriation of the concept of creativity by the narrative of IT. Does not this other concept of creativity have to look for a different semantic shell in order, if not to escape the appropriation, then at least to negate it and escape IT's logic of the creativity narrative? These are open questions to which I cannot find an answer, but whose urgency has become emphatically apparent through the examination of the creativity narrative of IT. However, it would be short-sighted to grant the arts per se; similarly trivial as IT's approach to art. Therefore, it seems reasonable to at least approach this *other*; that particular approach to creativity that may seem to be in opposition to the creativity narrative in IT. This *artisticness* (in order to not call it artistic creativity) incorporates another way of being and thinking that reveals itself through uncertainty, sensitivity and revelation and in the end cannot count on recognition – also and precisely because it is not quantifiable but understands the incommensurability between its various shapes as a necessity.

Another way of thinking would be, in Dieter Mersch's words, thinking in the aesthetic.[42] The aesthetic goes beyond all concepts and genres in the mode

42 Cf. Dieter Mersch, *Epistemologien des Ästhetischen* (Zürich/Berlin: diaphanes, 2015), p. 53.

of experience. It is essentially procedural.[43] Its knowledge is revealed in execution. Unlike in propositional, discursive thinking, no dichotomies (of truth and falsehood) are produced in the aesthetic. Accordingly and in contrast to IT's understanding of creativity, the *real* is not yet subjected to any structuring of distinctions and symbols.[44] Instead, the knowledge practice of aesthetics is characterised by a fundamental openness.[45] It is permanently on the lookout, open to the unsuspected or the alteritarian and does not hope for progress in knowledge or an increase in objectivity and the stabilisation of models.[46] It conducts experiments whose outcome remains uncertain.[47] The particular, like the processual, is essential for art and aesthetic practice.[48] After all, aesthetic epistemes reveal what fails to work, and what remains incommensurable, resisting the usual classification.[49] In art, contrary to propositional thinking, there are no paradigms that can be standardised and generalised.[50] Each work of art creates its own *singular paradigm*.[51] Such a paradigm eludes comparison.[52] It is the refusal of any commensurability that distinguishes art from the creativity narrative in IT. As shown, IT is not interested in singular paradigms. Because these paradigms cannot be generalised, they cannot be quantified and thus cannot be marketed, valued (again in a quantifiable way), classified or scaled. IT measures creativity quantitatively: creative is what achieves economic success. IT needs and wants to be understood. Despite or precisely because of its apparently revolutionary innovations, its narrative of creativity ultimately remains trapped in the still somewhat familiar.

A way out requires actual alterity, i.e., a partial intercultural otherness, which is, however, the opposite of the totalitarian dichotomy of inside and outside propagated by IT, made possible and legitimised by creativity acting as intermediary and cloaking device.

Through its exclusive adherence to this concept, IT refuses to accept the process openness and undirectedness of the (aesthetic) research process. Mer-

43 Cf. Ibid., pp. 128-133.
44 Cf. Ibid., pp. 52f.
45 Cf. Ibid., p. 67.
46 Cf. Ibid., p. 61.
47 Cf. Ibid., p. 147.
48 Cf. Dieter Mersch, *Nichtpropositionalität und ästhetisches Denken* (2013) p. 2.
49 Cf. Ibid., pp. 9ff.
50 Cf. Mersch, *Epistemologien des Ästhetischen* p. 164.
51 Cf. Ibid., p. 116; 157.
52 Cf. Ibid., p. 158.

sch provides a new perspective on the new saying that the new that can be understood cannot be entirely new, just as, conversely, the completely new could not even be recognised and described as new without referring it to something familiar. Creativity, from this point of view, seems to be useless for IT; or better: immune from IT – especially in the light of emerging concepts like artificial creativity. Only with the further development of learning systems could it be possible to autonomously create such an indifferent creativity, which as such will never be understood by anyone. But those singular paradigms that the other way of thinking in the aesthetic practice of knowledge creates remain hidden from IT, which is bound up in the logic of the propositional and distinguishable. Thus, a decisive part of the new (the *really new*) eludes it. For its concept of creativity can only grasp what becomes linguistically tangible and, accordingly, describable and constructible on the basis of existing categories. In contrast, the epistemes of art elude the logic of discursivity.[53] Art is capable of undermining discourses. It opens up that other way of thinking transcending all oppositions between determination and indeterminacy.[54]

This neither-nor, this in-between, thus the *interspace*[55] between differentiated poles that are determination and indeterminacy is not easy to endure. But it is a way out in order to negate the superficial purpose of IT's understanding of creativity as a cloaking device. One must be able and willing to not only endure the unsteady and fragile that is the *indifferent* or *other way of thinking*, but deliberately embrace it. Only in this way, however, is it possible to create a counter-design to the uniform, quantified and rampant logic of the creativity narrative of IT.

On the other hand, it may probably help to wait and see – as no dominance lasts forever: Even Salomon Friedlaender in the early 1920s already complained about a *monstrous overevaluation of the differentiated*.[56] And returning to the very beginning of this dissertation, in 2001 the Hudson River began

53 Cf. Ibid., pp. 139f.

54 Cf. Mersch, *Nichtpropositionalität und ästhetisches Denken*, pp. 6f.

55 According to Salomon Friedlaender, this space is called *indifference*. At first it seems that indifference is nothing but the plain background from which the interesting (perceptible, because distinguishable) figure stands out. Friedlaender saw it differently. For only in the middle between the poles one has the possibility to turn to the whole beyond the differences. That is why indifference is not boring, but *creative*. Cf. Salomon Friedlaender, *Schöpferische Indifferenz* (München: Ernst Reinhardt Verlag, 1926).

56 Cf. Ibid., p. 4.

to slowly recover from the mussel invasion and native species returned in large numbers. Although far away from a complete recovering, diversity seems to have been restored.[57]

57 Rebecca Kessler, „Musseled-Out Native Species Return to the Hudson", *Sciencemag*, last modified 21st January, 2011, https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2011/01/musseled-out-native-species-return-hudson.