

Endeavors to Represent the Non-Representational: Researching corporeal-locomotive media

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Abstract

This article is based on the findings and results of a three-year-long study of various gamers activities and experiences across different offscreen-onscreen gameworlds. The findings and results emerged through the use of a mixed methods approach that combined grounded theory method with phenomenography, remix methods, interpretative ethnography and visual methods. The present article will, with the concluded study as its foundation, present the developed methodological framework as well as the study's methodological results and findings. The presented methodological framework, results and findings emerged through the development of a conceptual understanding of the non-representational and pre-linguistic nature and structure of corporeal-locomotive gameplay. Through the effort of trying to think and talk about games as corporeal-locomotive activities and experiences it quickly became apparent that it was senseless to interview or study the communication of gamers as it was to analyze their onscreen gameplay or make them fill out questionnaires. In this way, the traditional ways of conducting 'game research' was fruitless in the study's endeavor to think and talk about the corporeal-locomotive dimension of gameplay where hands and bodies were moving to the (kin)aesthetic rhythms of the game's choreography. Consequently, I found myself barred from 'meaningfully' communicating the expressive, sensuous and (kin)aesthetic meaning and significance of corporeal-locomotive gameplay without seeming 'meaningless' to the research community. Therefore, I was forced to take on the additional task of developing a methodological framework that, on the one hand, was capable of connecting with the corporeal-locomotive dimension in gameplay activity and experience in a generative, appreciative and appropriate way and, on the other hand, was capable of communicating and representing this emerging new research field of 'gameplay corporeality' in a meaningful, proper and scholarly sound way. In short, I found myself taking a leap of faith, as I witnessed my Ph.D. thesis turn into a vibrant mix of 'research music videos,' 'film strips,' 'photo montages,' 'collages,' 'poetic tales,' 'theoretical remixes,' 'aestheticized metaphorical writings,' 'fictionalized narratives,' 'narrative inquiries.'

This article presents the methodological side of the story through presenting the results of this hazardous, messy and meticulous endeavor to represent the non-representational nature of corporeal-locomotive gameplay activity and experience. Furthermore, the article points towards the importance of letting the expressive research field or subject dictate the method, rather than letting the method dictate the exploration of the research field or subject - A circumstance that sets the

methodological approach apart from more traditional approaches within media studies and game research.

Keywords

Game research, corporeal-locomotive research, qualitative research, multimethodology, grounded theory method, remix methods

Introduction

When observing gameplayers in gameplay in digital games while trying to develop a way of thinking and talking about what is ‘corporeally’ and ‘locomotory’ at stake in actual gameplay activities and experiences I quickly ran into trouble. How was I to grasp and connect with the corporeal expressivity of gameplay in an appreciative way? How was I to capture and communicate the way these gameplaying bodies dived into gameworlds and carried out gameplay ‘in the flesh’ first-person? And how was I to develop a theory of ‘gameplay corporeality’ that would present and convey this new understanding of gameplay as something carrying corporeal-locomotive meaning, significance and (kin)aesthetics within it? (see my Nordmedia2013 article “Corporeal-Locomotive Media?: Experiencing first-person being & first-person doing in offscreen-onscreen gameworlds” for a more comprehensive and exhaustive presentation of this new field).

This article tries to answer these questions that emerged through the three-year-long phenomenographic study of what I in my Ph.D. thesis *gameplay corporeality*. This study was carried out through the close investigation of a varied group of gameplayers as they participated in their everyday corporeal-digital gameplay activities across different offscreen-onscreen gameworlds.



The study was carried out using a mixed methodologies framework in order to grasp corporeal locomotion as it was played out on various platforms (e.g. iPhone, PC, Wii, Ps3 and Nintendo DS) and across more than 20 different games (e.g. *World of Warcraft*, *Starcraft*, *Battlefield*, *Mario Kart*, *Rock Band*, *Just Dance*, *Cut the Rope* and *Subway Surfers*). The article will through building directly on the methodological, analytical and theoretical findings and developed frameworks coming from the defended Ph.D. thesis explicate some of the inner workings of the methods used to develop the novel research field of *gameplay corporeality*. Before delving deeper into the developed methodological framework I will shortly sum up the main data forms and methods used to address the corporeal-locomotive dimension in digital games. The research field of *gameplay corporeality* was developed based on the following data (among others):

- Informal/formal observational fieldwork (3 years on a weekly basis), informal/formal participatory fieldwork (3 years on a weekly basis), field notes (more than 200 pages), methodological, analytical and theoretical memos (more than 100 pages), offscreen photos (approx. 1600), offscreen video (approx. 50 hours), onscreen screenshots (approx. 300) and onscreen video (approx. 30 hours)
- Gameplayers observed regularly (some on a weekly basis) over a period of 3 years: Fenja; 5-8 year old female, competent and hardcore gameplayer, Jon; 36-39 year old male, expert and hardcore gameplayer, Rikke; 32-35 year old female, competent and casual gameplayer, Selma; 2-5 year old female, novice and casual gameplayer, Tue; 25-28 year old male, expert and hardcore gameplayer, Herdis; 59-61 year old female, novice and casual gameplayer, Iben; 27-30 year old female, novice and virtually non-gameplayer.

And the presentation of framework, findings and results is carried out through a six-step process:

- Firstly, the article will present the overall and guiding considerations for developing a methodological framework for corporeal-locomotive media as well as the central works used in the section “Jumping in at the deep end.”
- Secondly, the article will present the take and deliberations on the use of grounded theory method in developing a ‘non-representational’ and novel research field where the focus of attention is on letting the new field get a confident voice of its own. This is done in the section “Grounded theory method as manure for growing theory of the non-representational.”
- Thirdly, the article will present and give an overview of the empirical, analytical and theoretical data coming out of this approach to the field of gameplay corporeality in the section “Grounded data forms and documentation methods.”
- Fourthly, the article will present the take and deliberations on the use of remix methods in the effort to cross-fertilize raw data with theoretical concepts, different styles and modes of presenting the non-representational and prosaic presentation of research findings with the metaphorical, narrative and visual fabrication of vivid tales of corporeal locomotion. Here, the focus of attention is on developing a vocabulary for the inner non-representational, pre-linguistic core of corporeal locomotion in digital games. This is done in the section “Remix methods as synthetic fertilizer for enhancing comprehension of the non-representational.”
- Fifthly, the article will present and give an overview of the empirical, analytical and theoretical remixes coming out of this approach to the field of gameplay corporeality in the section “Remixing data forms and documentation methods.”

- In closing, the article will compile all these sections and present them as “A methodological framework for the non-representational.”

Jumping in at the deep end

When I as a researcher found myself faced with the existential scholarly choice of either following my research subject - gamers' gameplay in digital games - into totally unknown waters (corporeal locomotion) or remain on the safe side and instead try to squeeze it into familiar frameworks (communication, discourse and online community) I took a deep breath (for two months) and then jumped in at the deep end. This jump proved to be very scholarly fulfilling but also, at times, very challenging, frustrating and nerve-wrecking. To develop a methodological framework that would enable the investigation and development of the corporeal-locomotive dimension in gameplay activity and experience bring along certain central methodological challenges and consequences.

First and foremost, I had to find ways of tackling the challenge of investigating something previously unexplored in digital games such as *World of Warcraft*, *Starcraft* or *Call of Duty*. That is, how would I go about and investigate something for which there were no set methods or theories within the area of traditional game research? As a consequence I found myself rather 'naked' in the deep end of an alien pool, not even knowing if I would be able to swim and survive in these wild and uncharted waters.

Secondly, and by no means less important, I was faced with the challenge of investigating and writing about something tacit, pre-linguistic and non-representational as I tried to explore and explicate the meaning, significance and (kin)aesthetics of corporeality and locomotion in gameplay. One way to tackle this challenge was, on the one hand, to live out and participate in corporeality and locomotion in gameplay through autophenomenographic writings and, on the other hand, to live together with and observe corporeality and locomotion in gameplay through by turning close family and friends into the study's participants. In this way, it became possible to literally follow participants day and night year after year while continuously and spontaneously observing without coming of as an intrusive or alien presence. Such prolonged living out and living with proved necessary in order to *come to know* something tacit, pre-linguistic and non-representational and then try to put this mute movement-born being into words. The methodological consequence of tackling this challenge proved to be the construction of a multimethodological framework for grasping and the construction of a new metaphorical and conceptual vocabulary for speaking about being a corporeal-locomotive gamer in gameplay.

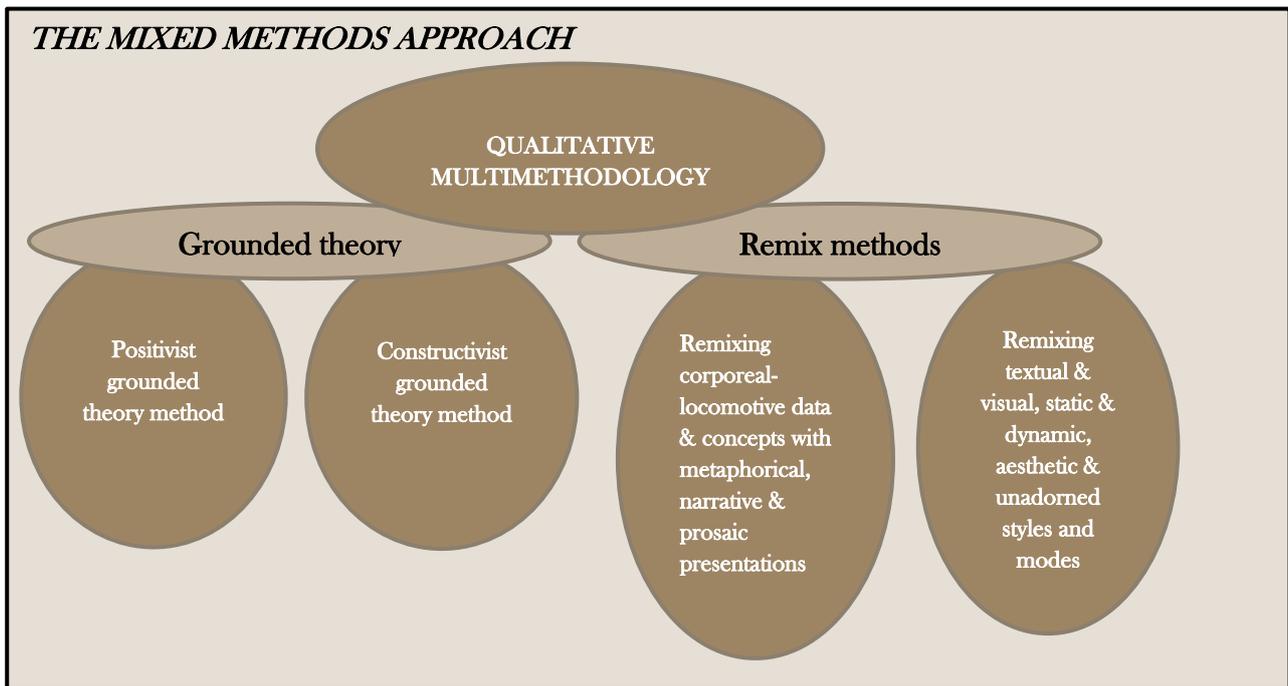
Overall, this jumping naked in at the deep end led to developing a methodological framework for the corporeal-locomotive dimension in gameplay activity and experience through adopting a 'messy methodology' capable of embracing the corporeal-locomotive dimension's mute, multifarious and multifaceted expressions. Accordingly, observational and participatory, objective and subjective, empirically grounding, phenomenologically describing and innovatively fabricating and remixing methods and theories were in the study set free to intermingle, proliferate and cross-fertilize as the alien (caco)phonic, (kin)aesthetic and (in)compatible corporeal-locomotive voices coming from the

field were not silenced but followed and documented through the development of a vocabulary for gameplay corporeality. In order to swim I had to face up to the fact that, rather than commencing the research quest head on with a preselected methodology or grand theory securely in hand, I had to take up this methodological challenge and pick the right (re)mix of methods and theories to truthfully transform the pre-linguistic and non-representational nature of the field into intelligible writing.

What proved to be the cornerstone in this process was to try to adhere to Markus Banks' caution: "Ideally, one should formulate an intellectual problem [what is the nature, significance and structure of gameplay corporeality], then consider the most suitable subject or empirical context for investigation [gameplay], and then consider which methods within that context are most likely to yield data that will address the problem [?]." (Banks, 2007, p. 8). Here, the aim of the study - to investigate and cultivate a fallow field through developing a suitable methodological and conceptual framework for it - became critical in relation to answering the unknown [?]. On the one hand, the chosen methods must be flexible, adaptable and adjustable in order to let the field (trans)form the method, and, on the other hand, the chosen methods must not bring along specific set world views on, concepts for, or framings of games, gameplayers or gameplay with them in order to prevent the method from (trans)forming the field. Thus, the first task at hand was to track down a suitable combination of reasonably 'empty,' 'open' and 'elastic' methods that allow the field to command the researcher in these corporeal-locomotive uncharted, tactile and tacit territories. Here, a multimethodological approach seemed obvious as:

Different methodologies are complementary, making different assumptions about the problem situation, and that it is therefore necessary to make a choice as to which methodology(ies) is(are) appropriate for a particular intervention. It is the contention of this paper that in order to make the most effective contribution in dealing with the richness of the real world, it is desirable to go beyond using a single methodology to generally combining several methodologies, in whole or in part, and possibly from different paradigms. We argue for the use of multimethodology. (Mingers & Brocklesby, 1997, pp. 489-490)

Consequently, a multimethodology was pieced together from the following main methods:



As well as the following central works covering different areas of ‘thinking and talking about corporeal locomotion:

METHODOLOGICAL COMPONENTS & WORKS	
<p>Qualitative research methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monique Hennink, Inge Hutter & Ajay Bailey <i>Qualitative Research Methods</i> (Hennink, Bailey, & Hutter, 2011) • Thomas R. Lindlof & Bryan C. Taylor <i>Qualitative Communication Research Methods</i> (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002) • Egon G. Guba & Yvonna S. Lincoln <i>Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research</i> (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) • Annette Markham “Ethic as Method, Method as Ethic: A Case for Reflexivity in Qualitative ICT Research” (A. Markham, 2006) 	<p>Grounded theory method</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antony Bryant & Kathy Charmaz (eds.) <i>The SAGE Handbook of Grounded Theory</i> (Bryant & Charmaz, 2010) • Kathy Charmaz <i>Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis</i> (Charmaz, 2006) • Brian D. Haig “Grounded Theory as Scientific Method” (Haig, 1995) • George Allen “A critique of using grounded theory as research method” (Allen, 2003)

Remix Methods	Documentation Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annette Markham “The Internet as research context” (A. N. Markham, 2004) • Annette Markham “Go Ugly Early’: Fragmented Narrative and Bricolage as Interpretive Method” (A. N. Markham, 2005) • Annette Markham “Fabrication as Ethical Practice” (A. Markham, 2012) • John Mingers & John Brocklesby “Multimethodology: Towards a Framework for Mixing Methodologies” (Mingers & Brocklesby, 1997) • Martyn Denscombe “Communities of Practice: A Research Paradigm for the Mixed Methods Approach” (Denscombe, 2008) • Julia Brannen “Mixing Methods” (Brannen, 2005) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roger Sanjek (ed.) <i>Fieldnotes: The Makings of Anthropology</i> (Sanjek, 1990) • Michael Angrosino <i>Doing Ethnographic and Observational Research - The SAGE Qualitative Research Kit</i> (Angrosino, 2007) • Marcus Banks <i>Using Visual Data in Qualitative Research - The SAGE Qualitative Research Kit</i> (Banks, 2007) • Pirkko Markula & Jim Denison “See Spot Run: Movement as an Object of Textual Analysis” (Markula & Denison, 2000)

As the above references demonstrate, the overall methodological research approach draws on current understandings of how to qualitatively construct and develop concepts and conceptual frameworks that are well-grounded in empirical data (qualitative methods: grounded theory method) as well as how to remix these data, descriptions, analyses and theories in qualitative ways that ensure empirical data triangulation, experiential analysis triangulation and expert theory triangulation (qualitative methods: remix methods). This mixed methods approach and its inherent diversity of documentation methods and conceptual refinement methods have proven to spark novel corporeal-locomotive insights through cultivating and refining gameplay activity and experience in new thought-provoking ways. Furthermore, it has proven to be a particularly apt framework for addressing, developing and conveying an ‘inarticulate’ dimension such as corporeal locomotion in gameplay.

The overall approach has, through this multimethodology, been to continually and constantly mix and remix whatever data ingredients and whatever method/theory ingredients that seemed to produce the most methodologically and conceptually adequate fit with the emerging field and its inner inarticulate workings. So, rather than adhering strictly to constructivist or empiricist paradigms, quantitative or qualitative methods, corporeal philosophy or perceptual psychology, the overall methodological attempt has been to move freely between them all while remixing, omitting, propagating and paring constituents, optics and techniques in order to construct a framework that competently and honestly cultivates, harvests and refines the empirical yield of the field.

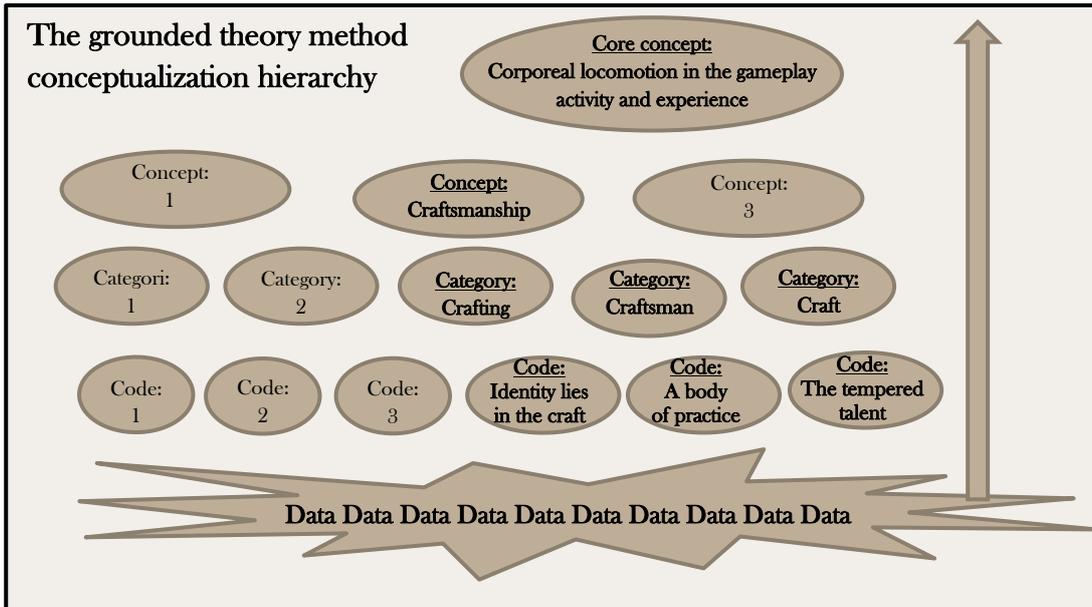
All in all, the only guiding methodological principles that the present research quest can be said to obey are that methods, data forms and theoretical concepts should be cultivated, harvested, refined and remixed in such a way as to enable:

1. the closest possible fit between field and framework, that is, between the ‘corporeal-locomotive dimension’ out there and the ‘methodological and conceptual frameworks’ developed to describe it here,
2. the closest possible fit between the developed methodological framework and the developed conceptual framework,
3. the incorporation of potentially valuable techniques, optics and metaphors, even when seemingly incompatible or estranging, that in the long run could produce a presentation of data in such a way that it reflects the corporeal-locomotive dimension out there,
4. maximum flexibility and adaptability of methods and concepts in relation to what the field and the harvested data demands, that is, enable a method of investigation iteratively developed on the basis of what the field tells us and teaches us ‘at this moment,’ and
5. a conceptual framework which is developed on the basis of what the field tells us and teaches us that the conceptual framework should be.

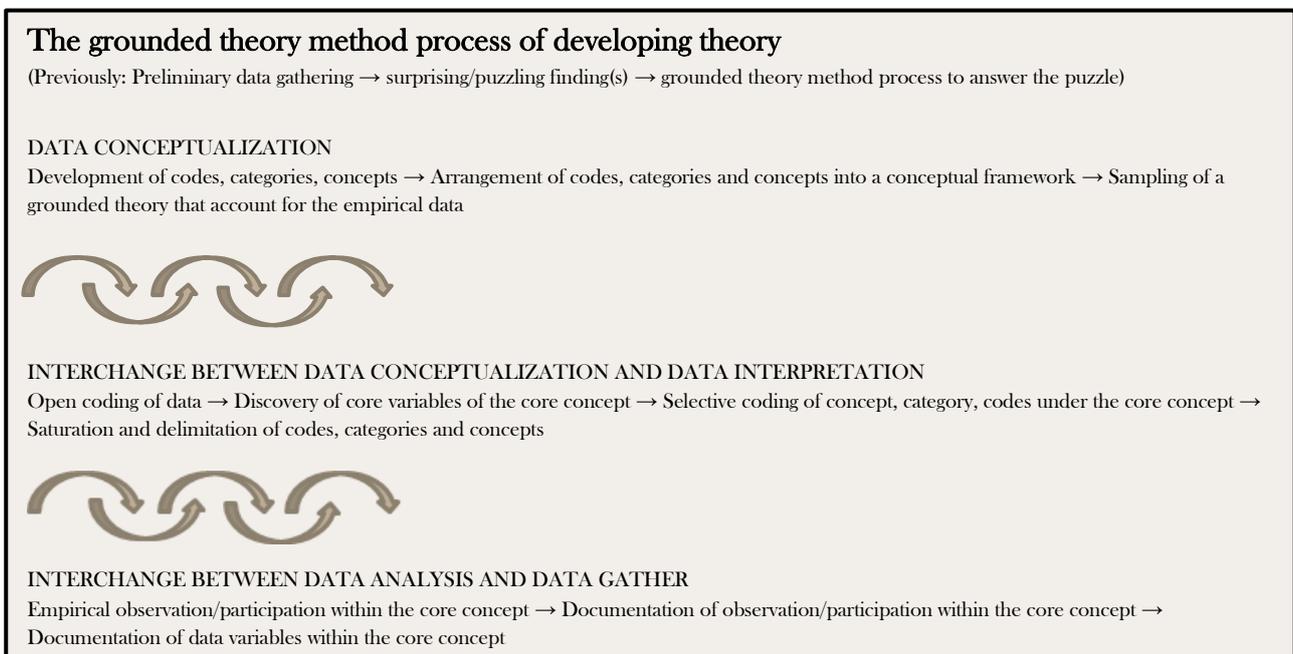
Inherent in these guiding principles is an intimate interdependency between the grounded theory method and the remix methods. This is due to the fact that remixing is carried out *based on and guided by* the grounding of it in the field’s harvested crop of data. That is, the grounded theory method specifies that the data should guide, select, deselect, identify and decide the (re)mixing of methodological and theoretical categories, concepts, optics and tools in such a way as to most powerfully and properly capture what emerges from the field. The grounded theory method tells us to come to the field carrying no set traditions, paradigms or theories. Instead, the ‘frameworks,’ ‘perspectives’ and ‘standpoints’ we occupy in relation to the field should be whichever frameworks, perspectives and standpoints the field tells us to adopt. Accordingly, the methodological-theoretical foundation must necessarily in the outset be a foundation of ‘no-method’ and ‘no-theory’ given that a methodological-theoretical foundation and framework should be developed *on the ground of* the data coming from the field.

Grounded theory method as manure for growing theory of the non-representational

The grounded theory method is basically a method, not for creating data, but for creating concepts and conceptual frameworks out of data. The grounded theory method was first presented by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in their two founding books *Awareness of Dying* (1965) and *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1967) wherein they propounded the grounded theory mantra stating that ‘theory emerges from data.’ It is a method aimed at generating a theory or framework around a core concept (here ‘gameplay corporeality’). This developed core concept should then be able to account for most of the variation in the collected data.. A model of the relationship between abstracted core concept and messy data could look as follows:



The process of theory and/or conceptual generation is, importantly, carried out iteratively as a movement between data collection, data analysis and data conceptualization. The core of the grounded theory method process can be said to be the simultaneity of collecting data through fieldwork, analyzing and interpreting data through open and selective coding and creating and developing codes, categories and concepts from data which are finally sampled into a theoretical framework. The core of the grounded theory method process can be sketched out as follows:



The present study has importantly, not resulted in a ‘properly executed’ grounded theory has but has, rather, adopted a grounded theory method *approach* in order to form a ‘substantive’ conceptual framework for the corporeal-locomotive dimension in gameplay that is grounded thoroughly in

empirical data. A ‘substantive’ framework is a theoretical interpretation of or explanation for a discovered demarcated enigma (such as the simultaneous significance of corporeal locomotion in gameplay and absence of corporeality and locomotion in game research) within a particular substantive area (gameplay) (Bryant & Charmaz, 2010, p. 610). In this fashion, empirical corporeal-locomotive data are coded and clustered into categories which are then again grouped under concepts which then form the basis for the construction of the core concept and its framework. In other words, the grounded theory method (approach) leads to a ‘reverse engineered hypothesis’ as: “A researcher does not begin a project with a preconceived theory in mind [...] Rather, the researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data” (Bryant & Charmaz, 2010, p. 47).

The above focus on developing novel theory and carrying out selective theory driven data collection stands out from the way most other qualitative research (e.g. ethnography, ethnomethodology or reception analysis) carries out data collection, i.e. as something generating ‘thick descriptions’ of a given setting regardless of theoretical relevance (Bryant & Charmaz, 2010, p. 155):

*I have found that, in the years since Glaser and Strauss’s 1967 publication *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, researchers have placed more and more emphasis on the accuracy of collected data rather than concentrating on the developing of theory. These researchers are in grave danger of developing a rich description of the social scene rather than a theoretical one. Description is important to our knowledge, but it’s not theory. (Bryant & Charmaz, 2010, p. 118).*

In essence the reason for adopting a grounded theory method (approach) is often the discovery of something seemingly unintelligible, unexplored or alien in the researcher’s field of attention:

Something unintelligible is discovered in the data and, on the basis of the mental design of a new rule, the rule is discovered or invented, and simultaneously it becomes clear what the case is. The logical form of this operation is that of abduction. Here one has decided (with whatever degree of awareness and for whatever reason) no longer to adhere to the conventional view of things. This way of creating a new ‘type’ (the relationship of a typical new combination of features) is a creative outcome which engenders a new idea (Bryant & Charmaz, 2010, p. 219).

And, since what caught this researcher’s attention was of a pre-linguistic, pre-representational, invisible dimension of gameplay, grounded theory method was especially suited for the task as “Grounded theory [method] is an excellent tool for understanding invisible things. It can be used to reveal the invisible work involved in many kinds of tasks” (Bryant & Charmaz, 2010, p. 79).

Grounded data forms and documentation methods

All of the data gathered in the were gathered in ‘natural settings’ and were characterized by being expressions and impressions of ‘natural gameplay situations.’ In this fashion, research and data collection took place wherever and whenever there was gameplay in the making. In this way, gameplay was never ‘performed’ in honor of the researcher as the participants were never ‘encouraged’ to deliver data (as is the case when using e.g. ‘interviews,’ ‘questionnaires’ or ‘lab experiments’). Rather, the researcher documented corporeal gameplay manifestations through naturally occurring, non-planned gameplay sessions among friends and family members. Moreover, all harvested corporeal-locomotive data are of a ‘first-hand’ nature, meaning that they are obtained through first-hand observation and participation. This is of particular importance when one strives to comprehend and develop a fallow or unacknowledged field within research:

Observational research is emergent, which in this context means that it has great potential for creativity [when compared to interviewing or lab experiments]. Observational researchers can, if they so choose, eschew predetermined categories; at any point in the process outlined above, the researcher can shift the question(s) he or she is pursuing. Observation has the potential to yield new insights as ‘reality’ comes into clearer focus as the result of experience in the field setting. (Angrosino, 2007, p. 61).

Below, is a short outline of the grounded data forms coming out of the field through the use of grounded documentation methods. ‘Grounded data forms and documentation methods’ are meant to cover the collection of more or less ‘raw data’ through more or less ‘prosaic methods’ to build the empirical foundation upon which the conceptual framework for gameplay corporeality is established through the use of ‘remixing data forms and documentation methods.’

DOCUMENTATION METHOD	DATA FORM
OBSERVATIONAL FIELDWORK	<p><u>Informal observational fieldwork</u>: Casual, sometimes even coincidental, observations of a more or less haphazard nature focused on gamers in gameplay across various games. Nevertheless, many of the research quest’s most profound insights and central concepts or categories were stumbled upon during such informal observational fieldwork. Insightful or theory-laden observations were later developed and refined through formal observational fieldwork.</p> <p><u>Formal observational fieldwork</u>: Structured and pre-planned scholarly observations in the effort to grow, cultivate or refine ‘interactional’ codes, categories and concepts for corporeal-locomotive gameplay. Sometimes the observational fieldwork was focused on the cultivation or refinement of a specific category/concept, or even a specific aspect of a specific concept/category; at other times formal observational fieldwork was carried out in order to breed new or contradict old codes, concepts or categories.</p>

<p>PARTICIPATORY FIELDWORK</p>	<p><u>Informal participatory fieldwork:</u> ‘Natural,’ unplanned everyday participation in different gameplay activities and experiences of varying compositions and orchestrations. Here, the entire selection of central and peripheral game and gameplay seeds were tried out on the researcher’s own body in order to gain some personal familiarity with the activities and experiences characterizing these offscreen-onscreen gameworlds.</p> <p><u>Formal participatory fieldwork:</u> Structured and pre-planned scholarly participation in the effort to grow, cultivate and refine ‘interactional’ and ‘experiential’ codes, categories and concepts for corporeal-locomotive gameplay. Sometimes participatory fieldwork was focused on the cultivation or refinement of inner experiential qualia and sometimes it was more focused on outer interactional qualia regarding corporeal locomotion.</p>
<p>TEXTUAL NOTES</p>	<p><u>Head notes:</u> Notes kept and carried in the head. Head notes are a kind of mental or experiential note that the researcher ‘stores in the head’ during participation or observation. Some head notes are later converted into ‘field notes’ or enter into ‘post-fieldwork representations’ (see below)</p> <p><u>Scratch notes:</u> Notes taken ‘on the fly’ when something has to be scribbled down hurriedly in the heat of (own or others) ongoing action. As such, a scratch note functions as a kind of scholarly ‘Post-it’ notes. These notes are often of a very esoteric nature and, thus, have to be turned into a more expanded, contextualized product, such as ‘field notes’ (see below) in order to prevent them from becoming unintelligible with time.</p> <p><u>Field notes:</u> Field notes are the most extensive, interpretative and internally coherent type of note as they often consist of a unified or narrated description containing diverse scratch and head notes and the enlargement and/or interpretation of the observations and participation these notes contain. Thus, field notes are often more rich in contextual information and present a more detailed account of the corporeal-locomotive activity and experience.</p>
<p>TEXTUAL MEMOS</p>	<p><u>Analytical memos:</u> Done as post-field analysis. Analytical memos are simple and intuitive analyses of what was noticed during observations/participation in the field. An analytical memo is the analysis of spontaneously discovered or recognized analytical patterns and elements – aspects of gameplay activity or experience that seem to be repeated or recur so that they can be said to be typical of the (general) gameplay activity and experience being explored. However, they also contain analysis of suddenly realized or recognized deviations and exceptions.</p> <p><u>Methodological memos:</u> Done as post-field methodological reflections. Rather than focusing on the content, meaning or form of the harvested data, these memos focus on the way data was harvested. That is, these memos focus on the methodological framework itself and can stem from</p>

methodological failures, problems, intricacies, considerations, ideas etc. that have emerged during fieldwork and that need to be stored, worked out and possibly tried out. Methodological memos can also contain comments about what was methodologically adopted, abandoned or decided. Such methodological memos would subsequently play an important part in the development of the methodological framework for investigating corporeal-locomotive gameplay activities and experiences.

Theoretical memos: Done as post-field philosophical, theoretical or conceptual reflections. These memos focus on the conceptual framework itself and can stem from discovering, trying out, describing varieties of or refining a concept or category. Theoretical memos contain the ongoing struggle of figuring out how the patterns, meanings, qualia, elements, deviations and exceptions that emerge in the analytical memos fit together, can be accounted for and, subsequently, conceptualized.

VISUAL DATA

Snapshots: In-field offscreen and onscreen photo documentation. Employed as a source of data to be experimented with and investigated to yield corporeal-locomotive insights. Given their 'static' nature, snapshots of corporeal-locomotive gameplay are excellent meditative tools when contemplating the finer nuances and subtle structures of corporeal gameplay or trying to develop the conceptual framework. The practice of taking 'streams of close-ups of gameplaying hands' (up to 150 consecutive snapshots) turned out to be of particular usefulness both as a meditative tool, as a conceptual development tool and as an interpretative static representation of dynamic corporeal locomotion.

Video clips: In-field offscreen and onscreen video documentation. Employed as a source of data that forms the basis of close descriptions of the field and that makes gameplay categories and concepts emerge. Given their 'dynamic' nature, video clips of corporeal-locomotive gameplay are excellent documentary tools when looking for the dynamic qualities, deeper meanings and general structures of corporeal gameplay. Often, however, these video documentations inevitably turned into interpretations, explorations and discoveries rather than remaining simple, straightforward documentations. Hence, 'video clips' were incorporated, firstly, as a 'neutral' documentation method which then was allowed to change in order to document the changing comprehensions of corporeal gameplay.

Remix methods as synthetic fertilizer for enhancing comprehension of the non-representational

Remix is a term originating from within the practice of music where multi-track mix tapes could be remixed. Here, new tracks would be added, tracks would be removed, tracks would be altered, tracks would be substituted with other tracks or tracks would be moved to the foreground or background in the final (re)mix. This notion of remixing has over time been adopted by many different practices such as software, fan art machinema and even research. Today, remix generally refers to the 'reworking of previously existing elements.' Remix methods do, within a scholarly context, refer to the remixing of different styles and genres of research representation, the remixing of various concepts coming from different theoretical frameworks, the remixing of different data forms and formats or the remixing of several analytical practices and aesthetic forms.

Hence, while multimethodology or mixed methods denote the use of more than one method, remix methods denote a more radical or unorthodox remixing approach to data, analysis and theory. Accordingly, the use of mixed and remix methods arises out of the circumstance that even though grounded theory method and remix methods are directed at the same field - corporeal locomotion in gameplay - they produce totally different, and at first sight even incompatible, perspectives and results. A central insight gained during the study's research quest for the significance of corporeal locomotion in gameplay is, that if one wants to both conceptualize and delve deeply into a field, such as the corporeal-locomotive dimension in gameplay activity and experience, that is characterized by a heavy emphasis on the experiential, phenomenological, inarticulate and pre-representational, then grounded theory method is the way to begin, and remix methods the way to proceed. In the above, the methodology for 'conceptualization' was accounted for. In the below, the methodology for 'delving deeply' will be accounted for.

As a 'remixing researcher', I play with patterns, make metaphorical mosaics, creative collages and conceptual patchworks. Remix methods make research fun. But it does, however, also make research risky. Remix methods are more demanding, in that remix methods do much more than 'respectfully quoting' elements (other people's prior research, empirical observations, the study's participants etc.) into a piece that you as author otherwise take full ownership of in regards to 'originality of content.' Contrary to this, remix is more closely associated with the less honorable practices of appropriation, mimicry or fabrication. This is due to the fact that the elements that enter into the (musical or scholarly) mix are not necessarily unaltered and uniquely traceable back to their origin, neither as content nor form. In this way, the study's results is the joint accomplishment of all remixed data, borrowed or fabricated analytical and theoretical bits and pieces. When efficiently put to use, remix methods produce an endless cross-fertilization of conceptual and empirical pieces of different species and origins into a new original (re)mix.

That is, for me, the art and craft of remix - an art and craft which, like the collage, the mosaic or the bricolage, does not aspire to be completely coherent, homogeneous, stable and streamlined or universally representational. A research quest is often messy in the making even though the research result may be neat. Adopting a remix approach means, to me at least, that one acknowledges some of this messiness, instability and fabrication within the final polished product.

This process of fabrication and remix is clearly at odds within the traditional ‘descriptive’ or ‘interviewing’ approach to fieldwork within qualitative research methods but, surprisingly, in line with the approach to developing theory within grounded theory method – within grounded theory methods it is a common practice to warn the researcher against the incorporation of raw data, verbatim recordings or ‘thick descriptions’ on the expense of focused conceptualization, abstraction, generalization and theory construction. Thus, both remix methods and grounded theory method come together in their emphasis on analytical and theoretical fabrication and synthesization, their emphasis on the researcher’s interpretive authority as well as in their emphasis on a “method of analytical representation [which] is designed to unfocus from the individual and refocus on the patterns – those discursive activities that, when experienced live, speak to more than the specific content.” (A. Markham, 2012, p. 344).

One of the ways this is done is by distinguishing between the dissuaded practice of carrying ‘defining theories’ (that prescribe how and what to see) and the advised practice of carrying ‘sensitizing concepts’ (that suggest new ways to see). Including such un-specifying or un-determining sensitizing concepts and frameworks in the investigation permits researchers to apply them [sensitizing concepts/frameworks] to a wide array of phenomena. Regardless of how empirically contentless and vague they are, they may serve as heuristic devices for the construction of empirically grounded categories [...] Therefore, a sensible way to use a heuristic concept like identity in grounded theory research is not to derive a ‘hypothesis,’ which can be ‘empirically tested’ [...] but to employ it as a conceptual frame which helps to understand empirical phenomena found in the research field (Bryant & Charmaz, 2010, p. 208).

Through the research quest’s effort to animate the remix mantra, ‘Find it! Rip it! Mix it! Share it!’, concepts, ideas and insight were eclectically engaged, combined and integrated as the pursuit to illuminate the inner, intimate and innate workings of the corporeal-locomotive dimension was carried on. Through empirical, analytical and theoretical remixes the offscreen and the onscreen, the corporeal and the digital, the locomotive and the perceptual, the gameworld and the gameplayer, the gameplay activity and the gameplay experience amalgamated into a (in)coherent whole.

The study’s eclectic remixing from more or less (in)compatible traditions, paradigms and perspectives is carried out in accordance with the viewpoint that: “A strategy of coding which uses different and even competing theoretical perspectives may often be superior to a strategy which remains restricted to a limited number of pet concepts” (Bryant & Charmaz, 2010, p. 209). In this way, “Heuristic categories play the role of a theoretical axis or skeleton to which the flesh of empirically contentful information from the research domain is added” (Bryant & Charmaz, 2010, p. 210) (See my Nordmedia2013 article “Corporeal-Loomotive Media?: Experiencing first-person being and first-person doing in offscreen-onscreen gameworlds” for examples of such sensitizing and heuristic concepts and frameworks).

In this way, a kin-aesthetic sensibility was sought implemented in the textual corpus in order to render it more “visceral; that is, they go beyond conscious reasoning and bring us inside experience and in touch with feelings. They are closer approximations of lived experience, which give them greater

credibility and authority as a realistic account” (Markula & Denison, 2000, p. 418). This is done to incorporate a more ‘skin-tight’ comprehension of corporeal-locomotive gameplay activities and experiences and to honor the fact that “Not only is meaning always ambiguous but also the processes we engage in to make sense of the world are neither linear nor smooth. Rather, they are seamed through and through, more of a patchwork or mosaic than a coherent, flawless, and stable whole.” (A. N. Markham, 2005, pp. 837-838).

In this way, vivid kinaesthetic non-representation, passionate language and figurative imagery is composed in conjunction with sober descriptive representations, abstract language and theoretical frameworks in order to get an accurate rendering of gamers interacting in and experiencing offscreen/onscreen gameworlds through corporeal-locomotive gameplay.

Through such cut-up techniques, fragmented observations and participation, punctuated or scattered narratives and multiple theoretical frameworks (e.g. craftsmanship, sensory experience and body-schematic learning), corporeal locomotion in gameplay is, in accordance with Annette Markham, presented not as a grand narrative but as a remix of imagery, insights and impressions in order to make a new conception of gameplay make itself heard: “...if the purpose is to break the frames we have arbitrarily set around the ways we present what it is we think we know, the form should also break the frame [...] to make readers think about many things while forming their own impressions” (A. N. Markham, 2005, p. 822).

Remixing data forms and documentation methods

Before moving on to the presentation of the remixing data forms and documentation methods, a word on visual research methodologies needs to be stated, as they were foundational and instrumental in the remixing and development of the corporeal-locomotive dimension. Thus, textual and visual methods were of equal significance and impact in the research quest.

In *Using Visual Data in Qualitative Research - The SAGE Qualitative Research Kit* the ‘serendipitous’ quality of visual methods is underlined by Marcus Banks: “...image-based research often encourages investigative serendipity, the following of a line of inquiry that could not have been predicted in the original research design.” (Banks, 2007, pp. 8-9). He then proceeds to emphasize the exploratory nature of such visual methods:

In general, visual research methodologies tend towards the exploratory rather than the confirmatory. That is, visual methodologies are not so much employed as a method to gather data of predetermined size and shape that will confirm or refute previously posited hypotheses, but as a method designed to take the researcher into realms that she may not have considered and towards findings previously unanticipated. (Banks, 2007, p. 10)

Accordingly, adopting such visual methods in the research quest seemed self-evident. And even more so, as the subject under analytical investigation and conceptual development was of a decidedly non-linguistic, non-representational and non-narrative nature. Here, visual methods proved their strength

both within the rendering of the corporeal-locomotive dimension of gameplay, as “...the addition of visual methods can bring an added dimension, particularly in realms where the knowledge sought is beyond the range of language” (Banks, 2007, p. 116), as well as within the analysis of it, as “...analytical strategies that rely on linguistically derived models of semiotic communication are inadequate. In this way, textual and visual, observational and participatory, grounded and remixing data forms and documentation methods became collaborators in the research quest for the significance of the corporal-locomotive dimension in gameplay activity and experience.

Below, is a short outline of the most important textual and visual remixing data forms coming out of the field through the use of remixing documentation methods:

DOCUMENTATION METHOD	DATA FORM
TEXTUAL INSCRIPTION REMIXES	<p><u>Figurative language</u>: Inscribing grounded data with figurative language, imagery, tropes etc. in order to conjure a more ‘image-formed and -forming’ understanding of the corporeal-locomotive dimension.</p> <p><u>Non-representation</u>: Inscribing grounded data gathered with emotions, feelings, sensations, experiential qualia, memories, impressionistic or expressionistic features etc. in order to conjure a more ‘empathetic’ understanding of the corporeal-locomotive dimension.</p> <p><u>Synesthesia</u>: Inscribing grounded data with sense inversions, sense transformations, cross-sensory metaphors, sensory associations, multi-sensory mappings etc. in order to express the linkages between the senses and conjure a more ‘sensuous’ understanding of the corporeal-locomotive dimension.</p>
TEXTUAL INTERPRETATION REMIXES	<p><u>Auto-phenomenography</u>: Interpreting grounded data gathered on the grounds of the researcher’s own lived experience and performed activities in order to create first-person accounts of the experiences and activities of corporeal-locomotive gameplay. Although auto-phenomenography has many traits in common with the more widely known method of auto-ethnography, auto-phenomenography focuses not so much on the researcher’s experience of a social setting, culture or group of people as on the researcher’s own lived experience of a specific phenomenon (e.g. corporeal-locomotive gameplay).</p>

	<p><u>Narratives and stories</u>: Transforming grounded data into fabricated narratives and well-told stories that highlight specific points, explore certain themes, express a grounded category or concept and fuse disparate observations or participations and present them as coherent articulate wholes</p> <p><u>Metaphorical remixing</u>: Interpreting grounded data through performing a metaphorical reading of the gameplay activity and experience in order to create connections between a source domain (e.g. craftsmanship or jazz) and a target domain (e.g. corporeal gameplay) and thus subsequently new insights into and a possible new comprehension and vocabulary of the target domain.</p>
<p>VISUAL INSCRIPTION REMIXES</p>	<p><u>Aestheticizing, stylization and (re)fashioning techniques</u>: Inscribing grounded data with music, external imagery, beautifying editing, inserted adornments or embellishments etc. and presenting them as music videos, scholarly arguments, conference presentations, and ‘living concepts’ in order to conjure a more ‘moving’ scholarly understanding of the corporeal-locomotive dimension (e.g. the presenting the ‘corporeal and passionate gameplayer in the research music video “Body Movin’: Gaming as the joy of doing” published in <i>Audiovisual Thinking - The Journal of Academic Videos</i>, no. 3.).</p>
<p>VISUAL INTERPRETATION REMIXES</p>	<p><u>Photo montages</u>: Transforming grounded data into photo montages that talk to the eye rather than the mind - i.e. transforming visual material in order to make a specific methodological/theoretical point or argument, juxtaposing visual material to underscore certain similarities, making visual antitheses to underscore certain differences or fusing visual material to transform disparate elements into a coherent whole.</p> <p><u>Research music videos</u>: Transforming grounded data (‘shoot footage’) into ‘research music videos’ (my coinage) talking to the body rather than the mind - i.e. transforming different video clips into an assembled kinaesthetic rendering of ephemeral corporeal-locomotive gameplay activities and experiences in order to evoke corporeal-locomotive gameplay sensations and memories in the viewer’s body and thus get the ‘corporeal-locomotive message’ across (see e.g. the research music video “Body Movin’: Gaming as the joy of doing” published in <i>Audiovisual Thinking - The Journal of Academic Videos</i>, no. 3.).</p> <p><u>Visual collages/bricolages</u>: Interpreting grounded data through cutting up and then fusing together own and others visual material in order to perform visual readings of or arguments about the corporeal-locomotive dimension. Visual collages/bricolages are performed as the fusion of various source domains into a new remixed target domain in order to create new insights into or points about corporeal-locomotive gameplay.</p>

The great multiplicity and multimodality of data apparent within the tables of ‘grounded data forms and documentation methods’ and ‘remixing data forms and documentation methods’ has been decided on to ensure that many different angles, expressions and perspectives are covered in relation to the corporeal-locomotive dimension of the gameplay activity and experience. Out of this mess and mesh of qualitative, grounded and remixing data approaches, the conceptual framework for gameplay corporeality slowly emerged through careful data analysis.

It has been this study’s experience that data gathering “appears not as an orderly process of collecting or recording but as an improvisation in the midst of competing, distracting messages and influences.” (Sanjek, 1990, p. 54). Ironically, it was thus not until the fieldwork was over that the methodological framework was practically complete.

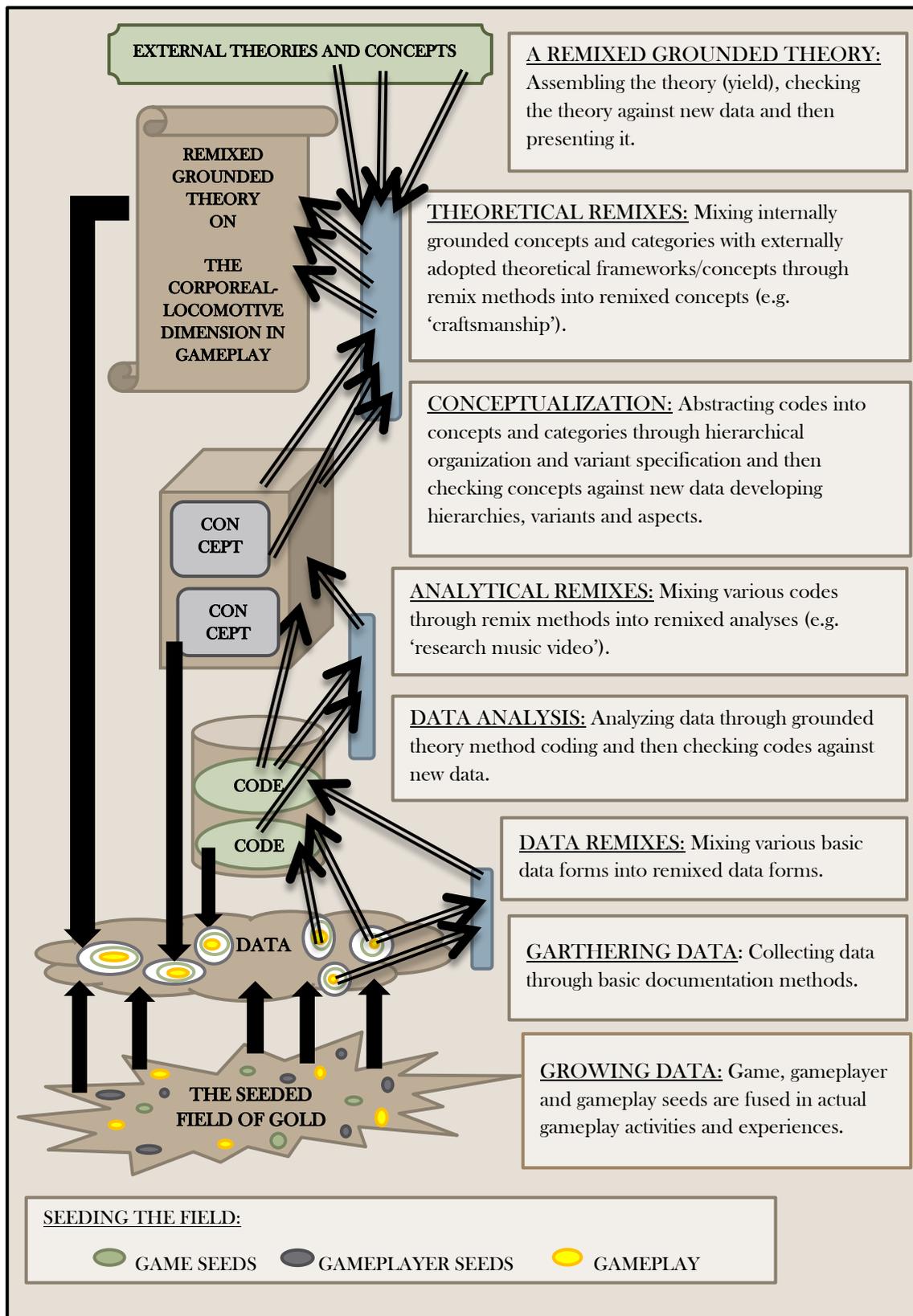
A methodological framework for the non-representational

So how could you methodologically approach, investigate and analyze corporeal gameplay in a way that adequately acknowledges and addresses the inherent complexity, multimodality and indissolubility of the field as well as its self-sufficient relevance, autonomic significance and (kin)aesthetic value? And how could you methodologically approach, investigate and analyze the corporeal-locomotive dimension in such a way that its manifold relations, interdependencies and intimacies internally and to other dimensions of gameplay activity and experience are acknowledged and preserved?

In the process of considering such questions a comprehension of the intricate relationship between method and theory slowly forms. It is realized that the methodological framework is what shapes the theoretical approach, as the conceptual framework is what shapes the methodological approach. And both are shaped by the field under development: the corporeal-locomotive dimension in gameplay activity and experience.

What became of particular importance was the realization that method is inherently theoretical and theory is inherently methodological. There is, in reality, no ‘methodological framework,’ as there is no ‘conceptual framework.’ There is only the methodological-conceptual framework, as the one is inseparable from the other. So, even though the two are presented within separate articles at Nordmedia2013, in reality they are one. In reality, method is something conceptual and concepts are a methodological way of approaching the field. Hence, the presented methodological framework in this article is not solely an empirically developed methodological design for conducting research on corporeal gameplay or related areas; it is just as much a theoretical concept. Accordingly, methods are not just technical tools, but just as much philosophical conceptions. And conversely, the presented philosophical, theoretical and analytical conceptualizations present in the Nordmedia2013 article “Corporeal-Loomotive Media?: Experiencing first-person being & first-person doing in offscreen-onscreen gameworlds” are just as much methodological expressions as they are theoretical impressions. Below is a model the assembled developed methodological framework (to be read from the bottom up):

The methodological framework for the corporeal-locomotive dimension



On the basis of the above model it is clear that the concept of ‘methodology’ should be comprehended as equally concerning ‘the theory behind the employed methods’ and ‘the method behind the employed theories.’ In this way, theories should always be merged with methods and vice versa, on the basis of the premise that “...there is [on the one hand] nothing so practical as a good theory” (Lewin, 1951, p. 169) and “There is [on the other hand] nothing so theoretical as good practice” (Hunt, 1987, p. 78).

Hence, the developed methodological framework is a mixture of empirical- and theory-laden methods. The empirical methods underpin the grounded theory approach as they use collections of data to form theory. In this way, the empirical methods consist of the aggregating of naturally occurring data where concepts, categories and theories are derived from experienced practice. Overall, it is a method where no previously selected hypothesis guides the process of aggregating data in order for the data to test the specified hypothesis. Rather, data is aggregated through a sort of trial-and-error framework (i.e. iterative process). So, while the object of investigation (i.e. the corporeal-locomotive dimension) is established beforehand, what the object signifies and whether it is meaningful to study it is unknown at the outset. However, the empirical methods are, in the model, supplemented with more theory-laden methods. Thus, remix methods are underpinned by a more theory-laden approach where a well-assorted toolbox of different theories and/or methods is used to (re)mix the data coming from the field. In this way, the ability to entertain a range of different concepts and theories to account for the emerging findings (caused by the use of the grounded theory method) gives the researcher a solid foundation for playing with and trying out multiple methodological and theoretical ideas and frameworks before constructing a (grounded) methodological-theoretical framework of his/her own. Accordingly, this article asserts that an open (grounded theory method) mind does not necessarily imply an empty (remix methods) mind given that in the development of a new research field, theory becomes method and method becomes theory as the field evolves through molding the researcher’s mind.

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