

Critical Performativity and Embodied Performing as materio-socio-cultural Practices – Phenomenological Perspectives on performative Bodies at work

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Abstract. One of the most elementary way in which members in organisations are involved in their performances are their embodied and expressed relations and interactions. The paper shows how phenomenology can help to render explicit these incorporated experiences and dimensions of performances in organizational life-worlds. Particularly, Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology allows to understand the interlacing role of body-related, interrelations of performing processes in and through organising. These embodied dimensions of performance will be demonstrated by examples of performative bodies at work. By concluding some perspectives on embodied performing in organisation are offered.

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“The unique strengths and potentials of performance are what make it dirty, messy, and dangerous....”

(Goltz, 2013: 22)

INTRODUCTION

Performance indicator, performance measures, performance appraisal system (Causer & Jones, 1996), performance targets, and performance management techniques codify, measure, judge and discipline the productivity of (some-body's) efforts and results against those of individualized others or pre-determined standards. Measures matter (Bierbusse & Siesfeld, 1998) and there are many attempts to measure performance: Deployment of assets measured as ROI, ROE DEA, Shareholder Value, Profitability, Liquidity and Capital Structure measured by Cash flow, Debt-equity, Debt service, Resource Control measured by Financial Statements, Department Expenses, Activity Accounting, Cost of Quality, Value-added/non-value-added Ratio, Balanced Score-Card. All these and more techniques try to measure economic and organisational performance. At a conceptual level, the benefits, as instrumental advantages of measurement seem obvious. As a quantitative, goal-oriented system, performance measurement determines decisions regarding salary increases, bonuses, promotions, layoffs, demotions, and transfers fall. By holding employees' accountable for their performance, as judged by a systems of measurement, successful ones can be rewarded and poor ones punished. Performance-measurement is seen as what influences developmental goals translation of strategy into action, and

entailing the many ways managers attempt to enhance employees' motivation and ability or procedures to monitor and control them. Accordingly, systems of measuring the performance prisms are "quantifying the efficiency and effectiveness of past actions" (Neely et al., 2002) or measurement of value that the organization delivers to the customers (Moullin, 2003).

So called 'best practices', various measurement systems (Striteska, & Spickova, 2012), especially, key performance indicators KPIs, are used as yard-sticks for accomplishing high-performing organisations and are supposedly functioning to secure financial success and increasing shareholder wealth or growth. KPIs are supposed to make objectives quantifiable, providing visibility, e.g. via dashboards, scorecards or reports, into the performance of individuals, teams, departments and organizations and enabling decision makers to take action in achieving the desired outcomes (Parmanter, 2007).

The predominant focus on organizational performance has been studied as an aggregate organizational-level dependent variable respectively broadened to more disaggregated levels of analysis, and performance has been discussed as both input and outcome and recasted in terms of performativity (Guérard et al., 2013).

A performance management with single-mindedly focuses on short term financial output and measurements as part of strategic drive for profit, ultimately ignores the developmental needs, capabilities, and motivation of the employee impacting their health and personal life; while a sustainable, strategic and participatory HR approach would help to achieve a long-term organizational performance (Ehnert, et al. 2014, Maley, 2014).

Accordingly, systems of performance measuring and conventional understandings seem to cause undermining influences or un-intended impacts on body-mediated creative inter-actions and spontaneous behavior as well as social responsive and responsible practices in organizations.

Performance improvement management methods that lead to stressing people "in the pursuit of excellence" may trim down their factual or potential 'productivity' and thereby the viability of the organization. In other words, supposed measurable evidence itself may cause a deterioration of performance (Austin, 1996); or at least what is needed is to inquire under what circumstances does performance measurement positively impact on organizational performance (Bourne et al., 2005: 374).

Are dysfunctions of performance nothing more than a rare, freakish anomaly, or are specific measurement-oriented monitoring and tight supervision itself worsening performance of by this means unhappy, angry, frustrated and frightened employees?

As Cooper and Burrell (1988: 96) pointed out long ago, but which is and increasingly becomes even more powerful: "The significance of the modern corporation lies precisely in its invention of the idea of performance, especially in its economizing mode, and then creating a reality out of the idea by ordering social relations according to the model of functional rationality", thus manifesting the modernist *Zeitgeist*. Accordingly, performances - in general and of employees and managers in particular - are an influential way by which purpose-driven organisations are arranged and specific meanings are being constructed. For that reason, critically investigating performances can contribute to a deepened understanding of how organisational members and entire organisations are co-constituted by and construct or make sense of their performative experiences and (affective) processes involved.

The following paper is responding to the call for a critical research agenda for exploring performance from multiple perspectives (Holloway, 2009; Thorpe & Holloway, 2008), and a research on critical performativity (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012; Spicer et al. 2009; Spicer et al., 2009: 545-554); including its possibilities and perils of critical performativity (King, 2015); uses and abuses (Gond et al., 2016) as well as calls for reconsideration (Cabantous et al., 2016). Related to the performative and performativity turn in the social sciences (Czarniawska, 2016; Muniesa, 2014: 7); the concept of a critical performativity has emerged as a potential solution to problems of a supposed anti-performative character of critique (Spicer et al. 2009). To conceive performativity critically Spicer et al. (2009: 545-554) are suggesting to aim for reworking discourses and practices by using possible tactics of critical affirmation, ethics of circumspect care, a progressive pragmatism orientation, and a focus on potentialities and normative emancipatory stance. For developing a progressive understanding of performativity implies for Wickert and Schaefer (2015: 7), re-interpreting the performative by promoting "other values, such as emancipation, democracy or ecological balance". However, for moving critical performativity forward (Learmonth et al. 2016), suggestions for keeping and advancing critical performativity as a political project have been called for (Cabantous et al., 2016: 206). This calls for a 'political theory of organizational performativity' that enables 'more powerful ways of intervening in organizations' (ibid 2015: 13).

In search for a politics of hope, with Denzin (2016: 156), a corresponding 'performance of possibilities' - itself part of a 'post-capitalist politics of the possible' (Gibson-Graham, 2006) - would combine intervention¹ with activism, and citizenship; while reflexively asking questions like:

- Will the performance contribute to an enlightened and involved citizenship?
- Will the performance disrupt structures that limit freedoms and possibilities?
- Will the performance lead performers (and researchers/ ethnographers) to rethink questions of identity, representation and fairness?

Following these guiding questions and understanding performance as a site of 'inter-praxis' (Küpers, 2017) it may become a medium of change and transformation of practices and effectuation in favor of those that are or become more just, sustainable and wise.

Distinguishing processually between performativity as the '*doing*' and performance as the '*done*' (Denzin, 2003: 4), allows not only to understand performing as what precedes performance, but also involves participatory, embodied, enactive and experiential modes of be(com)ing (Küpers, 2014), thus learning and transformation. Furthermore, such differentiated consideration also facilitates developing, articulating, refining and sustaining performative practices even more inter-relationally. These practices can be realised in what could be called embodied 'inter-practices' of organisations and among its performing members and stakeholders (Küpers, 2013a).

1. In a broadening way, performativity can be interpreted as signifying 'intervention in practice' (Spicer et al., 2009: 543). A performativity, qualified as critical 'involves active and subversive intervention into management discourses and practices' (Spicer et al., 2009: 538). The aspiration is to move beyond 'cynicism and negativity' by recognizing that critique also involves an affirmative movement (Spicer et al., 2009). For Alvesson et al. (2009: 23), the idea of critical performativity is underscored by understanding that critique can incorporate positive impulses alongside its reflexive and deconstructive course. This is important in order to avoid that critique functions only as a negative force and, as such becomes marginalized within academic and business worlds. Performativity is not only related to instrumentality, i.e. measurable 'technical' efficiency-oriented managerial performance appropriated by fitting 'the means-ends scheme of goal directed action' (Koopman 2005: 129). While othering that which is outside it: "an absent hinterland of different performative realities' (Sage et al. 2013) and functioning as grand narrative that jeopardise transformative practices (Lyotard, 1984).

Related to such relational orientation the following contribution outlines how phenomenology can help to render explicit the incorporated and inscribed modes of bodily performing and embodied experiences and materio-social and cultural dimensions of performances as a relational event. Phenomenology engages with experience, perception, and with making sense as processes of structuring performance-making and reception that are embodied, situated, and relational (Sherman et al., 2015).

Particularly, Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology offers an interpretative approach to the interlacing role of body-related, perceptual, and expressive inter-relations of creative performing processes in organizational life-worlds and beyond. The textual performance conveyed in this article will be arranged in the following order: The first part of the paper highlights the significance of performances as an inter-related event. It will argue that a relational perspective is a fruitful way to explore and understand how performing experiences and occurrences in organisations are constituted, developed and made meaningful. Afterwards, a phenomenological approach towards embodied and expressive inter-relations of performances/performing will be presented.

The embodied dimensions of performance will then be demonstrated by examples of performative bodies at work in body-mediated, interplaying events and practices. The paper concludes by offering some perspectives on what a corporeal understanding and practice of embodied performing as 'materio~socio~cultural' practices in organizational life-worlds, and beyond, might become.

INTER-RELATIONALITY OF PERFORMANCE IN ORGANISATIONS AS STAGES

Performance in general, and organizational and managerial performance in particular can be understood as a form inter-related process mediating a dramaturgical enactment. From such broader view, performance can be conceptualised as a medium of intentions, responding and a staging for meanings and expressions. If organisations and leadership can be interpreted as a 'drama' (Jeffcutt et al., 1996; Linstead & Höpfl, 2000; Starrat, 1993), a significant study of the 'stage' upon which this is enacted, the narrated plot, setting, themes, construction of characters, roles and interactions, failures, or conflicts in daily life becomes possible (Goffman, 1959). Thus, seeing organisations and management through a dramaturgical lens can open up for a new view of organisational and managerial every-day life.

Performers are actors, who play characters and roles with a 'theatrical consciousness' (Mangham & Overington, 1987: 221), while they perform their acting and experience passion and suffering (Höpfl & Linstead, 1993) on a stage, called organization. Thus, organizational stages are specific milieus of organizational members as characters, who are acting out in a quasi-theatrical way (Sauter, 2000) also life stories behind them (Bentley, 1972: 59). This does not mean that 'theatre' is equal to organisational life, nor vice versa. Organisation, understood as a theatre-place in which performed dramas occur, is neither a closed system or a-contextual play, nor an 'a-historical' sphere. On the contrary, this theatrical world is fundamentally influenced by the individual, social and organisational histories and culture as well as a specific body-mediated situatedness. Therefore, using the theatrics metaphor and understanding performed processes as part of the concrete, visible life-world in organisations, can help to gain deeper in-sights of the factual enactment of

embodied meanings involved. Such approach requires understanding that sense-making of performed realities is inhering in daily embodied practices themselves. In performances as ongoing practice, enactment in organisations emerges from the fluid, but pragmatic inter-relationship situated at work. With such orientation, variously embodied and performed actions can actually mean different things, at different times and to various agents and diverse socio-material conditions and relational constellations. This implies that to approach performances in life-worldly organisations is to describe the expressions and meaning of performed and processed experiences without denying or restraining its densities and obscurities and ambiguities involved.

Accordingly, for such enactive and relational approach towards performing, the 'events of performances' and 'performative events' develop out of a complex set of interdependent interactions and agencies. By these relational actions its expressions and meanings are continually created, re-created, put in question and re-negotiated through a complex network of embodied entwinements and social inter-changes. Thus, making sense of performances is a communal and 'systemic' accomplishment within a local sensual 'con-texture' and social-historical inter-communicative 'context(uality)' (Küpers, 2012). As the Latin word *contextus* suggests ('con' = *together* and *texere* = *to weave*) it refers to putting together or weaving elements (Barnhart, 2001: 213), thus a con-textual experience and process involves knowing about patterning and realizing how to perform.

In this sense, performing is an ongoing process of relating understood as a joint-action that makes particular occurrences 'real', creative and meaningful. Performing individual actions in themselves have no meaning, but acquire the same only as they are supplemented by the processes, experiences, and actions of and with others in a responsive interplay within embodied and social performances. In this way, embodied performances as shared, dialogically structured and responsive activities, constitute a realm and processual reality *sui generis*. Such understanding implies that performative acting cannot be explained as 'subjective' behavior, nor as isolated, 'objective' action. To understand performing as inter-relational event requires to see it co-constituted by processes of being bodily and spontaneously responsive, thus connected to others and otherness. This 'otherness' is always already situated, while co-creative co-practicing performances are carried out. Those involved in performance are part of a ceaselessly unfolding flow of relationally responsive activities of one kind or another (Shotter, 1995) without having a center. For such a decentered relational approach organisations are performative arenas, in which the experiencing and acting of their de-identified members are co-merging 'forces' and processual manifestations; a virtual stage of imminence that allows to posit as possible what which was supposedly impossible to come to appear (Alloa, 2014: 162). The bodies of performing actors are a virtuality that, being always already real, has the ability to detach themselves from the given actual; capable of allowing to be taken up by other roles. As such performers in their 'we-mode', who are enacting a 'we-can' of "we cannot" (Küpers, 2015: 141), are part of a situated materio-spatio-temporal' order and socio-cultural-political web of relations and 'inter-ests' as in the between' of what matters. Such orientation allows considering various forms of responsive responsibilities and communal issues as dimensions of a revisited, more integrated corporate social performance (Wartick & Cochran, 1985; Wood 1991). With this 'real-virtual', embodied and social-responsive perspective, various forms of expression and voices can be perceived and heard, while considering

different aspects of body-mediated performance and performing as enacted.

Phenomenologically, this exploration can be done without discoursing performing as more or less 'true', or more or less serviceable in relation to some mono-logical definition of a fixed knowledge, how things 'really' are or what is 'successful' in predetermined economical ways. Accordingly, the notion of performance cannot be taken any longer as a conceptual 'anchor' for establishing a 'facticity' for example of competencies, outcomes or given learning formats (Holmes, 2000). What constitutes performance is rather bodily and socially co-created through indeterminable, inter-relational and emergent processes. Such embodied process-view of performing involves warranting claims and affirmations that situate performative activities in the very instantiation of social practices. These are processed by fluid identities of an open becoming that is moving in-between in-corporation and expression within and through pre- and transforming contextualities (Küpers, 2012).

PHENOMENOLOGY OF EMBODIED AGENCY OF PERFORMING

A phenomenological approach offers a descriptive and interpretative method for investigating the basic role of entwined bodily, emotional, expressive and socio-cultural dimensions of performance within organisational life. Thus, phenomenologically, performances can be conceived as enacted inter-related events that are processing embodied and communicative relationships. For an extended phenomenological understanding of embodied agency, and thereby effective performative actions, particularly pre-reflexive and sub-personal processes, states and conditions including material, physico-bio-chemical, and ecological or also technological elements and non-human dimensions are constitutive (Küpers, 2015: 154). Embodied performing includes imitation, or mimesis; poiesis/construction; kinesis/motion, interruption, transgression as dramaturgical staging (Conquergood, 1998: 31). Having these elements of mimesis, poesis, and kinesis, Conquergood (ibid) argued that every performance is emergent, subversive, incomplete, and ambiguous. Viewed as imitative, processual, liminal struggles, performances always have the potential of transformation. (Denzin, 2016: 153). For example skill-related and bodily kinetic disposition of animated bodies allows performative (inter-)actions to become gestural and expressive, creating also non-reflexive responses. In doing so, embodied actor and agencies mediate a 'proto-signification' that is rendering performative moments and movements which are 'figurative' or culturally meaningful by embodying the situation in its calibrated performance (Noland, 2009: 64) of integrated 'speaking-doing' bodies.

According to Coole (2005), agentic capacities emerge and interact as contingent singularities of incarnated individual or collective performing agents across a co-existing spectrum between pre-personal, corporeal and thus non-cognitive processes and a trans-personal, intersubjective inter-world.

Expressive bodies are central in the enactment of social and organizational life as 'it is through the performance of bodily actions that the performance of other actors is constituted or effected' (Schatzki, 1996: 44).

For Schatzki (2001: 3), practice refers to embodied materially mediated arrays of human activity centrally organised around shared practical understandings. For him expressive bodies not only signify

biological or psychological states, but are central in the enactment of social and organizational life as “it is through the performance of bodily actions that the performance of other actors is constituted or effected” (Schatzki, 1996: 44). All the three dimensions of ‘body-ness’ outlined by Schatzki (1996), that is ‘being a body’; ‘having a body’; and the ‘instrumental body’ are relevant for performing. Already *‘being a body’* implies a mostly backgrounded ability to perform bodily ‘doings’ and ‘sayings’, and to experience bodily sensations and feelings (Schatzki, 2010) (fingers being capable of moving for typing or pointing). Becoming aware of *‘having a body’* is made evident in situations of breakdown, malfunction, discomfort, and incompetence (fingers missing the correct keys or pointed target). Finally, the *‘instrumental body’* refers to the notion that it is through the performance of bodily actions that the performance of other actions is effected (action of typing or pointing for specific purposes).

According to Schatzki, practice is a ‘temporary unfolded and spatially dispersed nexus of doing and saying’ where the body and artifacts are sites of understanding (1996: 89). Accordingly, sense-based practices of organizing are made up of a collection of embodied orientations, feelings, thoughts, intentions, and activities related to equipment and tools as well as shared socio-cultural milieus. For example, turn-taking participations in business meetings are organised through embodied orientations and conducts as a multimodal performative practices, displaying specific local expectations regarding rights and obligations to talk and to know (Markaki & Mondada, 2012). Based on the outlined phenomenological understanding, the following discusses some specific forms of performative bodies at work in practice.

PERFORMATIVE BODIES AT WORK

When professionals are engaged in practice, in performing their professional work, their bodies are always-already active participants (Green & Hopwood, 2015: 26). Serving both as actor and medium, the body is the *‘conditio sine quo non’* for all kinds of performative actions, interactions and relational practices in organizing, like mobilizing sensual, psycho-physical and social capacities, presences and forms of processing knowledge or communication.

Performing ‘Bodies-at-work’ involve working bodies or bodily work that is done and effected on or through other bodies, respectively when the contextuality ‘becomes’ the body. Various forms of somatic or sensory work as well as affective, emotional and aesthetic labour and embodied performances are part of work-practices and its affective dramas that are staged and performed in everyday-life of organising (Küpers, 2015: 161). In all these forms of performative work practitioners are incorporating embodied senses and knowing, as intertwined with feelings and cognition, into their social or organizational work-practice (Sodhi & Cohen, 2012). They not only use their senses, somatic sensations and bodies as viable and valid sources and media of their practice but also knowledge as part of their professional activities.

In performing somatic work (Vanini et al., 2012) or sensory work in organization (Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2009), practical work-experiences of the embodied practitioner create, manage, reproduce, negotiate, interrupt and communicate somatic awareness and sensations. During somatic work, people manipulate sensory experience often for a desired impression management. This kind of work of managing impressions uses agency-oriented body-techniques (Crossley, 1995), and processes

embodied sensations, emotions or aesthetic components in order to stage specific forms of faked or genuine performance.

Using sensing as a social and symbolic practice, the somatic working body is crafted, negotiated or deployed, while being involved in 'affective dramas' of being performed, staged and presented in everyday-life of organizing. These somatic -based or -mediated practices range in occupational areas from fashion to fitness (Waskul & Vannini, 2013). An embodied, ritualized performance, for example, managing smell as an 'effectuating act' and as a sign, is often processed in critical relation to social, cultural and moral order in specific organizational circumstances, while it enacts a corporeal sense-making or sensuous making of meaning (Küpers, 2013b; Waskul & Vanini, 2008).

Mediated through the senses and bodily 'infrastructures', various interplaying processes of sensing and perceptions are active corporeal performances that are structuring experiences and agencies as socially mediated activities.

Embodied performances of somatic work incorporate also affective, pathic and e-motional dimensions for ongoing processes of acting and enacting. In embodied and placed forms organisations and its members 'body-forth' moving working body-selves and performative processes. Ambivalently, both are perceptive, operative-intentional as well as responsive and indeterminate or emergent, but also ruled, controlled and constrained. As such, embodied sensing beings at work are building up and enacting a somatic career as a sensuous personal and historical identity (Vanini et al., 2010: 339).

In the organizational context, this performative, somatic work is sometimes realized in critical relation to given circumstances and rules that influence the enactment of a corporeal sense-making or sensuous making of meaning (Waskul & Vanini, 2008). This sensual making of senses in somatic working is processed in order to make them congruent with the given or aspired personal, interpersonal and/or cultural understandings of logical conformist necessities or ethical and aesthetic desirability as well as socio-cultural and organizational norms affecting the body. Various forms of representation and moulding 'subjectification' try to rationally tame and discipline the performing bodies-at-work, attempting to (re-)produce docile, but fit adjustable bodies through post-disciplinary regimes of work (Weiskopf & Loacker, 2006).

PERFORMING BODY IN AFFECTIVE AND EMOTIONAL LABOUR

Closely connected to somatic works are various forms of affective and emotional labour that refer to ways in which members of organizations are operating as bodily-engaged beings within occupational milieus (Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2009: 222). These forms refer to kinds of embodied practices, which produce or modify affective and emotional experiences in people to manipulate senses, affects and feelings. In embodying emotional labour (Knights & Thanem, 2005), the performing body acts as a medium of affective and symbolic communication through bodily language, gestures and appearances, especially in service work (Bolton, 2005). Such emotional labour in action navigates multiple involvements as shown in studies on the organizational practices in a beauty salon (Toerien & Kitzinger, 2007). This kind of work has ambivalent effects, which may be impoverishing, alienating or exhausting but at the same time mutually connecting, acting out and enriching or satisfying working-life (Lapointe et al., 2012). Another form of embodied performance

is the body-work involved in caring. Embodied care work is committed to the flourishing and growth of individuals, especially ameliorating suffering and flourishing while it includes 'caring knowledge', 'caring habits' and 'caring imagination' (Hamington, 2004: 12).

As an embodied, performative and imaginative endeavour, care not only is bound to the field of nurse-patient or doctor-patient relationships in the medical domain, health sector and therapy delivery. Embodied care can also be related to areas of social policy, political theory and law as well as stakeholder approaches, knowledge and creativity management, accounting and relational leadership offer opportunities to connect to the relationality of an embodied caring (Hawk, 2011: 16–17).

Moreover, while embodied care work aspires to contribute to the thriving unfoldment of interrelated human persons, communities and systems, this undertaking raises questions of values, morals and ethics, and to respond with ethical bodies (Al-Saji, 2006). Very down to earth, embodied ethical work in experiential, emotional and political care practices are dealing with corporeal waste of the leaky body, such as excrement, snot, sweat, saliva, sick, wind, blood and pee with invalidated, disable people (Hughes et al., 2005). This work of care is often stigmatized as low-status, low-paying and dirty work, deemed more suitable for the bodies of women and migrants (Dyer et al., 2008; Huang et al., 2012). Ethical engagement of health care providers, with their embodied clinical working experiences and practices, are situated in a likewise embodied 'relational space' (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005: xviii).

Again an ethical, sensitive, caring labour comprises complex and varied embodied relationships that include in addition to the patient, physicians and working colleagues also family members, organizational working context, within which care-takers attempt to bring about the best outcomes (Knutson, 2012).

PERFORMING BODY IN AESTHETIC AND PRESENTATIONAL LABOR

Furthermore, aesthetic and presentational labor is a an embodied performative practice that entails supplying, mobilising, developing and commodifying corporeal dispositions, capacities and attributes transformed into competencies. These are then aesthetically geared towards producing a 'style' in service encounters (Warhurst & Nickson, 2007: 107) that appeals to the senses of customers, visually or aurally. Aesthetic or presentational workers can also use 'moving' micro-political strategies of embodiment that serve as resistance or co-optations. As Swan and Fox have shown (2010), for enacting resisting moves occupational resources are used that involve forms of symbolism of gendered and racialized bodies and body-work as part of temporal, dynamic, intermingled processes in diversity-work in the public sector. In their description of the politics and ambivalence of diversity-work they show how micro-practices and its moves employ both embodied and discursive resources as well as management technologies. These undermining practices imply that the embedding normative orders in embodied work are negotiable structures that are open for modification. As such they are varying or morphing with changes in worldly situations and its structuration within specific, altering margins and horizons. Accordingly, embodied working life - and moves within the same - are governed by somatic-aiesthetic criteria, dispositions, intentions and social norms. Importantly, these are dynamically related to moving-making desired states of bodily senses and feelings (Vannini et al., 2010: 337). The power of material, embodied presence of actors in inter-

practicing is shown in a case-study on a meeting in a strategy context by Hodgkinson and Wright (2002). They show how much the physical presencing of positions and movement of key-actors in a meeting-room can influence the development of practices of strategizing. For example, they demonstrate how a leader skillfully manages not only her discourse at the workshop, but also how the lay-out of the chairs and her own bodily positioning vis-à-vis the whiteboard is used in order to ensure her episodic, arranged and performing moves. As the moving presencing flow of such practices is full of surprises, the supposed control may be an illusion. Corresponding to the flows of materially arranged places, possible performative movements of resistance to such practices, like ignoring, non-listening or distractive activities, may emerge. Likewise, such practicing can activate alternative imaginaries and shapings of sense-scapes 'from below' (Jensen, 2011: 268).

As a form of presentational performance, aesthetic labour displays approved social attributes of the body or embodiment, for example, to create and preserve a professional and/or corporate image or keeping up appearances as demonstrated empirically in the fashion industries (Entwistle & Wissinger, 2006). This corporeal work is realized, for example, through clothing policies for wearing uniforms as a way of aestheticizing retail-workers (Hall & van den Broek, 2012). As an ongoing production of the body/self, specific embodied capacities of aesthetically-oriented labour has been investigated as experienced by interactive service employees in the hospitality industries (Witz et al., 2003). As a subcategory of aesthetic labour, also 'athletic labour' has been explored that emphasized health-related dimensions affording a low risk of costs for sickness absence (Huzell & Larsson, 2012).

Self- and other-oriented aesthetico-presentational labour is embodied practices, in which front-line personal service specialists overtly or subtly know about the relationship between emotional and aesthetic labour practices. They are acquiring emotional and aesthetic literacies that are essential to their performance in maintaining a close, personal relationship with their clients (Sheane, 2012).

PERFORMATIVITY AS MATERIO~SOCIO~CULTURAL PRACTICES

Understanding performance as bodily and socially co-created inter-relational and emergent as well as expressive processes implies being related to specific materialities or as itself 'materio~socio~cultural' practice (Küpers, 2016). The very materiality of the body and of embodiment arises from and is co-constitutive for the performativity and vice versa.

Considering performativity's material dimensions, complements a discursive orientation. Not being solely limited to discursive interventions, performativity happens through incorporated socio-material agencies (and agencements) that are constituted within and across organizations, institutions and markets or communities. It is in and through bodily-mediated socio-materialities that performing actors, and agencies, objects and practices are and come together (Orlikowski, 2007; Orlikowski & Scott, 2008). As embodied, material-social and cultural event they are 'mattering' that is acquiring "meaning and form in the realization of different agential possibilities" (Barad, 2003: 817).

Linking the body and embodiment to material sense-making (Küpers, 2013b) or the materiality of sense-making (Bakke & Bean, 2006: 65), allows understanding meaning-creating activities of performativity as taking the form of materialised enactments and habitualised practices

(Brown et al., 2008: 1052). Thus, performativity is a situated creation and interpenetration of materialities and activities understood as a processual inter-relating.

The role of 'materio~socio~cultural' practices (Küpers, 2015a) for performativity and especially the per- & transformativity of materials is confirmed by research on the mediating and meaning-giving role of artifacts in organisations (Rafaeli, & Pratt, 2005). Physical artifacts as perceived by the senses by organizational members, allow them to do (or not) things, inter-mediate to feel or response (not) in a certain way. The physical environment of work settings, like furnishing or office designs have various effects on task performance, interpersonal relations, and job satisfaction (Baron, 1994). For instance, dress and accessories or personal adornment are serving as symbols of multilayered social identities in performative organisational life (Rafaeli & Pratt, 1997). Or architectural arrangements are used to set the proper stage with further dramaturgical props are all a part of the performative drama of everyday life (Brissett & Edgley, 1990). As implicit bodies as performance (Stern, 2013) can be understood *in actu*, alongside other material and social arrangements in the conduct of practices, the way how artefacts, social realities via bodies enable and constrain actions depends on the activity at hand in professional practice (Green & Hopwood, 2015: 23).

The actions of materio-socio-cultural performativity are part of bodied inter-relationship that refers to a shared embodiment or 'inter-corporéité' (Merleau-Ponty, 1995: 141). This intercorporeality simultaneously foregrounds the material and socio-cultural nature of the performing body and the bodily and tangible nature of performing relationships in practice. Part of the relationship is also including non-human physical and artefactual dimensions or as 'boundary-objects' that call, afford or disclose co-constitutive meanings and responsive relations of a nexus of "self-other-things" (Merleau-Ponty, 2012: 57).

By embodied inter- and intra-actions (Barad, 2003), embodied spheres of performativity of meaning and relations are co-created. At the same time, through the context of these relations, the intra-actingly involved performing bodies are themselves acted upon. Somatic sensations, semantic interpretations and with this perceptions, emotions, cognitions and actions emerge from this *in(ter-)between* of embodied 'materio~socio~cultural' relationships of performativity.

CONCLUSION

This paper showed the significance of a phenomenological and relational approach for interpreting the interconnected processes of performance. Based on advanced phenomenological insights, the constitutive roles of situated embodiment and inter-relational connections for performances have been outlined. Such extended understanding offers new perspectives on bodily, pre-objective dimensions and pre-conscious experiences, relevant to performing and its expressions. Considering the incorporated and inscribed modes of bodily and embodied experiences and expressive dimensions of performances, organisations can be seen as staged life-worlds for performances that are events embedded in performing contexts. For illustration some examples of enacted performative bodies at work were discussed. Furthermore, critical performativity was interpreted as embodied contextual and con-textured (inter-)practice. As such it is always already socially and historically conditioned by contesting and contested contexts actors or agencies and as such implicated with power and in it is con-textured in that material, socio-material dimensions

and realities are co-constitutively involved in its realization. Such embodied understanding and more processual and integral approach towards performance and performativity and radically re-thought management practices (Küpers et al. 2017) provides and leads to various practical, political as well as theoretical/methodological implications (Küpers, 2005: 237-255) that cannot be explicated here.

Performativity is not first and foremost about imposed meaning, but more about force and effect as well as its implicit sense-making. Accordingly, the potentially transformative effects of the performative are multidimensional as they can be discursive, or material consequences and/or affective, provoking a wide array of sensations in the spectators. They may range from awe, shock, horror, disgust, nausea, or vertigo, to fascination, curiosity, sympathy, or agony, which stirred them to actions that equally constituted reality (Fischer-Lichte, 2008: 17).

As a critical one, performative practices and practices of performativity also concern how intra- and inter-ontological ties, sensual, bodily, interpersonal and sociological accounts can help to enact specific realities, rather than others and to develop alternative ways constructively. Such approach helps making explicit the performance of, for example, profit imperatives, patriarchy, racial inequality, and ecological irresponsibility as well as bundles of relations and associations that assist in enacting organisations as instruments of domination. In such a view, exploitations, male authority, disparities, etc. do not in themselves explain anything—they are what pre-cisely have to be explained and critically interpreted with regard to their effects.

Overall, the outlined interpretation of an embodied performance and performativity contributes to re-organising the sensory world (Porcello et al., 2010), and moving towards a more sensorial culture and a sensual engaged 'releasement' as ethos of a 'letting go and be-come' '*Gelassenheit*' (Küpers, 2015a).

"*Gelassenheit*" translated as releasement, serenity, composure or detachment refers to a non-objectifying ethos of active and ongoing passivity. This ethos entails an attitude of accepting by a careful 'letting' that is an abandonment of habitual, representational and appropriating orientations as well as corresponding actions. This bearing appears as very challenging in contemporary organization with its performance-driven 'practicalism' and corresponding constraints. But it is exactly because of this increasingly unviable form that *Gelassenheit* is and will become even more urgently needed for a more sustainable present and future. In this letting-be also of things, practitioners in organization do not attempt to manipulate, master or compel. Instead, in a post-heroic mode, leaders and leadership let things appear and process in their revealing and vital ways. Importantly, this is not indifference or lack of interest in things, but rather an 'engaged letting'. This letting orientates towards 'rescuing' things and experiences from appropriating projection and totalising closures of enframing. Entering a modus of letting-be is realized through a receptive waiting and listening, thus more an 'active non-doing' in relation to things and what 'matters', rather than a willing and controlling business as usual. Specifically, it moves from a representational and calculative mode towards more poetic relations, intermediated via a presencing, atmospheric sensitivity and proto-meditative tuning. Through *Gelassenheit* it may be possible to suspend (or silence) habitual and calculative modes of thinking and performing that open to the promptings that come from the ontological depth of other beings. A phenomenological analysis leads us to step back away from customary and habitual representations of beings within the ontological horizon of objective presence to the prior and more

fundamental manner in which they appear in terms of worldly handiness. Gelassenheit means to step back out of representational thinking into a kind of thinking that is not in a hurry to impose its ordering and calculations on things—it is not on a mission to follow the modernist project of putting questions to nature and forcing her to answer or being used or exploited.

Such orientation is strongly focused on all senses and sense-making involved in performing and their interplay and integration of inter-connected bodies involved in co-modulation of the self-in-interaction and other-in-interaction (De Jaegher & Di Paolo, 2007: 504). Practically, this implies allowing operational intentionalities of performance to be overridden and decentered, while entering a mutual responsive ‘incorporation’, where coordination of inter-related body movements, utterances, gestures, gazes, affections and ‘more-than-human spheres etc. can gain such momentum and possible meanings emerges. Thereby, an ‘inter-between’ becomes the source and medium of performative processes with their involved partners and joint sense-making can be co-created in a way not necessarily attributable to either of the interaction parties.

As we have seen, bodies are implicated, energising and organizing as well as anchoring and coordinating various performing practices in organisation. What kind of and how performing processes are realized and expressed in organisational life-worlds is mediated through bodies and socio-materialities inter-involved. Accordingly, performing and performativity is an embodied ‘inter-practice-ing’, the actual ‘doing’ and temporal relating that is an ongoing and emergent ‘be(com)ing’ in organizational life-worlds and beyond.

‘Inter-practice-as-performance’ are the “enactment of events with what resources are available in creative, imaginative ways which lay hold of and produce the moment” (Thrift, 2006: 124), while implying proper movement, timing and rhythm with both tact and tactics (Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2009). Thus, interpreting performance as event implies also to temporalised dimensions of performance, like durational performance, narrative structures, historicity, seriality, tradition, perception, repetition, timing and iteration. These affective, multiple, relative sometimes inconsistent, perceived dimension of time, play a crucial role for liveness and presence of performing. Considering the nexus of performance and temporalization (Grant et al., 2015), it will be worthwhile to further explore how performative activities – social, cultural, aesthetic and everyday – give rise to time and in turn are co-constituted by temporalization.

Such enacted understanding allows then also possibilities of a different practice become accessible or cultivable. Performance is not only played out repeatedly in the exchanges and interactions of professional practitioners and the ‘object(s)’ of their attentions, intentions and responsiveness, including themselves as well as others, like customers or stakeholders. Rather, as a embodied ‘materio~socio~cultural’ practicing the event of performing remains open to the possible, the creative, inventive and co-shaped emergence of different ways of what and how somethings is going on, or of making or letting things happen.

For this also ways of (not) knowing and material ways of being known as well as the unknowable can be brought into relation to ‘somaffective’ performance in changing and particular ecologies of happening (Hunter, 2016). Thus, engaging in a performative practice and its somatic complexity encourages performing practitioners to learn pathways for morphing that is opening themselves to things they do not know and becoming different (Hunter, 2016).

It is hoped that the phenomenological approach proposed in this article may contribute to a more comprehensive understanding and critical

oriented research on and practice of embodied, felt and co-creative dimension of what might be called 'inter-performing' enacting event can be developed, enacted and further explored

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