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### ► To cite this version:

François-Xavier de Vaujany, Jeremy Aroles, Pierre Laniray. Towards a Political Philosophy of Management: Performativity & Visibility in management practices . Philosophy of management, 2019, 18, pp.117-129. 10.1007/s40926-018-0091-4 . halshs-01868087

**HAL Id: halshs-01868087**

**<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-01868087>**

Submitted on 5 Sep 2018

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# **Towards a Political Philosophy of Management:**

## **Performativity & Visibility in management practices<sup>1</sup>**

François-Xavier de Vaujany<sup>1\*</sup>, Jeremy Aroles<sup>2</sup> and Pierre Laniray<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> PSL, University Paris-Dauphine, DRM, Place du Maréchal de Lattre de Tassigny, 75016 Paris, France. Email address: [devaujany@dauphine.fr](mailto:devaujany@dauphine.fr)

<sup>2</sup> Alliance Manchester Business School, Booth Street West, M15 6PB, UK. Email address: [Jeremy.aroles@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Jeremy.aroles@manchester.ac.uk)

<sup>3</sup> IAE de Poitiers, 20 Rue Guillaume VII Le Troubadour, TSA 61116, 86073 Poitiers Cedex 9, France. Email address: [planiray@poitiers.iae-france.fr](mailto:planiray@poitiers.iae-france.fr)

\* Corresponding author

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<sup>1</sup> Draft version of our paper accepted and to be published in *Philosophy of Management*.

## **Towards a Political Philosophy of Management:**

### **Performativity & Visibility in Management Practices**

**Abstract:** Phenomenological, process-based and post-Marxist approaches have stressed the immanent nature of the ontogenesis of our world. The concept of performativity epitomizes these temporal, spatial and material views. Reality is always in movement itself: it is constantly materially and socially ‘performed’. Other views lead to a pre-defined world that would be mostly revealed through sensations (i.e. ‘representational perspectives’). These transcendental stances assume that a subject, although pre-existing experience, is the absolute condition of possibility of it. In this paper, we develop another view of performativity (either complementary or interrelated to an immanent stance), one that re-introduces transcendence in the analysis but sees in it something dialogical to the process itself. We draw from the notions of visibility-invisibility and continuity-discontinuity (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2013, 1964) in order to show how everyday activity both performs and makes visible the world. From that perspective, modes of visibility appear as emergent conditions of possibility of performativity itself. We draw some implications for the conceptualization of management practices.

**Keywords:** Performativity; Visibility; Management practices; Merleau-Ponty; Austin

## **1. Introduction: Performativity... a disembodied process?**

This paper is concerned with the tensions between ‘immanent’ and ‘transcendental’ stances and the implications of these tensions for the field of Management and Organisation Studies (MOS). More precisely, we position our paper as an attempt to momentarily ‘reconcile’ these two stances through a focus on the concept of performativity (*sensu* Austin) and the Merleau-Pontian concepts of visibility/invisibility and continuity/discontinuity. We set to develop another view of performativity (either complementary or interrelated to an immanent stance), one that re-introduces transcendence in the analysis and yet sees in it something dialogical to the process itself. By drawing from the concepts of visibility/invisibility and continuity/discontinuity (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2013, 1964), we set out to show how everyday activity both performs and ‘makes visible’. Modes of visibility appear as processual conditions of possibility of performativity itself. Such position could consist in seeing organizing processes as constituting the conditions of possibility of their own perception and actions in the flow of everyday activities themselves. What is visible or invisible, continuous or discontinuous in the joint assemblage of people and objects involved in the flow of organizing becomes a key issue in the process of becoming itself, its intercorporeity and emotional dynamic (Küpers, 2014).

Adopting such an ontological stance allows us to articulate three potential contributions. First, this allows us to focus the description of performativity not only on results (or finalised outcomes) but also on the process itself, which then appears as an emergent perceptual condition of possibility. Second, by inviting us to be more attuned to the complexity, multifacetedness and embodiedness of performances, our suggested conceptual stance enables us to explore some of the key aspects of the becoming of work practices, in the

context of which collaborative entrepreneurship, communities, emotions, ‘doing together’, craftsmanship and inter-corporeity are increasingly more important (Spinuzzi, 2012; Garrett et al., 2017). Indeed, work and managerial practices tend to make both the visibility and continuity of collective activities more problematic than ever, with the generalization of open spaces, mobile work, working at home or open innovation (Anderson, 2009; Johns and Gratton, 2013; Borg and Söderlung, 2015; Gandini, 2015; Taylor, 2015; Bouncken and Reuschl, 2018). Finally, the explicit inclusion of a ‘transcendental loop’ may keep open a wider space for discussions about personal ethic and collective engagement in civic life (Arendt, 1958/1998). Keeping this conversational space between bodies and stressing the on-going exploration of the past in the present with a sense of freedom and responsibility is part of what we see as a transcendental dimension in the immanence of processes.

This paper is structured as follows. The next section introduces the notion of performativity (as developed by Austin) and presents the Merleau-Pontian concept of visibility in order to articulate a different view on performativity (a view that sets out to ‘transcend’ the immanence/transcendence dualism). This lays the foundations of our third section, which consists in a reflection on the implications of our conceptual development with regards to our understanding of management and new work practices. We conclude this paper on the political ramifications of our dialogue between performativity and visibility.

## **2. Oscillating between or combining performativity and visibility: A Merleau-Pontian invitation**

*Performativity: Back to key social, material and temporal debates*

The notion of performativity lies at the heart of numerous ontological discussions in MOS (Orlikowski, 2005; Spicer et al., 2009; Cabantous and Gond, 2011; Guérard et al., 2013; Wickert and Schaefer, 2015; Gond et al., 2016; de Vaujany and Mitev, 2017). These discussions draw from debates within various areas of scholarship, such as linguistics (Austin, 1962), gender studies (Butler, 1990, 1993) or Science and Technology Studies (Barad, 2007). In a sense, this turn towards performativity can be traced back to the work of the British philosopher of language John Langshaw Austin. For Austin (1962), a discourse instantiates the object that it refers to; put differently, ‘words do something in the world, something that is not just a matter of generating consequences’ (Loxley, 2007: 2). This idea of a performative utterance refers to what Austin (1962) calls a ‘speech-act’: a sentence is not a simple statement or description of what people are doing; the sentence actually performs the action.

Austin (1962) distinguishes between constative and performative sentences. A constative sentence is concerned with facts and built around truth-values. Contrariwise, a performative utterance is not truth-evaluable and is always part of an action simultaneously performed as it is being uttered. As an instance of performative sentence, Austin (1962: 5) proposes the following: ‘I bet you six pence it will rain tomorrow’. He also distinguished explicitly from inexplicitly performative sentences. The performative power of discourse will require the actualisation of certain ‘felicity conditions’ upon which the performative sentence relies (Austin, 1962; Loxley, 2007). For instance, the utterance ‘I now pronounce you

husband and wife (or wife and wife, or husband and husband)', which produces the social construct of marriage, is often accompanied by certain artefacts (e.g. a suit, a white dress, rings, etc.), specific individuals (e.g. witnesses, the mayor, a priest, etc.) and frequently takes place in a specific and ritualized context (e.g. a town hall, a church, etc.) – these form the felicity conditions of the utterance. In that sense, the material underpinnings, mediations or contexts (embodying an institution) connected to a particular speech contribute to making this speech performative. Interestingly, the distinction between 'performative' and 'constative' utterances has been questioned by Austin himself (see Austin, 1962) and by critics of his work (see for example Jakobson, 1985 or Searle, 1989).

More recent research has stressed the material (i.e. signs can be more than texts and symbols) and temporal (i.e. performativity is present time, as our experience is always performative) dimensions of the notion of performativity (see for example Pickering, 1995; Sedgwick and Parker, 1995; Barad, 2007; Muniesa and Callon, 2013). From a performative perspective, agency 'performs'; put differently, in an entangled way, it materially and socially constitutes our world (Pickering, 1995; Barad, 2007). From a performative stance, there are no pre-defined entities. Agency may inhere in tools such as assemblages of software packages, screens, computers and models that perform design, calculation and even composition (Orlikowski, 2002; Cooren, 2004). In the context of Science and Technology Studies (STS) discussions, the concept of intra-action epitomizes this tendency (Barad, 1999, 2003, 2007). Past, present and future are present in activity itself, constituted and constitutive of it with it not being necessarily the intentional effect of a creative human agent: devices can act. Furthermore, performative stances are in clear opposition to 'representational philosophies' (Lorino et al., 2011). Representational approaches see language and signs as direct and unmediated representations of reality. In contrast, phenomenological (Heidegger,

1927/1996; Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2013), pragmatic (Dewey, 1938/2007; Peirce, 1903/1997) and post-Marxist stances link truth to actions and performances.

From a performative perspective, an immanent becoming constitutes the core aspect of ontology (Dewsbury, 2000). This has notably been evidenced through the body of literature lying at the intersection of ‘process philosophy’ and organisation studies (Tsoukas and Chia, 2002; Hernes, 2008, 2014; Nayak and Chia, 2011; Olsen, 2011; Küpers, 2014; Aroles and McLean, 2016; Helin et al., 2016) as well as in some STS-inspired perspectives, such as agential realism (Barad, 2003) or the actor-network theory (Czarniawska and Hernes, 2005; Latour, 2005).

Carefully describing the network and all the mediations identified through a pragmatist inquiry is a key objective when adopting a performative lens. Time is itself ontological (based on duration, manifestation and time reckoning systems) and the researcher can ultimately delimit a ‘field of events’ (Hernes, 2014). Through descriptions, everything can look to be mediation but in a world becoming more and more global and liquid (Bauman, 2013), subject to continuous changes and dyschronies (Alter, 2000; de Vaujany et al., 2018), the ontology of performativity provides a powerful theoretical stance. Time, necessarily, *is* the main concern of any ontology of performativity.

### *Visibility: Exploration of a neglected late Merleau-Pontian concept*

Merleau-Ponty (1945/2013, 1948, 1964), who died just one year before the publication of *How to do things with words* (Austin, 1962), was particularly interested in the visibility/invisibility and continuity/discontinuity loops at stake in the processes of perception and embodiment. Merleau-Ponty’s (1945/2013) view of (embodied) perception is by no means representative: perception is not sensation. Perceiving means constructing through



senses more than reproducing through senses. As such, seeing is by no means an isomorphic process (*Ibid.*). Beyond space and materiality, time is also a construction in Merleau-Ponty's work. We spend most of our present time in the past; we re-enact forms and structures already perceived and efficient for our activities. Should we really perceive continuously the world through all our senses (separately), we would quickly be cognitively and emotionally exhausted.

Merleau-Ponty (1945/2013, 1948, 1964) also suggested two key loops and dimensions in the process of perception. For him, visibilities and invisibilities are key dimensions of our everyday activities. In order to perceive and act, we need to create a lot of invisibilities. As we cannot simultaneously face the innumerable sensations conveyed by our embodied experience of the world, we must put many other things aside. For instance, in order to write these lines, we need to put aside the noise of the street, overcome a pain somewhere in the body, ignore email and phone notifications, etc. According to Merleau-Ponty (1964), visibilities and invisibilities are thus not the opposite of each other; invisibilities are the scaffolding of visibilities and also often what could make visibilities possible and extend them. Time, which is seen by Merleau-Ponty (1954-1955/2003) as the epitome of an institution (Terzi, 2017), is a key emotion in the process of balancing visibilities and invisibilities. To write, one needs to put aside nostalgia (a disturbing past) and anxiety (an impeding future). These sensorial invisibilities will then reinforce the visibility of one's activities for oneself.

These visibility/invisibility loops are not just the product of individual necessities (e.g. cognitive); they also have a historicity. Codes of visibility/invisibility evolve over time. For example, a request on Google Maps is probably constitutive of a different temporality and enacts a different institution to that of the walk of the flâneur in the Haussmannian Paris of the 19th century. It was probably easier to 'feel' the infrastructure related to the place and the underlying domination mechanisms (in particular through collective conversations but also

through intensive immersions into the city) in the case of the flâneur than in the context of individual immersions into Google requests and the complex set of algorithms behind it. The same relation underlies continuity & discontinuity (Merleau-Ponty, 1964) and activity & passivity (Merleau-Ponty, 1954-1955/2003); far from being oppositional, they mutually constitute each other.

Constitutive of modes of visibility and continuity, expression is both a form of embodiment and an event. The subject is constructed and visible for oneself. What interests Merleau-Ponty 'is the establishment of the event, and not primarily and essentially the establishment of the subject in the event' (Gély, 2000: 355). This establishment of the subject (and one's body) in the event is also present in some research about performativity that shares communalities with Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology. This is notably the case of Butler's (1990) view of embodiment and its relationship with performativity (Stoller, 2010). The ability to locate gender and organs (and their affordance) is inseparable from the performative movements of society (whereas Merleau-Ponty would stress their emotional and body-grounded progressive internationalization).

In slight contrast to an ontology of performativity, from the viewpoint of an 'ontology of visibility', researchers should be particularly careful about the variety of things and the degree of 'thingification' that they make of the worlds they investigate and the miscellaneous underlying assumptions and other worlds that relate to them. Relations and identifications will be central to an empirical engagement with the notions of visibility and invisibility. Surprises, anomalies, and breakdowns should be carefully explored in order to make sense of the potentially symbolic and/or material objects that are part of an instrumentation or extension of the corporeal scheme (Merleau-Ponty, 1945; de Vaujany et al., 2018). More generally, the researcher is both immersed and situated in a relation of 'care' and 'responsibility' towards the object of the research, which is questioned with regards to all those modalities of

understanding that produce and reproduce the worlds that surround it. Ultimately, an ‘ontology of visibility’ always implies a flow of meaning, which may be a movement from one anthropological system to another, from a natural to a questioning attitude, etc.

The following section briefly summarises in a table the two perspectives aforementioned, namely an ‘ontology of performativity’ and an ‘ontology of visibility’. This comparative summary will lay the foundation of our discussion of the implications of establishing a dialogue between the concepts of performativity and visibility for the field of MOS.

*Performativity and visibility: The latter as the embodied description of the former?*

If a performative ontology gives sense to the notions of inseparability and relationality (applied by Jones (2013) to the concept of ‘entanglement’), an ‘ontology of visibility’ provides more room to the notions of embodiment, reversibility and interpenetration. An ‘ontology of visibility’ shares commonalities with Marx’s (1959) view on the alienating dimension of work. Adler (2009) underlines that for Marx, the prototypical activity is practical (the famous *Thesis Eleven*). Hook (2002) argues that Marx’s and Dewey’s understandings of practical activity are very similar. Marx’s account situates humans as world makers and shapers who use both concrete and symbolic tools. Material tools, abstract ideas, theories and human desires always mediate material realities. Their relation to collective forms of social organization mediates individuals’ relations to such materiality: people construct social reality but not always under circumstances of their own choosing and they do not do so either as idealists or as wholly social animals. They are animals capable of imaginaries, socially constructed but materially more or less enabled or restricted. In short, performativity and visibility can be contrasted the following way (see Table 1).



	<b>PERFORMATIVITY</b>	<b>VISIBILITY (and INVISIBILITY)</b>
<b>Definition</b>	The process of constitution (instead of ‘representation’) of our world through the flow of everyday activities.	The joint process of embodied perception and non-perception and the emergent conditions of possibilities of this process.
<b>Ontological stance</b>	Mainly immanent. Life and organizing are always in the flow. Everyday activities perform our shared reality, which is a duration, a temporality and a sense of ‘happening’.	Both immanent and transcendental. Visibilities-invisibilities are emergent conditions of possibilities (i.e. constituted in and through the flow itself) of the continuities-discontinuities of the process. Continuities-discontinuities are also emergent discontinuities of visibilities-invisibilities in a sense of happening.
<b>Status of an external, pre-existing world</b>	There is no pre-existing world or pre-existing entities. World is always assembled and constituted temporally, materially and socially through activities.	There is no pre-existing world, but there are conditions of possibilities immanent to the flow itself (i.e. a transcendence in the immanence or a transcendental dimension in immanence/process).
<b>Key references</b>	Austin’s (1962) and Searle’s (1989) description of linguistic performativity and felicity conditions; Pickering’s (1995) notion of ‘performative idioms’; Barad’s (2007) view of intra-action, performativity and material discursive practices.	Merleau-Ponty’s (1954-1955/2003) lectures at the Collège de France and his description of visibilities/invisibilities, continuities/discontinuities (Merleau-Ponty, 1964). Butler’s (1990, 2015) view of gender as performative.

Table 1: Performativity versus visibility

### 3. Performativity and visibility: Implications for MOS

This section is articulated around the three potential contributions of this paper, as stated in the introduction. The positioning of visibility as a strong ontological stance raises the question of the ontological relationship between the concepts of performativity and visibility; can they be complementary? Are they interrelated? The second contribution is to articulate a different view (post-Kantian) on the notion of condition of possibilities, which may lead to research that would be more in phase with contemporary trends in work practices (e.g. new forms of collaborative work, etc.). Lastly, we also see this work as resulting in more reflexive discussions about ethics with regards to MOS.

*Ontologies of performativity and visibility: Complementary or interrelated views of practices and processes?*

Performing requires making visible and invisible things as well as both continuing (i.e. using pre-reflexive perceptions reproduced in present time) and setting up discontinuities (something is ‘happening’ inside and beyond these continuities). Everyday activities are both in the flow and immanent, and the flow itself requires and produces the phenomenological conditions of its continuity and duration. As explained by Merleau-Ponty (1960: 305), ‘in this network of calls and answers, where the beginning metamorphoses and accomplishes itself, there is a duration that belongs to no-one but to everyone, a ‘public duration’, the ‘rhythm and proper speed of the event of the world’ that, according to Péguy, would be the theme of a true sociology’.

Compatible and complementary stances see in performativity and visibility two distinct ontologies that are (more or less) harmonious. A stance stressing the importance of embodiment versus one which does not give an importance anymore to sense-making and embodiment may result in the second perspective (i.e. complementarity) (Küpers, 2014). Flesh is a different matter, and its involvement in the process of becoming may lead to a specific ontology, which is complementary to that of performativity. From the viewpoint of MOS, this has some clear and practical implications. A non-embodied and non-flesh-focused view of performativity may lead to a stress on assemblages viewed and enacted for and by themselves. The text of the assemblage, as revealed through the dialogical process of writing and inquiring, is at the heart of the study. For instance, exploring the performativity of a new search engine, a balanced score card, a new managerial practice will flow itself. In contrast, a flesh-grounded and embodied description of performativity is likely to lead to a more sense-making and inter-corporeate-oriented description of the process of becoming. One possible drawback is a possible over-focus on human agency and ‘emotional flow’ (Merleau-Ponty, 1945).

We contend that these two views are more than simply compatible or complementary; they are interrelated. In that sense, we join Merleau-Ponty’s (1960: 267) reflexion: ‘The truth is that the relationships between the natural and the transcendental attitudes are not simple, are not side by side or sequential, like the false of the apparent and the true’. We see the process of becoming as both immanent and transcendental in the sense that the process produces its own conditions of possibilities. Visibility/invisibility loops and continuity/discontinuity modes emerge in the flow itself of everyday activities, which is more and more at stake in contemporary work practices of digital mobility, coworking, Do It Yourself or working at home where individual need to set up and maintain their emotional, cognitive and social work bubbles.

*Visibility-invisibility and continuity-discontinuity loops as condition of possibility of performativity*

The notion of condition of possibility is often linked to Kantian and neo-Kantian views of reality (Russon, 2007). Time, space, God and divinity appear as conditions of absolute possibilities to do something or formulate a thought. They are absolute and pure categories likely to help us build knowledge beyond sensible experience (see Kant, 1781/1999, 1783/2002). Other philosophical approaches have defended empirical or realistic views of transcendence; this is notably the case of Critical Realism, as advocated by Archer (1995). These approaches aim to identify empirically and creatively (imagination and abduction have an important role to play) grounded conditions of possibilities for agency (e.g. ‘generative mechanisms’). To avoid the epistemic fallacy (i.e. conflating epistemology with ontology, transitive and intransitive dimensions of knowledge), researchers would thus need to consider jointly a phenomenological world (of reflexivity), a locus of subjective time and a ‘real’ world, both the ‘real’ construction that is the emergent effects of individual activities, the context of upcoming agencies, a locus of objective time. This would lead to the idea that performativity itself is a process ‘conditioned’ by endogenous mechanisms (i.e. neurologic generative mechanisms) that underlie perceptions. This is not what we suggest in the context of this paper. Both philosophical stances (Kantian and critical realist) put aside the notions of embodiment and becoming. As noted in the introduction, we are concerned with the ways in which we may be able to endow the notion of performativity with a sense of embodiment and sensations. As such, we defend emergent views on the conditions of possibilities of managerial practices, part of the flow itself, as co-constituted by the flow of everyday activities.



Let us take a contemporary example. Entrepreneurs involved in the practice of pitching their business models in a coworking space make visible some logics, some specific entrepreneurial metaphors and the urgent temporality of their entrepreneurial project. They make more invisible some implementations and partnerships necessary to move forward and materialize their project. They suggest how discontinuous their project might be, but to do so they need to rely on the routines of entrepreneurship and the place where they perform their pitch. At the very moment of their pitch, they feel their audience, make invisible some things they wanted to say because the previous entrepreneurs mentioned it, and if they want to make visible the originality of their project, they have to remove what appeared 20 minutes ago as a key idea. The performativity of their speech relies on a complex entanglement of visibilities and invisibilities unfolding as the utterance progresses. In short, during their pitch, they have to co-create the conditions of possibilities of their communication and make joint differences and repetitions.

In a sense, this could be related to Merleau-Ponty's (1960: 283) take on loneliness as necessarily related to togetherness: 'Saying that the ego 'before' others is alone implies situating it with regards to the ghost of another, at least it involves perceiving an environment where others could be. The true and transcendental loneliness is not this one: it occurs only if the other is not conceivable, and this requires that there is not a self to claim this loneliness. We are truly alone, provided that we are not aware of it; it is precisely this ignorance that is our loneliness.'

*Senses, perceptions and embodiment: Towards an ethic of performativity with visibility?*

Making visible raises the question of *for whom* and *to what purpose* (at the risk of perhaps overstating human agency). It also implicitly and immediately raises the question of

invisibility. What and who is put aside in the visibility and ordering of everyday activities? In other words, what and who gets annexed, silenced and other-ed in this process of performing visibilities and invisibilities. As noted by Thøgersen (2014: 29), ‘what we actually express is not primarily a matter of our own intentions – a will-to-speak – based on ready-made-thoughts; but rather a matter of our immediate emotional grounded response to our surroundings and hence also based on whether the opportunities for certain expressions exist within our current surroundings, within our current experience of the world’.

An ontology of visibility brings with it alterity, otherness and togetherness (Descola, 2012). It also creates a locus for reflexivity, as it anchors becoming into ‘inter-corporeity’ (more than flesh). Emotions we jointly feel, affects we invest in are the main matter of everyday ethics. Their positive or negative presence/absence need to be illuminated and discussed in the key agora of our cities. Butler (2015) thus stressed the importance of public gathering and the performativity of numerous bodies assembled in a public space. This has always had a political effect that is largely leveraged today by social media and micro-blogging (Sergi and Bonneau, 2016; Vaast et al., 2017). For Merleau-Ponty (1945: 417), ‘My freedom, the fundamental power which I enjoy of being the subject of all my experiences, is not distinct from my insertion in the world. It is a fate for me to be free, to be unable to reduce myself to anything that I experience, to maintain in relation to any factual situation a faculty of withdrawal, and this fate was sealed the moment my transcendental field was thrown open, when I was born as vision and knowledge, when I was thrown into the world’.

#### **4. Conclusion: Towards a political philosophy of management?**

The work (in particular the later work) of Merleau-Ponty has been the subject of numerous misunderstandings, in particular his view of embodiment. His focus on embodiment

and inter-corporeity is not a way to introduce another matter that would be flesh itself (Reynolds and Roffe, 2016)<sup>2</sup>. Merleau-Ponty wanted, most of all, to stress the importance of reversibility and emotional flow and to place them at the heart of the process of becoming (Küpers, 2014). The flow can be seen as pure immanence (with probably a pure Bergsonian view). It can also be viewed as a dialogical process: interrelated transcendental-immanent dialogical loops. Embodiment is a condition of possibility of experience, or rather, is at the heart of the emergent conditions of possibilities of experience (their continuities and visibilities).

If the former view places a greater focus on the risk of an overstress of temporal dynamics as constituted by the assemblage itself and time as a textual, aspatial and ‘aemotional’ narrative, the latter increases the risk of overstating human agency, emotions and pre-reflexive narratives. All this is far from being neutral politically and entices us to engage more than ever with the political philosophy wished by Arendt<sup>3</sup> (1958/1998).

What is the world of work and management we wish to constitute and make visible through our empirical and conceptual descriptions and what are the tools we use for this task? As noted by Arendt (1958: 26), ‘homo faber could be redeemed from this predicament of meaninglessness ... only through the interrelated faculties of action and speech, which produce meaningful stories as naturally as fabrication produces use objects’. Furthermore, with the view of a world made of assemblages and discourses, the political engineering of this world is also a question of performing and making visible the ‘right’ assemblages. This also implies discussions and texts questioning the responsibility of all those individually

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<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, it is not a way to put aside instruments, techniques and the materiality of our world. Instruments and materiality are part of the experience and of our pre-reflexivity. Merleau-Ponty sees them as relevant mainly if they are part of the broader process of visibility-invisibility, continuity-discontinuity and passivity-activity that is at the heart of the emergent conditions of possibilities of collective activity. He also believes in the ontology and materiality of our world, but suggests that we temporally live in a present that is often ahead of ‘real’ matter and the ‘real’ world (we are inhabited by past mediations). We re-cognize and re-activate perceptions more than we sense the world. We come close to matter ‘as it is’ in a pure experience, mainly when something wrong happens. What’s going on? Instruments and objects at hands then take their shape, colors and matters in the field of our experience.

<sup>3</sup> See van Diest and Dankbaar (2008) and Nielsen (2016) on the relation between Arendt’s work and MOS.

constituting the assemblage. This requires making them continuously accountable of their agency (Sartre, 1943/2003). This is sometimes difficult in the context of what appear as radical post-humanist (Hayles, 1999) and highly temporal views of agency and management.

Another view stresses the pre-reflexivity, emotions, perceptions and inter-corporeity at the heart of becoming (Küpers, 2014). Narration is then quickly a hermeneutic for and by itself (Ricoeur, 1983). However, this view can lead to managerial approaches (e.g. of design) more focused on bodies and embodiment (Küpers, 2014; de Vaujany and Vitaud, 2017) and can then perform a world less engaged in the possibilities of material agencies at large, that of the materiality performed, encountered by the assemblage itself. Putting together the two ontologies of performativity and visibility in management (which we see as co-authors as more than ‘complementary’ but interrelated) is a fascinating task for future research in management. A task we see as performative by itself. Performative for the best we hope.

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