

Embodied Responsive Ethical Practice

The Contribution of Merleau-Ponty for a Corporeal Ethics in Organisations

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Abstract

Following a phenomenological understanding of the body and embodiment, this paper explores corporeal ethics as a practice in organisations. With the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty, bodily dimensions and enfolded intercorporeality are seen as media for ethically enacted and morally responsive, thus responsible forms of practicing and relationships. Then the article discusses specific forms of responsive and caring practices as well as the ethical relevance of bodies at work in organisations. Finally, practical, political, and theoretical implications are offered and perspectives for further investigating and incorporating practicing of ethics in organisations are outlined.

Keywords: embodiment, body, responsiveness, ethical practice, Merleau-Ponty

“if an ethical position becomes reified into one perspective, it then becomes detached from reality, and its ethical power is actually lost because it no longer touches upon the embodied and hence shared space of the in-between. An ethics that does not take embodied relations, that is reality, into account...ultimately loses its capacity for flexibility, for openness to others, and for being part of a common and shared reality that opens up possibilities for the future” (Fielding, 2011: 520).

“Organisational moral discourse has never been ‘grounded’ in the body. It never had an eye for the gestural. It never understood that morality goes beyond words, codes or legislation. In this sense, it is part and parcel of culture that has lost its gestures and therefore fears nothing more than its own morality” (ten Bos, 2011: 290).

Introduction

Various unethical and irresponsible practices in professional settings (Robinson, 2009; Kaptein, 2011) as well as the recent financial and economical crisis and its effects on fragile environments, local communities, global societies, economies and organisations have shown how much the viability of communities and situated living beings depends on responsible and ethical orientations.

However, conventional business ethics and especially concepts like sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility are and can be instrumentalised for merely re-conforming and reconfirming sustaining and legitimising ‘business as usual’ (Banerjee, 2008; Fleming et al.; 2013). Such usages are marking a rampant discrepancy between greenwashing rhetoric and realities (Barth & Wolff, 2009) or aspirational talk (Christensen, et al.; 2013), instead of re-establishing the way business is organised and integrated more wisely into society.

Additionally, (im)possibilities of business ethics (Woermann, 2013) and limitations of responsibility of and within organisations (Küpers, 2012a) have been discussed critically (e.g. Carter et al.; 2007; Jones et al.; 2005). By creating authoritative normative frameworks

in business life, traditional business ethics models “often facilitate the abdication of moral discretion and responsibility” (Painter-Morland, 2008: 87). Accordingly, and being an ambivalent subject in organisation and management studies, business ethics has been exposed to an ideological critique (Neimark, 1995; Wray-Bliss, 2009) and problematised as uncritical, narrow, and foreclosing (Jones et al.; 2005; Wray-Bliss, 2012).

Mainstream’ business ethics has been charged with broadly accepting the political constitution of managerial–capitalist organisation, resulting in it largely failing to question numerous deeply problematic practices and ideologies, including the managerial prerogative, the hierarchical ordering of society and business organisation, the monopolisation of formal political power by the managerial elite and the casual, gross inequalities of material reward reproduced within hierarchical business structures. Indeed, for such critics, ‘mainstream’ business ethics has not only failed to systematically question the right to manage, but has cloaked this monopolisation of power and privilege with the appearance of further moral legitimacy (Wray-Bliss, 2012).

Much of the ‘return to ethics’ in apologetic convenient business ethics displays a conservatism and blocks off certain experiences that are deemed to be unwelcome to conforming management and organisations (ten Bos, 2003: 267) or precludes potentials for a relational, responsive and systemic alterity (Byers et al., 2007). Accordingly, many conventional business ethics approaches follow an understanding of atomised subject(ivity), guided by autonomy, disembodiment, distance, self-containment, moral reasoning that are articulated as virtue, rational duty or legislative policy or rules leading to patriarchal political structures and cultures.

In term of ethical conventions, much business ethics follows deontological traditions or teleological orientations. While for the first ethical orientation and practice is based on a series of duties or obligations, which are ordered in a legislative framework or publication and policing of abstract codes of conduct; the

second is concerned with the pursuit, and often exhibition or perfectionisation of virtuous (business) values and behaviour focusing on consequential implications. Deontological, universalizing approaches are relying on an atemporal and non-particularist formulation determined through antecedent continua of aims, meanings or causality or beforehandly united by a normative rule-system. As such they tend to lack attending to the processural and constantly negotiated quality of human ethical agency and moral decision-making. Telological, consequentialist especially utilitarian ethics derives duty or moral obligation from what is good or desirable as an end to be achieved within a given order. Such approach runs the risk of abstracting from and objectifying phenomena and people as means, which itself might lead to rationalise unethical consequences (Painter-Morland, 2008: 53).

Such impoverished understandings of ethics have been critiqued as restrictive ones (Kjonstad & Willmott, 1995) that often substitutes compliance and obedience for ethics and a corresponding subordination to duty and to a higher moral hierarchical authority (e.g. Maclagan, 2007; Stansbury & Barry, 2007; Painter-Morland, 2010).

Utilitarian reasoning and formal calculation allows business practitioners to justify rationally also harmful consequences of actions by simply outbalancing it with other perceived benefits. "The belief that ends can justify means often serves to rationalise unethical behavior" (Painter-Morland, 2008: 53). Relying on 'objective' balancing of pleasures and pains, tend to overlook the implicit assumptions and substantive value considerations that informs every act of calculation and compromise (ibid. 54) or with affirmatively accepting economic priorities such instrumental approach is outweighing other (societal) values. Within an utilitarian cost-benefit analysis, all pains and pleasures are made commensurable in order to be able to calculate the overall pleasures and pains brought about by particular decisions. Abstract reasoning aims at aggregating pains and pleasures allows utilitarians to avoid the specific experiences of those individuals or phenomena who or which may be affected by their decisions. As it is often impossible to gauge the potential effects on others over time, utilitarian calculation can't accommodate unpredictable changes in context (ibid. 55).

Empirical research confirms the ethical dangers and perils of cold-blooded deliberative decision-making in that these rationalistic approaches may actually increase unethical behaviours. Such effects occur via focusing on monetary pay-offs and calculative mind set when it overshadows body-based implicit, intuitive responses and constricting social considerations in moral judgements (Zhong, 2011).

To counter rationalist models of moral practice and normative, principled orientations call for alternatives, in order not merely reproducing the myth of a supposed sovereign agency or generate alienation. Especially, what are needed are non-foundational and a non-essentialist, critically reflective understandings of ethics (Painter-Morland & ten Bos, 2011) and post-metaphysical interpretations of normativity (Woermann, 2013). Such repositioned ethics would radically questioning taken-for-granted notions of supposed natural or good practices, while historicising and politicising morality. It would be ethics that avoid tendencies following an onside focus on over-generalising and universalising or an overtly individualising and fragmentary particularising. A reconfigured ethics problematises claims of a rational superiority that is attached to principles and procedures or privileging substantive categories and contents over process.. This even more as such grand schemes and grand narratives can become vehicles for the legitization

of existing power configurations (Painter-Morland, 2008: 82). Adopting a more integral understanding of meanings of ethics and of morality (Diprose, 2002; Komesaroff, 1995; Shildrick & Mykitiuk, 2005), refers not primarily to rules or principles for proper conduct. Nor would a viable meaning of ethics be reduced to the moral conscientiousness of judging individuals that takes precedence over responsibilities to another. Like it would not be one that is subjected to prescribing institutional order(ing) and arrangements like through policy guide-lines or codices, codes, committees, or auditing-programs or regulatory strategies. Rather, a more proper understanding requires an ethic that is grounded in every-day performative interactions between individuals and social groups. Thus, it pertains to what practitioners performatively do or not do with others in the context of their daily living.

Part of the impoverished and one-sided status of ethics in general and business ethics is that the bodily and embodied character of moral practice has been neglected (Wray-Bliss, 2002). An ethics that does not take embodied relations into account loses more than its capacity for flexibility is misleading and blind to affectual relations, care, compassion or any forms of feeling experienced pre-reflexively through the body (Pullen & Rhodes, 2014). Accordingly, it lacks openness to others and 'othering' that are part of a common and shared reality out of which possibilities for the future can unfold (ten Bos, 2011: 520).

Instead, an embodying ethics involves working with situated, ongoing psycho-social experiences (Allegranti, 2011) and even reflects monstrously affective ethics of organisational life (Thanem, 2011: 104; inquiring into what bodies can do (Thanem, & Wallenberg, 2014).

An orientation towards embodiment allows researchers' and also practitioners' to consider how bodies make ethical sense (Diprose, 2005: 238) individually and interrelationally. It is paying attention to the interstitial spaces between bodies encountering one another within organisational live-worlds that give rise to 'ethically important moments' (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). These then are assisting possibilities of seeing and doing 'otherwise' (Butler, 1990).

Offering a distinct European perspective, a phenomenological approach supports such a corporeal-oriented understanding by providing a refined discernment and integration of experiential qualities of the processing performing body and of embodiment. This integration includes co-constitutive and non-cognitive dimensions involved in moral practices, like emotional and aesthetic elements or an embodied 'ethical know-how' (Varela, 1999) as well as ethical relation to 'things' as the neglected Others of humanity's (social and material) world (Dale & Latham, 2014; Küpers, 2015a).

Rather than seeking recourse in the principle of rational autonomy, phenomenology allows to locate ethical acting and comportment as relational, incumbent upon the ways that placed and moving bodies interact and informing one another in an ethos of *statu nascendi* (Waldenfels, 2006: 94).

Considering such ethos in *statu nascendi* as a more indirect and lateral approach avoids a merely affirmatively descriptive phenomenology of morals and a moralising phenomenology (Waldenfels, 2006: 94). Correspondingly, the task of moral phenomenology is to explore experiential dimensions of emerging moral life or morally pregnant states and process (Kriegel, 2007). In this way moral phenomenology avoid becoming a phenomenology of morals that thematizes only factually existing orders of value, norms, morals or validity claims, nor convertes into a moralizing phenomenology which only invokes the

values with which its research starts but also ends up in recommending them. "The mere mention of values and norms would remain on this side of a justification, whereas their use would be beyond it. The passage from not yet engaged neutral descriptions to always already existing morals would have to be achieved by a moral 'turning'" (Waldenfels, 2006: 92). "The dilemma of moral phenomenology "leaves us with with the alternatives of the ordinary without something extraordinary or the extraordinary without something ordinary" (ibd.).

Phenomenologically, all those involved in their life-world and practices are first and foremost embodied beings or agencies respectively mediated by the living process of situated embodiment, and expressions. Accordingly, living forms of moral practice are rooted in and processed through the vivid significance of their bodies. These are interacting with their respective worlds in which proximities are matters of shared concerns. This is the case even if the other is distant, spatially, temporally or socially. Based on sustained and situated bodily engagements, mutual commitments and obligations are secured in the proximity of an already shared horizon of ongoing meaning integrating also inter-personal agencies and collective institutional-based moral agencies. Proximity, which is the root of ethical engagement necessitates responsibility in both face-to-face encounters, but also a responsibility for those "other" Others. Phenomenological morals of direct responsiveness are in danger of falling into an intuitionism, which derives moral obligations and commitment only from the immediated encounter with the personal other. This may lead to a powerless bouncing in encountering de-moralised logic of circumstances (Sachlogik) while not being able to consider sufficiently or importing distance effects (Fernwirkungen) into the close horizon of being capable of answering. Therefore there exists the need for considering embodied ethical practice in relation to individual actors, inter-personal agencies and collective institutional-based moral agencies.

Phenomenological approaches are recognising and directed to everyday moral experience as they are structured and realised in situated local social interaction in their bodily-mediated life-worldly embedment and to bodily mediated judgements in critical reflections (Drummond, 2002: 5; Kriegel, 2007; Sanders & Wisniewski, 2012: 2). An ethico-phenomenological analysis discloses and interrogates not only the 'eco-bio-socio-psycho' basis or mediality of moral dispositions, feelings, decisions and actions. It also exposes and critiques the political, institutional and economic investments that underwrite them. Thus, phenomenology provides the basis for an ethics that is sensorial and corporeal (Roberts, 2003; Pullen & Rhodes, 2014) or carnal, and somatic (Bevan & Corvellec, 2007).

According to an corporeal orientation, ethical capabilities and a sensuous ethics of difference (McCann, 2011) are mediated through a constitutive 'sensibility' (Roberts, 2003: 251) extending also to embodied members of organisations as a corporate body. To consider sufficiently the entwinement of business and ethics, as part of returning to them as life-worldly practice anew (Sandberg & Dall'Alba, 2009), we need to see how this mutual implication is an embodied one.

The body turn (Hassard et al., 2000: 12) signifies an attempt to integrate the basic, but often mistreated, undervalued or ignored bodily dimensions in organisational practices (Dale, 2001; 2005; Dale & Burrell, 2000). Following this bodily turn, corporeal ethical sensibilities of a genuine responsible and sustainable living and acting can emerge. In large parts, these forms of living in organisation do not come out through discursive advocacy and principles, nor prescribing rationality or institutionalized governmentalisation. Rather, they occur and develop through

pre-reflective, non-representational, affective processes and embodied practices. Such ethical orientations and practices unfold through a body-learning (Yakhlef, 2010) and possibilities that are afforded by affects and senses (Küpers, 2014).

Facing the prevailing neglect and marginalisation or instrumentalised, functionalistic understandings of the body in organisational theory and business ethics, following a phenomenological approach can help to re-member the nexus of the body and embodiment in relation to practices and ethics. This re-membering allows not only a critique of reductionistic understandings and misled interpretation of ethical practices within a management of everyday life that prioritise instrumentally orientated action (Hancock, 2009). It also contributes to an extended performative and ethico-reflexive practice in and on action. Such bodily approach helps reintegrating material qualities and experiences of ethical practice as part of a re-embodied organisation (Styhre, 2004).

With an extended phenomenological understanding, the following discusses potentials of an embodied practice of ethics in organisations by following Merleau-Pontyian philosophy. With Merleau-Ponty, the body and embodiment can be interpreted as media and spheres for the ethically reflective, enacted and morally responsive, thus responsible relationships with others in organisations (Ladkin, 2015).

In the subsequent sections, first, basic ideas of a phenomenology of ethics and responsiveness are outlined, which in turn open up towards an extended understanding of embodied ethics as responsible practice in organisation. Afterwards specific forms of responsive and caring practices as well as the ethical relevance of bodies at work in organisations are discussed. Finally offered are some practical, political, and theoretical implications as well as perspectives on further investigating and incorporating practices of ethics in organisations.

Merleau-Ponty & Embodied Ethical Practice

Phenomenology contributes to an enriched understanding of practice in organisation and leadership (Küpers, 2015) and ethical practices in particular by returning to experienced phenomena and events in their life-worldly situatedness, inter-relationality and cocreated meanings. Phenomenologically, ethical practising is embodied, involving various bodily modes of practical belonging and engagements in the world (Csordas, 1993; 1994: 12). In particular, with Merleau-Ponty (1962; 1995, 2012) we can recognise the ethical significance of the sensuous, perceptive, expressive, epistemic, and responsive capacities of the habitual, yet open, living body and embodiment. The ethical importance of his work rests both upon the account he provides of the relational, bodily nature of the primordially inter-connected selves as mind-bodies and in their ambiguity, openness, creativity, and transcendence of relations involved.

Departing from the orthodox Husserlian conception of the purpose and scope of phenomenology, Merleau-Ponty offered a post-Cartesian, post-dualistic and post-representational turn to the living body and to situated embodiment as dynamic media and disclosing nexus of meaning and ethical practice. By extending Husserl's account of the "lived body" that is the body as it is experienced and experiences as opposed to the merely physical body, Merleau-Ponty resisted and rejected the traditional representationalism and dualisms with its separation of matter and mind, body and spirit. Instead, he developed the idea of an embodied perception and consciousness of a 'body-mind' as processing a living connection to the world. It is this incarnated perception and embodied reality and its interplay

that is constituting responsively and ethically in an inseparable bond with the vastness of experience and existence as a being-in and towards-the-world.

Taking the body and embodiment as a dynamic 'base', his existential form of phenomenology and relational ontology addresses a wide range of ethically relevant bodily experiences and embodied phenomena. These comprise perception, spatiality and motility of the body, the body in sexual being and in speech, as well as expression. Furthermore, embodied relationships to others and questions regarding the connection between the body and temporality as well as freedom are explored.

Accordingly, Merleau-Ponty's advancement of phenomenology strives for overcoming or undermining the de-corporealisation of the body and the neglect of embodiment. It does so particularly by refocusing on an extended understanding of concrete structures of ethically important life-worldly experience as well as developing an interrogative ethics (Hatley, 2006: 20).

In other words, for Merleau-Ponty, the body and embodiment are always already lived, meaningful and relational and thereby implicitly related to ethical practicing. Taking the body as way of being in the world of everyday-life, this embodied ethical practice is built upon a pre-reflective and ambiguous 'ground' of experiences-as-lived-through and their expressions. Merleau-Ponty's philosophy helps us overcome the divide between the objectivism of facts and the subjectivism of values in a way that the traditional Western dualisms do not allow (Low, 2012: 68).

Influenced by and critically using insights by Heidegger and the Gestalt theorists and psychologists, Merleau-Ponty not only rejects the modernist version of referentialist-representationalism, but critically refutes the dominating strands of Western philosophy and science; those being the empiricist-objectivistic and the rationalistic-subjective paradigms. Both empiricist realism as well as rationalistic idealism are reductionist as they reduce living phenomena, perception and sensation either to the realm of matter or to that of ideas. The empirical thinker apprehends others in their speech-acts as causal effects, leaving them caught in a machine like mechanism. The intellectualist, assuming a coincidental quality between him, his ultimate interiority, and his meaning fails to empower either himself or any subject with the means necessary to guarantee contact with others or the openness onto which perception dawns. Focusing instead on bodily experiences and embodiment, not as material 'objects' or subjective 'representations', but as constitutive and open media, led him to an anti-foundationalism, anti-essentialism and non-dualism, and philosophy of irresolvable ambiguities.

For him values are neither 'objective' nor 'subjective', but result from the coming together of patterns, interpretations and enactments. Meaning, including ethical meaning, is formed as the human body meets the world and as embodied human beings, are able to "identify and empathize with nature, other living bodies, and other humans" (Low, 2012: 68).

While Merleau-Ponty never wrote an 'ethics' itself, his conception of an embodiment mediates a proto-ethical relationship and communion of embodied responsive (inter-)subjects in the world. His phenomenology of relational corporeality, and embodied decentred intersubjectivity can serve as a fruitful medium through which an ethos through the body can be cultivated (Carey, 2000). Even more, such phenomenological approach contributes to a living ethics of interpersonal relations (Fischer, 2008) and social becoming (Crossley, 1995; 1996) as well as an 'ethical sustainability' (McCormack, 2003: 496).

Building upon the proto-ethical soil of partial and imperfect carnal reciprocity it becomes possible to enter into an ethical

pact with the Other, keeping the dialogical circle open to the disruptions of perspectives and at the same time, aiming to facilitate a non-totalizing dialogical communion in which we can dwell in our everyday sensuous existence (Fischer, 2008: 164). From his inter-subjectivist account an interconnection of communicative expression and empathic engagement between self, other, and the world can be extrapolated. As an embodied being the self is constituted in relation to the other within an event of inter-subjectivity that is more than the co-presence of alter egos, but part of the fabric of social becoming (Crossley, 1996). Being embedded in a primordial intertwining, this embodied intersubjectivity preserves asymmetry, heteronomy and alterity of the other. The empathic and expressive power of corporeity is not only a condition for social living bonds of communication - that is communicating across the gestures of other bodies - but also provides a medium of transformation from one expressive modality to another. This transformation moves for example from direct vision, audible styles and kinesthetic rhythms of experience to narrated stories or institutionalized records of writing or performances or the other way round. In this way the embodied empathy and expressivity are the condition and media for incorporated communication. From a phenomenological perspective, a living ethics can be seen as a 'function' and emergent process of a bodily subjects and embodied inter-subjective and corporeal processes, in which selves and agencies are always already situated as well as in which they take part actively and transformationally in their con-textuality (Küpers, 2012). Such an embodied ethics requires genuine recognition of the other as intrinsically valuable and as differently 'other' including animals, non-human species, and the environment: life and sentience. What is ethically valued, need to be rooted in life and sentience, and what moral practices requires sympathizing and empathizing as well as relating sustainably with other humans and even other non-human species. Instead of a detached objectivity and an autonomous subjectivity, for Merleau-Ponty, there are always already social processes of a becoming with others at play in and towards the world. In such becoming the mutual fluidity of reversible and ambiguous interplay is acknowledged, without reducing the difference(s) of the other to the standards of the self-same (Shildrick, 2005: 8).

With Merleau-Ponty, we can recognise a bodily-mediated and embodied understanding of ethical practicing as part of an interwoven, post-dichotomous nexus of "self-other-things" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: 57) and as part of a perspectival "integral being" (Merleau-Ponty, 1995: 84). Accordingly, the threshold of ethics lies in the materiality and tangibility of the relations between selves and others within integrative life-worldly enactment and practicing.

To put it differently, the life-world is seen as ethically relevant and meaningful with respect to the ways in which practitioners perceive, feel and act within it, and which acts upon them (Crossley, 1996: 101). These active and passive relationships refer to material, socio-cultural, historical, gendered, and technological conditions and realities with regard to ethical practicing. Being embodied implies that ethical practitioners are dynamically incarnated in and mediated through mundane experiences, (inter-)actions, emotions and moods. Furthermore, they are embodied especially through receptive, situated affect-ness or being sensually attuned. Accordingly, the embodied ethical subjects as well as their socio-cultural embodiments are situated in an ongoing sensual way that is tactile, visual, olfactory or auditory. Whatever these incarnated subjects perceive, feel, think, intend or do as well as make sense of or cope with morally, they are bodily exposed to and process their practicing

within a synchronised field of interrelated senses and synaesthetic sensations (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: 207).

Within the sphere of such processed and experienced ethical practice, a member of an organisation does not only feel and acknowledge as 'I think' (ethically), but also capacities for 'I relate to' or 'I do' or take an ethical stance of 'I can' (not).

As the lived-body is constantly present it is functioning as a perceptive and intentional organ, dispositioned as an 'I can' (Husserl, 2001: 50-51). This implies that the 'I can' (or 'cannot') and the 'I feel' (or 'do not feel') are capacities to experience or to do certain things. Moreover, this bodily disposition and propensity to reach out, relates, precedes and impacts the possibility of the 'I know' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: 137, 173).

In other words, the atmosphere within which ethical practicing is situated is not only what people conceive about it. Primarily, this milieu is one, in which they live through with their 'operative intentionality' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: xviii, 165) as a bodily, pre-reflexive, concrete spatial motility, closely connected to responsiveness.

Enacted Responsiveness as ethical practicing

With the outlined understanding of embodied-based practice of ethics, there is a close link between what is actually given and what is intended as well as how to respond situationally. This responsiveness refers to a specific embodied answering practice (Waldenfels, 2007; 2012). A phenomenological understanding of response and responsiveness considers the ethical and other demands or appeals to the Other(s). Phenomenologically, responsiveness comprises manifold interpretations of a giving and receiving proactive orientation that implies being ready to answer. Importantly, this responding is processed by bodily senses, spatial orientations, gazes, gestures, and desires as well as memories and expectations with regard to ethical practices.

As part of a proto-ethical nexus, responsivity is a basic feature present in all sensing, saying and doing, of all embodied and linguistic behaviour, relations and acting (Waldenfels, 2007; 2012). Enacted responsiveness creates a multidimensional ethically and morally significant space for moods, conversations, and agencies of being-in-the-world relationally and ethically. Even keeping silence or not giving answers are forms of responding.

In responding, we are incited, attracted, threatened, challenged, or appealed to by some-what or some-body. This addressing is happening before taking a deliberative initiative, aiming at something or applying certain norms. Thus, all forms of experiencing, communicating and operating are always a kind of situated and process-oriented ethic-bound practice of answering. This implies that responding has its specific embodiment, temporality and inevitability (Waldenfels, 2012) with regard to ethical practicing.

In this way, 'being responsive', refers to an open event, which allows its own set of criteria or 'standards' to co-emerge. In other words, responding is a co-creative process in which the measure co-originate with what is measured: "The response does not fill in gaps but helps to formulate the question, which it answers" (Waldenfels, 2006: 96).

The ethical significance of specific acts of response is that it summons, evokes, invites, requests, inspires, effects, or provokes. This processing moves as a responsive difference between 'what is answered (contents) and 'towards what or whom' (claim/entitlement) the answering is addressed as manifested in the other.

Accordingly, a phenomenology of ethical responsiveness takes as starting point the claims or demands of the preceding 'Other'

and a corresponding responsive trust, thus tries overcoming the one-sidedness of intentionalistic, rational choice, and normative conceptualizations. Accordingly, responsiveness implies ethico-political dimensions, which precede the onset of all normative ethics or institutionally regulated politics. For example, nurses grasp clinical situations and carry out response-based nursing practices while they recognise the unexpected, see the big picture, and consider future possibilities (Benner et al., 1996). Their expert moral agency requires excellent moral sensibilities for instance a vision and commitment to good clinical and caring practices, as well as perceptual acuity, manifest in the ability to identify salient moral issues in particular situations. Furthermore, their responsive practice incorporates an embodied ethical know-how along with skilful engagement and respectful relationships with patients, families, and coworkers. Finally, they have the ability to respond to the situation in a timely fashion (Benner et al., 1996: 160). Integrating relational and embodied knowing and responding is also concretised through proximity and with touch serving as base, for example in an ethical practice in nursing within an interprofessional team (Wright & Brajtman, 2011).

The ethical relevance of the logos of enlacing responses lies in undermining traditional oppositions of moralism and pragmatism, universality and particularity, casuistry and legalism, oneness and alienness. Even more "there are demands that do not fit the current categories of teleological, deontic or utilitarian ethics, but are nevertheless not irrelevant for ethics" (Waldenfels, 2006: 98-101).

Moreover, such phenomenological understanding of responsiveness contributes to an extended understanding of social ethical practicing and reinstating responsibility understood as the ability to respond bodily (Küpers, 2012). Specifically, it allows studying embodied ethical practicing as joint, plural action and cooperation, processed through 'We-Mode-intentionalities' as forms of collective reasoning, responding and commitments (Tuomela, 2007; Schmid, 2009). Importantly, these entwined spheres of social bodies and embodiments are not seen as fixed loci or representations, but dynamically emerging and open relationships as an enacted 'We-can'.

From a phenomenological perspective, not only is ethical practicing responsively embodied, but being embodied is always already a way of mediating a responsive proto-ethical practicing through disclosing 'bodies-in-action' in their lived and shared situations. Within this situatedness, living bodies inter-mediate responsively between internal and external, subjective and objective as well as individual and collective dimensions and meaningful ethical practices. The socio-culturally co-constituted and communicatively expressive body-mediated processes (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: 197) coordinate the relations between individual behaviors, social relations, artifacts and institutions. Thus, ethical practices can be seen as a function and emergent process of vivid responsive bodily subjects and a dynamic embodiment of socio-material realities. In these multi-folded realities, ethical practitioners and their practices are interrelationally entangled as part of and process through the more comprehensive medium of 'flesh'.

Ontology of Flesh as medium of ethical practice

As we have seen, ethical practices can be seen as a function and emergent process of responsive bodies and social and systemic embodiment. In these embodied spheres practitioners with their practices are constituted and interrelated in a shared carnality. Taking part actively and passively in this embedding

carnerly, both are ontologically implicated as an embodied mutual involvement. Correspondingly, practitioners and their practicing are always already and continuously influenced by primordial and pre-reflexive dimensions and emergent processes. These dimensions refer to how practices are co-created by embodied pre-subjective and pre-objective capacities. They are part of a dynamic and cooperative phenomenal unfolding within what Merleau-Ponty calls 'chair du monde' or 'Flesh' (Merleau-Ponty, 1995).

This nexus flesh refers to a textile or common connective tissue of exterior and interior horizons and meaning that is woven through all levels of experience, preceding and making possible all particular horizons and contexts. The elemental mediating flesh refers to an incorporated intertwining and reversibility of pre- or non-personal dimensions with personal, inter- and transpersonal aspects or qualities. Serving as a connective tissue and generative capacity, this flesh 'enables' phenomena to appear in the first place. Moreover, flesh processes a meaning that is woven through all levels of experience, preceding and making possible all particular horizons and contexts of practice.

The polyvalent variegated open-ended term and metaphor of flesh is Merleau-Ponty's (1995) central ontological principle, which sustains his attempt to overcome traditional metaphysical dualisms as well as to expand and ontologise his concept of the lived-body. For him this body is signifying a polymorphous, open system, thus an ambiguous Being and foundation of the possibility of expression. The ontological concept and carnal metaphor of "flesh" expresses and allows associations to both the sensible and bodily commonality of beings and also the generative capacity of a difference-enabling being as becoming. Referring to the intertwining and reversibility of pre-personal, personal, inter- and transpersonal dimensions, Merleau-Ponty's ontology of flesh allows understanding phenomena more profoundly and relationally. Flesh refers to both the particular being and the more general element in which all beings and the world share, but with its indeterminate qualities cannot be reduced to the old notions of subject or object. Rather, flesh serves as the formative medium or milieu anterior or preceding the conceptual bifurcation into the 'subjective' and the 'objective' or other forms of dualistic categorising. Thus it allows a post-dualistic orientation, respectively critique of dualistic separations. As an inter-mediating realm, this flesh inter-links the pre-reflexive sentient and sensible body, through which in- and outside, passivity and activity enmesh. In this way, flesh refers to an original fabric that precedes what then become bifurcated into opposing categories, such as subject/object following a binary logic. As a universal dimensionality, the elemental Flesh subtends all other categorization and typicality. Not being a static totality or metaphysical identity, it is a process of incomplete difference-enabling. Being as ongoing explosion tied to dehiscence as the manner in which the perceptual and meaningful horizon remain open, through differential progress and sedimentations of meaning. Understanding flesh, as a kind of originary absence is what makes the presentation of being-present possible, but which never presents itself as such. Thus, it is 'non-space' of in-between, an 'écart', the gap, the separation, the differentiation between the touching and the touched, the seeing and the seen, mind and world, self and others. That gap, that space of corporeal difference, is the 'there is' within 'the Being that lies before the cleavage operated by reflection, about it, on its horizons, not outside of us and not in us, but there where the two movements cross' (Merleau-Ponty, 1995: 95).

As elemental being, flesh manifests as a kind of silent and invisible ontological fond out of which self, others and phenom-

ena of leadership and organization arise in reciprocal relations. Referring to a chiasmic, incorporated intertwining and reversibility of pre-personal, personal and interpersonal dimensions, Merleau-Ponty's indirect ontology of flesh allows the understanding of organizational realities and possibilities to be more profound and relational. With this relational understanding it becomes possible to approach what does not appear, and yet which is the very condition for appearance. Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of chiasmic flesh-in-betweenness with its reversibilities, criss-crossing and inter-corporeity provide the base for an ethos of relational and integral be(com)ing as an un-, inter- and refolding. This be(com)ing is processed through an constitutive difference (écart = gap, spacing, rift, dehiscence) in the fabric of experience. It refers to an opening which is like a separation-in-relation, a kind of 'separation-difference' that as a generative possibility makes perception and experience possible. Moreover, the wave, which flows within the sensing/sensed-being is inaugurated by contact with Others in the world. Sense encounters with the fleshly world are insertions of the world between a sensing and sensed body and its embodiment, like 'between two leaves' (Merleau-Ponty, 1995: 264). This manifests in the social world as an inter-mediating, open-ended soma-significative and dialogical exchange as chiasmic entwinement between embodied selves and others. Correspondingly, flesh is yielding itself a sentience and sensory 'reflection' also with other sentient beings. As the chiasmic depth of flesh is constitutive of sensibility and affectivity, the affective configuration allows for a non-closure spiralling of verticality, non-representable presencing and expression. Merleau-Ponty's ontological interpretation of co-emerging flesh implies an explosion of being, a relational being that is indistinct from nature's coming-to-presence. In Merleau-Ponty's phenomenologico-ethical space of embodied proximity and fleshly entwinement the others are part of the same share. They are my twins in flesh, "flesh of my flesh" (Merleau-Ponty, 1964: 15). Through being co-fleshly beings in a joint situatedness, ethical life is constituted, and sustained. We always already communicate with the instituting surrounding worlds and its incarnated Others in a communal life. From this perspective, the interior and the exterior, the individual and the collective of any practice are mutually interconnected with each other. This implies that all those involved in this practice co-create and communicate and unfold together in a responsive, thus ethical-sensitised way. According to this implicitly ethical ontology, we are all kindred expressions of the flesh of the world. It is on this ground that embodied ethical possibilities and interrelationships can come into being.

The patterns of meaningful being and action exist neither only in the mind, nor in the external world. Rather, they are neither subjective nor objective, but constitute rather a kind of world in-between, which refers to an inter-relationality here of ethical practices. It is this 'inter-between' within an ongoing continuity between ourselves, others and the natural world that needs to be considered and enacted for developing, understanding and practicing an embodied ethics. The 'place' of ethics is then one between people and their 'enfleshed' in-the-world-ness. Therefore, the challenge for a moral practice is to understand the inextricable intertwining of the body-subjects as embodied selves in relation with the world they inhabit. This inhabitation happens in the midst of fields of situated, relational inter-corporeal in-betweenness at the brink of non-dual being.

As these elaborations show, for Merleau-Ponty, the phenomenal, ontological and ethical significance of a primordial connection as well as formative and enduring ethical-oriented communion with others and kinship of all beings in the sensible

world is based on flesh. Ethically, then flesh serves as the common and generous source (Diprose, 2002) that is a generosity of giving and being given. A fleshly relationship of becoming with others implies an ethics of openness to alterity that is characterised by a 'non-indifference to difference' (Diprose, 2002: 184).

Based in this flesh, "the body itself is the groundwork or field for our morally responsive and responsible relationships with others" (Hamrick, 2002: 301). With the medium of flesh, Merleau-Ponty reconciles mind and body and self and other that is serving as a base for cultivating a relational ethics. Merleau-Ponty's account of sensual bodies, embodiment and flesh can show not only the role of a mutuality and affinity between bodies, but also for a wider community of beings. This involves a resistance to absolutism and an appreciation for diversity and mutuality with different others for a creative ethical becoming.

A corresponding ethical space of engagement is then characterised by a proper relationship of the self, others and the world. This engagement requires a continuous reversible process of interlinking perceiving, thinking and effective acting in a committed pact of living in an 'inter-world' (Merleau-Ponty, 2012: 373). Such reversible milieu of engagement, even at a distance, fosters genuine responsiveness, constructive dialogue and opens up ethical interpretations. By this practitioner can make progress on issues of moral disagreement or potential resolutions of ethical conflicts. But importantly, this is done without obliterating difference into sameness and therefore leading to meaningful ethical actions and also engagement-at-a-distance for responsible acting (Sanders, 2012: 111).

Even more, the collective intercorporeal flesh in which practitioners are enfolded is both their inherent capacity for ethical practices as well as serving as a basis for alternative ethical formulations and forms (Lefort, 1990). As a kind of ethical artistry, moral actors and agencies can take their bodies in relation to organisations as an 'unfinished task' to constitute and institute ethical and other meanings (Hamrick, 2002: 294). This implies that moral practicing and decision-making are closely connected to bodily artful expressions and joint movements. Such practicing together institutes values and interests within the limitations of a given mediating situation in which perspectives are converging (Hamrick, 2002: 297). This includes moves towards a renewed responsibility to the vulnerable and suffering bodies as well as aspirations to realise a shared flourishing and well-being. The connectedness into which we are always interwoven and through which we sense and understand can inform how to live with, sympathise with and care for others. While embodied ethical practicing aspires contributing to the thriving unfoldment of interrelated human persons, communities, and systems, this undertaking raises questions of values, morals, and ethics respectively responses by ethical bodies (Al-Saji, 2006). Furthermore, such embodied ethical practice allows linking embodiment and socio-ethico-political nexus as social flesh (Beasley & Bacchi, 2007). Consequently, ethics and politics based on Merleau-Pontyian thinking (Coole, 2007: 175), allow to critically paying attention to underlying principles and purposes as well as considering strategic and moral choices in organisations.

Ethics as embodied Practice in Organisations

The following outlines a phenomenologically based understanding of ethics as embodied in organisational practice (Küpers, 2015). This practice-orientation resonates with the emerging 'ethics as practice' approach (Muhr et al., 2006; Painter-Morland, 2008; Woermann, 2013: 27). Such orientation transcends

moralistic and legalistic approaches in that it goes beyond predeterminations (Clegg et al., 2007), and conceives ethics as situated, framed and governed (Andrews, 1989; Paine, 1994; Ibarra-Colado et al. 2006). In other words, such approach is concerned with moral corporations (Roper, 2005) that are more sensitive to a relational, historical and contextual understanding of their practices.

As empirically confirmed by a study on ethics in intensive care medicine and health care professionals in New Zealand, views and practices of ethics in organisations are not exhausted by definitions of rules and principles or codes and ethics' protocol, but involved a notion of 'doing' ethics as an ad hoc and uncodifiable practicing (Shaw, 2010).

Living and acting ethically in organisation are forms of skilled bodily and embodied practices and experiences that are inextricably tied to one another for creating meaning. Specifically, embodied practices take place as a temporal and spatial 'inter-val' of in-between, involving a syn-chronisation of rhythms (Crossely, 1996) of embodied organisational actors. To put it differently, qua body-subject and inter-corporeality to relate and communicate is to create and occupy a shared space and rhythmic movements, while being enacted in ambiguous situations of bodily experience (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: 71; 198).

Embodied practical ethics is not only a discerning intellectual and virtue-oriented process of deliberating the means and reflecting the ends of contextually constrained actions. Rather, it also involves sensing, perceiving, making choices and realising actions that display appropriate and creative responses under challenging organisational circumstances through bodily ways of engagement. Practicing bodily ethical arises from participation in embodied acts and responses of organising its practice. This practicing is also expressed in non-verbal forms; for example via the moral significance of gestures that reveal how morality relates expressive bodies (ten Bos, 2011). Responding to the question whether organisations and its members are in any way capable of ethical embodiment and moral gestures in relation to apologies, ten Bos (2011: 289) shows that organisations may have lost this capacity because they have lost a sense of embodiment. "The world of organisation and management is a part of a broader culture in which words function as empty shells that are no longer attached to what people feel or sense. If words are not linked to this pre-rational reality, if they have lost any touch with the realm of the body, how are we supposed to believe the person issuing apologies, swearing an oath of allegiance or speaking out the truth?" (ten Bos, 2011: 289).

Conversely, with a regained integration of embodied dimensions, affective bodies create and mediate gestures as expressions that are situated between various dimensions of practicing and include symbolic techniques. Relationally, these expressions move between initiation and imitation, life and thought, between exteriority and interiority, between the material and the immaterial and between body and words.

Based on the post-dual ontology of 'inter-being' (Merleau-Ponty, 2003: 208), a radicalised relational orientation understands ethical practice and practicing in organisations as an emerging event that can be interpreted as 'inter-practice' (Küpers, 2015). Phenomenologically, this ethical 'inter-practicing' is always already co-constituted and continuously influenced by embodied capacities of experiential processes within the elemental mediating Flesh, as described before (Merleau-Ponty, 1995: 131). In the social world of organisations, flesh manifests as an inter-mediating, open-ended soma-significative and dialogical exchange as chiasmic wave-like flow and entwinement between embodied selves and others processing their

shared “We-can-Mode”. The relational flesh creates ‘in-between spaces’ (Bradbury & Lichtenstein, 2000) of inter-practicing that includes various interwoven, emerging processes and feedback-loops (Calori, 2002; Lukenchuk, 2006). In particular it provides possibilities for an unfolding in-betweenness, flesh serves as generous source (Diprose, 2002). As such it can enact a corporeal generosity of embodied mutual recognition of ‘sameness’ and difference of the other within organisational life-worlds (Hancock, 2008) and for a politics of difference and resistance (Pullen & Rhodes, 2014; Rhodes & Wray-Bliss, 2013).

A flesh-mediated, embodied ethical ‘inter-practice’ helps to reveal and interpret the relationship between being, feeling, knowing, doing, structuring and effectuating in and through action in organisation. Level-wise, this relational practising is happening individually and collectively as both are implicated in organisational every-day life with regard to what matters specifically (Stark, 1993).

Embedded within the complexities of human pragmatics, such ethical inter-practice covers both the experiential actions of bodily agents and institutionalised operations of organisations as ‘incorporations’. Therefore, the concept of ‘inter-practice’ can be used for inquiries into the interrogating and negotiating inter-play of the inherently entwined materialities, subjectivities, intersubjectivities, and objectivities in relation to ethical issues and responsive practices.

Responsive ethical practicing in organisation

Part of organisational reality is that its members are challenged to to act, speak and express in response to being provoked by various calls to give answers. As living bodies and being embodied practitioners respond to also ethically demanding questions, problems or claims. These are posed to them through embodied, material conditions and their embedding or affording contexts. In organisations, this answering refers to needs, calls or further modalities, like incentives, entitled rights, vested interests, requests or impositions as well as structural or functional requirements.

The significance of specific acts of responses in organisations is that it summons, evokes, invites, offers, inspires, effects and provokes or offends, thus challenges all involved in organisational life-worlds. As an answering practice of members of organisations, this kind of responsivity features in all sensing, saying and doing, influencing all embodied and linguistic behaviour and acting in and beyond the organisation in relation to its dynamic environment and its stakeholders.

A phenomenology of ethical responsiveness takes as starting point the various demanding claims of the preceding ‘Other’ of organisational encounters, thus tries overcoming the one-sidedness of intentionalistic, rational choice, and normativistic conceptualizations as they can be often found in organisational studies.

Instead of mono-centric orientation, a relational and responsive ethos finds its starting point before all individualised centering or orders of normative law and morals in organisations. Therefore, such ethos rejects an appropriation and equating by recurring to what lies ‘before’ and what constitutes all foundations of organisational order. Rather, the ethics and morality of a responsive responsibility is derived from the situation of answering in every-day-life. This situated answering to demands and claims is not determined through antecedent continua of aims, meanings or causality, nor beforehandly united by a normative rule-system, but in a ‘responson’ as participating engagement (Waldenfels, 1994: 194).

As an answering ‘from below’ (Waldenfels, 1994: 419) this ethical responding is to be conceived as a concrete, organisational events, while it integrates living bodily emotional and expressive chiasmical processes (Shotter, 2004). Accordingly, ethical practicing arises from engaged participation in bodily experiences, acts and responses in organising. Such responsive practice becomes particularly relevant when there are no conductive duties to act respectively, nor attributable problems. Therefore, such responding becomes especially significant when there are causal connections interwoven that cannot be covered through simple justification of consequences. These links are prevalent especially in unclear and ambivalent states of affairs as they often occur in organisations. Likewise, a responsive practice of responsibility is able to deal flexibly with intransparencies, ambiguities and contingencies as well as tensions and conflicts involved.

As behaviour a dialogical answering responsiveness in organisation is specifically one, in which there is openness to points of view of various parties affected. In the fields of organisational realities, those involved who are sensitive for differences and who make a difference become mutual respondents or co-respondent in co-authored relationships. Furthermore, organisational responsiveness occurs where the settings of patterns co-evolve and surplus answers are created.

Specifically, there can be reproductive and productive answering. While a reproductive answer reproduces the same or existing meaning, a productive answering is inventing or creating new answers, thus starts from somewhere else, which could not have been planned or pre-ordered. In a realm between order and the extraordinary, a creative and productive response exists, indeed, is born, in the very act of the response as a practice itself. As by giving answers, those involved are giving something, which they do not have; they are creating, inventing so to speak, surplus answers in the act of giving answers, thus there is interconnectedness of giving and taking in the sense of taking in giving and giving in taking. In responding to open requests or demands in to every-day life something is co-created out of the between of the ordinary and the surplus of the extraordinary. This implies that every answer, by starting from a non-anticipatable and hence unpredictable request of the other (or alien), is inevitably constituted by a certain amount of unpreparedness and consequently by an at least minimal amount of inventiveness. Such an inventive character, which derives from the delayedness and limitedness of every answer, can be therefore understood as a necessarily contingent trait of any responsive act. In other words, by being structurally contingent, no answer can ever pretend to be the final or the best answer, but, at most, a possibly renewable response, a response which can be changed and transformed according to the occasional and historical events of requests, appeals, and demands of the alien other. Response is therefore not simply filling a gap, but rather contributes to the form and formulation of the questions it is answering. Thus, it does not grow out of individual insufficiency, or out of individual initiative, but out of the acceptance of external offers and expectations, which demand an answer. Responsiveness in practice therefore means engaging with that which comes from an external source. Response thus makes use of possibilities that are offered and also in certain ways demanded. Such responsiveness begins, therefore, within the context of regulations and meaning, and forms a new rationality. This “responsive rationality” is defined by Waldenfels (1994, pp.333ff) as a rationality that exists in the form of answers and relates as a contextual resonance to something not arising out of itself, without being replaced or taken over by complete order.

A responsive-rational postponement of the pattern of interpretation allows disorder to show through the new order. The inadequacy of reasons and the incalculability of talking, acting and enduring are not seen as failures to be addressed, but as constitutive for this form of responsive rationality. There is not complete and clear determination of what will happen. Something is experienced in responding, which is not actually available in the present state, but will be in the future.

In consequence, responses demand or call for further potentially value-creating developments. Accordingly, in organisations responsiveness is present in being proactive 'reagible' and ready to answer and leading to forms of a giving and receiving answering anew.

In the context of an embodied ethics of care in organisations, responsiveness has been interpreted as a specific sub-virtue of caring as a corporate virtue, among attention, and respect (Sander-Staudt, 2011: 268). As such it serves to meet needs, avoiding unintended consequences while mitigating corporate imposed burdens on caring practices. As empirical research has shown, perceptions of manager's recognising and appreciating responsiveness play an influential role in employees' intentions whether or not to speak up (Saunders et al., 1992). Experiencing fair and trustworthy treatment by a responsive authority figure of the group indicates that the group values and respects the particular employee, which in turn promotes or inhibits his or her expression of opinions, concerns or ideas about work-related issues in the work group. Responsive and fair supervisors treat voicing employees with dignity and respect and are unbiased, prompt, supportive, and effective in dealing with their voice. The more employees perceive their managers to be responsive to their voice, the more likely they are to engage in subsequent behavior (Saunders et al., 1992). In contrast, when a manager responds to an employee's voice in ways that fail to meet procedural and relational fairness, this may communicate that the employee enjoys less respect and is less valued as a group member. Thus, manager's responsiveness to employees' substantially affect employees' perceptions of how they and their voices are respected and valued within the group that is engaged high-status or marginal, low-status group members (Janssen & Gao, 2012).

Responsive leaders and followers are skilled in the art of 'reading' the placed situation that they are attempting to organise or manage and acting in a more ethical way. They are creatively patterning to and co-authoring already shared embodied feelings, thoughts and practices arising out of joint circumstances. Being able to respond and thus being responsible may prevent that any one member placing him or herself ahead of others for example in story-telling. It might keep organisational members cautious not to dismiss others as having voices and stories that do not count or are not expressed. In this way, it becomes possible to ethically recognise and embrace the silent senses and voices of those marked by gender, race, colour, physical differences, etc. In turn, such inclusion helps to ensure that the marginalised retain their place entrenched, rather than being shunted off at the periphery.

For example, considering the elemental medium of a 'Flesh of Leadership' allows rethinking (ethically) the co-created and reversible roles of leading and following (Ladkin, 2010: 71-73; 182-183) as both are constitutive through their mutual interplay (Küpers, 2013).

As an alternative to conventional hierarchies, a responsive formation and transformation of organisation leads towards more interactive processes, including developing a post-heroic, dispersed leadership capacity. This can be realised in responsive

open decision-making processes that are based upon expertise, social competencies and situational or task-oriented rotating or distributed leadership practices (Küpers & Weibler, 2008). Instead of a calculated or conditioned exchange, being responsive is a living practice of a give and take. Such giving and taking can then provide the base for re-interpreting accountability (Painter-Morland, 2006) and responsibility as the ability to respond in organisational life-worlds characterised by a 'responson' as participating engagement (Waldenfels, 1994: 194). Moreover, such responsive practice can lead to forms of extended responsabilisation in organisations that can be critically connected to approaches towards more integral understandings and enactments of corporate social responsibility and sustainability (Küpers, 2012a).

Embodied caring as body-integrating responsive ethics

In close connection to a responsive practice, embodied care with its triptych dimensions of caring knowledge, caring habits, and caring imagination (Hamington, 2004), can serve as a medium for the development of a body-integrating responsive ethics. For Hamington (2004: 12) care is "an approach to individual and social morality that shifts ethical emphasis and consideration to context, relationships, and affective knowledge in a manner that can be fully understood only if its embodied dimension is recognized. Care is committed to the flourishing and growth of individuals; yet acknowledges our interconnectedness and interdependence". For him, the three embodied dimensions of care 'caring knowledge', 'caring habits' and 'caring imagination' are not simply preconditions to a behavioral outcome involving caring actions. Rather, they represent implicit and continuous bodily experiences leading to additional knowledge.

Because business is ultimately relational, an ethics of care provides a moral framework for guiding business on both an individual level and an organisational level (Simola, 2012). Furthermore, it can recommend styles of comportment, principles for decision-making, and attention to practical dynamics in economic dealings (Sander-Staudt & Hamington, 2011: xxi). According to Shelden, (2012) an organisational culture of care can be cultivated through the proactive community-oriented, organisational leadership practices and prosocial contagion. This would comprise, involved presence, active listening, connecting, leading, and implementation of ameliorating suffering and flourishing. As such it can be part of an integral ethical decision-making and action (Simola, 2011).

Care is fundamentally, an embodied, performative, and imaginative endeavor that has significant implications for what we know, who we are, and the nature of the good in organisations. Organisational and institutional contexts in which ethics of care-in-relation appear are the field of nurse-patient and doctor-patient relationships in the healing and therapy delivery domain. Also in 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 ethic of care (Hawk, 2011: 16-17). Moreover: "An ethic of care, with its emphasis on active and informed engagement in democratic processes and its preference for non-hierarchical and non-bureaucratic organizing, offers a comprehensive moral framework that more accurately reflects human reality, a value of constructive human development, and a practice through which all can benefit developmentally (Hawk, 2011: 28).

Bodies at work and ethical practice in organisations

Various forms of 'bodies at work' can be used for applying the phenomenology of a body-integrating ethics in the organisational context. As we have seen embodied sensing practitioners are comported intentionally and responsively towards a material and social world. This happens while their experience opens up to inexhaustible, but meaningful possibilities of their working bodies. Expressive bodies not only signify biological or psychological states, but are central in the ethical enactment of social and organisational working life. The relevancy is given as "it is through the performance of bodily actions that the performance of other actors is constituted or effected" (Schatzki, 1996: 44). Accordingly, sense-based ethical practices of organising 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 of work. For example, turn-taking participation in business meetings are organised through embodied modes and conducts as a multimodal practice. This implies displaying specific local expectations regarding rights and obligations to talk and to know (Maraki & Mondada, 2012).

Furthermore, corporeal ethical dimensions play an important role in forms of embodied labour. In such labour members of organisations operate as bodily-engaged beings within their occupational milieus (Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2009: 222). Through this practical work and its sense-making, embodied practitioners in organisations create, manage, reproduce, negotiate, interrupt, and/or communicate somatic sensations and meanings that are related to ethical concerns and issues. Likewise various forms of affective labour are ethically relevant as they produce or modify dramatised and emotional experiences by influencing bodily sensations as part of contemporary experience economy.

Also in embodying emotional labour (Knights & Thanem, 2005) the body acts as a medium of affective and symbolic communication through regulated bodily language, gestures and appearances, for example in service-work (Bolton, 2005). This enactment has highly ambivalent effects that are not only impoverishing, alienating or exhausting, but also be mutually connecting while acting out an enriching or ethically satisfying working-life (Lapointe et al., 2012).

A practical form of ethically sensitive embodied labour is the body-work involved in caring as outlined before. Embodied ethics in experiential, emotional and political care practices are dealing with corporeal waste of the leaky body, like excrements, snot, sweat, saliva, sick, wind, blood and pee with invalidated, disable people (Hughes et al., 2005). This work of care is often stigmatised 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 experiences, call for an embodied "relational space" (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005: xviii). Such space refers to respectful dialogical milieu within which ethical practice can occur while supporting nurses' ethical choices and problem solving. An embodied relational ethics approach towards this caring labour is helpful to consider the complex and varied embodied relationships, e.g. to physicians, colleagues, family members, organisational context, within which nurses attempt to bring about the best outcomes for patients (Knutson, 2012).

Furthermore, aesthetic and presentational labour is an embodied practice that calls for being ethically sensitive and re-

flective as it entails supplying, mobilising, developing and modifying embodied dispositions, capacities and attributes transformed into competencies, which are then aesthetically geared towards producing a 'style' in service encounters (Warhurst et al., 2000: 4).

Occupational and somatic practices of workers can also involve micro-ethico-political 'strategies of embodiment'. These may function as a manifestation of resistance or co-optation, which involve symbolic and ethically relevant forms of racialised and gendered bodies at work, for example in the context of new public sector management (Swan & Fox, 2010). Also modes of impression management invite ethical interrogation as they comprise agency-oriented body-techniques (Crossley, 1995a) or embodied emotions or aesthetics for specific forms of faked or genuine communication.

Finally, re-integrating an ethical understanding of the body into the understanding of work can help overcoming dichotomist classification between embodied and disembodied work including scientific practices (Essen & Winterstorm, 2012).

Practical, Political and Theoretical Implications

Practical Implications

With its experiential, dynamic and provisional status, the described forms and transformational qualities of embodied ethical practice in organisation defy control and elude manageability. Because these relational practices do not exist as given, stable, fixed entities, they cannot be simply organised or manipulated. Instead of being designed directly, embodied ethical practices can only be designed for that is, enabled and encouraged. What can be done practically is to prepare and offer supportive conditions that engender targeted facilitations on a situation-specific basis. This includes forms of practical responsabilisation (Küpers, 2012) by which embodied moments of ethical practices flourish in organisations. Ethical responsive spaces (McCann, 2011) and practices can be prepared by cultivating an attentional openness, which is one of attending with and to the body (Csordas, 1993) and the cultivation of creative habits (Tharp, 2003).

Bartunek and Rynes (2010) suggest that implications for practice can be characterized in terms of three features for the recommendations. The first one refers to the primary audience(s) who are the employees and managers as embodied actors, and entire organisation as embodiments as well as stakeholders. Secondly, there are specific types of actions for example increasing awareness, acquiring ethical knowledge, mindfulness training, taking structural changes with regard to realising embodied ethical practices. Finally, there are kinds of outcomes hoped for from those actions, like higher level of well-being, an enhanced quality of caring and more self-restorative interactions, or group- or organization-level outcomes, such as creating climates and cultures of embodied ethical practice.

Conditions that make it more likely that organizational members will become aware of and attuned the actual or possible suffering of a colleague as well as conditions that enable empathic concern and responding including its speed, scope, scale and customization are critical for the activation of compassion (Dutton et al., 2006).

Furthermore, as ethical practice is a protensive temporalisation, the future is always already present and is actualised in the immediate present (Adkin, 2011). Therefore, an embodied organisational member in her ethical modes, experience the forthcoming with a bodily anticipation, specifically with regard to 'what is to be done'. As embodied ethics is the enactment of a doing, this practicing need to be enhanced organisationally by

opportunities for venting feeling, an open critique and dialogue. These forms of expression allow quests and questions as well as corresponding responses to unfold and be processed that may also lead to an ethical learning. Building on the described ethically potent in-between the capacity for learning in organisations with regard to developing an 'inter-ethics' (Abma et al., 2010) depends on the ability to nurture between-times and between-places for the co-creation of value in different constellations (Berthoin-Antal, 2006). In this context, inter-relational sensitive ways of arts-based learning (Taylor & Ladkin, 2009) are helpful. These are drawing on various collage, video, drawing or painting, poetry, sound or other art-forms to embody aspects of experience that are then available to develop ethical sensibility and for a morally sensitive sense- and decision-making. For example, they contribute to a refined ethical development or to make ethical problems and dilemmas visible and being processed creatively. Such art based approach for ethical learning can make use of different but entwined modalities of knowing, including experiential, practical, presentational and propositional (Heron, 1992). While propositional knowing 'about' something is knowing through ideas and theories, expressed in information statements, presentational knowing draws on expressive forms of imagery through movement, dance, sound, music, drawing, painting, sculpture, poetry, drama, story and so on (Heron & Reason, 2001: 83). The practical challenge will be to find ways of "translating" presentational or aesthetic knowing into forms that can be recognised and hold value within current organisational contexts where the propositional and cognitive and instrumental orientations are privileged. To realise embodied ethical practices, organisational members require having access to available material and financial as well as affective, emotional, cognitive and social resources which refers to political implications.

Political Implications

Ethics in organisations can be envisaged as a political project (McMurray et al., 2010). As such it is one that is concerned not solely with individual agency or introspection, but also with the structures and systems of organisation in their political embedment. Accordingly, ethical practice often necessitates ethico-political restructuring of contemporary corporate life, to support employees and groups to be able to engender proper ways to negotiate and to respond. Critically, a body-integrating ethical approach calls for analysing ways in which politically-bound ethical practices in organisations are exercised to achieve and maintain power or control. This entails that certain forms of practicing are excluded or superimposed. Particularly, this critical stance refers to the issue of how specific embodied experiences, meanings and practices are discriminated, marginalised, degraded and ignored or dominated, subordinated or disciplined. Correspondingly, a critical approach towards an embodied ethical politics can be used for studying the ordering and normalising of disciplinary techniques and encumbering processes of forced or imposed practices. Furthermore, it would explore how the dynamics of power and distress increase insensitivity to the pain of others (Van Kleef et al., 2008).

Ethical embodied practices not only refer to purposive actions, but also to non-purposive, a-rational and especially silence(d) acting in organisational life. Thus, phenomenologically and ethically, it is important to explore what is not practised or not said, including un-noted actions or actors and omissions. Additionally, this implies considering those phenomena that seem to be strategically unthinkable, supposedly un-doable or tabooed for example in decision-making and those excluded

as possible practices (Carter et al., 2007: 94).

Following Rancière (2010) postfoundational and postliberal democratic understanding of disruptive politics of dissensus this includes a re-arrangement of political order and different regimes of perceptual part-taking. These regimes determine what can count as perception, experience or sense also collectively. Reconfiguring them modifies a sensory framework that distinguishes differently the visible from the invisible, the sayable from the unsayable, the audible from the inaudible, the possible from the impossible with regard to ethical issues.

Furthermore, tactics and micro-political processes in relation to the everyday-of-living (de Certeau, 1984) can be studied as a reclaiming and an employment of a creative embodied intelligence' and ethical practice of governance. By engaging with the other in everyday practices, with de Certeau we can foreground a political ontology that sees otherness as the starting point and that takes the irreducibility of daily practice as a creative challenge and opportunity. These irreducible practices can be translated into politically reflective ethnographic studies that are exploring possibilities of practicing and (inter-)subjectivities in more nuanced and ethically engaged ways (Napolitano & Pratten, 2007). Moreover, ethico-politics of resistance (Pullen & Rhodes, 2014) can be seen as a web of emancipatory practices that are operating pragmatically through localised and concrete ethical gestures and political activities. Through these outlined approaches embodied ethics becomes a form of politics of life. This can then cultivate an art of living more intensely in the pursuit of transformative changes as a political and ethical act (Bradotti, 2012: 195-196).

Theoretical and Methodological Implications

Phenomenology allows approaching ethical practices in their fullness and complexity as they arise as experiences and realities in rich, often unstructured, and multidimensional ways. Compared to the second-hand constructions of positivist science phenomenology retains a sensibility and awareness for how organising appears and manifests processually and structurally. Following an extended method of suspension or bracketing, a phenomenologist specialising in organisations' attempts to meet ethically or morally relevant phenomena, as they appear in as open and unprejudiced way as possible. The results of this phenomenological methodology are revealing descriptions and understandings as well as moments of deeper clarity. Accordingly, practices can be seen and interpreted in a fresh and more adequate way. In contrast or supplementing what psychological, behavioral, cultural, constructionist or system-theoretical investigations can provide, a phenomenological approach of embodied ethical practices in organisations contributes to enriched interpretation of its relational dimensions and meanings. For example, following recent effort to develop "an ethics of the body" (Frank, 1995: 52) a phenomenologically informed research can study organisational member's (ethical) attitudes toward their bodies, as illustrated by the language they use in narratives about their illnesses and health seeking experiences.

To further explore the body and embodiment in relation to ethics in organisation, research needs to become a more multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary endeavours, opening up for multiple and innovative methods. This requires not only considering and using approaches, methods and findings from other disciplines, like social sciences and humanities, but also sciences.

Moreover, taking research itself as a form of inter-practice, cross-disciplinary bridging helps to show the ethical significance of bodily and affective or embodied processes. For exploring the embodiment of ethical organising a more integral epistemology

and methodological pluralism is needed (Küpers & Edward, 2008). Such orientation is integrating first-, second- and third-person perspectives in singular or plural forms. This implies integrating each of their specific, inherent methodologies or modes of inquiries as well as their complex interplay. Epistemologically and ontologically, such research contributes to a radically reflexive reworking of subject-object distinctions with their knowledge problematics (Cunliffe, 2011).

Further empirical work is necessary to examine the locations and extent to which organisational members practice (or not) ethically in concrete situations. For example, investigations can study how embodied ethical practices are realised (or not) in the midst of moral decision-making or what motivates positive morality in the absence of normative principles.

Overall, carnal organisational studies of ethical practicing embrace a more sensorial stance in relation to bodies of all its members and the mediating embodiment at work as part of every-day lives. Developing such embodied organisational research on embodied ethics, requires shifting away from a theorising about or of bodies, in a disembodied, objectifying or subjectifying way. Rather, it reorientates itself towards a mode of inquiry that is sensing and making sense while thinking from and with lived bodies and embodiment. Such orientation calls for more sensual methodologies and art-based research practices (Warren, 2008). For example, collecting and analysing embodied, sensuous appearances in relation to ethical practices by integrating videography into research methodologies helps to study and (re-)present bodily senses (Merchant, 2011). Or a visual co-inquiry methodology can be used for engaging with felt values, dealing proactively with ethical dilemmas, paradoxes and contradictions. Even more, such visual approaches mediate a critical reading of the visual or visual representations of business organisations (Page & Gaggiott, 2012) with regard to embodied ethical practicing.

Limitations and Conclusion

This paper has shown the significance of phenomenology for an embodied, responsive and thus responsible practical ethics in organisational life-worlds. Such conceptualisation does not only reconceive the embodied 'base' of ethical practices, but also allows conceiving new ways of approaching how they co-evolve within the multidimensional nexus of organisations.

If ethical practices in organisations are shaped by bodily processes and an embodied operative intentionalities and responsiveness, then inquiries that fail to take them into account may miss not only significant aspects. Rather, what is overseen is also how embodied ethical practices are happening in and through a 'space in-between' (Bradbury & Lichtenstein, 2000).

However, what remains important is a critical reflection concerning various difficulties, limitations and problems involved in realising embodied ethical practices. Possible criticisms that might be raised in relation to embodied ethics concern for example that they remain parochial or obscure larger social and transsituational dynamics. Without a broader sense of justice, for example care ethics may allow for cronyism and arbitrary favouritism. Therefore, an integral embodied ethics would need to extend to collective spheres, agencies and complexities, including public and international domains as well as distant relations and institutional forms and power structures. Furthermore, a critical stance on embodied ethical life needs also to consider the danger of an escapist retro-regression. Returning to an embodied practice requires being aware of not falling prey to a pre-modern longing for unity and retro-romantic fallacies. A

historiographically and culturally informed account of embodiment and ethics prevents falling into a kind of neo-sensualism or neo-sensationalism. It rather links the embodied sensorium of ethical practice to contemporary forms of sense-making, including increasingly influential realities of tele-presences and multi-media applications.

Recognising embodied ethical orientations invites possibilities for a critical study and different realisation of organising practices. On the one hand, such approach helps to critique disembodied ethics. Such kind of abstract ethics neglects individual and collective bodies or embodiments or merely comprehends them as constructed, or renders them for an utilitarian practicalism as instrumentalised objects. Reductionist approaches block the enfoldment of creative potentials of embodied ethical practices. Functionally, separating the lived body and embodiment from ethical practices inhibits their further development and research.

On the other hand, focusing on and facilitating genuine embodied ethical practicing may contribute to realisation of alternative, ingenious and more suitable forms of a more responsible life in organisations. 'Alter-native' here refers to literally 'other-birthly' ways of living, entailing socio-cultural-political and moral dimensions and issues. A creative ethics as embodied practice allows a 'provisional imperative' as is relates to transgressivity, irony, and imagination in order to make the impossible possible (Woermann, 2013: 32, 45-47, 76-84).

Being aware of embodied ethical practices helps to learn of particular possibilities and constraints of the conditions within which practices are enacted. Thereby it allows recognising alternative ways of performing and improving concrete work-practices that are "uncovering [of] new or alternative routes of action" (Nicolai & Seidl, 2010: 1270). This circumstantial and circumspective orientation becomes even more relevant as today's organisations are situated in increasingly complex, often paradoxical and dilemmatic individual and collective settings. Furthermore, actualising an embodied and ethically sensitive practice enables the development of more relational ways of leading and following. Prudent relational practice mediates and cultivates through and for the body more of integral well-being (Küpers, 2005) as well as nurturing practical wisdom in organisations (Küpers, 2013a)

Instead of imposing formulaic legislative compliance measures and rules or norms, a wise practice embodies a capacity for appropriate responsive realisations in the face of particularities, heterogeneity and imprecations. Taking the predicament of our current state of affairs in organisations, the economy and civic society can only ignore the cultivation of the art of wiser ways of embodied practicing at their peril. Practical wisdom can also contribute to a professional artistry as the realisation of an embodied ethical practice. This practice is an 'art' of becoming ethical and wise that also integrates a(i)esthetic dimensions (Küpers, 2013a). In this way, an embodied wise ethics leads and realises a meaningful sensing and genuine sense-making. As an embodied practical approach such ethics moves beyond one-sided cognitive or rational emphasis, while encompassing a full range of moral issues experienced across the interwoven private-public continuum. This includes also a passion for sustainability (Shivastava, 2010) and an enagement for non- or more-than human life forms.

By not exarnating the lived world, embodied ethics re-connects then to an openness in favour of a revealing sense of wonder, in all its historically contingent and ambivalent forms. Interestingly, the very term 'wonder', from the Old English 'wundor' cognates with the German 'Wunde' or 'wound'. This

connection invites to ponder about possible links not only to affect, pathos and emotion or surprise, ie. super + prehendere as taken over and taken up. Rather, these happenings of wonder also connect to the vulnerabilities and receptivity of the body. Such orientation then allows drawing from the whole range of revealing intuitions, imaginations and insights and links to a more empathetic and compassionate life (Nussbaum, 2001). Consequently these can be integrated into an embodied ethics as interpersonal work as well as practices and narratives of compassion in organisation (Frost et al. 2006; Kanov et al., 2004; Lilius et al., 2011).

Acknowledging our envelopment in the 'flesh' allows us to approach the other with wonder and to wonder at and about together as a shared communal experience. Merleau-Ponty expressed it: "to establish wonder would give us the principle of an ethics" (Merleau-Ponty, 1964: 11). While wonder may arise from the extraordinary, it is the extraordinariness of the ordinary (Malpas, 2006; Rubinstein, 2008). Accordingly, a won-

derous orientation brings about provocative and destabilising, hence response-calling experiences of strangeness in relation to the familiar, qualified as ethical.

It is hoped that the phenomenological interpretation of embodied ethics as proposed here provides possibilities to reassess, revive and further investigate the relevance of bodily realities and embodied processes of ethical practicing in organisations. Remembering bodily dimensions, reflecting critically and researching living experiences and dynamic intricacies of an embodied ethics and a responsive ethos are challenging endeavors and demanding journeys. But given our current perilous situation these undertakings are timely and worthwhile as they contribute to much required, more integrally transformative and sustainable practices in organisational life-worlds. Moreover, such embodied ethical practicing provides potential for developing more responsible and wiser economic, political, societal relationships and realities also beyond organisations.

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