

The turn to performativity and the democratic concern

Four orientations for a more Demos-sensitive debate

Jean-Luc Moriceau

Introduction: the (non-)democratic performativity of the text

Around thirty years ago, the crisis in representation first hit ethnography and anthropology, and then started to shake the qualitative study of organizations. Ethnography's project had been to represent the other, both in the sense of describing the other's culture and of speaking for those who have no voice. The crisis resulted from ethnographers realizing that they had largely invented the cultures that they supposedly described (Clifford, 1986) by imposing their authority and ideologies (Clifford, 1986; Tyler, 1986), while writing from their concepts of gender, class and ethnicity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Ethnographers began to wonder who has the right to speak for whom and in what ways. And they went on to examine how theories and writing styles interpenetrated their work (Geertz, 1988, van Maanen, 1995). The crisis in representation strengthened concerns about the democratic quality of social studies in general, and organizational studies in particular. The debate centred on how to do justice to the peoples (to be) represented. Researchers supposedly aim at conveying multiple and unheard voices, but were often locked into their own theories, reproducing their academic authoritative power. The concerns were mainly about theory and what happened in the academic arena and much less about the effects of research and writing on the people written about.

A new turn has come; a performativity turn (Diedrich and al., 2013), which has started to rattle organizational studies. Again, there is a similar democratic concern, but this time focussed on the effects texts and theories have on the Other. If our theories are not just descriptions or ascertainties, if they indeed influence the organizations we study, then we must reflect on what gets done with our words. And especially so when we write about others. What actually gets done with and thanks to our theories? Can we make our texts less authoritative or debilitating, and (more) emancipatory? Do our texts (in-)tend to send people out fighting for their own

independence, or do they merely reproduce and strengthen existing power positions, unjust forms of privilege, and strengthen alienation?

This concern for performativity is nothing new. Sociology has a long history of questioning the social consequences of research; suffice it to name critical theory (e.g. Horkheimer, 1937), or Giddens's take on reflexivity, according to which social agents use theory that describes their social behaviour to redefine themselves and their situation (Beck *et al.*, 1994).

The concern for performativity in organizational studies is coming nowadays via economics and economic sociology, hereby imprinting the debate with a very specific form or problematization. For example, Faulhaber and Baumol (1988, p.580) have inquired: "How much have economists in fact contributed to the flow of innovation used in business and government?" The underlying question is double-edged. On the one hand, if the scholars have not contributed, one might wonder about their social utility; on the other hand, if they have contributed, they may be responsible, at least partly, for the post-2008 economic crisis or for contemporary economic debacles. Here, performativity is used as a kind of record of the 'impact factor' of theory: do the models change the way things are done? Put this way, the concern for performativity may seem rather self-centered around academics. Supposedly, academics know how people should behave and performativity measures the impact of their texts. Academe may tell us how to behave, but: 'Do people actually follow and confirm such statements?'

For economic sociology, economics is without a doubt, performative: "Economics (...) performs, shapes and formats the economy, rather than observing how it functions" (Callon, 1998, p. 2). Economics brings the economy into being: "Economics performs the economy, creating the phenomena it describes" (MacKenzie & Millo, 2003, p.108). Researchers in the field of economics have produced many case studies demonstrating their influence. For example, MacKenzie (2003, 2006) has described how the Black and Scholes' formula managed to build its own world by determining the pricing formulae used by stock exchange computers, and by finally becoming unquestionably true – or as they prefer to say, the world that it presupposes became actual (Callon, 2007). Another example is Garcia-Parpet (2007) who has depicted

how the computerized strawberry market in Fontaines-en-Sologne progressively was reshaped to resemble the perfect market of abstract economic theory.

Performativity here entails two levels: “Economic relations are not to be taken as given, but as performed by economic practices” and again: “Economics brings into being the relationships it describes” (MacKenzie, 2004, p. 303). The economy and its business organizations are not fixed entities, they are not a product of structure or of intentional choices. Business organizations are performed by actors and for their performances the actors make use of theories. This latter influence can run through beliefs (psychogenetic performance) or through devices (material performance) (Muniesa & Callon, 2009, p.297). The theories and concepts are embodied in socio-material devices, such as the imperative calculation of net present value for capital budgeting, or stock valuation formulae leading to computerized automatic trades. Thanks to such socio-technical devices, economists and other economic agents (e.g. bankers and policy-makers) enforce their concepts and interests. These devices constrain the actions and rationales of the economic agents and produce actual effects on the economy. The stream of research dedicated to this form of performativity is close to actor-network theory, and it underscores the fact that performativity stems from a network of actants (Muniesa & Callon, 2009), which inspired by Deleuze, are called an *agencement*, a French word built on the same root as agency.

I welcome the performativity debate and the turn to performativity, especially within the ‘text makes economic reality’ stream. But does the argument apply to organizational studies as well; do its texts have performative potential, i.e. do they have the ability not only to mirror, but also to affect people’s lives inside organizations? My concern is not for the existence of impact, but for the kind of effects that are brought about by research. There are already some organizational researchers that display disquietude about what our research has brought to performance: worried that we are entrapping others’ lives in relentless chains of causes and effects, in confirmation of very limited identities or set trajectories. These are anxieties that our writings have locked us and our readers into a division between those who know and those who suffer. Thus, does organizational studies produce texts of opportunities, helping people to build their own pathways, or just the opposite?

I want here to raise four loci of debate that all pertain to a democratic concern regarding organizational research. As the debate is still unfolding, there are many views on performativity and there are multiple performativities (MacKenzie and al., 2007); there is no agreement on what 'performativity' really means. But it seems, first, that many scholars see a division between those who know how organizations should be run and others who do not. And the scholars try to influence those others who do not know, and who supposedly should be made to perform in accordance with expert prescriptions. Second, performativity supposedly operates across a sharp divide of two separate worlds, that of actants and that of the acted upon. Third, performativity is supposed to influence behaviours and thoughts, and its effect on subjectivities is downplayed. Thanks to its focus on cognitive and material devices, affects and affectivity are only given a minor role. And fourth, much of the performative effects may not be a result at all of intended influences, but result from what could be seen as parasitism and ghostly presence.

The turn to performativity demands an ethical urge to reflect on the effects that our words actually have on practice. Starting with performativity as impact factor and as performance, I will present elements of the debate in regards to the four preceding loci, using ideas from Jacques Rancière, Kathleen Stewart, Judith Butler and Jacques Derrida.

(i) Performativity and emancipation

Cabantou *and al.* (2011, 2014) have highlighted the performativity of rational decision theory. Although many organizational scholars have described discrepancies from the rational decision making model, Cabantou *and al.* see the eternal return of decisions made with its help and in conformance with the theory's prescriptions. They describe how the theory gets performed, taught by academics, engineered by decision analysts, and commodified by consultants. In their depiction, there is still the dichotomy between those who (think they) know how decisions should be made, and want to explain the right way to make decisions, and those who still have to understand and apply that knowledge. People, here, have different places and their roles are ascribed a priori by their places. Performativity, evidently, is a concern for

experts; it is about their aptitude to get their conceptions adopted by practitioners. Performativity is not portrayed as emancipatory on the receiving end.

To understand ‘emancipatory’ I refer to Jacques Rancière. For Rancière (1987, 2000, 2008), all organizations entail the distribution of places and of capacities, or of incapacities attached to those places. He calls this the ‘distribution of the sensible’: it functions between schoolmasters and learners, between spectators and performers, between intellectuals and followers, between managers and the managed; and all of these are allegories of inequality. Emancipation starts with the assertion of the principle of equality; that is, with the rejection of oppositions between the powerful and powerless, those in command and those who must follow. Emancipation requires acknowledgement of a more balanced distribution of competencies. Rancière exposes what I refer to as the first locus the performativity debate.

Rancière is interested in the question of performativity. In *The Flesh of the Words* (2004), he devotes specific attention to the ways words become flesh. How do words become deeds, take power over lives, and incarnate the everyday labor of people? According to Rancière, words do not acquire their power by assembling themselves into the right descriptions, representations, or imitations; rather “it is by naming, by calling, by commanding, by intriguing, by seducing that they slice into the naturalness of existences, set humans on their path, separate them and unite them into communities” (p.3). Words have the ability to command the reader; to become seed able to bear fruit in the soul; and to set one marching. But how desirable is any of this? Rancière questions the ability and the appropriateness of words, speech and text, to command activity. Transforming lived reality with books and theories smacks of trying to build the new man, and of creating the people still to come. And it evokes images of Stalin and Pol Pot. Rancière differentiates between speech as command and control, and speech as the flesh of the human theatre. To use Merleau-Ponty’s phrase, it is the *flesh-of-the-world* that shares, relates, distributes and performs. The way the text co-performs with other texts, persons, places and peoples, can be authoritative or emancipatory. Performativity is tied up with what sort of performance is required, delivered, desired or dreamt. How the text performs is crucial to its political significance.

Let's take the example of Rancière's analysis of James Agee's *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. From all Rancière's examples, Agee's book comes the closest to our interest in organizational studies. In his analysis, Rancière (2011) is not interested in finding concepts to explain or give guidance for the lives of the American sharecropper families described in the book during the New Deal. Rancière looks at Agee's text as an aesthetic performance: it shows us thought weaving together perceptions, affects, names and ideas, constructing the sensible community. And these links create and give support to the intellectual community that makes such weaving possible.

Rancière insists that Agee describes "the cruel radiance of what there is;" via a frivolous and systematic account of swimsuits, nails, boards and woods. It is a text of endless depictions. Agee is worried that his gaze and speech will add more violence to the already existing violence. His descriptions, lists, and text are grounded in no particular authority, and refuse to define their criteria of selection. He refuses to select what suits his views. If his sentences lengthen and stretch, it is not to better link each insignificant detail of rural life in poverty to its context and its causes. Analysis of poverty is always already so well known, in advance. His sentences are written in pursuit of an unachievable goal of linking all the details to the uncontrollable chain of events that make up the cosmos and these persons' destiny. It is only beyond mere adaptation to circumstances that real lives can begin to live up to their fate. We are treated both to the immense weight of necessity and the art with which people respond to existence. Agee reveals the wounding condition of exploitation and economic violence, and how people live with their scars. Agee condenses in a few images the sensitive fabric of the human condition, rendering it touchable and thinkable, without denying its dignity. The description was rooted and documented by long and caring acquaintance with these particular coal-mining families. It had the power to set people or programs in motion, but before all, Agee refuses the violence of objectifying these lives. His book is written in support of no theory commanding any specific action plan or reaction. Agee's performativity was not bound to having any change proposals. He looks for ways to break the 'distribution of the sensible' that attributes to the sharecroppers a helpless passive position. His book can induce people to stand up and march.

For Rancière, there is a kind of paradox of performativity in the arts in regards to emancipation. He places James Agee's text in a tradition that started in the mid-eighteenth century and that defined a new topic: the people; and focused on a new place: history. A new aesthetic paradigm developed in opposition to the established representative order. Literature had been defined as a body with well-articulated parts. Poiesis required a plot, and a plot capable of providing order to actions. The representative regime was based on a hierarchical model: "a well-ordered body where the upper part commands the lower, the privilege of actions, that is to say of the free man, capable of acting according to ends, over the repetitive lives of men without quality" (p.15). The aesthetic paradigm of a writer like James Agee develops as a breach with this hierarchical model of the body, realized in the plot of the story and its actions. But Agee wrote to enhance and champion the (new) community of free and equal men. Paradoxically, Agee's aesthetic regime actually has a plot of its own. He advocates a new sensibility of respect and equality. He addresses his readers in their sensible life itself, our seeing, understanding and judging, is subject to renewal. But hereby he tends to cut off his community of readers from all the paths that are normally used to reach a political or cultural goal. For Rancière, emancipatory performativity cannot be sought through planned change or top-down intended action. It rather starts by revoking 'the distribution of the sensible' that entitles unequal places, aptitudes, and rights to those who seek to do things with words, and those that are being done to by these words. Agee's writing showed the dignity of the poorest of the poor to a privileged literary audience. It reversed the norm: the wealthy well-educated urban readership was not his humanist model but the desperately underprivileged rural people that he had met.

To return to the performativity of the academic field of economics, "those who know" are academics. Michel Callon extends this group when he distinguishes between 'confined' economists and economics 'at large' (1987). Theory and performativity are not a monopoly of the academics; theory and performativity are also produced by bankers, policy-makers and others. In terms of performativity, Rancière focuses on the question of emancipation. Performativity is about how theories affect people's lives. If theories are designed with the presupposition of the equality of intelligence and are not intended to explain how Others should behave and think, performativity could become emancipatory. Otherwise, theories tend to solidify the inequalities of

place and condition, strengthen power positions, and holdback the possibilities of voice. But Rancière's preconditions for an emancipatory performativity tend to cut off what Callon (2008) refers to as 'intended performativity' or the normal way that texts intend things. Put succinctly, telling people how they should behave democratically is a performative contradiction.

(ii) Performativity and affectivity

The idea of performativity as the processes whereby ideas, theories and models shape or influence organizations and markets often assumes two separate worlds: the world of theory and the world of practice, and a world of words and one of actions. Economists are in their "ivory tower" (Callon, 2007, p. 315). They look at economies and organizations from a distance, without being affected by what they study. And there is yet another separation: between the economy (as the realm of things) and politics (as the realm of words) (Cochoy and al., 2010). Franck Cochoy reminds us how Hirshman demonstrated that Adam Smith's theory of the invisible hand, which posits natural-like laws of the economy, was a way to rid economics of politics. Economists have striven to maintain a radical separation between their theorizing and what economic agents do. They claim to describe the economy existing out-there, rather than to be economic agents themselves (Cochoy and al., 2010). This separation introduces a second locus for debate.

After Rancière, I turn to Kathleen Stewart to illustrate my point. When, more than half a century after Agee, Kathleen Stewart (1996) endeavored an ethnography of the American deep south, she returned to the same communities that Agee had visited and described. She wrote about, and with, the people she met, looking for a similar kind of performativity as Agee had found. She does not want her words to have a power to effect (such as, make a political or economic difference), rather that they have a power to affect (to move and deeply touch the reader). She is aware of the potential injustice hidden in the words of the most generous of projects. She praises Agee for his endless search for something else than decontaminated knowledge. Looking for the decontaminated meaning of things, she contends, separates completely Us from Them, placing the ethnographer as a model builder and reducing

culture to a thing or a system that the author can grasp and decipher. Ethnography may be correctively filtered by literary devices such as author positioning, formally dialogic presentation, ironic distance or self-reflection; but it remains in its essence an authorial construct.

For the researcher to let herself be contaminated, is to refuse the scientific distance praised by so many methodologists. It means being affected, touched and transformed, and it also means being engaged, without a possibility of being indifferent. Alphonso Lingis (1998) presents this being affected as a Levinas-ian encountering of the Other's face, in which one loses the full mastery of oneself and of one's situation and feels the urge to respond to the Other's vulnerability. Affects are what move you and force you to think, not from a general perspective, but driven by the singular experience that is presently unfolding. It entails a reeling present that holds onto you. From the experience of affectedness, the author does not devise any conclusion, order, or proposals for political reforms. She will rather write a text as a performance, designed to affect the reader and render the reader sensitive to a variety of facets of the human condition. If there are some elements of interpretation, it is done in the way a musician or an actor interprets a piece of music or a play, performing with her own sensitivity and without a conductor or director. Culture is not a thing that can be described and analyzed. Culture is triply co-constructed, triply felt, evoked and passed on by (i) the people attended to, (ii) the author and (iii) the reader(s).

Stewart's words are performative, but not because they command actions or install a new order of things. The world is not changed by her words in the way a mayor, through her authority, can declare a couple, husband and wife. Stewart's performativity requires work, the work of affectivity, of reflexivity and of ethics. How readers work through such a text will not be the same, but (almost) everyone may eventually be affected. The author has to work very hard. Not only to let herself or himself be affected, touched, and transformed by the processes of encountering, but also to not rush too quickly towards explanation, facile codes, or "solutions" to the problems of alterity. Academic writing tends to objectification and to the production of decontaminated knowledge, characterized by its imaginative poverty. Affect challenges the writer's ability at cultural and inter-subjective translation. The author has to dwell in the proliferation of expressive signs long enough, "displacing the

premature urge to classify, code, contextualize, and name long enough to imagine something of the texture and density of spaces of desire that proliferate in Othered places.” (1996, p.26) And she has to craft words that would constitute and reconstitute her experience of affectedness. The reader has to work to hold her attention on the texture of the texted experience, to feel and reflect on the testimony without in turn rushing to explanations and big, distancing syntheses. To link what is read with all previous readings, to one’s own experience and to the new thoughts triggered by the words, is a big task. Without the help of standard systems of reduction and theoretical models, the reader has to pass through a series of affects and forge a judgment in debate with the author. And the people studied are not denied their share of the work. Because they are not reduced to one thing, one voice or one representation; they may be affected by the picture painted. The people studied are invited to reflect in dialogue with the text, constructing their own working through of its affects.

Performativity, seen as the way one world influences another, can maintain a strict separation between the two. The idea often is to build decontaminated knowledge, rid of politics, of affect, and to try to have its results implemented. The separation prevents connectedness, care, and responsibility for the other from developing. Often, what passes as performativity, is calculative, cognitive and representative, with no place for affect, emotion, real concern and responsibility. I have pointed in this subsection to a major dilemma in performativity; if it entails affect, relatedness and relationship, it may not be able to be prescriptive, didactic or planned-out. Contrastingly, one of the main strengths of economic sociology is to show the many socio-material links between theory and practice, seeing “ideas and realities as maintained and interrelated through supple chains of practical translations” (Kjellberg & Helgesson, 2006, p.851). But these links are then often devoid of affect, care and responsibility. If the world of the researched and the researcher are not separated, performativity may no longer be able to have an impact, or to install behavioral change via how socio-material circumstances are represented. Performativity can also entail the inauguration of a series of workings that participants simultaneously go through.

(iii) Performativity and subject construction

A third locus of debate, focuses on what it exactly is which is influenced by performative texts. More often than not, behavior is the targeted goal or perhaps “paradigm shift” is intended. But the subjects themselves, when exposed to performative address, seemingly remain unchanged. People react and adapt to devices and languages, but their subjectivities are either readily adaptable or irrelevant. Let’s take the example of an illustration proposed by Ferraro, Pfeffer and Sutton (2005). They wanted to show that the language and assumptions of economics shaped managerial practice, creating the behaviors they predicted. Economics and managerial theories act for these writers as self-fulfilling theories and as a consequence they become institutionalized. Employment relationships have become more market-like. Layoffs and downsizing have become an usual managerial tool of decreasing costs. Ferraro and al. describe the mechanisms whereby shareholder value ideology and the replacement of the community or family metaphor of the firm by one of the market, has changed organizational assumptions. Management practices and institutional arrangements are now designed differently. In result, people act selfishly with poor business ethics and behave as if only motivated by extrinsic incentives. While in this illustration something does seem to have changed in the subjectivities, the authors limit their analysis to behaviors. When submitted to performative texts and ideas, people may not only alter their behaviors, but also their self-constructions.

To discuss this, the third point, we would like to turn to Judith Butler. If Stewart emphasizes affect as the power to be moved, and in turn to make persons and relations move; we should not overlook what words, even unintentionally, by their repetition, solidify and reproduce. By speaking, we may reproduce and strengthen the very oppositions (the multitude versus the elite, or the powerful versus the powerless, or the intellectuals versus the ignorant) that we seek to fight against. We may forget that within the multitude that there is a variety of groups, destinies and conditions, with variations across history, geography and culture.

What the multitude is, is before all else, what the multitude performs; but this performance is not an act of free will accomplished by fully self-conscious persons. When we write about the multitude or persons belonging to the ‘people’ our texts are

constitutive for subject construction. Let us try here to think this through with Judith Butler's concept of performativity, while aware that this transposition from 'gender' to 'people' bears weaknesses and limits. For Butler (1993), the performative power of the utterances and texts that she is studying stems less from the right words being spoken in the right context, than from their reiteration: that is, repetition and dissemination in many places and layers of society. People are addressed by words and cannot ignore them because "[o]ne comes to exist by virtue of fundamental dependency on the address of the other." (Butler, 1997, p.6) Discourses are performative, in the sense that they produce the subjects they speak about. Words do not only produce an effect, but they reproduce it; constraining and regulating the effects they have on people. According to Butler (1990), following Foucault, the formation of the subject occurs in relation to the "regulative discourses," or "framework of intelligibility," conveyed by what is normatively said about the subject. Subjects require such discourses for their constitution and do not exist without their effectivity. The performativity of a single utterance or writing cannot be isolated from the preceding discourses that have shaped the construction of self. For example, hate speeches of machismo and pornography are constitutive of women's identity (Butler, 1997). Such discourses are so deeply rooted in ourselves, and notably in a part of ourselves opaque to self-examination (Butler, 2005), that we cannot expel their workings from our identity. Of course, such performances are not automatic; they can somehow be undone or counteracted. For instance, the same words that have been used to injure, may be re-signified into positive proclamations. But people seek recognition and that recognition happens via regulative discourse (Butler, 2004). To be addressed means to be recognized, but recognition may be conferred with words that are hateful or debilitating (Butler (1997)). The subject has to build itself even though. Texts' performativity are problematic, whether or not they are adopted by the multitude. Performative texts are authoritative speech that acts thanks to social norms. We need to worry about what kind of normativity we disseminate: whether our discourses are habilitating, and whether they increase the room for agency. But agency will always be limited, opaque, and shaped by a wealth of regulatory discourses. And we must not only think of what we do with language, but also what we do to language. Language is the stuff from which subjects and sociality constructs itself.

Performativity has to do with how our texts and ideas affect people's lives, conceived of in terms of behaviors and sense-making. But performativity also entails subject construction, manifest in identities and recognition, with important differences in consequences, mechanisms and responsibilities. The way people are described in our theories can influence the way people make accounts of themselves. Identities can be done or undone by the words one constructs oneself with, or that are used against one. Words may transform self and other. The impact of a text may well be non-existent. But the repetition and accumulation of texts may have an impact – and often does. And this impact will probably be far more profound than some simple behavioral alteration.

(iv) Performativity and difference

A fourth debate concerns the origin of performative effect. Usually, performativity is described in terms of an author or theory having some effect on people's lives. But in some cases, performative effects can take place without being ascribable to an author, or they are only very indirectly linked to theory. François Cooren (2004) refers to 'textual agency' in the cases of textual effects without reference to an authorial 'I', such as if the author is only presupposed, or the author or the author's theory has disappeared.

Jacques Derrida (1972) demonstrated that Austin's analysis of performativity, though it is supposed to be a general theory of speech acts, actually presupposes a restricted, idealized, and even unrealistic form of authorial agency. Real performative enunciations are threatened by parasites. If a phrase is uttered, for example by an actor, or is solely quoted, and even more generally, if it is hijacked by a context different to the one supposed by, or appropriate to, the enunciator; then the performativity will fail. Parasites are enemies. But Derrida retorts that much performative power stems from parasitism. The enunciated phrase will leave its mark, which can be cited or grafted onto other contexts. The phrase's working will drift away from the initially intended effect and will acquire new meanings and new powers. Austin overlooks that phrases gain their performative power thanks to iterations. The mayor's declaration 'I pronounce you man and wife' in a wedding, will

have felicity only if it is recognized as such. And it is recognized because it has been declared before and because this power has been inscribed in laws or statutes. Each iteration is not just the mere repetition of the same, with the same performative action; it is a repetition that happens anew, in different contexts, and times. Each iteration slips away from the originary intent, gaining meaning and effect in the new context and via the traces of previous ones. Austin's concept of intentionality supposes the pure presence of the enunciator, who is fully aware and in control of his intentionality. But the performance works through a 'token' or a 'mark'. The token or mark introduces a gap between itself and the enunciator, so that the intention is prevented from being fully present to itself. The enunciation is not fully in contact with or in control of its target or meaning. The structure of performativity cannot be reduced to the case of the spoken enunciation. Performativity can survive the death of its author, as in the case of a testament, and also the death of the original receiver or context of production. The performative structure is far more complex than one of an enunciator intending a specific effect with his words in a prescribed context.

Austin wanted to exempt his theory of performativity of all cases that he termed 'non serious'. Derrida (1990) has replied to Austin and to Searle that performativity requires a serious examination of its structure and actual working. From this serious look, Derrida asserts that performativity differs from authorial intentionality. It is based on marks or tokens that can be quoted, altered, grafted, hijacked, taken over; and this is the structure of all communication. Performativity cannot be controlled by the author, but this does not exempt the author from responsibility, be it individual or collective. Responsibility might or might not hamper our will to speak out and to write. It certainly alerts us to the complexity of performativity and our need to reflect on it each time anew. We, as researchers, are used to playing with marks, tokens, traces and symbols, but we need to be reminded that the words we read and the words we write work in complex structures of *différance*. They identify, brand, differentiate, discriminate, subjugate, reify and flee. The writer's arrogant will to have a direct effect on others with words needs to be reigned in. But this must not prevent us from working with and amidst the multitude or the people. We write from a powerless sort of power, with effects mediated by detours and meanderings, as we search for impossible possibilities, working with and twisting language, which resists all violations, trying for new effects and contributions.

As impact factors by classical economists, or as socio-economic indices, performativity requires an author and devices for the diffusion of ideation. However some performative effects may arise without any of these. Performativity's (anti-)democratic consequences need to be analyzed, focusing on the responsibility and political role of academe.

Conclusion

Referring back to my introduction, I described economists anxious of demonstrating their contribution by showing the performativity of their theories. I cannot avoid reiterating my worries about equating 'being performative' and 'having an impact'. What quality does this impact have on people's lives? I hope I have managed to disentangle and separate various approaches of performativity, distancing it from its more common use, as an equivalent to efficiency. Letiche (1992) recalls Lyotard (1979)'s concern that our postmodern society is governed by performativity. Performativity is thought of here as technical and economic, whose principle is to achieve the best input/output equation, while remaining blind to any questions pertaining to the realm of the true, the just, or the beautiful.

Discussion of the authoritative or emancipatory possibilities of performativity is needed, and awareness of the affect of being connected and contaminated with the people's lives that we analyze is necessary. Impacting subjectivities and identities, via recognition and performative effects, without authorial responsibility is a deep concern. The socio-material devices of authors can wreak havoc. Non-human actants can dominate performativity, but this does not mean one is justified to not to see peoples' faces in these mechanisms.

The performativity of our words on the other's existence ought to be of primary ethical, epistemological and political concern in the way we study organizations. I have tried to show that the further one gets from a technical, economical and cybernetic conception of performativity, the more room there is for emancipatory interaction or demos. However, performativity is complex and multifaceted. Concerns about performativity have to be taken anew for each study. Spicer et al. (2009) propose a range of tactics to foster critical performativity: affirming ambiguity, working

with mysteries, applying communicative action, exploring heterotopias and engaging micro-emancipations. Alvesson (2009), likewise, has devised circumspect care, progressive pragmatism and searching for present possibilities as an emancipatory program. Crisis in performativity may bring about more propositions, trials and debates among scholars, and hopefully not by excluding the multitude or people.

Georges Didi-Huberman (2012) is alarmed by how the multitude/people have only a bit part; they are just a *figurant* in most representations. The people are either over-exposed or under-exposed with the same effect of disappearance from the text. Performativity is about the possibility for the multitude/people to recover a face, *une figure*, and acquire a more equal role in the distribution of places and aptitudes that research presupposes.

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