



**HAL**  
open science

## Inter-Play(ing) – Embodied and relational possibilities of serious play at work

Wendelin Kuepers

► **To cite this version:**

Wendelin Kuepers. Inter-Play(ing) – Embodied and relational possibilities of serious play at work. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 2017, 30 (7), pp.993-1014. 10.1108/JOCM-12-2016-0267 . hal-01768891

**HAL Id: hal-01768891**

**<https://hal.science/hal-01768891>**

Submitted on 14 Jun 2018

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

# Inter-Play(ing) – Embodied and Relational Possibilities of ‘Serious Play’ at Work

Wendelin Kuepers

## Introduction

*“Come in, Brother,” Jack said. “Business before pleasure, is always a good rule, whoever you are. Some day the rule shall be business with pleasure, for the joy of labor shall have been restored.”* (Ellison, 1995: 304)

The formerly sharp line and boundaries between play and work or playfulness and seriousness seem to become increasingly blurred and crossed. What can be observed at present is a growth of a ludo-industry and of ludo-capitalism (Dibbell, 2008) that is the broadening infestation of the global economy by play. With this we witness the emergence of a *homo ludens 2.0* with oscillating playful identities using ludic media technologies (Frissen et al. 2015) and also co-creating characters, whose playful relationships in a fluid between-and-between world creates ‘work’. Accordingly, in our present ludic culture and experience economy, playfulness not only characterizes leisure time, but also those domains that used to be ‘serious’, such as work in organisation.

With these tendencies towards juxta-positioning play and work, critical questions arise: Have organisations and management entered into a kind of playful mode and ethos (Costea et al., 2005)? What does it imply that specific forms of play are enacted or even institutionalized as integral to work culture to enhance organizational practices and creativity? What does it mean that organisations allow temporarily to suspend functional pressures, structural obligations, and pressures for conformity and consistency, in order to enter playfully a transitional in-between space, in which organizational members explore and experiment and to play freely with new ideas although these may not seem immediately useful in generating products or solutions (Mainemelis & Ronson, 2006: 121; Mainemelis & Altman, 2010)? How can we leave behind the ideology of a work-ethics that trivialized, infantilises unserious play in contrast to serious productive work, without loosening the qualities of conceptually distinguishing both; and in how far is play a much richer phenomenon than functional instrumentalising or appropriational approaches try to do (Sørensen, & Spoelstra, 2012).

Is play a form of work (McGonigal, 2011, 29-31) or work a play (Reeves and Read 2009, 173)? Are play and work recombined to serve in organisations as ‘therapeutic stage set’ for manipulating souls, managing their well-being and happiness in late (pop-)modernity (Costea et al., 2007)? How can playful illusion (*‘in ludere’ = ‘in play’*) and ‘real’ seriousness; how can fun and utility as well as process and outcome be-come integrated, wisely?

For responding to these questions, the following develop an extended, more integral interpretation of play as an embodied and unfolding process.

As a style of be(com)ing, play is and remains enigmatic and ambiguous that cannot be made transparent completely. Perplexingly, play is slippery, elusive and evasive, as it defies, and at times resists precise definitions or comprehensive conceptualizations.

Like a trickster practice it might appear and vanish anytime, anywhere and ‘any-how’, although rendering lasting effects on individuals, groups, organizations and societies. Being part of historical and current developments of human being and culture, the creation and enactment of play, provide insights into qualities and intrinsic meanings that are or cannot be framed and tamed by economically governed, calculative and purpose-driven orientations. As a more process- rather than product-oriented practice, the motivation for and interest in play follows a pursuit of internal values and ends; for which rewards can be found in the very act.

Running contrary to the principled and deliberate means-ended approach, play, “may be heralded as a singularly fulfilled, liberating experience, through which man opens doors normally closed, alters his habitual modes of perception, refuses categorically to tolerate premature and limiting closures, views naked simplicity of the world and entities within it, and inaugurates processes and actions of creative and novel transformation” (Meier, 1980, p. 31), especially when understood as embodied.

Etymologically, play refers to ‘*dlegh*’ (from Indo-European meaning, literally, meaning movement, motion, energetic engagement, discovering new possibilities) which implies moving bodies and embodiment, venturing towards the novel. But how is play incorporated? Who moves in an engaged way, with what or whom, how and why? How does play constitute a dialog between human beings’ inevitable bodily openness, commitment, and attachment to the world?

Phenomenologically, embodied play can be interpreted as an existential, intentional and expressive phenomenon (Torres, 2002). For Fink, “play has an extraordinary status in its being an existential basic phenomenon, just as primordial and independent as mortality, love, work, and struggle/rule” (2016: 204).

With such phenomenological approach, play can be approached as situationally, immediately and directly apprehended and ‘lived through’, thus revealing itself in relation to others and in or towards the world. Based on a Merleau-Pontyan understanding of embodiment and a processual-relational approach (Küpers. 2015), incorporated playful practice, is seen in the following paper as part of a multidimensional and interrelational nexus. Such approach allows re-interpreting the aforementioned tensions and to problematize paradoxical intentions and implications of ‘serious play’ as situated between being autotelic and purpose-driven.

An understanding of embodied playful practice helps to show the proto-integral mediality of playing as part of an integrity of being, knowing, doing and effectuating. Moreover, it opens up perspectives on a ‘wised-up’ playful organizing and ‘poietic praxis’ of serious play.

For showing how serious play is an embodied practice and inter-relational event first typologies and the continuum of play are outlined. Subsequently, a phenomenology of embodied play respectively playful practice is offered that interprets both, play and practice, as situated co-creative inter-action, characterized by power and ambivalences.

Then the multidimensional and relational concept and creative practice of ‘*inter-play*’ is shown to be a part of a transformative inter-practice in organizational life (Küpers,

2011). Accordingly, various forms of *in-(ter)between(s)* of play will be seen as experiential mediating nexus. This inter-relational spheres of interplaying (players and play-grounds) brings together self, others and worlds, while involving engagements between inner and outer life as well as its subjective, intersubjective and objective dimensions, integrally.

To further qualify interplay, then serious play and its paradoxical nature are critically discussed and links to practical wisdom (*phrónêsis*) as well as poietic praxis and the role of professional artistry presented.

Finally, some theoretical, political and practical implications are outlined and by concluding perspectives offered.

### **Typologies and Continuum of Play**

As a response to and critical elaboration of Huizinga's universalising, formal definition of a rule-bound and ordering "play-festival-rite complex" of *homo ludens* (Huizinga, 1955, p. 31), in his seminal work on 'Man, Play, and Games' Caillois (2001) develops his own interpretation. He defines play as a free, separate, uncertain, 'an-economic' activity that is governed by rules and make-believe (*ibid.* 9). For him this implies that it is voluntary, and has an unknown conclusion. While Huizinga is searching for an all-embracing or unitary conception of play and its function for human civilization, that (in sacred seriousness) takes place "outside and above the necessities and (profane) seriousness of everyday life" (*ibid.*, 26), Caillois tries to reconcile play's many forms and typologies them differently.

Caillois's definition of play has the following six elements. Play is (1) free—that is nonobligatory; (2) separate that is, cut off from reality; (3) uncertain, in the sense that the results are not known beforehand; (4) unproductive that is an expenditure that does not create wealth or goods<sup>1</sup> (5) rule-bound or -governed; and (6) fictive, operating within a fictitious reality. As such it is "accompanied by a special awareness of a second reality or of a free unreality, as against real life" (2001, 9–10). Accordingly, he offered a specific typology or classification of games: *agôn* (competition), *alea* (chance), that are both predominant in 'advanced' civilizations and *mimicry* (simulation, imitation, make-believe or role play), and *ilinx* (movement, whirlpooling or disorientating vertigo and risk-taking).

Importantly, all the mentioned forms of play comprise bodily and embodied dimensions. There are competing bodies moving in *agôn* as well as exposed, receptive bodies related to *alea*. A re-embodied understanding of play revives and reintegrates affective pre-reflexive dimensions of playful *mimicry* and twirling *ilinx* that tend to be lost in competitive *agôn* and fortuitous *alea*. While referring to pre-human bodied foundations of playful impulses, make-belief-related *mimicry* and thrill-seeking *ilinx* have been suppressed or merely functions as a kind of escape.

Caillois's classification of these four types of play has value, for it helps to analyze the different kinds of challenges and satisfactions that any particular, also informal play activities present also in organization.

Cross-cutting his classification of types Caillois (2001) discerns two play attitudes on a continuum: '*paidia*' and of '*ludus*' as a gradient between freer and more regulated forms of play. While the first one refers to more active and exuberant processes (like improvisation, carefree gaiety and laughter, and spontaneous, impulsive, joyous, and

uncontrolled fantasy); ludus relates to disciplines, calculates and involves more explicitly rule-governed forms of contrived play that often involve specific skills and mastery.

All mentioned categories of play phenomena are located somewhere between the poles of paidia and ludus. While agon and alea lean towards the pole of ludus, mimicry and ilinx tend more towards paidia.



Figure 1 Cailloisian typology of forms of play

With its set of artificial restrictions ludus functions for forming activity as coherent, and communicable thus permit complex social interaction and by disciplining paidia, gives “the fundamental categories of play their purity and excellence” (Caillois, 2001, 31). But as playing without paidia seem ultimately sterile, formulaic settings in which players quickly lose interest; paidia fascinates and offers opportunities for creativity, spontaneity, and self-assertion. A satisfying experience balances between ludus-related coherent expressions (order) and paidian pursuit of freedom (disorder).

Taken together, these classifications and poles are useful tools for the analysis of different kinds of play forms, and shift in play preferences and social functions throughout history<sup>2</sup> as well as the ludification of contemporary culture and organisations.

In our contemporary era, an agôn-alea combination dominates, inviting the question how to incorporate the qualities of mimicry and ilinx. Playful activities, like games, are not inferior settings, but rather alternative worlds. These forms of play allow people to play through the possibilities of life and, in some cases, finding satisfactions denied in profane society and work-places. For example taking on new guises (mimicry) or experiencing feelings of disorientation and change (ilinx), both help developing and acting out creatively new senses of being and reality in innovative organisations.

When playing, players create and engage with some kind of alternate reality; while this ‘new’ reality is positioned within the reality of their daily lives. Both Huizinga and Caillois defined this contextual reality of play as not serious, unreal or nonsensical contrasting it with every-day life. Although both authors also recognize that play can be very serious in itself (Huizinga, 1955: 33; Caillois, 2001: 10) such dichotomizing conceptualization is too stringent and problematic (Sutton-Smith 1997: 208).

This is especially the case, when imposed intrusions of external concerns lead to an appropriation and ‘professionalism’ by which play, made ‘serious’, becomes a kind of regime or ‘obligation’, thereby undermining spontaneity and freedom of choice and action as well as other (sheltered) qualities of play.

One way to overcome a rigid dichotomization of play in schemes of rational and irrational, playful and non-playful or serious and non-serious activities and to develop “*playful organizations*” - culturally and structurally (Warmelink, 2014) - is to fully embrace it as bodied process, experienced by bodily players in likewise embodied play-ground.

### **Phenomenology of Embodied Play**

Playfulness carries the presence, flexibility, and openness needed to improvise (Küpers, 2011) with and expand the stream of possibilities as they emerge in each moment. The proposition of the following is that play is always already embodied and that embodiment is constitutionally related to a playful ‘possibilising’ relation to the world. This implies that play not merely has bodily dimensions or involves a body, but that playing itself is enacted and processed in an embodied way. Moreover, being embodied is responsively and creatively playful. Being embodied is always already a way of playful practicing mediated by living bodies within a situated and responsive praxis. And it is Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology of the body provides a philosophy for understanding play as embodied and embodiment as playful.

Phenomenology contributes to an enriched understanding of an embodied, playful practice by returning to phenomena, things and events in their life-worldly situatedness and meanings. Phenomenologically, organizations are situated lifeworlds (Sandberg & D’Alba, 2009), in which playful practices take place through experiential processes and thus living action, while also providing the source and medium for meaning.

Ontologically, the situatedness of practices of play comprises spatio-temporal dimensions. This implies that it occurs through relations to places (Küpers, 2010) and states of durability as ‘contextuo-temporal’ realities as both providing constitutive conditions for occurring events, activities and sense-making.

Practices of play are always already co-constituted within ‘Being-in-the-World’ (Heidegger, 1962, §12, 13), which makes them “unfolding, fluid, ongoing, shifting, wholistic, and dynamic” (Weick, 2003, p. 459).

According to Merleau-Ponty (1995, 2012), our body is our way of being also playfully in the world of everyday-life. Specifically, embodied practices of play are built upon a pre-reflective and ambiguous ‘ground’ of experiences-as-lived-through and its expressions. From this viable perspective, the body and embodiment are not only functioning as surfaces for inscriptions or discursive constructions, but are having an experiential depth and specificity (Leder, 1990).

“Play, in the middle of the ambiguous world, open players to new horizons, landscapes that stretch the field of intentionalities, an opening that is so fragile that it tends to disappear when players go looking for it” (Torres, 2002, p. 136).

From a phenomenological perspective, ways of playful practicing are embodied, while involving various bodily modes of practical belonging and engagements in the world (Csordas, 1994, p. 12).

What renders Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of embodiment particularly important for a critical understanding of playful practice in organisation is his critique of both, empiristic realism and materialism, as well as rationalistic idealism and intellectualism. Both reduce live-worldly phenomena, perception and sensation either to the realm of nature/matter or to that of spirit/ideas, each failing to explain the expressive sense of emergent practices.

Instead he develops a bodily-mediated and embodied understanding of being in the world of practicing that can be used for re-interpreting play as part of an interwoven post-dichotomous nexus of “self-other-things” (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 57) and perspectival “integral being” (Merleau-Ponty, 1995, p. 84).

As practices of play are first and foremost embodied and its practitioners are primarily bodily beings, they are both parts of the world and coextensive with it; constituting, but also constituted by it. Accordingly, life-worlds are found meaningful mainly with respect to the ways in which practitioners perceive, feel and act within it and which acts upon them (Crossley, 1996, p. 101) within materially, socio-culturally, historically, gendered, and technologically impacting realities.

Importantly, embodiment as base for play does not simply refer to a physical manifestation, nor is a body a physico-perceptual objectified ‘thing’ or physiological resourceful system. Rather, being embodied implies that playful practitioners are dynamically incarnated in and mediated by mundane experiences, emotions and moods, especially through receptive, situated affectedness or sensually being-at-tuned when inter-actively processed. Thus, the embodied playful practicing subjects as well as their socio-cultural embodiments are situated in an ongoing sensual that is tactile, visual, olfactory or auditory way. Whatever incarnated playing actors perceive, feel, think, intend or perform as well as how they make sense of or cope with, they are bodily exposed to and process their practicing within a synchronised field of interrelated senses and synaesthetic sensations (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 207) with others.

Embodied capable and actually playing (inter-)subjects and realities of play as well as a given or co-created playground, mutually constitute and condition one other. They are all parts of an unfolding process of relating towards a world in which places, people, practices and play are and unfold together.

Play does not only reaffirm people's bodily character in the world, but involves a meaningful structuration of the situated socio-material back-(play-)ground in which it happens and specific rules that are organizing the play. “The center-background gestalt is not imposed on the player but has a dynamic co-source in the player herself. Players begin to play when they co-determine, co-structure their playground in an autotelic spirit. The playground is not something rigid and predetermined waiting to be acted upon. Nor are players' sources of absolute freedom in shaping an infinitely malleable environment. On the contrary, players themselves make play by coconfiguring the

playground. In other words, play happens when people's playing bodies enter into playgrounds. But, at the same time, all the ways in which playgrounds and their conditions are available to players are radically connected with and affected by their playing subject-bodies (Torres, 2002; p. 143).

With Mainemelis and Ronson (2006: 86-92) play and its activities and -ground mediate or consist of a circular interaction among the following five elements: *threshold experience*, temporal and spatial boundaries, *uncertainty–freedom constraint*, *loose and flexible association between means and ends* and *positive affects*.

According to them with these elements play manifest in organization as a form of *engagement* with work tasks (playing with one's core work) or as a form of *diversion* (playing with non-work elements in the work context), both fostering creativity, always involving pre-linguistic enactments and social protoplasmic cultural elements (ibid. 122). Thus, practices of play can be seen as a function and emergent process of vivid bodily subjects and a dynamic embodiment of the playground in which practitioners are inter-relationally entangled. The entwinement or infringement between practitioner and their intermediating embodied practicing allows considering multi-folded spheres of experiences and realities of play together. This mutual entanglement permits exploring the interrelating perceptions, affects, feelings, - even love<sup>3</sup> - meanings and actions as well as 'material-cum-social' dimensions of practices in organisations in a fluid, reversible and integrative fashion (Küpers, 2011; Küpers & Edwards, 2008; Küpers, 2015).

**Play as situated, co-creative event & non-teleological action and expression** A comprehensive understanding of embodied play considers individual and collective co-creative (inter-)action in organizations. This social co-creation, stimulated and facilitated by play, can be interpreted as a continually emerging and integrative process. It is processed functioning by temporarily suspending ordinary conventions, structural obligations, and functional pressures, and by encouraging behaviors whose value may not be immediately evident (Mainemelis & Ronson, 2006). As such it includes corporeal, social, and further situational and relational dimensions as part of integral play (Gordon & Esbjoern-Hargens, 2007).

The corporeality, sociality and situatedness in the practice of play, render possibilities for specific forms of creativities and creative action (Joas, 1993, 1996). As Joas in his pragmatist theory of local and particular creativity showed, corporeality together with situativeness and sociality, reflect the embeddedness of actors. Especially the concept of situation, as inherently meaningful and constitutive for agency, could be viewed as a "suitable replacement for the means-ends schema as the primary basic category of a theory of action" (1996: p. 160). The situated creativity of play that resides and emerges through pre-reflective perceptions and social actions is based on a nonteleological interpretation of the intentionality of action. Situational play is processed enacted through situatedness, body-schemes and primordial sociality of human life and, hence, human agency.

In the spontaneous emergence of embodied and situated play-ing in the world, players are not aware of their playing, explicitly. Paraphrasing Merleau-Ponty, the world of play is not what the player thinks or reflectively achieve, but what and how s/he lives through (2012, p. xvi-xvii) as a meaningful happening and lived expression. For play, there is no predetermined meaning that is complete or pre-existent awaiting expression



in actions of play. Rather, play is autotelic unfolding processes that transpire through verbal and non-verbal inter-actions of bodily expression and transformed meaning. “Human beings at play live a different reality to the extent that the coming into being of a new signification embodies creation in the sense of transforming available meanings... lived in its unfolding moment... Play, to put it differently, alters the means of expressions in which it is manifested and affirmed” (Torres, 2002, p. 150).

Instead of starting with the teleological assumption of given, antecedently fixed ends, and conceiving action as following choice of appropriate means of pre-established ends, a non-teleological conception, as being manifest in playful action, operates differently. Such a creative, situational orientation and understands of embodied playful acting mediates a quasi-dialogical and responsive relationship. Responsiveness refers to a specific answering practice (Waldenfels, 2008) in dealing with a demanding situatedness with its specific claims or issues.

A playful response creates answers for example in the form of free associations or improvisations that indicate and facilitate a productive interaction in the free, open creation of meaning. They allow something to arise, which was neither expected, predicted, planned nor prepared in advance.

Playful actions do not follow predefined or actual ends, but emerge as open-ended processes. Means and ends do not form a transitive order that functions solely to fulfill a single purpose. As means and ends flow in a continuous stream of reversible organizing, both are part of an elastic nexus of a given situation and unfolding expressed meaning. In such a nexus, the distinction between them is only an analytical and temporal one. The lived situated meaning, incarnated and liberated in play, belongs to the co-constituting player and the playground as discussed before. As such it relates to culture, and its available meanings as a kind of repository and folio from which play(ful) expressions are possible (Torres.2002, p. 175).

“Play constitutes a primordial dialog between human beings’ inevitable bodily openness, commitment, and attachment to the world. People’s mode of being at play enunciates a radical and mutual conjugation of potentialities held by the body-subject and the world. In other words, as players, humans enter and affect available playgrounds with their playing bodies while at the same time their playing bodies are constituted and reconstituted by those playgrounds” (ibd., 2002: 177-78).

Having and receiving the world through spontaneous and meaningful ways makes playing an expressive process. This process of emerging expression is realized as an intentional or voluntary act, while players are confined to their playgrounds with its rules. Both influence how and what meaning can become creatively alive. “As a mode of existing in the world, the tension between the player-playground constitution of play is always already expressive” (ibd, 2002, p. 180) and as such a form of interplay that is part of an ‘inter-practice’

### ***Inter-play as embodied ‘inter-practice’ in organisations and management***

By integrating multiple dimensions, play is a co-creative event that emerges out of individual and collective levels; respectively is processed through its co-constitutive relationships. For further understanding play as a multi-level and unfolding process and inter-relational practice, the following outlines the concept and practice of

*'interplaying'* as part of an inter-practice. Thus, onto-epistemologically inter-play will be used as a relational concept for understanding the process of be(com)ing as well as pragmatically it is seen as mediated inter-relational practice. Again, both are seen as embodied and integrate the previously outlined dimensions and elements.

The concept of inter-practice of play helps to reveal and interpret the interrelationship between being, feeling, knowing, doing, sharing, structuring and effectuating in and through action, both individually and collectively.

Correspondingly, the concept of inter-practices can be used for inquiries into the negotiating interplay of the inherently entwined materialities, subjectivities, intersubjectivities, and objectivities as well as individual and collective intentionalities and responsiveness of play, as they occur and are processed in organizational life-worlds (Küpers, 2011).

Embedded within the complexities of human and systemic pragmatics, an embodied and integrative inter-practice includes not only previously outlined experiential and social inter-actions of actors, but also institutionalized operations of organization as collective agency and systems.

Similar to the conceptualization of practice-configurations that follows a radical process-orientation (Chia & MacKay, 2007), these playful practices are not an aggregation of purposeful activities of self-contained individual actors and material things. Rather, as embodied and relational these practices are pre-personal, personal and trans-individual that is individual, social and systemic events of dynamic, emergent be(com)ing and meaning-giving processes.

Accordingly, embodied (inter-)playing practitioners, their own practices and the practicing of others in praxis that are all inseparable and mutually implicated in organizations. Therefore, what organisational inter-playing practices are, can only be understood by pointing to the tendencies, doings and be(com)ing of the interrelated practicing of various inter-acting practitioners and the specifics of their situated conditions and dynamic involvement as part of an embodied praxis.

Metaphorically, this inter-practicing of inter-play resembles more a creative wayfinding and dwelling, in contrast or supplementing a planned navigation and building (Chia and Holt, 2006). A relational understanding and enactment of this practicing of inter-play is an en-fleshed one, as it enters, processes and renders specific interbetween and integration that in turn is part of a trans(re-)lational nexus.

### **In-(ter-)between as medium and trans(re-)lational nexus**

The in-between spaces and times of play can be seen and experienced as a mediating 'ground' and nexus. This sphere of interplaying connects self, others and worlds as play-ground, while involving imaginative engagement and enlivenment between inner and outer life (Winnicott, 1971); active and passive (Gadamer, 1992) and bisociatively between parts and wholes (Koestler, 1964). By taking integral and relational perspectives on the co-constituting inter-play, all parts of playing are brought together in an organizational 'space in-between' (Bradbury & Lichtenstein, 2000). As Bradbury-Huang et al. (2010) showed, these relational spaces are characterized by an ecology of high-quality interactions, aspirational trust and learning that nourish collaborative

contexts and enduring, sustainable partnerships in form of projects, events, and meetings.

Overall, it is the relational in-(ter)between, which is the 'birth-place' and milieu of playful practices with their personal, interpersonal, socio-cultural and systemic interrelationships, hence fluid identities. In this processual in-between, we can find the 'source' and 're-sources' for creativity, innovation and surplus-value of embodied practices of play in organizations and its members. Playful organisations (Grønbæk Pors & Andersen, 2015) and a playful organizational membership that are emerging out of this in(ter-)between render then intensive, but transient relationships (Andersen, 2013). They generate a surplus of actualized possibilities and potential identities and thus continuously cross boundaries between real and virtual as well as individual and social worlds (Andersen & Grønbæk Pors, 2014).

With this focus shifts towards a processual inter-playing in-between, play emerges as an event out of the nexus of playing selves, others and things (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 57) that helps exploring the paradox of serious play and relating it to practical wisdom.

### **Paradox of Serious Play & Practical Wisdom**

The concept and intervention technique of serious play describes moments in which play and work are deliberately and meaningfully juxtaposed in distinct organizational contexts and in relation to outcomes (Statler et al. 2011). The serious play process involved a distinct mode of intentionality (i.e., playful openness to emergent change), as well as an alternative medium in which to express strategic content (i.e., 3-D materials, like LEGO bricks or clay). As a facilitation practice specific shifts of modes and media enable participants to generate new possibilities to interpret and work in their organization as well as the problems faced by it (Statler & Oliver, 2008). There are summarizing reports on the state-of-the art concerning applications of serious play in Europe (Frick et al. 2013). For examples serious play has been used to enhance participatory development (Hinthorne, & Schneider, 2012) or as means to foster creativity in innovation processes (Schulz et al., 2015; see also Styhre, 2008) Reframed as a specific form of embodied mediated practice, serious play involves sustaining a paradox of intentionality (Statler et al. 2011). This paradox brings together autotelic behavior that has no purpose (play) and telic purposive, goaloriented engagements (serious). Accordingly, the practice of serious play has been seen as occurring whenever people in organizations engage in autotelic activities deliberately and intentionally to achieve some desired or emergent outcomes that have 'serious' consequences for the organization.

As a practice of paradox, serious play is not defined by specific material circumstances associated with it, or the outcomes associated with it. Rather, "instead the extent to which participants are frivolously having fun as an instrumental means of achieving serious productive objectives, and thereby enacting a paradox of intentionality" (Statler et al. 2011, p. 247). Such use of play is in danger of appropriating play for specific interests that are somehow alien to a 'free' playing, but are seen somehow as needed to bring play into world of organization and business. The question then will be who defines in which way the seriousness and what will be status of desired or pre-determined outcomes. If play implies valuing spontaneity, especially of the responsive body and forms of embodiment or it entails an acceptance of what might appear first as unorthodox results or outcomes, what happens to playing if it is utilized. Instrumentalising play and its qualities may then contain, harnessed, tame or frame it in 'serious' ways.

Furthermore, the critical question remains: who gets to play, what kind of game (Kane, 2004, p. 275)?

The challenge for practitioners will be to design or keep possibilities of play activities and its spontaneous emergences open and to qualify it as being 'serious' not only for economic purposes. Accordingly, to respond to the dangers of appropriating play and for developing a more integral understanding and practice of serious play, ethical dimensions need to be considered and linked to practical wisdom.

Already Huizinga (1955, p. 11) noted that play puts to the test the player's ethical values of courage, resilience, and most importantly, fairness.

Research has shown the connection between serious play and practical wisdom (Statler, 2005), especially for developing practically wise leadership (Holliday, et al., 2007).

Like embodied play *phrónêsis* and *phrônêtic* action are not exhausted by universal rules; as they also require knowing how, when, where and in what way to apply rules (MacIntyre, 2006: 164) based on practical, situational intelligence.

Practicing serious and 'fair play' - as part of practical wisdom - in organization and leadership (Küpers & Statler, 2008) - entails various tensions and ambiguities (Rooney, McKenna & Liesch, 2010). But also it helps to pursuit mastery and excellence (*arête*) within a set of rules - as inner structure of the play itself that mediate a flourishing and integration.

A genuine integral practical wisdom embraces the body (embodied incorporated dimensions), mind (cognitive, logical, rational thought), heart (feelings, emotions, moods) of individuals and collectives. Striving for an integrity of being, knowing, doing and effectuating, this proto-integral orientation contributes to accomplishing a worthwhile purpose that meets present and future needs sustainably, contributing to the well-be(com)ing of the members and stakeholders of organizations (Küpers 2005). Accordingly, a wised-up inter-practicing of play aspires may support the flourishing of interrelated embodied persons, communities, and futures, such undertaking raises questions of values, morals, and ethics respectively ethical bodies (Al-Saji, 2006) thus socio-ethico-political practices.

Referring back to the Caillois-ian typology of games, depending on the specific type of play that is chosen, the world of organisations can be presented as political battlefield (*agon*), a place where chance rules (*alea*), a stage for imagination and performance (*mimicry*) and/or where people strive for kicks or experience spontaneity or collective enthusiasm (*ilinx*). However, an embodied practice of inter-play in organisation and management, guided by practical wisdom, would help to deal with the dominating agonistic orientation (competitive play) differently. It would do so by integrating more *alea* (chance), *mimicry* (simulation or role play), and *ilinx* (disorientating vertigo, risk-taking) forms of play that are decentering the self, in a daring, but also prudent way. While in *agon*, the player relies only on him- or herself and s/he bends all his efforts to do his/her best; in *alea*, s/he relies on everything except him-/herself and he surrenders to forces that elude him/her. Furthermore in *mimicry* s/he imagines that s/he is 'other' than s/he really is and invents a fictitious universe; while *ilinx* also is characterized by an 'othering' as it serves as an answer to one's need to feel the body's stability and equilibrium momentarily disoriented, to escape the tyranny of sedimented perception (Caillois and Halperin, 1955: 75).

The integrity of being mediated by practical wisdom helps to navigate within the continuum between the poles of anarchic *paidia* and of rule-bound *ludus*-scheme, thus

moving with integrity between freer (improvisational) and more regulated (disciplined) forms of playing in organisations.

Such integrity-based ‘wised-up’ playful organizing and leading calls for developing a practice of wisdom and wise practicing with multi-literacies-in-use (Hibbert, 2013) and embodied reflexivity and thus a wise playfulness may provide important models to enhance the character of civil life (Henricks, 2010: 172).

One further lesson that can be drawn from Caillois in relation to wise practices is the need for keeping the demarcating magic circle of games and play. For Caillois the various impulses at the heart of play can only be positively satisfied, under conditions and rules that mediated conflicts or offer protection from the excessive virulence of human instinct that threatens personal and social integrity. Having a definite spatial and temporal frame helps to discipline and control or refuge potentially perilous bodily impulses by supplying a system of constraints that all players agree to uphold.

Through a voluntary subjection a psychologically safe arena for interactive improvisational play in organising becomes possible.

Beyond Cailloisian emphasis on protective measures and regulation of drives, a wisdom-oriented enactment of embodied play can also render ludic pleasures that can fruitfully bring the playful out of the closed magic circle and into the everyday or organizational life-worlds as arenas that are leading to innovative forms of spontaneous sociability. Ludic experience of embodied play can be channeled into situations that highlight organizational members’ awareness of their own bodies, the risks of interpersonal trust, the fluidity of individual identity, the relationship between individual autonomy and reciprocal interdependence, etc.

In critical relation to Caillois scheme, it becomes possible to re-interrogates the dialectic between labor and play concretely. For example it helps to understand the role of precarious practice of game-makers as ‘playbour’ in the digital games industry (Kücklich, 2005). The hybrid form of ‘playbours’ use modding as play that is modifying hardware, software, or virtually anything else, to perform a function not originally conceived or intended by designers or creating new or altered content and sharing. Thereby they explore new modes of relationship between non-alienated labour and leisure in the post-industrial age.

Considering recent reappraisal (Henricks, 2010; 2015) Caillois’s work as an imaginative, “diagonal science” (Caillois, 2003, 335–57) helps to understand the material and cultural patterns of play that animate and transcend collective life also in organisations.

Therefore, the playing field, the player and other players as well as ‘play-objects’ in organisations are at the same time part of an embodied everyday reality. What distinguishes playing from other more ‘serious’ modes of being on the one hand, and sheer fantasy on the other hand, is that the players are simultaneously in the ordinary world and in the play-world and that players are reflexively aware of being ‘eccentric’ in both worlds.

Similarly as in forms of “bounded playing” (Lilius et al. 2011), employees can be found to engage in enjoyable diversionary activities, but with an explicit awareness of their need to focus on work. The mutually understood play-boundaries - displayed themselves playfully - enable organizational members to engage in routine ‘distracting’ play, rendering ties, fostering authentic knowledge of one another and thereby strengthen relationships.

Furthermore, an integral ‘play ethic’ provides not only the right to play, but also includes an obligation for care (Kane, 2004, p. 174). This implies that wise players are ‘response-able’ (ibid. p. 352) that is able to respond and enacting a responsivebased responsibility (Küpers, 2012) that is part of a professional artistry and poietic praxis of play as outlined in the following.

### **Professional artistry and poietic praxis of play**

Artful qualities and dimensions of play can be conceptualized as professional artistry in sensu Schön (1987). As embodied play is processed by a non-rational tacit knowing and doing, it is integrally and relationally tied to an artistry of practice, operating in indeterminate zones of practice. Accordingly, the art of organizing and managing playfully ‘reveals itself both in crucially important situations of uncertainty, instability and uniqueness and in those dimensions of everyday practice, which depend upon the spontaneous exercise of intuitive artistry’ (Schön, 1983, p. 240).

As a practically habitualized incorporated disposition for acting, which remains open for improvisation (Küpers, 2011), this playful artistry strives towards what makes professional activity work at its best, and thus refers to a mastery state or condition that makes people perform tasks or functions well.

As a specific practicing within a shared tradition, a professional artistry involves a blend of practitioner qualities, attunement, knowledge, pragmatic skills and creative imagination processes together with the ability to use them critically, intuitively and practically (Titchen & Higgs, 2001).<sup>4</sup>

For this, the artistry of play includes embodied kinds of reflections (Kinsella, 2007) in and on actions. These are processed performatively through ways in which the ‘thinking bodies’ (Burkit, 1999) of practitioners, who each inter-act with themselves, and together with each other and their likewise incorporated environment within a partly rule-governed play-ground.

The performative artistry of play requires sensibility and imagination, but also the ability to make judgments about the feel and significance of the particular (Eisner, 2002). Correspondingly, a judgement-artistry allows artful, professional practitioners to make highly skilled micro-, macro- and meta-judgements that are optimal for the given circumstances (Paterson, Higgs & Wilcox, 2006).

Being more an activity-oriented than an attitude-oriented practice, this judgementable professional artistry is enacted in a mature performance that is characterized by virtuosity and excellence (Bourdieu, 1990), for example in health practices (Titchen & Higgs, 2008) or leadership processes (Kay, 1994).

Being a ‘cultural virtuoso’ (Dreyfus, 2004), those who employ a professional artistry, use their bodily wisdom to respond also emotionally ‘at the appropriate times, about the appropriate things, to an appropriate degree, and so on, and to desire and aim at the appropriate kinds or ends of targets’ (Russell, 2009: 13, 18) or emergence of purposes. In this sense, professional artistry enacts emotional competencies in relation to institutional actorhood as ability of actors within organizations to display and experience appropriate emotions in a given institutional order (Voronov & Weber, 2016).

As we have seen, professional artistry is processed in the creative interplay of prereflexive and reflexive understanding, interpretation and enactment. As such it can be seen or ethically qualified as part or manifestation of *phrónêsis* employed in

particular horizons (Gadamer, 1992). Play, like *phrónêsis*, is not the application of general principles to practical situations, but resembles more a living dialogue. As such it is always already mediated by the application of universality and particularity forming a practical, reasonable and participatory way of being. As embodied, artful wise play is always one with others and in a playground. Being processed as a dialogical capability of expression and mediation, it invites responding to participate in creative ways and thereby disclosing engagements in world.

Furthermore, critical *phrónêsis* as form of serious play allows us to view practical wisdom itself as being responsively *poiêtic* (Küpers, 2013). This implies that poetic *phrónêsis* in professional playful practice serves both as means and an end in itself: a means to creating narrative meaning (social creativity) that includes attention and recognition of others and otherness as well as social inclusivity as an end, as outlined by Ricoeur in his poetics of possibility (Wall, 2005). A playful *poiêtic phrónêsis* enacts performatively and creative judgements (Shotter, & Tsoukas, 2014, p. 240). through being responsively and creatively in situations, where an embodied aesthetic becomes an organizing principle (Monthoux de and Statler 2008).

In sense of a *poiêtic phrónêtic* as a living praxis, a professional artistry of play moves from formal utility to a ‘*Spiel*’ of actual, performative ‘usability’ in the corporeal order of things with an open experience of temporality and spatiality unfolding across “the field of presence” (Keller, 2005: 178).

### **Theoretical and Methodological Implications and Political Issues**

In contrast or supplementing to what psychological, behavioral, cultural, constructionist or system-theoretical investigations can provide, a phenomenological approach of embodied inter-practices of play in organizations contributes to enriched interpretation of relational dimensions and meanings. With such relational orientation a phenomenological investigation is close to process-oriented approaches, which likewise emphasize the dynamic and creative-imaginative practice, opening up towards the realities of movement and becoming (Chia and Holt, 2006).

To further explore the body and embodiment in relation to play in organization, research needs to become a more multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary endeavor that is opening up for multiple and innovative methods. Taking research itself as a form of an inter-practice, cross-disciplinary bridging helps to show the significance of bodily and affective or embodied processes involved in inter-practices of play. For further investigating the embodiment of inter-practicing playing, a more integral epistemology and methodological pluralism need to take first-, second- and thirdperson perspectives in singular or plural forms with each of their specific, inherent methodologies or modes of inquiries as well as their complex interplay. Epistemologically and ontologically, such research orientation contributes to the radically reflexive reworking of subject-object distinctions with their knowledge problematics (Cunliffe, 2011).

Inquiring into the making of sense of embodied playing while thinking *from* and *with* lived bodies and embodiment can be realized by using more sensual methodologies and art-based research practices (Warren, 2008). For example, collecting and analyzing embodied, sensuous appearances by integrating videography into research methodologies (Merchant, 2011), helps to study and (re-)present bodily senses involved

in embodied inter-play. Further research is called for that probe more deeply not only into the role of materialities and artefacts, but also relationships and dynamics of embodied inter-play of playground and players in organisations as discussed before and related to institutional realities. For example, it would be worthwhile to further explore possible links between playful practice of professional artistry and the capability of switching between different multiple and coexisting or conflicting ‘institutional logics’ in ‘institutional work’ and ‘institutional complexity’ (Smets Greenwood and Lounsbury 2015). Such approach would also offer connections to projective and practical-evaluative agency (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). This can then also be linked to modes about how to exercise judgement and ‘getting things done’ in the here and now (Smets, Morris and Greenwood 2012) as well as the potential for change and transformation also of institutional arrangements. Such approach implies also investigating the power at play (Andersen, 2009) and ambiguities of play (Sutton-Smith, 1997).

Part of a critical political reflection in future research is also exploring more the dark side of play. Play can imply an irresponsible gambling by taking risk and unleashing desires without considering possible consequences; or may lead to a sense of ‘childification’ or infantilisation (Costea et al., 2005) by leadership or involves patriarchal macho-games that reinforcing a masculine dominance. Furthermore, the use of play within the domain of work may reinforce a colonization of individuals’ inner lives by an imperative logic of performativity and productivity. Accordingly, setting up a supposed ‘play spaces’ can be an attempt and subtle or indirect form of attaining normative control (Kark, 2011, p. 523).

A critical investigation can reveal how specific embodied experiences, manipulated meanings and imposed practices of ‘organised play’ and its players are misleading or discriminating. It can show what is marginalised, degraded and ignored or subordinated on individual and collective levels. What needs to be investigated is the question: who can play what game and by which rules? In terms of a politics of a play ethic, with Kane (2004, p. 286), we need to ask: “How do we collectively ensure that everyone get the opportunity to be a player.... A that play culture’s ‘multitude of purposes’ isn’t closed down or prejudged before it is ripe and ready”.

Considering the ‘political life of sensation’ (Panagia, 2009), we need to ask what is or cannot be expressed, processed or practiced playfully or calls for a redistribution and reconfiguration of the playful sensible (Rancière, 2004; 2010)<sup>5</sup>.

Furthermore, if play is insufficiently shielded from the ‘normal’ organizational and managerial pressures for efficiency, accountability, and control, then not only is play constrained, but this situation may backfire and even trigger cynicism and resentment among employees (Walker, 2011).

### **Practical Implications**

With its experiential and thus dynamic status, the described forms and transformational qualities of embodied playing defy control and elude full manageability or teachability. Because relational practices of interplay do not exist as a given, stable, fixed knowledge or setting, they cannot be simply organised or taught, but only enabled. Instead of being designed directly ‘as’, the task would be to design ‘for’ practices to happen that is facilitated and encouraged in an ongoing learning and development process (Kolb & Kolb, 2010).



Part of this challenging design is to prepare and offer supportive conditions and relationships that engender catalytic circumstances on a situation-specific basis, by which embodied moments of play can develop and unfold in organizational and educational contexts. Considering the complex intricacies of bodies at ‘work-play’ and embodiments of play in organisations and its members, calls to prepare, create or facilitate supporting conditions, and favorable relationships by which these practices can flourish. Enabling and empowering possibilities need to be offered in adapted and tailored ways, according to needs and requirements of given environments, states of affairs or transformational goals, aspired by employees, management, organisations and stakeholders.<sup>6</sup>

For example, Mainemelis and Ronson (2006) proposed that job complexity, lack of environmental threat, and available time and space for play are key organizational conditions for nurturing play in the work context.

Practically, devices and strategies for the design and development of ‘slow serious games’ (Marsh, 2016), allow engaged movements and interaction between play, player and playground as safe, transitional play-space. In particular, these processes help to focus attention and concentration as well as to provide openings and opportunities not only for experimentation, but also for ongoing reflection, contemplation, and learning. Accordingly, to Marsh these opportunities can be supported and realized by cultivating appropriate rhythms between different experiences and encounters, while lingering or resonating with post-encounters.

Generally, the transmission of culturally-situated bodily, affective and e-motional sensing, knowing and experiencing in inter-practicing of embodied play can be cultivated by members of organizations through “education of attention” (Ingold, 2001: 139). Importantly, this is an attention of embedded sentient experiences by attending *with* and *to* the body (Csordas, 1993). Likewise, experimenting and enacting with improvisation (Küpers, 2011) and the paradoxical capacity of expecting surprise – understood as an active receptivity for the unpredictable (Dastur, 2000) are helpful ways for cultivating play. Expecting to be surprised sensually brings out the stratified rhythms of affective experiences that subtend it and allow the emergence of otherness, difference and newness through play(ing). Embodied play can be supported and realized when mindful bodies or body-minds can serve as media and agencies for sensory knowledge and imaginative, intuitive and emotional processing. This somantic and semantic practices through which fluid bodies and co-emergent minds interplay (Fenwick, 2006), can integrate varied and often disconnected aspects of implicit experiencing and reflective consciousness. This mediation can be realized via bodily experienced, situated ‘felt-sense’ and co-emerging ‘felt-shifts’ as enacted through focusing (Gendlin, 1995).

Particularly sensual ways of arts-based learning (Taylor & Ladkin, 2009; Küpers, 2016), are helpful for developing inter-practices of embodied practices of playing. These are drawing on various media like collage, video, drawing or painting, poetry, sound or other art-forms to embody and process aspects of experiences. For example ‘art-based mediation’, especially by using serious play has been shown to be meaningfully connected to initialize a multidimensional, sustainable, development process in health care systems (Schulz et al., 2016).

Such art-based approaches can make use of different but entwined modalities of knowing and learning, including the experiential, practical, presentational and propositional modes that are mutually supportive and enhancing (Heron, 1992).

Practically, embodied playful attitudes as well as the systematic use of artful responses can help facilitators to transform problems and conflict by giving the opportunity for creative solutions (Sclavi, 2008, p. 178).

Furthermore, to realise embodied, creative inter-practices of play and creating ludic learning spaces (Kolb & Kolb, 2010) or play-space as '*Spielraum*' (Gadamer, 1992) that are integrated as critical reflexive praxis (Deines, 2012), have specific requirements. It requires that organizational members have access to available material, financial as well as affective, emotional, cognitive and social resources. Only with these it becomes possible to move immanently and recursively between work- and play-space (Meyer, 2010) and thus enacting organisational play within and beyond managing (Tökkäri, 2015).

## **Conclusion**

From a phenomenological perspective this paper has shown the role of embodied, and inter-relational dimension of play, player and playground related to organizational life-worlds. As co-creative event, action and expression, inter-play(ing) was interpreted as an ongoing emerging process of an embodied 'inter-practice'. Accordingly, the spheres of an in-between were discussed as media for inter-playing selves, others and playgrounds in organizations.

Furthermore, the paradox of serious play, the role of a professional artistry and a poietic praxis of play have been explored and various theoretical and practical implications outlined.

Considering the co-constitutive Gestalt of play(er-) and -grounds, these are not objective and autonomous poles, positions or structures. Rather, they are coconstitutive and inter-playing dimensions of '*Organization in Play*' (Kavanagh et al., 2011). Accordingly, play is neither the simple effect of an exterior stimuli (the playground); nor a mere internal production (the player), or compliance to guiding structures (rules). Rather, inter-play is a particular expression and style of living, understood as "a certain way of handling situations" (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 342). This interplaying handling is processed as a dialogue and entwined 'inter-playful' meaning-generating nexus between 'body-subjects', embodied others and the enfleshed world. Accordingly, a style of interplaying serve as an actual, embodied 'presencing' of meaning and as the actualization of possibilities of expressions. Styles and its expressive gestures of interplay emerges as an intertwining of facticity and freedom, as the appropriation of a given situation and the transcendence of it. As such it opens up the prospect of a thoroughgoing perspectivalism and more integral and wiser practices in praxis.

Reconfiguring the inter-relationship between play and work, 'serious inter-play' qualified as wise, professional artistry and a poietic mediates a transformation of embodied intentions, inter-actions and practices of players and playgrounds into a mode of be(com)ing that can contribute to more sustainable development in and through organising.

Overall, the proposed concept and enactment of inter-play indicates to an in(ter)between that serves as an extra-ordinary liminal process, by which meanings are ambiguous at best, and where conventional and dualistic positioning are 'undone' and put into play, and thereby opening up wiser and more sustainable form of organising. Thus, there is wisdom in 'inter-playfulness'!

## References

- Al-Saji, A. (2006). Vision, Mirror and Expression: The Genesis of the Ethical Body in Merleau-Ponty's Later Works. In J. Hatley, J. McLane & C. Diehm (Eds) *Interrogating Ethics: Embodying the Good in Merleau-Ponty* (pp. 39–63). Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.
- Andersen, N. (2009). *Power at Play: The Relationships between Play, Work and Governance*, New York: Palgrave.
- Andersen, N.Å. (2013). *Managing intensity and play at work: Transient Relationships*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Andersen, N.Å and Grønbaek Pors, J 2014/ Playful Membership : Embracing an Unknown Future. *Management & Organizational History*, 9(2): 166-183.
- Bourdieu, P. (1990). *The Logic of Practice*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Bradbury, H. & Lichtenstein, B. (2000). Relationality in organizational research: Exploring the space between. *Organization Science*, 11: 551–564.
- Bradbury-Huang, H., Lichtenstein, B., Carroll, J., and Senge, P. (2010). *Relational space and learning experiments: The heart of collaborations for sustainability. Research in Organizational Change and Development* 18:109-148.
- Burkitt, I. (1999). *Bodies of Thought: Embodiment, Identity and Modernity*. London: Sage.
- Caillois, R. (2001) *Man, play, and games*. (first published 1958). Champaign: University of Illinois Press.
- Caillois, R. (2001a). *Man and the sacred*. New York: Free Press of Glencoe.
- Caillois, R. (2003). The edge of surrealism: A Roger Caillois reader, ed. Claudine Frank, Duke University Press, Durham, NC.
- Caillois, R. and Halperin, E. (1955). The Structure and Classification of Games *Diogenes* 1955 3: 62-75.
- Chia, R. & MacKay, B. (2007). Post-processual challenges for the emerging strategy-as-practice perspective: Discovering strategy in the logic of practice postprocessual challenges for the emerging strategy-as-practice. *Human Relations*, 60: 217–242.
- Chia, R. and Holt, R. (2006). Strategy as Practical Coping: A Heideggerian Perspective. *Organization Studies*, 27(5), 635–655.
- Costea B., Crump. N. and Holm. J. (2005). Dionysus at work? The ethos of play and the ethos of management. *Culture and Organization*, 11(2): 139–151.
- Costea, B., Crump, N and Holm, J (2007). The *spectre of Dionysus: play, work, and managerialism*. *Society and Business Review*, 2(2) 153-165
- Crossley, N. (1996). *Intersubjectivity: The Fabric of Social Becoming*. London: Sage.
- Csordas, T. (1993). Somatic modes of attention. *Cultural Anthropology*, 8(2): 13–56.
- Csordas, T. J. (Ed.) (1994). *Embodiment and Experience*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Cunliffe, A. (2011). Crafting qualitative Research: Morgan and Smircich 30 years on. *Organizational Research Methods*, 14(4), 647–673.
- Dastur, F. (2000). Phenomenology of the event: Waiting and surprise. *Hypatia*, 15(4): 178–189.
- Deines, S. (2012). Der Spielraum reflexiver Praxis: Gadamer und die Kritische Theorie More Info, Madeleine Kasten, Herman Paul und Rico Sneller (Hg.):

- Hermeneutics and the Humanities: Dialogues with Hans-Georg Gadamer.* (110-132), Amsterdam University Press.
- Dibbell, J. (2006). *Play money: Or, how I quit my day job and made millions trading virtual loot.* New York: Basic Books.
- Dreyfus HL (2004). What could be more intelligible than everyday intelligibility? Reinterpreting division I of being and time in the light of division II. *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society* 24(3): 265–274.
- Eisner, E. (2002). From episteme to phronesis to artistry in the study and improvement of teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. 18 (2002). 375385.
- Ellison, R. (1995). *Invisible Man*, New York: Vintage.
- Emirbayer, M., and Mische, A. (1998), ‘What is agency?’ *American Journal of Sociology*, 103/4: 962–1023.
- Fenwick, T. (2006). Inside out of experiential learning: Fluid bodies, co-emergent minds. In: R. Edwards, J. Gallacher & S. Whittaker (Eds). *Learning Outside the Academy. International Research Perspectives on Lifelong Learning.* (42– 55), New York: Routledge.
- Fink, E. (2016). *Play as Symbol of the World and Other Writings*, Indiana University Press.
- Frick, W., Tardini, S. and Cantoni, L. (2013). White Paper on LEGO®SERIOUS PLAY® A state of the art of its applications in Europe.  
<http://www.researchgate.net/publication/262636559>
- Frissen, V.A.J., Lammes, S., Lange, M.L. de, Mul, J. de and Raessens, J.F.F. (2015). Homo Ludens 2.0. In V.A.J. Frissen, S. Lammes, M.L. de Lange, J. de Mul & J.F.F. Raessens (Eds.), *Playful Identities. The Ludification if Digital Media Cultures* (pp. 9-50). Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Gadamer, H. (1992). *Truth and method*, Continuum, New York, NY.
- Gendlin, E. T. (1995). Crossing and dipping. *Mind and Machines*, 5: 547–560.
- Gordon, G., & Esbjörn-Hargens, S. (2007). Integral Play: An Exploration of the Playground and the Evolution of the Player, in *AQAL: Journal of Integral Theory and Practice* 2(3): 62-104.
- Grønbæk Pors, J. and Andersen, N.Å (2015). Playful Organizations : Undecidability as a Scarce Resource. *Culture and Organization*, 21(4): 338-354.
- Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and Time*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Henricks, T. (2009). Orderly and disorderly play: A comparison. *American Journal of Play* 2:12–40.
- Henricks, T. (2010). Caillois’s Man, Play, and Games An Appreciation and Evaluation, *American Journal of Play*, 3: 157–185.
- Henricks, T. (2015). Play and the Human Condition. A cutting-edge reappraisal of the causes, contours, and consequences of play, Chicago UIP.
- Heron, J. (1992). *Feeling and Personhood*. London: Sage.
- Hibbert, K. (2013). Developing a wisdom of practice with multi-literacies-in-use. J. Bainbridge & R. Heydon, (Eds.), *Constructing meaning: Balancing elementary language arts* Toronto: Nelson.
- Higgs, J., Titchen, A. and Neville, V. 2001. Professional practice and knowledge, in *Practice Knowledge and Expertise*, edited by J. Higgs and A. Titchen. (3–9), Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.

- Hinthorne, L. and Schneider, K. (2012). Playing with Purpose: Using Serious Play to Enhance Participatory Development, *International Journal of Communication* 6, 2801–2824.
- Holliday, G., Statler, M. and Flanders, M. (2007). Developing practically wise leaders through serious play. *Consulting Psychology Journal*, 59(2), 126–34.
- Huizinga, J. (1955). *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*. London: Hunt.
- Ingold, T. (2001). From the transmission of representations to the education of attention. In: H. Whitehouse (Ed.). *The Debated Mind: Evolutionary Psychology Versus Ethnography*. (113–153), Oxford: Berg.
- Joas, H. (1993). *Pragmatism and Social Theory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Joas, H. (1996). *The Creativity of Action*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Kane, P. (2004). *The Play Ethic*. London, UK: Pan Books.
- Kark, R. (2011). Games managers play: Play as a form of leadership development. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 10(3): 507-527.
- Kavanagh, D.; Keohane, K. and Kuhling, C. (2011). *Organization in Play*. Witney, UK: Peter Lang.
- Kay, R. (1994). The artistry of leadership: an exploration of the leadership process in voluntary not-for-profit organizations. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, 4(3), 285–300.
- Keller, K. (2005). The corporeal order of things: the spiel of usability. In: *Human Studies*; (28)2: 173-204.
- Kinsella, E.A. (2007). Embodied reflection and the epistemology of reflective practice. *The Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 41(3), 395–409.
- Koestler, A. (1964). *The Act of Creation*. London: Hutchinson & Co.
- Kolb, A. Y., & Kolb, D. A. (2010). Learning to play, playing to learn: Case study of a ludic learning space. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 23(1): 26–50.
- Kücklich, J. (2005). Precarious playbour: Modders and the digital games industry. *Fibreculture Journal*, 1. <http://five.fibreculturejournal.org/fcj-025-precariouplaybour-modders-and-the-digital-games-industry/>
- Küpers, W. (2010). Inter-Places - Embodied Spaces & Places of and for Leader/Followership, *Environment, Space, Place Journal*, 2(1),79-121.
- Küpers, W. (2011). Embodied Pheno-Pragma-Practice – Phenomenological and Pragmatic Perspectives on Creative ‘Inter-practice’ in Organisations between Habits and Improvisation; ‘*Phenomenology & Practice*’ Vol. 5(1), 100-139.
- Küpers, W. (2005). Phenomenology and Integral Pheno-Practice of Embodied Well-Be(com)ing in Organizations; *Culture and Organization*, Vol. 11(3): 221–231.
- Küpers, W. (2013). The Art of Practical Wisdom, Küpers, W. & Pauleen, D. (2013). *A Handbook of Practical Wisdom. Leadership, Organization and Integral Business Practice*. (19-45). London: Gower.
- Küpers, W. (2015). *Phenomenology of the Embodied Organization - The contribution of Merleau-Ponty for organisation studies and practice*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Küpers, W. (2016). Embodied Aesth-Ethics for Developing Practical Wisdom in Management Education/Learning, Küpers, W. & Gunnlaugson, O. (eds),

- Wisdom Learning: Perspectives on Wising-Up Management & Business Education*, (272-311), London: Routledge.
- Küpers, W. & Edwards, M. (2008). Integrating plurality – Towards an integral perspective on leadership and organisation. In: C. Wankel (Ed.). *Handbook of 21st Century Management*. (311–322), London: Sage.
- Küpers, W. & Statler, M., (2008) Practically Wise Leadership: Towards an Integral Understanding, *Culture and Organization*, 14(4): 379-400.
- Leder, D. (1990). *The Absent Body*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Leonard, G. & Murphy, M. (2005). *The Life We Are Given: A Long-Term Program for Realizing the Potential of Body, Mind, Heart and Soul*. New York: Tarcher.
- Lilius, J. M., Worline M. C., Dutton, J. E., Kanov, J. M., & Maitlis, S. (2011). Understanding compassion capability. *Human Relations*, 64, 873–899.
- MacIntyre A (2006). *The Tasks of Philosophy: Selected Essays*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mainemelis, C. & Ronson, S. (2006). Ideas are Born in Fields of Play: Towards a Theory of Play and Creativity in Organizational Settings. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 27, 81-131.
- Mainemelis, C., & Altman, Y. (2010). Work and play: New twists on an old relationship. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 23: 4–9.
- Marsh, T. (2016). Slow serious games, interactions and play: Designing for positive and serious experience and reflection *Entertainment Computing* 14:454-53.
- McGonigal, J. (2011). *Reality is broken: Why games make us better and how they can change the world*. New York: Penguin.
- Meier, K. (1980). An Affair of Flutes: An Appreciation of Play, *Journal of Philosophy of Sport*, 7(2), 24-45.
- Merchant, S. (2011). The Body and the Senses; Visual Methods, Videography and the Submarine Sensorium. *Body and Society*, 17(1), 53–72.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1995). *The Visible and the Invisible*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (2012). *Phenomenology of Perception*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Meyer, P. (2010). *From workplace to playspace: Innovation, learning, and changing through dynamic engagement*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
- Monthoux, de, G.P. and Statler, M. (2008). Aesthetic play as an organizing principle, in *The Sage Handbook of New Approaches in Management and Organization*, edited by D. Barry and H. Hansen. (423–35), London: Sage.
- Nietzsche; F. (1973). *Beyond Good and Evil*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books.
- Owen, H. (1997). *Expanding Our Now: The Story of Open Space Technology*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.
- Paterson, M., Higgs, J. and Wilcox, S. (2006). Developing expertise in judgement artistry in OT practice. *British Journal of OT*, 69(3), 115–23.
- Reeves, B., and Read, J.L. (2009). *Total engagement: Using games and virtual worlds to change the way people work and businesses compete*, Boston MA.: Harvard Business School Press.
- Rooney, D., McKenna, B. and Liesch, P. (2010). *Wisdom and Management in the Knowledge Economy*. London: Routledge.

- Russell, D. (2009). *Practical Intelligence and the Virtues*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sandberg, J. and Dall'Alba, G. (2009). Returning to practice anew: A lifeworldperspective, *Organization Studies*, 30(12), 1349-1368.
- Sandelands, L.E. (2003). *Thinking about Social Life*, Lanham: University Press of America.
- Sandelands, L. (2010). The play of change, *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 23(1): 71– 86.
- Schön, D. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner*. New York: Basic Books.
- Schön, D. (1987). *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*. San Francisco, CA: JosseyBass.
- Schulz, K.-P., Geithner, S., Wölfel, C. & Krzywinski, J. (2015). Toolkit-based Modelling and Serious Play as Means to Foster Creativity in Innovation Processes, *Creativity and Innovation Management*, 24: 323-340.
- Schulz, K.-P., Kawamura, T. and Geithner, S. (2016). Enabling sustainable development in healthcare through art-based mediation. *Journal of Cleaner Production* 140(3), 1914–1925.
- Schwartz, P. (1991). *The Art of the Long View*. New York: Doubledat-Currency.
- Shotter, J. and Tsoukas, H. (2014). In Search of Phronesis: Leadership and the Art of Judgment *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 13(2), 224–243.
- Sclavi, M. (2008). The Role of Play and Humor in Creative Conflict Management. *Negotiation Journal*, 24(2), 157-180.
- Smets, M., Greenwood, R., and Lounsbury, M. (2015). An institutional perspective on strategy as practice. In D. Golsorkhi, L. Rouleau, D. Seidl, & E. Vaara (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of strategy as practice*, (283-300). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Smets, M., Morris, T., and Greenwood, R. (2012). From practice to field: a multilevel model of practice-driven institutional change, *Academy of Management Journal*, 55(4): 877–904.
- Sørensen, B. M., and Spoelstra, S. (2012). Play at work: continuation, intervention and usurpation. *Organization*, 19(2): 81-97.
- Spicer, A., Alvesson, M. and Kärreman, D. (2009). Critical performativity: The unfinished business of critical management studies. *Human Relations*, 62(4): 537-560.
- Statler, M. (2005). Practical wisdom and serious play: reflections on management understanding, in *Sophisticated Survival Techniques / Strategies in Art and Economy*, edited by H. Schrat. Berlin: Kulturverlag Kadmos.
- Statler, M. and Oliver, D. (2008). Facilitating serious play, *The Oxford Handbook on Organizational Decision-Making*, ed. Hodgkinson G and Starbuck W, (47594), Oxford University Press, Oxford, United Kingdom.
- Statler, M., Heracleous, L., & Jacobs, C. D. (2011). Serious play as a practice of paradox. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 47(2): 236-256.
- Styhre A. (2008). The element of *play* in *innovation* work: The case of *new drug development*. *Creativity and Innovation Management* 17(2) ·
- Sutton-Smith, B. (1997). *The Ambiguity of Play*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Taylor, S. and Ladkin, D. (2009). Understanding arts-based methods in managerial development. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 8(1): 55–69.
- Titchen, A. and Higgs, J. (2001). A dynamic framework for the enhancement of health professional practice in an uncertain world: the practice-knowledge interface, in *Practice Knowledge and Expertise*, edited by J. Higgs and A. Titchen. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 215–25.
- Titchen, A. and Higgs, J. (2008). *Towards Professional Artistry and Creativity in Practice in Health, Education and the Creative Arts*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Tökkäri, V. (2015). Organizational play: within and beyond managing, *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 10(2), 86–104
- Torres, C. (2002). *Play as expression: An analysis based on the philosophy of Maurice Merleau-Ponty*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The Pennsylvania State University.
- Voronov, M. & Weber, K. (2016). The Heart of Institutions: Emotional Competence and Institutional Actorhood. *Academy of Management Review* 41(3), 456–478.
- Waldenfels, B. (2008). The role of the lived-body in feeling. *Continental Philosophy Review*, 41(2): 127–142.
- Wall, J. (2005). *Moral Creativity: Paul Ricoeur and the Poetics of Possibility*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Walker, A. (2011). Creativity loves constraints: The paradox of Google’s twenty percent time. *Ephemera*, 11, 369–386.
- Warmelink, H. (2014). *Online Gaming and Playful Organization*. New York: Routledge.
- Warren, S. (2008). Empirical Challenges in Organizational Aesthetics Research: Towards a Sensual Methodology. *Organization Studies*, 19(4), 559–580.
- Weick, K. (2003). Theory and practice in the real world. In H. Tsoukas & C. Knudsen (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of organization theory* (pp. 453–75). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Weisbord, M. R. & Janoff, S. (1995). *Future Search: An Action Guide to Finding Common Ground in Organizations & Communities*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.
- Winnicott, D. W. (1971). *Playing and reality*. New York: Routledge.

---



---



---



---



---

<sup>1</sup> In contrast to Huizinga’s requirement of play’s intrinsic exclusivity, or the complete corruptive nature external goods have on the intrinsic is countered by Callois. For him the unproductive and intrinsic orientation does not exclude the possibility of external factors playing a part in conjunction with the intrinsic nature of the activity. Many things can both be goods-in-themselves while at the same time still being constitutive of other goods. As external elements can exist within play the question emerges how they relate to internal dimensions, especially how the world of play is related to means-ended work



production. Caillois considers play relative to function in determining that it is unproductive, which implies play may be measured against conduct that is means-ended. Certain values inherent within each activity resonate with a person's particular stage of development, interests, experiences that contribute to a very meaningful mode of achieving self-actualization, defined by the individual's free choice and the teleological nature of the activity. Each stage of growth as result of this transformative experience, in itself, demonstrates the *value of play*. Such personal productive value shows that play is not just "useless". While Huizinga simply precludes play from being useful for external goods in his definition, Caillois considers play relative to function in determining that it is unproductive, which implies that play is being assessed against conduct that is means-ended.

<sup>2</sup> While Apollonian traditions emphasize order, harmony, and rational control with fixed and hierarchical privileges in which *agôn* and *alea*, i.e., merit and heredity, seem to be the chief complementary elements of the game of living" (2001b, 87); Dionysian societies are "ruled equally by masks and possession, i.e., by mimicry and *ilinx*." (ibid). Already Nietzsche has identified the irrational, frenzied Dionysian aesthetics as being playful, enacted via an sensual, bodily, chaotic processes as the foil to rational, cognitive and ordering Apollonian aesthetics with its sublimating pleasure of figuring things out, understanding of stories, solving a problem, seeing beauty in the system, thus seeing them as intrinsically joined, although they might appear as separate. "Mature manhood: that means to have found again the seriousness one had as a child at play" (Nietzsche, 1973: 94).

<sup>3</sup> According to Sandelands (2010), play - situated at the boundary of fantasy and reality and approached by intuition via the body and feeling - is the creative enlargement of love and life of community involved in healthy and effective adaptation and development. Accordingly, for him, to manage change as play is to call upon the possibilities of adaptations and developments that lies at the creative edge of love. Discussing creative play as love in action with passion, for Sandelands (2010), play as dynamic or "moment" of (re-created) social life begins in and expresses (and symbolizes) love understood as dynamic tension between the division, i.e. differentiation within unity, and unity across differences. According to him play can be interpreted as "love's bloom of creation at the boundary of unseriousness (fantasy) and seriousness (reality) wherein new social arrangements arise to take the place of old social arrangements (Sandelands, 2010: 77) that is at the boundary of what is possible and what is." "In the mutual attraction, synchrony, merger, selflessness, and unserious-seriousness of play (as cooperative agonism) each person meets and adjusts to every other with the result that each contributes more readily and more fully to the life of the whole" (Sandelands, 2010: 80). Individuals do not play; they are played by the greater life in which they are part (Sandelands, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> According to Higgs, Titchen and Neville (2001), professional artistry involves a blend of qualities, skills and processes, particularly: practitioner qualities (for example, connoisseurship, emotional, physical, existential and spiritual synchronicity and attunement to self, others and events); and practice skills (for example, expert critical appreciation, ability to disclose or express what has been observed, perceived and done and meta-cognitive skills used to balance different domains of professional craft knowledge in the unique care of each patient, and to manage the fine interplay between intuition, practical reasoning and rational reasoning and between different kinds of practice knowledge). Creative imagination processes are imagining the outcomes of personalized, unique care interventions and creative strategies to achieve them.

<sup>5</sup> For Rancière (2004; 2010), this involves aesthetic ruptures. These are challenging the 'share of the sensible' that defines the respective places and the parts. Thereby it becomes possible to alter the field of the possibilities and capacities of what and how something can be seen, heard, thought, said or otherwise expressed. Taking equality as means of contesting hierarchical and exclusionary distributions of the sensible, accordingly allows imagining other forms of arrangements, preserving the possible as possible. In this context, it might be interesting to link embodied play to a critical performativity that is using possible tactics of critical affirmation, ethics of circumspect care, a progressive pragmatism orientation, and a focus on potentialities and normative emancipatory stance, rework discourses and practices (Spicer et al., 2009, p. 545-554).

<sup>6</sup> For these undertakings, advanced facilitative practices, like open-space, future-search, mind mapping, scenario, affinity diagrams, and world-cafe2 technologies and workshops (Owen, 1997; Weisbord & Janoff, 1995; Schwartz, 1991) might be helpful. These types of creative approaches and proto-integral practices are excellent for mediating more integrative and inclusive perspectives and realisations as well as enactments of embodied design in and as leadership. They are inherently collaborative in nature, and because they each bring multiple points of view together around an issue of importance, working with organization's members and characteristics of embodiment, allowing them not

only to make contributions, but –co-design, while moving towards finding common ground. These forms of facilitation can be effectively used both in learning settings as well as real-world settings to create a more integrative understanding and enactment of embodied inter-practicing organisations. Incorporating the development an integral practice (Leonard and Murphy 2005) of some sort among practitioner—a mind, body, heart, and soul approach and mindfulness practices is a key to developing them as being able to respond ‘w-holistically’ to situations with their whole embodied being.