



The many sides to performativity

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Abstract

Performance will dominate the 20th and the 21st century just as *discipline* did in the 18th and 19th centuries. Performance can be seen as a global formation of power and knowledge, challenging us to perform . . . or else. The technology of performativity exposes the jargon and practices of efficiency, effectiveness, quality assurance, control, inspection, and accountability in contemporary education. Any undertaking must be justified by an increase in productivity, measured by a gain in time. The technology of performativity, based on systems of rewards and sanctions, makes us both perpetrators and victims. It erodes the professional soul of teachers and academics, with metric adequacy becoming the primary focus. Performativity leads to fabrications in which individuals present themselves in specific registers of meaning, valuing only certain possibilities of being and becoming.

In this article, I argue that while the technology of performativity is dominant in universities and broader society, performativity does not have a single meaning. It is a polysemous term with many meanings. I discuss various meanings of performativity, including Edward Said's notion of performance as an extreme occasion, slow scholarship, Judith Butler's concept of gender performativity, the performativity of knowledge, the performativity of method, and posthuman performativity. These different meanings create alternative opportunities for being and becoming, suggesting that the dominance of the technology of performativity does not preclude other possibilities. I explore how these interpretations could counter the technology of performativity in the neoliberal university during a time of polycrisis.

Keywords: accelerationism, higher education, neoliberal university, performativity, polycrisis

Introduction

I begin with the concept of polycrisis which was first introduced by French philosopher and sociologist Edgar Morin, and Anne Kern (1999). More recently, it has been popularised by economic historian Adam Tooze (2021). A polycrisis is not just a collection of many crises but is, rather, about how these crises interact in ways that amplify their overall impact and lead to devastating effects. Different stressors, such as environmental, technological, economic, political, and health-related issues, are increasingly interacting at a fast pace, creating unpredictable shocks of greater intensity. This interconnectedness of crises makes it challenging to address them in isolation since the compounded effects can lead to more

severe and widespread disruptions. Polycrisis is the consequence of the dominant role that humans have played in altering planet Earth¹ making scientists Crutzen and Stoermer (2000) posit a new geological epoch, the Anthropocene. However, in his book *Capitalism in the Web of Life*, Jason Moore (2015) argued that the term Anthropocene needed to be replaced by Capitalocene. Moore (2015) averred that the rise of Capitalism² in the period after 1450 resulted in a shift in humans' relationship with non-human nature that was more significant than the ascendancy of agriculture and, later, the steam engine. More than just the rise of capitalism, is the acceleration of capitalism through the instrumentalist use of advanced technologies (Le Grange, 2024).³

Polycrisis is closely linked to the acceleration of capitalism. The crises we face today, such as unprecedented environmental destruction, growing populism, global financial crises, pandemics, xenophobia, ongoing racism, and gender-based violence are consequences of the deterritorialisations produced by global neoliberal capitalism. This acceleration of capitalism has been facilitated by the instrumentalist use of advanced technologies (Srnicsek & Williams, 2013). These technologies have been mobilised to advance capitalist interests, leading to the emergence of platform capitalism.

The acceleration of capitalism has resulted in part because no productive antidote to the dogmas of its neoliberal form have come to the fore. Critical theory and leftist politics have struggled to counter neoliberal capitalism effectively. Johnson (2013) noted that decades of critical theory have failed to offer a significant alternative to neoliberalism, with some theories even adopting the economic analyses they aimed to challenge. Srnicsek and Williams (2013) argued that thirty years of neoliberalism have left most left-leaning political parties devoid of radical thought. These parties, including neo-socialist regimes like the Bolivian revolution, have advocated largely for a return to Keynesian economics and mid-20th-century socialism that are no longer relevant today. Additionally, social movements have become less effective, and organised labour has been significantly weakened by the structural adjustments imposed by neoliberalism (Srnicsek and Williams 2013).⁴

As mentioned, capitalist accelerationism has been facilitated by the instrumentalist use of advanced technologies. These technologies have been mobilised to advance capitalist interests, leading to the emergence of platform capitalism that encompasses a range of platform-based companies providing hardware and software infrastructure for anyone to use. Platform capitalism refers to a range of platform-based companies that provide hardware and software infrastructure on which anyone can operate. Srnicsek (2017) identified five types of

1 Although humans have played a dominant role in altering ecological systems, I agree with Haraway (2016) that humans have not acted alone but have terraformed the earth with other species and abiotic processes.

2 Moore insisted on the initial capital on Capitalism.

3 Lines of connection could be drawn between Gramsci's notion of organic crisis (see Hlatshwayo 2020) and polycrisis, but what makes polycrisis distinctive is the acceleration of stressors and the complex convergence of these stressors in a globalised world. A related term to polycrisis is permacrisis (declared word of the year in 2022) that relates to how crises seem never to end and create prolonged suffering such as that of the COVID-19 pandemic.

4 Smaller radical social movements such as #RhodesMustFall, #FeesMustFall, #BlackLivesMatter and #OccupyWallStreet have offered some resistance to neoliberalism and could be mobilised into broader movements that can be sustained but such a desire remains work in progress.

platform-based businesses: advertising platforms (e.g. Google and Facebook); cloud platforms (e.g. Salesforce); industrial platforms (e.g. General Electric and Siemens); product platforms (e.g. Rolly Royce and Spotify); and lean platforms (e.g. Uber and Airbnb).

The acceleration of capitalism through technology, coupled with the political left’s failure to challenge neoliberalism effectively, has given rise to what is known as accelerationist theory that encompasses the ideas of those who theorise about capitalist accelerationism. These theorists include individuals with apocalyptic views of capitalism (see Land, 1993, 2012, 2014) and those who offer counter-responses to the narrow neoliberal perspective, arguing that the acceleration of capitalism does not foreclose on productive ways of living along the journey (Noys, 2013, Srnicek & Williams 2013). In fact, when Noys (2010) coined the term accelerationism, he invoked it in a pejorative sense because he argued that the acceptance of accelerationism would naturalise neoliberalism. And Srnicek and Williams (2013) argued that advanced technologies can offer productive possibilities if they are decoupled from capitalism. Although there are nuanced understandings of accelerationism, the core idea is that the only way out of capitalism is through it. Accelerationist theorists agree on this point but differ on the speed of the journey and whether there are productive possibilities for life during this process.

Universities are embedded in society and therefore influence and are influenced by societal, political, economic, and environmental forces. In other words, universities are not shielded from polycrisis. Those who inhabit universities are victims of forces that curtail freedoms but also actively take up dominant discourses. The accelerated pace of change described above is felt in the contemporary university that is predominantly a neoliberal university. The contemporary university is governed by neoliberal governmentality and expands progressively through neoliberal ways to seek additional funding through revenue-generating enterprises (Le Grange, 2023). See Table 1 below for a representation of what characterises the neoliberal university and what it engages.

Table 1
The neoliberal university (that accumulates)

The neoliberal university	
What characterises it?	It engages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charges fees and awards degrees • Celebrates diversity • Rewards excellence • Invests in advanced technologies (embraces 4IR) • Participates in the university rankings • Engages in for-profit initiatives and partnerships • Biomedicalises ethics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • with the high-tech economy • in partnership with for-profit private companies • in global science networks • with corporate and donor funders • with local communities but in colonising ways—community engagement becomes a performance indicator

Source: Le Grange (2023, p.44)

In this article I focus specifically on one aspect of the neoliberal university, and this is performativity. First, I discuss the technology of performativity evident in the neoliberal university. Second, I consider alternative meanings of performativity from a range of fields. Third, I deliberate on how we might stay with the trouble of polycrisis and the neoliberal university by invoking the different meanings of performativity to open alternatives to the fast pace of the neoliberal university. I conclude with some parting thoughts.

Technology of performativity⁵

McKenzie (2001) argued that performance will be to the 20th and 21st centuries what discipline was to the 18th and 19th centuries. He suggested that performance can be seen as a global formation of power and knowledge, one that challenges us to perform. . . or else. For McKenzie, this concept extends and displaces the disciplinary power analyzed by Foucault (1977). Barnett and Standish (2003) further elaborated on this idea, stating that the term performance aptly exposes the jargon and practices of efficiency, effectiveness, quality assurance, control, inspection, and accountability that have become prominent features of contemporary educational regimes. They argued that whatever is undertaken must be justified in terms of an increase in productivity, measured by a gain in time. The technology of performativity operates on systems of rewards and sanctions, making us both perpetrators and victims. This approach erodes the professional soul of teachers and academics since metric adequacy becomes the primary focus. Performativity leads to fabrications in which individuals present themselves within specific registers of meaning, valuing only certain possibilities of being and becoming (Ball, 2003).

Performativity is known and felt strongly in South African higher education institutions. Institutions themselves are pressured to perform for several reasons: the prevalence of world university ranking systems; targets set by governments on the number of doctoral graduates that must be produced per annum; funding of research outputs by government, etc. Most if not all South African universities have performance appraisal systems that are used to determine annual salary increases and rewards such as performance bonuses. Quality assurance audits and reviews have become the order of the day with both internal quality assurance and external quality assurances mechanisms. Not all aspects of these performativity regimes are unproductive, but the concern is that universities end up valuing only what can be measured to the neglect of what should be valued. French philosopher Lyotard (1984) observed that the key change in the contemporary university is that knowledge is no longer produced in pursuit of truth but of performativity, “that is, the best input/output equation” (p. 46). In the contemporary neoliberal university pedagogies have become fast (aided and abetted by advance technologies) and the quickest route to publication is sought, with institutions doing the bean counting.

I contend that neither the neoliberal university nor performativity can simply be wished away. The technology of performativity has great appeal and even those in the university who

5 Ball (2003) uses the term technology of performativity to refer to the culture of performativity that exists in the neoliberal university focused on efficiency, systems of rewards and sanctions, with dehumanising consequences. This notion of performance is different from the meaning of performativity in other discourses or fields of inquiry.

criticise it, are inevitably perpetrators of it. Moreover, no viable alternatives for thwarting the neoliberal imaginary have come to the fore. In a context in which advanced technology will continue to accelerate, as predicted by Moore's law⁶ the pathway to move beyond it is to work/move through it. In other words, instead of naturalising the technology of performativity, we should engage in productive work along the journey of navigating through it. This brings me to the next section of the article, in which I discuss alternative understandings of performativity and how insights from these meanings of performativity could be(come) counter forces to the technology of performativity.

The other sides to performativity

The first notion to which I refer is Edward Said's, *performance as an extreme occasion* (Said and Marranca, 1991). Edward Said was a well-known Palestinian-American scholar, literary critic, and political activist. He was professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University and was also an accomplished musician who particularly enjoyed live music performances. He was interested in the role of music in creating social space. In his music criticism, Said was motivated by sustained pleasure rather than by writing reviews or scorecards of performances. He preferred to attend many performances and, over time, allowed certain impressions to crystallize in his mind as he reflected on them and on the music he played. He wrote,

So what I like to do is to go to many more performances than I would ever write about and then over a period of time, certain things crystallize out of my mind as I reflect on them and think about them, and the music I'll play over. (Said & Marranca, 1991, p.22)

What captured Said's attention was the uniqueness and transcendent nature of live performance where technical mastery and affective expression converge to create a powerful, singular experience. Such moments cannot be repeated or measured and require bodily presence. Said's notion of performance provides inspiration for thinking about teaching performance as an extreme occasion. The art of teaching is a neglected terrain in the neoliberal university and is likely to become eroded further as residential universities continue to pivot to online learning because the art of teaching requires authentic bodily presence. It is the art of teaching that inspires a love of learning and that stimulates curiosity and, additionally, engages students in what is immanently present, including polycrisis. Said's performance as extreme occasion reminds us of a need to find spaces in the neoliberal university for students to experience inspirational teaching because some room should remain in the neoliberal university for valuing the art of teaching.

The *performance of slow scholarship* is growing, particularly since the publication of Berg and Seeber's (2016) book, *The Slow Professor*, in which they challenge the culture of speed

⁶ Moore's law is the observation that the number of transistors in computer chips will double every 18 months to two years, exponentially increasing computer capacity. It is not a law of physics, but an observation of a historical trend projected forward. The recent invention of AI chips might produce accelerations that exceed that of Moore's law.

in the academy and argue for a culture that will alleviate stress, improve teaching, research and collegiality. Slow scholarship is integral to a philosophy of slowness that was the impetus for movements such as Slow Food and Slow Cities that challenges daily practices that prioritise efficiency, speed, and output at the expense of quality (Ulmer, 2017). In other words, slow movements including slow scholarship disrupt neoliberal performativity. In her address to the World Economic Forum, Spivak (2014) emphasised that “real knowledge depends on cooking the soul with slow learning, not the instant soup of a one-size-fits-all toolkit” (para. 8).

However, slowness does not mean being unproductive, but, rather, being differently productive (Ulmer 2017). In the context of writing slow ontology, Ulmer (2017) demonstrates how one could write differently such as writing *on*, *with*, *through*, and *in* nature, as well as writing in zones of conflict and struggle. Such writing will necessarily open up pathways for engaging the complex challenges of our time. In writing about the University of Beauty, Bearn (2000) offered an alternative conception to the smoothness, efficiency, and banality of the neoliberal university. For him, beauty is formless, non-representational, and pointless. Formlessness does not imply the absence of form but rather an indeterminate multiplicity of forms that can stimulate the playful positive pleasure of the beautiful. He argued that enjoying formlessness is akin to enjoying caressing. Bearn asserted that caressing is pointless not because it lacks a point, but because it involves countless points; pointlessness in this sense is positive and productive. Caressing takes time, and as Bearn (2000) notes, it is “not for lovers in a hurry. . . there is nothing efficient about it” (p. 244). While technology might be fast in the neoliberal university, pedagogy should be slow, and we should find ways of slowing pedagogy. Le Grange (2020) pointed out that teaching students to caress conceptually the myriads of forms and representations introduced to them will take time, and therefore pedagogy should be slow and not be typified by the efficiency of performativity. The deep and complex issues facing people and planet may require slow pedagogy and research. Given the massification of higher education with its attendant large class sizes means that slow pedagogy might not always be possible, but lecturers could find some moments to work with students in smaller groups, to structure lectures differently by not providing airtight arguments for students and to use technology in productive ways instead of instrumentalist ones.

In *Gender Trouble*, Butler (1990) extended the work of 20th-century feminists who challenged biological determinism, arguing that gender differences arise from societal structures, not biology. As Simone de Beauvoir (1949/2015) famously stated, “One is not born, but rather becomes a woman” (p. 283). Butler posited that gender is performed through ritualised repetition, meaning it is what you do, not who you are. This perspective allows for many different constructions of gender beyond a sex-based binary. Butler used drag as an example of gender performativity since it parodies the notion of an original or normal gender. Since gender is performed, it follows that it can be performed differently. Butler’s work on gender performativity can be extended to other identities so that all identities are understood not as fixed but as fluid and performed. Neoliberal governmentality might reconfigure those who inhabit the university into what Foucault (2008, p. 226) referred to as “entrepreneurs of the

self". In other words, those who inhabit the university (or are inhabited by it) become interpellated into neoliberal discourses. Butler helps us to understand that such interpellation is not a given, and that there are lines of flight from identities that neoliberalism might produce: in the neoliberal university multiple becomings are possible.

The *performativity of knowledge* has been an area of study conducted by sociologists of knowledge. The performativity of knowledge counters a representationalist view of knowledge that characterises much of western research. Turnbull (2000) studied how knowledge has been produced in many cultures and fields over time, including the building of the Gothic cathedrals, Indonesian rice farming, Polynesian navigation, modern cartography and the scientific study of malaria. He concluded that what all knowledge producing cultures have in common is not empirical verification as touted by western researchers but the social organisation of trust. Unlike a representationalist view of knowledge that renders different knowledges disparate and incompatible, the performative side of knowledge allows seemingly disparate knowledges to collaborate and create new knowledge spaces, termed "third spaces" or "interstitial spaces" (Turnbull, 1997, p. 560). Sociologists of scientific knowledge and philosophers of science recognize widely that, despite differences in epistemologies, methodologies, logics, cognitive structures, or socio-economic contexts, all knowledge systems share the characteristic of localness.

Knowledge is not just local but also situated—it has a place and creates space. When knowledge is produced, it is assembled from heterogeneous components and given coherence through social strategies and technical devices. As Star (1989) noted, knowledge production is deeply heterogeneous, with different viewpoints constantly being reconciled. Each actor or site in a scientific community has a partial truth consisting of local beliefs, practices, constants, and resources, none of which are fully verifiable across all sites. The aggregation of these viewpoints is the source of science's robustness. The common element of all knowledge systems is their localness, but they differ in how they are assembled through social strategies and technical devices to establish equivalences and connections between and among otherwise incompatible components. Turnbull (1997) noted that some traditions move and assemble knowledge through art, ceremony, and ritual, while western science does it through forming disciplinary societies, building instruments, employing standardisation techniques, and writing articles. In both cases, it is a process of knowledge assembly through making connections and negotiating equivalences between and among heterogeneous components while simultaneously establishing a social order of trust and authority, resulting in a knowledge space.

In the context of the science technology society (STS) movement, John Law (2003, 2004) has written about the *performativity of method*. By this we mean that method (used in the sciences) is not neutral but transformative since method alters substances in laboratories and reconstructs social reality. Accounts of method found in textbooks do not convey this understanding of method. Law (2003) argued that accounts of method found in textbooks make social inquiry mostly "a form of hygiene", since it seeks to give clarity and coherence to reality, which is not itself very coherent. He writes,

Do your methods properly. Eat your epistemological greens. Wash your hands after mixing with the real world. Then you will lead the good research life. Your data will be clean. Your findings warrantable. The product you will produce will be pure. Guaranteed to have a long shelf-life. (p. 3)

Method is not merely a set of procedures for reporting on reality; it is performative and helps to produce realities. It does not do so freely but operates within a hinterland of existing realities, resonances, and patterns (Law, 2004). Method is also creative, reworking and recrafting realities to create new versions of the world (Law, 2004). It does not simply describe what is out there but reconstructs the objects or phenomena it seeks to describe. Additionally, method includes and excludes in creating presences, absences, and othernesses. There are several implications here, and I mention two: first, if method is parochially conceived and performed, it might capture very little of the world. Second, if method is understood as being performative or enacted, then it could be (re)imagined more broadly and generously thus capturing much more of the world including polycrisis described earlier. Put differently, method makes and draws together things in particular ways and describes them accordingly, but it could also make and describe things differently.

The last notion of performativity that I discuss is *posthuman performativity*. Steve Shavero (1997), cited in Barad (2003), questions the idea that nature is ahistorical and timeless, suggesting we are too impressed by our own cleverness. Barad (2003) argued that various intellectual turns, including the linguistic and cultural, have reduced everything, including materiality, to language or cultural representation. Barad questions why language and culture are given agency and historicity, while matter is seen as passive just as Nietzsche, in the 19th century, cautioned against taking grammar too seriously in challenging the belief that words can represent preexisting phenomena. This critique contests the excessive power granted to language in determining reality and shifts the focus to practices, doings, and actions. Posthuman performativity emphasises that matter matters and that it is entangled with meaning. Barad (2007) introduced three important concepts that give meaning to posthuman performativity. The first is ethico-onto-epistemology that emphasises the entanglement of ontology, epistemology, and ethics. The production of knowledge can therefore not be separated from becoming and actions in the world. Moreover, becoming and actions in the world are never singularly human, but happen in intra-action with all of life. Barad's (2007) second concept is intra-action which means that no entities pre-exist but emerge through intra-actions. The third concept is material-discursive practices given that the tools and methods of scientific practices are not just assemblages of humans and non-humans but produce particular meanings and material realities to the exclusion of others. In short, posthuman performativity involves intra-actions with all of life and not only humans and the representations they produce.

So far, I have discussed different meanings of performativity produced in different discourses. Although the technology of performativity dominates in the neoliberal university, other notions of performativity can operate because the neoliberal university is not monolithic and not impervious to penetration and change. Next, I discuss how these alternative meanings

of performativity could become counter forces as we stay with the trouble of the planet and the neoliberal university.

Staying with the trouble of the neoliberal university

I borrow from Haraway (2016) the phrase, “staying with the trouble” (p.3). What she means is that we should engage with the complexities and challenges of the world instead of escaping from them. There are three dimensions to this engagement. The first is “making kin” (p. 99), which involves developing connections with other species and non-human agents, also in unusual ways. The second is that she posits a new epoch, Chthulucene that captures the interconnectedness of all life in juxtaposition to the Anthropocene that focuses on the impact of humans on the planet. The third dimension is the concept of “sympoiesis” (p. 58) which refers to making-with in contrast to autopoiesis, which means self-making. Sympoiesis emphasises that the world is co-created by humans in intra-action with non-human biotic and abiotic components. Higher education institutions are embedded in the world and therefore are affected by (and affect) the complex challenges of the world. Therefore, as scholars in higher education institutions, we should stay with the trouble in the sense that Haraway uses the term. Haraway’s notion of staying with the trouble resonates with *posthuman performativity* discussed earlier and requires of scholars the ability to respond to the complex challenges that are immanently present in the world, including polycrisis.

However, we can also think more narrowly about the complex challenges of the neoliberal university and particularly its performativity regimes. These challenges relate to, among others, the erosion of academic freedom, creeping managerialism, the erosion of the soul of academics, fabrications by scholars, and the biomedicalisation of ethics (Du Preez & Le Grange, 2024). I suggest that we should stay with the trouble of the neoliberal university that, as I have argued, cannot be easily wished away. Moreover, as we journey through the neoliberal university and its performative regimes in order to get beyond it, we can draw on the different meanings of performativity to act as counter forces, so that the neoliberal university is not naturalised. We will not be able to slow down the rapid speed at which advanced technologies will develop and it is likely that bodily presence in pedagogical processes will be(come) curtailed in residential universities. Said’s notion of *performance as an extreme occasion* reminds us that teaching is an art that requires true bodily presence and that we should find time and space to value this dimension of teaching that requires observation over sustained periods, and which cannot be understood or valued through rapid appraisals and the administration of online MonkeySurvey questionnaires. Moreover, insights from the *performance of slow scholarship*, is an antidote to the fast speed of advanced technologies and surface learning that aligns with the latter. Conceptual caressing takes time and there is nothing efficient about deep learning. Slow research requires of scholars that we refuse to chase outputs and of institutions that they stop doing bean counting and, instead, imagine ways of doing research differently without scholars becoming unproductive.

Butler’s *gender performativity* inspires us to think more broadly about all identities as performed. Foucault (2008) argued that neoliberalism reconfigures individuals into

entrepreneurs of their own lives, but the performativity of identity tells us that this is not a given and that there are alternative ways of becoming that should be opened or invigorated in the neoliberal university. Understanding *method as performative* reminds us that when we are doing research, we can use research methods in the neoliberal university that will have transformative effects in the world that will bring about a more sustainable and socio-ecologically just world. The *performativity of knowledge* opens possibilities for thinking and doing research that transcends disciplinary boundaries and doing research in partnership with communities outside of the western neoliberal universities such as with Indigenous communities to form new knowledge spaces and create new knowledges that are responsive to polycrisis and the complex challenges of the neoliberal university.

Parting thoughts

Those who inhabit the contemporary university feel the pressure to perform and the technology of performativity is destroying the souls of some academics, reconfiguring others into entrepreneurs of the self, and making some engage in fabrications and academic gaming. In the neoliberal university, we are in different ways victims and perpetrators of performativity. None of us can claim innocence. Performativity regimes will not disappear tomorrow, so we cannot wish them away. And some of these regimes might even have benefits such as quality assurance processes that play a role in protecting the rights of students.

What I have done in this article is explore how notions of performativity have been constructed in discourses outside of neoliberal ones and how different meanings of performativity can act as counter forces to neoliberal performativity to ensure that the latter is not naturalised since it is likely to remain with us for some time. Although we might not be able to wish away the neoliberal university and its performativity regimes, it is important to note that the neoliberal university is not monolithic and impervious to penetration and change. There are counter forces inspired by alternative conceptions of performativity that can be invigorated. Such counter forces are crucial if higher education is to play a role in addressing polycrisis in the world as well as the complex challenges immanent in the neoliberal university.

I do not wish to sum up what I have discussed in this article in a nutshell for the reader but want, rather, to open a discussion on performativity for further exploration in a time of polycrisis. What working through neoliberalism might look like cannot be known in advance and requires experimentation with the real. There are no recipes, but a commitment to a life-long affair of experimentation, which is at the heart of education, is needed. As Ansell-Pearson (2016, p. 28) so cogently put it,

We do not know what affects we are capable of in advance, and this suggests that there is an empirical education in life, involving a ‘long affair of experimentation, a lasting prudence’ and a wisdom that implies constructing a plane of immanence. In terms of our becoming-ethical we can say that we do not know what a body can do: it is a mode of practical living and experimenting, as well as, of course, a furthering the

active life, the life of affirmativity, for example, cultivating the active affects of generosity and joyfulness, as opposed to the passive and sad affects of hatred, fear and cruelty.

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