Do You Play with Philosophy?

Antonio Strati

University of Trento, Italy

Email: antonio.strati@unitn.it

Abstract: This article raises the doubt as to whether philosophy – as well as epistemology and social theory – are really important for understanding organizational life. This doubt has a provocative value, since my writings are fully immersed in philosophical debates, and is expressed with an ironie serieuse. The provocative value of this article consists primarily in encouraging organizational scholars to "play with" philosophy rather than simply refer to it or to merely resume philosophical research in their studies. What do I mean by "playing with"? I will illustrate and discuss this research choice by intertwining the language of written words with the visual language of photography and by grounding my arguments in the evocative process of knowing. Accordingly, I will translate my doubtful and critical considerations on the relevance of philosophy in the study of organization in the photographic image of the selfie. In this light, in the article I will first expose some considerations regarding the connections in-action between organizational aesthetics research and aesthetic philosophy, social aesthetic theory, criticism and the history of art. That is, on the research areas in organization studies and philosophy and social sciences I am particularly familiar with. Thus, I will slightly move my point of view to focus on whether the theoretical and research paths of organization studies, on the one hand, and philosophy, on the other, intersect and combine, and to consider whether there are crucial similarities between these two different bodies of knowledge that can be grasped. This plurality of points of view shows that my doubt on the importance of philosophy in the construction of the organizational discourse does not have an ideological character because it does not lead towards a univocal experience and a unique vision. On the contrary, according to the neo-phenomenological aesthetics of Vilém Flusser, my interrogative is a phenomenological doubt which poses the issue of freedom and playfulness in doing aesthetic research in organizational contexts.

Keywords: Aesthetic Approach; Vilém Flusser's Phenomenological Doubt; Philosophical Sensibilities; Photography as a Scenario and Metaphor; Wallaby and Posthumanist Aesthetics.

ARE WE REALLY SURE THAT PHILOSOPHY IS IMPORTANT FOR THE AESTHETIC UNDERSTANDING OF ORGANIZATIONAL LIFE?

In the last decade, a growing number of publications (de Vaujany, Aroles, & Pérezts 2022; Helin, Hernes, Hjort, & Holt, 2014; Mir, Willmott, & Greenwood, 2016; Tsoukas & Chia, 2011) signals that a new intellectual trend is influencing and transforming the research and study of organizational life. This new intellectual trend is giving a novel form to the previous awareness of organization scholars about the importance of philosophy, epistemology and social theory in their research and studies. As well as it is configuring, at the same time, a new fashion in the study of organization through edited volumes, journals' special issues, monographs and journals' articles.

References to philosophers and compendiums of their thought are increasingly characterizing the style and architecture of writing organizational essays. Thus, to keep alive the interrogative of whether philosophy is important for the understanding of organizational life is essential in order to avoid that the relevance of philosophy in organization studies is just taken for granted and, thus, reflected uncritically and acted uncritically through standardized canons of the aesthetics of organizational writings.

The interrogative expressed in the title of this section also shows the ironie serieuse which characterizes my sentiments about the recent renewed attention of organizational scholars towards the connections in-action between organization theory and philosophy. In fact, philosophy and social theory, beginning with the sociological one, affect most of my writings. I cannot therefore exhibit a point of view which is concerned or even against the increasing attention of organizational scholars towards philosophy and social research.

On the other hand, in the midst of this new intellectual trend in organization studies and in the context of this new academic fashion, my passion for the philosophical and social theory debates makes me feel crucial the interrogative of whether an aesthetic vision can lead to construction of a variegated context of dialogues with philosophy.

Thus, the interrogative "Do you play with philosophy?" formulated by the title of this essay it has the value of a manifesto that invites organizational scholars and students to abandon the realms of philosophical compendiums and references in their writings. To pose to ourselves the essential question "Do I play with philosophy?" emphasizes, in fact, the act of exploring aesthetic forms of understanding the connections in-action between philosophy and organization studies.

This is the principal argument that I will illustrate and discuss in this essay. Few notes regarding my personal style of writing may help the reader to better contextualize and situate this article:

• this essay is grounded on the evocative process of knowing that has characterized my aesthetic understanding of organizational life since the origins of the organizational aesthetics research in the late 1980s;

• as in some of my previous writing, photography has a great relevance and will play both as the main scenario and as a metaphor for doing aesthetic research. In this way I will illustrate and clarify my style of "playing with" philosophy against the scenographic background of the pervasiveness of the photographic image in contemporary societies;

• "play" does not constitute the focus of this writing, although I feel the importance of this topic which has been discussed in philosophy from Aristotle to Huizinga, among others, and recently also in organization theory (Organization Studies, 2018);

• to "play with" is conceptualized as a "movement that is not regulated by concepts of how to move or ideas specifying the goal of movement" (Hjorth et al., 2018: 157), i.e. how to jump in and move freely in sensing and acting;

• my style of "playing with" philosophy will intertwine the language of the written words with the visual language;

• philosophy will generally indicate both philosophical thought and epistemological debates, social theory and theories of art.

In the next section, I will depict the main features of the doubt posed by the interrogative "Are we really sure that philosophy is important for the aesthetic understanding of organizational life?". I will do it through three considerations that I will exhibit in the form of image, that is, of three "selfies" – such as those made with a smartphone – which also insert me, through my writings, into the photographed subject.

THREE SELFIES TO PLAY WITH PHILOSOPHICAL AESTHETICS

The following considerations relating to the doubt whether philosophy is important for understanding organizational life are shaped in the form of "considerations-image", as if they were selfies taken with my smartphone rather than photographs. This choice is due to the fact (i) that, as I have just pointed out, in this essay the language of words is intertwined with that of images, (ii) that, in general, selfies are not supposed to be so accurate and formalized in their representation such as photographs usually are, and (iii) that also my writings can easily be included in these three "considerations-image" given their selfie nature.

The selfie is a photograph, albeit of a particular kind. As with photographing, in fact, taking a selfie is a performative process characterized by a self-reflexivity that involves the corporeality of the photographer's physical movement in space. What, in general, distinguishes the selfie from the photograph is that the self-representation and the representation of the photographic gesture are, in the selfie, inseparably co-present (D'Aloia, 2018).

The three selfies that follow all focus on the same subject – the doubtful importance of philosophy in the study of the organization – but look at it from slightly different points of view. Each selfie, in fact, does not represent this doubt in its totality, but gives shape to fragments of the interrogative whether philosophy is important for the understanding of organizational life. A photograph is truly a photograph only if it excludes the idea of wholeness – stresses the German sociologist Siegfrid Kracauer (1960) – and, commenting on Kracauer's thesis, the French writer and art critic Laurent Jenny emphasizes that a photograph

"is always perceived as a fragment of a larger spatial reality. It is precisely this constitutive incompleteness that explains its proliferation in visual culture. Because it

always experiences itself as fragmentary, it seeks to compensate for its inadequacy by multiplying partial points of view." (2019: 28-29)

Thus, since I experienced each of the following selfies as fragmentary, I multiplied my partial views taking three. The first selfie, "Aesthetic philosophies and organizational aesthetics research", is taken from a point of view closer to the subject, because I am more directly involved in this "considerations-image" through my writings. The second selfie, "Intersecting theoretical paths", is taken from a rather central point of view. The third selfie, "Bodies of knowledge that do not overlap", is instead taken from a more distant point of view.

AESTHETIC PHILOSOPHIES AND ORGANIZATIONAL AESTHETICS RESEARCH

The first "considerations-image" explores the relationship between organization studies and philosophy, focusing on the specific area of organizational research concerning the aesthetic dimension of organizational life (Baldessarelli et al., 2021; Creed et al., 2020; Gagliardi, 1990; Guillet de Monthoux, 2004; King & Vickery, 2013; Linstead & Höpfl, 2000; Meyer et al., 2013; Strati, 2019; Taylor & Hansen, 2005).

This selfie shows, first of all, that the intersections between organizational aesthetics research and philosophy are largely labile, and that a large part of the research and studies conducted to understand organizational aesthetics have made reference to philosophy in a predominantly occasional and ritualistic manner (Strati, 2019). The selfie also shows that, instead, in the four different research styles or study approaches – "aesthetic approach" (Strati, 1999), "artistic approach" (Guillet de Monthoux, 2004), "empathic-logical approach" (Gagliardi, 2006), "symbolic-archaeological approach" (Berg & Kreiner, 1990) – which characterize this area of organization studies, philosophy is nevertheless important.

This applies particularly to hermeneutics, symbolic and phenomenological philosophy, aesthetic sociology, pragmatism, the new current of the everyday aesthetics philosophy, as well as to the aesthetic philosophy of the origins, in the eighteenth century, namely that of Addison, Baumgarten, Kant and Vico. Furthermore, around them extends a constellation of aesthetic philosophies ranging from Nietzsche to Pareyson, from Schelling to Schopenhauer, from French Theory to Italian Thought, and many others. In this first selfie we see a variegated and changing panorama of philosophy, as if it were in a continuous metamorphosis along certain lines of research. These latter are represented above all by hermeneutic philosophy, by theories – both philosophical and historical-artistic – relating to performance, and by the distinction between aesthetic philosophy and philosophy of art.

The centrality of hermeneutic philosophy concerns all four approaches to the study of organizational aesthetics, because hermeneutics pervades all the theoretical reflections outlined in the context of organizational aesthetics research.

Similarly, studies on organizational aesthetics are generally characterized by attention to the performative character of organizational experience, whether the symbolic construction of the organization is privileged – as occurs in the symbolic-archaeological approach and in the empathic-logical approach –, whether we study the aesthetics of the experiential flow in the management of the art firm - as happens in the artistic approach –, or whether we look at the practice theory in organizational contexts (Gherardi, 2019; Gherardi & Strati, 2012), as happens with the aesthetic approach.

The distinction between aesthetic philosophy and philosophy of art, on the other hand, mainly distinguishes the debate between two of the four approaches to the study of organizational aesthetics, namely the aesthetic and the artistic one. The artistic approach places the "worlds of art" (Becker, 1982) at the center of the study, observes the playfulness and experiential flow characteristics, researches how art can contribute to the management of the organization. The aesthetic approach, on the other hand, considers the worlds of art as one of the many different ways in which the aesthetic dimension is relevant to social practices in organization and society. Therefore, it studies the processes of aesthetic negotiation in the organizational experience tout court and the ways in which aesthetics itself is configured and defined in daily work and organizational practices.

This selfie does not show philosophical theoretical traditions or emerging new philosophical currents that clearly distinguish one approach from the other. Of course, we can observe the greater importance of the symbolic philosophy of Ernst Cassirer and Susanne Langer in the symbolic-archaeological approach and in the empathic-logical approach compared to the other two approaches. And it can also be noted that the theories of criticism and art history on performance are of particular importance to the artistic approach, while the eighteenth-century aesthetic philosophy of Addison, Baumgarten, Kant and Vico has great relevance especially for the aesthetic approach. But these are accents and tones. Because, just to give an example, for the aesthetic approach, symbolic philosophy as well as the theories of criticism and the history of art on performance are equally important. If different philosophical orientations can be noted, they are constituted not by traditions and currents of study, but, instead, by three main philosophical sensibilities - the "aesthetic", the "hermeneutic" and the "performative" (Strati, 2016) - that "play with" philosophy.

To conclude, this first selfie shows that the paths of organization studies intersect on several occasions and in various ways with those of philosophy although large part of the organizational aesthetics research often makes only a mere ritualistic reference to philosophical thought. Furthermore, it should be noted that few scholars of philosophical aesthetics have shown attention and sensibility towards organizational research on the aesthetic dimension of daily life in organizations (Chytry, 2008; Iannilli, 2019; Ratiu, 2017; Studi di Estetica, 2019; Thyssen, 2003; White, 1996).

INTERSECTING THEORETICAL PATHS

The second "considerations-image" is that of research and study paths in organization studies, on the one hand, and research and study paths in philosophy, on the other, which have intersected in some areas of organizational study. These areas are, among others, the epistemological one relating to the debates on the rationalist and positivist paradigm (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Hassard & Pym, 1990; Hatch, 2006; Morgan, 1997; Strati,

2000), as well as the philosophical ones concerning the modern/postmodern perspective, post-functionalism and post-structuralism, the symbolic construction of social life, gendered organizational life, the corporeality and materiality of organizational life, the aesthetic dimension of organization and ethics in the organizational context, non-representational theory and post-humanism (Buchanan & Bryman, 2009; Clegg et al., 2006; Linstead, 2004).

This selfie shows, however, that philosophy has achieved some importance for the understanding of organizational life, and that the philosophical sensibilities of organizational scholars have increased their influence on the study of organization. Over the past decade, these philosophical sensibilities have concerned philosophy in general (Mir et al., 2016; Tsoukas & Chia, 2011), as well as particular philosophical traditions, such as phenomenology (de Vaujany et al., 2022; Holt & Sandberg, 2011; Küpers, 2015), process philosophy (Helin et al., 2014) and pragmatism (Lorino, 2018; Simpson & den Hond, 2022), and specific areas of philosophical research, such as aesthetics (Gherardi & Strati, 2017; Guillet de Monthoux, 2004; Strati, 1999, 2016, 2019) and ethics (Pullen & Rhodes, 2022; Rhodes, 2019).

The specular phenomenon, that of the importance of organization studies for philosophy, is almost non-existent. In other words, there is neither scholar of organization, nor organizational theory that, with rare exceptions such as the work of Max Weber, has constituted an opportunity for theoretical debate in philosophy and not even a habitual reference, even if only ritualistic.

This second selfie shows that the research and study paths remain distinct between organization studies, on the one hand, and philosophy, on the other. When they intersect the research and study paths do not intertwine and the phenomenon of mixing or hybridization does not occur.

BODIES OF KNOWLEDGE THAT DO NOT OVERLAP

The third "considerations-image" is a more general glance and therefore focuses from a certain distance on the in-action connections between organization studies and philosophy. Although the sociology of organization, organizational theory

and management studies have referred to philosophy, as we have just seen with the second selfie, the fact that the characterizing elements of these two bodies of knowledge hardly resemble each other and are not superimposable stands out.

Just think of the classical distinction that contrasts analytic philosophy with continental philosophy (D'Agostini, 1997), which has particular importance in the field of aesthetic philosophy (Cazeaux, 2000; Gaut & Lopes, 2001) on which the first selfie focused. This is a distinction that does not characterize organization studies. Although this distinction between the two philosophies has had some influence in the study of organization, the organizational discourse has not been configured in terms of analytical organization studies and continental organization studies.

The same conclusion is reached if we take into consideration a classic distinction in organization studies such as that which contrasts organization studies based on qualitative methodologies of social research with organization studies based, instead, on quantitative research methods (Buchanan & Bryman, 2009). This is a distinction that does not characterize philosophy and that we can only find in certain areas of social theory. The third selfie clearly highlights that the two bodies of knowledge made up of organization studies, on the one hand, and philosophy, on the other, remain highly distinct.

FRAMING AND FRAGMENTATION IN THE MAKING OF SELFIES

The three selfies – "Aesthetic philosophies and organizational aesthetics research", "Intersecting theoretical paths", and "Bodies of knowledge that do not overlap" – illustrated above frame my interrogative on the relevance of philosophy for understanding organizational life from three points of view which are slightly different.

These photographic frames exclude "all that surrounds" them and exercise "a unifying integration with respect to the interior" that makes the gaze glide "inward on them", we can observe by drawing on the aesthetic study of the German sociologist Georg Simmel (1902; Eng. trans. 2020: 148-9) dedicated to the painting frames. That is, to continue with Simmel, framing separates and connects at the same time and, as Heather Höpfl

(2006: 14) observes, framing not only "marks the boundary between inside and outside but also moves forward, has a trajectory".

By framing the three selfies, I collected fragments of organizational research and of philosophical debates, and I created fragments of connections in-action between organization studies and philosophy. These fragments enclosed in each of the three photographic frames were translated into a new artifact, which is a "detail" rather than a "fragment", since its configuration depended on my point of view, on my framing. The fragment, recalls the Italian semiologist Omar Calabrese (1987: 75-79), comes etymologically from the Latin frangere which means to break, and it outlines something that breaks without the need for a subject breaking it. On the contrary, the detail, although etymologically always coming from the Latin, derives from the Renaissance French de-tail, that is, to cut from, and it presupposes a subject that cuts, that is, a retailer.

Furthermore, the three selfies configure themselves as "realities", while showing fragments of the connections in-action between organization studies and philosophy. In the framing, that is in the "constitutive and apparently innocent aspect of the photographic act", observes the Italian philosopher Maddalena Mazzocut-Mis (2006: 309), "the germs of the simulacral potential of the photographic image are latent".

These observations resonate with the practices of doing organizational research, with the aesthetic study of social practice in organizational life, and with art-based organizational research and management learning. In particular, the characteristics that resound are the following:

• framing is the inseparably co-presence, material and corporeal, of the representations of both the fragments of the organization experiential flow and the researcher's gestures. Framing fragments of organizational life frames, at the same time, our aesthetic and carnal being involved in the framing act. There is "a need to give attention to what constitutes the frame", writes Heather Höpfl (2006: 13), and therefore – according to the concerns expressed by the French philosopher Jacques Derrida – to the surface and the internal and external limits of the frame, in which we find ourselves, as researchers framed by our corporeality, purpose, baggage and history;

• the fragment/detail dynamics in the aesthetic study of organizational life highlights the issue that the results of organizational research acquire simulacrum value. The plurality of framing acts in the conduct of organizational research does not cancel this problematic issue. However, it is avoided that the outcome-simulacrum of organizational research also acquires the ideological value of the univocal perspective in understanding and communicating the organizational experience studied. According to the Czech phenomenologist philosopher Vilém Flusser, in fact, the plurality of points of view from which these three selfies are taken reveals the "phenomenological quality" – rather than the ideological one – of my doubt that philosophy is important for understanding organizational life.

In the next part of the article, I will further explore the connections in-action between the theme of phenomenological doubt treated in Flusser's aesthetic philosophy of photography and the photographic act of framing as a metaphor of aesthetic research on organizational life.

PLAYING WITH FLUSSER'S PHENOMENOLOGICAL DOUBT

The phenomenological doubt will be illustrated and discussed in this part of the essay in relation to programmed act, poetic performing and the enigma of framedness in order to further highlight the importance of "playing with" philosophy. Also in this part I will continue to intertwine the two different languages of words and images and to ground my arguments in the evocative process of knowing.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL DOUBT, PROGRAMMED ACTS AND PERFORMATIVE PROCESS

In his philosophical reflections on the aesthetics of photography, Vilém Flusser proposes the distinction between phenomenological doubt and ideological doubt. The "act of photography", observes Flusser (1983; Eng. Trans. 2000: 38), "is that of 'phenomenological doubt', to the extent that

it attempts to approach phenomena from any number of viewpoints", and, moreover, the photographers' practice itself "is hostile to ideology", that is to "the insistence on a single viewpoint thought to be perfect".

> Photographers have doubts, but these are not of a scientific, religious or existential sort; rather, they are doubts in the sense of a new sort of doubt in which stopping short and taking a decision are reduced to grains - a quantum, atomized doubt. Each time photographers are confronted by a hurdle, they discover that the viewpoint they have adopted is concentrated on the 'object' and that the camera offers any number of different viewpoints. They discover the multiplicity and the equality of viewpoints in relation to their 'object'. They discover that it is not a matter of adopting a perfect viewpoint but of realizing as many viewpoints as possible. Photographers act in a post-ideological way even when they think they are serving an ideology. (Flusser, 1983; Eng. Trans. 2000: 38)

This distinction, which emphasizes freedom in doing research, has fascinated me because it resonates with the practice of my art photography, as Pierre Guillet de Monthoux (2021) remarks. In my photographic practice, in fact, the photographic act consists in framing the subject to be shot from a variety of different points of view. But even just by observing the photographic acts of the people around us we can see that the framing of the subject to be photographed is studied through slight modifications of the point of view. It happens quite often that, before taking the photo, you frame a first time, then you change the photographic frame, you make other attempts by moving the point of view a little to the side, a little further back, a little higher or, conversely, lowering it.

These are bodily acts, made by bodies socialized to photographic culture, by bodies even experts in photographing or by bodies that improvise in the act of photographing. Taking a photograph is a "performative process" that the photograph as an artifact hides within itself, observes the American pragmatist philosopher Richard Shusterman (2012). There can actually be only one framing, but this rarely happens. More often, instead, the gestures, postures and movements of the body follow one another in

search of personal photographic frames that respond to individual taste and are aimed at making beautiful or even ugly and poorly made photographs.

> "the "mathesis" of this doubt (its deep structure) is prescribed by the camera's program […] Photographers' practice is fixed to a program. Photographers can only act within the program of the camera, even when they think they are acting in opposition to this program. This is true of all post-industrial acts: They are "phenomenological" in the sense of being hostile to ideology, and they are programmed acts." (Flusser, 1983; Eng. trans. 2000: 38)

This second aspect of phenomenological doubt is of great importance, because, as I will illustrate and discuss in the next section, the "program of the camera" ends up constituting the world within which we have the power to search for different framings of the subject we are about to give form through photography.

However, I have never liked the philosophical claims that are offered in terms of a "strong theory" which has general validity. My "playing with philosophy" is grounded in the Italian philosophy of the "Weak thought" (Vattimo & Rovatti, 1983) which problematizes strong philosophical statements. But I want to keep alive the feeling of drama and limitation to creative freedom highlighted by Flusser's phenomenological doubt. I have often sensed, in fact, the aesthetic negotiation between, on the one hand, the freedom to frame the subject to be photographed from multiple points of view according to my personal taste and, on the other, the "programmed quality" of my act of photographing.

Let's ask ourselves, for example, with what photographic aesthetic are we progressively socializing through virtual meetings carried out via digital platforms in our organizational contexts and that the covid pandemic in recent years has spread more and more in society. They made us familiar with the bizarre and deformed corporeality of ourselves and the colleagues we work with. The aesthetic choices of the various framings end up offering us a pastiche of clippings of "leg-less digital bodies" that are framed in small rectangles on the screen of our computers. Inside these framings we see half-lengths bodies grappling with computers and mobile phones, faces deformed by the wide-angle shot of the computer camera, faces of which appear, in great evidence, large foreheads, swollen nostrils and puffy lips, faces in shadows darkened by the backlight or dimly lit.

What photographic aesthetic are we, all together, creating and disseminating through digital platforms in organizational life and in society? These collective photographic acts influence the ongoing configuration of the aesthetic canons of digitized organizational life. Furthermore, these aesthetic standards increasingly pervade our private life as well. Whereby we are becoming increasingly accustomed to them, as if this were the new aesthetic, that is, the aesthetics of digital corporeality and the digital materiality of the organizational life. Their strangeness and their rare beauty strike us less and less. We notice less and less the "camera programs" and the mediation of the continuous IT technological innovations in which we are immersed.

The new aesthetic canons due to these digital photographic – and video – shots underline the relevance of Flusser's philosophical reflections on the phenomenological doubt of the photographic act. But, at this point, in what form do the participants in the organization, photographic software programs, photographic hardware, digital platforms, organizational environments, and other subjects, are intertwined in the experiential process that configures the aesthetic authorship of the new aesthetic canons of digital photography? In other words, what about the "author" of the photographic act?

Let's take a closer look at the issue of aesthetic authorship in the next section by reflecting on a less composite but equally qualitatively rich experiential process of aesthetic negotiation to "play with" Flusser's philosophical aesthetics.

POETIC PERFORMING AND AESTHETIC AUTHORSHIP

To reflect on the "authorship" of the photographic act, and to illustrate and discuss its connections in-action with Flusser's philosophy of the phenomenological doubt, I will now refer to Poetic performing (Fig. 1), an image that will bring us back to the theme of aesthetic philosophies and organizational aesthetics research seen in the first part of this essay.

The photopoem Poetic performing in Figure 1 portrays a meadow on which a wallaby, leaning delicately against the thick trunk of a tree, is sniffing the fingertips of my left hand. The photopoem depicts the same image that I used to visually illustrate the phenomenological and posthumanistic character of the aesthetic approach to the study of organizational life (Strati, 2019: 97), but it has a slightly different aspect.

The image published in the book was a black and white reproduction of the color photograph taken in the "Kangaroo Point" park in Brisbane, Australia, a decade ago and lightly manipulated with Adobe Lightroom software for printing. Three written texts of two words each – "sensorial knowing", "aesthetic judging", and "poetic performing" – completed the image by indicating the key dimensions of the aesthetic approach. These texts also underlined the aesthetic experience that I experienced while building the interaction with the wallaby. I framed and memorized this aesthetic experience through the photo taken with my right hand which is not only not included in the image, instead of what happens with the selfie, but it is not even suggested by the image.

The photopoem in Figure 1 is not completed by written texts but should underline them visually through the manipulation realized for this essay with Adobe Photoshop software. Photographic manipulation that also aesthetically emphasizes that this image is not proof of the interaction between the wallaby and my left hand. A photograph "is not a proof" – writes the French art critic François Soulages (2017: 307) – but a trace together "of the object to photograph which is unknowable" and "the photographic subject which is also unknowable", as well as "photographic material". A trace that can stimulate us to philosophize because photography is antidogmatic:

"in its richest part, photographic art creates works that can only sensitize and move us, destabilize and shake us, and therefore enrich us. Photography is therefore a source of astonishment: it makes us think and imagine, dream and see; it can incite us to philosophize." (Soulages, 2017: 308)

Poetic performing, then, is not the tout court interaction between a wallaby – accustomed to human visits in the park of "Kangaroo Point" – and my left hand offered to her smelling. It is not even proof of this interaction. It is only a trace that stimulated my "playing with" the aesthetic approach, aesthetic philosophies, art criticism and the social theories that focus on the aesthetic dimension in organizational life and in contemporary societies.
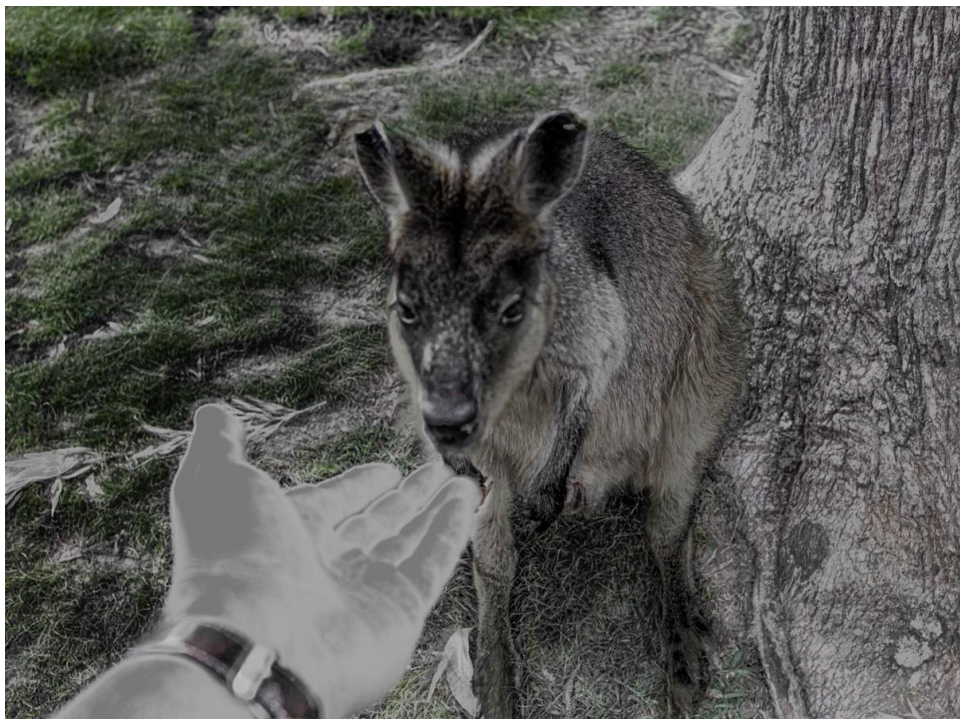
Figure 1: Poetic performing.
(Antonio Strati, File Leica M9, software Adobe Lightroom and Adobe Photoshop, 2012-2022)

Furthermore, Poetic performing is not even a photograph. It is a digital file and its materiality is that of mathematical strings. It can therefore be modified indefinitely thanks to software programs that intervene on the image without procuring definitive changes to the file. The file, however, does not allow modifications on everything and for everything, that is, it does not give rise to the freedom of doubt indefinitely.

In fact, my freedom to formulate phenomenological doubts has been limited and circumscribed by the interaction of my body and my senses with the algorithms of the software programs of the Leica with which the photograph was taken, as well as with those I used later both for the book and for this article to edit the photograph according to my aesthetic taste. Even when I wanted to do the opposite of what machine programs – Leica and MacBook Pro – prepare, suggest, or prescribe to do, I still found myself immersed in the world of camera program algorithms and software program algorithms, as has Flusser pointed out.

I have been almost glued to this world (Pignot, 2021) from which I had liked to detach myself and deconstruct my aesthetic appreciation of the technological sublime (Ames, 2018). My aesthetic choices as a photographer have been negotiated with the aesthetic choices that camera programs, MacBook Pro programs and Adobe software programs foresee, recommend or prescribe. But does not something similar happen in the research practices of the aesthetic study of the organization even when we remain in the realm of the written word?

What, perhaps, is much rarer in the aesthetic study of organizational life is that something similar to the fact that I have not framed Poetic performing photograph by looking through the viewfinder or previewing it on the Leica M9 monitor occurs. The phenomenological doubt of the framing was no longer entrusted to the sensory faculty of sight and the aesthetic taste experienced by looking. It was entrusted to the knowledge and sensory acting skills of my right hand.

It was, in fact, my right hand to frame the image and, thus, to take the photograph immersed in the interactions with the algorithms of the Leica programs. With the eye - and with all the other senses -, instead, I was intent on "constructing the subject" of the image, that is to say on capturing the continuous metamorphosis of my interaction with the wallaby. That is, I was focused on something that resonates with the practice of constructing the subject of the aesthetic study of organizational experience.

But, then, who is the author of the photograph Poetic performing in Figure 1? The hand that chooses the photographic frame and takes the photo, the eye that decides the moment in which to take the photo, the algorithms of the camera program? Hand, eye, corporeal photographic competence, aesthetic culture and photographic imagination, software program of the photographic device and hardware characteristics of the camera constitute the aesthetic authorship of Poetic performing. They compose it in the course of an experiential process made up of aesthetic negotiations conducted on the level of photographic taste, on the level of the sensory faculties and perceptive-sensorial faculties, on the level of the photographer's framing freedom, and on the level of photographic aesthetic philosophies. But it's not just them who made the photo, as I will argue below in the following last section of the article.

THE ENIGMA OF THE FRAMEDNESS

In the Poetic performing photograph (Fig. 1), the wallaby's gaze is turned towards the hand, and in the image you can see both my act of offering an open hand to let the wallaby approach, and the act of sniffing of the wallaby. The wallaby's forelegs are close to my hand, below it and next to her body which is slightly leaning against the large trunk of the tree. On the lawn, some leaves and small broken branches can be seen. The photograph shows the animal world of my hand and the wallaby leaning against the plant world of the tree, lawn, leaves and small branches. In it you can see, out of focus, the strap of my watch and its buckle testifying to the presence of the world of artifacts that has become increasingly pervasive since the industrial revolution of a few centuries ago.

Facing each other, the wallaby's muzzle and my left hand create an interaction that is corporeal and based on the perceptual-sensory faculties - sight, smell, touch, hearing and taste - and on the

sensitive-aesthetic judgment of both. The smell of my hand - and perhaps of my body as a whole as well - did not offend the perceptiveness of the wallaby's nose as she sniffed me; indeed, it attracted and intrigued her as you can see by observing the intensity with which the wallaby looks at my hand.

Not only are the sensory organs of smell and sight active in the bodily interaction photographed. For example, the touch is active with the wallaby's hind legs resting on the grass of the lawn and with the side leaning on the trunk of the tree. Looking at the wallaby's ears, hearing too appears to be activated, although the photograph does not make the sound heard. The proprioceptive faculties of both the wallaby's body and my body are active. Thanks to them we were able to approach, with delicacy, without losing the balance, without mistaking the rhythm of the interaction, without ruining the atmosphere of curiosity and trust that has been created between us (and which lasted the moment necessary for me to be able to photograph).

Now, observes the French sociologist Edgar Morin (2016), the explanation usually given by scholars to events of this type is that "the animal-wallaby" sniffed the hand of the "human- me" in search of food. The domination and pervasiveness of rationalist and positivist thought generally seeks the functionalist and structuralist narrative that ends up stripping the animal world of its aesthetic dimension. Even in aesthetic sociology, observes Helmut Staubmann (2022), beyond the theories of Georg Simmel and Jean Marie Guyau, the "social" has been conceptualized in terms of norms and values or meaning and interpretation, neglecting body and aesthetics. Yet, in the animal world of which we belong, we make ourselves beautiful to attract and seduce. Similar poetic performances can be noticed in the plant world. That is, writes Morin (2016; It. Transl.: 2019: 16), we deal with a dimension that, if we do not want to call aesthetic to leave this expression only to the world of human beings, we can call "pre-aesthetic fantasy". Or that we can call – in my terms – "posthumanist aesthetics", that is to say a philosophical aesthetics which avoids both the anthropocentric framing and the claim that aesthetics is gnoseology of a lower order.

Couldn't it be, in fact, that the wallaby just wanted to smell the fingers of my hand as I was gently offering them to her? That she just wanted to smell me and look at the shapes of my hand? That sniffing and looking at the fingers of my hand was an act without a rational- structuralist purpose, that is a "disinterested" aesthetic act, in Kantian terms, done just for the pleasure of doing something beautiful in and of itself?

With this new doubt, we can leave the sociologist Edgar Morin, the philosopher Immanuel Kant and the mystery of posthumanist ordinary aesthetics to return to the issue of the aesthetic authorship of Poetic performing with another new doubt: are we sure we can rule out wallaby?

The act of photographing is therefore an enigma, because it is never clear who the author is and because aesthetic authorship does not entrust the centrality of the photographic act simply to the photographer who takes the photograph. An enigma that also belongs to the aesthetic authorship in doing organizational research and which is complicated by the progress of innovation in information systems and telecommunications. In the immersive environments of "image making", once the virtual reality helmet is worn, writes the Italian philosopher Andrea Pinotti (2021: XI-XII),

> "I am no longer in front of the painting or the screen that offer me an image; I am rather inside, simply immersed in an environment that urges me to actions and movements, offers me affordances and the possibility of agencies as if I were present in a real space. I lose a freedom: the ability to look off-screen, off-image. And I gain another: precisely because immersed in a condition of unframedness, I can autonomously give myself the frame, free as I am to frame what I like best in the visual field."

CONCLUSIONS

At the end of the article, we are ironically at the same point where the essay "Do you play with philosophy?" it begins. Is philosophy really important to understanding organizational life? And how, then, to explore and deepen philosophies, social theories, art criticism and art history to understand organizational life?

This article on "playing with" philosophy concerns fragments of philosophy, epistemology, art criticism and social theory, in general, and of the aesthetic philosophy of photography, in particular. The architecture of the communication of my dubious considerations on taking for granted the importance of philosophy in the study of organization and, also, my critical considerations with respect to its becoming just a fashion in the academic world, has been grounded in the aesthetics of the photographic act of making a selfie. In this way, as well as the written words, the visual language of photography has become an integral part of my arguments. Written considerations and images – shown and not – have been intertwined in order to stimulate a process of evocative organizational knowing on methodological and theoretical issues that I feel are relevant for the aesthetic study of organizational life.

"Do you play with philosophy?" it began with three selfies, that is, with the images with which I intended to lightly highlight the problematic nature of the possible interactions between organization studies, on the one hand, and philosophy, on the other. These bodies of knowledge are very different from each other and, moreover, especially philosophy above all shows very limited interest in organization studies. Furthermore, most organization studies, in turn, are not always fascinated by philosophy, epistemology and social theory. Even in the case of organizational aesthetics research and the aesthetic approach, the reference to aesthetic philosophy, theories of social aesthetics, criticism and the history of art is often purely ritualistic and does not create a "playing with" these bodies of knowledge.

Not always though. There are numerous studies which have shown a profound interest in investigating organizational issues thanks to philosophy, epistemology and social theory. Among these, "playing with" the theme of phenomenological doubt proposed by the Czech neo-phenomenologist philosopher Vilém Flusser, this essay emphasizes the issue of the researcher's freedom in doing research immersed in the digital realms of the algorithms, as well as the issue of the aesthetic authorship in doing research in organizational contexts.

"Do you play with philosophy?" – in general and, in particular, with aesthetic philosophies and theories of social aesthetics – constitutes an "imaginary manifesto" in favor of the freedom to philosophically investigate themes and problems that emerge in empirical research and in the theoretical construction conducted in sociology of organization, organization theory and management studies.

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