Call for Papers, AoMO 2018 @ University of Brighton

Stream title: Performing performance, embodying bodies, and bridging bridges: How do workplace and theatre innovate together for sustainability?

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Keywords: theatre, performance, workplace learning, innovation, sustainability

This stream explores possible bridgings between contemporary workplace performance and theatre performance in terms of embodied learning and innovation for sustainability. We start with a fascinating story of dramatic encounter between Danish industrial workplace and theatre in 1980s, which developed into an innovative theatrical practice that facilitates workplace learnings for organizational/societal sustainability. Inspired and energized by the bridging story, we will inquire how performing bodies of theatrical performance can meet and dance together with performing bodies at various contemporary workplaces, especially of knowledge workers, to facilitate embodied learning and participatory innovations to improve the sustainability of workplaces and organizations/societies. How do such encounters develop overtime to bridge multiple stakeholders of workplace by allowing them to share their ideas in their languages? (Harmaakorpi, Melkas, and Uotila, 2017). How do they liberate and empower diverse communities of knowledge-intensive practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991) in and around organizations, and thus improve increasing knowledge workers' quality-of-working-life (QOWL) in terms of workplace communication, stress-coping, and "work-life balance"? We especially hope to explore the bridgings of workplace performance and theatre performance that bridge different social levels ranging from workplace practice level through organizational level to societal level.

In these cross-level inquiries, we also hope to focus on the roles of resonating human bodies as performing artifacts both in workplace and theatre. While modern organizations as "engines of civilization" are expected to supply good water, air, food, and cloths as well as quiet and sheltered space to re-create and sustain human bodies, they also "create" and "consume" human bodies as another type of "natural" resource (inner nature) to sustain themselves and the civilization. (Hassard et. al., 2000) Many have emphasized the importance of embodied knowledge such as tacit/implicit knowing, skills, expertise, and non-verbal communication in the process of innovation for organizational sustainability (Varela, Rosch, and Thompson, 1992; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995; McGilchrist, 2009). They have argued that modern organizations can create new ways to re-create and sustain themselves, the civilization, and the nature if they succeed in re-creating and consuming these intellectual resources embodied in the workplaces.

Keeping in mind such paradoxical "instrumentalization" (Habermas, 1984; 1987) of human bodies as estrangement/alienation (Brecht, 2014) in the exploration of bridging performance of theatre and workplace and innovation for organizational/societal sustainability, we may develop, and even go beyond, a metaphor of "organization as theatrical performance", which envisions the theatre as space of action based learning in organizational contexts (e.g. Pässilä and Oikarinen, 2014; Pässilä, Owens, and Pulkki, 2016).   The metaphor especially highlights such dynamic and emergent theatrical forms as Epic Theatre (Brecht, 2014), Forum Theatre (Boal, 1985), theatre laboratory (Barba, 1995; Schino, 2009; Chemi, in press), and improvisations (Johnstone, 1981), which all go far beyond the classic/static metaphor of "organization as role-playing/taking" leading to such forms as Research based theatre (Pässila, Oikarinen and Harmaakorpi, 2015).   Such a metaphorical inquiry (Morgan, 1997) may lead to richer understandings of workplace and organizational learning that bridge diverse research streams including: field theory (Lewin, 1997), process philosophy (Whitehead, 1978) that has been informing from the social construction of self (Mead, 1934) to recent knowledge creating "Ba" (Nonaka, Toyama, and Hirata, 2008, Pässila, Uotila and Melkas, 2013), emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995) and multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1994), phenomenologies of "intercorporeality" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) and relational-self (Levinas, 1991), as well as post-structuralist notions of complexity theory (e.g. Stacey, 1996), "narrative/storytelling" (e.g. Boje, 2008), "polyphony" and "Heteroglossia" (Bakhtin, 1981), and "body without organs" and "plane of immanence" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983).

Contributions to the stream can be in such diverse formats as papers, performances, installations, improvisation, video-clip/film, exercises/games, etc.   We welcome participation of academics, artists, managers, specialists in HR, OD, organization change, and educators, who are interested in theatre-mediated workplace learning.

Abstracts of no more than 500 words, in word.doc format, should be submitted as an email attachment by 1 December 2017 to aomo2018@gmail.com and to kawamura@bus.osaka-cu.ac.jp and tc@learning.aau.dk.   All decisions will be made on the basis of the abstracts submitted.   For those in need of a fully refereed conference paper, a deadline for submission will be communicated a little closer to the conference.

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