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From the Anthropocene to an ‘Ecocene’—Eco-Phenomenological Perspectives on Embodied, Anthrodecentric Transformations towards Enlivening Practices of Organising Sustainably

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Abstract: The following paper discusses the contexts, conditions and implications of the so-called ‘Anthropocene’ (1). In particular, the following challenges the hyper-separation between nature and culture (2). Afterwards, possibilities for an anthro-decentric transformation are outlined (3). For this transformation-and following (eco) phenomenology-then the role of the body and embodiment, as well as a body-mediated turn towards an enlivening ‘ecocene’ is discussed (4). The article concludes with some implications and perspectives which are all related to a different kind of more sustainable organizing (5).

Keywords: Anthropocene; transformation; embodiment; organising; eco-phenomenology

1. Introduction

With its unprecedented changes in the earth’s geo-and biosphere, the fundamental and irreversible human imprint and impact on natural systems and processes has turned humankind into a geological agent, which has led to term this epoch and state of affairs, the ‘Anthropocene’. Under the techno-human condition [1], anthropogenic-induced environmental change and the domination of the Earth’s ecosystems have reached a global scope and a permanent geological time-scale [2,3]. The detrimental impacts and degradation of human activities have accelerated and intensified in various areas. This includes the overuse of resources, and overloading that is over the limits, and by all this endangering the integrity of the fragile ecologies of planet Earth and its climate. [4].

Each of these and other human-bound phenomena are aspects of a tremendous upsurge in economic and other growth-related processes by of global productions and consumptions while being distributed via worldwide markets and globalization. These developments and their impacts are increasingly all-pervading in modes of hyper-modernist, neoliberal worldviews and its economic and socio-cultural practices. All of these activities and its impact are reaching and surpassing the boundaries of what the Earth, can cope or ‘bear’. Exploiting the planet, as a resource-pool in unsustainable ways will lead to unforeseeable repercussions, side-effects and far-reaching consequences. In addition to passing globally aggregated earthly thresholds, infringing various planetary boundaries manifest in life-threatening impacts, such as climate change, which is more a heating and regional-level boundaries. These boundaries can be specified with regard to atmosphere and biosphere-integrity, geo-bio-chemical flows, land-system change, freshwater use, etc., while they have been crossed as a result of human activity.

Concretely, too much greenhouse gas going into the atmosphere, too much fertiliser running off into waterways and increased soil and ocean acidification, as well as overharvesting and overfishing are changing the organic makeup of planetary life. Furthermore, the implications of increased urbanization,

contamination, losses of forests and wild-life; thus, bio-diversity, or species extinction, and further forms of human-caused destruction, have placed Earth's ecological environment and systems into a state that can no longer provide healthy and sustainable habitats. Even more, the complexities of today's interwoven, multifaceted problems that have arisen from the human domination of the planet call for a radical transformation.

Metaphorically speaking, the Earth is a body that is inflicted with serious ills. The earth-body's bio-spherical and socio-ecological metabolism cannot 'digest' human interferences, interventions and outputs. This greedy species called humans and its voracious mechanisms of capitalism are depleting what has been reduced to resources faster than what can be renewed, while emitting too many waste-products that cannot be absorbed. In fact, this effluence and pollution underline the 'weight' of humanity on the Earth. And thus this stress the way in which humans have become a collective, global subject' or in the words of Michel Serres: the "only thing left floating will be the homogeneous excrement of the victorious Great Owner, *Sapiens sapiens*" [4]. According to Serres, humanity has become the most successful parasite of any invasive species, a hominiscence appropriating the entire planet—taking without giving and engaging in continual (terrorizingly) territorialisation [5]. For him, this condition calls for learning to form a new natural contract to be woven into our existing sense of the social contract [6]. This would allow the recognition of Biogea, that is the formidable residual reality that keeps us alive, transcends us and can eradicate us [7] (p. 48). Such an approach invites the cultivation of an ecological 'ethics of symbiotic reciprocity with implications for reinventing, understanding, organising and managing as well as leadership education' [8].

One of the main drivers of this excessive matter/energy throughput is the construct of an unlimited economic growth in a limited world that is nihilistically producing ecological and other forms of devastation and destruction. In particular, it is an inherent 'productivist' orientation that is inherently unsustainable as is producing both burn-outs and over-shoots [9].

If we continue to transgress natural and planetary boundaries, of inhabitant of Earth namely humankind will cause the earth to destabilise, and constrain even more attempts to diminish existing suffering. All of the increasingly visible suffering and problems in ecological spheres mirror psychological and social alienations and pathologies. These problematical developments may lead to a decline and worsening of states of affairs in many parts of the world [10], as well as to an overarching threat to the entire planet and all its life-forms.

As the latest data and information about climate and emissions and the impact of carbon-based production and life-styles confirm, what will take place are very unsettling and uncontainable changes of the planetary climate and thus life on Earth. As we know, these radical changes will then generate impacts with disastrous effects on livelihoods. Part of the consequences may even entail migration, disease, civil conflicts, violence and war among humans and so-called non-humans alike.

However, processing the supposed inevitable collapse, and approaching probable catastrophe or possible extinction may service deconstructing, reframing and rendering creative responses of adaptation [11]. Or such movement towards an abyss may mediate a radical rethinking and a reimagining a commitment to a more sustainable sense-making as well as very practically doing things and living differently [12] (p. 14).

In a way, the human constructed but unsustainable realities are demonstrating an existential precariousness of our way of living and as much a loss of control, as the need for recognition of what is non-controllable. In addition, "maybe the life-energy sprung by environmental and climate tragedy is to be found precisely in the liberation from one pattern of self-understanding here, into a vitally different one—a new sense of the human self in evaluative action with which climate tragedy challenges us" [13] (p. 12).

In the acute context we can experience an increased questioning of the quest for sustainability by the drama of the Anthropocene [14], sceneries of encountering it [15], or depoliticising and necropolitical 'Anthropo-obScene' [16,17]. These obscene 'anthropocenic' dramas and sceneries are threatening the

entire planet earth and its forms of life which are all facing far-reaching impacts and effects while slipping into dangerous impasses.

Conceptual disconnection and practical alienation from materialities and bodies, the appropriation of (capitalist) desires, and fantasies of constant growth and repeatable progress have gained increasingly ideological traction and power. Disembedded from their material origin(ation)s, fossil fuels, like coal, gas and oil as well as other so-called raw-materials, function as energy resources that have ignited a Promethean fire. This has fired up first civilization and later an industrialisation machine, enframed in the illusory image of endless linearized growth. Over time, such orientation has generated not only a vast emptying out, but also devastating by-products or supposed side-effects that become increasingly a central problem. Reconstructing the narrative economic history shows how the carbon-centric development is based on replacing flow power (photosynthesis) and animate power, embodied in living creatures, with stock energy, based on fossil, and on capitalist accumulation. These developments have caused and are leading to a craving, polluting and inequality-generating 'capitalocenic' formation. This human-made 'capitalcencian' regime with its nihilistically productive operations, scientific knowledge and technologies, is generating noxious consequences e.g., of adding large quantities of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere and ecological devastation. Following neoliberal regimes and doctrines, current dominant systems of production, reproduction, and consumption as well as organisation and managerialism make it impossible for the 'earth-body's' bio-spherical and the socio-ecological metabolism to digest and bear human interferences, interventions and outputs in this very Anthropocene.

But entering the debate on the Anthropocene implies constant conceptual exchange between different planet-centred and human-centred 'hi-stories' that are increasingly being told and unfolding. These differentiating histories are concerning those between earth-system history (humans as geo-biophysical force) and world history (humans exerting social-existential power). Furthermore, the different stories are situated between a scientific life, involving measurements and debates among qualified scientists and a more popular life as a moral-political issue; also involve questions of culpability and responsibility. Accordingly, "there are many Anthropocene out there, used for different purposes along different lines of logic in different disciplines" [18] (p. 124).

As the Anthropocene is an ambivalent and malleable concept, it accommodates several co-existing and, at times contested, narratives and ambivalent visions. On the one hand, there are those gloomy dystopian and (post-)apocalyptic imaginaries with its stories of disaster, decline, demise and extinction. Correspondingly eco-eschatological narrative frames [19] and 'dark ecology' [20], are announcing the impending or actual arrival of the end of the world [21] (p. 7), as a revelatory climate Armageddon, as an example of many apocalyptic imaginaries.

On the other hand, there emerge neo- and eco-modernist visions that speak again about myths of progress, salvation and solutionist masteries that are supposed to be possible. The later ones are images of a heroic neo-Promethean Earth-mastery that assume using techno-scientific knowledge and neo-technocratic expertise while pursuing a hyper-accelerationist vision. Such vision embraces not only 'big money', but also 'big science' with 'big pictures' of geo-engineering and 'big data' that all are seen as necessary to rescue the Earth and all 'Earthlings' [22], while being part of problematic agenda and a politics of hope that is partly illusory [23].

Both apocalypticist and salvationist approaches follow questionable narrative trajectories that are often deployed as discursive-representational tactics or rhetorical strategies. Such imaginaries and interpretations are often communicated by alarming Cassandra advocates, who are stating that all is doomed, versus those Panglossian advocates according to whom all is supposed to be the 'best' in this best of all possible worlds. Both agendas, - those of 'dooms-dayers', who try to slow all down or resign while getting ready to the last days, as much as those 'boomsters', who call for all to 'speed it up' in an practicalism - both of these are problematic, if taken as one-sided or fundamentalist. In their, place- and timeless abstract positioning, these dystopian and utopian orientations are foreclosing

political debate. Such, reductive imaginaries are making it harder to ask critical questions, like how to get out of reproductive, unsustainable socio-environmental trajectories of organising and managing.

We are facing an exhausted or fatigued quest for sustainability as an eco-political paradigm that is merely sustaining the unsustainable [24]. Accordingly, there are various discourses about an ‘end of sustainability’ [25] or ‘post-sustainability’ [26] while also calls for alternative forms of post-capitalism, post-growth and post-consumerism emerge. Co-responding to the given situation and the outlined discourses and calls, the following offers some perspectives towards mind- and artful ways of becoming sustainable with and as cultures of complexity [27,28].

Instead of seeing the Anthropocene as a single hegemonic, linear narrative that is supposedly apolitical, the subsequent elaborations recognise multiple, debatable or controversial and even polemical narratives [29]. Informed by deep insights from past histories, decentred, post-anthropocenic imaginaries may then help reframing existing relation to the present, while inviting and encouraging more creative responses and promising alternative sustainable futures to come.

While the meaning of the age of the anthropos and its various ways of being narrated and researched remain disputed and unsettled, there is a distinct and particularly relevant plotted storyline and quest emerging. This patterned emplotment concerns the relation between nature and human/culture. It seems that the juxta-positioned relationship between them will be a question of life and/or death-at the border of earth-history [30]—as its impacts generate unsustainable realities for both as a meshed nexus.

The overcoming of dichotomies as separating oppositions and leaving behind apocalyptic dystopia [31] or bleak optimism [32]—will be required in order to move towards anthropo-decentric transformational futures. These separating dichotomies between nature and man/culture may also be connected to opposition between human and non-human, structure and agency, micro and macro or surface and depth.

Misleading dichotomies are behind the logic and arguments for the Anthropocene. In particular, what is presupposed is that a claimed exceptional human reality is not a geo-logical reality and that humans are of more value than the ecologies in which these are embedded. The dividing understanding of humans as extra-natural and nature as extra-human, has triggered and reproduced the very stage for a systemic appropriation and exploitation.

Based on all the outlined critique the next sections first challenges the hyper-separation between nature and culture and then outlines possibilities for an anthro-decentric transformation. With regard to the latter, the author will then address the role of a body-mediated turn towards an enlivening ‘ecocene’ and concludes by offering some implications and possible perspectives.

2. Overcoming the Hyper-Separation between Nature and Man/Culture

Ontologically, epistemologically and practically, the Anthropocene challenges the traditional distinctions that are separating nature from culture that is from cultural structures, and the order of approaches and knowledge about the world and social practices.

As the increasing number of Anthropocene-related analyses is showing, humankind has monstrously scaled up in forces with a global expansion. These forces demonstrate the acute capability to radically reshaping the Earth. In this very era of the Anthropos, “natural forces and human forces are so intertwined that the fate of one determines the fate of the other” [33] (p. 2231). Such entwinement of human and non-human spheres and socio-natural entangled hybridization in a climate-changed world [34] has led to what has been called a post-natural ontology of the Anthropocene [35]. Such ontology is characterised by crossing the human–nature divide inherited, especially in the Western world from Platonian–Cartesian–Newtonian paradigms and the Enlightenment and Modern eras, as foundations of ‘humanism’.

Separating the natural and the human has led to the functioning of an anthropological machine [36] by which animals are ‘humanised’ and humans are ‘animalised’. As Agamben showed, the operations of anthro-machines gradually lead to immoral dehumanising acts and a mechanization of embodied life that implies the loss of meaning. For Agamben, these developments cause a valorisation not of

‘bare life’ but of efficiency, along with the exchangeability and disposability of all that can be assembled or disassembled.

Nature has been and is domesticated, technologised and capitalised in a way that it even cannot any longer be considered as what was used to be called ‘natural’. Whereas nature is ‘humanised’ in the sense of anthropo- and socio-genic practices, these same practices are normalised or ‘naturalised’ and thus understood as part of ‘natural’ occurrences.

As epoch and as discourse, the Anthropocene appears as two entwined processes and conceptualisations. On the one hand, it is happening in real time; that is, it is chronologically characterised by the human bound impact on natural environments in the context of historical time. On the other hand, it represents given states of relationships between humanity and its societies, positioning nature as that which is at stake, whereas the supposed separation from nature supports our perception of entanglement.

Realising humanity’s material dependence, embodiment, and the fragility of beings including human ones calls for rethinking and reimagining those traditional assumptions and myth about the autonomy-based self-contained and rational subject that commences and terminates with itself [37]. This state of affairs demands a decentring of the anthropocentric dispositions and positioning, and critically problematising tendencies towards the re-elevating of humans as reborn Prometheuses [23,38]. These neo-Promethean Earth-master are now “playing God with the climate” [39], while rivalling the great forces of nature of a defiant earth [40] (p. 41) by pursuing an updated eco-modernist agenda. Such agenda would continue and perpetuate the human-centric, technocratic managerial program that is characterised by hyper-accelerationist vision and actions to save both planet earth and its earthlings [41].

By contrast, what is needed is a critical understanding of anthropogenic and androgenic orientations that favour an eco-modernising and its implications, as well as eco-authoritative claims [42]. This need for such a critique is even more urgent, as it is emerging from different socio-political narratives and ‘bio-power(ful)’ settings that produce vulnerabilities and inequalities as well as unintended consequences.

On the one hand, and considering environmental problems and inequities, it is understandable for humans to debate their technocratic options: the speed of transition to renewable energy, issues of justice in relation to the climate, possibilities to sequester carbon, harvesting rainwater, securing food, developing policies concerning climate refugees, measures for adaptation and mitigation etc. On the other hand, these supposed solutions are part of the problem: since if continued in a Promethean manner, such ‘solutions’ will generate further problematic im- and complications as well as further possibly unsustainable developments.

One of the problems with de-politicising eco-modernist approaches is an immunological, bio-political fantasy that sustains the promise of adaptive terraforming, and resilience. Such imaginary represents a management of earth systems that supposed to allow perpetuating known life-forms for some, while becoming a deadening politics, or ‘necro-politics’ for others [13].

The challenge will be developing a different alternative approach. This would be one that processes differences sensitively, and simultaneously is more inclusive concerning the very status of the entangled material-based and the human-mediated spheres seen in a newly understood and enacted continuum of the natural and cultural life and its worlds. These life-worlds are those of embodied and socio-culturally ‘constructed’ institutions and organizations that are composed and immersed or consuming physical matter and so-called non-human dimensions. They constitute entanglements of so-called ‘non-human’ materiality and social ‘culturality’. These worlds of life can be reinterpreted together as a kind of ‘materio-culture’ as well as ‘socio-nature’. Such nexus of ‘materio-cum-culture’ and ‘socio-natural’ relations [43] refer to an entwining mesh. Interrelationally this mesh is forming a pluralistic and complex process that is unfolding as an uneven, contingent and emergent process.

Correspondingly, at present there exist various strands of neo-materialism and critical post-humanism that reflect this meshed nexus of culture and nature as confluent ‘natureculture’ [44]

or entwined ‘nature-culture’ [45]. These diverse orientations aim at a non- or post-anthropocentric approaches and mappings. All of them search for an understanding of matter and what matters, socio-culturally as well as reflect ‘matters of concern’ related to generative and democratic powers. Such interpretations allow conceptualizations of wayfaring movements of confluent fluxes *in-between* matter and minds, bodies and souls, natures and cultures etc. Entering these ‘in-betweens’ may open up imaginations and envisioning, while entailing far-reaching ‘real-world’ immersion and engagements that relate to disclosing phenomena and opening practices that reverse established divisions between what was used to be called ‘nature’ and ‘culture’ as separate constructs. Both are reversed and repositioned into a what can be expressed in a new synthesizing word as a ‘nat-cult-ural’ integration, for example, related to organization and leadership [45].

3. Anthro-Decentric Transformations through Embodiment and Bodied Practice

The interweaving of distributed and ‘performing’ materialities and ‘other-than-human’ as well as socio-cultural realities infer and refer to a specific immanence. It is an immanent sphere that can be seen as a form of ‘living mattering’ of entangled agencies and expressing symbolic and political meanings. Importantly, this immanent materiality and mattering is always already constituted and mediated by bodies and forms of embodiment. The sensual and social dimensions of the material and ‘post-human’, play a constitutive role in the structuring and organising of situations and configurations as enacted within various life-worlds. These worlds of life— also within organizations and leadership [46]—are always already part of an embodied performing processes in and through organising [47].

What is called for are ways to facilitate the processing of multiple futures of Anthropocenes, beyond an age of humans [48]. This idea is even more ‘applicable’, as the ‘anthropos’ has never been only human’ [49]. An abstract human or humanity as homogenous unit or ‘collective’ actor that is completely dependent upon nature never existed, and the supposed human exceptionalism is a constructed myth and misleading belief. The danger of such orientations is to frame and reduce human-based activities in the web of life to an abstract humanity as homogenous unit or as a ‘collective’ actor [50]. Critically we can ask: was it that all human-kind caused the Anthropocene or, rather more specific ways of living and organising, in particular ways of managing and politics, as well as definite forms of technologies and its usages that caused profound alterations of life and ecology?

Instead of glossing over with universalising tendencies, differentiate among the multiple and unequal social values, relations, and practices of power that accompany ‘essentialised’ humans and their individual and collective behaviours. This is true, especially when materio-natural phenomena and environmental changes are related to social-cultural categories and realities, such as classes, races, genders, powers, or capitals etc.

In particular, the aforementioned eco-modernist orientation can be a misleading ‘story’ or ideology, according to which ‘human enterprise is contrasted with the great forces of nature [3,51]. This contrasting logic follows the idea that ‘Humans’ are part of nature, whereas ‘Humanity’ is separated from ‘Nature’. Considering these oppositional dis-positions and that one key critique of Anthropocene-talks is the very pitting of Man against Nature ‘out there’, critical questions emerge:

- How can we extricate ourselves from this schizoid interpretation of defining humanity as a species within an ecology of the living, with regard to methodologies, strategies of analysis, and structures and ways of communicating, human activities are seen and treated as separate and independent?
- How do we relinquish Cartesian dualism and leave behind or process dichotomies and separations between the ecological insight of a ‘humanity-in-nature’ versus the ongoing dissection between humanity and nature? How can we bridge the ‘Great Divide’ [52] between the two? Or, do we need an ‘Ecology of Separation’? [41]. Acknowledging the wild, subtractive capacity of nature, and against eco-modernist technocratic delusions or conservative ‘organicism’, can there exist an unconstructable Earth that emerges as unsubstitutable becoming that always escapes the hubris of those, who would remake and master [22]?

- How can we ‘save’ nature in a ‘post-wild world’ [53]? How can we sense and make sense of another means of materio-socio-culturally being and becoming in the world, where the social and other categories are not only human [54]?
- Can the Anthropocene epoch be one of brave experiments and a deep regeneration of modes of how to organise and manage, including giving presence and expression as well as agencies or legal forms of prudence and protections to human and other-than human beings [55] (p. 13)?

With regard to anthropocentrism, humanity seems to be both “Peril and Promise” [56], while questions about the status of intrinsic value of non-human or more-than-human beings are vital. The challenge will be to overcome one-sided subjectivist and objectivist definitions of value and valuing. With the subjectivist, human-centred approach, all attributions of intrinsic value are anthropogenic, that is, originating in and dependent upon human acts of evaluation [57]. By contrast, for an objectivist environmental holism, pursuing an ethical non-anthropocentrism, an ecosystem possesses a systemic value e.g., ‘producing’ life. Such system-based value is seen as both fundamental and prior to the intrinsic value of living things, including human beings and exists independently of either human evaluative or perceptive acts [58,59].

Value is neither just a human social construct, nor a free creation of human desire, labour or capital. Nor do other-than-humans only have a system or ecological value, but both are media and agents of value creation. How creative and flexible can then our human value perspective be regarding the other-than-human world without breaching an objectionable anthropomorphism?

Enlightened anthropocentrism and various forms of non-anthropocentrism, sentio-centrism, biocentrism, and ecocentrism are still centred on human versus ‘non-human’ speciesism. However, as outlined what is called for is a decentred and decentring, inter-relational approach that is neither ‘subjective’, nor ‘objective’. Rather such a radical inter-relational understanding and practice requires new terms—like ‘*inter-jjective*’ and ‘*inter-jjectivity*’—that allow a sustainable flourishing in what will be called in the following the era of an ‘ecocene’. The subsequent section will discuss how an eco-phenomenological perspective on embodiment can be helpful for qualifying that is perceiving, comprehending and enacting this ‘ecocene’.

4. Merleau-Pontian Phenomenology for and in the ‘Ecocene’

The phenomenology and late ontology of Merleau-Ponty provides a decentring post-Cartesian-centered approach for developing not only a timely environmental ethics [60], but also ‘proto-wise’ practices for an co-scene. What makes Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological approach towards the body and of embodiment so valuable for a post-anthropocentric understanding is his radical criticism of one-sided forms of materialism and idealism. Following a certain logical exclusion, both reduce living phenomena and ways of sensing and perceiving them either to the realm of matter or to that of ideas. With this both of them are each failing to have access and understand expressive senses of qualities and practices emerging into what Merleau-Ponty calls embodied ‘inter-becoming’ [45,61].

Beyond reductive materialistic or idealistic positioning, he develops an understanding of practising that is mediated by bodies and being facets of a post-dichotomous nexus of “self-other-things” [62] (p. 57). In turn, this is part of a perspectival and transformative “integral being” [63] (p. 84). Living bodies serve here as media for moving into post-anthropocentric ‘ecocene’s. In these eco-scenic spheres the nexus of mind-and-matter, culture-and-nature, self = and-world, are gathering and co-evolving together in non-fusing but holonic ways of part and wholes, thereby disclose an open process of ‘betweening’. The embodied ‘subject’ or ‘inter-(sub)ject’ and its likewise embodied ‘inter(sub)jective’ encounters with all their meanings and ‘inter-(ob)jective’ lifeworld and its forces are an extensive continuum. In the same and different ways, all of them are rooted and co-create together while taking part in a mode of ‘inter-being’ [64] (p. 208).

As uncontrollable, erratic, and unmanageable be(com)ings, the body and embodiment are genuinely decentring. Neither is centred or mastering, but rather disrupting, dejecting, and absconding purposive and boundary-defining impositions or orders. Bodies and embodied forces cause dynamic

and incomplete ways to perceive, feel, think, intend or respond as well as to act on material, biological, social and cultural spheres. All of these dimensions are twistingly entwined and jointly engaged within an ever-present relational sphere. This special sphere is what Merleau-Ponty named the ‘flesh’ of the world [63]. In particular this flesh can be characterised as an elemental carnality and formative medium for an in-between that is relevant for all processual ways of organising [47], reinterpreted as ‘organic-isations’ [65].

The philosophy of nature by Merleau-Ponty [66] contributes to the development of a responsible ecology [67,68] and an affective eco-phenomenology [60,69]. These orientations are both elements of a reawakening of corporeal planetary senses and an invigorated dance of entangled ‘Earth-bodies’ [70]. Such planetary bodies move in co-emerging, spiraling ways, while embodying, and unfolding the ‘human-and-other-human’ world, and being attentive to how silence sings the world [71].

A Merleau-Pontian phenomenologists approach does take seriously the values and contributions of various beings on their own terms and in relation to the ‘more-than-human’ beings in their otherness [72] (p. 48). Through our embodiment, we can learn to acknowledge relations of momentous ontological continuity with other beings, including animals, plants and, (a)biota.

The charge of an Anthropocentrism against Merleau-Ponty fails to recognise that as a body-subject, one is not solely, nor even fully ‘human’, as one’s body implicates one *in* the world also comprise others within [72] (p. 54).

Bodies are living, and dynamic affective openings that take part in a dis- and continuous process of relating and meaning-making or releasement of something meaningful. These are bodies with rhythms and pulsations that affectively engage with, withdraw from and reconnect again with the world and its phenomenal fields. These bodies exist together as ‘human-other-human’ conviviality that is as being with a natural (‘con-naturality’) and a material-discursive conviviality as being with the social (‘con-sociability’). Expressed in terms of material ecocriticism in both of these forms together, there is ‘storied matter’. This narrative materiality speaks to or about the ways that material forms—bodies, things, elements of organic as well as inorganic matter, landscapes, and biological entities—“intra-act with each other and with the human dimension, producing configurations of meanings and discourses that we can interpret as stories” [73] (p. 7).

This intra-actional process is possible due to an evolutionary continuity that is an ontological crossover via lateral kinship with other bodies [63] (pp. 207–208). Moreover, based on this and through a genuine conviviality, a coevolving symbiogenic ‘Ecozoic’ era [74] may emerge. As the ‘con-naturalities’ and ‘con-sociabilities’—present in conjunction with convivialities—are not directed towards a teleological convergence, both and moves towards that ecozoic world keep a momentum of living differences that is and remains open for other un- and re-foldments or foldings. Cultivating and establishing new ecozoic or ecocenic’ relationships between human- and ‘more-than-human’ beings will require disruption of assumptions of both hierarchies of importance and centrality that are positioning humans in the centre and move towards a mutual thriving.

The challenge will be to develop more comprehensive understandings of entwined ‘wilderness’ and ‘culturedness’. Such understanding is one that honours the presence and voice of ‘more-or-other-than-(human)-beings’ and even more expressions of multispecies, in multi-de-centric and convivial ways. With an ontological relationism, we can cultivate relearning to sense, listen and otherwise perceive earthly phenomena and develop responsive attending and caring relationships. Such attending and caring is considering to what is going on within and around in a continual emergence in relation to worldly conviviality across vast webs of difference beyond narrow personal and human-centred concerns, and organizing a transformation towards a living ‘ecocene’. Thus, overall Merleau-Ponty’s eco-phenomenology and ontology can help to develop transformative commitments and forms of organising for more sustainable futures [75]. What is needed to enact such futures is a revived re-thinking, re-imagining and re-doing as well as cultivating proto-wise, pro-sustainable practices that all may serve as media for developing and organising anthro-decentric orientations.

Questioning the anthropos of the Anthropocene, such orientation allows not only to decentre and re-situate the anthropos in relation to the earth. Rather, such undertaking is envisioning a new understanding and enacting of 'Gaia' as a geo-bio-historical multitude and assemblage of coevolving life-forms. From such decentring and interrelational Gaia-ian perspective Gaia the anthropos appears then as what could be called 'humanimality' or 'hum-animism' [76] as part of the above-described entwined 'nature-culture'. These 'humanimals' are natural-cultural beings of Gaia understood as a multiplicity or distributed agency as Latour has discussed in his enquiry into natural religion and new geo- and ecostories [77]. Not having fixated intentionalities, eco-stories have their starting point in the inherent force of agency. Thus, they can be defined as "a form of narration inside which all the former props and passive agents have become active without, for that, being part of a giant plot written by some overseeing entity" [77] (p. 74). Such decentring nexus can be interpreted as 'materio-culture' [78] as well as 'socio-nature' [79]. Both of these terms refer to a nexus of entwined material, social, and cultural ecologies as embodied, relational practices of human and other beings in relation to responsive and responsible organizations [80].

A critical usage of 'anthropocenic' concepts provides a chance for developing different, more embodied, understandings, imaginaries [81] and practices of 'ecocening'. These concepts concern not only multi-speci(es)ified arrangements and ecological embodiments, but also embodied, prudent sense-makings and practical 'proto-wise' imaginaries. Such 'alter-Anthropocene imaginaries' [82] express stories, policies, actions or 'non-actions', and corresponding forms of governance, institutions organizations and their leadership. Furthermore, an 'ecocening' can help to challenge imperatives of progress and growth as well as further belief-systems that underpin economic, organisational, and managerial thinking, constructing, and acting.

Taking an embodied perspective, facing the impasses of Anthropocene 'ecocening', understood also as putting living ecologies 'on the scene', has the potential to usher into a radical transformation. In such transformation an appreciation of the nature and culture, both 'materio~culturally' and socio~naturally with its 'impActing' and extent of human impacts on global environmental processes can be a leveraging medium or catalyst for an imaginary and practical shifts. Such transformative shift includes a radical change in affective and cognitive dispositions, and attitudes, thus ways of perceiving and conceiving as well as cultivating different habits and habitus in relation to the earthly habitat. In other words, such transformational realisation facilitates the emergence of sensibilities and sense-making practices in and through organizations that are of the magnitude required to learn living and working differently, individually, collectively and systemically. Moreover, an extended organising would involve also playful 'kin-making with other-than-human beings we share this planet with.

Thereby, the Anthropocene and its impasse may serve to inter- and disrupt as well as go beyond the limits of conventional, inherited worldviews, forms of knowing and its enactments. Questioning the same can then contribute to re-visioning and re-enacting individual and social customs of sensing, thinking, knowing and doing.

A caring imagination, especially an ecological imagination [82] or imagining anew may allow rendering the narrative ethical and aesthetic dimensions sense-able thus morally motivating [83] (p. 150). This rendering mediates perceiving actual anthropocenic conditions as visible in light of what could be eco-scenically possible.

A corresponding social dreaming serves as a creative source and a corresponding eco-scenic ethical practice [84]. Similar like a creative moral imagination in an age of globalization [85–87], an eco-ecenic imagination helps to re-orient and reframe organizational and managerial practices, collective actions, more moral 'outcomes' [88] and ethical decision making. These 'proto-ecocenic' imaginations can be seen as situated and creative activities in relation to anthropocenic problems and dilemmas. Forces of imagination draw together different possibilities, freeing them by suspending between determinate and indeterminate vectors of sense. This is allowing for deliberate - de-liberare' means weighting out - risks and opportunities, and creating possibilities for emerging processing and actions to 'take place'.

Following Bachelard's phenomenology of material and elemental imagination and ontology of imaginative creation in waking-working reveries [89], these could represent the groping experimentation of 'imagining forward'. Furthermore, these are forces of becoming that can help reconcile man and nature as an 'inter-world' of trans-subjective reveries and poetic images for the 21st century [90]. Such attempt at re-imagining and 're-story-ation' seeks to rediscover an elemental connection with earth, fire, air and water, that allows a felt as well as imagined poetics of vital agency of matter and 'proto-environmentalist' practice. As part of rediscovering our planetary senses, for Mazis [70,71], imagination can serve as a medium through which the symbolic accumulations of different past moments are connected and revealed. And this can happen in a way that makes them resonate with one another in the light of the present and multiple possible futures. In particular, a poetic turn—resonating with a sensitivity to silence and gestures—can help in drawing upon the imagination inherent in the perception of the physiognomy of the world. Moreover, such poeticising can serve as an entry into the depths of perception and the nexus of genuine INTER-relations among beings.

5. Turning towards an Enlivening Eco- or Zoë-cene and Ecological Practical Wisdom

Is a reversal possible, a seemingly unthinkable „Great Derangement“ [91] of practices and life possible and what would such move mean and imply?

A post-anthropocenic turn [34] might help re-discovering old forgotten ways or mediate new ways of being and becoming in the world meaningfully. A revived turning may then contribute to a transformative transition away from an overly human-centred, deadening Anthropocene towards a more inclusive, enlivening [92,93] 'ecocene' or 'zoë-cene'. Concerning the latter term, the Greek word *zoë* refers to meanings of life in its felt sense, including the whole animated and animating Earth [93]. Accordingly, the living *zoë* can be conceived as a generative and vitalist force that is common to all species in transversal domains [94]. An orientation towards such *zoë*-via a 'Gaian Praxecology' [95] integrates and learns from the proto-wisdom of plants and animals in the sense of an integral eco-sophy and human wisdom.

Eco-phrónêsis manifests an ecological practical wisdom for and from ecological practice, including planning, design, construction and management [96]. For such comprehensive wisdom perspectives as embodied practice, bodies and embodiments are entangled with worlds that are both natural and cultural. Thus, there is a "relationship of 'inter-Corporeity' with the biosphere and all animality" [64] (pp. 334–335).

Ecologically wise approaches sometimes favour an anthropoharmonism and anthropo-harmonic compassionate ecology [97–99]. They do so to work both actively and cooperatively with the wider biotic community to preserve, regenerate, and adapt healthy, functional, and resilient ecosystems, e.g., anthropoharmonic phrónêsis, such as the practical wisdom of permaculture [99].

Moving towards a re-embodied scene of *zoë*-living represents a tremendous opportunity to engage more wisely and transformatively with the quests and questions of ecology and its inhabitants as well as in and through organizations.

Facing increasingly alienating times of rapid and escalating change [100] and technical and social acceleration [101], such quests and questions involve the reconsideration and reintegration of meanings, values and responsibilities. All of this is as part of a complete reorientation of the human-earth relationship as well as its resonances [102].

The eco- and *zoë*-ianly qualified (post-)Anthropocen-ian move marks the transforming of Earth—twisted by practices of the anthropos—that is radically altering organizations and society on a meso-level as well as their acting members on a micro-level towards wiser ways of operating and living.

Situating wisdom and its learning call for a reconfiguration of relationships among all beings with regard to local and planetary perspectives and by organising differently. Cultivating and enacting practical wisdom for this 'eco- and *zoë*-scene' is part of living well, i.e., individually, societally, ecologically and sustainably flourishing [103,104]. Realising this well-be(com)ing has never been more

important than it is today and for a liveable world to come. Its urgency also affects the actual and possible, not-yet-incarnated lives of stakeholders that are at stake or, even more, whose stakes are already burning. Facing these auto-destructive dynamics, and the limiting character of the present situation of demand a metamorphosis beyond ‘over-coming’ and different ways of organising.

6. Organising (in/post) Anthropocene

Anthropocene has been and increasingly is discussed in the academic organization literature e.g., [55,105,106]. Very early, the anthropocentric orientation in organizations as ‘a primary instrument by which humans impact their natural environment’ [107] (p. 705) had been problematised [108]. The complex relationship between organization and the environment (al) crisis has invited eco-social reflection and inquiry [109]. Accordingly, calls have been made for greening organizational studies (e.g., [107]) and for eco-centric [108] and/or climate resilient organizations [110].

But then what does organising mean in the Anthropocene [106,111]? How can the Anthropocene help not only in understanding on-going anthropogenic problems and organising its solutions, but also creating alternative forms of organising based on other relationship between humans and more-than-human earthlings? And how can the emerging-geo-story of the Anthropocene contribute to and be translated to renewed local understandings and practices?

The conceptual and methodological challenge in responding to such questions lies in reflecting on how to connect geo-biophysical and geo-political concerns on the macro- and mundo-levels to the meso-levels of organising, as well as the micro levels of practitioners and individual actions. Furthermore, how to interrelate the temporal scales ranging between intergenerational and bio-geo-logical time to short- and mid-term orientations of organizations?

The overriding discourses and practices in organization with regard to environmental sustainability seems to offer no satisfactory or acceptable responses challenges of the Anthropocene that require epistemic shift, as long as no new ‘matters of concern’ [105] (p. 10), ecologies of concern [112] or responsible ecological concerns are taken seriously. Moreover, from feminist ecological perspectives, Seray et al. call for a move from a matter-of-fact orientation, towards an “aesthetic of matters of concern as necessary for reclaiming sustainability in organization theory for life in the Anthropocene” [105] (p. 10).

7. Practical, Political and Theoretical Implications

7.1. Practical Implications

The outlined dimensions and transformational moves from a deadening Anthropocene towards an enlivening ‘ecocening’ have several practical and political, as well as theoretical and methodological, implications. Instead of being directly designed, embodied and enfolded practice can only be designed for, that is, allowed and encouraged, to unfold [113]. Part of this challenging transformation is to provide supportive conditions and constructive relationships that engender targeted facilitations or catalytic circumstances on a situation-specific basis. By these interventions embodied sustainable eco-scenic practices can then flourish in every-day work-life. Possibilities that enable and empower need to be organised in adapted and practically tailored ways. Specifically, this organising and offering has to be done according to the needs, demands and requirements of given environments, states of affairs or objectives aspired by employees, management, organizations and external stakeholders.

Enfolded eco-scenic practices of sustainable development in embodied organisations [114] can bring to the fore, for example, concrete forms of energy-consumption, recycling, transport and food-practices concerning natural and social ecologies. This need to be related in particular to environmental workplace behaviours [115] or life-affirming, inclusive approaches towards biomimicry [116] and the rise of the biophilic organization [117]. A corresponding sustainable capability approach acknowledges the intrinsic value of other-than humans, including plants, animals and various ecological life-forms [118,119]. All of them need to be recognised as primordial stakeholders of Gaia [120] in an open-ended participation processes. What is practically required

are forms of nurturing eco-cultures that mediate sustainable ways of living [16] and integral wisdom practices [121]. The challenge will be to change routinized path-dependent practices, which means identifying possibilities for disrupting, reorienting, and/or redirecting practices in more sustainable forms of realisations [122,123]. Importantly, this implies also understanding and overcoming psychological-cognitive and organizational obstacles to action that perpetuate unsustainable practices [124] and addressing political dimensions.

7.2. Political Implications

Organising differently in the Anthropocene and towards a more integral ecocene necessitates an ethico-political restructuring and transformation of contemporary organizations. This concerns, especially ways to support employees, groups and stakeholder to be able to engender proper ways to negotiate and respond as well as cultivate actual and proactive ways of acting that are more sustainable. Critically, this also involves analysing and questioning anthropocentric and interest-centric political practices and how they are used to accomplish and uphold power or control.

How are specific ‘proto-eco-scenic’ experiences, meanings and practices discriminated, marginalised, degraded and ignored, or how are attempts to enact them dominated, subordinated or disciplined? Correspondingly, a critical approach can be used for studying the ordering and normalising of disciplinary techniques (governmentalities in sensu Foucault) and encumbering processes of forced or imposed anthropocenic affirmative practices. Furthermore, such an approach could explore how the dynamics of power and distress increase insensitivity to the pain of others [125].

In the same vein, another focus might be to study what and how practices are silenced or invisibilised in organizational regimes. This implies exploring what is not sensed, expressed or practised, including un-noted feelings, thoughts, actions or actors and omissions in the hierarchy of activities underpinning social organizational or managerial and economic orders. Additionally, such orientation suggests considering what seem to be strategically unthinkable, supposedly un-doable or tabooed, for example in making decisions and those ideas that are excluded as supposedly impossible practices.

A promising approach in this context is to consider the Anthropocene through the lens of Rancière [55,126–129], with his focus on emancipatory politics and social change—the order of the police and politics as well as the redistribution of the sensible. Following his post-foundational and postliberal democratic understanding of a disruptive politics of dissensus, this includes a re-arrangement of political order and different regimes of perceptual part-taking. These regimes regulate what can count as perception, experience or sense, not only individually, but also collectively.

The reconfiguration of these regimes modifies a sensory framework that distinguishes the visible from the invisible, the sayable from the unsayable, the audible from the inaudible, and the possible from the impossible with regard to ethical issues. In particular, an everyday aesthetics that affects the perception of and enables the redistribution of the sensible can be part of the reconfiguring of the common field of aesthetics and politics [130].

Future research on aesthetic ways of organising may comprise exploring the ‘undoings’ of a given distribution of the sensible, or re-orderings of the very manner in which (public) space lends itself to and is produced by processes of organising extended towards the general forces of organising that affect living beings and the conditions of lives [131] (p. 38).

This also involves instituting in the sense of establishing and asserting new political ‘subjects’ or better to say ‘inter-jects’ that are otherwise not acknowledged by the order of the policing powers. The new performing political subjects or ‘inter-jects’ can be linked to a theatrical and literally spatial dimensions of ‘staging’ that are implying a re-construction of the stage, the production of scenes, provoking performative places and times as well as moving bodies and voices or expressions that have been theretofore unheard of and unseen [132].

The inter-face of the previously outlined nexus of ‘nature-culture’ can be interpreted as a milieu where experiences, practices, policies, ideas and knowledge meet, are negotiated, discussed and

resolved [133]. However, such an approach must consider also the ambivalence, tensions and problems involved in such undertaking. In particular such approach needs to avoid falling into a retro-romantic orientation, that is nostalgically pursuing or reverting towards a holistic harmony-seeking and sentimentally re-enchanting eco-philosophy.

As much as a certain longing for returning to a pre-reflective unity for disembodied, alienated humans in late modernity, or to a fragmented as relativistic postmodernism consciousness appears as understandable, there is no nostalgic way back. There is no way anymore towards retro-regressive coincidence with nature or supposed pre-existing given identities or 'Truth'. Because the reversibilities of being are always imminent and never realised completely, 'the coincidence eclipses at the moment of realization' [63] (p. 147). This implies that all relations to nature and to bodies are always already culturally mediated, to the extent that culture is 'natural' and embodied.

7.3. Theoretical and Research Implications

Regarding future research, theory building and empirical investigation, research can focus on the conditions and qualities of the transformation towards more eco-scenic organising and its embodied practices. For exploring this methodologically, a processual approach is appropriate that enacts the literal meaning of method as 'following along a way', i.e., 'meta ton hodon'. By disclosing descriptions and interpretations of actual experiences and phenomena as they appear, researchers can develop a much-called for a-causal, non-reductionistic and non-reifying approach towards ecocenic organising. In particular, longitudinal studies and multiple case studies as well as sensually oriented and art-based methods are suitable for what might be called 'pheno-pragmatic' research practices [47] (p. 253).

Future research on integral organization and leadership would be supplemented by exploring bodily mediated spatio-temporal and cultural realities and tacit experiences and knowing by using art-based research. This includes also sensually oriented methodologies and, for example, aesthetic ethnographies and interpretations [134]. Research, especially on embodied organising and learning, is "fully alive and creative when wide-eyed and involved, when it sees, touches, hears, tastes, and feels" [135] (p. 19), thus when it is using and refining embodied, sensory faculties. Therefore, considering the own body and other bodies while researching qualitatively [136], and various manifestations of embodiment in research [137], as well as deploying embodied research methods [138], is vital.

8. Conclusions

Critically, this contribution reflected upon questions of organising in the Anthropocene by discussing possibilities for overcoming the hyper-separation between nature and man/culture as well as anthro-decentric transformations. Outlining the need for turning wisely towards an enlivening cco- or zoë-cene, were complemented by offering practical, political and theoretical implications.

For exploring modes of togetherness and modi co-vivendi (conviviality), Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of a non-dual, and non-anthropocentric flesh—as elemental, reversible chiasmic 'one-in-an-other' or 'l'neinander' [64] (p. 306)—calls for a more inclusive understanding of nature-and-culture. Such comprehension accommodates both human and 'other-than-human' components as part of a primordial, enfleshed in-division and to describe how various others like animals, plants and, albeit to a lesser extent, (a)biota, are and become alive by being related to each other.

Transforming from the Anthropocene to an ecocene and with this moving towards a "cosmoplocene" [138]—invites non-anthropocentric stories of the uni- or pluriverse. For some, this is part of an ex-centric anthropocosmic turn and narrative via the hovering forces of elemental imagination [139] (p. 172) to be eco-scenically processed in a critical way.

This transformation towards an ecocene may include an eco-sensitive, cosmopolitan, environmental narrative and wisdom-oriented ethics to cope with the globalised nature-culture of risk in the Anthropocene. As such, this evolution may facilitate a wiser move towards the thriving

of other-and human beings. This would be a type of ecological eudaimonism [140] that comprises living well, i.e., individual, societal, ecological, and cosmic flourishing.

Ecocentric theorising and practice means leaving behind an unsustainable productivism [9], while cultivating an non-anthropocentric ethos of releasement. Such releasement-orientation allows human and non-or other-than-human worlds to peacefully coexist, co-evolve and co-creatively unfold on each on their own terms and in a new understood common sense related to releasement [141]. Such a mindful ethos of releasement is one of letting go that may offer opportunities and possibilities to reconfigure and inter-relate anew with ourselves, others and the world.

This letting-go, or in German 'Gelassenheit', can be translated as serenity, composure or detachment. As such it denotes a non-objectifying ethos of what can be called in paradoxical way an active and ongoing passivity. The ethos of being 'gelassen' involves an accepting attitude by a cultivated and careful 'letting-be'. This letting go is abandoning habitual, representational or appropriating orientations and actions. Such bearing appears to be very challenging in contemporary organizations and economy and leadership with its performance-driven 'practicalism' and corresponding constraints. However, it is exactly because of these increasingly unviable forms of conventional modes of organising and economising all that 'Gelassenheit' is and will become even more necessary for a more sustainable today and tomorrow to come.

In practicing this 'Gelassenheit', people do not try anymore to manipulate, or master. In its place, and realising a kind of post-heroic mode, they are free for possibilities of eco-scenic be(com)ing to emerge in their own disclosing and vital ways. Significantly, this process is not one of indifference or lack of interest, rather is qualified as an 'engaged letting go' that operates without appropriating projections or totalising closures.

Entering a modus of letting-be, in and through embodied 'ecocening', is realised through a receptive waiting and attending. This more receptive orientation is more an 'active non-doing' in relation to what 'matters', rather than a controlling-driven and fixed willing of conservative forms of 'business as usual'. In particular, letting-be moves from a representational and calculative mode towards more poetic relations. Furthermore, this intermediated via being in the now and, atmospheric sensitivities and forms of dwellings that are a kind of proto-meditative tuning and mindful being.

By cultivating this letting-go those who engage in it silence habitual modes of thinking and doing. By developing this 'Gelassenheit', it may become possible to suspend and redirect instrumental modes and routinised unsustainable behaviour. Therefore it becomes possible to openly obtain encouragements that come from the uplifting depth of other beings in their otherness.

Such orientation is not on a mission to pursue the modernist and adapted eco-modernist anthropocentric project of putting questions to phenomena and forcing them to answer or being exploited or ill-treated or inventing quick fixes in hasty operations.

'Gelassenheit' discourages mindless organising or the exploitive misuse of unsustainable practices or bad leadership in its rigid, intemperate, callous, corrupt, insular [142] or violent modes, including a 'violent innocence' [143].

Embodied and critically engaged letting-go is not the type of depoliticised (secular corporate) mindfulness practices that (re-)produce docile, neoliberal subjects as part of a bio-power(ful) governmentality regime. It is questioning those regimes that, among other issues, hypostatise the tension and dynamism of neoliberal capitalism and fail to cultivate a critical awareness of social, political and ecological factors [144]. Instead it explores and enacts forms of 'commoning', and cultivates a genuine togetherness of "more-than-human commons" [145].

Like mindfulness, engaged 'Gelassenheit' considers the mutually constitutive dimensions of selves to complex social and political ecologies of other subjects and the world as 'inter-jectives', and letting all evolve as embodied in-between also in practically wise organizations [146].

Overall, it is trusted that the concepts and perspectives as drawn here provide possibilities to wisely re-assess and revive the relevance of the embodied dimension of practices in and through organizations as part of the move from the Anthropocene towards an ecocene. Enacting this bodied,

performative practice in and beyond organizational life-worlds, pursuit in the spirit of an engaged ‘Gelassenheit’ may then mediate an organizationally related incarnation and unfoldment of a genuine ‘alter-native’. An ‘alter-native’ is here taken literally as ‘other-birthly’, thus altered economic, political, societal and ethical ‘inter-ests’ and inter-relationships of sustainable worlds to become are born.

Further critical research on concept and narratives of the Anthropocene, but even more an ecozoic pedagogy [147] and experimental enactments of ways towards an ecocene will be essential. These can provide opportunities to cultivate more prudent, non-hubristic human, especially organizational and leadership practices. Realised and evaluated in everyday life, such research, education and experimentation can then contribute to practically wise sensing, feeling, thinking, deciding, as well as en- and interacting spiralling, cycles of sustainable unfoldment that are as much embodied mindful as ‘re-evolutionary’.

This all can be envisioned by imagining the realisation as expressed by Paul Goodman (1911–1972): “Suppose you had the revolution you are talking and dreaming about. Suppose your side had won, and you had the kind of society/organization that you wanted. How would you live, you personally, in that society/organization? Start living that way now!”

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