

# Chapter 2

## The Body in Professional Practice, Learning and Education: A Question of Corporeality

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### Introduction

Lyotard famously asked: *Can thought go on without a body*<sup>1</sup> This question can be complemented, here, with others: *Can practice go on without a body? Without bodies?* This is perhaps especially important and indeed challenging for professional education, which has experienced what seems an ever-increasing emphasis on ‘mind’ at the expense of ‘body’. This has been clearly so in the case of fields such as teaching and nursing. Aldrich (2006) proposes in this regard that there is a noticeable shift in the historical record of teacher education, from an initial focus on ‘apprenticeship’ to college-based ‘training’ in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and then on to ‘theory’, with the rise of the educational disciplines and the movement into universities. Similarly, medical education has been described as characteristically working with a view of learning as ‘mainly a cognitive process’ (Zukas and Kilminster 2012, p. 200), rather than also being embodied, with ‘practical, physical and emotional aspects’ (p. 201). The movement towards ‘virtual’ forms of professional education, for instance in nursing, can be cited as a further instance of such postmodernising developments in technology and culture (Lyotard 1984).

What happens, then, when bodies are foregrounded, or are brought back in? What is involved when practice and the body are thought together, in seeking to re-assess the challenge of professional education? *Does the body matter?* This book takes

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such questions as its organizing imperative. Our focus here will be on what is called simply *corporeality*. This follows on from the introductory work of Schatzki and Natter (1996, p. 2) in their account of the interplay of ‘socioculturated bodies ... and bodies sociopolitical’. For them, corporeality refers to the way in which the world is profoundly organised by the multidimensional body – a body which ‘is not simply physicality but activity, experience and surface presentation as well’. As they write: ‘social bodies are maintained through the social molding of corporeality’ (Schatzki and Natter 1996, pp. 5–6). For us, this is to be realized in terms specifically of professional life.

But it might be better still, rhetorically, to present the term itself as ‘corporeality’. This indicates that what is at issue are professional worlds, a professional reality, above all else predicated upon and constituted in and by corporeal co-existence, the orchestrated work of bodies – professional bodies. Yet while there has undeniably been increasing interest in and emphasis on the embodied nature of professional practice, learning and education, this is clearly still something requiring closer analysis and further investigation. Fenwick (2012, p. 67) observes: ‘What or whose bodies, how are they mobilized and how are they distinguished in practice? *What constitutes a “body”?*’ (our added emphasis). Further, there is little agreement yet about just what is actually at issue here, with regard to the body itself, despite a growing corpus of scholarly attention, seeking at once to challenge commonsense and to extend understanding, amid changing social and cultural conditions and preoccupations. All this points to the need for ‘a revised view of what “the body” means’ (Johnson 2007, p. 264).

In what follows, we take up what such a revision in our view of the body might mean, and explore a range of resources for conceptualising issues of corporeality in practice, learning and education in professional contexts. We begin by exploring the turn to the body in practice theory and philosophy, locating our arguments (and indeed, this volume more widely) within a body of work that shifts the ontological basis for our understanding of society in ways that clearly foreground the body, while resisting individualism. We then focus specifically on the work of Theodore Schatzki, as a key figure in contemporary practice theory and philosophy, and outline his concepts of being a body, having a body, and the instrumental body, before considering the kind of body or ‘body-ness’ that is implied in his work. Next, we turn to questions of representation as crucial both to the wider practice-theory movement and to specific problems of the body, how we study it, and write about it. We then go on to address matters such as performance and habituation in (professional) practice. In concluding the chapter, we seek to draw these strands together, presenting a tri-partite framework for conceiving corporeality in professional practice, or the practising body: the body as metaphor, the body as background, and the body as resource. Our aim in this broad and complex mapping of the territory is to introduce and expand on various conceptual aspects of philosophical-empirical enquiry (see Green and Hopwood, Chap. 1, this volume), while many subsequent chapters weave these and other related ideas through specific empirical contexts. How *are* bodies and practice(s) to be brought and thought together?

## The Body in Practice Theory and Philosophy

Recent work in professional education draws explicitly on what has been called practice theory and philosophy (e.g. Green 2009a, b; Hager et al. 2012a). Practice is now seen as crucial in understanding professional learning and change. Lee and Dunston (2011, p. 489) usefully describe ‘practices’ as ‘complex socio-material accomplishments, multi-dimensional, situated, embodied, and fundamentally relational’. Importantly they are best conceived as ‘supra-individual’, or at best both ‘individual’ and inter-individual’, meaning that, properly conceptualized, they are to be understood beyond and outside an individualist, rationalist framework. Postill (2008, p. 1) points to ‘two “waves” or generations of practice theorists’, with the so-called ‘first generation laying the foundations and ‘regard[ing] the human body as the nexus of people’s practice engagements with the world’. Key figures here are Pierre Bourdieu, Michel de Certeau, Michel Foucault, Anthony Giddens and others. The ‘second generation’, exemplified in the work of Sherry Ortner, Theodore Schatzki, Andreas Reckwitz, John Warde, and others, ‘is currently testing those foundations and building new extensions to the theoretical edifice’ (p. 1). As Postill (2008, p. 5) writes: ‘Most practice theorists . . . minimally define practice as ‘arrays of activity’ in which the human body is the nexus’. He goes on, perhaps rather aphoristically, to describe practice theory as ‘a body of work about the work of the body’ (p. 5). ‘With one or two exceptions’, he writes, ‘this loose network of approaches to social theory takes the human body to be the nexus of “arrays of activities” (i.e. practices) that agents perform with greater or lesser commitment, dexterity and grace’ (Postill 2008, p. 6).<sup>2</sup>

Reckwitz (2002, p. 251) similarly asserts that ‘[a]t the core of practice theory lies a different way of seeing the body’. At the same time, it seems that, for him, the body itself is just one of several components of practice to be accounted for:

A ‘practice’ . . . is a routinized type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one other: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, ‘things’ and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge (Reckwitz 2002, p. 249).

Bodies matter in such an account, that is, but by no means exclusively. This is certainly a matter of some contention, and even confusion. How best to understand the body in this regard? For our purposes here, our focus on the body as such is based on the view that bodies matter, over and beyond their participation in the sociality of professional practice, as a ‘partly reproductive, partly ever-evolving network comprising human bodies well as artefacts’ (Reckwitz 2012, p. 248), and as such involving both affectivity and spatiality.

So what does this ‘different way of seeing the body’ consist of? Reckwitz is again worth quoting here:

Practices are routinized bodily activities; as interconnected complexes of behavioral acts they are movements of the body. A social practice is the product of training the body in a certain way: when we learn a practice, we learn to be bodies in a certain way (and this means more than to ‘use our bodies’). A practice can be understood as the regular, skilful

‘performance’ of (human) bodies. This holds for modes of handling certain objects as well as for ‘intellectual’ activities such as talking, reading or writing. The body is thus not a mere ‘instrument’ which ‘the agent’ must ‘use’ in order to ‘act’, but the routinized actions are themselves bodily performances (which does not mean that a practice consists only of these movements and of nothing more, of course). These bodily activities then include also routinized mental and emotional activities which are – on a certain level – bodily, as well (Reckwitz 2002, p. 251).

Importantly, practice thus understood embraces both ‘body’ and ‘mind’: ‘A “practice” thus crosses the distinction between the allegedly inside and outside of mind and body’ (Reckwitz 2002, p. 252). At the very least, what counts as a ‘body’ is complicated in such accounts.<sup>3</sup>

For Schatzki (2012, p. 14), a key figure in the recent practice turn in contemporary theory (Schatzki et al. 2001), practice is conceived as ‘an open-ended, spatially-temporally dispersed nexus of doings and sayings’. If we focus for a moment on the foundational role and significance of ‘doings’ and ‘sayings’, as what are described as ‘base activities’, what needs to be emphasised is that these are conceived right from the outset as ‘bodily activities’ (Schatzki 2012, p. 15). They pertain to, and arise from, the body, that is, and are implicated in the interaction of bodies. This can be observed, from the outside, but it can also be *experienced*, as in Shotter’s arresting accounts, over many years, of what he sees as relational, participative, practical understanding-in-action:

[A] much more immediate and unreflective, bodily way of being related to our surroundings than the ways that become conspicuous to us in our more cognitive reflections, a way of relating or orienting towards our surroundings that becomes known to us only from within the unfolding dynamics of our engaged bodily movements within them (Shotter 2011, p. 439).

This is thinking with and through the body, in the very course of practice, as a primary mode of being and becoming, of moving on, often resourced by but not determined by conscious thought. These are quite fundamentally body matters, although this may not be something usually or widely given due acknowledgement, or fully, properly recognised.

Hager et al. (2012b) point to five key principles in a practice-theory perspective; namely, that practice is to be understood as [1] ‘more than simply the application of theoretical knowledge, or a simple product of learning. (p. 3); [2] ‘a sociomaterial phenomenon, involving human and nonhuman actors’ (p. 3); [3] ‘embodied and relational’ (p. 3); [4] ‘neither stable, homogeneous not ahistorical’ (p. 4); and [5] ‘emergent, in the sense that the ways in which [practices] change and evolve are not fully specifiable in advance’ (p. 5).<sup>4</sup> That is, in summary, practices are purposive, embodied, situated (‘emplaced’), and dialogical, or co-produced, as well as being emergent and necessarily sociomaterial. Moreover, with specific regard to understanding and researching professional practice, and explicitly building on Schatzki and others, Green proposes that ‘saying’ and ‘doings’, as so-called ‘base activities’, are to be seen as fundamentally matters of interaction, or rather intercorporeality (cf Csordas 2008):

Professional practice in this light consists of *speech* (what people say) plus the activity of the *body*, or bodies, in interaction (what people do, more often than not together) – a play of voices and bodies. In this view, practice is inherently *dialogical*, an orchestrated interplay, and indeed a matter of co-production (Green 2009c, p. 49).

It is worth thinking moreover of what ‘speech’ involves, what it consists of: lips and tongue, in movement, and the musculature of the throat, breathing, the head itself, and relatedly, its associated gaze-work, the eyes, and the senses more generally, the sensorium, including the body’s apprehension of itself, in space, relationally, its haptic awareness, etc. What people *say* and what they *do*, in practice, in its enactment and realization, are quite fundamental, then. Furthermore, these are always bodies in action, or inter-action, located in space-time (ie ‘context’) – moving bodies. While thoroughly implicated in what has been described as the socio-materiality of professional practice, learning and education (Dahlgren et al. 2012, p. 190), nonetheless bodies arguably remain distinct, effectively ‘anchoring’ practices, albeit along with various non-human artefacts (Reckwitz 2012, p. 248). These are to be understood as ‘living bodies’, comprising ‘at once a sedimented-biological life and a personal, intentional, projective power’ (Hass 2008, p. 88), and hence always ‘body-subjects’: ‘The body as we live it is no thing among things, but the pulsing, carnal condition for perceiving things; it is the stable, yet elusive being around which things and the world take shape’ (Hass 2008, p. 84).

## Schatzki’s Body

Given Schatzki’s importance in the recent ‘practice turn’, it is appropriate to focus here on his account of the body. His co-edited volume on the social and political body is addressed to ‘the interwovenness of socioculturated bodies (i.e. human bodies that incarnate and are transformed by sociocultural practices and phenomena) and bodies sociopolitical (i.e. social and political formations and institutions)’ (Schatzki and Natter 1996, p. 2). The Introduction to that volume further proposes the notion of ‘corporeality’ as indicating the centrality of the body in social life. In his own essay, Schatzki focuses on the relationship between *practice(s)* – ‘a central topic of social and political thought’ – and what he calls ‘social constitution’, tracing through Foucault, Butler and Wittgenstein how individuals, as ‘persons’ and ‘subjects’, are constituted in and through practice, and specifically on the role of the body in this regard. Following Wittgenstein, Schatzki (1996a, p. 65) refers to ‘the expressive body’, by which he means the manner in which ‘mind’ is to be understood as ‘the expressed of the body’, and sees this as realized in turn as ‘firstly, a manifesting body’, ‘second, a signifying body’, and ‘finally, an instrumental body’ (pp. 68–69). This is an important contextualizing account for our purposes here, in considering work on practice and the body.

More broadly, Schatzki identifies Wittgenstein and Heidegger as the primary influences on his practice theory. Wittgenstein provided a basis for his earlier works on social practices, while Heidegger features more prominently in his later focus on spatiality, temporality, and activity. Schatzki's relation with these thinkers perhaps provides a template for how researchers might engage with his work. He presents his thesis as a 'creative interpretation' of Wittgenstein (Schatzki 1993, 1996b), and an 'appropriative interpretation of Heidegger' (Schatzki 2007, 2010). So, we might most usefully approach his works not with a rigid *application* in mind, but with perhaps a degree of interpretation or appropriation as befits particular philosophical or empirical purposes. What follows is offered in this spirit, not as a definitive representation of Schatzki's work, but as a partial (in both senses) reading that reflects our focus of this volume on the body, and the purpose of this chapter, which is to rehearse some of the foundational concepts that are woven throughout the book. Our account follows a chronological template, tracing the varying emphases in Schatzki's work and the different connections he makes to questions of the body.

Schatzki explains that, despite building closely on Wittgenstein, renowned for work on 'language games', he does not imply any particular significance for language: 'language alone does not articulate intelligibility – bodily behaviour and reactions also play an omnipresent and foundational role' (Schatzki 1996b, p. 13). Here we find a number of entry-points into his thinking on the body. It is invoked as 'omnipresent' and 'foundational'. There is a strong sense in Schatzki's account of social phenomena that the body is *always* there, no matter what issue is in question: there are no facets of social life where bodily doings, sayings, and sensations are not somehow in play. The foundational notion rests on a concept of people as entities who are in the world via behaving and feeling bodies. Schatzki's reference to bodily doings and sayings is repeated in his writing and prominently cited in works that reference him. 'Bodily doings' refers to 'all behaviour that is not a speech act' (Schatzki 1996b, p. 47), noting, however, that not all speech acts involve language. 'Bodily sayings' refers to a subset of bodily doings that have communicative function. Schatzki maintains an emphasis on their bodily-ness, stressing that speech acts, like other behaviours, are directly carried out bodily.

The newfound prominence of the body that Schatzki hails stems from a view that 'bodily doings and sayings, and bodily sensations and feelings, are the medium in which life and mind/action are present in the word ... By way of the body, mind is present in experience' (Schatzki 1996b, p. 41). Here we can begin to see how Schatzki joins many others in challenging a Cartesian mind/body dualism. The performance of an action consists in bodily doings and sayings, but also sensations, images and feelings accompanying that behaviour. His focus on performance, taken up further in his later writings on activity (Schatzki 2010), underpins an assertion of doubt that there is any significant division between the realms of mind and action.

It is worth clarifying here how, for Schatzki, bodies link to practices. One understanding of this concerns the notion that personhood is an effect of social practices (Schatzki 1996). Expressive bodies exist, at least for the most part, within social practices. That particular life conditions present and prevail, and that bodies express and manifest particular states of affairs, reflect a social dimension.

These phenomena are understood by Schatzki to be properties of human co-existence, the hanging-together of human lives. Individual bodies perform actions, but the repertoire of actions is learned and is intelligible as part of a social practice. However, Schatzki's later focus on activities provides us with another sense of how bodies and practices relate. Bodies perform doings and sayings that constitute particular actions. Any particular activity instantiates and upholds the very practice that shapes it and through which the activity is intelligible. Without bodies performing doings and sayings, practices would cease. Without practices, the development and ongoing performance of meaningful repertoires of bodily doings and sayings and accompanying sensations and images, would not occur. This is not to say that bodies are passively seized by social practices, constituted as collective clones. But it is to assert that an expressive body depends on the existence of other people, other bodies, who react to it as such.

So, although Schatzki writes of 'the body', in fact his arguments imply 'bodies'. Bodies are foundational to social life, not as instruments or as material features of collective beings held together in some other fabric, but because practices are the medium in which lives interrelate, a central dimension of human co-existence, and because without bodies there can be no practices. And without practices, there remains nothing but a residual material entity, devoid of expression and performance of meaningful activity.

### *Three Dimensions of Body-ness*

The three dimensions of 'body-ness' outlined by Schatzki are: being a body; having a body; and the instrumental body. The first draws attention to the ability to perform bodily 'doings' and 'sayings', and to experience bodily sensations and feelings. These are 'basic' in their nature, referring to things like being able to move one's fingers, lift one's feet, adjust focal length of the eyes, and so on. Such bodily being is often backgrounded, resulting from the experiential and conceptual unity that a person has with her body in normal circumstances of acting and experiencing. We don't normally 'try' to see, or 'remind ourselves' to sense heat or cold, or have to think about having legs and being able to move them when we walk. This is not to define bodily being with a universal or homogenous performative requirement: bodies are different, and have different (dis)abilities. But whatever body we have, in normal circumstances there is a dimension of that body-ness – what Schatzki calls 'being a body' – that sinks into our unified concept of self, and which we simply perform (rather than perform with).

That we have a body is made evident in situations of breakdown, malfunction, discomfort, and incompetence. Here the fact that one is a body manifests itself, forcing a distinction between self and body. This may occur as we learn to touch-type and find our fingers missing the correct keys, as we stumble in performances on musical instruments, lose our balance, trap fingers, strain to hear a voice over background noise, and so on. Schatzki (1996b) describes this in terms of a



distinction between self and body – although the body is someone's, (s)he is not identical with it, rather (s)he *has* it. This does not undermine the fact that one may also be a body. These are not categories or types of bodyness, but *dimensions*.

The instrumental body refers to the notion that it is through the performance of bodily actions that the performance of other actions is effected. The action of typing is accomplished through movements of the hands and fingers. The action of speaking is accomplished through muscular movements of the lips and jaw, and the production of sound through the vocal chords. The bodily actions through which the secondary performance is accomplished would be understood in terms of the first dimension: being a body. The instrumental body is thus not a tool that some disembodied will takes hold of (a rejection, that is, of Descartes), but rather a linked dimension of body-ness. Schatzki (2010) refers to practical understanding as distinct from the ability to carry out bodily actions. Practical understanding is 'knowing how, through the performance of bodily actions, to carry out [other] actions that are signified as the ones to perform' (Schatzki 2010, p. 117). One's practical understanding of playing a viola, say, is knowing how, through the performance of coordinated movements of the left hand and fingers on the strings, and the right hand and fingers on the bow, to carry out the playing of notes and production of sound that constitute playing a viola. In highlighting the links between the body and 'understandings', we again see how mind and body are not treated in Cartesian separation.

### ***What Kind of Body/Bodies?***

Addressing dimensions of body-ness goes some way into explaining how the body and practice might be conceived together at a philosophical level. We have found room for plural bodies, both in the ties between body-ness and social practices, and in the multiplicity of bodies accommodated within any one of the three dimensions: being a body, having a body, and the instrumental body. We can comb Schatzki's writings for further glimpses as to what kind of body is being conceived and imagined.

It is clear from the start that Schatzki resists a discursive emphasis that would follow Foucault. His description of speech acts as bodily sayings – for him, a subset of doings – highlights a very material body at the heart of his conception. This physical or material sense of the body is affirmed in his discussion of possibilities in practice. Although actions (which uphold and instantiate practices) follow what it makes sense to do, this intelligibility is not unbounded. Practices transpire within objective space that devolves from material arrangements of objects, and the materiality of our bodies themselves. Practices are open, but not infinitely so, and one's body is a crucial delimiter of this practical scope. This is not to suggest biological reductionism or determinism, nor is it to fix the body in some constant natural state apart from society. On the contrary, bodies in Schatzki are understood in intimate and dynamic connection with social life, and with material objects.



Schatzki (2002) explains that, in his reference to bodily doings and sayings, the term 'bodily' emphasises things that people do with their bodies, *including whatever prosthetic parts and extensions may be involved*. Such prosthetics may include walking sticks, reading glasses, heeled shoes, and so on.

In Schatzki, the abilities of (cyborg) bodies are not held *in vacuo*, but are understood *in actu*, alongside other material arrangements in the conduct of practices. How artefacts or bodies enable and constrain actions depends not just on physical properties, but also on the activity at hand. The relevance and meaning of the physical body as a material entity that makes some practices possible and at the same times sets limits to this possibility, is not static nor contained within the body or its (cyborg) appendages. This is a property that reflects the particular activity at hand. But nonetheless, bodies maintain a strong physical, material presence and performance.

Lest we leave readers with a somewhat diminished sense of the body's materiality, it is worth highlighting Schatzki's defence of a residual humanism in his account, which, as he asserts, serves his goal to 'vindicate the integrity and unique richness of human agency' (Schatzki 2002, p. 193). While the body is a material 'thing', it is not of the same order as other 'things'. Schatzki (2001) describes his view of the body as 'living-lived' rather than physical, and later distinguishes different categories of materiality – people (i.e. human bodies), organisms, artefacts, things (Schatzki 2003). His attention to the materiality of the body does not mean that the body is reduced to materiality. Just as the physical capacities of the body contribute to the delimiting of possibility in practice, because they make up part of what prefigures what one does, this does not mean that bodies contribute to mindless reproduction: 'all the prefiguration in the world cannot sew up agency before it occurs' (Schatzki 2002, p. 233). And because any agentic action would involve a bodily doing, bodily saying, or both, the human body lies at the heart of agency. Part of the indeterminacy that characterises all human actions and social practices, in Schatzki's account, stems from the body, and it is thus also the body that provides the site and basis for interventions, lines of flight, and subtle distinctions in performance that contribute to the maintenance, evolution, and dissolution of practices (Schatzki 2012).

A somewhat different sense of the body emerges in Schatzki's (2010) discussion of spatiality and temporality. He draws not only on Heidegger here, but also on Lefebvre, and is particularly influenced by *Rhythmanalysis* (2004). This appears to address a void that Schatzki detects in Heidegger's account of temporality, which rests on 'thrownness' and 'projection', leading to a sense of past, present and future as dimensions of temporality, rather than separate points in successive chronology (what Bergson would refer to as past, present and future occurring at a single stroke). Schatzki turns to Lefebvre (2004) to find a bodily anchor for his work on temporality (which never separates from questions of spatiality). In particular, Lefebvre's emphasis on the body as a kind of metronome for social life, and of bodily rhythms as key ways in which human activity is coordinated (or becomes problematic), seems to chime with Schatzki's desire to account for the hanging-together of human lives in embodied terms. Hopwood (2014) offers a detailed

account of rhythms and bodies in professional practices in health, while Johnsson (2012) develops a subtly different account of ‘tempo-rhythm (see also Johnsson, Chap. 5, this volume).

## Representation, Practice and the Body

A matter warranting attention at this point is the issue of *representation*. Practice theory in general defines itself against what is best described as ‘representationalism’, a key feature of the Cartesian legacy. As Green (2009c, p. 50) notes:

‘Representationalism’ is that view of the world predicated on a spectator view of knowledge for which the primary reference-point is the authorial subject of rationality and realism, a stance ‘burdened by lingering, if not overtly, neo-Cartesian conceptions of representation’ (Schatzki 1987, p. 295).

This is the world as defined in terms of knowledge, theory, experience, reason (rationalism), ‘mind’, etc, privileging ‘cognitivism’ or its cognate ‘mentalism’:

In such a representationalist view, knowledge precedes and predetermines action. Knowledge is distinct from practice, as mind from activity in and of the world. And both mind and knowledge are privileged vis-à-vis practice and the body (Green 2009c, p. 50).

This is a view, moreover, ‘sharply at odds with the arguments associated with Wittgenstein and Heidegger, and the primacy of practice thesis more generally’ (Green 2009c, p. 50). But a distinction can be made between ‘representationalism’, as a worldview predicated on a Cartesian perspective, and ‘representation’, albeit understood differently. The distinction is nicely captured, in fact, in recent work organized under the banner of what is somewhat ironically called ‘non-representational theory’, itself to be understood as a variant of practice theory and philosophy (Thrift 2006; see Green, Chap. 8, this volume). Although described as ‘disparate and potentially loosely connected bodies of thought which do not prioritise the role of representation in their accounts of the social and the subject’, such theoretical initiatives ‘can by no means be characterized as anti-representation *per se*’ (Anderson and Harrison 2012, p. 2). This is because ‘what passes for representations are apprehended as performative presentations, not reflections of some *a priori* order waiting to be unveiled, decoded, or revealed’ (Anderson and Harrison 2012, p. 19). Green (2009c, p. 51) argues similarly, asking indeed if there is ‘value in reformulating representation within, and as part of, an adequate theory of practice?’ Accommodating a reconceptualised view of representation within a more open, flexible practice theory and philosophy is likely, in fact, to have various advantages for a project such as this present one, which seeks to bring together what are similarly contested literatures on practice and the body.

Work on the body, for instance, has clearly come up against the limits of language and representation, conventionally or classically understood. Reference is often made to ‘the erasure of the body’ in what are seen as overly textual

accounts (e.g. Somerville 2006, p. 40), as a symptomatic feature of poststructuralist and/or postmodern explorations (Somerville 2004). Judith Butler is often cited as exemplifying the challenges and vicissitudes in such a stance, with Schatzki (1996b, p. 64) for instance arguing that she works with ‘an overly linguistic notion of practice’, and one that is at the very least ‘under-theorized’. The possibility exists, then, that different conceptions and constructions of language are at issue here, as well as of practice itself. Others continue to draw more sympathetically on poststructuralist theory and philosophy to explore, for example, ‘teaching as emphatically embodied practice’ (Vick and Martinez 2009, p. 10) or the work of aged-care nurses (Somerville 2004). Still others, operating more specifically within a practice-theory perspective, note ‘the power of language and discourse to redefine the possibilities of self, subjectivity and agency’ (Caldwell 2012, p. 285), in arguing for a re-assessment of the relationship between language and practice. Even Schatzki has acknowledged ‘the key role that representations of the body play in the bodily constitution of individuals’ (Schatzki and Natter 1996, p. 10). Hence, Green (2009c) proposes that representation might well be drawn into a reworked theory of practice, either as a resource for managing ‘breakdowns’ or interruptions, or as an explicit incitement to change. The question remains: What role might representations(s) play in better understanding practice and the body, then, especially in contexts of professional learning and education?<sup>5</sup>

With regard to the body, further, it may be helpful here to draw in Farnell and Varela’s (2008) account of what they call ‘the second somatic revolution’. They describe this as predicated on a view of ‘human action . . . best understood as a dynamically embodied discursive practice’ (Farnell and Varela 2008, p. 216). They see it as building on from the first “revolution”, which they describe as ‘beginning in the 1980’s and exemplified in the work of Csordas, Jackson, Turner, Shilling and others’, and as ‘inspired by Merleau Ponty’s existential phenomenology’ (Farnell and Varela 2008, p. 235). Crucially what is at issue in this shift, as they see it, is a growing awareness of and sensitivity to the body in action, in motion – an interest, that is, in ‘the moving body, the doing itself’ (Farnell and Varela 2008, p. 216). This was coupled with a new sense of the living body as at once *somatic* and *semiotic*, and what they call ‘the primacy of the signifying moving person’ (p. 221). As they write:

Instead of restricting semiosis to representational signs and symbols, we propose a multi-sensory semiosis loosely defined as processes of agentic embodied meaning-making afforded by the modalities of taste, hearing, touch, pain, smell, sight, and kinesthesia in various relationships with talk and other bodily action. The post-Cartesian move is to view such somato-sensory semiotic modalities as providing human beings with resources for meaningful action that frequently elide spoken expression, but which are never separate from the nature, powers and capacities of linguistically capable agents (Farnell and Varela 2008, p. 225).

There are implications here, certainly, for how the body/practice nexus might be conceptualised and researched.

## Practising the (Professional) Body

What does it involve to put the focus emphatically on actually practising the professional body? This takes us back to the very question of practice as a distinctive concept. To do that, of course, is somewhat ironic, given that there seems almost inevitably a disjuncture between conceptualising and, as it were, ‘living’ practice, or experiencing it *as* practice. It is important to bear in mind, then, the view that representation – as ‘commentary’ – is often at the expense of the lived experience of practice and the body, as Bourdieu has argued, among others (Green 2009c, p. 45). When professionals are engaged in practice, in performing their professional work, their bodies are always-already active participants, as we have indicated. These bodies are not at all supplementary to what is happening; indeed, to a significant if varying degree, they are energising and orchestrating the practice in question, anchoring it and organising it. Knowing how to go on, what to do next, etc, is a matter of practical reason as much as anything else, and this reasoning is always embodied, in the sense that it is tacit, experiential (‘body’) knowledge, or *knowing*, realised and expressed in what is done, in and through practice. It is useful, therefore, to spend some time here exploring what it means to speak of practising the body.

Schatzki (1996b, p. 89) points to three senses of practice, namely ‘learning how or improving one’s ability to do something by repeatedly working at it and carrying it out’; ‘a temporally unfolding and spatially dispersed nexus of doings and sayings’; and ‘performing an action or carrying out a practice of the second sort’. The last of these points to the importance of *performance* itself, or what might be called ‘practice-ing’ – the actual ‘doing’ of (the) practice. This is something perhaps best realised in phenomenological terms, since it suggests a focus on what might be called the lived/living experience of practice. What is practice like? Or, rather: What is being in practice like? What does it *feel* like? This is further complicated, but also enriched, by putting emphasis more on what forms of subjectivity are emerging or forming in and through practice, on *becoming* – on becoming in practice.

For Thrift (2006, p. 124), performance is a crucial consideration, understood as ‘the enactment of events with what resources are available in creative, imaginative ways which lay hold of and produce the moment’. This is immediately and aptly to be observed in professional practice, which to a significant degree consists of just such enacted ‘events’, played out repeatedly in the exchanges and interactions of the professional practitioner and the ‘object(s)’ of her attention – her clients, patients, students, etc. And just as much as this activity always necessarily refers back to available discourses and practice traditions, it is also open to possibilities, to creativity, invention, and the production of the New – different ways of going on, and of making things happen. This may only be momentary, and relatively miniscule, and may not even be noticed; but it exists all the same. And of course sometimes, even if rarely, it does get picked up, and drawn in to what is now imaginable, and therefore possible.

In referring to ‘the “art” of the necessary improvisation that defines excellence’, Bourdieu (1977, p. 8) points to the importance of understanding practice as involving a distinctive, acquired ‘feel for the game’, an affective-corporeal knowledge in-and-through action. This has been described elsewhere as a matter of invention (‘within limits’) and improvisation, as well as repetition and indeed reproduction: ‘Improvisation as a characteristic feature of (“artful”) practice is always knowledgeable, though never fully or totally so – never, that is, wholly rational’ (Green 2009c, p. 46). The focus here is on intuition, tacit knowledge, ‘feel’, a sense of context – what Flyvbjerg (2001) calls ‘arationality’, or the realisation and exercise of expertise. For Flyvbjerg (2001, p. 18): ‘Experts operate from a mature, holistic well-trying understanding, intuitively and without conscious deliberation. Intuitive understanding comes primarily from experiences on one’s own body and is in this way at one with the performer’. Crucial aspects of practice-as-performance then are movement, timing and rhythm (Hockey and Allen-Collinson 2009), along with both tact and tactics – a felt sense of what is appropriate and when to act, for best effect. All this is fundamental to the praxis of the embodied professional.

But notions of habit and habituation are equally fundamental, as is ‘training’, or, in Schatzki’s terms above, ‘learning how or improving one’s ability to do something by repeatedly working at it and carrying it out’. This is often underestimated and under-valued – perhaps especially when the emphasis falls on mental life and the cognitive-intellectual aspects of professional practice and education. Yet a strong case exists for re-assessing the role and significance of the body in this regard too. This is where due consideration of the links between Bourdieu and Merleau-Ponty become appropriate, and compelling. Both thinkers conceive as ‘reason’ as ‘primarily corporeal’, with thinking understood as ‘a kind of corporeal awareness – prior to taking the form of representations’ (Marcoulatos 2001, p. 6). For Bourdieu, history, culture and power become embodied as *habitus* – ‘the durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations’ (Bourdieu 1977, p. 78). This is formed early, and through repeated, regular social-somatic experience. It involves both habit and habituation. Similarly for Merleau-Ponty, habits are to be understood as ‘dynamic embodiments of significance’. Rather than being simply ‘an automatic function’, Marcoulatos (2001, p. 5) describes embodied habits as ‘a living responsive, adjustable propensity towards certain behaviours’ (citing Merleau-Ponty 1962, pp. 142–143, 145). A ‘feel for the game’ therefore, in the course of its practice, combines both doing whatever comes as it were ‘naturally’, in the moment, *and* calling on what has been assiduously practised, in training.

This is what Noble and Watkins (2003, p. 527) point to, in their account of sporting expertise, observing that ‘... no player plays without spending more time training than actually playing; no-one begins as a masterful player. The “feel for the game” is developed over time, and is only acquired through enormous application’. They also, importantly, propose ‘a distinction between *habitus*, or what the body is disposed to do, and bodily capacity, or what the body could do under different circumstances’ (p. 527), and re-introduce what they see as a missing or at least underplayed element in Bourdieu and arguably other such arguments, namely

‘consciousness’. This latter point is crucial, albeit complex. It allows for reflexivity and a form of ‘mindfulness’ in professional practice, including how we draw upon theory and work with memory and representation. It is also what helps us to more systematically hone our expertise, and to become better at and in our practice. This is not to suggest that such ‘reflection’ is itself sufficient, rather that it forms a necessary, supplementary aspect of truly professional practice.

## Conclusion: Or, Re-framing the Practice(d) Body

We began this chapter by asking can practice go on without a body? The short answer is no – but it is important nonetheless to think carefully about what constitutes and counts as a body, and about the nature of the relationship between practice and the body. Bodies are always thoroughly implicated in the practice of practice, in ways both complex and complicated. As Landri (2012, p. 91) asserts: ‘Body is, in fact, constituted in the field of practice’. In concluding, we propose that, for the purposes of this book and its overall project, the body might well be usefully understood in a three-fold fashion, as respectively ‘metaphor’, ‘background’, and ‘resource’. This is not intended as definitive, nor is it something evident here in every instance, across the essays that follow. However this tri-fold notion serves as a reference-point, in seeking to understand practice and the body in professional education.

Seeing the body as *metaphor* opens up the whole question of the lingering effects of Cartesianism, or what has been referred to as Descartes’ legacy. Central to this is a consistent valorisation of mind over body in Western thought, and relatedly a persistent dualism. To refer to the body is therefore to point to the displaced *other* of this heritage: the other side of rationalism and the project of reason. Citing Descartes in this regard highlights modernity and the Enlightenment, but this particular line of thought reaches back to the Greeks and encompasses what Derrida (1976) calls *logocentrism*, or the primacy of logic, language and the mind. There is a crucial gender dimension to this as well, with the disembodied logical mind not only subordinating the animal in humanity but also the feminine; hence Derrida’s strategic notion of phallogocentric rationality. ‘The complexities of this heritage of dualisms’, as Bayer (1998, p. 8) writes, ‘and the ways in which they have filtered into the order and arrangement of individual and social life from macro- through to micro-levels means that the “body” has to be thought through on many levels and with some specificity’ (our added emphasis).

Hence references to the body need not be taken literally, or simplistically, although this is not to deny or gloss over the particular materiality of the physical body. We ask here: what does it mean to think the body ‘on many levels’, or at different scales? Is it useful to consider what might otherwise be seen as outside or beyond the body, as in some formulations of body-environment coupling, within which moreover boundaries become blurred, or porous? Is it possible to think

productively beyond the anthropomorphic body? Is there value here in bringing together the ways in which the body itself figures as metaphor, as trope? For instance, in referring to bodies of knowledge, or to the corporate body, etc.

The body as *background* refers to the manner in which much of what we do, as practitioners, as professionals, proceeds and is enabled by what we do not have to attend to, consciously. It is to refer to that which goes without saying, literally, or even noticing, but which is necessary and productive, all the same. Charles Taylor notes '[t]he paradoxical status of the background . . . It can be made explicit, because we aren't completely unaware of it'. However, as he continues, 'the explicating itself implies a background' (Taylor 1995, p. 70). More is going on, in practice, than can be talked about, or 'represented'. At issue here is the distinction between 'tacit' and 'articulate' knowledge.

As Green (2009c, p. 48) writes: 'Some things are inarticulatable in our practices, in a sense unknowable', adding that this 'is not to say that they don't exist or aren't significant in and for the practices of our practices. Rather, they must be seen as the unsaid, the unspoken, or perhaps the unspeakable'. They may not be 'speaking' yet, or only in certain indirect or oblique ways. Or quite literally they may be 'unspeakable' because they pertain to the realm of the unconscious, to phantasy and phobia, and desire. For Taylor (1995, p. 70): 'The very fashion in which we operate as engaged agents within such a background makes the prospect of total explicating incoherent'. That is what might be deemed the strong position in practice theory; others might want to probe the possibility further, not so much to do away with the 'background', or to deny it; rather, to propose that interrogating and exploring notions of 'background' and 'context' remains something worth thinking about, philosophically and empirically. What seems clear, however, is that much of what we do, we do so as embodied beings; we bring our bodies with us, in our practice, even if we are unaware of that being the case. We speak and we act, we engage with others, and our bodies are there too, always, more or less in the background . . .

Finally, but also relatedly, the body functions as a *resource* for practice. We draw upon the body in order to do what we need to do, in practising our profession and our work; we draw on its resources, whether that be in our 'sayings' or 'doings', or indeed our 'relatings' (Kemmis 2009). Vick and Martinez (2009, p. 9) refer specifically to 'the use of the voice' and the movement of the body in teaching, its positioning in space, and in relation to others. Teachers use their bodies, in teaching, as do nurses, in nursing, and so too do doctors and lawyers, accountants and social workers (e.g. Tangenberg and Kemp 2002). That does not mean they are necessarily conscious of this; indeed, if Bourdieu is right, it is rather the 'habitus' that generates practice, with little regard for consciousness or agency<sup>6</sup> – which means, to some extent, they are in fact used by their bodies. Whatever the case, bodies matter. Shotter (2011) provides a good example of the body as resource, but also as background, when he argues that 'there is a much more immediate and unreflective, bodily way of being related to our surroundings than those of which we are aware in our conscious reflections' (p. 453). His concern is with what he calls relational-orientational knowing – knowing how to go on. How do we move



meaningfully in and through our world, our practice, drawing on whatever we can in order to get things done? In doing so, he argues:

[W]e take our body's resourcefulness in this respect so for granted that we fail to see it (perhaps paradoxically) as something that is both foundational to our very way(s) of being in the world, but also as something that we can in fact still alter and change [...]—thus to change, not simply our thoughts, ideas, and opinions, but our own very way of being in the world (Shotter 2011, p. 440).

This is, then, the body in practice, which is always, of course, a matter of practising the body. This is something, further, that also involves, and necessarily, varying degrees of effectiveness and elegance, expertise and artistry, in dynamic circumstances out of which moments of professional praxis emerge. What we have sought to do in this chapter, and indeed in the volume more generally, is to bring the body back into active, creative consideration, in professional education and beyond. Re-articulating corporeality and practice theory remains however an ongoing philosophical-empirical challenge.

## Notes

1. The title of one of Lyotard's most brilliant essays (Lyotard 1991).
2. Bourdieu in particular should be acknowledged here, as indeed an original and arguably crucial figure, whose continuing value and insight is perhaps underestimated in newer work on practice and the body. Re-reading Bourdieu is likely to be particularly generative, then, especially when coupled with other thinkers such as Spinoza, as Watkins (2012) has shown in her recent work on schooling, discipline and the body, or Dewey, as Burkitt (2002) does, in revisiting notions of 'habit'.
3. Deleuzian accounts of the body are both provocative and illustrative here (e.g. Guillaume and Hughes 2011).
4. In a subsequent paper, Reich and Hager (2014) refer to 'six prominent threads', the additional one being 'that practices exist and evolve in historical and social contexts, shaped by complex social forces, including power' (p. 4).
5. See Dahlgren et al. (2012) for an example of work that seeks to draw on this point.
6. See however Watkins' (2012) reworking of Bourdieu, drawing on Spinoza.

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