Performing Weight Change: A Performative Reading of Reality-making

Through a Relationship of Meaning and Doing

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

Reading the reality-making processes that create bodies in weight change performances challenges us to understand the relationships between meanings and actions, or between discourses and materiality. This study uses a performative model to elaborate how discourses and materiality can be read in texts in such a way to bring transparency to the process of materiality-making, agency and causality. The texts used in this study are transcribed interviews of participants who identified themselves as undergoing weight change. Reading weight and body-making as a discursive-material relationship enriches a shared understanding in the interdisciplinary space of psychology and English. The performative model chosen for this study offers sufficient structure to read both the generic features of reality-making and individually-nuanced reality-making practices, presenting psychologists with a sophisticated understanding of change processes.

To read reality-making with detailed transparency, we require tools of analysis that can directly read discourses and actions as shared spaces of relationship, through which material entities can emerge. For such tools of analysis, this study utilizes and extends the model of performativity offered by Dr Karen Barad (2007). In using this model to read text performatively, the unique features that are creating performances of weight change are accessed through a reading of boundary-making practices, through the relationship between meaning and doing that establishes what matters in accessing possibilities for meaning and

possibilities for doing, and through the elaboration of subject-object relationships into a sequenced performance.

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Introduction

Act one: Reality matters.

A spectator is positioned on the playing field of contested realities. One reality faces another reality. As a spectator, the task is to decide which reality is 'best', most durable, applicable, convincing, valid. The task is to decide how one reality matters more than another reality. Do this task well, and the spectator becomes an actor in the performance of narrowing and selecting what matters.

Act two: Realities matter.

A spectator is positioned on the playing field of contested realities. Each reality is unique. As a spectator the task is to avoid the expectation of selecting and supporting a chosen reality, and instead to examine the diversity and the uniqueness of each reality. Any contest between meanings and ascribed authorities move to an irrelevant sideline as attention to the unique meaning-making process becomes the focus of the observed performance. Reality-making matters.

Act three: Reality-making matters.

A spectator is positioned in a playing field of entities that are acting as realities in performances of weight change, performances where body and meaning are in relationship. The spectator knows that body matters; discourse repeatedly writes meaning that becomes a delineation of "surface we call matter" (Butler, 1993, p. 9). The spectator knows that matter matters; matter itself has meanings and is given meaning, or is meaninged, through access to discourses that

are available (Barad, 2007). Reality-making is a dynamic relationship between language and matter. What matters matters.

This is a study of performance, the performance of weight change. It is a study of a performative reading of weight and body. It is a reading of what matters. What matters matters. In the dynamic relationship between body and discourse, what matters discursively emerges as matter and what meaning is offered to action determines what is recognised as recognizable physicality.

On a playing field where all possibilities for the meanings that could matter meet all possibilities for the physical doing that could matter, then understanding how particular meanings and how particular actions emerge as an agreed matter is important for reading the making of materiality. By reading what meaning matters in the discourses prevalent in texts, and by reading the meaning offered for how body matters, then we can read texts in such a way that allows us access to the making of materiality. As a spectator to the unique realities on offer through the texts being studied, the task of this study is to read details in untitled texts as performances of possibilities that create bodies in weighting-up and weighting-down performances.

Weight matters. Weight matters because populations are getting bigger and the subsequent health-related problems are more extensive. Research has suggested that more Americans will die of obesity-related problems than AIDS (Oliver and Lee, 2005). But this is not a study of the way weight matters in society. This is a study of the way we can understand how weight matters, how the reality-making processes of bodies that weight-up and bodies that weight-down can be read.

Why weight change? I come to this study as both a student of English and as a psychologist. Weight and body-making are positioned in a relationship of physicality and language. The field of psychology occupies this position through its interest in behaviour. A study of weight, or more specifically a study of weight-making, offers an opportunity to examine the reading strategies that could potentially liberate psychology from its history of writing meaning onto behaviour from prescribed discourses and position it into a future of reading meaning and behaviour as being intimately linked. But body-making also has an extensive history in English theory, particularly through the writing of Dr Judith Butler (1993) and her model of performativity. A study of weight, or body-making, positions itself in the field of performativity where language or discourse is understood to be inseparable from action or what we recognise as materiality. For an English student, a study of weight offers the opportunity to examine the inseparability of language and matter, of subject and object, through an insistence that such study will be applicable beyond the boundaries of academic theory.

As an English thesis, this study is a study of texts. In this particular study, the texts are untitled texts, unrehearsed and unedited transcripts of interviews of seven participants who identified themselves as losing weight. My key interest in this study is how texts can be read with sufficient detail to understand the unique materiality-making processes of each body-changing performance that these participants are involved in.

Texts are also the raw material of psychology, particularly the texts without titles that we speak of and live through as the meaning of our everyday lives. As a psychologist, this study is an exploration of the way psychology can move into understanding behaviour from and through the language that is creating it. As a

psychologist, I am viewing this study as an exploration of an exciting fusion of disciplines that can enable access to possibilities for reading behaviour and understanding how change can be effective through shifts in the subject-object relationship and performance.

Performativity theory, with its interest in the relationship between language and action, provides this study with its theoretical foundation. In choosing to read texts through Dr Karen Barad's (2007) model of performativity, I have chosen a model that understands materiality as a relationship between discursive meaning and material meaning. Materiality emerges through agreement on what possibilities for iterated actions are recognised as intelligible. It is an understanding of materiality as a relationship between some recognised meaning and some recognised doing that then opens the space of entity-making to detailed scrutiny and analysis.

This thesis elaborates examples of reading the space of meaning-doing to gain access to the diverse, unique features of reality-making that create a weight-change performance. The early chapters detail the theoretical foundation for this reading of weight change. Chapter one describes the performative model of Barad (2007) and the conceptual structures it provides through which unique meaning-making can be read. Chapter two describes discourses that dominate academic literature on weight. Discourse is critically important to this study as materiality is recognised as a discursive relationship with possibilities. Discourse functions in two ways: to write a meaning for body, enabling or constraining access to possibilities for doing; and through providing a repertoire of meanings for how what it is that matters as body can be recognised or silenced. What stabilises as an agreed relationship between what meaning matters and what action matters

emerges to be read as entity in text. Reading entities as they appear in texts is a reading of what has mattered in the individual, unique reality-making process.

By reading texts through the conceptual space opened to analysis through Barad's model, structures of meaning-making become transparent. The delineation of a boundary, the stabilising of a materiality through the relationship of discourse meaning and physical meaning, and the emergence of an entity into subject-object functions are the structures that can be read in and as performances.

Chapters three, four and five elaborate each of these structures in text that offer transparency to materiality-making. Chapter three examines boundary delineation by examining examples of the way food is able to enter some weight change performances. Chapter four considers examples of body-making. By elaborating the material-discursive relationships that create the unique boundary that delineates a body, it is possible to understand how variations in body-making occur in a population sample, all of whom share a common expectation that their bodies will weight down. By understanding how a body can access weighting-up actions, then it becomes possible to apply a sophisticated reading to understand a range of unique weight-change performances. Chapter five broadens the discussion of materiality-making by examining the function of subject and object in weight change performances. As a subject and an object emerge through a shared space of meaning, I argue that reading the way in which each is delineated and the relationship between them is critically important in understanding how agency and causality can be enacted in a weight change performance.

While much of this thesis is concerned with the detail of analysis, I hope the excitement behind the insights into reality-making that this model opens is also recognised. As an English student, applying language theory to everyday texts is

extremely gratifying. As a psychologist, to take a step to move the profession to a boutique service is refreshing, a service where the mapping of uniquely personal meanings replaces normative assessment or monocular observation. To move our understanding of change from behaviour management to a shift in subject position that enables access to new possibilities for behaviour is hope and creativity given professional licence. To rewrite assumptions of professional authority from a position of holding privileged access to knowledge to respectful negotiation of a position of inclusion in the uniquely crafted world of personal meaning makes this exercise of study deeply satisfying and ethically mindful of the relationships that connect us all in the performance of shared wellbeing and happiness.

Chapter One - Reading Untitled Texts

For my fluctuating weight, I would think that, um, that would be where my life was at crisis point, is that the sort of thing that you mean? You know, aye, like so, when I had my accident, I thought I would lose a lot of weight and I didn't. I put on weight. But I wasn't in the position to overeat because I was in hospital, so I didn't think that my weight - I thought that my weight would be controlled by stress, but I think it's a choice thing, that when it's up and down its purely and simply that I have time to eat, whereas - to eat normally - whereas my normal lifestyle is such that it's chaotic so my eating is chaotic, does that make sense?

Participant A – Interview one

Yes this excerpt does make sense, but what sense? Is this untitled text about weight? Finding out that being in hospital did not mean she lost weight? That weight fluctuates with crisis points? That weight is about personal choice? How should I read this text? What matters? What reality is being made?

The language world that we live through every day is awash in texts without titles, such as the excerpt above. These are spoken texts that are enacted without pause for rehearsal or rewrite, that create meaning, that are enacted as performances, and that function without titles. Without the writer, the producer of the words, assisting readers by cueing them to an intended meaning, readers are in

relationships with texts that directly expose the meaning-making tools they, the readers, bring to the reading of the text. In this study, I read untitled texts. I want to read these texts in such a way that the meaning-making tools I bring to understand these texts provide as much capacity for understanding what matters as possible. By that, I mean I want to read texts to understand how meanings and actions are in relationships, discursive-material relationships that create specific materialities.

Before continuing to describe the meaning-making tools used in this study, I will briefly describe the untitled texts that are studied. The texts that are being read are transcriptions of a series of spoken interviews. Seven participants, all of whom identified themselves as trying to lose weight, were interviewed three times over a period of three months. In these interviews, participants were asked to respond to six broad prompts that offered as little structure as possible (see Appendix 1). The aim was to access untitled texts from each participant. The same six prompts were used on each interview cycle. The series of interviews with seven participants were recorded, and spoken responses were transcribed to produce text. These texts are impromptu and unrehearsed, with no opportunity for editing or rewriting. Excerpts from these are the untitled texts that are examined in this study, transcribed word for word, punctuated as loosely as possible to retain the fluidity of the original text, while still providing some structure for readers.

Untitled texts are significant for two reasons. They privilege the meaning that a reader is creating, and, in doing so, move the position of authority to the reader's meaning-making. Untitled texts are texts that psychologists work with everyday. Reading untitled texts through a performative theory offers a way of bringing greater transparency to the profession's relationship with these texts.

Through a study of untitled texts, English language theory and psychology can share meaning, offering different understanding to the assumed authority claimed by traditional psychology through its practice of writing titles for texts. Inherent in this thesis is a desire to bring transparency to the reading of untitled texts in order to reposition the authority of title-writer for untitled texts away from selected readers to a shared relationship between reader and text. In the shared relational space between reader and writer, the transparency that a performative reading offers gives access to the unique way that what matters, which can be read in text as the nuanced positions of meaning and doing, makes a reality, and in this study, the materiality of body.

Bringing transparency to the meaning that is making a specific materiality, inevitably involves asking, whose meaning or what meaning is being accessed? Politics is present. Politics is present not only in the questioning but in the researcher's position to the question. Rejecting any assumption of a shared and mutual understanding of meaning, such questioning aims attention directly to the boundaries that delineate recognisable meaning from unrecognisable meaning. By drawing on the model of Karen Barad (2007), who, in turn, is influenced through the diffractive view of boundary demarcation elaborated by Haraway (2003), this study signals that it is deeply interested in bringing transparency to boundaries that delineate specific ways of knowing and specific actions. Reading boundaries diffractively "serves as a useful counterpoint to reflection: both are optical phenomena, but whereas the metaphor of reflection reflects the themes of mirroring and sameness, diffraction is marked by patterns of difference" (Barad, 2007, p. 71). Through the reading of boundaries we can examine the processes that delineate inclusion and exclusion of possibilities for meaning and doing. The

nuanced detail of the agreement between meaning and doing can be read in texts, bringing transparency to the shades of meaning-doing that create specific materialities. What matters begins to become accessible through reading texts; as what matters becomes more accessible, then the process that is creating materiality also becomes more accessible.

A reader of text is acknowledged as a key player in supporting or destabilising what is recognised as 'real' in text. Barad insists that a researcher is intimately within the world that they are studying: "Knowing does not come from standing at a distance and representing but rather from a direct material engagement with the world" (Barad, 2007, p. 49). This study examines the ways individuals "directly engage" in and through the reality-making of their untitled texts. Any assumption a reader may hold that their way of knowing the meaning of a text is the way of knowing the meaning of a text shifts as more direct access is given to the writer's meaning and way of knowing. From this position, readers are then challenged to read untitled texts, not through their prior knowledge but by accessing the processes of meaning-making and materiality-making that can be recognised in text itself. The politics in this thesis focuses at an individual, micro level.

Micro analysis of text is the foundation of English study. The purpose of the reading process in this study, however, is twofold, bridging two disciplines. The purpose of this micro-level analysis is to examine the reality-making of untitled texts with the rigour of discursive analysis, embedded in language theory in order to satisfy the need for a real-time process, and to understand reality-making in a way that can be used in the profession of psychology. This requires the reading to have sufficient generic application for professional use while still attending to

individual reality-making. In addition, a reading of these untitled texts is required to clearly elaborate the relationship of language and doing, the action or behaviour that is psychology's interest.

Because the texts being studied are being read as texts of the relationships between bodies and language, or discourses and materialities, then reading them is most appropriately assisted by the theory of performativity. This theory interests itself with the relationships between language and materiality. In this study, the theory of performativity offers a way of reading the relationships between specific words and specific bodies that weight-up and bodies that weight-down.

Through its development from the inaugural work of performative theorist, Austin, the theory of performativity has offered increasingly sophisticated concepts that allow a reading of a fluid, relational meaning-making process that creates objects with varying levels of stability. Through the work of Austin, whose contribution is recognised in his description of language as either constative, "an utterance that purported to describe the world" (Loxley, 2007, p. 167) or performative "an utterance that performs a particular action" (Loxley, 2007, p. 166), the way in which language is in relationship with action has been opened to analysis. While highlighting the relationship between words and action, Kirby (2006, p. 105) suggests that Austin's focus on words as the signifiers of meaning now sets this earlier work apart from the subsequent development in performative theory, which elaborates the relationship of discourse and materiality.

The work of two current performativity theorists, Dr Judith Butler (1993) and Dr Karen Barad (2007), has provided key concepts that are used to understand the reading of meaning in this study. Through the work of Butler and Barad, a reading of relationship between language (or discursive meaning), and

materiality-making offers sufficient transparency to the unique nuances of individual meaning that leads to an understanding of the making of the weighting-up and weighting-down bodies in this study. Performativity theory offers an understanding of the way language generates material meaning and the way that language meaning is in relationship with body-making.

These current performativity theorists offer two critically important concepts for an understanding of reality-making, the concepts of citation and iteration. These concepts have emerged with a significant role in performative theory through the work of Judith Butler (1993). Both citation and iteration contribute to understanding the way in which discourse is involved in materiality-making. Citation refers to what can be known or the words of a particular discourse that are being used or cited to make a particular meaning. Through Butler's model (1993), a performative reading of participants' texts attends to citational practices in reading what discourses are actively making meaning. While citation establishes the way something can be known, it is through iteration, the repetition of the specific way something can be known, that agreement is established on what is known. This concept of Butler's signals a need to read the discourses that are active in the making of meaning in the untitled texts of this study. Knowing what is understood as real is intimately connected to the discourse that is providing meaning.

It is through citationality and iteration that Butler offers another key concept for the reading of untitled text about weight change, a model of materialization. Materialization is critically important in this study as it offers a way to understand how the physicality of bodies is established and stabilized. It offers a way that we can understand the weighting-up or weighting-down of

bodies as a process of enacting meanings that can create variations in body materiality. Butler suggests that materialization is a process "that stabilizes over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity and surface we call matter" (1993, p. 9). Continuing to develop this concept, she states, "what constitutes the fixity of the body, its contours, its movements, will be fully material, but materiality will be rethought as the effect of power, as power's most productive effect" (1993, p. 2). These concepts propose that it is repetition of what can be known, of what is recognised as intelligible, that establishes the boundaries which signal what is agreed to exist and what remains as unknown. The concept of boundary and the undisputed presence of materiality are signalled in Butler's model. From this theoretical base, the raw materials of a performative reading of weight change have emerged; matter is inherently physical and inherently genealogied.

In the concepts offered through Butler's wide lens on the theory of performativity, our understanding of body changes. Rather than being understood as a pre-exisiting entity, a body can be understood as an agreed meaning that signals what 'features' of body is recognised with meaning and what is unintelligible. It no longer makes sense to read a body simply as a physical entity to which weight is attached or removed. Instead a body is understood to be constructed through meanings that function with boundaries of meaning that stabilize over time to "produce... [a] surface we call matter" (Butler, 1993, p. 9). By reading a body without any assumption of prior entity exposes a body to being read through the body-making processes that are delineating its boundary.

From Butler's work, we know that discourse and materiality are critical elements of a body-making relationship. But how can the relationship be read? Important questions remain over the mechanics of reading the relationship of

discourse and materiality. If, for example, the participants in a study all identify themselves as engaging in a weight change process, and if those participants are awash in the same shared discursive field i. e. by the same citational possibilities, how is it that some participants are able to create weighting-down bodies and some are not? Butler's theory of performativity offers insufficient detail to explain how weight-loss discourses have been so ineffective in establishing and maintaining weighting-down bodies.

Discourses are clearly involved in body-making, offering the meanings that delineate how bodies can be understood. A simple reading of discursive norms, however, is too blunt an instrument to provide the precision required to understand individual, nuanced reality-making. In this study, I then have to ask how citational and iteration practices can be read with a level of acuity that will allow an understanding of individual materiality-making practices. Out of a shared discursive field, how can I read the unique language-body relationships in text in order to read the processes of materiality-making that make one weight-change performance uniquely different from another?

Significantly, Barad has identified similar questions over the applicability of Butler's model to an understanding of materiality, stating that both "Butler's and Foucault's theories fail to provide an adequate account of the relationship between discursive practices and material phenomena" (2007, p. 146). Further challenging Butler's model, Barad's observes that "it is not at all clear that Butler succeeds in bringing the discursive and the material into closer proximity" (2007, p. 64). Her model elaborates practices for reading the relationship between discourse and matter more closely. Her assertion that "matter is not a thing but a doing" (Barad, 2007, p. 151) stresses her level of determination that matter and doing will be read

as occupying the same space. For this reason, the performativity model elaborated by Karen Barad is a significant influence on this study.

Barad's model insists that we can read language and body as a mutually creative relationship; they are conceptually held in the same space. She states, "neither discursive practices nor material phenomena are ontologically or epistemologically prior" (Barad, 2007, p. 152). In a study of weight change, a specific body cannot be assumed to exist separately from the meanings that are being used to delineate what is recognised as that body : "material phenomena are inseparable from the apparatuses of bodily production" (Barad, 2007, p. 152). What this means for the reading of body through text is that matter and discourse are considered as one entity, one boundaried 'space' of specific relationship between meaning and physicality, referred to in this study as a meaning-doing zone. Discourse or meaning is 'in' the zone, and the physicality of body, i. e. what it does, is also 'in' the zone of meaning-doing. Both are assumed to have agency within this space. The challenge is to read this relationship in a way that brings a transparency to the body-making process.

Reading zones of meaning-doing through text means reading the features that are delineating specific relationships with possibilities. Out of all the possibilities for meaning and all the possibilities for physicality that could be recognised, some meanings select some physicality as recognizable, and in doing so delineate a specific meaning-doing zone. An agreement over what is recognised and what has meaning can be delineated to function as materiality. Barad elaborates this in stating that "matter emerges out of, and includes as part of its being, the ongoing configuring of boundaries" (2007, p. 152). At this point, three features can be seen to be critical in the reading of the meaning-doing zone,

through which a specific body is recognised as being delineated. These three features are discourse, matter and boundary.

These three features, discourse, matter and boundary, bring transparency to a reading of the individual nuances that create a weighting-up or weighting-down body. Barad states, "What is needed is a robust account of the materialization of *all* bodies – 'human' and 'nonhuman' – including the agential contributions of all material forces (both 'social' and 'natural'). This will require an understanding of the nature of the relationship between discursive practices and material phenomena" (Barad, 2007, p. 66). By drawing on Barad's model to provide this "robust account" (2007, p. 66), a reading of text as reality-making involves a reading of what stabilises in the relationship between doing and meaning as agreement of what matters. It is this agreement between doing and meaning that emerges as a specific body. Out of all possibilities for what could matter, a specific meaning-doing zone has selected and delineated a range of possibilities to be included as what matters. From this point, we can proceed to examine how a meaning-doing zone can be read.

The way the three features, discourse, matter and boundary, can be read as the process of body-making can now be elaborated.

Discourses are critical to a performative reading of materiality-making as discourses signal what meanings are recognised as intelligible. Using Barad's model, discourse is defined as "not what is said; it is that which constrains and enables what can be said" (2007, p. 146). Identifying discourses that are active in the space of meaning is critically important as an indicator of what can matter and consequently what matter-making the space is able to produce.

Although chapter two elaborates the most readily identifiable discourses in more detail, examples of the way reading discourse adds detail to materiality-making may clarify the significance of their reading at this point. Because access to specific discursive meanings both enable and constrain what "can be said" or what can be recognised as mattering, a reading of discourse indicates what meanings can seen to be mattering in the making of materiality. For example, if medical discourse the meaning that matters out of all possibilities for meaning, then a body that is overweight may be understood to have a metabolic dysfunction or a diabetes risk, and such a body may be involved in medical examinations. If a health and fitness discourse is making meaning, then a body can be recognised as an underperforming or handicapping body. Reading discourse indicates what sort of meaning a body may be given or expected to achieve.

But matter is also acknowledged with active meaning and agency in the space of meaning. Discourse, then, does not simply determine the making of a specific materiality, but also offers meaning for the reading of body-doing. So, for example, when Participant C hears herself described as "middle-aged", she reads her body as "matronly" and "hideous" through an appearance discourse. Participant A so keenly enacts the moral discourse that, even when she approaches a cafe, she imagines the staff reading her body as immorally large, saying, "O here's that fat bitch, what does she want a scone for?"

Already through the reading of discourse and its relationship with matter, details to the process of weighting-up or weighting-down can be added. Reading the discourses that are active in a meaning-doing zone enables access to the range of possibilities for doing that are actively creating specific bodies. By simply reading a discourse as it writes a meaning for body, it is possible to distinguish the

unique selections of meanings that have been made from all possibilities for meanings. These selections create the uniqueness that will distinguish one space of meaning-doing from another as they indicate what possibilities for recognisable physicalities are offered to create bodies.

From this initial reading of discourse, it also becomes possible to read the number of discourses that are enacted within a space of meaning, and to read the congruencies and discrepancies between discourses that are writing meaning onto body and the discourses that are being enacted in and through the physical action of body. This significantly influences the capacity for a meaning-doing space to establish stability and iteration, as will be examined later in his chapter.

Simply reading discourses, however, is not sufficient to distinguish individual nuances in zones of meaning that delineate matter. If it were we would be content to identify the five or six dominant discourses prevalent in making meaning around weight change, knowing that these alone explain all possible variations in weight change. Clearly they don't. In order to access the unique meaning-making that is acting to create materiality in any particular zone of meaning-doing, it is necessary to read the boundary that is acting to delineate a materiality.

Reading a boundary means reading the features that are delineating each unique relationship with the world of possibilities. From the relationships that are possible with all meanings that could be included and all doing that could be included in a specific meaning-doing zone, a reading of boundary clarifies what possibilities are being recognised as meaningful and belonging. A reading of boundaries is a reading of the meanings that are signalling what belongs and what does not belong, and a reading of the actions that are recognised as belonging or

not belonging. A boundary signals what particular meaning matters enough and with sufficient, consistent repetition to delineate a space as a unique selection of some possibilities over others.

Barad's theory offers assistance in formulating a reading of this boundary through the concept of apparatus. Barad suggests that apparatuses are the construction of "material conditions of possibility and impossibility; they enact what matters and what is excluded from mattering" (2007, p. 148). Apparatuses are the processes which delineate what matters, and what is excluded from mattering. In a reading of text, then, by reading apparatuses, we can read what is delineating boundary.

While Barad attends to apparatuses as physical measures, such as an ultra-sound machine, in this study, apparatuses can be understood as being either physical or discursive. They may be discursive rules or conditions that are set to delineate how and what meaning can included or excluded from recognition, and what doing can be included or excluded. When Participant G states that weight change is "good for self esteem", this can be read as a discursive signal for what meaning is included as mattering. Equally, apparatuses can be read as physical delineators of what matters. For example, when Participant A decides not to accept the offer of a Muffin Break bag to carry her potato salad for fear people will read the bag and think she is carrying a cake, the labelled bag can be read as serving as physical apparatus, signalling what is included and what is excluded as mattering in the meaning-doing zone.

A boundary signals how well a space can preserve what matters from other possibilities for what could matter. This means a boundary must act to select some possibilities and eliminate some possibilities in order to retain delineation of a

specific zone of meaning-doing. Later, in chapter three, a more detailed reading of boundaries examines how effective inclusion and exclusion of possibilities is critically important in enabling a meaning-doing space to achieve the stability and iteration that is required create entities. If the expected or hoped-for entity is a weighting-down body, then reading how effective a boundary is in stabilising and repeating a process of weighting-down is critical in understanding materialization. This means it will be useful to read both how well a boundary can exclude all actions that do not create a weighting-down body and to read how well a boundary can include all doing that creates a weighting-down body. Such a reading of boundary offers a transparent process to understand the robustness and stability of the materiality-making process.

Reading the selected possibilities that are in the relationship of matter and discourse is an essential step in a generic reading of reality-making, but not sufficient to access individual, unique realities. Exactly how the delineated possibilities for doing and meaning become delineated as matter can now be read. This means we still have to read more of the materiality-making process within a boundaried zone. The question to be addressed is how some possibilities for meaning and doing function as unique meaning-doing zones creating recognizable entities that emerge to function with a unique materiality.

To understand exactly how discourses and matter are in relationship and how an entity can be created through such a relationship, Barad offers the concept of intra-action. The term *intra*-action is preferred instead of *inter*action, recognising that any relationship being established is not one between two prior existing entities (2007, p. 139). Intra-action can be thought of as the process that clarifies what doing and what meaning matters.

Barad's concept of intra-action, the process that determines what matters, provides access to what is being enacted through a meaning-doing zone. The dynamic jostling between what could matter and what does matter is intra-action. Ultimately the process of intra-action establishes a line of agreement, indicating which of the possibilities for what something could do and could mean have been stabilized into an agreement of what it does do and does mean. Barad elaborates this concept, "It is through specific agential intra-actions that the boundaries and properties of the components of phenomena become determinate and that concepts (that is, the particular material articulations of the world) become meaningful" (2007, p. 139).

Intra-action is a conceptual structure for reading how possibilities for meaning and possibilities for doing settle into an agreement of what specific meaning matters and what specific doing matters, and how an agreed relationship between them stabilizes into the function of entity. Intraction conceptualizes a way of reading how meanings select particular possibilities for doing and how doing is accommodated with meaning. For example, when Participant A decided fitness mattered, she walked. When Participant B decided being fit didn't matter, she stopped exercising. When Participant C says size matters and she is no longer size 6, then her body no longer belongs in the meaninged space it used to. Restrained from the possibilities for action that provide meaning, Participant C's body is relegated to a meaningless, redundant nothing. Iteration of such agreed relationships between meanings and actions create different body shapes. What matters determines what specific materialities are 'made' by selecting actions that, when repeated over time, will stabilise into a shape or form that can be recognised as enacting its meaning: "matter is not a thing but a doing "(Barad, 2007, p. 151).

The concept of intra-action signals a critical difference between Butler's and Barad's model of performativity. Having established, through Butler's work, that iteration and citation are significant processes that lead to recognition of entity, Barad clearly delineates a marked difference in her model, stating "In an agential realist account, performativity is understood not as iterative citationality (Butler) but as *iterative intra-activity*" (Barad, 2007, p. 184). This difference enables Barad's model to access further detail in the reality-making process, offering transparency to individual nuances in the entity-making process.

The conceptual move from "iterative citation" to "*iterative intra-action*" provides a way of reading a much broader plane of shared boundary between language and physicality. "Citation", referring through discourse, is replaced by "intra-action", a process of negotiating meaning and doing or discourse and matter through relationship. Intra-action provides a much more extensive range of connection between discourse and materiality along which individually-nuanced positions can be stabilized. The tool for reading individual reality-making is being sharpened (Barad, 2007, p. 28).

In moving an understanding of iteration and citationality into a wider space of readable relationship, then multiple positions of nuanced meanings can be read as recognisable, credible positions of meaning-making. Access is opened up to both what matters in the making of a specific reality and what is not mattering. For a psychologist interested in change with clients, this moves a focus of change away from any belabouring of what is mattering, into a process that accesses alternative possibilities for what could matter. For example, a shift in the discourse of meaning-making will shift access to enacting different possibilities of doing. The

profession can attend to subject-making not to elaboration of the object that has been made.

Space to examine positions for making reality is not just opened up within the process of intra-action. Attention to nuanced differences of meanings within and between discourses is also accessed. Because reality-making is understood as a relationship between language and physicality, then these nuanced positions of possibility for meaning and positions of possibility for doing require attention in the reading. In a reading of boundary and a reading of discourse, attention to the variations in positions for meaning can be read. In reading boundary, for example, reading the level of impermeability through reading the number of discourses that are providing meaning to possibilities for doing to be included adds detail to the way a unique reality-making process is being enacted.

Reading a position through which discourse is being enacted is significant in understanding both the concepts of subject and agency. A position in discourse impacts on the delineation of an entity and the way in which subject can act. For example, a position in discourse may be read as being quite precisely delineated. That means the subject is enacting a specific position of meaning within the range of meaning positions a discourse offers. If the meaning that is being enacted is a narrowly delineated position then, in turn, the doing or action that is recognisable in the meaning-dooing space will be a narrowly delineated band of accessed possibilities. By reading the discursive position that is being enacted, we can read nuances in the range of possibilities for doing that is available for a body to weight-up or to weight-down.

The importance of acknowledging variations in the positions through which discourse can be accessed is not new. Butler (1990) indicated that variations in the

repetition of discursive norms impacted on agency (cited in Barvosa-Carter, 2005, p. 177). From the untitled texts being studied, it is clear that a discourse can be enacted from different positions, which produces significantly different access to possibilities. In order to access language that can describe variations in position in discourse, I have turned to performance studies. The term 'spectactor', from the community theatre work of Boal (cited by Quetzil, 2006), presented itself as a useful concept for describing a discursive position that crosses the boundary of performer and audience, enactor of discourse and observer of discourse. The position through which discourse is enacted is described as either actor or spectator. In subsequent descriptions of examples from participants' texts, I use the term spectator to describe positions that enact discursive meanings from the periphery of discourse and actor to signal position within the normative expectations of a discourse.

By adding these nuanced positions of meaning into a reading of discourse, further subtleties in the way materiality is being made becomes transparent. Specific positions in discursive meaning access specific possibilities for doing that can be included in the meaning-doing zone. For example, when Participant G says, "the weight change process is good for like self esteem and giving you confidence", she is speaking from the authoritative position of an actor of the discourse. She 'knows'. When Participant C says, "real women, real whatever, if I could be a size 10, I'd be there", she is demonstrating a desire to be enacting the appearance discourse, a spectator desperately wanting to be actor. And when Participant A says: "I don't see the body as you see it, it doesn't bother me as long as you are clean", she speaks from the position of a spectator to the appearance discourse, happy to demonstrate that appearance does not matter. The significance of reading

these positions is in the transparency they bring to the nuanced positions of meaning that create diversity in a body-making process. This transparency, added by reading the variations in positions on discourse, enables us to understand the range of possibilities for action that each participant has access to.

Through these refinements in reading individual positions in discourse, a more precise understanding of exactly what is being included in the meaning-doing zone is being accessed. Further, the way that included meaning and doing is being stabilised into an agreed relationship is also being read as the detail of discourse position signals the detail of what doing can be accessed. A rich understanding of the reality-making process is emerging. From this understanding, we can examine how specific entity emerges.

Entity emerges through the process of intra-action, through the process of jostling possibilities into an agreement of what is being done and what it is meaning. Remembering that "matter is doing" (Barad, 2007, p. 151), when discursive possibilities for meaning and material possibilities for meaning stabilise, then there can be agreement on what a thing is by agreeing on what it does.

Such agreement is signalled, in Barad's model, through the concept of agential cut. This is the concept that Barad uses to describe how stability is achieved. An agential cut describes a delineated entity. When actions are recognised, delineated from other possible actions, meaninged and no longer negotiable, an entity has emerged. An agentially cut entity can be understood as a stable position of meaning repeatedly accessing a stable range of doing. A discourse that is being consistently enacted from one position consistently expects body to perform specific actions, thereby making a specific, unique body.

Importantly, through the concept of agential cut, a reading of subject and object is possible. Delineation of subject and object can be read as the foundation of ongoing performance as entities acquire agency, enabling them to enact what matters. Signalling the significance of agency in the emergence of entity, Barad refers to this process of agential cut as "specific intra-action... [that] enacts an agential cut... effecting a separation between subject and object" (Barad, 2007, p. 333-4). In the process of entity-making, a subject position can emerge as an iterated relationship, a repeated position of agreed relationship of discourse and materiality. Most importantly, the subject that is cut through intra-action is a subject that is delineated by what matters in a specific meaning-doing zone. This then removes the assumption of prior entity and the assumption of subject necessarily being human. When, for example, Participant A says, "the charts tell me I am obese", it is "the charts" that have been cut with sufficient clarity to function as subject. Participant A is the acted-on object in this meaning sequence, an object that is being acted on by the authoritative meaning offered through the medical discourse. The conceptual mechanics of agential cut enable a subject to be understood as a stabilized position that repeats specific doing to act as entity. A subject is delineated from other meaning-doing possibilities that do not stabilize to the same extent. Entity, functioning as subject, can be distinguished from entity functioning as object.

The significance of entity which can function as subject is that it can enact agency as a performance. Agency is not assumed to exist prior, but emerges through relationships of meaning. Subject, as an agreement of what matters in the relationship of materiality and discourse, emerges as a meaning-doing relationship. A relationship is delineated into such a stable point of agreement that

this point of agreement can then function with subject-making authority. It can assume a position of acting on another entity, as a subject that acts on an object. So a subject that has emerged through a process of clarifying what matters can function to enact that specific 'what matters'. What matters now has its agency. Further, because entity, as subject, is that which can act, and object is that which gets acted on, then sequenced doing which can be read as performance is enacted.

Through a reading of the emergence of subject and object, with consequential causality and agency, a performative reading enables the reading of reality-making to move beyond simply reading a delineated entity as a 'thing' that is being produced. A performative reading enables access to an entity as a specific, relationally delineated stable agreement of meaning: "Knowing is a matter of part of the world making itself intelligible to another part" (Barad, 2007, p. 185). How one way of knowing is in relationship with another way of knowing allows us to examine the sequential meaning that a specific entity, functioning as subject can perform. A weighting-up body or a weighting-down body can be understood as enacting what matters, a specific relationship of what matters. The specific relationship that emerges as a subject will determine the relationship that is possible between a subject and an object, and so will determine the nature of the performance that is being enacted.

A performative reading of a subject as the delineation of what matters insists that a reading of meaning extends from a concern about what is being made into how a sequenced relationship between subject and object is being made. Again, the reading focus shifts to seek further nuanced detail of individual reality-making performances. Now attention can be paid to the way one meaning-making is in relationship with other meaning-makings. This then indicates the need to

examine what relationships any a particular entity is able to access. Or, more specifically, how is it that the way this particular entity does its doing impact on sequential relationships or performances? This means we have to examine how entity can enact what matters as performance. In doing so, we now need to understand a relationship between performativity and performance.

Not surprisingly, Barad places performativity and performance in relationship, stating that meaning is the "ongoing performance of the world in its differential dance of intelligibility and unintelligiblity" (2007, p. 149). Academic discussion offers an array of descriptions elaborating the relationship. As the debate has not yet established clarity in delineating a relationship of performativity and performance, it can most easily be recognised as the dynamic, ongoing positioning and repositioning of boundaries in an intra-active process through which clarity may emerge. Butler's original discussion of performativity and performance insisted on a distinction between the two. She describes "performance as bounded 'act' distinguished from performativity insofar as the latter consists in a reiteration of norms which precede, constrain, and exceed the performer and in that sense cannot be taken as the fabrication of the performer's 'will' or 'choice'; further, what is 'performed' works to conceal, if not disavow, what remains opaque, unconscious, unperformable. The reduction of performativty to performance would be a mistake" (1993, p. 234). Through her intention to define what performativity and performance is, Butler writes of relationship between performance and performativity through what it is not.

In seeking to clarify the boundedness of performance as suggested by Butler, Lloyd (1999) concludes, "The lack of clarity about how a performance is to be understood leads to a paradoxical position. Since the performative produces

that which it names, and since gender is understood in performative terms as the effect of the intersection of discourse and practices of gender, and since these discourses and practices underpin performances, it suggests that a performance is itself performative. This distinction seems to be of little help. Indeed it raises more questions than it answers" (p. 209). The closeness of performativity and performance is a position echoed by Usher (2006) stating, "Performance conditions the possibility of any and all performatives, or to put it another way, as performance is itself enabled by performativity, so too performativity is realised through its performance"(p. 279).

This closeness of the relationship invites attention to the plane of connection where doing performativity meets performance. Alexander signals the usefulness in understanding this connection when he states, "Actions are performative insofar as they can be understood as communicating meaning to an audience. For the purposes of understanding such performance, it does not matter what meaning "really" is, either for actors themselves or in some ontological or normative sense. What matters is how others interpret actors' meaning" (2008, p. 179). Madison (2003) also intimates the significance of relationship between performer and audience in stating that performance directed to political change is where "both performers and audiences can be transformed" (p. 479).

The way that the relationship between performativity and performance in this study is understood is through a shared interest in elaborating and clarifying what matters in creating entity, and how what matters can be enacted through sequential relationships. Because performativity enables a reading of subject and object, and consequently a reading of agency and causality, then performativity is understood as intra-active; it opens up the reality-making space to detailed

understanding. Through performativity, we can understand what is able to form further relationships as performance. In this way then, performance can be understood as interactive, as the way one meaning is in relationship with another meaning. What matters impacts on both.

Critical to this study is the question of how the relationship of performativity and performance can be read in text. Reading the sequential causal relationship between a subject and an object is central to this process. Performativity enables an understanding of how a specific subject or object is being created. Understanding how subject and object are in relationship then allows us to understand how a specific subject may be in relationship with other meanings. So, for example, recognizing that a subject is delineated through highly impermeable discursive boundaries enables understanding of the possibilities for relationship with other meanings that it can access. A highly impermeable boundary is likely to easily eliminate and avoid connection to other meanings. A subject that is delineated through multiple meaning contenders, which consistently destabilise entity creations, may establish completely different subsequent relationships with other meanings, being unable to eliminate alternative meanings or doing from the meaning-doing zone.

Through accessing the relationship between performativity and performance, then specific patterns of sequential relationships can be read. Relationships between a subject and an object may be linear, with a clear line of cause and effect, for example. Alternatively, they may be circular, temporary, or with the robustness of meaning that will enable sustained performance. Chapter five elaborates these concepts through examples.

The task I set myself, in this study, is to read untitled texts with sufficient detail to explain the unique variations in the materiality-making of participants' bodies. Barad's model has offered critically important ways of understanding the relationships between discourse and matter, bringing transparency to the processes that create bodies by enabling a reading of materiality-making. Combining Barad's model with aspects of performance theory produces a reading model that gives access to weight changes as performances of what matters, offering rich understanding of reality-making. Reading entities as meaning-doing relationships opens access to possibilities for sophisticated ways of supporting weight change management through understanding and managing subject position.