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After Basia Banda, *Zamknij (Black Gap)*, 2015. © Basia Banda and Feminist Colour-IN.
Coloured at the 7th Conference on New materialisms at the Polish Academy of Sciences
while listening to Ewa Domańska keynote “Slow Science and Emergent Methods in
the Humanities and Social Sciences” (by mirko nikolić).

First Edition

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NEW MATERIALISM

the mattering of the arts
crafts, and aesthetics

Edited by

Katve-Kaisa Kontturi, Milla Tiainen & Adrian Mróz

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Preface

By exploring and further developing new materialist thought in the philosophy of art and aesthetics and the study of different forms of art, this special issue enters an expanding and already richly layered field that consists of new materialist research on art. Indeed, alongside feminist theory, science and technology studies, and media theory, studies of art can be pointed out as one key area where reignited interest in the mattering of matter to human practices and the interrelations of humans and the wider world began around two decades ago, thus having a formative impact on the multi- and transdisciplinary assemblage that is nowadays called the new materialisms. Much recent study of art elaborates, above all, on such particularly well-known and influential theorists of new materialism as the feminist philosopher of science, Karen Barad, and political theorist, Jane Bennett. Yet, it is important to remember that the renewed theoretical and practical interest in the roles of matter began within studies of art already at the turn of the 1990s and 2000s (see e.g. Kontturi & Tiainen, forthcoming). It arose in various disciplines, from art history to musicology, as an attempt to rethink the practices and effects of art after some decades of heavy emphasis on textuality and discursive ideological contents, which had come to characterize critical studies of art similarly to many other disciplines of the humanities.

Notably, these reorientations of inquiry were intent on examining the materialities that matter in the makings, reception, and sociocultural significance of art beyond modernist art philosophy's notion of materiality as a vehicle for supposedly autonomous artistic expression, encapsulated by such slogans as "truth to materials" (see Bolt 2013, 4) or the "tendency" of the (musical) material (e.g. Adorno 1999, 54). From the early 2000s onward, scholars such as art theorist and visual artist Barbara Bolt began developing ways to analyze processes of art's materialization that occur "between the matters of bodies, cultural knowledges, *and* the materials of production" (Bolt 2000, 320, emphasis in original; see also e.g. Bolt 2004; Kontturi 2009; Meskimmon 2003). Moreover, the term new materialism started to be employed in the study of art in the latter half of the 2000s. In the wake of the

term's early proponents Rosi Braidotti and Manuel DeLanda, it was invoked to emphasize the need to reconsider "the significance and ontological status of materiality in our analyses of culture, power, and subjectivity" in a theoretical framework that conceives of phenomena as composed of several, yet constitutively related and mutually influencing registers of being, from the material to the social and the symbolic (Tiainen 2008, 150).

Certainly, the revived attention to matter—in the sense of dynamic materializations of artistic materials, human bodies-subjects, and art's socio-physical environments, in the projects of the 2000s—was not a self-contained affair. Like nowadays, these research orientations were already then inspired by currents of thought in philosophy and the humanities and social sciences more generally. These inspirations included the newly emerged transdisciplinary engagements with the process philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. Nonetheless, as a context for this special issue of *The Polish Journal of Aesthetics*, it is interesting to note that the "new" materialist approaches to art and its study were also motivated from the outset by the distinctive state and traditions of art-related disciplines. These approaches emerged *in parallel* to reorientations to matter in other fields (for example, in science studies and media theories), instead of just following developments elsewhere.

By today, engagements with the mattering matters of art have proliferated into a multifaceted range of studies, disciplinary and theoretical angles, and joint research endeavors. The scholarly locations of these projects vary from sound, music, and voice studies to performance research (e.g. Eidsheim 2015; Neumark 2017; Fast 2018; Tiainen 2013; 2017), and from the study of historical and contemporary visual arts and media arts to artistic practice-led research and explorations of different arts in education studies (e.g. Kontturi 2013; 2018; Golanska 2017; Parikka 2011; nicolić & Skinner 2019; Donaldson & Kontturi 2019; Radomska 2020; Hickey-Moody 2018; Huuki 2019). Frequently, these explorations combine new materialist theoretical work with posthumanist thinking, affect theories, indigenous bodies of knowledge, queer studies, and postcolonial perspectives, among others. In addition, several edited collections and journal special issues dedicated to new materialist study of art have been published in recent years (see e.g. the contributions in Barrett & Bolt 2013; Tiainen, Kontturi & Hongisto 2015; Barrett, Bolt & Kontturi 2017; and Kontturi, Nauha, Tiainen & Angerer 2018).

The special issue at hand, "New Materialism: The Mattering of the Arts, Crafts, and Aesthetics," joins this vibrant complex of new materialist theorizations and research practices across fields of art, but also makes a distinc-

tive contribution to this complex in at least two senses. First, the peer-reviewed articles and book reviews included in this issue provide a particularly effective overview of the diversity of topics, areas of research, and methodological directions that are involved in the development of new materialist ways of studying art. Together, the three peer-reviewed essays, by Joanna Łapińska, Polina Golovátina-Mora, and Adrian Mróz, respectively, respond quite literally to the latter part of the issue's title. Each contributes first and foremost to one of the areas listed in the title: the arts, specifically vocal and musical performance, in the case of Łapińska; the crafts in the case of Golovátina-Mora; and philosophy of art and aesthetics in the case of Mróz's essay. To be sure, the compartmentalization between arts, crafts, and art philosophy is not taken for granted nor regarded as unproblematic in the articles. Instead, they move across and renegotiate these categories, for example, by seeing crafts and arts as a continuum and by devising various connections between art philosophical considerations, new materialist concepts, and specific artistic practices. At any rate, the mutually different topics and locations of the articles demonstrate the multidimensionality of new materialist studies of art also in a methodological sense: while Łapińska carries out a new materialisms-informed close analysis of the performance and materiality of sound in the presently vastly popular ASMR videos, Golovátina-Mora's essay represents practice-led research by growing from, or with, her own and another jewelry-maker's crafts/artistic practice. Meanwhile, Mróz's article focuses methodologically on conceptual analysis and the creation of some new conceptualizations which are inspired by new materialist theories and other scientific and philosophical approaches relevant to his concern with the notion of habit.

The methodological range of these articles is complemented by the studies discussed in the three book reviews. These studies represent Deleuze- and Guattari-inspired cultural study of music and sound, feminist new materialist and collaborative study of contemporary art, and new philosophical and art-historical theorization of the image. Conjointly, these six contributions comprising the issue offer a concise but kaleidoscopic view of what new materialist research on art can entail and some of the paths on which it is currently moving. At the same time, they will, hopefully, inspire the readers to imagine and discover further future co-becomings of new materialisms and ways of researching art.

The second distinctive feature of the present issue is linked to the purview of *The Polish Journal of Aesthetics*. In their different ways, all the peer-reviewed articles inquire into the enriched or expanded understandings of aesthetics, and the adjective "aesthetic," which may open up through new

materialist thinking. While they do not always explicitly refer to the notions of aesthetics and aesthetic, all the essays examine issues that are of high relevance to the field of aesthetics—both as a modern academic discipline and in a more historical perspective. These issues include the questions about what “art” and “artistic practice” can involve, how they should be understood, and what counts as art and artful or is included within these concepts. Recalling the historically older layers of the concept of aesthetic/s, the articles also explore how the ways of acting, making and experiencing investigated in each essay engage and are perceived through the senses. In relation to this, they investigate how a new materialist focus on the liveliness of all kinds of matter and on co-constitutive relations—or intra-actions (e.g. Barad 2007)—of human practices with the wider-than-human world, including technologies, other species, physical locales and things, and ecosystems, may reconfigure our understandings of the sensorial nature and impact of art. A more detailed introduction of the articles helps to shed light on their approaches to these questions and new materialist thinking in general.

In her contribution, “Vibrations of Worldly Matter. ASMR as Contemporary *Musique Concrète*,” Joanna Łapińska crafts a fresh approach to the globally thriving phenomenon of ASMR (autonomous sensory meridian response). This phenomenon spreads on YouTube and other digital platforms in the shape of videos in which performers, who are nowadays often called ASMRtists, produce sonic and other sensory stimuli that invoke pleasant tingling sensations in the bodies of many recipients. While there is already some academic research on ASMR, for example in media studies, Łapińska’s article makes a novel intervention by analyzing the phenomenon in relation to the practices of electronic music called *musique concrète*, or as a new manifestation of these practices. According to Łapińska, *musique concrète* aims to offer new sensibilities of musical expression while promoting an attentive mode of listening to matter. By elaborating on new materialist notions concerning the physicality and materiality of sound and its vibrational force, Łapińska demonstrates how the ASMR practices generate specific sensorial attunement to the material elements involved in these performance and reception events, and thus to matter more generally. Her approach contributes to the still rather small group of projects that advance new materialist theorizing in music and sound studies.

Polina Golovátina-Mora’s essay, “Sprinkles of an Agate Sea-Wave—Multi-species Storying as Creating with Matter,” explores the constant interplay, or intra-action, of sensorial experiences and memories, theoretical concepts,

nostalgias, and active materialities across the traditional (European) human–non-human divide in creative, artistic practice. Golovátina-Mora is preoccupied with the ways that creative practice always stems from more than just the actions and seemingly self-sufficient designs of the humans called artists. In her take, such practice unfolds as the outcome or process of multiple, co-constitutive, intra-actions of human agency, physical milieus, lively and responsive matters engaged in and generative of art-making, other species, and layered sensations and recollections. To investigate and invoke a feeling of creative practice as “multispecies entanglements,” Golovátina-Mora advances experimentally a twofold methodological approach. First, she explores how intra-actions constitutive of creative practices are storied within two Instagram channels that concern such activities as jewelry-making and felting. Instead of a comparative analysis, Golovátina-Mora approaches the posts and elements of these channels as parts of a dynamic, distributed knowledge about the more-than-human material and relational nature of art and crafts. Second, her article extends this approach to creative activities to the level of text by pursuing a mode of writing *with* these activities, which involves an interplay between academic conventions of written expression and the practice of “speculative fabulation.”

In his two-part article, “Behaving, Mattering, and Habits Called Aesthetics,” Adrian Mróz advances Bernard Stiegler (1952–2020), a political French philosopher renowned for his scholarship on technics, as a critical new materialist thinker. Mróz and his article, which is “noetically active”, are concerned with the “technical doings” of artworks while foregrounding the value of the performative materiality of behaviors and sensory shaping. He analyzes select definitions of behavior and habit to develop a new materialist understanding of these phenomena, re-conceptualizes manipulation as “caripulation,” and considers the application of “pharmacology” to habit. Part One of the article, titled *Theoretical Navigation*, provides a theoretical background for Mróz’s analyses, while Part Two, *Theoretical Cays of Phenomenologically Making-Sense*, is laid out in four readings focused on specific questions. The first weighs new materialism with the psychological discipline of behaviorism. The second consists of an existential analysis of “behaving” that argues for the non-banality of habit. In the third section, the phenomenology of retention is applied to behavior. Finally, the last reading raises the problem of the *pharmakon* with the action of cutting as applicable to social conduct with special regard to artistic practices.

The first book review incorporated in this edition is by Juliana España Keller who discusses the volume *Musical Encounters with Deleuze and Guattari* (2017), edited by Pirkko Moisala, Taru Leppänen, Milla Tiainen, and

Hanna Väättäinen. This polyphonic title concentrates on Deleuzian-Guattarian research as well as elaborations on Spinozian metaphysics. The book's multisensory expanse of subjects in feminist new materialisms encompasses, among others, music and sound studies, expanded listening, dance, dis/ability, semiotics, and ethnography. The work provides vital attention to concepts such as *affect*, *becoming*, and *assemblages*, including *different* ways of moving and conceiving across contemporary creative practices. The next review, by Rahma Khazam, concerns Katve-Kaisa Kontturi's book titled *Ways of Following: Art, Materiality, Collaboration* (2018), where she introduces a new materialist methodology for observing art in movement, by following and collaborating *with* three female artists. In Kontturi's research, various ongoing becomings or *ways*—like stratification and destratification, co-workings, as well as the autonomy of process—interlace in and co-compose instances of art-making. Her account allows us to learn about the creative process through Deleuzian theory and how philosophy and art can complement and challenge each other. In Katherine Robert's review of *Theory of the Image* by Thomas Nail, we learn of the defaults and paradoxes of established Western aesthetic theory from the 20th century, such as *stasis* and *ahistoricism*, for which Nail provides an alternative through a new materialist framework that is useful for both theorists and artists. As Robert states, Nail offers an understanding of images that does not focus solely on the visual, but also explores what these images *do* within the presented novel and holistic "kinaesthetic" theory—which has steadily gained relevance within the current synchronous and disruptive digital turn.

This special issue, however, does not rely only on the power of the written word to address and express "matterings of matter in arts, crafts, and aesthetics." It also introduces an artistic and activist practice that attends to and revolves around vibrant moving matters of color, body, and image: *Feminist Colour-IN* (2015–). This practice was developed by artist Kim Donaldson and theorist Katve-Kaisa Kontturi who took an interest in the widespread coloring book boom that predominantly promotes self-care, concentration, and focus (hence economic and societal productivity), as in Emma Farrons's *The Mindfulness Colouring Book: Anti-stress Art Therapy for Busy People* (2015). By taking over and transposing the productivity-driven nature of mindfulness for feminist purposes and combining it with earlier forms of feminist activism, such as quiet sit-ins or consciousness-raising, Donaldson and Kontturi created a coloring practice and designs that would raise new knowledge about and enhance feminist connectivity and collectivity through the color-in (Donaldson & Kontturi 2019). They call participants

to join the project by asking them to: “Attune to the emerging environment / Colour in what you hear, see, smell, feel / Synthesise sensations, conceptions, thinking / Focus on the vibrating present to open a future / while learning the lines and desires of local art / Share it, if you will / Tag it: #feminist-colourin.” In other words, their practice is not about emptying one’s head, but about creating a stronger connection to others and the world; not about self-absorption but about reaching out through the embodied and relational movement of coloring-in—by following the lines and rhythms of the designs, or drawing over them. As such, *Feminist Colour-IN* can be described as “an aesthetic activism of connection and collectivity” deeply invested in the vibrant material potentialities of color (Donaldson & Kontturi 2019; Kontturi & Tiainen forthcoming).

The first *Feminist Colour-IN* workshop was integrated into the program of the *7th International Conference on New Materialisms—Performing Situated Knowledges: Space, Time, Vulnerability*, which was held at the Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, in September 2016.¹ All the conference delegates received a booklet and set of coloring pencils, and were invited to color-in instead of or in parallel to making written notes on the talks they were listening to. The designs of the booklet were drawn after the works of Polish feminist artists of different generations, offering the participants access to a knowledge otherwise not present at the conference, also connecting them to the feminist histories of the local area in question. The cover illustration of this issue was colored in Warsaw by artist-researcher mirco nikolić on a design based on Basia Banda’s painting, *Black Gap* (2015). It emerged while nikolic was listening to Professor Ewa Domańska’s keynote “Slow Science and Emergent Methods in the Humanities and Social Sciences.” When tagged and posted online, it connected further audiences both to the conference and the art of Banda, making them matter more—through the mattering practice of coloring-in.

This journal issue is illustrated with altogether six designs to be printed and colored in—if the readers so wish. All the designs were originally published in different editions of *Feminist Colour-IN* booklets: in the Polish (2016), Australian (2016), and Finnish (2017) ones. As a new compilation assembled for this issue, they offer a rich geographical, generational, cultural, and ethnic companion to the new materialist arguments of the issue’s

¹ Between the years 2014–2018, the conference series was organised by New Materialism: Networking European Scholarship on ‘How Matter Comes to Matter’ action, IS1307, funded by COST: European Cooperation for Science and Technology.

articles. The chosen designs are situated in-between and in dialogue with the essays and reviews. The first of them is drawn after Polish artist Julita Wojcek's *Tęcza* (Rainbow in English), which is an award-winning, flower-covered, outdoor installation that caused much political controversy and was vandalized by right-wing, anti-GLBT conservatives several times during its different occurrences. The next illustration, which is located between Łapińska's article on ASMR and Golovátina-Mora's suggestion of art/craft-making as a multi-species practice, acquaints us with Australian artist Texta-queen's piece from the series *We don't need another hero* that portrays immigrant artists who are also people of color living in settler-colonial realities. The design in question presents a Pacific queer performer Fez Faanana starring in a made-up show titled "Attack of the Underwater Woman" (2011). Then, placed before Adrian Mróz's two-part article, we encounter an uncolored version of Basia Banda's *Black Gap* which is thus available for new matterings of colored matter. The book reviews are likewise accompanied by color-in designs. Next to the review of the edited collection *Musical Encounters with Deleuze and Guattari* (2017) stands Indigenous Sámi artist Merja Aletta Ranttila's wood engraving *How far I can fly* that offers a wild, joyous scene of human-animal coexistence. The review of the book *Ways of Following: Art, Materiality, Collaboration* appears in dialogue with Finnish artist Kaisu Koivisto's *Cornucopia* (1996)—a complex large-scale installation carefully constructed out of cow horns that the artist retrieved from a slaughterhouse. Finally, our illustration plan and the whole issue close with the review of *Theory of the Image* that is accompanied by Australian artist Nusra Latif Qureshi's multilayered take on the colonial histories of Pakistan through the 'mattering' revival of miniature painting.

Katve-Kaisa Kontturi, Milla Tiainen & Adrian Mróz

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AFTER JULITA WÓJCİK, "TĘCZA", PLAC ZBAWICIELA, WARSZAWA, 2012

After Julita Wójcik, Tęcza (Rainbow), Plac Zbawiciela, 2012.

© Julita Wójcik and Feminist Colour-IN

Joanna Łapińska*

Vibrations of Worldly Matter. ASMR as Contemporary *Musique Concrète*

Abstract

The autonomous sensory meridian response (ASMR) is a sensory phenomenon, sometimes referred to as a “brain orgasm,” which involves pleasant tingling sensations in a body in reaction to certain stimuli. This article analyzes ASMR within the framework of ideas put forward by the *musique concrète* that offered new sensibilities of musical expression and promoted attentive listening to matter. At the same time, we treat sonic practices of ASMR as inspired by the concepts developed by New Materialism, especially the notions of physicality and materiality of sound recognized within the ontology of its vibrational force.

Keywords

ASMR, *Musique Concrète*, New Materialism, Sonic Materialism, Vibration

Introduction

At first, we see hands with elegant, slender fingers and manicured nails. They are making slow, sweeping movements towards the camera—as if they wanted to stroke it, moving rhythmically up and down, dropping gently towards the fleshy, brown cloth spread on the tabletop. One hand begins to stroke the top of the other, and then immediately gets back to caressing the soft fabric in circular motions. After a moment, there is a prop in the frame—a sizable, wooden box for sorted tea bags. The woman, whose face remains hidden, brings the object close to the camera so that we can clearly see its

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shape, the texture of the wood, and the tea bags hidden inside. She begins to play with the box—first, she is tapping the wooden case with her nails, changing the pace from time to time, and then she is stroking, squeezing, and scratching the plastic tea bags, at the same time creating a kind of musical composition made from the impromptu produced sounds.

This description covers only the first six minutes of the over thirty-minute video titled *Intoxicating Sounds ASMR* published on the YouTube channel “Gentle Whispering ASMR” (2016). The video, made by Maria Viktorovna (sometimes referred to as “Queen of ASMR”), is one of the most popular clips on her channel, currently with over nine million views. It was Maria’s hands that were stroking the table covered with soft material and then tapping the wooden box. She is an ASMR artist, or ASMRtist for short, i.e. a person who creates and posts their ASMR content on the Internet. Viktorovna is one of the most popular YouTubers making their own videos and she was one of the first ones who were so intent on developing the art of ASMR in online space.

YouTube has quickly become a platform gathering a large community of ASMR enthusiasts who watch and listen to the content created by their favorite artists. The imagination and creativity of ASMRtists know no bounds. Their arrangements use hundreds of various objects which would produce interesting sounds that could give the viewers-listeners a specific sensation of “brain tingles,” or a pleasant tickly feeling in your head, and neck, that causes relaxation, calmness, stress relief, and sleepiness.

Before we start analyzing the ASMR artworks in terms of observing if and how they display the new materialist approach to reality, especially to sound as a material object characterized by vibrational force, we will briefly introduce the ASMR phenomenon. After describing its most important properties, we will see in which contexts it is most often examined—what the researchers, investigating the phenomenon so far, have pointed out and why. Thus, we will justify our choice of the unusual theoretical framework co-created by the ideas that might have been mothballed prematurely—the ideas of *musique concrète*, especially those calling for change in our musical sensitivity, as well as those promoting the attentive listening to reality. Ideas of *musique concrète* turn out to be relevant in the case of ASMR, especially in the context of the deliberate blurring of boundaries between the “natural” and “cultural.” Experimenting with sound, its material sources and the possibilities of technical processing by a *musique concrète* composer-bricoleur is something that is also fascinatingly connected with the concepts proposed by New Materialism, especially with the idea of vibration and the vitality of matter capable of affecting bodies in each vibrational event.

This article aims to indicate the continuity and vitality of certain concepts concerning our attitude towards material, inanimate objects in the world around us, especially their potentiality to create sound understood as a vibrational force—from the prematurely forgotten ideas of *musique concrète* to those concepts of New Materialism that are related to the vibrational-affective, non-human-centered understanding of sound enabling the establishment of relationships between human subjects and non-human material objects. It is an attempt to give an account of the sonic practices of ASMR being an expression of a new materialist approach to reality, which is no longer based on a strictly human, rational, logical paradigm, but instead emphasizes “the existence of a material world that is independent of our minds” (Dolphijn, van der Tuin 2012, 39). As we observe in ASMR videos, everyday objects are able to enter into affective relationships based on sound vibrations that move our bodies, which, as a result, provokes a change in the way of thinking about these artifacts. They are no longer treated in a utilitarian, metaphorical or linguistic manner, consistent with their commonsense purpose and *telos* of the technology used, but, at the moment of interaction, they reveal their surprising vibrational properties and the ability to set bodies in motion. Therefore, our choice of a new materialist conceptual framework “which refuses the linguistic paradigm, stressing instead the concrete yet complex materiality of bodies” (21) allows us to focus on a vibrational quality of sound leading to the affective experience rather than to its symbolic meaning.

ASMR: Properties, Subgenres, Contexts

“ASMR” stands for a pseudo-scientific term “autonomous sensory meridian response” coined in 2010 by Jennifer Allen, founder of one of the first Facebook groups and a website about this phenomenon. On the one hand, the name means a physical sensory response “in which individuals experience a tingling, static-like sensation across the scalp, back of the neck and at times further areas in response to specific triggering audio and visual stimuli” (Barratt, Davis 2015, 1). Sometimes, it is also a response to tactile, olfactory or cognitive factors. The most common ASMR stimuli include: whispering, personal attention, crisp sounds, slow or repetitive movements, smiling, aeroplane noise, vacuum cleaner noise, laughing, the sounds of smacking, eating, clicking, brushing, painting, drawing, white noise (Barratt, Davis 2015, 6; Sadowski 2016, 32).

On the other hand, the name “ASMR” identifies the entire technologically-mediated media phenomenon, which includes the activities of ASMRtists, mainly on their YouTube channels. The ASMR community has been using the world’s most popular online platform for years, “to create, collect, and exchange videos made to trigger the tingles through a computer screen” (Andersen 2014, 2). Audiovisual recordings are most often classified as short-term relief in dealing with insomnia and stress, with depression and anxiety (Poerio 2016, 120), as well as in moments that require concentration—as a soundtrack for certain activities, e.g. reading, studying. The relationship between the relaxing effect of ASMR “promoting various facets of happiness or subjective well-being” (Del Campo, Kehle 2016, 103), and mindfulness / meditation practices is another important aspect of the phenomenon (Barratt, Davis 2015, 12; Fredborg *et al.* 2018). ASMR artists often treat their activity as a mission to improve the quality of life of the viewer-listener, and it is not just a hobby for them, but a full-time job and a source of income (Silady 2017).

Most of the videos published by ASMRtists fall into one of two subgenres. The first one includes videos focusing on the use of various everyday accessories—Helle Klausen calls them “sound assortments” (2019, 88)—in order to produce interesting sounds and images that will cause a tingling sensation in the viewer-listener. Watching a few random videos in this category shows that the artists are only limited by their imagination when it comes to the range of objects they use. The instruments of artists-experimenters can include such unrelated things as apples, ice cubes, bathtub mats, a furry rug, a vinyl record, and many others. If you want to find out how great the creators’ imagination is in this area, simply search the word “ASMR” and the name of any object that comes to your mind on YouTube. There is a high chance that there is an artist who has already made a video with this particular object—stroked, tapped, and scratched from all sides. The category also includes the video of Viktorovna, mentioned in the introduction, where she uses not only the tea bag box, but also an artificial leather make-up bag, a pink hair comb, and a gel eye mask.

The other subgenre, which will only be mentioned briefly in this article, is known as “roleplay” videos “imitating everyday activities such as visiting the doctor, getting a haircut or going to the library” (Klausen 2019, 88). Performances given by artists in the style of “close personal attention” are intended to imitate activities pitched somewhere “between a careful ritual and a routine check-up” (Bennett 2016, 131). They include videos where the artist plays the role of a professional (e.g. a beautician, hairdresser, doctor,

stewardess) and focuses all their attention on the viewer-listener whose head would be located where the camera is. The ASMRtist maintains eye contact with the viewer, leans towards the microphones installed on both sides of the screen and whispers some soothing words, phrases or indefinite sounds. The viewer-listener finds themselves in a position of an object taken care of by the artist who performs various actions to put them in a good mood, or make them drowsy. In addition to their strictly affective effect on the viewer-listener's body, which is supposed to cause pleasant body chills, these types of videos are based on recalling cognitive associations related to "memories of intimacy, care, and attention" (Andersen 2014, 15). What makes the two subgenres different is the fact that the artist in the first one usually stays in the background, showcasing the objects they play with, not showing their face. This would not be recommended in the roleplay videos.

Since ASMR is a new cultural phenomenon, there have not been that many scientific analyses on the topic. The few researchers who have shown interest in this phenomenon usually look at them from the perspective of gender studies, commenting on the clichéd representations of women in videos that are part of the "heteronormative experiences of intimacy" (2014, 10), while partly breaking out of those experiences thanks to the public nature of intimacy presented in the videos or due to the female artists' attempts to control their own representations, including exceeding the logic of the "male gaze" (Sadowski 2016). The optics of performative studies (Waldrón 2017) is also used to describe the public intimacy practices in ASMR. Other commentators focus on the peculiar "stickiness" of affect which, by spreading all over the space between bodies, attracts viewers-listeners to the videos constructing a tingling experience (Smith, Snider 2019). There are also those who extract the most important properties from the aesthetic ASMR universe—i.e. sound, whisper, and voice—in the context of either their haptic, multi-sensory effect on the viewer-listener (Klausen 2019) or wider associations with the notions of power, a symbolic and literal case of women using their voice (Iossifidis 2017). However, we have not come across an interpretation of the ASMR through the prism of ideas related to *musique concrète* in connection with New Materialism. We shall see that both the ideas of *musique concrète*, which have been formulated since the late 1940s, and the remarkable triumphs of the latest theories of New Materialism resonate in the works of ASMR artists, especially "sound assortments" examples, and at the same time, they illuminate each other in an interesting way.

A Worthy Successor to *Musique Concrète*?

Sound studies researchers emphasize that the ideas of *musique concrète* remain a vital reference point in modern electroacoustic music (Lech 2017), despite the fact that the ideas of the French sound engineer Pierre Schaeffer, who is believed to be the father of *musique concrète*, are often ignored, which makes them more of a historical curiosity (Misiak 2012). Especially nowadays—in the era of advanced sound processing technology—the ideological plane of *musique concrète* demands to be discovered. Tomasz Misiak (2012, 50) seeks to reveal its inherent never-ending potentialities. He sees its relevance, first of all, in contemporary artistic practice, especially in the artists' approach to experimentation in music, and secondly, in the theoretical foundations of *musique concrète* provoking a change in our way of thinking about, defining, and describing "music." Both aspects seem to be clearly visible in the works created by ASMRtists—mainly in their soundtracks that are a key component of almost every video and can be seen as *musique concrète* pieces.

Musique concrète is a term introduced by Schaeffer in 1948. It means music which is created mainly by using sounds that are commonly seen as non-musical and non-instrumental. A *musique concrète* composer does not want to be limited by traditional musical theories and uses raw material of various origins—"sounds captured from the world around us" (Hyde 2012, 172)—recorded and processed using electroacoustic devices. The sounds used in compositions included both artificial and "natural" sounds: the rumbling noise from vehicle wheels, the swoosh of wind and water, the barking of a dog, the click-clack of footsteps, the sound of a siren, buzzing noises and murmurs. The collected materials were then processed in the studio using various transformation techniques to build a sound collage. Sounds of our everyday lives were taken out of their usual contexts and put into new, unexpected frames—it is worth noting, however, that the sound source in the first pieces of *musique concrète* was still recognizable despite having been processed. Over time, the sources became more and more blurred.

A *musique concrète* composer is someone who can be called a *bricoleur*, a DIYer creating art based on what is available to exceed the original functions and meanings through appropriate combinations and incrustations of finished elements (Misiak 2013, 98). The artist attentively listens to reality in order to be able to find or generate unobvious, surprising, and sometimes random sounds of the world around us. A *musique concrète* composer—a *bricoleur*, to use Claude Lévi-Strauss's concept—having taken objects out

of their original context, gives them new meanings (156). ASMR creators do this as well, following in the footsteps of DIYers of *musique concrète*. One might hazard a guess that they become *musique concrète* composers the moment they consciously ignore the utilitarian functions of the objects used in their artistic work for the illumination of their unusual aspects and extracting the unobvious sound qualities from them. When it comes to ASMR practices, working with various accessories goes beyond the *telos* of the technology used when crossing the border of pragmatic use of those objects. “Sound assortments” videos show combs and hairbrushes that do not comb the hair, but they are being knocked and scratched to bring out some deep noises; tinfoil and gift wrapping paper do not serve their usual function, but they produce crispy sounds when being tapped on and squeezed by hands; candles in glass containers do not burn, but provide a rough texture to be explored with hands, etc.

In order to find out that sound DIY is in the center of ASMR videos of the “sound assortments” subgenre, let us look at one of the examples where the artist examines various objects in order to produce the most interesting sounds. The video published on the “ASMRSleepyHead” (2019) channel, titled *ASMR IRRESISTIBLE SCRATCHING / NO TALKING / pearls, textured glass, fabric, sponges, etc.* is a typical representation of the subgenre. It shows a performer playing with a few objects that have nothing in common. You will see (and, of course, hear) a glitter bedspread, a glass liquid soap dispenser, a trivet, a string of artificial pearls, and kitchen sponges. When in contact with the artist’s hands, and as a result of rubbing the objects against each other, the material gadgets start speaking in various sounds creating an unusual musical composition consisting of the sounds of knocking, scratching, friction, and rubbing. The ASMRtist becomes a composer trying out different paces of scratching and scraping when producing sounds, by using one hand or the other, or both at once, changing the pressure of nails scratching the surface of objects, intensifying or muting the sounds when bringing the accessories closer to the microphone or moving them away from it.

Materiality of objects and the artist’s physical commitment when creating their work remind us of the vibrational nature of sound itself, which is an aspect examined by sound studies, especially by theories from the forge of sonic materialism (Cox 2011). Vibrationality of sound is visually emphasized in ASMR by its material sources being openly present on the screen and music being created by the artist almost live, at the time of physical involvement with the props. This type of hands-on approach to creating media content coexists here with the focus on the idea of sound as material-based.

Unlike *musique concrète* tracks, the sources of sound in ASMR are rarely hidden. This is related to the plane of activity that is based not only on sonic stimuli, but also on visual ones that can produce pleasant bodily responses. This context could bring an interesting look at ASMR from the perspective of the recently flourishing field of visual music that combines interest in the visible, material side of music (e.g. musical instruments) with the traditional, audio side (Hyde 2012). We need to remember, however, that ASMR is not always based on a combination of visuality and sound—some videos (such as “Guess the Trigger”) show experiments carried out by artists, where part of the fun is to hide the sources of sounds so that they have a more powerful influence on the listener.

The composer of *musique concrète* is somewhere in between composing and listening (Misiak 2013, 113). The author of *ASMR IRRESISTIBLE SCRATCHING* is a *musique concrète* composer since she does not use a score for creating her tingling soundtrack, but composes while extracting sounds from the artifacts she chose for the performance. Therefore, she has a freedom to modify it live when working with gadgets by adjusting the pace, volume, and intensity of actions. The headphones, which artists often wear when filming, are helpful as well—although we cannot see them in the video because it solely focuses on objects shown in the foreground, but all you need to do is find a roleplay video where the ASMRtist does not hide their face to find out that wearing headphones on set is a standard practice. The *musique concrète* composer must listen to what they are creating at a given moment to be able to modify their work on an ongoing basis.

Technical sound manipulation, so symptomatic for Schaeffer’s *musique concrète*, is also important in ASMR. This is where the blurred lines between “nature” and “culture” become evident. The sounds that reach the viewer-listener seem “natural,” but they are, of course, processed by the “cultural” tools and technical solutions available today, including microphones and computer software. The use of available sound processing technologies has a significant impact on the final shape of the artistic work and the effect it produces in the viewer-listener’s body that, as a result, is no longer part of either “nature” nor “culture” *per se*.

At this very moment we can hear in ASMR the echo of the new materialist attempts to “liquefy” the opposition of nature/culture indicating the conventionality of these categories. These attempts are connected directly with the ideas of New Materialism put forward, among others, by Rosi Braidotti, especially with a “non-dualistic understanding of nature–culture interaction” and an effort “to rethink our bodies as part of a nature–culture continuum in their in-depth structures” (2013, 3, 92). ASMR, in a new materialist spirit,

encourages us to think in terms of processes that occur between different subjects-objects and ourselves rather than in terms of the oppositions between “us” and “them.” The material objects with their vibrational capabilities can be called the subjects interacting with both the artist’s and the viewer-listener’s bodies causing them to experience some new affective relationships. As Ewa Domańska puts it, “we tend to see things from a pragmatic point of view; the thing is important inasmuch as it serves people and can be used by them in a variety of discourses [...]” (2006, 182). Here, objects seem to go beyond their intended roles and establish uncommon relationships with the human subject.

This kind of processual approach means developing a non-dualistic, non-binary perspective associated with changes in the “Eurocentric paradigm” that implied “the dialectics of self and other, and the binary logic of identity and otherness as respectively the motor for and the cultural logic of universal Humanism” (Braidotti 2013, 15). Some key figures for New Materialism, e.g. Jane Bennett, Elizabeth Grosz or Karen Barad, who build their concepts on the ideas of vibrational voice or music, come to similar conclusions while using the notions of resonance, vibration or diffraction to describe the world. While implementing these categories, they suggest that vibration is the fundamental ontological way of structuring matter, and that it allows to overcome the unnecessary differences between human and non-human, animate and inanimate matter, subjects and objects (James 2019).

We perceive ASMR sonic experiments with the vibrating material objects as blurring the boundaries between what is given and what is constructed (Mąkowska 2015, 149). These are the boundaries between “natural,” immanent sonic properties of the given objects and the “processed” sounds created out of them. ASMR sonic experiments illustrate how pointless it is to establish a clear demarcation line between the considered concepts.

There are very specific material objects that play a leading role in the process of establishing various relations between different subjects and connecting them with each other using vibrations. The market for new technology products advertised with ASMR in mind is quite big now—the characteristic binaural microphones, e.g. 3Dio with human-shaped silicone ears, are ideal for creating this type of content because of their unusual sensitivity and attractive appearance. It has been revealed that “binaural recording made the associated tingling sensation more intense” (Barratt *et al.* 2017, 8).¹ In ASMR, tools from the technical production facilities are

¹ Emma L. Barratt, Charles Spence and Nick J. Davis came to this conclusion after examining the answers of 130 people who self-reported experiencing ASMR in online ques-

not oblique in the process of creating a given work of art live or in the final product; on the contrary, they play one of the main roles here. Artists treat microphones, cameras, and headphones as gadgets made of matter, participating in each performance—the process of creating *musique concrète* that is supposed to create bodily shivers. The scratched, kissed, squeezed microphone is like a totem, and the camera—stroked, hugged, and touched—is always at the center of attention.

The new sensitivity towards the world and its materiality introduced by *musique concrète* is in harmony with some of the new materialist approaches to our reality, especially with the ones focusing on the vibrationality and materiality of sound. The ideas of *musique concrète*, reflections of which we have seen in ASMR practices, display attempts to transcend both the nature / culture dichotomy and the strictly human-centered understanding of sound and music. Now, we will look at how New Materialism conceptualizes sound and matter and how these ideas become inspirational for ASMR.

ASMR's Attempts at New Materialism

Since the 1990s, we have been observing a development of the agenda of the theoretical turn known as New Materialism(s) (the term coined by Manuel DeLanda and Rosi Braidotti): a retreat from modernist and humanistic traditions based on a dualistic perception of the world, which have had the greatest impact on cultural theory so far (Dolphijn, van der Tuin 2012, 48). What was the most important step in the new materialist process of adding value to the activity of non-human actors is the so-called turn towards matter, which resulted from noticing the limitations of the linguistic turn and the theory of social constructivism that dominated the humanities over the years.

Voice and sound as such were rarely seen as based on materiality. However, more and more philosophers try to introduce the idea of vibration while focusing on the link between materiality and sound. One of them is Jane Bennett who describes New Materialism as “giving voice to [...] vitality intrinsic to matter” (2010, 61). Elizabeth Grosz also perceives vibrations as crucial to life defining them as “oscillations, differences, movements of back and forth, contraction and dilation [...]” and “vectors of movement, radiating

tionnaires. A significant number of participants described their sensations as stronger when binaural recording was involved.

outward, vibrating through and around all objects or being dampened by them" (2008, 55). In addition, she draws attention to the affective potential of vibrations moving bodies in a pleasurable way which reminds us of the tingling sensation of ASMR: "There is something about vibration and its resonating effects on material bodies that generates pleasure, a kind of immediate bodily satisfaction" (2008, 32). According to Grosz, "the visual and sonorous" artworks based on the accommodated and framed worldly vibrations, "capture something of the vibratory structure of matter itself; they extract color, rhythm, movement from chaos in order to slow it down" (2008, 19).

Many researchers are eager to use these ideas in their studies. Nina Sun Eidsheim, interested in the multisensorial phenomenon of music, wants to "redirect thinking about sound as an object, as with the figure of sound, toward a reconception of sound as event through the practice of vibration" (2015, 3). According to Eidsheim, "singing and listening are better understood as intermaterial vibrational practices" (*ibidem*), not necessarily as associated with the human-centered understanding of sonic events. Here, the sound is mainly associated with vibrations of certain frequency occurring in a given material medium, and not only with those that reach the human ear (Friedner, Helmreich 2012). These findings lead to rethinking the level of involvement of human and non-human factors in co-creating a musical composition, as well as moving away from focusing on aurality as the most important feature of sound.

The vibratory quality of sound connects humans and non-humans by setting their bodies in motion. Vibrations of sound waves, even if initiated by a human being, always have the ability to move all bodies made of matter, and thus to improve their vitality and potential for further activity. This way, the vibrations draw our attention to the connections made between human and non-human actors. In the new materialist context, it is emphasized that "vibrations create relations" (Fast *et al.* 2018) which connect different bodies throughout a given event. This way, bodies—always fluid and in motion—interact with each other in a vibrational affective event, creating new dynamic connections, constantly becoming, not freezing in familiar forms.

Sonorous artworks of ASMR play on such approach to sound as vibratory structure of matter captured in an affective entanglement of bodies. This structure is revealed in the form of a "feeling with no name" (Sadowski 2016, 160), "a kind of immediate bodily satisfaction" (Grosz 2008, 32). The tingling sensation felt in response to various stimuli is an affective response to the vibrations produced by the interaction of various human and non-human bodies. Bodies of ASMR recipients—affected by sound vibration, with an

awakened tingling response—are stimulated by movements captured and produced by other bodies and thus they are in a state of potentiality, in the unfinished phase of becoming. The body experiencing ASMR is a sensitized and fluid body, as the vibration felt inside is short-lived, fickle, changeable, and elusive.

We have already established that stimuli intended to cause ASMR in this emerging body are usually inseparable from the visible source of sonic vibrations. Indeed, ASMRtists put material sources of vibrations in the center of the tingling experience. Physical props are always treated by the artist's hands with anointment, like sacred artifacts with magical properties that are being invoked during tactile interaction. In a typical ASMR video, the object set in motion by the artist spreads vibrations which are captured by a sensitive microphone and passed on to the recipient, leading to a physical response. Let us look at one of the videos from the "Caroline ASMR" (2019) channel where Caroline slowly plays with numerous objects, discovering their sonic possibilities, showing a childlike astonishment on her face. The video includes sounds produced by a pink textured pillow, a studded leatherette women's bag, a bear figurine, a string of wooden chili peppers, a jute sack, etc. With a gentle smile on her face, the artist sets the objects in motion, causing vibrations reaching the bodies—of the viewers-listeners and her own. We can clearly see the reactions of Caroline's body—her smile strengthening and her body slightly trembling when she feels the vibrations of matter coming on.

The type of approach to matter represented by Caroline is similar to what Jane Bennett called "childhood sense of the world" that "draws attention to an efficacy of objects in excess of the human meanings, designs, or purposes they express or serve" (Bennett 2010, 20). This kind of amazement at the world and its existing entities, whose common-sense, "adult," practical purpose is irrelevant here, facilitates a deeper understanding of the vitality of matter. Such an attempt by an ASMRtist to look at the objects-props stripped of meaning in a "fresh" way, without preliminary suppositions, in order to be able to further feel and pass their vibrations spreading in all directions and touching different bodies, is one of the main ideas underlying the ASMR artistic practices.

As we pointed out, New Materialism, with its proposal to look at sound in a way that goes beyond the limiting human understanding, as an idea of vibration that develops affective relations between bodies and connects human and non-human material entities emerging in a given vibrational event, can be a source of some inspirational ideas blossoming in contemporary ASMR artworks.

Conclusions

The article has examined how ASMRtists use the idea of sound's materiality in their creative activity. In the article we suggested the accuracy of certain concepts—the ones proposed by *musique concrète* style and New Materialism theories—concerning a contemporary attitude towards material reality. We recognized both of them as being occupied with the idea of “wider-than-human” understanding of sound as vibration that is capable of establishing affective relationships between humans and non-humans during the artistic performance.

Thanks to the analysis of selected ASMR videos, we have found that these artistic practices show a new materialist approach to matter and material objects that goes beyond a strictly human, rational, and practical understanding of them. ASMR practices emphasize a certain activity of the material objects which do not serve humans in accordance with their intended purpose but instead reveal surprising sonic-vibrational properties capable of affecting humans and their bodies. In addition, it was noticed that definitions of sound do not begin in ASMR with a focus on the human ear—it is not by accident that most videos feature the material objects, not humans, in the foreground. An ASMR artwork is treated here, as Elizabeth Grosz would say, as a sonorous event that accommodates and frames the vibration of the worldly matter.

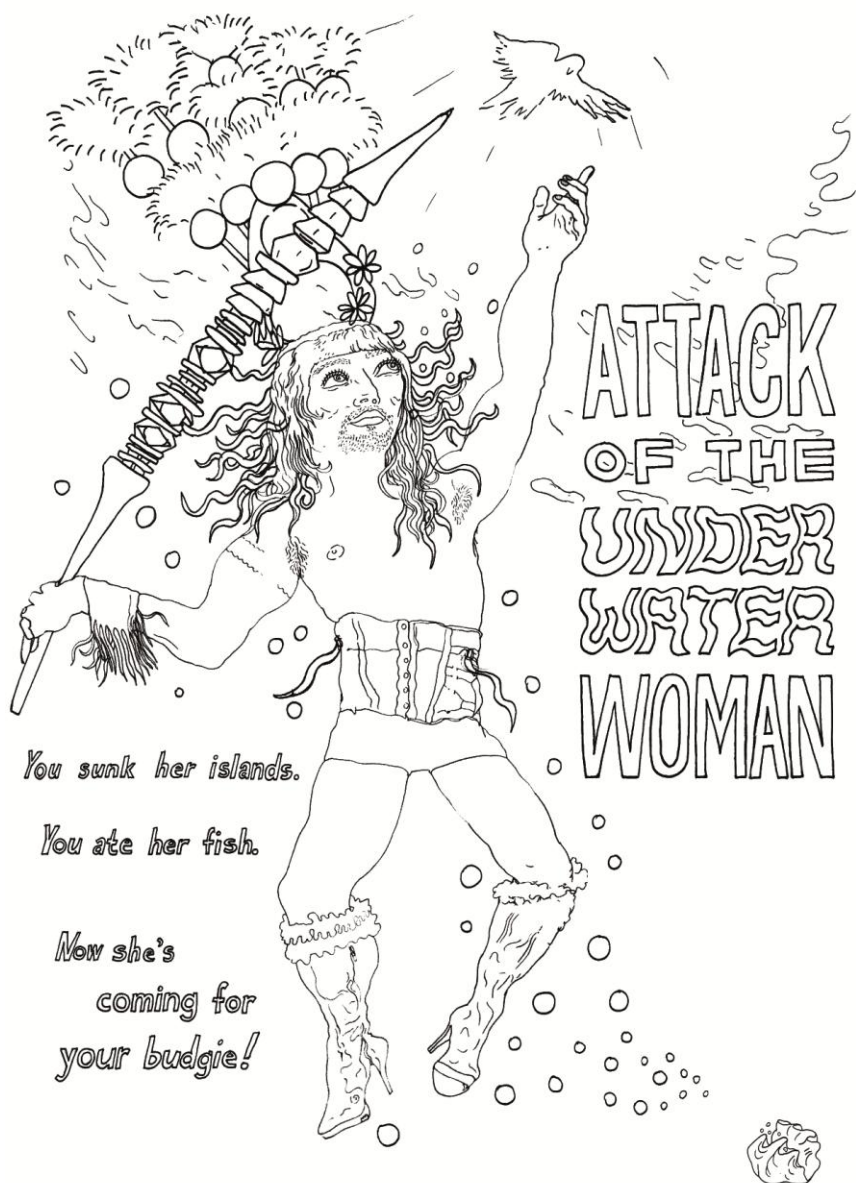
ASMR may have significant consequences for our understanding of the idea of (non-) human “music”, the issues of vitality of matter and our relationships with it, or the definition of “subjectivity.” ASMR, operating as a lens, focuses our attention on the vibrations of worldly matter, indicating its affective potential. Here, material objects are being put in the spotlight and treated like subjects with their ability to attract all our attention, occupy every single minute of the video, pour out lavishly from the screen and seep the sonic vibrations directly into our ears and bodies.

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Textaqueen, Attack of the Underwater Woman,
Starring Fez Faanana, 2011.

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Sprinkles of an Agate Sea-Wave— Multispecies Storying as Creating with Matter

Abstract

This article employs diffractive research strategies such as poetic inquiry, storying and speculative fabulation (Haraway 2013) to explore the interplay, or intra-action (Barad 2007), of memories, nostalgias, and material storied with two Instagram channels. The article does not compare these elements, but sees them as parts of a distributed knowledge (King 2011). Informed by Deleuzo-Guattarian nomadic thought and feminist new materialism, the article suggests looking at artwork and crafts as performativity (Barad 2007), networked reenactment (King 2011) and speculative fabulation (Haraway 2013). The article itself takes shape in multispecies entanglements as ways of engaging with vibrant matter.

Keywords

Diffraction, Distributed Knowledge, Networked Reenactment, Speculative Fabulation, Stonework

The Workroom

The scent of the northern sea is as sweet and refreshing as a baby's breath; the motion of its waves is erratic yet purposeful, like dogs' frolicking. Its light is opal and amber on sunny days, and like moonstone and labradorite on grey ones. I see it as transparent and airy. A friend of mine says it is oily.

It is the same, yet different in every moment of its re-enactment/co-creation of our entangled realities, known or imagined with multiple ever-changing multispecies participants. The sea never stays in one place. In the

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moment I recognize its outreach towards me, I recognize the rhizome we form. In alliance, we make our space-time (Barad 2007): it expands our known space-time and transforms it in our mutual becoming and our mutual and collective plugging in (Deleuze & Guattari 2005; Jackson & Mazzei 2013) to collectively vibrant matter (Bennett 2010). I feel the presence of the sea far away from it, not just as a mental memory but with all my senses; it makes me write about it and think of our relationality. The rhizome we form grows to other alliances—dogs, birds, trees, air, paint, pencil, stones, and shells.

Employing the Deleuzo-Guattarian relational approach to art and qualitative research and its unpacking in feminist new materialism, this article explores how rhizomatic relations with nature and material are articulated in the work of an artist known on Instagram as @musha.art and in my own artistic experience pursued within my Instagram project @morkomorketide. This exploration is not a comparative analysis but an instance of intra-action (Barad 2007) that springs from the entanglement of its multispecies participants. I use the reflective reading (Smartt Gullion 2018) of my own artistic experience to relate it to that of @musha.art's and vice versa. Here, *o n e ' s o w n* means an entangled or networked experience. *E x p l o r i n g* means intra-action within multispecies entanglements.

These artistic experiences are simultaneously testimonies, theory, and method. They are not data to be interpreted to produce a final truth but a living process of the “assemblage in formation” (Jackson & Mazzei 2013, 263) plugged into multiple processes, this text being one of them. Thus, the article does not present the results of a study but, as a material practice itself (Barad 2007; Bennett 2010; Hekman 2010; Rosiek & Snyder 2018; Smartt Gullion 2018), engages with matter and diffractively explores the entanglements that drive the inquiry (Mazzei 2014). It is thinking-making (Haraway 2013), thinking in being (Barad 2007; Mazzei 2014) or thinking-in movement (Deleuze & Guattari 2005; Truman & Springgay 2019): theory, practice, memories, and associations—all actively participate in the thinking process. They mutate as they intra-act with the multiple participants of the process throughout this article.

Although I met @musha.art in person, the true conversation began as I started following her posts on YouTube, Instagram, and her blog. Her social media channels form an open expanded community of those sharing a mindset (@musha.art, 20.12.2019) and generate entangled *n e t w o r k e d d i s t r i b u t e d k n o w l e d g e* (Haraway 2013; King 2011). The network entails collaborative engagement formally shaped by the tools that social media offers.

The discussed artistic practices are both nostalgic and utopian. They co-create an alternative space-time through critical and situated engagement (Deleuze & Guattari 1994, 108) with the world that Andersen (2017) calls *storying*. The memories and associations they evoke are diffractive post-memory (Hirsch 1992/1993), counter-memory (Barthes 2000), or Deleuzo-Guattarian rhizomatic anti-memory (2005). Following these conceptualizations, they deconstruct the clear-cut distinction between memory and history, past and present, individual and collective, intimate and public, between the media of representation, being “equally mediated by the processes of narration and imagination” (Hirsch 1992/1993, 9) and, in this way, entail the process of assemblage as the practice of *distributed knowledge* (King 2011).

Circling the text (St. Pierre 1997), poetic inquiry (Faulkner 2015; Leavy 2015), or rather speculative fabulation (Haraway 2013) as performative and dynamic discursive-material research practices bring out the diffractive and distributed nature of networked knowledge. Speculative fabulation is re-assembling, a tentacular collaborative learning-knowing-experiencing-making sense in and with the world (Haraway 2016a; 2016b). The tentacles, Haraway explains, “are not disembodied figures” (2016a, 2) or fragmented bodies in the part-object vision of the world (Deleuze & Guattari 2005, 171-172), but multiplicities “lived along lines” (Haraway 2016a, 2) in multispecies entanglements. The rhizome’s nodes are the tentacle’s suckers, curious and outreaching organs of matter that simultaneously mark structure-oriented space and call for its diffractive dismantling to explore new connections. Speculative fabulation enables multidimensionality and celebrates diversity (King 2011). It is the process, as King elaborates, of learning “how to be affected or moved”, it “opens up unexpected elements of one’s own embodiments in lively and re-sensitizing worlds” (2011, 19).

While speculative fabulation is an open, all-dimensional mapping—performative “experimentation in contact with the real” (Deleuze & Guattari 2005, 12), the two-dimensionality of a journal paper inevitably turns it into an ordered layout (Grellier 2013). The order of the sections in this article constitutes an interplay between academic laws or conventions and the practice of speculative fabulation; and rather than merely sustaining the order, the sections seek to open it up by exploring the rhizome’s nodes—the spaces of potentiality.

I recognize the rich and thought-provoking body of literature about mat-
tering in art and lament that the article’s word limit prevents me from dis-
cussing in more detail the contribution of many authors. They share an un-

derstanding of life and matter as a movement, a flow, and the ethical search for new forms of research, teaching, seeing, thinking, and being with things, which urges to break language orthodoxy and seek artistic expressions and arts-based practices. We can find more extended reviews and elaborations of new materialism and artistic practices in many methodological and theoretical studies (e.g. Coleman, Page & Palmer 2019; Kontturi 2018; Leavy 2019; Sinner, Irwin & Adams 2019; Tiainen, Kontturi & Hongisto 2015).

I would also like to mention scholars from academically underrepresented regions and scholars who work closely with indigenous practices of knowledge, and whose contribution to new materialisms, whether directly focused on art or not, remains understudied (Rosiek, Snyder & Pratt 2019). Many artists and artistic collectives expand our understanding of feminist new materialist thinking and artmaking. Yet they stay less visible due to their location, limited access to resources and academic networks, or choice of language. This article is a dialogue between an artist/organic scholar and a scholar/organic artist, where organic is understood in the Gramscian sense (Gramsci 1992) as grassroot and not institutionally certified. This dialogue allows the artistic practice to theorize and so, hopefully, expand the circle of references while contributing to the already rich debates on mattering art with ever new vibrant matter.

Stonework as travel, as toil and following the path

Natural bodies are not a resource, scenery or metaphor, but active participants and co-creators in our various endeavors (Bennett 2010; Chen, MacLeod & Neimanis 2013; Kohn 2013; Rautio & Stenvall 2019; Somerville & Powell 2019). Stones and crystals evoke associations and with them memories, dreams, and stories. They could be memory and language themselves (Barad 2007; Cohen 2015; Jacanamijoy Tisoy 2014; Kontturi 2018). More so when you know more about their origin, composition, and structure (DeLanda 2015). They tell the stone's story: about the erosion of a volcano, a passing insect or an animal, a disaster, and nearby minerals. All these serendipities make the mineral recognizable, yet still a unique assemblage. Holding a small piece of a fossilized equisetum left by the collapsed cliff at a seashore first brings me back to the image stored in a biology or geography schoolbook and, in the next instance, as in a daydream or a flashback, to an ancient forest. The textbook becomes a portal (a tentacle, a sprinkle of the sea wave) to the fossil world. Together with an incrustation in the mineral, they are ingredients of the amalgam which I am part of.

A stone in nature looks different: its ornament is hidden and could be revealed by stonework. Depending on the combination of stones, setting, carving, and sculpturing, its beauty could be augmented or lost. Stonework is the mechanical or chemical interference and manipulation with its structure and integrity. Even without considering the ethical aspects of excavation such as work conditions, environmental effects, artificially stimulated demand, and invented traditions, stonework raises ethical concerns: is this aesthetics of manipulation a result of the aesthetics of purity and sterility or a childish curiosity and longing for discovery? Is it another form of domination and colonization? When is the stone cut out of its environment and separated in pieces, the fragmented body, and when is it the body without organs, “permeated by unformed, unstable matters, by flows in all directions, by free intensities or nomadic singularities, by mad or transitory particles” (Deleuze & Guattari 2005, 4)?

The concern of consumption haunts my artistic practice. Where is the line between creativity, communication with the world, creation, and consuming, producing trash? Bennett (2010) argues that trash is a vital relationality and therefore creative. The intention, the scale, and ethics of production, attitude to the material in question, and the process of creation itself all make a difference. Works dealing with similar ethical dilemmas (Smartt Gullion 2018; Rosiek & Snyder 2018) turn to Barad’s definition of justice that “entails acknowledgment, recognition, and loving attention” (2007, x). Yet no universal solution and no list can do “justice to entanglements” (xi). “There is only the ongoing practice of being open and alive”, Barad notes (2007), “so that we might use [...] our responsibility [...] to breathe life into ever new possibilities for living justly” (x) “for the wonder of a nonhuman life to be created” (Deleuze & Guattari 2005, 192). The wonder is the diversity and multiplicity of potentialities of the alliances, of kin- and rhizome-making, in openness and ethical giving in of one’s will, one’s power over, one’s imposing I, in becoming clandestine (Deleuze & Guattari 2005). “Intense intimacy with their material” (Bennett 2010, 60), care and loving attention (Barad 2007) enable an artist’s multisensory knowledge of the material (Kontturi 2018) and self in the world.

“I adore it when the stone compels me despite my ambitions and it itself defines the form [for the ring],”¹ says @musha.art in her story (30.03.2020)

¹ All the non-English social media posts onwards are my translations. I have retained the original emoticons as they were included by the authors and complement the meaning. I do not engage in analysis of the emoticons as this could distract from the storyline of the article, yet keep them in the original quotes for ethical reasons.

(personal communication, 1.04.2020). She elaborates: “As a jeweler, you want to express your ambitions, make the setting of the complex engineering, show off. Then you look at the stone and give in to it, cut off anything excessive in your ideas” (personal communication, 1.04.2020). She adds that everything, sky, stars, mountains, a leaf or a stone all have and lack value and meaning, as they transform depending on the assemblage, in this case with her as an artist. “So, do I. I change throughout our conversation”, she replies to my thoughts about her artwork.

I thought of @musha.art because of her articulate recognition of the active participation of matter in (her) makings of art. Her thinking or theorization above relies on speculative fabulation and “on a plugging in of ideas, fragments, theory, selves, sensations” (Jackson & Mazzei 2013, 262), memories, materials among many other things. @musha.art is a jewelry artist, documentarist, and traveler. In their five-year trip around the world, she learned jewelry-making and perfected the craft. The true learning process, however, was the journey itself, a journey of relations with her partner, of encounters, of reading, listening to, seeing, smelling, tasting, recording, filming, writing, and posting (Soundaround.me. Official page, YouTube channel). Her jewelry-work after the world trip is a form of elaborating these past experiences and transformations, as her posts suggest: “Once I will tell you about the mental discoveries while working with metal :) But for now, just about how beautiful it is” (@musha.art, 14.04.2018a).

In Russian the word for traveling is “putieshestvie,” which is a compound word meaning “following the path,” focusing on the process over the destination. In English, “traveling” comes from the word “travail” meaning “toil” or “labor” (Harper 2020). This is the toil of dismantling and becoming the body without organs (Deleuze & Guattari 2005), in/appropriate/d other, ruins, or staying with the trouble (Haraway 1992; 2016b) to become open, alive and lovingly attentive. The traveler—“the path trotter” [putieshestvennik] is the one who does the hard work of following the path of the unknown in the world and self, whether moving in space or staying still (Golovátina-Mora 2018): the movement of deterritorialization, “nomadic motionless voyage,” “voyage in place” with “intensities” rather than the movement from one definite spatial point to another (Deleuze & Guattari 2005).

@musha.art’s jewelry work, as I will illustrate in the next section, is always a learning/searching/exploring process of becoming with matter, thinking-making of speculative fabulation. It is traveling

on the river where the diffraction rather than reflection is visible everyday reality: “pacifist amateur, collector of treasures, maker of desires [...] soul of the river,” @musha.art introduces herself on Instagram. Her Instagram channel is an interplay of photos of jewelry, of her working process, materials, places, herself, her partner and her, people she loves, other artists she follows, a birthday wish to the passed rock singer who “moves, inspires, teaches to love night, wind and rain, and even if he does not give you *t h e p l a c e f o r t h e s t e p f o r w a r d*, he directs you to it” (@musha.art, 22.06.2017). Stories weave around the photographs and videos, evolving-mutating together, entangled, rather than presenting the already done and completed. The channel is a diary of *t h i n k i n g - i n - m o v e m e n t* and *k n o w i n g i n b e i n g*. The pictures and videos story together with texts on the trip, the origin of the stone, its structure and characteristics, the memory, a thought that inspired, preceded, or accompanied the process of creation. The followers’ comments complement the story and inspire its development: they reveal the technical details, such as whether she carries her instruments with her while traveling or buys them every time anew (@musha.art, 14.04.2018a).

Multispecies speculative fabulation of jewelry

Tracing the bear dreams about the summer. Sows give birth to their bear cubs under winter’s soft cover. That always impressed me! But I am sure that what they dream of in their dens is summer... The emerald surface of the water that covers rushing fish, jingling leaves in the trees, and lush soft grass hugging you up to your ears (@musha.art, 27.09.2019).

This story introduces a collar made for a friend with a deep green gem on the woven string photographed on deep green grass. It unites emotion and memory triggered by zoological knowledge, her dream of summer when the grass hugs the bear or herself (?). Has she ever experienced such softness of the grass or has she only imagined it?

@musha.art’s jewelry, the textured or smooth silver, stones, the secret on the back of the setting come from her traveling, herself, thoughts about the person who ordered it, or from a spontaneous desire to create: “A collar with the drops of labradorite. I wanted to make a light thing and I think I made one. [...] Who loves heavy raindrops or drops of the morning dew under the starry night sky?” (@musha.art, 24.01.2020). This section savors the performativity of her Instagram channel in detail.

A jewelry piece is photographed on the skin, among leaves, or on a branch that looks like a hand carefully holding it, in the snow, or by the fire where one can make a berry drink the color of the stone (@musha.art, 24.11.2019). Colors and shapes of the photographic background highlight the colors of the stone, the story becomes the stone's setting itself: "[my partner] jokingly notes that it looks as if a fairy dropped it in the forest. Do you intentionally photograph it like that?—Of course, I do" (@musha.art, 29.03.2018).

Every being actively takes part in storying.

Wonderful and unrepeatable moss agate in an expandable ring. [...] Your personal entrance to Narnia. The first snow, frost on a sleeping tree, fog, or snowy air... From one angle, you will see winter, from another—spring... [...] if you try to catch the sunlight through it... wow, one can see a halo and observe the trees... [...] it is magic 🧙. [...] I wanted to photograph it in the Baikal winter forest, but I could not do it in the cold ❄️, the ring went on "charging" in the backpack behind my back 😊 (@musha.art, 23.11.2019).

The photograph of the ring and the story (the phrasing or the image, or both) distracted me from the ring, and I could not understand how she focused on the trees through the ring. The ring looked hollow. Did she use photoshop to make a collage? I kept on returning to the image, but I saw a tree in the fog. A few months later, I went back to this publication: distanced from the old story, I saw the ring and the ornament of the stone. It was magic. The magic of diffraction made me part of this storying, it made *t h i s s u n s e t a l s o m i n e*, as @soundaroundme (02.12.2016)—their world trip Instagram channel—once described the rhizome that a sunset forms with its watcher.

The pieces are carried around, they travel with the artist to find a perfect setting for the photograph to reveal what "Pachamama has cooked" (@musha.art, personal communication, 31.01.2020) and what the artist saw in this cooking; they have gotten "charged" with the air to pass it on to the one who will wear, see it or read about it. In this co-traveling, the artist may rediscover the place herself (@musha.art, 11.01.2020a).

The pieces of jewelry live their life the moment they are done, during the process of creation or even before (?): "I am not sure if the lizard looks at you through the stone or if it is cut in the setting," wonders one comment (@musha.art, 5.11.2019).

I was photographing it today and kept on thinking: "How have you ended up in the city in the middle of the winter!" I remember working hard on your antennae and fixing the labradorites, weaving the wings... you are alive as if it was not me who made you... 🐝 You were inspired by my favorite sphinx moths, who hover over the flower as a hummingbird would. And now you are autonomous (@musha.art, 9.01.2020).

The author plays a facilitator, instigator, and co-creator with the stone's origin, memory, size, color, ornament, and texture. All this diffracts the course of the creation process and its storying:

An absolutely tiny pinkie finger-ring. Its secret is even tinier: a fox puppy in the green summer grass. I know, its owner will walk it well in the mountains and meadows ♡. The last photo shows the Ai-Petri fox. They are very purposeful and busy there: they enter the tent and take everything they need. It is ok when it is an oven glove, worse when it is your shoe 🐾. I love them very clever guys (@musha.art, 11.01.2020b).

The last photo in the set shows the fox walking at night carrying something stolen from the tent. Its silhouette is cut in the back of the ring setting. The greenstone glows like a green grass blade in the sun through the fox, which makes the fox itself glow and emphasizes its trickster nature.

As in any rhizome, there is "no beginning nor end" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005, 25): "With amazement, I noticed the particularity of the rutilated quartz—its golden arrows are warm in the sunlight as if they are the light itself" (@musha.art, 29.03.2018). It is impossible to say what triggers what: inspiration–creation; material–jewelry–seeing it everywhere. The relations world–material–jewelry shapes the form of the publication as well.

Late at night, I realized that the huge waning crescent was looking through my window. It was just rising and was still warm as if it was covered with gold. I could not take my eyes off of it for about three minutes... In the photo, there is a moonstone. One can watch its irisation for a long time as well, it is not even: in some places, it is blurred; in others, it pierces the depth of the stone with its sharp needle beams. The ring found its owner, it has its secrets, but I wanted to precisely show the stone this time (@musha.art, 20.12.2019).

For @musha.art the quartz with inclusions and air bubbles are pieces of the ancient Patagonia ice that she and her partner collected during their travels (@musha.art, 14.04.2018b), the pieces of larimar are the snow-white sand on the shallow part of the Caribbean coast (@musha.art, 13.07.2019). Are their colors a mere metaphor of their origins' locations? What triggers what? What is older? Its structure "grants [the stone] a rich inner world"

(@musha.art, 14.04.2018b), its form stipulates, and the setting reinforces the light in it (@musha.art, 29.03.2018). It is a co-creation, co-storying: “those bluish flames on the bottom of the piece that you can see in some pictures are the reflection of me wearing a sweater” (@musha.art, 29.03.2018). It is always a unique assemblage and “stones of the same type are never the same” (@musha.art, 29.03.2018). As an artist, she notices and balances the differences with a difference: compensating the weight of the stones by adding silver parts with a different weight to the earrings (@musha.art, 13.07.2019), “slightly balancing the tenderness of the stone with texture and oxygenation of the silver setting” (@musha.art, 22.10.2019).

She talks about stones “like they’ve got feelings, [...] like they can think for themselves” (Rowling, 2007, 403). It is surprising, marvelous, magical, even if scientifically well explainable, @musha.art (29.03.2018) concludes. “I love milky opal with a slight touch of green. [...] The only gourmet would choose such a stone. And I understand their choice” (@musha.art, 22.10.2019); “I love tourmalines! They are different, lively, sparkly! And at the same time, mysterious. Dee” (@musha.art, 12.08.2019). Marvelous and magic, wonder, and love are familiar words in her posts. They reveal her profound love and care for stones, the feathers she has collected while traveling, as well as animals, fossils, traces, experiences, sounds, colors, and more, since they are children of Mother-Earth.

She does not collect but participates in the assemblage-co-creation: “Soon I will collect the bird 🐦” (@musha.art, 4.08.2017). The process of making, working with material is a form of spiritual, mental, cognitive, emotional, and bodily learning: “I loved working with this bracelet and feel it on my hand, I even dreamed of making one for myself 😊, sometime...” (@musha.art, 23.04.2019). The making does not have a pre-set purpose but is an open-ended and often unpredictable process of becoming-with and in:

I feel primal and wild. If not for the heat, I believe I could see thousands of years ago in the mirror of the melting silver [...] all those flames, to which my eyes stare so mesmerized. Time disappears and everything around me with it, I am one to one with the mystery that I wish to learn (@musha.art, 23.02.2019).

Along with the video of melting silver, the fire, an interplay of orange, blue, brown and silver—and the coarse yet capturing and mesmerizing sound of the Andean flute—the post produces the desire that is expressed in the comments; in my case, it is the desire to get up, dance, watch the video, again and again, make something myself, or kiss a silver ring.

A second before the miracle begins. I love my workshop, the atmosphere in it, my teacher, and my compañeros—workplace mates. I love the smell of the burning wood, heated ceramics, the whisper of the burner, the heat of the fire, the hissing of the water when candent metal is immersed in it, and the bell of the anvil. I love all of this:) But more than that, that moment when you take a stone made by nature that you love so much and, in your thoughts, see it set. For one instance, your breath and your heart stop, you hear absolute silence. An inhale. And it begins... (@musha.art, 14.04.2018c)

The still picture of a hand with its palm lines black from smut holding a transparent quartz-like stone and round yet asymmetrical pieces of silver feeds this silence of creating.

Diffraction shades and stains

I love the scent of the fur on the top of my dogs' heads. It smells like coffee, sweet, dry, clover-like, musky; like the soil of a warm summer, a plowed field at noon. This is not a metaphor but an interplay of memories and experiences as I search for more precise descriptions of the scent with the closest associations I have. Their scent calms me down. The warmth, fluffiness, and smoothness of their hair confront the strength of their muscles. I like how they respond to my hugs: affection, attachment, and attention, yet not giving in. They are autonomous, they are themselves. Each part of their body has a life of their own, yet they are part of a whole. They change the course of my thinking in multiple directions. It also happens when we walk: a sudden something changes the pre-set trajectory of the walk and we stop or go in a different direction. I try to see what drew their attention, thinking about that something, them, grass, the movement.

I collect their fur because I feel I would betray and waste something if I had just thrown it away. I also think it is beautiful. The decision to make a felted puppy was spontaneous, generated by a set of circumstances. Wool is moldable, yet resistant; it is soft, warm, and the texture feels smooth when held in your hand. While working with their fur, I felt like I was hugging them. The shape is formed with a few pokes, I see ears and tail, familiar facial expressions, the curve of the back, the tension of the leg muscles. I am surprised and mesmerized with what appears in my hands. I even feel uncomfortable poking this creature with a needle. Felting as a practice of entanglement makes me think of its plasticity yet firmness.

Was the desire to make this sculpture a desire for control? I hope not. While working, I was revisiting our hugs, feeling their scent with my imagination. I revisited my memories, at times I looked at their pictures or them

when they were around. I talked to them through the needle, wool, and sensation. The puppy-fur-felted dog is its own being now. I touch it with my forehead the same way I do with my dogs. It responds. I sense its smell with my imagination. It is the materialized assemblage of my dogs, my vision of them, my senses, their fur, their personalities, the needle, my memories, our relations, we are all together and separate. The felted sculpture playfully continues reassembling all that and more.

The Instagram channel @morkomorketide was created as a transmedia storying project. Like the felted puppy, it was born from an urging desire, a search, from a moment of *s i l e n c e* to begin to explore what is in-between the media, matter, external and internal stimuli, as reflexivity with creating an academic or otherwise creative practice. I believe the first post of the series was a dog looking intensively to my off-camera face with the comment: “so, tell me a story or shall I chew your shoe instead?,” which suggests the silence of creating (@morkomorketide, 22.04.2017a). The channel is intentionally public to emphasize its openness to conversations with the world, yet it is structured by Instagram’s algorithm and my ability to select followers.

The pictures do not necessarily correspond to the story; one post does not continue immediately from the previous post; English and Russian texts are not always a translation of each other, nor are they neatly separate. Often the preference of a certain word, its sound or spelling, the reference to an association, a memory, a quote, a song, or a movie defines the order of the post. Capital letters are avoided to emphasize the in-betweenness of the story. Desynchronization between, for instance, image and sound, as Trinh Minh-ha (1990) proposes, triggers deconstruction of the dominating gaze and introduces a multiverse of connections, relations, and meanings.

@morkomorketide pursues the goal of *p l u g g i n g i n , t h i n k i n g - m a k i n g i n* becoming with the discursive-material reality in flux and with the trouble. The storyline is an attempt to walk the streets as a dog would (or as I understand and remember it): let oneself be driven by what is not meant to be in the pre-established street order, yet is there—ruins, stains, shadows, blurred pictures as if in motion, parts, and fragments that with plugging in are feelers of the whole body, a body themselves. Like a puppy, the story tries to look in multiple directions, change storying the moment it is undertaken, look for details as tentacles of the diverse colorful multitudes with curiosity, momentous purpose, and joy. The story looks for not where it comes from but where it brings me, you, us.

The plant's shadows on the balcony tiles have multiple levels and intensities of grey, interrupted by the reflection from a windowpane. The text of the publication says: "they [white birds—blurred glass carvings against the red background from the previous post] want to catch the early light to change it slightly with their feathers to its own shadow. it opens the stair[s]" (morkomorketide, 22.04.2017b).

Walking in and with, I see the shadow, and in my thoughts, I see the story as a setting for a gemstone. I need to share it. The lack of time and the other non-Instagram life make me collect the stories in my head, on my phone, and my laptop. By the time it is published, the story can be different, merged, and transformed. It is an ongoing multispecies conversation in and with matter. Is what I see mine?—as @soundaroundme (12.12.2016) suggested. Whose voice is speaking? Is it as it is, or do I transform it? Do we re-enact it?

Does an agglomeration of pavement patches in a Finnish town look like the Moomins scene? And do moss on a tree trunk in the sunlight and tree shadows dance at the bottom of the sea (@morkomorketide, 18.11.2017)? Has the power of the tree, restrained by the concrete of the human road, spoken with its roots that look like a wise sad elephant? (morkomorketide, 9.05.2017) and what hill covered with the sun coming through the morning mist is the bag of the chamomile tea?—the one from my childhood memories or the one from the Hobbit story? (@morkomorketide, 1.09.2018) Finally, as Harry Potter asked Dumbledore at the King's Cross: "Is this real? Or has this been happening inside my head?"—"Of course, it is happening inside your head, Harry, but why on earth should that mean that it is not real?"—Dumbledore beamed at him in response (Rowling 2007, 725). One thing becomes the other and back with no beginning nor end: "As we were falling or going up the sound of our movement became the sound of the ocean waves" with the texture and ornament of the night butterfly's wing (@morkomorketide, 26.03.2019). It is nostalgia, imagination, wishful thinking, utopia, a desire to share the admiration with the world around, by revisiting, re-memembering, re-entering the storying in search for re-sensibilizing the ways the world is looked at, as well as for the community of the soul sisters (@musha.art, 20.12.2019).

The video shows a dancing grass blade against the construction site across the road. The text says: "that day we ex[c]hanged a recipe of a happy bark for an enthusiastic idea of weaving sunlight in the constructions for their lightness and yet extra strength" (@morkomorketide, 6.05.2017). The publication primarily wanted to share the happiness that dance emanated.

Forthwards to the Workroom

There is a long serpentine walk between the beginning and the end of this writing. While walking it I grew in love with this text, intuition grew into ideas, and theory mended holes in my thoughts. The pieces of the puzzle found each other at least for the time being and opened new ones. But as I get up to hug one of my dogs, he turns to his back to express his affection and lets me rub his belly. I bury my face in his fur and breathe in the sweet musky scent. I go back to my computer and the felted puppy looks at me cheerfully (@morkomorketide, 4.02.2020). Somewhere far away the waves of the opal sea play with each other as two dogs on a beach. I hear their sound in the rustling buzz of the computer fan. I feel their sprinkles in the freshness of the night.

This coda summarizes the fragment of the traveling momentarily shaped as the present text. I prefer the term coda to that of conclusion as it entails the openness of the becoming-movement. It brings back or rather forth the idea of living through the writing with multiple participants, all of which contribute to the craft—re-turns to it while “diffracting anew” (Barad 2014, 168). Simultaneously, it offers a refrain and marks a dismantling node in the rhizomatic entanglement of paper-artistic experience-matter. As Deleuze and Guattari (2005) wrote:

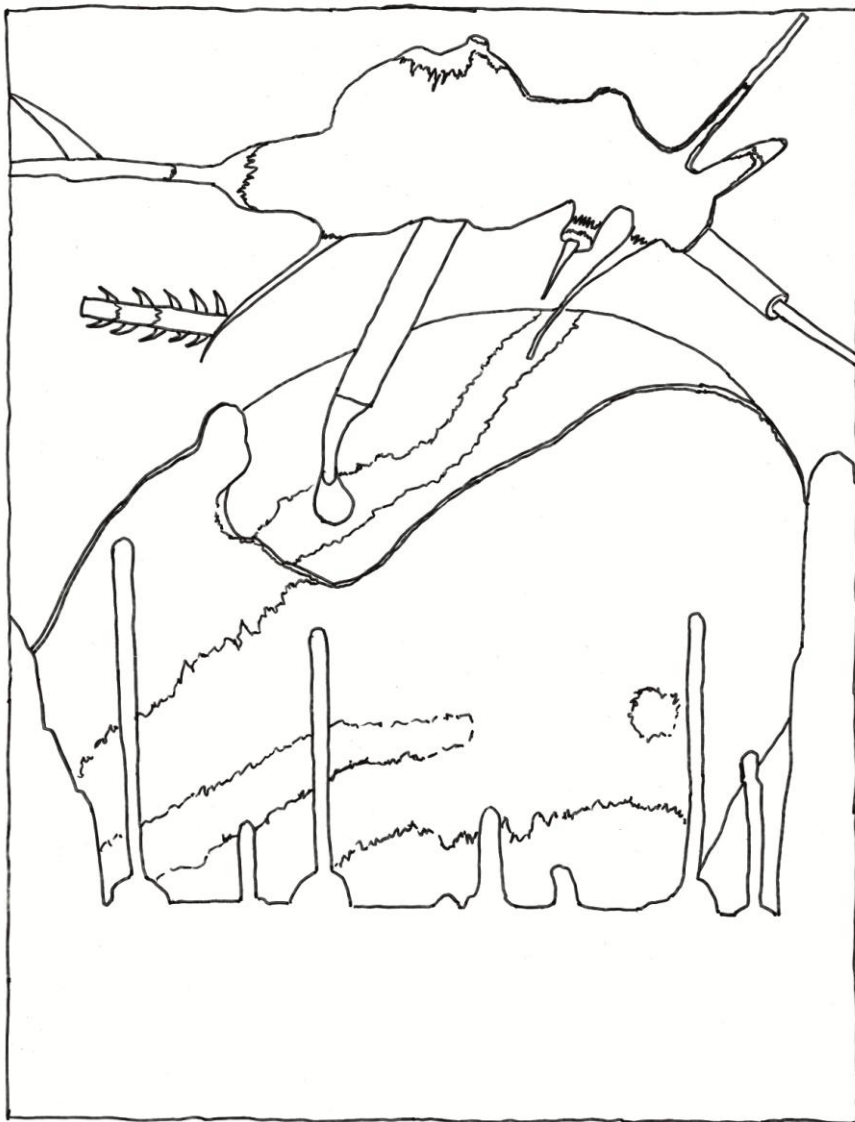
It is the body without organs, animated by various intensive movements that determine the nature and emplacement of the organs in question and make that body an organism, or even a system of strata of which the organism is only a part (171-172).

Diffractive inquiry (Mazzei, 2014) cherishes loving attention to matter, as Karen Barad (2007) has discussed. It is this loving attention that this inquiry also partakes in. Loving attention supplies or builds a basis for justice that should guide forms of artistic practice as any other activity, scholarly or otherwise. It opens ever new possibilities for knowledge of multiple selves and others and sensitivities to the vitality of matter. Care for matter and loving attention to its even smallest elements and details search for ways to build rhizomes; building rhizomes brings out the vibration of matter; the vibration of matter makes craftwork art. With/in the aesthetics of co-creation and care, artwork does not begin in the workroom, it does not have a single author, nor does it have a beginning or end. It is a way of relating to the world. The networked entangled world is the workroom, where everybody contributes to the shared art assemblage with momentarily preferred and changing means.

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After Basia Banda, Zamknij (Black Gap), 2015.
© Basia Banda and Feminist Colour-IN

Adrian Mróz*

Behaving, Mattering, and Habits Called Aesthetics

Part 1: Theoretical Navigation

Abstract

In this two-part article, I propose a new materialist understanding of behavior. The term “mattering” in the title refers to sense-making behavior that matters, that is, to significant habits and materialized behaviors. By significant habits I mean protocols, practices and routines that generate ways of reading material signs and fixed accounts of movement. I advance a notion of behaving that stresses its materiality and sensory shaping, and I provide select examples from music. I note that current definitions of behavior do not capture its material dimension. This is because behavioral science has mostly viewed matter as passive, and not as an active agency. Such an approach has metaphysically framed behavior as a phenomenon of presence that is external from its environment. The approach of behavioral science to matter where there are fixed borders between the internal and external is lacking, since it does not account for agential cuts as conceptualized by Karen Barad. Instead, I consider behavior performatively; as an ongoing iterative practice and as integral to the growth of immanently self-caused matter that spawns metastable relational formations that produce different possibilities for successive formations. In this regard, behavior matters, and matter behaves. One key aspect of my article advances Bernard Stiegler as a critical new materialist thinker. This advancement concerns the technical doings of artworks, which include the material activity that is generative of sensitivity: feelings and beliefs associated with a sense or meaning. I outline an example of the materiality of habits as constitutive of music. After that, I coin the transformative doings of matter on the artist as a “caripulation,” which is a desired movement or motion that transforms the mover and the moved. Finally, I raise “pharmacological” considerations in terms of the Stieglerian aspects of organic and inorganic organized matter.

Keywords

Behavior, New Materialism, Art, Aesthetics, Behavioral Aesthetics, Habits, Music

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Introduction

In this article, I propose that it is worth paying attention to the materiality of behaviors and feeling¹—to how behavioral aesthetics comes to matter within new materialist explorations of art/techne [τέχνη]—by developing new theoretical and exploratory thinking. The article's structure arises from my readings of Bernard Stiegler's philosophy, which I aim to develop *with* my text's authorial agency. I experiment with a methodological mode of rhizomic writing (Hillier 2007, 16-17; Chloe Humphreys 2013), which performatively acknowledges and respects a kind of "alien" thinking (Miguens 2015; 2020).² After all, noetically active texts (like when we say a substance

¹ Aesthetics understood broadly as αἴσθησις. In Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, the general premise is that behaviors and theoretical mental/physiological terms, such as thoughts, feelings, and emotions, are all mutually interconnected and influence each other in time. The ability to identify a behavior and any other associated terms, i.e. joy, sadness, *Weltschmerz* (literally world-pain, a term coined by the German author Jean Paul) etc., is a technical (linguistic) ability to bring to conscious awareness and direct attention at some quality that is judged by the faculties of cognition and understanding as well as phenomenologically retained and projected via memory and anticipation. For emotions as behavioral complexes see: Bradley and Lang 2000. For a dictionary of invented emotions see: "The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows" n.d.

² That is "alien" to established scholarly intellectual homogenizations of thought (writing) or Western Anglo-Saxon managerial standards that penetrate foreign traditions within the political and formal grammatizations of records and texts. I am verbalizing this in order to acknowledge the concerns of my reviewers, to whom I wish to extend my thanks and appreciation. I have decided to compromise and significantly revise this submission, so that this text is intelligible for the Anglo-Saxon academic culture (given the fact that it is written in English, a language whose grammatical structure is already analytical). Most of their suggestions for structuring the text fit Western "academese" criteria of communication practices. I received my academic training in Poland. So, despite the fact that I am an English native speaker, the writing style presented here is individuated and diachronic, a part of Teutonic (impressionistic, relativistic, interpretive, postmodern, digressive) thinking, writing, and practicing philosophy and communication. In the Anglo-Saxon perspective, writing is seen above all as a means of doing things through texts, i.e. interacting with people. From the Teutonic vantage point, writing becomes primarily a form of being through texts. It is likely, therefore, that problems will arise when Polish speakers are asked to perform a skill-dominated writing task, whether in their native tongue or in English. [...] The Teutonic approach to writing and teaching writing is described sometimes as focusing on content and showing some disregard for form [...]" (Duszak 1998, 196). So, I value academic noetic diversity, which is why I prefer to contribute in this way, as a means of individuating within the global tendency towards a uniformization of the culturally embedded intellect or Aristotelean *nous*. Besides, as Stiegler claims throughout his philosophy, reading should be *laborious*, since writing that

is biologically active) ultimately energize truth-seeking behaviors that are idiosyncratic movements of producing *différance* and curiously synchronizing extra-ordinary³ understanding.

I expect that each re-reading of this two-part article will stimulate novel critiques and productive misunderstandings. This is crucial given their necessity and value in terms of the Stieglerian “error,” “lack,” or “default” [*défaut*] in noetic genesis, producing human and even extra-human knowledge or at least that which is in excess of the human (referring to the incalculability of life) (Stiegler 1998a). For Stiegler, knowledge is by definition infinite, although it is limited by its “retentional finitude:” the technical horizons, limitations, or boundaries of memory and forgetting (Stiegler 1998b). So, I omit certain discourses⁴ from this text’s foreground, which is this article’s *default* that is necessary [*le défaut qu’il faut*] and which should not be resolved here.

I do not intend to develop a central narrative against which each section is fixed nor a “final” line of argumentation that can be established once and for all. This work [*œuvre*]⁵ is open and performative, it is care-fully⁶ and

individuates the singular difference of the diachronic “I” with a synchronic “We” qualifies as a pharmacological stimulate, for instance, encouraging the growth of the hippocampus in the brain. Thus, the aimed social role of this text is to train and elevate the value of the spirit/mind [*esprit*] or attention and being.

³ Here, extra-ordinary means an elevation of the ordinary or the “[...] everydayness that creativity always transfigures into something improbable, that is, into something singular [...]” (Stiegler 2010, 12).

⁴ These could include science and technology studies (Bruno Latour), object oriented ontology (negative new materialism), or vital new materialism. See: Gamble, Hanan, and Nail 2019.

⁵ Here, the use of square brackets denotes a reference to a foreign word which can be translated in many ways. This term is important in Stiegler’s philosophy. In this case, the French word *œuvre* means not only work (labor) or artwork, but also an opening, operation, and activity.

⁶ This term refers to the Stieglerian notion of care as thinking about attention so as to cultivate it. This is a temporary noetic practice of interrupted thinking done from time to time (Collins 2014, 219). Stiegler (2017a) conceptualizes thinking as care, which is exemplified by the wordplay between *penser* (to think, to imagine, to believe) and *panser* (to treat, to care, to bandage). Etymologically speaking, *panser* is a doublet of *penser* since both terms derive from the Latin *pensare*. The meaning of *panser* as “to take care, to heal, to concern oneself with” comes from *penser à* (thinking about, considering), and *penser de* (thinking of, having an opinion). This doublet should be viewed considering the original meaning of the term *ethos*, especially since *ethos* was understood as an accustomed place or a habitat of horses. *Panser* had meant to give (a horse) proper grooming or attention, to treat it well. Its virtue is in attempting to help both *feel* better; to care about and care for

artificially designed to be noetically active, which is the inadequacy of not reaching its “end,” an end that—metaphorically speaking—would be its death. The questioning, however, that I do intend to develop concerns itself with how the field of behavioral aesthetics makes intelligible the sensory mattering of procedural, habitual learning that constitutes every *work* of art (what I call making-sense). By habitual I refer to the Aristotelian *hexis* [ἕξις] and *ethos* [ἦθος] (Holmes 2018, 64-96).⁷ In *Nicomachean Ethics* (1105b), the feelings that accompany pleasure or pain, or the *páthē* [πάθη] that motivates and moves the soul (what I understand as the *esprit*), are defined in relation to the *hexis* which determines the direction or end of the experienced feelings as well as their intensity or quality. The Stoics later developed this term as a material binding power or what Seneca called the *unitas*. It was grouped along with *physis*, *psyche*, and *nous*. *Hexis* is the “*unitas* of inorganic matter” (Peters 1967, 83-84; Preus 2007, 290). Thus, the mattering of *habit* and its technical importance for behavior are worth exploring.

relationships. It ties the notion of looking after or being tender, nursing, and soothing, to what we call thinking, or any other activity of the mind. It should be noted that thinking is commonly viewed as a behavior, something an organism does. (Melser 2004) I believe this holds profound implications for philosophy in terms of attaching oneself to knowledge, as loving all kinds of thought, especially *savoir-vivre*, and for providing nourishment or *food for thought*. If the intellect (*nous*) is stimulated, if it receives proper treats or what is called positive reinforcement within its milieu or habitat, it grows. Careful thinking as *penser/panser* in terms of Cartesian *cogito ergo sum* is thus about attentive existential housekeeping; it is about practicing hygiene [ὑγιεινὴ τέχνη, *hygieinē technē* or the art of health]. In other words, *penser/panser* is communicative behavior, which is sound, wholesome or salutary, and necessarily implies the intimate, the domestic and the social.

⁷ The latter, *ethos*, emerges out of the former, *hexis*, which is an active having, not an action. *Hexis*, non-mechanistic procedural and repetitive embodied “habits” or a semi-permanent “second nature” (between “nature” and “culture” in Aristotle’s *On Memory and Recollection*), needs to be cultivated in order to command any *technai* and shape thought itself. See the section titled *Ethos and Hexis* as Rhetorical Habituation for detailed analysis of the relation between these two terms in the second chapter of Holmes’ book. There, we learn that daily habit, *hexis* (a state, characteristic, disposition or bodily comportment), derives from *echein* (to have/possess) and is understood as a trained or learned *active having* that proceeds *activity* and produces ethical action, action that is not impulsive nor necessarily completed, which can be suspended. *Hexis* is not always a repetition of a specific behavior in the presence of its stimuli, since it entails its inhibition and common sense. The general conclusion is that habits produce creativity, and not what is conventionally assumed, that they are obstacles to creative thinking, which would be to misunderstand the importance of procedural, repetitive, bodily actions that give shape to thinking, which in turn steer behavior; that is *ethos* as character formation or habituation, which is responsible for *excellence*, an aesthetic category used for judgement, a “practice” of cultivating a “second nature” or perhaps an artificial instinct.

This article has organized itself into an introductory section that is followed by a critical inquiry of the term behavior. Behavior is in *default*, and so the popular notion of this term is lacking and necessarily inadequate,⁸ which is the *default* of the formal acknowledgement of the activity of matter. The subsequent sections are like cays: small, low-elevation, sandy islands that share common ground with these problematics, while surrounding waters of the unknown (unobserved and unmeasured) conceal this. We may cross waters with bridges (structures of argumentation to follow) or by using individuated rafts and ships, so the “correct” navigation (argumentation) from one island to the next does not need to be linear, that is, follow grammatized bridges or traces of noetic movement presented in this paper. The range of topics, the proposed map of beaches, includes the general habits of music-making, the Stieglerian notion of pharmacology, and theoretically flirts with select notions developed by Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

When it comes to the specific theoretical location or situatedness of this article, the milieus in and for which the arguments of the piece are first and foremost put forward are located in art and music philosophy, more general philosophy concerning embodiment, cognition, and behavior⁹ (Ayoko and

⁸ Behavior, and its material failures and resistances, for me is understood phenomenologically in relation with tertiary retention, as nudge theory and its politics should make obvious (Thaler and Sunstein 2009; Raihani 2013; Ariely 2009; Kahneman 2012). As Stiegler writes: „When adequation is effective, interruption no longer occurs, although adequation is nothing more than a default: *I think* can no longer accompany this representation, which itself cannot present itself; flux has ended. The individual thus bequeaths this ‘completed inadequation,’ so to speak, to his or her posterity, in the form of tertiary retentions: a pipe, a bit of garden, love letters, tools, a butterfly or linen collection, a library (even a library of books he or she has written), a cat, photos, a cemetery plot. Anything is possible, even the unmarked grave and the public trash dump” (Stiegler 2011a, 58).

⁹ Milla Tiainen has brought to my attention that the focus on the constantly iterative and open-ended habits constitutive of behaviors of musical creation could be developed by some of the approaches charted in Nicholas Cook’s book *Beyond the Score: Music as Performance* (2013) i.e. the notion of “corporal (sic) thinking.” Inspired mainly by Deleuze and Guattari and some related philosophies, Tiainen also has written about the ever-dynamic nature of even the most entrenched habits of music-making, and about the undoing of habits through embodied potentiality reignited by imagination, in her PhD dissertation, *Becoming-Singer*, which was based on ethnographic and philosophical research with classical singers. Unfortunately, her dissertation is not easily available. Although, interested readers may refer to her other writings on the same topic that are in circulation—for example to Tiainen 2008 in the book, *Sonic Interventions*, or to Moisala, Leppänen, Tiainen & Väättäinen 2014 in the journal, *Current Musicology*. However, I do not have the

Ashkanasy 2020; Kilbourne, Dorsch, and Thyroff 2018; Stienstra et al. 2012), and more specifically the philosophical practice of producing knowledge as perused by *Ars Industrialis* (Stiegler 2014b, 11-28).

The problematics of behavior are explored initially from an etymological and definitional analysis of the term. I note that the term “behavior” is ambiguous, and definitions—from non-specialist dictionaries like Merriam Webster to the philosophical accounts presented by philosopher Filipe Lazzeri—tend to overlook the materiality of behavior. These definitions conceive of behavior immaterially as a quantifiable and copiable style or pattern, cause or reason, function or operation, an organized movement, and finally, as a difference. All these aspects are positioned as external to matter and to its milieu or environment. The motives presented in this paper follow the thinking formulated by Stiegler in the series, *Technics and Time* (Stiegler 1998a; 1998b; 2011a), where the philosopher claims that the question of who (*esprit* or spirit/mind) or what (matter) invents the human, an entity which necessarily lacks an essential nature, is one that is undecidable.

My thinking of behavior is orientated by reflections on technics, as a necessary contribution supplementing the *default* in the thinking of people associated with new materialisms¹⁰ (Gamble, Hanan, and Nail 2019), as proposed by Charles Devellennes and Benoît Dillet, and Michał Krzykowski (Devellennes and Dillet 2018; Krzykowski 2019). The former two advance the plurality of new materialisms as a strength and pluralize the discipline furthermore by centering technics within its discourses (Devellennes and Dillet 2018, 9). In other words, they view Stiegler as a philosopher who advances the “unthought” by “taking the pharmacological nature of technics seriously, that is, treating it both as a potential cure and as a potential poison” (Devellennes and Dillet 2018, 18). They argue that such a “pharmacological” analysis “is a productive way to move the debate forward for new materialisms” (Devellennes and Dillet 2018, 18). Moreover, Krzykowski adds that Stiegler is a thinker of what is called hyper-matter (digital information), an energy and information complex where matter can no longer be distinguished from form (Stiegler, Petit, and Bontems 2008, 109-110). Fol-

space to develop this approach in this article, which is aimed at understanding the technology (Krzykowski 2019, 86) of behavior as Skinner problematized it, that is the “technology of behavior” (Skinner 2002). Stiegler understands bodily existence as exorganic and endorganic (Stiegler 2020a).

¹⁰ A discipline of various heterogenetic paradigms and theories. A better way of speaking would be to say new materialisms in the plural (Coole and Frost 2010; Sanzo 2018; Devellennes and Dillet 2018).

lowing the thought of Chinese philosopher Yuk Hui, who notes a contemporary technological shift from the “organized inorganic” to the “organizing inorganic” that repositions machines and other technical systems as not mere instruments but “gigantic organisms in which we live” (Hui 2019, 28), Krzykowski argues that “new materialist thinkers seem to overlook this shift [...]” in the hyper-material (Krzykowski 2019, 82). That is the shift from the passive “organized” to the progressive “organizing” aspects of matter, which for me raise behavioral questions. If organizing inorganic matter is conceived of in terms of gigantic organisms or Stieglerian “simple, complex and hyper-complex exorganisms” (Stiegler 2020), then their negentropic behaviors and habitats must also be studied. In addition, Krzykowski emphasizes that positioning Stiegler within the discourses of new materialisms would be philosophically promising, since “[...] revolutionary hyper-materialist thinking goes beyond what new materialist scholarship often refers to ‘nature-culture(s)’ and focuses on the vital link between technology and biology in order to better explain the technological condition of noetic life and offer a wider account of what is called thinking” (Krzykowski 2019, 88).

Moreover, as Devenelles and Dillet do, and as I do here, “By engaging with the work of Stiegler in this introduction, [...] we also aim to put this technological question at the forefront of new materialist agendas, something that remains a lacuna of much of the literature” (Devenelles and Dillet 2018, 9). They defend the claim that Stiegler is a new materialist thinker who derives his thinking from Derrida, not Latour (Devenelles and Dillet 2018, 15), and who provides the advantage of placing technics at the forefront of new materialist attention. Krzykowski approaches technics broadly in his critique, where he argues that “technics (*tekhnē*) designates all domains of what is referred to as *savoir* in French and what cannot be reduced either to ‘skills’ or ‘knowledge.’ Therefore, as Stiegler suggests, politeness, elegance, rhetoric, philosophy, poetry, dancing, as well as cooking, can be defined as technics, that is particular forms of performed *savoir* or *savoirs* [...]”. These knowledges, noetic activations, take place through thoughtful or careful practicing of a material “caripulation.”¹¹ He adds, “ ‘All human action has something to do with *tekhnē*,’ which means that ‘delimiting the field of technics’ is difficult (Stiegler 1998, 94)” (Krzykowski 2019, 86). Thus, there is a proper domain of *savoirs* that address the questions of behavior. So, I think of behavior as an ensemble of materially habituated techniques that are productive of sensibility and sensory formation, and in effect, produce diverse aesthetics.

¹¹ I define this term later in this paper.

Part I. Theoretical Navigation

Background context on the materiality of behavior

What ways of questioning, then, can be posed about the material relationship between behavior and the sensible (who/what makes sense—understood as the agency of producing sense perceptions and intellectual or symbolic meaning)? Sensibility is assumed to stem from organologically sculpting modes of perception and sensitivity¹² that grow with material media. (Stiegler 2011b; 2014; 2015; 2017b; 2017c; Dillet 2017) If phenomenology, like the *Structure of Behavior* by Merleau-Ponty, is to be today theoretically refocused on behavior, rather than on consciousness, then how can retention be developed?

I am interested in the intersection between being and having. In this article the questioning and proposal of paying attention to the materiality of behavior stem from studies that address the philosophical question of the general origin of behavior (and life) itself (Brennan and Lo 2011; Larson, Jensen, and Lehman 2012). Examples include behavioral chemistry—molecular-level behavior and the problem of “free will” in terms of the “decisions” of the “Self” of molecules, proteins, RNA, and so on—or the contemporary understanding of complex behaviors as recurrent processes of behavioral trait selection that have repeatedly emerged in biology (York and Fernald 2017). From a macro-scale perspective and in response to these sources, I noticed that behavior trait selection is also a question of co-selection by the properties and behaviors of material, technical sensory objects called inorganic organizing matter constitutive of tools coupled with refined anthropic gestures, for example writing, grammaticized and ordered

¹² Stiegler pursues this question by referring to the notion of the social sculpture as practiced by German artist Joseph Beuys (Fitzpatrick 2014). Organology is understood as a tripartite transductive relationship between human sense organs, technological artefacts, and social organizations. What is problematic is how to situate behavior in this tripartite relationship. It certainly cannot be reduced to physiology nor to instrumentality, so to only one term of this triple relation. I think that this was precisely the aim of what Rosetta Brooks, and other artists like Stephen Willits, has called *Behavioral Art* in the periodical *Modern Art Studio International* volume 185 issue 951 in the early 1970s. It was supposed to produce changes in how a given social class understands Others as well as in “sculpting” how they behave through means of cybernetic control. (Willats 2010). This would later develop into the notion of *performance*, which will become contested by Tania Bruguera in the 2000s through the foundation and closure of the *Catedra de Arte Conducta* (Behavior Art School).

in political culture¹³ (Everett 2012; Hayles 2012; Stiegler 2020b; Yamamoto 2013) and transmitted via Stieglerian “epiphylogenetic” memory (Stiegler 1998a, 175-79) from generation to generation through mimetic and technically supported habitual learning.

My proposal consists in the development of this understanding to include a new materialist approach to the phenomenon of human behavior, which cannot be reduced to the biological—or organizing organic matter such as the brain, DNA, or bodily dopaminergic systems. It must also include the social and the artificial [τέχνη], that is the noetic and its organizing inorganic material supports and “spiritual” cults, understood as cultivations of the localized, procedural, and embodied habits of cutting¹⁴ or individuating the

¹³ I bear in mind several ancient Greek notions in relation to the philosophy of culture (not to be opposed to technics), which I only have space to shallowly signal here without any in-depth elaboration: 1) Being κόσμος (kosmos), that is well-behaved or well-ordered. It would also be appropriate to bring to mind the “cosmetic”; 2) πολιτεία (politēia) from which modern notions of the body politic and civil society derive, such as urbanity, politeness and to police; 3) πράξις (praxis) as embodied practices and conduct, embodying virtue in the form of common sense, i.e. φρόνησις (phronēsis); 4) ἔθω (éthō), that is ethnicity and ethos, ethical character or customs and habits; and, 5) τρόπος (trópos) understood as a style, direction, turning motion, manner, way of behaving in life, the use of discourse. When thought together and in simplification, we could say that the cultural body politic is one of steering or controlling the ways of ordering symbolic codes, rules, and even “laws” of behavior that differentiate civil life from barbarism and separate the possible from the socially impossible and taboo. Rules of etiquette are regulated and directed; such as, for example, correctly displaying the orthotic (exact) gestures and uses of a knife and fork to eat in a desirable way according to criteria of the social setting for a purpose that cannot be reduced to the simple drive to satisfy hunger. Thus, the flow of the cosmetic, polite, practical, ethnic, and stylistic modes of behaving and learning of *savoir-vivre* are subject to processes of discretization producing an image, i.e. γράφω (gráphō), or an alphabet of gestures, i.e. γράμμα (grámma), in the realm of imagination, including pictorial and literary depiction and idealizations conveyed by virtues such as *excellence*, which materialize themselves in the form of role models and best practice in the form of Stieglerian tertiary retentions. At the same time, this is a production of a certain aesthetic (looks and feelings) that lay the groundwork for sensibility itself. An example could be the discomfort felt when trying to adapt one’s behavior to social norms in order to not be rude, that is perhaps moving from chewing with one’s mouth closed in Western Culture to making loud lip-smacking sounds when eating in the presence of others in non-Western cultures. See “aesthetic dissonance” in Mróz 2019.

¹⁴ When referring to cutting, I recommend reading the final section or “cay” on pharmacology in this paper. In terms of Karen Barad’ agential realism, the smallest unit of analysis are phenomena. The phenomena of behavior would thus appear from within the relationship constituting doings and measuring agencies. When detecting cuts, cuts are made, and agencies are distributed. The agential qualities of phenomena are cut together

esprit or spirit/mind as a particular mode of perception and ways of feeling and living that support value. I have in mind cults of behaving and energizing characteristic of enthusiasm [ένθουσιασμός]¹⁵ like when we talk about co-operative “team spirit” in sports or business (Stiegler 2014b). Spirit value is orientated towards a certain virtue of elevation, surpassing of limits and generations of miraculous bifurcations,¹⁶ called *ex-celence*. So, to say behavior matters is to say, at least, that it is negentropic and anti-entropic, significant, and that it is physical.

This problem of selection that I have mentioned above may be considered as a problem of the heritable invention of milieus and behavioral stimuli of and by organisms, coupled organizational and temporal technical systems of both organic and inorganic matter. In terms of a phenomenological behavioral retention that I advance in this paper, the habits of organized organic and inorganic matter actively resist and anticipate forces of disorganization. They concern both biological entities and non-biological ones like crystals or the “free will” or choices exercised by molecules within behavioral chemistry. In other words, behaviors are metastable repeated traces, forms of memory, intra-acted¹⁷ between the habituations of both organized organic matter and organized inorganic matter.

With that said, my approach in this paper follows a theoretical exploration that builds upon the Stieglerian undecidability and *différance* of the who and the what that is posed in the problem of anthropogenesis or the inven-

or apart, which are performative decisions of the who or what that acts, these are agential cuts that temporarily stabilize certain properties and boundaries within phenomena (Barad 2007; Kleinman and Barad 2012; Barad 2014).

¹⁵ Being “possessed”—“having” internalized or in terms of phenomenology: retained, so transformed into extra-conscious thought—a “divine,” sacred, or singular essence, that is an “external” or socially shared property that is infinite and characterized by negentropy, which is differing from and deferring death, that is entropy, by energy sources that are renewable or not exhaustible.

¹⁶ Stiegler has recently published a book titled *Bifurquer* on this topic (Internation Collective 2020).

¹⁷ Intra-action is defined as follows: “Intra-action is a Baradian term used to replace ‘interaction,’ which necessitates pre-established bodies that then participate in action with each other. Intra-action understands agency as not an inherent property of an individual or human to be exercised, but as a dynamism of forces (Barad, 2007, p. 141) in which all designated ‘things’ are constantly exchanging and diffracting, influencing and working inseparably. Intra-action also acknowledges the impossibility of an absolute separation or classically understood objectivity, in which an apparatus (a technology or medium used to measure a property) or a person using an apparatus are not considered to be part of the process that allows for specifically located ‘outcomes’ or measurement” (Stark 2016).

tion of the human¹⁸ [*l'invention de l'homme*] (Stiegler 1998a, 134-179), where the human is an endangered phenomenon itself. Now, the aesthetic qualities of movement and technical categories (Koppensteiner, Primes, and Stephan 2017), such as speed or precision, indicate that gestures and behaviors incorporated with instruments of changing and refining automated corporal habits towards idealized protentions of excellence are products of their mutual technogenesis¹⁹ (Hayles 2012) and the development of biological organs, that is to say, habit as growth and loss of the flesh (Stiegler 2020b). When it comes to the apprehension of art objects as *objectus* (dance routines, songs, concepts, etc.) we usually evaluate the elevated and retained selections of performance²⁰ of these organic movements in the aesthetic features of the artifacts themselves, retentions that re-produce objects like paintings, dance, songs, and even abstract concepts like labor value.

My development focuses on behavior rather than action and performance because I view behaviors as “techno-logies” (Krzykowski 2019), a complex set of skills, repetitive programs subject to phenomenological retention and protention that form lifestyles. The phenomenon of behaving in a certain style arises from emergent transductive²¹ relationships (De Assis 2017, 698-701) of mattering which shape new techno-social²² norms and sensory habits, including long-term ways of envisioning the future, that is, protention. The term behaving conveys the possibility of learning and a qualitative measure of intentionality: adopting and changing norms between generations, and moreover it requires material re-minders or cues for regular attentive repetition and variation in order to conserve that pattern of mattering, which is human.

¹⁸ The human is not thought of as some innate property of *homo sapiens* like having self-consciousness, rather the human is a transient mode or pattern of rational existence supported by technics and performatively displayed by *homo sapiens*. That is to say, we are not intellectual, rational beings twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

¹⁹ The idea that humans and technics have coevolved together.

²⁰ See the case of this paper titled *pharmacological considerations*.

²¹ This is a concept developed by Gilbert Simondon. “Transduction refers to a dynamic operation by which energy is actualized, moving from one state to the next, in a process that individuates new materialities” (De Assis 2017, 695). I do not have space here to analyze in depth the differences and similarities of the processes of individuation between intra-action that give shape to agency and temporal processes of transduction, i.e. immanent processes of differentiation and individuation that over time energetically form transducers or modulators of resistance that gradually mediate real potential and actual energy by means of information, and thus give shape to the event.

²² This hyphen means that the two terms “technical” and “social” are co-constitutive and only emerge in a compositional manner in relation to the other. This signifies a transductive relationship.

However, because of transduction (resistance) of the flow of captured energy, intra-acted behavior is always threatened by the possibility of its spontaneous extinction (as well as re-emergence), that is loss or forgetting, and this includes the possibility of misbehaving (which is not necessarily a bad thing). In turn, I understand action in an Aristotelean fashion, as the materialization of potential energy—as in “passing to the act” (Stiegler 2009). In simplified terms, action conveys a thing done, a change of state, or a one-time act performed at a specific moment in time and it is also subject to entropic forgetting and decay without maintenance and work. For me, the singularity of the term action loses the broad sense of effort and automatization, or gradual passing into time, inherent in the life-long idiomatic formation, retention or learning of *ethos* and *hexis*: habits and routines, constitutive of *savoir-vivre* and *savoir-faire* in the realm of shaping synchronic human political life.

In my proposal of considering behavior in terms of its materiality, I would like to indirectly approach debates about actions and intra-activities (Barad 2007; Bennett 2001; Latour 1996; Ingold 1986) in Art Studies (Kontturi et al. 2018) from the sidelines by rooting behavior and habit²³ in Stiegler’s philosophy. The phenomenon of behavior can be viewed as the outcome of intra-action between organized organic matter and its *milieu*. Intra-action connotes the relationships within phenomena that are doings (Kleinman and Barad 2012, 80) that carve the material agential properties of behaving. Stiegler’s philosophy advances the pharmacology of cutting and an organological analysis of the project of behaving or what he calls acting out. I want to avoid confusing behavior (which organizes the passive and that, which is passing and has passed) with action (the realization of the virtual) when referring to the very similar posthuman discourses on intra-action (Kessler 2019, 80-86) from which behaviors emerge.

I view intra-action as a category that logically advances behavior. This is because the agential capacities of various behaviors and habits are ones that follow from or derive from agential cuts that are performed within the

²³ I would like to thank my reviewer for suggesting the analysis of the confluence of matter and behavior that make habits by deploying process philosophy’s model of identity, such as Gilles Deleuze’s process-orientated ontological understanding of habit. However, the Stieglerian analysis developed in this paper is one of that Stiegler already developed as a “theatre of individuation,” since he uses the Deleuzian notion of repetition, which is fundamental in Stiegler’s pharmacology. I have decided to omit this understanding of habit in favor of *hexis*. However, a Deleuzian development of habit in relation to art can be read, for example, in the article by Andrew Lapworth titled “Habit, art, and the plasticity of the subject: the ontogenetic shock of the bioart encounter” (Lapworth 2015).

world's intra-activity. In other words, intra-action (the relational emergence of agency) should be "cut" from my interests in behavior (the negentropic maintenance of agency which has relationally emerged and can be entropically lost), which is perceived, organized, and the temporal movement that is retained *a posteriori*, after the agential cut. This does not exclude the possibility of healing the cut and re-growing intra-actively. Nevertheless, the term behavior does not exist in a "vacuum", it is relationally "linked to and affected by the materiality and discursive frameworks with which it intra-actuated" (Barreiro and Vroegindeweij 2020, 141). In a sense, I aim at "delivering" a resituated humanist account of the phenomena of behavior, "saving" the techno-idiosyncratic transductive material agencies or retentions of the human in the negentropic becoming of the planet.

Therefore, I think within Stieglerian philosophy, according to which the rational and civil pattern that is the human is a temporary and mediated mode of existence always threatened by the possibility of a regress to subsist only in reduced modes of survival. It is a noetic being threatened by the loss of noetic functions and behavioral extinction leading to inhumane drive-based reactions. In other words, who or what is humane is constitutive of urbanity, civility, that is constantly threatened by regression and requires care (Cohen 2017). So, I have revalued behavior in terms of its habitual technicality. As a distinctive, perceivable and transmittable type of consistent ability to make (a *différance*) and make-do,²⁴ as τέχνη, I understand behavior as ordering transformative socializing procedural habits—a set of rigorous and disciplined routines—of embodying craftlike knowledges that one has "tasted," like *savoir-vivre*, *savoir-faire*, *savoir d'expérience*, and *savoir théorique*. In this regard, behaviors put various knowledges to action²⁵ (produce singular effects), and hence negentropically order, carve, a practiced phenomenological world. The body within which knowledge is stored may be any combination of organizing organic matter (e.g. muscles and brains) and organizing inorganic matter (e.g. machines and computers). Organized matter, technics, forms as a trace—and thus a memory as behavior (Delaney and Austin 1998; Keim et al. 2019)—of repeated singular actions that are elementary units of localized habits that constitute general modes of behav-

²⁴ The production or learning of skill (making of agency or the capacity to do), the ability to manage in spite of limitations and inadequacy, and the use of supplements, especially those that are "good enough."

²⁵ This, as Michał Krzykowski writes, "requires a new sense of critique and a new understanding of what knowledge-making practice actually means in relation to hyper-matter" (Krzykowski 2019, 86). See footnote No. 8 in Krzykowski's article.

ior. Behavior is plural, pre-mediated or intentional (not necessarily conscious), and consists in temporal practices of making-sense, sensibility²⁶ [αἴσθησις], orientated not only by an end, but by the exteriorization or individuation of the Self,²⁷ which Stiegler claims is always inadequate or in default. Behavior, as a holistic complex of specific habits of organizing actions entangled with matter, itself emerges with inorganic material supports (laws, languages, metronomes, pens, videos, etc.), which also “behave” in a double meaning.²⁸ Later in this paper, I philosophically thematize this double meaning of behavior within the dual composition of the *pharmakon*, which is equally poisonous and remedial, destructive and productive.

Select problematics of behavior

In this section, I explore problematic or “fuzzy” definitions of behavior, which I understand philosophically as a phenomenon of existential retention and protention in matter (being and having). In other words, it is a selective storage of living experience (e.g. memories and dreams) in organizing organic matter (e.g. a brain, dopaminergic system, gut-brain axis, etc.) and

²⁶ Understood as sense perception, and as the ability to make sense, including the capability of (re)producing shareable knowledge for oneself (and others, including the self as other, that is an idealized and projected future “me” that does not exist but is projected as already having reached an understanding, that is has “acquired” knowledge, including knowledge of what is not yet understood) that becomes an understanding since one “knows” what “it” is like to “do” something. Consider the question “What is “it” like to play guitar?”. The “it” here refers to a particular experience, and the *like* not only includes analogy or metaphor, but also the sense (at least symbolic) of a particular ordered set of repeated actions called playing guitar, which one also “likes”. This repetition is not an exact repetition, but one that changes meaning and restructures sense perceptions, the brain and body, with each undertaken repetition.

²⁷ End as in goal, and end as in death. Behavior requires care, thoughtful maintenance since it is always threatened by the processes of extinction and forgetting (a fading of non-reinforced conditioned responses over time). Civilized, socialized, or “cultured” (as in *cultura animi*) behavior motivated by far-sighted desire is always threatened by its collapse into barbarism once desire is reduced to short-sighted drives and impulses.

²⁸ The dual behavior of matter can be illustrated by particle behavior and wave-like behavior of material particles at the atomic scale, such as the behavior of the photon or the duality of radiation. Moreover, arranged in greater masses, new behaviors emerge when particles join to create different states, for example, gas, liquid, solid, and superficial fluid, and which have new behavioral properties when subject to extreme conditions (when pushed to the limit). Information is also a state of matter. Matter is also organized technologically.

organizing inorganic matter (e.g. artworks, computers, globalized industries, etc.) (Parikka 2007; Alaimo 2010; Sampson and Mazmanian 2015; Rao and Gershon 2016). According to Stiegler, the latter are representative of processes of exosomatization at various levels of complexity (Stiegler 2020a) of the former. For example, neuroplastic embodied brains produce exosomatic organs like computers or other memory aid devices that necessitate coordinated gestures, e.g. to draw tally marks, which physically and structurally transform those brains over time through repetitive somatic routines and trained non-mechanistic habits of movements and gestures that selectively develop into specialized behaviors called *techniques*. Learning takes place through the aid of rote learning techniques that are transmitted via technical supports [ὑπόμνησις] or mnemotechnics which carry the memory of a past, selected experience, including traditions and customs, that is, ethos. Behavior conceived *a posteriori* emphasizes the captured and stored agency transmittable to an individuating social being, a being that consists in relations constituted after experienced perceptual selections, after the act or agential “cut,” that is to say, decisive inclusion and exclusion of what is considered, in terms of a passing intra-action. The point in this section is to present various equivocal definitions in order to show that the materiality of behavior is left unthought.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines behavior, a word first used in the 15th century and etymologically derived from “be” and “have,” a form of existential retention, seizing or taking hold-of, as “the way in which someone conducts oneself or behaves;” “the manner of conducting oneself,” where conduct is defined as “to cause (oneself) to act or behave in a particular and especially in a controlled manner;” and “the way in which something functions or operates.” The Oxford dictionary provides similar definitions, including a teleological one, where behavior is intentional and directed at other people. As the Brazilian philosopher Filipe Lazzeri Vieira²⁹ notes, this is an extremely prevalent term that is difficult to pin-down. He tries to clean up the linguistic ambiguity with a much more rigorous analysis: “behavior is said in at least four ways: (i) as the occurrence of an organism’s action

²⁹ Lazzeri Vieira is an epistemologist and philosopher of mind, action, and psychology. He is currently developing ways of conceptualizing behavior and some categories related to behavior. He undertakes an analysis of its theoretical definitions, and studies models of behavioral selection as determined by effects as well as the differences between overt and covert behavior, including the biological functions of behaviors and their intentionality or direction by goals. He takes the concept of action and analyzes action from a behavioral perspective, how action is related to other theoretical terms.

or reaction; (ii) as a class or pattern; (iii) as group behavior; and (iv) as a change or movement of an object" (Lazzeri 2014, 78). Lazzeri highlights two definitions. According to the epistemologist and philosopher of biology, mind, and language, Ruth G. Millikan (1993), "A behavior is [...] at least the following: 1. It is an external change or activity exhibited by an organism or external part of an organism. 2. It has a function in the biological sense. 3. This function is or would be normally fulfilled via mediation of the environment or via resulting alterations in the organism's relation to the environment" (Millikan 1993, 137). What is more, "according to Moore, behavior is an event in which a functional relation exists (in the sense of a probabilistic correlation we can establish) between the environment and one or more neural or muscular systems of the organism responsible for movement or posture; and this functional relation, roughly, must conform to rules that define operant, reflex or other known behavior patterns" (Moore 2008, 66-68). What such definitions tend to exclude is the materiality of behavior. According to performative strand of new materialism, which is theorized—among others—by researchers like Karen Barad and Vicki Kirby, it is a mistake to presume forces as external to matter, something that "guides, structures, or grants meaning to its behaviors" (Gamble, Hanan & Nail 2019, 112; see also Barad 2007; Kirby 1997; Irni 2013; Jones 2015; Barclay 2017). A fault, thus, would be to conceptualize behavior as external to the forces of *hexis* (habit) that give it shape or as external to its environment, and as separable from them, as phenomena that can be distantly observed and measured without intra-actively transforming (selecting) what is being observed. They also signal that behaviors are general, repeatable, and controllable processes of organologically amassing already constituted relationships through established retentions between an organism, its environment, and itself.

The definitions above consider behavior *per se* as an abstract function or property of matter, including negentropic and entropic organisms. Let us take as an example the behavior of wood, which would be another way of phrasing the retained existential relationships in which the matter of wood habitually—defined here in analogical terms of modes of growth, general appearance, or shaping as used when describing crystal habits (Massumi 1992; Kontturi 2018; Bernstein 2002, 46)³⁰—influences and is influenced

³⁰ Katve-Kaisa Kontturi has brought to my attention that the wood example is one that has been important for new materialisms. Extensive examples have been developed, for instance, by Brian Massumi, who provides an account of woodworkers collaborating with and getting to know wood. This is an account of what I would claim advances a Stieglerian

by its surrounding conditions. The behavior of wood, as properties of this differentiated material itself that comes in many states and varieties, lays at the foundation of determining the techniques of the luthier, the musician, and *musicant* (Rouget 1985, 102-103) or amateur. This includes its corruptions and failures. The poor acoustic properties of wood that had already habituated or characteristically shaped themselves into guitars in early jazz bands, groups that developed due to the industrial turn in music (Donin & Stiegler 2004, 6-20) lead to the invention (the who/what is undecidable) of the electric guitar, where wood and its emergent techniques have altogether bifurcated and been augmented inasmuch as to constitute an electric sonorous and acousmatic reality. One of the eventual doings of wood conjoined with people was to play jazz. Obviously, there is a relational and regional history to the behaviors of matter, and this history is an important factor in the development of various artistic techniques and accidents, both happy and deadly.

Stiegler's general organology is a methodological account of the material ontological history of a plethora of instruments—an account that extends beyond musicology—in the form of the study of all instruments, or technologies and devices like the computer, their history, cultural applications, classifications, and other technical aspects concerning how certain technologies consist in their effects, like produce an aesthetic, perception, sound, or behavioral change. So, when thinking of the habits (ways of growing, giving an appearance or look, shaping) of organizing organic and inorganic matter constitutive of temporally organized endosomatic and exosomatic movements, I would like to signal that the appropriate method for advancing the study of behaviors would be through general organology. Just as wood habituated into music, so do behaviors selectively develop in terms of their looks, feels, and complexity.

However, before attempting to draw any historical account another problematic of behavior needs to be raised. It is found in the distinction between quantification and qualification. Behavior—which needs to be attentively

understanding of *otium*. It is an extra-ordinary *time for care*, rhythm of thoughtful commerce between the forces of wood and the woodworker that shape an emergent temporary consistence (see: the section “Subsist, Exist, Consist” in *Ars Industrialis*'s vocabulary) that is not reducible to subsistence, not reducible to a calculated trade of *negotium*, a form of life shaped by the hyperindustrial reductive logics of the market. These are singular practices of the forces of the Self, which is always “stuck” in its own inadequacy and always beyond it-self. It emerges within the struggle of collaborating with materials in order to overcome “stuckness” or *anthropy* in the process of individuation (Kontturi 2018, 104-110; Stiegler 2011a; 2018; “Vocabulary—English Version | *Ars Industrialis*” n.d.).

developed or else it goes extinct (back to the potential realm, to the “before” of the agential cut of intra-activity)—can undergo quantification (measurement, and thus, selection) and repetition. Yet, it is an ongoing iterative indeterminate process. This is even more perplexing when it is subjugated to axiological arbitration, which is an attempt to qualitatively evaluate behavior as good or bad, caring or evil, respectable or scandalous, toxic or helpful. Multiple cases of the ambiguity of behavior can be imagined, such as occupational hazards or the mania that is provoked by the toxicity of the artist’s lead paints which induce hallucinations (Montes-Santiago 2013), or the mispractices of not properly disposing of those paints, which ecologically threaten the environment with pollution. Still, such a toxic material was necessary for constituting an artistic epoch and its material practices of care. This leads us from one set of selection criteria to another: from a historical account to a philosophical one.

Thus, the general problematics of behavior studied philosophically are problems of materially re-objectifying what humans make-sense as abstract and what resists fixed objectivity, which makes it a philosophical problem *par excellence*. It is a matter of materializing behaviors. However, we cannot physically grasp behavior with our hands like a pen or any other concrete, tangible object regardless of size. We grasp behaviors with the embodied and materially supplemented mind, those grasps are stored in each practiced gesture and devices of recording. Behavior, although perceived, is not exactly present-at-hand. This is behavior as theorized by science and marketing: behavior that needs to be “repaired” in order to reach some goal set by scientists or marketers. Theorization itself is a sort of meta-behavior of complex decision making or selection that scrutinizes a “failure” of perceived behaviors, examples of such theorization lay in the doings of con-artists, pick-up artists, or even ourselves when we try to figure out why certain behaviors fail to be operational or useful. Behavior is not exactly ready-at-hand either, since everyday, ordinary, unproblematic, not theorized habits, especially in the case of addiction, are states of simultaneous disrepair of the organism and restoration of the habits. At times, we conduct ourselves automatically, without consciously theorizing why; nevertheless, subconscious “theories” may in fact hypomnematically develop or grow into the living body through habit (*hexis*).

We may also structurally problematize human behavior as a mode of being in-itself [*en-soi*] and for-itself [*pour-soi*] (Merleau-Ponty 1963). Human behavior, without forgetting its corporeal materiality, is dynamic, and as a subjective embodied experience of repeated selection and loss, is a tem-

poral object of phenomenological inquiry. Nonetheless, we can also easily and clearly do many things with behavior onto-epistemologically and technically: it can be observed and ignored, identified and misidentified, turned into a stereotype, manipulated and fabricated, arranged and re-arranged, and so on. Of course all of these *actions* and *reactions*, interactions and intra-actions, are modalities of behaviors themselves, which is to say “matters of practices/doings/actions” (Barad 2003, 802) or a secondary “enactment of boundaries” (Barad 2003, 803) that must be studied in light of the way they self-stabilize and destabilize differential boundaries by the active participation of matter, of which one form includes the material instruments, devices, tools, and technologies, in the “world’s becoming.” The materiality of the human flesh, and human organizations which materialize, matters just as much as every other body of material force (Barad 2003, 809). So, the term “behavior” is quite significant and dependent upon material conditions, yet it is also ambiguous.

To recapitulate what has been developed in this section, I have presented my understanding of behaviors (observable movements) and habits (*hexis*), and I have proposed a shift from the abstract (like the past and future, which do not exist) to the material (present). The problematics of behavior in terms of its definition revolve around equivocal definitions that tend to overlook the mattering of existential retention, of being and having at the same time, of be-having. Their abstract functions, or habits, develop in time and can be “passed down.” A transitory example on the behavior of wood was described. Stiegler’s general organology and pharmacology (cutting that is both positive and negative) can provide a historical account of some aspects of behavior in terms of the relations between endosomatic and exosomatic organs as well as collective social organizations and institutions. From such an account, other problematics should be included, such as the problem between measuring behavior quantitatively and qualitatively; and studying behavior from a philosophical perspective, which is not necessarily limited to ethics. Two examples were provided, one in Heideggerian terminology in terms of presence-at-hand and readiness-at-hand, and the other in Merleau-Ponty’s modes of being in-itself and for-itself. Another path or road of meaning-making is a route paved by new materialist thinking. What follows are several short exploratory developments from this section that can be read in any order.

Adrian Mróz*

Behaving, Mattering, and Habits Called Aesthetics

Part 2: Theoretical Cays of Phenomenologically Making-Sense

Introduction

Four cays are presented. The first is titled “behavior matters.” It consists of a composition of ideas from a discipline of behaviorism that relate with how behavior is material and how its meaning is actively practiced. Methodological behaviorism views its object of study as external, mechanistic, and separated from an *esprit*, which can be understood as a characteristic (*ethos*) or style of habitually be-having and growing exosomatically. Through habits, behaviors have their own material agency and forces of self-replication or selection. The second cay is titled “Oh Behave! The doings of habit or making bodies of art,” which is an account of the problem of sensibility and feeling (aesthetics) in relation to behavior. Phenomenological aspects of habitual retention are raised. This situates behavior as a phenomenon that does not exist, but rather consists with exorganogenesis, which is the production of artificial objects that resist utility or reductions to fixed employment. So, all art is an axiomatic product of behavior. The next cay is named “On the Material Habits Constitutive of Music, Caripulation, and Memory.” For clarification, the term, to caripulate, I generally use to describe a practiced movement conjoining the Latin *carus* or the wish and desire that is first needed for

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any movement whatsoever, and the *carō* or the body as flesh, as in manipulation—which is a handful—or pedipulation, especially when talking about the feet or *pedesis*, which is a theory of motion “directly and iteratively related to its immediate past but is not determined by it” (Gamble, Hanan, Nail 2019, 125). Here musical behavior is thought of as a kind of *savoir-vivre* that grows (habituates) bodies and their capabilities for moving. The goalings and bodily gestures are conceptualized by what I call caripulations that store the “objective” memory of behavior that has passed and that anticipates its next step and repetition through the growth of flesh and production of new instruments. It is an organologically practiced movement of making symbols orientated by desire, generative of *savoir-faire*. Three distinctions of behavior that leave marks and make selections (caripulations) are presented in accordance with the premises of the phenomenological general organology, which include: its primary retentions as present behavior that is passing, its secondary retention as memory inscribed in the growth of flesh, and its tertiary retention as artificial technical supports that shape and are shaped by behavior. Finally, because of the possibility of manipulating tertiary retentions, which condition the selections of primary and secondary retentions and protention, a pharmacological motive is proposed for the further caripulative priming of behavioral drives (associated memories). The pharmacology of behavior includes its sensed patterns that are composed organologically, contextually both toxic and therapeutic. Behavior is artificial or technical, it is a *techne*, which has been overlooked by philosophy because of its assumed naturalness.

Behavior matters

New materialist thinking provides understanding that adds to the philosophical investigations of behavior that matters. The new materialist problematics of behavior would include its meaning and how it is material. I would like to explore the situation when we say a certain behavior matters in this section, since what we usually mean by that phrase is that behavior is important or significant. In effect, it makes-sense. In the arts and crafts, all behavior matters since etiquette and performance guidelines regulate them. To mis-behave would be to break norms and bring about scandal. It would also imply breaking expectations or exhibiting new forces and agencies. Of course, the arts also involve this kind of breaking of expectations and established habits. Then again, to say behavior matters would also be to say

that a doing of matter is to behave, meaning that certain behaviors are activated by stone tools (cutting), watercolors (painting), and other media (acting, performing, being a medium).

The terms that we use every day to denote changes of states such as action or reaction are also equivocal and quite ambiguous, which is significant if we consider that they are used to describe a massive extent of reality, from physical changes in matter and its properties to psycho-physical stages of change that are correlated with behavior change. Rather than thinking of matter as mechanistic, and with it the flesh and embodied behavior in general as just mere Cartesian mechanisms, the vitality of matter, its performative dynamics (Tillman 2015), constitutes the general focal point in the recognition of habit as it relates to performative materiality and practiced human life. In the framework of agential realism, matter is not “passive” (Tillman, 2015, 30). This signifies a confutation to the idea that the behavior of matter is permanent and fixed. In simplification, behavior is what comes after an intra-active cut. Instead, as Diana Coole describes, intra-active matter “[...] is self-transformative and already saturated with the agentic capacities and existential significance that are typically located in a separate, ideal, and subjective realm [...]” (2010). If, for a moment, we shift our attention to the psychological behaviorism (Graham, 2019) of Ivan Pavlov where organic responses to external physical stimuli have been coupled with different stimuli, called classical conditioning, we see that the assumptions of the old schools of behaviorism fit snugly into the mechanistic paradigm of physics, where all behavior change supposedly originates from “external” actions that manipulate fixed “internal” mechanisms, which is to fail to understand any exosomatic organicity.

These organological changes of states, as a mechanistic readiness to respond to stimuli, also reveal the idea that matter is “separable.” Here the methodological behaviorist schools (Graham 2019) come to mind, where there is a privileging of observable external behavior as explanatory for an organism’s behavior. In such a case, the assumption that a mysterious extra-material force called a “mind”—in other words the premise that matter holds no faculty for reflection or thought, as unmeasurable or inaccessible—is ubiquitous yet concealed. Changes of mental states (forces of granting meaning), thus, would be material changes omitted by methodological behaviorism. Moreover, the stimuli—as isolatable—are conceived as distinct from the agent they are acting upon, or even the human scientist is separate from the subjects they manipulate. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who criticizes the mechanistic sciences with the aid of pathology, shows in *The Structure of*

Behavior that mechanicalistic cause-and-effect chains are not necessarily appropriate because of the *phenomena* of *wholes* (Merleau-Ponty 1963). Because of this phenomena, the structure of behavior is endowed with meaning, it makes-sense, and is more than a sum of its parts or mechanistic, linear chains of causal reflexes and reactions of the material flesh to isolated physical stimuli. This means that behavior is neither random nor probabilistic. It is not necessarily mechanistic and has a procedural bearing. Its pedetic¹ unpredictability lays in the mutual intra-active influence of matter with itself due to relational material arrangements and changes (Gamble, Hanan, and Nail 2019, 125-127).

A re-affirmation of the ontological significance of materiality draws with it the consequences of diffracting behavior itself. Matter cannot be separated from the *esprit* or mind/spirit (as external forces of meaning-making), and it cannot be isolated from other matter. So, matter behaves, and specific behaviors materialize. There is a dynamic relation between consciousness and behavior, including a plethora of other forces such as will and intent, the *nous* or intellect, and the collective or social, which all significantly intra-act with matter that has its proper agency as “an ability to cause some kind of change” (Tillman, 2015, 32). Through habits, behaviors have their own agency and forces of self-replication or selection. This brings us to aesthetics, the philosophy of sensing or making cuts, a substantial consequence, re-connecting it with ethics, the political, and bringing new understanding to the technical, to *techne*. Stiegler goes so far as to claim that *techne* had been disadvantaged and isolated by Platonic and Heideggerian philosophy in favor of *episteme* (Stiegler 1998a, 1; see also Parry 2020).

Oh Behave! The doings of habit or making bodies of art

In this section I explore the existential implications of the perceived phenomenon of “be-having” that becomes constitutive of states and disposition, of habits. In 2019 I posed the question of what generally is understood as art (*techne*) *does* in place of asking for a substantial definition of what art *is* (Mróz 2019b). Growing from my previous deliberations, I do not intend to stabilize the ontological, or metaphysical, understanding of art (craftwork, applied arts, fine arts, entertainment, etc.) and fix its workings in terms of a static definition. Such a fixation is usually contested by the avant-garde

¹ “Motion of semi-autonomous self-transport” like the movement of the foot when walking.

practices of artists and art workers who may refuse to be locked-in by formal prescriptive barriers, which are practices of employment rather than *works* or *workings*.

What is lacking here is the problem of *aísthēsis* [αἴσθησις] in relation to behavior. Analyses that do touch upon the subject of behavior usually stop at banal conclusions that art challenges habits and fixed mechanistic behaviors, which certainly is deceptive, and which ignores the ongoing iterative and performative processes of habits (*hexis*), which materialize. Art (technē) generally understood is a working of habits and a fixing of aesthetically (sensory, feeling) orientated behavior that is not a mechanistic fixation. But to know what we are talking about, we must realize that behavior itself is not fixed, as an experienced object of reflection or diffraction, it is matter's way of moving in constant flux. Phenomenologically, subjectively experienced behavior is not the same behavior that we remember (retain), for the same exact behavior can be equivocal, since it is a temporal object of the embodied material consciousness just as much as a melody is, and there are protentions or anticipations manifest in behavior, such as in the bodily movements of a predator prepared to catch a prey, which is the memory and anticipation of devouring.

If we take an understanding of sensitivity as causal prefixed and determined reactions, which is to say that of the pair stimulus–reactions, then we fall into the trap of fixing the flesh into closed entropic reflex system models, where stable unchanging systems need to be thought of as in place. Merleau-Ponty, however, suggests the opposite (1963). Behavior emerges as an entangled act of commerce between an environment and the interdependent (which we can understand through metaphor as a dependence of the monads) and intra-dependent (which we can analogically understand as the state of being of holobionts) as well as the emergent (superorganisms like the ant hill which is capable of “remembering” as a collective as opposed to the individuals ants who do not share this memory) entities that arise from a plethora of environments and create new milieus at the same time. Behaviorists most certainly do not negate the mind, they only make the claim that they cannot measure the mind, which is to say that it is the infinite.

In an article for *Psychology Today* Tim Carey writes that behavior does not exist, and he is right insofar as we understand that neither does art, since they form a consistency that persists and insists itself, for he claims, with a cliché of contemporary consumer aesthetics and viewing mind as metaphysically distinct from matter, that behavior “only exists in the eye of the beholder” (Carey 2019, para. 17), which makes it a subjective problem

of relational aesthetic (sensory) inquiry. This is to say that behavior's materiality is at once a perceptual (techno-epistemic) and an organological (ontic) problem. Carey instead substitutes the equivocal term "behavior" with the term "goaling". This is because behavior, as he notes, is ill-defined and caught in a vicious loop. The term "goaling" is a verb that is synonymous with control processes (hexis), which consist in an attempt to control involuntary and voluntary actions or various approaches to reach specific goals (that is maintain *homeostasis*) of an organism. Even if such "innate" action is called "instinctive" or "reflexive", it is still dependent on learning and memory, or making-sense. One goal of any social organism would be that of "exclaiming" or expressing its Self via technical exteriorizations (growth of the body and its supplements) or exorganogenesis. That said, there are goals that one may be conscious of, and goals that are forgotten or that one is totally unaware of, and this should not be thought of as limited to the agency of an individual, but rather as the intertangled web of intra-actuated goalings, not reducible to instrumentality or utility, conducted by all inhabitants contributive to the processes of individuation. This idea leaves room for the fact that one and the same organism may have contradictory behaviors, which often are called pathological or dis-ordered. However, if viewed *pharmacologically*, then this contradiction becomes an accidental necessity in terms of the already passing present orientated towards a future becoming.

To reiterate, I do not have in mind the problem of habits as forms of fixed, mechanistic, never changing behaviors, because to do so would be to completely ignore the phenomenology of behavior itself. No organic behavior is ever an exact replication, no habit is ever fixed, and as a singular action that is sensed and unfolds in time, a specific attractive or repulsive behavior is itself a temporal object composed of retentions and protentions, of memory and anticipation, of trauma and anxiety, of nostalgia, nightmares and dreams, and of hopes and desirable or fanciful carnalities. Moreover, it is also programming idealized automatisms into organizing organic matter, which become craft and skills elevating their products in their time for care to the extra-ordinary status of art, as well as de-automatizations, which happen while learning and growing (habituating) a new body for new tasks that demand such a novel embodiment. All art (techne) is a product of behavior. And all aesthetic sensitivity is an effect of art's material fabrications and organological manufacturing. The final product, which is the artwork, is thus only a small part of a great scheme of doings,² one that steers behaviors and

² Katve-Kaisa Kontturi addresses many of these marginalized aspects such as stratification and destratification, co-working, or the autonomy of process in the great scheme of

grows perceptual patterns of “appreciation” or art consumption as well as its fabrication, production, logistics, and technical realities. These processes have been generally taken for granted, and thus made invisible.

On the Material Habits Constitutive of Music, Caripulation, and Memory

Hyper-industrial aesthetics consists in the programmed behavioral conditioning of responses and reactions like saying “wow!” “breathtaking!” or “beautiful!” (Mechner 2019) and in learning how to pay sensory attention, how to focus on the material sources of beauty, pleasure, reward, and so on. In turn, these tactics transform an environment (like advertisement as sensory pollution and exploitative devaluation of the embodied spirit/mind) and the collective and individual perception of and attention to stimuli which reside in the dynamic of conditioning one’s body with peripheral artifacts so as to grow “an eye” or “an ear” (Stiegler 2011b) and so as to grow resistance or develop habitual desensitizations. The industrialization of making-sense enacts a cognitive modification of the ways humans process various sensory stimuli, such as works of art and entertainment, according to selections (memory). Such behavioral selections are habitually retained in materially inscribed social reality (Barrett 2018), traditions and institutions that care for artifacts and maintain emotional labor.

Certainly, artists, art workers, and the amateurs shape an aesthetic through various media at vastly various levels of complexity, from the applied arts of decoration and crafts to the massive performances that engage thousands. The musician must co-work with the material foundations of music. This working is a learning of habits, and a fundamental shaping of behavior as the labor that advances the work of art. A musician must carefully learn how to behave (*savoir-vivre*). They may change their diet to have strong nails for playing on the guitar, and then shape those nails following the demands of nylon strings. They will certainly re-shape their bodies through practice routines and training exercises. They grow new flesh and hard-wire automatisms and reflexes that are the foundations of music. Music is primarily a work of the body. It has always been a shaping of the ear through the shaping of the flesh and its perception systems and artificial objects that sculpt thinking-it-self. Conversely, ever since the invention of the

the emergence of art and its doings in her book, *Ways of Following: Art, Materiality, Collaboration* (Kontturi 2018). I would like to thank Milla Tiainen for pointing this out.

gramophone, music has been separated from the practice of moving one's body with an artificial instrument to generate a sonic disturbance in the air. This movement, this organized behavior, has been re-organized: industrialized and passed-on to the machines, including computers. The work of producing music now involves the swipe of the finger or the touch of a button, which results in the sensory audible experience of listening to music, but no longer a rigorous act of being with one-self while producing sounds, *of a critical listening to our body's ex-static and ex-cellent relaxation that had been needed in order to intra-act with its material instruments to produce any idealized form of sonorous flow*. We hear music everywhere now, and its habitual significance and disciplining of corporeality have significantly transformed (Delalande 2020) since its industrialization.

The self-control needed to conduct music (practice routines and a musical *savoir-vivre*, learning skills such as *how to read* music, the search for improvisational *savoir-faire* and technical knowledge, the task of inventing the new as the knowledge of conceptualization, and so on) has resulted in the industrial division of the behaviors of music by inventing music experts, called musicians, who are tasked with the work of playing music for the benefit of music consumers, be they art critics or the mass markets audience. Listeners have in reality been musically proletarianized, since they have lost the artificial behavioral knowledges that are fundamental in the carnal needs of the body and the material demands of instruments, including production realities (musicians are very keen on technicalities like selecting the type of wood an instrument is made from, or on the fabrication process and instrumental maintenance itself). It is also a practice of learning how to grow a body, how to be with aesthetic dissonance, of enjoying a piece and at the same time being disturbed by it, since the *challenge* of playing has been one of challenging and ex-ceeding abilities and habitual skills, as well as the perceptions needed to appropriately move the body and to, finally, move others.

Abstracting from the above-mentioned *discipline* of music, we may generalize: all artwork is work that is a working of the artist by the material that the artist *caripulates*. I selected this term in place of manipulation, which has a negative connotation, with the intention to be as maximally inclusive of the entire body as possible without privileging the hands and their digits. To illustrate the former, the behavioral caripulation of material by artists which is also material that carnally sculpts the artist's being, we may consider learning how to knit, how to sculpt, how to tattoo, how to draw, how to paint, how to play an instrument, how to edit and upload content for social media like vlogs or capture and disseminate selfies, how to act or learn how

to play a role for theater, how to tell jokes or stories, how to learn new habits and forget (poor) habits that have been made while learning certain skills, or how to curate the artefacts installed in contemporary art museums and galleries. Of course, we could name other examples for consideration, but this would lead to an endless list. Nevertheless, such ability or *savoir-faire* is transformative and singular in each case. Material is a manipulation of physical matter (manually knitting a sweater) and in others it is abstract (such as in making conceptual art).

In order to become consciously aware of our own behavior, it must be submitted to a process of phenomenological objectification, to scrutiny and criticism by others, which is at the same time a factor of *stimulation* that changes the original behavior in such a way that leads to the materialization of the symbolic, as is the case with *savoir-vivre*. This quasi-externalization process is one that leaves traces and signs. If this were not the case, then tracking by hunters, including *marketers*, *coaches*, and *psychics* who have learned to read *body language*, would be an impossibility. In other words: "Humans have always left traces of our behavioral and cognitive processes. These traces have evolved with us: where our ancestors left stone tools and cave drawings, we now leave digital traces—social media posts, uploaded images, geotags, search histories, and video game activity logs" (Paxton & Griffiths 2017, 1630). Through the traces of behaviors, which are computational (Gomes et al. 2017, 8), we caripulate temporal sequences or time itself, which is the play of 1) the conduct of here-and-now taking place for a moment in the present, 2) the memories of behavior (as repetition or repetitive behaviors called habits and stored in the living flesh: the muscles, nervous system, and brain, and which can be forgotten, or go extinct, and also spontaneously recover), and 3) the recordings of behaviors, which are their *material* traces to which Paxton and Griffiths refer, such as the stone tool which is a memory of the action of cutting or the meta-data produced on digital media, which are memories materially externalized by organizing organic matter or the living body understood as the flesh, since algorithmic "alerts" may remind us to do some action (calendar or alarm clock) or act a certain way (such as open an app or respond to a text message).

I have formulated these three distinctions of behavior with the support of Bernard Stiegler's analysis in the series *Technics and Time*, especially volume three. There, he undertakes an analysis of retentions and protentions, and contributes the category of tertiary retentions to Husserl's phenomenology. Briefly, retentions refer to what consciousness retains, keeps, or apprehends. Primary retentions are the now moment, which in Husserl's compari-

son to the melody, would be analogical to a given note of a melody that happens to be playing at a certain point in time. Secondary retentions refer to repetition, to memory, to the imagination. After hearing a melody, it is possible to consciously replay it within the imagination. Now, tertiary retentions, are the supports of both primary and secondary retentions. I understand them as all marks and traces, techniques and technologies, all devices and equipment, from which consciousness and its memories as selections, that must include their protentions, come.

If applied to *behavior*, rather than consciousness, then how can retention be possible? It is necessary to note that behavior can be manipulated, or as I prefer to say—caripulated. This is evident through the success of classical conditioning and radical behaviorism—“far from being dead” (Brown & Gillard 2015, 24)—or the study of functional relations *with* environment events (Heward & Cooper 1992, 345), which is used still today to get dogs into scary MRI machines for studies. Behavior at a certain moment is easily comparable to primary retentions. What is not clear is the storage of memory in behavior. Memory as behavior is conceivable, since learning is something organizing organic matter and organizing inorganic matter *do* (Delaney & Austin 1998, 76), and ancient mnemotechniques of dances and songs (Kelly 2016) should suffice as evidence for the claim that secondary retention of behavior is an organized form of repetition that carries knowledge, actions learned either by heart or in parrot-fashion.

When it comes to tertiary retentions, the recorded trace, which is organized inorganic matter, then we have come to live in an age where an exact repetition of a behavior is possible for the very first time ever in human history. The photograph has given us exact visual replicates of poses, attitudes, stances, and general looks. With cinema, however, we can view one behavior repeatedly without any modification to its form. Moreover, this exactitude of behavior, especially in terms of algorithmic governability, is no longer something for the distanced gaze, of watching and re-watching various fantastic behaviors on the screen. Robotics provide dancers who move exactly coordinated with precisely the same movements in identical fashion at every performance. This is a novelty. Humans have been dancing the robot for decades. Nowadays, the task is to teach robots to dance the human, whose data are being collected, analyzed and whose actions are being algorithmically caripulated.

Pharmacological Considerations

Pharmacology is a philosophical term used by Stiegler and originally developed by Plato, Jacques Derrida, and later by Michael Rinella. It should not be confused with the very specific meaning referring to the medical or pharmaceutical industry producing chemical biologically active substances for bodily absorption, although I do indeed think also of this concept (the *pharmakon* understood as responsible for *cutting* or *striking*) in terms of “chemistry” or “magic,” which I understand as a kind of aesthetic (feeling of beauty or style) that envelops desire or attraction, enthusiastic possession *qua* love or passion. When saying matter is active, I understand it as matter that can be the source of aesthetic reactions (like exclaiming “wow!”) as well as bodily and social changes (e.g. in cognition or disciplines).

First, it should be noted that the distinction between organic compounds and inorganic ones remains only as a distinction and is not intended to draw sharp ontological boundaries. Nor is it an opposition, especially since this distinction is ambiguous and there is no agreed-upon definition in the life sciences, wherein organic is usually understood as a compound containing carbon-hydrogen bonds, whereas biological organisms do indeed contain inorganic compounds within their systems, which are essential for their survival (Betts et al. 2013, ch. 2.4). Moreover, if we take an *exosomatic* view (Stiegler 2018, 2) which is to question the *Da*³ of *Da-sein* (von Herrmann & Radloff 2011) that discloses human bodily life, then the relationship with inorganic organized materials which are artifacts, tools, instruments, and so on are co-constitutive of a relation that is just as essential to the growing patterns of the human being as water or oxygen under the dermatic boundaries of the flesh. For the stone tool requires digits that are capable of manipulation, and this implies that through behavior the environment has selected for the organ of the hand, and its supports in the shape of feet and an upright posture which has freed the mouth from grasping. This continuous process of transformation is still undergoing, as research in the cognitive sciences has shown there is an ongoing restructuration of the brain’s functions due to the use of digital media (Hayles 2012).

³ The “Da” in *Dasein* means neither “here” nor “there,” nor does it mean something present (*anwesend*) or extant: it is solely the designation for the phenomenon of “unclosedness,” that is, for “openness.” But what kind of openness? “The expression ‘Da’ means this abiding disclosedness (*Erschlossenheit*)” (GA 2/176-177). The “Da” of “Dasein” has the purely ontological significance of disclosedness, which is said to belong to Dasein abidingly (214).

Nonetheless, if we take a “pharmacological” research perspective, then all matter is active in some regard. For the philosophy of art this would or could include, for example, the material substrate of paints, which were toxic and hallucinatory, or the steel string of a guitar, which *cuts* into the skin of beginners and draws blood. There is no passivity or any distanced inactivity of matter, since there is much discussion (Bolt 2000) about the biological activity of molecules, and likewise, their psychoactive influences and effects, like social activities in the forms of rites and rituals or in terms of the use of power in suppressing certain biochemical becomings and privileging others within enormous, global, geo-political and economic superstructures of human ant-hills, where emergent *organizational* behavior is not a sum of its individual actors alone.

The philosophical application of the *pharmakon*, as scrutinized by Derrida, Stiegler, and Rinella, has given rise to the understanding of the pharmacological as the discussions and theories organized by *pharmaka*. What are *pharmaka*? This notion derives from ancient Greek, and denotes a plentitude (Pokorny 2017, 133-135, 276-277, 325, 632) of colorful things that cut and leave marks, and thus, are “magical” and can heal through therapy, in the meaning that Homer uses when he says ἥπια φάρμακα πάσσειν in the *Iliad* (531), which is a “troika” or triple application of soothing [i] *pharmaka* (drugs or herbs) on arrow wounds, for the arrow must be cut out of the body through the (ii) skilled use of the knife, and an enchantment or magic [iii] spell (which, instead of magic, we must think of as memory supports, or mnemonic devices) is sung over the wound of the *suffering* patient (under the influence of *pathos*) who needs therapy (Holmes 2010, 79).

As we know, dug-up roots and herbs that require cunning in their caripulation can also interact with the flesh to discretely kill or cause harm. There has been a historical separation of a distrust with regards to drugs between the male and female, the right and left, between doctors and witches, the rational and irrational (Ehrenreich and English 2010; Whaley 2011; Faraone 2001; Hillman 2008). For the positive attributes have been associated with the privileged whereas the negative effects have been passed on to the scapegoat, the *pharmakos*, which have included women, foreigners, and the artisan *techne* itself (let’s not forget that certain artists have been banished from Plato’s *Republic*, and today they are still accused of “demoralizing” the Youth in moral panics), which is symptomatic of the containment and replication of repressive structures.

The action of *cutting* strikes at the root of the *pharmakon*, and as such, should be taken as a *techne*, which is also a cutting, for which the Slavic equivalent of *techne* would descend from the Proto-Balto-Slavic *téštei*, which

in Polish has become *ciosać*, a word that designates the work of carpenters, to hew, to give shape and form through the cut that is at the root of the *labor* (as a birth) of all assembly, which is constructive and destructive at the same time, and never in opposition, but a composition, a *différance*. The power of the *cios*⁴ equips the arms since the *arm* can be extended and opened to shake someone's hand or shaped into a fist to strike them down.

Considering the above, the social cut is also present in what we may call discipline or conduct. There is a right behavior assigned to sitting at the table, to the *savoir-vivre* of consuming food, a privileging of the use of the right hand over the left, there is a proper way to appreciate art, and a correct version of scrutinizing goals. Behavior is the unthought *arche* of philosophy, which tries to deliberate this problem in terms of: φρόνησις–phronesis (wisdom of useful skills), ἦθος–ethos (ethics as habits), πράξις–praxis (doing), ποιέω–poiēō (making), of τρόπος–trópos (a manner), ὕβρις–hubris (overconfidence or pride), εὐκοσμία–eukosmia (decency or good order), παροινία–paroinia (drunken conduct), or σκαιούργημα–skaïourghma (left handedness as ill-behavior, malice, cunning, treachery, or foolish action). Behavior as a *techne* was unthought since it was a natural movement of the cosmos, of order, and of orderly behavior. The ethos of music was to instill masculine and feminine behaviors into its practitioners, catharsis was to wash away any lingering acting-out and misbehaviors from the fabric of society since Ancient Greece. It was not until the 20th century did behavior become seen as an operant or re-active *medium* for scientific manipulation with the advent of behaviorism and for artists to cut, to shape, and to form in the form of the avant-garde. We can see this notably: in the works of Stephen Willats's *Centre for Behavioral Art* at Gallery House in London in the early seventies of the last century, that contributed to the development of conceptual art in terms of the creation of the practices of *performance*; and in the Cuban *Cátedra Arte de Conducta* of Tania Bruguera, who *cut* her behavioral art school's life short in rebellion against the Western practices of performance.

I adopt the artist Bruguera's view that the term "performance" is one that privileges contemporary anglo-centric Western culture and legitimizes established neocolonial market institutions of what Annie Le Brun calls "globalist realism," that is, a "shock" or disaster capitalism (Klein 2008) understood by me as a mutation of socialist realism of the Soviet Union (Le Brun

⁴ Polish: hit or blow, as in punch—the equivalent in French is *coup*, or the Ancient Greek κόλαφος, which is to strike with the fist, treat roughly, or to afflict and toss to and fro, which in Polish is *kłuć* or *kłóć*.

2018). Contemporary art occupies both private and public environments, i.e. tangible, everyday social relationships, including the transformation of daily life and in particular its aesthetic framework, which is what Bernard Stiegler describes as an “aesthetic war” (Stiegler 2014a) that is waged through marketing and the Le Brunian art market. Given that the issue of “lifestyles,” or everyday behavior, has always played an essential political and moral role in the eyes of activists and theorists alike, contemporary art, according to Le Brun, is now aimed at producing an effect of consternation or shock on as many people as possible. This, for her, is part of the ideological as well as emotional undertakings that are carried out on a massive scale. Le Brun writes: “Just as the Soviet regime aimed to shape sensibilities through socialist realist art, it seems that neo-liberalism has found its equivalent in a certain contemporary art (Koons, Hirst, Kapoor, Cattelan, etc.), whose energy is being used to establish the reign of what I would call globalist realism. The difference is that, in order to exert this global influence, there is no need to rely on representations edifying from a specific ideology. For it is no longer a question of imposing one conception of life over another, but essentially processes or devices [*dispositifs*] that are in perfect harmony with those of the financialization of the world. And if the terror of ideological totalitarianism is here replaced by the seductions of market totalitarianism, the specificity of globalist realism is to invite us to train ourselves” (Le Brun 2018, 36).

This would then be a self-training or auto-behaviorism almost reminiscent of machine learning, and a form of self-discipline that corresponds to what Stiegler calls symbolic misery, which is a reduction (and hence a loss) of subliminal motivation or desire (way of diverting energy) to desublimated impulsive drives designed and engineered by the market’s use of behaviorism and psychoanalysis (Stiegler 2014; 2015). The stake of behavioral aesthetics is one of political and economic control over long-term processes of social and psychic individuation, that are not subordinated to short-term selection criteria of the financial market. Accordingly, I use the term behavior just as Bruguera had proposed within the methodology of the *Cátedra Arte de Conducta* in Havana. She claims: “The fact of being unable to pronounce the word performance well also made me think quite a lot whether I wanted to do something which I did not entirely master, precisely because, culturally, it did not belong to me. [...] The word ‘behavior’ that until then I had seen only related to manners—twice seven years apart—came to me and was redefined: first, as the name of a school which actually was a mild prison, with no bars; second, as a statement of power. When looking for its

translation, I saw it was also associated with movement, conduction, from one point to another." Whereas, "[...] Performance is already an Academy with a tradition against which we should work" ("Tania Bruguera | Debates (about Behavior Art)" n.d.).

Summary and Conclusions

In this double article I have proposed paying attention to the materiality of behavior, which stems from studies that address the philosophical question of the general origin of behavior and life itself. The article's structure arises from my readings of Bernard Stiegler's philosophy, which I developed with my text's authorial agency and a methodological mode of rhizomic writing. I did not intend to develop a central narrative; instead, I proposed theoretical explorations of topics conceptually organized as performative cays. They were situated above as islands of art and music philosophy, as well as more general philosophy concerning embodiment, cognition, and behavior. The conceptual *default* of behavior is lacking, and necessarily inadequate, and popular definitions generally overlook the activity of matter and the materiality of behavior. These approaches define behavior in abstract immaterial categories. Devellennes and Dillet claim that Stiegler is a Derridean new materialist thinker or at least is worthy of the attention of new materialist researchers, advancing technics to the forefront of new materialist agenda. Thus, I have explored behavior here in terms of *tekhnē*.

In Part One, I theoretically navigate the material relationship between behavior and the sensible. Sensibility is assumed to stem from organologically sculpting modes of perception and sensitivity that grow with material mediums. I theoretically refocus phenomenology on behavior in order to develop the mattering of retention as habits. My proposal consists in the development of this understanding to include a new materialist approach to the phenomenon of human behavior, which cannot be reduced to organized organic matter. In terms of a phenomenological behavioral retention that I advance in this paper, the habits of organizing organic and inorganic matter actively resist and anticipate the forces of dis-organization. In other words, behaviors are metastable repeated traces intra-acted between the habituations of both organizing organic matter and organized inorganic matter. The libido, desire, or historic transformations of the experience of the sensible, emerge within the boundaries of the relationship intra-acted between the living and the animating "dead." Life is understood by Stiegler as an active, temporary and localized, struggle against rises in entropy, as anti-entropy and as its dialectical negation, negentropy.

My approach follows a theoretical exploration that develops the Stieglerian undecidability and *différance* of the who and the what that is posed in the problem of anthropogenesis/technogenesis. My development focuses on behavior rather than action and performance because I view behaviors as technologies, repetitive programs subject to phenomenological retention and protention that form lifestyles. However, because of transduction (resistance) of the flow of captured energy, intra-acted behavior is always threatened by the possibility of its spontaneous extinction. In turn, I understand action in an Aristotelean fashion, as the materialization of potential energy—as in “passing to the act.”

In my proposal of considering behavior in terms of its materiality, I indirectly approach debates about actions and intra-activities in Art Studies. Stiegler's philosophy advances the pharmacology of cutting and an organological analysis of the project of behaving. The agential capacities of various behaviors and habits are ones that follow or derive from agential cuts that are performed within the world's intra-activity. The who or what is humane is constitutive of urbanity, civility, that is constantly threatened by regression and requires care. I also philosophically thematize the double meaning of behavior within the dual composition of the *pharmakon*.

In the subsequent section of the article, I explore problematic definitions of behavior, which I understand philosophically as a phenomenon of existential retention and protention in matter (being and having). They signal that behaviors are general, repeatable, and controllable processes of organologically amassing already constituted relationships through established retentions between an organism, its environment, and itself. These definitions consider behavior as an abstract function or property of matter, including living and dead organisms. Obviously, there is a relational and regional history to the behaviors of matter, and this history is an important factor in the development of various artistic techniques and accidents. So, when thinking of the habits of organizing organic and inorganic matter constitutive of temporally organized endosomatic and exosomatic movements, I propose that the appropriate method for advancing the study of behaviors would be through general organology by using a common analogy to wood. Behaviors selectively develop in terms of their looks, feels, and complexity. Behavior can undergo quantification and repetition. Two considerations were provided, one in Heideggerian terminology in terms of presence-at-hand and readiness-at-hand, and the other in Merleau-Ponty's modes of being in-itself and for-itself. So, the problematics of behavior in terms of its definition revolve around equivocal definitions that tend to overlook the mattering of existential retention.

Part Two of the article consists of a composition of exploratory says that relate with how behavior is material and how its meaning is practiced. I explore the situation when we say a certain behavior matters. Matter cannot be separated from the *esprit* or mind, and it cannot be isolated from other matter. Aesthetics is thought of as a philosophical practice of making-sense and selections. I explore the existential implications of the perceived phenomenon of “be-having” that becomes constitutive of states and disposition, or habits. Analyses that do touch upon the subject of behavior usually stop at banal conclusions that art challenges habits and fixed mechanistic behaviors, which ignores the ongoing iterative and performative processes of habits (hexis), which materialize. Art (techne), generally understood, is a working of habits and a fixing of aesthetically (sensory, feeling) orientated behavior that is not a mechanistic fixation. If we take an understanding of sensitivity as causal prefixed and determined reactions, which is to say that of the pair stimulus–reactions, then we fall into the trap of fixing the flesh into closed reflex system models, where stable unchanging systems need to be thought of as in place. This is to say that behavior’s materiality is at once a perceptual (techno-epistemic) and an organological (ontic) problem. I do not have in mind the problem of habits as forms of fixed, mechanistic, never changing behaviors. I develop this in relation to the way musicians learn to behave.

By abstracting from the above-mentioned discipline of music, I generalize: all artwork is work that is a working of the artist by the material behavior that the artist “caripulates,” which is a term I have developed in relation to manipulation. In order to become consciously aware of our own behavior, it must be submitted to a process of scrutiny and criticism by others, which is a factor of stimulation that changes the original behavior. I have formulated three distinctions of behavior with the support of Bernard Stiegler’s analysis in the series *Technics and Time*. I understand them as marks and traces, techniques and technologies, from which consciousness and its memories as selections, that must include their protentions, come. When it comes to tertiary retentions, the recorded trace, which is organized inorganic matter, then we have come to live in an age where an exact repetition of a behavior is possible. Moreover, this exactitude of behavior is no longer something for the distanced gaze, of watching and re-watching various fantastic behaviors on the screen.

Pharmacology is a philosophical term used by Stiegler and originally developed by Plato, Michael Rinella, and Jacques Derrida. When saying matter is active, I understand it as matter that can be the source of aesthetic reac-

tions as well as bodily and social changes. In a “pharmacological” research perspective, then all matter is active in some regard. For the philosophy of art this could include any process that is beneficial or destructive, negentropic or entropic. The philosophical application of the *pharmakon* has given rise to the understanding of the pharmaco-logical as the discussions and theories organized by *pharmaka*. Dug-up roots and herbs that require cunning in their caripulation also interact with the flesh, which can grow or decay. The action of cutting is relevant to the notion of *pharmakon*, and as such, should be treated as a *techne*, which is to give shape and form through the cut that is at the root of the labor (as a birth) of all assembly that is a composed difference which is constructive and destructive at the same time. Behavior as a *techne* was unthought since it was considered a natural movement of the cosmos, of orderly behavior. The ethos of music was to instill masculine and feminine behaviors into its practitioners, *catharsis* was to wash away any lingering acting-out and misbehaviors from the fabric of society since Ancient Greece.

Therefore, the open, exploratory and active work of shaping thinking above is a theoretical proposal of paying attention to the materiality of behavior, which is considered as a kind of repetitive memory that individuates the Self and its associated milieu. Behavior, as an art or *techne* that cuts and gives shape to taste, is revalued in its conjectural habitual technicality as an ordered transformative socialized procedural habit (*hexis*). I note that hyper-industrial aesthetics consists in the programmed behavioral conditioning of responses and in learning how to pay sensory attention, or how to focus on the material sources of beauty, pleasure, reward, and so on. The industrialization of making-sense enacts a cognitive modification of the ways humans process various sensory stimuli, such as works of art and entertainment, according to selections (memory). As a *techne*, behavior is pharmacologically active, so it is a matter of “chemistry” or “magic,” which manifests aesthetic dissonance (cuts of discomfort and comfort, emotional labor balancing satisfactions and frustrations) and the organological growth of artificial, physiological, and social bodies. Standard definitions of perceived and measurable phenomena of behavior overlook the activity of matter, which contains its own agency and meaning. Technique is considered an important type of appealingly shaping or stylizing behavior, which is more of a philosophy (analysis of meaning) or an art (expression and crafting of the Self in its retained organized ways of possessing its own being) than a science (instrumental).

Each behavioral technique is constituted by procedural, ongoing iterative and performative growth processes, habits [ἔξις, ἔθος], which are special temporal selected movements that influence the intra-active tendencies of both organic and inorganic organized matter. Behavior does not “exist.” It appears and disappears. It is phenomenologically interpretable and temporal. As a *techne*, it orders the passage of time and happens in time. It can be ethnically cultivated and historically passed down (inherited) through the generations. Behaving can be judged in terms of its beauty, it can be well-done, or poorly executed. It is also saving and dooming.

Hence, behaviors have their aesthetics and are phenomena that qualify for greater philosophical review, at least via the problems of their presence-at-hand, readiness-at-hand, or considerations of behavior’s ambiguity for-itself (subject) and in-itself (object). Behavior freed from the baggage of mechanistic behaviorism necessitates considerations in terms of its aesthetics, as tastes in *savoir-vivre* and *savoir-faire*, also understood as the origin or *arche* of all art, which is rooted in ordered gestures and movements that shape exosomatic organicity: material artifacts (artworks and technics), organizations and institutions (etiquette), and bodily sense perception itself (physiology).

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Merja Aletta Ranttila, Niin kauas kuin lennän (So far as I fly), 1996.

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Juliana España Keller*

Book Review

Musical Encounters with Deleuze and Guattari

Edited by Pirkko Moisala, Taru Leppänen, Milla Tiainen and Hanna Väättäinen
Bloomsbury Academic, Bloomsbury Publishing Inc, London, NY. 2017

Musical Encounters with Deleuze and Guattari assembled by Finnish editors, Pirkko Moisala, Taru Leppänen, Milla Tiainen and Hanna Väättäinen, University of Helsinki, brings together a richly-laden volume of carefully selected individual essays that are based on the involved authors' fieldwork projects and textual matter. The edited volume is one of the major outputs of the Academy of Finland -funded project, "Deleuzian Music Research" (Academy of Finland 2012–2016), whose core team was comprised of the volume's four editors. The book combines a diverse field of thinkers, cultural theorists, musicologists and contributors in music and sound mediums and is divided into three thematic sections: *Elaborations, Events and Experiments* in Deleuzian music research. Challenging the conceptual underpinnings of historical music theory, the book also introduces Deleuzian-Guattarian key terms that recur throughout the chapters. The individual essays feature a wide diversity of thematic fields and areas of music and sound research: performance and sound theory, somatics, bio-science, ethics, neuroscience, contemporary healing practices, ethnomusicology, jazz and popular music, Western opera, disability studies, dance movement and cultural studies.

The contributing authors examine the methodological implications of the French philosophers, Deleuze and Guattari's conceptual ideas in a musician's arrangement, a live event or a collective or participatory entangle-

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ment, or in improvisational styles of musicking that are explored as a 'musical encounter.' All of these authors critically expand on Deleuze and Guattari's concepts, sharing contemplative ruminations through their situated creative research practices. The entire anthology focuses on transposing musicality actively at play and emergent, converging working sonically and vibrationally in moments where a musical encounter can be sensed with its power to "affect." Indeed, *affect* is one of the key concepts that interweave with *becoming* in Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical work. This conceptualization of affect, which describes the basic dimension of encounters between two or more entities, is critically introduced by the editors of *Musical Encounters with Deleuze and Guattari*: "to influence each other's states of being" while affect also means the entities' attendant "transitions from one state and capacity of being to another" (12).

This expansive concept is principally characterized in all its complexities in Deleuze and Guattari's perhaps most widely resonant book, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (trans. B. Massumi, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), which is mentioned numerous times throughout the book's chapters. The chapters elaborate on the transition and altered state Deleuze and Guattari associate with affect by exploring what different entities undergo, and in what ways, as a result of musical and sonic encounters. In most essays, this component is the prevailing melodious subject of the contributing authors.

What is described through the perspective of affect—that is, all the phenomena, forces, intensities and materialities that are constantly formed and reformed as music and musical experience within their mutual encounters and relations—is fundamental to this book because it gives the reader an abundant source of understanding exploratory new sensations, experiences, ideas and modes of being in particular musical encounters or musical and sounding processes that are intersected with Deleuze and Guattari's thinking. For example, in Chapter (9), author, Michelle Duffy proposes that it is not what participants can tell us about sound collections that are important, "it is the affective, bodily and intuitive processes that constitute self and place" and allow us "our varied and multiple entries into the sound world" (200).

Author of Chapter (10), Hanna Väätäinen, partners with Anneli Tiilikainen, a dance enthusiast who has a visual impairment. Väätäinen explores how to use movement as an analytical tool in music and dance research by observing the forms, colours, temperatures and sounds of the materials in the given space. The collaborative dancing of Väätäinen and Tiilikainen

concentrated on the characteristics of space through the movements and sounds they discovered in their fieldwork to develop a way of creating concepts by using movement improvisation, a form of contemporary dance. In the chapter, this form of dance is approached as an ethnographic and Spinozan-Deleuzian method of forming common notions. For Väättäinen, common notions are influential as not necessarily words but ways of moving and conceiving in relation to something else: a piece of music, a research subject or a material and social space and especially dancing bodies. Väättäinen extends her material thinking in relation to Baruch Spinoza's book on "Ethics" and later, Deleuzian concepts in relation to adequate ideas posited in the book *Ethics* (Spinoza II/P.40 Schol. 2, P.43 Schol. 1677).

Whether singular or collaborative, new ways of thinking about contemporary creative practices are explained in the chapters across many forms of existence, oftentimes through the Deleuzian approach to "becomings" in the form of an "assemblage" which signals the potential a particular entity or material can come to have or enact when intra-connected with temporal-space-time connections and entangled with sociocultural forces at work. Ultimately, the concept of becoming saturates the whole ontological approach of this book and its openness to process and difference, that is, to becoming with each musical encounter. In the authors' transcripts, there will always be something new emerging, reconfiguring, diffracting from these musical elements which come together and vibrate for just that moment, providing increasing attention to all the differences and unpredictability that are noticed in a musical event and the active agency of matter (human and non-human) or entities of matter as forces intra-acting (a new materialist approach) together. In chapter (3), Jay Hammond singles out Deleuze's concept of the rhizome in order to understand the temporal dimension of race through an ethnography of jazz culture in the USA. Like the "Black Lives Matter" movement, Hammond asks us to think of race as both embodied and historical. 'To be black in America' is to live under a conception of time that is not your own.

In addition, many of the contributing authors emphasize the Dutch philosopher and mystic, Baruch Spinoza as previously mentioned, in relation to the *mind-body* relationship and Spinoza's respective notions of affect and affection. Author, Marie Thompson, in Chapter (7), highlights that much of Deleuze's work, including that with Guattari, is underpinned by a Spinozan metaphysics. Most of the authors, including Thompson, propose extended understandings of what music is by paying attention to musical events' multisensory, more than aural, not yet actualized (in Deleuze and Guattari's terms virtual), and vibratory beyond the human characteristics.

Taru Leppänen's Chapter (1) on the Deaf Finnish rap artist Signmark (Marko Vuoriheimo), whose album *Signmark* (2006) was the world's first rap album by a Deaf musician, opens with Signmark's childhood memory that invokes important questions about the notions of listening, music and their intra-relation. Someone who is totally deaf and blind can still hear and/or feel sounds. Therefore, Leppänen argues that Signmark's performances can be apprehended as *haptic* engagements with music as he describes his performances in terms of bodily vibrations. Audism, discrimination on the basis of the (in)ability to hear, is implicated in Signmark's musical memories. According to Leppänen, it is also discernible in much of music research, while a haptic and vibratory approach inspired by Deleuze and Guattari may help researchers to overcome this limiting and discriminatory perspective.

Active listening bodies have become a central theme in cultural and feminist musicology of recent decades, and Spinoza and Deleuze's non-anthropocentric notion of the body allows the reader to understand how an experimental music praxis affects and is affected by sound making, by encouraging a move beyond the binary between active musicking subjects and passive musical objects. Author, Elizabeth Gould, in Chapter (5) addresses this question in queer and pop music as forms of becoming in terms of creative acts of difference, by referencing a Deleuzian sense of constant positive difference that provides the ground on which identities are founded. Author, Pirkko Moisala's study in Chapter (6) emphasizes music as a communal activity in ways that build upon the ethnomusicological study of musical performance. In Moisala's approach, performances are not about an already existing people but "a people to come," in that site-specific musical encounters between human participants and their social relations, physical environments, the artefacts involved in the performance, are moulding the future and what it might be like for the community in question. Thus, musical encounters can change and transform a people's becoming, and vice versa.

In general, the essays of this volume may most appeal to practicing musicologists, performance-based researchers and experimental sound artists whose topics of study and audiovisual artworks intersect resonantly with aspects of the musical practices explored in the book, and with the current discourses of musicology, performance (art) studies and sonic improvisation. This is especially relevant in relation to strands of process philosophy, new materialism, and post-humanism; as *becoming* is an intra-active modality permeating musical events and meaning. The overarching question that the contributors invite us to contemplate is this: What can Deleuze and Guattari do for (or to) music encounters?

Thus, what is particularly of interest in this book is the exploration of the principle boundaries of Deleuze and Guattari-inspired music studies and the assimilation of sonic material that is traditionally rejected as “noise,” as well as reflection on the extent to which Deleuze and Guattari’s ideas apply to all music or, alternatively, evade some genres. For example, attention to the body of work by American musician and music theorist, John Cage, is particularly relevant in this respect. Author, Janne Vanhanen in Chapter (8) writes about the significance of listening, as creating a sonorous body, relational to Deleuzian philosophy where the author takes into consideration the auditory realm that emphasizes indeterminacy, improvisation or process, materiality of the sonic medium and goes beyond listening to traditional music forms. Vanhanen proposes: “To learn is to experiment. This is a most relevant point of view when thinking about the meaning and possible importance of experimental music” (184).

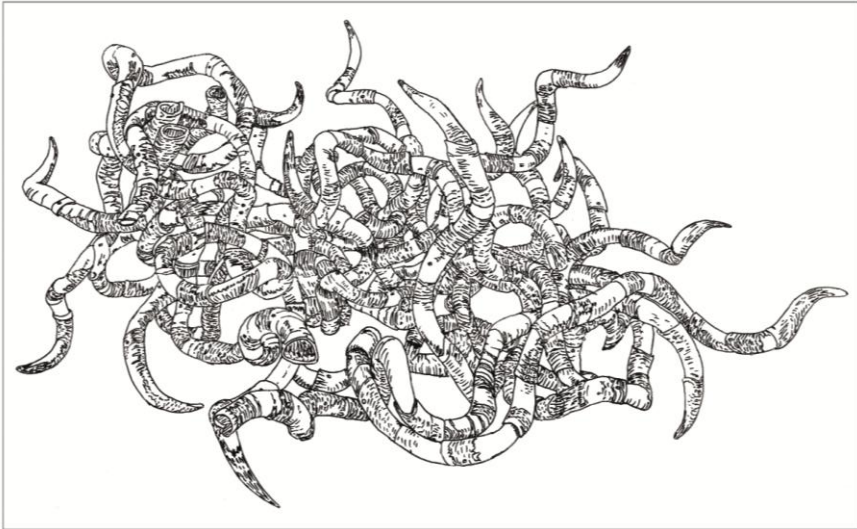
This model of expanded listening questions both the musical “object” and the practice, the *what* and *how* of listening. Can you listen to an idea? To a process unfolding? To sound as pure vibration? Vanhanen opens ways of constructing what he puts forward as ‘the Inorganized Ear’—a sonorous body without organs, a Deleuzian situation, where experience is not essentially categorized or organized but is encountered as a flow of intensities between bodies organic and inorganic out of which the experience of listening occurs.

Adding to the conceptual relations of new materialist and posthuman(ist) thinking in reading this book, one envisions a sense of intra-connection between self and others and a process of redefining one’s sense of attachment to a shared interconnected world. Author, Sally Macarthur in Chapter (2) is drawn to the idea of pursuing difference-in-itself, for such a feminist new materialist concept has the potential to transform real-world problems in music, since the Deleuzian micropolitics of becoming influences the ways in which music performs cultural work through its connections. For Macarthur, musical practices are culturally embedded, shaped by a multiplicity of conditions and interests.

This is something that is quite profound in today’s feminist materialist thinking, and it is highlighted by our current existence in a world undergoing a pandemic. It is particularly significant in relation to magnifying our relationship with nature, the sixth extinction and in ethnomusicological terms—the role of the sounds of our ecological surroundings in future musical encounters.

Author Milla Tiainen's primary aim in Chapter (4) is to explain how the concept of assemblage may also enhance our understanding of the currently changing material and social functions of artistic, including musical, performances in relation to environmental crises and the surge of non-human centric thinking. Tiainen elaborates on the interdisciplinary art project and immersive musical encounter, "The Algae Opera," by London-based designers and conceptual artists, Michael Burton and Michiko Nitta that comprises material and semiotic flows and connections. According to Tiainen, this art project is at once a machinic assemblage of material elements or processes and a semiotic system: a collective assemblage of enunciations. In addition to the concept of assemblage applied and expanded in the book, this suggestion is tied very much to the *Three Ecologies* by Félix Guattari (2000). In Guattari's view, the intra-relations across all the three levels—the environmental, the social, and the individual—need to be transformed in order to try and solve the current ecological crises. In her analysis of "The Algae Opera", Tiainen points to a potential future re-designing of our bodies which will enable us to live differently and acquire novel sensory experiences in connection with more sustainable food production practices and eating rituals which hopefully involve mutually beneficial interactions with bacteria, algae and other non-human biological systems of this world.

Finally, this book draws serious attention to the generative potential of the socio-cultural, material, non-human, and metaphysical dimensions of many kinds of experimental music through its topics. The multiplicity of musical practices and approaches is deeply revealed through these different assemblages that in turn affect the ways Deleuze and Guattari's thinking can be understood through and with musical encounters, since all concepts involve complexity and a search for a way to textually respond and amplify their dynamic intra-relations.



After Kaisu Koivisto, Runsaudentarvi (Cornucopia), 1996.
© Kaisu Koivisto, Turku Art Museum and Feminist Colour-IN

Rahma Khazam*

Book Review

***Ways of Following: Art, Materiality, Collaboration* Katve-Kaisa Kontturi**

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Theory has always been an adjunct to art, stepping in after the fact to endow a work with academic legitimacy. Yet what if theory were to become part of the nuts and bolts of art-making, able to articulate, synthesize, and push forward the creative process itself? This is where *Ways of Following* comes in: its author Katve-Kaisa Kontturi, currently Acting Professor of Art History at the University of Turku in Finland, has a background in participatory, arts-based, practice-led, feminist, and new materialist research, with a particular focus on art-writing, art-based research, and the relations between art and theory. Her book pursues these research interests, while charting her long-term encounters and engagement with the work of three contemporary women artists, offering a vivid demonstration of how a certain strand of philosophy (Deleuzian, for the most part) can accompany a specific kind of art, pointing to their interdependence and common goals.

Take, for instance, Kontturi's account of Susana Nevado's *Honest Fortune Teller* (2005), an installation addressing contemporary embodiments of Catholic imagery, in which the notion of layering or stratification is key.

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As Kontturi points out, Deleuze and Guattari regard stratification as a means of creating order from the chaos of the world, as a long-term process of creation and re-creation (57). In the same way, the thirty-five paintings and small sculptures making up Nevado's installation took many months to complete, and especially one particular painting to which she was constantly adding new layers, which she would then remove and overpaint. Yet as Deleuze and Guattari also observe, stratification is like a belt that supports but nonetheless restricts. Nevado too gradually came to feel that the layers she was continually adding were merely going over familiar ground (57-58), and she eventually rubbed the uppermost layer of the painting in question with sandpaper, so that the pinup girl figures and other readily identifiable signs in it became unrecognizable. As Kontturi writes: "Before the scrubbing, it was images and their significance in the anthropomorphic strata that governed the painting. This is what Deleuze and Guattari call the 'imperialism of the signifier' (61): in other words, the previous version of the painting, to use Kontturi's terms, "was stratified, it was stuck" (59). Yet it was nonetheless still open to being destratified and turned into art by the scrubbing process—in the same way as strata, according to Deleuze and Guattari, are never closed, but traversed by forces that change their course (57). Kontturi notes: "When something is stratified, it becomes commonplace and easy to communicate. Consequently, what was [...] called 'artwork'—art as an object of recognition and interpretation—is art that is stratified. Work of art, however, escapes the belt of stratification" (57). Of course, this does not mean that any painting can be improved by scrubbing, but rather that in this instance the creative process can be concretely and precisely described in terms of destratification, such that art emerges once recognizable givens have been produced and then overcome (65). In *Ways of Following*, philosophical insights are continually interlaced in this way with descriptions of the processes, ideas, and actions that constitute art-making, so that we grasp the art through the philosophy and the philosophy through the art – and through the black-and-white images of the works of art explored in the book, which contribute to the reader's comprehension of both the art and the text.

Ways of Following is also an account of art-making that takes stock of the contexts, actions, and materials that provide the impetus for the creative process to develop and thrive. As such, it reformulates existing artistic methodologies, replacing norms, styles, and preconceptions with such notions as openness, liveliness, and 'going with the flow'. Kontturi's own status as a 'follower' of artists exemplifies her approach, her task being not

to record the artists' pre-planned schedule but to make an active contribution to the unscripted unfolding of their working day. She writes: "[M]y technique was to 'collaborate' rather than only observe the artists working, meaning that it was critical for me to stay open to their viewpoints and ways of doing" (71). Kontturi's open-ended writing practice likewise goes with the flow, rather than just recording her own feelings: she describes it as 'writing as following', or what Marsha Meskimmon calls 'writing-with', which is an ethical mode of writing about art that offers new knowledge obtained by attending to the complexities of the work of art (11–12). In the same way, art-making itself is to be viewed not as an individualistic enterprise driven only by human agency but as a collaborative undertaking engaging the agency of the artist's materials as well, just as art too may be redefined not as a platform whereby the artist demonstrates her mastery over her materials, but as a complex assemblage of processes with its own expressive qualities that does not just comply with the artist's intentions but also exceeds them. As Kontturi points out with respect to Nevado's installation: "It was Nevado who initiated the process, but then, so to speak, the process had to take a course of its own" (83). Kontturi thus maps out an 'autonomy of process', quite different from the notion of artistic autonomy: "It is not, then, autonomy from the social or from the symbolic that I am suggesting [...] It is just that when connected in art-making, matters of art create their own mutual movement that might be called autonomous" (95).

The notion of more-than-human collaborations that exceed the presence and/or influence of humans is clearly of key importance here (18). Without disregarding the participation of humans, such co-workings—as Kontturi calls them—include the impact of light or paint, as well as the intensities of processes as such, which "count more than individuals or other clearly defined material entities" (21). Such intensities play a key part in the viewer's reception of art, as in the example of the swirling, rotating beams of coloured light issuing from Helena Hietanen's installation *Heaven Machine* (2005–2006). The beams provoke in the viewer temporary loss of vision and disruptions of her sense of balance, impacting the functioning of the body in a manner that is no longer just material but material-relational: "What the encounter with *Heaven Machine* suggests is that when works of art are seen merely as passive 'battlefields' for representation and interpretation, their potential lines of flight, their material-relational capacity to change and move thinking is easily missed" (45). For all these reasons, Kontturi's approach is not just a 'method' of art-making but a 'way', for 'method' implies

pre-determination and regularity, whereas 'way' has more to do with process and ongoing becoming (16). She writes: "In this way, in the way of following, the beams of light do not affirm a certain life, not the life of Hietanen, nor more generally a Christian way of life, but an indefinite life not restricted by the juxtaposition of 'here and now' and 'hereafter'" (44).

Yet despite its qualities, the book leaves a number of questions unanswered. Is Kontturi's approach, based as it is on an absence of preconceptions or goals, applicable to all kinds of art or just the works described in the book? Portrait painting, for instance, would seem to be dependent on some form of likeness, while conceptual and minimal art are defined in accordance with relatively stable criteria. The book also raises questions with regard to the philosophies on which it draws: for over and above Deleuze and Guattari, there are references to new materialist philosophers such as Jane Bennett and Elizabeth Grosz. Grosz's emphasis on vibration as a fundamental component of life, and on the imperceptible movements and shifts challenging the apparent solidity of things is ideally suited to exploring the nuances of process art (40) (191). Yet in the long term, it challenges the very notion of art. How is the viewer to relate to a work if it is continually changing? Does a de-stratified work also undergo change to the point where it might once again become stuck after a certain amount of time? And if art must be bereft of preconceptions, how are we to distinguish it from non-art? Finally, another new materialist assertion—that there are no individuals but only an interconnected network of human and non-human actions and entanglements—poses problems for the above-mentioned claims concerning the autonomy of processes and materials.

Yet many of these omissions exceed the book's scope. Consequently, they do not jeopardize its strongest claims: its insistence on the relatedness of philosophy and art and their capacity to support and strengthen each other's assumptions, on the key role of more-than-human factors in art-making, and on the important contribution of feminist art-making to these goals. The book thus addresses not only philosophers engaging with Deleuze, but also—and especially—artists, art theorists, feminists, and new materialists, as well as students of humanities disciplines more generally.

Not only do publications exploring new materialist thinking and analysis in the field of contemporary art address diverse readerships, but they also take different forms: compared to such noteworthy edited volumes as *Realism Materialism Art* (eds Cox, Jaskey, Malik, Sternberg Press 2015), and *Power of Material/Politics of Materiality* (eds Witzgall, Stakemeier, The Uni-

versity of Chicago Press 2018), Kontturi's contribution is a full-length book. As she reminds us, art (and presumably writing too) must constantly renew itself, and such is indeed the case of the art (and the writing) she defends: "Art addresses what we may become. It keeps offering new flows of process to follow and stucknesses to attend to, and therefore, also, new sensations to encounter and conceptions to create" (202).



After Nusra Latif Qureshi, Order of the spoils, 2012.
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Katherine Robert*

Book Review
Theory of the Image

Thomas Nail, (2019), *Theory of the Image*, New York: Oxford University Press. 416 pages
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In *Theory of the Image*, kinetic materialist philosopher Thomas Nail opens by stating that “we live in the age of the image” (1). The author convincingly shows from a process materialist perspective that traditional Western aesthetic theories are no longer adequate now that digital media have “unleashed the largest flow of digitally reproduced words, images, and sounds the world has ever witnessed” (1), an “equivalent of a Copernican revolution of our time” (1). Nail is an associate professor of philosophy at the University of Denver in Colorado, USA and this current work emerged in relation to his previous new materialist theorization of an ontology of movement in *Being and Motion* (2018). In *Theory of the Image*, the author’s goal is to provide “a new aesthetics for our time, *an aesthetics of the moving image*” (3), that is, a *kinesthetics*. His central question is “what does the mobility of the image say about the nature of images and aesthetics more broadly?” (4).

Nail argues that qualitative structural changes occurred with this digital revolution and that “none of our senses has remained unchanged” (3). The aesthetics of the twentieth century modeled on human agency and structures such as psychology or linguistics are too limited. Nail’s objective “is to locate the real and historical conditions for the emergence of the con-

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temporary mobility of the image" (5) in contrast to old paradigms of images as static representations. Nail offers a non-anthropocentric material theory from the perspective of the image's own mobility to view earlier images in new ways and glimpse what has been hidden prior to this "new historical-aesthetic regime" (2) of electrical flow as motion. The author succeeds in showing the reader how images move and circulate as matter and what they *do*, not what they *mean* and Nail's kinesthetics provides a much needed comprehensive aesthetics framework from a new materialist perspective. Those wanting to know where Nail places his kinesthetics in relation to other contemporary theorists such as Erin Manning, Brian Massumi, Mark Hansen, Ossi Naukarinen, and Simon O'Sullivan (365) will find more information in the extensive end notes.

The book is organized into three parts. The conceptual framework for kinesthetics is explained in part I, while parts II and III shows the application of the theory to Western and Near Eastern art history. The intended audiences are philosophers of aesthetics and art historians and Nail anticipates in the introduction that readers from these different disciplines may be tempted to read only the parts that seem related to their fields (13). Nail urges an openness to the holism of his theory as a new way to think about art and aesthetics and encourages experiencing the entire text.

In addition to these intended audiences, *Theory of the Image* provides a framework for artists who desire to theorize their creative material processes, as well as for those theorizing arts-based research methods (Rosiek 2018a; 2018b). Scholars working in visual and cultural studies may also find the work insightful and stimulating. While stunningly brilliant and exciting, groundbreaking ideas can be difficult to comprehend so the conceptualization in part I may be intimidating for some and require patience and diligence for those readers unfamiliar with new materialist concepts, traditional Western aesthetic theories and art history, and Newtonian and quantum physics, which Nail utilizes to show how kinesthetics is applicable to this new age of digital images. However, Nail is correct that greater understanding does occur through applying kinesthetics to the historical and contemporary examples in parts II and III.

While explaining his own concepts in the introduction, Nail clearly points to two problems with existing Western aesthetics from which *Theory of the Image* attempts to differentiate itself: stasis and ahistoricism (4-10). An objective ahistorical static concept of images is entangled with the Platonic idealism, copy, and representation, while subjective stasis concepts derive from Kantian philosophy that declares subjective notions of beauty are unchanging, universal, and fixed in the human mind. Nail argues that these

anthropic constructivisms leads to a distrust of our senses and situates the material world of nature as merely a “prompt for us to discover the beauty of our own aesthetic and phenomenological faculties” (7). Nail’s theory uncovers kinetic paradoxes in traditional aesthetics that ignore the agency of images and their “growing mobility that shifts back and forth *between* objects, subject, copy and model, transforming and modulating them in a continuous feedback loop” (3). However, these critiques of Kantian aesthetics and phenomenology are not the primary focus of Nail’s work and in the end notes he offers other works that have covered these arguments, such as those by Karen Barad, Tom Sparrow, Manuel Delanda, and Diana Coole and Samantha Frost (367).

An important key point is that Nail’s material kinetic conception of the image includes *all* matter, not just works of art, which is explained in the introduction and first three chapters on the flow of matter, the fold of affect, and the field of art. Nail’s use of the term “image” includes visual sensing but also “sonic, haptic, olfactory, and gustatory” (11). Process materialism theorizes matter as creative unstopable motion that is not predictable or measurable. The movement is emergent rather than causal, “pedetic and indeterminate” (21). Nail clearly separates himself from vital materialism, which he argues metaphysically fetishizes life or vitality as a physical force that is retroactively applied to matter (22). Instead he offers an additive historical theorization of events from which to examine images while showing that material sensing occurs first and then metaphysical meaning making follows (49-54). Indeed, in part II, Nail uses the kinesthetic field of the ancient Greeks, Mesopotamians, and Egyptians to show the material historical processes in which human thought and reason came to be perceived as the source of all perception, instead of the actual physical material world (131-183).

In kinesthetics, images are matter that emerge in iterative patterns that bodies sense, and when repeated in turbulent cycles of randomness, a temporary order of metastable material states emerges, giving an appearance of stability and stasis. Drawing on Heraclitus and Virginia Woolf, a helpful analogy Nail offers is of an eddy in a river (48-49); the eddy appears as a stable *thing* that can be perceived as different from the river itself—it is a meta-stable recognizable pattern. However, the eddy is constantly reproduced with new water, made of individual molecules of hydrogen and oxygen in a form that produce a quality of liquidity that we sense visually, audibly, tactilely, etc.

Degrees of qualities make perceivable the differences of “things” in each loop and sensation is the “kinetic difference between sensibility and the sensed” (49) as matter flows iteratively. Aesthetic qualities do not reside within things themselves (54-61). Rather, qualities are kinetic agential motion in the material form of gases, solids, liquids, and atomic forms that are in continuous motion and sensed through taste, touch, smell, sound, and sight. It is the folding of matter repeatedly into conjunctions that the combination and arrangement of qualities and quantities emerge, which creates a thing that appear discrete but is not (62-68).

Works of art are not reified, static objects. They are kinetically active material processes that are continually emitting material flows for light, sound, and scent, as well as receiving material flows and being transformed in turn. The work of art is an entire ecological system, aesthetic field, or feedback loop between flows of matter that compose it and its environment, all flows that leave its body, and all the flows that return to and affect it (84).

Readers should be aware that the concepts in part I of *Theory of the Image* emerged with Nail’s ontological theory of motion and are explained in greater detail in his previous book *Being and Motion* (2018). Part II is organized by and describes four dominant material and kinetic Western aesthetic regimes: The functional field of prehistory; the formal field of the ancients; the relational field of the European Medieval period, and the differential regime of the modern period. The conceptual kinetic patterns Nail describes related to each historical era are centripetal, centrifugal, tensional, and elastic, respectively. Each chapter has conceptual and historical parts that defines and illustrates the patterns using historical images and Nail includes a breathtaking wide range of modalities as examples, such as architecture, stained glass, perfume, food, theater, and cinema, to name but a few. As an example, Nail identifies six main aesthetic fields for the centripetal Prehistoric Image explored in Chapter 5, including the body, hearth, cave, vessel, wind instruments, and the house. Nail deeply explores the relationality of these fields with specific aesthetic material movement such as the relation between the cave and painting (114-118).

Part III offers a historically sensitive reading of digital and contemporary images that Nail conceptualizes with two dimensions: the hybridity of all previous regimes covered in part II and kinetic generative images. Nail argues in Chapter 15 that it is not that the old historic patterns are inaccurate now, but rather that they are still in use as hybrids and remixes. How digital electronic material flows offer kinetic interaction that is generative, including by introducing disorder, randomness, and feedback, are explored in

Chapter 16. While part II provides an interesting new take on the images from Western art history and is helpful to show the theory, Nail's inclusion of contemporary art brings the concepts full circle back to demonstrate his claim that a new aesthetics is needed.

The author clearly lays out the limitations of the work in the introduction (13-15) and recaps them in the conclusion while offering ideas on how to further apply kinesthetics (363-364). Nail transparently acknowledges the Western and Near Eastern cultural and historical narrowness of the art history utilized and begs for patience in his acknowledgement that not all historical periods or works are as comprehensive nor symmetrical through the book due to practicalities. Rather, the purpose is "to unsettle already settled histories by tracing a different history beneath them" (14).

Nail also intentionally works within his own European linguistic and cultural background and the geographical limits of the examples (14), while suggesting ideas for future work in the conclusion that reiterate movement across borders (364). While remaining in the Western lineage, he offers that Western aesthetics are historically and kinetically influenced by Eastern and colonial worlds while also materially influencing these worlds, including through exploitation. It would be an act of colonialism to appropriate non-western worldviews into Western paradigms but applying a critical lens to detect and queer universalizing principles and assumptions in Western theory (Barad, 2015) is ethically crucial in new materialism. While motivated out of humility and avoidance of colonial moves, the categorical neatness the author uses to limit the work unintentionally reifies Western categories of difference, and given the nature of kinesthetics, these divisions seem somewhat out of place. Nail acknowledges this discrepancy and explains in the introduction that the coexisting and remixing paradigm was too large for the current work and indicates future work in this area (14).

Nail's theorization and demonstration of kinesthetics is a stunning contribution for the growing interdisciplinary interest and application of new materialist theories and succeeds within the philosophical scope of the book, that is, Nail clearly places his own work within the Western philosophical canon. And his knowledge of Western art history and contemporary art are extensive enough to supply his kinesthetic theory with visual examples that greatly aid in understanding, ranging from visual conceptual models to art, historical, and scientific images. However, it would be interesting to see what the author could accomplish in the future with interdisciplinary, cross-cultural, and collaborative endeavors and the use of creative modalities to show the application of kinesthetics in the material world.

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