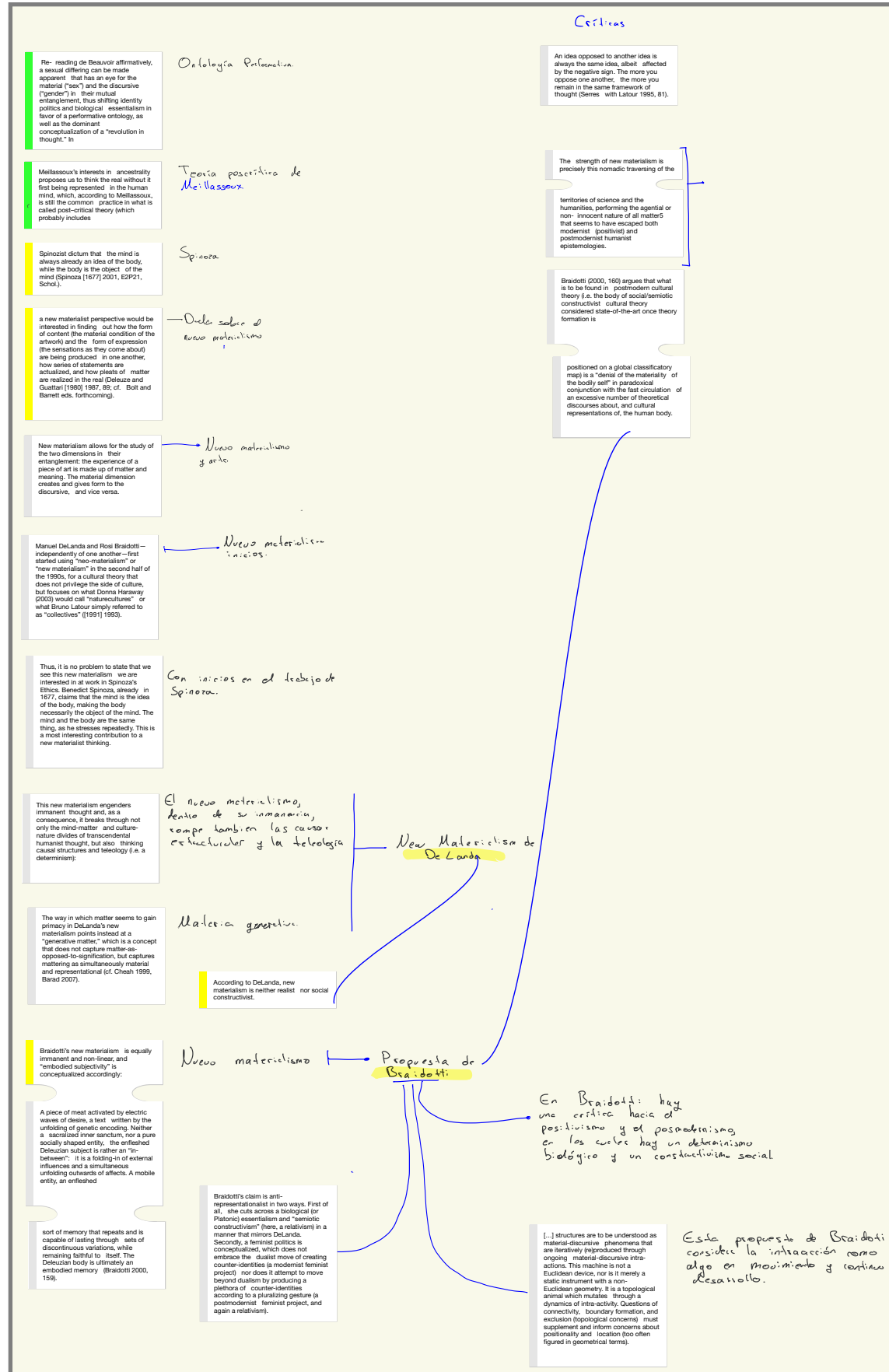


Workspace 'Workspace 1' in 'Dolphins-van-der-Tuin_2013_New-Materialism'

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*New Materialism:
Interviews & Cartographies*

New Metaphysics

Series Editors: Graham Harman and Bruno Latour

The world is due for a resurgence of original speculative metaphysics. The New Metaphysics series aims to provide a safe house for such thinking amidst the demoralizing caution and prudence of professional academic philosophy. We do not aim to bridge the analytic-continental divide, since we are equally impatient with nail-filing analytic critique and the continental reverence for dusty textual monuments. We favor instead the spirit of the intellectual gambler, and wish to discover and promote authors who meet this description. Like an emergent recording company, what we seek are traces of a new metaphysical 'sound' from any nation of the world. The editors are open to translations of neglected metaphysical classics, and will consider secondary works of especial force and daring. But our main interest is to stimulate the birth of disturbing masterpieces of twenty-first century philosophy.

Introduction

A “New Tradition” in Thought

Chapter 5 (“The Transversality of New Materialism”) focuses on three ways in which new materialism can be called “transversal.” So far we have seen that new materialism is a cultural theory that does not privilege matter over meaning or culture over nature. It explores a *monist* perspective, devoid of the dualisms that have dominated the humanities (and sciences) until today, by giving special attention to matter, which has been so neglected by dualist thought. Cartesian dualism, after all, has favored mind. As concerns feminist literary theory in the deconstructive paradigm, for instance, it has been noted that:

Men have aligned the opposition male/female with rational/emotional, serious/frivolous, or reflective/spontaneous, [whereas] feminist criticism [...] works to prove itself more rational, serious, and reflective than male readings that omit and distort (Culler [1982] 2008, 58).

It is this kind of scholarship, according to Jonathan Culler, but also according to DeLanda (as seen in the interview above) that attempts to provoke a shift in thought, but which continues the dominant scholarly mode of thinking. And whereas this act of reclaiming thought has been important for feminism, it has not spurred a revolution in thought (as we will explain in Chapters 5 and 7). New materialism wants to set such a revolution in motion, and for this reason it has a renewed interest in philosophical monism or in the philosophy of immanence. New materialism,

as a transversally new intellectual orientation, works through the transcendental and humanist (dualist) traditions that haunt cultural theory, and finds itself transversally on the brink of both the modern *and* the post-postmodern eras. The transcendental and humanist traditions, despite being manifold, are consistently predicated on dualist structures. New materialists open up the paradoxes inherent in those traditions by creating concepts that traverse the fluxes of matter and mind, body and soul, nature and culture, and opens up active theory formation. The three transversalities discussed in Chapter 5 concern disciplinarity, paradigms, and the spatiotemporality of theory—that is, the cartographical methodology introduced in the interview with Braidotti.

Chapter 6 (“Pushing Dualism to an Extreme”) discusses the way in which new materialism constitutes a philosophy of difference or immanence by working through or “traversing” the dualisms that form the backbone of modernist thought. This chapter dives immediately into the epistemological or even *methodological* dimension of new materialism itself as displayed by the interviewees in Part One. Continuing the transversal ideas of Lyotard, Deleuze, and Bruno Latour about the temporality of theory formation, new materialists have set themselves to a rewriting of all *possible and impossible* forms of emancipation. This rewriting exercise involves a movement in thought that, in the words of Henri Bergson ([1896] 2004, 236), can be termed “push[ing] dualism to an extreme.” By this movement, Deleuze ([1968] 1994, 45) has stated that “difference is pushed to the limit,” that is to say, “difference” is “shown *differing*” (ibid., 68; emphasis in original). The chapter addresses the new materialist ways in which modernity’s dualisms (structured by a negative relation between terms) are traversed, and how a new conceptualization of difference (structured by an affirmative relation) comes to be constituted along the way. This conceptualization of difference leaves behind all prioritizations (implicitly) involved in modern dualist thinking, since a difference structured by affirmation does not work with predetermined relations (e.g. between mind and body) nor does it involve a counter-hierarchy between terms. The chapter makes explicit the *methodology* of the current-day rise of non-dualist thought, both in terms of its non-classificatory mode of (Deleuzian) thinking, and in terms of the theory of the time of thought thus effectuated (Lyotard’s

notion of "rewriting modernity" is not a postmodernism). We conclude by demonstrating how this new materialism traverses the sexual dualisms that structure modernist feminist thinking, anticipating the next chapter that includes a re-reading of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* ([1949] 2010), mainly through the work of Elizabeth Grosz. This short demonstration forms the bridge to Chapter 7.

➔ The seventh chapter ("Sexual Differing") envisions a new way of mapping the relations between the sexes by moving beyond sex, sexual difference, and gender. Instead of the epistemological groundwork for a new conceptualization of difference, this chapter is interested in new materialism's ontology of difference itself. In the dominant reception of the work of de Beauvoir, finding its apotheosis in the work of Butler, feminists overthrow sex and sexual difference in favor of gender. What we propose in a new materialist spirit is that gender, with which a revolution in thought was intended, did not produce the desired effect. Theorists of gender position themselves in dualistic opposition to theorists of sexual difference, and end up re-affirming sexual difference in its narrowest definition (the biological essentialism of sex). All forms of identity politics, as shown in the interviews summarized by the Culler citation above, involve dualism, and need to be opened up and set in motion. Counter-intuitively, a true revolution in thought does not consist of the dualistic overthrow of a seemingly outdated framework. Similar to Deleuze's rejection of Otherness that runs through a great deal of the new materialist work, we show how a revolution in thought entails the affirmation of the thinking process—that is, a practical philosophy. This chapter in line with the preceding chapter, proposes the setting up of a new materialist theory of sexual difference as a practical philosophy in which concept and creation are considered as intertwined. Re-reading de Beauvoir affirmatively, a sexual differing can be made apparent that has an eye for the material ("sex") and the discursive ("gender") in their mutual entanglement, thus shifting identity politics and biological essentialism in favor of a performative ontology, as well as the dominant conceptualization of a "revolution in thought." In the practical philosophical process, then, the present comes about as creating the past and the future: de Beauvoir (the past) is being re-read (the present), while working towards the future of feminist thought. Through our so-called case study

on sex, gender, and sexual difference, we show how the new materialism is a practical philosophy that makes way for thinking metamorphoses regarding—along with sex—“race,” class, and the other so-called axes of social difference.

Finally, in the eighth chapter (“The End of (Wo)Man”), we engage most directly with new materialism’s new metaphysics by discussing its post-humanism or a-humanism. We start from the work of Foucault, on whose work all interviewees took a position. When Foucault in *The Order of Things* ([1966/1970] 1994) announced that man was only a recent invention, he added a permanent question mark to the humanist and modernist traditions that had dominated European thought for over two centuries. In his recently published accompanying dissertation *Introduction to Kant’s Anthropology* (2008, submitted in 1961) he gives us an even more thorough perspective on how anthropocentrism has shaped our (dualist) thinking, and how it has actually distorted our strategies of studying the real. His views can definitely be considered the opening statements of new materialism, especially because Foucault in his later work has shown in so many ways how bodies (think of prisons, for instance) and the words within which they are enveloped (think of “delinquency”) act only in entanglement with one another, and that the human being acts within the actualization and realization of these discursive forces. Recently, Meillassoux’s *After Finitude* ([2006] 2008) proposed another re-reading of Kant that suggests that Foucault has not pushed things far enough (as Meillassoux explained in his interview).

Foucault.

Not even referring to Foucault in his book, Meillassoux’s interests in ancestry proposes us to think the real without it first being represented in the human mind, which, according to Meillassoux, is still the common practice in what is called post-critical theory (which probably includes Foucault). Meillassoux, continuing themes found in the early writings of Alain Badiou, together with other speculative thinkers such as Ray Brassier and Graham Harman, thus intends to fulfill Kant’s Copernican revolution of the mind by proposing a radical anti-anthropocentrism, which refuses to see truth only in how it can possibly appear to the human mind. Instead, he proposes an understanding of truth (or nature) through mathematics. We will show how Meillassoux’s speculative materialism differs from the positions of other prominent contemporary materialists such as Barad and

Theoric
post
critica.

Miguel
de Spinoza.

A través de la relación de sus
componentes

DeLanda. These authors, though also inspired by the natural sciences,

emphasize that phenomena reveal themselves from their relations. However, we will also demonstrate how a coherence can be created between these new materialists that, after having worked through humanism and the different differences it gave rise to, asks how much (wo)man we need at all. Without intending to come to a fixed conclusion, we can see that the different developments in new materialist thinking leave us with many questions in both the sciences and the humanities on the role of the human being in the morphogenesis of the real. This book, together with the new materialist scholars it interviews and discusses, wishes to provide a methodological opening for these ontological questions.

The "new" in new materialism is not a term that accepts or continues a classificatory historiography of (academic) thinking that necessarily comes with a hierarchy or any kind of *a priori* logic. New materialism affirms that such hierarchized specialization creates "minds in a groove" whereas "there is no groove of abstractions which is adequate for the comprehension of human life" (Whitehead [1925] 1997, 197). New materialism does not intend to add yet another specialized epistemology to the tree of academic knowledge production (Deleuze and Guattari [1980] 1987, 5). As such, it is thus not necessarily opposed to the crude or Historical/Marxist materialist tradition. It is not necessarily different from any other materialist, pragmatic or monist tradition either, since it carefully "works through" all these traditions in order to avoid, along with the trap of antagonism, the trap of anachronism (Lyotard [1988] 1991, 26–7) or of "a retrograde movement" (Bergson [1934] 2007, 11). New materialism says "yes, and" to all of these intellectual traditions, traversing them all, creating strings of thought that, in turn, create a remarkably powerful and fresh "rhythm" in academia today (Simondon [1958] 1980).

Parte de
la filosofía
continental

New materialism's metaphysics follows from an interdisciplinary development in thought, whose backbone is a strong interest in Continental philosophy. Yet it seems to have no difficulty in opening up these thoughts to Anglo-American thought, and actually makes their intermingling productive. Yet this is nothing "new." There are many examples in which Continental and Anglo-American thought have been moving in similar directions, as scholars were consciously or unconsciously inspired by a

radical thought they felt to be present beneath what was known. After all, just like Alfred North Whitehead's plea for "wandering" through and beyond grooves (Whitehead [1925] 1997, 207), Lyotard's "working through" is "a working attached to a thought of what is constitutively hidden from us in the event and in the meaning of the event" (Lyotard [1988] 1991, 26). Or in the words of Bergson, "As though the thing and the idea of the thing, its reality and its possibility, were not created at one stroke when a truly new form, invented by art or nature is concerned!" (Bergson [1934] 2007, 11). Good ideas are never bothered by space or time. From Bergson to Whitehead and Lyotard, from Louis Hjelmslev to Benedict Spinoza, from Foucault to British Cultural Studies, and from quantum physics to contemporary feminist theory—time and again, new thoughts travel easily and have always already announced themselves when the conditions are right (De Boever et al. 2009).

One could even claim that the break between Continental and Anglo-American thought, or the divide between the sciences and the humanities as C.P. Snow ([1959] 1965) expressed it in his famous 1950 essay "The Two Cultures," were not so much states that were *noticed*, but were actually prompted by philosophers of science themselves. Snow's taxonomy created and eventually overcoded this radical distinction he claimed to have merely observed (cf. Kirby 2008a). Such major Historiographies, to speak again with Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, are not so much critiqued by new materialism. Instead, they are being read in their relations to the minor historiographies which often result in the appearance of alternative *new* trajectories. It is in this sense that the "materialism" of new materialism is also not exclusive. It is not embraced in opposition to transcendental thinking, but instead re-reads metaphysics as a whole from a "natureculture" perspective, as science studies would call it (Latour [1991] 1993, Haraway 2003). The new materialist practice of reading as re-reading, together with the readings proposed by new materialist scholars, perform its new metaphysics.

New materialism wants to do justice to the "material-semiotic," or "material-discursive" character of *all* events, as Donna Haraway (1988, 595) and Karen Barad (2003, 810) would call it. It is interested in actualizing a metaphysics that fully affirms the active role played by matter in "receiving"

a form (cf. Simondon 2009, 4). Working through Cartesian or modernist dualisms, new materialism has set itself to practice the Spinozist dictum that the mind is always already an idea of the body, while the body is the object of the mind (Spinoza [1677] 2001, E2P21, Schol.). In terms of artworks, for instance, a new materialist perspective would be interested in finding out how the form of content (the material condition of the artwork) and the form of expression (the sensations as they come about) are being produced in one another, how series of statements are actualized, and how pleats of matter are realized in the real (Deleuze and Guattari [1980] 1987, 89; cf. Bolt and Barrett eds. forthcoming). In this way, new materialism is different from most post-Kantian studies of art, since in these studies, the material and discursive dimensions are treated separately. After a short description of the materials used following a "crude materialism," the contemporary scholar influenced by the so-called "linguistic turn" proceeds to deconstruct its messages. New materialism allows for the study of the two dimensions in their entanglement: the experience of a piece of art is made up of matter and meaning. The material dimension creates and gives form to the discursive, and vice versa. Similar to what happens with the artwork, new materialism sets itself to rewriting events that are usually only of interest to natural scientists. Here it becomes apparent that a new materialist take on "nature" will be shown to be transposable to the study of "culture" and vice versa, notwithstanding the fact that these transpositions are not unilinear. After all, "transposition" is at work in music as well as genetics (Braidotti 2006, 5).

Thinking in such a way reveals to us a "[...] new form of materialist philosophy in which raw matter-energy through a variety of self-organizing processes and an intense power of morphogenesis, generates all the structures that surround us" (DeLanda 1996, n.p.). Studying these metamorphoses as they happen through the formation of content and expression, that is, through the entanglement of materiality and meaning in the widest sense of the word, new materialist thinking allows us to write such a metamorphosis not by excluding parts of it beforehand, but by at least being open to the process in its full manifestation. We need this new materialism because, whether it concerns earthquakes, art, social revolutions, or simply thinking, the material and the discursive are only taken apart in the authoritative gesture of the scholar or by the common-

sensical thinker; while in the event, in life itself, the two seeming layers are by all means indiscernible. New materialism wants to move away from the authoritative scholarly attitude and from everyday utilitarian common sense, and wants to engross itself in what is “ontologically prior” (Massumi 2002, 66).

As an important but poorly defined force in contemporary academia, new materialism stands in need of conceptualization, and this second part of the book provides it. We bring together important scholars and texts that have contributed to the new materialism, and by showing the coherence in their (implicit) dialogue, by demonstrating their joint movements, we allow for a natureculture metaphysics of the ontologically prior to be actualized. But we do not map this new tradition from a distance. In this book, we add to new materialism as much as we perform a new engagement with canonical and minor academic literatures. In keeping with new materialism’s interdisciplinarity, our mapping shows us how new materialist accounts are similar to certain (empirical) tendencies in accounting for nature on the one hand and cognitive accounts of culture and nature on the other.

Chapter 5

The Transversality of New Materialism

Manuel DeLanda and Rosi Braidotti—independently of one another—first started using “neo-materialism” or “new materialism” in the second half of the 1990s, for a cultural theory that does not privilege the side of culture, but focuses on what Donna Haraway (2003) would call “naturecultures” or what Bruno Latour simply referred to as “collectives” ([1991] 1993). The term proposes a cultural theory that radically rethinks the dualisms so central to our (post-)modern thinking and always starts its analysis from how these oppositions (between nature and culture, matter and mind, the human and the inhuman) are produced in action itself. It thus has a profound interest in the morphology of change and gives special attention to matter (materiality, processes of materialization) as it has been so much neglected by dualist thought. In the same breath we then always already start with the *mater*, as Braidotti (2002b, 170) already emphasized elsewhere. This explains why, along with the interest in science seen in particular with DeLanda and Latour, the emancipation of mat(t)er is also by nature a feminist project.¹

For those familiar with the materialism of Walter Benjamin, “new materialism” is ironic for several reasons. Analyzing modernity, Benjamin ([1982] 2002, 22) rejects the modern fetish of newness and the illusions it presumes. Particularly because he considers “[n]ewness [...] a quality independent of the use value of the commodity,” staging a materialism that is “new” would make no sense at all. But of course there is no reason why

we should confine ourselves to such a linear modernist idea of History. Especially if, in following Latour ([1991] 1993, 82), we claim that “[h]istory is no longer simply the history of people, it becomes the history of natural things as well,” Benjamin’s critique can be put aside. The newness we are interested in is not so much a better or improved version of “old” (historical, Marxist-inspired) materialism. DeLanda for instance has made it very clear that he rewrites this Marxism and its (humanist) take on the material (though Benjamin in particular offers us many ways out of these traps). Therefore DeLanda also wrote his famous *A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History* (1997) in which he puts such an “other” history, as proposed by Latour, to work (see also Harman 2008).

In this book it is not so much a history that is presented to the reader, but rather, following Braidotti, a *mapping* of how the materialism that is referred to as a new materialism is at work in the humanities and in the sciences at this very moment. Of course that does not mean that we exclude historicity, time, or memory; texts are read insofar as they are considered important and valuable for the non-dualist, materialist current in contemporary thought, and not judged according to when they were conceived. Thus, it is no problem to state that we see this new materialism we are interested in at work in Spinoza’s *Ethics*. Benedict Spinoza, already in 1677, claims that the mind is the idea of the body, making the body necessarily the object of the mind. The mind and the body are the same thing, as he stresses repeatedly. This is a most interesting contribution to a new materialist thinking. Similarly, the present book develops an interest in the new materialist thoughts to be found in the work of the authors mentioned so far, but also in that of Simone de Beauvoir, Henri Bergson, Alfred North Whitehead and Brian Massumi, among others.

There is a good reason why a book on new materialism is written now. In recent years new materialism has proven to be capable of opposing the transcendental and humanist traditions that are haunting cultural theory, standing on the brink of the post-postmodern era. Of course dualist traditions are stubborn and have buried themselves deep in the minds of (common-sense) scholars today. These traditions continue to stir debates, which are being opened up by new materialists (think of the feminist polemic about the failed materialism in the work of Judith Butler (Kirby

2006), and of the Saussurian/ Lacanian linguistic heritage in media and cultural studies (Dolphijn 2010), which as Karen Barad (2007) has shown, have prevented the theorization of “agential matter” from being effectuated). But at the start of the 21st century, this new materialist ambition does seem to offer a more than equal alternative for scholars working in the humanities and beyond. Perhaps for the first time in its history, this “minor tradition” in thinking (as Gilles Deleuze would label it) is getting the attention it needs, freeing itself from the Platonist, Christian, and Modernist rule under which it suffered for so long.

In the work of both Braidotti and DeLanda it has been through a rethinking of several French philosophers closely connected to May ‘68 (including Michel Foucault, Luce Irigaray, and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari) that their thinking came about. And it was the work of Deleuze (and Guattari) that was actually most important to them. Especially in his early work, Deleuze tried to show that the materialist philosophy he proposed was not new but fell into the rich though minor tradition already mentioned. By writing on philosophers like Spinoza, Nietzsche, and Bergson, but also on writers like Marcel Proust and Franz Kafka, Deleuze intended to rewrite the history of thinking by giving attention to those materialist authors it had rejected or marginalized for such a long time. At the start of his career, Deleuze puts the emphasis on re-reading radical minds like Spinoza, thus showing how they actually offer philosophy a new way of thinking—namely, a philosophy of the body. And it is by traversing these different philosophies of the body that Deleuze’s other work (sometimes with Guattari) really starts exploring materialist/monist thought to the fullest, creating the fertile ground upon which new materialist scholars like Braidotti and DeLanda take root today.

Most faithful to the work of Deleuze (and Guattari), DeLanda’s early version of new materialism proffered the claim that the concept “abstract machine” (Deleuze and Guattari [1980] 1987) captures processes without form of substance that can be found in concrete assemblages of biology, sociology, and geology alike, in a manner that enables cultural theory at large to move away from linguistic representationalism towards “the realm of engineering diagrams” which are “shared by very different physical assemblages.” Thus there would be an “abstract motor” with different

Spinoza
aunque
como
Kafka.

physical instantiations in technological objects and natural atmospheric processes” (DeLanda 1996, n.p.). This new materialism engenders *immanent* thought and, as a consequence, it breaks through not only the mind-matter and culture-nature divides of transcendental humanist thought, but also thinking causal structures and teleology (i.e. a determinism):

This conception of very specific abstract machines [...] indeed points towards a new form of materialist philosophy in which raw matter-energy through a variety of self-organizing processes and an intense power of morphogenesis, generates all the structures that surround us. Furthermore, the structures generated cease to be the primary reality, and matter-energy flows now acquire this special status (ibid.).

Abstract
Machines.

The way in which matter seems to gain primacy in DeLanda’s new materialism points instead at a “generative matter,” which is a concept that does not capture matter-as-opposed-to-signification, but captures *mattering* as simultaneously material and representational (cf. Cheah 1999, Barad 2007).

Braidotti introduced new materialism or “a more radical sense of materialism” by framing it as “[r]ethinking the embodied structure of human subjectivity after Foucault” (Braidotti 2000, 158). Coming from a very rich materialist tradition in Australian feminism, Braidotti’s “after Foucault” should not so much be read as a reference to a move *beyond* Foucault, given that she and DeLanda (as well as other new materialists) can be said to affirm, one way or another, the much-noted prediction of Foucault ([1970] 1998, 343) that “perhaps, one day, this century will be known as Deleuzian.” Compared to DeLanda, Braidotti’s new materialism is equally immanent and non-linear, and “embodied subjectivity” is conceptualized accordingly:

A piece of meat activated by electric waves of desire, a text written by the unfolding of genetic encoding. Neither a sacralized inner *sanctum*, nor a pure socially shaped entity, the enfleshed Deleuzian subject is rather an “in-between”: it is a folding-in of external influences and a simultaneous unfolding outwards of affects. A mobile entity, an enfleshed

sort of memory that repeats and is capable of lasting through sets of discontinuous variations, while remaining faithful to itself. The Deleuzian body is ultimately an embodied memory (Braidotti 2000, 159).

Apart from the immanence of the new materialism qualitatively shifting the many instantiations of cultural theory that exemplify the transcendental, there is a strong emphasis on the intra-action² of the technological and the natural, or as Braidotti has called it, on “the ‘posthuman’ predicament” which entails “much more than the definitive loss of the naturalistic paradigm” (ibid., 158). Bringing “nature” into cultural theory does not make new materialists susceptible to adopting the ontology of the so-called positivist natural sciences. One of the pillars of the new materialism is the claim that modern natural science and postmodern cultural theory are both humanisms (cf. Colebrook 2004). In Braidotti’s work the shared humanist subject of biological determinism and social constructivism is exchanged for a *post-humanist subject*, which entails for starters a qualitative shift away from the two poles of present-day epistemology: positivism and postmodernism (cf. Haraway 1988).

In their subsequent work, DeLanda and Braidotti continued constituting new materialism by posing *dual oppositions* as their main target. Reworking and eventually *breaking through* dualism appears to be the key to new materialism. Dualism comes to the fore as the structuring principle of the transcendental and humanist traditions that they want to shift in their work. Prioritizing mind over matter or culture over nature is a transcendentalizing gesture following humanist and dialecticist thought. It posits postmodernism as overcoming the flaws of positivism, and social constructivism as overcoming biological determinism. As such, the gesture is predicated upon sequential negation, and has a progress narrative structure. The reliance upon dialecticism has been uncovered as an effect of what Lynn Hankinson Nelson (1993, 127–8) termed “unreal dichotomies” or “non-exhaustive oppositions.” Nelson has made clear that one pole of a dichotomy or binary opposition is always already implied in the other *as its negation*, which makes dichotomies unreal and oppositions non-exhaustive. In the words of Michel Serres:

Critica.

An idea opposed to another idea is always the same idea, albeit affected by the negative sign. The more you oppose one another, the more you remain in the same framework of thought (Serres with Latour 1995, 81).

The intimate relation between two so-called opposites makes it clear that the transcendental and humanist tendencies, which are fought by new materialist theorists are fundamentally reductive. After all, negation implies a relation, which is precisely what is undone by the dependence of transcendental humanist thought on dualism.

Attempting to break through reductive dualist thought in *A New Philosophy of Society*, DeLanda (2006, 45–6; original emphasis) makes the following statement:

[...] general categories do not refer to anything in the real world and [...] to believe they do (i.e. to reify them) leads directly to essentialism. Social constructivism is supposed to be an antidote to this, in the sense that by showing that general categories are mere stereotypes it blocks the move towards their reification. But by coupling the idea that perception is intrinsically linguistic with the ontological assumption that only the contents of experience really exist, this position leads directly to a form of *social essentialism*.

Linguisticity (which is *not denied*, but given its proper place, that is, a more modest one) forms the nexus of DeLanda's non-dualist argument about new materialism. *Anti-representationalism* (an immanent gesture) is employed so as to break through the assumed binary opposition between realist essentialism and social constructivism. Due to the fact that causally linear, predetermined and constrained reasoning has been left behind (or at least is included in an open, constrained yet undecidable³ notion of causality that fills up all of its dimensions), it cannot be argued that new materialism entails a simple move *beyond* social constructivism in a progressive way. According to DeLanda, new materialism is *neither realist nor social constructivist*. It is precisely the commonalities of realism and social constructivism that are being recognized, though shifted.

Braidotti (2006, 130; cf. Rossini 2006) theorizes similar moves in *Transpositions*, yet with a clear focus on feminist politics:

In the political economy of phallogocentrism and of anthropocentric humanism, which predicates the sovereignty of Sameness in a falsely universalistic mode, my sex fell on the side of ‘Otherness,’ understood as pejorative difference, or as being-worth-less-than. The becoming-animal/ becoming-world speaks to my feminist self, partly because my gender, historically speaking, never quite made it into full humanity, so my allegiance to that category is at best negotiable and never to be taken for granted.

This is neither an essentialist statement, nor one of semiotic constructivism. It is rather the materialist acknowledgement of a historical location: a starting position of asymmetrical power differentials. This location is not only geopolitical, but also genealogical and time-bound.

Braidotti:

Braidotti's claim is anti-representationalist in two ways. First of all, she cuts across a biological (or Platonic) essentialism and “semiotic constructivism” (here, a relativism) in a manner that mirrors DeLanda. Secondly, a feminist politics is conceptualized, which does not embrace the dualist move of creating counter-identities (a modernist feminist project) nor does it attempt to move beyond dualism by producing a plethora of counter-identities according to a pluralizing gesture (a postmodernist feminist project, and again a relativism). Feminists “rather go further and push towards qualitatively stronger de-territorializations” (ibid., 134), that is, towards becoming-animal/becoming-world, which entails a breakthrough of the naturalizing tendencies of both sexist humanism *and* the de-naturalizing tendencies of modern and postmodern feminisms.

What we find in the work of DeLanda and Braidotti is a series of moves that complexify cultural theory in the light of the habit of dualism. We claim that the immanent philosophies of DeLanda and Braidotti (though by no means exclusively), in their early as well as their recent incarnations, exemplify the constitution and enactment of new materialist cultural theory.

This chapter engages with the constitution of new materialism, as an object of study and a shared ambition with the scholars whose work we study. Following the interviews in Part One of this book, and building on a comprehensive review of enactments or instantiations of new materialism in recent cultural theory, this chapter proposes that the immanent gesture of new materialism is transversal rather than dualist as it intersects academic (neo-)disciplines (for instance feminist theory, science and technology studies, and media and cultural studies), paradigms (for instance the Saussurian/Lacanian linguisticism that is still prevalent in cultural theory today, or the dualistic take on the natural sciences and the humanities), and the linear spatiotemporalities conventionally assigned to epistemic trends (for instance “new” materialism versus Marxist historical materialism as practiced by Benjamin for instance⁴). Our proposition is that new materialism is itself a distinctive trend, both in feminist theory and in cultural theory more broadly, and a device or tool for opening up theory formation. This is to say that new materialism not only allows for *addressing* the conventional epistemic tendency to what can be summarized as classification or *territorialization* (when a new trend appears on the academic stage, it is usually interpreted as a “class” that can be added to an existing classification of epistemologies), but also—and at the same time—for *de-territorializing* the academic territories, tribes, and temporalities traditionally considered central to scholarship. After all, the classificatory strategy perfectly exemplifies transcendentalism and the two characteristics of dualism (sequential negation and a narrative of progress). Braidotti has summarized the need for this double move as a “qualitative leap” towards “creating conditions for the implementation of transversality” (ibid., 123). In this chapter, we intend to affirm the *transversality* of new materialism. That is to say, we study and propose a new materialism that *cuts across* or intersects dual oppositions in an immanent way. Félix Guattari ([1964] 1984), coining this term as early as 1964, insists on the “micropolitical” nature of transversality, introducing it as a means to search for the new—not by critiquing the old, but by radically questioning (or smoothening out) all the barriers that supported its logic. “Transversality is the transference between the vehicular” as Gary Genosko (1996, 15) then concludes. The strength of new materialism is precisely this nomadic traversing of the

territories of science *and* the humanities, performing the agential or *non-
i* nature of all matter⁵ that seems to have escaped *both* modernist
(positivist) and postmodernist humanist epistemologies.

New Materialism Generated: Depending on Disciplines

Although we want to show here that a first instantiation of transversality enacted by new materialist cultural theorists cuts across scholarly disciplines, there is a whole range of scholars working on new materialism from their respective disciplinary locations. In these specific disciplinary takes on new materialism, the potentialities of the new materialism get lost in unnecessarily narrow understandings. Introducing new materialism *into* a discipline entails a transcendental gesture according to which the new materialism and the discipline in question (e.g. sociology) are positioned as pre-existing or *generated* rather than generative, and consequently as interacting rather than intra-acting. In other words, due to the presumed schism or dualism, the transversality of new materialism is being undone rather than affirmed or put to work. To transversalize can only be done when always already “invoking a new frame of analysis,” as Jonathan Gil Harris (2003, 281) puts it. A new materialism that emerges *from* a discipline is an immanent gesture that we will discuss in the next section.

Momin Rahman and Anne Witz (2003, 245) in “What Really Matters? The Elusive Quality of the Material in Feminist Thought,” for instance, focus exclusively on sociologically induced feminisms, and argue that “there needs to be a recognition of both the limits of a constructionism grounded in materialism and the potential of a constructionism that deploys materiality as a more porous and flexible concept.” Rahman and Witz recognize the shift engendered by a new materialism (conceptualizing “materiality”), and claim that the conceptualization of the material employed in the early days of feminist sociology was more complex than simply economical. This cartography is in line with what we want to present here. Although new materialism has set in motion a *qualitative shift* in cultural theory at large, this shift is transversal, not dualist. Striking alliances between the old and the new, Rahman and Witz claim that early feminists broadened the definition of the economically determinist material to include social relations and the domestic sphere, and worked on the

both language-oriented cultural constructivisms and sociologically induced feminisms are to be critiqued, since *neither* has fully employed the agential qualities of matter. Sheridan's reading of what she calls a "new stage" (ibid.; cf. Hekman 2010, 7 on a "new settlement") in feminist theory generates a focus not only on biological matter or on a cultural theory incorporating insights from the natural sciences, but also on the matter of the political economy, thus qualitatively shifting a concept of matter as purely physical and opposed to the social or linguistic.

The new stage's disciplinary transversality comes to be fully delineated by Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman (2008, 9–10; cf. Squier and Littlefield 2004) as a new materialism (here called "material feminism") that is to be found in the disciplines of "science studies, environmental feminisms, corporeal feminisms, queer theory, disability studies, theories of race and ethnicity, environmental justice, (post-)Marxist feminism, globalization studies, and cultural studies," and which as an epistemic trend is involved in "integrating them into what amounts to a new paradigm for feminist thought. [...] this paradigm is currently emerging and [...] is a necessary and exhilarating move for contemporary feminism." In *The Material of Knowledge: Feminist Disclosures*, Hekman (2010) goes so far as to demonstrate that new materialism is to be found in *all* scholarly disciplines, cutting across the trans-Atlantic disconnection between analytic and continental philosophy, and putting feminist theory at the forefront. For us, too, the new materialism allows for a move away from disciplines towards the meta-disciplinary, in feminist theory and in cultural theory more broadly, which is a claim that alludes to the importance of studying and engaging with the effect that this move might have on the *paradigms* of contemporary cultural theory. In what ways does new materialism traverse paradigms?

Generating New Materialism: Playing with Paradigms

Demonstrating the workings of new materialism, that is, generating a new materialism rather than relying upon a new materialism already pre-generated, Braidotti (2000, 160) argues that what is to be found in postmodern cultural theory (i.e. the body of social/semiotic constructivist cultural theory considered state-of-the-art once theory formation is

positioned on a global classificatory map) is a “denial of the materiality of the bodily self” in paradoxical conjunction with the fast circulation of an excessive number of theoretical discourses about, and cultural representations of, the human body. In other words, cultural theory in the postmodern era has been unable to account fully for materiality, whereas it found itself surrounded by an excessive representation (thus objectification) of (bodily and non-bodily, organic and inorganic, always already feminized) matter in popular culture as well as cultural theory. Braidotti takes postmodernist constructivism’s specific form of anti-essentialism, which affirms representationalism, to be responsible for this curious situation. Postmodernist constructivism is discovered to be a paradigm in which the space for materialism is, in Alistair Welchman’s words (2005, 390), “restricted,” and postmodern cultural theorists are simply included in the huge category of “critics who use an impoverished conception of matter inherited from non-materialist systems of thought” (ibid., 388). Postmodern cultural theory, otherwise seen as constituting and having been constituted by the *Crisis* of Reason, seems to have continued to work within the legacy of modernism’s foundationalism. The modernist system of thought relying on Reason (and concepts like Logos, Mind, Representation) has not been fully broken down, and this is why transcendental and humanist tendencies continue to haunt present-day cultural theory. We have already explained that a postmodernism dualistically opposing modernism cannot entail anything but a continuation of the Same (cf. Alaimo and Hekman 2008, 2–3, Hekman 2010, 48). How does new materialism succeed in qualitatively shifting the paradigm that had supposedly already left the academic stage after May ‘68? And how does it introduce a conception of matter that is *not* impoverished?

As already stated, Braidotti’s new materialism, which she also terms a “bodily” or “carnal” materialism (2006, 182) begins with “the enfleshed Deleuzian subject,” which is “a folding-in of external influences and a simultaneous unfolding outwards of affects.” The exterior and the interior, the subject(ive) and the object(ive), the individual, the social, and the symbolic are conceptualized as co-constitutive instead of pre-determined levels or layers. The genealogy of this Deleuzian subject is created in Continental thought; it includes “Descartes’ nightmare, Spinoza’s hope,

object is no longer passive matter that has to be re-presented; meaning-making takes place on a two-way track.¹¹ Here it is also demonstrated how new materialism does not discard signification (cf. Ahmed 2008, 34) but rather directs it to its proper place and qualitatively shifts the linguistic turn accordingly (i.e. non-dualistically).

In the passage cited above as well as in her later work, Haraway focuses upon the ways in which bodies and systems of scholarly signification/representation materialize alongside each other. Harawayian instantiations of new materialism affirm what Barad (2007) has called an onto-epistemology, or even an ethico-onto-epistemology, according to which being and knowing (and the good) become indistinguishable. Inspired by Haraway and Barad, we lastly wish to discuss the *cartographical methodology* that generates and is generated by the disciplinary and paradigmatic transversalities of new materialism.

Cartography Rather Than Classification

New materialism is a cultural theory for the twenty-first century that attempts to show how postmodern cultural theory, even while claiming otherwise, has made use of a conceptualization of “post-” that is dualistic. Postmodern cultural theory re-confirmed modern cultural theory, thus allowing transcendental and humanist traditions to haunt cultural theory after the Crisis of Reason. **New materialist cultural theory shifts (post-) modern cultural theory, and provides an immanent answer to transcendental humanism. It is a cultural theory that is non-foundationalist yet non-relativist.** In conformity with the interviewees in Part One of this book, we have shown that there is much to be gained from an argument such as the latter; after all, postmodernisms and modernisms are manifold, on the one hand, and epistemologically very similar on the other. It is for this reason that new materialism continues to rewrite the history of philosophy. As already stated, the minor tradition Deleuze proposed is now widely read and commented upon, but increasingly, great minds of the past are being given the attention that their work needs. For there is no need to limit this tradition to a series of personae or even to what the History of Philosophy has labeled a particular “type” of thinking. Scholars at work within modernism such as Bergson, Whitehead, William James and Edmund

Husserl, all of whom had been pushed aside or reinterpreted by dualist thinking, are in need of serious materialist re-readings, which are in fact being carried out by an increasing number of scholars today. There is not even any reason to exclude Hegel from this list. For when he stated that “Action divides [spirit] into substance and consciousness of the substance” (Hegel [1807] 1977, paragraph 444), this not only comes very close to Spinoza’s solution to the mind-body problem with which this chapter began, it also allows us to rethink Marx’s (Hegel-inspired) materialism as a (non-dualist) neo-materialism. The richness of all these philosophies had by and large been suffering from dualism-dominated modernism and postmodernism. The way in which new materialism was generated in the previous paragraph alluded to the fact that duration not only came to be inserted into matter (ontology), but also and simultaneously into theory formation (epistemology). In other words, theory formation also entails the materialization of boundaries. Starting theory formation from *movement* alludes to cartography rather than classification, which is the third instantiation of transversality that we intend to highlight in this chapter.

In the introduction we claimed that new materialism not only *enacts* a thinking about theory formation that is other than classificatory (new materialism sets in motion a non-dualistic epistemic practice), but also that it enables us to understand the way in which theory formation used to be thought (following a territorialization pattern). We claimed that classification exemplifies the territorial and is fully dualistic, and throughout this chapter we have made clear how seemingly opposite epistemic tendencies or classes are in fact non-exhaustive oppositions. New materialism criticizes not only the use of “a discipline” or “a paradigm” as pre-determined, but is also critical, along the lines of the dismantling of binary oppositions that it enacts of the pre-determination of classifications of theoretical trends. Classifying epistemic tendencies that are supposedly prevalent in cultural theory implies working along territorial lines, which is a transcendentalizing gesture along with invoking sequential negation and a narrative of progress (i.e., it is dualist). This does not allow for the (un)folding of cultural theory—the matter-energy flows of theory formation, the non-linear coding practices, the cutting across matter and signification—to be captured. New materialism de-territorializes the ways in which cultural theory has been classified, and

this process we call cartographical. We referred above to Colebrook, who questioned a conceptualization of “language” as “a fixed, determining, and inhuman grid imposed upon life.” She defined new materialism as allowing us to see not only matter, but also language as a “living force.” Questioning fixity thus opens up the possibility of thinking about theory formation in a non-linear, cartographical way.

Barad’s “Re(con)figuring Space, Time, and Matter” is useful for explaining the move away from the classificatory towards the cartographical. Earlier we mentioned Barad’s neologism “intra-action,” which allowed us to demonstrate that terms such as mind and matter, or sociology and new materialism, do not exist independently before they begin to inter-act. Barad (2001, 98) explains the machinery of intra-action as follows:

[...] structures are to be understood as material-discursive phenomena that are iteratively (re)produced through ongoing material-discursive intra-actions. This machine is not a Euclidean device, nor is it merely a static instrument with a non-Euclidean geometry. It is a topological animal which mutates through a dynamics of intra-activity. Questions of connectivity, boundary formation, and exclusion (topological concerns) supplement and inform concerns about positionality and location (too often figured in geometrical terms).

Affirming onto-epistemology, Barad talks about mapping practices that draw boundaries, and she claims that *the same* objects/boundaries materialize in non-exhaustively opposite mapping practices (Euclidean space versus stasis in non-Euclidean space). The mapping practice, generating intra-action and generated through it, shifts both options and works along the following lines:

What we need are genealogies of the material-discursive apparatuses of production which take account of the intra-active topological dynamics that reconfigure the spacetime manifold. In particular, it is important that they include an analysis of the connectivity of phenomena at different scales. [...] The topological dynamics of space, time, and matter are an agential matter and as such require an ethics of knowing

and being: Intra-actions have the potential to do more than participate in the constitution of the geometries of power, they open up possibilities for changes in its topology, and as such interventions in the manifold possibilities made available reconfigure both that will be possible. The space of possibilities does not represent a fixed event horizon within which the social location of knowers can be mapped, nor a homogenous fixed uniform container of choices. Rather the dynamics of the spacetime manifold is produced by agential interventions made possible in its very re(con)figuration (ibid., 103–4).

These genealogies, or “cartographies” in our vocabulary, are non-dualist approaches to theory formation that allow for absolute deterritorializing. Not primarily interested in representation, signification, and disciplinarity, new materialism is fascinated by affect, force, and movement as it travels in all directions. It searches not for the objectivity of things in themselves but for an objectivity of actualization and realization. It searches for how matter comes into agential realism, how matter is materialized in it. It is interested in speeds and slownesses, in how the event unfolds according to the in-between, according to intra-action. New materialism argues that we know nothing of the (social) body until we know what it can do. It agrees with studying the multiplicity of modes that travel natureculture as the perpetual flow it has always already been.

In the next chapter we will take up the question of non-dualism, and we will discuss in a detailed manner *how* new materialism pushes dualism into non-dualism, thus allowing for a non-reductive take on matter and language.

Notes

1. This mapping of new materialism overlaps considerably with the one produced by Myra J. Hird (2004, 2006), albeit that we (much like Barad in the interview earlier in this book) do not argue that new materialism has gotten off the ground in the natural sciences, and that there are varieties of feminist *applications* of new materialism. We will demonstrate in this book how new materialism traverses both the sciences and the humanities *necessarily*, and how it is immediately a feminism.
2. For this term see Barad 2007.
3. We take this formulation from Grosz 2005.