

# MATTER

journal of new materialist research

Universitat de Barcelona

EDITORIAL  
ISSUE 9

## Editorial

Editorial

Editorial

**Monika Rogowska-Stangret (0000-0002-8317-8562)**

University of Bialystok, Poland

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1344/jnmr.v9.46931>

### Recommended citation:

Rogowska-Stangret, Monika (2024). Editorial. *Matter: Journal of New Materialist Research*, 9, 1-5.  
University of Barcelona. <https://doi.org/10.1344/jnmr.v9.46931>



The texts published in this journal are – unless otherwise indicated – covered by the Creative Commons Spain Attribution 4.0 International licence. The full text of the licence can be consulted here: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

With the new issue of „Matter: Journal of New Materialist Research” we invite our readers to stroll through a rich and diverse body of new materialist inquiries. Together with the authors we encourage to revisit the seemingly familiar paths of new materialist sources and inspirations, to reopen conversations with philosophers outside the scope of new materialisms, and to filter through new materialist lenses new questions that arise from environmental and political challenges, academic, art, and arts psychotherapies practices. In this sense we call for deep theoretical investigations and “convers(at)ions” (Kirby, 2011) and at the same time we challenge new materialist theoretical frameworks to respond to “our today” (Bunz et al., 2017, p. 15). What is new in new materialisms (asked again and again, never replying with a final and conclusive response)? Whom can we still invite to a dialogue on matter and ethics, freedom and emancipation and thus with whom we can still establish alliances and productive differences? What kinds of ethics might shed a new light on extinction and de-extinction? What kinds of academic practices might interrupt the draining neoliberal logic of knowledge production at contemporary universities? How can we respond to the atrocities of “our today”: wars, terrorist attacks, human rights violations, everyday systemic violence against racialized others, LGBTQIA\* communities and women? How new materialist perspective affects arts psychotherapies? What can it teach us about healing, hope, resilience, and subversion? And what new materialist researchers and philosophers might learn from activists, psychotherapists, from everyday struggle and healing?

Adam Lovasz in an essay *Henri Bergson and New Materialism* revisits some of the apparently well-trodden routes in new materialist scholarship. Picking Bergson’s legacy to think with, Lovasz examines what

does “‘newness’ mean in New Materialism”. Through a close and careful reading of *Matter and Memory*, the author uncovers the extent to which Bergson’s metaphysical proposition is an inspiration for new materialist anti-dualist approaches. At the same time, Lovasz addresses some of the criticisms against Bergson voiced from feminist and postcolonial positions. The stake of this debate is high as it asks about racist, Eurocentric, and phallogocentric politics that stems from French philosopher’s work. Reading Bergson through new materialist lenses, however, becomes a way to uncover the emancipatory potential in philosopher’s politics. Lovasz unveils the extent to which both Bergson and feminist new materialists might learn from each other in their shared “engagement with the reality of change” and commitment to “societal openness to alternation” “without necessarily adhering ourselves to a single, universalist, static conception of emancipation, progress or, worse, the ‘good’”. Lovasz thus argues for refraining oneself from grasping reality, politics, and theories as immobile, fixed, finished accomplishments and invites us instead to trace and follow processes, movements, and creative transformations.

In *What is the Matter with Matter?* Barad, Butler, and Adorno Philip Højme stages a dialogue between Karen Barad, Judith Butler, and Theodor W. Adorno – philosophers often classified as belonging to different theoretical traditions. Nevertheless, as we know from new materialist research, classifications tend to turn into classifixations (van der Tuin, 2014) disciplining the “unruly edges” (Tsing, 2012) of theoretical boundaries and inhibiting creative “convers(at)ions”. Højme argues that even if Barad’s and Butler’s theoretical positions differ (and as such might enrich one another), both thinkers share some ethical commitments. With reference to Adorno’s negative dialectics the author offers a way to appreciate differences of all the mentioned

philosophers in a non-reductive manner and yet to highlight their common ethico-political concerns and fights.

Gabriela Galati in *The Archive as a World-Making Apparatus in the Anthropocene* engages in the discussion on environmental crisis and the Sixth Mass Extinction – the radical decrease of biodiversity – as one of its hallmarks. The author approaches the question of extinction from a feminist perspective problematizing ethics behind the de-extinction practices. Instead of jettisoning this idea altogether, Galati offers a reading of de-extinction as an archive – a practice that is agential and life-making. The author, drawing from Jacques Derrida’s take on the archive, asks: “what kind of archive(s) do we want or do we need? What kind of archive(s) are we creating?”, what futures does the archive enables and for whom? Galati offers a reading of an archive as an event, “scene of responsibility”, and feminist counter-apocalypse (Żylińska, 2018).

Dominik Havsteen-Franklin, Alice Myles, Daniel Stolfi, and Liliana Montoya De La Cruz – authors of *A Matter of Dis/Embodied Non/Relating in Art/s Psychotherapies Practices* offer a new materialist reading of arts psychotherapies. This perspective challenges some of the assumed concepts in therapeutic work stressing the relational aspect of bodies-environments and boundary-production. How healing happen if “we are intrinsically in and of the world”? How the fact that “the boundaries of our relation to the world are changing according to how we continue to conceptualise this relation” can be used to address “questions arising from traumatic events”? How to take account of the fluidity of the boundaries accentuated within new materialist theories and yet be careful with trauma-inducing “boundary violations”? The authors address those questions through thinking arts therapies as processes of becoming, “reformulating languages and boundaries, affects and thoughts, with and

through the materiality of the arts form and the existing socio-political context that is dominated by mind-body binary hegemonies”, and exploring the possibility of both human and more-than-human healing.

*Hair-Power Performativity: A co-experimental braiding together of SF and inquiry* by Rachel Sinquefield-Kangas, Essi Ikonen, and Boshra Najari is an effort to respond to death of Jina Mahsa Amini severely beaten by Iranian morality police on the grounds of improper clothing. The authors think with Marco Melgrati’s illustration created to honor Iranian women’s protests that followed Amini’s death and engage in speculative fabulation to uncover relations between hair and power. Regulations on hair have been disciplining individuals in line with sexist and racist viewpoints today and in history. Yet, the authors provoke us, “what if research were to emerge indicating that hair might have the agentic capacity to shift political order?”. Rachel Sinquefield-Kangas, Essi Ikonen, and Boshra Najari weave together facts and fictions, the personal and the political, posthuman theoretical apparatus and storytelling in search for transformative and subversive potential of resistance. “Is the power in the hair of a woman or in her head? Is the head of the authorities filled with an illusion of power when they cover my hair? Or is my hidden hair proof of their power? Will my hair be proof of my power then?”

Editors of the Intra-view section of the journal, Magali Forte and Jacky Barreiro in *Relations of care and affirmative disruptions in academia* converse with Katie Strom, critical posthumanist scholar, on transformative and subversive potential of resistance in academia. Through examining Strom’s work and academic practices, the readers get a unique insight into the stakes, struggles, and costs it takes to disturb the neoliberal organization of universities and knowledge production. Simultaneously, the intra-view brings hope and inspiration to organize and

develop affirmative practices of care, life-giving connections, and mutual support in academia.

This issue's *Almanac* entry consists of three individual, yet entangled, interventions. Kate Fahey authored a short piece on neologism – *lingulaaah* accompanied by an image. Fahey creatively plays with different aspects of tongue and language – anatomical, linguistic, etymological, phonological, affective, underlining both the harnessing and disruptive potentials lying in language and capturing the intensity and dynamism of vocalizing body, of body-and-world entangled within each other, of speaking and unspeaking. This entry is followed by two more theoretical ones that delve into philosophical nuances of voices (*Voice* by Heidi Fast and Milla Tiainen) and bodies (*Body* by Monika Rogowska-Stangret) and demonstrate the variety of questions, complexities, and approaches within new materialist debates on the subject matters. These were previously published on <https://newmaterialism.eu/> as part of the project on „New Materialism: Networking European Scholarship on ‘How Matter Comes to Matter’” (European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST), Action IS 1307, 2013-2018).

Contributions in the section *Affecting Affirmative Reviews* offer a review of recent literature. Zofia Jakubowicz-Prokop discusses

an anthology *Posthuman Pathogenesis: Contagion in Literature, Arts, and Media* (2023), edited by Başak Ağin and Şafak Horzum uncovering the nuances of thinking with pathogens. Shiva Mainly reviews *Decolonial Conversations in Posthuman and New Materialist Rhetorics* (2022) edited by Jennifer Clary-Lemon and David M. Grant and shows how the anthology invites “a symphony of decolonial voices” into posthumanist and new materialist scholarship. While, Myriam Hernández Domínguez recaps discussions from a collection of essays entitled *Deleuze and Guattari and Fascism* (2022), edited by Rick Dolphijn and Rosi Braidotti and provides main directions for how to think with French philosophers against fascism today.

The contributions in the 9th issue of “Matter” show the generosity of thinking-with, affirmative readings, and thinking with care. At the same time, the authors don't shy away from ethically upsetting and politically urgent matters. By engaging with colonial, racist, and sexist legacies as well as with unjust and oppressive power structures in thinking and doing, in philosophy and politics, in affects and fictitious speculation, they voice a common, yet situated, struggle to open hope, empowerment, resistance, and strength to protest and heal.

## Bibliography

Bunz, Mercedes, Birgit Mara Kaiser and Kathrin Thiele. (2017). Introduction: Symptoms of the Planetary Condition. In M. Bunz, B.M. Kaiser and K. Thiele (Eds.), *Symptoms of the Planetary Condition: A Critical Vocabulary* (pp. 7–17). Meson Press.

Kirby, Vicki. (2011). *Quantum Anthropologies: Life at Large*. Duke University Press.

Tsing, Anna. (2012). Unruly Edges: Mushrooms as Companion Species. *Environmental Humanities*, 1(1), 141–154.

van der Tuin, Iris. (2014). *Generational Feminism. New Materialist Introduction to a Generative Approach*. Lexington Books.

Zylinska, Joanna. (2018). *The End of Man. A Feminist Counterapocalypse*. University of Minnesota Press.

#### Author information

**Monika Rogowska-Stangret (0000-0002-8317-8562)**

email: [monika.rogowska@gmail.com](mailto:monika.rogowska@gmail.com)

Monika Rogowska-Stangret, Assistant Professor at the Department of Philosophy, University of Białystok, philosopher conducting research at the intersection of feminist philosophy, environmental humanities, and critical posthumanism, translator. She was a member of the Management Committee in the European project *New Materialism: Networking European Scholarship on "How Matter Comes to Matter"*, European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST), Action IS 1307 (2013-2018). She published in, among others, „Feminist Theory”, „Philosophy Today”, „The Minnesota Review: A Journal of Creative and Critical Writing”. She is the editor-in-chief of “Matter: Journal of New Materialist Research”.