

Fall 2016 • ANT 541

NEW OBJECTIVITY:

*from historical materialism
to object-oriented ontology*

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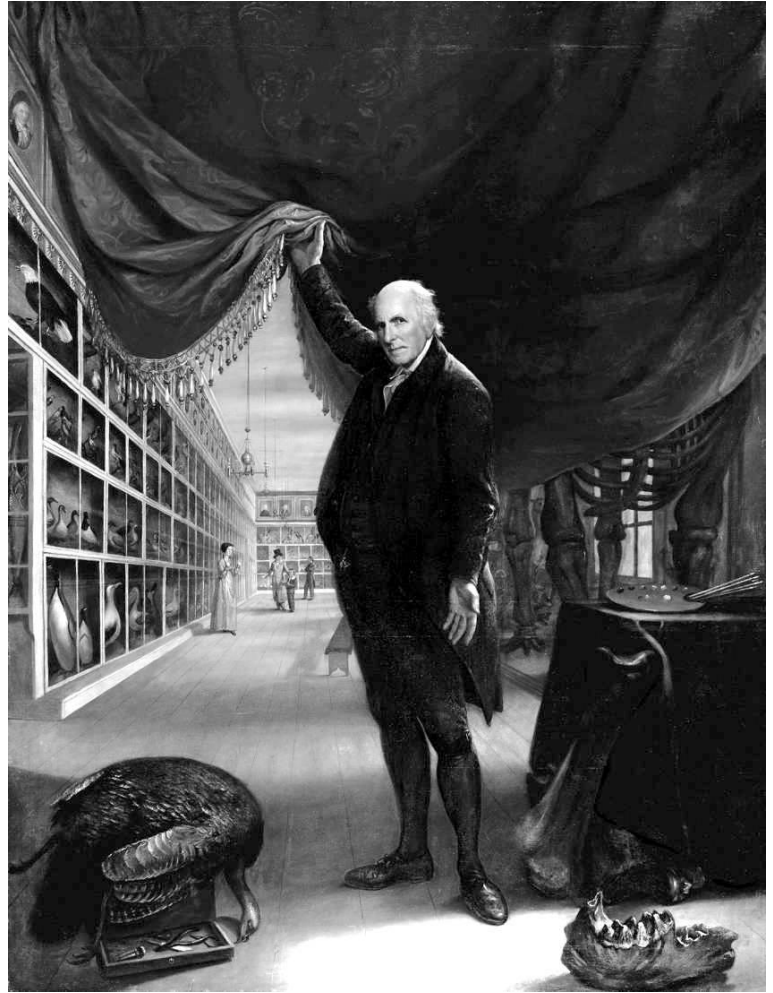
Following the recent explosion of interest in “thing-power,” “thing-systems,” and “thing-theory,” this course explores promises and limits of new versions of materialism. Current debates about the “*agentive* capacity” of the non-human and the “vitality” of matter are placed against the backdrop of anthropology’s long-standing interest in the social life of things.

REQUIREMENTS:

Class participation:

- weekly position paper;
- leading one class discussion
- contribution to the discussion: 50%

Final project: 50%



Charles Wilson Peale. *The Artist in His Studio* (1822). Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.

Please, have copies of assigned texts with you.

To encourage active exchanges in class, I ask you **not** to bring your laptops; they tend to distract and alienate.

Books on order:

Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.

Graham Harman, *Immaterialism. Objects and Social Theory*. Cambridge: Polity, 2016.

Klaus Theweleit, *Object-Choice (All You Need Is Love)*. London: Verso, 1994.

PART I: MATERIALISMS

1. HISTORY, MATERIALIZED

Frederick Engels, Ch.3. Historical Materialism (From F. Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (1880). The Marx-Engels Reader. Ed. Robert C. Tucker. New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1978, pp. 700-717)

Robert H. Kargon & Arthur. P. Molella, Ch.1. Neotechnics in the Garden: The Marriage of Country and Town; Ch.2. Planning for National Regeneration: Techno-Cities in the Interwar

Years. (From: Robert H. Kargon & Arthur. P. Molella. *Invented Edens: Techno-Cities of the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2008, pp.7-14; 25-46)

Louis Althusser, Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses. (From: Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. Trans. Ben Brewster. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971, pp. 127-188)

John L. and Jean Comaroff, Fashioning the Colonial Subject: The Empire's Old Clothes. (From: John L. and Jean Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier*. Vol.2. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997, pp. 218-273)

Marshall Sahlins, Anthropology and Two Marxisms: Problems of Historical Materialism. (From: Marshall Sahlins, *Culture and Practical Reason*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 126-165)

Optional:

Vladimir Lenin, On the Significance of Militant Materialism. (Trans. David Skvirsky & George Hanna. From: Vladimir Lenin, *Collected Works*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972. Vol. 33, pp. 227-236)

2. MATERIALS, CULTURED

Jules David Prown, The Truth of Material Culture: History or Fiction? (pp.1-19);

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Why We Need Things (pp.20-29);

Peirce Lewis, Common Landscapes as Historic Documents (pp.115-139);

Michael Owen Jones, Why Take a Behavioral Approach to Folk Objects? (pp.182-196)
(From: *History from Things: Essays in Material Culture*. Ed. Steven Lubar and W. David Kingery. Wash.: The Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993)

Richard Handler and Eric Gable, Ch.3. Why History Changes, or, Two Theories of History Making; Ch.4. Just the Facts. (From: Richard Handler and Eric Gable, *The New History in an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997, pp. 50-102)

Michael Bernard-Donals, Figures of Authenticity (From: Michael Bernard-Donals, *Figures of Memory: The Rhetoric of Displacement at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016, pp. 47-88)

Bjørnar Olsen, Material Culture after Text: Re-Membering Things, *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 2003, 36:2, 87-104.

Optional:

Paul Betts, Re-Enchanting the Commodity: Nazi Modernism Reconsidered (From: Paul Betts, *The Authority of Everyday Objects: A Cultural History of West German Industrial Design*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004, pp. 23-72)

3. MATTER

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Objects of Ethnography. (From: Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, pp.17-78)

Michael Rowlands, A Materialist Approach to Materiality. (From: *Materiality*. Ed. Daniel Miller. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005, pp. 72-88)

Webb Keane, Signs Are Not the Garb of Meaning: On the Social Analysis of Material Things. (From: *Materiality*. Ed. Daniel Miller. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005, pp.182-205)

- Peter Pels**, The Modern Fear of Matter: Reflections on the Protestantism of Victorian Science. *Material Religion* 2008, Vol. 4(3), pp. 264-283.
- John Tresch**, "Matter No More": Edgar Allan Poe and the Paradoxes of Materialism, *Critical Inquiry* (Summer 2016), Vol.42, pp.865-898.
- Chris Fowler & Oliver JT Harris**, Enduring Relations: Exploring a Paradox of New Materialism. *Journal of Material Culture* 2015, Vol. 20(2), pp.127-148.
- Elizabeth A. St. Pierre, Alecia Y. Jackson, and Lisa A. Mazzei**, New Empiricisms and New Materialisms: Conditions for New Inquiry. *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 2016, Vol. 16(2), pp. 99-110.

Optional:

- Diana Coole and Samantha Frost**, Introducing the New Materialisms. (From: *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*. Ed. Diana Coole and Samantha Frost. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010, pp.1-46.
- Melissa A. Orlie**, Impersonal Matter. (From: *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*. Ed. Diana Coole and Samantha Frost. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010, pp.116-136).

PART II: THINGS

4. BIOGRAPHIES OF THINGS

- Karl Marx**, Theses on Feuerbach (1845) (First published as an appendix to Engel's *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy* in 1888. Marx/Engels Selected Works, Volume One, Progress Publishers, Moscow, USSR, 1969, p. 13-15.)
- Igor Kopytoff**, The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization. (From: *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Ed. Arjun Appadurai. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, pp. 64-94.)
- Sergei Tret'iakov**, The Biography of the Object, *October*, Vol. 118, (Fall, 2006), pp. 57-62.
- Boris Arvatov**, Everyday Life and the Culture of the Thing (Toward the Formulation of the Question), *October*, Vol. 81 (Summer, 1997), pp. 119-128.
- Christopher Pinney**, Things Happen: Or, From Which Moment Does That Object Come? (From: *Materiality*. Ed. Daniel Miller. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005, pp. 256-272)

Optional:

- Sherry Turkle**, What Makes an Object Evocative? (From: *Evocative Objects: Things we Think With*. Ed. Sherry Turkle. Cambridge: the MIT press, 2011, pp. 307-327.)

5. THING THEORIES

- Ian Hodder**, Ch.1. Thinking about Things Differently; Ch.3. Things Depend on Other Things (From: Ian Hodder, *Entangled: An Archeology of the Relationship between Humans and Things*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012, pp.1-14; 40-63)
- Bill Brown**, Thing Theory. (From: *Things*. Ed. Bill Brown. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004, pp. 1-23.)
- Tim Ingold**, Materials against Materiality. *Archaeological Dialogues* (June 2007), Vol. 14(1), pp 1-16.
- Severin Fowles**, The Perfect Subject (Postcolonial Object Studies). *Journal of Material Culture* 2016, Vol. 21(1), pp. 9-27.

Betti Marenko, Neo-Animism and Design, *Design and Culture* 2014, Vol. 6(2), pp. 219-241.

Optional:

John Plotz, Can the Sofa Speak? A Look at Thing Theory. *Criticism* (Winter 2005), Vol. 47, No. 1, pp. 109–118

Leslie Atzmon & Prasad Boradkar Introduction A Design Encounter with Thing Theory, *Design and Culture* 2014, Vol. 6(2), pp.141-152.

6. THING-POWER

Peter Fischli and David Weiss, *The Way Things Go* (1987) – *film*.

Jeremy Millar, *Fischli and Weiss, The Way Things Go*. London: Afterall Books, 2007.

Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.

Optional:

Andrew M Bauer & Steve Kosiba, How Things Act: An Archaeology of Materials in Political Life. *Journal of Social Archaeology* 2016, Vol. 16(2), pp. 115–141.

Larisa Jasarevic, The Thing in a Jar: Mushrooms and Ontological Speculations in Post-Yugoslavia. *Cultural Anthropology* 2016, Vol. 30(1), pp. 36–64.

PART III: OBJECT-RELATIONS

7. OBJECTS OF AFFECTION

Sarah Ahmed. Happy Objects (From: *The Affect Theory Reader*. Ed. by Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010, pp. 29-51)

Yael Navaro-Yashin, Affective Spaces, Melancholic Objects: Ruination and the Production of Anthropological Knowledge, *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (Mar., 2009), Vol. 15(1), pp. 1-18.

Elizabeth Edwards, Objects of Affect: Photography Beyond the Image. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 2012, Vol. 41, pp. 221–234.

Jason Pine, Last Chance Incorporated. *Cultural Anthropology* 2016, Vol. 31(2), pp. 297–318.

Bill Brown, The Modernist Object and Another Thing (Man Ray) (From: Bill Brown, *Other Things*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016, pp. 79-124)

Optional:

J.A. Hazeley & J.P. Morris. *The Hipster*. Loughborough: Ladybird Books Ltd., 2015.

Man Ray, *Objects of My Affection*. New York: Zabriskie Gallery, 1985.

8. SUBSTITUTE OBJECTS

Klaus Theweleit, *Object-Choice (All You Need Is Love)*. London: Verso, 1994.

Eduardo Kohn, Ch.3. Soul Blindness; Ch.4. Trans-Species Pidgin (From: Eduardo Kohn, *How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology beyond the Human*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013, pp.103-153)

Optional:

Maurice Godelier, Substitute Objects for Humans and for the Gods (From: Maurice Godelier, *The Enigma of the Gift*. Trans. Nora Scott. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999, pp. 108-170.

9. INTEROBJECTIVITY

Roger Caillois, Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia. Trans. John Shepley. *October* (Winter, 1984), Vol. 31, pp. 16-32.

Jacques Lacan, The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience (From: Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English* [trans. Bruce Fink], New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006, pp.75-81)

Bruno Latour. On Interobjectivity. *Mind, Culture, and Activity* 1996. Vol. 3(4), pp. 228-245.

Rane Willerslev, Animals as Persons (From: Rane Willerslev, *Soul Hunters: Hunting, Animism, and Personhood among the Siberian Yukaghirs*. Berkeley: California University Press, 2007, pp.89-141)

Lucas Bessire, Apocalypse and the Limits of Transformation (From: Lucas Bessire, *Behold the Black Caiman: A Chronicle of Ayoreo Life*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014, pp.124-146)

Optional:

Peter Galison, Image of Self, (From: *Things that Talk: Object Lessons from Art and Science*. Ed. Lorraine Daston. New York: Zone books, 2004, pp.257-296)

Paul Daanen & Gordon Sammut, G.H. Mead and Knowing How to Act: Practical Meaning, Routine Interaction, and the Theory of Interobjectivity. *Theory & Psychology* 2012, Vol. 22(5), pp. 556–571.

10. OBJECTIFICATION

Karl Marx, Estranged Labor (From: Karl Marx, *Economic & Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1959, pp. 70-81)

Bruno Latour, How to Make a Filer Ripe For Use (From: Bruno Latour, *The Making of Law: An Ethnography of the Conseil D'Etat*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010, pp. 70-107)

Friedrich A. Kittler, Typewriter (From: Friedrich A. Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*. Trans. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999, pp. 183-266)

Karin Knorr Cetina and Urs Bruegger, Traders' Engagement with Markets: A Postsocial Relationship. *Theory, Culture & Society* 2002, Vol. 19(5/6), pp.161–185.

Optional:

Joost van Loon, A Contagious Living Fluid: Objectification and Assemblage in the History of Virology. *Theory, Culture & Society* 2002, Vol. 19(5/6), pp. 107–124.

Sven Lütticken,

- Art and Thingness, Part I: Breton's Ball and Duchamp's Carrot (*e-flux*, 2010 Vol.13)
- Art and Thingness, Part II: Thingification (*e-flux*, 2010 Vol.15)
- Art and Thingness, Part III: The Heart of the Thing is the Thing We Don't Know (*e-flux*, 2010 Vol.15)

11. NETWORKS AND ASSEMBLAGES

- Bruno Latour**, Pt. 1. How to Deploy Controversies about the Social World (From: Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 21-158)
- Adam T. Smith**, Ch.1. On Assemblages and Machines; Ch.2. On the Matter of Sovereignty (From Adam T. Smith, *The Political Machine: Assembling Sovereignty in the Bronze Age Caucasus*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015, pp.21-96)

Optional:

- Frédéric Vandenberghe**, Reconstructing Humans: A Humanist Critique of Actant-Network Theory. *Theory, Culture & Society* 2002, Vol. 19(5/6), pp. 51–67.
- Edwin Sayes**, Actor–Network Theory and Methodology: Just What Does It Mean to Say That Nonhumans Have Agency? *Social Studies of Science* 2014, Vol. 44(1), pp. 134-149.
- Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing**, Chapter 8-10 (From: Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015, pp.109-137)

12. OBJECT ORIENTATIONS

- Karin Knorr Cetina**, Sociality with Objects: Social Relations in Postsocial Knowledge Societies. *Theory, Culture & Society* 1997. Vol.14 (4), pp. 1-30.
- Graham Harman**, *Immaterialism. Objects and Social Theory*. Cambridge: Polity, 2016.
- Graham Harman**, *The Quadruple Object* (Parts 1-4, 10). Washington: Zero Books, 2011, pp. 1-69; 136-142.

Optional:

- Armen Avanessian & Andreas Töpfer**, The Quadruple Object (From: Armen Avanessian & Andreas Töpfer, *Speculative Drawing*. Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2014, pp. 199-212)
- Timothy Morton**, A Quake in Being: An Introduction to Hyperobjects (From: Timothy Morton, *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013, pp. 1-24.)