

Sensitive Objects

Affect and Material Culture



Edited by Jonas Frykman &
Maja Povrzanović Frykman

NORDIC ACADEMIC PRESS

SENSITIVE OBJECTS



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Preface

This book is based on the papers presented at the conference entitled *Sensitive Objects*, held at the Inter-University Centre in Dubrovnik, Croatia, 23–25 April 2014. The conference was initiated by Jonas Frykman and Maja Povrzanović Frykman, who co-organised it with Kirsti Mathiesen Hjemdahl and Nevena Škrbić Alempijević. We thank Agderforskning, Kristiansand, Norway, for both hosting the conference and supporting the production of this book within the KULNÆR project.

The editors and three of the contributors are affiliated to Agderforskning. Given that studies of innovation in the tourism, cultural, and creative industries are the hallmark of that institute, we hope that theoretical incentives concerning affect and emotion will also prove useful in the wider field of innovation research. At the same time, we want to point to the value of applied research projects, such as those presented in this book, as constructive contributions to the theoretical advancement of affect studies.

Jonas Frykman & Maja Povrzanović Frykman

Affect and Material Culture

Perspectives and Strategies

Jonas Frykman & Maja Povrzanović Frykman

Becoming attuned

At that wonderful concert you attended, did the music fill your body, did your feet dance uncontrollably and did your voice crackle in the sing-along with people you had never met before? Do you remember the sweet pain in your palms after applauding and the almost suffocating throng of bodies? Was the atmosphere uplifting? Did it encapsulate sounds, sights, smells, bodily sensations, and feelings simultaneously? What about the sudden feeling of power and togetherness when you took part in a demonstration, the sudden shouting and rush of blood to the head when your home team scored a goal?

By posing questions like this about the body, senses, feelings and atmosphere, we hope to attune readers to affect – the subject to which this book is devoted. We will look at how affects matter in general and, in particular, how they are related to the body, the environment, and things. This, we believe, is the contribution to which ethnology and anthropology are best suited, considering the changing yet persistent importance of material culture in these disciplines and of fieldwork for understanding the affective potentialities of objects.¹

Interdisciplinary studies of affect and emotion have produced ‘a virtual explosion’ of research and theoretical writings in the last decades, writes the psychologist Lisa Feldman Barrett (2010: 203), who heads an interdisciplinary affective science laboratory. These studies are not only marked by differing and sometimes conflicting theoretical perspectives

and research strategies – ‘old debates continue to rage on’ (ibid.), especially when body and language are concerned – but also lack a common scientific language that would enable ‘an epistemologically objective scientific enterprise about something that is so ontologically subjective’ (ibid.) and eludes ‘conventional semiotic and semantic procedure’ (Gibson 2013: 243).² As always in academia, this dilemma is characteristic of perspectives that are in the process of breaking new ground. The fact that the words *affect*, *emotion*, *feeling* and *sentiment* are often used interchangeably makes dialogue across disciplinary borders difficult and confusing. Being a truly interdisciplinary field, genealogical influences are still clearly visible (Pellegrini and Puar 2009). Although definitions vary, the common keywords when describing affects seem to be intensity, contingency and potentiality.

A commoner way of approaching what affects stand for is found in the writings of geographer Ben Anderson, who reflects on ‘affective atmospheres’ and uses the vague term ‘something’ in many of his texts. To him, affective atmospheres express ‘an ill-defined indefinite something, that exceeds rational explanation and clear figuration. Something that hesitates at the edge of the unsayable’ (Anderson 2009: 78). Being ‘at the edge’ implies that they ‘mix together narrative and signifying elements and non-narrative and asignifying elements’ (ibid. 80). In line with our introductory questions about the atmosphere at a concert, Anderson (ibid. 77) reflects more on what such atmospheres *do* and less on what they *are*. Affective atmospheres ‘may interrupt, perturb and haunt fixed persons, places or things’ (ibid. 78). They are indeterminate with regard to the distinction between the subjective and objective and are ‘impersonal in that they belong to collective situations and yet can be felt as intensely personal’ (ibid. 80).

We claim that ethnographic research provides a fertile ground from which to capture the ambiguities of affective and emotive experience. For an ethnographer, that ‘ill-defined indefinite something’ is always related to particular people, places, situations and objects. Lingering momentarily with the examples of music and atmosphere, when Elisabet Hauge (Chapter 9) writes about the background of a successful Norwegian black metal band and its lead guitarist, she portrays a man whose music draws inspiration from his immediate material environment – a ‘very sensuous interface of people, places and things’ (Bille et al. 2015: 37). The old building housing ‘The Mill’ studio in his home village, its waterfall, the

surrounding forest and the carefully scythed fields are all objects that put him ‘in the mood’, make him feel that there is ‘something in the air’ and inspire his compositions and performances. This ‘mood’ and this ‘something’ are not only physically experienced by him, but also by the other musicians, producers, record managers, volunteers and audiences, and contributes to an affective attunement to the world of metal music.

The effect of an atmosphere, as suggested above, is deeply personal and embodied, yet is hard to describe. When listening to music, we can *feel* the goose pimples on our skin and let our fingers snap to the rhythm. Music does not have to engage the mind’s cognitive functions, but has the power to move our bodies and make us dance, jump and turn. A concert becomes ‘a surface resonant with the rhythms of music, as well as of bodies, crowds, calendar events, trucks, heart rates, muscle contractions and more’ (Clough 2010: 228, citing Henriques 2010). Music may fill us with joy or sadness. Regardless of which, it is almost always a mix of bodily motion, affect and emotion. The moment we engage in the scholarly practice of analysing such experiences and try to understand their history, symbolic significance and what they represent, their complexities are too easily reduced and the beat of the music – that ‘something in the air’ that *affects* us but is so hard to put into words – too easily lost.

Changing perspectives on affect

Nils Gilje (Chapter 2) states that, by definition, affect deals with the pre-theoretical conception of the world. He sees the present interest in the field as linked to how a cognitive bias has left whole territories of human life uncharted, where moods and emotions are largely omitted from an understanding of the human condition. But this turn to affect is not new, as the two professors of gender studies, Ann Pellegrini and Jasbir Puar, indicate:

What some have hailed as a recent ‘affective turn’ in fact draws across older formations of sentiment studies; theories of emotion; ‘structures of feeling’ (to invoke Raymond Williams’s oft-cited formulation); the work of Gottfried Leibniz, Baruch Spinoza, Henri Bergson, and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, among others; and science and technology studies. Thus, what appears to be a

‘new’ critical, conceptual lens that has gained significant intellectual and scholarly cachet in the last decade is in fact indebted to multiple, and often contradictory, genealogical threads. (Pellegri and Puar 2009: 36)

When Gilje traces the fate of affects and emotions back through the history of Western philosophy he ends up with Spinoza, who, unlike Descartes, could not accept that human consciousness was independent of the body and free from the intensity of affects. But Gilje does something more than trace these intellectual forefathers. By going back to the fifteenth century philosopher Giovanni Pico della Mirandola and forwards to Søren Kierkegaard and the phenomenologists of the twentieth century, he hints at the occurrence and recurrence of the same theme at times of major social change and development. The most elaborate philosophical discussions of mood, attunement and affect are to be found at turning points like the Renaissance, the Scientific Revolution, Romanticism and the decisive years around the first World War.

The novelty of this particular ‘turn’ is that it follows a general questioning of theory in the humanities and social sciences, and especially in cultural studies and critical theory. For instance, the focus on texts becomes less prominent than the emphasis on readers’ affective responses. In their introduction to *The Affect Theory Reader*, Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg (2010) list no fewer than eight main approaches to affect, among which the phenomenological and postphenomenological approaches are the most influential. What they see as a clear humanities-related approach is a diverse attempt to ‘turn away from the linguistic turn and its attendant social constructionisms’ (ibid. 7). They note that the research within this approach focuses on ‘those ethico-aesthetic spaces that are opened up (or shut down) by a widely disparate assortment of affective encounters’ (ibid. 8).

Deriving from the Latin *afficere*, the word affect implies passivity, in that it means ‘to have had something done to one’. The general agreement is that affect encompasses the various capacities of bodies to affect and be affected, and that it therefore refers to forces and intensities that are visceral (see Cichosz 2014: 56). Hence, the interest in affect in the first place involves a focus on bodies and embodiment, on ‘the very fabric of the body and those forms of embodied experience that often remain unseen, unnoticed and unrecognised’ (Åhäll and Gregory 2015b: 5).³ By

introducing ‘an empiricism of sensation’ (Clough 2010: 224) into the social sciences and the humanities, affect studies ‘intensified the difference or difference of subjectivity and the human body while turning attention to the sociality of the transmission of force or intensity across bodies, and not only human bodies’ (ibid.), thereby including non-humans in the study of affects.⁴

Seigworth and Gregg (2010: 8) see the effort to understand the working of affect as ‘how the “outside” realms of the pre-/extra-/para-linguistic intersect with the “lower” or proximal senses (such as touch, taste, smell, rhythm and motion-sense, or, alternately/ultimately, the autonomic nervous system)’. Philosophical inquiries into bioscience suggest that affect is ‘both a “precognitive” attribute (not in terms of a telos, but in terms of a quality) of the body as well as emotion’s trace effect’ (Pellegrini and Puar 2009: 37). Such a conception of affect implies a distinction between sensation and the perception of that sensation: ‘Affect, from this perspective, is precisely what allows the body to be an open system, always in concert with its virtuality, the potential of becoming’ (ibid.). Affect may therefore ‘anchor claims about the materiality of bodies and physiological processes that are not contained or representable by language or cognition alone’ (ibid.).

However, the idea that affect can be analysed as a ‘precognitive’ phenomenon has been criticised by scholars such as Margaret Wetherell, a professor of social psychology who finds the idea that our bodies are shaped by an outer force prior to sensemaking unsustainable: ‘we cannot create a split between a semi-conscious, automaton-like, reactive body and the reflexive, discursive, interpreting, meaning-making, communicating social actor’ (Wetherell 2015a: 160). In line with recent neuroscience and psychobiology research, Wetherell advocates an analysis that ‘does not presume a strongly, pre-organized, built-in set of innate affect programs’ (ibid.). She sees affective practice as ‘a moment of recruitment, articulation or enlistment when many complicated flows across bodies, subjectivities, relations, histories and contexts entangle and intertwine together to form just this affective moment, episode or atmosphere with its particular possible classifications’ (ibid.).

The affect studies pioneer, Brian Massumi, claims that affects works synesthetically, which ‘implies a participation of the senses in each other’ (1995: 96). The simultaneous activation of senses such as taste, smell and touch has often been mentioned by scholars of affect (see e.g.

Highmore 2010). This ‘dismisses any hierarchical separation between soma and matter’ (Boscagli 2014: 4). For instance, when Povrzanović Frykman (Chapter 4) writes about how memories of humanitarian aid are triggered by specific objects, it is clear that people’s physical reactions are activated by the sensations of taste, smell, sound and touch. The synesthetic quality of affects can also be used to set the stage for a total experience, something that is of particular importance to Hauge’s analysis (Chapter 9) of the concerts at ‘The Mill’. Here, the black metal concerts are intertwined with a material surrounding that includes good food, the aroma of newly mown meadows, and torchlight illuminating the darkness of night.

Affect and emotion

Affect and emotion are often paired up in the literature. However, invoking one or the other ‘has come to signal a basic orientation to the self, world and their interrelation (as well as in some cases a particular politics and ethics)’ (Anderson 2009: 80). Scholars who agree that affects *precede* conscious knowing place it *beyond* emotions depending on how culturally defined the emotions seem to be. Massumi (1995: 86) defines affect as ‘a state of suspense, potentially of disruption’, expressed through an array of physiological reactions (muscular contraction, secretions) and visible symptoms (voice changes, facial expressions). Emotion, on the other hand, is ‘the socio-linguistic fixing of the quality of an experience which is from that point onward defined as personal’ (ibid. 88).

In Nigel Thrift’s words, affects refer to ‘complex, self-referential states of being’, whereas emotions are ‘cultural interpretations’ of affects, culturally constructed ‘everyday understandings of affects’ that have a distinctive vocabulary and serve as a means of relating to others (Thrift 2008: 221). As summarised by Anderson (2009: 80),

the distinction between affect and emotion has been caught up in the subjective/objective problematic via two oppositions: narrative/non-narrative and semiotic/asignifying. The terms have fallen on one or the other of those divides – affect with non-narrative and asignifying and emotion with narrative and semiotic. Affect with the impersonal and objective. Emotion with the personal and subjective.

While ‘the emotions of anger, regret, jealousy or empathy, are best communicated by describing the personal circumstances and sociocultural context of their staging’ (Henriques 2010: 82; see also Bendix 2015), affects have ‘the kind of significance that has to be embodied, felt and experienced’ (ibid.). Affects are often equated with ‘intensities’ (Massumi 1995; Stewart 2007). Emotion, then, is ‘qualified intensity’, ‘intensity owned and recognized’ (Massumi (1995: 88). For Massumi, a linguistic expression that ‘qualifies’ is not simply in opposition to intensity: ‘The relationship between the levels of intensity and qualification is not one of conformity or correspondence, but of resonance or interference, amplification or dampening’ (ibid.). However, ‘matter-of-factness dampens intensity’ (ibid. 86).

This ‘dampening of intensity’ raises significant questions about the methodology of studying affect in the frames of ethnographic research. What happens when affects are ‘translated’ as representations? What happens to affect in the process of narration? In psychology, theorising about affects is based on controlled observations of physical reactions, often in experimental situations where expressions, movements and utterances can be registered in a systematic way. But in several chapters of this book we are faced with interviews, memories and recollections of significant events that are narratively framed, and thus by definition stand out as emotions or a mix of affect and emotion. It is therefore of crucial importance to explore how the cognitively defined emotions that are encountered in interviews can be used to investigate affective states. In Povrzanović Frykman’s contribution (Chapter 4) we see this dilemma drawn to its extreme. Corporeal memories of war are narrated two decades after the events took place. As a researcher she was not even present at most of the interviews. So how can she possibly grasp the multilayered affective reactions that took place in the interview situations? We have to qualify the background given so far by discussing some of the basic features of contemporary approaches to analysing affect.

The problem of naming

The power that resides in the affect perspective is to be found in what it promises to open up. Kathleen Stewart (2007) consistently refers to ‘forces’ and ‘intensities’ as a vague ‘something’. If nothing is defined, there is a strong potential for something new and unexpected to take place: ‘Once captured in the content nets of specific emotions, affects lose

their capacity for movement and change' (Cichosz 2014: 56). Massumi also claims that any definition 'annuls the potential' and 'turns formless affective expression into content, such as a discernible emotion' (ibid.). The moment we name/define affect we choose how to deal with it and probably engage in a culturally appropriate emotional reaction.

However – and this is comforting for those working with interviews – even if affect is not entirely 'containable in knowledge', Massumi sees it as 'analyzable in effect, as effect' (ibid. 107, n. 2). His explanation of how affective and emotional layers are connected captures how (e.g. in Chapter 4) an interviewee slows down, starts to breathe heavily, sighs and pauses as the narration touches on more demanding topics.

Researchers such as Sara Ahmed take a different stance by focusing on what affects *do* rather than what they *are*. She explores 'how naming emotions involves different orientations towards the objects they construct' (Ahmed 2004: 14) and takes clearly circumscribed emotions as the starting point when analysing affects. She notes how affect can accumulate around a sign or figure and argues that the circulation of affect occurs through specific cultural processes (see Wetherell 2015a for a critical discussion of Ahmed's work). An example of how to use such an approach can be found in this volume, in the analysis of the multifaceted (post)colonial relations between the state and the Sámi population. Kramvig and Flemmen (Chapter 8) also describe how discriminatory names and frequently used blanket terms form the basis for a wide array of unspoken, affective attitudes that are difficult to get rid of.

Again the focus on practice – what affect *does* – also tends to widen the scope for what it *is*. When, for instance, bodily memories of war are brought to the surface (Chapter 4), when traumatic conflicts are played out in families (Chapter 7), or in the humiliation of having your cultural heritage faked and appropriated for commercial purposes (Chapter 8), affects do not appear as significantly 'dampened' by being narrated or framed in wider socio-historical understandings of the issues in question. By *juxtaposing* corporeal and cognitive processes in fieldwork or interview situations, much of the potential for understanding affect seems to get lost.

This is fully in accord with Wetherell's critique (2013) of how affect is too quickly contrasted with the discursive and the cognitive and distinguished from 'domesticated' emotion. She claims that the 'splitting of affect from everyday talk, discourse and meaning-making and the presentation of affect as something pre-conscious, to do with just bodies

and events, makes little social psychological sense' (ibid. 349). She further argues that 'the objective of affect research is to produce textured, lively analyses of multiple modes of engagement' (ibid.), for which purpose the studies of discursive practice are more apt than 'non-representational' methodological approaches (see also Wetherell 2015b).⁵

Approaching affects ethnographically

This collection of essays does not try to turn the tables on language, narrations, or any other representations or trends within cognitive studies.⁶ Instead, it is born out of a curiosity about how more established ways of analysing culture could benefit from advances in the growing field of affect and emotion studies. For more than a century anthropologists and ethnologists have investigated everyday life, where affects and emotions have always played an important role, but have until recently 'not often been explicitly articulated as a force in themselves in theories of culture, history, and ways of life' (Stewart and Lewis 2015: 236).⁷

Most of the contributors to this volume are ethnologists and anthropologists with an extensive experience of fieldwork and a pronounced sensitivity for the material objects embedded in their respective (historicised) contexts. Nils Gilje, who is a philosopher, Elisabet Hauge, a cultural geographer, and Lesley Stern, a professor of visual arts are the only contributors from other disciplines. Presented in more detail below, some contribute brand new ethnographic material and engage in autobiographical writing, whereas others revisit material gathered in earlier ethnographic studies or reach for examples from popular culture. The contributors invite us to their fieldwork sites in Norway, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the US, yet these sites serve only as a background for their examination of how objects embody or trigger affects and produce affective atmospheres. The book starts with theoretical and methodological discussions (chapters 1–3), and moves on to specific analyses of when, how, for whom, and why particular objects become sensitive (chapters 4–8). The final chapters (9–11) place the discussion of this sensitivity in the wider frame of their authors' professional interest in innovation and culture tourism, while the last chapter (12) lends the book a finishing twist towards experimental writing.

As discussed above, the influence of philosophy on research into affects can hardly be overstated. Consequently, many contemporary

studies pursue elaborate theoretical discussions rather than analysing ethnographic material. When Nils Gilje (Chapter 2) traces studies of affect to their historical settings, he is trying to close the gap between philosophy, ethnology and anthropology: ‘Philosophy has always been good at asking questions but cultural and behavioural sciences are then called upon to come up with interesting answers’ (Frykman & Gilje 2003: 8). This book sets out to overcome this divide and put theoretical concepts and approaches into use.

Stef Jansen (Chapter 3) critically examines the advantages and disadvantages of adopting contemporary theories of affect and the possibilities of integrating the perspectives they offer with established procedures of ethnographic work. As a point of departure he refers to his research in present-day Sarajevo (Jansen 2015), but also to a film evocative of the affective atmospheres in Bosnia and Herzegovina after the 1990s war. Why are ‘intensities’ experienced unequally, what does it take to ‘get’ the affective state of the other, and how should we write about it?

Maja Povrzanović Frykman (Chapter 4) discusses the range of methodological issues that can arise in interviews, with a particular focus on objects and their ‘sensitivity’. How can describing a tin of hardly edible minced meat received as part of a humanitarian aid parcel in wartime Sarajevo, or the cherished memory of sharing a carefully tended tomato grown on the windowsill, release bodily reactions and emotional outbursts some twenty years later?

Nevena Škrbić Alempijević and Sanja Potkonjak (Chapter 5) write about a birthday party in postsocialist Zagreb that was ruined when an object from the past – a huge dusty portrait of former Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito – unexpectedly turned up as a gift. In the twinkling of an eye the atmosphere at the party became suffocatingly thick. What can this example, entangled as it is with objects that have changed their meaning but retained their impact, tell us about the affective charge of history, politics and place?

Orvar Löfgren (Chapter 6) asks how things harbour hopes and dreams, traumatic memories and a hard-to-verbalise sense of abandon and adventure when they are thrown together in a suitcase. The packing of ordinary luggage means both preparing for a journey and assembling objects that might appear ‘sensitive’ inasmuch as they trigger affects. By employing a historical perspective, Löfgren also demonstrates the malleability and formation of emotions due to the learning processes facilitated by films.

The undoing of a home and its objects is discussed by Jonas Frykman (Chapter 7), who analyses situations relating to the division of an inheritance – a ‘material, affective and multisensory environment, interpreted, known and acted in by domestic practitioners, through various sensory embodied ways of knowing’ (Pink et al., 2014: 428). When parents die, some things attain a pronounced affective value and at the same time serve as symbols, as the focus of narrations and as starting points for a return to past worlds, like Proust’s famous madeleine. Emotions run high and siblings, once close, become enemies who might never see or talk to one another again.

Britt Kramvig and Anne Britt Flemmen (Chapter 8) use the theories of affect to explain what happened when a traditional Sámi costume was mocked by the display of Chinese-manufactured copies at a Norwegian food-chain kick-off. Some of the Sámi community engaged in a fierce debate in which strong feelings, stemming from centuries of discrimination, were revived.

The essay by Elisabet Hauge (Chapter 9) about innovation and affect in the black metal musical world has been introduced above. This is the first of three essays based on the study of culture as a motor for innovation and regional development, which has become the hallmark of Agderforskning institute.

Locating their research in a small Norwegian coastal town, Kirsti Hjemdahl Mathiesen and Jonas Frykman (Chapter 10) discuss how a female entrepreneur runs a successful hotel more or less on intuition. The proprietor has developed a hard to formalise or calculate ‘sense’ for what present and future customers want, how to choose between different cultural activities and, moreover, how to communicate this to the staff. Considering the overall materiality of the hotel and its environment, and the mobile phone as part of the proprietor’s subjectivity, the researchers explain the success of the hotel with the aid of affect theory.

Can applied research contribute to theoretical advances in the field of affect studies? Sarah Holst Kjær (Chapter 11) pursues this question by describing how Chinese and European visitors reacted to the storm-swept lighthouse museum of Lindesnes in southernmost Norway. The place spurred reactions that were poles apart. For example, the European tourists felt exhilarated at being exposed to the elements, and the wind and waves enhanced their feeling of uniqueness, whereas the Chinese tourists shivered in the biting winds and longed for protected barbecue

sites. The same milieu was experienced in accordance with how the senses, affects and emotions are culturally organised. This poses further questions about how we should study the interrelations between body, culture and place and how perspectives on affect can best be used to refine such analyses.

The book concludes with an essay by Kathleen Stewart and Lesley Stern (Chapter 12). They take us on a journey in which affective relations to places and objects are central. At the same time, it becomes an excursion into the art of writing ethnography as recomposing brief moments of affective encounters and testing the limits set by academic traditions and scholarly expectations – something that is also discussed by Stef Jansen (Chapter 3). Their writing responds to the philosopher and psychologist Ruth Leys (2011), one of the most experienced researchers of affect, who encourages its scholars to get out of their armchairs in order to ‘provide thick descriptions of life experiences of the kind that are familiar to anthropologists and novelists but are widely held to be inimical to science’ (ibid. 471). This resonates perfectly with the art of haiku writers, who

attend to a moving configuration of perceptions – a glimpse of colour, let’s say, plus a special tincture or texture combined with a peculiar sound pressing through a moment – that can resonate in the reader sensibility so that ... ‘the mind is struck as with a hammer, bringing the senses up short and releasing a flood of associations’. (Gibson 2013: 246)

Affects and objects

With some significant exceptions, such as Navaro-Yashin (2009, 2012), Gibson (2013), Jansen (2013, 2015), and Bille et al. 2015), few ethnographers have worked on affects in relation to material culture.⁸ As ethnologists and anthropologists we are interested in practices and lived experiences that are always historically embedded. We therefore do not understand objects as having an *independent* affective ‘charge’. It is the practices of the people using the objects or who are inspired by environments that we observe, and it is the people we ask who tell us how they understand their practices ‘as goal-oriented, meaningful and affectively loaded’ (Jansen 2013: 35).

Kramig and Flemmen (Chapter 8) align with the anthropologist Yael Navaro-Yashin (2009, 2012), who has done a lot of systematic fieldwork on affects. In her work on Turkish Cypriots inhabiting expropriated Greek dwellings, Navaro-Yashin challenges the way in which affect has been theorised, using metaphors that invoke abstraction, imaginaries of immateriality and conceptualisations of invisibility (ibid. 203). She also claims that affect is contained and emitted through the solidity, presence, visibility and tangibility of objects – a view of material culture that has been discussed at length by Hannah Arendt in the *Human Condition* (1958).

Arendt's approach sums up most of the contributors' perspectives on material culture as well as the inspiration they draw from phenomenology. Here, inspiration is taken from Martin Heidegger, from phenomenology in general, and from postphenomenology in particular (see Ihde 1990; Ahmed 2004; Frykman and Gilje 2003; Frykman 2012) in order to pull philosophy – transformed into 'a more contemporary, flexible and effective philosophical toolcase' – down from the commanding heights to 'the trenches' (Ihde 2003: 4).

Heidegger's unique contribution is not so much his well-known statement that it is impossible to perceive the world cognitively without being tuned into or in a certain mood, but his combination of mood *and* material culture. Who else ventured to connect affects to something as mundane as tools and practical work? At times Heidegger has been caricatured for thinking from the perspective of a workshop or farmer engaged in different routines of tool use, although that perhaps says more about academic snobbery than his philosophical aptitude. From such a standpoint, tools such as hammers, scythes, axes, saws and knives could be seen as part of the countryman's 'equipment' to be used for the purposes that their owner intended at a particular moment. With his scythe in his hands, the farmer perhaps envisaged fields to be mown, barns to be filled, flour to be milled and bread on the table. These things were *zuhanden*, or 'ready-to-hand', that affected his body as well as his intentions. His thoughts were given direction without the objects per se being the centre of his attention. On the other hand, the moment the scythe broke, the farmer had to reflect on its construction: whether it was really meant to be used on such stony fields and whether a better brand was available. The tool itself became *vorhanden*, 'present-at-hand', an object to be named, mulled over, something that found its cultural

significance in the inventory of other objects. As such, it presented itself to him as a symbol or a representation.

To Heidegger, the material as well as the social environment – *Umwelt* – was essential for understanding what ‘being there’ – *Dasein* – is all about. By using the notion of *Befindlichkeit*, he simultaneously referred to people’s moods and situations. The German phrase *sich befinden* means being situated in the sense of meeting the situation in a mood that makes its potential matter. Heidegger used the word mood – *Stimmung* – to denote this affective attitude to the world. Moods make it clear how things present themselves, how they are given substance and are selected from an otherwise neutral or indifferent environment. Any environment is thus perceived as *sensitised* prior to being intentionally explored. In his chapter on inheritance conflicts, Frykman (Chapter 7) describes an upset woman who in her *Stimmung* of anger is about to smash a crystal vase into smithereens on the pavement – a situation that leaves us in no doubt about affects being related to objects. This is the kind of moment that aptly captures what Heidegger meant by *Befindlichkeit*: a situation where affects make things matter, a complex chain of relations that is instantly felt and made tangible.

As the ways of approaching affects in this book are predominantly ethnographic, they tend to focus on what Bourdieu (1977) called *situated praxis*. Several contributors begin their analyses from similar points of departure – an event, a situation, or a scene. This is the case with the appearance of a fake *gákti* in a Sámi area (Chapter 8), eagerly received humanitarian aid in a besieged town (Chapter 4), the sudden display of a contested politicised portrait at a birthday party (Chapter 5) and tourists turning up at a lighthouse (Chapter 11). Similar to zooming in on the moments of despair, grief and quarrelling when parents die and objects from their estate are to be distributed (Chapter 7), they all in their different ways attempt to ‘catch’ the affects associated with objects at the moment of perception. Such moments reveal what people experience and know but perhaps cannot clearly articulate – the contingencies and junctures, the ‘tentative, charged, overwhelming, and alive’, to echo Kathleen Stewart (2007: 128–129).

As Hjemdahl and Frykman (Chapter 10) show, when the researchers visited Hotel Norge and its dynamic manager they literally ran with her from room to room and from one panorama view to another. Interviewing her about her activities and plans for the future was a bodily enterprise.

Talking was not enough, they had to move together through the hotel environment, look out of the windows, feel the wallpaper, see the size of the ballroom and so on. Similarly, as Hauge (Chapter 9) documents in her study of how place is important to musical entrepreneurs, a place is not simply a location, but a site where people live out their lives and where objects serve as useful tools.

There is a striking similarity between how Massumi juxtaposes affects as non-cognitive, irreducibly bodily and non-signifying and emotions as cognitive, vocal, laden with meaning and culturally embedded and how Heidegger describes relations to objects. According to Heidegger, the affective relation to material culture is *zuhanden*, which means bodily and non-signifying, while the emotional dimension has many traits in common with *vorhanden*, which is cognitive, symbolic and culturally embedded.

However, Orvar Löfgren's study of suitcases and baggage (Chapter 6) shows the danger of dichotomisation. Things are constantly on the move between *zuhanden* and *vorhanden*, necessity and symbol, 'intensity' and 'qualification'. A suitcase contains the things that are essential for your travel and at the same time is an outer shell filled with prestige, social significance, dreams, aspirations and commercial value. Löfgren uses Doreen Massey's concept of *thrown togetherness* to denote how haphazard the packing can sometimes be and how the contents gain affinity by virtue of them being in the same bag. He also hints at another important dimension in Heidegger's theory of how objects are attached to one another, namely the concept of *worlding*. The notion of worlding nowadays frequently appears in philosophy, ethnography, cultural studies, and technology studies, where it functions as a floating signifier. In this book it is applied in the same way as Heidegger used the concept of *Welt* – with reference to the totality of things that can be *zuhanden*, present-at-hand in the world. Toiletries, stockings, underwear, trousers, shirts and pullovers already had a strong attraction before ending up in the suitcase. Worlding here implies that things are brought together by being understood, handled and used. More or less out of habit they make themselves present and 'call for each other' before the suitcase is taken out of the closet. Their interrelation is so contingent that it can only be partially verbalised and intellectualised. When things are worlding they need no words, but are there, ready-to-hand. Just as the farmer's tools refer to one another, a wardrobe contains items that are ingrained prereflectively from an early age.

How things are worlded through use is made especially clear with regard to the generational differences observed by Povrzanović Frykman (Chapter 4) among former recipients of humanitarian aid. Here, the age of the interviewees during the war accounted for the difference in the affective charge of their narratives. Growing up under siege, the children in wartime Sarajevo absorbed the material world around them as it unfolded through their senses. While the happily recollected bar of chocolate – a standard item in an aid package – helped them to establish the world as they knew it through their palates, the same chocolate effectively ‘un-worlded’ the adults’ world, because it was an affective reminder of the material losses and changes in their environment that challenged their identity and dignity.

Objects become sensitive through use, but also serve as beholders of affects. The photograph of a long-dead president of a now non-existent state (Chapter 5) reveals the affective powers that are ‘activated, reactivated and also altered ... in the sparking gap between the picture and the viewer’ (Gibson 2013: 256). This and other contributions to this volume show that tangibility is crucial for the transmission of affects.

With this collection of essays we ground our analysis of affects in the relevant philosophical traditions, review some of the achievements in the humanities and social sciences, and raise important methodological issues. The objective has been to examine the potential for epistemic gain from material culture research in connection with studies of affect. Things explored in the context of closely observed situated practices have given us insights that are not attainable from textual or visual sources.

We therefore believe that ethnologists and anthropologists, together with other scholars doing ethnography, can make an important contribution to the field of affect research. Our hope is that this book will be read across disciplines, not only to promote the value of ethnographic work, but also to further theoretically informed empirical approaches to affect and material culture.

Notes

- 1 In the field of material culture studies a sustained focus on affect is still quite rare. See e.g. Chadha 2006; Navaro-Yashin 2009, 2012; Townsend-Gault 2011; Beckstead et al. 2011; Gibson 2013, Hafner 2013; Jansen 2013; Pink et al. 2014; Springwood 2014; Bille et al. 2015. See also the special issue of the *Journal of Material Culture* from 2010, which was devoted to emotive materiality and the affective presence of human remains (see Krmpotich et al. 2010).

- 2 An exhaustive review is beyond the scope of this chapter, although some of the publications on affects and emotions that complement the discussions in this volume are worth mentioning. These include the overviews of affect research provided in Clough and Halley 2007, Gregg and Seigworth 2010, and Wetherell 2012. See also Protevi 2009, Groenendyk 2011, Jasper 2014, and Åhäll and Gregory 2015a, who argue for the importance of studying affect in the field of politics and international relations. Current research on the emotions in the discipline of history is presented in Matt 2011. The work of philosophers interested in emotion are reviewed in Griffiths 2013, and those interested in ‘atmospheres’ in Bille et al. 2015. For a discussion of the sociality of emotions see Rogers et al. 2014 and for a review of sociological approaches to emotions see Turner 2009 and Stets 2012. See also Wulff 2007, Scheer 2012, Stewart and Lewis 2015 and the special issue/sections of *Emotion Review* from 2009, 2010 and 2012 (see Reizenzein and Döring 2009; Feldman Barrett 2010; Russell 2012), especially the section on social-constructionist approaches to emotion from 2012 (see Averill 2012). A good starting point for reading about affect in relation to the body is the special section of *Emotion Review* in 2009 (see Niederthal and Maringer 2009) and the special issue of *Body & Society* in 2010 (see Blackman and Venn 2010). See also *Affect and Embodiment* (n.d.), a selection of articles published in the journal *Cultural Anthropology*. Margaret Wetherell’s critical overview (2015a) of the major trends in ‘turn to affect’ is especially illuminating.
- 3 See e.g. Paterson 2007a, where the affective nature of touch is emphasised in a discussion of Reiki massage (see also Paterson 2007b). Analysing how the hand plays a vital role in both the intellectual and affective dimensions of healthcare, Pink et al. (2014) ‘bring together discussions of materiality with those of tactile knowing to develop a theoretical route to conceptualizing the relationship between the hand, tactile knowing, materiality and safety’ (ibid. 427).
- 4 See e.g. Charles Fruehling Springwood’s ethnographic study (2014) of gun-owning Americans and their weapons as central agents in a network of objects and affects. Springwood shows how gun owners are transformed by the corporeal relationships they have with their weapons and sees this relationship as ‘a mode of affective embodiment, in which the gun so easily merges with its owner, forming and conforming to the body, dissolving into one’s person unconsciously, much like but much differently than a cell phone’ (ibid. 450). He sees embodiment as the prevailing affective mode by which these objects affect the world.
- 5 Wetherell (2015a) proposes that *affective practice* should become the topic of affect research, not the circulation of emotion or affect in itself. Similarly, Monique Scheer (2015) discusses *emotional practices* and argues that ‘a definition of emotion informed by practice theory promises to bridge persistent dichotomies ... such as body and mind, structure and agency, as well as expression and experience’ (ibid. 193).
- 6 See Boscagli 2014 on ‘new materialism’.
- 7 European ethnologists’ recent attempt at such an articulation can be found in Bendix 2015.
- 8 In the introduction to a special issue on ‘staging atmospheres’, Bille et al. 2015: 35 note that ‘what is needed is a stronger emphasis on the material dimension of atmosphere to balance the anthropocentric perspective on affective experience’.

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Chapter 2 shows how affects, moods, and emotions are treated by Spinoza and philosophers of existence, and how existential philosophy is a source of inspiration for empirically oriented social and cultural research. According to Spinoza, human consciousness can never be analysed independently of the body and its affects: joy implies an increase in the power of acting and sadness a decrease. By leaving the philosophy of the mind and concentrating on the philosophy of the body he has become a constant point of reference for scholars promoting the 'affective turn'. For Kierkegaard and Heidegger our primary access to the world is also affective: the perceiver is always in some kind of mood – distracted, indifferent, anxious, or bored. Although fundamental to an understanding of how the world is constantly 'attuned' through affects and emotions, they both leave out what ethnologists and anthropologists have taken as their main focus – practice.

Moods and Emotions

Some Philosophical Reflections on the ‘Affective Turn’

Nils Gilje

A cognitive bias has dominated the humanities and the social sciences for a long time. Most researchers have neglected the importance of moods and emotions in understanding the social and cultural dimensions of the human condition. Even those interested in the deeper and ‘inner’ realms of experience have often avoided the affective aspects of social interaction. In recent years, especially within what could be called existential sociology and ethnology, there has been a new focus on emotions – including those of the researcher. Subjectivity is on the agenda. With the new ‘affective turn’, some highly interesting work has been done to investigate feelings and emotions from an empirical perspective (Povrzanović Frykman 2003; Clough and Halley 2007; Greg and Seigworth 2010; Frykman 2012). Some of the older sociological literature on the existential predicament is also highly relevant with regard to the ‘affective turn’ (Douglas and Johnson 1977; Ellis 1991; Scheff and Retzinger 1991). With the new focus on moods and emotions, existential philosophy could be a source of inspiration for more empirically oriented social and cultural research. Philosophers such as Kierkegaard, Jaspers, Heidegger and Sartre suddenly become sparring partners for researchers analysing strong and challenging emotions and feelings.

In this chapter I will take a step back and look at how affects, moods and emotions are treated by some of the philosophers of existence.¹ Even though Heidegger uses terms like *Affekt*, *Affektion* and *affizieren*

(Heidegger 1996: 137–142, 341–346), his most important contribution to the ‘affective turn’ is his analysis of attunement (*Befindlichkeit*) and moods (*Stimmungen*). As it is understood in present-day philosophy and ethnology, the ‘affective turn’ also seems to reflect how Spinoza understood basic affects such as joy (*laetitia*) and sadness (*tristitia*). It would therefore be interesting to take a closer look at the affinities and differences between Spinoza and Heidegger. In doing so I will initially discuss a possible conceptual difference between moods and emotions, for example anxiety and fear. Even though anxiety and fear are sometimes treated as synonymous, some existential philosophers insist that this is not necessarily the case. It is often claimed that anxiety has no intentional object, but that fear always has, as for example in a fear of empty spaces, criminals or wild animals. The most existential of the existentialist philosophers is probably Kierkegaard. He is rightly famous for his analysis of anxiety, and he will therefore be the point of departure in this essay.

Starting at the beginning

In what sense could Adam and Eve be said to have been fully *self-conscious* human beings before the Fall? Were they perhaps closer to natural phenomena without self-consciousness? As far as I know, the cliff outside my window has no consciousness. My cat, on the other hand, is quite a different story, and seems to have a high level of consciousness. In the world of nature there seem to be different degrees of self-awareness, but despite this we still think that human beings have a self-consciousness that is unique. There is also, of course, the fact that infants and young children gradually become self-conscious and aware of themselves in new ways. According to Kierkegaard, all infants reflect the experience of Adam and Eve in their journey to self-awareness.

In *The Concepts of Anxiety* (1844), Kierkegaard retells the biblical story of Adam and Eve and the meaning of original sin. Before the fall, Adam and Eve lived a preconscious, or not fully self-conscious, life. This state is described by Kierkegaard as one of innocence and ignorance. In the Garden of Eden their lives were happy, and they knew nothing of pain and sorrow. They could eat anything, except the fruit from the tree of knowledge. So far they had no experience of good and evil. After sinning, they were driven out of the garden and had to live the life of

human beings. Kierkegaard obviously treats the biblical story of the Fall of Man as an allegory: every human being has to make the passage from the preconscious life of infancy to self-conscious adulthood. Freedom, spirit (*Ånd*) and morality are not given, but are phenomena that develop in human beings (Pattison 2005).

In Kierkegaard's language, Adam and Eve were not fully awake in the Garden of Eden, being ignorant and without spirit. But even in this state they had the capacity to experience something, namely to become aware of something that is really nothing, but that still gives birth to the human feeling of anxiety. Nothing begets anxiety. That is the first step out of the Garden of Eden; a step that has to be repeated by every human being (Kierkegaard [1844] 1980: 41).

Kierkegaard's style of writing is not always easy to understand. What he seems to be saying is that anxiety is triggered by the child's first awareness of a way of living ('eating from the tree of knowledge') that it still does not understand. Neither can it avoid the temptation to move in the direction of this 'nothing'. In this moment, anxiety becomes part of the human condition:

The anxiety belongs so essentially to the child that he cannot do without it. Though it causes him anxiety, it captivates him by its pleasing anxiousness ... The more profound the anxiety, the more profound the culture. (Ibid. 42)

According to Kierkegaard, this kind of anxiety is not found in animals. Animals have no spirit and do not have the freedom to commit original sin. It is difficult to say whether this argument is consistent with Kierkegaard's gradualism or not, but we do not need to go into detail here.

Kierkegaard's probably best known argument in *The Concept of Anxiety* is the claim that anxiety is not the same as fear, or that anxiety cannot be reduced to fear. Only a nothing can bring anxiety. The concept of anxiety is therefore very different from fear and similar concepts 'that refer to something definite, whereas anxiety is freedom's actuality as the possibility of possibility' (ibid. 42). This is another argument for the thesis that anxiety is not found in animals – they simply lack the possibility of freedom. It is only for human beings that 'freedom's possibility announces itself in anxiety' (ibid. 74). Understood in this way, anxiety is a reality *sui generis*. I can take the necessary steps to avoid

fear, but this is not so easy when it comes to anxiety. If someone asks me ‘What is it?’, a possible answer could be ‘I don’t know. It was probably nothing.’ And that is a good answer. But how can I be troubled by something that cannot be found anywhere in the world? How can I be worried about nothing? Of course, it can sometimes be psychologically difficult to distinguish between anxiety and fear, and the two states can also be intertwined in different ways.

What is really at stake here is the idea that anxiety and fear are two very different concepts. Kierkegaard never tires of repeating that the object of anxiety is nothing: ‘If we ask more particularly what the object of anxiety is, then the answer, here as elsewhere, must be that it is nothing’ (ibid. 98; see also 77, 97). But in Kierkegaard’s case, it is problematic to claim that anxiety is a non-intentional object and something that can never be an object of knowledge. This is especially so when it comes to children: ‘In observing children, one will discover this anxiety intimated more particularly as a seeking for the adventurous, the monstrous, and the enigmatic’ (ibid. 42). Anxiety, of course, is not identical with these phenomena, although they do point in that direction. Sometimes Kierkegaard seems to be saying that anxiety announces itself in the enigmatic. When the distinction between good and evil is finally established, then ‘the object of anxiety is a determinate something and its nothing is an actual something, because the distinction between good and evil is posited *in concreto*’ (ibid. 111). But this will not eliminate anxiety. For the adult human being, the possibility of freedom will never erase the distinction between good and evil. There are always possibilities and therefore new – so far unimaginable – sins: ‘So anxiety again comes into relation with what is posited as well as with the future’ (ibid. 111).

Even though the relation between anxiety and fear is not crystal clear in Kierkegaard, I still think he is right to argue the difference between these two concepts. In the existentialist tradition, it is often claimed that what Kierkegaard calls anxiety is a mood – a *Stimmung* – to use the terminology of Heidegger and his pupils, while fear is an emotion. We are afraid of something, while when anxious we become conscious of a ‘possibility of a possibility’ (Kierkegaard). Human beings are always open in this way. Every ‘no’ – as in the Garden of Eden – makes us conscious of a new, as yet undiscovered possibility. A ‘no’ makes us aware of a border, beyond which we should not move.

Being itself is not an object

The literature on Heidegger's relations to Kierkegaard is huge (for some interesting contributions, see Magurschak 1985; Caputo 1993; Mulhall 2001). We have seen that in Kierkegaard anxiety and nothingness always correspond with each other, and that nothingness produces anxiety. We can find similar statements in all of Heidegger's work: 'Anxiety discloses Nothingness' (Heidegger 1967: 9), and 'Anxiety is the basic attunement that confronts us with Nothingness' (Heidegger 1973: 231). Such similarities in terminology hide some important differences. Heidegger's project in *Being and Time* was to develop an interpretation of being as such – a universal fundamental ontology. Despite all the external similarities, this project was very different from Kierkegaard's thinking. In *Being and Time*, Kierkegaard is only mentioned in three footnotes. Seen from Heidegger's point of view, 'Kierkegaard got furthest of all in the analysis of the phenomenon of Angst', he had 'explicitly grasped and thought through the problem of existence ... in a penetrating way', but this 'does not mean that he was also successful in the existential interpretation of it' (Heidegger 1996: 405, 407, 412). According to Heidegger, the fundamental ontological problematic – the question of being as such – was foreign to Kierkegaard and he complained that the Danish philosopher was 'completely under the influence of Hegel' (ibid. 407). In Heidegger's interpretation, Kierkegaard was still dominated by Western metaphysics. Strictly speaking, Kierkegaard was 'not a thinker, but a religious writer' (Heidegger 1977: 91).

Heidegger's basic criticism of Kierkegaard in *Being and Time* could perhaps be summed up in the following way: Kierkegaard's thinking never moves away from an ontic and psychological level (with the exception of *The Concept of Anxiety*) and he was alien to the question of being, even if he had interesting things to say about 'das Existenzproblem'. Heidegger was right: Kierkegaard was not interested in uncovering the deep ontological structures of human existence. But as Pattison has pointed out, Kierkegaard could have criticised Heidegger in more or less the same terms as he criticised Hegel: a thinker interested in the subjective and passionate approach to existence would not be interested in developing a universal ontology. He/she would be interested in his/her subjective and personal existence and not in *Dasein's* (Pattison 2005: 86).

Karl Jaspers was influenced by both Kierkegaard and Heidegger. He took over Kierkegaard's understanding of anxiety, freedom and human existence, never missing subjectivity and personal *Existenz*, and reformulated Heidegger's question of being in his own vocabulary. In many ways it is much easier to understand Jasper's version of the question of being:

The first answer to the question of *being* arises from the following *basic experience*: Whatever becomes an object for me is always a *determinate* being among others, and only a *mode* of being. When I think of being as matter, energy, spirit, life, and so on ... in the end I always discover that I have absolutized a mode of determinate being, which appears within the totality of being, into being itself. No known being is *being itself*. (Jaspers [1937] 1971: 17)

As finite human beings we never attain a standpoint where the limiting horizon disappears and from which we can survey the whole, like a view from nowhere. Seen in this way, it seems a difficult – if not impossible – project to construct a universal fundamental ontology. What Jaspers calls *being itself* is not an object and not a being, and disappears the moment it announces itself in new beings. Trying to capture being itself is like trying to capture our shadow. This being itself is what Jaspers calls the encompassing (*das Umgreifende*): 'The encompassing always merely announces itself – in present objects and within horizons – but it *never* becomes an *object*. Never appearing to us itself, it is that wherein everything else appears' (ibid. 18). A similar distinction can be found in Kant. According to Kant, everything we can know is *in* the world, but the 'world itself' is not an object of knowledge. There is astronomy, physics, chemistry and so on, but no science of the 'world itself' (Kant [1787] 1970: 384 ff.).

Like anxiety, I cannot point my finger at the encompassing. Anxiety and the encompassing are not open to ostensive definitions. I cannot show you where they are. This understanding of the encompassing is close to Heidegger's own position in the 1930s. But Heidegger would probably have added something to Jasper's description, namely that the encompassing is always already affective and characterised by certain moods (despair, boredom, the feeling of estrangement etc.).

Everything is so strange ...

The Norwegian poet Sigbjørn Obstfelder (1866–1900) – who died of tuberculosis at the age of 34 – wrote a beautiful poem describing something that perhaps could be called a ‘mixed mood’, involving both the feeling of estrangement and that of anxiety. This mood ‘colours’ everything that is observed; every object is experienced from a certain affective perspective, or a certain mood. The poem is called ‘I look’, ‘Jeg ser’:

Jeg ser på den hvide himmel.
Jeg ser på de gråblå skyer.
Jeg ser på den blodige sol

Dette er altså verden.
Dette er altså klodernes hjem.

En regndråpe!

Jeg ser på de høye huse,
jeg ser på de tusinde vinduer,
jeg ser på det fjerne kirketårn

Dette er altså jorden.
Dette er altså menneskenes hjem.
De gråblå skyer samler sig. Solen blev borte.
Jeg ser på de velklædte herrer,
jeg ser på de smilende damer,
jeg ser på de ludende heste.

Hvor de gråblå skyer blir tunge.
Jeg ser, jeg ser ...
Jeg er visst kommet på feil klode!
Her er så underlig ...

(Obstfelder 2001)

I look at the white sky.
I look at the grey-blue clouds.
I look at the blood-red sun.

So this is the Earth.
So this is the home of the planets.

A raindrop!

I look at the tall houses,
I look at the thousand windows,
I look at the distant church spire.

So this is the Earth.
So this is the home of mankind.
The grey-blue clouds gather. The sun disappears.
I look at the well-dressed gentlemen,
I look at the smiling ladies,
I look at the stooping horses.

The grey-blue clouds become so heavy.
I look, I look ...
I must have come to the wrong planet
Everything is so strange ...

(translation by Nils Gilje)

In the poem the familiar world is present – the sky, clouds, houses, a church, gentlemen, ladies, horses – but at the same time is strangely unfamiliar. Something has moved in between mankind and the worldly things, between the poet and his worldly compatriots. Everything is strange. All the well-known phenomena seem to have lost their meaning and what is going on has become questionable. This leads to a feeling of estrangement. Is the observer a stranger in the world he inhabits – or does he know it too well? Can this really be the world of mankind? At the end the poet seems to be trapped in the mood of the uncanny, or what Heidegger calls ‘Unheimlichkeit als solcher’. The poet feels that he is not at home in this ‘home of mankind’, where everything has become strange.

There are some striking similarities between Obstfelder and the German poet Rainer Maria Rilke, both of whom seem to experience the same complexity of moods. In Rilke’s poem ‘Die grosse Nacht’ the poet is in a city that appears strange and unfamiliar, watching it from the window and observing it at a distance:

Noch war die neue
 Stadt wie verwehrt, und die unüberredete Landschaft
 finsterte hin, als wäre ich nicht. Nicht gaben die nächsten
 Dinge sich Mühe, mir verständlich zu sein. An der Laterne
 Drängte die Gassen auf: ich sah, dass sie fremd war.

(Rilke 1975)

The new city still was as if denied me, and the unpersuaded landscape darkened as if I was not. The nearest things did not bother to make themselves known to me. The street crowded itself up to the lamppost: I saw it was strange.

(translation by Nils Gilje)

In such a mood the world is disclosed in a certain way. Moods seem to have the function of opening up the world to us, and different moods disclose the world in different ways. In this sense, moods are our pre-theoretical access to the world. However, it is also a well-known fact, at least in some forms of existentialist philosophy, that some moods have a more privileged status than others. In the works of Kierkegaard and Heidegger, anxiety has such a privileged ontological position. But perhaps we should also regard the feelings of alienation and estrangement, as in Obstfelder and Rilke, as important existential moods that should not be transformed into ontological structures.

I have already indicated that anxiety differs from fear in that the object of anxiety is ‘nothing’ or ‘nothingness’. In this sense, anxiety is not just understood as a mood among other moods, such as pleasure and sadness, but is also said to be an ontological characteristic of mankind, rooted in his or her very existence. I do not find this argument very convincing, though. It is not quite clear why anxiety should be ranked in this way. The same could probably be said about despair, boredom, estrangement – or more cheery moods like happiness and the feelings of pleasure and joy. It is exactly at this point that Spinoza becomes relevant for our discussion.

Spinoza and the ‘affective turn’

There is little of Spinoza in Heidegger’s *oeuvre*. Heidegger seems to have accepted the argument of post-Kantian German idealism that Spinoza could not think of the Absolute as subjectivity (cf. Heidegger

[1936] 1986: 57 ff., 124; Heidegger 1957). Heidegger developed a dialogue with the Greeks, Duns Scotus, Meister Eckhart, Kant, Hegel, Schelling and Nietzsche, but not with Spinoza. In *Being and Time* Spinoza is not mentioned at all. This is strange, because there are interesting points of overlap between *Being and Time* and Spinoza's *Ethics*. One promising theme is Heidegger's interpretation of *Befindlichkeit* and moods (*Stimmungen*) and Spinoza's analysis of the emotions (*affectiones*). Kierkegaard does not seem to have shown much interest in Spinoza either. His claim that Spinoza's substance is only a metaphysical expression of Christian providence is not very convincing (Kierkegaard 1980: 199).²

Even though Heidegger and Spinoza develop similar claims about thinking, understanding and moods, there is also an obvious distance between them. This comes out clearly in their reflections on death. For Heidegger, death is a permanent and yet undetermined 'possibility of no-longer-being-able-to-be-there' (1996: 232). Death is intimately mine. No one else can die my death. At the same time, death is something that I would like to put into parentheses, or ignore. For me, anticipating death, or 'running ahead into death', defines the possibility of the absence of all possibilities. For Heidegger, this is the most challenging way of being attuned: 'Being-toward death is essentially Angst'. What is it that characterises authentic existence projected being-toward-death? Anticipating death, which for Heidegger has nothing to do with the 'cowardly fear' of death, discloses the finitude of existence and makes us free in relation to it (ibid. 245). In this sense, Heidegger talks about the possibility to be ourselves 'in passionate anxious *freedom toward death* which is free of the illusions of the they' (ibid. 245; emphasis in the original). Anticipating death can even free us from the tyranny of *das Man* and open the gate to an authentic life. In Spinoza there is nothing of this heroic realism towards death. In fact, Spinoza is extremely critical of those moods that have had a privileged status in many existentialist traditions: 'A free man thinks of death least of all things; and his wisdom is a meditation not of death but of life' (IVp67).³ According to Spinoza, a free person is not led by anxiety and fear. Rather he/she strives to act, live and preserve her/his being. Therefore a free man does not focus on death, but – as Spinoza claims – 'his wisdom is a meditation of life' (ibid.). For Spinoza anxiety can never lead to an authentic life. Authentic existence is rather correlated with joy and happiness. This seems to be an understanding of being-in-the-world that is far removed from Kierkegaard and Heidegger.

However, this first impression reveals some very interesting affinities between these thinkers.

According to Spinoza, all forms of understanding and knowledge are expressed in affective structures (see Renz 2012). Spinoza seems to claim that feeling and thinking, or feeling and cognition, are two aspects of the same psychological process (cf. 2a3, IIP48–49). Even true knowledge is something that is *felt*, not only something that is known (cf. Vp23). As we have seen, Heidegger develops a similar thesis by arguing that our understanding is always already ‘attuned’ in certain ways:

Mood has always already disclosed being-in-the-world as a whole and first makes possible directing oneself toward something ... The moodedness of attunement constitutes existentially the openness to world of Da-sein. (Heidegger 1996: 129)

In both Spinoza and Heidegger we are confronted with the elimination of the idea of an original unbodily and ‘pure’ theoretical attitude to the world. This explains why the purest *theōria* does not abandon all moods:

Even when we look theoretically at what is merely objectively present, it does not show itself in its pure outward appearance unless this *theōria* lets it come toward us in a *tranquil* staying. (Heidegger 1996: 130)

For Spinoza, there is close correspondence between the emotions of the body and the ideas of the soul. Human consciousness can never be analysed independently of the body and its emotion. Our relation to the world is always already constituted by bodily emotions or affects.

The reason why Spinoza has such an important place in the ‘affective turn’ is due to his philosophy of emotion and power. Gilles Deleuze has correctly pointed out that Spinoza engenders all the passions, in detail, on the basis of two fundamental affects: joy as an increase in the power of acting and sadness as a decrease or diminution of the power of acting (cf. Deleuze 1981). According to this analysis, Spinoza leaves the philosophy of the mind and concentrates on the philosophy of the body. Seen from Spinoza’s point of view, we still do not know what a body is capable of. We talk about the soul and the mind, but we have no idea what a body can do. Here Spinoza goes in a materialistic direction compared

to Heidegger and Kierkegaard, where at least *Dasein* (Heidegger) or the individual being (Kierkegaard) gets a body.

Power is a key term in Spinoza's philosophy of bodily emotion. Whenever power of some kind increases or decreases, there are emotions. When there is an increase in power, there is active emotion. This claim can also be turned around: when there is active emotion, there is an increase in power. According to Spinoza, increase in power is also an increase in freedom. Only active emotions will increase our power and freedom; passive emotions will decrease our power and diminish our freedom (cf. IIIp6–9). What kind of emotions will increase our power and freedom? What kind of emotions will decrease our power and freedom? The starting points for answering these questions are joy and sadness.

In the *Ethics*, especially in parts 3 and 4, Spinoza analyses many emotions on the basis of the two fundamental affects of joy (*laetitia*) and sadness (*tristitia*). An increase in power, freedom and autonomy has everything to do with joy. Joy cannot be separated from authenticity. In IVp41, Spinoza defines joy as the emotion, whereby the body's power of activity is increased or helped. Thus, it is not only the body that profits from joy. According to Spinoza, an increase in the body's power to act also implies an increase in our ability to think (cf. IIIp11). Joy makes us better thinkers and improves our minds. Here, active emotions have a lot to do with intellectual activity.

Why is joy so important for Spinoza? Most of the positive claims in his philosophy of emotion are based on joy: when we are in joy, we increase in power. Increasing in power implies being joyful. When we experience joy, we become freer, at least in some respects, and become more active. When we feel joy we also experience an increase in self-realisation and authenticity (being oneself). So, for Spinoza, it is not primarily anxiety that discloses the world to us – it is *joy*.

Not all forms of joy have positive effects, however. Love and desire, for example, may be excessive and take control of our actions. In such contexts Spinoza uses the term *titillatio*, which is perhaps best translated as intense stimulation or extreme excitement. When our bodies are taken over by *titillatio* we tend to become the slaves of our own passions. In part 4 of the *Ethics* Spinoza analyses some of these possibilities:

For the emotions, whereby we are daily assailed, are generally referred to some part of the body which is affected more than the rest; hence the emotions are generally excessive, and so fix

the mind in the contemplation of one object, that it is unable to think of others. (IVp44)

Emotions can thus become obstinately fixed. This is the case when we are completely absorbed in an object (or a subject). It is not difficult to imagine what Spinoza has in mind here. His favourite example is ‘those persons who are inflamed with love, and who dream all night and all day about nothing but their mistress, or some woman’ (IVp44). According to Spinoza, we should therefore differentiate between cheerfulness (*hilaritas*) and extreme excitement. When joy affects all parts of the mind and body equally, increasing our total power, Spinoza normally talks about joy as cheerfulness. Cheerfulness somehow permeates the whole person.

Spinoza’s *Ethics* can be read as an attempt to show us how to educate our emotions and desires. We have to learn that a strong emotion may impede the development of different aspects of mind and body, especially when it is concentrated in one or a few bodily parts (and corresponding ideas). *Titillatio* comes in many forms. One effect of extreme excitement might be a partial or limited increase in power and freedom, although it could also result in a dramatic decrease in power and freedom. Very strong stimulations of the body may block an increase in power and freedom, or reduce it. An example of this is sexual addiction, or an unusually strong obsession with sex, which can reduce a person’s possibility of self-realisation. In fact, any extreme excitement that is initially pleasurable may turn us into slaves. If *titillatio* renders the body ‘incapable of being affected in a variety of other ways’ (IVp43), we will soon lose our freedom and autonomy.

The power and freedom of mankind can also be reduced in other ways. Some of Spinoza’s most interesting reflections on human affections focus on sadness (*tristitia*). Generally speaking, sadness is a state of decreasing power and freedom. When discussing sadness, Spinoza distinguishes between melancholy (*melancholia*) and pain (*dolor*). This trio corresponds more or less with joy, cheerfulness and extreme excitement. Melancholy can be said to be the polar opposite of cheerfulness. Melancholy diminishes or hinders the power of activity in our bodies, and therefore also hinders the power of thought and understanding in our minds. This mood implies an overall decrease in activity (cf. Næss 1975: 103). Like cheerfulness, melancholy affects all parts of the body (cf. IIIp11). We can be taken over by melancholy. It is a mood that completely

colours our perceptions of the world and ourselves. Spinoza has a lot to say about the emotions that we encounter in poets such as Rilke and Obstfelder, but insists that melancholy is a state in which we lose power and freedom in every relation. Extreme forms of melancholy come close to madness.

Pain corresponds to extreme excitement or stimulation and normally implies a decrease in power in at least one relation and a partial loss of freedom. Being in pain also implies a partial decrease in understanding. Pain is clearly intertwined with thinking and understanding.

It is not possible here to go into Spinoza's complex analysis of mixed emotions. The pain that is experienced during a pleasurable or highly rewarding undertaking, such as climbing a mountain or working on an article late at night, does not normally lead to a decrease in power and freedom, largely due to the joyful nature of the undertaking. If *titillatio*, or excessive stimulation, is an obstacle to freedom and self-realisation, in certain joyful situations *dolor* could be a positive stimulation.

From these comments on the 'affective turn' in Spinoza we can easily understand why he could not give any primacy to the existential mood of anxiety. Even though anxiety, like *dolor*, could help us to understand some important aspects of the human condition, Spinoza would probably say that anxiety is a mood that at least partially diminishes our body's power to act and decreases our freedom and autonomy. But Spinoza would also agree with Heidegger that thinking and knowledge production cannot be separated from the emotions of our body. We always *feel* our understanding of something.

Back to basic moods

Let us suppose that anxiety has an important philosophical function. Kierkegaard's claims that anxiety discloses our experience of 'nothingness', and Heidegger does the same: 'Die Angst offenbart das Nichts' – anxiety reveals nothingness. Why, then, is this presentation of anxiety and nothingness so important for thinkers such as Kierkegaard and Heidegger? It might be because anxiety shakes the human being in all his/her familiar relations. According to Heidegger, in everyday life the human being is ontologically 'fallen', lives an inauthentic life and has *das Man* as its hero. In our daily lives most of us take part in what Heidegger calls the 'real dictatorship of the "they"' – with its 'newspapers' and

‘public transport’. Of course, everything that is ‘public’ (*öffentlich*) – such as political parties and trade unions – is an expression of *das Man*. Most of the time I take part in the ‘great mass’, where ‘every Other is like the next’. However, most importantly, *das Man* conceals my finitude and what it really means to be a finite being-in-the-world (see Heidegger 1956: 167–180). Here I will not discuss Heidegger’s elitist and rather problematic criticism of modernity, but will instead focus on his understanding of the role of moods.

For both Kierkegaard and Heidegger, anxiety and the experience of ‘nothingness’ are necessary in order to bring humans out of their everyday lives and attain a more authentic level of existence. Anxiety serves to shake us up and bring us back to ourselves. Understood in this way, anxiety has an extremely positive function, and is not something that should be avoided at all cost. It is rather an expression of what is human about human nature. Anxiety is like some sort of dizziness that creates a distance between people and everything they are involved in. However, in this state of lack of control, mankind’s existence, possibilities and freedom are revealed. When humans are thrown back on themselves, they will finally discover their real existential freedom. Seen from this perspective, which is shared by both Jaspers and Heidegger, anxiety has nothing to do with weakness. Weakness shows itself when we flee from anxiety and move back to the security of trivial and inauthentic everyday life – to the life of *das Man*. Withstanding anxiety implies extreme effort.

Other basic moods (*Stimmungen*) have a similar function in the philosophy of existence. They all call mankind to authenticity, but do not have the same privileged position as anxiety. I will not go into an analysis of moods such as boredom (*Langweile*), melancholia (*Schwermut*) and despair (*Verzweiflung*), but will simply make a few comments about them. With regard to boredom, we need to distinguish between superficial boredom, for example when reading a boring book or listening to a boring lecture, and a deeper and more ‘*eigentliche Langweile*’ (Heidegger), which can be totally overpowering, where nothing seems to be important and all action seems meaningless. I am bored by everything, including myself and nothing in the world matters. Heidegger calls this a feeling of ‘strange indifference’ (*merkwürdige Gleichgültigkeit*). It is probably easier to flee from boredom than anxiety. Heidegger once said – in 1929/1930 – that boredom was the primary mood of the times (Heidegger 2004). But as we know, in 1933 the basic mood was quite different.

Heavy-mindedness and melancholia seem to have been important moods in Kierkegaard's life. Melancholia (*tungsind*) was his 'faithful mistress'. According to Kierkegaard, melancholia is similar in many ways to anxiety. If you ask a melancholic what makes him or her so gloomy, then he/she will answer: I don't know, I can't say. Heavy-mindedness is akin to being melancholic and is a person's way of being in the world (for a good analysis of Kierkegaard's view of melancholy, see Verstrynge 2008: 143–159). There also seems to be a close relationship between boredom and melancholia; melancholia is sometimes understood to be an extreme form of boredom. Kierkegaard also accepted the old idea that melancholia was a severe sin, in that it breaks down our ability to decide and to act as free human beings.

Let us leave the moods for a moment and turn to how existentialist philosophy understands 'existence', or the basic human condition. According to Kierkegaard, there is no progress and no cumulative learning at the existential level. At this level, every generation has to start from scratch. What is really human can never be learned from previous generations. The question of heritage is therefore reformulated within existentialism: it becomes a question of 'repetition', which is also the title of one of Kierkegaard's books from 1843: *Repetition (Gjentagelsen)*. It is an important argument, too, in *Being and Time*: 'The repetition is the explicit handing over' (Heidegger 1996: 352, translation modified by Nils Gilje). This idea was already very popular in Lutheran Protestantism and is clearly expressed in Luther's claim that 'the old Adam should become sober by daily remorse and repentance and daily be reborn as a new man' (quoted from Bollnow 1949: 104). It is important to stress that it is only at an existential level that something like 'repetition' is found, which Kierkegaard also pointed out in *Repetition*. In normal life we are involved in transformation and progress. Repetition understood from an existential point of view does not exclude reforms and transformations of society. However, existential repetition cannot make sense of such changes.

In our everyday language we talk about high and low moods, superficial and deep moods, and being 'attuned' in a certain way. This expression comes close to the German *Stimmungslage* (or the Norwegian *stemningsleie*). When I am in a certain mood or attuned in a certain way, the world appears to me affectively. I am tuned like a musical instrument. When I am attuned in a different way, it appears differently. Moods are

therefore basic ways of relating to the world. They also have an epistemic function. Moods make certain experiences possible and exclude others. They determine from the outset how the world appears to us as individuals. Even our observations are coloured by moods, sometimes in light colours, sometimes in dark colours. Our experience of the world is therefore emotionally coloured, as 'rosy' or 'gloomy.' This is how moods open the world for us. Not even the so-called theoretical attitude is free from moods, but is based on very specific ones. Moods are thus always involved in the discovery of the world: 'Every understanding has its mood. Every attunement understands' (Heidegger 1996: 309). While there is surely more to discovery than attunement and moods, basic affects seem to play an important role in scientific activity.

At this point there is also an important difference between Heidegger and his most famous pupil Hans-Georg Gadamer. In *Truth and Method* Gadamer develops a much more cognitive interpretation of how the world is disclosed to us. Seen from Gadamer's point of view, preunderstanding and prejudice are the most important preconditions for understanding. But both preunderstanding and prejudice are basically forms of propositional knowledge. Moods are not propositions. And Heidegger's idea of the primacy of practical knowledge or know-how (the German terms being *Vorhabe* and *Vorsicht*) can in my opinion not be reduced to propositional knowledge.

I have tried to establish a distinction between moods (*Stimmungen*) and emotions (*Gefühle*), even though this distinction is not very well supported by our everyday language, at least not in Norwegian and probably not in English either. I still think that there is a difference between experiencing joy when an old friend unexpectedly turns up and being attuned in a certain way. A mood is more like a state that for shorter or longer periods 'takes hold of me'. In the 1970s Jack Scott had a hit called 'What in the world's come over you'. A mood is something that comes over me, without necessarily being intentionally directed towards an object. There might be a close relation between the general feeling of well-being or happiness, and the joy of seeing an old friend, but it still seems to be a good idea to draw a distinction between mood and intentional emotion.

Mood and emotion are related in complex ways. In Sergio Leone's spaghetti western 'Per un pugno di dollari' you never see the nameless and lonely rider, played by Clint Eastwood, smile or laugh. The antihero

is obviously tuned in a certain way. He is characterised by his gloomy moods. But mood does not reduce the emotions to superficial epiphenomena. Even though Heidegger placed moods at a deeper ontological level than emotions (*Gefühle*), moods can be turned on by strong emotions. The loss of a dear friend or a family member could mean being in a sad mood for a very long time. In Henrik Ibsen's epic poem *Terje Vigen*, he tells the story of a Norwegian fisherman and sailor who during the British blockade in the Napoleonic wars set out in his rowing boat to buy wheat in Denmark. On his way home he was captured by an English captain and put in prison for five years. When he eventually returned to Norway he found that his wife and child had starved to death. The loss of his wife and daughter transformed Terje emotionally. In his mourning he became completely overwhelmed by melancholia and sadness, and also by hate and revenge. In such a mood certain emotional expressions are unthinkable, for example laughter and joy. Only after having saved the wife and daughter of the English captain who was responsible for his loss could Terje Vigen be attuned in a new way:

Ærbødig løftet han barnet ned,
 og kyssed dets hender mildt.
 Han ånded, som løst fra et fængsels hvelv;
 hans stemme lød rolig og jevn:
 'Nu er Terje Vigen igjen sig selv.
 Indtil *nu* gik mit blod som en stenet elv;
 for jeg *måtte* – jeg *måtte* ha'e hævn.'

Respectfully he sat the child on its feet,
 and kissed its hands gently.
 He was breathing as though released from a prison cell,
 his voice sounded calm and even:
 'Now Terje Vigen is himself again
 Like a rocky stream flowed my blood then;
 for I *had* – I *had* to take revenge'.

(translation by Nils Gilje)

Despite my emphasis on the difference between emotions and moods, there are clearly intriguing interactions between the two, and in many cases it can be difficult to determine which is which. A mood is not a

completely subjective experience either, because subject and object and the self and the world are interrelated. This point is clearly expressed by Heidegger in *Being and Time*: The mood is neither 'subjective' nor 'objective', but arises as a way of being-in-the-world in the world itself.

Kierkegaard, Jaspers and Heidegger give anxiety a certain priority over other moods. Even though anxiety is an important mood, I think that moods in the plural open up the basic structures of our being in the world. Unfortunately, Kierkegaard and Heidegger tend to focus on anxiety and despair in their analyses of the human being. In paragraph 40 of *Being and Time* it is clear that anxiety is the primary and paradigmatic mood in the analysis of *Dasein*. The problem with this approach is that other moods tend to be reduced to deficient or superficial moods. In my opinion, Heidegger's analysis of anxiety is brilliant, but he tends to end up with a one-dimensional *Dasein*. This is because it is based mostly on one mood – anxiety.

It is easy to understand why anxiety has been given such a privileged place in existential philosophy. Anxiety is the mood that confronts us with *Nichts*. What we are confronted with in Nothingness is life itself, or what Heidegger called 'das In-der-Welt-sein selbst'. According to Kierkegaard, anxiety presents to us the possibility of freedom. Heidegger's argument is similar: Without the original manifestation of nothingness, there is no self-being and no freedom.

An interesting approach to such claims that does not start from anxiety can be found in the works of the Italian Renaissance philosopher Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. In *On the Dignity of Man* (1486), Pico presents his personal version of the myth of creation. In Pico's version, God is a Platonist and uses the rich resources in the realm of ideas in the creation of the world. According to this view, the sun, the moon and the stars have a fixed essence or nature and behave in accordance with ideas about the sun, moon and stars. The same is the case with animals, trees, plants etc. The lion behaves in accordance with ideas about lions, the sheep in accordance with ideas about sheep and so on. No created being can change its nature. However, on the sixth day, when God created Adam, all the ideas and resources had been used up. So when God made Adam he had to conclude that all creatures had a fixed and eternal essence except for Adam, who was created without a permanent nature and had freedom to become a wild beast or a beautiful angel. According to Pico, this is how man is distinguished from all other beings. He also

maintained that freedom is the dignity of man (Pico 1965). We know that Kierkegaard was aware of Pico, as was Heidegger (probably from his reading of Schelling's treatise on the freedom of man).

I would like to add a few words about Pico to explain the relevance of his myth. Pico is a kind of paradoxical anti-essentialist. What is the essence of men and women? It is to be without a predetermined essence. Our existence precedes our essence. We recognise this as Jean-Paul Sartre's argument in *Existentialism is Humanism*. Sartre has only secularised Pico's analysis. Seen from Pico's point of view, every human being is placed in Adam's position; he is either free or condemned to freedom, as Sartre would say, and has to pick his way between the beasts and the angels. At an existential level there is in fact nothing new, no progress, no learning process. This idea, as we have seen, was taken over by Kierkegaard and Heidegger, both of whom focused on exactly the same points: *Gentagelse* and *Wiederholung*.

Conclusion

In my opinion, anxiety is a very fragile foundation for a phenomenology of moods and emotions. Let me first reiterate the sound point Heidegger's position, namely that I am always in some kind of mood. I am distracted, indifferent, anxious, bored or whatever. Therefore, mankind's primary form of disclosure is affective, and this affective disclosure reveals humans as confronted with their own existence. When mankind is attuned in a mood, she/he sees possibilities – for instance of an authentic existence.

Most of the time we live our lives in what Plato called the realm of *doxa*, and what Heidegger refers to as everyday life. Being-in-the-world is always being together with others in that world (*Mitsein*). Heidegger calls the everyday form of this being together *das Man*. Being determined by *das Man* is inauthentic, because it means that man lives according to the conventions and customs of the everyday world. In *Being and Time* – except for the discussion in paragraph 74 on taking part in the fate of the *Volk* – there does not seem to be any authentic form of being together. With this exception, being together is understood negatively as *das Man*. Authentic existence is only possible when man confronts anxiety and death. In some sense, then, authentic existence in Heidegger takes the form of self-sufficiency.

Is it perhaps time to rehabilitate inauthentic existence? What is really wrong with small talk? What is wrong with a jolly good party? Why is it inauthentic to see Liverpool play football, read newspapers, or watch television? (For some interesting comments on this, see Critchley 2007: 21–50). If Heidegger had been more open to positive moods, or to Spinoza's phenomenological descriptions of joy, his criticism of modern daily life would probably have been different. There is an elitist bias in both Kierkegaard and Heidegger, and much less so in Spinoza (see Negri 1991). Whatever Heidegger thought of the modern world, he was surely not fond of the 'real dictatorship of the "they"'. But this did not protect him from the real dictatorship of Hitler. Heidegger's phenomenological analysis of attunement and moods is nonetheless an important source of inspiration for both present-day philosophy and more empirically oriented social and cultural research.

In this chapter I have tried to spell out some of the philosophical ideas involved in the recent 'affective' and existentialist turn in ethnology and social science, focusing primarily on Kierkegaard, Spinoza and Heidegger. One important claim has been that moods and emotions disclose our world in different ways. Thus moods and emotions also have important epistemic functions.

Notes

- 1 Generally speaking, moods can be understood as collective phenomena and should not be reduced to more individual or psychological affects or emotions. We are affected by moods that somehow come upon us from the 'outside'. On the other hand, moods should not be 'objectified' (*hypostasis*). Moods are nothing if they are not experienced by human beings.
- 2 The reference is to Kierkegaard's *Journals and Papers*.
- 3 Spinoza is quoted using the standard system of reference to the *Ethics*. The edition used is *Ethics* (translated from Latin by R.H.M. Elwes), New York: Dover Publications, 1955. For example, IVp67 refers to part IV proposition 67.

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Chapter 3 raises questions about the challenges of combining developments in contemporary social and cultural theory with empirical ethnographic research. The author critically examines the advantages and disadvantages of adopting recent theories of affect in connection to his research in present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina. How does a feature film relating to the aftermath of the 1990s war elicit different intensities among various audiences? How can ethnographers write about such intensities? What possibilities does the 'affective turn' offer to ethnographers, and what does it put out of reach? The author makes a case for ethnographic investigations that aim for analysis that goes beyond evocation through hermeneutics, conceptualisation, and critical argument. Evoking certain forms of affect without making the 'affective turn', he concludes that the ethnographic study of affect may be at its best when it also historicises their specific forms, tries to detect patterns in their operation, and conceptualises them in dialogue with other scholarly work.

Ethnography and the Choices Posed by the ‘Affective Turn’

Stef Jansen

Affect is at the centre of exciting attempts to renew ethnography.¹ This essay aims to disentangle the implications of some central programmatic components of affect theory for ethnographers and to crystallise key choices embedded in calls for an ‘affective turn’. It asks: what does the ‘affective turn’ lead us *towards*, and what does it lead us *away from*?

The tension, the tension...

Obrana i zaštita (*A stranger*), a 2013 film directed by Bobo Jelčić, deals with a day in the life of an elderly couple, Milena and Slavko, in contemporary Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina, BiH). When a family friend Đulaga dies, Milena matter-of-factly prepares for them to attend his funeral. Their friend Milan could give them a ride. Slavko is not sure they should go. He is preoccupied with what seems to be something else entirely: he is waiting for a call from a certain Dragan. Later, in a conversation in the photocopier room of a public institution, we find out that his attempts to get hold of Dragan and his dilemma about the funeral are intimately related. Agitated, Slavko tells a friend that Dragan has promised him to take care of something but has not called since. Should he contact Dragan himself? Or would that be counterproductive? ‘Do you know ... what tortures me most?’, Slavko asks, ‘I’m afraid someone said something to him about me ... something against me.’ A man

called Srećko, he adds, recently said: ‘Slavko, you’re more on their side than on our side’. The scene is abruptly cut. *Obrana i zaštita* never spells out Slavko’s predicament. Yet, as we shall see, to an audience familiar with contemporary Mostar – and only to them – the link between his dilemma about Đulaga’s funeral, his issue with Dragan and something referred to as ‘sides’ is now clear.

Having bought a bottle of whiskey from a black market trader, Slavko asks for a meeting with Dragan at another public institution. A range of details, including the contrasting bodily demeanour of Slavko and the secretary, embed the scene in the political-economic dynamics of contemporary BiH. Slavko eventually establishes that Dragan is in a hotel for lunch but his subsequent search there is unsuccessful too. In fact, we never meet Dragan, but he hovers over the story as a person of influence – probably a politician. We know he has a potential hold over Slavko. And Slavko, rightly or wrongly (we’ll never know), connects this with the issue of ‘sides’.

His dilemma regarding Đulaga’s funeral lasts. Milan visits to cancel his offer for a lift because his wife is ill. He apologises profusely and offers to drive them a little later. The conversation turns ugly – Slavko’s behaviour verges on the rude. He exclaims he doesn’t know if they’ll go at all. Viewers are again left in doubt. Is Milan’s unavailability genuine or is he reluctant to drive them? Is this a problem for Slavko or a welcome way out? Milena suggests they go by foot. Slavko still hovers: ‘Listen... In this situation in which I find myself now, I don’t know whether it would be smart to go to the funeral. While Dragan is taking care of this, you understand?’ In a highly gendered set-up, Milena quietly persists, continuously invoking moral duty and reciprocity: ‘They came first when my old man died, they are like family to me’. While Milena prepares a salad, a tormented Slavko steps of the balcony. The screen goes dark.

In the next scene Slavko and Milena make their way to Đulaga’s house. Slavko insists they take backstreets and paths, lamenting that Dragan has not contacted him. He has forgotten his mobile phone in the flat. Throughout the gathering in Đulaga’s house and at the cemetery, Slavko acts very ill at ease. Afterwards, Đulaga’s daughter Zehra offers them a lift. A tense altercation follows – mirroring the earlier conversation with Milan. Eventually Zehra drives them to their flat. Yet on the way, she breaks down in tears, stops the car and gets out. Milena tries to console

her. Slavko buys water for her from a kiosk and, crossing the street, is hit by a truck. The screen goes dark again.

Upon returning to their flat, Slavko sees Dragan has still not called. Exasperated, Slavko repeats his suspicions about Srećko, who, like Dragan, does not make an appearance in the film. After a lengthy silent refusal, Milena now criticises Slavko for moral failure. His initial reluctance to attend the funeral, as well as his 'sitting on needles' at Đulaga's house, she tells him, is due to his fear that Dragan would find out about his attending. Slavko puts up a vehement but unconvincing defence, blaming his 'situation'. In response to Milena's moral arguments, he too emphasises his closeness to Đulaga's family. In unexpectedly rude terms she tells him she is fed up. Slavko sweeps up the tablecloth and scatters the contents on the floor. He goes to the bathroom and collapses. The neighbours are called and he soon recovers.

Throughout the film, it is clear that Slavko's 'situation' draws on a more encompassing 'situation' in contemporary Mostar. *Obrana i zaštita* offers only a few hints of such historicisation. Twice, radio and TV voices in the background obliquely refer to a 'divided city', to 'insecurity', to 'the recent past' and to the 'national division of the city created in the 1990s'. A few enunciations by the protagonists themselves also gesture towards a 'situation'. For example, on the way back from the funeral, Milena breaks the silence in Zehra's car, sighing:

Everything has somehow changed [long silence] I don't know ...
 There are no people anymore ... There's no life here anymore ...
 Whoever can do so, it's best they escape.

There is no reaction to this. Slavko mostly simply laments his fate. 'I don't know who I am, or where I am', he exclaims. When he hints at the more encompassing 'situation', he never completes his sentences. This is particularly striking in a scene when he awaits his son Krešo, visiting from Croatia, at the bus stop and steers him into a park. A long, almost frantic monologue follows.

Krešo, I came to pick you up just to tell you a few things on our own. The situation is difficult. Difficult, by god. Everything's finished, but this is not it. It's still not known here what could be. Nothing is known. Everything here is in some tension. One thing

is said and another thing is done. I don't see a solution. Not at all. Not me, nobody does. Everything is fine between people but it only requires ... for it to explode. There you go, that is why I don't like you to come too often. Well ... Zehra asked about you. I don't know. I wouldn't meddle in that. Sit down with her for a bit. She's alone. Her husband is an idiot, she's not with him anymore. I'd ask you that you be ... What do I know, maybe it's nothing, but fuck it, you understand what I'm saying. On the other hand, Zehra's alright. Normal. Correct. She drove us home after the funeral. Kind. She hugged and kissed me. She's beautiful, I can tell you. But, well, there you go, you see about it. I think it's not for you. Now, I don't know what you, with her, did you do anything. I won't meddle. But I think, well, there you go, I told you what, you see about it. I'm more or less fine. Sometimes urinary tracts, sometimes my kidney, and then that lumbago when this weather changes, Well all that's normal. The rest is okay. Years, you know, so it's ever more difficult when a man every day ..., well, it'll be clear to you when you reach my age. There's no more, it's not ... No no! Ah yes, well, my stool gives me trouble, big trouble. I went to the doctor's, he said don't worry. If it's not every day, he says, it's normal, at your age. But somehow I'm not at peace with that so they gave me aloe vera to drink. And, you know, it helps. Every morning I drink a glass on an empty stomach. But fuck it, then I need the loo straight away ...

Krešo, who smoked and looked away throughout, now sharply turns to his father: 'Right, old man, are you aware that every time I come here you tell me the same things?' Slavko, surprised, tries to establish some intimacy but his son angrily pushes him away, telling him in exactly the same crude terms as his mother Milena that he's fed up with him.

Later they have the black market trader (Krešo's friend), Milan and his partner over for a meal in their flat. Alcohol flows. We don't follow any one of the crosscutting conversations. The camera mainly focuses on Slavko, who hardly participates. He self-consciously puts his arm around his son's shoulders. The phone rings. Milena answers. It's Dragan. He is available now. Slavko immediately returns to the public institution and in a long silent scene he sits in the waiting room, holding his bottle of whiskey in a plastic bag. The film ends.

Affect theory – the autonomy of affect

Obrana i zaštita blew me away. To me it brilliantly renders some key dimensions of contemporary life in BiH. I watched it in Sarajevo with friends who felt the same. Its great quality, to us, lay in the way it brought across a particular atmosphere. In our conversations the term we used most commonly to describe this atmosphere was *napetost*, i.e. a continuous tension. Not much happens in *Obrana i zaštita*. The scenario is sparse. Dialogue is limited. A few heated conversations are as spectacular as it gets. There is no plot, no surprise. There is no sequence of actions by the protagonists that increases or decreases the tension. It is simply there, palpable in every scene. Almost unbearable at times. Although the above conversations do provide some entries into it, to us it was above all the photography, the sound and the central performances by two well-known actors that made this work. Shaky, handheld close-up camerawork often approaches the protagonists from indirect angles, which makes for claustrophobic viewing. Clearly, in this essay, much of this is lost. All in all, no explanations of the tension are identified – Slavko's concrete 'situation' and the 'situation' in Mostar are never specified – but we all agreed the film powerfully evoked them.

Coincidentally, at the time of our conversations about *Obrana i zaštita*, I was reading some writings in the field of 'affect theory'. While it is hard to find definitions of 'affect' in such work (and harder still to find one that is shared across different writings), all authors seem to agree that affect is about 'intensity'. For some it is intensity (Massumi 1995: 88), whereas for others it is 'a nonconscious *experience of* intensity' (Shouse 2005, my emphasis). Some speak of 'affect' and others of 'affects'. The most common reference is to Spinoza, who wrote of 'the capacity to affect and be affected'. Yet rather than identifying specific 'affects' – as Spinoza does in his references to hate, envy, anger, etc. (Navaro-Yashin 2012: 26) – in this recent work affect appears as an unspecified 'something', proclaimed to be very important. 'Affect', we are told, is not feeling or emotion. Instead, it is 'pre-personal' (Shouse 2005). It is 'asocial, but not presocial' (Massumi 1995: 91). Crucially, according to these theorists, affect cannot be signified: it is resistant to language and remains in excess to it (Blackman and Venn 2010: 9; Massumi 1995: 96; Seigworth and Gregg 2010: 1–2; Shouse 2005). Affect, it is said, can only be experienced and evoked.

Reading such work, it struck me that its register closely dovetailed with my Sarajevo conversations about *Obrana i zaštita*. As we saw, we felt it was permeated by and brilliantly brought across a continuous tension – an intensity – relying much less on signification than on evocation. Intrigued, I delved deeper into affect theory. I found that, broadly speaking, two key sources of inspiration are experimental neurosciences and Spinozian–Deleuzian philosophy. Yet despite its central place in some of the work they cite, many authors who embrace affect theory do not refer to the first at all.² Leaving brain processes aside, much affect theory is written in a programmatic fashion, converging around two postulates: (a) affect should be a key matter of concern because it is of crucial importance in the world, and (b) affect *theory* provides the only or the best framework to produce the new forms of research, writing and politics that this requires. In both cases there is an insistence on departure from existing work: a call for an ‘affective turn’ (Clough and Halley 2007).

The call for an ‘affective turn’ emerged within broader posthumanist developments in knowledge production. Affect theory shares many affinities with actor-network theory, which rejects the ‘sociology of the social’ (its own term) in favour of a greater focus on non-human actants, such as objects, with whom humans are said to be always-already entangled in a ‘flat’ social (Latour 2005). Affect theory also strongly resonates with anthropological work that rejects an ‘epistemological’ approach (its own term) in favour of an ‘ontological’ one (e.g. Henare et al. 2007). We thus see a convergence of three self-proclaimed ‘turns’ – the turn to objects, the ontological turn and the affective turn.

In this scholarly landscape, affect theory turns away from something labelled with many terms, such as language, reason, cognition, meaning, signification, discourse, positions, identities, structures, subjectivity or representation. Instead, since affect is ‘irreducibly bodily and autonomic’ (Massumi 2002: 28), ‘always prior to and/or outside consciousness’ (Shouse 2005), a focus on affect as a matter of concern is said to draw attention to immanence, to bodies, to their attunement to each other and to objects, which are considered to function prior to all of the above. With regard to affect *theory* as a framework with which to approach this matter of concern, we find a call for turning away from ‘paranoid theory’ (Sedgwick 2003), ‘critical thinking’ (Massumi 2002), ‘studies of representation’ (Thrift 2004) or ‘representational thinking and

evaluative critique' (Stewart 2007). Readers are mostly left to join in the dots themselves. In my reading, this usually implies poststructuralist cultural studies, performativity theory and/or psychoanalysis. Yet it has more encompassing ramifications.

To grasp these ramifications for anthropology, it is important to note that affect theorists seek to overcome what they consider deficiencies of two related approaches that have long been central to this discipline. Firstly, the 'affective turn' looks beyond social constructivism. Here social constructivist approaches are identified with hermeneutic attempts to analyse meaning (as we saw, sometimes glossed as e.g., 'representation' or 'signification'). While problematic,³ for reasons of argument I will adopt Stewart's term 'representational thinking' to refer to this. Secondly, affect theorists find fault with 'critical' approaches. By this they seem to mean efforts to detect patterns that are not immediately visible (sometimes 'structures') in order to gain insight and, potentially, to inform action. This is related to generalisation. Think for example of attempts to identify historical patterns of class, gender or other inequalities that are understood to also function on a scale beyond the immediate setting under study. The 'affective turn' and its sister 'turns' emphasise the limits of such efforts to engage in 'evaluative critique'.

How then should scholars go about implementing this 'affective turn'? What should they turn *to*? Affect theorists call for a different sensitivity, different modes of attention, different ways of being attuned to what happens around us, 'different forms of knowing that disclose the tangle of connections that exert a pull on us and that can be felt' (Blackman and Venn 2010: 11). I did not find methodological guidelines. Instead, there is a promise, which exists in diverging incarnations (see Seigworth and Gregg 2010: 5–9). At one end, the promise remains largely implicit and is exemplified in a shift of emphasis or a broadening to incorporate hitherto understudied domains of experience (e.g. Berlant 2001). At the other end, there is an explicit dismissal of any 'enlightening' aspirations of hermeneutical and/or critical scholarship (e.g. Massumi 2002). What allows us to detect a call for an 'affective turn' in these diverging writings is the exhortation to consider a new matter of concern (affect) and a new way to study it (affect theory). Whether authorised by neuroscientific experiments or not, affect is invariably postulated as worth increased attention. And since it is said to be resistant to signification, analysing it in terms of 'representational thinking' is considered limited

at best and futile at worst. Moreover, notwithstanding its aspirations, it is argued, ‘evaluative critique’ inevitably ends up placing what it records in pre-existing frames and thereby closing off emergent ‘potential’. It is therefore believed to be politically ineffective at best and detrimental at worst. Instead we are called upon to refuse any ‘capture and closure on the plane of signification’ (Massumi 2002: 263; see also 1995: 96).

In its more strident versions, affect theory takes a vanguard position. A detailed dissection of the writings of Massumi and Sedgwick, two of the most-cited affect theorists, shows how they ‘emphasize the unexpected, the singular, or indeed the quirky, over the generally applicable, where the latter becomes associated with the pessimism of social determinist perspectives, and the former with the hope of freedom from social constraint’ (Hemmings 2005: 550; see also Irni 2013). At this, the sharpest end, affect theory stages a call for a farewell to the old ‘representational’, ‘critical’ ways, which are presented as limited, boring, flat, cold, determinist, generalising, oppressive, arrogant and elitist. Such existing approaches are said to instil pessimism because they inevitably ‘close off’ their matters of concern. Making the ‘affective turn’, it is promised, allows one to be part of a new way that is more encompassing, exciting, multidimensional, warm, open-ended, attuned to singularities, liberating, humble and democratic. It offers optimism because it is oriented at ‘opening up’. While not all affect theorists position themselves in such terms, a common denominator remains: an emphasis on the limits of current scholarship – portrayed as hopelessly caught in attempts to hermeneutically trace meanings (‘representational thinking’) and to critically bring to light patterns (‘evaluative critique’) – and a call to go beyond it. We have a serious challenge here.

Anthropology meets the ‘affective turn’

How can we investigate affective dimensions of life ethnographically? How can we produce texts that successfully render them in anthropologically interesting ways? These questions have been at the heart of my academic endeavours for years, although I wasn’t familiar with affect theory. Upon reading such writings, it seemed to me that ‘affect’ – or at least a term derived from that root – allowed me to grasp not just the appeal of *Obrana i zaštita* to my Sarajevo friends and myself, but also a larger concern. For years now, when people ask me why I prefer to spend

so much time in the Balkans, I have been telling them – grappling for words – that this is because of a certain ‘intensity’ I experience in life in this part of the world. Unwittingly, then, I have been using the register of affect theory and my (largely unarticulated) sense has long been that this ‘intensity’ is indeed ‘prepersonal’ and that it cannot be fully grasped in signification. It also became a core concern in my anthropological work in which I try to grapple with ‘intensities’ of lives in the post-Yugoslav states, time and again seeking to provide insight into dimensions of a certain ‘shared historical sense’ (Berlant 2001: 3). For example, I have investigated the pressure to identify ethnationally; nostalgia for a past future; people’s sense of home after displacement; the unease of crossing borders; the everyday geopolitics of people’s sense of entrapment. Much of this came together in a recent book on yearnings for ‘normal lives’ amongst people in a Sarajevo apartment complex, focusing on their sense of abandonment and spatiotemporal entrapment (Jansen 2015).

A question that emerges for me is then: if I consider issues that could be grouped under the label of ‘affect’ to be at the centre of my research, should I therefore take the ‘affective *turn*’? Would my specifically anthropological interest in issues of affect be best served by the programmatic orientations promoted by affect *theory*? In what follows I try to disentangle some key choices anthropologists face when considering such an ‘affective turn’. What are the parameters at stake – implicitly or explicitly – when weighing the promise offered by affect theorists?

In the spirit of scholarly debate, I address these questions in dialogue with the work of Kathleen Stewart, a contributor to this volume and a participant at the workshop that preceded it. With her ground-breaking book *Ordinary Affects* (2007) Stewart established herself as the best-known anthropological proponent of the ‘affective turn’. Written as an experiment to devise a new anthropological mode of writing, *Ordinary Affects* consists of a short programmatic introduction followed by a series of descriptions of ‘scenes’ in the US in different places and at different times. These are interspersed with other sections (see below).

Let us first look closely at how Stewart herself positions her work. What are ordinary affects? Stewart’s many redescriptions function mainly through metaphor or illustration. For example, ordinary affects are ‘public feelings that begin and end in broad circulation, but they’re also the stuff that seemingly intimate lives are made of’ (Stewart 2007: 2); they are ‘an animate circuit that conducts force and maps connections, routes, and

disjunctures' (ibid. 3); they are 'the scene of an encounter we can barely get our eyes around, a cluster of non-coherent attachments and impacts' (Stewart in Fannin et al. 2010: 929).

How then can anthropologists ethnographically study ordinary affects and write about them? Stewart has called her book

an experiment in ethnography. It is ethnography as a form of haptically mapping what's happening. A vague and inarticulate analytical work ... Here, ethnography is a sustained, sensory practice of attending to the material and affective emergence of things that come together as shared sensibilities or fall apart, perhaps leaving traces or dormant trajectories. It is an attunement to potential modes of existence resonating in immanent events and in the lived rhythms and refrains (that is forms, genres, habits) that circulate, accrue, underscore attachments and detachments, and form modes of inhabitation. (Stewart in Fannin et al. 2010: 930)

As a reader I mainly encountered the innovative impulse of *Ordinary Affects* as a new way of *writing*. This is also how Stewart herself positions the book. Aiming to develop an experimental 'form of address' (Stewart 2007: 4), she has said she wants

to incite new forms of writing and reading, new approaches to analytic objects, and new forms of attention and attachment to the intensities and sensibilities now taking place in the various situations of the ordinary. (Stewart in Fannin 2010: 928)

Experimentation, speculation and attunement to 'potential' are promulgated as key aims. Stewart says: 'Something throws itself together in a moment as an event and a sensation: a something both animated and inhabitable' (Stewart 2007: 1). As is common in affect theory (e.g. Massumi 1995: 96), she frequently reaches for words that start with 'some-' and remain unqualified, thus purposefully maintaining indeterminacy. Her book, she says,

tries to slow the quick jump to representational thinking and evaluative critique long enough to find ways of approaching the complex and uncertain objects that fascinate because they literally

hit us or exert a pull on us. My effort is not to finally 'know' them – to collect them into a good enough story of what's going on – but to fashion some form of address that is adequate to their form. To find something to say about ordinary affects by performing some of the intensity and texture that makes them habitable and animate. (Stewart 2007: 5)

'Slowing the quick jump' could suggest that 'representational thinking and evaluative critique' are not rejected but postponed. I am left unsure whether Stewart finds this worth pursuing or not. Yet readers familiar with contemporary social theory are given some clarification on her position. And this too is in line with most writing in affect theory: the author tells us what her aim is *not*. So, the 'somewhere' she writes from is

Not the kind of somewhere that is easily reducible to subject positions or to the effects of underlying structures but one dispersed across social and cultural fields and gathered into singularities and resonant forces. (Stewart in Fannin et al. 2010: 928)

Stewart is *not* committed, she says, 'to the demystification and uncovered truths that support a well-known picture of the world' (Stewart 2007: 1). She continues:

the terms neoliberalism, advanced capitalism, and globalization that index this emergent present, and the five or seven or ten characteristics used to summarize and define it in shorthand, do not in themselves begin to describe the situation we find ourselves in. The notion of a totalized system, of which everything is always already somehow a part, is not helpful (to say the least) in the effort to approach a weighted and reeling present. This is not to say that the forces these systems try to name are not real and literally pressing. On the contrary, I am trying to bring them into view as a scene of immanent force, rather than leave them looking like dead effects imposed on an innocent world. (Ibid. 1)

With *Ordinary Affects*, then, Stewart aims to develop an ethnographic mode of address that avoids unwelcome forms of closure that she associates with representational thinking and evaluative critique – reduction,

demystification, totalisation. She does not reference which approaches manifest those problems. But since the author positions herself as an anthropologist and her book as ethnography, I assume that this portrayal is meant to include at least some anthropologists and their ethnographic writings. Perhaps it remains unspecified because she believes such problems are so widespread in anthropology as to obviate the need for specification?

In any case, in this essay I try to disentangle the challenge posed here to ethnographers. Given the variety of uses of the terminology of 'affect', I must state upfront that this essay is not a review of a body of ethnographic studies that take issues of affect as their matter of concern. Most of them, namely, share with affect theorists an interest in affective dimensions of life, yet they do *not* make the 'affective turn'. Many both evoke affect *and* seek to analyse it in hermeneutical and critical ways that are not radically different from how they proceed with other matters (see e.g. Muehlebach and Shoshan 2012; Millar 2014; Navaro-Yashin 2012). I will not dwell on this common ground between affect theory and such anthropological studies of questions of affect. Instead, this essay focuses on the call for an 'affective turn'. I attempt to formulate as precisely as possible some key choices it entails for ethnographers. I do this in direct dialogue with *Ordinary Affects* because I consider it the strongest book-length work by an anthropologist to embrace the 'affective turn'. While she does not mention this 'turn', Kathleen Stewart, in my reading, has devised the most consistently followed-through experiment to develop an ethnographic form of address that eschews both (social constructivist) hermeneutics and critique. Steadfast in its attempts to be true to the implications of the 'affective turn', her book therefore allows identification of breaking points where affect theory's specificities can be seen at work in their clearest form.

When ethnographically writing about issues of affect, which possibilities does the 'affective turn' offer and which ones does it put out of reach? I will organise my reflections in three central (interdependent) either/or choices.⁴ The first choice concerns the reach of evocation we aspire to: who do we evoke *for*? The second one revolves around aspirations we may have *beyond* evocation. The third choice concerns the grounds on which we are prepared to be held accountable as authors.

Three key choices for anthropologists interested in questions of affect

Do we aspire to evocation across boundaries of familiarity?

For anthropologists, a first choice regarding the 'affective turn' concerns evocation itself. It revolves around questions of audiences, familiarity and historicisation. Who do we evoke *for*?

To crystallise this, let us first return to *Obrana i zaštita*. If this film evoked a certain form of affect so well for my Sarajevo circles, how would it fare for other audiences? A friend of mine fought to earn it a special mention as a jury member at a foreign film festival. She failed. 'They didn't get it', she said. The success with which we felt the film brought across an intensity to us relied on *our own* hermeneutic work of framing, based on pre-existing knowledge of certain meanings and patterns. We framed the tension in the film through historicisation. We knew Mostar was violently 'unmixed' during the 1992–1995 war, largely along ethnonational lines. From the outset, through names that we could identify in ethnonational terms, we assumed that Đulaga and Zehra live in the east of Mostar and Slavko, Milena, Srećko, Dragan and Milan in the west. An awareness of possible exceptions did not remove this assumption: we knew about Mostar's patterns of segregation; its 'sides'. We knew some of Mostar's streets and their location. We suspected right away that Slavko's dilemma about attending the funeral was related to the city's ethnonational division. And note that it is not that he, a man with a Croatian name living in West Mostar,⁵ is nervous about attending a funeral of a man with a Bosniak name in East Mostar per se. Clearly, as Srećko's accusation implies, Slavko spends much time on the 'other side'. His main worry is what Dragan – on his 'own' side – will think of that and how this will impact on his life. That too we 'got'.⁶

While *Obrana i zaštita* could have explained all this, to us, its evocation of tension was all the more successful because nothing was spelled out. These meaning(ful practice)s and patterns do not need to be specified outside the cinema in BiH either. They usually aren't. Hence, while pre-existing knowledge was crucial to the film's appeal to us, much of its particular power relied on *resonance*. To different degrees, we were familiar with dealings with ethnonational issues in roundabout ways; but also with the difficulty to find solid ground for moral personhood

in this historical conjuncture in BiH; with living in waiting; with the importance of some 'Dragan', to be 'chased' with a bottle of whiskey; with the difficulty to assess the genuineness of stated intentions, worries and excuses. We were not estranged by Slavko's despair at his own doubts; by his demeanour in the secretary's office; by his switching back and forth between unfinished sentences about the 'situation' and about his health; by Krešo's exasperation with his father's anxiety; by Milena's insistence on moral duty and reciprocity, her silent disapproval and her eventual outburst – embedded in the couple's gendered interactions. Even the furniture in their flat is familiar to us. I suspect that most viewers in or from BiH, and perhaps others in or from the post-Yugoslav states, will, perhaps regretfully, find it resonates with dynamics they know or imagine in some household around them. Through this resonance, *Obrana i zaštita* evokes familiar affects from a familiar world. I think it does so brilliantly, partly because it offers so little historicisation. For viewers who already have the tools to hermeneutically frame this, this works.

Anthropological writings embracing the 'affective turn' invest heavily in evocation and reviews show that the reception of *Ordinary Affects* too relies to a large degree on familiarity (e.g. Highmore 2010; Pelkmans 2013). The 'scenes' that make up much of the book are short descriptive pieces that reverberate. I was struck by the beauty of much of the writing. Given Stewart's focus on particular US worlds, this resonated to me with work by some of my favourite artists: Tom Waits, say, or Lorrie Moore, or Raymond Carver. As in their work, and as in *Obrana i zaštita*, I felt some 'scenes' were affectively very powerful. Yet, as we saw, the evocation of affect in *Obrana i zaštita* would not work, even for people in BiH, without playing on people's names or without any reference to Mostar's 'sides'. Significantly, to explain its affective power to a broader audience in this essay I had to spell out some meanings and patterns that remain unspoken in the film.⁷ In contrast, the 'affective turn' calls on us to 'perform' affect and to refrain from hermeneutic attempts to historicise it: the autonomy of affect, its theorists say, places it beyond interpretation. Instead of aiming for such 'closure', we should retain singularities at all times. *Ordinary Affects* does indeed refrain from such 'representational thinking'. It evokes-in-singularity. It seems that the 'scenes' in Stewart's book do for some readers what *Obrana i zaštita* does for some viewers: they evoke 'intensities'. In some cases this worked for me too, brilliantly so. In other 'scenes' it didn't, possibly because I lack familiarity with

the various US worlds Stewart is travelling through. Having taken the 'affective turn', the author did not give me a hand through historicisation. As a result, some 'scenes' simply slid off me, not 'attuning' me to anything. And some filled me with unease when, rather than allowing attunement, the reading experience felt closer to voyeurism (see Breen 2009: 94). Stewart's empathy is obvious throughout the book, yet a refusal to historicise risks such reader responses.

Much anthropological work on affect takes an alternative route. Most explicitly, in her work on the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (2012), Navaro-Yashin aims to capitalise on the strengths of affect theory without embracing the 'turn' it promotes. She calls for reconciliation, exploring dynamics of affect *and* of subjectivity, of human *and* of non-human agency, and valuing evocation *and* signification. Navaro-Yashin identifies and names certain forms of affect, qualifying them and embedding them in configurations that she knows are unfamiliar to many of her readers. Her evocations often work through emic terms in the Turkish language, which she explains. Indeed, she emphasises the need to historicise forms of affect, framing them hermeneutically in constellations of meanings specific to the setting.

I suggest that the choice anthropologists face here is whether in our ethnographic writing we aspire to evoke certain forms of affect *across boundaries of familiarity*, or not.⁸ If we do aspire to this, historicisation is crucial for that evocation to work. I think *Obrana i zaštita* draws part of its great evocative power for audiences in BiH from the decision to provide only minimal historicisation. The price paid for that choice is that this evocation falters for other audiences. Inspired by affect theory, anthropologists can make the same choice and may proportionally gain in evocative power. Or they can try to introduce audiences to unfamiliar worlds from the perspective of people who inhabit them – and thereby defamiliarise familiar ones. Making the 'affective turn' means choosing to let go of the most important tools we have to fulfil this aspiration.

Do we aspire to go beyond evocation?

A second choice that comes with considering the 'affective turn' concerns the refusal of 'closure' associated with hermeneutical and/or critical analysis. Affect theory, as we saw, warns that affect can only be experienced and evoked. Stewart has said that 'ordinary affects can only be approached awkwardly, described around, repeated as a refrain, scored

over and underscored' (Stewart in Fannin et al. 2010: 929). We may then ask: is there any value in attempts to trace the embeddings of certain forms of affect, to interpret them, to conceptualise them, to build coherent arguments about them?

Affect theory does sometimes gesture beyond evocation. In fact, Stewart's experiment includes an attempt to reconfigure conceptualisation itself:

Ordinary Affects tries to produce a different kind of concept. Not one that can be cut out of scenes and situations to be laid on the table for academic debate but one that builds by attaching itself to the living out of what is singular and proliferative in a scene or moment, to what is accrued, sloughed off, realized, imagined, enjoyed, hated, brought to bear or just born in a compositional present. (Stewart in Fannin et al. 2010: 930–931)

Also, in her introduction, Stewart explains that her book *performs* 'some intensity and texture' of ordinary affects by *mapping* 'connections between a series of singularities' (Stewart 2007: 5). Perhaps we can read this second part as going beyond evocation. In this light it is notable that the 'scenes' in the book are interspersed with short sections of a different type, difficult to render other than by citation. For example, a part of the section under the heading 'The politics of the ordinary' says:

Ideologies happen. Power snaps into place. Structures grow entrenched. Identities take place. Ways of knowing become habitual at the drop of a hat. But it's ordinary affects that give things the quality of a something to inhabit and animate. Politics starts in the animated inhabitation of things, not way downstream in the various dreamboats and horror shows that get moving. Step one in thinking about the force of things is the open question of what counts as an event, a movement, an impact, a reason to react. (Ibid. 15–16)

The style of these sections remains tentative, speculative. Yet in addition to evocation, we encounter propositions here. These are themselves purposively vague and inconclusive. If *Ordinary Affects* 'is written as an assemblage of disparate scenes that pull the course of the book into a

tangle of trajectories, connections and disjunctures' (ibid. 5), Stewart's 'mapping' does not spell out how connections, trajectories and disjunctures are formed in particular social configurations. No 'patterns' are identified in ordinary affects and their operation beyond the singularity of any scene. The 'tangle' is not mapped out in an explicit, coherent manner that I can recognise as mapping. In fact, not one particular affect is named in the book. As in other work written in line with the 'affective turn', what I can recognise as a form of conceptualisation here does *itself* occur through evocation, particularly through gestures to particular unnamed but identifiable scholarly traditions, as flagged by terms such as 'forces', 'event', 'intensities', 'trajectories', 'circuits', 'flows', 'potential', etc. Like Slavko, in his monologue in *Obrana i zaštita*, Stewart avoids closure. In the process, unanalysable per se or unanalysed by choice, affect remains a 'something'.

Again, other anthropological work takes a different route. Navaro-Yashin's study (2012) explicitly names particular forms of affect (e.g. 'melancholia', 'abjection', 'spatial confinement'), historicises them and maps them and their resonance, particularly with regard to the politics of sovereignty in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (e.g. practices of bordering, administration, mapping, documentation etc.), refracted against global state-making dynamics. Like many other ethnographic studies,⁹ in addition to hermeneutic framing, which renders evocation effective for readers unfamiliar with the setting, Navaro-Yashin thus seeks to uncover patterns in the operation of forms of affect. She conceptualises this in generalising terms through the systematic tracing of singular forms of affect and their resonance. In my own writings on post-Yugoslav lives I too seek to identify widely resonant patterns in the work of certain forms of affect and to map them, for example, in postwar, post-cold war developments. And let me not shy away from it: this can have a somewhat disenchanting effect. Trying to analyse how certain forms of affect operate is a bit like explaining a joke. Yet much as I like a good joke, a key anthropological objective for me is to try and understand the work of certain forms of affect in their historical conjuncture. As an ethnographer I partly try to do this on the basis of how people themselves try to make sense of it. All this, of course, is incompatible with a turn away from 'signification'. Yet, like Navaro-Yashin, I found that the people I work with *themselves* historicise affect and that there is much 'signification' going on in relation to the forms of affect we study.

If affect theory emphasises affect's 'autonomy', we may thus ask if, for anthropologists, it could not be of interest 'precisely to the extent that it is *not* 'autonomous' (Hemmings 2005: 565, my emphasis).

In the final section of *Ordinary Affects*, entitled 'Beginnings', Stewart writes that her book:

doesn't mean to come to a finish. It wants to spread out into too many possible scenes with too many real links between them. It leaves me – my experiment – with a sense of force and texture and the sure knowledge that every scene I can spy has tendrils stretching into things I can barely, or not quite, imagine. But I already knew that. (Stewart 2007: 128)

I am not sure if I understand this correctly, but as a reader I think I too can spy many of these tendrils. And this is a testament to the remarkable success of Stewart's experiment. In contrast, my own fraught, far less original attempts to write anthropologically about affect – mostly without calling it that – have indeed struggled with a frustrating slide towards totalising closure of the kind that Stewart seems to warn us against in her introduction. But a question then emerges: what price are we prepared to pay for such success?

Is our only protection against 'asserting a flat and finished truth' (Stewart 2007: 5) a refusal to even *try* to develop analytical approaches that go beyond evocation through hermeneutics, conceptualisation and critical argument? Must, as affect theorists imply, such attempts inevitably assume determination by certain 'underlying structures' and necessarily fetishise particular terms (e.g. neoliberalism)? Can we not explore *to what extent* such 'structures' – or whatever we call them – may have explanatory value and *to what extent* particular terms can be of use? These are things we do *not* know yet when we start our investigations and I think many anthropologists invest much work in such explorations, precisely because ethnography allows us to 'slow the quick jump' to hasty answers. Should such questions be discarded or are they worth asking? If worth asking, I suggest, this allows us to formulate a second key choice regarding calls on anthropologists for an 'affective turn'. Quite regardless of the question whether a rhetorical commitment to 'openness' actually does avoid closure,¹⁰ we may ask: is it our main aspiration to maintain the *principle* of open-ness (to singularities, lines

of flight, becoming, indeterminacy, potential and so on) against the closures of others? Or do we attempt to move towards (self-consciously hesitant, modest, tentative) closures ourselves through careful analysis and argument beyond evocation?

On which grounds are we prepared to be held accountable?

A third choice following the call for an 'affective turn', firmly embedded in the previous two, concerns authorial accountability. As we have seen, affect theory often entails a self-conscious abstention from any truth claims underpinned by recognisable argumentation. This is implicitly or explicitly presented as an emancipatory move. Such an aesthetic and ethic of abstention has important implications for the positioning of the author. Stewart states she does 'not write as a trusted guide carefully laying out the lines between theoretical categories and the real world' (ibid. 5). This positioning is one of the grounds on which *Ordinary Affects* has been praised for 'join[ing] other recent attempts to render cultural life in more fragmentary, less arrogant ways' (Fannin et al. 2010: 923) and falls in line with a general self-presentation by affect theorists as a humble alternative to the pretence of enlightening omniscience detected in 'representational thinking and evaluative critique'.

How exactly is this positioning of humility constructed? We saw that Stewart rejects providing concepts 'cut out of scenes and situations to be laid on the table for academic debate'. I suggest this entails a much further-going pre-emptive neutralisation of *any* debate. The propositions in the sections that intersperse the 'scenes' in *Ordinary Affects* are submerged in unqualified ontological statements and non-committal speculations. One reviewer has called this an 'authorial shrugging of the shoulders' (Jackson 2008: 273). Stewart thus effectively renders irrelevant in advance any engagement in terms of (dis)agreement or refinement. Readers-colleagues, i.e. academics, cannot talk back to the book on the basis of its contents or on the basis of insights external to it. Nor can those readers who appear on its pages as its subjects. While posited against closure, in this way the authorial voice of the affect theorist is actually made unassailable. Whether intended or not, such an approach shelters an author from *any* critical reasoned argument, academic or otherwise. One cannot agree or disagree with a 'refrain'. One can sing along with it or not, and as for appraisal, only aesthetic criteria can be applied. The reactions to *Ordinary Affects*, often glowing, are indicative in this respect:

they praise it for being touching, beautiful, powerful, deep and elegant. As we saw, for some readers this may resonate more, and for others less. As in *Obrana i zaštita*.

I, for one, would be delighted if someone said that my anthropological writing achieves similar effects to a great feature film. Or rather, if someone said that it *also* did that. Here we are dealing with modes of expression and their institutional conditions of existence. Because in leading us away from 'representational thinking and evaluative critique', much work inscribed in the 'affective turn' also leads us *towards* something else. And that something else is not entirely new: it strongly resonates with established styles in artistic production. Faced with a call for an 'affective turn', I suggest ethnographers must consider what kind of authorship they aspire to. Is it a different kind of authorship from that of novelists or feature film-makers? In practice, it certainly involves different forms of accountability. Of course, such differences are not internal to our work itself, but a product of the historical development of scholarship and of art, their institutional frameworks, publishing venues, audiences, rewards, pressures, and so on. Arguments can be and have been made against this division of labour. Yet in the current configuration of academic and artistic production, these differences *do* exist and I suspect that very few anthropologists can afford to ignore them. For most of us, the criteria by which our work will be appraised differ from those that artists will encounter. Anthropologists can decide to evoke certain forms of affect. Many do so, without making the 'affective turn': they *also* decide to historicise specific forms of affect, to detect patterns in their operation and to conceptualise them in referenced dialogue with other scholarly work. Of course, like novelists and feature film-makers they necessarily do this in a stylised, selective manner. They 'edit' their products.

Yet should they aspire to exactly the same goals? Is your list of favourite anthropology books or course reading pack assembled on the same grounds as that of your favourite novels, songs or feature films? Should it be? Is a commission to allocate doctoral research funding in anthropology governed by the same criteria as those of a film festival jury? Should it be? Or should anthropologists, in contrast, be vulnerable to critique based on reasoned argumentation? If so, this means we must write in ways that allow our readers, including the people we write about, to talk back to our work on the basis of evidence or experience, or in terms of the coherence of our arguments. Going beyond evocation, trying to

earn some trust as 'guides' means readers can hold us accountable. In the terms of anthropological knowledge production as an institutionalised field today, the call for an 'affective turn' presents a choice between an authorial self-positioning that is vulnerable through such aspirations and one that is unassailable because it abstains from them.

To end, a reminder. The key decisions for anthropologists when considering the 'affective turn' are not decisions about whether we believe the work of affect is important or not; whether we study it or not; whether we evoke it or not; whether we place it centrally in our writing or not. Writing as someone whose answer to all these questions is a hearty 'yes', in this essay I have tried to crystallise three choices concerning the question of *how* ethnography can best contribute to this.

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Notes

- 1 Reflecting my primary academic biotope, I shall refer to 'anthropology' and 'anthropologists' throughout. Yet my argument does not focus on disciplinary tradition but on the specificities of the *ethnographic* study of affect. I therefore believe that colleagues who (also) self-identify as ethnologists may find that it resonates with their concerns too.
- 2 And those who do, do so at a price. Massumi (2002) and Sedgwick (2003) have been criticised for decontextualising the disputed results of a specific set of neuroscientific experiments, transferring them into the humanities and seeking to render them authoritative through repetitive citation (e.g. Hemmings 2005; Leys 2011; Papoulias and Callard 2010).
- 3 For a critical discussion of the use of the term 'representation' in affect theory, see Leys 2011: 458–459, n43.
- 4 Elsewhere (Jansen 2013) I have addressed a fourth choice, concerning how we render the communicative moment of our ethnographic methodology in our writing about affect and non-human entities.
- 5 Or rather: 'Slavko' is *not* a name anyone in BiH will categorise as Bosniak.
- 6 For an ethnographic study of border-crossing in Mostar that may help readers to 'get it' too, see Palmberger 2013.
- 7 Perhaps we can detect a certain hierarchy of places in anthropology here too, whereby they are considered to be in need of different degrees of framing. Would Duke University Press,

- the home of much affect theory work, publish a book by an anthropologist on BiH that would refrain from a minimum of historicisation? Should they?
- 8 These boundaries should not be a priori equated with boundaries of 'national culture'.
- 9 An interesting branch consists of ethnographic studies of forms of affect (without necessarily calling them so) in relation to the politics of sovereignty. See e.g. on borders, Demetriou 2007; Löfgren 1999; Povržanović Frykman 2001; Reeves 2011.
- 10 For reasons of space I will leave the political positionings of affect theorists aside here, although this is where many of them predominantly pitch their commitment to 'openness'. This tends to be concentrated in the omnipresent word 'potential' (unqualified).

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During the 1992–95 war, the vast majority of people in Bosnia and Herzegovina relied on international humanitarian assistance for survival. Material goods sent as humanitarian aid were crucial to the civilians trapped in Sarajevo under siege. Chapter 4 presents what some of the residents remember and how they talk about it two decades later. The analysis pursues how the act of narration of a particular person–object interaction activates corporeal memories and establishes affective links – resonances in the body and mind – between then (when the experience was acquired) and now (when one narrates it), between what the research participants talked about (their humanitarian aid-related experiences), and how they talked about it (affects that were revived in the course of narration). The vivid descriptions of sensual experiences concerning humanitarian aid – the tastes and smells of food and feel of clothing items received from distant donors – witness to the lingering sensual effects those experiences still have today.

Sensitive Objects of Humanitarian Aid

Corporeal Memories and Affective Continuities

Maja Povržanović Frykman

In his book *Lifeworlds*, Michael Jackson (2013) quotes a woman who survived Ravensbrück: ‘the presence of bread today never erases the memory of the absence of bread in the past’ (ibid. 272). The people quoted in this chapter also talk about the absence of bread and their manifold experiences of receiving humanitarian aid during the siege of Sarajevo in the 1990s. Their accounts, retold some twenty years later, confirm that these experiences have not been forgotten. On the contrary, they contain vivid and often gripping descriptions of sensual memories of humanitarian aid – of tastes and smells of food, of clothing items received from distant donors, and of the lingering affective power these things still have today.

My empirical focus is Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina – a country that due to the war in the 1990s attracted one of the largest humanitarian operations of that decade involving many of the significant international humanitarian organisations (Forman and Patrick 2000). The so-called ‘air bridge’ to Sarajevo was closed after 13,000 flights transporting 167,677 tonnes of humanitarian aid from twenty countries (*Hronologija* 2012). This aid sustained the life of civilians who stayed behind in Sarajevo during a siege that lasted for over three and a half years (Maček 2009).

During the war, 90 per cent of the population relied on international humanitarian assistance for their survival. However, countless articles on war and postwar aid to Bosnia and Herzegovina predominantly promote

the perspective of the so-called ‘donor side’ (see e.g. Forman and Patrick 2000). In contrast, this chapter focuses on the ‘recipient side’, with an interest in the micro level of individual experience in the local context of Sarajevo during the war years.

In a pilot study undertaken in collaboration with the Sarajevo Centre for Refugee and IDP Studies, fifteen people were interviewed between November 2013 and April 2014: nine women and six men of varying ages and different educational backgrounds who lived in Sarajevo during the 1990s war.¹ Five interviews were conducted with people now aged 30–36 but who during the war were children approaching their teens. Two research participants were in their mid-forties, three in their mid-fifties, three in their mid-sixties, one was 72 and another 92 years of age. One had completed primary school only, nine had completed secondary school education, three had graduated from university and two had a PhD degree.

The interviews were explorative. The question relating to what the interviewees remembered about receiving humanitarian aid in the 1990s was open and enabled them to raise any issue they found relevant. The transcribed material encompasses 180 pages of text that is exceptionally rich and facilitates several angles of analysis. The local perceptions of the effects of humanitarian aid, conceptualised as a specific realm of global interconnectedness, have been discussed in a paper framing humanitarian aid as an aspect of global moral and political order that affected local sociocultural orders (Povrzanović Frykman 2016). Another paper (Povrzanović Frykman 2015) addresses the finding that the same kinds of aid are sometimes framed as charity and at others times as help, which suggests that their social meanings are ultimately defined by the (im)possibility of reciprocity. This chapter sets out to explain why some objects in the collected narratives emerge as sensitive objects, and to show how war memories are preserved and communicated through affective relations to such objects.

Material circumstances

An in-depth description and analysis of life in wartime Sarajevo is provided by Ivana Maček (2009) in her book *Sarajevo Under Siege: Anthropology in Wartime*. This book is an essential read for anyone wanting to understand the context of experiences focused on in this chapter.

As an eyewitness, she captures many of the paradoxes of civilian life in wartime and the peculiar tension that existed between destruction and creativity. Offering an account of individual experiences of war, she discusses the norms of behaviour and the perceptions of reality that were continuously defined and redefined as people tackled life in cold apartments and survived on meagre and basic foodstuffs, never knowing when running water or electricity would be available again and being at the mercy of the forces attacking Sarajevo. The *Sarajevo Survival Guide* (1993) – a sarcastic imitation of a Michelin city guide produced during the war – offers abundant examples of life in a town under siege. Appreciated gifts include a bottle of clean water, a candle, a bar of soap, shampoo, a clove or two of garlic or an onion. At the time when the monthly salary of those still working was between 10 and 30 DM (ibid. 68), 1 cubic metre of wood cost 200 DM (German Marks) with 50 DM added for home delivery. A kilo of garlic cost 120 DM and a litre of oil 40 DM. 40 DM was also the cost of a kilo of beans, a children's bicycle or a humanitarian aid ration pack (ibid. 45).

The woman I interviewed described their material circumstances by stressing the resourcefulness of Sarajevans living under siege. Reflecting on the events some twenty years later, she consistently used the present tense to describe them:

We are incredibly adaptable, I think, more than animals. Really, there is no electricity, there is no water, there is no food – so what? You don't see anything, of course, it gets dark at five o'clock and you are collecting that oil used for frying, and you make a wick from some rope to make a lamp. Then you remember to take the battery out of the car that had been totally destroyed, and connect it to a small lamp – I mean, the one from the battery – and then you are really happy, you have light in the house, yeah! So, it is a very strange experience.

She also recalled the lasting effects of some of the bodily sensations related to the war:

I remember I was freezing in 1992, because when the winter came it was terribly cold. I tell you – the windows – they don't exist [they were all broken by the shelling]. Terribly, terribly cold. I mean,

since then I have not been able to stand two things – I cannot stand the cold, definitely, not even today, not for a second. And the other thing is that I can't stand dim lighting. There can't be a romantic light in the house, it has to be at least 100 watts! Even today, it is strange, when, say, the radiators stop working; something happens, something needs repairing, and the temperature starts falling – I freeze at the very same moment, even if the radiators are still warm. But when I hear that they are not working, or someone says, that repairs will be needed ... It's the same with water. If there is no water, you freak out. You run to the shop to buy water that same second; you think about buying a jerrycan with 5 litres of distilled water, because it can be used for washing. It is not a problem, it is not a problem, don't panic, everything is OK! So, I think – I know – this is some kind of reflex-fear, a trauma that, in a way, triggers it, not only in my case, no, no, it is really the same for everyone who was here. Absolutely, you still react to such things today.

From an individual perspective, the claim that 'everyone' living in Sarajevo under siege reacted in the same way to a change in their material circumstances has to be thoroughly corroborated.² It can also be treated as a narrative device to describe the magnitude of the negative experience.³ However, this woman's descriptions of being unable to stand the cold – 'definitely, not even today, not for a second', and her 'freaking out' at the lack of running water are genuinely related to personal experience. Moreover, they show that the wartime difficulties are still deeply engrained in her body.

Corporeal memories

Although an individual's remembering occurs in socially inscribed settings and frameworks, a discussion about how subsequent experiences and public discourses of war may have influenced individual memories and how they are narrated is beyond the scope of this chapter. Here, the point of reflection concerns the tendency of memory studies to prioritise 'the cerebral, the representational, and the cultural', which results in 'our thinking on memory often remaining fixated on a point outside the body' (Burton 2011: 9).

The narrative quoted above is a conscious articulation of a personal experience and is presented as something that was shared by others who experienced the siege of Sarajevo. It is thereby placed in a wider framework of narrating war from a victim perspective – a framework that is likely to be influenced by the many representations of the 1990s war in Bosnia and Herzegovina that this woman has been exposed to over the last two decades. It could have been influenced by her own retelling of the same story (with a good-to-be-told structure) to other people before repeating it to me. However, this does not necessarily mean that her past and present bodily feelings are *only* constructed as a useful narrative device, or that she only remembers the war non-discursively through her terror of freezing, darkness and thirst, or the rush of panic triggered by what Kathleen Stewart (2007) describes as fragments of sensory experience. The above quote is actually an apt illustration of what Stewart sees as the sudden awareness of the ‘edge of the ordinary’ that is triggered by things resisting routine use.

According to Blackman and Venn (2010: 7), bodies are ‘thoroughly entangled processes, and importantly defined by their capacities to affect and be affected’. As any engagement with material culture is always embodied,⁴ the issue in question is therefore ‘how people remember through the body and the intercorporeality of person and object’ (De Nardi 2014: 447). As shown by Maria Tumarkin (2013), an individual’s remembering may engage person–object interactions that constitute a bodily remembering; bodies can be ‘inhabited and structured’ by an ‘active immanence of the past’ (ibid. 315). Tumarkin reminds us that ‘much is being missed when we think about the intrapersonal forms of remembering and transmission either in exclusively declarative and representational terms or as profoundly overshadowed by trauma’ (ibid. 312) and suggests that we ‘do not buy into the opposition’ between representation and affect (ibid. 318). While mnemonic processes operate ‘on various levels not fully reducible to cognition’, their products are ‘exceeding representational form rather than being completely outside or beyond it’ (ibid. 313).

Tumarkin’s work shows that memories can be transmitted discursively as well as affectively, and that this can be done separately or at the same time (ibid. 315). This also applies to the narratives analysed here. Documented in the audio recording and described by the interviewer who also transcribed the interviews are the tears shed, the deep sighs, the facial expressions and gestures accompanying the statements of disgust or

happy excitement; all of which escape representation through language. They are neither outside nor beyond it, but rather an integral part of the intentional communicative effort that, by evoking corporeal memories, also solicits bodily (re)actions in the course of narration.

Even if said in the context of a formal interview, turned into a text, translated into another language or cut out of a wider narrative context, the fragments of narratives quoted here still witness to the intensity of people's experiences, which in some cases still feel very real due to the act of narration.

Yet another attempt to explain the engagement of body in remembering is of relevance here. In proposing an understanding of chronic pain as a form of corporeal (body, somatic) memory, Tess Burton (2011: 7) adopts Edward Casey's phenomenological stance, which is that corporeal memory is not something we merely 'have', but 'something that we *are*; that constitutes us as we exist humanly in the world' (Casey 1987: 163). In other words, the body 'remembers its own activity' (ibid. 147) and body memory 'includes its own past by an intimate osmotic intertwining with it' (ibid. 178; see Burton 2011: 27).⁵ Or, as Blackman and Venn (2010: 9) formulate it, an enfleshing and embodying affect is 'a particular kind of process-in-practice'.

Widening Burton's considerations to other kinds of corporeal memories, the analysis attempted here sets aside the question of which bodily experiences were shared by many or most people in Sarajevo under siege, and how they might be included in the institutionalised representations of the victims' suffering (thereby affecting the narratives analysed here). Instead, my analysis pursues how the act of narration of a particular person-object interaction activates corporeal memories and establishes affective links – resonances in body and mind (Seigworth and Gregg 2010) – between *then* (when the experience was acquired) and *now* (when one narrates about it), between *what* the research participants talked about (their humanitarian aid-related experiences) and *how* they did it (affects that were revived in the course of narration some twenty years later).

Affect and narration

For Brian Massumi (1995: 86), affect is 'intensity' – 'a state of suspense, potentially of disruption'. He associates it with 'nonlinear processes: resonance and feedback which momentarily suspend the linear progress of

the narrative present from past to future' (ibid.). As will be shown below, this 'resonation' – which I call *affective flashbacks* – can be discerned in the narrative material.

Massumi's claim that affect (or intensity) is 'qualifiable as an emotional state' (ibid.) is relevant here. He defines emotion as 'the socio-linguistic fixing of the quality of an experience which is from that point onward defined as personal' (ibid. 88); as a culturally shaped 'insertion of intensity into semantically and semiotically formed progressions, into narrativizable action–reaction circuits' (ibid.). Even though affect is not entirely 'containable in knowledge', Massumi sees it is 'analyzable in effect, as effect' (ibid. 107, n. 2). It is thus possible to pursue affect in the narrative material presented here.

If naming/defining affect enables a culturally appropriate emotional reaction (see Cichosz 2014: 56), the ambiguous 'openings' – the moments of grappling with words, along with the changes of voice and facial expressions – make it possible to understand the occurrence of what I call *affective surplus* in these narratives.

Sarah Ahmed, on the other hand, takes clearly circumscribed emotions as the starting point when analysing affects, since 'naming emotions involves different orientations towards the objects they construct' (Ahmed 2004a: 14). Yael Navaro-Yashin (2009) is also interested in the emotions engendered amongst Turkish Cypriots inhabiting the seized Greek dwellings, the affects generated by the assumed objects and the broader postwar environment itself. Stef Jansen (Chapter 3 in this volume) explains how Navaro-Yashin employs affect theory without embracing the 'turn' away from what has been called 'representational thinking'. She explores affect *and* subjectivity, human *and* non-human agency and values both evocation *and* signification. A similar exploration is attempted in this chapter.

This chapter also frames affect hermeneutically in constellations of meanings specific to the setting in which it arises. I maintain that focusing on the affective layers of the narratives discussed here – in discursively presented reminiscence, but also in non-discursive aspects of narration – helps to explain why some objects of humanitarian aid emerge as sensitive. However, such an explanation needs to recognise the intertwining – discernable in the narratives – of emotions as understandings of affects that are firmly embedded in a particular socio-historical context, and where the affective quality of the experiences narrated has no clear or unambiguous socio-linguistic fixing.

In Sarajevo under siege, meanings were destabilised and emotions as cultural devices were inadequate for grasping the realities of threat, lack and destruction. Talking about it in terms of fear and sadness does not seem to be adequate, because recalling these emotions does not capture the affective quality of the situation some of my research participants call ‘absurd’ and the people Maček (2009) met in Sarajevo talked about as ‘surreal’.

The presence of tense smiles and strained laughter is striking in this material.⁶ I see it as a way of dealing with the perceived absurdity of the experiences narrated, with the ambiguous quality of a situation of siege. On the one hand, a retrospective description of life under siege often produces surprise and disbelief. On the other hand, by framing it as a set of funny events or recollections to be laughed at, the narrator occupies a distanced, empowered position. Being able to laugh at oneself is a sign of strength. There is an abundant documentation of war humour, notably in Sarajevo (Kapić et al. 2006; Maček 2009; *Sarajevo Survival Guide* 1993; Sheftel 2012). Humour makes sense of absurdity by denying the straightjacket of an imposed, troublesome reality. It constitutes a platform that stabilises one’s existentially elated position, from which the conditions of siege and destruction are observed and laughed at. However, as one middle-aged woman said:

Now, more often than not, war experiences are turned into anecdotes or jokes. But there is a big difference between then [and now]. We now use anecdotes to talk about it ... we have a different feeling now than we had then.⁷

In their introduction to the special issue of the journal *Body & Society*, Lisa Blackman and Couze Venn (2010) note that ‘affect is invoked to gesture towards something that perhaps escapes or remains in excess of the practices of the “speaking subject”’ (ibid. 9). These authors warn against an ‘exclusion of processes which might be characterized as less visible to the particular technologies of observation, seeing and listening that characterize the humanities, and particularly the reliance of many of our qualitative methodologies on language and sight’ (ibid.). This is connected to the critique of ‘representational thinking’ (Stewart 2007; Thrift 2008; see also Jansen, Chapter 3 in this volume), which assumes that the discursive representation of a research object is sufficient (Black-

man and Venn 2010: 9). Referring to Stewart (2007), Blackman and Venn compare ‘representational thinking’ to ‘a particular academic and analytic training in *attention*, which excludes other ways of ‘noticing’ and attending within our research endeavours’ (Blackman and Venn 2010: 9).

Relying on interviews, the interpretations offered in this chapter are ‘based on the practices of the “speaking subject”’ (ibid. 18). Here, the researcher’s knowledge about how people feel remains tentative and the representation in a text ‘closes off’ potentially different meanings. However, it is both possible and necessary to engage the registers of affect by examining people’s visceral and affective responses to an interview. This entails paying special attention to ‘feelings that are incongruous when examined alongside the content of an interviewee’s account’, or that direct the interviewer to ‘what is left unsaid but that is communicated through other forms of bodily knowing’ (ibid.). Both affect and emotion are ‘immediately embodied’ (Massumi 1995: 85).

Affective continuity

When recounting their experiences of receiving humanitarian aid, several interviewees expressed ambivalence and frustration: tears and laughter sometimes accompanied one and the same narration. They were grateful for the help received and recognised this as crucial to their surviving the siege. But a highly emotional tension between the feelings of gratitude and humiliation was obvious (see Povrzanović Frykman 2016). Some interviewees struggled with notions such as pride, personal integrity and human integrity, yet used the word ‘humiliation’ without hesitation and in a straightforward manner. To paraphrase Seigworth and Gregg (2010: 8), they refer to an ‘ethico-aesthetic space’ that is opened up by affective encounters with humanitarian aid.

A psychologist who worked through the war but was still in dire need of aid is a case in point. She recalled the time when her husband fainted after not having eaten for days in order to save food for their two small daughters. She recollected a situation when her five-year old daughter telephoned her at work to ask whether she could cut herself another slice of bread:

It was horrifying for a mother to have a child call in order to ask
– mummy, may I cut one more slice of bread? That was terrible,

because she knew that if she ate it today there wouldn't be anything for tomorrow [tears]. And that was a child five years old, it is terrible to be in such a situation, but, as much as that humanitarian aid was humiliating, it was valuable. I did understand the value of it. On the other hand, it has had its ... well, effects, in the feeling of integrity, some human, basic, pride. It does not have to be pride, but somehow a feeling [sigh] that you are helpless, that you can't do anything.

Here, the statement 'it was horrifying' represents a complex emotion of fear and horror. Describing it in such strong terms communicates the overwhelming negativity of the situation. Moreover, by saying that 'it was horrifying for a mother', the narrator calls on a culturally embedded understanding that she assumes is also shared by the interviewer, namely that mothers want to protect and provide for their children. This makes it even clearer why not being able to feed them is represented as 'horrifying'. The reflections on feelings of humiliation, integrity, pride and helplessness indicate past emotional work and give a succinct insight into the ambivalence experienced by this recipient of humanitarian aid. But what about her sighs and the tears shed in the course of the interview some twenty years later? Although an evaluative and emotional import is standard for any autobiographical narrative, an affective surplus seems to be contained in the emotionally charged situations described here. This is especially obvious in the continuation of this woman's narrative, even though unlike the previous excerpt it presents a more general picture and does not relate to a particular event:

I still remember those queues in the winter; we would stand outside and wait in those queues. I often discussed this with my husband, for him too standing in those queues was humiliating – that someone would see us waiting for food [sigh]. Because we were people who earned our living [laughter] it was very humiliating. I didn't want to go, because it was really terrible that someone should see me receiving aid. And I remember those queues where people sat, and, of course, we had to sign, and [I remember] the bags that we then carried, that *meant* life to us [said with emphasis] and [sigh] they really were very significant, they were welcome. I am not saying that they were not *important* [uttered excitedly]! Yes,

they were, and we would probably not have survived without that, but the humiliating feeling that someone is giving you the basic things you need for living, even now when I tell you about it I have that ... that feeling, I have difficulty breathing [laughter, then a sigh], because it's all coming back, the memory of it comes back, of what that period was like ... we were happy to receive things, without them we wouldn't live!

The interviewer (see note 1) noted that the woman's narration was speedy and uncharacteristic of her usual way of speaking. Talking about difficult memories seemed to make her agitated. Her narration involved laughter, tears, sighs and heavy breathing, all of which suggest an affective flashback resulting in bodily (somatic) reactions that were beyond the narrator's control. The act of narration thus created an affective continuity between what was said and how it was told, between the past lived experience and the present experience of talking about it. I insist on the importance of paying attention to (the effects of) corporeal memories – their sensory and affective dimensions – because this is where the explanation of affective continuities over a long period of time lies.

'Continuity' here refers to the intensity of affect and not to its quality. If the experience had only been stored in the body, the same affects would have been relived. But the experiences narrated here have been psychologically processed, which means that the quality of the affects may have changed.⁸ Laughter, tears and sighs belong to the now – the narrating moment. At the same time, they suggest that the intensity of the experiences is retained. The statements quoted above about feeling humiliated during the war are cognitive statements, whereas the tears shed in the interview stem from the sadness and frustration emerging now of the revived intensity of the experiences then. I therefore argue that a two-decade-long exposure to a variety of representations of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1990s does not taint or falsify the kind of affective continuity that emerges at the personal level in the recorded narratives.⁹

At the same time, intertwined with the dominant narrative topic of humiliation is the materiality of basic things (the food depended on), bags (in which these things were carried home) and queues (connecting the war-imposed lines of bodies in the street and the personal – bodily – experience of suffering the cold while waiting). Other interviewees also tended to focus on the sensual qualities of particular objects of

humanitarian aid (negative but also positive, as will be shown below). As explained above, the senses involved in person–object interactions constitute a bodily remembering. It is these interactions’ affective charge that makes the objects appear sensitive, even in narrations that occur a long time after the war.

Sensitive objects

Sarah De Nardi (2014), in her research on Second World War veteran storytelling as ‘feeling’, pays attention to things relating to memories. Her work highlights the importance of mementos (such as a scrapbook or a dead brother’s scarf) for embodying the narrator’s memory, rather than simply being memory aids that facilitate storytelling. De Nardi’s interviews with members of the Italian and British Second World War resistance activists suggest that their experience was grounded ‘in the body and the world, and is shared through storytelling that is also perforce grounded in the body’ (ibid. 443). This researcher shows that the ‘worlds of feelings’ of veterans are established through their interactions with mementos used in storytelling, and that these objects are not just sites of memory or relics but also ‘sites of feeling’.¹⁰ Consequently, engagement with mementos is ‘a route to understanding and expressing the ways in which persons, memories and objects are interconnected an mutually constitutive’ (ibid. 461).

The people quoted in this chapter did not use and did not need to use any physical mementos in the course of the interviews. Instead, they engaged with their corporeal memories while reviving fragments of sensory experience. The person–object interactions constituting these memories seem to have had a lasting and easily revived affective impact.

Brian Massumi (1995: 96) defines affect as synaesthetic, which implies ‘a participation of the senses in each other’. Ben Highmore points out that senses and affect ‘bleed into each other’, that every flavour has an emotional resonance (sweetness, sourness, bitterness) and that the bio-cultural arena of disgust ‘simultaneously invokes a form of sensual perception, and affective register of shame and disdain, as well as bodily recoil’ (Highmore 2010: 120). Highmore asks, ‘When emotions are described by flavors, ... are these simply metaphorical conventions? Or does the emotional condition of bitterness for instance release the same gastric response as the ingestion of bitter flavours? How do we make our

way from one modality to another?’ (ibid.). He notes that it is hard to imagine even trying to untangle the physical experience of touch, feel and movement or passionate intensities such as love or bitterness in order to subsume them ‘to discrete categories in terms of their physicality or their ideational existence’ (ibid.). Indeed, it is a matter of interpretation as to whether a particular word uttered in an interview denotes a revived affect or is used as part of a by now locally well-established ‘emotionally correct’ way of representing the experience of innocent victim and deserving recipient of aid. We can only guess why an interviewee shed a tear while talking into the voice recorder two decades after the war. It is, after all, not certain that she would know herself if asked about it, since tears reflect an affective, open-ended state.

However, it is certain that the narrative material discussed here offers several examples of how ‘to have your attention being gripped by the goodness or badness of your circumstances, ... is to be gripped by what *matters* to you, by something you *care* about, and – crucially – in a way that essentially involves and appreciation of that mattering’ (Helm 2009: 253; emphasis in the original). This pertains to significant others, close social relations and things. Descriptions of tastes and smells of food and clothing received as humanitarian aid are abundant. These are mostly the objects that are in direct touch with bodies or are incorporated by being eaten, such as lentils remembered as disgusting and rice rejected as repulsive (‘I need it, but would not touch it! I can’t, I couldn’t eat one spoonful, not even if I was dying of hunger!’), or heaps of smelly old clothes at the Red Cross to ‘dig in’ in order to find useful clothing:

I still have memories of stinking clothes at the Red Cross ... Well, that part, of the clothes that were arriving – with the best intention of those people who were giving away second-hand clothes – for me, that smell, I still seem to have it in my nose [she laughs tensely]. The mountains of clothes that I rummaged through in order to find something suitable for my children ... it was very humiliating.

As in the quote in the previous section, the experience recounted here is perceived as negative and framed as humiliating. We cannot tell whether the woman ‘really’ felt humiliated when searching for clothes at the Red

Cross in Sarajevo during the 1990s war, or whether this framing – captured some twenty years later – ‘convinces’ Sarajevans that they were humiliated, or whether they were actually very pleased to have access to anything that was scarce. However, such considerations do not question the authenticity of this woman’s experience of the unpleasant smell that still activates an olfactory memory in her body. The fact that she laughs tensely while talking about it suggests her ambiguity towards this revived experience, i.e. she would like to laugh it away but cannot truly do so because it is (also) her corporeal memory.

A pensioner recollected how he ate mouldy bread:

I remember the hunger, when there was nothing but mouldy bread, we ate that, so that the little [good] bread we got could be given to the children. I ate those *mouldy crusts* [stressed by being uttered very slowly] and I lied to the children that that it was live penicillin and that I liked it.

Here, the affective flashback makes the man talk more slowly, as if mentioning the mouldy crusts makes him retaste them. Another person said:

We got a big can of smelly fish. I haven’t been able to eat fish since then; the smell of fish makes me vomit.

The statement ‘the smell of fish makes me vomit’ establishes a direct affective continuity between the past and the present. By not adding ‘still’ to the statement, the narrator seems to recognise and admit the permanent nature of the memory. Borrowing Tumarkin’s formulation (2013: 315), here we can see how the body is ‘inhabited and structured’ by an ‘active immanence of the past’.

Sensitive symbols

There is a clear tension in the material between acceptance out of necessity, the repulsive objects narrated about and the attempt to distance oneself from the former experience. It seems that disgust is not only communicated due to corporeal memories revived in the interview situation, but also to establish that one has not sunk so low in war as to stop caring about the smell and taste of food.¹¹

An object gathering layers of humiliation in the interconnected experience of hunger, necessity and charity is canned minced meat called ICAR. As summarised by one of the interviewees:

The famous ICAR, of course, no one could avoid it. It was eaten because it was necessary, but there were a lot of stories told about ICAR. It was like dog food, they sent us food for animals. People talked a lot about it, but everyone had to eat it, you had to because there wasn't anything else, no meat or anything else ... so, that's how it was.

Referred to at length by most interviewees, ICAR features among the most important objects in the virtual war museum (*Sarajevski ratni predmeti* 2010) and has iconic status. It has been analysed in scholarly articles (Sheftel 2012), presented in the Bosnian media (Bošnjaci.net 2007) and at tourist information sites (Sarajevo 2012) and discussed at length in web forum groups (Forum Klix.ba 2013). The popular consensus in Sarajevo and beyond is that ICAR symbolises the relation between international political actors and people living in Sarajevo in the 1990s – a relation of uneven power that has to be shielded by cynicism and black humour. It is a symbol of Sarajevans' position as the generic other in relation to those sending them survival rations – as an indiscriminate mass of desperate people in dire need of any kind of food (see Povrzanović Frykman 2016).

ICAR is generally remembered as disgusting, as something that even cats and dogs refused to eat but that Sarajevans had to. 'A monument to the international community' (by Nebojša Šerić Šoba – a Sarajevan visual artist now living in New York) signed by 'the grateful citizens of Sarajevo' (see Bošnjaci.net 2007) was erected in an attempt to resolve this ambivalence and frame the experience. The object represented is a can of ICAR. This 'monument' can be regarded as a cynical materialisation framing a difficult experience to gain visibility.¹²

It is uncertain whether or how much the narratives analysed here are affected by the iconic status of ICAR. However, when it is evoked in the interviews it seems to produce a 'kick in the stomach'. With few exceptions, people talked at length about their hatred of ICAR, even if they admitted to eagerly consuming it because they were not in a position to reject it (the taste could be improved if one was lucky enough to have access to onions or spices).

Some kind of minced meat, in some smelly salty sauce, I mean, with no tomato ... It was just minced meat, I mean, I don't know what it was, but some kind of sauce with meat, salty, with some spices, possibly ... the spices were hardly noticeable, but they disguised the taste of the meat.

The woman quoted above joked about her cat's reaction to ICAR (and in doing so used the present tense):

Those are the most disgusting cans! You share the can with the animal, because it also has to eat something. And the cat sniffs at the can and then looks at you as if to say are you nuts? I'm not going to eat this!

Another interviewee framed her experience differently, in spite of having talked about a dog whose hair started to drop out after eating ICAR:

I can tell you, ICAR was to us ... getting ICAR was a feast! Because, even if it was the most common thing [a common part of humanitarian aid], it wasn't certain that we would get it.

In a web forum entitled 'Has the riddle of ICAR ever been solved?' (Forum Klix.ba. 2013) the participants try (in 2011–13) to find out who produced ICAR and what exactly it contained. The humorous entries are numerous and black humour is prevalent. A straightforward connection is made by some participants between the bad quality of food received as humanitarian aid (ICAR being iconic in that sense as well) and the present-day perceived magnitude of cancer-related deaths in Sarajevo (an established folk belief on this matter seems to feed into the general victimisation stance), whereas some forum participants remind the others that 'in spite of everything it was super food' (ibid.).

For the discussion in focus here, it is relevant to mention that the person saying this describes how he found an unopened can two years after the war and tried it 'in order to remember the taste – and the taste was disgusting. However, at that moment (during the war) it was superb' (ibid.). Another participant in the forum presents himself as a chubby teenager in war who devoured ICAR in great quantities. As none of the neighbours would eat it, they gave their rations to him.

In the interviews, the affective connection between then and now can be discerned through its effect on the body. That effect can be negative – a certain smell makes the person vomit – or positive. The material contains plenty of descriptions of excitement and joy caused by the encounters with items of aid. The following story about a tomato blurs the borders between its symbolic and pragmatic value, but nevertheless depicts it as a sensitive object. It is a story about a tomato grown on the balcony and solemnly shared by three neighbours who ate their respective parts of the tomato with a knife and fork.

Aunt T., myself and granny *shared* [emphasised] a tomato that we had *grown* [emphasised] in a flowerpot. It was like a small ball and was pink, it wasn't even ripe. We put it on a *big plate* [expressed very slowly] and then we took *small plates* [expressed very slowly] and cut it into *three pieces* [expressed very slowly], and each of us put a piece on our plates, picked up a fork and a knife and cut that tomato piece by piece. Can you imagine that? ... We enjoyed this *small* [expressed very slowly] tomato [laughter]. The three of us! It was a special pleasure. I don't think I have ever eaten a better tomato in my life [laughter]!

The potential symbolic value of this tomato is strengthened by the anchoring of the narrated memory in sensual experience. At the same time, a positive corporeal memory is interlaced with the happy memory of solidarity and togetherness that was reconfirmed by the material practice of sharing 'a meal'. Yet, at the same time, the way the three women consumed the tomato re-established them as civilised people (eating with a knife and fork) and thereby symbolised their pre-war normality.

A matter of generation

As shown above, the objects that emerge as sensitive in the narratives told by people who lived through the siege of Sarajevo are not 'sites of mourning' (De Nardi 2014: 446). Here, they are analysed as 'sites of revisited experience' involving ordinary things that acquired extraordinary importance in the context of war. Their importance stems from the fact that they were scarce and difficult to obtain, although the framing of how they were experienced is not only negative. The material suggests the importance of the

age of the interviewees during war, in that it seems to be the main reason for the difference in the affective charging of their narrations.

People who were adults at the time of the war mostly talk about their experiences in terms of difficulties and humiliation, whereas those who were children in the 1990s tend to talk about the excitement and joy of getting sweets, toys, or a pair of secondhand jeans that were ‘just perfect’ and so dear that it was ‘impossible’ to throw them away after the war. Children take the world around them – its materiality – as it is, as it unfolds for them through their senses.¹³ When asked about humanitarian aid, most of the younger research participants talked animatedly about the moments of pleasure experienced when receiving precious tidbits from humanitarian ration packs. One of them added:

You know, perhaps I talk a bit differently about it now ... You see, when you are older, then perhaps you talk differently, but we [those of us who were children] talk about it all as joy, and the tidbits that made us happy.

What were known as Vietnamese cookies have a similar status to ICAR in the local narratives. A woman whose children were very young in the war said:

I remember those cookies sent by UNICEF that were some 50 years old ... they were very dry and white, we tried to do something with them, make cakes out of them combined with something else. That was terrible too. I saw how old they were, I saw how terrible they were, but I simply had no choice but to give them to the children to eat, because I didn't have anything else. If I had I would certainly not have made them eat them, and that also makes me angry, because I had the feeling that they just wanted to get rid of them ... I had the feeling that the people sending us that help, humanitarian, were in fact manipulating us because they sent us something that they would never eat themselves.

However, the same cookies were a favourite of a younger man, who said:

There was this famous ICAR that is often mentioned, but I actually remember the ration packs – *aaaand* [prolonged] those cookies, American, some 40–50 years *old* [emphasised], in metal tins, and

which we [children] ate, ate, ate, because they were so sweet [smile] and we were pleased *when they were available* [emphasised]. They were sweet, and we children liked those sweets, and they were *eaten* [said very slowly].

His most cherished wartime objects were the ration packs (originally made for the American military):

Those ration packs that contained several things were something special, they contained, as one says, both the salty and the sweet. Some sweets, small *bars of chocolate* [said very slowly], those *dishes* [said very slowly] that were there! Those ration packs remained for me ... because they were packed in a special manner, in some *plastic* [said very slowly], *foil* [said very slowly], then in some, I don't know, material that was probably heat-resistant and water-proof. So I remember that a lot.

Another young man cherished the second-hand shoes from the humanitarian aid. Although they were too small for him (and thus hurt), he loved them because they enabled him to play football with the neighbouring boys. Also, the following example shows how the unpleasant bodily experience of a material object is acknowledged, but its function perceived as more important. It illustrates how the memory of bad smell is pertinent, yet it is not the reason for framing the experience as negative (the mix of tenses reflects the original):

My parents would go a couple of times, and bring ... not really clothes, but they brought some kind of *plaids* [said very slowly]. We called them *horse blankets* [said with emphasis]. They were *red* [said very slowly] and they were quite coarse.

Why 'horse' blankets?

Well, I don't know, they were so ... like, they were so *coarse* [said very slowly] and so *ugly* [said very slowly]. Well, you couldn't – if you used them to cover yourself – you simply couldn't breathe, they were *smelly* [said with emphasis], and therefore people called them 'horse *blankets*', because in the past plaids like this were used to cover horses.

Oh, I see.

So, folk would say – we have now reached the point where we have to use what was used for horses. But it was war – cover yourself with whatever ... There was no heating, there was nothing to heat with, no central heating, of course, or anything we have today – cover yourself with that! So I remember a lot of such plaids coming in, and since they were *big* [said very slowly] they were warm but also very smelly, and in the war it was not possible to wash them because there were no detergents or electricity for the washing-machine to work... So they would make from it ... I remember from our neighbourhood, they [women] would make some kind of overall for us [children] that we would wear in the winter. Some people had sewing machines in the home, and they used this plaid and cut it a bit, here, there, and made ... like ... for the winter.

Like an overall?

Yes, like an overall. We would then – I mean, it is normal for a child to go the very moment there is a ceasefire – run out, roll in the snow, we were just playing, getting rid of energy. And we were *warm* [emphasised], but oh that *smell* [emphasised, smiling]. So, I remember those horse blankets, as we called them, very well.

For the younger interviewees the war experience was not a break with the everyday that made them aware of material losses and changes in their environment, or a challenge to their identity and dignity. It was the world they knew, the only world they had first-hand experience of. Twenty years later, the young people's stories about humanitarian aid revived the excitement felt at the 'aid arriving!' and the commotion in the long queues. Their memories of parcels are happy memories, because they remember the joy of getting a brand new dress or a new notebook that was the prettiest they had ever seen. Their sensual recollections focused on, e.g. 'ration pack no. 7', which ranked high in their version of the practice of collecting things and trading the collectables.

Most importantly, it contained a bar of chocolate. As noted above, the taste of chocolate is remembered by young people for its deliciousness – for its very materiality and not as a memento of the normality of

chocolate consumption lost due to the war. While the bar of chocolate helped children to establish the world as they knew it – and themselves as individuals who liked chocolate – through their palates, the same bar of chocolate served to effectively remind the adults that the world as they knew it was no more. The realisation of a moment of pleasure, formerly a regular part of everyday life, becoming something exceptional and evoking the all-encompassing nature of loss made the adults, as one of them said, aware of ‘how much you are in fact abandoned, how insignificant you are’.

Conclusion

Taking the examples of past experiences of receiving humanitarian aid, this chapter shows how person–object interactions activate the bodily remembering that involves affective relations to particular objects.

This chapter contributes to ‘enfleshing and embodying affect as a particular kind of process-in-practice’ (Blackman and Venn 2010: 9). It shows that in the narratives about past war experiences, the objects in direct touch with the body and those sustaining the preservation of bodies are given a central place. In line with De Nardi’s claim (2014: 458) that the memory of the body is inseparable from the living (present-day) memory of a past war, the analysis shows that senses engaged then retain a lingering affective dimension that is communicated in the narration now, and at the same time affects the person in the act of narration.

The analysis of my examples offers a general explanation of the experiences illustrated by the introductory statement that the memory of ‘the absence of bread in the past’ – the deep, overwhelming hunger of those who were starving – is not erased by ‘the presence of bread today’. Such experiences are not erased – and sometimes cannot be erased – because they constitute corporeal memories. Such memories in turn reveal how deeply people are entangled with a surrounding material world.

The analysis further shows that the objects that people single out as important are sensitive due to their ambiguous nature, i.e. due to people’s ambiguous attitudes towards them. Some objects were necessary but at the same time foul-tasting or smelly. Others brought about sensations of pleasure, but were scarce. Either way, the senses involved in engagement with those objects constitute corporeal memories that ‘resonate’, even two decades later, in meetings with particular smells and tastes, or

due to sudden ruptures in the expected material circumstances (heath, light, running water).

However, these corporeal memories also appear to be reactivated by the very act of narration. This suggests that the affective power of past experiences remains gathered in some of the objects of humanitarian aid, i.e. in the memories of them. These memories are both positive and negative. However, for the people who were adults at the time of the war, particular objects of humanitarian aid also emerge as sensitive because they are so basic and part of a normal existence in the sense of 'normality as people know it' (Nordstrom 2004). At the same time, the objects were highly desired regardless of their repulsive traits. In the *post festum* narrative effort of sense-making, they become the nodes of realisation of the fragility of any kind of taken for granted materiality in which 'normal' social and emotional reactions are supposedly safely embedded (see Povrzanović Frykman 2002).

It is noted (in line with Tumarkin 2013) that person-object interactions constitute a bodily remembering, that mnemonic processes also operate at levels that cannot be fully reduced to cognition, and that the products of these processes exceed representational forms rather than being completely outside or beyond them. This chapter shows that in addition to the what – the words that qualify the experiences and the ways they are rationally (and morally) framed in the narrative act of sense-making – the how also needs to be observed – the physical and physiological dimensions of the act of narration.

Tears were shed during several of the interviews. However, perhaps most importantly, the tense laughter and smiles of disbelief offer glimpses of the lingering ambivalence stemming from the revived memories of deprivation and pleasure alike. They highlight – for the narrators themselves as well as for the researcher – the affective power, retained as corporeal memories, of the utterly precarious situation of the siege. They also confirm openness as a core character of affect: the objects of humanitarian aid remain sensitive precisely because the (older) narrators could not (always) decide how they felt about them. Twenty years after the war they were not quite sure how to 'fix in words' their experiences of humanitarian aid, whether they should feel grateful or angry, happy about surviving or humiliated. Regardless, the act of narration creates an affective continuity between what is said and how it is told, and between the past experience and the current act of narration.

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Notes

- 1 Thirteen interviews (one with a married couple) were conducted in Sarajevo by the psychologist Dr Nina Bosankić, who acted as research assistant. She is assistant professor at the International University of Sarajevo and senior researcher affiliated to the Centre for Refugee and IDP Studies in Sarajevo. A native of Sarajevo, she was in her teens during the war. The people she interviewed were not her close relations, but her own or her relatives' acquaintances. She had not talked about the matters discussed here with the fourteen interviewees before, but they could all presume her familiarity with the subject matter. I interviewed the fifteenth participant by Skype, also in Bosnian, the native language of all the interviewees. The translations of the interview excerpts are mine.
- 2 Observe also the term 'trauma' in this quote. The discussion of how this term is and can be used is beyond the scope of this chapter.
- 3 Ivana Maček (in her comments on this text) observed that the narrative device 'and everyone would tell you so' was often used when people in Sarajevo said something that was politically/publicly ambiguous. By using the narrative device of magnitude, the woman I interviewed may have wanted to make sure that I (an outsider who did not share her experiences of the seige) did not regard her reactions as strange, but like those of 'everyone else'.
- 4 In line with how it is used by Thomas J. Csordas (1990), embodiment refers to the body as the main means of interacting with the world. For Csordas, 'the body is not an object to be studied in relation to culture, but is to be considered as the subject of culture, or in other words as the existential ground of culture' (ibid. 5). His approach is developed from the perspective of psychological anthropology and 'leans strongly in the direction of phenomenology' (ibid.).
- 5 Burton (2011: 8) sees chronic pain as the antithesis of the commemorative, embodied ritualisation described by Paul Connerton (1989) as essential for the maintenance of social memories and for defining collective identities. 'Instead, chronic pain is marked by an almost complete absence of communal performance or formal significance within the life of a community. Its meaning is located within the four corners of the (modern) individual, symbolically banal, corporeally profane and devoid of meaning, for everybody except the sufferer, and sometimes even for the sufferer as well' (Burton 2011: 8). See also Linda Green's description (1994) of illness among Guatemalan Maya as the only unpoliticised way of remembering political violence and pain/loss.
- 6 This was also well documented in my former research on war experiences; see Povrzanović Frykman 2002 and 2008.
- 7 Ivana Maček (in her comments on this text) observed that the quality of the affect is changed in the narrative – for the purpose of distancing and thus also integrating an otherwise too psychologically disturbing experience. Other ways of coping with disturbing experiences include forgetting them, or ignoring them as much as possible – not talking about them.
- 8 When commenting on this text Ivana Maček observed that people in Sarajevo were happy

- when they received their humanitarian aid packages but felt ashamed at having to queue for them. However, at the time they did not laugh or feel suffocated.
- 9 The connections between personal and collective experiences and their subsequent representations are not pursued here, but would benefit from Fischer and van Kleef's work (2010), where the social dimension of emotions is seen as fundamental. The analysis of such connections would further benefit from Richard and Rudnycky's emphasis (2009) on the relationality inherent in affect – its transactional and intersubjective character that forges new subjectivities and new collectivities. Richard and Rudnycky's notion of affective collectivities might also be useful in interpreting solidarity in war. The same applies to Sara Ahmed's discussion (2004b) of affective economies. Stories cherishing solidarity are prominent in the interviews and the related affective collectivities can be discerned on different scales (see Povrzanović Frykman 2015).
 - 10 De Nardi therefore concludes that memory is not just retrieval from or of the past, but has a regenerating aspect that is 'encapsulated' in mementos as the veterans' 'best tool to reach out with their stories and emotions in order to establish a meaningful connection with the contemporary world – to feel that what they did *matters*' (ibid. 460; emphasis in the original). My examples reveal what mattered to people living under siege, but also open up the question of how the experience of being dependent on humanitarian aid mattered, and might still matter, with regard to people's emotions and attitudes in the context of postwar socio-political developments (see Povrzanović Frykman 2016).
 - 11 In his research on Sarajevans' postwar yearnings for 'normal lives', Stef Jansen (2013) shows that this dynamic is central to everyday war memories in Sarajevo more generally.
 - 12 In a PR statement issued by the Centre for Contemporary Art in Sarajevo, the institution that authorised the placement of this sculpture in a public space, the part about Sarajevans 'still today remembering these cans with disgust' is followed by a reminder of the arms embargo imposed in the 1990s by the international community. The point made is that instead of allowing them to fight back and defend themselves, the international community was 'feeding the endangered population with the long out-of-date canned meat' (Bošnjaci.net 2007).
 - 13 See Frykman, Chapter 7 in this volume, on how an affective relation to the environment is analysed in terms of worlding.

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Josip Broz Tito was the personification of the Yugoslav state for 35 years. Starting from specific scenes where objects referring to him are visible in contemporary Croatia, the authors of Chapter 5 give examples from the post-Yugoslav affective zones: a portrait of the leader appears as a gift and ruins a birthday party; his name is found spelled out in roses in a public park; small busts and bric-a-brac are sold at flea-markets. In different ways they all invoke what the authors of this chapter call 'Titoaffect'. This is a state composed of a mix of affects such as indignation, repugnance, and shock that lead to emotional states of introspection and remembrance of days gone by. They demonstrate that in spite of Tito constantly being denounced in the political realm, his memory still summons a range of more or less silent affective communities.

The Titoaffect

Tracing Objects and Memories of Socialism in Postsocialist Croatia

Nevena Škrbić Alempijević & Sanja Potkonjak

In this chapter we focus on the residual materiality of socialism and its ambivalent status in Croatia today. We observe that relicts from the socialist period have the power to affect people and produce affective stirrings in the social realm by, for example, arousing emotions or making people act or remember episodes that have been silenced. Objects that have a particularly strong effect are those bearing the image of the ex-Yugoslav president, Josip Broz Tito (1892–1980). Our study of this topic began in 2004 with the project ‘Political Places in Change’, which focused on unofficial contemporary celebrations of Tito’s birthday in his birthplace (cf. Hjemdahl and Škrbić Alempijević 2006). During our research we noted that for the majority of actors – including researchers – artefacts bearing Tito’s image, name or reference to him triggered a strong emotionally charged reaction. This ranged from the holding of one’s breath to a desire to express one’s opinion; reactions that we in this essay refer to as the Titoaffect. A wide variety of objects bearing Tito’s image or name have emerged in various contexts, many of which are mentioned in Mitja Velikonja’s book *Titostalgia – A study of Nostalgia for Josip Broz* (2008). Sculptures, paintings, drawings, photographs, postcards, banknotes, books, textbooks, newspapers, comics, badges, plaques, decorative plates, gramophone records, tapestries, gobelins, cigars, wine and other Tito products are all scattered in today’s new affective landscapes.

When analysing the affective dynamics of the material remnants of socialism we do not only observe the objects themselves, but also people in actual social contexts, i.e. their emotional, bodily and intellectual involvement, their sensory perceptions and the narrative expressions and social practices triggered by the presence of Tito in their everyday lives. In this sense we follow Sara Ahmed, who states that: ‘to experience an object as being affective or sensational is to be directed not only toward an object, but to “whatever” is around that object, which includes what is behind the object, the conditions of its arrival’ (Ahmed 2010: 33). In other words, we need to look at what the symbolic power of objects reflecting Tito’s personality cult was like in the past and how it affects people now. How do these objects trigger people into action and trigger experiences before they even begin to deliberate on the meanings inscribed in them? We also analyse how people circulate these objects today: what they do with them, what they say about them and how they experience them in the afterlife of socialism.

We use the notion of the afterlife of socialism to situate the temporal layer of our research. When we look at the flow of objects over time and the simultaneous changes in social memory, we are able to follow their ‘cultural afterlife’ (Rigney 2004: 383) and understand how they reflect people’s perceptions of socialism and postsocialism. The afterlife of socialism is an interpretative horizon – an analytical playground in which we see the potentiality of socialism to resonate beyond its historical existence. We approach the afterlife of socialism as a dimension that influences present-day social practices and creates new affective worlds. In that sense, our aim is to produce a record of attunement and disattunement to the socialist legacy. Here we point to ‘rifts’ in affective responses and practices that stand out against the contemporary horizon of values. Given Ahmed’s claim (2010) that objects are dependent on sociability and the cultural and political environment in which they affect people, the Titoaffect that is set in motion by Tito artefacts can only be studied in the full understanding of post-Yugoslav memory shifts and political turns.

In addressing the Titoaffect we build on recent research on post-socialism and memory in post-Yugoslav countries. The number of studies of socialism from the postsocialist perspective has increased in recent years. Some researchers, such as Dunja Rihtman Auguštin (2000), analyse changes in everyday practices caused by changes in the political

system, discuss interventions in the urban toponymy and follow the fate of socialist monuments in postsocialist times. Others deal with the politics of memory in Croatian socialist culture, or examine textbooks and popular culture as vectors of memory (Čale Feldman and Prica 2006; Jambrešić Kirin 2004; Žanić 2002). Several studies focus more closely on the imaginary, on places and practices directly related to Tito (Škrbić Alempijević and Hjemdahl 2006; Velikonja 2008). However, because of a lack of consensus about his role in Croatian history, Tito remains a problematic topic in Croatian academic circles.¹ Our aim is to address this uneasiness by using the Tитоаffect concept. There are certain points of contact between this concept and the previously discussed Titostalgia, which also raises the question of how and for what purpose Tito is still present more than thirty years after his death. In comparison to the concept of Titostalgia, related to the sunny side of memory (Velikonja 2008), Tитоаffect encompasses a whole span of differently charged reactions to Tito objects.

'Tito's bodies in word and image' (Brkljačić 2003) were omnipresent in all the spheres of political and everyday life in the former Yugoslavia. From the 1950s until the end of the 1980s the figure of Tito served as the core of political mythology and a personification of the country itself (ibid. 99). That was one of the reasons why Tito 'in word and image' vanished from public sites in the 1990s, after the break-up of Yugoslavia and during the Croatian War of Independence. Negative connotations have been attached to Tito's figure, such as the political system he represented being both backwards and harmful to Croats, and that 'Tito's Army', which is what the Yugoslav People's Army was frequently called, turned against the Croatian people. Memory shift, or a sharp cut in the politics of memory, was both an element and a symptom of the nation-building process. The historic imaginary of the Croatian state has been constructed anew. Some collective memories have been deliberately 'forgotten', especially those connected to the Second World War and life under socialism and Tito, and subdued by the discourse of the suffering of Croats in the aftermath of the war and 'in the chains' of the former Yugoslavia (Jambrešić Kirin 2004: 140). Other episodes, motifs and figures have been placed in the front line, such as those referring to the historical periods preceding socialism, and especially those which in popular discourse have the status of 'eras of Croatian independence', in which the Croats established some sort of autonomous political for-

mation, as in medieval times (see Biti and Blagaić 2009; Potkonjak et al. 2006; Škrbić Alempijević 2012: 185–202). In those periods Tito monuments and other artefacts created in his image went underground and disappeared from public sight. Tito objects were stored in galleries and basements, forgotten in the landscape or reserved for the private sphere. In other cases they were violently destroyed, altered, thrown away or blown up with explosives. On the other hand, Tito's name can still be heard or stumbled across in the public sphere. For instance, one of the central squares in Zagreb, where the National Theatre stands, still bears the name of Marshall Tito, notwithstanding numerous protests and initiatives to choose a more politically correct name. In contemporary Croatia, even in the mainstream political discourse, there is no consensus on Tito's role in Croatian history, and both present and past usages of his name reflect this. Sometimes he is called a communist villain, a butcher of Croats, an anti-Croat, a Yugoslav dictator. Here Tito is an ugly word, but at the same time is a means of creating and mobilising cohesion in right-wing political circles. This also applied in the presidential campaign in 2014, in which one of the candidates was criticised by her own party, the Croatian Democratic Union, for failing to refer to Tito as a criminal in her public speeches (Lovrić 2014). In other cases, Tito is defined as a supreme leader of antifascism and a fighter for freedom. For some people he is primarily 'a very cool guy', both good and bad, and a truly impressive historical figure. For others, the appearance of his figure is kitsch, due to the overflowing sentimentality it implies.

In the examples of how objects can become more than remnants, relicts and dead artefacts upon which to gaze, we show how they trigger wonder and memories and foster affective engagement. Given the materiality that constitutes them and the political symbolism inscribed in them, such objects are 'affective before they are encountered' (Ahmed 2010: 40). In other words, there is an anticipation, potential and intensity about them that 'compels a response' (Stewart 2007: 14). In order to address the response to the 'potential stored in ordinary things' (ibid. 23) we elaborate on three affective realms of the Tитоaffect. They do not exhaust all the possible realms, or function as affects that are 'emerging discharged by ... objects' (Navaro-Yashin 2009: 1). Rather, they are accidental, snatched and partial images of what constitutes the post-Yugoslav affective zone. There we find three predominant affects: one is indignation, shock and repugnance; the other is introspective silence; and the

third is drive to share memories of individual pasts in a reflexive and positively connoted manner.

To illustrate the range of Titoaffects we present three scenes, or contexts, in which we intentionally or accidentally encountered Tito objects. The first two scenes evoke a personal rapport with Tito artefacts, which are narrated as stories and encapsulated in the third person. Pseudonyms are used for the stories' principal characters. This translation to a third person narrative has also enabled us to observe the stories from a different perspective. In addition to reconciling our own personal reflexions this process helped make us more attuned to the narratives of our interlocutors. By becoming other people's stories, our own stories began to resonate with the Titoaffect we wanted to convey.

Helena's story – Tito at the birthday party

It was a mild winter's night in 2006. A friend of Helena's husband from high-school days was celebrating his 35th birthday in the indoor space of what had previously been the neighbourhood's public gathering point in the western part of Zagreb's outskirts. As soon as Helena received the invitation she knew that it was going to be a wild, drunken night. The birthday boy had a reputation for throwing the craziest parties wherever he was and regardless of the company he kept. He was a funny, noisy, sociable person who laughed at everyone and himself. Also, he was an official at the Civil Court and a supporter of the right-wing Croatian Democratic Union, with a rich family history of engagement with that political party at the highest governmental level.

Helena and her husband went to the party with another couple, the man being the birthday boy closest high-school friend. They took a bottle of wine with them from Helena's home island, knowing that it would be well received. Once at the party they placed it on the long table, which was already groaning with drinks and snacks.

The large room was packed with people: the host's colleagues from work, his neighbours, members of the mountaineering club and old mates from his home town. They were dancing, drinking, smoking, laughing, shouting and trying to hear what was being said over the loud rock-and-roll music vibrating from the hi-fi. The birthday boy was in charge. The venue was dark, sweaty and pulsating.

Around midnight Helena became aware of some commotion at the door and moved towards it, expecting some kind of birthday surprise. A few of the man's colleagues were manoeuvring a big, flat rectangular object through the doorway. Helena took a closer look. What she saw was a familiar black-and-white picture of Tito in his presidential pose, in a black suit, his serious face photographed in half-profile. This familiar picture, along with images depicting Tito as the Marshall, a chief commander of the Yugoslav People's Army, and in the company of cheerful pioneers, had previously hung in offices, schools and other institutions all over former Yugoslavia. It had a thick, dark, heavy frame. It was covered in dust, but otherwise was in a perfect shape.

'We thought it would be more authentic if we left the dust on it', explained the initiator of this unusual birthday performance. It was not the finding of the object – an extraordinary birthday gift – that was the bottom line of his quest through remnants of a forgotten past. The main motivation was to *do* something with the object, stir up the sweating crowd, change the usual course of the party and make a difference. Helena asked where he had found it. 'In some basement', he responded. Helena had the impression that he did not want to reveal whose basement it was. The gift-giver asked for some kind of confirmation of the greatness of his idea. Some of the participants saw it as a good joke, an original provocation. But the high-school friend in Helena's company was furious. He couldn't believe that he was seeing Tito again, 'after we finally got rid of all of it'; *it* meaning all sorts of things – Tito, socialism, the war. A chair was placed at the edge of the dance floor. Everyone gathered around the chair in a half-circle. The music stopped and the lights were dimmed. The host was invited to approach the chair. Then the treasure hunter entered with the birthday gift, its subject hidden from view. 'For your birthday present we decided to give you something that you can decorate the walls of your office with', he said. With a ta-dah gesture he turned the picture towards his expectant audience. Everything froze. For several long seconds there was a deathly silence. Some eyes were fixed on Tito, and some on their host, awaiting his reaction. A few of the participants giggled nervously, or made a silly remark about the size and subject of the picture. Most of the sentences were incomplete: 'I remember we had one of those in our...' But these attempts did not hide the fact that the birthday boy did not like his present at all. His face showed disappointment and distaste. He mumbled something about hanging the picture

in his office and then turned, slowly, to face the table laden with drinks. The partygoers followed suit and the picture was ignored. Nobody talked about Tito, or at least if they did it was drowned by the music, and it was a while before people's party spirits were again raised. But after a



Figure 5.1. The official image that used to be displayed in public buildings. Photo: Željko Livnjak, September 2015. Used with permission.

while people ‘forgot’ about the awkward situation and began to dance and shout as before. The chair with Tito perched on it was dragged into the nearest corner out of the way. In the morning it was still there. The birthday gift had been forgotten.

Sara’s story – Tito’s name is written in the park

Sara and her husband moved into a residential block in Zagreb’s city centre in the middle of 2000. They purchased a flat on the 9th floor with a panoramic view over the old town. In time they learned that the building held a secret more striking than the view. Sara did not remember who noticed the lettering in the park first – the name of Tito in yellow rose bushes – but once her attention was drawn to it, she started to chase ‘the Tito ghost’. She even learned from the neighbours that ‘they live in an old commie street’.

Sara approached her immediate neighbour first; a woman in her fifties who turned out to be a poet. The poet told her, in hushed voice, that she should not disturb the memory of Tito. Sara was amazed. If you start ‘chasing the story’ – the poet told her – someone may alert the authorities and then the lettering will be removed, ‘someone might dig it out’. The poet was distressed at Sara’s curiosity, so Sara dropped the subject. She did not want to tarnish the treasure the poet’s family held dear. The poet’s words resonated strangely: ‘There is no more socialism. What is left is social inequality’. The poet was bitter: ‘They promised us a better future. It looks as though they secured a better present for themselves’. Sara understood that the poet did not want her to do anything – but just let Tito be. Sara should simply keep quiet. It was as though the keeping of the Tito lettering a secret was their private prank on the society. In Sara’s building, silenced rebellion went hand in hand with silenced pride. After all, as one of neighbours announced, ‘they themselves planted the rose bushes after Tito’s death’.

Talking to another neighbour, a woman in her seventies, in a lazy Sunday conversation helped Sara to find out more about the history of the building: ‘I shouldn’t be talking to you about that. I don’t dare. I am not sure if you know that a multinational group of people lived here before. They were a colourful group’. The elderly woman was a retired literature professor, an intellectual, tactful and not very happy about being labelled a ‘military widow’. At the same time as pointing to the fact



Figure 5.2. Tito's geoglyph in the city park. Photo: Hrvoje Kalafatić, September 2015. Used with permission.

that many different nationalities once lived in the building, she warned Sara that some people were still 'under the impression of war' and that 'everything changed in the 90s'. What changed was not just how neighbours looked at one another when they learned the importance of being a Croat, a Serb or a Muslim. More than anything else, the world they knew changed. They were trapped and had to refashion themselves, and be careful about what they said in public. The elderly woman said: 'A few days ago I was standing there facing the lettering – the rose bushes haven't started to bloom yet. I wonder each year whether they will still be there in the spring. Shaped in Tito's name!' She thought that it was 'peculiar' that even during the war (in the 1990s) she never saw the bushes looking unkempt. She had expected someone to come in the night and pull everything out, to 'clean away' the 'annoying memory'.

'Do you think that the gardeners who look after the public gardens know what they are trimming and pruning?' Sara asked the elderly neighbour. 'Yes', was the answer. 'What about the corner shop employees who sneak out for a smoke and sit on the wall and turn their backs to Tito – do they know?' 'They all know', said the elderly woman. It was their small and silent victory; the spirit of rebellion was there.

Sara was amused at the thought of Tito's ghost. Her first impression was that other people also regarded the lettering as comical. But no matter who Sara talked to she met the same reaction – awkwardness and silence. Some praised the silence for preventing harm being done 'to Tito', some did not want to get involved, while others cherished the silence, even though they felt threatened by it.

How well does Tito sell?

'Where can we find Tito?' That was our starting question when we discussed, at the beginning of 2014, which public contexts to approach in order to trace Tito objects and the affects they create. Strolling and shopping in Zagreb's open-air markets seemed like a reasonable option. After all, at one time selling Tito was a profitable business. In our search for Tito we decided to visit two such markets: Hrelić, the biggest flea-market on the outskirts of Zagreb, and Britanac, branded as an open-air antiques fair in the city centre. What unites these two markets is the way the past, including the socialist past, is transformed into a commodity. However, they also differ in many ways – in the goods sold, in their esteemed economic value, in the way trading objects function and in the types of vendors and buyers they attract. But they are still interconnected. 'Merchants selling at Britanac go to Hrelić early in the morning and pick up anything of value, including Tito statues', explained one of the vendors at Hrelić.

Situated next to the city's drop-off depot – a rubbish dump marking the southern entrance to Zagreb and blocking the view of the city's skyline for motorists, Hrelić is the Mecca for petty trade. There you can buy anything from used cars to cheap low quality clothing produced in China, second-hand and well-worn clothes, once fashionable now vintage accessories, spare parts for household appliances, books, old journals and all kinds of memorabilia. Anything that can be sold, traded or exchanged and that might tickle someone's imagination or meet one's needs has a price at Hrelić. 'How much do you ask for Tito? Does he sell well?' We asked our questions every time we saw anything resembling Tito displayed there. We saw several busts, a book about Tito's life, paper money from the socialist period and a lot of badges. Those are 'Tito's badges and those with the red star sell the best', we were told. The first Tito objects passed from hand to hand because they had to be touched by the person buying them to see if they felt right. It took us a few hours



Figure 5.3. Selling Tito at Hrelić flea market in Zagreb. Photo: Sanja Potkonjak, February 2014.

to pick our way through the neat lines of piled goods on the ground. Our search for Tito had limited success. The traces of him at Hrelić were few and far between. We commented how odd it was that he was gone. ‘The thing sells better at Britanac’, a vendor explained, commenting that he kept Tito busts and other valuable items at home, in his garage, because they were too pricy for Hrelić. He only took them to the market if they had been ordered in advance. However, from time to time, Tito and the ideological industry that had made him ever-present surfaced in different ways. At the very end of our Hrelić tour we found Tito at his very best. ‘I see you are interested...’ was the vendor’s cheerful response as he turned to us. ‘He [Tito] knew how to deal with kids. He was a leader!’ He seemed to have to explain this in order to sell the picture. But there was no mystique surrounding Tito’s name at Hrelić. One sells things, Tito objects included, because someone wants to buy them. There were no witty comments about Tito and no special sentimentality around him – as we had heard on other occasions. There was just a glimpse of happiness – that faded the moment we declined an offer to ‘buy Tito’ for 50 kunas.

Britanac was a different story. Tourists and celebrities, people in their Sunday best carrying their groceries home moved slowly past the neatly arranged stands. We could hear the buzz of the town centre – trams passing by, car horns blending with the morning chatter over coffee in street cafés. Under red market umbrellas, vendors displayed statues, paintings, books, antique furniture, old uniforms, traditional irons and coffee grinders. On several occasions we stumbled across Tito: the bust in his image, monographs and banknotes bearing his picture and name, photographs, postcards and stamps, Tito badges and key holders, an elementary textbook from the forties teaching children their first letters of alphabet – I, O, T – and how to write their first word: TITO. We took photographs of the objects and commented on them to the vendors. Our interest in Tito objects triggered reactions from merchants and from passers-by. ‘The girls are interested in Tito’, said one vendor to another and they both smiled at us, obviously amused. An elderly lady with a dog on a leash asked the vendor how much Tito cost when she saw us fingering a small metal bust of the former leader. ‘70 kunas, Madam’, was the reply. ‘Do you have any better ones than that?’ As soon as she had said this, she added: ‘Although the best one of all is gone’. We met a distinguished professor from our faculty. He caught us browsing through a book entitled *Tito and the Diaspora*. ‘The author had to formulate his work like that’, he said to justify the writer putting Tito and the diaspora together. ‘He had to connect the emigrants with the system because in those days being a member of diaspora meant being Ustasha.’ Our interest in Tito objects resonated like a wave in the social space around us. The objects and their trading offered an opportunity to state one’s opinion, to excuse someone else’s writings and to evoke personal memories. They became the focal point of interaction.

Tito’s coming out

Nowadays, objects bearing Tito’s image or name appear when you least expect them, as both a means and a hindrance to social interaction. They propel markets, inspire artistic and social interventions and create various kinds of affects. People act differently in such an encounter: they draw back from the object that reminds them of the forgotten past (as in the case of the unsuccessful birthday present), are drawn into a conspirational silence protecting a secret rose bush lettering or share



Figure 5.4. Selling Tito at Britanac in Zagreb. Photo: Sanja Potkonjak, February 2014.

knowledge and memories when faced with Tito imagery, as shown in the open-air markets in Zagreb. Uprooted from their thriving historical environment, Tito artefacts are diverted from their previously expected, albeit heterogeneous, meanings and collective support. However, their potential to produce suspense and create an immediate and object-related affective cohesion and interaction around themselves makes every Tito object an extraordinary artefact that provokes people into expressing their feelings of appreciation or utter irritation and disgust.

The groups we met around the Tito objects were not made up of like-minded individuals or supported the same, or indeed any, ideology. They were not clearly bound up in time and space. They did not recognise sharp distinctions. They were sometimes private and at other times not, for example the residents of the 'old commie street' guarding the secret of the Tito lettering. Groups like this can also appear in public spaces and in public contexts, although do not necessarily give an impression of collectiveness. We noticed this when searching for Tito objects in Zagreb's open-air markets, where the people who participated in the actions and dialogues provoked by their presence expressed quite different and

sometimes even opposing opinions and sentiments. These groups were temporarily joined together in affective practices triggered by the 'proximity' of the Tito object, in relation to it, or in attachment or detachment. They were simply circumstantial, dependant on the reappearance of the Tito object. Provoked by the sudden recognition of a Tito artefact, their emotions peaked and vanished. This was what was witnessed when Tito appeared suddenly and unexpectedly at the birthday party.

If we return to the aim of this essay, to the affective power of an object, we need to ponder on the affects and relational nature of the material existence of the Tito object. In our study we have tried to discern how an object like this buzzes, vibrates and prompts affects. We saw how it provoked and served as a stimulus to express something that would otherwise have remained concealed. Nowadays, these objects seem to utter something unexpected, despite having been ordinary, common and almost typical parts of a popular culture in socialist times. This is also the case for those objects that, at the moment of their production, did not serve any practical purpose. The same can be said about the institutional use of Tito pictures, which were meant to turn a public space into an arena in which the power of the state was seen and felt. However, those objects became so omnipresent and expected that they became part of the everyday scenography. Back then, in the heyday of Tito objects, they may not have been recognised as profound ethnographic treats. What would be noticed at that time was their absence rather than their appearance. Nowadays, their absence is taken for granted. When they do reappear, they trigger unaccounted affective practices and unexpected ethnographic situations. In our study, the Tito objects we encountered made people turn their backs and move on as though nothing had happened; they created an embarrassing silence, made invisible things visible as in the ethnography of the unwanted birthday present, made neighbours reconsider the rose bush manifestation of Tito's name and made buyers and bystanders engage in brief interactions and share experiences and historical lessons on Tito and socialism, as in the Hrelić and Britanac markets.

What makes these objects unexpected and extraordinary in the present is the fact that they have changed from being obligatory in socialism to being unwelcome and stigmatised in the dominant politics of remembering in postsocialism. For a while many Tito objects went underground and were suspended from the public sphere. When they re-emerged

they echoed the uneasiness of that process. In the present their everyday usages are marked with ambiguity and ambivalence. It seems to us that the Titoaffect largely relies on the interplay of the objects' ordinariness and extraordinariness, and their simultaneous familiarity and estrangement. Such stirrings in the social space can hardly be verbalised, but are nonetheless widely felt, experienced and acted upon.

Ahmed describes affects as a challenge to how we think of emotions that encapsulate our being in the world. The affective turn '[is] bringing forth ghosted bodies and the traumatized remains of erased histories' (Ticineto Clough 2007: 3). It allows us to research affects that creates some sort of span between the present encounter with the objects and the past they evoke, even if that past functions as a temporal stratum that is intentionally forgotten in the present moment. By recognising the power of a Titoaffect to shape, i.e. to disturb and inspire reactions, we approach its manifestations as graspable affective accounts. In our use of the idea of Tito objects we have pointed to their capacity to weave a meaningful affective web for the generations experiencing and sharing Tito's charisma. We have also acknowledged its transgenerational translation into a sign that provokes pain, discomfort and disturbance.

Ahmed (2010) calls the impression that is attached to objects their 'affective value'. When explaining the social life of objects she holds that there are a wide range of experiences, sensations and relations to the affective value of the particular object. The fact that Tito artefacts stimulate political and personal affects ranging from adoration to abhorrence shows Tito's affective power over people. They are indicators of societal battles, encounters with a changing world and help people to reflect on a meaningful existence. They all come to us as Titoaffect-at-work.

Our decision to confront the powerful memory of Tito and the Titoaffect emerged from something deeply disturbing within us. It emanated from a society we were not only observing but living in, and that is reflected in the stories told here. It also struck us that at some point our ethnography could not grasp the emotion of the underlying narratives, the mockery and contempt, we were confronted with.

With these stories we have tried to point to the existence of different affective communities and their relationship with the socialist past (ibid. 37). These communities also differ in how they relate to Tito's heritage. Some still celebrate the images and memories of Tito's cult, while others do not. They follow what could be called a Croatian emancipatory

national cult, based on dissociation from Tito's ideology and indignation at his enduring cult. But the vast majority of people we encountered did not act according to this binary distinction. Their narratives, reactions and practices situate them in a heterogeneous and multilayered zone of Tитоaffect. Some of these communities seem to be more private, while others are more public. However, they coexist, produce affects and link a relationship to the past with one created for present needs. What brings them together in the zone of Tитоaffect is that they are affected in multiple ways by the same objects.

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Note

- 1 All the mentioned publications can be viewed as a part of a wider discussion about the postsocialist condition in the post-Yugoslav countries. Studies of postsocialism represent an emerging field in Croatian ethnology and cultural anthropology, but also in other humanities and social sciences (see Kolanović 2013; Prica and Škokić 2011).

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What makes the suitcase such a sensitive object? It is a container in which emotionalities and materialities are entangled – packed or unpacked in sometimes surprising ways. The suitcase is a container into which not only objects are stuffed, but also emotions and dreams. It can be many things: a distillation of the future, an icon of mobility, a last resort, a threatening or comforting object. A very personal bond might also evolve – ‘me and my suitcase’. The emotional charges change with the kinds of journeys undertaken, a longed-for vacation, a routine commute, or a desperate escape across borders.

Emotional Baggage

Unpacking the Suitcase

Orvar Löfgren

Two Hollywood suitcases

A woman rushes upstairs past her guests at a funeral reception in her elegant, upper-class home in Milan. Emma, played by Tilda Swinton, just can't take this life any longer; she needs to get out of the claustrophobic setting she married into ... *now!* Her housekeeper runs after her, understanding completely what is going on. Together they throw open wardrobe doors and begin to pack a travel bag. This is the final scene of the film *I Am Love* from 2010; tears are streaming, and clothes are being torn from their hangers.

It is a classic scene. The heroine has had enough and can't wait to leave. For the film's audience, it is clear that it is not the suitcase that is important, but the need to pack for a new life. The mixed feelings of anger, sorrow and anxiety for the future must be given a tangible form: clothes are ripped from shelves, stuff thrown into a bag. Without a packed suitcase, there is no final break-up. Body, objects and affects are working intensely together here. Yet, when Emma walks out of the house a few minutes later, she is not carrying a suitcase. It has already done its job.

My next Hollywood suitcase has a major part in the film *The Accidental Tourist* from 1988. The film features a travel writer, played by William Hurt, who specialises in writing books for business travellers who want to avoid the foreignness and anxieties of travel and remain untouched by the exotic, eating in McDonalds whenever possible and wearing practical grey suits that do not show any stains. The film begins

with the writer neatly packing a small suitcase and preaching about the necessities of packing light. This favourite carry-on case of his follows him throughout the film. When he moves in with a new woman, it remains unpacked next to the bed as a silent but menacing threat ('are you thinking of leaving me?'). When, in the end, he opts for a new life with her, he drops his beloved suitcase in a Paris alley before grabbing a taxi to the airport, leaving it behind him, filled as it is with his old life.

It is not surprising that suitcases are popular co-actors in media narratives, from novels to movies, songs and advertisements. These two Hollywood examples illustrate how suitcases can do many things besides carrying belongings. The suitcase is not only a container for stuff, but also for affects, dreams, anxieties and ideals. It can be many things: a distillation of the future, an icon of mobility, a last resort, a threatening or comforting object, a defence against a hostile world. It is an object into which affects and materialities are crammed and intertwined in interesting ways. I will use several perspectives to explore such processes. The first is Doreen Massey's evocative concept, *throwntogetherness* (2005). What kinds of objects and feelings are thrown together in the limited space of the suitcase? How do surprising mixes, intimacies and provocations emerge out of the confrontations of toothbrushes, clean underwear, pocketbooks, souvenirs and bottles of pills, together with an entire array of mixed feelings? The suitcase is also a throwntogetherness of the past, the present and the future, as the two examples in the films illustrate. In the case of *Emma*, packing a suitcase is a powerful statement of breaking up, a threat materialised into action: putting power behind the words, 'I am actually leaving you'. In *The Accidental Tourist*, the suitcase carries other emotional charges. It is a fortress against an uncomfortable feeling of being abroad, a reassuring object, but also a threat of future action that is mirrored in numerous hit songs about a packed suitcase ominously waiting in the hallway or under the bed.

The concept of throwntogetherness focuses on the ways in which diverse elements come to cohabit in a setting or a situation, often as unexpected neighbours – but in order to understand how these confrontations work, a few other theoretical tools are helpful. In her book *Vibrant Matter*, Jane Bennett analyses the agency and affective power of things, from a small collection of rubbish to a nationwide electricity grid, using Deleuze and Guattari's *assemblage* as an example of a 'confederate agency' (Bennett 2011). Another helpful approach can be found in the concept

of entanglement (see Ingold 2007 and Hodder 2012), the ways in which humans and things as well as sets of things become codependant. These three concepts approach questions of affect as potentially energising or intensifying in the everyday life of things, but by linking feelings and materiality there is also a far better chance of contextualising affect and not seeing it as free-floating energy. As the editors point out in the first chapter of this volume, the boundaries between affect and emotion are fluid. The suitcase is a good example of this fluidity and interweaving, which I analyse using mundane but broader concept of ‘feeling’, although at the end of the chapter I return to the question of affect and emotion.

My wider theoretical inspiration comes mainly from non-representational theory (Anderson and Harrison 2010; Vannini 2015), a tradition combining several theoretical and ethnographic perspectives that should rather be termed ‘more than representational theory’. It focuses less on codes, representations and discourses and more on everyday practices and skills, as well as sensibilities and affect (drawing on theories of materiality, performance and affect). In many ways, it is grounded in a phenomenological interest in commencing the analysis with the how rather than the why of social action. This interest does not, of course, exclude symbolic and semiotic aspects of material objects; the boundaries between the non- or pre-representational and the representational are constantly blurred. As I aim to show, the life of the suitcase illustrates ways in which the material and symbolic are constantly interwoven – a special form of entanglement.

The strength of non-representational theory lies in its constant experimentation with methods to capture the dimensions of actions which are hard to verbalise. This is often done through a bricolage approach, inviting dialogues with art, popular culture and fiction. The result is a strong interweaving of theory and methodological experimentation, in an attempt to find new ways of doing ethnography, and often learning from approaches outside academia, such as from artists who experiment with destabilising or provoking everyday life, for example (see the discussion in Thrift 2008).

I will use such a bricolage approach, mixing history, popular culture, field observations, art and fiction. I have, for example, found it fruitful to combine fieldwork with watching films, because this genre often opens up insights into the impact of artefacts and affects. Films can compress or stretch out time and space; they can distort, enlarge

or miniaturise themes, and make materialities stand out as important props or trendsetters.

The same goes for other forms of fiction. In the opening poem of her collection *Vagga liten vagabond* Eva-Stina Byggmästar (2010) imagines the home of a woman with wanderlust: the living room full of illuminated world globes, and suitcases everywhere. Are the suitcases packed and ready to go, or are they invitingly empty? They convey the mood that Scandinavians and Germans call ‘travel fever’ (*resfeber*, *Reisefieber*), that mixed feeling of anxiety and excitement, nervous anticipation and a longing for elsewhere (Löfgren 2015). To pack a suitcase is, in a sense, to start from zero; it is an empty vessel ready to be filled to the brim. Yet, at the same time, packing is an intensely cultural process, a competence people learn. The empty case is already full of pre-understandings and conventions. What to bring, and what not? And how to pack it? This is where material and technological potentials are entangled with travel logistics, with social and economic resources, and with hierarchies, feelings, cultural ideals and conventions.

To explore these entanglements, a historical perspective is helpful (which, by the way, is too often lacking in both non-representational and affect theory). Historical contrasts are needed to destabilise the taken-for-grantedness of the present. This goes especially for what Michel Foucault has called ‘objects without a history’, which led him to develop his genealogical approach (Foucault 1977). It is not a question of searching for origins but of looking at the open and messy situations in which new elements take shape, as for example in learning to pack for a journey in an age of mass travel.

When a new technology or practice emerges, it is often the focus of much experimentation and debate, and there is a high degree of visibility that later fades away. As new forms of travel such as rail and air opened up, there were bewildered but enthusiastic discussions about how to handle these forms of transit. How did one learn to be a rail or an air traveller, and what skills had to be developed? The historical perspective is also important to understand what James Gibson (1986) has called ‘affordances’: an object’s ‘potentialities for a particular set of actions’. Even if you never have seen a suitcase before, the handle reaches up for the hand, the lid wants to be opened and the container filled.

The suitcase has thus enabled, or blocked, some avenues of use and in my discussion of this evolution I will also bring to my aid the suitcase’s

minor siblings, the handbag and the wallet, which are just as much part of the choreography of travelling. Researching such items also means encountering both the frivolous and the harrowing – suitcases go everywhere.

To carry or not

Let me start by looking back to when there were no suitcases. There is a winding history of luggage. For the elite, packing was for centuries not much of a problem. Well into the nineteenth century, dignitaries still travelled with wagon loads. Back in the Middle Ages, and in early modern times, such a train and its escort was an important way of signalling wealth and power, a travelling showcase. In a sense, the European elites remained semi-nomadic, moving between different homes and continuously paying visits – this is the world as depicted in *Downton Abbey* and its like.

The elite never had to worry about the actual packing: trained servants anticipated their needs and took care of the abundance of chests, boxes and trunks. Porters and footmen stood ready along the route. For the mobile poor, it was less of a problem; they didn't have many belongings and had to make sure they took along with them what they could carry or drag along by themselves – from a bundle on a stick to a small chest.

This changed as mass travel by sea and rail accelerated in the late nineteenth century. The new travelling middle-class needed different kinds of trunks and cases. An entire industry of trunk makers developed, producing all sorts of containers for travel. The greatest innovator of them all was Louis Vuitton, who launched his firm in Paris in 1854. His early experience of packing for upper-class households gave him insights that were useful when he turned to developing new kinds of luggage for affluent travellers (see Pasols 2005). Vuitton's luggage-making career is interesting because it highlights the constant interweaving of choices of materials and innovative technologies, as well as questions of social status and fashion. It was no coincidence that he started his firm in the same period that saw the birth of the modern department store and the fashion system of *haute couture* in Paris.

As Guiliiana Bruno (2002: 373 ff.) has pointed out, Vuitton's focus on fashion and women also put a focus on travel as a female possibility. His advertisements show women posing with new kinds of luggage, from shoe-

boxes to collapsible travel beds, or a *voyageuse* at her travelling desk, with portable writing table and library. But these collapsible innovations could still only work with an infrastructure of maids, porters and luggage vans – it was a freedom for the privileged traveller. This also meant that there was no need to make luggage light or streamlined. The elite never had to carry anything. Heavy materials such as wood and even iron were used to make sturdy trunks that could be stashed in steamboat or railway storage compartments. They often had to be carried by several persons. The drive for innovation was more towards producing specialised kinds of luggage. The ‘suite-case’, for example, started out as a flat container designed for suits, to be carried alongside the boxes for hats and collars (Gross 2014).

Vuitton and other producers opened up a new world of ‘travel objects’. It was not only the trunks themselves that were developed, but also the idea that there should be special stuff to enhance the travel experience, such as picnic sets, toiletries, etc. This is how the countess Jean de Pange describes her journey from Paris to her house in Dieppe, a four-hour train ride in 1900:

One freight car was not always sufficient when you consider that each servant (there were at least fifteen) had a trunk and my mother alone had thirteen ... She had some things sent ahead – her cushions, stools, foot warmers, screens, flower vases, and travel clock – as if we were going camping in the desert, when in fact the house in Dieppe was full of furniture ... we settled ourselves in as though we were going to China. We would take several baskets of supplies and an array of ‘travel’ utensils. Folding knives and forks, tumblers that could be flattened like opera hats, small bottles of salt, eaux de cologne, mentholated alcohol, fans, shawls, small rubber cushions, and an awful rubber chamber pot that made me feel sick just to look at it. (Pasols 2005: 137)

The modern suitcase was developed during the late nineteenth century to cater for the new kind of travellers, who, unlike the countess, had to carry their own luggage. As opposed to the trunk, it was designed to be carried to the side with one hand, which meant that it had to be slimmer and more rectangular than a trunk, and with a single handle. (This is why the traditional flat and rectangular ‘suite-case’ was used as the starting point.) New and lighter materials such as leather and canvas

over thin wooden frames were used. The suitcase also became personalised, an extension of the travelling body. People started decorating their suitcases with fancy hotel labels, and they also formed an attachment to 'my suitcase' – it became a sensitive object. The fashion dimension was accentuated in the process, although first and foremost the design had to fit with the new travelling body. Questions of balance, size and weight had to be solved in interaction with the new ways of carrying – a suitcase body. An American luggage factory even changed its name to Samsonite, evoking the biblical strength of Samson.

The material history of this piece of luggage is important, because it illustrates how a commodity emerges in dialogue between technological development, transport logistics and cultural conventions. Such entanglements resulted in the modern suitcase, which presented a special kind of material affordance: a limited container, which people had to adjust to. The suitcase emerged out of new travelling needs, but it also came to redefine such needs.

Only the absolute necessities

'When George is hanged, Harris will be the worst packer in this world', Jerome K. Jerome (1889/1957: 34) writes in his classic description of how three men prepare for their holiday on the river. Their endeavours to decide what to bring and how to squeeze it into the suitcases turn more and more chaotic.

Here we meet the new travelling middle-class for whom the question of luggage – what to bring along and how – becomes an important part of their preparations. This is especially marked in modern tourism, which has produced an endless flow of advice and debate on what should go into a suitcase. In a sense, packing became a micro-journey in itself. As things pile up in readiness, the whole journey is anticipated and there is a lot of mental travel going on. Do I really need this? What have I forgotten? The needs and potentials of the upcoming journey or vacation are materialised in the sorting and handling of all sorts of stuff. And the whole time this process is done in front of the old suitcase, invitingly empty – both enabling and restricting.

The need for travelling light leads to discussion about what to take – a cultural definition of necessities, which, of course, will look quite different according to people's social position and resources. The market

started to produce miniature and lightweight travel items. In the 1920s, Vuitton launched the small travel bag, the Keepall, which became one of the firm's classics. The 'overnight bag' gained ground, again creating a new standard. What does one need for a weekend away?

As the social base of international tourism broadened after the Second World War, the advice industry intensified. A Swedish guide, 'How to travel in Europe' (Strömberg 1951: 49 ff.), was aimed at new middle-class groups ready to take the brave step of going abroad. At last the Continent was open for leisure travel again. The back blurb promises that the book will give the reader 'a powerful travel fever!' Reading the long introduction on travel preparation is a little nerve-racking, there is so much to think about. Suitcases shouldn't be more than you can carry yourself and not look too fancy because this will make hotel porters 'more hungry for tips', the author states. He preaches the need for travelling light, but goes on to suggest lists of necessary items that cover several pages, from a miniature iron and a silk robe for walking to the bathroom in the hotel corridor, to an extensive medicine chest. Reading the long list of medicines and remedies (always bring extra toilet paper, it is a scarce commodity abroad), the reader might have second thoughts about daring to leave home.

Reinventing the wheel

Suitcase technology stayed very much the same until the advent of air travel called for even lighter luggage. To keep fuel costs down, it was important to limit luggage weight, and by the end of the 1930s, regulations emerged in the US that were often standardised around a maximum weight of 20 kilos, or 40 pounds. (This figure was seen somehow as representing a suitable amount of packing.) With the help of new materials, suitcases became lighter. The first aluminium case, made in Germany, was modelled on the classic body of the Junker aeroplane. Later, plastic took over. Although there had already been experiments with suitcases on wheels in the early 1900s, this technology did not really catch on until the 1970s when flying became a mass activity. The innovator of this development was actually an airline pilot (Gross 2014). Dragging stuff along instead of carrying it came to create new motor choreographies of travelling.

Airlines continued the fight against excess luggage. People are much cheaper to transport than luggage because they do their own handling, and unlike suitcases they are also potential consumers once aboard.

Accordingly, budget airlines took a punitive line on any type of luggage other than carry-ons, with the introduction of heavy charges. Today, new emotional scenes take place at the check-in, with people trying to squeeze their carry-ons into the metal grid of acceptable measurements. Being a 'smart packer' has increasingly become a question of kilos and centimetres.

Airlines love people like the seasoned traveller Ryan Bingham, the main character of a novel turned into a film, *Up in the Air* (2009). Played by George Clooney, Ryan is a consultant who spends much of his life airborne on his way to new assignments all over the US. His home is the airport lounge and hotel. In an early scene, he is travelling together with a young woman whom he is supposed to be training to be a consultant like him. Her induction begins when they meet in the departure hall where she is dragging a large suitcase and a carry-on clothes wardrobe. This won't do, he tells her, and takes her to buy a cabin bag on wheels, and in the middle of the hall he begins to systematically sort out her stuff, putting most of into the wastepaper basket. Life is too short to check in luggage. Then he teaches her to scan the waiting lines to see where one can get through security the fastest and avoid the holidaying families and slow senior citizens. Step by step she is taught the routines that Ryan has turned into mere body reflexes.

As a business traveller and commuter, Ryan has created a fantastic flow. The camera captures his elegant choreography when he glides with minimal friction through the security and ID controls, the hotel lobbies and waiting lines with his light and fast-rolling suitcase. With the perfectionist's delight, he swishes his gold and VIP cards, juggles the plastic trays at the security check, cutting corners, finding the fast lanes everywhere. Not only his clothes are wrinkle-free, his whole life is liberated from demanding relationships or duties. He loves this no man's land, where you can always be in transit – travelling light. 'Moving is living' is his motto. Watching him gliding through space is to see a man with a habitus that has perfected the union of body and luggage.

Learning to pack

The history of suitcases shows how the size and form of luggage help people select and deselect. One sets out with an invitingly empty case, which soon begins to overflow. What should I pack? Only the necessities!

And what are they? Every item put into the case is briefly considered: will I need this, would it be good to bring this along, or fun ...? Skills of anticipation and planning become important, and such skills are learned and relearned during a long travel career.

Children start early, being allowed to pack their own miniature suitcases but then having their parents going through their stuff and telling them what they can or cannot take. In their own playworld, however, they can pack whatever they want. A story by the Swedish childrens' author Astrid Lindgren (1950) features a boy of four who is wrongly accused of taking his dad's favourite pen. He decides to take revenge by leaving the family and moving across the yard to the outhouse. He packs for his new life, carefully selecting the necessary items for this exodus: a favourite storybook, a small ball and a mouth organ. He is already fantasising about sitting out there alone on Christmas Eve surrounded by his belongings, playing a sad melody on his mouth organ. 'How they will miss me then!'

The Turkish author Orhan Pamuk (2006) remembers how he loved to unpack his father's suitcase after his dad returned from his travels, handling the familiar and unfamiliar items, taking in the fragrance of eau-de-cologne and other scents of foreign parts. Another man [quoted in Nippert-Eng 2011: 149] talks of the ways in which he still follows meticulously his father's style of packing; he is performing a ritualised tradition.

Other people get out of the packing habit and have to start learning again. In the film *As Good as it Gets* (1997), Jack Nicholson plays a writer with pronounced behavioural disorders. He summons his courage and invites a waitress at his favourite café (Helen Hunt) for a weekend trip. In the next scene, we watch them both packing nervously. 'You are, of course, shocked by being used again', she says to her old suitcase, hidden away on the top shelf. Time to pack, but what? What kind of weekend is this? 'There's no way to pack for this trip!' she exclaims as she weighs different garments in her hands. Meanwhile, the writer, with his obsessive-compulsive disorder, has made a detailed packing list with all items waiting in perfect order on the bed next to the suitcase. He surveys the piles like a commander inspecting his troops, preparing for battle.

The two scenes point to the performative dimension of packing; it is not just a routine but an event, sometimes heavily ritualised but always charged with affects as a long journey or simply a weekend trip is arranged through material objects. The suitcase is not just a container but a generator, providing shape and direction for the traveller's actions.

Gendered suitcases

To watch the writer and the waitress packing is also a reminder that this is a heavily gendered activity. In the history of modern travel, there is a long tradition of men belittling of women's packing as an irrational, emotional, and, above all, overflowing activity. In a visit to the lost property office at Euston station in 1849, a male observer was baffled by all the stuff left behind, especially the women's belongings:

How many little smelling bottles – how many little embroidered pocket-handkerchiefs – how many little musty eatables and comfortable drinkables – how many little bills, important little notes and very small secrets each may have contained, we felt that we would not for all the world have ascertained. (Richards and MacKenzie 1986: 309)

There is a long tradition of condescending male remarks about women who pack too much, who can't restrain themselves, which the sociologist Jean-Claude Kaufmann (2012) has explored in his study of the handbag. He points out that women, and especially wives and mothers, never pack just for their own needs. Reading his book I am reminded of the Moominmamma who always carries a reassuring handbag along, unlike the unfettered adventurer Moominpappa. Women have learned not only to anticipate their own needs but also those of others. When a mother packs for a family holiday she keeps adding stuff that is 'good to have', as she plans for all kinds of eventualities and mishaps. Paper handkerchiefs, plasters, painkillers, and other first-aid stuff, an extra towel, a corkscrew, maybe some plastic mugs, sunblock, and much more. Her suitcase carries a heavy responsibility and her husband cannot understand why she takes such a long time to pack – aren't you ready yet, darling?

In Hollywood movies, lone heroes travel without suitcases; it would look unmanly. When the suitcase on wheels was introduced, some male resistance to it was also noted. Dragging luggage along seemed a little feminine. A real Samson carries his case, and, if he is a true gentleman, that of his female companion too. Hollywood movies also illustrate another gendered divide. For the male Hollywood gaze, women's suitcases seem to hold a special fascination, as Michael Walker (2005: 277) has pointed out in his discussion of the film-maker Alfred Hitchcock.

What are they hiding, why do they carry a sexual charge and why are they a forbidden territory invaded by men who secretly go through their contents? But Walker also points out that the suitcase is used to signal a self-reliant and strong woman, able to take care of her own stuff and life.

Packing not for a weekend but for life

A different film shows a man packing his suitcase; meticulously he places all he needs in the case: clothes, toiletries, and finally a hairbrush. His movements are swift but orderly, he is in a hurry to leave Europe for Israel. The film is part of a campaign after the Second World War to get Jews to leave Europe with all its recent memories of the Holocaust, and help build the new state of Israel.

The use of a suitcase scene is no coincidence. The film seems in a silent dialogue with another situation packing for a journey into the new and unknown: at Block 5 in Auschwitz, there is a large display of the suitcases brought by Jewish victims. The Gestapo had instructed them to bring along a suitcase each, in order to create a reassuring feeling of a temporary move, and people were told to mark their luggage for later identification. The names are still there in block letters, some carry the extra label '*Waisenkind*': orphan. Inside these suitcases, packed in haste, were belongings brought along on a journey to a new life – a stay at a work camp, as most of the travellers thought. On arrival their suitcases were confiscated immediately, and when the liberators arrived in 1945 there were stacks of these suitcases, which had been emptied and the contents sorted for further use by the camp staff. Why is it that these piles of suitcases produce such strong emotional reactions among visitors? Unlike the heaps of skeleton parts or the cramped bunks in the barracks, the suitcases bring to the fore a personal destiny. They may have been emptied but they are still loaded with anguish, hope and bewilderment. Although they rest there silently, they communicate action, the hurried packing of a few cherished belongings.

The suitcases at Auschwitz belong to harrowing memories of packing for the millions of people forced from their homes as refugees or deportees in twentieth century Europe. Their stories are remarkably similar. Often there is a knock on the door, the militia or the police give the orders: get ready to leave, in an hour or tomorrow. Bring only a suitcase with the necessary things. Necessary for what? In other situations, there is

not even that much of a warning. In a panic people just throw anything into the suitcase. During the deportation of Estonians to labour camps in Siberia after the Second World War, people remember how some just started cramming stuff into the suitcase without any idea of what was needed. If the soldiers knocking were local militia, they occasionally gave a bit of advice. You should pack this but not that ...

But, again, it is the container in the form of the one suitcase that frames the preparations for the journey. All over the world battered suitcases are still being dragged along, people's belongings suddenly reduced to the items that could be squeezed into the case. It is not surprising that a book on refugee voices from Bosnia and Croatia bears the title *The Suitcase*, and in the texts suitcases appear in many ways. One woman remembers: 'When we rushed out of our homes into the city, perhaps forever, I took some of my favourite books, a checked vanity case, and undergarments.' She asks her mother: 'What did you bring?' – 'That which everyone needs, she says' (Mertus et al. 1997: 87). People remember what they forgot to pack in the frenzied hurry and what they managed to take with them. Another woman packed lots of warm clothes although it was the middle of the summer, but also Marcel Proust, the book of the *I Ching* and a favourite scarf. Reading Proust in exile, with the scarf resting under a cushion, a reassuring link with the past was created.

The most intimate side of exile is tied to luggage, the Croatian writer Dubravka Ugrešić writes, as she looks at her luggage, 'my only true companions, a witness to my wanderings. The suitcases travel, go across borders, move in and out with me. If there is something I dream of, it is not a new home, but a new suitcase ... East, West, home is best, most people would agree. But the majority is always wrong. East, West, suitcase is best!' (Ugrešić 2007: 17).

Migrating suitcases

I'm watching Victor and Miguel pack. We have just returned from a shopping trip where they bought four gallons of water, three cans of beans, 11 cans of tuna, two cans of sardines, half a kilo of limes, two bags of tortillas, a loaf of bread, a bulb of garlic (to rub on their clothes as a defence against snakes), and a can of chilies. They are both trying to cram two gallons of water into

their backpacks that already are overloaded with food and clothes. Miguel tells me he has an extra pair of socks in case his feet get wet or he starts to get blisters from his uncomfortable knock-off Adidas sneakers. He has also packed a couple of black T-shirts that he says will help him avoid *la migra*. ‘It makes it harder for them to see us at night,’ he says ... (León 2012: 477)

The backpacks are the cheap camouflage or black ones you can buy from the vendors that make a good profit selling cheap stuff for migrants trying to cross the border into the US. In Jason León’s study of the material culture of illegal migrants, he shows how a set tradition of ‘what to carry in the backpack’ for this desert crossing has evolved based upon local hearsay and the stories of experiences exchanged between migrants, and the fact that most migrants can only afford cheap equipment like sneakers that rapidly fall apart. When Victor finally made the journey, he had to throw away everything in the backpack apart from the plastic water containers. He still keeps the backpack as a memento of that last successful trip.

There are hundred thousands of travellers like Victor, who pack for an illegal border crossing. For most of them, packing could not be more strategic; a negotiation of the absolute necessities, balancing between minimum weight and the maximum chances of survival. But, as Leon points out, migrants may be packing the wrong stuff. In the Mexican case, they carry blackened water containers and black T-shirts, because of the obsession with not sending out any dangerous signals, but later they discover that the water gets undrinkably hot and the body soaking wet under the fierce onslaught of the desert sun. Others may discover that their careful packing is no use at all when the middlemen rob them of their only belongings during the journey.

Suitcases or travel bags also follow different kinds of migrants across the borders. The nature of the journey is mirrored in the packing. There are people who commute between homes – to an overnight flat, a caravan, a hotel room away from home. Migrant labourers, transnational professionals, itinerant salespersons. What do they take along? Another category that also highlights ideas of what is needed to make a home from home is the children of divorced parents who alternate between mum’s or dad’s place. Ida Wentzel Winther (2015) has followed such children as they get ready to move again and pack their bags. Their packing tells

us a lot about tricky balancing acts and questions of belonging. She is observing a girl packing for the weekly switch between her parents' houses. Her hands are moving among things, hesitating, there is a lot of affect here. Where is home actually (ibid. 224)?

A special case concerns migrants returning home for holidays. Their suitcases need to be stuffed with gifts, with careful consideration given to what the people back home might expect, demand or need; and on the return journey, to what one wants to bring back to one's new home. Think of the masses of Chinese factory workers who go back to their villages for the New Year holidays with loaded suitcases (Chang 2009), or the many transnational migrants making return visits home. In a sense, what they are packing are social relations, but also, as Maja Povrzanović Frykman and Michael Humbracht (2013) have discussed, there is a flow of everyday objects connecting the two settings, which creates some kind of experiential continuity.

Transgressing borders

Transnational suitcases are open to inspection. One of Jean-Claude Kaufmann's informants, Brunette, is stopped by customs. The official begins to search her car. She has no problems with this, but all of a sudden he sticks his hand into her open handbag and starts rummaging. 'I turned ice cold, it was like he invaded my intimate sphere and without warning' (Kaufmann 2011: 138).

At security checks and border crossings, people know that their luggage may be searched by total strangers, and when that happens it often feels invasive. The last time it happened to me, I couldn't but be embarrassed as my chaotic packing was disclosed to the bystanders, with everything a mess.

Luggage searches are thus heavily charged with strong feelings. Here are two examples. The first features two British tourists in Scandinavia in the 1870s. Their train stops at the Norwegian–Swedish border:

Our two portmanteaus were seized upon and carried into the custom-house, where the station-master, in a very magnificent dress of light blue, with silver facings, a three-cornered hat on his head, and a sword by his side, was walking about with a piece of official chalk in his hand. We feared all our well-packed effects

were to be tumbled about by the rude hands of the custom-house people; but we were spared that trial. Either the station-master was in an amiable mood, or (very probable) our train was behind time, for after gazing benignly upon us, he asked P. if we were tourists, and being told that we bore that character, he mildly begged to know if we had anything contraband. On being informed that we possessed nothing illicit, he smiled a gracious smile, affixed a mark upon our things, and motioned to a porter to take them back to the luggage-van. (Arnold 1877: 246)

Mr Arnold was asked about contraband, but not about his identity, which was a minor matter in the 1870s. Contraband were objects which must not be carried across a border – in earlier times, this meant things like special luxury goods, political pamphlets, pornography; later it was drugs, alcohol and certain foodstuffs.

In the travel handbook from 1951 quoted earlier, the author has a detailed section on customs problems, which begins ‘thoughts about



Figure 6.1. All of a sudden your private life is opened up for inspection. Customs officials checking ferry travellers from Copenhagen, Denmark, in Malmö, Sweden, 1948. Copyright IBL.

customs make travellers terrified'. He then produces an impressive list of customs duties and currency regulations in Europe. 'How many gramophone records or how much coffee is one allowed to bring across the border? Don't forget that artworks are taxed according to the weight of the frame' (Strömberg 1951: 460).

Mr Arnold feared the invasion of the privacy of his suitcase, but his social standing protected him. Others may experience worse humiliations, such as the Nigerian art curator Okwui Enwezor (1996: 65) who describes his experience of the customs control at Charles de Gaulle airport, surrounded by other Third World migrants:

I hate being one of these people: the men and the women with their bundles, their world and dreams contained in bags and boxes long out of fashion. Even more, I loathe the pawing fingers of the coarse young French officer at Charles de Gaulle, his rudeness and sullen manner, his angry inferiority complex.

Enwezor felt the nonchalant hands moving through his belongings had a clear message: 'you are an inferior person'. People do not forget such charged situations. The customs official holding up object after object, asking intimidating questions with his 'rude' hands, as Mr Arnold puts it, or his 'pawing fingers' as Enwezor describes it.

In recent decades, the search is not so much for contraband but for terrorists. Over time, border controls became laxer, but then the new threats of terrorism once again made luggage a problematic issue. The security control turned into a needle's eye and a *zone nerveuse*. After 9/11 in 2001 the lists of forbidden items grew, and even the most mundane and peaceful objects took on a new and menacing aura. A Swedish museum began to collect objects confiscated at a major airport, and it is a baffling collection of nail files, corkscrews, scissors, combs and cigarette lighters. Later, even mineral water bottles and shampoo were confiscated. Tensions increased, and at Heathrow airport in 2007 signs warned travellers: 'Please be patient while we carry out important security procedures ... We will not tolerate threats, verbal abuse or violence.' As monitored and organised as the procedures at the security checkpoint are, the situation when travellers have been through it seems makeshift and chaotic. Businessmen fight for their dignity as they grab their belongings while trying to hold up their beltless trousers with one hand. People search

for somewhere to sit down to put their shoes back on as they attempt to reorganise all their things, put their keys and cash back into their pockets, the computer into its travel case.

A man talks of his suitcase contents spilling out at the airport in front of some people: 'it's not like I cared that people would see them, but they're like my things. So I feel attached to them in some way and it would make me nervous that anyone could see them because they were laying on the floor' (Nippert-Eng 2010: 120). He felt even more nervous as he started picking stuff up as quickly as possible. Every delay meant more embarrassment.

In situations like these, bystanders are turned into voyeurs, with a unique chance of viewing the private belongings of total strangers, and also, maybe, having their prejudices corroborated. There are, for example, a number of cases in which travellers of the nineteenth century have their national stereotypes confirmed by observing others being scrutinised. Here is a Swedish academic in 1844 watching Englishmen open their luggage: 'How orderly, clean and neat in comparison with the trunks of the German and the confusion and chaos which characterised their packing, *Allgemeine Zeitung*, unclean shirts, books, brushes, jars and cartons, entangled in a crazy and dirty mess' (quoted in Arvastson 2008: 2).

The suitcase in the attic

After a busy life, many suitcases have stopped travelling: they are resting in attics, collecting dust and in the process they become a new kind of container. One such case belongs to Dmytre Zrchuk, which when it was opened contained 199 items: fourteen paper patterns for cut-outs of various animals, a coloured print of the Madonna and Child from Innsbruck, a paisley scarf and three peach-coloured towels, an alarm clock, a hand carved wooden dog, a bronze model of the Washington Monument, a photo album, a sewing kit, a silver fork and spoon, twenty-six postcards ... books, dictionaries and pamphlets in German, Ukrainian and English. Zrchuk's suitcase was found in the attic of the Willard State Hospital in New York. When this mental institution was closed in 1995 and demolition crews moved in, two female employees remembered that there was some stuff stashed in the attic of the Sheltered Workshop Building. When they managed to pry the door open they encountered an awesome sight: crates, trunks, hundreds of standard suitcases, doctor's bags, and many-

shaped containers were all neatly arranged under the watchful eyes of the pigeons. All 427 pieces were taken to a museum. It took years to go through and catalogue the contents. This was luggage that patients had packed neatly as they prepared themselves for a stay at the hospital. They had carefully chosen what they thought they would need and what items they would like to bring along, from family albums to elegant clothes. Little did they know that they would never open them and that many of the inmates would spend the rest of their lives in this institution, while their cases lay forgotten in the attic (Penney and Stastny 2009).

Some travelled light, like Lawrence Marek, a Galician immigrant and window washer from New York. He arrived at the hospital in 1937 and his suitcase contained only a pair of extra shoes, two shaving mugs and brushes, and a pair of suspenders. Maybe he packed for a short stay in 1937, but he remained in the hospital until his death in 1968. Others brought almost an entire life with them. Margaret Dunleavy, a nurse who arrived in 1941, had the most items of all in her trunk. It contained dishes, pots and pans, kitchenware, a nurse's uniform, hundreds of negatives and photographs, a pair of ice skates and much, much more. She was ready to set up a home from home, with all her cherished belongings. Over the years, these possessions gathered dust in the attic, frozen images of a journey planned, with a selection of necessary or beloved items. All they would need for their trip ...

There are other forgotten suitcases in attics around the world. In 1923, Olga from Gammelnäs in Sweden went to America and worked as maid in a wealthy Boston family, while her fiancé Erik stayed at home, fishing and farming. Olga and Erik had to keep up their relationship through letters for many years, bridging two very different worlds. When she came back sixteen years later, they raised a family and her Boston savings helped to buy the small farm they had longed for. Olga died young, and after Erik's death in 1993, their daughter found her mother's old American trunks stowed away in the attic. They were filled with American clothes, embroidered silk blouses, stylish dresses, white gloves, Bakelite handbags and other wonders of 1930s fashion, as well as untouched cosmetics from nail polish to Luxor Complexion Powder, together with Boston theatre programmes, souvenirs and photos. These were belongings that a smallholder's wife in Gammelnäs had no use for, and could not show off back home. The trunks stayed closed up there in the attic, encapsulating a time that had been, but mattered little after her

return from the exotic world ‘over there’. All of a sudden, the daughter encountered a life unknown to her.

The life and labour of suitcases

The luggage in the attic is a reminder of the different life histories of things. One aspect which makes the sight of the Auschwitz suitcases so harrowing is the knowledge of the many earlier and joyful memories attached to them: a holiday at the grandparents, or a vacation by the sea. Affects can catch people unaware when the lid is opened, eliciting a wide array of sensations and feelings, drawing on personal memories or fantasies about the former owner.

In such ways, the suitcase also demonstrates the powerful entanglement of material and symbolic dimensions. With the gradual personalisation of luggage in the forms of the favourite suitcase or handbag, such items also come to carry a weightier symbolism. All kinds of meanings are projected unto them and they may take on a life as metaphor (‘living out of a suitcase’ or ‘a baglady’) or even end up as a rather empty symbol, as when old battered suitcases are transformed into decorative elements in home interiors or shop windows, where their power to produce an atmosphere of cosmopolitan adventure is put to work.

The personal bond between person and object is created above all by the constant handling, the packing and unpacking. ‘To live out of a suitcase’ is not just a metaphor but a real experience for many. A young American woman I interviewed puts it like this:

I feel I have been living out of a suitcase for so many years. Just like my friends, always moving between temporary lodgings and never really settling down. The case is always there, half-unpacked under the bed, signalling a state of impermanence and makeshift arrangements. The day it is emptied and put away in the attic, I know I have finally settled.

In a way, an old suitcase, which has been through a long life of packing and unpacking is a good example of what Sara Ahmed has called stickiness: ‘affect is what sticks, or what sustains or preserves the connection between ideas, values, and objects’ (Ahmed 2011: 29). The suitcase is an object attracting strong feelings. When Orhan Pamuk’s father died, he

was left with a full suitcase, as the daughter in the example above was. Although he had opened it so often as a child, he found it was hard for him to open it now, it seemed to be overflowing with feelings. Was he ready to confront his father's life?

Why can it be so challenging to open someone else's luggage? What makes a suitcase or a handbag such a special container of stuff and mixed feelings? It is a special kind of bounded universe. Analysing the life of the handbag, Jean-Claude Kaufmann (2012) asks how mundane items in the supermarket or on a table, from tampons and underwear to corkscrews and pocketbooks, are just this, everyday stuff – but collected together in a suitcase or a bag, they acquire a new aura of intimacy and often also of secrecy. It is a throwntogetherness that may turn into a personalised version of 'me'. 'Through what they choose to carry and not to carry with them, participants support specific narratives of self', as Christena Nippert-Eng (2011: 147) puts it in her discussion of the wallet. Similarly, suitcase contents are a material distillation of a life, a home or a style of living. It is no coincidence that artists often use the suitcase as an identity container ('who could be the owner of this assemblage' or 'open your suitcase and I will tell you who you are'). The contents can be turned into a micro-biography – this material collection is actually me.

By being included in the select company of other objects, things may acquire a special aura, turning into talismans. A small stone from a holiday beach, a couple of photographs, a poem or a wrinkled letter. This process is enhanced by having them close and handling them ('I just can't be without them'). One traveller kept a small, dog-eared card with a prayer for starting out on a journey (Nippert-Eng 2010: 111) – 'It is nice to have', he said. But the longer such items are left in the travel bag or wallet, the more important they may become. They turn into more of a necessity than many other essentials. Even the illegal immigrants crossing the desert with only the absolute minimum often carry a small image of a saint.

A refugee from Estonia in the 1940s (interviewed for the Nordic Museum Archive) threw an old, rusty pair of scissors into his suitcase before his hasty departure. When he unpacked the case in Sweden, he realised that this item was now the only thing he owned that had belonged to his father and in the process a mundane object turned into something else that was overflowing with affect.

Margrit Wettstein has discussed similar processes in her study of Jewish refugees – the author Nelly Sachs, for example, who escaped with her mother on the last civilian flight out of Berlin in 1940. She crammed a few clothes and some personal items, a few photos, her father’s military decorations and a beloved childhood album of bookmarks into her suitcase. ‘With the Gestapo waiting it was what you put into your pockets that came to remain of your home’ (Wettstein 2009: 12 ff.).

The strong affects of suitcase contents are created by several processes of throwntogetherness and entanglement. First of all, an item inside the case has gone through a process of selection, it has been deemed worthy of being included among the necessities. Secondly, the size of the suitcase limits the number of things. It is a relatively small and clearly bounded collection, which may make it more powerful (unlike heaps of things). Inside the suitcase, things are joined into a ‘confederate agency’, or a vibrant assemblage as Jane Bennett has put it (2011: 23), a theme I will explore in the following.

Unattended luggage will be destroyed by the authorities

The summer heat is quivering over a rural railway station. On the empty platform stands a suitcase with a bouquet of drooping flowers on top. The luggage attracts attention, like a materialised form of travel fever. Who does it belong to? What’s inside it? From the shade by the station building, other travellers start to fantasise about it. This is the captivating start of a story by the Swedish author Stig Dagerman (1945: 1), written long before unattended suitcases in transit spaces became a danger signal.

What are suitcases good for and what are they good at? I have discussed what suitcases can do, and what people can do with them, in very different contexts. They are mundane objects, dragged along, but they are also magic and sensitising tools and represent a number of container skills: separating, uniting and compressing. I began by referring to Doreen Massey’s evocative but somewhat elusive concept of throwntogetherness and have used the suitcase to develop the analytical potential of this term further. The suitcase creates special conditions for such confrontations between past, present and future as well as between objects with very different charges, and to understand that we must look at processes of entanglement.



Figure 6.2. To be surrounded by your own luggage can create a private comfort zone while waiting for the train. People arrange and rearrange, open and close their bags and suitcases – a constant interaction. Photo: Orvar Löfgren, St Pancras Station, London, 2009.

As I have shown there are strong emotional attachments between travellers and their suitcases. The case may be charged with nostalgic memories and moods of belonging, it may be surrounded by an aura of

adventure och secrets, but there are also strong dimensions of affect. The reassuring look at the contents before departing, the feeling of security when gripping the handle during the journey, the suspense of opening a closed, dusty trunk up in the attic, or vague sensations of unease and exposure at border controls or security points.

First of all, as objects are mixed and become entangled, a cell phone charger chord lovingly wrapping itself around a box of pills or a shirt, new constellations are formed; the beloved notebook is in strange company, squeezed in among the dirty socks. The suitcase turns into a cultural container by this throwtogetherness, enclosing and joining together stuff that may be seen as a personal micro-universe. Jane Bennett points out that an assemblage owes its capacity for agency through the ‘shi’ effect. She is using a Chinese term, which describes something that is hard to verbalise,

the kind of potential that originates not in human initiative but instead results from the very disposition of things. *Shi* is the style, energy, propensity, trajectory or élan inherent to a specific arrangement of things. (Bennett 2011: 35)

Feelings and materialities begin to work together through these proximities and are confronted, sometimes unexpectedly; objects are emotionally charged in novel ways. And this goes for both the carefully planned packing and the stuff that is just thrown in more or less randomly.

Secondly, the suitcase as both a physical and cultural container brings key ideas into play – the necessary, the essential, the indispensable, the optional, the superfluous – in very concrete ways. Trying to decide whether to make do with or without this, objects are weighed in the hand. As a strong device of affordances, the suitcase has room for both constraint and potential. During its history, it has become a measurement for ‘enough’. Over a century, the conservative form of the suitcase created a special standard. Comparing suitcases, handbags and wallets tells us about such spatial constraints, but also about cultural ones: packing each of them is done according to different genres. One important difference is that the wallet, and especially the handbag, is more rarely emptied and reorganised. Stuff starts to sediment in there, which may create stronger processes of entanglement.

Another important dimension is the throwtogetherness of the past, the present and the future. For every object selected or left behind, a potential future is constructed: this weekend, my job trip, a family vacation, or a life-changing migration. Packing for possibilities, eventualities, disasters, or for dreams of fun. The business traveller who adds a packet of condoms or a seductive nightgown is certainly not planning an extramarital affair, but then ‘you never know’. The suitcase starts looking ahead, but also backwards. People pack continuities. What elements of an earlier life demand to be taken along on a new journey? In this sense, packing can become a ritual of incantation, an attempt at controlling the future.

There is also the question of time frames, as I have shown. What is packed? Temporal or permanent lives, real or fantasised? Some of the cherished stuff bought during a journey and carried home turns out to have no place there; its special aura evaporates as the suitcase is unpacked. Feelings that get packed may turn out to be ephemeral or ‘sticky’.

Thirdly, the union between traveller and suitcase is created above all through constant handling. This entanglement or union between traveller and luggage can be observed in several situations. There are the constant routines of packing and unpacking, where deft hands, planning minds and an empty suitcase on the bed work together. A process of habituation is at work here. Think, for example, of the veteran long-distance commuter packing his or her suitcase every Sunday evening, creating a kind of *rite de passage* which marks the break away from the family. Who is leaving? Just me and my suitcase.

Luggage also does things to the travelling body, slowing people down or making them comfortable (Bissell 2009). Travellers are constantly lifting, dragging, resting. At railway stations and airports, I have spent time watching this interaction. The reassuring rummaging through a handbag, for example – visiting a familiar world in an alien context. People cling to their luggage, arrange it as a small fortress around themselves while they wait. Here, the suitcase works rather like a transitional object, bridging the owner and the alien outside world in Winnicott’s sense (1971). When people rest with their suitcases by the side, they seem like little children patiently standing close, sometimes held in a firm grip: ‘unattended luggage will be removed by the authorities’.

Dimensions like these illustrate the ways in which suitcases handle a number of polarities in people’s lives: private/public, past/future, personal

idiosyncrasies versus shared cultural conventions and ideas. Packing and unpacking a suitcase means constantly negotiating such tensions and paradoxes. There is a constant entanglement here of material practicalities, affects and cultural projections, so evident in the turning of the suitcase into something private and very personal.

Out of the throwtogetherness of objects, memories and intentions in the suitcase, special moods as well as quickly passing affects arise when the case is opened and items handled. There is the melancholy of a suitcase in the attic, with its sense of unfulfilled dreams or nostalgia for times gone by; there is the optimism or anxiety of packing for a future life or short journey. Or, as Christena Nippert Eng (2010: 156) says about opening a purse:

Each time one opens one's wallet or purse, the sound of the ocean may be heard. There is room for agency, for individual preferences, practices and other idiosyncrasies in these small islands of privacy.

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Death and inheritance may unleash a wide range of affects and emotions, with bitter mean-spiritedness at one end of the spectrum and wellsprings of goodwill and love on the other. Chapter 7 deals with the cultural processes of how bequeathed objects become sensitive, charged with affective value. Against a background of empirical material, the author investigates the possibilities of combining a phenomenological approach with affect theories. Examples from Swedish peasant society are used in comparison with reports and texts about present-day patterns of the breaking up of an estate. Central to the discussion are the Heideggerian concepts of worlding and gathering, together with Arendt's notion of the space of appearance. The way the senses are 'educated' – as a result of socialisation and the day-to-day sedimentation of experiences – is highlighted as an important complement to affect research.

Done by Inheritance

A Phenomenological Approach to Affect and Material Culture

Jonas Frykman

Doreen's fondest memories were of those rainy afternoons, sitting with her mother in mother's bedroom. Mom would take down the wooden jewelry cases from the top shelf of her bedroom closet, and they would spread out Grandma's bracelets, rings, necklaces, and pins on the bedspread. Doreen and her Mom would hold the pieces up to the light and Mom would tell Doreen about how Grandma loved to wear this necklace or that ring. Mom would talk about the family gatherings where she herself wore the pieces that Grandma had handed down to her. Mom would often tell Doreen that the treasured family jewelry, with all of its history, would be in Doreen's hands one day.

After both parents died, the jewelry was made the part of the estate. Her two brothers made her go to the lawyer's office to discuss its economic value, and then they explained to her that 'the law is the law'. The rings, necklaces and bracelets were all sold and the money shared. 'In order to get her share she had to sign a release document. She signed it, as her brothers asked, but at the bottom of the release she wrote, 'I'll never forget what you did to me and I will always remember your words, "the law is the law," but the law can't force me to ever speak to you again'. (Fish and Kotzer 2009: 59)

Two Canadian solicitors, Barry Fish and Les Kotzer, quote this example from their practice in the book *Where There is an Inheritance ...* (2009). In the preface to a collection of around 80 similar cases, they write, ‘We have constantly found that death and inheritance unleash a vast range of emotions which embrace bitter mean-spiritedness on one end of the spectrum, and the deepest imaginable wellsprings of goodwill and love on the other’ (Fish and Kotzer 2009:12). Objects can often release very deep conflicts, the repercussions of which are deeply felt in the inheritors’ lives. Things bequeathed are given an ‘affective value’, in that the inheritors find themselves in a liminal state and thus become open to a wide array of influences that are often difficult to name and grasp. The void that is created when parents die is manifested in how the order and loyalties that once defined objects within the family are lost. Things that were once integral parts of a family’s everyday life – the familiar bed, the everydayness of the cutlery – are suddenly transformed into mementoes and symbols that allow entry into a world gone by. However, what cannot be passed on is the sensual, affective dimension of the family that we intuitively learn to recognise from early childhood. The well-known wrangling over an estate has some of its roots in this fluid state and in the knowledge of the permanent loss of what was once home.

Perspectives

In order to understand the intensity with which affect is evoked by material objects, the relation between the body and the environment needs to be further explored. To that end, the following analysis will delve into some of the concepts and perspectives that are most poignantly formulated within the phenomenological tradition in anthropology and ethnology, where the ‘ability to grasp the world cognitively only supplements the ability to grasp it practically and physically’ (Jackson 2014: 10).

To get a better picture of the way affects work in this relation, it is first and foremost crucial to focus on the very situation in which material objects are animated. By using Martin Heidegger’s concepts of *worlding* and *gathering* (further discussed below) it will be possible to understand something about the unspoken processes that occur at the moment of experiencing an object. Objects as worlding are not to be understood as discrete entities that stand apart from the context that gives them significance. Instead, they ‘open up’ the entirety to which they belong for a

particular subject. Heidegger's use of worlding implies that a set of events and relations is gathered in the things themselves; he also uses the term *Umwelt* in a way that refers to the English environment.

According to Pierre Bourdieu (1977), affects are a result of how the body's senses are organised. When dwelling on habitus, Bourdieu (2001) focuses on the embodiment of a set of dispositions such as feelings, thoughts, tastes, and bodily postures (Reed-Danahay 2005: 107). Habitus, then, is made up of dispositions formed in relation to the objects that people handle and the tasks they perform.

Hannah Arendt's notion (1958) of space of appearance is to a great extent concerned with affective atmospheres by describing how material culture is brought to life in a certain situation and how affects are welded with objects, history, and narration. Jean-Paul Sartre's notions of the imaginary and the real also stand out as important tools for the analysis attempted in this chapter.

The application of these theoretical perspectives will be discussed in relation to examples of estates being broken up in two different settings: peasant society and contemporary conditions. The examples that have been chosen indicate that the analysis is not taking a set of empirical material as its point of departure. Rather, two types of material are discussed: texts from newspapers, magazines, and literature; and statements from lawyers, counsellors, therapists, and researchers. Fish and Kotzer's book, mentioned above, is one of many in which solicitors, therapists, and counsellors talk about cases and clients they have come across. In addition, the analysis utilises a collection of answers to a questionnaire about estates being partitioned (LUF 242) sent out in 2015 by Lund University's Folk Life Archives. Informants from southern Sweden were asked to describe what happened in their own families when their parents' property was to be divided among siblings.¹ This material mostly serves as a background for the analysis. Out of the 75 answers received only a few mentioned conflict, and then mostly in relation to holiday homes.

There are methodological issues of considerable importance that surface when faced with these sources. Judging from the informants' answers, families seemed to follow rational principles when the estate was to be divided. The procedure was described either as collecting the objects that were to be inherited into equally valuable heaps and dividing them fairly among members of the family, or receiving them from their parents' 'warm hands' while they were still alive. It is highly plausible

that there is a pattern where the givers and recipients already knew one another's preferences so well that the objects were transferred before the death of the giver. Such a pattern reveals family relations based on a recognition of individual preferences. Conflicts are abundantly described in the other types of material mentioned above, however, since they refer to situations where people were seeking legal or personal advice.

This absence or presence of conflict indicates some of the many pitfalls we meet when dealing with affects. In the case of life histories, it is possible to discern how memory, narration, and written texts can capture of affective atmosphere. As far as legal or therapeutic cases are concerned, however, single situations are often presented in relation to the material objects that are causing the crisis. Any life history will meet difficulties in capturing the affective atmosphere – the smug smiles, the envious glances, the not-so-well-hidden triumphs, and bodily reactions such as tear-filled eyes and the lump in the throat. Even if awkward moments are not easily forgotten, the way affects appear is evasive and hard to put into words. This discrepancy between the two kinds of source materials points to an analysis in which the understanding of affects, experience, and material culture takes us one step further.

In the example above, most readers will probably understand Doreen's frustration and disappointment and sympathise with her. She was deprived of what she believed should be bequeathed to her on the grounds that it was part of her life with her mother. Asking *why* affects runs high on such an occasion is like inquiring into a humdrum truism; the challenge lies in describing *how* the affects works and the cultural processes by which such attachments develop.

It is obvious that if the gems and rings had been found in a jeweller's shop they would have been valued for their aesthetic qualities or financial value, similar to the way in which the brothers saw them, even if the jewellery was also ingrained with a familiar significance for the brothers. To have affective value for the inheritor, items have more than such symbolic importance; they can, as Doreen's example illustrates, be conjoined with childhood events where the present is fused with the past and the future in a shared intimacy.

The questionnaire mentioned above can be used in a cultural analysis to describe how inherited objects are made the props of a narrated family history. The genre of life histories presents a very special dilemma in understanding the relation between people and objects. Any such

history tends to follow the intentions of the narrator (Tigerstedt et al. 1992). To paraphrase Jean-Paul Sartre (1995), not only does the narrator have a sense of the plot that, from the very beginning, makes the whole story end-oriented, but he/she is also limited by what Sartre calls the ‘imaginary’. In this context, Sartre contrasts the imaginary with objects of perception, i.e. the ‘real’. Any representation can only contain what is more or less consciously put into it (Sartre 2004; Detmer 2008). A narrator, who already knows the outcome of the story, fuels the representation with intentions and linguistic proficiency, and thus keeps it, in Sartre’s words, imaginary. Furthermore, such stories work with a double chronology – the past is portrayed through contemporary experiences, and objects fit into the present experiences of the narrator rather than the subject at the moment of perception (Burnett 1984). As discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 in this volume, however, stories about difficult experiences have a capacity to create affects in the narrator that were neither intentional nor linguistically aligned. Later in this chapter the opposition between the imaginary and the real is again questioned.

Objections of this kind are beyond the essence of what Sartre is after, however. When he talks about the ‘real’, he is primarily trying to describe the experiential dimension, the many contingencies and junctures, the realm of the pre-reflective and the nonverbal; but above all, he is talking about seeing things as part of an environment and, in practical terms, in contact with everyday events. It is when this multitude is looked at under the pretence of our interests and projects that it might escape our attention (Sartre 1965; Detmer 2008) and thereby also our multilayered relation to objects.

In peasant society

The reactions that arise when property is bequeathed are bound by time and milieu. In literary fiction, the parting of an estate is often portrayed as the instance where people’s true state of mind is displayed. Greed, vindictiveness, callousness, mendacity, and pure mischief are frequently found in dramas and novels, from Shakespeare’s *King Lear* to contemporary detective stories, and the inheritance trope has remained as one of the favourite means by which to bring pitiful human imperfections into the open. But what is presented as the most basic of emotions and personal shortcomings is something that, upon closer inspection, is a

connection between people and objects that is mostly non-verbal and pre-reflexive, and is closely connected to the social and material context.

The author Gustav Hellström portrays a scene from a traditional setting in his novel *Storm över Tjurö* ('Storm över Tjurö', 1935), and takes every opportunity to dwell upon the mentality of the islanders. The novel, set at the beginning of the last century, depicts a local clergyman who marvels at the readiness of farmers and fishermen on Tjurö to fight over heirlooms long before the body was cold. When reading the local newspaper,

he saw how sibling rose against sibling, child against father, or mother, father and mother against the children. The most sacred of blood relations was torn like cobwebs in the autumn air. For a couple of thousand kronor, or even the simplest piece of furniture could suddenly acquire value, as was it about bare life. The very drudgery of human existence presented itself in the fine print of the notices in the papers. (Hellström 1935; translated by Jonas Frykman)

For the islanders, access to a farm and land was essential for their very existence. The economy was autarchic – no wages could be expected at the end of the month, no hand-outs from the state, no holidays abroad. Status and recognition within the community were based on ownership of land, and property was mostly in short supply and almost always inherited. Identity for the islanders was constituted in relation to the world as it was experienced, both materially and socially, but always in relation to the community. The habitus of one farmer mirrored that of his neighbour.

These people's habitus took shape in the handling of farm equipment, the tilling of the soil, and the sowing of the grain. They had learned how to understand and *feel with* their land, which was a more thorough and assertive process than what they *thought of* (Frykman and Gilje 2003). They probed every piece of their farm; as they walked behind their horses, ploughing and harrowing, the stones and rugged outcrops had by and by become as familiar as their arms and shoulders. At sea the islanders either pulled up nets full of herring or had to return empty-handed. In their boats they learned to read the skies and gauge the swell. They knew where the shallows were and how far down the sea bed was. Land-

marks helped them to navigate. Each glance at the sky was followed by the implicit question of whether rising early and casting out more lines was worthwhile.

Inside the house, the furniture, such as the chest of drawers, the writing desk, or the clock, was mostly singled out to be scrutinized only when questions of inheritance made it visible. The chiming of the clock indicated the hour when the different chores should be carried out, the men were due home, the cows were to be brought in, and when the food had to be on the table. At the writing desk the daughters of the family learned how to put a shopping list together, while the chest of drawers housed the dowry and the children's baptismal gifts. The interior of one house mirrored that of the next.

All in all, things were not so much seen as singular objects from a certain period in life that people found reasons to bicker about or go to court for. They were rather things that made sense through their uses, chunks of ongoing life, objects through which people knew how to lead a life and survive on the island of Tjurö. The fact that people fought over heirlooms was only partially due to their family history and their mental and emotional dispositions. The heirlooms became real to the extent that the material culture was part of the medium through which the world was disclosed. This was precisely what Heidegger meant by 'worlding'.

Atmosphere

Affects in contemporary societies are not as obviously community-related as on Tjurö, but appear more as a consequence of individual rights being violated, agreements broken, and love betrayed. When she was dispossessed of the jewellery, Doreen was deeply affected, since something she and her mother had cherished had been lost. The two Canadian solicitors recount another incident in which personal relations were gathered interobjectively – between people and a material object. Two sisters were fighting over a treasured crystal vase. Their mother had received it as birthday gift from one of the two. When their mother passed away it was made part of the estate which had to be divided equally between the daughters. The one who had originally purchased the vase saw her chance to reclaim the treasured piece, even though it was equally dear to them both. She took it to the building in which the solicitor's office was

housed. Outraged, she called them down to the parking area to make them witness the breakdown of a troubled sisterhood:

Her face was turned red and she was shaking with anger as she turned to open the door. She reached into the front seat and held the crystal vase over her head. She shrieked at us, 'IF I CAN'T HAVE THE VASE, THEN NO ONE CAN!!!' With those words, she shattered the vase on the pavement of the parking lot, jumped into her car, and took off. (Fish and Kotzer 2009: 34)

As the editors of the book *The Affect Theory Reader*, Seigworth and Gregg claim that it is unnecessary to emphasise the difference between inter-objective, in between people and things, and intersubjective, between people. Things and the environment are included in 'ongoing impingements and pressures from intersubjective and interobjective systems of social desiring' (2010: 7). Above it was stated that affects relate to the pre-reflexive and the lower and proximal senses, such as touch, taste, smell, rhythm, and other types of everyday phenomena and can just as well be the outcome of an interobjective encounter.

'Atmospheric affects' on the other hand are frequently described as intersubjective communication which implies the body and the senses. When Spinoza uses the notion of *affectio*, he is referring to 'the force of an affecting body and the impact it leaves on the one affected' (Watkins 2010: 269; see also Gilje, Chapter 2 in this volume). Affects then denote influence and change. To affect a person is to act upon his or her bodily state as well as state of mind. In the way it is used by Spinoza, it refers to the potential to act; the simultaneous power to affect the world and to be affected by it (Massumi 2002; Clough and Halley 2007; Autumn White 2007). What makes affects hard to pin down in neat definitions is that they belong to that bodily realm of the pre-reflective that Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962) refers to as 'that world which precedes knowledge, of which knowledge always speaks, and in relation to which every scientific schematisation is an abstract and derivate sign-language, as is geography in relation to the countryside in which we have learnt beforehand what a forest, a prairie or a river is' (ibid. viii, ix). The pre-reflexive is what one comprehends before even starting to deliberate.

Affects, then, are set apart from emotions that are more easily defined since they have found their way into words. Emotions are, in Sartre's

(1962/94) famous definition, always directed towards an object: you are angry, in love, frustrated, or mad with someone; you are frustrated, enchanted, or bored with something. Emotions are ‘culturalised’, put into frames of reference, recognised by others and narrated.²

The psychologist Theresa Brennan, in her book *The Transmission of Affects* (2004), compares affects to the atmosphere that can be felt when, for instance, one enters a room and notices that the air is ‘so thick you could cut it with a knife’. Affects communicate important messages non-verbally, passing below the radar. Building on Spinoza, Brennan points out how affects are ‘also responsible for bodily changes, some are brief changes, as in a whiff of the room’s atmosphere, some longer lasting’ (ibid. 1).

This affective atmosphere – the transmission of affect – if only for an instant, alters the biochemistry and neurology of the subject. The social environment literally gets into the individual. Physically, something is present that was not there before, but it was not intended nor even generated solely or in part by the individual organism or its genes (ibid.).

As characterised by the philosopher Eirin Manning (2007: 17), affects are found in between people, through touch or by simply being moved, ‘of reaching towards one another’, and exceed linguistic signification. In Kathleen Stewart’s definition (2007: 5), they are ‘complex and uncertain objects that fascinate because they literally hit us or exert a pull on us’.

For an anthropologist or ethnologist, the notion of affective atmospheres becomes problematic or decontextualised when the related histories or narratives existing in the field are not taken into consideration (cf. Jansen, Chapter 3 in this volume). In her ethnography of divided Cyprus where ethnic Turks took over the buildings and olive groves left by the expelled Greek farmers, the anthropologist Navaro-Yashin (2007) shows how melancholy radiated from deserted or half-ruined properties, but was also reflected in tales and narratives.

The solicitors mentioned above give almost an ethnographic description of how affective atmospheres are constantly interwoven with narration. For example, they describe an event concerning two cousins and the frosty atmosphere between them after the division of an estate. The son of a deceased client had been involved in a bitter fight with his cousin over the will. The business his father had run unexpectedly went to the cousin, which meant that the son was dispossessed while his cousin triumphed. After this the two men could hardly stand being together

in the same room, to say nothing of turning up at the same wedding party, where the relatives and wedding guests immediately experienced the icy coldness between the two antagonists. Was the other smearing his adversary's reputation when seen whispering in the ear of the person sitting next to him? Was this whisper the prelude to him blaming his cousin in front of all the others? He was quoted as saying:

You don't know how it feels to look at every person at the table as a buffer between you and the person you fought with. You don't know how nervous you might get meeting your enemy while the two of you are alone in the washroom. There is a stress that words can't describe. (Fish and Kotzer 2009: 37)

Simply being aware of the man moving around other people caused affective changes that were bodily. The man's bearing, thoughts, emotions, actions, and understanding of his surroundings were all affected. The anger, excitement, or diffuse discomfort he felt had, of course, a long prehistory that had been clearly narrated.

Worlding

Worlding is a concept where objects, experiences, and use/practice are in focus, where history is taken for granted rather than made the object of investigation. When writing about objects as filled with *dormant energies*, the Irish poet Seamus Heaney gives a good picture of how material objects are worlding. He takes the reader into the 'world which precedes knowledge' (Merleau-Ponty 1962):

The rooms where we come to consciousness, the cupboards we open as toddlers, the shelves we climb up to, the boxes and albums we explore in reserved places in the house, the secret spots we come upon in our earliest solitudes out of doors, the haunts of our first explorations in outbuildings and fields at the verge of our security – it is in such places and at such moments that 'the reality of the world' awakens in us. These are archetypal moments, occurring in every life irrespective of intellectual, social or economic differences. And it is at such moments that we have our first inkling of past-ness and find our physical surroundings invested with a

wider and deeper dimension than we can, just then, account for. This is an unconscious process at the time. It is neither sentimental nor literary, since it happens during the pre-reflective stage of our existence. It has to do with an almost biological need to situate ourselves in our instinctual lives as creatures of the race and of the planet, a need to learn the relationship between what is self and what is not self. It has to do with exploring, sniffing out, settling in and shaping up. And just as the smell of the rubber sheet in a pram or the feel of boards in the bottom of a cot or the scrape of the nappy pin as the child creeps on a tiled floor or the slippiness as he creeps over linoleum, just as these sensations teach the child about the realm of the present, so in every life there are sensations which inaugurate contact with the large and inviting reality of the past. (Heaney 1993)

When Heidegger (1962: 116/84) introduces the concept of worlding, his intention is to describe the state where things are familiar and used as tools – implements that help to link individuals to a certain environment and make that environment of concern for the user.³ The philosopher Richard Polt explains Heidegger's concept as 'a system of purposes and meanings that organizes our activities and our identity and within which entities can make sense to us' (Polt 1999: 54), and he explains that the potentials are there 'before we formulate propositions about them' and are thus filled with possibilities (ibid. 68). The objects are *zuhanden* – ready-to-hand – which implies that it is unnecessary to think about them because they are already there, ready to grasp and put into use. They influence the user pre-reflexively, as with a hammer or a pen, which dictate different possible operations, can be interpreted in different ways, and are to be used in order to follow an intention and create a totality of material and social relations – a world. Worlding conjures up what Heaney affectively discloses as the 'world' of his childhood home. Worlding implies that things assemble a human condition in terms of time and space. In his biography of Heidegger, the German philosopher Rüdiger Safranski (1998) uses Proust's famous cake to explain worlding: 'Proust dunks his madeleine in his tea – and the universe of Combray unfolds. The madeleine, that sweet shell-shaped cake "is worlding"' (ibid. 96).

Death and the inevitable inventory that follows disconnect the objects from this familiarity, their *zuhanden* state, and they become *vorhanden*

– present-at-hand – and perceived as symbols or representations. When they stop worlding it is like when a person dies and her clothes and objects are left behind, saturated with a void that, one eventually realises, is forever. The loss that is felt is proportionate to the complexity of the world that the object was once a part of and an opening into, while it is now reduced to something that can be sold or valued for a market price.

Gathering

Not all inherited objects are invested with what is usually called ‘affective value’. When fights broke out in peasant society they were mostly over property that would make its owner the rightful heir of the farm or the family domain. Conflicts in contemporary milieus often take place over things that bring to mind significant family events: Christmas celebrations, baptisms, weddings, or similar gatherings. Heidegger’s notion (1971) of gathering consequently does not describe family festivities or even how things are remembered per se, but how singular objects are endowed with the ability to bring a certain material surrounding and its web of relationships to life. Or, to put it differently, when things are gathering they summon both the people involved and the activities they perform. Heidegger’s classic examples are bridges, farming implements, and a family meal at which the social and culinary skills of the participants around the table are to the fore. In the example that introduced this chapter, instead of seeing them as broaches, rings, or bracelets, Doreen perceived the jewellery as holding together something that now contained both the objects and her mother. Or, to put it differently by using Heidegger’s term, they were gathering a set of events and relations – an *Umwelt* (environment) – that had become sensitive since her mother’s death.

To gather, then, is not an outcome of the process of bringing together objects that are random or statistically present properties, ‘but a matter of how the thing itself ‘works’ – how it ‘things’, as the Australian philosopher Jeff Malpas puts it (2006: 234; see Polt 1999:58). With the word ‘thinging’ he refers to objects as not just symbolic, i.e. present-at-hand, or even useful, i.e. ready-to-hand, but as evoking interwoven contexts through the perceiver’s personal experience.⁴

In the book *The Perception of the Environment*, Tim Ingold (2000) takes Pieter Breughel the Elder’s well-known picture *The Harvesters* (1565) to illustrate the usefulness of the concept of gathering. He describes how

the artist lets an entire picture of a landscape reverberate with how he paints the central motif of a tree. ‘This is not *any* tree’, Ingold writes:

Rising from the spot where people are gathered for their repast is an old and gnarled pear-tree, which provides them with both shade from the sun, a back-rest and a prop for utensils. Being the month of August, the tree is in full leaf, and fruit is ripening on its branches. For one thing, it draws the entire landscape around it into unique focus; in other words by its presence it constitutes a particular place. The place was not there before the tree, but came into being with it ... In its present form, the tree embodies the entire history of its development from the moment it first took root. And that history consists in the unfolding of its relations with the manifold components of its environment, including the people who have nurtured it, tilled the soil around it, pruned its branches, picked its fruit, and, as at present use it as something to lean against. The people, in other words, are as much bound up in the life of the tree as the tree in the lives of the people. (Ingold 2000: 204)

The picture is not just a demonstration of how Breughel dreamed up the many riches in the lives of Dutch peasants in the sixteenth century. It also shows the homogeneity of its population and how closely people were integrated with fields, crops, and landscapes. People and nature were as one. Here, the process of gathering was released by the hand and imagination of the painter.

Until it mysteriously disappeared when moving a couple of years ago, I had in my possession my father’s bedside table. It was inconspicuous, but to me it gathered in itself my father’s profession as a doctor, his life history, the family that was his, our relationship, and my conceivable future. It belonged to the category of objects that emanated such strong affects among all of us five children; with great difficulties, it was made a part of my inheritance when father died. The world that gathered in it was dear to me, but also problematic because, among other reasons, I never fulfilled his dream of choosing the medical profession. This indeed was an object that became ‘sticky’ as Sarah Ahmed (2010) put it, close to the Heideggerian concept, of gathering filled with a surplus of

affects, emotions, and meanings. In other words, it was attractive and disturbing at the same time.

That bedside table stood in his room, a screened-off territory with a separate entrance and a restroom. The table's design revealed the 1950's fascination with teak and mobile furniture, and was acquired when father decided to move back home after having lived on his own for some years. It had two levels. The surface of the lower level, which was hardly visible, had bleached spots in the polish from diluted alcohol and ether. There he kept the constantly leaking circular steel container for sterilising syringes. Some of the small metal files for cutting the tops off of glass ampoules were stuck in the cracks in the woodwork. He suffered from an illness that eventually took his life and that needed regular, self-administered treatment. The upper level was the table's public space and was littered with poetry books, cigarette packets, a overflowing ashtray, and a black Bakelite telephone with a direct line to the surgery. The surface also had several circular stains from the pots of yoghurt that father downed when he arrived home, there being little time to eat at work. This surface told the story of a cultured, busy, and devoted doctor of his time, while the lower part had more sombre connotations and murmured of personal shortcomings, spells of anxiety, and crumbling health.

Sitting on the other side of that table at night, I listened to father, inhaling the smoke from his unfiltered Philip Morris cigarettes, while he talked. The smoke that drifted towards the ceiling blended with the chemical smells from his medical practice. In our nocturnal sojourns, when his last patient had gone and I had sneaked away from my homework, I learned about diseases, cures, remedies, and heard stories about his own childhood and his family's material and emotional poverty, hardships that obviously made him follow a vocation that allowed him to help people in need. Hovering over the table was an equally thick yet invisible ambience made up of his professional knowledge, my filial affection and admiration, and my deepest compassion for his many crises, which as a youth I found difficult to fully comprehend. The fact that something is worlding makes it come alive with its connotations and many uses. The phenomenon of gathering lays bare the object's particular context of activities, in this case the setting of the world of patients, relatives, and friends that surrounded us in the 1950s, their stories and characteristics, all filtered through the relation between father and son, and powerfully

gathered in a piece of furniture made out of teak and standing on four wheels. In other words, this object had a very special affective value.

Space of appearance

We have now seen how affects can be stirred up at the parting of an estate due to the special power objects become endowed with, here described by the notions of worlding and gathering. The pain following the realisation that some of this magic is jeopardised when the things are taken out of their original *Umwelt*, however, only partially explains the turbulence that define this event. The agitated atmosphere that surrounds the loss of parents presents the objects with new connotations, bestowing them with a new meaning.⁵ Breaking the objects off from their original setting is often felt as a trauma, yet it is also the beginning of another momentum. As referred to above, when a person's clothes or objects become saturated with a vacancy after he/she has departed, it can also be the beginning of a new phase. To start with, however, such objects evoke a sense of vagueness and uncertainty among the bereaved. Some of the objects from home will be integrated into the homes of the children, some will be sold, and others given away. And sometimes they become part of an arsenal by which the inheritors attack one another. The affective backdrop for such a transition is often precarious, writes the professor of social psychology Bertil Törestad; respect for the ageing parents might have stopped the children – the inheritors – from showing their irritation and feelings of long-lasting injustice, but

[r]eality has to be renegotiated when the parents are gone. The bereaved have to deal with inheritance at the time when they are mentally most unfit to deal with it ... Many children regress and end up in what could be described as trench-warfare, where both sides adjust their arsenal in order to injure their counterpart most severely. Old violations are brought up and now finally have my revenge and settle the old scores! (*Uppsala Nya Tidning* 11/5/2011)

The lawyer Carola Erixon describes the ambivalent situation when emotions and affects that have been kept at bay are brought out into the open: 'We usually take a lot [of crap] from family members, and have a kind

of ‘wild card’ on being mean’ (*Svenska Dagbladet* 16 Nov. 2006), which we are able to brandish at this moment of emotional crisis.

At the inventory of the estate, what has been private and held within the family must, to some extent, become public. The dissolution of what was once a household is a legal process by which the familiar attains publicity – at the risk of dirty linen being hung out for all to see. Hannah Arendt (1958) has coined the concept of space of appearance to capture the fact that at such and similarly highly affective occasions, people, objects, and material culture form a tightly interlaced unit; furthermore, it is a unit that is political to the extent that it facilitates a specific kind of future.

Originally Arendt used the concept to describe the role played by the public sphere – *agora* – in the city-states of ancient Greece. There, citizens met in dire contexts to discuss and decide on upcoming matters. The term denotes how seemingly spontaneous flares of political action are deeply anchored in what appears around the actors: the history of previous decisions, the existence of ingrained habits, and the anticipation of a reachable future. Arendt persistently points to the role played by the environment in the shaping and recharging of culture and politics. The things that surrounded the ancient Greeks at the *agora*, such as buildings, monuments, statues, art, and all those objects that carry the offprint of history, memory, or common efforts, are all activated in such a space of appearance.⁶ Arendt (1958: 95) claims that continuity without objects is not continuity in the real sense, for ‘The whole factual world of human affairs depends for its reality and its continued existence, first, upon the presence of others who have seen and will remember, and second, on the transformation of the intangible into tangibility of things’. Thus, Arendt’s use of ‘space of appearance’ becomes the spot where something new is created against the backdrop of something tangible that already exists. Through this reciprocity, the space of appearance becomes invested by the power of the past in projecting possible futures on the present.

The summer house

The home, the neighbourhood, the village, the town square, or even a TV programme might create a space of appearance. On the island of Tjurö, it was the family farm that was the immediate space of appearance, which extended to the community of which it was a part. The inheritors on Tjurö were surrounded by furniture, houses, and land that were to

be passed on to them without very many alternatives. The objects had been incorporated and were worlding due to their daily use; any loss was likely to cause deep despair. The physical *Umwelt* that once made them could just as well undo them.

A very special space of appearance stands out in contemporary material under the name of the summer house. Books and articles with titles like *Saving the Family Cottage: A Guide to Succession Planning for Your Cottage, Cabin, Camp or Vacation Home* (Hollander et al. 2013) flood the market, mostly written from a legal point of view as a kind of first aid kit for families trying to steer clear of inheritance conflicts. In the answers to the questionnaire LUF 242 about inheritance, the holiday home on some occasions was described as the scene where nasty conflicts between siblings could be played out.

This underlines deep emotional attachments to the place and the precautions taken to retain happy memories. Or, as the American professor of English Ken Huggins writes in the essay 'Passing It On: The Inheritance, Ownership and Use of Summer Houses' (2003: 87):

Going to a summer home each year may be the most treasured of childhood memories. If you were fortunate enough to have done this when you were young, you may have stronger, clearer and fonder memories of your times at 'your summer' house than from your year-round house. And as you married and had kids of your own, you may have wanted to give them the opportunity for the memorable and treasured times you had.

The holiday home symbolises days away from school and obligations, of staying together as an extended family with grandparents, aunts and distant cousins, of rummaging through the woods and meadows, of getting mosquito bites, of building huts and claiming places of your own. The holiday home often turns out to be the place where the happy family life *happened* that you later keep looking back at. As with all important places, belonging becomes a stronger link than nostalgia. Michael Jackson (2014: 87) describes this attachment as 'a haunting presence, an afterimage, a ghost' that lingers since this is the place from which one once drew sustenance.

Counsellors and solicitors interviewed about inheritance matters in Swedish newspapers tell stories about how deeply inheritors are affected

when the holiday home must be split up or sold. Heirs line up to seek legal and personal advice as to how to settle conflicts and injustices. It is as if the place makes them revive not only the happy days but also the troubled relations: who was the most privileged, who was given the most attention by the parents, who was there when the ageing parents needed help and care, and who never turned up. In short, who had received the most of that affective substance that used to be the heart and soul of the family? What solicitors call ‘family relations’ are more at stake than objects of economic value. A person involved in many estate inventories concludes that ‘it is mostly about love lost when disagreement turns up. If I did not get enough love, at least I want money or things’ (*Svenska Dagbladet* 12 Nov. 2008). The worst scenes take place, he says, when siblings are involved in a conflict, whereas more distant relatives seem to have a more rational attitude.

Fights over the elusive, affective family substance stand out as a recurrent theme in stories about holiday homes. In one story, two sisters told of their disgust at their brother for monopolising not only most of the parents’ affection, but also metaphorically claiming the emotional essence of the summer house. When it could no longer be kept it was put on the market, and the sisters were unduly blamed for having violated the spirit of togetherness and affection:

We are three children, one brother and two sisters. We were given the summer house to share, provided that our parents were allowed to construct a separate building. When our parents passed away our brother insisted that he should take over the big house while we sisters shared the small one. My sister and I did not agree, mostly because we found out that our brother had been favoured in so many ways that we had not known about – and eventually the entire property was sold. There was no longer a place where memories could appear. This very sad story means that we can no longer meet. Our brother’s children talk about us as the ‘mean aunts’ and what our sister-in-law says cannot be repeated. (*Svenska Dagbladet* 30 Nov. 2008)

In another unhappy fight over who was getting the most love from the parents, a sister and brother inherited the holiday home that had been in the family’s ownership for a long time. The sister, who was the apple

of her parents' eye, wanted to keep it and buy her brother out for below the market price. The situation made him aware of years of neglect and a constant lack of moral support. When as a young man he went to sea he was scolded by the parents, and when he later started to study he was again told to find a proper job. 'Nothing I did was good enough. Finally, I decided that I would have as much a say as my sister and not succumb to being yet another victim of parental authority' (*Dagens Nyheter* 17 Aug. 2004).

The holiday home became a space of appearance where much of the affective atmosphere was gathered in its very *Umwelt*, its things and activities, and where the imbalance in family relations became visible when the summer house's future had to be decided.

On the formation of affects

Heidegger's concepts of worlding and gathering can be combined with chronological perspectives such as history, narration, socialisation, and what Sartre, as noted above, called 'the imaginary'. When stories are told about how family-owned objects, like a cut-glass chandelier, the collected works of Selma Lagerlöf, a necklace, or the summer house, cause so much trouble, 'it really turns out to be about something else', claims the psychologist Madeleine Gauffin Rahme. As a therapist she specialises in clients who have ended up in the middle of a family feud against their will. The root of the feuds could be anything from a father not providing enough of love or attention to a daughter whose efforts to take care of ageing parents had not been recognised (*Svenska Dagbladet* 12 Nov. 2008).

When material objects surface as symbols and become 'imaginary', they are in every sense of the word also 'real' and usually founded on childhood experiences. A closer look at the difference between the upbringing in peasant society and the contemporary world makes this point clear. In premodern society, the farmstead, with its fields and animals, was a home that one only left through marriage or death. The days were defined by a seasonal rhythm of work and children were engaged in tasks and production according to their strength and ability from a young age. Toys were rare and the potential for expanding the self into a world designed to stimulate the imagination, for example by playing with dolls, did not exist more than was necessary. Inside the house the rooms looked very

much the same as they did in the houses in the neighbouring village; they might be poorer or richer but were all variations on the same theme. This existing *Umwelt* was incorporated into a person's habitus from an early age, with little room for an individualized subject to expand.

Nowadays, family members only live under the same roof and share material experiences for twenty or so years. Primary as well as secondary socialisation takes place within this time span. During these years children are preparing for a professional trajectory that requires considerably more flexibility than the old model that was built upon imitation. Regardless of whether the children end up as dockers, entrepreneurs, doctors, artists, or scholars, during childhood they are surrounded with a wide range of objects and imaginary rooms that they learn to master, love – and transcend. Childhood then becomes that cherished foreign land where life was lived at its fullest and moments of happiness and betrayal are never to be forgotten. This was the heart where affects were experienced, named, and dealt with as emotions. To the Heideggerian approach we must then add what is brought up in the space of appearance where education of the senses happens.

The training ground *par préférence* for this childhood learning process was the holiday home – at least in middle-class families (Frykman and Löfgren 1987). In every phase of the family cycle it was the place that conjured the old and young back to the days of childhood, where innocence in the children was expected and eccentric behaviour among the grown-ups was allowed. The emotional and affective disposition acquired here remains the ideal of what holiday homes are all about, and are the answer to why the loss of such an estate brings up such strong affects.

In one family described by Fish and Kotzer (2009), the father bequeathed the summer residence to his two children. His dream was that they would share it equally and keep it as it was. Here they were supposed to enjoy the lightness of life, cooking dinners and being at the very heart of real family life, 'swimming in the pool, playing cards around the kitchen table, and laughing hysterically as his children told their children the funny stories they shared when growing up' (ibid. 157 ff.) Now, however, they were no longer children and had developed new tastes and habits. Nevertheless, the summer place transported them back to a time of irresponsibility, where parents stood ready to move in and preclude any misunderstanding or rivalry, but now they had to sort out every grievance themselves. In the end they decided to time-share the place. When the

son arrived, he found to his dismay that his sister and her family had left the house in a mess: 'rotting food in the fridge, crumbs on the floor, beds unmade, pots still on the kitchen counter, dirty dishes in the sink' and obvious traces of teenagers having used the place for partying. Clothes were not properly hung in the wardrobes and swimwear, sandals, and tennis racquets were not in their proper places (ibid. 157 ff.).

What had once been part of the expectedly unbothered behaviour at holiday time stood out as slothful, and the darker sides of what was supposed to be a fairyland were brought out into the open. The holiday home was turned into a material rebuke of the fundamental qualities the sister and brother had accumulated when growing up. Again, as in many other cases, the property had to be sold and the bonds between siblings were severed. Something that is so deeply ingrained is difficult to put into words. The only remedy seemed to be to fight over the possessions when what was really lost was the heart and soul that once gave life to the material objects.

Conclusion

This chapter on affects and material culture took as its point of departure the division of an estate. It was inspired by theories of affect combined with a phenomenological approach based on the works of Heidegger, Sartre, Bourdieu, and Arendt. The ways in which affective atmospheres work help to describe how objects are to be approached through their uses and show how affects are an 'in-between' phenomenon, passed on between people inter-subjectively, but also between people and objects inter-objectively. When a daughter, for instance, is denied her mother's jewellery, it becomes clear how the bonds to her mother were contained in and transmitted through the physical experience of the objects. The jewellery truly was worlding to the extent that it brought to life a world shared and known to her and her mother. But this relation is hard to verbalise and thus difficult to 'prove' to her brothers, since they had not shared the same intimate relation with the mother that the jewellery gathers.

Through the case of peasant society, the question of the sedimentation of affects was addressed. The peasantry were allegedly prone to fighting over property, and the parting of an estate was an occasion for the basest of affects and emotions to be displayed. In interpreting such milieus,

the analytical tools of worlding and gathering make perfect sense. What was at stake was not individual or personal dispositions, but rather the objects they were bickering about had become a part of their habitus and the very medium through which the world was disclosed. Affective responses arose when this self-evident connection was jeopardised.

The breaking up of a home comes at the worst of times: when the people concerned are grieving. Here again the phenomenological approach to material culture has proven helpful. Through Arendt's concept of space of appearance, it became possible to see the part played by material culture in palpably trying to create something new out of a harrowing situation. The recharging of objects that is more seldom brought to attention 'before we formulate propositions about them' turned out to be graspable though such an approach.

The analysis of the holiday homebrought to the fore the matter of formation of affects through the combination of material culture and socialisation – in a way similar to Bourdieu's analysis of habitus. The difference to peasant society was clearly demonstrated with regard to the individuality and the development of self that has become such a critical part of growing up. The holiday home turned out to be a place where formation of the self is most poignant since it is there children are given free rein to find their own way. What happens there on holiday are important affective events, often mulled over on winter evenings while leafing through photo albums and repeating stories.

Finally, this chapter showed that catching this formation of the senses, the affiliation to objects and milieus that had been important in the process of growing up, was only partially reachable with the phenomenological toolbox. The analysis has to reach out for life histories and other types of narratives, and consider the wider question on how the socialisation of members of a culture is done in everyday practice.

Notes

- 1 Since the questions explicitly asked about events in the informant's own family, almost all of the answers turned out to fall within the genre of life stories.
- 2 Raymond Williams uses the notion of the structure of feelings to describe how a certain time or epoch could be characterised by a set – a structure – of thinking, emotions, and affects 'which is indeed social and material, but each in embryonic phase before it can become fully articulate and defined exchange' (Williams 1977: 131).
- 3 This kind of worlding is described by Arendt in *The Life of the Mind* (1971: 20): 'Living beings,

- men and animals, are not just in the world; they are of the world and this precisely because they are subjects and objects – perceiving and being perceived – at the same time’.
- 4 For Heidegger, the use of gathering is part of an epistemology where the ‘fourfold’ (earth, sky, gods, and mortals) are brought together. Elaborating on this is beyond the scope of this chapter.
 - 5 Heidegger uses the general term *assertive* to describe the transition of things as they lose the uses to which they were once put in a certain context.
 - 6 Arendt’s concept has common traits with Heidegger’s view of how worlding works: the environment is taken for granted to the point that it becomes innate.

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The multiplicity of affective reactions released by just one object is at the core of Chapter 8. The authors describe how a retail chain staged a kick-off in northern Norway in what is also the territory of the indigenous Sámi population. To make it 'authentic', mock Sámi costumes made in China were given to the employees. This event caused an intense debate in the local and national media where opinions about the rights of indigenous people, colonialism, safeguarding heritage, and the humiliating abuse of the Sámi national dress were voiced. It turned out that although most of the population formed an affective community to the extent that they all were animated, they did not react in similar ways. The authors stress that when analysing affects in relation to material culture, time and place matter as well as the relations and context that give the object substance.

What Alters When the Traditional Sámi Costume Travels?

A Study of Affective Investments in the Sápmi

Britt Kramvig & Anne Britt Flemmen

The wearing of a traditional Sámi costume (*gákti*) that was light green in colour and produced in China at an internal event staged by the employees of the Norwegian grocery retail chain KIWI¹ resulted in an emotional public debate in Sápmi/Norway.² Some saw the use of the traditional Sámi costume as disrespectful, while others saw it as harmless fun. People reacted in different ways: some were disgusted, some were frustrated and angry and some were amused and intrigued. We were faced with a situation in which the majority population was seen to tread on the (already sore) toes of the indigenous Sámi people. In the debate that followed multiple positions were performed – and within the Sámi community too. This was one of these rare occasions when the respectful use of indigenous Sámi objects was publicly debated and differences in opinion within the Sámi community became publicly visible. Disagreement and discontent within the Sámi community is not often verbally expressed in Norwegian public arenas. It is rather communicated in other, subtler ways.

Our task in this essay is to track what it is that alters when matter, terms, and aims travel from one place to another. We will argue that the costumes need to be considered as more than iconically charged objects. Objects such as the *gákti* enact connections to a specific heritage that is celebrated, as well as to memories and a sense of nostalgia and loss. The *gákti* is part of some highly affective practices for a group of people exposed to centuries of persecution and marginalization. We also sug-

gest how affect aroused by the presence of objects can be articulated. We take inspiration from Navaro-Yashin's claim (2012: 203) that affect is contained and emitted through the solidity, presence, visibility, and tangibility of objects. In line with Frykman and Povrzanović Frykman (Chapter 1) we attempt to approach objects as materiality that become sensitised through use, but also serve as containers of affects.

We use the ethnographic story of the KIWI jacket debate to argue that we need to view affect through the qualities, textures and potentialities of the objects themselves. The affect that is transmitted by objects can be explored through the disconcertment and tension present in the debate. With this story we want to explore what happened when the traditional Sámi costume (*gákti*) travelled into the internal building of collective identity amongst the employees of the grocery retail chain KIWI, and how this can be understood. The emotions and heated debate that followed testified to the challenges of recognising and establishing respect for difference in a postcolonial era.

The KIWI jacket

In autumn 2010 there was a Norwegian media storm when 630 KIWI employees wore a specially made 'KIWI green', Guovdageaidnu/



Figure 8.1. The KIWI jacket. Photo with permission, ryan.txanson@gmail.com



Figure 8.2. The Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino *gákti*. Photo: Valerie Stalder. With permission, Tromsø Museum – Universitetsmuseet.

Kautokeino-inspired traditional costume made in China. The group of employees took to the streets of the city of Tromsø on their way to an event created by ‘Better and Better’, a company based in southern Norway. This company had been commissioned to gather KIWI employees from the entire country to celebrate the philosophy and strengthen the identity of the KIWI group using untraditional means. On meeting members of the group in their green copies of the Kautokeino-inspired *gákti*, the artist Sara Marielle Gaup,³ from the Sámi band Adjagas, said on NRK Sámi Radio that she was in total shock: ‘This is an insult to us [Adjagas] personally, but also an insult to the Sámi people.’⁴ Adjagas had been booked to play later that evening, but decided to withdraw from the

KIWI event with immediate effect. The Sámi lawyer Ande Somby said in the local newspaper *Nordlys* that ‘this was like pissing on a Sámi symbol’.⁵

Hans Kristian Amundsen, the editor of *Nordlys* newspaper, wrote an editorial entitled ‘Relax’:⁶

I think that Sámi lawyers should take it easy. Their fierce condemnation is more harmful to the Sámi reputation than the green jackets from China. The image of the Sámi as sensitive and lacking in self-irony is unfortunately confirmed by the verdict of the morality police. We suggest relaxing. It is not harmful to any part of the Sámi community when people dress up in green jackets.

I hope that Sámi lawyers will learn from this incident. In 2010 the Sámi have to tolerate tasteless elements without interpreting them as oppressive. The Sámi culture is strong enough to withstand the ridicule and teasing. Moreover, it was nice that 650 KIWI employees came to the High North and learned about Sámi culture.⁷

The event sparked a lively open debate about the extent to which the Sámi community should be expected to accept and tolerate the (mis)use of Sámi national symbols.

The Sámi designer Anne Berit Anti regarded KIWI’s use of the colourful Kautokeino costume as positive:⁸ ‘They may simply have wanted to build bridges.’ When interviewed by the Sámi newspaper *Sagat*, she suggested: ‘Why not take advantage of this media frenzy and get KIWI to run a big campaign on reindeer meat?’ She believed that this would be a fruitful cooperation, especially at a time when reindeer meat was in abundance. This could be done ‘quickly, safely and cheaply’ she chuckled, referring to KIWI’s slogan. She also added that she could understand the Sámi’s reactions, especially in the light of the Finnish tourist industry’s extensive (mis)use of Sámi culture, and in particular the *gákti*.

Another contribution to the debate expressed a somewhat different point of view:

We have inherited these somewhat painful things from Norwegian Sámi interactions, and the KIWI jacket with its colourful splendour reflects these stories. I believe we will be able to progress further if we deal with this more honestly, rather than just

being politely self-ironic, to secure that the recognition of the Sámi will not be damaged.⁹

KIWI's CEO used the media to apologise for hurting people's feelings and explained that they had collaborated with the Sámi people via a local Sámi company prior to the event and that no objections to their plans had been raised. The event company explained that: 'We simply wanted to be part of the culture, with lavvu, reindeer, a fireplace and the whole package. We had set up camp at Breivikeidet (outside Tromsø). Jeans and suits do not fit into such a camp.'¹⁰ The story was published in the southern regional newspaper *Drammens tidende* under the headline 'KIWI in Sámi trouble'. Prior to the production of the KIWI jacket the company had also checked the legal aspects of the matter and found no concerns. A very heated debate followed in *Nordlys*, on the website iTromsø and in the social media. This debate ranged from supportive and humorous contributions to scorn and anger.

This is a very interesting case because it contains all the necessary and fundamental prerequisites for indigenous people's cultural expressions to travel from one place (the Sámi community) to another (an internal company event). One of the more interesting aspects of the debate, in addition to its intensity, is that it did not simply take place within the Sámi community. On the contrary, many new and unexpected constellations and statements and inter- and intra-ethnic alliances were formed and clearly articulated. The object multiplies in such a process and gives us the chance to explore and rearticulate the similarities and differences of this specific event.

Positions in the debate

Three major positions were at play in this debate. We refer to these as the cultural flexibility argument, the rights argument and the equality argument. In different ways, all these arguments address the issue of how to bring the past into the present. The tensions arising from this debate can appear as postcolonial moments, a concept introduced by Verran (2002), where differences and similarities are seen as possibilities.

The cultural flexibility argument resonates with the overarching values that guide everyday Sámi practices (Kramvig 2005). The flexibility argument, launched by for example Anne Berit Anti, claims

that the KIWI jacket could be laughed at and seen as a way of building bridges. She also points to the commercial potential of KIWI copying Sámi items. At the same time she understands that someone might experience this as a violation of Sámi culture. In the everyday life of ethnically mixed communities, which most Sápmi communities are, the concept of Sáminess is dynamic, flexible and situated. Social practices that sustain ambiguous identity categories are present. After a century of institutionalised assimilation, some people still insist on ambiguity as a way of resisting Norwegian society and the logic of nationalism. In the practice of everyday life, objects are materials that are employed in the creation of a local, collective self-perception that transcends ethnic boundaries. In the flexibility argument, memories and experiences of different pasts are recognised as being present and in need of articulation. The complexity of memory and affects performed in emotionally conflicting situations is also recognised.

The rights argument refers to the work done to ensure indigenous people's rights to their own cultural expressions, self-determination and land. In Norway, this work has meant a balancing act between the transnational channel of NGOs and institutionalised ways of conducting politics. Bargaining for their rights as indigenous people within the state system, or 'bounded entities', the Sámi rights movement has been able to bring about institutional changes in Norway (Minde 2008). After colonisation, in both politics and everyday life indigenous people have lived the complex relationship between citizenship claims and participation in transnational social movements. Indigenous people strive towards visibility and acceptance. Since the 1960s many liberal nation-states have made space for their 'rights movements' and other forms of 'identity politics'. Nevertheless, according to Brown (1993: 398) these claims have become a 'vehicle of subordination through individualisation, normalisation and regulation'.

In our case, we consider the rights argument to have been put by, for example, Sara Marielle Gaup (Adjagas) and the lawyer Ánde Somby. They viewed the KIWI jacket as a violation of Sámi tradition and identity and as a disrespectful mockery of the political work done to recognise Sámi autonomy.

In his PhD thesis, Mattias Åhren explores who has ownership of the traditional Sámi costume and beauty pageants. Through his work, the rights positions are now in the process of being stabilised in legal

terminology (Åhren 2010). These questions have not been considered as pressing in Norway in the same way as they have for example in Finland (Junka-Aikio 2014). The Norwegian Sámi Parliament has not (yet) adopted Åhren's suggestions and taken up the global indigenous rights arguments in these cases. This hesitance can be viewed as a way of maintaining the flexibility and not being forced to fix Sámi cultural objects legally in terms of rights. It can also be viewed as a way of sustaining a local perspective and not simply adopting a global indigenous rights argument. It could be argued that in each specific case it is the local community's right to judge how matter or objects can travel. The argument about local communities' rights to decide on these issues is also launched by Åhren (2010). The Sámi *gákti* are different and the patterns reflect and are 'owned' by specific communities or by the local *siida* or families using the specific patterns.¹¹

The equality argument has an immediate and particular force in any debate, because it appeals to an (implicit) understanding that the same rules apply for everyone. Here, the questions asked seem to be why or how are you (people) different and why should you be treated differently? Marianne Gullestad (2002) argues that Norwegian discourses are performed through a specific combination of a bureaucratic welfare state and an open globalised capitalist economy, with a particular relationship between egalitarianism, nationalism and racism. Gullestad (2001) further argues that equality conceived as sameness ('imagined sameness') underpins the equality discourse in Norway. This makes statements of equality and difference challenging for the Sámi, as well as for other minorities. The imagined sameness becomes a prerequisite for equality.

When Amundsen stated that Sámi culture is strong enough to withstand ridicule and teasing, we read this as an equality argument. His appeal is for the Sámi to tolerate 'tasteless elements', to 'not be so sensitive' and to 'have more self-irony'. It is an appeal to allow the (colonial) past to remain in the past without bringing it into the present, the here and now. In the debate, the space for laughter was very limited, and with the exception of the Sámi designer Anne Berit Anti, very little laughter was heard.

How can we analyse these tensions and controversies regarding the respectful use of and ownership of the Sámi *gákti* in particular, of indigenous (symbolic) objects in general, and their naming and use? These objects come with different stories. What kinds of stories are told in moments of tension and conflict about the use of traditional Sámi

objects? Our reflections on these questions are inspired by Verran's own questions (2013), which are both ontological and political: How can we be respectful of difference, but not intimidated by it, in practical engagements between practitioners of disparate knowledge traditions? How can we imagine struggles of doing difference together in the here and now (Verran 2013: 141)?

Doing pasts differently

Like other indigenous people, the Sámi have often been described as wild, unruly and uncivilised, and their religious beliefs seen as an expression of a barbarism that has to be overcome (Kramvig and Flemmen 2010). The first expressions of 'civilization' in Sápmi often came with the introduction of churches, followed by the establishment of trading posts. This was followed by military fortifications, educational institutions, trade routes etc. The fascination with indigenous people – like the noble savage – has been described as deeply rooted in the Western modernity project (Said 1984; Hastrup 2007). The authentic 'we', which we in the West lost access to as a result of modernity's disintegrating effects, could be recovered as a nostalgic vision into the past that was derived from their contact with others.

The othering of the Sámi people can be regarded as a prerequisite for colonial projects to discipline the Sámi in terms of law, religion, education and language. This disciplining was part of an aspiration to 'help less fortunate others'. Sámi society has changed radically over the past 30 years, with new images emerging of Sáminess and the Sámi as one people (Stordahl 1994). The process of ethnic incorporation and the establishment of a Sámi political movement required images and symbols that worked both internally within the Sámi population and externally vis-à-vis the Norwegian government and public. These images were based on language and other cultural features, such as Sámi costumes, music, handicrafts and ecological sensibility, which articulated something different than the symbols of Norwegian culture (Schanche 1993). As reindeer herding was a very specific Sámi occupation, it lent itself to being used in the creation of a Sámi culture and history.

Schanche (1993) focuses on the paradoxes of this creation of an official Sámi past. The emphasis on the different Sámi values and symbols means that, at least to a certain extent, the Norwegian majority indirectly (by

negation) defines these values and symbols. Earlier research on Sámi issues focused on the process of ethnic revitalisation that began after a hunger strike outside the Norwegian Parliament in 1979 and the protests against the development of the Alta–Kautokeino river basin for hydro-electric power and the subsequent flooding of important Sámi pastures in 1980–81. Inspired by Fredrik Barth's study (1969) of ethnic groups and boundaries, the social construction of ethnicity and the establishment of boundaries between the Norwegian and the Sámi are seen by Thuen (1995) as important processes in the production of the Sámi nation.

The terms colonisation and decolonisation have only recently entered the public debate in Norway. The movement for Sámi rights was not really on the international agenda until the hunger strike outside the Norwegian Parliament and the civil disobedience at Stilla (the protests against the damming of the River Alta–Kautokeino). These events made the Norwegian state's treatment of the Sámi nationally and internationally visible. The government's assimilation policies gave way to increased Sámi consciousness, a gradual recognition of Sámi rights and support for the development of Sámi institutions, such as the Sámi Parliament (opened in 1989). In the 1980s and 1990s, the consequences of the colonial processes were brought to light, and the young people who had become more aware of a suppressed history claimed Sámi ethnicity to be increasingly relevant. Nevertheless, the social and political hierarchies and epistemic regimes that regulate the relationship between indigenous and dominant societies are hard and slow to undo (Kuokkanen 2010). Moreover, as Fanon (1963) argues, the undoing of colonial relations risks provoking conflict. In the contemporary process of decolonisation, our particular interest is how pasts are constructed differently and how objects come with different affects and pasts.

When we refer to the Sámi people we need to remember that we are actually talking about differences. Both the Sámi and Norwegians have lived in the same or neighbouring communities in which intermarriage and different kinds of bridging practices have been relatively common. The Sámi communities do not only differ when it comes to language (there are nine different Sámi dialects), but also in terms of artistic expressions and knowledge traditions. The traditional chanting (*joik*) differs from one community to the next; likewise traditional costume (*gákti*), Sámi practices and stories. In addition, it is important to remember that these practices have been multiplied by the processes of colonialism and

decolonialism. It is important to many that differences are respected and not erased in the eagerness to establish the category of the Sámi as a particular subject or citizens with specific rights. It is emphasised that people as well as communities should be able to ‘speak for themselves’ and not be reduced to one category with one voice and one past.

Some communities never gave in to the government’s assimilation policy. Others lost track of their Sámi past and are now trying to revitalise it. All these practices, and the different affects related to them, add to the complexity in Sápmi, where different indigenous communities and generations bring the past into the present in different ways. The sense of pain, shame, and guilt are more vivid for the older generations than the younger (Stordahl 1994). For some, memories are extremely intense, while for others they can be just a vague ‘something’ (see Chapter 1 in this volume). Younger Sámi organisations taking part in these debates often express respect for Sámi ownership, heritage and ways of life.

Questions about how to bring the past into the present are painful for many people. At times they have led to conflicts about how to connect the past, places and indigeneity. Families and places are reinterpreted, while ‘forgotten’ Sámi pasts are retrieved and often the subject of turbulent debate. This makes Sámi cultural expressions fragile, because they contain highly contested, valuable, repressed and often painful experiences and stories. The challenge in today’s Sápmi is mainly related to the effort to reclaim and revitalise the traditional Sámi culture and knowledge. These efforts are undertaken at the highest political levels, for example through the construction of institutions and the development of autonomous administrative units, such as environmental and resource management, culture, education and health. In addition, the same efforts are made in people’s everyday lives, in the challenge of recapturing the Sámi traditional knowledge, and the challenges related to self-articulation in a turbulent and complex landscape (Kramvig and Flemmen 2010).

The KIWI jacket as boundary object

An object is something people act towards and with (Star 2010: 603). Its materiality derives from action, not from prefabricated stuff or ‘thingness’.¹² These actions are manifold, which means that (some) Sámi objects have multiple and conflicting stories to tell. Further, these objects differ in the sense that they do not travel easily from one place to another. For

example, the *gákti* belongs to a very specific place, a specific community of *siidas* and to the people inhabiting these specific areas. The traditional costume thus enacts a given area and is connected to given place. Patterns, ribbons, belts and silver accessories also point to specific places. Social positions, such as married–unmarried, woman–man and differences in economic resources, also become visible. But the *gákti* has some flexibility. In areas that have recently reclaimed their Sámi heritage, such as Stjernøya (a Coastal Sámi area in Finnmark), reconstructions of the *gákti* have been made using old pictures, old fabrics and the stories told in the different communities. Furthermore, young people often make their own fashion statements by adding to, combining or introducing new objects to the *gákti*. All this is done with a sensibility of the tradition.

Given this flexibility, what went wrong in the case of the KIWI jacket? How should we understand the anger, frustration and conflicts that were provoked on this specific occasion? We argue that the emotions, or rather the affects of this object, need to be understood in relation to the object's ability to travel from one place to another. On this occasion movement provoked alterity. It is important to understand what alters when objects, here represented by the *gákti*, travel in this way. We follow Navaro-Yashin's argument (2012) that the transmission of affect between object and subject that produces disharmony, tension or uneasiness needs to be considered. This, she claims, is a specific quality of affect and follows it up by asking where this qualification comes from. The multiple qualities of the objects and the different stories they embody in relation to the viewer's knowledge of their context evoke anger and tension among those who come into contact with them. 'Objects and a material environment can generate affect, then, but only as they get entangled in forms of human mediation' (ibid. 214).

Science and technology studies (STS) are helpful in an analysis of this topic in that they suggest that objects are effects of stable arrays or networks of relations (Law 2002: 91). Law (2002) argues that objects hold together as long as the relations hold together and do not change shape. Our argument is that in the case of the KIWI jacket the relations changed and the object was instead connected to networks that were not regarded as responsible and trustworthy for sustaining the shape of the *gákti*. The traditional Sámi costume was thus not flexible enough to withstand this new enactment, at least not for some. The way the object, in this case the KIWI jacket, was held together or stabilised was challenged.

Some objects are referred to as boundary objects (Star and Griesemer 1989). These objects are of particular interest to us because they enable different views and practices to coexist without consensus and enact interpretive flexibility. According to Star (2010), they mean a shared space, where the sense of here and there are confounded (*ibid.* 602–603). Star argues that the distribution of standards is at the core of many social justice issues concerning standardisation. We need to study the standardisation and both the ill-structured and well-structured aspects of a particular boundary object (*ibid.* 613–614).

The KIWI jacket holds on to the differences between an ill-structured object and a locally tailored one. As we see it, standardisation is what is at stake in the present public debate. With regard to international law, Åhrén (2010) addresses the appropriation of ‘non-members’ and the use of parts of indigenous people’s culture. As previously indicated, Åhrén aims to establish the extent to which international law gives indigenous people the right to own and/or determine their distinct collective creativity and does this by analysing human rights law (in particular the right to self-determination) and property rights. Åhrén concludes that indigenous people are the beneficiaries of ‘collective rights proper’, including the right to self-determination. This means the right to continuously pursue their cultural practices and to maintain and develop their distinct cultural identity (*ibid.* 215). It also means not making use of indigenous people’s cultural elements in ways that seriously harm their collective cultural identity.

Standardisation is a clearing of the field and the elimination of contradictions. All standardised systems throw off or generate residual categories, i.e. the ‘not categorised elsewhere’. These categories then form new boundary objects and a cycle is born (Star 2010: 614). Ongoing unsolved standardisation issues balance the need for flexibility and the need for order and stability (which are necessary in order to define rights): ‘the battles and dramas between the formal and informal, the ill-structured and the well-structured, the standardized and the wild, are being continuously fought’ (*ibid.*).

Even though standardisation produces new boundary objects and does not offer a final solution, a certain degree of standardisation is needed in order to protect people from the experience of violation and harm to cultural identities and property rights. Åhrén (2010) argues along these lines when he discusses that not all non-members’ uses of

indigenous people's dress should be regarded as 'prohibited'. In order to be considered damaging, the use must be seriously culturally offensive or risk integrating members of the indigenous people into the majority population. According to international law, a respectful use of objects that acknowledges the Sámi as a distinct people is allowed (ibid. 278).

A heated debate can be productive for recognising affects and for raising awareness of difference and awareness of an object with all its ambiguity and contingency. One of the actors expressed this turbulence in the following story:

If you wear a *gákti* outside the core Sámi area people throw the *Ánti-joik* at you.¹³ I do not know how many times this has happened. But then I also think it is not done in bad faith, for nowadays the non-Sámi also talk about the Sámi in a positive way. But even though people mean no harm with jokes and imitate the Sámi joik, it has become easier for non-Sámi to denigrate the Sámi. Thinking and saying things like 'they are only colourful clowns that speak in a funny way' are now standard.¹⁴

There is a wide array of unspoken affective attitudes at the basis of discriminatory names (see Chapter 1 in this volume). These affective attitudes are not easily changed but – as argued by Sarah Ahmed (2004) – naming emotions can involve different orientation towards the objects they construct. Discriminatory naming practices can be done in good faith, as indicated in the quote above, or in bad faith. We therefore need to focus our attention on the ever shifting but temporarily stabilized entanglements of place, embodied practices and discursive constructions (Di Masso and Dixon 2015).

Objects of affect

Navaro-Yashin (2012: 203) challenges the way affect generally has been theorised through metaphors that invoke abstraction, imaginaries of immateriality and conceptualisations of invisibility – in both the psychoanalytic and the sociological traditions. She claims that affect is both contained and emitted through the solidity, presence, visibility and tangibility of objects. Inspired by her position, we have viewed affect through the qualities, texture and potentialities of the object itself. In this

essay, we have illustrated how the affect for a specific object, the KIWI jacket, only becomes felt and known to us as human beings when we engage with it via mediation and qualification. We have illustrated how affect is in this case qualified, and how affects emitted by materialities can mean anything in a specific context.

We have analysed the KIWI jacket as both an unconventional classification practice and as a boundary object. What is the significance of the KIWI jacket? In this specific situation, what affects does the object transmit? We argue that the remnants and residues that link it to the Kautokeino *gákti* also have tangible affects. More specifically, it is the sense or knowledge of the context in which such objects are normally used that mediates the affects that people experience, qualifies the transmission of affect, puts it into words and meaning. For people who are distanced from the colonial history of the Sámi people, the tangibility of the KIWI jacket may not produce the same affective tension. Together with Navaro-Yashin, we would thus argue that tangibility transmits affect, but that these affects are mediated and qualified by the knowledge that people have about the object's context. Affect is tangible (and not just immaterial), but it is also mediated and qualified by the specific people who experience it.

The story of the KIWI jacket represents an affective transmission between objects and human subjects that produces laughter, uneasiness, tension and anger. In order to decide where this qualification comes from, we need to look at the KIWI jacket and its qualities: the green colour, the pattern, the ribbons, the Chinese producer etc. It is these qualities of the object, in relation to the observer's knowledge about its context, that evoke the laughter, the unease, the tension and the anger. Objects and the material environment can generate affect, but only when they become entangled in forms of human mediation (Navaro-Yashin 2012: 214). This affect may cause disharmony and disturbance.

Closing remarks

The KIWI jacket highlights the differences *within* the Sámi communities in the Norwegian (but still mostly regional) public debate. Different standpoints have been taken on how the multiple (colonial) past should be articulated, how Sámi objects move and what alters when they do. We have argued that in order to understand the affects, the tensions in

the debate, the KIWI jacket should be considered a boundary object. In line with Wetherell (2015: 86) we consider that ‘body/brain landscapes, meaning making, feeling, communication, and social action entangle and become figured together in emotion episodes. The affective and the discursive intertwine’. We have furthermore argued that three major positions have been at play in this debate: cultural flexibility, rights and equality. In their different ways these three arguments address the issue of how to bring the past into the present. The tensions arising from this debate can appear as postcolonial moments, where differences and similarities are present as possibilities (Verran 2002). What is for some an eager promise becomes for others a situation without hope. This also signals the different positions that (indigenous) people can take, and their possibilities for articulation. As DeMasso et al. (2015: 87) argue, there are ‘some huge advantages, however, to not attempting to disentangle just the affect in the moment, and advantages, too, to ranging more widely in our analyses beyond participants’ orientations and accounts to reflect on the histories of affective discursive meaning making and their biographical and ideological place and force.’

The question here is how to bring the past into the present. People live in different affective and narrative communities, where some see the past while others see the present, and where some see a post-colonial situation while others see a colonial one. The conflicts that take place concerning the standardisation of Sámi objects such as the *gákti* can be harmful, tiring and humiliating, however, the creation of a public space for discussing how complex cultural objects can be respectfully dealt with would be helpful.

The affects of the KIWI jacket show that not everyone attaches themselves to the objects in the same way and for the same reasons. The affective community involves positive, hopeful attachments for some and alienating and unequally shared burdens for others. These affective states show that the histories of race and racism cannot be wished away by commonly asserted attachments to abstract ideals of shared belonging (Ahmed 2010). These affective states demonstrate that differences are not eliminated by abstract ideas of shared belonging and the contemporary dream of unconditional movements in time and space. At the same time, examining these affective states provides a greater understanding of how unequal attachments move people towards action in relation to racism and discrimination.

Notes

- 1 KIWI is one of Norway's largest grocery retail chains, with around 600 stores nationwide.
- 2 There are different Sámi dialects and spellings, and we have followed the advice of the Swedish Riksantikvarieämbetet, as this is a Swedish-based publication, even though we consider Norwegian material.
- 3 Gaup lives in the Sámi municipality of Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino and is also a *duodji* (Sámi handicraft) student at the Sámi University College in Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino.
- 4 'KIWI i sametrobbel', *Drammens tidende* 12 Sept. 2010. Available from: <http://www.dt.no/nyheter/KIWI-i-same-trobbel-1.5621079> [accessed 8 Aug. 2014].
- 5 'Raser mot KIWI's kofstunt', *Nordlys* 11 Sept. 2010. Available from: <http://www.nordlys.no/nyheter/articles5306233.ece> [accessed 12 Sept. 2012].
- 6 The authors have translated this and other contributions to the debate into English.
- 7 'Slapp av' comment by the editor in *Nordlys* first published 14 Sept. 2010 www.sett-fra-nord.origo.no 14 Sept. 2010 Available from: http://www.sett-fra-nord.origo.no/-/bulletin/show/595154_slapp-av?ref=checkpoint [accessed 15 Feb. 2015].
- 8 'KIWI kofte gir reinkjøtt muligheter' The newspaper *Sagat* 15 Sept. 2010 Available from: <http://www.sagat.no/hovednyheter/2010/09/15/28034/> [accessed 4 Nov. 2014].
- 9 Ludvig R. Comments www.sett-fra-nord.origo.no published 13 Sept. 2010. Available from: http://www.sett-fra-nord.origo.no/-/bulletin/show/595154_slapp-av?ref=checkpoint [accessed 4 Oct. 2014].
- 10 'Raseri mot KIWIs tulle-koft', the newspaper *VG*, 13 Sept. 2010, p. 8.
- 11 The northern Sámi expression *siida* has multiple meanings, including community and home. *Siida* is a particular and flexible form of organisation for reindeer herders and has a central place in today's husbandry legislation. The Reindeer Act uses the term *siida* when referring to a group of herders who jointly practise reindeer herding in specific areas.
- 12 As Frykman and Povrzanović Frykman remind us (Chapter 1 in this volume), objects do not have an independent affective charge. We are concerned with the practices of people using objects.
- 13 *Ánti and the Ánti-joik* (or Sámi song) was first seen on Norwegian TV in 1975. The series focused on a boy called Ánti and the difficulties he had fitting into the Norwegian school in Kautokeino. The series was a major success, was sold to 26 different countries and is part of the Norwegian collective memory.
- 14 From a radio documentary made by NRK, available from: <http://p3.no/dokumentar/sapmifil/> [accessed 12 May 2016]. Translation from Norwegian by the authors.

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In this book a phenomenological approach is often used to explore how objects are sensitised: the analyses explore what is happening interobjectively. Humanitarian aid, political portraits, and bequeathed objects are examples of such sensitising in the previous chapters. Chapter 9 adds an analysis of place and dwells on affective atmospheres. The point of departure is a Norwegian black metal musician. While being part of a subgenre of heavy metal music associated with being macho, aggressive, grotesque, and even satanic, this musician has a striking tendency to constantly involve nature – meadows, trees, streams, and a watermill from his homestead – in his music and performances. Building on a sophisticated interpretation of Heidegger's understanding of how place works, the author demonstrates the strong relation between affects, creativity, and place.

In the Mood

Place and Tools in the Music Industry with a Focus on Entrepreneurship

Elisabet Sørjorddal Hauge

How the moods and emotions of composers and performers of music influence their artistic entrepreneurial work is a rewarding field of study. Usually, prominent musicians are portrayed in terms of their personal biographies, career, friends, intimate life and political views, as though important answers can be found there. But to what extent is their creativity the outcome of milieu and context? Music, like other art, cannot be reduced to the representational. In *The Origin of the Work of Art* (2001), Heidegger claims that the power of art lies in its capacity to ‘open up a world’ and unveil a truth that lies beyond and is more complex than the symbolic, the linguistic or any other kind of representation. What art makes ‘appear’ is a ‘totality of equipment’. Here he is referring to our practical dealings with the world – as opposed to a theoretical, cognitive knowledge where objects are supposed to *mean* something and be *understood*. In his vocabulary, such appearance is akin to the ‘worlding’ of things or events (see Frykman, Chapter 7 in this volume).

The power of art is revealed when this opening up or ‘disclosure’ is recognised, performed or presented. Perhaps Heidegger’s most famous analysis is that of Van Gogh’s portrayal of a pair of shoes. Shoes generally appear all in everyday situations and can be scattered around in the entrance hall or aesthetically exposed in a shop window or advertisement. As the American philosopher Richard Polt (1999: 137) indicates,

what Heidegger writes about is how the artist manages to make them ‘expose the world of a peasant woman, a world oriented by work, need, childbirth and death’, which means that in the viewer’s imagination the shoes are ‘worlding’. Correspondingly, when music is performed it gives new dimensions to situations or raises questions about environments or encounters the composer has been party to – trees, wind, climate, meadows and people – or the moods they evoke. For Heidegger, this feeling often means ‘gathering’ the space into a place. ‘Place’ is given a particular meaning in his vocabulary and is never conflated with spatiality or a certain position in space, because it refers to existence and perception rather than area. It is a locale made up of humans and non-humans, norms, values, rules, potentialities, possibilities etc. His own formulations are never easy to decrypt and have given rise to different interpretations: ‘Place is always the definite “over there” and the “there” of a useful thing belonging there’ Jeff Malpas (2007) points to how ‘place’ can be seen as the beginning of something rather than the end. He uses the same German word as Heidegger – *Ort* – to clarify this: ‘the term originally indicated the point of the or edge of a weapon – the point of a spear for instance – at which all of the energy of the weapon is brought to bear’ (ibid. 29). In short, ‘place’ becomes the site or platform where people act and live their lives and where objects serve as useful tools.

In this chapter a musical entrepreneur and his relation to place and tools are explored since entrepreneurial opportunities are often born out of place. Entrepreneurial opportunities such as musical expressions are seldom (or never) the result of a one-man act, but are usually socially derived (Ridderstråle and Nordström 2004). The affective dimension is brought into the analysis by adding another of Heidegger’s terms – ‘attunement’. Attunement is all about mood; the mental and physical states through which the world is seen – predominately despair, boredom and the feeling of estrangement (Heidegger 1996: 135; see Gilje, Chapter 2 in this volume). Being attuned to a place means being affectively alert to it and to act according to how place ‘opens up’ new possibilities. This is why Heidegger claims that moods are ‘disclosive’ – they reveal the potential of a place and thus uncover what there is. Moods disclose things such as the vibes of a room, the fear produced by an encounter, the fists clenched in the pocket, or the attentiveness on seeing a beloved face. Being an entrepreneurial artist implies being

sensitive to places, people and things and being able to arrange this into words, images or music.

This chapter takes the experiences of a Norwegian black metal musician as its point of departure in order to analyse how place affects initiatives in this particular field of entrepreneurship. The text is based on comprehensive fieldwork resulting in a PhD dissertation (Hauge 2012).¹ Theoretically, inspiration is drawn from phenomenology and especially the role that affects play in relation to place and enterprise in the field of music.

Black Metal at the Mill Studio

Knut Magne Valle is an established name on the Norwegian black metal scene. Black metal is a subgenre of heavy metal music and is associated with being white, male, macho, aggressive, grotesque, satanic and misogynistic (Bossius 2003). Since 2000 an important stage and studio for this extreme subgenre of heavy metal is to be found in a poetic, rural place, namely an old watermill close to Valle's parental home, beautifully situated on a cliff beside a waterfall and surrounded by deep woods. In different ways the mill's interior embodies the mysticism of the Norwegian metal world, with its loudspeakers and high-tech recording equipment and old-fashioned handicrafts with plenty of references to Norse legends and the medieval world of magic. From here he has produced over 100 records and it is from here that Norwegian-inspired black metal has spread throughout Europe, Asia and North America.

Valle's career took off in 1996 when he was invited to join the up-and-coming, but not yet fully established, band Arcturus. The band was actually founded by other key people in the metal scene in 1987 Mortem. When the band released its second album, *La Masquerade Infernale*, in 1997, Valle was the lead guitarist and sound producer. The album represented a stylistic break with the black metal genre in that it introduced a clear voice and straightforward verse–refrain songs and led to the band's breakthrough. Most of the changes were a direct result of Valle taking over as the band's songwriter and producer. As he told me in an interview in my research:

For me, Arcturus' breakthrough was also the time when my activities as a producer also started to take off ... I was the band's

producer and when I got very good reviews and feedback, new production possibilities opened up. Suddenly I found myself in a position where I could produce for other bands. I was at the beginning of my career as a producer. I started out producing hard-core extreme metal music and have ended up with a broad CV of albums covering most genres of rock music.

Self-realisation

Norway's musical scene in general seems to be neglected when income from industry is counted nationally. Oil, the processing industry, fishing and tourism are traditionally associated with the country. As entrepreneurs, metal musicians display characteristics that are different from other groups, be they technologists, computer scientists, communicators, or service providers such as plumbers, hotel and restaurant workers (Hauge 2012). One of the traits that makes them different is that profit is rarely a motivating factor. Rather, inspiration comes from the musicians' purposeful desire to realise themselves (*ibid.*). Authenticity through music is the basic prerequisite for this self-realisation and is inextricably related to its originator.

Although the project sounds like a reflective and self-absorbed cultural construction, it is at the same time deeply rooted in place and environment. 'Atmosphere' is a key concept and, for Valle, the milieu is both carefully chosen and gives rise to new artistic opportunities. Processes of this kind are of course reciprocal, in that the musician affects the context and at the same time searches for unique expression. For musical entrepreneurs such as Valle, this amounts to a lifestyle that is paradoxically place-bound and deeply individualistic, in that it expresses a state that can never be finalised.

The idea of atmosphere and the possibilities of 'tuning in' to a place are recurrent themes in Valle's entrepreneurship. It is generally known that nascent entrepreneurs do not search for the optimal place in which to establish and develop their enterprise (Stam and Bosma 2014), but, like Valle, establish their firms in the area to which they belong; the place where they were born or where they are among family and friends. This is yet another of the many paradoxes connected to black metal, namely that authenticity and self-realisation in a music genre that is to all intents

and purposes hostile to mainstream culture rely on a strong attachment to the familiar and sedentary.

Nevertheless, it would seem that in such places a passion for engaging in entrepreneurial acts is born and fostered. For many musical entrepreneurs, new projects and business ideas have been connected to place through economic transactions in worldwide markets. The way it is described in phenomenology: the home is a potential site filled with tacit knowledge that is of crucial importance for the entrepreneur. It seems to evolve, take shape and become creatively and economically viable through the interaction with the founder. This way of performing entrepreneurship is a developing process, where the entrepreneur merges affective self-realisation through the place and at the same time changes it. Or, to formulate it in more general terms, the actors choose how to act from a horizon of future possibilities where projecting onto an imaginable future is based on what is meaningful to the musicians and their past experiences (Weick 2004, 2006).

In the mood, identifying opportunities

The literature on opportunity recognition is vast, although it mostly focuses on the perception, cognitive capacity and behaviour of the entrepreneur – plus the infrastructure that facilitates entrepreneurial work (cf. Gaglio and Katz 2001). By looking at the influence of such factors, one usually finds the answer to how ideas could be developed into more commercially oriented concepts. The art of leading a future-oriented way of life is all about the disposition of becoming. To a certain extent this is also true for Knut Magne Valle who, based on his past experiences and future possibilities, is able to recognise which new realities can be actualised. In this process he moves from ‘what is’ to highlight ‘what is possible’ (Ardichvili et al. 2003). However, recognising new entrepreneurial opportunities does not just involve plans and consciousness, but also includes the affective impulses from objects and places that make up a lifeworld.

Every musician has to be in the *mood* for writing and composing, but also for recognising and acting on entrepreneurial opportunities. Producing new songs, albums, giving concerts and so on means tuning into the environment. Being able to provoke specific musical moods also gives the musician access to the worldwide music market. The suc-

cess of cultural entrepreneurship is therefore on the one hand a process that is dependent on the musician's creative power, energy and desire to express new sounds and on the other hand a question of how the audience becomes attuned to the musician's world of art.

The success of any opportunity recognition depends on the actors' persuasion and communication skills in order to procure the necessary resources and stimulate buyers' interest (Gaglio and Katz 2001). Holt (2008) claims that opportunities are socially embedded constructs that need to be recognised by others. For a musician like Valle, it is not simply a matter of identifying a market niche, possessing a patent, or designing a new business model, but being able to engage with and persuade others to become attuned to the elements that constitute this particular life project. Becoming attuned means that the audience discerns what the musician's artworks disclose – something that resonates with them.

Musicians make entrepreneurial history by attempts to trigger people to respond to and obtain the practice or product that they create and present into music markets; they make it when they invite listeners into their world and involve them in their art. The dialogue between musician and audience engenders meaning and new understanding. This differs from the entrepreneurial processes of engineers or those in the tourist sector, who offer a time-limited commodity or service. Such history-making or meaning-production is seldom the result of one person's intentionality. Instead, it comes out of the subject's actual engagement with the world in all its complexity.

When making music Valle interacts physically with his place of birth and belonging. The Mill Studio located by a waterfall, the surrounding forest and the carefully scythed fields are all objects that put him 'in the mood', make him feel that there is 'something in the air' and inspire his compositions and performances. The atmosphere that the Mill Studio contributes to also affects other musicians, producers, record managers, volunteers and audiences who gather in Valle's home village and that contributes to an effective attunement to the world of metal music. However, concentrating his inspiration in only this one location would be a mistake. The exchange of musical and entrepreneurial experiences between Valle and his partners is also a movement that connects different locations. Together with Valle, the Mill Studio identity is constantly renewed and developed.

A man of many places

Born in 1974, Knut Magne Valle is the youngest of a family of five, which includes his mother, father, brother and sister, all of whom live in the small municipality of Gjerstad. Everyone in the family is interested in music, and from an early age Knut Magne was fascinated by the possibilities of changing sounds. He tested how different configurations of wires and loudspeakers produced new sounds and soon became familiar with the creative potential of guitars, amplifiers and mixing boards. In an interview he describes himself as a turbulent pupil, where episodes of mischief often resulted in letters to his parents. He was not a slow learner, but simply disliked most of the theoretical subjects. Valle also admits having been in need of a mentor who could show him the right path; a person who was open to the ideas and possibilities of pupils interested in subjects other than mathematics, grammar and languages. Therefore, for him school was a place that he was forced to attend, but where his potential was not tapped. Full of energy, breaks were more attractive to him than the lessons. As Valle notes: 'During the 1980s the formula for primary and lower secondary education was very theoretically oriented'.

In his free time Valle took part in the development of the local extreme metal scene. His parents allowed him and his friends to practise in an old sawmill attached to the farm. He and his friends reorganised and remodelled the sawmill and turned it into a rock club. The place became a meeting area for practising, concerts and where young people could hang out. His concerts attracted a network of metal lovers from all over southern Norway and the club became a central place for the growing Norwegian underground of extreme metal music. In interviews Valle nostalgically remembers how the activities at the club were not always legal. Like other teenagers it was important to dig music, have a good time with friends, down a few beers and 'live life at its best' (see Spinoza et al. 1997). Registering their small business activities with the local council and paying taxes on entrance fees were not on their agenda. Nevertheless, the youngsters learned to take care of the mill, arrange and host concerts, carry and repair equipment and engage in other practical tasks. 'The rock club was the start of something', as Valle explains:

At the beginning the sawmill was in many ways just an empty shell. We arranged concerts with our band Saga Rockers to earn

money to insulate the house. Afterwards we built a stage and the club became a very nice place to hang out in and visit. When we arranged concerts a lot of other bands, and also local metal lovers and those from the eastern part of Norway kept coming back. And when other bands performed I was the sound technician, because I had learned and experienced a lot about rigging sound. This was actually the beginning of my career as a sound technician.

Valle moved to Oslo after completing a year-long sound technology course at a college in northern Norway. Here he became a hard core member of the capital's extreme metal underground. In addition to playing in a few bands, he also established himself as a music producer. Although the equipment he had invested in was good for producing demos, it was not professional enough for albums. Life in Oslo was quite expensive, but he found suitable premises in a dilapidated building in the city centre where he could both live and make music. Three rooms were rented out to three heavy metal colleagues. For the four this location turned out to be important for their musical careers. In addition to having their own bedrooms and sharing a bathroom, kitchen and living room, they also had access to a large space for playing music that included studio facilities. The accommodation was located in an old block of flats where about 50 to 100 other metal fans and musicians also hung out. In their individual ways they were all part of the black metal scene that turned out to be a hothouse for future entrepreneurial projects. The milieu also became a kind of melting pot for musicians entering and exiting band projects. According to Valle, this block of flats became the playground for what was to become the famous Norwegian black metal genre, where sounds were experimented with, techniques were polished, competence was acquired and band members were tested and exchanged.

Unfortunately, in 1994 the young musicians were given notice to leave the premises due to the impending demolition of the block of flats. This meant that they had to find alternative premises, and dispersed. Although the past is a closed chapter and cannot be changed, Valle says that on several occasions he could not help wondering what might have happened if people had stayed put. If they had, the entrepreneurial story would have been quite different. He explains that,

the milieu became a breeding ground for all the best bands in Norway. Enslaved, Gorgoroth, Empirior, Mayhem and Arcturus – they all played here. Even Satyricon was allowed to practise here. It was an environment that had a head start, and some of the processes of synergy and dynamics resembled those of Silicon Valley.

For Valle this turned out to be a decisive place where, together with other people, he was practically and emotionally absorbed; ‘gathered together with other persons and things’ he opened up to the world and invited the world to him (Malpas 2006: 221). Impressions from here were carried into another flat in the city centre, where he established an amateur studio, updated its profile and called it Jester Studio. One of his colleagues from Arcturus established Jester Records in the same premises. This co-localisation enabled them to make use of each other’s competence and share the rent. It was here that Arcturus’ breakthrough album *La Masquerade Infernale* (2012) was recorded and produced.

It became clear that the sound studio generated money, while the record company was in the red. This led the two friends to end their business partnership. Valle began to call his studio Møllar’n Studio (The Mill Sound Studio) and moved to a set of studios in Oslo where he joined forces with Turbonegro (one of Norway’s most popular and successful death punk bands) and Kåre and the Cavemen (a Norwegian rock band). This new partnership constellation continued until the owners decided to sell the studio premises and equipment in 2002.

Getting attuned

Over the years Valle has played at numerous concerts and done many tours. He eventually concluded that returning home to Gjerstad was a possible but also necessary step in his artistic development. The Mill Project moved physically from the old sawmill to the beautifully located watermill described at the beginning of the chapter. After 12–14 years of development, the studio is now famous throughout the heavy metal world. Attracting metal musicians from far and wide, the Mill also provides accommodation for long-distance travelers. Today, the Mill Sound Studio, in its rural setting, is not only imbued with the spirit of mystical metal identity, but also with a sense of opportunities materialised.

The studio is filled with the right tools; the equipment that Valle needs to engage in music production. This equipment is constantly used in new ways and the existing tools have to be replaced and upgraded as the world of sound creation moves on and evolves. In parallel while Valle develops his music productions, his toolkit also expands to create new music of constantly improved quality. In this sense music and sound production are neverending, but rather work as openings for new sounds, albums, festivals, new technological equipment and so on.

Without the early links to the metal scene Valle would probably never have incorporated the specific tools needed to produce the distinct sound. For example, when he reflects on his years in Oslo he says that: 'I think the Mill project would have been stillborn without my time in Oslo. Of course I might have produced some small local bands'.

The merging of place and equipment can be studied in the arrangement of the Water Mill Festival, which has been arranged in August each year since 2003 and is determinedly anti-commercial: 'We will not advertise, since the radical motive of the festival is not to earn money, but to spread metal music to people. Any profits made from the events are used to fund future festivals'. Here, lesser-known bands are given a chance to perform live. Valle's strategy has been to recruit for the music trade whilst simultaneously giving the audience a varied musical experience in picturesque surroundings. The festival is totally dependent on volunteers, such as festival crew and musicians, who are given free tickets. The musicians who perform have an inspiring backstage area in the shape of Valle's sound studio universe. Due to the sound studio the festival attracts metal-loving musicians, bands, their fans, people from sound studios, record companies and the music press. According to Valle the festival serves as a meeting place and synthesis for metal music lovers, where ideas are born and evolve. The Water Mill Festival also acts as a hotbed for new business deals, although no deals are formally made there.

As there are no barriers around the stage the concert area is quite intimate. In an attempt to integrate nature, the grass around the mill is scythed. As environment-friendly mushroom soup, moose burgers, moose casserole and organically grown vegetables from the family farm are all on the menu. Come nightfall torches are lit and illuminate the festival area and stage. When the last concert of the day is over, the party moves to the festival camp at Valle's farm. The camp has two zones: one

for people who want to party and a quiet family camp with swings and slides for children. How Valle is constantly striving to improve the quality of his festival is a good illustration of recognising and actualising a well-known and at the same time diffuse atmosphere of ‘something in the air’. This ambiguous something is composed of the physical place with musicians, producers, record managers, volunteers and audiences all contributing to an affective attunement to the world of metal music.

Creating the perfect sound is a crucial part of Valle’s life work and a treasure that he wants to pass on to metal lovers and festival participants. A problem in the early history of the Water Mill Festival was that the soundconditions were not optimal on the outdoor stage. In order to address this, Valle contacted a former student, Rune Skramstad, who just had completed his Bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering and product design. Could a loudspeaker be built, based on a horn principle, to produce the required sound? Rune found the challenge exciting and spent three days simulating the bass horn. He and Valle then built a seven-metre subwoofer under the stage at the Mill, which worked perfectly.

The story of Valle’s lifeworld proves that the world of sound is not only something that is heard. People, sound, place and objects become entangled into a significant whole – a context that comes alive during the Mill Festival. As the manager of this happening, Valle tries to make visitors part of the environment that has come alive for him. His affinity with the Mill is never confined to one particular location, but to the music that takes shape through the place. When circulating between the different platforms, for example the studio in Oslo, on tour and at concerts, it would seem his lived experience matures and turns into embodied knowledge. Here it is clear how he as an entrepreneur stands apart from other inventors. He makes the visitors/customers members of the place by inviting them to share the mood of the Mill with its studio and music, and the family farm with its game, plants and ambience. The outcome is more of a shared subculture than a producer–client relationship.

Conclusion

Heidegger is very explicit about ‘how moods give emotional depth to our experience’, which resembles how Spinoza saw affects as lessening or heightening our potential. They both agree that thinking and know-

ledge production cannot be separated from the emotions of our body (see Gilje, Chapter 2 in this volume). For Valle, place in the shape of the Mill is first and foremost something that is embodied and *felt*. For him it sums up what he has learned throughout his career. As a musician *and* an entrepreneur he has explored the different potentials of things.

Heidegger (1996) writes that tools help us to see – feel – the world. The tools used by the musician Valle, together with places in which he operates, have shaped his identity. They are tangible and filled with content and include guitars, basses, drums, loudspeakers and amplifiers. For the professional musician in his entrepreneurial career, tools like these are necessary but not sufficient. Professionalisation requires their adoption and internalisation to the extent that they almost become invisible and are extensions of the body. The extreme black metal sound is created by musicians playing their instruments with an abandon that confers their hard-won self-realisation and authenticity. However, this is a process and not a state. In order to be successful in a changing world an engaged actor needs to be constantly on the move. As tools are acquired and skills grow, sounds become more sophisticated, more knowable and more distinct. Valle's motivation is to play the guitar faster, heavier, darker, slower, backwards or in response to whatever challenge or innovation arises. Place and tools are pathways to the world in which he lives and acts. In his case the process of becoming an accomplished musician and entrepreneur starts at home. In his early career Valle had access to a limited set of tools. As new tools have been included in the working processes, old tools have been replaced, thus allowing for renewed learning. In the process of using and learning how to handle the equipment, the band expanded its repertoire and in practice discovered and created a wider world of music.

This step-by-step disclosure of a wider musical world is a decisive effect of becoming an entrepreneur *and* a skilful musician. Training brings change, as well as a change of direction. As Valle explains it; 'Even if your goal is not necessarily your goal all the time, you have to work in that direction. Still, you have no guarantee that you will succeed'. Becoming entrepreneurial was not an apparent intention when Valle went into business. The intention was rather a passion for music. Footprints, presented as events, are left behind in the entrepreneurial process; new interpretations, understandings and visions are made and pave the way for new beginnings.

In this chapter Valle's story has been presented in a narrative form. But the real story lies in the skill of the body and sleight of the hand, the music wrought from the guitars, the perfection of the sound system and everything gathered in the place. Entrepreneurs in other business sectors may follow similar guidelines. Inherent in the experience of Valle is his successful involvement with black metal music, which mirrors a world of which he is part. The concluding remark on the production of music is, in this chapter, that it is released through the entrepreneur's moods and attunement, which in turn brings the place and tools alive. All this is articulated in a way that others can appreciate, because it resonates with something they too have perceived.

Notes

- 1 For the uses of a Heideggerian approach to phenomenology and an analysis of how concepts such as place, tools, potentiality, the actual and projecting are used in relation to entrepreneurship, see Hauge 2012.

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SENSITIVE OBJECTS

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Innovators engage in activities that tend to absorb them body and soul. In Chapter 10 the authors walk through a typical day with an innovative hotel manager. Notwithstanding her training in the hotel trade, she seems to be in a constant dialogue with hotel rooms, furniture, buildings, and the urban surroundings. Facetiously, she claims to be using 'whim as a method'. That, of course, turns out to be a cover for how she succeeds in staying attuned to her material and social circumstances, sensing their potential. This chapter shows that her energy also tends to be atmospheric, animating wider circles of the local community and thus affecting institutions and administrative people that before had only had formal contact with this particular hotel.

Innovation and Embodiment in a Small Town Hotel

Kirsti Mathiesen Hjemdahl & Jonas Frykman

A hotel and its owners

An invitation to ‘Experience the idyllic atmosphere of Lillesand at Hotel Norge’ appears on every page of the hotel’s website. It also states that ‘at many hotels, you wake up in the morning not knowing whether you are in London, Oslo or New York’. Hotel rooms are often similar the world over, and somewhat nondescript. Claiming that this is not the case at Hotel Norge (Hotel Norway) in Lillesand seems rather bold. To the question ‘Could Hotel Norge be anywhere else than in Lillesand?’ the answer is ‘Hardly’. The website presentation also describes how the hotel and town were and still are intertwined – for example how this once important seafaring town was linked to Europe, and that many of the town’s architectural elements originate from this golden age, with their traditional English sash windows, Dutch tiles and half-hipped roofs.

The historical aspects are also covered. The earliest parts of Hotel Norge date from 1837 and were originally a tanning mill. To give it an extra twist, we are told that the tannery was built by an escaped Irish rebel. The town of Lillesand was given its privileges in the following year. In 1873 the mill was converted into a hotel, by which time the town had become an important centre for trade and shipping. This also meant that the hotel became the heart of the town’s flourishing cultural life and enabled it to expand. The First World War was a time of crisis for shipping in general, and both the hotel and town experienced difficulties. This was followed by the Nazi occupation during the Second World

War. For the remainder of the century the town experienced peaks and troughs. In 2006 the hotel's current owners, Beate and Wolfgang Töpfer, took over and decided to continue the work to restore it to its original style. This proved to be a major undertaking – externally the buildings were restored to reflect the 1890s, with copies made of details that had disappeared. As Beate Töpfer is quoted as saying, 'We have tried to preserve the cultural history of the hotel, while still daring to look into the future' (www.hotelnorge.no).

In her work Beate pays much attention to feelings and intuition: 'If you had known how much I base my choices on feelings and intuition, you wouldn't believe it. I don't have a single thing written down. I run everything based on how I feel.' By this time Hotel Norge had become a member of a cluster called USUS, a project in which local business life, Innovation Norway, the Norwegian Research Council and academia work in consort to develop the tourism and culture industry.¹ Here, more than one hundred studios and businesses work together to encourage tourists visiting the region to return and to recommend the destination to others. The aim of the cluster is to explore and strengthen the potential for innovation, value creation and competitiveness. Hotel Norge is an active member of the cluster, involved in the research and innovation programmes offered by USUS, and visited regularly by members of the project team and the research team for interviews and follow-ups.² It amounts to a kind of applied ethnography, in which members of the team converse with the owners for a period of five years, starting in 2010. In 2011 the hotel became a dialogue partner for the development of innovation projects, and in 2012 was made a formal partner in research projects on innovation praxis in the field of tourism, culture and creative industries (TCCIs).³ This essay is based on a collection of interviews and conversations with the owners. In this way, the material from Lillesand constitutes a paradigmatic case for other members of the cluster.

It eventually became obvious to the research team just how much innovative activity is based on affects and the ability to take in both the material and the social environment – *Umwelt* to use a Heideggerian term – through the senses, and how meanings are often hidden or neglected. This kind of intuitive scheme can be difficult to put into words and structures. To the owner of the hotel, the art of formulating what had hitherto been done at will turned out to be a learning process, where

experience was put into words and plans, and its role in choice-making and implementation became visible to us as researchers.

In most research on tourism, this and similar areas are dominated by the academic disciplines of economics. Its ability to describe and measure parameters in quantitative terms has been indispensable in a sector experiencing rapid expansion. Today, Norwegian tourism contributes over 2 billion Euros to the national economy and makes up over 6 per cent of the GDP. However, the outcome of the TCCIs venture is more easily described and measured than the incentives and ideas that make creativity flourish. After working on this for some time as ethnologists, we have noticed how easily discourses containing concepts such as business models, profit, turnover and regional outcomes seep into our minds and language. What is constantly left out, of course, is the answer to our pertinent question of what makes people take the initiative at all, and how they become and stay entrepreneurial. The study of Hotel Norge has helped us to focus on the complexity of the entanglement between innovator and environment. This analysis of a specific entrepreneurial case thus starts by looking at how the entrepreneurs begin on a small scale by caring for the hotel, staff and guests, and after some time expand their activities so that – quite unexpectedly – this enterprise turns into something that gathers together many of the cultural activities of this small coastal town.

Affecting tourism

What are the special traits of entrepreneurship in the tourist sector? How, for instance, can they be distinguished from artistic activities like the performing arts or technical inventions? In the first place they seem to share the entrepreneur's strong passion – the affect that builds up towards the object. But the differences between working in a world that you also inhabit and constantly augment and having a secluded studio or workshop (see Hauge, Chapter 9 in this volume) that is totally dependent upon creativity, are multiple. How do you keep deadening habits, routines and duties at bay when running a hotel? How do you make the milieu vibrant and energetic day after day? We met proof that profit is not sufficient a stimulus. The traits that Beate and many other entrepreneurs in the hotel business constantly demonstrate are personal qualities that have something to do with skills such as presence, charm, friendliness, empathy and the ability to listen to guests and visitors. The

ability to share your enthusiasm with the staff is also of crucial importance; running a hotel is teamwork. But equally important is the capacity to stay in dialogue with the material surroundings and the geographical location. The analysis below demonstrates how these attitudes add extra value to the local community, and ultimately the entire region.

During the interviews Beate shows affects that are close to love for her hotel. She talks about the building and the rooms with their different wallpapers, curtains, windows and paintings with passionate commitment. They seem to give her energy and it is as though the two have a reciprocal relation. Like many entrepreneurs she has an all-engulfing relation to her projects that permeates her entire way of life. ‘We see’ write the psychologists Cardon et al. (2009) ‘evidence of this in entrepreneurship research, where for example passion has been described as “the underlying force that fuels our strongest emotions. It is the intensity we feel when we engage in activities that interest us deeply. It fills us with energy and enables us to perform at our peak”’(ibid. 6). This is the mood – or *Stimmung* as Heidegger would call it – through which she encounters her environment; the affective state that makes her perceptive to its potential, body and soul (see Gilje, Chapter 2 in this volume).

In order to understand how Beate feels about being part of the material environment we need to parallel such affects with the phenomenological insight of what happens when things are ‘worlding’. Heidegger uses the concept to describe the phenomenon that people can be seen as porous; that the environment seeps in and ‘affects’ the way they feel, think, dream and get on with their lives. Or, to put it differently, that people often function like batteries that are energised and charged by their environment. Heidegger’s use of worlding is similar to how affects are treated by Brian Massumi (2002). Affects are mostly pre-conscious experience; a potential that does not have to be realised in language. Following Spinoza, Massumi describes affect as the body’s way of preparing itself for action, which adds the dimension of intensity to worlding. For Beate the environment is obviously worlding in multiple ways and radiates energy. But the different parts and dimensions of the hotel also ‘gather’ into new meaningful wholes, in that she includes significant traits in the local milieu and makes them accessible to guests (see Frykman, Chapter 7 in this volume).

Phenomenology has falsely been accused of being ‘stuck in repetitions and preventing the emergence of the new’, in that it deals with

the pre-reflective and leaves intentionality out (Leys 2011: 457; Massumi 2002). As will become evident in this presentation, our research shows that Beate's project of managing the hotel and successfully changing it into a profitable business is guided by affect – in this case a combination of a non- or prelingual capacity to gather dormant potentials in the environment and a solid training within the trade. This training includes four years of education at the *École hôtelière de Lausanne* in Switzerland in economics and management, and experience of working in big hotel chains, in which daily reports are a decisive theme. All this training shines through in the way she runs Hotel Norge. Despite this, Beate knows that this knowledge and experience is not sufficient to come to grips with how the hotel could develop. On the contrary, she fears that formal plans or structured schemes will lead to eternal repetition and habituation.

Things that inspire

When the Töpfer family bought the respected but run-down old hotel in the centre of Beate's home town in 2006 the challenges facing them were enormous. The hotel had only 26 rooms and turnover was NOK 7 million. Besides the renovations, personal service was their hallmark. Not a penny was spent on marketing. The emphasis was on delivering the best to guests and relying on word-of-mouth recommendations. However, the business idea proved so successful that within the space of ten years turnover had risen by 142 per cent to NOK 17 million. Every year since then the family hotel has shown a healthy profit. Beate's way of running the business, invigorated by the way she feels her way forward, obviously works:

It sounds totally – when hearing myself saying it – it sounds as though the business is run on a whim. But I feel that everything becomes so much better when it has been adjusted in line with what I have observed, what I have felt, what I have seen and the reactions of the person standing in front of me. So it becomes a form of memento, or a kind of experiential basis. I feel I make a qualified judgement as we go along – a choice. At least up to now this has resulted in very little time being spent on writing long-term strategies or plans. It has worked for me, or for us, to work in this way.

How creativity works for this entrepreneur became clear to us as we followed – literally ran – in her wake as she went about her daily business, doing our best to put her actions into words and reports. It turned out that a large chunk of her inventiveness comes from plans – she has them at her fingertips. ‘It is wrong to say that I have no strategy, because I have!’ she says. ‘But it is not expressed in a written format and put into a document. Perhaps that’s a bit silly, because it is distressing to have things only half expressed. By working in this way it is still possible to be flexible and make changes. I am still in the process of convincing myself that I have to go down that road.’

When talking things through with us, Beate also *walked* them through. She took us into the hotel garden, where the walls had been restored and all the windows replaced. ‘Our most captivating renovation’, she jokingly called it. Continuing her tour she showed us the latest development in the back garden – an outdoor stage where only temporary permission for performances had been granted and for which the future is uncertain. She told us about her dreams for the use of the stage and the plight of having to submit a full application to the authorities when the visions she had were still in the making. ‘Look now! I have decided to update you on everything as I have come across it. Some of these things might be totally irrelevant, but I can’t bother brooding on what might have been!’ she said. When leaving the garden and climbing the stairs to the first floor and the building’s ballroom she filled us in on some of the key ideas for future performances, how they fitted with the hotel’s other activities and how they related to experiences from previous years.

What we are presented with in the ballroom is a pleasant intimate atmosphere consisting of a patterned parquet floor, dark brown wallpaper that makes you feel as though you are back in the good old days and a huge painting of light playing on the surface of water created by a renowned local contemporary artist.

Looking around Beate notices scuffs on the wallpaper and marks on the wooden floor. ‘What we think of doing now, just here, is moving the stage over to the other end of the room’. She stands where the new stage was planned and seems to be remembering the past and envisioning the future as she surveys the scene. ‘We had a theatre performance recently and the actors discovered that it was more convenient to have the stage here. I don’t remember exactly why, but it was something about the feeling of the room. I then realised how such a radical change could work

really well.’ She goes on to describe a planned new curtain, the kind of technical equipment and musical instruments that will be acquired and put to use, and how the room can be reverted to the theatre it once was. ‘This was the town’s theatre. It was here that things happened. It’s so much fun to put it all back. You can almost picture the tragedies and such.’ As Beate continues to talk we gain a good sense of how she pictures the future of the space:

For a person like me who’s always talking about the multiple uses of things it is so great to see the possibilities that a partition made by a curtain might lead to. It has to be equally nice on both sides, so we also can turn this into a *chambre séparée*, a chef’s table. The entrance is here, the exit to the balcony is there, the staff entrance is there and above it is a chandelier. Fantastic!

Beate’s fluid way of managing and developing Hotel Norge in Lillesand, without any real office space and apparently dependent on the knowledge and inspiration received from a direct contact with the objects and immediate surroundings, demonstrates how her entrepreneurial acting is embodied. Bourdieu (1977) refers to well-developed skills in his description of habitus as a set of dispositions that are formed in relation to work and the material culture that people are dealing with (see Frykman, Chapter 7 in this volume). When Beate enters the hotel’s rooms, dreams, possibilities and new initiatives come to life, take shape and fill functions. To use Kathleen Stewart’s words (1996), as Beate walks through the rooms ‘it was the things that remembered’. Beate is like a ‘battery’ and is energised and charged by her *Umwelt*. In all her openness, she incorporates what Stewart in *Ordinary Affects* (2007) calls a ‘highly affective subject’; a subject drifting through scenes letting life wash over her, feeling empowered and thus embodying ‘a collection of trajectories and circuits’ (ibid. 59).

From infrastructure to content provider

Being entrepreneurial in the hotel business also means being able to draw energy from and mutually inspire the local community. The relationship between Hotel Norge, the town of Lillesand and the region serves as an example of how such an activity is dependent on the ability to energise

the surrounding community and identify its slumbering potential. In Beate's case, this process is animated by her contacts with USUS and our year-long discussions.

Becoming a member of the regional cluster in 2013 and taking part in an USUS Conference was a turning point. The purpose of this was to promote repeat visits, referrals and recommendations based on cooperation between businesses involved in tourism. The goal of TTCIs – culture and experience industries – is to improve guests' total experience. Presentations were given and workshops arranged to show and discuss how public and private risk capital could be made available for enterprises engaged in innovation projects. Prior to this it had never occurred to Beate that public investment could be available for the renovations and cultural upswing of the hotel. This put her in line with the majority of tourism companies in Norway (Aas and Hjemdahl 2015).

An eye-opener for Beate was a graphic presentation of the different functions in the tourism sector. A Power Point presentation (see Figure 1) showed a hierarchical, pyramid-shaped model displayed the most important factors. At the top of the pyramid were the companies providing the guest streams: national and international companies transporting visitors by water, land and air. The next level consisted of companies

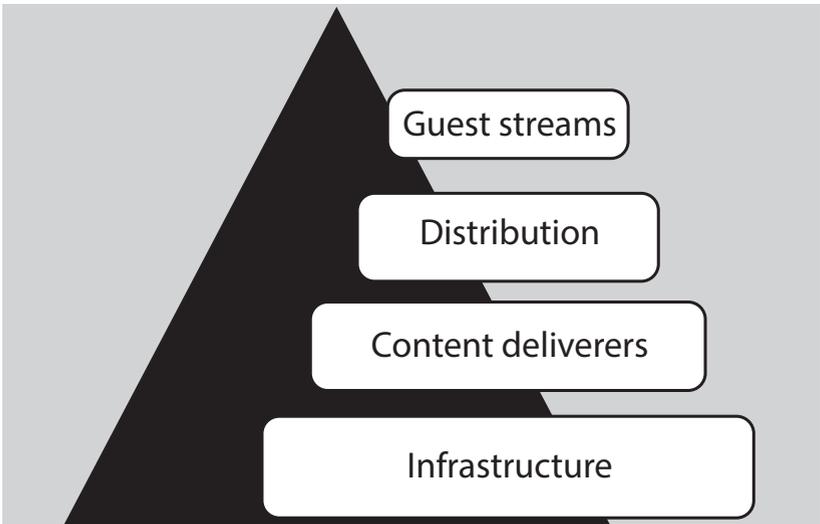


Figure 10.1. The 'value chain' of the tourism, cultural and creative industries, as presented by the USUS cluster (www.usus.no).

providing distribution, working mainly through digital channels or as niche companies. Third in line were the content deliverers, the art and cultural institutions and other members of the ‘experience industry’. At the bottom of the pyramid model Hotel Norge in Lillesand was represented under the label infrastructure – meaning traditional locations where guests could sleep and eat.

Beate reacted instinctively on discovering that her hotel belonged to the bottom section. This was too challenging a position to be in! ‘It seems as though I am too dependent on other actors to attract any stream of guests to my hotel. I have to develop the hotel so that it includes the broader parts of the value chain. The hotel must grow so that it takes a much more active part as a content deliverer and does not remain under infrastructure. Could Hotel Norge Lillesand be turned into a Culture Hotel?’ she wondered. The very next day she appeared at a workshop discussing just those possibilities.

For the following two years she systematically worked with different programmes from public agencies to develop such projects. The first to invest was the corporate fund Innovation Norway, which gave a preliminary grant. The Norwegian Research Council then provided funding for another preparatory project, and finally a main project was funded by Innovation Norway. The requirement for such a financier was that the project should meet the demands of particular stakeholders, in this case the County of Lillesand. At the end of the first year of the project Beate said,

Having a strategy in your stomach is not the same as having a document on the shelf.

Why, because you know where you are going?

Yes, so it’s wrong to say that I have no strategy and no plan. Because I have!

Having to formalise the different steps of the innovation process, partly due to the public funds she has received, also made her look at her previous experiences in a new way. Writing applications, reorganising her actions into side and main projects and delivering reports on results help her to clarify what was originally embodied knowledge and sensations. However, formalising the steps does not mean having to change her

winning concept. Writing reports is one thing. Successfully managing her innovative business is another.

This project has forced me to ... look at the description in a new light, tick off what has been done and see what has not been done, just the work with reporting – like before Christmas when I had deadline for reporting to Innovation Norway, to actually see what I had done, I was totally shocked. It was a really good feeling, to be honest, and one that I am not really used to. For the nine years before you arrived I didn't have anyone to report to about anything.

And you haven't really been properly aware of what you were doing?

Yes, it is sort of... like a carousel.

But how do you orient yourself, give substance to what you are doing?

I am not conscious of what that might be!

I have tried to picture what I see you with, and it's ...

... the phone?

Yes, the phone!

Haha.

Because that seems to be your entire office.

Yes, that is correct.

Don't you have an office?

No, not at all, I don't have anywhere special to work. I walk and walk and sit down wherever possible with the laptop and the phone.

*What are your tools for innovation, besides instinct and emotion?
Do you employees understand that 'now Beate has a clever idea'?*

I talk a lot with them, so they are very involved in what's running around in my head. Yes, very much!

Do you think that they understand that you're immersed in new ideas? Do you think they sense it?

Yes, because they know me very well.

What are you like in that mode?

Well, it depends what I am up to. When I am into arrangements, which is something I really love to plan and deliver, I am in my element. If a customer has asked for something specific it's our task to make the practical arrangements so that it happens, so it will be perfect for them. Then I am up and about and all over. Well, I'm not sure. Someone else has to observe, I have no conscious relationship to this at all. But it is probably a hands-on experience. But I always seem to land on my feet.

How do you know that you are landing?

When I deliver! That is usually obvious when the guests arrive.

In a success story such as Beate's, creativity and innovation in the field of TCCIs is very much a matter of the unspoken, of experience, and also the capacity to be affected by the milieu and the project ahead. Joy, struggle and uncertainty are the brick and mortar of this particular type of innovation.

Town and total concept

Schemes and business models are available that show how innovative enterprises can be structured. As summarised in Figure 10.2, the innovation management literature (e.g. Frohle and Roth 2007; Tidd and Bessant 2013) suggests that the innovation practices of enterprises can be divided into two broad categories: (1) process-oriented practices including sub-categories such as strategy, portfolio management, development process, tools and effect measurement, and (2) resource-oriented

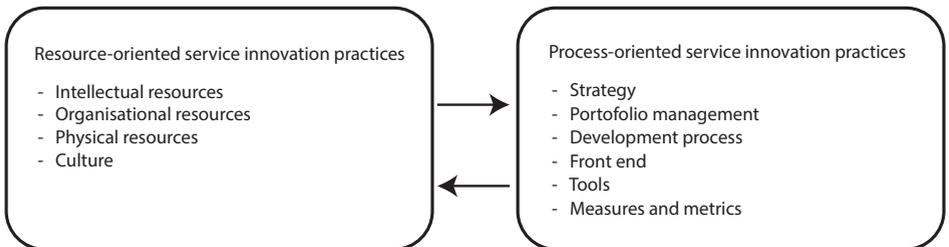


Figure 10.2. Resource- and practice-oriented practices in innovation (Aas et al. 2015).

practices including the establishment of the resources needed to carry out innovation processes.

Seen from the outside, the developments at Hotel Norge in Lillesand align with many of the points in the above boxes, especially as in this case the process is both supported and controlled by external financiers and evaluators. However, in practice the development project becomes something quite different; something that captures chance and opportunity and is able to tune into the surroundings, people, places and objects. This way of working proved to be helpful when Beate took the daring step of trying to engage a larger section of the town and region in 'a total concept'.

Beate invites us for breakfast and we sit in a room with a beautifully restored light-blue wallpaper on the wall. Outside we can see the archipelago that has made this part of Southern Norway so beloved and widely known stretching into the horizon. Beate wants to discuss how to develop the project from a preliminary to a main phase and encompass the 'whole' – the whole being the participation of the town and the region. Up to now she has trusted her intuition, energy and moods, but wonders whether this is too risky and provisional for a major project.

USUS Art was called in to help.³ They engaged a site-specific artist – Laura – who helps USUS companies to sense the place, take in the atmosphere, and capture the vibe. USUS Art is only available for companies that are capable of being challenged, because the artist often contributes with insights and suggestions that are offbeat. Beate regards this as strength:

The really good thing on the day that USUS Art was here was that she made me see things in a new way. Seeing her in this house and inspecting the most everyday objects was liberating. Suddenly we saw the rooms from a new perspective. We discovered the attic and the possibilities there, and got several creative angles on things. It was really exciting! But it was also a difficult starting point. She had no concrete mission. No agenda for the day. In order to get acquainted with the hotel she touched and in a way altered the way we saw things. I was aware that she was feeling her way through the terrain. But with the wrong person it could have been a total failure.

The result was that Beate was put on the track of exploring a dramatic historical background for the hotel that would later prove useful. The hotel,

as we have seen, began with an Irish rebel, who for various reasons had to escape from home on a trading ship. Close to the Norwegian coast he was placed in old trunk, put in a smaller boat and hoisted overboard. He drifted ashore in Kristiansand, where he made his fortune and eventually became one of the most powerful men in town. He owned three ships, two pirate ships and one cargo ship. He then moved to nearby Lillesand and bought the tannery from a man called Reiersen.

As we sat eating breakfast and after hearing about the outcome of the meeting between Beate and USUS Art, the entire USUS team started to throw ideas and possibilities around. USUS Culture suggested that ‘You could have Irish Days!’ USUS Art filled in with ‘Did you know that he married here and had seven children and then killed himself? Henrik Wergeland wrote the poem ‘Robert Major’ for his funeral.⁵ How cool! You could put someone in a trunk to be washed ashore every year.’

This was so much fun. I started to think more freely, and it made my imagination move in a new directions ... Being a midwife for ideas and pointing to a totally different starting point, when you don’t have to think about anything to do with economy and all that. Matching these two worlds! I mostly get totally tied up thinking about costs and limitations. That is the drawback of everyday management.

Beate kept on tossing ideas around, all the time anchored in the town of Lillesand and what she had learned about its history, sensing the possibility of creating something that could have happened there a long time ago.

Staging the past

Beate had an outdoor summer stage built in 2012 (see Figure 10.3). A number of different shows and concerts were staged, all of which were a sell-out. She got a glimpse of what a Culture Hotel could be. The town was ready for live events and performances. Together with local artists and cultural institutions the hotel sizzled with enthusiasm.

However, the most decisive moment came in the shape of a request from an event company. The company had been promising special treats for international customers with high demands. Could Beate stage something really different in the town of Lillesand? A group of media people

who had already surveyed many different sites in Norway were now on the lookout for a ‘real deal’ and something unusual. The company had checked Lillesand out a couple of times, liked the location and its beautiful architecture and now wondered how much more there was to



Figure 10.3. The hotel garden with an outdoor stage erected temporarily during the summer of 2012. Beate has big dreams for the stage. Photo: Beate Holm.

offer in the shape of events. This request made Beate aware of how she had packaged and presented the hotel and how similar this was to other places, but also how much there was still to explore and develop.

When searching for the ultimate local experience Beate first turned to the maritime museum. The director was thrilled by the unorthodox possibility of staging a joint event. They decided to present a dinner table in late nineteenth-century style. The theme, 'The Captain's Table', was portrayed in the living room of the former owner of what later became the museum, the famous Captain Carl Knudsen. The event was preceded by intense discussions about whether one was allowed to use museum objects, move hotel furniture into the museum and how to organise the tableware and food. In the Hotel Norge kitchen the answer to all the challenges was standard: 'no problem'. Preparing the food, setting the table, serving the meal – all were swiftly managed by the hotel. The female museum director dressed up in authentic clothes and styled her hair in turn-of-the-last-century fashion. She took her seat as one of the guests at the dinner table in a room that had not seen food for 60 years. Story-tellers were summoned and contributed something extra to the staging. The event turned out to be a re-enactment, where the actors blended in as guests. By the end of the evening the museum director was visibly touched and taken by the atmosphere of a reconstructed past: 'Imagine, this must have been how they lived there and then'.

The following evening, an actor impersonating the Norwegian author Knut Hamsun appeared at Hotel Norge. In fact, a suite at the hotel was reserved for this Nobel Laureate in the 1930s. Given that Hamsun became a most controversial figure in national literature when he joined the Norwegian fascists and collaborated with the Quisling regime during the war, this was a daring step. Nothing about this background was on display, however. The hotel website instead claims that:

Knut Hamsun was a quiet and modest man. When life became too troubled at home in Nørholm, or when one of his books was released, he 'escaped' to Lillesand. He didn't enjoy all the media attention. But he loved the quiet and peaceful life of the small town. Here he got his inspiration from wandering along the piers and chatting with people. In the early 1930s he came on several occasions and at Hotel Norge was given room 302 and special care. The room was big and airy with a fantastic view of the harbour ...

Whether Hamsun wrote any of his books in room 302 is highly uncertain, but there is no doubt that he came to the town and the hotel for inspiration. Some of the characters in the August trilogy are recognisable. (www.hotelnorge.no; translated by the authors)

The guests who were invited to the re-enactment were served an aperitif on the building's third floor. In smaller groups the 20 or so people were taken on a tour that ended on the fourth floor, where the actor sat reading from one of Hamsun's books. When he had finished reading, Hamsun led the group down to dinner at the Kings Table, situated in the ballroom. Here he continued to play the grand author while eating and conversing with the guests (perhaps not the ideal company for a person who was said to love the quiet life). During the meal the leader of a local literature festival gave a lecture on Hamsun. The event was totally constructed to enforce the feeling of 'being there', combining a lecture, presentation and live performance by Hamsun.

The event company experiencing the two Lillesand evenings clearly enjoyed the different ways of creating new impressions. They wanted to return the following year, if possible to follow in the footsteps of Henrik Ibsen. The museum staff were also thrilled. They gained new insights by letting the pieces in the exhibition come alive. The increase in the museum's economy occasioned by this event was welcome too. The hotel too saw new possibilities ahead. Beate said: 'Sure it was a lot of work, but we still have treasures to unpack. If we had managed to put it into our marketing system we could have reached out to more people'. She also started to wonder how such an event could be made sustainable. According to her calculation, the hotel would break even with ten events per year. What other concepts could be themed and staged? 'Imagine if we could focus on preparing theme packages for international tourists, we would develop even further qualities that would make us unique and stand out.'

The ultimate local experience

Research and development projects both demand an intense contact with local stakeholders at the town and county level. In our case it initially proved more demanding than simply changing the concept for Hotel Norge, especially as such cooperation is based on the ability to

persuade by means of budgets, long-term activity plans and detailed working schedules for employees. However, the main obstacle was the possible merging of publicly administered cultural activities and commercial ones: “‘What kind of prioritising is this? The hotel is a business actor! What are you doing?’ You can understand the reaction from a body traditionally concerned with optimising the conditions for the development of local culture.’

During our conversations Beate explained how it took ‘quite some time to get the library, the museum, the office for culture at the town-and-county level as well as artists to understand that this was not only about our plans for Hotel Norge. It was about contributing to the already existing cultural activity in the region. We wanted to engage in what was already going on in Lillesand’s cultural sector. We thought that together we could make it flourish even more.’ Her most important message was promising but blunt: ‘we already have a guest stream; we have the infrastructure and if we can manage to cooperate this could take off for all the agents of art and culture in Lillesand’.

Instead of presenting the plans for innovation hinted at above, Beate stuck to her informal pattern and invited representatives from different local cultural bodies to lunchtime talks and a dinner. ‘Did you get the impression that they understood your ambitions?’ we asked. She answered:

To start with no one knew exactly why they were summoned. I had invited them to brain storm and no one managed to spot any common thread for the meeting. But everyone was a bit curious and perhaps even honoured, in a way. I had not prepared a presentation but trusted the usual dialogue. Starting with the USUS context I told them that Hotel Norge was regarded as infrastructure in the value chain and I found that a problem. Yes, they seemed to understand what I am trying to accomplish with this project.

As the discussion continued and the ideas became more concrete, it was clear to everybody that the hotel could increasingly be seen as a stage for different activities and performances. The outer facilities of a hotel garden and rooms already existed, but were too one-dimensional. Beate’s vision – aided by her cooperation with USUS – was to develop the hotel from a place for eating and sleeping in nice surroundings to one permeated by the sensation of entering a different world. She explained:

Regardless of whether you drink hot cocoa in the library, attend a conference, stay overnight or are a garden guest, I want you to feel invited to a specific cultural experience. One way or another we want to unpack parts of the history of Lillesand that mean something unique for the place. The project can be copied in other places and hotels, but they would have to build on their own unique material. I've spent a lot of time making sure that this is not only about the four walls of a hotel. Everything is in close proximity in town and the more our guests are invited to discover something of what there is to experience the more value they will get for their money. This was why our potential partners understood that we genuinely wanted to offer our visitors a full package and we that have something unique for everyone who wants to join in.

'So you managed to get everyone to pull in the same direction?' we asked. 'Definitely! This is what I have sown, and so far so good. This meeting went really well. It was so much fun!'

One of the pillars turned out to be something called Together for Culture, where different local initiatives were offered to the hotel and its garden stage. Together with a local design bureau the hotel staff worked to brand the concept. Prior to every arrangement they produced posters to put up all over the town, were present in social media, on digital screens, in advertisements and in the editorial columns of the local newspaper. As many partners as possible could be gathered under one heading. The idea was that people would recognise the concept, even though the content changed from time to time. According to Beate, the entire event was 'an example of something that is anything but profitable. This will only be cost, no revenue ... we will still do it, because it is important for us to connect to such good partners'.

There is no doubt that Beate has initiated the project with profit in mind, not only for her hotel but also for all the partners involved. According to her, in the long run it is certain to pay off. Her main idea is to establish new market positions using this innovative business model. In addition to increasing and retaining guests looking for that little extra in terms of regional conferences and seminars, the targeted groups are national and international tourists on the lookout for something genuine and romantic at the same time (see Kjaer, Chapter 11 in this volume). By branding the

town, different actors are perceived from the perspective of the travelling visitors. Beate believes that: 'With a good dialogue and a sincere wish that the others will succeed the cake is big enough for everyone'. She seems able to express the same hope for what it is possible to achieve to the other partners. In other towns and localities the cooperation between art, culture and business have failed because the different parties do not know enough about each other's' reasons for joining and what a common outcome might be. Leadership, a belief in making dreams come true, building trust and sharing knowledge among the participants are all important. Although this proves to be hard to capture in words, it is obviously something that is felt by the participants and emanates from Hotel Norge in the town of Lillesand.

Conclusion

In her book *Ordinary Affects*, Kathleen Stewart (2007) advocates the importance of focusing on affects as an alternative to a rigid or too systematic approach to the cases under study, irrespective of whether this is a well-known totalising system like structuralism, a 'linguistic turn' in ethnology or anthropology, models of globalisation, neoliberalism, capitalism in other disciplines, or mainly trying to squeeze the everyday processes in ordinary lives into overarching patterns (for a discussion see Jansen, Chapter 3 in this volume). In Stewart's writing the central matters are always about how people are 'affected and affect others' in the Spinozian way (see Gilje, Chapter 2 in this volume). Using what are now classic formulations she wants to 'draw attention to immanence, to bodies, to their attunement to each other and to objects. ... to bring them into view as a scene of immanent force, rather than leave them looking like dead effects imposed on an innocent world' (ibid. 1). Something new may arise when the environment starts 'worlding' to the people living in it and their ability to make objects, people and places 'gather' in ways that were not seen before.

As became evident to the team following Beate in our many walk and talks, interviews over meals and helping her to formulate applications and reports, structures such as 'resource-oriented' and 'process-oriented' faded into the background. Instead, her attunement to places, people and objects was exceptional and was constantly displayed to us. Beate paid more attention to her gut feelings than to pondering rationally on

resources or portfolio management. It seemed as though her creativity was affectively based on, her strategy situated in, embodied knowledge – ‘whim as a method’. In this way she managed to sway not only the librarian and the museum director who felt so deeply moved when staging a captain’s table, but also the guests and the representatives of the town and council as well. As she expressed it: ‘I have so much faith in this project. I draw so much energy and inspiration from it.’

To some extent, helped by the USUS cluster and taking part in innovation conferences, Beate’s contribution expands the notion of being a Culture Hotel for wider purposes – a total concept. In a complex landscape of new partners she manages to cover wider parts of the value chain than we had foreseen and thus gives important feedback to the wider TCCIs project. The project is still in its initial stages and to some extent the future seems to lie in the hands and mind of the innovative owner. After following the processes at Hotel Norge in Lillesand for several years we can see how things are still in the making. As researchers we are more used to looking back at cases that are settled and closed. So when Beate says ‘so far, so good’, it captures our understanding of the innovative process precisely.

Notes

- 1 A USUS cluster consists of more than 100 businesses in the tourism, creative and cultural industries in southern Norway that works towards the development of innovation capability, value creation and competitiveness by means of a systematic, holistic and coordinated development of existing guest streams (see www.usus.no). USUS Advanced is the research programme of the cluster, which involves numerous national and international research projects, all of which are user-driven and cooperate with some 20 different research milieus and universities.
- 2 The research team, led by Kirsti Mathiesen Hjemdahl, visited the site regularly for a period of four years.
- 3 Her key contribution was as a specialist within culture projects, and in addition as a specialist within site-specific art and experience design.
- 5 Henrik Wergeland 1808–1845, Norwegian patriot, poet, playwright, historian, and linguist.

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Lindesnes Lighthouse is a well-known Norwegian tourist attraction. Few museums can compete with this windswept cape where an affection of the senses is concerned. Within the new museology and experience economy, museums have been redefined as storytellers, performers, and event-makers; above all, they are supposed to communicate with the visitors in diversely emotional ways. The staff at the lighthouse have been trained to appeal to the visitors not primarily by cognitive means, but rather in visual, tactile, as well as in audible ways. The author of Chapter 11 follows two groups of middle-class visitors to Lindesnes, one from Western countries and the other from China. It turns out that the two groups display very different preferences due to the ways their senses have been educated through their backgrounds. This chapter shows that whenever affects is on the agenda, the cultural organisation of sensibilities must be taken into consideration.

The Performative Museum

Designing a Total Experience

Sarah Holst Kjær

Observing

Nearby, we saw a group of white wooden houses. We drove further and at the end of a road, there was Lindesnes Lighthouse, the southernmost place in Norway and a coastal heritage museum. Here, they were very innovative with coastal food culture – although the products didn't have labels in English. The location itself was a selling point – it felt special to be here at this extreme point. Although the wind was cold and there was lack of information, this place felt like a hidden attraction.

This ethnographic observation and diary extract from our research team includes the language of museum development:¹ innovative lighthouse staff and the location as a selling point. It has a vocabulary of bodily sensations and feelings: nice food, special feeling about the place and a cold wind. It is also a touristic description: white wooden houses, the lighthouse at an extreme point and a hidden attraction.

The description, written in 2014, reflects a larger societal trend, namely that Scandinavian local heritage museums situated in regional settings deal with globalisation when they receive visitors from many national and cultural backgrounds. From a visitor perspective museum, materiality and landscape are met with diverse underlying assumptions which affect the relationship between certain bodies and particular places. At this windswept, coastal museum, not only neighbours from Denmark,

Sweden, Germany and the UK came. Visitors as far away as from China were also beginning turn up.

Like most Scandinavian museums, the Lindesnes Lighthouse's officially defined target group was school children. In addition, sailors used the museum as a navigation point. As a result of the changing market conditions in the traditional culture industry (see Hjemdahl and Frykman, Chapter 10 in this volume), the museum did not take it for granted that it would be possible to be publicly subsidised in the future. The museum hence wanted to understand and possibly expand into new markets. Taking the point of departure in ethnographic observations, qualitative interviews and questionnaires, the scope of this chapter is to discuss how the Lindesnes Lighthouse Museum communicated the experience setting of the coastal landscape, its materiality and artefacts, by mainly taking for granted that the museum's own espoused values of the coastal landscape would be understood and approached in predictable ways by two visitor groups of Northern European pensioners and Chinese young adults. The tourists in both groups were well educated and middle class, but coming from a Northern European and Asian context.

Taking the view that cultural background affects people's basic underlying assumptions when interpreting a museum landscape, this chapter will discuss various phenomenological perspectives on the relationship between body and place. It may be usual that museums develop by analysing and understanding visitors' cultural backgrounds. Through investigation it becomes clear how easy or difficult, familiar or strange, a particular experience setting can appear to people who are not 'in the know'. Museums will try to adapt their communications and marketing through a language and translation approach. But opening up to a body and place perspective reveals how a particular cultural body is experiencing a setting through more or less 'obvious' cultural objects in uncharacteristic ways. In this example a dramatic coastline landscape and a traditional red and white coloured lighthouse were experienced through many unpredictable cultural objects: the taste of biscuits, souvenir toys reminding of grandchildren, the smell of thermos flask coffee, and even the feel of paperware was to associate to the quality of the coastal lighthouse experience.

Using experience economy concepts identifying the performative museum through marketing concepts, 'storytelling', affinity and a 'total experience' perspective (Skot-Hansen 2008), I focus on how museum

visitors from these two cultural backgrounds assimilated the material and emotional stories which the staff more or less explicitly applied to the lighthouse and its harsh coastal setting.

It is assumed that most impressions are interpreted through personal experience and cultural background (see Jansen, Chapter 3 in this volume). In this case, the less instructive the two tourists groups found the museum materiality to be, the more likely they were to bring into play their own preferences in leisure habits, social rituals and consumer desires. Scandinavian museums often rely on visitors already having 'curriculum knowledge' or in-depth familiarity with what is on display. This chapter discusses what happens when a limited amount of information is available to certain groups of museum visitors and how they relate – or would like to relate – to the coastal landscape through their cultural background and with their bodily preferences. In order to analyse the relationship between certain bodies and a particular coastal materiality, I interpret utterances and sensory impressions given by Northern European pensioners and Chinese young adults during their visit to the Lindesnes Lighthouse Museum (see Pink 2009: 12, 17).

Lighthouse materiality

Lindesnes Lighthouse dates back to 1656 and is thought to have been the first of its kind in Norway. Located on the dramatic coastline of southern Norway, it became a national heritage site in 2000 and started functioning as a museum as well as an active maritime navigation point. On a national scale, Lindesnes Lighthouse is amongst the ten most visited attractions in Norway.

Besides its traditional obligations, such as collecting, documenting and communicating research, the museum also became part of an ambitious Norwegian cultural policy. In a national white paper on museum responsibilities from 2002 the museum was expected to 'surprise and challenge emotionally and intellectually'.² Although this can be interpreted in many ways, it was mainly understood by heritage museums as a way to deal with being a 'boring' or 'old-fashioned' museum.

In order to meet policy requests, several approaches originating from the experience economy were tested. 'Experience economy' can be defined as the practice of using aesthetics and consumption in order to commodify cultural expressions and settings. Experience economy

is thus a consumer-orientated way of staging and performing cultural expressions with the purpose of making a profit. In order to become successful from a commercial perspective, the Lindesnes Lighthouse Museum interpreted the policy demands of being 'emotionally challenging' by creating strong place brand and setting up a souvenir shop with local and high-quality products. The museum even opened a fish restaurant and transformed one of the buildings into an apartment hotel. By being consumer-orientated, the museum stopped being boring at the same time as it became a corporate entity. Hence the museum tried to meet new public expectations that a cultural institution should maximise profit through commodities and consumption (Aronsson 2007: 16; Skot-Hansen 2008: 73, 82).

Still, the everyday routines suggested that the Lindesnes Lighthouse Museum was mostly occupied with dealing with how materiality could associate to the lighthouse itself. It was difficult transforming the many layers of historical events, instruments, objects and remnants of earlier lighthouses, military bunkers from wartime and inscriptions from kings who arrived at the lighthouse, being both faithful to the storyline of the museum while at the same time being consumer-oriented. Matching the landscape with different entertainment interests of pensioners and young adults should not only create the right emotional response, these matches would also change the museum's materiality. Prioritising things, foregrounding one thing while backgrounding another, would create consequences in the experience setting of the museum.

The museum's staff had nonetheless transformed the lighthouse's technical equipment and work-related apparatus into tourism-oriented experiences. As the lighthouse was part of a seascape, the surrounding views were spectacular, especially from the very top of the lighthouse. The museum had focused on service consumption such as events, exhibitions, festivals and live concerts. The restaurant and souvenir shop sold locally produced seaweed products – beer, bread, salt and crackers – with a clear brand reference to the museum and to the ocean below where you could see the fresh seaweed before it was collected. In addition, the museum had engaged in digital storytelling using new technology. A cinema has been created for both education and entertainment. Since the Lindesnes Lighthouse Museum had begun narrating romantic feelings in relation to the dramatic weather at the coastal landscape, honeymoon tourism had been on the rise. It was possible to have a wedding ceremony held

out on the cliff and the old lighthouse keeper's cottage which was turned into the apartment hotel mainly served couples who had food delivered from the restaurant or nearby caterers. A champagne dinner served at the top of the lighthouse could even be arranged.³ When the museum staff and other visitors had gone home for the day, the landscape and the weather, often extreme wind, sun, rain or snow, offered a solitary experience. Being one of the most well-known tourism establishments inside and outside Norway, the Lindesnes Lighthouse Museum was an year-round attraction which did not suffer from any off-season problems. On the contrary, the staff would point out that the museum's coastal location was the most impressive when summer was over. Then, autumn and winter weather conditions had a pronounced effect on the bodily sensing (Kjær 2011b).

The visitors

In 2008 and 2013 I conducted interviews and participant observations with groups of Northern European pensioners and Chinese young adults at the Lindesnes Lighthouse Museum. The two groups presented a new global reality, in that the European population is ageing and has more leisure time while the Chinese population is becoming wealthier and is therefore more eager to travel to faraway places such as Norway.

In the wake of the empirical investigations it became clear that the studies had a lot to say about the local–global tourism situation of a national heritage museum. The visitors often involved previous experiences of completely different museums and amusement parks. These comparisons were quite unpredictable to the museum staff, but shed light on how local ways of communicating were perceived as rather cryptic and esoteric by the experienced visitors (Meethan 2001).

The two groups were not asked identical questions. Nevertheless, their experiences and views helped the museum to (re)invent the landscape by suggesting new experiential service products related to the visitors' own preferences as leisure consumers. The practices, desires and opinions of the Northern European pensioners were identified in a qualitative questionnaire survey that resulted in 78 responses. In the questionnaire the pensioners had an opportunity to discuss topics such as their general impression of the experience landscape and how the museum could be developed further in relation to service consumption. Their responses

were then followed up by intermittent ethnographic observations. In this context, the questionnaire responses were examined in relation to how the museum could become even more attractive, providing for the visitors' needs and demands (Kjær 2011b).

Sixteen Chinese visitors were approached and interviewed at the museum in 2013. How they moved around in the landscape, looked for information, took pictures, took in the views and used the place was observed. The Chinese visitors were invited to freely elaborate on their experiences, their access to the lighthouse and information about it. These brief *in situ* interviews led to a clearer understanding of how they understood this particular museum, its coastal sensations and museum activities (Kjær 2014).

The museum staff knew very little about the lifestyles of Northern European pensioners and Chinese young adults. Demands from the national cultural policy proved quite superficial. How far should the museum go in meeting the needs of particular consumer groups? Did approaching visitors in a 'service-encounter manner' and adapting to particular cultural backgrounds also mean compromising the experience setting itself (Mossberg 2007: 84)?

The performative museum

Nowadays museums are expected to offer entertainment and education and to be performative, i.e. act as a 'museum theatre' by using dramaturgical techniques of staging and performing to convey emotions and personal attachment to visitors. Emotional attachment to the museum is a concept that more and more has been borrowed from traditional businesses and the commercial experience industry, e.g. the theme park or amusement park (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2000: 58). In order to address its visitors the museum needs to know something about their cultural background: the specific habits, needs and rituals. The museum materiality and experience landscape should be arranged in such a way that the visitor feels 'absorbed' and 'transformed'. The imperative is that 'positive emotions', 'feelings of fun' and the use of 'imagination' are ways to perform an intense visitor experience. The overall intention is thus to stimulate all the senses, and meaningful intensity makes the consumer more willing to spend money (Lorenzen 2015: 72; Bosjwijk et al. 2007).

Already in 1995, the English marketing-researcher Fiona McLean (1995: 601) wrote that 'over the past 20 years the environment in which the museums have been operating has changed radically. Museums have not come through unscathed. Increasingly they are being forced or encouraged to generate their own income and to respond to the demands of the public. Although some museums may not consciously recognize it as such, they are being expected to develop a marketing orientation.' The Lindesnes Lighthouse Museum management and staff had embraced the marketing orientation which created the affective trends in Norwegian cultural policy. Making the traditional heritage museum 'surprising' and 'challenging' was ultimately a goal-orientated strategy aiming at getting more people interested in going to the museum in order to obtain an acceptable return on its public subsidy. Although schoolchildren – the quickly distracted consumers – were probably the policy's main target group, the museum wanted to test what surprise and challenge meant to the greater spending power of Northern European pensioners and Chinese young adults.

In order to avoid the possible clichéd description of museums as 'cold marble mausoleums that house miles of relicts that soon give way to yawns and tired feet' (Kotler & Levy 1969: 11) the Lindesnes Lighthouse had in many ways begun to perceive itself more like a experiential service organisation, shouldering the role of performer, event-maker and storyteller. Influenced by marketing theories and the experience economy, communicating with visitors in challenging ways meant 'targeting' and dramatizing the immediate experience of objects and materiality in order to affect the visitors' emotions and intellects. It also means using the museum's experience landscape in intentional ways by creating opportunities for service consumption. In very concrete ways, the museum's materiality – artefacts and sceneries – became the main tools to engage the visitors. Examples of this were how the museum used souvenirs and Internet access in order to affect visitors. Guests would consume more by feeling connected through materiality: being able to 'get in touch' through commodities and communication with their fellow visitors and even with family members back home. Designing photo-opportunities at certain chosen locations, being able to hang out at the cafe, or 'liking' the museum on its social media pages, were also norms of how the performative museum was consumer-oriented. In the eyes of management and staff, the museum could and should be a place where

theatrical elements – staging, scripting, acting – enhanced the sensory experience by means of producing relationality and emotionality (Skot-Hansen 2008: 83, 130–131).

On an experiential and sensory level, the Internet has created a general awareness of ‘the total experience’. The museum visitors increasingly expect to sense and feel in multimodal ways, e.g. through movement, touch, smell, sound, visuals, moving pictures and texts, all of which can be perceived as a single yet complex experience (Kjær 2011a). Activities – weddings, guided tours, climbing the cliffs – accumulated intensity. The haptic, bodily feelings, moving, tasting, listening and smelling the lighthouse landscape was a way the museum designed totality: a multi-modal experience that was meant to compete with or even perform more intensely than imaginations or the cyber world.

A total experience

The museum visit is part of general culture-tourism practice. As noted by architectural historians Gunilla Jivén and Peter Larkham (2003: 69), tourism involves ‘the most deliberate search for sense-related place experiences’. Leisure consumers interact with and perform a range of practices, such as eating, gazing, walking and resting, in order to activate and enrich their senses. A phenomenological perspective on culture tourism can be starting to focus on that ‘something’ which the camera is unable to capture (*ibid.*). Investigating a lighthouse landscape will then not be about observing tourists’ common habitual practice of taking popular snapshots of the magnificent view. It will not be about how the best panorama pictures can(not) capture the essence of being there. Instead, the total and absorbed experience can be about viewing the place from all angles, turning your head, moving around, feeling the wind in your face and perhaps having difficulty breathing in the sudden gusts of wind. When time is limited and space is compressed, certain ‘must-sees’ and activities, such as getting to the top of the lighthouse, having your attention directed to certain scenes and being affected inter-subjectively by other visitors, make deep sensory impressions. According to the philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s definition of how the body ‘perceives’ place it is always about connecting to a particular moment in time through the authentication of the senses, affects and emotions (*cf.* Sjørlev 2015: 159). For that reason, a phenomenological perspective can

be used to understand how a particular cultural body experiences a place through e.g. ‘feeling heritage with one’s hands’ or even sensing a place through souvenirs, lunchboxes or the survival kit of the journey (Kjær 2011a: 23). By arranging bodily presence in a material context, museum curators are now aiming at organising ‘the essence’ of the display: the ‘sixth sense’ or the synthesis of the five senses coming together into a transforming into existential, educational, self-improving experiences of totality (O’Dell 2006). Consumer goods and services are becoming tools for the body to connect to the place.

This ‘total experience’ is captured in the idea of the multisensory, working through bodily practices such as orientating oneself, moving, walking, climbing or being still, and as in the case analysed here, being absorbed in the totality of the coastal environment. However, such bodily practices depend on the cultural background: needs, habits and tacit underlying assumptions (Bosjwijk, Thijssen and Peelen 2007).

Pensioners and young adults

How did a coastal museum in Norway attune to Chinese young adults or Northern European pensioners? In practice, visitors often do and think unplanned things and are not easily governed. In this respect the pensioners were perhaps more ‘easily managed’ than the Chinese, because their cultural background, curriculum knowledge and previous experiences more predictably formed a correspondence between their bodies and the Lindesnes Lighthouse landscape. As almost no information was translated into a language they could follow, the Chinese found it difficult to grasp the instructive ambitions of the museum.

The focus of the Northern European pensioners was on absorbing the natural forces of the landscape. They defined the coastline as ‘idyllic’, ‘lovely’, *‘schön’* and ‘wonderful’ and enjoyed the ‘peace and quiet’, ‘contemplation’ and ‘purity and freshness’ of the place. They were equipped with thermos flasks and sandwiches and dressed in brightly coloured Goretex anoraks. They leaned into the wind and said ‘the stormy weather is great’, or that it is ‘nice to feel the wind’. They ‘loved’ the maritime cultural history of the museum and back in their cottages – either in the museum area or at the nearby holiday resorts. They read novels, guide books and glossy magazine features about Scandinavian lighthouse holidays. They even read historic travel descriptions such as the English

philosopher Mary Wollenstonecraft's *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark* (1796/2008). The pensioners often travelled in pairs and were unaccompanied by children. They could be on a romantic holiday with their partner or travelling with a friend. They wanted to take souvenirs home and 'highly appreciated' the locally produced wooden toy lighthouse for their grandchildren (Kjær 2011b).

The Chinese visitors were equally interested in and impressed by the coastal landscape, although they were more interested in the coast-related health products. They were 'overwhelmed' by the natural environment, which the pensioners took for granted and felt very comfortable in and secure with.

The young adults were not at all familiar with the rough, cold and windswept landscape. They were freezing and not wearing the appropriate outdoor clothing. Norway in general was a considerable contrast to their everyday life in urban, service-orientated, but also heavily polluted cities which they felt affected their health and wellbeing (Potter and Lloyd-Evans 1998: 199). The freshness of nature was very 'impressive' to them. They travelled in small and larger groups. Many lived, studied and worked in Scandinavia and had sometimes invited their elderly relatives and parents for a holiday. More often than not they were experienced travellers and compared Norway to other Western and Scandinavian destinations. They orientated themselves through their smartphones and various social media pages, searching for other travellers' recommendations. They listened to experiences, rumours and hearsay on Trip Advisor, Qyer, Weibo and Facebook, or looked up information about transportation, places of interest, food and accommodation on search engines such as Google or Baidu (Kjær 2014). In contrast to the pensioners, they depended on access to the Internet but often planned the entire trip from home, preparing their experiences in the smallest detail to make sure they did not waste precious time by not being able to find accommodation, transport, information and shopping possibilities.

Like the pensioners, the Chinese young adults liked to read about travel and some chose the novel *Norwegian Wood* by the Japanese author Haruki Murakami (1987). Although the travel literature preferences of the pensioners and the Chinese only partly or metaphorically touched on the exact travel destination, their choice of reading indicates ways of transferring literary meaning, sense-making and underlying assumptions

to an outlandish geography. By approaching the two cultural groups and their entertainment habits it became clear that onto an 'under-communicated' or 'self-evident' natural heritage museum all kinds of signifying practices could be projected. For a short moment, the micro-movement of eyes connected a situated body with the idea of an entire country while at the same time transporting the traveller in time and space.

Ritualising social relationships

The performative museum has been called an 'emotional factory' (Skot-Hansen 2008: 82). It mimics theme parks and amusement parks in the sense that it wants to provide for the needs of visitors. This means that materiality and service are often constructed so that they aim at facilitating for visitors 'working on' and 'improving' their social and emotional relationships. Global theme park corporations such as Disney for example train their service staff using a service principle which they call 'emotional contagion'. This means that staff are understood to have an emphatic function and are taught to evoke trust and confidence through the performance of friendliness. This performance is supposed to be need-fulfilling and is meant to 'rub off' on the visitor experience in a positive way (Voss and Zomerdijk 2007: 110). The Norwegian ethnologist Kirsti Mathiesen Hjemdahl (2003: 44) has also studied theme parks in relation to families and defines this leisure landscape as a place which allows 'modern reconciliation rituals' to happen. Museum visitors in general (Meethan 2001), the pensioners and young adults in this study included, also expected emotionalisation from the Lindesnes Lighthouse Museum: there should be a support of togetherness and an avoidance of unpleasant social friction. Certain rituals and performances, including giving the visitor a chance to remember the family back home by purchasing gifts, sending postcards or uploading snapshots on social media, were expected. The consumption management of emotions is of course not the same as how it felt for a visitor to long for a grandchild in the souvenir shop. It is not the same as how a visitor, uploading a snapshot on Facebook, would jump when the digital sound from the 'thumbs-up' responses started to tick in. Museum materiality was an actor in relationship bonds. In the landscape, there was always a we of some sort.

The Chinese young adult visitors liked to send postcards to their families back in China. In the eyes of the Western traveller this may

seem like a nostalgic practice, but sharing their visit with family back home was a very important documentation of their being there. They preferred long-lasting memory tokens – something to put in their scrapbook, like a ticket, a postcard, a stamp or a brochure. It is said, that Chinese invented paper and due to this cultural history they have a particular liking for it (Westerby 2013). The Chinese visitors touched paper in the museum's souvenir shop. They talked about it, felt the thickness and the structure, and valued the quality of the different paper items on display. Handwritten messages on postcards authenticated the visit – they *were* actually *here*. At the same time, the postcard sending met the expected ways of sustaining social relations with people back home. The Chinese visitors documented their presence at the lighthouse in autobiographical ways. They collected memory-tokens. In order to have something special to look forward to, some would send postcards to themselves. Others would unite with both postcards and family. On leaving the museum they explained that eventually they would use the paper items acquired here in order to transport themselves back to the museum (Kjær 2014).

From a museum staff perspective, this particular liking could not have been perceived beforehand or understood without knowing the underlying assumption of the actual haptic practice of the Chinese. Sensing and touching the paper's materiality connected to the lighthouse feeling.

Body and place

The visitors' emotional interrelatedness was considered by the museum when designing the restaurant, café, hotel apartment, sun lounge areas, playgrounds and outdoor recreational areas. The aim of the place organisation was to fulfil the visitor's exact need. The goal was to try to create a flow between comfort zones, pleasure and learning geographies, making visitors to stay longer, consume more, move them in the right directions, avoiding others, create quiet areas at certain times while surprising them at others.

Around 2000 many lighthouse establishments in Scandinavia turned to the romantic market. The Lindesnes Lighthouse Museum had advertised the coastal landscape as a romantic getaway. Honeymooning with seafood dinners, overnight stays and champagne was a popular product. Those pensioners wanting a second blissful moment were receptive. On

weekend trips to the lighthouse the loving couple could ‘find silence in the ocean void’ and be ‘swept in a haze of romance’. In a lifestyle magazine given to me by the pensioners, the reporter wrote:

Inside we have lit candles. Outside the lighthouse casts its light. No TV disturbs us. We watch the beautiful sunset and talk all night. We enjoy the sound of the waves and our hiking-trips to the peaks. Actually, it would have been great, if we had got stuck by a hurricane and by some extreme weather conditions. (*Tara*, November 2008, 193–194)

The romantic experience was preconditioned by marketing and storytelling in different kinds of media. This type of experience says something about how a museum only to a certain extent can manage and market a place. The visitors will sometimes ‘micromanage’ the experience to perfection. Through the practice of lighting a candle, the moment of glancing, the actual decision to turn off the TV, intensify what the coastal landscape already dramatizes. A material association between body, place and symbolism was established. Being physically moved by the storm, wind and waves was also described. In late modern romantic consumption, being touched and changed at a profound level (O’Dell 1999: 264) was possible in the littoral landscape.

In the history of popular culture the immediate relation between the romantic body and a coastal landscape has long been defined as passion. In the scenic dramas from twentieth-century Hollywood, several romantic films were shot in the dramatic scenery of the Niagara Falls. These images eventually led to the place becoming a mainstream honeymoon destination. Here, the transforming power of a wedding was supported by the equally sublime and intense landscape (Löfgren 1999: 30).

During fieldwork some of the pensioners introduced me to Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark* (1796/2008). By exposing herself to the rough Scandinavian countries, her idea was to create a genre of existential travel writing. Wollstonecraft explored the sublime scenery on the eastern and southern coastline of Norway and writes about how the transformative effect of this ‘wild’, ‘dark’ and ‘shadowed’ coastal landscape produced her ‘tender melancholy’ (ibid. 33). Using the expedition, she set out to ‘close the grave’ of her youth. In other words, she went on a Grand Tour to

grow and become powerful, and did this by exposing herself to a highly unapproachable and demanding landscape. In her diary she wrote:

Nature is the nurse of sentiment, the true source of taste; yet what a misery, as well as rapture, is produced by a quick perception of the beautiful and sublime when it is exercised in observing animated nature, when every beautiful feeling and emotion excites responsive sympathy, and the harmonised soul sinks into melancholy or rises in ecstasy. ... I cannot, without a thrill of delight, recollect views I have seen, which are not to be forgotten, nor looks I have felt in every nerve, which I shall never more meet. The grave has closed over a dear friend, the friend of my youth. (Ibid. 36, 41)

The pensioners' entertainment readings added meaning to their time spent at the Lindesnes. The same can be said for the Chinese young adults equipped with their travel literature. Their preferences in literature show how the two groups acted in meaning-seeking ways. Using literary expressions, what happened at the museum was that the two groups created an atmosphere which intensified – or maybe even completed – their experience. Approaching the museum landscape in multimodal ways, using different types of media, objects and sensory approaches in order to engage with the surroundings, the coastal landscape only became complete when the visitors connected their certain bodies with particular approaches to the place (Sjørøsløv 2015: 163; cf. Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004).

Landscape likings

The museum could narrate, display and organise artefacts and connect them to the museum's own espoused values. But to a certain degree the museum could not anticipate how new visitors would engage with or perceive the displayed materiality. The pensioners and young adults were two different visitor groups. Still, what they had in common was a strong liking for the natural heritage landscape.

The concept of affinity can help to investigate how engagement, affects and emotions, sometimes are felt strongly because of connection and recognition. Affinity can be defined as 'something' which makes people and things suited for each other. It points to a feeling of closeness because of

similar qualities, ideas, or interests. Museums can try to ‘become friends’ with visitors by connecting their storyline, brand or experience product with the visitor, who immediately should recognise it as something shared (Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel 2013: 9, 12, 15). Affinity hence can refer to a communication strategy for achieving an intersubjective relation where objects, feelings and rhetoric of felt similarity serve to ‘eliminate unproductive clues’ in the experience (Bosjwijk, Thijssen and Peelen 2007: 23). The goal of something shared is to direct the visitor’s perception of the landscape to a meaningful, personalised, matter.

Being aware that ‘blue sky is rare in China’ (Kjær 2014), the young adults were highly connected to the museum’s coastal-based food products: seaweed, plants, herbs and smoked salmon. Such health-promoting products seemed important both as a high-quality restaurant meal and as gifts to be shipped home. Products from the sea symbolised the Chinese visitors’ cultural assumptions of a pristine, pure and clean Norway (Ooi 2014; Westerby 2013). Thus, improving one’s health by a sojourn in the coastal landscape and buying gifts and souvenirs reflecting the pure, local and ‘raw’ were meaningful – and affinity-based – things to be shared amongst friends and family. Healthy food products aligned with the Chinese imagination, while the pensioners’ assumptions were about romancing in the isolation offered at the lighthouse. To both the pensioners and the young adults, the lighthouse landscape itself was considered attractive because it was presenting a cherished idea about the untouched nature (Olsen 2007: 44). This can be defined a place-aesthetic which may originate in the widespread discourse on natural heritage: the coastal landscape is considered authentic as long as it appears non-pre-arranged and non-commercialised (Jivén and Larkham 2003; Kjær 2011a).

Still, the Chinese visitors did not move as unrestricted as the Northern European pensioners. One Chinese exclaimed ‘places in Norway aren’t planned like visitor attractions’. Others would ask for ‘more comfort’ when exposed to the cold and stormy climate. They wanted opportunities to ‘enjoy the sunshine in the restaurant’; ‘sit [in furniture with blankets] on a big grass lawn’, ‘see the sea view’, ‘have a barbeque’ and have access to ‘entertainment equipment for children’. One Chinese female biologist said that ‘it is so boring here’, while a male engineer wanted more knowledge: ‘I really want to know more about culture. But the Norwegians cannot be very proud of their heritage, because nowhere am I able to read about it on the web – neither in English, nor Mandarin’. However, he soon lapsed

into personal discomfort: 'In general, the museums are never open, and it is impossible to find out which bus will take you there'. Several other Chinese visitors defined the Lindesnes Lighthouse Museum as 'cold and primitive' and wondered 'who would ever want to visit here'?

The German geographer Wolfgang Georg Arlt (2006: 198) argues that the leisure consumption of the Chinese urban middle classes – like the visitors at the lighthouse museum – are more dominated by visual symbolism more than bodily sensing. Being used to commercial commodities, the Chinese consumers display 'no limits to consumption'. In this investigation, the Chinese explained that at home they were used to spending all day at one attraction and doing all kinds of activities. This made them ask for more comprehensive information, access to barbecue dinners and some sort of children's playground (Kjær 2014).

Conclusion

In a global order, the local performative museum can accrue location and scenery as important assets that need to be shaped, packaged and organised as consumer products or as the intake of an entire themed – romantic, dramatic or health-improving – environment. In the main it is all about an emphasis on the body and its senses, and affective responses to the landscape.

The pensioners focused on low-key luxuries, such as being able to buy more gifts for their grandchildren and eating candlelit seafood dinners. They dreamt about spending nights at the lighthouse establishment itself. They also wanted to be out in the open landscape enjoying the view from their sun loungers whilst covered in warm blankets and drinking takeaway coffee and eating sweets while talking (mostly about the grandchildren) and reading newspapers and novels. To the pensioners, the Lindesnes Lighthouse Museum appeared a place with territories to be explored through easily choreographed-with-the-wind bodily movements. Through hunches and sensing, they engaged with the winds, smells and sounds.

Sensing was of course relevant for the Chinese visitors, but in a different way. Their expectations of what was on offer at the lighthouse were a matter of the bodily experience of health.

The two groups had different expectations about what sensations a day at a coastal museum should provide. Both visitor groups expected

the museum to facilitate experience, service and commodity consumption. However, although Northern European pensioners appreciated the norms of an ‘untouched’ heritage landscape and were able to interpret these espoused values in the museum materiality, Chinese young adults were bored, cold and not used to disclosing meanings in an under-communicated, unbranded and under-designed landscape.

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Notes

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- 2 The Norwegian national white paper quoted is Stortingsmelding nr. 48, 2002–2003, p. 178 (quoted in Pabst 2011: 30).
- 3 See www.lindenesfy.no/files/FYRET2014_engelsk_24s.pdf [accessed 16 April 2015].

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Within the framework of the book, Chapter 12 presents an experiment with ethnographic writing and nonrepresentational theory. The authors take the reader on a journey where affective relations to places and objects are central, and singular objects or scenes are evoked. They creatively recompose brief moments of worlding and test the limits set by academic tradition and scholarly expectation.

Companion Pieces Written Through a Drift

Lesley Stern & Kathleen Stewart

These pieces began with a writing experiment. We participated in a conference called *Ex-Situ* organized by Craig Campbell and Yoke-Sum Wong at the University of Texas in April 2014. The conference began with a workshop of paper presentations in Austin. Then thirty or so people traveled by car to Marfa in West Texas, writing along the way. In Marfa there was a second workshop presenting the works that had come together on the trip out. The journeys out and back ranged from 3 to 5 days. The two authors of this writing traveled together. Here we present two companion pieces written during and after our trip together.

Craig and Yoke-Sum called us together around the concept of *ex situ* with writing such as this (excerpted from the flyer for the workshop):

The concept of being *ex-situ* seems to hold the potential for us to move on a different register. It is a very common situation we find ourselves in as mobile bodies in this world: from Paris to Kyzyl to Marfa to Edmonton. *Ex-situ* doesn't raise a hierarchy but through travel and displacement, perhaps, it finds appeal in site-specificity, in the terror of knowledge and ideas; 'here' might take us 'there' or 'everywhere'. Taking account of resonance and echo, the situatedness of place/site encompasses connecting experiences. *Ex-situ* plays upon those connections, contingencies, convergences, correspondences, layers – material, emotional and mnemonic.

In this piece, then, we are describing the thick entanglement of subjects and objects, aesthetics and politics, as something that happens on the register of affects. Travelling across a vibrant landscape with each other and others, and armed with the task of writing, we were transported to a register in which ‘things’ of all kinds affect one another and are affected.

The Lion, the Rooster and the Ferrari

Lesley Stern

Marathon, Texas. It is early morning and light is creeping into the motel room. Last night we walked back to the motel under a huge black sky, so black the stars shone like the burnished feathers of a silver rooster, burros brayed, flights of angels winging us to our rest. I remember living in San Agustín Etla near Oaxaca, being kept awake and woken and harassed all day and night by the sound of braying burros, turkeys, a rooster, dogs, people. *Gracias a los burros* my rooster does not have to crow. He stands on the dressing table in front of a mirror so there are two of him. Sculptural. Silent. He is double and a doubler. He doubles the odds—of detouring discovery. I open the door and step out into the dusty parking lot. The sky is now a soft donkey grey, fringed to the east with vermilion, redness seeps out of the earth, filtering into the sky.

I can stretch my arm in any direction and reach the edge of solidity and then my fingers will close around the sky.

I take the rooster outside and photograph him. He is immobile. His coxcomb is scarlet, his body painted in swathes of yellow, green and blue. His tail is feathery, the featheriness of sliced tin, a shiny indigo blue. He is perfectly proportioned. His toes are splayed giving him a firm purchase on the ground, or the dressing table, or wherever he alights. Always out of place, he will be my register of place as we travel through desert regions towards Marfa.

The rooster joined us before the desert. In Johnson City, home of LBJ we find somewhere to pee: a tiny coffee shop in a large yard filled with ironware. Flying pigs and alligators and cows. All painted. On the counter a faded photo of a Starbucks van, the side door slid open so that ‘tarb’ is eliminated. What you see then is the Starbucks icon and the word ‘sucks.’

While he fixed me an excellent espresso, John and I swapped a few minimally anecdotal details—he'd lived in San Francisco, he could tell I wasn't from Texas. Probably not from San Francisco either. The old guy he's swapping yarns with, toothless, dusty, feels like he's roamed the local block for years, and probably drunk every bottle in town, but who knows? Who knows peoples' stories unless you drive with them for days and days through the desert and can talk of this and that and failed relationships and swap another hilarious story of another disastrous episode in the life of love. I asked John who made the rooster and the other creatures, where they came from. He looked at me quizzically as if to say which leg can I pull, which story will she buy, or as if he were asking himself is this a trick question, what's she after, this foreigner, who on this wide Earth wants to know about the provenance of painted tin *tchotchkes*, who gives a flying fuck where the rooster comes from. Then he laughs and says Juan, Carlos, Roberto, Ricardo, Miguel... an army of anonymous Mexicans. I realize then it was indeed a sneaky question, the sort of question that a snooty gardener asks, either to elevate her purchase, raise it out of the realm of tourist art and into the realm of artisanal individuality, or simply to trip up a pretentious vendor.

I could go back to Old Town in San Diego and buy this rooster, closer to the source of its production. Or just nip across the border and buy it by the side of the road. Probably I could even nip back to Zimbabwe and buy the same rooster.

And yet not exactly the same.

There was a bigger rooster, grander. But as soon as my eyes lit upon this one I knew he was the one for me. He is life size, perfectly proportioned, he has stepped out from a child's picture book, from meticulously illustrated Mexican playing cards. R for rooster, G for gallo. Watch out, says the old guy, he's a cantankerous rooster, that one.

Molly, who has turned up at the bakery with Allen and Lynsey, says we will photograph the rooster everywhere we stop on our journey towards Marfa. He will be our sign, our register of place. The problem is Molly drives off with her lovely camera and I only have a phone. Luckily, the rooster responds well to iPhone attention. Preens, holds still while I teeter and shake.

In Harper, where we get gas, he stands beneath a wall on which is painted a much larger than life US flag and under it a large star of David and the slogan: Stand By Israel. Over the doorway on the same wall it

says Building for Sale. Somehow my focus is screwy and the rooster is cut out of the picture.

He does appear, albeit tinily at the bottom of the frame, under two bucking broncos, at Lowe's a local market in Fort Stockton. We had a cup of tea at a restaurant here and the young Mexican American who served us wouldn't take any payment; it's just water he said. I bought a bar of fancy dark chocolate with sea salt, an anomalous foreign import, and Katie bought a local newspaper. We ate the chocolate at the Rock House by the Rio Grande. It was musty.

In Marathon we have breakfast at Nancy's Coffee Shop. Under the large sign is scrawled, faintly, barely legible, 'Foiled Again.' He stands in the large expanse of the dirt parking lot in front of our rooms. The horizon is so low it just peeks over his head.

We drive down into Big Bend National Park. At last and eventually we arrive at Terlingua ghost town. There is a row of seats along the verandah of the saloon that is also a gift shop and also the hotel, next door to the Starlight Theatre and Bar which only opens at 5 pm so we will not get there, but it looks enticing, stars are painted on the ceiling. On the verandah everyone has a bottle in hand, slow gossip fuels the atmosphere. New people in town, everyone is alert but pretends to notice nothing. Though they all noticed Norah. Someone has already picked up the keys to the Rock House, and when I ask who she says a boy and a girl with tattoos. Norah later tells us that on her way out a woman grabs her arm to comment on her tattoos and confides loudly that she has her ex-boyfriend's name tattooed on her butt.

At the Rock House the Rooster sits on a table, the Rio Grande behind him. And then I bring him in for the night to sit safely at the foot of my bed. There are rooster thieves abroad, and vigilance is required. The next morning as we drive away we see Mexican cowboys on their horses fixing the fence. What a way, I think, to fix the border. But Katie says there is no fence here, the river serves as the border between countries, the cowboys are just looking out for their cattle that do not know to not cross the Rio Grande.

We reach Marfa, the rooster and I. You would not exactly call him Juddesque, my rooster. Picturesque, yes. *Ex-situ* incarnate.



And then we leave Marfa. As the desert spreads out behind us the radio crackles into coherence. The rooster sits silently in the back seat of the car, but the air around him is volatile, and even though the car appears and feels to us like an airtight razor sharp capsule slicing through space, something escapes, the rooster's colors vibrate, charging the landscape, inviting reciprocal attention. A doubler, he is an attraction and he attracts, he elicits color, winkling out of desert hues streaks and swathes and seas of vivid primary color.

All along the highway on the plateau before the western edge of the Texas Hill Country we listen to country music, all along the highway where wildflowers bloom: swathes of bluebonnets intermingled with red and yellow.

We stop for lunch in Ozona, a small big town, the county seat of Crockett County, named for Colonel Davy Crockett, a hero of the Alamo. We drive through the town looking for a steak house Katie once ate at and remembers hungrily but it is nowhere to be found. The streets of the town are deserted on this Sunday, faded tatty shuttered shops are strung along the main street fanning out from the civic center—gracious and impressive buildings, solidly built of stone. The Café Next Door is the only non fast-food place we can find off the freeway. We expect it to be full of travelers like ourselves, but it is chock-a-block with families out for Sunday lunch, dressed up a little, probably coming here after church. The little girls have colored bows in their hair, some of the men wear clean and crisply bright red shirts, with black jeans and skinny black ties and polished boots and Texan hats. People are eating big, but we delicate and discerning city girls order toasted cheese and salad. The sandwich has been heated, but the cheese resists melting, its plasticity and psychedelic orange hue pronounced by heat. We don't say anything to one another, we are hungry and wolf the sandwich down. But later, as we drive through an expanse of nowhere Katie, says, out of the blue, "That cheese was scary."

In the town of Frederiksburg, with its lovely stone buildings that seem to have been eerily transported from an earlier and European era, we are again craving tea and so return to the Old German Bakery and Restaurant. On the way out to Big Bend and Marfa we had delicious bratwurst and sauerkraut here and a pork cutlet that was even better cold the next morning in the motel at Marathon watching the sun come up. Over the blackboard menu in the Bakery there was a montage of

photos, some showing a part of the town invisible to a passer-through: faded walls, deserted streets, graffiti; other photos and cuttings showed cavalcades, monuments, and John Kennedy's face cut from a German newspaper. The rooster had posed outside the bakery and Molly photographed him. He will not appear in the Bakery's montage and I have never seen Molly's photograph, but I have a vivid image of him there, casually consecrating the site.

The bakery is closed this Sunday, so we wander round a back street and Katie shows me the Sunday houses and tells of how she stayed there with her mother and father when they were both still alive. These are small weekend houses that the ranchers and farmers built in the late 1800s so that they could spend a night or two when they came in to town for church and perhaps to party. They are small houses, craft houses meticulously constructed out of local materials, now mostly rented out to tourists. Katie's voice softens as she tells me about these houses.

We find a cup of tea at a Biergarten where two young girls in their sparkling twenties are taking their grandparents out for dinner or lunch in this Sunday mid-afternoon, and have to shout a lot, and at the table next to us, a party of retirees, just off the coach, are checking out the town on their iPhones, comparing maps and statistics.

North of Fredericksburg we pull in to a wildflower nursery, and walk through fields of blue, fields of red, whole fields like oceans, like we are swimming through a diaphanous red sea, light as air. Yoke Sum, in Marfa, had shown us the seed packets she and Derek had purchased here. She is going to take them back to England to plant in her garden, where, if the bluebonnets grow, they will become exotic rather than native. Here, although native, they did not sprout spontaneously along the highway. It was Lady Bird Johnson who was largely responsible for getting rid of the junkyards and billboards that graced the highway system, replacing them with native plantings, through her support for the Beautification Act of 1965. Before this road trip if you had tossed to me the words Johnson and 1965, and asked me to say whatever came into my mind I would have said Vietnam, napalm, and the Civil Rights Act of the previous year. That word, beautification, it slightly churns the stomach and curls the lip. Botox and pansies, landscaping and real estate, Sunday best, veneering.

Yet Lady Bird Johnson's legacy lives on, particularly in the infelicitously and far-from-beautifully named Surface Transportation and Uniform Relocation Assistance Act of 1987, which requires that at least 0.25 of 1

percent of funds expended for landscaping projects in the highway system be used to plant native flowers, plants and trees. As we swim through the crimson air of the poppy meadows in the flower fields I ponder the shiftiness of that word beautification, the slipperiness of terms like native and exotic, the chimerical propensity of color and how it can be strangely conjured into being through political process and the enactment of policy, but also strangely through the agency of objects charged with magical propensity.



I board the plane in Austin, bound for home, buckle up, and with eyes closed hear again the night train in Marathon. Movie fragments, night sounds, flicker across the screen of memory: the central Australian desert in *Night Cries*, black-and-white images in *Killer of Sheep*. That wailing sound rises, from somewhere within, then fades across the surface of my skin. It feels like the after-purring of a large cat, when growling segues into purring, and purring slowly ripples into soundlessness, until all that remains is a somatic memory.

On the runway all of a sudden lightning streaks across the darkening sky and hailstones start falling. The wing of the airplane is soon covered in whiteness. A shiver shoots through the plane, there is a quivering in the air. We prepare to disembark but then the crisis subsides as quickly as it erupted, the sky clears, the mood shifts. Sparks of electricity remain in the atmosphere, however, people start talking, there's an expansiveness that wasn't there before. I am sitting next to a young woman who endears herself to me by showing concern for the rooster who, in his overhead bin, has been jostled by a bag stuffed in haphazardly by a rough and rude young man. She tells me that her mum collects roosters and even has some from Soviet-era Russia. I'm not really a collector, I demur. I can understand that, she says, he is clearly the one and only.

My surly hermeticism is instantly vanquished, the conviviality of airplane small talk sucks me into its orbit. Maria tells me that she volunteers as an animal rescuer, fostering creatures from the wild so that they can eventually be returned to something like a natural state. As a student she worked at the Austin Zoo and Animal Sanctuary. Occupying a large acreage in the hill country, this zoo is home to many domestic and exotic animals that were either rescued from, or unwanted by, their owners.

Toads are rescued, goats, donkeys and snakes, but also coyotes, cougars, lions, tigers. All the big cats are endangered in their native habitat, and in quasi-legal captivity too, and so zoos often see themselves as places of preservation and restoration. A mode of domestic rewilding. Maria tells me a story about a lion. My jaw drops inch by inch until it reaches the floor and a great gaping hole opens up in my stomach.

The story Maria tells me goes like this. A lion was rescued from a church. Used in religious theater he would be wheeled onto the stage with a lamb. He had been drugged out of his mind, overfed and malnourished, confined to a small cage in a trailer, never exercised. When he was released and stepped on to the ground for the first time he buckled under his own weight. All the bones in his feet shattered.

Later I will find on the Internet a photo of a blonde man, a pastor as it turns out, in a pink jacket, open-necked shirt and khakis, clutching in his arms a lamb. He stands on a stage and you can see, behind him, a caged lion. Ed Young is a mega-church pastor, best-selling author and televangelist. The lion and the lamb were brought onto stage as part of his Wild Sermon series. He is often described as creative, is a flamboyant performer, in his services he deploys props, gimmicks, visual theater. He is prone to putting into play everyday sayings and of dramatizing biblical metaphors through literalization and embodiment.

The lion, you might say, was simply a prop, a visual aid, an illustration of language. Functionally it was equivalent to the Ferrari which Ed Young drove onto the stage one Sunday as part of a sermon illustration for his series titled 'RPM: Relationships. Passion. Marriage.' 'God gave me a Ferrari,' Young said, 'because I am a Ferrari. You're a Ferrari too. God has given you a Ferrari.' The Ferrari it seems is the body, and at the same time *you* are a Ferrari because you are made in the image of God.

Maria told me that there is a happy end to the story, they eventually managed to rehabilitate the lion, and in the zoo he can roam, as though in the wild. I cannot say with certainty that Maria's lion is the same lion that Ed Young brought onto the stage. There was a flurry, a media exposé, but a spokesman for the Fellowship Church says the lion was back 'at home' on his California reserve where he has thousands of acres on which to roam. No permits were requested for the theatrical sermon because none were needed. No prosecutions ensued. The lion, in the media and Internet coverage, simply disappeared into some mythical Californian savannah, or into thin air.

The lion and the Ferrari. Each a thing, a prop, a visual aid, a charged image. Or perhaps they are objects charged with magical propensity. They are things, albeit different sorts of things, yet transformed from thingness through embodiment and rhetorical sleight of hand. The theatricality of the symbolic dimension. And the rooster, my rooster? Is he a thing, a prop, a visual aid? What sort of a thing is he?

The wailing of the train and the roaring of the lion.



I shall take him home this rooster, a Texan I guess, home to California where he will be charged to remember all the fantastical details of this journey which I shall forget slowly, memory by memory.

Things that Shine

Kathleen Stewart

Lesley and I are participating in an experimental workshop, *Ex-Situ*. There is first a day-long workshop in Austin where, in accordance with the experiment, people give papers in a fairly standard academic atmosphere. Those presenting have already been charged with the spirit of experiment so there is some friction between individual papers and members of the audience. There are even some semi-accusations hurled as the critics follow along with the papers but come across sticking points. Are we going too far, are we letting out secrets, is it ok to be a little snarky about your ethnographic subjects? The tone of the room wants to play and does become playful, but also, in that very shift, it tries to lurch back to the land of the serious, responsible, even a sanctimonious counterbalance. We learn things about academia through a sensory encounter. There are also objects floating around the room and taking off. Partially deflated and yet also energized critiques are flopping around with a question of something magically mundane or some question of the real. The edges of both the objects and the critiques are fluffing up with attitude projected or spied. There are questions of allegiance.

The next day we're on the road. Right away things are not just calmer but peaceful. The light is slightly miraculous. Suddenly I am remembering my life along the trail through Johnson City and beyond. Corporeal memories are popping into view with a tree on the side of the road, a picnic area where we stopped several times, an ornate Victorian county courthouse, the ruined grain mill that had been a utopian artists' colony. We had visited the artists' colony over the years. Even twenty years ago already in an early state of ruin, we had visited the different stages of its decay as its slow passing following suit of the building itself and its initial industry. At one time, the artists' colony had occupied a dozen crafts shops specializing in woodwork, welding, or candle-making. The first time we visited, now twenty years ago, the shops were abandoned and left open to the dust, the wind, and visitors. I remember that one of them had ancient shoes nailed all over the walls. There were also the remains of a carousel and bits of a miniature train extending out across a creek and into a field on the other side. The grain elevator itself was covered with gigantic sculptures of working men climbing its sides with tools in their hands. There was some reference to the Wobblies. There was an active theatre in the mill and a barbeque restaurant whose walls were covered, every inch, with neon beer signs and plaques embodying old West sayings, jokes about marriage, and declarations of war or loyalty. I can't remember now what they said but I remember the overwhelming sensory immersion in them when you walked in the door. Now the theatre and the restaurant are gone, sending my memories skidding over different times with different people, most of them now gone too.

Impeckable Aviaris is still in the old storefront in Johnson City. It is, as usual, closed to walk-in business. There are bird cries behind the fence on the side. You can peer through the cracks into an overgrown bamboo paradise, looking for the giant Victorian birdcages that, it seems to me, used to be visible. It seems as though I used to see the birds there though I don't really know what Double Yellow-Headed and Lilac-Crowned Amazons look like. If I saw them, I have no clear residual visual image. But I still feel the presence of the encounter with them.

It has been years since I've wanted to buy something sentimental. But I am put on pause while Lesley shops for a rooster. She's intent; she's established a line of inquiry for herself, a search. I am inspired by her. So rather than just wait I make a decision to actively drift. I go into a cabin with a sign I find obnoxious in its aim at some cowboy-gesturing Western

tourist man: 'This cabin for sale. 21k. Pick it up and haul it away. Sleep when you die.' I ignore this sign, practically covering my eyes from its very sight. Yet as I step into the cabin I suddenly remember a shopping smell from twenty-five years ago. The memory sensation is set off by a dusty-homey smell of the prairie old West tempered by a sweet-home Texas smell. The smell is coming from a large antique wooden dresser sitting still in a corner. I stand in the middle of the cabin staring at it and then slowly let my eyes wander over the other things collected in this cabinet of curiosities. Then I stare again at the dresser. Stray fantasy questions drift through me, until I have exhausted this little tendril of shopping for an object to capture a past partly mine but also always already saturated with outside influences. I wonder, half-heartedly, how I would transport the dresser, where it would go in my house, what would have to go to make room for it, where I have seen a dresser like this before. In my grandmother's house, I think. But it also seems to me I must have had one of my own that was very much like it. Bits and pieces of things slide in and out of my head: other trips, other encounters with dressers, bedrooms with flowered wallpaper, iron beds, and thin curtains that blow in the breeze of opened windows. There are images from movies and photographs and stories tangled with some kind of experiences I had or must have had. Or it's as if I had them. Everything is tinted together. The stillness settles. I'm touching the Western lamps, thinking of my mother's lamps and the one Justin, my nephew transplanted to Montana, made in the manner of her. That one, a Western lamp too but Montana made, sits in my living room. I see a cast-iron picture frame with curlicues on the top. What sells me is the way the little frame swings on two little arms. It was a mistake, it was wrong of me, not to buy it and bring it along. I might not have taken pictures of it in places we stopped the way Lesley did with her rooster, but maybe I would have squirrelled it away in the trunk, secretly opening its imaginary brown wrapping paper to look at it from time to time.

By the time we get to Fredricksburg I'm pulling our convoy down side streets sparking on the little German Sunday Houses I stayed in years ago with my mother and father, my mother and sister, my mother, and before that some grad students from UT I didn't know very well and I can't even remember who they were. Each little house pops into view hauling into memory and sensation the (im)materiality of two days here, a night there, the stones we marveled over in the kitchen of that place,

the flowers in old buckets on the porch there. There are still chairs on that porch. The images meeting memories create a pause in me, a suspension poised between the pleasure of the moment then and the (now realized) end that was coming.

By now I'm noticing the mugs with names on them in the Old German Bakery, the dishwasher-wanted sign. I have a picto-fantasy of dropping into a little place like this for a few weeks and becoming simple. A place where a person would have something to do that's out and about with others. An 'as if' world. As if you don't have other things happening in your head or to your body or your life. As if things wouldn't get complicated, people wouldn't be hurtful or needy, you wouldn't get tired of it all. As if you wouldn't actually be on the ground in the middle of things that push and pull, excite and drain. Lesley cheerfully pulls me out this zone. She says we may have to walk off the lunch. But then I skid back on a new track. I picture an experiment of setting off to walk to Marfa. Let's say just for four hours, see how far we would get, see what would happen. Not far. Someone would have to pick us up. I think I say something to this effect but it's not a statement fully in the world and people look at me strangely, my half-articulation sitting awkwardly between us like an alien visitor we don't know what to do with.

Allen, Molly, and Lindsey keep showing up right behind us. It's like we're on a giant rubber band. We pull apart, even for hours, but as we home in on a destination they're back on our tail. There's some texting to coordinate but it's always beside the point, unnecessary, unwittingly after the fact; I'm still typing even as the actual people are already walking up the sidewalk on their own. Such a pleasure of unexpected efficiency. Somehow we are on one another like glue, but not stuck.

Lesley and I enter the desert – the West arrives in a proper form. We are already talking about failed relationships. The stories are long and dense, magnetizing people and times and mysterious desires or compulsions or something. We don't know exactly what drove the immersions into these worlds that were us for a while. These unfolding worlds get interrupted by scenes spied, vistas registered, stops for food, gas, pictures of the rooster, encounters with local people or other drivers engaged in expressivities of their own – 'Don't *say* anything to him, Katie, people shoot each other out here.' We enter a happy rhythm of deep story drenched in unpredictable detail interrupted by a propulsion into some kind of action and then back into the stories eagerly taking up where we left off.

Each of us remembers where we were in the other's story – 'Ok, so what happened to the guy with the drugs?' The talk has vistas of far off places and long-gone lives that now overwrite the wide desert vistas around us. Everything has become literally amazing. The amazing scenery. The amazing situations we once found ourselves in and lived out. Things that now seem insane and so completely unlikely.

By the time we get to Marathon for the first night's stop we have magnetized a thick and popping collection of characters, scenes and events to a composition hitting notes between us. The sky opens into a surround-scene theatre of brilliant color and then a blanket of blackness filled with stars. We are not moving anymore. We are in silence. We walk into town, buoyed by the magically astonishing sounds of trains passing close by, burros braying and whinnying and frog croaks so deep and loud we have to stop to wonder what kind of creature that could be. To just listen. At the Gage Hotel, well-heeled Texans gather on a vast open patio for margaritas laced with cactus and jalapeños and bison steaks.

In the morning I set off early, alone, to get the lay of the land. I come across a mural of an alien on an old fence around a dusty house where things seem to be spilling out of windows and doors. I think there is something funny strange about the intersection of the UFO dream bubble of the 1990s with the emergent monster of hoarding. It's as if this little spot in the desert is an extreme contact point where the wild trajectories of times gather and leave their mark. The scene attunes me to other scattered signs of intensities here: a gray-haired, three-legged, skinny dog (or coyote?) roaming just on the perimeter, plastic bags blowing down the dusty streets, spectacularly old trucks in beautiful faded pastels, an ugly beat up car with an open gas cap. I stop at the ancient gas station on the outskirts of town. I'm not sure it's open but the door is unlocked. I have to figure out how to use the pump, which is from before my time. Then I have to find the owner to pay. He's very calm. Grease covers the walls and the used parts scattered across the shelves. There is water for sale and beer. There are old calendars. A truck coming out of Big Bend stops to get gas for the trip back to Houston. An older, very fit, couple get out and starts to crawl over the gear and kayaks in the open bed of the truck, tying things down for the highway. Everything is covered in dust – backpacks, skin, picks, tents, water and oil jugs. These two are post-wilderness. Blissed out and sunk deep into some kind of happiness. We talk a little about what they've been doing – rivers and mountains,

a cougar. I try to suss out who they are and what they're thinking. Then I go back to the Marathon Motel perched on the edge of the world to meet Lesley and go to a charmed breakfast place where we eat the best French toast I've ever imagined on thick white plates and someone plays a guitar on the porch.

We spend the day driving the length of Big Bend, stopping on trails to hike and at overlooks to eat sardines and slices of bread. For a stretch of time we end up behind a slow driver. Very slow. I say I can't even figure out how he exists. He sees us right behind him but it doesn't register. At all. He's chewing gum, he's talking to someone in the passenger seat, he's casually turning his head side to side, checking out what's happening. Talk about blasé. Lesley gets agitated, I think because she thinks I'm agitated – 'Get around him. Flash your lights at him'. But by now I'm on an even keel. Though still dumfounded by his.

I am under a spell I remember from earlier trips out here. It comes from the driving pace of co-witnessing incarnations of half-natural, half-human worlds. It starts at the sudden, inexplicable entrance to the desert on the other side of Fredricksburg and then sets in bodies in the hour-after-hour of the desert's unfolding. A nothingness in which things nevertheless keep appearing creates a fullness that swells to fill the container of the mind in the scenery like jello in a mold. It was on hour six of my first trip that I found the cowboy restaurant and bar in Ozona. A long wooden building filled with smoke and men eating fantastic steaks and baked potatoes. On the other side of the long wooden bar inside, men in cowboy hats drank whiskey and played poker. It was an ecology I could just see the outlines of. The place sang.

By the time we get to Terlingua we are windswept and acclimated to a wildly animated world. Our thinking is piecemeal and saturated. Our impressions are not just our own but the result of things coming in and out of phase, of objects impinging on another one. So Terlingua's ghost town displayed in all of its excess and the dusty people sitting on the long wooden covered sidewalk, drinking beer and watching us arrive as if we, too, are a breaking story, is just too much for me. They want to talk, they seem to be covered with tattoos and sayings. I have to shade my eyes. I keep walking to find a bathroom, get the key to The Rock House, and get out of there. Twenty miles down the road, The Rock House is a sudden mirage on the Rio Grande. Joey, Nora, Alejandro and Daniel are drinking rum and coke on the expanse of a patio

overlooking Mexico. It is stunning and still. We sleep under the stars in the remains of a trading post.

The next morning is a rude awakening. By now the packing is in a shambles; we are throwing stray shoes and sweatshirts, bags of nuts, and bottles of half-drunk water into the car. We are due to present in Marfa. We drive the winding road that follows the river and then north, interrupted only by the dramas of crossing a zingy shockingly hyper-official very white border checkpoint, though we have never left the country. Our cellphones keep telling us welcome back to the United States.

In Marfa the Hotel Paisano is surprisingly gracious with high ceilings and arched doorways. Blue Mexican tile throughout carries a color shine across the lobby and into the open courtyard on one side and the ornate pool grotto on the other. The film crew and stars had lived at the hotel in 1955 while filming *Giant*. The grand entrances to the hotel are lined with film posters. In keeping with its status as a historical building, there are no elevators or phones in the hotel. You drag your things up a circular stairway and find your room by name. Mine is the Elizabeth Taylor room. It's massive and seems to have the original furniture from 1930. It has two bathrooms.

All over town there are signs of the artist Donald Judd's occupation of the town since the 1970s. The Chinati Foundation houses his permanent collections in a World War II army base just outside town. There are art galleries and modern art installations in old stone buildings and public squares. The conference gathers again in a beautiful book store supported by the artist colonies here now and the waves of art tourists that have joined the outdoor enthusiasts in the visiting zone. We have gourmet pizza brought in for lunch while we bleat out our stories and show and tell beautiful photographs and spoof film on *Paris, Texas*. One woman reveals maps of underground oil pipes covering every inch of Texas including the wild scenic territory we've just been through. She feeds us Rice Crispie treats so that we can feel the petroleum melting down our throats in the form of marshmallow. The bell of a wake-up call is ringing but I'm so far gone that it's just one more thing that shines.

The graduate students are happy. They gather, drinking free gourmet mixed drinks out of plastic cups from the foodie festival in the Paisano courtyard, at gigantic picnic tables under a shade cover the size of a stockyard on the railroad tracks in the middle of town. They run across the wide, cattle-steering street for pictures for their Tumblr assemblages.

The next morning on our way out of town we have breakfast in a poor Mexican restaurant that barely feels like a public place. We gaze at men eating tripe. It's Sunday. We make our way back faster than we came, sticking to the highway except for a few forays into the few towns along the way trying to find again remembered things.

Back in Austin something of this trip stays with me for a while (and even now). Living and non-living things seem a little more poised on the verge of expression. Thought-feeling ventures into an incipiency. There is a sense of the as-if quality of things infused with the surprise of accruals, fractures, gestures and losses.

I am back to learning native plants one at a time. Digging dirt in the Edward's Plateau shallow limestone and caliche and the Blackland Prairie clay, I come to know Barberry, Arelia, Acanthus, Guava, Cast Iron plant, Red Columbine, Coreopsis, Firecracker Fern, Bearded Iris, Shrimplant, Mexican Feathergrass, Texas Wisteria, and Monkey Grass.

One day I am raking leaves in the backyard when I hear loud honking and yelling on the street. Thinking one of our dogs or cats has gotten out (again), I run through the gate to find neighbors and pedestrians standing in the street yelling back and forth. 'What was that? We should call the police. Did you get her license plate?' A woman had been pushing a stroller with a dog attached. A car speeding up the street had nearly hit her and then stopped to yell 'GET OUT OF THE ROAD!!!' before screeching off. The woman of a young couple coming down the street from the other direction (also with a stroller) says the driver is well known as the crazy driver and there's a YouTube clip of her doing this kind of thing. She tells us how to find it online. The police have been called many times. Her license plate has been circulated on the neighborhood listserv. There's a pause. We look at each other. The scene feels over-filled with the tangled, ricocheting resonances of things but we're not quite sure what things exactly. The things that make people snap or that make people follow the crazy snappings of others online. The things that compose a neighborhood that watches. I wonder where the crazy woman lives, what it's like inside her house/life/car. My wonderings are shored up by the expectation scored into my senses and others' that things will happen, scenes will emerge that are partial revelations suddenly cut adrift in a landscape we move through.



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