

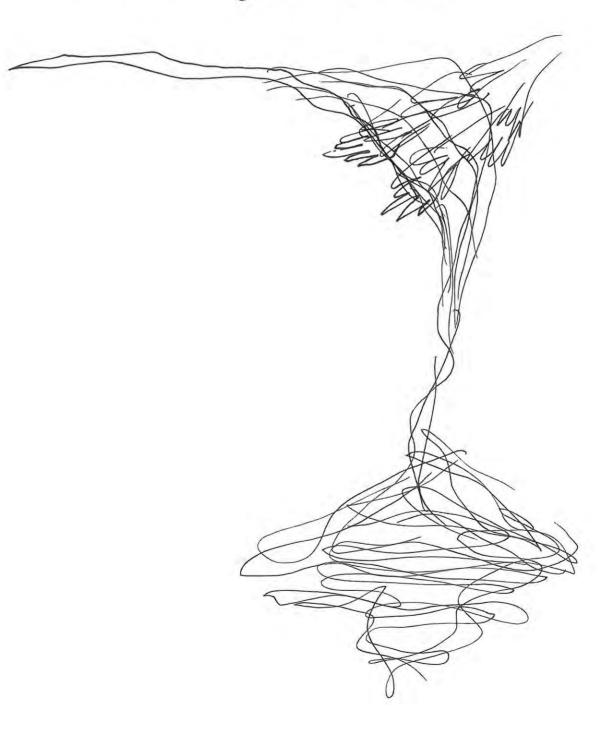
## MDT program texts

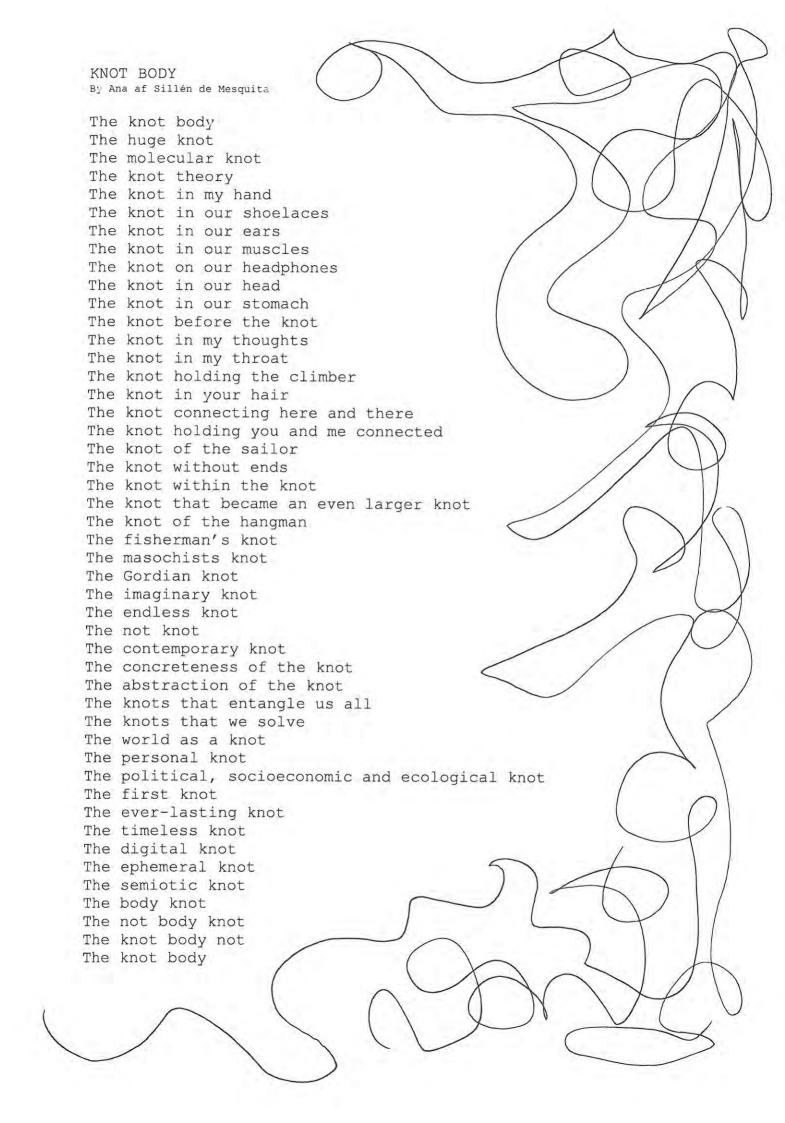
The program texts is a series of unedited fanzine-style booklets available on the MDT website and in a limited cost price edition, printed, folded and stapled on MDT's Konica Minolta All-in-one Copier.



## First Sequence #1

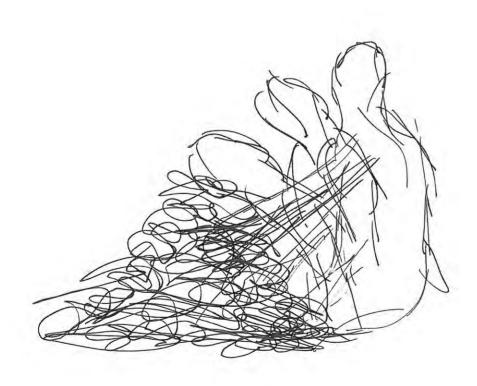
Darkness, body holding rope enters The space pulls in repetably the whole rope in to space only hands and rope are visible introduction lasting around 7 min





### Second Sequence #2

Body continues hand movement af bur the whole voice is lying in a pile on stage the space polling movement slowly transforms to pushing movement and start towteling the pile of rope Hands start to massage the rope and slowly other parts to body start to enter in Lontact with the pope continuing the same pois and rhythm more right is intoduces revealing more body of min speeding the rope on the fidoor



#### KNOT BODY

The Knot Body is revealed in the moment we experience a body entangled in a 500m long rope. What happens when the body becomes a knot and the knot a body?

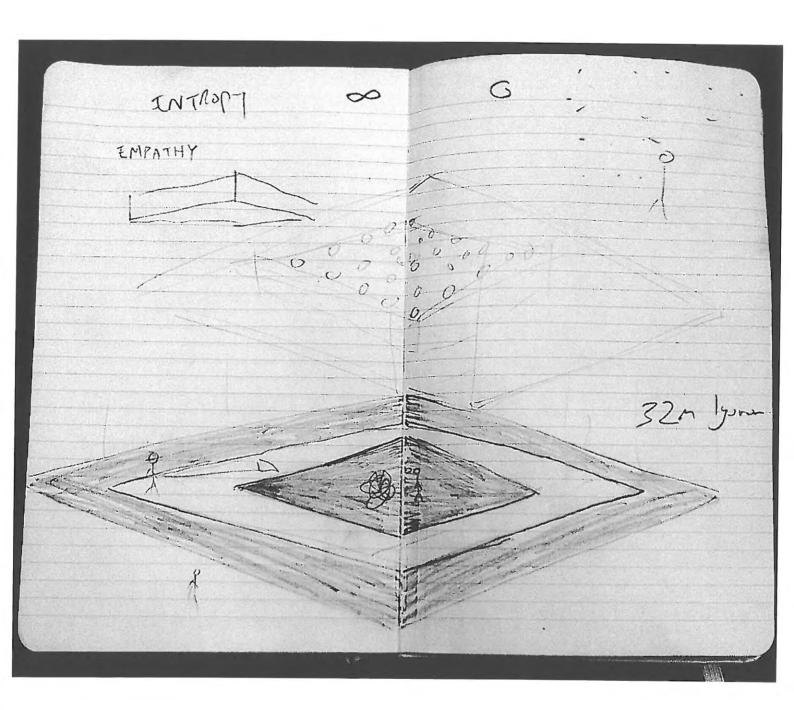
QUARTO's attention lies in the experimentation between a body and a 500m long rope - rope-body, node-body, entangled-body, knot-body - as an attempt to escape from the body's/object's daily attributes and give it an unsuspected meaning, beyond the understanding of a representative body/object relation. Thereby, what is provoked with the entanglement of the knot intends to abandon some recognizable forms, movements and choreographic scores that have been dominant, while dealing with an object that is one of the oldest and most important inventions of mankind: the rope, the knot.

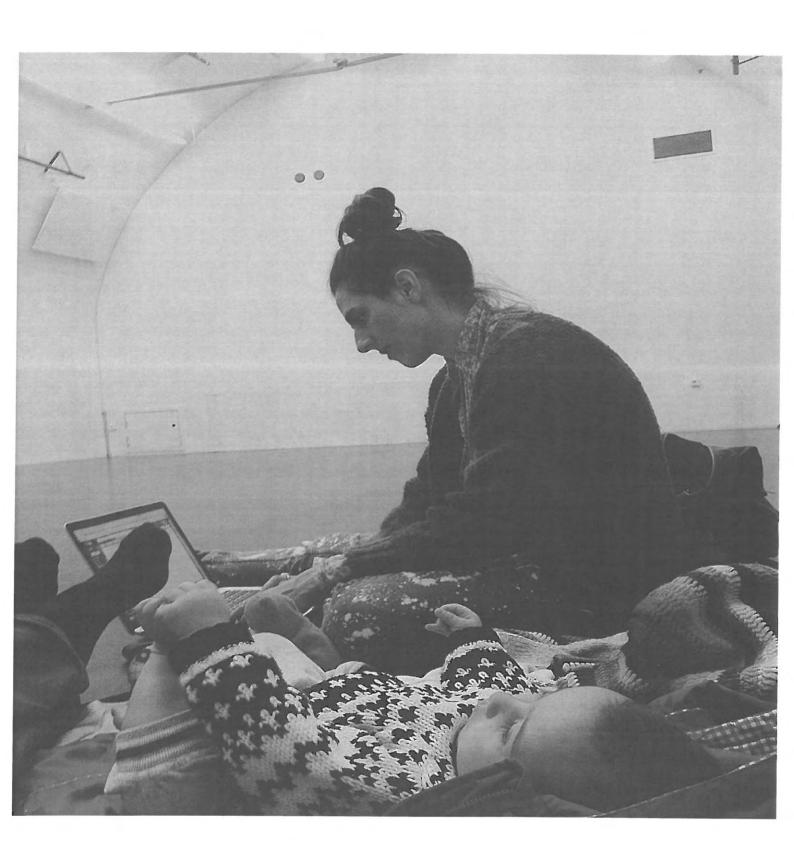
The Knot Body is revealed in the moment we experience it entangled in the rope, where the limit between body and knot is defuse. Precisely in this place we witness the creative potentiality of the body/object through liberating it from its social representations. The KNOT seeks to produce spaces, images and fragments where the body is involved with the rope: winding, untangling, pulling and unraveling. Knot Body reminds us of the endless layers and complexities of the huge contemporary KNOT we are entangled in today, in various spheres, economical, political, ecological, social and ethical, both personal and collective knots that also intertwines and connects us all.

#### KNUT KROPP

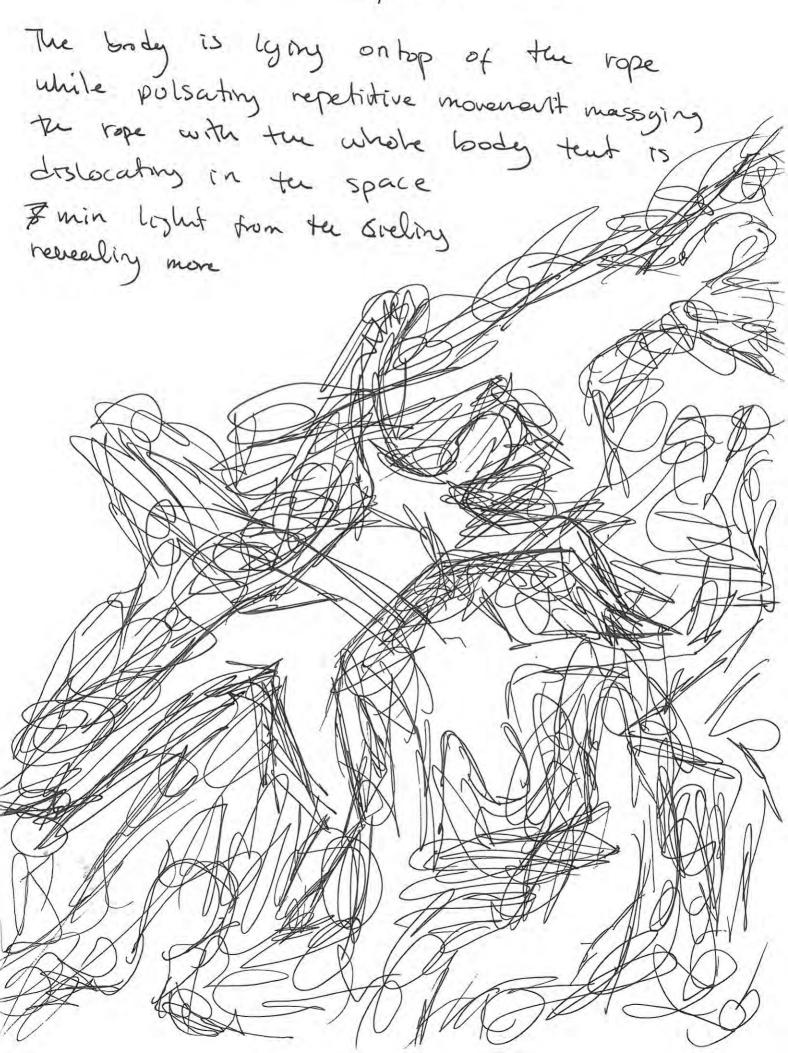
Gränsen mellan kropp och rep trasslas ihop när den som rör sig inne bland knutarna försöker rymma från igenkännbara former och betydelser.

Knot Body är uppföljaren till föreställningen Beauty of Accident som blev QUARTOS internationella genombrott. I detta experiment med ett halvkilometerlångt rep leker de med det oväntade: repkropp, knut-punkt, kropp-trassel, knut-kropp. Ur repet provocerar de fram ett trassel som överger dominerande former, rörelser och koreografi. Fram träder nya möjligheter att skapa en relation mellan kroppen och objektet, repet och knuten som är en av mänsklighetens äldsta och mest basala uppfinningar. Knot Body letar efter platser, bilder och fragment där gränsen mellan kropp och rep löses upp. Knot Body påminner också om alla de lager och den komplexitet som utgör den stora nod vi lever i idag, inom våra politiska, ekonomiska, sociala och etiska sfärer, personliga och kollektiva knutar som trasslas ihop och flätar oss samman.





# Third Sequence #3



#### Knopen i historiskt perspektiv

"I begynnelsen var Repet ..."

Förutsättningen för att kunna slå en knop, göra en splits eller tillverka en sjömansmässig konsthantverksprodukt, är att man – utöver kunnandet – har lämpligt arbetsmaterial. Man behöver alltså ett rep eller ett snöre.

Historiskt sett är olika former av fibrer eller senor, så småningom förädlade till band och tågvirke, de äldsta hjälpmedlen för att sammanfoga och fästa olika komponenter till varandra, för att göra buntar eller knippor och för att kunna flytta föremål (släpa, hissa, fira).

För att skarva eller förlänga surrningsmaterialet, och för att säkra det sammanfogade, behövdes någon form av knop eller knut. Genom årtusenden har tågvirke och knut- eller knopteknik utvecklats under ömsesidigt beroende och i naturlig symbios till allt effektivare produkter och lösningar, som även fått ett stort inslag av dekorativa och konstnärliga element.

Tågvirkesframställningen och utvecklingen av knuten eller knopen i alla dess former, och dess samhörighet med vävning, mattknytning, knyppling och andra textila tekniker, väntar fortfarande på sitt vetenskapliga standardverk. Kanske blir det aldrig skrivet!

Många författare av böcker om knopar och reptillverkning påpekar ofta repets och knopens ursprunglighet och betydelse för den mänskliga civilisationens utveckling. Till skillnad från fallet med den obesvarade frågan "Vad kom först – hönan eller ägget?", behöver man inte tveka i fallet "repet eller knopen". Man måste ha ett rep för att kunna slå en knop.

#### Förgängliga material försvårar forskningen

Olle Wahlbeck, den siste direktören för Wahlbecks Fabriker, som började som repslageri 1876 och sålde sin reptillverkning till England 1971, skriver i Rep och repslageri bl.a. "... stenåldersfolkens förmåga att använda sig av rep har varit en väl så stor hävstång vid framväxten av vår materiella kultur som nyttjandet av mejslar och yxor av sten", och han fortsätter: "... utan linor och snören skulle inget fiske kunnat bedrivas, ingen boskapsskötsel ha kommit till stånd, inga åkrar kunnat plöjas, inga (större) vattendrag kunnat överskridas..." Han anser vidare att "repet blev urtidsmänniskans första och viktigaste redskap" och påpekar att "apors och andra djurs klättringar och svängningar i grenar och lianer kan beskrivas som en första användning av rep" och att "den vegetation som omgav 'Lucy' och hennes samtida bjöd på ett stort urval växter med starka fibrer". Han noterar också att jägarfolken i kallare klimat, i brist på lämpliga växter, säkert snabbt lärde sig att utnyttja senor och hudar från fällda djur för repframställning.

Wahlbeck lämnar också exempel på tidigt repslageri som styrks av gravfynd från 4000-talet f.Kr. i Egypten, och egyptiska avbildningar av repslagning har daterats till ca 2000 år senare. Dörren till Tutankhamuns gravkammare var vid upptäckten surrad med ett ca 3000 år gammalt rep av påfallande modernt utseende. Den äldsta kända avbildningen av ett rep anses vara en grottmålning i Spanien som daterats till ca 15000 år före vår tidräkning.

Rep och tråd har från tidernas begynnelse och ända fram till 1930-talet varit av organiskt material, som endast under vissa gynnsamma betingelser har kunnat bevaras i mer än några hundra år. Allt annat tågvirke och surrningsmaterial har brutits ned och försvunnit – och knoparna med dem. Arkeologin kan dock påvisa spår efter surrningar som använts för att fästa olika stenverktyg till skaft. Man kan också fråga sig hur hantering av enorma stenblock eller användningen av metkrokar varit möjlig i förhistorisk tid utan tågvirke respektive metrevar som fästs med någon form av knopar.

I den i förordet nämnda skriftserien On Knots and Everything, där band 11 är betitlat History and Science of Knots, är knopens historia och egenskaper belysta i ett stort antal vetenskapliga uppsatser. Det skulle falla helt utanför ramen för den här boken att utförligare referera de vetenskapliga resultaten. Låt oss dock kortfattat redogöra för delar av innehållet.

Författarna av den första uppsatsen, Charles Warner och Robert G. Bednarik, anser sig bl. a. ha relativt säkra bevis för att knopar använts för över 300000 år sedan och att kunskapen därför kanske har funnits i en halv miljon år. Borrade hål och bearbetade urfasningar i sten och ben, sannolikt för att fästa en sena eller en baststräng, är belagda från många platser på jorden (Frankrike, Israel och Australien) och daterade till ca 35000 år sedan. Nyligen (1999) har det framkommit uppgifter om att ett över 20000 år gammalt skotstek skulle ha återfunnits i ett avtryck i en flodbädd. Charles Warner spekulerar i nästa inlägg i boken över hur knopen uppstod och vilka knopar som kom först, och bedömer att de flesta förhistoriska knopar tillkommit av en slump. Att medvetet välja - och upprepa - samma knop anses människan dock ha kunnat i åtminstone 10000 år.

Även om det krävs att flera gynnsamma faktorer samverkar för att organiska material skall kunna bevaras under lång tid, finns det flera exempel där detta har skett. Ett sådant är fyndet efter den s.k. ismannen, som hittades välbevarad infryst i en glaciär i Tyrolen ca 5400 år efter sin död. Hans kläder och utrustning innehöll linor och snören av läder, senor och gräs, många med olika knopar, varav man kunnat identifiera bl.a. enkla halvslag, överhands- och råbandsknop, en nätknop och flera slags flätning och vävning.

Andra exempel är flera danska mossar och kärr, där man hittat tågvirke med knopar och surrningar som genom kol-14-metoden har kunnat dateras till äldre stenåldern – för ca 3500 år sedan. Vidare anger Olle Wahlbeck att lingarn har påträffats vid dessa utgrävningar och daterats till ca 2500 år f. Kr.

På andra håll finns mycket material bevarat som ännu inte är vetenskapligt bearbetat. Sannolikheten för att man här skall göra nya fynd är stor när arkeologerna får tid och intresse även för knopar och tågvirke.

#### Knopen i historisk tid

Därmed är vi inne i historisk tid, och kännedom om antikens knopar kan man få både från skulpturer och litteraturen. Knopar har i alla tider tillmätts magiska och symboliska egenskaper och därvid avbildats och beskrivits i text och bild. Den gordiska knuten diskuteras bl.a. av Öhrvall, som anser att det kan vara fråga om en eller två kardelknopar, slagna i samband med en lagd stropp, vilket gör det möjligt att gömma kardelerna så att det hela ser oupplösligt ut. Sägnen säger ju att den var anbragt mellan tistelstången och en vagn, och ett svärdshugg skulle obestridligen snabbt skilja de två.

En annan under antiken känd, beskriven och avbildad knop var den s.k. herkulesknopen, där namnet antyder dess styrka och gudomliga egen-

skaper. Den behandlas ganska utförligt av den grekiske läkaren Oreibasios, som omkring 360 e.Kr. sammanfattade sin tids medicinska vetande i en encyklopedi om 70 band av vilka drygt tjugo ännu är i behåll, och där han, enligt Öhrvall, "beskriver aderton knopar och öglor som användes inom kirurgien". Öhrvall har tagit del av dessa skrifter i en fransk översättning och anser sig kunna känna igen alla utom en på beskrivningarna (bl. a. råbandsknop, dubbelt halvslag och säckknut) men klagar på att de senare gjorda avbildningarna är felaktiga utom i tre av fallen. Herkulesknopen användes bl.a. för att fästa ihop kvinnornas gördlar men även som arkitektonisk utsmyckning, där man i avbildningar av statyer kan känna igen knuten och åter konstatera att det rör sig om vår råbandsknop. En knop som också har givit upphov till många sägner och avbildningar, bl.a. inom heraldiken, är kärleksknopen, som ganska ingående behandlas både av Öhrvall och i On Knots and Everything.

I den senare behandlas även de rika fynden av knopar och flätningar från Egypten samt det säregna knopsystemet "Quipu" från inkatidens Peru, där det anses ha använts i den nationella förrådsredovisningen (inkafolket saknade skriftspråk). Det finns även uppsatser om Kinas knopar – särskilt för utsmyckning av kläder – och en intressant redogörelse för inuiternas (eskimåernas) knopar och de material de använder i rep och revar. Boken innehåller även matematiska beräkningar av knopars hållfasthet och styrka samt teoretiska spekulationer i vad som kallas topologi ("En gren av matematiken där man studerar kontinuitet, konvergens, dimensioner och deras algebraiska egenskaper", enligt 1996 års upplaga av Nationalencyklopedins ordbok).

Fynd av tågvirke från sjunkna skepp från grekisk, romersk och kinesisk forntid liksom från vår egen vikingatid och senare görs sällan, eftersom vegetabiliska och animaliska produkter bryts ned snabbt där syre har tillträde. Från t.ex. Vasa har man dock bärgat tågvirke med knopar som vi kan känna igen i dag. De har sannolikt skyddats av gyttjan på bottnen i Stockholms ström.

Knop, stek och splits av Pille Repmakarin © 2002 Sven-Erik Andersson, Göran Romare, Ulf södergvist samt Ica Bokförlag, Forma books AB

# foorter sequence #4

Bodey Starts entering tourd by athering the trot, the treat becomes a body and the body becomes a knot, its the same thing, limits between body and rope become defuse, then knot as skin of the body, inseparable the becoming of the toody is emerging, working on different win light levels, floor, medium and standing on different from the top and sides forwards



#### REPET

Av Naima Chahboun

Inte repet som reser sig i det indiska tricket.

Inte repet som trasslar sig i den gordiska knuten.

Inte repet som Judas hänger sig i.

Inte repet som vevas mot skolgårdens regnvåta asfalt, slag efter slag, rast efter rast.

Inte repet som jagas av råttan.

Inte repet som tjäras till tross.

Inte repet som dinglar under ballongen.

Inte repet som fäster i flaskan som krossas mot fartygets skrov.

Inte repet som munkarna bär som ett skärp.

Inte repet som scouterna flätar till knopar - råbandsknop, fallrepsknop, käringknop,

vantknop, ormhuvud, halvslag och dubbelt halvslag - inte det repet.

Inte repet runt bergsbestigarnas midjor.

Inte repet runt Gullivers armar och ben.

Inte repet som fäster harpunen som spetsar den flyende valen.

Inte repet som slingrar runt ankaret på kaptenens håriga bröst.

Inte repet som binder Lucky vid Pozzo.

Inte repet som leder Birk hem.

Inte repet som sotaren bär över axeln.

Inte repet som älskaren virar runt vristerna, varv efter varv.

Inte repet som kaffe med kakor - mandelmusslor, hallongrottor, brysselkex, kanelflarn,

finska pinnar, kokostoppar, drömmar - inte det repet.

Inte repet som räddar den drunknande.

Inte repet som knyts till en lasso och slungas runt ungtjurens hals.

Inte repet som fäster i gungan som svindlar i magen, sjunker mot skyn.

Inte repet som stallkarlen knyter runt fölungens fuktiga framben.

Inte repet som skiljer inne från ute, klubben från kön.

Inte repet som binder kamreren vid disken när rånarna rymmer med bytet.

Inte repet som surrar Odysseus vid masten medan han slits av sirenernas sång.

Inte asa-repet Gleipner som tvinnats av bergens rötter,

kattens buller, björnens senor,

kvinnors skägg, fåglars spott och fiskars andedräkt - inte det repet.

Inte repet som repetition.

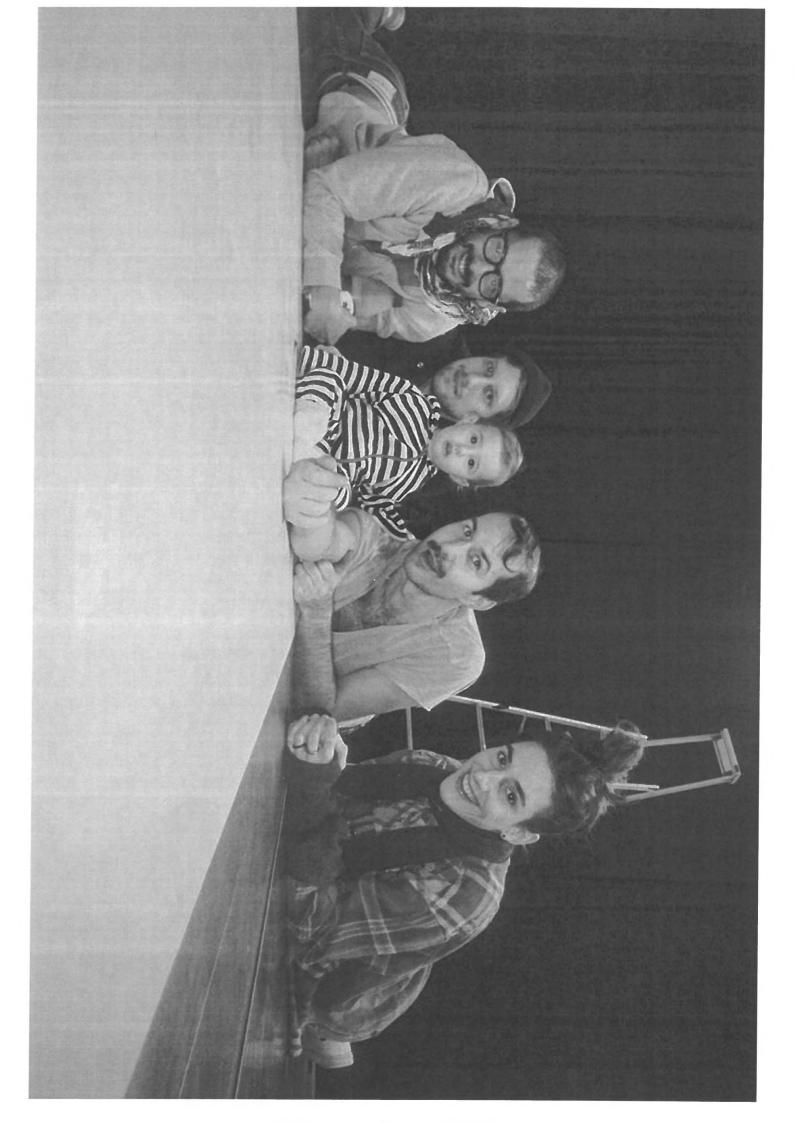
Inte repet som upprepning.

Inte repet som förklaringsmodell.

Inte repet som projektionsyta.

Inte repet som metafor

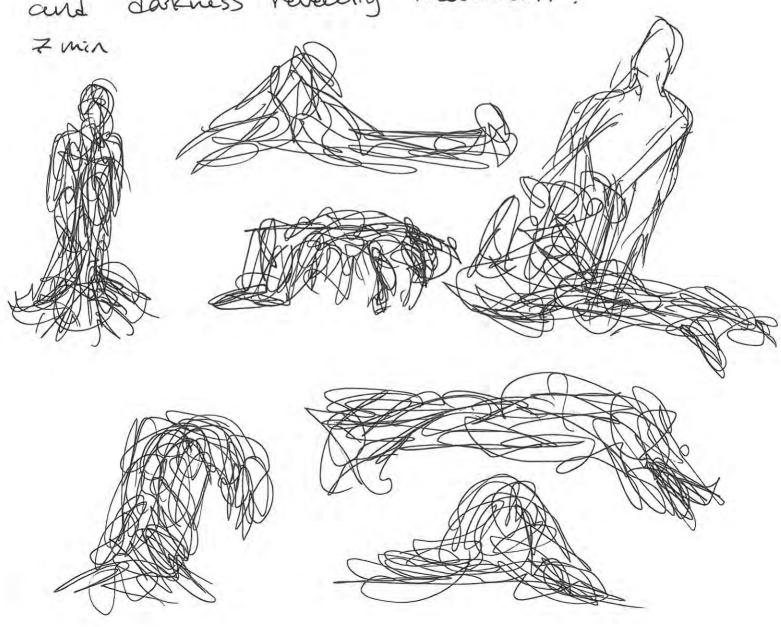
```
Bara repet
Repet utan egenskaper.
Repet utan minne.
Repet utan religiös tillhörighet.
Repet utan kulturell förankring.
Repet utan plats i världsekonomin.
Repet utan kön.
Repet utan nation.
Repet utan Marx mervärdesteori.
Repet utan freden i Roskilde.
Repet utan Rosa Parks och Malcolm X.
Repet utan telecombranschen.
Repet utan rhizomet.
Repet utan kapitalflykten till skatteparadis.
Repet utan lolitatrenden.
Repet utan bikram yogan.
Repet utan rashegemonin.
Repet utan spatiala motståndsstrategier.
Repet utan ekologiskt fotavtryck.
Repet utan biologisk krigföring.
Repet utan New Public Management.
Repet utan demokratiska processer.
Repet utan senromantiska ballader.
Repet utan rationella val.
Repet utan Koranen.
Repet utan Östersjöregionen.
Repet utan NHL.
Repet utan fallokratiska begärsstrukturer.
Repet utan Arrows omöjlighetsteorem.
Repet utan mayakalendern.
Repet utan fotosyntesen.
Repet utan Sverigedemokraterna.
Repet utan Robin Hood och Thomas Quick.
Repet utan modern femkamp.
Repet utan vaniljyoghurt.
Repet utan generösa avgångsvederlag.
Repet utan subalterna flöden.
Repet utan psykodrama.
Repet utan RUT och ROT.
Repet utan apokalypsen.
Repet utan gravitationen.
Repet utan analytiskt ramverk.
Repet utan genealogi.
Repet, ett rep.
```



# fifter sequence # 5

The Korot body is in constant mutation in space, different forms and shapes of body Knet appearing in defeut pleases where the light is fading in and out revealing the objets being in space, knut body shifting between novement and stillness.

Pifferent perspectives, light revealing stillness and darkness revealing movement.



#### Reflections on Knot Body

Nós estamos continuamente nos questionando, mas especialmente hoje questionamos a prática artística na qual temos investido nesses INTENSOS 13 anos de colaboração, o que nos trouxe ao processo de criação do próximo trabalho - KNOT BODY (CORPO NÓ). Estávamos sozinhos no teatro, todas as pessoas já haviam ido embora, estávamos perdidos no tempo, desfazendo um ENORME NÓ que pesa cerca de 70 guilos, e que ocorre a cada tentativa nossa de lidar com o material, estávamos exaustos após 4 horas tentando encontrar uma solução para desfazermos o emaranhado, o NÓ, o que em si já nos aponta um CAMINHO INEVITÁVEL no trabalho, visto que o NÓ está lá nos propondo algo, mas o que exatamente? Que NÓ é esse que nos é apresentado? O que é isso que qera tantas perquntas sobre nossas subjetividades? Algo sobre nossos próprios NÓS? Neste caso, esses insights criativos têm o potencial de transformar nossas compreensões, expandindo os vários sistemas imersivos de conhecimento que emolduram nossas consciências individuais. E NÓS estamos entendendo que talvez por isso nossas experiências estejam dando FORMA E SIGNIFICADO ao trabalho, conscientes do potencial assim como das limitações e processos associativos que isso possa gerar. Esse quebra-cabeça nos fornece um ponto de entrada para interpretar e experimentar o trabalho através de um esforço físico e mental extenuante no ato de desfazer o NÓ no CORPO - o CORPO NÓ.

#### Leandro Zappala INKONST - May 18 2015

We are constantly questioning what we are doing, but especially today we questioned ourselves about our artistic practice in which we have invested INTENSIVELY the past 13 YEARS OF COLLABORATION, which has brought us to the creation of the new work - KNOT BODY. We were alone in the theater, everybody had already left, lost in time undoing a HUGE KNOT weighing around 70 kilos and that occurs in every single attempt to deal with the KNOT BODY, we were exhausted after 4 hours trying to find a solution to undo the entanglement, the NODE, which in itself already presents us an INEVITABLE PATH in the work, since the NODE is there proposing something to us, but what exactly? What kind of Knot is presented? What's this that generates so many questions about our subjectivity, something revealing our own KNOTS? These creative insights have the potential to transform our understanding by expanding the various immersive systems of knowledge that frame our individual awareness. And we understand that maybe it's therefore our experiences give form and meaning to this work, knowing the potential as well as the limitations and associations it may generate. This puzzle provides us an entrance point to interpret and experience the work through strenuous physical and mental effort in the act of undoing a KNOT BODY.

Repet har införts sig gentemot våra kroppar, alltså den relationen gjorde att vi har utvecklat en specifik teknik och koreografisk vokabulär utifrån repet, vilket vi aldrig skulle ha utvecklat utan repet. Repets längd påverkar också, för att ett sådant otroligt långt rep är svårt att manipulera. För det första det inte tillverkats så långt för det är omöjligt, det går ju här igen anti-rep, emot repets funktion av att vara så långt för det blir ohanterbart, opraktiskt. Och också knytet, det där intrasslade repet som också går emot knytet funktion som skulle vara I ordning, organiserad, säker, pålitlig, estetisk och som man kan lätt få upp och den är alltid emot den.

Men också att det finns en hel vokabulär, rörelse vokabulär som inte fans innan vi manipulerade repet, att nu kan vi ju nyproducera rörelse utan repet men den rörelse föddes från manipulation. Rörelsen kommer från objektet.

Med Knot Body går vi tillbaks till början när det bara var intrasslad och trasslet egentligen är ju uppgjord av knutar, det är små knutar som gör en trassel, en element som knutar, det var ju där alltid började. När vi först fick repet, för några år sedan, så fort försökte vi manipulera, så blev det bara trassel, det tog jätte mycket arbete. Vi har utvecklat ett förhållningssätt, en teknik för att hantera repet som gör att det tar bara en timme att göra knyten och göra om den. För några år sedan, tog det 3-4 timmar. Vi var I studio 6 timmar bara för att göra om en knyt. Efter ett tag, kanske ett år, insåg vi att det finns en metod, en praktik som kommer från repet, det är repet som visade det till oss.

Sedan detta ledde till Durational rope/Beauty of Accident (Moderna Museet, 2014), som blev vår seger av knyten. Vi kunde manipulera repet genom en teknik att hantera repet utan att knyten skulle uppstå, eller att de var hanterbara. Då kom vi in I det Durational Rope, I flödet, vibrationerna, I konstant rörelse, och knyten var den som stoppade rörelsen. Och nu går vi tillbaks där vi började, till det okontrollerbara, I den upp styrda finns det en teknik som vi måste hantera, det finns risker som du tar men samtidigt har du en viss teknik där du kan hantera den risken.

#### Fakta om repet

Svart
Lösflätad polyestersilke
500 meter
42 kilo
12 mm diameter
Mycket lätt att splitsa
God nötningstålighet
God UV-resistens
Flyter
Töjning vid brott: ca 20%

Specialtillverkad av Pille Repmakrn.

"Eftersom den är lösflätad så har den en specifik karaktär, den har en starkare energi flöde och smidighet än andra rep" Gunnar Westin, Pilles systerson

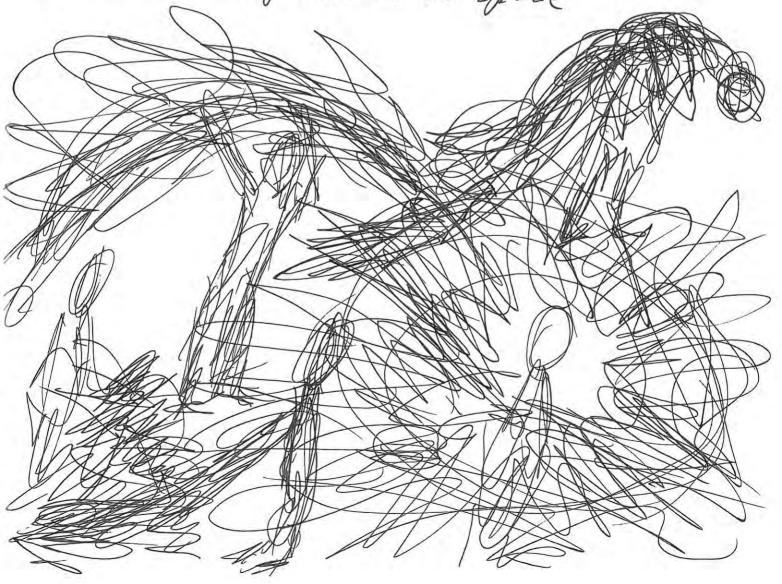
Pille Repmakar'n, som egentligen hette Sven-Erik Andersson, var ansedd som en av landets största auktoriteter på allt som har att göra med rigg, knopar och sjömaning. Och även internationellt var han ett legendariskt namn i sådana sammanhang. Han var en av landets fyra riggmästare, och startade egen firma 1976. Den låg till en början på Nybrokajen, men våren 1980 fick han möjlighet att tillsammans med Tackel & Tåg och Segelshopen etablera sig i Råseglarhuset på Skeppsholmen.



# Sister sequence #6 Body starts to seperate itself ses

Body starts to seperate itself Brown in bis movement true pope thowing it arround with an intensive energy while spining and murny an intensive energy while strubble space light is fragmantizing Bragmenty true mercenut, crusty still inges that staylourn as a negative in the eyes

7 min light in creling slowly fuding in untill the body is exausted and study carrying the pape in littual possitions in space



# IMPROVE FOCUS, PERSISTENCE, AND FOLLOW-THROUGH

A 2007 study conducted at the University of Pennsylvania examined students over an eight-week period to determine how meditation might impact their cognitive ability. At the end of the study, participants took computerized tests. The students who meditated demonstrated greater focus and accuracy and the ability to manage tasks and prioritize goals better than the control group.

Because meditation shifts your focus to the here and now, it can help you stick with a task and see it through to completion. This has positive implications for job satisfaction and performance—whether you're doing repetitious, routine tasks or making executive decisions—and for producing outcomes as well. The following meditation uses a Zen technique of emphasizing the process instead of the goal. By keeping your attention on the task at hand, the meditation strengthens your focus, patience, and persistence.

- 1) Acquire a piece of rope, cord, string, or lacing at least 2 feet (61 cm) in length. Sit in a quiet place where you feel comfortable. Near one end of the rope, tie a loose knot. Focus your attention completely on the process of tying the knot. When you've finished, tie another loose knot a few inches from the first knot. Then tie another.
- Work slowly and methodically, keeping your attention on your task.
- 3) If your mind starts to wander or you catch yourself becoming bored, take a deep breath and exhale. Then bring your attention back to the details of your task.

- 4) Appreciate the dexterity with which your fingers function. Notice the numerous movements you must make to create each knot.
- 5) Continue the process until you've tied as many knots as you can in the piece of rope.
- 6) Now, reverse the process and begin untying the knots one at a time.
- 7) Work slowly and methodically, keeping your attention on what you're doing.
- 8 } When you've untied all the knots, repeat the process.

Seventh Sequence #7 the body is now to truly seperated from the Kopt. The sours has been growing in every seque additing more and more layers to it untill mon wow tay de out and only remains a low monotone where Aune comes in and sits by the tubele and starts to read a text. time to undo the huge theref

# Vibrant Matter

A political ecology of things

JANE BENNETT

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# Preface

This book has a philosophical project and, related to it, a political one. The philosophical project is to think slowly an idea that runs fast through modern heads: the idea of matter as passive stuff, as raw, brute, or inert. This habit of parsing the world into dull matter (it, things) and vibrant life (us, beings) is a "partition of the sensible," to use Jacques Rancière's phrase. The quarantines of matter and life encourage us to ignore the vitality of matter and the lively powers of material formations, such as the way omega-3 fatty acids can alter human moods or the way our trash is not "away" in landfils but generating lively streams of chemicals and volatile winds of methane as we speak. I will turn the figures of "life" and "matter" around and around, worrying them until they start to seem strange, in something like the way a common word when repeated can become a foreign, nonsense sound. In the space created by this estrangement, a vital materiality can start to take shape.

Or, rather, it can take shape again, for a version of this idea already found expression in childhood experiences of a world populated by animate things rather than passive objects. I will try to reinvoke this

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sense, to awaken what Henri Bergson described as "a latent belief in the spontaneity of nature." The idea of vibrant matter also has a long (and if not latent, at least not dominant) philosophical history in the West. I will reinvoke this history too, drawing in particular on the concepts and claims of Baruch Spinoza, Friedrich Nietzsche, Henry David Thoreau, Charles Darwin, Theodor Adomo, Gilles Deleuze, and the early twentieth-century vitalisms of Bergson and Hans Driescb.

courage more intelligent and sustainable engagements with vibrant trajectories, propensities, or tendencies of their own. My aspiration is to articulate a vibrant materiality that runs alongside and inside humans The political project of the book is, to put it most ambitiously, to enmatter and lively things. A guiding question: How would political responses to public problems change were we to take seriously the vitality will and designs of humans but also to act as quasi agents or forces with to see how analyses of political events might change if we gave the force of things more due. How, for example, would patterns of consumption change if we faced not litter, rubbish, trash, or "the recycling," but an edibles, commodities, storms, metals—not only to impede or block the accumulating pile of lively and potentially dangerous matter? What difference would it make to public health if eating was understood as an most of them not, and none of which always gets the upper hand? What tion that the only source of vitality in matter is a soul or spirit? What of (nonhuman) bodies? By "vitality" I mean the capacity of things encounter between various and variegated bodies, some of them mine, issues would surround stem cell research in the absence of the assumpdifference would it make to the course of energy policy were electricity to be figured not simply as a resource, commodity, or instrumentality but also and more radically as an "actant"?

The term is Bruno Latour's: an actant is a source of action that can be either human or nonhuman; it is that which has efficacy, can do things, has sufficient coherence to make a difference, produce effects, alter the course of events. It is "any entity that modifies another entity in a trial," something whose "competence is deduced from [its] performance" rather than posited in advance of the action." Some actants are better described as protoactants, for these performances or energies are too small or too fast to be "things." I admire Latour's attempt to develop a vocabulary that addresses multiple modes and degrees of effectivity, to

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begin to describe a more distributive agency. Latour strategically elides what is commonly taken as distinctive or even unique about humans, and so will I. At least for a while and up to a point. I lavish attention on specific "things," noting the distinctive capacities or efficacious powers of particular material configurations. To attempt, as I do, to present human and nonhuman actants on a less vertical plane than is common is to bracket the question of the human and to elide the rich and diverse literature on subjectivity and its genesis, its conditions of possibility, and its boundaries. The philosophical project of naming where subjectivity begins and ends is too often bound up with fantasies of a human uniqueness in the eyes of God, of escape from materiality, or of mastery of nature; and even where it is not, it remains an aporetic or quixotic endeavor.

In what follows the otherwise important topic of subjectivity thus gets short shrift so that I may focus on the task of developing a vocabulary and syntax for, and thus a better discernment of, the active powers issuing from nonsubjects. I want to highlight what is typically cast in the shadow: the material agency or effectivity of nonhuman or not-quitehuman things. I will try to make a meal out of the stuff left out of the feast of political theory done in the anthropocentric style. In so doing, I court the charge of performative self-contradiction: is it not a human subject who, after all, is articulating this theory of vibrant matter? Yes and no, for I will argue that what looks like a performative contradiction may well dissipate if one considers revisions in operative notions of matter, life, self, self-interest, will, and agency.

Why advocate the vitality of matter? Because my hunch is that the image of dead or thoroughly instrumentalized matter feeds human bubris and our earth-destroying fantasies of conquest and consumption. It does so by preventing us from detecting (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling) a fuller range of the nonhuman powers circulating around and within human bodies. These material powers, which can aid or destroy, enrich or disable, ennoble or degrade us, in any case call for our attentiveness, or even "respect" (provided that the term be stretched beyond its Kantian sense). The figure of an intrinsically inanimate matter may be one of the impediments to the emergence of more ecological and more materially sustainable modes of production and consumption. My claims here are motivated by a self-interested

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or conative concern for human survival and happiness: I want to promote greener forms of human culture and more attentive encounters between people-materialities and thing-materialities. (The "ecological" character of a vital materialism is the focus of the last two chapters.)

In the "Treatise on Nomadology," Deleuze and Félix Guattari experiment with the idea of a "material vitalism," according to which vitality is immanent in matter-energy.<sup>6</sup> That project has helped inspire mine. Like Deleuze and Guattari, I draw selectively from Epicurean, Spinozist, Nietzschean, and vitalist traditions, as well as from an assortment of contemporary writers in science and literature. I need all the help I can get, for this project calls for the pursuit of several tasks simultaneously: (1) to paint a positive ontology of vibrant matter, which stretches received concepts of agency, action, and freedom sometimes to the breaking point; (2) to dissipate the onto-theological binaries of life/matter, human/animal, will/determination, and organic/inorganic using arguments and other reteorical means to induce in human bodies an aesthetic-affective openness to material vitality; and (3) to sketch a style of political analysis that can better account for the contributions of nonhuman actants.

In what follows, then, I try to bear witness to the vital materialities that flow through and around us. Though the movements and effectivity of stem cells, electricity, food, trash, and metals are crucial to political life (and human life per se), almost as soon as they appear in public (often at first by disrupting human projects or expectations), these activities and powers are represented as human mood, action, meaning, agenda, or ideology. This quick substitution sustains the fantasy that "we" really are in charge of all those "its"—its that, according to the tradition of (nonmechanistic, nonteleological) materialism I draw on, reweal themselves to be potentially forceful agents.

Spinoza stands as a touchstone for me in this book, even though he himself was not quite a materialist. I invoke his idea of conative bodies that strive to enhance their power of activity by forming alliances with other bodies, and I share his faith that everything is made of the same substance. Spinoza rejected the idea that man "disturbs rather than follows Nature's order," and promises instead to "consider human actions and appetites just as if it were an investigation into lines, planes, or bodies." \*\*Lucretius\*\*, too, expressed a kind of monism in his \*\*De Rerum\*\*

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Michel Serres says in The Birth of Physics, a turbulent, immanent field in Natura: everything, he says, is made of the same quirky stuff, the same ouilding blocks, if you will. Lucretius calls them primordia; today we night call them atoms, quarks, particle streams, or matter-energy. This cal sensibility, and that too is important to me. But in contrast to some writes Deleuze, is "ontologically one, formally diverse." This is, as and disintegrate.9 Though I find Epicureanism to be too simple in its same-stuff claim, this insinuation that deep down everything is connected and irreducible to a simple substrate, resonates with an ecologiversions of deep ecology, my monism posits neither a smooth harmony of parts nor a diversity unified by a common spirit. The formula here, which various and variable materialities collide, congeal, morph, evolve, imagery of individual atoms falling and swerving in the void, I share ts conviction that there remains a natural tendency to the way things are—and that human decency and a decent politics are fostered if we tune in to the strange logic of turbulence.

# Impersonal Affect

When I wrote The Enchantment of Modern Life, my focus was on the ethical relevance of human affect, more specifically, of the mood of enchantment or that strange combination of delight and disturbance. The idea was that moments of sensuous enchantment with the everyday world—with nature but also with commodities and other cultural products—might augment the motivational energy needed to move selves from the endorsement of ethical principles to the actual practice of ethical behaviors.

The theme of that book participated in a larger trend within political theory, a kind of ethical and aesthetic turn inspired in large part by feminist studies of the body and by Michel Foucault's work on "care of the self." These inquires helped put "desire" and bodily practices such as physical exercise, meditation, sexuality, and eating back on the ethical radar screen. Some in political theory, perhaps most notably Nancy Fraser in Justice Interruptus, criticized this turn as a retreat to soft, psycho-cultural issues of identity at the expense of the hard, political issues of economic justice, environmental sustainability, human

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rights, or democratic governance. Others (I am in this camp) replied that the bodily disciplines through which ethical sensibilities and social relations are formed and reformed are themselves political and constitute a whole (underexplored) field of "micropolities" without which any principle or policy risks being just a bunch of words. There will be no greening of the economy, no redistribution of wealth, no enforcement or extension of rights without human dispositions, moods, and cultural ensembles hospitable to these effects.

The ethical turn encouraged political theorists to pay more attention to films, religious practices, news media rituals, neuroscientific experiments, and other noncanonical means of ethical will formation. In the process, "ethics" could no longer refer primarily to a set of doctrines; it had to be considered as a complex set of relays between moral contents, aesthetic-affective styles, and public moods. Here political theorists affirmed what Romantic thinkers (I am thinking of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Friedrich Schiller, Nietzsche, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Thoreau, and Walt Whitman) had long noted: if a set of moral principles is actually to be lived out, the right mood or landscape of affect has to be in place.

I continue to think of affect as central to politics and ethics, but in this book I branch out to an "affect" not specific to human bodies. I want now to focus less on the enhancement to human relational capacities resulting from affective catalysts and more on the catalyst itself as it exists in nonhuman bodies. This power is not transpersonal or intersubjective but impersonal, an affect intrinsic to forms that cannot be tinctions are not particularly salient here) all are affective. I am here imagined (even ideally) as persons. I now emphasize even more how the figure of enchantment points in two directions: the first toward the humans who feel enchanted and whose agentic capacities may be thereby strengthened, and the second toward the agency of the things that produce (helpful, harmful) effects in human and other bodies.10 Organic and inorganic bodies, natural and cultural objects (these disdrawing on a Spinozist notion of affect, which refers broadly to the capacity of any body for activity and responsiveness, Deleuze and Guatari put the point this way: "We know nothing about a body until we know what it can do, in other words, what its affects are, how they can or cannot enter into composition with other affects, with the affects of another body, . . . to destroy that body or to be destroyed by it, . . . to exchange actions and passions with it or to join with in composing

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a more powerful body." Or, according to David Cole, "affects entail the colliding of particle-forces delineating the impact of one body on another; this could also be explained as the capacity to feel force before [or without] subjective emotion. ... Affects create a field of forces that do not tend to congeal into subjectivity." What I am calling impersonal affect or material vibrancy is not a spiritual supplement or "life force" added to the matter said to house it. Mine is not a vitalism in the traditional sense; I equate affect with materiality, rather than posit a separate force that can enter and animate a physical body.

My aim, again, is to theorize a vitality intrinsic to materiality as such, and to detach materiality from the figures of passive, mechanistic, or divinely infused substance. This vibrant matter is not the raw material for the creative activity of humans or God. It is my body, but also the bodies of Baltimore litter (chapter 1), Prometheus's chains (chapter 4), and Darwin's worms (chapter 7), as well as the not-quite-bodies of electricity (chapter 2), ingested food (chapter 3), and stem cells (chapters 5 and 6).

# A Note on Methodology

I pursue a materialism in the tradition of Democritus-Epicurus-Spinoza-Diderot-Deleuze more than Hegel-Marx-Adorno. It is important to follow the trail of human power to expose social hegemonies (as historical materialists do). But my contention is that there is also public value in following the scent of a nonhuman, thingly power, the material agency of natural bodies and technological artifacts. Here I mean "to follow" in the sense in which Jacques Derrida develops it in the context of his meditation on animals. Derrida points to the intimacy between being and following: to be (anything, anyone) is always to be following (something, someone), always to be in response to call from something, however nonhuman it may be.<sup>13</sup>

What method could possibly be appropriate for the task of speaking a word for vibrant matter? How to describe without thereby erasing the independence of things? How to acknowledge the obscure but ubiquitous intensity of impersonal affect? What seems to be needed is a certain willingness to appear naive or foolish, to affirm what Adorno called his "clownish traits." This entails, in my case, a willingness to

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theorize events (a blackout, a meal, an imprisonment in chains, an experience of litter) as encounters between ontologically diverse actants, some human, some not, though all thoroughly material.

What is also needed is a cultivated, patient, sensory attentiveness to nonhuman forces operating outside and inside the human body. I have tried to learn how to induce an attentiveness to things and their affects from Thoreau, Franz Kafka, and Whitman, as well as from the eco-and ecofeminist philosophers Romand Coles, Val Plumwood, Wade Sikorski, Freya Mathews, Wendell Berry, Angus Fletcher, Barry Lopez, and Barbara Kingsolver. Without proficiency in this countercultural kind of perceiving, the world appears as if it consists only of active human subjects who confront passive objects and their law-governed mechanisms. This appearance may be indispensable to the action-oriented perception on which our survival depends (as Nietzsche and Bergson each in his own way contends), but it is also dangerous and counterproductive to live this fiction all the time (as Nietzsche and Bergson also note), and neither does it conduce to the formation of a "greener" sensibility.

For this task, demystification, that most popular of practices in critical theory, should be used with caution and sparingly, because demystification presumes that at the heart of any event or process lies a human agency that has illicitly been projected into things. This hermeneutics of suspicion calls for theorists to be on high alert for signs of the secret truth (a human will to power) below the false appearance of nonhuman agency. Karl Marx sought to demystify commodities and prevent their fetishization by showing them to be invested with an agency that belongs to humans; patriotic Americans under the Bush regime exposed the self-interest, greed, or cruelty inside the "global war on terror" or inside the former attorney general Alberto Gonzales's version of the rule of law; the feminist theorist Wendy Brown demystifics when she promises to "remove the scales from our eyes" and reveal that "the discourse of tolerance ... [valorizes] the West, othering the rest... while feigning to do no more than ... extend the benefits of liberal thought and practice...

Demystification is an indispensable tool in a democratic, pluralist politics that seeks to hold officials accountable to (less unjust versions of) the rule of law and to check attempts to impose a system of (racial, civilizational, religious, sexual, class) domination. But there are limits to its political officacy, among them that exposés of illegality, greed,

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mendacity, oligarchy, or hypocrisy do not reliably produce moral outrage and that, if they do, this outrage mayor may not spark ameliorative action. Brown, too, acknowledges that even if the exposé of the "false conceits" of liberal tolerance were to weaken the "justification" for the ion" for empire.<sup>17</sup> What is more, ethical political action on the part of advocate for demystification, recognizes this liability: "If all we can do is evaluate, critique, or demystify the present, then what is it that we are iberal quest for empire, it would not necessarily weaken the "motivahumans seems to require not only a vigilant critique of existing institutions but also positive, even utopian alternatives.18 Jodi Dean, another hoping to accomplish?"19 A relentless approach toward demystification works against the possibility of positive formulations. In a discussion of the François Mitterand government, Foucault broke with his former tendency to rely on demystification and proposed specific reforms in the domain of sexuality: "I've become rather irritated by an attitude, which for a long time was mine, too, and which I no longer subscribe let them get on with their legislation and reforms. That doesn't seem to, which consists in saying: our problem is to denounce and criticize: to me like the right attitude." The point, again, is that we need both chitique and positive formulations of alternatives, alternatives that will themselves become the objects of later critique and reform.

What demystification uncovers is always something human, for example, the hidden quest for domination on the part of some humans over others, a human desire to deflect responsibility for harms done, or an unjust distribution of (human) power. Demystification tends to screen from view the vitality of matter and to reduce political agency to human agency. Those are the tendencies I resist.

The capacity to detect the presence of impersonal affect requires that one is caught up in it. One needs, at least for a while, to suspend suspicion and adopt a more open-ended comportment. If we think we already know what is out there, we will almost surely miss much of it.

# Materialisms

Several years ago I mentioned to a friend that Thoreau's notion of the Wild had interesting affinities with Deleuze's idea of the virtual and with Foucault's notion of the unthought. All three thinkers are trying

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to acknowledge a force that, though quite real and powerful, is intrinsically resistant to representation. My friend replied that she did not much care for French poststructuralism, for it "lacked a materialist perspective." At the time I took this reply as a way of letting me know that she was committed to a Marx-inspired, egalitarian politics. But the comment stuck, and it eventually provoked these thoughts: Why did Foucault's concern with "bodies and pleasures" or Deleuze's and Guattari's interest in "machinic assemblages" not count as materialist? How did Marx's notion of materiality—as economic structures and exchanges that provoke many other events—come to stand for the materialist perspective per se? Why is there not a more robust debate between contending philosophies of materiality or between contending accounts of how materiality matters to politics?

For some time political theory has acknowledged that materiality matters. But this materiality most often refers to human social structures or to the human meanings "embodied" in them and other objects. Because politics is itself often construed as an exclusively human domain, what registers on it is a set of material constraints on or a context for human action. Dogged resistance to anthropocentrism is perhaps the main difference between the vital materialism I pursue and this kind of historical materialism.<sup>22</sup> I will emphasize, even overemphasize, the agentic contributions of nonhuman forces (operating in nature, in the human body, and in human artifacts) in an attempt to counter the narcissistic reflex of human language and thought. We need to cultivate a bit of anthropomorphism—the idea that human agency has some echoes in nonhuman nature—to counter the narcissism of humans in charge of the world

In chapter 1, "The Force of Things," I explore two terms in a vital materialist vocabulary: thing-power and the out-side. Thing-power gestures toward the strange ability of ordinary, man-made items to exceed their status as objects and to manifest traces of independence or aliveness, constituting the outside of our own experience. I look at how found objects (my examples come from litter on the street, a toy creature in a Kafka story, a technical gadget used in criminal investigations) can become vibrant things with a certain effectivity of their own, a perhaps small but irreducible degree of independence from the words, images, and feelings they provoke in us. I present this as a liveliness intrinsic to the materiality of the thing formerly known as an object. This raises a

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metaquestion: is it really possible to theorize this vibrancy, or is it (as Adorno says it is) a quest that is not only futile but also tied to the hubristic human will to comprehensive knowledge and the violent human will to dominate and control? In the light of his critique, and given Adorno's own efforts in Negative Dialectics to "grope toward the preponderance of the object," I defend the "naive" ambition of a vital materialism,<sup>23</sup>

The concept of thing-power offers an alternative to the object as a way of encountering the nonhuman world. It also has (at least) two liabilities: first, it attends only to the vitality of stable or fixed entities (things), and second, it presents this vitality in terms that are too individualistic (even though the individuals are not human beings). In chapter 2, "The Agency of Assemblages," I enrich the picture of material agency through the notion of "assemblages," borrowed from Deleuze and Guattari. The locus of agency is always a human-nonhuman working group. I move from the vitality of a discrete thing to vitality as a (Spinozist) function of the tendency of matter to conglomerate or form heterogeneous groupings. I then explore the agency of human-nonhuman assemblages through the example of the electrical power grid, focusing on a 2003 blackout that affected large sections of North America.

In chapter 3, "Edible Matter," I repeat the experiment by focusing on food. Drawing on studies of obesity, recent food writing, and on ideas formulated by Thoreau and Nietzsche on the question of diet, I present the case for edible matter as an actant operating inside and alongside humankind, exerting influence on moods, dispositions, and decisions. I here begin to defend a conception of self, developed in later chapters, as itself an impure, human-nonhuman assemblage. I also consider, but ultimately eschew, the alternative view that the vibrancy I posit in matter is best attributed to a nonmaterial source, to an animating spirit or "con"."

Chapter 4, "A Life of Metal," continues to gnaw away at the life/matter binary, this time through the concept of "a life." I take up the hard case for a (nonmechanistic) materialism that conceives of matter as intrinsically lively (but not ensouled): the case of inorganic matter. My example is metal. What can it mean to say that metal—usually the avatar of a rigid and inert substance—is vibrant matter? I compare the "adamantine chains" that bind Aeschylus's Prometheus to a rock to the polycrystalline metal described by the historian of science Cyril Smith.

Vital materialism as a doctrine has affinities with several nonmodern

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(and often discredited) modes of thought, including animism, the Romantic quest for Nature, and vitalism. Some of these affinities I embrace, some I do not I reject the life/matter binary informing classical vitalism. In chapters 5 and 6 I ask why this divide has been so persistent and defended so militantly, especially as developments in the natural sciences and in bicengineering have rendered the line between organic and inorganic, life and matter, increasingly problematic. In Chapter 5, "Neither Mechanism nor Vitalism," I focus on three fascinating attempts to name the "vital force" in matter: Immanuel Kant's Bildungstrieb, the embryologist Driesch's entelechy, and Bergson's élan vital. Driesch and Bergson both sought to infuse philosophy with the science of their day, and both were skeptical about mechanistic models of nature. To me, their vitalisms constituted an invaluable holding action, maintaining an open space that a philosophy of vibrant materiality could fill.

In Chapter 6, "Stems Cells and the Culture of Life," I explore the latter-day vitalism of George W. Bush and other evangelical defenders of a "culture of life" as expressed in political debates about embryonic stem cell research during the final years of the Bush adminstration. I appreciate the pluripotentiality of stem cells but resist the effort of culture-of-life advocates to place these cells on one side of a radical divide between life and nonlife.

Chapter 7, "Political Ecologies," was the most difficult to conceive and write, because there I stage a meeting between the (meta)physics of vital materialism and a political theory. I explore how a conception the inventive worms studied by Darwin. Darwin treats worms as actants operating not only in nature but in history: "Worms have played a more important part in the history of the world than most persons would at of vibrant matter could resound in several key concepts of political theory, including the "public," "political participation," and "the politifirst assume."24 Darwin's anthropomorphizing prompts me to consider l use (and stretch) John Dewey's model of a public as the emergent cal." I begin with a discussion of one more example of vibrant matter, effect of a problem to defend such an idea. But I also consider the objection to it posed by Rancière, who both talks about dissonances coming from outside the regime of political intelligibility and models politics as a unique realm of exclusively human endeavor. I end the chapter by the reverse case: whether a polity might itself be a kind of ecosystem.

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endorsing a definition of politics as a political ecology and a notion of publics as human-nonhuman collectives that are provoked into existence by a shared experience of harm. I imagine this public to be one of the "disruptions" that Rancière names as the quintessentially political

In the last chapter, "Vitality and Self-interest," I gather together the various links between ecophilosophy and a vital materialism. What are some tactics for cultivating the experience of our selves as vibrant mater? The task is to explore ways to engage effectively and sustainably this enchanting and dangerous matter-energy.

#### Credits

Choreography & Concept: Leandro Zappala & Anna af Sillén de Mesquita.

Performance: Leandro Zappala.

Light: Daniel Goody & QUARTO.

Sound: Palle Lindqvist.

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