

”Ty i det ögonblick då konsten uppfattas som sammankopplad med grundläggande existensvillkor med naturens stumhet eller röst med jordens och vattnets och luftens materia med igelkottarnas och blåvalarnas försvinnande... då kan det vara viktigt att ställa sig inför det som ” konstnärens öga har sett” Jan Håfström ¹

Sandqvist(1982: 47)

THE MOVING MATTER

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THE MOVING MATTER

A Material Study Looking Through Theory.

Introduction

“There is no such thing as either man or nature now, only a process that produces the one within the other and couples the machines together.”

”²(Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari)

“Things, non humans, nature having equal significance as us, humans. They should also be an active part of mediating meaning and connections. Therefore we need to mobilize nature from the background.”³(Bruno Latour)

“ Nature is a skillful engineer and maker of complex materials. It is not what we can extract from it but we can learn from its innovations.”⁴
(Janine M Benyus)

These are some thoughts brought together from different sources of philosophy, anthropology and science by the philosophers Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, science anthropologist and professor Bruno Latour and science biologist writer Janine Benyus, focused on bio mimicry. The essay is called “Moving Matter and is focused on how these writers relate to materials and how it connects to nature and becomes, through my method, a kind of ecological reading, or a “geo philosophy”.⁵

In my study, I connect these writers because I found shared views on materials, nature, as active, trans-disciplinary, related to science and part of a big collective. For them materials are not only a single matter waiting but to be formed, but rather are an active moving agent which contains complex chemical and biological structures, connects with history, has a social, cultural and political role. All these complex relations could be said to form a kind of science-related material culture of materials, a moving matter. ⁶ This view also creates implicit ethical relations to nature and lead to a trans-disciplinary ecology.

²Deleuze &Guattari (1983:2ff)

³ Latou r(1993:

⁴ Benyus s§(

⁵ Herzogenrath(2009:4)

⁶ Ibid (2009:7ff)

In the second part I wish to conclude and summarize why, how these theories could be relevant when working and treating materials as makers, consumers, or wearers of jewellery. I wish to use the so-called “functions of jewelry” by adapting the thoughts from the first part of the essay and also by including works from different jewelry artists. By doing this, I am posing the question:

-What could it mean when we say that materials are active and intelligent in the context of jewellery and jewellery art?

Deleuze and Guattari

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari are two French theorists who have written several works together but also individual writings. It is said that Deleuze is more science-related and Guattari more focused on socio-political theories.⁷

I will try to clarify in the text, when common/joint or individual statements are referred to/taken into account.

“The Machinics”

In many of their texts, both Deleuze and Guattari argue that nature, in postmodernist and structuralist theories, is always looked upon as a construction and not as materiality. They state that nature is always explained through representation and should not be depicted through language or symbolic representation. Nature, and with it ecology, should be subjectified, not objectified.⁸

“There is no such thing as either man or nature now, only a process that produces the one within the other and couples the machines together.”

“..rather they are one and the same reality, the producer-product”

⁹

According to their theories nature and man are not divided; instead, they perceive nature as a giant, abstract machine, in which they don't wish to

⁷ Herzogenrath (2009:)

⁸ Ibid (2009: 5ff)

⁹ Ibid(2009:5)

separate human, nonhuman, art and artifacts. The essence of their ecology is “machinic”.

The machine works everywhere, it breathes, eats, shits and fucks. It is all mechanics with no unity and no controlling subjectivity. It is all different connections and assemblage. There is, in their meaning/vision, no whole or balance but a complex turbulent dynamic.¹⁰ Nature is difference-driven and is not seeking equilibrium.¹¹

Their machinic description of nature emphasizes a conceptualization of nature to stress the importance of relations in nature and the need to move away from an apocentric division between man and nature. Deleuze and Guattari don't consider their view on nature as ecology, but more as a “geo philosophy”, where ‘earth’ is a fundamental concept.¹²

In their text *Thousand Plateaus*, they describe how nature forms thousand connections and works within different territories (ecosystems), creating a complexity of patterns, rhythms, animals, trees, plants and sounds. This territorializing is an interactive, structural process of flows and flux and not an optimized idea. There is no ideal design, no survival of the fittest, more a bricolage, an assemblage, and openness.¹³

All systems change over time but humans use too much speed and effect. They see the human actions in late times, likewise creating a body without organs: this generates another imbalance, a black hole, cancer to the system, and it is very destructive. The global warming, ozone holes are all effects of this cancer. We should create smooth spaces, relative, global, local fixed within a big flow.

This complex assemblage, as they describe the ecosystem, needs to be articulated and conceptualized by philosophy. It should be a philosophy of differences, breaking up static, closed classifications. They created a concept of desiring machines of culture, nature, human and non-humans, with no phobia against the technique and believing that there are no distinctions between natural and artificial.

Deleuze and Guattari's “machinic” philosophy of ecosystems (geo philosophy), seeks no whole, no balance and no restoring of the “real truth

¹⁰ Herzogenrath (2009:4)

¹¹ Delanda(2009:29f

¹² Herzogenrath(2009:4)

¹³ Ibid (2009:40ff)

of the matter”, but the message seems to reflect a deep concern for all parts of the system.¹⁴

Intelligent Moving Matter

Starting from the theory of geophilosophy, especially Deleuze develops a very special view on material, a materialist philosophy.¹⁵ Materials are also machinic; with this statement, Deleuze means it consists of a variety of machines with complex molecular structures with the capacity of self-organization (assemblage). According to Deleuze, there is no real truth of the material. He strongly is against material depicted often as something formless, passive or even dead, a chaotic mess governed by God. Instead he aims at formulating an intelligent materialism where matter itself is not dominated by form but is animated, informed, productive and carries potentials. It is property of the matter itself to be productive, with its chemical, biological characteristics. Deleuze material metaphysics see the materials as part of production more than representation, being interesting as materiality instead of working through language. This “machinics” of the moving intelligent matter, makes constant loops between human, nonhuman, culture, science and philosophy.¹⁶

The artist and craftsmen tease the form of active energetic material in movement. Deleuze says that materials have an implicit form or topology, rather than geometry. By adding a variable, an intensive effect of materials collaborates with it rather than obeying or pacifying it. It is more interesting to follow and realize different characteristics, surrendering to the material and see where it leads you. Then it becomes a matter of material rather than an imposed form.¹⁷ Deleuze believes that reality without the distinctions of observable or unobservable exists, a realism without the human mind. The material has an implicit capacity that could be affected by the meeting with others. These capacities could be unrealized and could therefore be considered, by using the Deleuzian terminology, of virtual, which is also a “real” part of the material.¹⁸

¹⁴ Herzogenrath(1993:48ff)

¹⁵ DeLanda (2009:35)

¹⁶ Herzogenrath (2009:9ff)

¹⁷ DeLanda (2009:29ff)

¹⁸ Ibid (2009:25ff)

The Importance of Nature in the Trans-Disciplinary Ecology

An important aspect of both Deleuze and Guattari's theories, is that they move across disciplines; this aspect can be referred to as trans-disciplinarity. Thoughts relating to material and nature, are not to be considered ecological philosophy, but they rather connect to a wider range of thoughts related to ecology such as biology, chemistry, genetics, but also art, sociology and history. This material tradition, in which natural science, politics and culture are closely connected, is described as a model of morality, ethics of immanence. The connection with nature is an important part of creating the ethics. The machine reaches both culture and nature and sees them as important part of the same continuum. They both see it as necessary, as a creation of newness, to be multi-disciplinary, to establish relations between art, science, philosophy for exchange and reflections. The intelligent moving matter should therefore be looked upon from different disciplines in order to be properly analyzed.

Their science and technical approach refers to nature as a complex process going on for millions of years and therefore should not be Apo centric. According to Deleuze and Guattari, philosophers and artists have the role of having to articulate and conceptualize the trans-disciplinary philosophy of ecologies and its theories, in order to gain a deeper understanding. A Philosophy of difference, as it is referred to, in order to break the monopoly apart from static, closed classification.¹⁹

Guattari, who is more socio-politically oriented, even sees artists as little soldiers. It is necessary to be trans-disciplinary both in an esthetic and ethical sense and to orientate techniques towards human signs and behavior because, as it is now, they are mainly directed towards economics and consumption as lifestyles.²⁰

Art should be part of making visible new ways of thinking as in land art, music and "jewelry". Jewelry could be a very useful tool in working trans disciplinarily since it entails so many parameters as the maker-, wearer-, body-relation, material, symbols, and inter relational possibilities. These matters will be discussed more closely in part 2.

¹⁹ Herzogenrath (2009:8ff)

²⁰ Ibid (2009:12f)

Art should open up new territories, create new constellations, cracks, breakaways. Guattari sees ecology and its connection to art as important, a critical resistance to conservatism, neo liberalism, the postmodern and the world of capitalism. For example, he sees performance as an interrupted flux. John Cage makes music from nature sounds.²¹

They both criticize the European imperialism that ignores this subject-object relationship and see humans as a sole user and producer. They also criticize the fact that scientists are mostly turned against positivism and use their science and theory in a very pragmatic and isolated way. There is no essential science in the future, but rather a multiplicity of scientific fields, histories and societies and new fields are created all the time.²²

Bruno Latour

Bruno Latour was from the beginning trained as a philosopher and is today sociologist and anthropologist of science. He is an influential theorist on science and technology and has also been strongly engaged in environmental issues. Latour has a lot of connections to Deleuze and Guattari, insofar as he believes in transdisciplinarity and its mediating actions between humans and non-humans. His theories could also be looked upon as very materialist and science-related. His theories are based on interdisciplinarity.²³

We have never been Modern - the Anthropology of science and things great divide

In his book "We are not modern" he states the necessity of anthropology, as mediating factor between nature and culture, science and society. His discipline also includes non-humans, things and nature.²⁴ Through his book he strongly criticizes what he calls modern, referring to it as 'modernism'. He sees the whole concept of modern as an act of separation, purification and as something no longer acceptable or relevant.²⁵ He is also very sceptical about postmodernism, which he sees as only referring to

²¹ Delanda(2009:56f)

²² Herzogenrath (2009:18f)

²³ www.bruno-latour.fr/ biography

²⁴ Latour (1993:91ff)

²⁵ Ibid (1993:50ff)

modernism, without any real essence of its own.²⁶ In this concept he also talks and uses the metaphor of the Pre-moderns. This group stands for those who are keen on just restoring and maintaining the separation between nature and culture, afraid of the dangerous hybrids that would otherwise be produced. They are, according to Latour, incapable of analysing or being creative²⁷. These three groups, the Moderns, Post-moderns and Pre-moderns, are just preventing, in different ways, real development. The Moderns abolish the past and divide; the Post-moderns are just referring to references while the last group, the Pre-Moderns, are just conservative and afraid.²⁸ He accuses modernism of creating this 'Great divide', in which we perceive ourselves as being different from all other cultures, cut off from our past and religion. We created a society that had to be rational, effective and bureaucratic. What Latour points out in his theories is how we, The Moderns, in the West, separate nature and science from the rest of the society. Both of them are, according to us, universal. Nature is unique and external and science is neutral, free from politics and morality. We have two Great divides, one external, in which we differentiate ourselves from the rest of the world, and one internal divide, in which we separate ourselves from the nonhumans. When referring to materials in this study, the internal great divide is important in Latour's critique. Our split, our separation from nonhumans, animals, objects and materials, hides away a lot of conscious and unconscious information.²⁹ In many ways, we see ourselves as victims, victims of our own instrumentalisation, of science, technology, economy, bureaucracy and more. Our god is dead; we are alone in the world, "the white man's burden".³⁰ He sees it as mostly a product of a western, cultural imperialism that has created a monster out of control and we are all victims of this monster which has, among other things, caused the ozone hole, global warming³¹.

Before we could live with this monster, due to separation and possible opacity. The third world has been the place where we have placed the

²⁶ Ibid (1993:69ff)

²⁷ Ibid (1993:41ff)

²⁸ Ibid (1993:12)

²⁹ Latour (1993:104ff)

³⁰ Ibid (1993:114f)

³¹ Ibid (1993:50f)

hybrids. Now our lifestyle is hitting back and we have to face the consequences³²

Nature of Mediation

Now we must mobilize nature from the background. Break free from the universal nature with science as its one true interpreter. The Moderns see nature as real, unique external, not narrated, collective as society or existential as a being, all as part of their tendency to divide³³. Anthropology through interdisciplinarity, often rules out nature, especially when describing our western society. When studying other cultures it is easier to include it. Even when represented in fantasy, nature is easier to study; flying saucers are fine but not the ozone layer. The great internal divide of being universal as science separates nature³⁴. This outdated fact could be accepted, but not the actual sanctioned science that should be 'kept clean'; science and nature studies is a featureless landscape³⁵. Maybe the most important point in Latour's theories, is how we, as Moderns, have kept nature and science separated from society, culture and politics. Science has been the true mediator of nature until now. We also separate ourselves from non-humans; this aspect is being discussed further on, in the next chapter. Nature is also 'constructed' as everything else and so is science. We can accept it in other cultures but not in our own. Here Latour means that anthropology has a great task in studying and mediating this point of view. The nature-culture relation is not an artefact, but it exists and includes humans and nonhumans, the animals, plants, (materials).³⁶ Nature revolves around a collective that produces; there should be a history of nature, not only of humans.³⁷ This nonhumans or quasi objects play a big part in mediating, keep track of the relation between nature and society. As Latour puts it, "creating networks". All cultures construct humans, divinities and non-humans, even our own. We do not see that and are not able to analyze this. In other cultures, there may be ancestors and spirits to mediate knowledge. We have science, technology, zoology, and genetics, not because they are good and

³² Ibid (1993:

³³ Ibid (1995ff)

³⁴ Latour (1993:97ff)

³⁵ Ibid (1993:91f)

³⁶ Latour (1993:97ff)

³⁷ Ibid (1993:90ff)

true but because they connect us to nonhumans, animals, microbes, society and nature. They create new hybrids, new insights and construct new collectives for us. We don't need to find the essence of nature, as nature is something different from us. A lot of other different perspectives should be considered when we analyse nature, not only the scientific one. Political, historical and cultural perspectives should also be taken into account. We are tired of 'sleeping nature', something which is unknowable, inaccessible until scientists help us with understanding it by opening it up.³⁸ We westerners, in our modern way, know that we have made irreparable crimes against the rest of the world and nature. We must stop seeing us as victims in a society we created, we have to bypass that blockage which is also a totalisation, (in seeing us as different).³⁹

Materials as the quasi object

Another important point in Latour's theories is a very complex aspect that he refers to as 'the quasi objects'. The quasi objects constitute a new way of looking at non-human, material things, and humans as something that is not stable. Material seen as a quasi-object is not something shapeless or passive. It is rather something that mediates between nature and society, opening up different aspects and meanings for communication.⁴⁰ The quasi objects are essential for opening up the great internal divide, both in their own right but also in mediating between nature and us humans. Latour defines it as creating networks. As already mentioned in the previous chapter, science has been the true, universal communicator for nature, nonhumans, animals and plants, but now 'repressed materials' have to emerge from the scientific lab and find their place into reality.⁴¹ Human's nonhumans should be a part of the same collective. Quasi objects are the mediators looking upon the many aspects of things and materials. This fact makes these objects a part of material culture when objects also define the subject and the world around us. The material as a quasi object is moving and could be independently referred to as a material, a narrative, a social

³⁸ Ibid (1993: 104ff)

³⁹ Ibid (1993:125f)

⁴⁰ Ibid (1993:51f)

⁴¹ Latour (1993:104ff)

bond or a bit of each.⁴² The quasi object helps to open it up. The material as quasi object could then only exist in a mediating, interdisciplinary sense.⁴³ It is real even though not made by humans, collective because it connects us to one another. It circulates, is discursive, unstable and hazardous, with different stories connected to it.⁴⁴ It makes room for the non-humans through science and technology. It renders humans transcendental, not stable in form. It considers us as (beings) constantly shifting definition as in a state of morphs. Techno morphs, zoo morphs, the anthropomorphic, liberated delegated, mediated.⁴⁵

But the moderns also created good products that should be kept/saved, such as science, daring research, long networks, innovation, youth and independency from society⁴⁶.

Latour also sees anthropology as an important tool for mediating time. Modernists always abolish the past; everything that is past, is eliminated forever in a constant state of rupture with the past.⁴⁷ That is why we are so obsessed with things, preserved in collections and museums. Destruction brings along manic savings. But here the quasi object could be a mediator of times, act in a poly-temporal manner. It does not need to be labelled archaic or advanced and it could choose traditions if needed. Past is not something surpassed, revisited, repeated or necessarily protected. Different times could form a whole coherence. Future is a circle expanding⁴⁸. This mediation is important in changing the opacity, which has existed in the western culture. By using and making visible the traces and networks between humans, nonhumans, quasi objects and nature, we gain more knowledge, more creativity but also more consciousness.

⁴² Ibid (1993:76ff)

⁴³ Ibid (1993:89f)

⁴⁴ Ibid (1993: 76ff)

⁴⁵ Ibid (1993: 136ff)

⁴⁶ Ibid (1993:132f)

⁴⁷ Ibid (1993: 68f)

⁴⁸ Ibid (1993:72ff)

“We are on the brink of a materials revolution that will be on a par with the Iron Age and the Industrial Revolution. We are leaping forward into a new era of materials. Within the next century, biomimetics will significantly alter the way in which we live.”⁴⁹

Mehmet Sarikaya, material science and engineering professor, University of Washington

Janine M Benyus

Benyus is a biological science writer. She lectures on bio mimicry and works a lot with sustainable design for companies and governments.

Nature as the Scientist and Concerned Maker

Benyus’ take on bio mimicry concerns innovations inspired by nature, nature as the skilful engineer and maker of complex materials. The Bio mimicry is a science, according to the author, that is not only interested in copying structures or extracts materials from nature and organic materials. It is more important to use the manufacturing processes, “doing it in nature’s way”, for nature is an advanced maker when it comes to materials, structuring and engineering. Apart from a very pragmatic, technical and science driven relation to nature, Bio mimicry, according to Banyus, also derives its ethics from nature. It looks at the way it produces in an advanced but still sustainable way. Nature is the mentor, the model, and bio mimicry is a new way of viewing and valuing nature. The Bio mimicry revolution stands for “not what we can extract but what we can learn from it”⁵⁰

For example bio mimicry wants to see nature as a science model deriving from nature’s design processes in order to solve human problems, like in the case of solar cell inspired by leaves. They also see nature as ‘standard’, using ecological measures. Nature’s long experience has provided it with the knowledge of what lasts and functions. Nature is also skilful in adapting to its environment, using the sun, simple compounds and produce

⁴⁹ Benyus (2002: 95)

⁵⁰ Ibid (2002:preface)

totally bio gradable fibres among many things.⁵¹ Nature is smart and provides with advanced solutions for our threatened future.

Manifesto of bio mimicry according to Benyus:

Nature only uses the energy it needs

Nature recycles everything

Nature awards cooperation

Nature banks on diversity

Nature banks on diversity

Nature demands local expertise

Nature curbs excesses from within

Nature taps the power of limits”

Nature fits form to function

Nature runs on sunlight⁵²

Heat Beat Treat

It is interesting to see how much the course of our history has been influenced and defined by the materials used in the different eras, such as in The Stone Age, The Bronze Age, The Iron Age, the Plastic, Silicon age etc.⁵³

Before we were used to the materials we were given, like stone, wood, wool, bone, hide, but then we started to learn how to treat the materials with fire and a new evolution took place: the heat, beat and treat era had begun. And now we more and more distance ourselves from the life-derived materials.

In her writings, Benyus describes how we have lost track, driven by our wish to gain independence from nature. It started with the agricultural revolution when we broke free from hunting and gathering and it accelerated with the scientific revolutions. Then we, according to Francis Bacon, decided to beat nature, to “torture nature for her secrets”.

⁵¹ Benyus (2002: 1ff)

⁵² Ibid (2002:7)

⁵³ Ibid (2002: 96)

Then Industrial revolution came along when the machines kicked in, replacing our muscles. But the real break happened with the Petrochemical and Genetic-Engineering Revolution: from now on, we could synthesize what we needed; from now on, we could basically do anything. But we fooled ourselves, we forgot, keeping it hidden away, how this fact affected the nature and other life forms.⁵⁴

We have mostly in our environmental concerns concentrated on the growing garbage problem and pollution. But most of the damage is made before we even consume, in the making of the materials.

As an example to this, is the fact that four primary material industries - paper, plastics, chemicals and metals- are responsible for 71% of toxic emissions in the United States. Only five materials alone - paper, steel aluminium, plastics and container glass- use 31% of the energy in the US.⁵⁵

The Industrial era with its heat, beat, treat method has long been our main approach in making and treating materials and it still is.⁵⁶

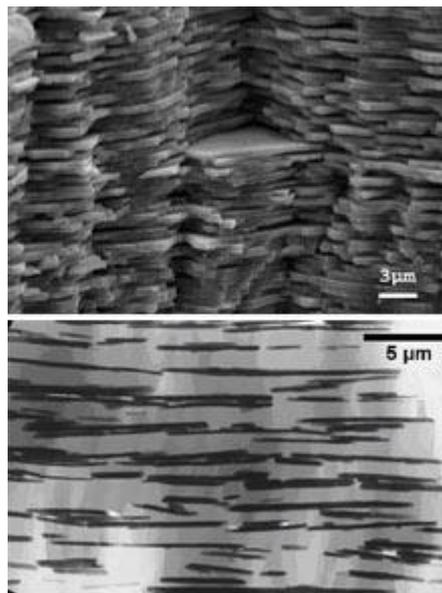


fig.1Nacre closeup

Nature: the maker of Materials

A lot of our inventions is already out there, but more secretly and elegantly, as Benyus puts it. Cleaver architecture featured in bamboo steams, heating and air conditioning in termite's nest, radar in complex transmission used by the bats, strong thread woven in the spider net, shatter proof ceramics drawn from mother of pearl and the wheel already

⁵⁴ Benyus (1998:5f)

⁵⁵ Ibid,Sachs Young(1998:95)

⁵⁶ Benyus(1998:97)

invented millionsof years ago in a tiny rotary motor in the most ancient bacteria.⁵⁷

Nature has some key methods in manufacturing materials. It uses life-friendly manufacturing processes, in life-friendly conditions, like water and room temperature, without dangerous chemicals or high pressure, but with complexity and functionality. It is also structured according to a very advanced hierarchy when it comes to manufacture and process a material.. Every different component

of the material, has a specific order in the manufacturing process.

She also talks about self-assembly, which is the advanced architectural structures in the process. How the microscopic cubes, rectangles and spheres organize themselves into intrinsic, finer, complicated ways so that it is still hard for us to figure out their intricated architectures, even harder it is to copy.⁵⁸

In her writings, Benyus gives a lot of examples of how scientists, in different ways, study nature and try to figure out its way of making and what the materials consist of.

She describes several different materials and processes of making in her writings.

Scientists trying to look into nature's mysteries of making, follow the advanced organic materials of nature. In the production of high tech materials, we often cause brittleness or toxic nightmares.⁵⁹

For example, she describes the super hard nacre of the abalone shell. It has an intricate structure of calcium crystals combined with a squishy polymer; this combination makes it super hard and, at the same time, the elasticity keeps it from cracking. The recipe of the mixture of inorganic calcium with the organic, soft, polymer seems to be the secret scientists try to solve.⁶⁰

The mussel, *Mytilus Edulis*, is also interesting to study, because of its ability to produce a super strong adhesive glue, which allows it to tightly stick to a rock. This glue is produced without primer in cold

⁵⁷ Ibid(1998:6)

⁵⁸ Benyus(1998:101ff)

⁵⁹ Ibid(1998:97)

⁶⁰ Ibid (1998:99f)

water. The process contains of several steps and different The Mytilus' soft foot/arm functions as a sucking cup, which creates a vacuum space to squeeze away water. After that it becomes a mould for the foam polymer production that later combined with a translucent fibres creates the adhesive.⁶¹

Other examples when bio mimicry science already has made breakthroughs, are the production of the immensely strong spider silk and the keratin materials, combined in order to create this thread combined adhesive. substance found in the, soon to be extinguished, rhino horn, which has the ability to heal itself.⁶²

Part 2

Connecting the Material:

In this text, different aspects and relations to material and nature have been mostly discussed from a specific, implicit ecological, perspective. This last part would like to connect these texts with the possibilities offered by jewellery as a concept. How could the aspects put forward in this essay, be interesting and relevant in the connection between this material-oriented, implicit ecology and the concept of jewellery and jewellery art.

Ecologies of Mediation connecting to the Concept of Jewellery.

Jewellery holds possibilities as an art form with prehistorically background and a natural connection to the body. That has made it a

⁶¹ Ibid(1998:120ff)

⁶² Benyus(1998:6)

messenger for different symbolical, political, social and religious aspects.⁶³

Although not practical, jewellery seems to hold some essential need and function for humans, which is present throughout history and in all different cultures. The function of adornment, is therefore big and complex.⁶⁴

Of other importance, is how jewellery functions as interpersonal agent, marking different relations. It is not a freestanding art form. It connects and relates, is never omnipotent. Mediating jewellery escapes the great divides. Also when seen as an art piece, presented in a clean gallery space, it always indicates a body absence, material, body relation; it always mediates its content on different levels.⁶⁵

Jewellery is a body-related object and because of that, it detains the dual complexity or possible function of being both an artefact made by a maker, as well as a mediator between the wearer and a range of different aspects concerning/affecting the reason of wearing jewellery. Both the maker and the wearer are therefore also important mediators: the body-connection also makes the wearer part of the mediation.

Latour even speaks about us humans morphing with the material. Not stable in our existence, when wearing jewellery we could really morph and communicate meaning and material.⁶⁶

All the four writers speak about nature and material as parts of a larger concept that connects in different ways. Referring to the concept of Latour, jewellery could work as a quasi-object, relevant in connecting the mediation of ecologies and moving matter.⁶⁷ It could also be seen as the jewellery machine or the trans disciplinary transitional agent, working between different fields and territories, according to the theory of

⁶³ Habermas(2011:98ff)

⁶⁴ Lindeman(2011:16)

⁶⁵ Habermas(2011:98ff)

⁶⁶ Latour(1993:136ff)

⁶⁷ Ibid(1993:51f)

Deleuze and Guattari.⁶⁸ In Benyus's case, maybe jewellery could be mediating that it connects to nature as a model of making both in material choice and construction.⁶⁹

In connecting the two parts, this essay brings up examples of different functions or mediation of meaning that could involve the concept of jewellery when this is connected to the intelligent moving matter, relating to the organic material and their implicit ecology. When connected, they all create a number of possibilities, opening up cracks and

Jewellery as the Little Soldier

All the writers see the matters discussed in this essay as being related to art. Deleuze thinks art and philosophy is a way to conceptualize the trans-disciplinary for deeper understanding.⁷⁰ Latour sees culture as a discipline to mediate.⁷¹ Guattari even calls artists and art pieces 'Little Soldiers', which would show the importance of the trans-disciplinary in both the aesthetic and ethical visualization to show upon how consumption and economics ruels our society.⁷² Benyus wants our production of materials and our design to be used having nature as a model.⁷³

The jewellery artist becomes a perfect 'Little Soldier' who is able to work with lot of different possibilities within the concept of jewellery. Using themes, body relation, matters and material among others, the jewellery artist could put forward questions and matters in the inter-relational communicative machine of jewellery.⁷⁴

Jewellery as a Quasi- Object, Transitional Agent and Jewellery Machine, Connecting to the Functions of Jewellery.

⁶⁸ Herzogenrath(2009:9ff)

⁶⁹ Benyus(2002:preface)

⁷⁰ Herzogebrath(2011:6)

⁷¹ Latour(1993:104f)

⁷² Delanda(2011:56ff)

⁷³ Benyus(1998: preface)

⁷⁴ Herzogenrath(2009:12f)

Jewellery has the possibility of constructing a self around you. This structure could show one's dreams and beliefs well as political and sub cultural belongings. It also functions as an inter-relational, transitional agent between the individual and the group, since it is useful for connecting, communicating and mediating. Jewellery also connects more interpersonal belongings to relatives and loved ones. In that sense, it is very interesting as an artefact because it connects to other people and to the world around us, and this relates to the act of mediation. Wearing a piece of jewellery received from a loved one or a relative, shows a connection, a symbolic bridge, between an isolated self and the outer world that could be looked upon as a kind of mediation. Latour speaks of escaping the great internal and external divides, in order to connect to other people and nonhumans.⁷⁵



WWW.MARZEE.NL

fig.2, Take and Give, the Mustard Seed, Kerry Seaton, 2011

The English artist Kerry Seaton (b. 1984) uses the symbol of mustard seed to define how jewellery could connect us to others. During an RCA student exhibition at Gallery Marzee, all the students were given the task of making jewellery boxes in a specific measurement based on the theme "Give and Take". A part from the set measurement, everything else was optional and individual. The artist cast mustard seeds in recycled gold and placed them inside the box, which she had previously filled with soil, in a ring-

⁷⁵ Latour(1993:104ff)

like arrangement. This is how she describes her piece, “A nod to the mustard seed”:

“Recycled 9ct Yellow gold mustard seeds with a fine pierced hole to enable threading onto string, to Take + Give one (or some) to friends and family, like a seed, its function is dispersal to a new location – extreme portability.”⁷⁶

This tiny symbol would provide her with the opportunity of connecting to many people she cares for. The minimal usage of the low carat material, becomes a part of the mediation, as a thoughtful poetic value.

Choice and relation to material and nature in jewellery could work in that mediation. The type of material used, could show and be a part of the mediation and the way connections are established. Material choice could be showing and if are informed about the use of the material, using the aspects in the mediation. In that sense, explicit or implicit conscious or non-conscious, material use shows awareness and is somewhat always political.

By using organic material, not only show an environmental concern but also a socio political awareness. Material use is often connected to working conditions and working environments. The gold industry is one example of business that is quite dirty both ethically and as a working environment, as it exploits poor people and it employs strong chemicals.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ <http://www.marzee.nl/>

⁷⁷ <http://www.nodirtygold.org/home.cfm>

fig.3 Black to Kwaii, Gitte Nygaard, 2011



The Danish artist Gitte Nygaard (b. 1970), has worked a lot with the Japanese Binochotan process . The Binochotan is an old Japanese tradition of making coal from Oak wood. Through very careful and sustainable procedures, the material is harvested without harming the wood. The coal is initially used for cleaning water and could, according to the artist, after its lifespan, be recycled and used for jewellery. She uses the recycling potential of the material in her work “Black to Kwaii”. Nygaard also maintains that the same atom group of C₆₀ of humble carbon is used in precious diamonds which is also the material of diamonds. The business of diamonds is often followed by great costs in terms of ecological and humanitarian detriment. This makes us dirty in another way. She also uses these methods in a series of work on Binochotan and Black, where she wants to draw a parallel with the dirty industry of diamonds. The artist uses a sustainable old technique and material to tell many stories⁷⁸

⁷⁸[http://www.gittenygaard.com/Binochotan and Black/ Black to Kwaii](http://www.gittenygaard.com/Binochotan%20and%20Black/Black%20to%20Kwaii)

Employing organic leftovers for creative experimentation could be made relevant today. Today, we more and more recycle plastic, paper, glass and fabricated material. Recycling garbage and old objects plays a big part in the art and craft movement today.⁷⁹ We could go closer to the circle by using the shell from an eaten mussel, fish skin, bones and we would find interesting and decomposable, organic materials. . In prehistoric times, organic leftovers such as as bones, feathers, teeth, shells were often used. The material was also symbolically charged with the powers of their original sources.⁸⁰

⁸¹The sub-cultural group of activists Gleaners, also known as garbage hunters, is making the up-cycling happen in a more political context: by looking through restaurants' and stores' garbage and leftovers, they point out how much food is being thrown away.⁸²

Recycling organic material as leftovers another could be in connection with a social and ritual function, as leftover from the meal. The social theorist Ann Thorpe writes about the importance of lifting up the social and ritual importance of social life in relation to consuming. The material as a consequence of meeting friends and family could also have a relevant usage.⁸³ When jewellery also functions more interpersonal, stating relations as a symbol, a bridge connecting to relatives or loved ones. Jewellery could also function as a mediation of time. Latour sees anthropology as a tool for opening up and looking at materials from different perspectives, as an important tool for mediating different time. Modernists always abolish the past; everything that is past is eliminated forever, and has a constant broken rupture with the past.⁶⁴ That is why we are so obsessed with things, saved in collections and museums. The destruction brings along manic savings.⁸⁴

Our complex relation to time could be seen in many pieces of Hanna Joris (b.1984), a former Ädellab student, who is also now writing a PhD on the

⁷⁹ Veiteberg(2011:8ff)

⁸⁰ Untracht(1982:49)

⁸¹ Veiteberg(2011:9)

⁸² Veiteberg(2011:9)

⁸³ Thorpe(007:199)

⁸⁴ Latour(1993:72ff)

theme “Via the body”, which deals with body fragmentation and jewellery art as human relic. In her artistic work, Joris deals with mankind’s suffering and struggling in its relation towards society, nature and culture. To describe our vulnerability and mortality she often works with organic material as potatoes and manioc to show our body decay and the time passing. In her master exam work at Adellab in 2009, she carved out body shapes from potatoes and left them shrink, while drying, on iron constructions.

Fig.4 “Our vulnerable position”. Hanna Joris, 2009



The complicated relation we have to the organic material becomes evident in her work. The organic material, as our own bodies, is often fragile and not easily preserved. The usage of the material here could be interpreted in an extremely political way. Here the superior humans really change place with the quasi object and the quality of the material becomes a very strong narrative of the human condition.⁸⁵

The quasi object could be a mediator of times and act poly temporally. Past is not something surpassed, revisited, repeated and protected. Different times could form a whole coherence. This mediating is important in changing the opacity, which has existed in the western culture.⁸⁶ By using organic material and making the traces and networks visible between material and

⁸⁵ <http://www.apparat.be/hannah-joris>

⁸⁶ Latour(1993:72ff)

humans, quasi objects and nature, we gain more knowledge, more creativity but also more consciousness.

The Belgian artist Hilde de decker in her tomato rings shows a kind aspect of our relation to time. The tomato that grows into her gold ring shows a slow process in relation to our modern fight for fast processes. It visualizes that it takes time to master and learn about how to work with a material, that it is a process. Humans have to adapt to the time of growth but we are also forced into a shape. The piece has an ambiguous mediation.⁸⁷



fig.5 Tomato Ring, Hilde de Decker, 2004

Jewellery as the relic, heirloom and the talisman or amulet, all could be seen as mediating time. As an heirloom or relic it connects us to our ancestors. In certain African cultures it entails ancestral blessings, which should provide the person wearing it with powers but also remembrance. The heirloom is still important in our culture but perhaps it bears a more subtle power.⁸⁸

The jewellery as protection could in many ways be referred to as the talisman. The talisman has prehistoric origins and refers back to when our ancestors would put animal claws around their neck to protect themselves from wild beasts.⁸⁹ For our ancestors it was a strong part of their reality but for us it is maybe more used as a good luck charm having a symbolic value.⁹⁰ By using the material in the jewellery as a conscious part of the

⁸⁷ <http://www.thinktank04.eu/>

⁸⁸ Habermas(2011:100)

⁸⁹ Uttracht(1983:49)

⁹⁰ Habermas(2011:104)

making , the piece obtained could be intended as a talisman or amulet. Then it both connects to us protecting our loved, ones, the non-humans and nature. It bridges back connecting, respecting our past and heritage, a relation, link to what we are a part of. It also puts us in a relation to the future generations to come. In this sense, the use of Binochitan coal could be seen as amulet for a sustainable, beautiful treatment of material.⁹¹

Finally

All the four writers talk about the “lack of opacity”, how we hide, neglect, misuse nature and its resources both with humans and nonhumans. They all describe in different but very connecting ways how it creates imbalance. Latour speaks of how we have created the Great external and internal divides.⁹² Benyus speaks of how we misuse, heat, beat and treat nature⁹³ and she even discusses nature’s way of manufacturing material in a manifesto on how we should look upon material when both producing and using it.⁹⁴ Guattari and Deleuze speak of how we neglect and abuse. How we use too much speed and effect, creating bodies without organs, black holes as cancers in the system.⁹⁵

fig.5 Before After, Chatrine Spranger, 2011

⁹¹ [http://www.gittenygaard.com/Binochotan and Black/ Black to Kwaii](http://www.gittenygaard.com/Binochotan%20and%20Black/Black%20to%20Kwaii)

⁹² Latour(1983:104ff)

⁹³ Benyus(1998:97)

⁹⁴ Ibid(1998:7)

⁹⁵ Delanda(2011:48ff)



Katrine Spranger's decadent use of crude oil in her jewellery "Before After" from 2011 (fig.5) could serve as an example. The artist cast crude oil into moulds of plastic bottles, tin cans and other consumer goods. The oil symbolizes how the value of a material, as in the case of adornment, is often connected to the scarcity of said material.. In the future, exclusive raw oil is melting on the body as a decadent sign of richness and sophistication. Though making us dirty, it doesn't matter what humanitarian or environmental consequences it may have. The black hole of Deleuze, the cancer in the system, is not stopping us. Our need of being special, exclusive, set apart from others, is what makes us humans invent strange fashions and hunt for precious material.⁹⁶

It is maybe important giving an independent voice, a right, and respect for the material in its own existence, knowledge, and possibility. We should leave our superior approach in our contact with it, render it from the background, inform ourselves and put us in the same context and existence as the materials and other non-humans. Can we still be ignorant or not being aware? Are we not part of this before mentioned "abolishment" described? Could this be done with the help of jewellery?

If we inform ourselves and become aware of the material used, the message in our adornments could be a good mediator and open up for a wider range of discussions, new perspectives, and questions. Some of it is already made by

⁹⁶<http://www.konstfack2011.se/master/majc/katrin-spranger/>

interesting work within jewellery art. Jewellery could be seen as the perfect mediator, art form, as a complex quasi object: a connecting machine between all humans and nonhumans, man and material.

Make way for the material and the jewellery machine.

The end

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Pictures

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Fig1 Nacre, Close Up, <http://www.technologyreview.com/computing/>, Februari 2012

Fig2 Kerry Seaton, <http://www.marzee.nl/>, Februari 2012

Fig3 Gitte Nygaard, <http://www.gittenygaard.com>, March 2012

Fig4 Hanna Joris, <http://www.artobjectdesign.be/category/jewellery>, March 2012

Fig5 Hilde de Decker, <http://bijoucontemporain.unblog.fr/tag/createurs/francesca-di-giamberardino-it/>, March 2012

Fig6 Khatrie Spranger, <http://www.konstfack2011.se>, March 2012

