

Matter and Material Culture, EJES

Date : April 21, 2011

Demonstrating again that material culture studies is indeed an interdisciplinary field of research, the current issue of the literary theory periodical, the *European Journal of English Studies*, is dedicated to the theme Matter and Material Culture.

[EJES](#) 15 (1).

Cultural materialism has been adding much to our knowledge and understanding of the ways in which culture is informed by and conformed to and with matter, and so have the numerous analyses and histories of material culture from fields as varied as sociology, anthropology, museum studies, consumer studies, and so forth.

On a different plane, matter has recently been the focus, among others, of Bill Brown's 'thing theory', according to which 'things' come into being when and where ordinary, narrative, or aesthetic objects stop functioning properly and thus become visible and obtrusive. Meanwhile, considerations of material and corporeal remainders of different kinds, from a variety of theoretical perspectives, have also emerged into the cultural landscape of late modernity.

We have encouraged contributions from scholars working in this wide arena of cultural, literary and scientific discourses, and who are engaged with, developing, or, at times, challenging a 'material turn' or 'turn to matter' in their various fields of research. The papers of this special issue of *EJES* explore the discursive construction of matter, the circulation of objects and the 'social life' of things (cf. Appadurai). But also, from a different angle, things and the thing(s) which may help us read matter beyond the paradigms of empiricism since we have been interested in re-opening the question of the 'matter' of materialism.

The fertile interplay and mutual interpellation between materiality as ineradicable opacity and the 'spectral dimension' which can be seen (most notably in Derrida) as affecting matter could, in our view, be a fruitful site for a cultural debate open to specialists in the study of Anglophone literature, language, media and culture.

(Modified extract from the editorial)

Contributions include:

Guest Editorial by Maurizio Calbi & Marilena Parlati.

C. Björkén-Nyberg

Roll Out Beethoven: The player piano and musical waste in Edwardian England.

pp. 7-17.

J. Scanlan

Fragments of Time and Memory: Matter, media and the modern auditory world.

pp. 19-29.

J. Breitbach

The Photo-as-thing: Photography and thing theory.

pp. 31-43.

C. M. Renes

Spectres of Mudrooroo: A suspended corpo-reality that 'matters'.

pp. 45-56.

P. Lavolette & K. Baird

Lost Innocence and Land Matters: Community regeneration and memory mining. pp. 57-71.

M. Parlati

Beyond Inchoate Debris: Dust in contemporary culture.

pp. 73-84.

Plus 5 book reviews which examine 6 different volumes.