

F(r)ictions

This node works on questions related to biology, fiction, and arts as surfaces of friction. We will address questions of power but also the problems of fiction, speculation, and scale. What happens when fiction produces the real in terms of control? How does the cultural regime of volumetry operate? What happens to “bodies” in the context of 3D scanning, modeling and tracing technologies, infrastructures, and techniques?

SF & 'so-called'

'SF' and 'so-called' are two ontoepistemological operations that open up possibilities for theory to build worlds

- "'so-called plants' & 'so-called bodies' are ways to question the various methods whereby finite, specified and discrete entities are being made to represent the characteristics of whole species, erasing the nuances of very particular beings." Possible Bodies
- "The Kingdom Dysphoria operation might be of use as a framing topic/attitude for us to have that exchange. It speaks about the crystalization of facts for modes of existence that are mutant and fictional, as well as about the dissidence needed to stay with complexity in a Modern Project that far from being ended is accentuated by many means, computational, narrative, legal or paradigmatic." Possible Bodies



SF

String Figures

Science Fact

Science Fiction

Speculative Fabulation

Speculative Feminism

So Far

- U. K. Le Guin □ Sf as a “thought experiment”: change some premises from the present to explore other possible worlds instead of extrapolating a present tendency to the future
- S. Delany □ science fiction is not about the future, but is rather a “significant distortion of the present”.

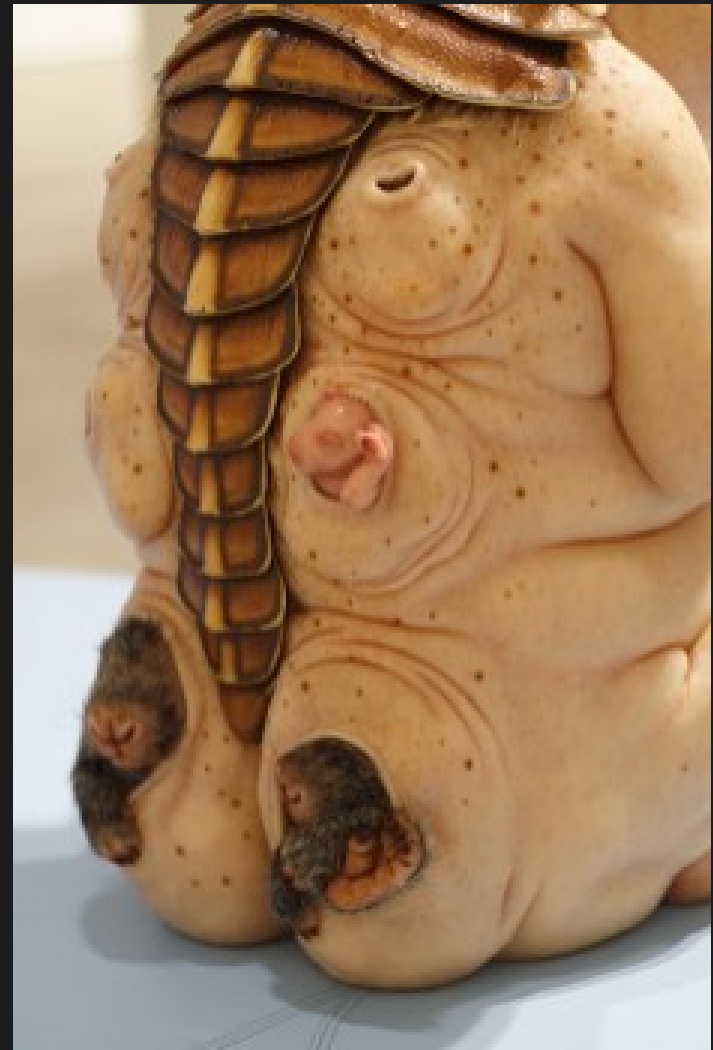


Diffraction, Lynn Randolph

Science fact and **speculative fabulation**
need each other, and both need speculative
feminism.

«Dis-moi comment tu racontes, je te dirai à la construction de quoi tu participes», Isabelle Stengers*

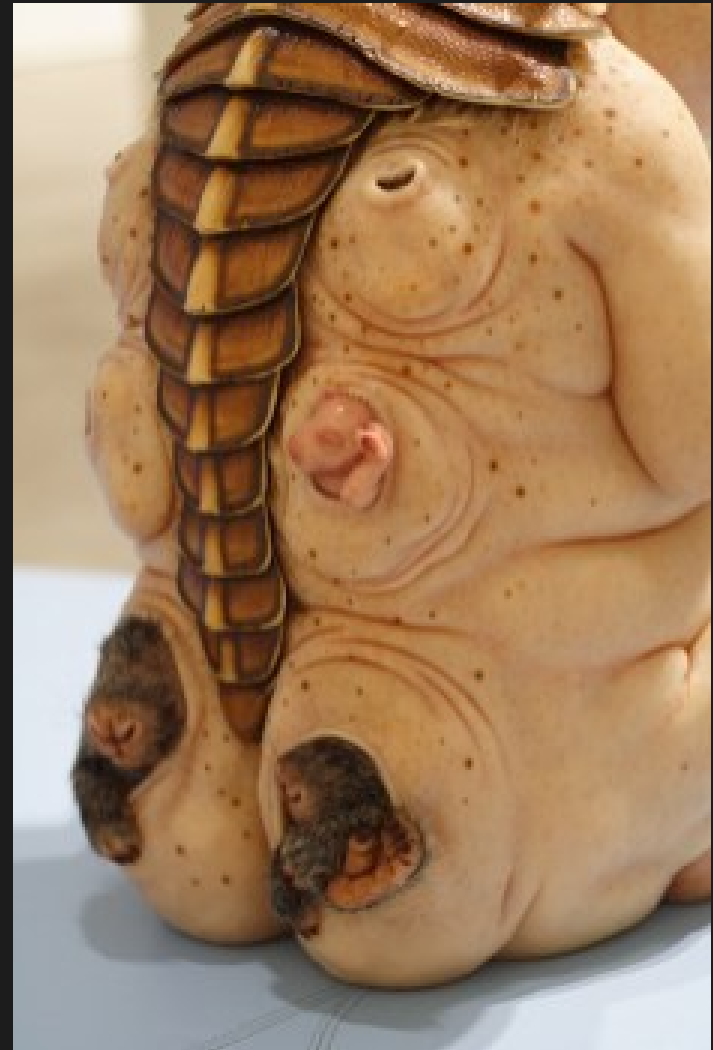
- Parler de gestes spéculatifs c'est mettre la pensée sous le signe d'un engagement par et pour un possible qu'il s'agit d'activer, de rendre perceptible dans le présente. La sens de l'activation d'un possible tient à ses conséquences, à la vérification que constitue la modification du présent qu'elle peut entraîner.
- L'engagement spéculatif comme pensée des conséquences, et non utopie ou imaginaire projetés sur le présent. Stengers
<https://dingdong.org/departements/narration-speculative/narration-speculative>



Rear view of Piccinini's *Surrogate* (for the Northern Hairynosed Wombat).

* "Fabriquer de l'espoir au bord du gouffre: A propos de l'œuvre de Donna Haraway", La Revue internationale des livres & des idées, n°10, Mars 2009

- Speculative gestures: thinking under the sign of an engagement with and for a possible that tries to be activated, to become perceptible at the present. The sense of activating of something possible as taking care of the consequences, of the verification that changes the present. The speculative engagement as a thinking of the consequences and not as a utopia or an imaginary projected into the present. Stengers & Debaïse



Rear view of Piccinini's *Surrogate* (for the Northern Hairynosed Wombat).

- Her visual and sculptural art is about worlding—that is, “naturaltechnical” worlds at stake, worlds needy for care and response, worlds full of unsettling but oddly familiar critters who turn out to be simultaneously near-kin and alien colonists.
- She invites those willing to inhabit her worlds to dedifferentiate in order to risk bioengineered redifferentiating as part of a queer family whose members require us to rethink what taking care of this country, taking care of these generations, might mean

Haraway, in *The Multispecies Salon*

With *Nature's Little Helpers*, Piccinini focuses her questions more on ecology and evolution than on genetic engineering or cloning, but the do mains are not cleanly separated, either. For one thing, the *Helpers* are all SF humanoids with dubious naturalcultural genealogies. In the stark heritage of destroyed human and nonhuman beings and blasted country, acknowledged or not, the past surges into the present and shapes possible futures,



Which facts have been stabilized, and why?

How does the “cultured” gorilla, i.e. Koko, come to represent universal man? Donna Haraway untangles the web of meanings, tracing “what gets to count as nature, for whom and when, and how much it costs to produce nature at a particular moment in history for a particular group of people.”



“Donna Haraway Reads the National Geographic”

flesh & sign

- *Primate Visions* reads primatology as science fiction, and science fiction as primatology (Octavia Butler's *Dawn*) □ both science and popular culture are entangled tissues of facts and fiction
- Possible worlds are constantly reinventing in the struggle for real, present worlds (*Primate Visions*)
- Nature for us is *made*, as both fiction and fact. If organisms are natural objects, it is crucial to remember that organisms are not born; they are made in world-changing technoscientific practices by particular collective actors in particular times and places. ("The Promises of Monsters")
- Science and science studies depend constitutively upon troping. Unless we swerve, we cannot communicate; there is no direct route to the relationship we call knowledge, scientific or otherwise. Technically, we cannot know, say, or write exactly what we mean. We cannot mean literally. ("Morphing in the Order: Flexible Strategies, Feminist Science Studies, and Primate Revisions", p. 201)
- Mathematical symbolisms and experimental protocols do not escape from the troping quality of any communicative medium. Facts are tropic; otherwise they would not matter. ("Morphing in the Order", p. 201)

numbers as frictional elements of *kingdom*
dysphoria

'Anumeric' people: What happens when a language has no words for numbers? How do numerless eyes see the world?

Caleb Everett

which knowledge, which worldviews are shaped by anumeric peoples?

The Pirahã people, who live along the banks of the black Maici River:

- struggle to precisely differentiate and recall quantities as low as four
- rely exclusively on terms analogous to "a few" or "some"
- (nevertheless) demonstrate a superior understanding of the riverine ecology compared to numeric outsiders
- their lives are not governed by years, hours, minutes, seconds. Therefore, there's not agriculture, nor a spatial depiction of time as progressive —as in the image of facing the future— or in parallel —as in a calendar.

Caleb Everett

- We speak a decimal language because an ancestral tongue, proto-Indo-European, was decimally based. Proto-Indo-European was decimally oriented because, as in so many cultures, our linguistic ancestors' hands served as the gateway to realizations like "five fingers on this hand is the same as five fingers on that hand." Such transient thoughts were manifested into words and passed down across generations. This is why the word "five" in many languages is derived from the word for "hand."
- Minutes and seconds are the verbal and written vestiges of an uncommon base-60 number system used in Mesopotamia millennia ago.
- Spatial basis of temporal:
 - we face the future as time passes through us ("passing" of time, time moving "quickly", "going back" to past). But it's not the case for speakers of Aymara
 - in parallel, moving from left to right (a calendar, a video progress bar, timelines in history books). But in the Thaayorre culture (Cape York Peninsula), people order events according to the trajectory of the sun, from east toward west

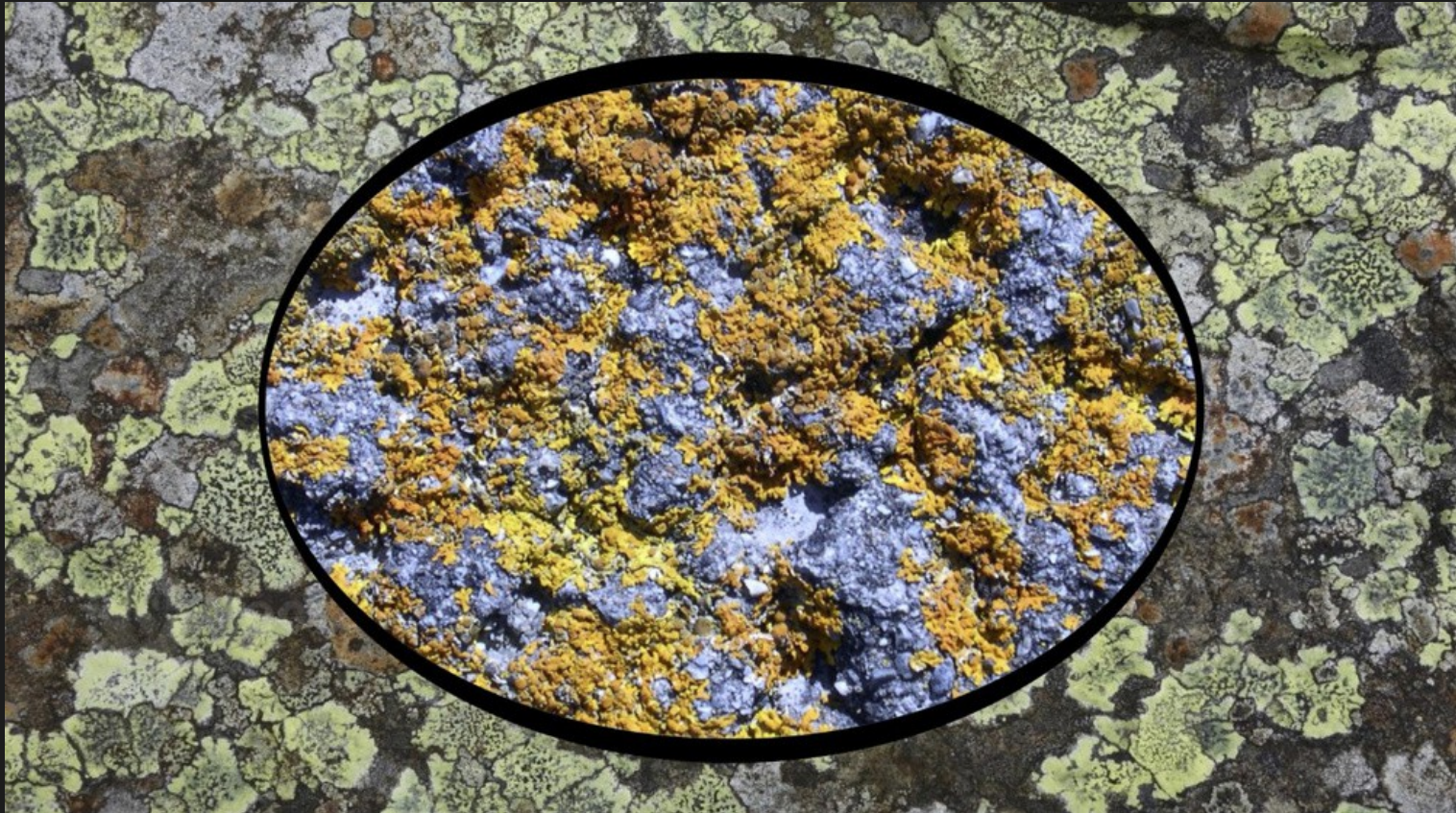
Situated knowledge

A teacher teaching maths in a rural area of Chile: There is a corral (pen) with 100 *llamos*. If I open the gate and let one llama leave, how many llamos will remain inside the corral? None, a boy answered.

Ok, the teacher said, you didn't understand, and she gives what she assumes is the correct answer: If I open the corral's gate, there will be 99 llamos left.

But the boy knows that, if you open the gate, there's always one llama that leaves first, and the rest of llamos follow this leading one, until all of them will leave the corral.

So, the teacher would rephrase the question, and would say: ok, so, I open the gate, one llama leave first, and then 50 llamos would leave the corral. How many llamos would be left in the corral then? And the boy would repeat: none. Because he knows that's the truth, that's the right answer.



- Where does a lichen end, where does it finish? How many species cobbled together to make the so-called lichens?
- When are lichens born and when do they die? Can we measure or tell a precise moment for birth and death?