



UvA-DARE (Digital Academic Repository)

Method unchained: To new adventures of ideas

Pape, T.

DOI

[10.25969/mediarep/15342](https://doi.org/10.25969/mediarep/15342)

Publication date

2020

Document Version

Final published version

Published in

NECSUS

License

CC BY-NC-ND

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Pape, T. (2020). Method unchained: To new adventures of ideas. *NECSUS*, 9(2), 77-91. <https://doi.org/10.25969/mediarep/15342>

General rights

It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Disclaimer/Complaints regulations

If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: <https://uba.uva.nl/en/contact>, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.

Method unchained: To new adventures of ideas

Toni Pape

NECSUS 9 (2), Autumn 2020: 77–91

URL: <https://necsus-ejms.org/method-unchained-to-new-adventures-of-ideas/>

Abstract

This position piece defends an understanding of method as a process of creative invention. The opening section distinguishes between method and methodology in order to problematise the relation between the two. In light of this distinction, the piece then assesses the general value of method's repetitive operational chains, for instance for purposes of learning and knowledge transmission. Ultimately, the argument affirms the need for a radical openness of creative practices, including research. This is first done through an engagement with Henri Bergson's method of intuition and then, in the final section, through the notion of metamodeling.

Keywords: intuition, metamodeling, method, methodology

Another text on method. Another movement of thought to articulate how thought moves. Where can this go except charted territory? So much has been said and written in recent years about methods in the humanities. Some of these statements will be briefly revisited here. Much more than repeat important positions on method, this movement of thought would like to inject our practices of knowledge production with some sorely needed creative freedom and what, following Paul Feyerabend, one might call a desire for 'anarchistic' invention.

To begin, this movement of thought makes a not uncommon distinction between method and *methodologies* (see e.g. Harding 1987 and Stevenson & Witschge in this special section). A method is a *modus operandi*; a methodology is an account of that MO. If a method is a 'way of doing' or a path that leads from a relevant question to a valuable answer, then a methodology — a discourse on method — is like a map that guides the researcher from question

to answer. Surely, method and methodology are like two sides of the same coin: they are not easily decoupled from one another. But what is the manner of this coupling? How do they connect? And are the current debates giving both sides their due?

Perhaps this provisional distinction can help clarify some of the fog of the debate and make method less of a frenemy, at least for this mind. For instance, given the lack of distinction between method and methodology, the renewed institutional emphasis on method can easily be perceived by many as an imposition resulting from a thinly veiled suspicion: the humanities do not know their methods and may not even have them. And so, one may be tempted to conclude, they must be coerced into adopting proper methods and stating them in the most explicit terms. But, of course, the humanities never lacked methods. They simply do not account for their ways of doing through ‘methodologies’ in the same ways that other academic disciplines have – and for good reason. Leaving those reasons aside for a moment, the point is that one must not confuse the *instruction* for a way of doing with the way of doing itself. A cooking manual is not a method. It is a methodology; the corresponding method is cooking; the expected outcome is dinner. Some need a cookbook. Others invent more freely based on a few guiding principles.

If a method is a way of doing, a MO that leads from a relevant question to a valuable answer, then humanities research — done in writing or otherwise — distinguishes itself from other academic fields of research because its methods can oftentimes only be caught in the act. Or, differently put, humanities methods are — at least to a certain degree — developed and tested in the act of writing itself. Humanities research does not always require a discourse on method because the research itself is a performative constitution of method, the creative act of building a consistent theoretical framework, analysing complex phenomena and building a cogent argument.

How, though, does one legitimise such a method? Arguably, this is the true stone of contention. The heart of the matter is nothing less than the cultural, scholarly, and political legitimacy of humanities research. For this reason, we must find a confident response to the methods debate, grounded in an ethos – a way of doing also – that stays away from the disdain for (and withdrawal from) method as well as the positivist embrace of imported methodologies. We must confidently legitimate our ways of doing from within the humanities and their guiding principles themselves. Clearly, we know how to

do this. To answer the question regarding the legitimacy of traditional humanities methods, one need only look at the assessment criteria we handle in our teaching. It is important, for instance, that we evaluate the ‘quality of argument’ because it indicates the methodic consistency of a student paper. As a mentor once said to a fledgling editor-in-training: ‘As an editor and teacher, I never ask whether I agree with the author. I ask whether the author agrees with themself.’ Here, ‘agreement’ does not simply refer to a shared understanding but more broadly to the reciprocal compatibility of all the scholarly procedures, concepts, claims, and conclusions deployed in a research project. Legitimising humanities research is a matter of such *immanent critique* guided by a number of general epistemological principles. As humanities scholars we do well to defend such an understanding of method as a singular way of doing that is immanent to a research project; for ultimately this is a matter of (academic) freedom, sociality, and liveliness. That is the point this text wants to make, the terminus that this movement of thought currently envisions for itself. The difference between method and methodology will provide a guide for the next movement. The guiding question is what kinds of value lie on either side of the distinction – and are they mutually exclusive?

The chains of method

Methods, let us say only for now, are chains of operations that produce understanding. The term ‘chain’ has been chosen for various rhetorical reasons, but we should not proceed to the negative connotations too quickly. Methods are chains in the sense that they connect, both intrinsically and extrinsically. That is very valuable. The example of an apparently simple method that comes to mind is *reading*. Reading is a way of doing and knowing that our societies try to teach every child in their first decade of life – that is a very good thing. It is also, by the way, a method that may vary considerably, depending on whether one is teaching the child to read an alphabetic, syllabic, or hieroglyphic script. Reading is not one method. Now, what are the intrinsic connections reading makes? In an alphabetical script, the method consists in connecting a graphic sign or letter to an articulated sound or phoneme; these sounds must then be chained together to form a word. These words are then connected to each other to form sentences. Punctuation, another aspect

of the method of reading, helps us figure whether that sentence is a statement, question, order, or what have you. We can leave it at that (of course, reading is much more complex and also culturally differentiated: compare reading the newspaper to reading a code of law). Those are the intrinsic connections that the method of reading makes between a complex set of operations. Reading as method is a repeatable enchainment of mental operations.

We should note, though, that the method of reading is rarely tested by making pupils reproduce a methodology for reading. Reading is learned by and tested in the doing. This points to an important difference between method and methodology, and that difference concerns value. Methodology betokens a meta-level at which the operative chains of thought are made explicit and formalised. As scholars we must ask ourselves in what situations the move to that meta-level is conducive to the solution of an intellectual problem. Teaching reading may be such a situation: the *extrinsic* connections that ways of doing create are between those who do the doing. In schools, people who have learned how to read (and how to teach reading) transmit that method to people who have not yet learned it. Ways of doing that produce valuable results, such as understanding a text, are repeatable, and there is value in that repetition. Here, the mind wanders to think of Champollion, who comprehensively deciphered the Rosetta Stone and rediscovered how to read hieroglyphic script after it had been unreadable for about 1,500 years. Sit with that one for a moment: for a millennium and a half, no one knew how to properly read those signs! A whole way of knowing was lost, just like that. Because methods get lost, they are worth repeating.[1] But, again, the repetition itself does not produce value; it reproduces or maintains the value of a way of doing. This is something that many contemporary method discourses do not adequately address: how a way of doing *creates* value as distinguished from the mere extraction of value previously created.

As a result, undue importance has been accorded to the repeatability or reproducibility of methodologies. Research does not take place in a sociopolitical vacuum. Quite the contrary, most scholars would confirm that higher education and research operate within an economic value chain, either directly or mediated through an economy of prestige. In such a setting, the reproducibility of methods no longer only fulfills the valuable scholarly functions of making knowledge verifiable, retraceable, and therefore reliable. Rather, reproducibility becomes an end in itself, because it is what turns a method into a salable commodity – or perhaps more to the point, a circuit of value extraction. We might call that ‘Methododology’. Think of the many

costly ‘summer schools’ that initiate neophytes into the *Méthodologie du jour*. Can we at least admit that this is about education as business at least as much as it is about a humanist ideal of education? Really, if the reproducibility of research was so scholarly and valuable, why is it that the majority of social science experiments are not reproducible and no one cares except perhaps for a few humanities scholars leery with Schadenfreude and Method envy?

But teaching is only half the problem. The methodological pressure also hails from funding bodies in an increasingly competitive ‘grant market’. Everyone knows that the results of a research project cannot be determined in advance; if they were, why do the research? But how then does one know whether a proposed research project is sound? Answer: check the methodology. If it is recognisable as an accepted standard of valuable scholarship, then it may be worthy of financial support. The concern for the useful dispensation of tax money is understandable. But what about the methods that have not developed or only half-developed, and therefore are not yet recognisable? How do you know whether money is ‘usefully spent’ if the various uses of a scholarly procedure themselves still need to be invented? The insistence on the recognisability of a method further standardises and rigidifies method. But as we know, the standardisation of thought stifles imagination and creativity. Standardised methods make us know the same way over and over again. That does not mean that one cannot produce more knowledge with a standardised method. But one is unlikely to produce new kinds of knowledge, let alone new ways of doing. Now, this might be a good moment to recall that virtually *all of our dominant Western methods are failing us*. We know that if humankind keeps insisting on its current ways of doing, living conditions on this planet will deteriorate catastrophically. Particularly considering Europeans, we barely have any shared methods for living sustainably. (This is also a reminder that the useful can be harmful.) We are running into catastrophe, and according to plan. Ironically, though, it would seem that we do have lots of methodologies: scientists tell us that it can be done, and how and now; they lay out comprehensive roadmaps; they tell us that it will be cheaper than continuing in the same way. And, yet, we are just not doing it. We do not know how.

One might have an intuition that philosophy and the humanities — a field of scholarship that knows how to create methods without methodologies, that constantly reinvents the how — have something to contribute to, among other things, the historical task of climate justice with new and actual ways of doing. Moreover, ‘There are situations where managing the presence of a

problem/event that dissolves the old sureties and forces improvisation and reflection on life-without-guarantees is a pleasure and a plus, not a loss.’[2]

Method as intuition

Here, the mind decides to be done with diagnosis and damage assessment. Goodbye, methodology. On the plus side, the mind wants to rush method down a path that will twist and turn it into something that it, the mind, can believe in. We are going fast and the road may be shifty.

In the ‘metalogues’ for the *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, (a mind that goes by the name) Gregory Bateson dramatises fundamental philosophical problems as conversations between a father (F) and a daughter (D) – alter egos, one presumes, of Bateson and his daughter, scholar Mary Catherine Bateson.[3] One of the throughlines of the metalogues is the relation between ‘muddles’ (or problems) and the rule-based ordering of those muddles (or methodology). In the metalogue ‘About Serious Games and Being Serious’, scholarly investigation itself is, astutely, described as a serious game, an operative fiction, a lived abstraction. The following quotations are heavily edited for purposes of point-making:

F: [...] We talk about ideas. And I know that I play with the ideas in order to understand them and fit them together. It’s ‘play’ in the same sense that a small child ‘plays’ with blocks... And a child with building blocks is mostly very serious about his ‘play’. [...]

D: Daddy, do our talks have *rules*? [...]

F: Well, the ideas that we play with bring in a sort of rules. There are rules about how ideas will stand up and support each other. And if they are wrongly put together the whole building falls down. [...]

D: Daddy! Wouldn’t it be a good thing if we had a few more rules and obeyed them more carefully? Then we might not get into these dreadful muddles. [...]

F: In a sense, yes. That’s right. Except that the whole point of the game is that we do get into muddles, and do come out on the other side, and if there were no muddles our ‘game’ would be like canasta or chess — and that is not how we want it to be.[5]

Rules seem like a good antidote to those ‘dreadful muddles’. But the muddles, one learns, are the whole point. If ‘we did not get into muddles, we could never say anything new’.[6] Is it presumptuous to suggest that there is lots of

research out there which contents itself with applying methodologies to case studies that has never seen a real muddle? ‘Explanation’, Bateson writes, ‘is the mapping of data onto fundamentals, but the ultimate goal of science is the increase of fundamental knowledge’.[7] Scholarship cannot resolve itself in application or explanation of what is given based on methodologies that are given. We must continuously reinvent our foundations.

We must not fix the rules of our serious games, our lived abstractions, lest we thwart the creative power of thought. We must trust that thinking can be radically new, that thinking can encounter the unthought in an unprescribed manner. (Here, the mind makes a note to disagree with the classic characterisation of play as unproductive, but that is a whole other side path:) Bateson suggests that the point of method, and research more generally, is *not* to solve a problem. *It is the other way around.* We must construct problems and extract from them the rules and techniques that will allow the mind to work through the problem. Method is always a matter of process. Let’s paraphrase (read: repeat with a difference) Erhard Schüttpelz and say that a method is constituted by the techniques of a theoretical problem.[8] For starters, Schüttpelz immediately undoes the dichotomy between theory and method that bogs down one strand of the debate. But also note the implied temporality: if the problem to be solved constitutes its method, then a method cannot preexist its problem. It is the other way around. Every research problem, everything we ‘throw before’ thought, requires the constitution of a consistent set of mental techniques. Or, riffing a bit more on Schüttpelz, every projected movement of thought works itself out by attracting and organising the techniques that will have solved it. So the difference between methodology and method is that the former comes from the past and the latter hails from the future, meeting in the now of thoughtful creation.

That is, the mind believes, what Henri Bergson meant when he said that every problem implies or enfolds its own solution. How then does one help a problem unfold itself toward its solution? The way of doing that Bergson suggests is guided by intuition, his famous ‘method of intuition’. In *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, Bergson explains how intuition helps generate new ideas through a visual analogy. Here is a long passage quoted in several parts (the definition of intuition comes only at the end):

The fact is that there are two kinds of clarity. A new idea may be clear because it presents to us, simply arranged in a new order, elementary ideas which we already possessed. Our intelligence, finding only the old in the new, feels itself on familiar

ground; it is at ease; it 'understands'. Such is the clarity we desire, are looking for, and for which we are always most grateful to whoever presents it to us.[9]

This is the valuable clarity of thought provided by tried-and-tested methodologies inherited from the past. Bergson attributes these accomplishments to the faculty of the intellect. Next he describes the clarity that is produced through an intuitive method:

There is another kind [of clarity] that we submit to, and which, moreover, impose itself only with time. It is the clarity of the radically new and absolutely simple idea, which catches as it were an intuition.[10]

Intuition is what makes us feel the import of an idea in a flash. Ideas really 'take' in the intransitive sense of achieving operational effect — in the way that kindling, a lesson, or a graft will hopefully take.[11] The method of intuition prepares those unexpected moments of realisation, the penny that drops on a walk in the park, the sparks that fly (even and especially) under the shower. All thinking and its doings are matters of feeling, of felt importance.[12] We prod around in the obscurity of an unthought problem, guided by the techniques and practices that the problem imports, until understanding strikes like a flash. The point Bergson makes is that the intellect lags behind because it lacks this creative edge:

As we cannot reconstruct it [i.e. the idea] with pre-existing elements, since it has no elements, and as on the other hand, to understand without effort consists in recomposing the new from what is old, our first impulse is to say that it is incomprehensible. But let us accept it provisionally, let us go with it through the various departments of our knowledge: we shall see that, *itself obscure, it dissipates obscurities*. By it the problems we considered insoluble will resolve themselves, or rather, be dissolved, either to disappear definitively, or to present themselves in some other way. One must therefore distinguish between the ideas which keep their light for themselves, making it penetrate immediately into the slightest recesses, and those whose radiation is exterior, illuminating a whole region of thought. These can begin by being inwardly obscure; but the light they project about them comes back in reflection, with deeper and deeper penetration; and they then have the double power of illuminating what they play upon and of being illuminated themselves.[13]

That the radically new idea of intuitively felt importance is incomprehensible at first indicates that it stages an encounter with the unthought. But already the idea reconfigures the relations between all the other ideas. Perhaps these here thoughts on method have produced an obscure muddle in the reader's mind. But perhaps – that is the wager – they make method appear

in a somewhat different 'light'. But the mind tires of this Enlightenment analogy for understanding. So, just one more go at it. Quickly, here is the definition of intuition:

Intuition, then, signifies first of all consciousness, but immediate consciousness, a vision which is scarcely distinguishable from the object seen, a knowledge which is contact and even coincidence.[14]

The method of intuition coaxes the mind toward an immediate consciousness of what cannot yet or no longer be called an 'object of study'. Here, thinking is only process, 'thought in the act'. [15] And the term 'immediate' indicates, importantly, that problematisations or the construction of problems are ways of entering the worldly muddles they present, ways of eventually 'seeing the world from within', to mix in some Patton on Deleuze. [16] In other words, before it appears as a chain of operations, method is the movement into an immanent domain of operativity that cannot be given over to methodology. In this phase of our intellectual endeavors, the metaposture of methodology is as yet impossible because the mind participates in, rather than directs, the world's self-organising process of lived abstraction.

One might want to object that this is rather 'subjective' and unscholarly. After all, where there is no object (yet or anymore), there is no objectivity (yet or anymore). That is no reason to discount the methodic value of the intuitive feeling of importance. As Whitehead writes,

the notion of importance is like nature itself: Expel it with a pitchfork, and it ever returns. The most ardent upholders of objectivity in scientific thought insist upon its importance. The zeal for truth presupposes interest'. [17]

This does not mean that our unmuddlings are loosely gathered flights of fancy by which we seek to satisfy our personal whims. Of course, such creativity does not operate in a vacuum either:

we must undoubtedly have recourse to the learning which we inherit; yet in the development of intelligence there is a great principle which is often forgotten. In order to acquire learning, we must first shake ourselves free of it. We must grasp the topic in the rough, before we smooth it out and shape it. [18]

So, of course, the world is full of other movements of thought. And some of them guide ours like little nudges to our prodding.

One more stretch of the way before the mind can rest. Something in this movement – probably the ‘metalogue’ – still tugs onward. The mind follows and encounters.

Metamodeling: Where are all the other places?

In a piece titled ‘Against Method’, Erin Manning proposes that we replace the notion of method with metamodeling. But this cheeky mind wants them to mutually include each other, wants metamodeling to be the way in which the humanities do their doings. And the mind also knows that some readers will think that this talk of intuitive methods is all nice and cute, but how the funding hell do you put this in a grant application? Well, try ‘metamodeling’. That might do the dazzle. More importantly, it does the work: speculatively.

Manning traces metamodeling through Félix Guattari’s coinage of the term and a *FibreCulture* issue titled ‘Models, Metamodels and Contemporary Media,’ edited by Gary Genosko and Andrew Murphie.[19] Genosko and Murphie propose:

Modeling operations involve petrified representations that have absorbed and arrested a-signifying semiotic flows and reconstituted them in meaningful ensembles as static, central reference points. [...] By contrast, metamodeling operations – not to be confused with higher order or general modeling – introduce movement, multiplicity, and chaos into models. Metamodeling de-links modeling with both its representational foundation and its mimetic reproduction. It softens signification by admitting a-signifying forces into a model’s territory; that is, the centrality and stability of meaningfulness is displaced for the sake of singularity’s unpredictability and indistinctness. What was hitherto inaccessible is given room to manifest and project itself into new and creative ways and combinations.[20]

Metamodeling is the processual diagramming or mapping of the relations between ideas, concepts, and theories in a manner that invites and incites new ways of engagement. As Manning writes, ‘metamodeling’ — like the method of intuition — ‘makes felt lines of formation’, of ideas informing one another in unknown, unpredicted ways.[21] To metamodel is to unuddle. In this way, ‘metamodeling is productive of a new kind of reality; it functions; forces things together’.[22] Prod prod prod spark flash. Is this not a crucial aspect of the way in which philosophical and humanities inquiry proceeds? Are these moments not what turns our writing and reading into genuine ‘adventures of ideas’?[23] Is this not a mode of worldmaking? And valuable?

This movement of thought wants to reclaim the notion of ‘method’ from those who would actually like to turn it into knowledge production by salable, repeatable mental schemata, and from those who would dismiss it as such and such alone. Let us make method the repetition-with-a-difference that is a (necessary but not sufficient) part of the development of a practice. Method is how a creative practice gains in consistency (also, but not only) by repeating itself with a difference. Part of this mind’s method is writing and rewriting these sentences until they are the most consistent expression of its movement of thought that it can create in language. Voilà, this is it. So far.

Method is the motor inside a movement of thought. And it goes through many iterations before it finds its inner consistency. Method is a little machine – abstract, if you will – animated by the mind-with-the-world and made of techniques organised in such a way that they produce a consistent movement of thought. Not always coherent perhaps, but consistent hopefully. For example, the metaphors in this text – initially ‘chains’, eventually ‘motors’ – may be mixed, but they are not inconsistent. They just capture what now appears as two different aspects or phases of the same process. A method appears as a chain of operations only after the fact and by the traces it has left (usually in the form of linear texts), only after it has worked itself out and solved the problem that birthed it, only when the grant is finished. But method in the act, as a way of doing, as the function of a consistent composition of intellectual techniques must be appreciated in its doing, just like the purr of a well-oiled engine. And another metaphor had been suggested: methodology as map. Well, if methodology is the map, then method has got to be something like the charting of a rather shifty territory. Whenever we do method in the humanities, we are charting our way out of various versions of a problem, sometimes finding places whose existence we could not even imagine.

A traveller, who has lost his way, should not ask, ‘Where am I?’ What he really wants to know is, ‘Where are the other places?’[24]

Perhaps we will find a few if we follow Erin Manning in changing and raising the stakes:

Whether we call it metamodeling, or whether we think of it as study [following Harney and Moten's *The Undercommons*], or call it research-creation [see Thain 2010], or radical empiricism [following William James] [or method], it is the question of how knowledge is crafted in each singular instance of a practice's elaboration that is key. An engaged encounter with the very constitutive nature of knowledge – be it at the level of new forms of subjectivity, or in the reorientation of how thinking and doing coexist – is necessarily *a disruptive operation that risks dismantling the strong frames drawn by disciplines and methodological modes of inquiry*. Of course, we have been saying this, in one way or another, for decades. But disciplinarity tends to win out, again and again. This is why we need the undercommons, an emergent site that does more than question the academic institution and its role in society. In the undercommons, where emergent collectivity is the order of the day, appetite trumps nostalgia, inventing metamodels that experiment with how knowledge can and does escape instrumentality, bringing back an aesthetics of experience where it is needed most: in the field of learning.[25]

One can only agree with the necessity of the undercommons. An elaboration of that idea would however lead this movement too far afield. The latter part of the quotation was included to make the reader want to explore the undercommons for themselves – should they find it important.[26]

So. May we grant ourselves this: the freedom to elaborate our practices in a radically singular and singularly consistent manner, to craft radically new ways of knowing and doing – in short, to invent new methods for a world in urgent need of them. Should we, given the urgency, not be encouraged and encourage to try and invent new methods every time we come together in study? Should we, given the immensity of our collective failure (sorry, really just in practical, ecological terms!) not at least be encouraged to experiment and fail better more often? There would be less rote repetition, but more creation. Should we not, following Bergson, embrace those internally obscure yet luminous ideas so that they may illuminate (no more metaphors:) new ways of doing? Contrary to what some might expect, there could be more consistency *because* we would allow ourselves to repeat with more difference.

Contrary to its efforts to 'valorise' research, the neoliberal technocratisation of the university has also cut the university off from society at large, due to the enormous pressure to (over)produce according to technocratic credential systems for students, teachers, and researchers. May we, instead, grant ourselves the freedom to intuitively invent or reinvent ways of doing that carry, create, and share immediate value to life in its environmental, social, and mental domains.[27] Let us find ways of doing that allow for new collectivities to emerge around a shared appetite for knowledge yet unknown. 'The

time for theory is always now.’[28] Which is to say: the time for method is always now. Which is to say: the only way it can be done is differently. Where are all the other places?

Author

Toni Pape is Assistant Professor at the Department of Media Studies at University of Amsterdam. He is the author of *Figures of Time: Affect and the Television of Preemption* (Duke University Press, 2019) and co-author of *Nocturnal Fabulations: Ecology, Vitality and Opacity in the Cinema of Apichatpong Weerasethakul* (Open Humanities Press, 2017). Toni is a member of the editorial boards of NECSUS and the 3 Ecologies imprint at Punctum Press. Toni’s current research project ‘The Aesthetics of Stealth’ investigates media-based practices of staged imperceptibility. Two articles from this project have been published in *Feminist Media Studies* (2017) and *Critical Studies in Television* (2019).

References

- Bateson, G. *Steps to an ecology of mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- Bergson, H. *The creative mind: An introduction to metaphysics*, translated by M. Andison. Mineola: Dover, 2007.
- Berlant, L. *Cruel optimism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011.
- de Lauretis, T. ‘Statement Due’, *Critical Inquiry* 30.2, 2004: 365-368.
- Feyerabend, P. *Against method: Outline of an anarchistic theory of knowledge*. London: Verso, 1993.
- Genosko, G. and Murphie, A. ‘Models, Metamodels and Contemporary Media’, *FibreCulture* 12, 2008: n.p. <http://twelve.fibrejournal.org> (accessed on 26 August 2020).
- Guattari, F. *Molecular revolution: Psychiatry and politics*, translated by R. Sheed. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984.
- . *The three ecologies*, translated by I. Pindar and P. Sutton. London: Athlone Press, 2000.
- Harding, S. ‘Introduction: Is there a Feminist Method?’ in *Feminism & methodology: Social science issues*, edited by S. Harding. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987: 1-14.
- Harney, S. and Moten, F. *The undercommons: Fugitive planning & black study*. Wivenhoe: minor compositions, 2013.
- Manning, E. *The minor gesture*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016.
- Manning, E. and Massumi, B. *Thought in the act: Passages in the ecology of experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014.
- Patton, P. ‘The World Seen from Within: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Events’, *Theory and Event*, 1.1, 1997: <https://doi.org/10.1353/tae.1991.0006> (accessed on 26 August 2020).
- Whitehead, A. *Modes of thought*. New York: Free Press, 1968.
- . *Process and reality*. New York: Free Press, 1978.

Notes

- [1] In *Against Method*, Feyerabend made this point about the affordances and limitations of rule-based methods more eloquently: 'A naive anarchist says (a) that both absolute rules and context-dependent rules have their limits and infers (b) that all rules and standards are worthless and should be given up. Most reviewers regard me as a naive anarchist in this sense, overlooking the many passages where I show how certain procedures aided scientists in their research. For in my studies of Galileo, of Brownian motion, of the Presocratics I not only demonstrate the failures of familiar standards, I also try to show what not so familiar procedures did actually succeed. Thus while I agree with (a) I do not agree with (b). I argue that all rules have their limits and that there is no comprehensive "rationality", I do not argue that we should proceed without rules and standards.' (Feyerabend 1993, p. 231). Let's not be naive anarchists.
- [2] Berlant 2011, p. 200.
- [3] Here is Bateson's definition: 'A *metalogue* is conversation about some problematic subject. This conversation should be such that not only do the participants discuss the problem but the structure of the conversation as a whole is also relevant to the same subject. Only some of the conversations here presented achieve this double format.' (p. 1). Question: What is the difference between a methodology and metalogue?
- [4] Bateson 2000, pp. 14-20; Vaihinger 1910; Massumi 2015.
- [5] Bateson 2000, pp. 17-19.
- [6] *Ibid.*, p. 18.
- [7] *Ibid.*, pp. xxvi-xxvii.
- [8] See the title of Schüttpelz 2019: 'Methods are the practices of a theoretical question'. That is my translation of 'Methoden sind die Praktiken einer theoretischen Fragestellung'. This text is a contribution of the ongoing methods debate in German media studies.
- [9] Bergson 2007, p. 23.
- [10] *Ibid.*
- [11] <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/take>
- [12] For a philosophical argument to support this claim, see Massumi 2002. For a scientific argument, see Damasio 2000. See also Whitehead 1968, p. 36: 'A thought is a tremendous mode of excitement.'
- [13] *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.
- [14] *Ibid.*, p. 20.
- [15] Manning & Massumi 2014.
- [16] Deleuze 1997.
- [17] Whitehead 1968, pp. 8-9. 'Interest' is used by Whitehead as a synonym for importance.
- [18] *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.
- [19] Guattari 1984; Genosko & Murphie 2008.
- [20] Genosko & Murphie 2008, n.p.
- [21] Manning 2016, p. 43.
- [22] Genosko & Murphie 2008.
- [23] Whitehead 1968.
- [24] Whitehead 1978, p. 258.

- [25] Manning 2016, 43-44.
- [26] See Harney & Moten 2013.
- [27] This is a reference to Félix Guattari's *The Three Ecologies* and the [3 Ecologies imprint](#) at Punctum Press. It is offered as an example of a publication series that tries to carry out the project outlined here.
- [28] de Lauretis 2004.