

Shakespeare Association of America 2016  
Novel / Traveling Objects  
Jennifer Linhart Wood (Folger Shakespeare Library)

Anna Riehl Bertolet Abstract  
Auburn University

### Patterns on the Move: Traveling toward Reincarnation

As with most patterns and blueprints, the very purpose of the patterns for needlework presupposes travel. The pattern (an abstract invention or a record based on an existing material object) is carried to a new place where it becomes the base for creation or recreation of the design. A printed book of patterns serves the same purpose—facilitating the reproductive process where new material objects may be created at a great geographical distance from the place of the pattern's origins. In the early modern era, with its nebulous concept of copyright, a printed book itself is a reproducible object that can be reincarnated at a new location, in a new context, with or without involvement of its first author or compiler. My paper asks twofold questions about the practice of production and use of early modern pattern books for needlework. What is the nature of the reincarnated object? How does reincarnation through travel affect the meaning and form of the object? How does such reincarnation affect the sense of authorship and audience of the pattern books?

First printed books for embroidery patterns appeared in 1520s, in Germany, moving from Augsburg to Cologne and other areas, then spreading to Italy, France, and England. In some cases, this process combined the physical travel of the object with the intellectual travel of its contents, *translatio studii*—for example, Johann Schönsperger “reincarnates” the Augsburg pattern book in Cologne; Federico Vinciolo brings the patterns from Italy and lays a new collection at the feet of Henri III and Louise of Lorraine, King and Queen of France. In these cases, the traveling object maintains its presence as an intermediary to its own reincarnation at the new place. The previous iteration of the object is evoked verbally and iconographically. It is almost certain that the pattern book travels physically to the new place, and it is beyond doubt that the memory and intellectual concept of the thing does travel and is materialized at the new place. The material objects created at the new location likewise maintain their links to the origins of the patterns, however distant these origins may be, or however vague or even inaccurate is the knowledge of these origins possessed by the new object makers. By their nature, the pattern books themselves are tied to the material and visual culture: their content is predominantly visual as they record the patterns that appeared or will appear on material objects; moreover, the books invite physical manipulation when the patterns are being traced. I explore this process of reincarnation of the objects, attending to the way the political, gender, and material factors inform this practice.

Chris Barrett Abstract  
Louisiana State University

### Hamlet's Things: An Experiment in Taking Things (,) Literally

Recent work in object-oriented ontology, ecomaterialism, and other fields has challenged literary critics to develop novel practices of reading, practices sensitive to the embeddedness of both organic and inorganic phenomena in a tissue (or network, or ecosystem) of actants and agents, practices exercised in the labor of expanding the definition of subjectivity beyond the human or animal. In thinking about the implications of such a practice, I wonder: does an object-inclusive reading practice demand a poetics of literality?

This poetics of literality might begin—maybe appropriately enough, given my specimen text of *Hamlet* and its many, many puns—with a familiar joke, the humor of which depends on the flickering status of the literal itself. The reason one should never speak figuratively in front of a thief is simple, the joke goes: a thief always takes things literally. This essay is an attempt at a poetics of literality grounded in a hermeneutic of theft, an effort to probe the interpretive gap between taking things, literally, and taking things literally. There is something inescapably thing-oriented about “taking something literally,” though, an insistence that meaning traffics in materialism, and specifically in conceptual, linguistic, or corporeal transactions of theft, gift, or capture. What is *it* about the literal that requires taking? And is that *it* the residue of a thing's insistence on its own being? Does remarking the materiality of objects—including those invoked or mobilized for figurative work—involve a kind of poaching or trapping or seizing?

To wander in these questions, I turn to *Hamlet*, which with its obsessive punning and figurative language, offers an ideal space for exploring the play of objects and literality. In particular, I consider Hamlet's famous declaration that “The play's the thing / Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.” In doing so, Hamlet is making not so much a cogent and singular statement, but rather two quite different but equally provocative assertions: either that a drama is itself an object, perhaps with its own “thing” power; or that a “thing” is itself a relative pronoun, an abstraction of language deployed for prepositional or metaphorical work. The first possibility concretizes an abstract thing, while the second possibility turns a concrete thing abstract.

Hamlet's resolution—depending on how you “take” its literal sense—opens up the possibilities for a theft-oriented reading: what is taken in the “thingness” of drama, and what is taken in the “un-thingness” of the many phenomena bearing the label “thing” (ghosts, duty, a king, words) in the play?

Cristina León Alfar Abstract  
Hunter College, CUNY

“‘Queen o'er myself:’ Portia's Deployment of Rings and Bonds, or  
Disciplining Men in *The Merchant of Venice*”

I am interested in Portia's circulation of the ring she gives to Bassanio and of Shylock's bond with Antonio as contracts which she enforces in *The Merchant of Venice*. Both objects are deployed and managed by Portia as modes of discipline. Her ring's movement—from wife to husband, husband to clerk, clerk to wife, and wife to husband—works not a symbol of love and fidelity, nor is it even a symbol of good faith; rather the ring works for her to position herself in a authority over her husband. Bassanio's bond with her will, out of respect for the sacrifices she is making by marrying him, remain primary. His failure to adhere to that condition forfeits his legal rights as her “lord, her governor, her king” (3.2.165). Similarly, I will argue, Portia uses the bond, here literally a contract, between Antonio and Shylock to discipline both men, the one who threatens her marital bond through his friendship with her husband, and the other who threatens to topple the Venetian racial and religious order. In the courtroom scene, the bond shifts, moving from one in which the terms appear clearly to favor Shylock, to one in which Antonio's cause is victorious. Portia engineers this movement, overseeing the process in which Shylock is stripped of his wealth, religion and community and Antonio owes his life to the clerk. Rings and contracts in Portia's hands, then, travel from their ostensible purpose in conventional marital and juridical promises of good faith to opportunities for the control of concerns materially important to a young woman whose father has controlled her marriage from his grave and who wishes to maintain—even in marriage—control over herself, her servants and her house. Portia's use of both ring and bond works, in this regard, to discipline the men who stand, directly or indirectly, in her way.

Edward McLean Test Abstract  
Boise State University

“Guaiacum: Holy Wood and the Pox”

Christopher Marlowe's Dr. Faustus sells his soul to the devil in exchange for worldly knowledge, requesting three books from *Mephastophilis*: one on incantations, a second on new astronomy, and a third “wherein [he] might see all plants, herbs and trees that grow upon the earth” (5.171). Evident in this last request is the importance of earth's botanical cornucopia to early modern Europe, a knowledge base that expanded exponentially with the encounter, exploration, and merchandising of the Americas. Herbalists throughout Europe fervently collected “new seeds out of strange countries,” planting and categorizing new flora in the private physic and pleasure gardens of educated aristocrats, displacing country peasants and herb wives as the purveyors of a new botanical knowledge. Subsequently, there was a boom in the production of Latin language herbals, which purportedly unlocked the secret knowledge of foreign herbs.

This paper moves from examining the production of botanical knowledge in Faustian herbal books to a case-study of a specific tree, guaiacum, tracing its indigenous roots from the Americas to early modern Europe where this New World tree played a formidable cultural role: guaiacum wood supplanted mercury in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as the “miracle” cure for syphilis (a disease which was also believed to be an American import). This paper explores the European adaptation of New World botanical knowledge and myth surrounding the origins and use of the American guaiacum through both its scientific representation in European

herbals and its literary representation in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. Guaiacum was also widely known as *Heben*, *Hebene*, or *Hebenum*, and carried a strong Judeo-Christian mythos in its alternative names, the "Tree of Life" and *Lignum Sanctum* (Holy Wood). I will suggest that in Spenser's *Faerie Queene* cupid's "deadly Heben bow," King Arthur's Heben lance, and Britomart's Hebene spear resonate with greater meaning if we consider Heben/guaiacum's enchanted powers in healing syphilis. By illustrating the American wood as a source of holiness and salvation, I offer a counterintuitive notion of early modern transculturation: rather than the metropolis determining the colonial periphery, the global becomes local and determines the core.

Emily Russell Abstract  
The George Washington University

(working) Title: ***I'll drown my book: Prospero's grimoire, adrift***

Abstract (excuse the swirling eddies of unnecessary words and under-edited thought, this abstract is under construction):

Does Prospero's book have agency? What is the nature of the relationship between Prospero, the book, and magic? Why would Prospero propose severing this link? Why drown a book? Why take it out of the reach of sound?

Object and Actors:

Book

In their material form, books are objects that contain thoughts and stories. They contain journeys. Portable themselves, they have a knack for initiating movement - for transporting those sentient objects who engage with books to become what we call readers. A grimoire, like Prospero's book, may contain something more - an ability to move, to act upon others.

Prospero

The reader. The speaker. The magician. The character, confined and (possibly/ always potentially) released.

Sound

Sound is the mode through which Prospero (potentially) initiates the magical agency of the book. Speech, reaches toward the book, creating a link between magician and grimoire. If they join, it is through this external flow. And, again, it is sound that moves the magic beyond book and reader. Prospero speaks and something happens.

Water

Prospero promises to drown his book - to submerge it in water deeper than sound has ever plummeted. The term "drown" brings with it connotations of death. People drown. Animals drown. And in this process, sentience, agency, and life are lost. But for a book, drowning is submersion in an element of drift. Where will the water take this book? How will it be transformed in the process? Will it meet with another reader, a second Prospero? Or will it stay with waters and sands and mud, mingling its words and stories with the sea and earth instead of with human minds and hands?

Lines of derivation, deviation, movement:

Act V, scene 1

*And deeper than did ever plummet sound/ I'll drown my book.*

Epilogue

*I must be here confined by you,/ Or sent...*

*But release me from my bands/ With the help of your good hands*

*Let your indulgence set me free*

Through his promise to drown his book, Prospero's relationship with his grimoire can be interpreted in multiple ways. The book can be understood as an agentive, potentially dangerous, magical object or as a non-magical, non-agentive, scapegoat object. I propose a reading of the relationship between Prospero, book, and magic that invites a discussion about the nature of material objects, and especially material objects that are tied to the creative work of humans.

What is the nature of our relationship with books?

Erika Mary Boeckeler Abstract  
Northeastern University

In William Browne's 1613 *Britannia's Pastorals*, twelve swains present their ladies with courtship gifts and accompanying posies, including a ring, a nosegay of roses with a nettle in it, a poem based on an anagram, a shepherd's crook, a comb, and a love-knot. The last three manifest as pattern (or "figured") poems. In this paper I take up the chiasmic dynamic between writing and object to argue for a reciprocal relationship of form between the two --in the sense that both generate features, and guide a reader's experience, of each other. In particular, I examine figured poetry and the material non-paper manifestations of those same objects. These solid objects are themselves inscribed with posies and even rebuses (adding another layer of object-writing), with a writing intended to physically move from the gift-giver as well as emotionally move the recipient.

In this I am guided by Johanna Drucker's notion of "performative materiality," a theory of materialism resistant to the idea that an object's identity consists of a static, seemingly objective set of properties and capacities. Her claim is that "an object is produced as an effect of a dynamic relation between provocation of the object's characteristics and an interpretative process." [1] My interest in pattern poetry and its object counterpart is to determine how writing guides that interpretative process by which objects are created and set into motion, keeping in mind that writing itself is a material enterprise that soaks up its objects.

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[1] Johanna Drucker, "Performative Materiality and Theoretical Approaches to Interface" *DHQ* 7.1(2013). <http://www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/7/1/000143/000143.html>

James M. Bromley Abstract  
Miami University

“Lascivious and Prophane Exercises”: Moving Objects and Sexuality in Thomas Middleton’s  
*Michaelmas Term*

Abstract: I will examine the representation of the epistemological and material construction of urban sexuality in Thomas Middleton’s *Michaelmas Term*. In the play, the movement of cloth, in finished and unfinished forms, facilitates otherwise impossible relations between men, and the cloth trade is depicted as involved in the circulation of sexual knowledge. Most readers of the play would find it an unlikely candidate for a utopian reading, given that its negative depiction of the cloth trade has been explained as a product of anxieties about the risk of abuse and victimization in commercial, social, and sexual relations in early modern London. I suggest instead that the play exposes how such anxieties circulating in the period inhibit the development of London as a space that could offer material and epistemological support for queer practices of selfhood, comportment, pleasure, and relationality. In its glimpses of a queer sexual culture that has utopian affordances without being pastoral, *Michaelmas Term*, I hope to suggest, can provoke us to query tacit assumptions that underwrite responses to the intersection of materiality, pedagogy, and sexuality.

Josie Schoel Abstract  
SUNY Albany

“Elizabeth’s ‘Rare and Dainty Secret’: Trafficking Cosmetic Recipes” examines a series of letters and gifts exchanged between Elizabeth I and Walide Safiye, the sultana of Turkey, written between 1593 and 1599. In one of the letters, Safiye requests that Elizabeth send “rare distilled waters of every kind for the face” that are to be “found in your kingdom” and “odiferous oils for the hands.” Elizabeth’s request for Turkish attire and Safiye’s desire to attain the “rare” cosmetics of England demonstrates that by the end of the sixteenth century, when the English nation was fixing its gaze upon the East, the East was looking right back at England. This often overlooked interaction between the two nations, occurring during England’s emergence onto the international stage, challenges Orientalist models of nascent English exceptionalism as built on dualisms. Looking at the letters between the two sovereigns, however, allows us to see the ways in which the exchange of cosmetic material constitutes a productive cultural and corporeal hybridity. This chapter ends with a discussion of the Turkish princess Donusa in Philip Massinger’s *The Renegado*, where I ask why her conversion to Christianity is presented in language borrowed from recipes and manuals on beautifying physic, such as those found in Gervase Markham’s 1615 *The English hus-wife*.

Maria Shmygol Abstract  
University of Liverpool

Problematic Taxonomy and William Percy's Underwater Objects

Starting with a consideration of the two extant manuscript copies of *The Aphrodysial*, my paper maps out the ways in which Percy's play can itself be considered as a travelling object (the play was originally composed in 1602 but the surviving copies are authorial transcriptions carried out in the late 1640s and are heavily marked with deletions, insertions, and other peculiarities that present the text in an unfixed state). I then consider the implication that the state of Percy's manuscript has on the key material objects used in the play, for example, a magic bracelet, a range of mechanically and supernaturally produced trinkets, and a seemingly 'prodigious' whale.

These novel objects travel in a variety of tantalizingly problematic and complex ways. In a literal sense, Percy's objects travel around the recesses of the underwater environs of the play world, but their meaning and function is also continually called into question and undermined through empirical examination, counterfeiting, and revelation. These objects pass through different interpretative frameworks as they circulate among the play's subjects and in doing so they problematize the seemingly straightforward taxonomic classifications that are assigned to them. The magic bracelet and the 'prodigious' whale in particular continually shift between categories of the miraculous, natural, supernatural, and mechanical as their material configuration is interrogated and picked apart. In thinking about these objects as being continually 'in motion' across taxonomic boundaries, space, and modes of production, this paper seeks to raise wider questions about the problems of classification of objects and bodies in the early modern period beyond amateur drama and the theatre.

Percy's play calls for diverse material properties but his most interesting objects – rather than being presented to the audience immediately in material terms – make themselves known from their position off-stage (like the whale's roaring) or they are figured first in verbal terms and then through artificial imitations (like the magic bracelet, which is only presented at the end of the play). By thinking about the different ways in which Percy's objects function and are brought into being in material terms, I hope to invite the seminar group to reflect on the (im)materiality of objects in a state of transition from off-stage to on-stage and how this might help us to query the nature and function of staged properties.

Naomi Howell Abstract  
University of Exeter

Variable Vestments and Polyvalent Patches: Piecing out the Past in Tudor Exeter.

In August, 1549, in the immediate aftermath of the Prayerbook Rebellion, a scaffold was constructed with some pines on the top of the tower of St Thomas parish church in Exeter for the purpose of executing the vicar, a charismatic leader of the rebellion. According to Hooker, his executioners clad him in liturgical vestments and hung the accoutrements of the liturgy about his

person. Finally, ‘all things being readie and *the stage perfected for this tragedie*,’ a rope was tied around his waist and he was hauled up to the top of the tower, ‘and there in chains hanged in his *popish apparell*, and had a holie water bucket and sprinkle, a sacring bell, a paire of beads, & such other like popish trash hanged about him, and there he with the same about him remained a long time.’ At the height of the Edwardian Reformation, Catholic clerical vestments were repurposed as costumes in the theatre of death.

Around this time, just across the river in or near the church of St Mary Steps in Exeter, another set of vestments was being skilfully repurposed. Offending images—like that of Christ—were carefully unpicked, though much of the embroidery was left in its original, pre-reformation, detail and splendour. Careful snipping and patching (carried out predominantly if not exclusively by women) with green and gold damask produced a new object: a funerary pall. This object now rests in Exeter’s RAMM Museum, and together with a similar object now in Exeter Cathedral Archives, comprises the subject of this paper.

By examining the broken and unbroken threads of these medieval textiles, and the ruptures and continuities they embody, this paper explores different modes and metaphors of memory in their explicit, oblique, erased, and vestigial forms. It is well known that pre-Reformation clerical vestments were sold, rented out and refashioned for use on the stage, but their early post-Reformation reuse in the public staging of the spectacle of death rewards further examination.

Sarah Williams Abstract  
University of South Carolina

#### Traveling Music and Theatrics: Jemmy LaRoche’s “Raree Show”

Popular from the seventeenth through the nineteenth century in England, traveling peep shows, or “rare shows,” were portable boxes containing a miniature scene usually presented in public gathering spaces such as fairs or markets. The viewer would peer through a “peephole,” much like a camera obscura, to witness a small tableau while the showman provided a musical performance. Many of the purveyors of these traveling “multi-media” experiences at the time were Savoyards, hence the more prominent “raree show” spelling intended to approximate the French accent.

Toward the end of the century, Jemmy LaRoche, a professional singer/actor on London’s “legitimate” stage, became well known for his song “Raree Show” from Peter Motteux’s *Europe’s revels for the peace of Ryswick* (1698) with music by John Eccles. While the political implications of *Europe’s revels* and its music have been examined, the mechanisms through which LaRoche and Eccles’ music achieved far-reaching cultural impact beyond the court and theater-going audiences for this English *ballet des nations* have attracted little notice. References to LaRoche’s song and performances “traveled”—much like he did with his portable stage—across genres, social classes, time, and performance venues. Jonathan Gil Harris notes that understanding matter only in the form of the object “ignores the dynamic dimensions” of that



In Ascham's text the thingliness of the arrow in flight—the art of shooting—is inscribed by the traces of an invisible quill as Ascham's words instruct the reader how to shoot and how to write true. That art, the invisible arc of the flying arrow's energy, is reflected in the image of the drawn bow and in the material words drawn to release in their readers' consciousness the otherwise unreadable res of the Word.

The traces of that art are also visible in the shooter's moveables, the artifacts that *Toxophilus* teaches his reader to make as well as to use. Anyone who looks to material history to find out more about bowyers, fletchers, and bows and arrows, will find, as I have, that Ascham has already closed that hermeneutic circle. His words tell us more about arrows than any material remains. The maker's arrow does not speak. The craft of the bowyers and fletchers was not—in the interest of the guilds—to be written down by them. We can examine some thousands of mute shafts and arrowheads, and several hundred bows. The arrows are incomplete. Not a single feather is left of the fletching that made the arrows fly straight or of the bowstrings that launched them. The goose feathers of Tudor quills likewise leave behind only ink.

This essay looks to restore the thingliness to artifacts by examining them through the art of shooting. The largest collection of Tudor arrows—4,000 headless shafts—is that raised recently from the wreck of the *Mary Rose*, the flagship of Henry VIII's fleet, along with an equal number of bracers and about 172 of the 250 longbows on the ship's inventory. This weaponry was never put to use.

And the essay also seeks to reflect upon some of the material circumstances of the writing of *Toxophilus*, especially in regard to right reason, faith, writing, and the belligerent royal patron it was aimed at and dedicated to.

For the verses in the lozenge below the royal arms on the dedication page recall the sinking of the *Mary Rose* and the naval invasion of England in the last and most devastating of Henry VIII's wars with Francis I, the arrows of Ascham's wit recovering the sunken artifacts of the royal flagship.

Rejoyce Englande, be gladde and merie  
TROTHE ouercommeth thyne enemyes all,  
The Scot, the Frenchman, the Pope, and heresie  
OVERCOMMED by Troth, have had a fall.

On July 18, 1545, Henry VIII was rowed from the encampment at Portsmouth to dine with his Lord Admiral aboard the *Mary Rose* after the first and inconclusive day of battle with the newly arrived French fleet. The next day, while Henry watched the opposing fleets from Southsea Castle, the *Mary Rose* inexplicably sank in the [Solent](#), the straits north of the [Isle of Wight](#). The inconclusive naval war continued on both sides of the Channel, the superior French fleet enduring poor command and bad wind. Skirmishes on land occurred around Boulogne and the Pas de Calais and in Scotland. The armies and treasuries of both nations were exhausted by years of pointless and expensive war; plague killed on land and sea; crops failed. By the end of the summer, the French fleet withdrew without in embarrassment and in September Lord Lisle led the English fleet on a Norman raid, burned the town of Trecort, the neighboring villages and

manor and abbey and 30 ships at anchor in the harbor. England, pressured by protestant allies, sought a way out.

Henry's fleet was ordered home claiming victory but discouraged and defeated by war, having lost nearly a third of the original company of 12,000 men—mostly to plague. The arrows of the *Mary Rose* were meant ultimately for transport to France. How successfully they would have been deployed is questionable. The fleet left shorthanded on archers, for famine and plague had reduced their numbers by almost a third. Victory needed to be claimed in order to win peace. So a Te Deum mass was sung at S Paul's "to give laude and prayse to God for the victorie that God had sent the Kinges Majestie in Scotland and that the Frenvch armie was departed from Bolleyne." By the end of that year—Ascham's timing is clearly aimed at the pride of the "victorious" king—*Toxophilus* was released for publication, its quill poised to make the case for the role of the eloquent orator to take his place alongside the bowman in affairs of state, if only to persuade the king to put down his bow, the exchange of letters being as true to the Word as the exchange of volleys, provided one fights for the right side.

Victoria Ann Jackson Abstract  
The Open University

### **Reliquaries Re-Formed and Reinvented as Tableware Vessels in Post-Reformation Europe**

Held in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London is an English rock crystal reliquary which, between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, descended in the wealthy Catholic Browne family of Cowdray, Sussex. During the Reformation, it was emptied of its relic and embellished with new silver-gilt mounts, transforming it into a tableware vessel to hold salt, and possibly extending its religious significance. In 1741, the object was reverted back into a reliquary by its new owners the Poor Clare nuns. While the re-forming of a vessel that once housed a sacred relic into a vessel to hold salt – also a 'sacred' substance – might be interpreted as a way to thwart anti-Catholic authorities during this time of Catholic persecution in England, it also indicates a considerable degree of visual and material continuity with pre-Reformation devotional objects. This paper examines this particular reliquary / salt-cellar, as well as several others, revealing how reliquaries were dismantled and re-fashioned into lavish receptacles to present salt during meals in Reformed communities across Europe. This project also investigates how reliquaries / dining objects scripted human actions in early modern Europe. More specifically, I argue that these objects inspired a 'performance' from their owners and users, a repertoire of oral, gestural and bodily acts. Because people could take their bodily cues from seemingly 'inanimate' vessels, these objects can be seen as 'scripting' performances. I use the term 'script' to signify not a rigid or unyielding dictation of performed action, but rather something that widely structures a performance while simultaneously allowing for unique, improvised variations that may not always be predictable. These 'performances of everyday life' were depicted in numerous media, from genre paintings and cheap prints, to domestic conduct books, and were represented on the stage. The paper demonstrates that the spiritual power of reliquaries was not diminished once re-formed and re-contextualised, but rather revived and adapted to new uses.

## Reading List:

Here are a couple of selections to get us started (from Jennifer Wood):

Jonathan Gil Harris. *Untimely Matter in the Time of Shakespeare*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009.

Julian Yates. *Error Misuse Failure: Object Lessons from the English Renaissance*. Minneapolis and London: University of Delaware Press, 2003.

(from Sarah Williams)

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From Victoria Jackson:

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(from Chris Barrett)

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Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, eds., *The New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*. Duke UP, 2010.

(From Emily Russell)

Bogost, Ian. *Alien Phenomenology, or What It's Like To Be a Thing*. MIT Press: 2010.

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From James Bromley

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From Naomi Howell

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From Stephen Foley

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