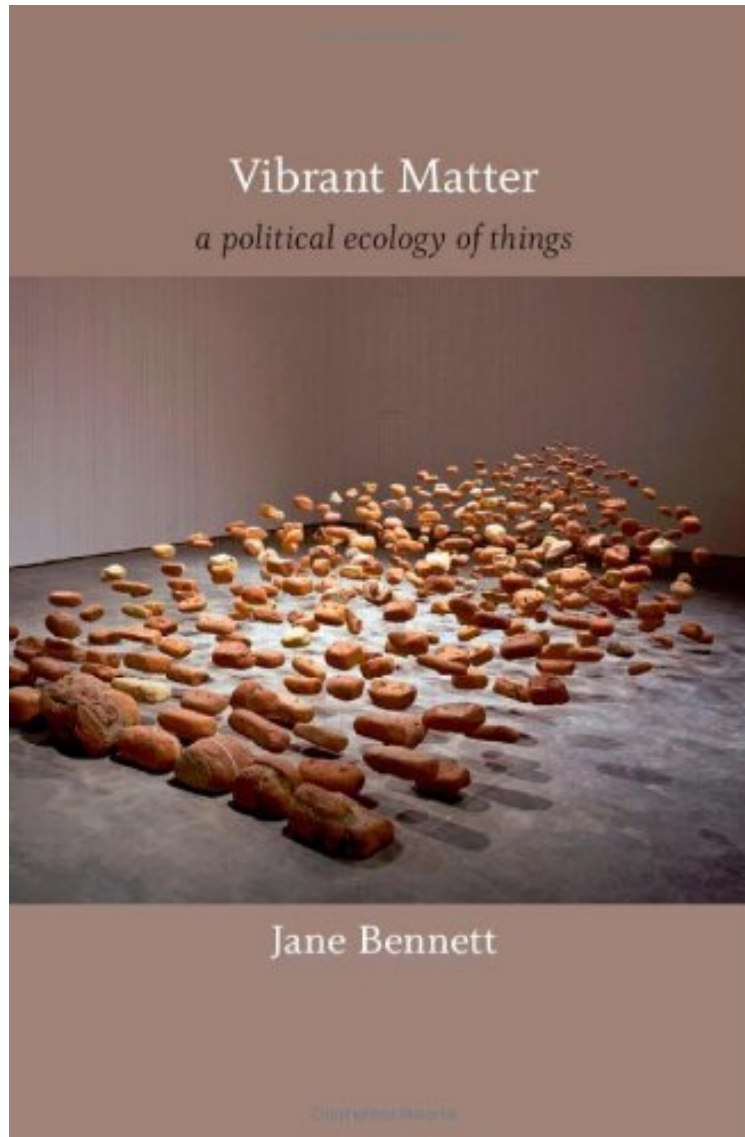


[Library ebook] Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things (a John Hope Franklin Center Book)

Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things (a John Hope Franklin Center Book)

Jane Bennett

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#29834 in Books imusti 2010-01-04Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.90 x .60 x 5.80l, .60 #File Name: 0822346338200 pagesDuke University Press | File size: 63.Mb

Jane Bennett : Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things (a John Hope Franklin Center Book) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things (a John Hope Franklin Center Book):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Fascinating Exploration of Humanity's Relation to ThingsBy

RDDIn Jane Bennetts "Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things", she explores the role of inanimate bodies and how humans interact with them. "Vibrant Matter" serves as Bennetts manifesto for the benefits of anthropomorphizing. Bennett writes, I believe it is wrong to deny vitality to nonhuman bodies, forces, and forms, and that a careful course of anthropomorphization can help reveal that vitality, even though it resists full translation and exceeds my comprehensive grasp. I believe that encounters with lively matter can chasten my fantasies of human mastery, highlight the common materiality of all that is, expose a wider distribution of agency, and reshape the self and its interests (pg. 122). To this end, Bennett uses various case studies to expand her readers understanding of what agency is and who or what is capable of possessing and using agency. Some of these agents include worms, the electrical grid, and accumulations of detritus in a storm drain. Bennett writes with the goal of shaping consciousness in order to expand humanitys understanding of its place in the world. She writes, My hunch is that the image of dead or thoroughly instrumentalized matter feeds human hubris and our earth-destroying fantasies of conquest and consumption (pg. ix). Bennett examines the historical debate over a mechanistic or essential arrangement of life. Describing the situating of a basic essence in each subject, Bennett writes, While I agree that human affect is a key player, in this book the focus is on an affect that is not only not fully susceptible to rational analysis or linguistic representation but that is also not specific to humans, organisms, or even to bodies: the affect of technologies, winds, vegetables, minerals (pg. 61). She writes of these philosophers work, Something always escaped quantification, prediction, and control. They named that something *lan vital* (pg. 63). According to Bennett, Drieschs goal was not simply to gain a more subtle understanding of the dynamic chemical and physical properties of the organism but also to better discern what animated the machine (pg. 71). This recalls the words Master Yoda spoke to Luke Skywalker on Dagobah, For my ally is the Force, and a powerful ally it is. Life creates it, makes it grow. Its energy surrounds us and binds us. Luminous beings are we, not this crude matter. You must feel the Force around you; here, between you, me, the tree, the rock, everywhere, yes. In sum, Bennetts manifesto demonstrates the importance of resituating humanitys place in the world by placing humanity within the world rather than outside of it.² of 2 people found the following review helpful. AmazingBy mlynsmileySuch a wonderful book. Jane Bennett has changed my views on "things" in a most profound way that has affected both my scholarship and my personal attitude toward the world of materials.⁰ of 1 people found the following review helpful. I like this bookBy Brian KummI like this book. It's not perfect or the most earthshaking book, but it's thoughtful and well composed. Really a lovely work. Recommend!

In *Vibrant Matter* the political theorist Jane Bennett, renowned for her work on nature, ethics, and affect, shifts her focus from the human experience of things to things themselves. Bennett argues that political theory needs to do a better job of recognizing the active participation of nonhuman forces in events. Toward that end, she theorizes a vital materiality that runs through and across bodies, both human and nonhuman. Bennett explores how political analyses of public events might change were we to acknowledge that agency always emerges as the effect of ad hoc configurations of human and nonhuman forces. She suggests that recognizing that agency is distributed this way, and is not solely the province of humans, might spur the cultivation of a more responsible, ecologically sound politics: a politics less devoted to blaming and condemning individuals than to discerning the web of forces affecting situations and events. Bennett examines the political and theoretical implications of vital materialism through extended discussions of commonplace things and physical phenomena including stem cells, fish oils, electricity, metal, and trash. She reflects on the vital power of material formations such as landfills, which generate lively streams of chemicals, and omega-3 fatty acids, which can transform brain chemistry and mood. Along the way, she engages with the concepts and claims of Spinoza, Nietzsche, Thoreau, Darwin, Adorno, and Deleuze, disclosing a long history of thinking about vibrant matter in Western philosophy, including attempts by Kant, Bergson, and the embryologist Hans Driesch to name the vital force inherent in material forms. Bennett concludes by sketching the contours of a green materialist ecophilosophy.

Jane Bennetts *Vibrant Matter* is an important work, linking critical movements in recent continental philosophy, namely a vitalist tradition that runs from Bergson to Deleuze and even, on Bennetts reading, to Bruno Latour, and (on the other hand) a political ecology of things that should speak to anyone conscious enough to be aware of the devastating changes underway in the world around us. There is good reason Bennetts book has, in short order, gained a wide following in disparate areas of political theory and philosophy. - Peter Gratton, *Philosophy in*