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THINGS IN THE (RE)PRODUCTION OF THE EMOTIONAL: HUMILITY, STICKINESS, AND EMERGENCY CONTEXTS

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The article is devoted to the sociological analysis of the transformation of the ontological status of material objects in the minds of the war. Based on the theoretical synthesis of the «material turn», the phenomenology of M. Heidegger, the theory of practices of P. Bourdieu, the actor -boundary theory and the sociology of emotions, the author of this conceptualization of the transition of speech to status «modest» background of everyday life into the status of active actors in social affairs. The phenomenon of «modesty of speech» is followed by D. Miller, which in peacetime ensures ontological security through the functioning of material culture as an invisible frame that does not require cognitive reflection. War is conceptualized as a process of «illumination» «that causes the collapse of the spiritual Umwelt, transforming «hands-on» (zuhanden) objects into «present» (vorhanden), obsessive to one's own witchcraft or ritual significance. Particular attention is paid to the analysis of affective economies, where speeches develop the power of «stickiness» for S. Ahmed, accumulating and transmitting emotional states over time and space. It is concluded that in a situation of forced movement of speech, the function of «transitional objects» and «self-objects» is established, maintaining the integrity of biographical identity in the minds there will be a breakdown of social bonds. A methodological research framework has been proposed that integrates the theory of «broader emotions» with the analysis of sociomaterial measures, the emotional process is not delimited by the neurophysiological boundaries of the individual, but is constituted through the functional integration of the «subject – artifact» system. Empirical verification of theoretical constructs is carried out through a series of in-depth biographical interviews with local object-centered techniques. It has been revealed that material objects in the minds of war act as containers of memory, affective affordances for tactile regulation of emotions, anchors of identity and agents of magical thinking. Digital artifacts are seen as «effective mobile self- objects» that ensure minimal coherence of the «I» through permanent access to archives of people. The article introduces contributions from the developments of relational ontology, including the Cartesian dualism of subject and object.

Keywords: things, material turn, humility of things, affective affordances, expansion of emotions, transitional object, power, sociomaterial dimensions, ontological safety, unworlding, affective economy, «stickiness» of things, habitus, Umwelt, sensitive objects, war.

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Setting the problem in its general form and its connection with important scientific or practical tasks.

Fundamental problematization of the status of material objects in modern sociological reflections marks decisive break with the classical semiotic tradition, which for decades was reducing thing to the level of passive substrate for translation gender, class or ethnic signifieds. In the paradigm dating back to M. Douglas and M. D. Sahlins, material



culture was considered as something like a «pseudo-language» that is acquiring dignity exclusively in the act of representation of human «I». However, epistemological shift known as a «material turn», placed thing in the epicenter of agency, endowed it with the status as an active co-constituent subjectivity and social structures [1]. This theoretical gesture, dialectically mirroring Hegelian concept of objectification, claims that things create people to the same extent that people create things. Process of subject's self-alienation, reifying his labor in material culture, followed by acquisition of more high level of self-awareness through interaction with this externalized objectivity, described by D. Miller in «Stuff», transforms material environment from mirrors to the necessary medium of human formation [2].

Connection of this problems with the most important scientific and practical tasks are revealed with particular acuteness in the liminal situations. It is precisely a war that is an extreme case of such a situations, like in the conditions of Ukraine in 2022-2026. Armed conflict that is systemically destructing habitual material environment (*Umwelt*) of the subject, produces ontological gap in the very structure of a personality that cannot be adequately understood in purely economic terms of damage or losses of property. When explosive wave knocks out windows housing, when the usual route to the store or water source becomes deadly, and clothes from an identity marker turns into a mean of biological survival, collapse of the «humility of things» happens. Humility of things is that invisible material framework which in peacetime time provided ontological safety, guiding behavior most effectively precisely because of its stealth. Research of this transformations has not only purely academic significance for sociology emotions, theory of practices and actor-network theory (ANT), but also practical dimension related to understanding mechanisms affective regulation, identity conservation and building strategies of resilience in a conditions of forced displacement, humanitarian disasters and post-traumatic restoration. Here thing stops to be a simple instrument, becoming an «obligatory passage point», dictating routes of movements, hierarchies of power and distribution of chances of survival.

Thus, the general scientific problem is a necessity of creation of a relational ontology capable to describe transformation of sociomaterial networks in conditions of their catastrophic destruction when the silent background of everyday life turns into an active one, often hostile, and sometimes saving participant of human dramas. This requires revision of Cartesian dualism delegating emotions exclusively to the mental sphere, and things – to the sphere of utilitarian or symbolic, in favor of holistic models where affect and materiality are being considered as co-constituting elements social reality.

Analysis of recent researches and publications in which the solution to this problem was initiated and which author relies; the allocation of previously unsolved parts of the general problem the article is devoted to. The theoretical foundation on which relies given research is formed at the intersection of several powerful intellectual concepts. Each this concept contributed to the «rehabilitation» of materiality, but none of them does not provide separately exhaustive analytical framework for understanding experience comparable to the experience of Ukrainian citizens in 2022-2026. Here the cornerstone stone role is performed by the Hegelian-Millerian theory of objectification, considering material culture as dialectical cycle of self-alienation and self-knowledge [2]. D. Miller, based on the «Phenomenology of Spirit», postulates that the subject does not precede the world of things, but is born in it and through it, which gives to the material environment the status of not just a mirror, but of an inalienable medium of human formation. Close logic, but in a different conceptual coordinate system, is developed by P. Bourdieu in the theory of habitus, showing that social order is incorporated into the subject not so much through explicit pedagogical instructions, but through routine, bodily rooted interaction with the material order of things [3]. Cultural dichotomies (male / female, high / low) are absorbed by a child through an organization of the house spaces; they silently form a system of sustainable dispositions that disguised under «second nature». E. Goffman, from his own side, conceptualized this invisible work of material as «framing»: objects are functioning like frame paintings that creates and constitutes parameters of appropriate actions, while remaining outside of cognitive focus [4]. Developing this one analogy, D. Miller and E. Gombrich claim that influence things eludes reflection precisely because they form the very structure of the situation, becoming an «obvious background» that does not require spelling and explication [5].

However key heuristic breakthrough in understanding how exactly this «background» gains power over the subject, was accomplished in the phenomenology of M. Heidegger, whose concept of «handiness» (*Zuhandenheit*) is deeply integrated into a modern research of materiality not only in philosophy, but also in sociology [1]. In normal conditions things remain in the status of «helpers» until they are functioning properly: their «humility» is exactly a condition of their maximum efficiency. When the usual thing breaks down or becomes inaccessible, it passes into the status of «present» (*vorhanden*), obsessive in its objectivity requiring forced attention and reflexivity efforts. Exactly this transition from *Zuhandenheit* to *Vorhandenheit* becomes a central mechanism of transformations materiality in war. Researchers working in the paradigm of «affective economics», in particular S. Ahmed, proposed the concept of «stickiness» to describe how affects do not «live» inside subject, but arise at the moment of contact with the object and «stick» to it, turning things in «containers» of emotions capable to save and broadcast experiences through time and space [6]. This theoretical line received a powerful development in works devoted to «sensitive objects», which accumulate affective value and capability to detonate powerful and bodily embodied memories even after decades [7].

Experience of wars as a catastrophic gap of social fabric was deeply understood through introduction concept of «un-worlding». This term describes process destruction habitual «attitude» (*Befindlichkeit, Stimmung*) of the subject, when war doesn't just deprive property, but knocks out the very soil of «being-in-the-world», creating existential vacuum and affective disorganization [8]. In this context, a special role is played by concept of «transitional object», dating back to the psychoanalysis of D. Winnicott, but actively sociologized in research of migration and refugees. Such object perceived in the modality «me / not-me», and functions as a critical mediator of identity, providing continuity of the «I» in conditions of biographical gap [9]. In parallel in cognitive philosophy and sociology of emotions, the researchers are actively developing thesis of «extended emotions», postulating that emotional episodes deep integrate external resources beyond neurophysiological borders of body and organism [10]. Material artifacts – from musical tools to mobile devices – act here not like as external triggers, but as constituent parts of the emotional process, forming functionally integrated gaining systems (FIGS). J. Farnsworth brilliantly applied this logic to analysis of digital devices that turn into «affective mobile self-objects» supporting ontological security through constant access to archives feelings [11].

Finally, a macrosociological framework for integration materiality and social connections provides concept of «sociomaterial networks», developed based on the principle of Spinoza-Simmel duality and the methodological ANT apparatus [12]. In this models social and material structures are two interrelated, co-constitutive systems: instrumental connections lead to joint use specific objects, and expressive (affective) connections – to immersion in general «material contexts», where objects connected functionally or spatially.

Despite the impressive theoretical synthesis a significant gap remains. This gap is exactly is to what this article is dedicated: the process of empirical verification of these concepts based on the material experience war unfolding «here and now» is still not enough researched. Most studies of «sensitive objects» and «un-worlding» are carried out on the historical material (for example, Sarajevo in the 1990s) or in the post-conflict perspective. The question that remains open is how exactly are working mechanisms of «stickiness», «affective affordances» and formation of transitional objects in the situation of ongoing armed high intensity conflict when destruction of material world is not of a memorized, but of a continuing nature. The connection between the collapse of the «modesty of things» and the surge of «magical thinking» in relation to material and digital artifacts is not fully explained also. The unsolved problem also is such a methodological task, as grasp «empiricism of sensation», that is, those affective states and tactile experiences that cannot be controlled through direct verbalization within the framework of standard sociological interview, but they constitute the very essence of interaction of man and things in extreme situations.

Formulating the purpose of article. The purpose of this article is to implement complex sociological conceptualization of transformations of ontological status of things in war conditions. This should be done based on the synthesis of theoretical resources of «material turn», phenomenology, sociology of emotions and actor-network theories. We also plan to conduct empirical verification of key theoretical constructs – «humility of things», «stickiness» and «affective economy», «transitional objects», «affective affordances» within the framework of the «Extended Emotions Paradigm» (ExE) – based on the series of deep biographical interviews with residents of the regions affected by combat actions. The research was aimed on the explication of mechanisms, by means of which material environment from the invisible «frame» of everyday life turns into an active, affective charged actant constituting strategies of survival, identity and emotional states of subject.

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Things in Sociology: Possibilities of Research and Problematization in War Context

In modern sociological reflections on the status of material objects underwent fundamental transformation from passive substrate of social meanings or epistemological background of the unfolding of communicative or (more broadly) social practices (that is, essentially, a «sign» or «symbol» in the spirit of classical semiotics) thing moved to the epicenter of agency, becoming an active participant of constitution of subjectivity and social structures [1]. This «material turn» requires revision of dichotomies of subject and object, especially in such liminal situations as war conditions when destruction of habitual material environment (*Umwelt*) exposes hidden mechanisms of affective attachment and ontological security [11].

In other words, there was a sociological and philosophical rehabilitation of things that have gone from representation to objectification. In particular, over decades dominated semiotic approach presented, for example, by the names of M. Douglas and M. Salins, who considered things predominantly as a «pseudo-language» representing gender, class or ethnic differences [2]. Within the framework of this paradigms clothes or home utensils were considered as deprived of internal values, acquiring dignity only via broadcast meanings human «I». However, modern theory, as if mirroring Hegelian concept of objectification, claims the reverse: things create people to the same extent that people create things – or, as a classic would put it, the firstborn of a feudal lord belongs to the entail to the same extent that the entail belongs to him.

Process of objectification, considered by D. Miller through the prism of Hegel's phenomenology of the spirit, represents by itself dialectical cycle of self-alienation: subject believes in something outside itself, reifies its labor in material culture and only then, through interaction with this «appearance», it reaches more high level of self-awareness [2]. Thus, the material environment is not just a mirror, but a necessary medium of human formation. In war conditions when this medium is subjected to destruction, it is not just a loss of property, but an ontological gap in the very structure of personalities [13].

Developing P. Bourdieu's theory of *habitus*, we see that culture is incorporated into the subject not through explicit training, but through routine interaction with the order of things. Material objects possess quality that D. Miller calls «humility of things»: they most effectively guide our behavior exactly when they remain unnoticed, forming an invisible framework or «frame» (in the terms of I. Goffman) for the social actions [14].

This raises the question of a deeper understanding of things. Previously exotic research subjects such as biography are coming under the sociological lens – for example, biographies of things or affective economy in crisis conditions. A thing in sociology no longer considered as a static object; it has «cultural biography», during which it can move from status of good into the status of a singular, sacralized object [8]. I. Kopytoff emphasizes that a seizure of thing from spheres exchange and its inclusion into the intimate world of the subject is taking place. In this world things accumulates affective value [15].

S. Ahmed suggests to analyze this process through the concept of «stickiness» and «affective economies» [6]. It implies that emotions do not «live» inside of subject, they arise at the moment of contact with an object and «stick» to it. Things in such conditions become «containers» for emotions, storing and transmitting affects through time and space. In war conditions certain objects – for example, humanitarian aid or miraculously survived objects of everyday life – turn into «sensitive objects», capable to deposit and then to detonate powerful (including bodily embodied) memories even after decades.

There is also a problematization of materiality in war conditions. Using phenomenological terms, war radically transforms *Umwelt* of subject, translating tools from the status of «handy» (*zuhanden*) to the status of «available» (*vorhanden*) objects of reflections [8]. Heidegger's concept of *Befindlichkeit* (disposition / attitude) indicates that our «being-in-the-world» is always affectively colored by a certain mood (*Stimmung*). War destroys this mood, creating what M. Povrzanovich Frickman calls «un-worlding» [7].

So, for adults residents of Sarajevo a chocolate bar from the humanitarian package became an affective reminder of degradation of their familiar world, a challenge to their dignity and identity. At the same time, for children who grew up in this conditions, the same objects participated in the primary process of the «creating the world» through sensory experience, forming other affective connection with materiality. This difference emphasizes that the thing does not possess an immanent affective charge; thing acquires this charge through social practices and historically deterministic context.

Ben Anderson introduces the concept of «affective atmospheres» that «haunt» fixed places and things [16]. Under the conditions of military conflict material traces (ruins, abandoned houses, expropriated property) become source of affective voltage that exceeds rational explanation. Things begin to act as agents of memory, materializing history and making it tangible through tactile contact [17].

Thus, no longer social networks are constituted, but socio-material networks in which extended emotions are practiced and executed. In conditions of social instability study of things requires interdisciplinary tools that combine sociology emotions, theory of practices and actor-network theory (ANT) [18]. ANT allows to consider things as «actants» – that is, as mandatory «transition points» with which human agents are forced to be considered during implementation their own projects. This brings us to the concept of «sociomaterial networks», where social connections and structure of materiality (mutual location of objects in space) are considered as two interrelated and co-constitutive systems [12]. Research shows that:

1. Instrumental connections (*cooperation*) lead to joint use specific items;
2. Expressive, affective connections (*friendship, kinship*) lead to immersion in common «material contexts», where objects connected functionally or spatially, even if they are not used jointly.

Thesis of «Extended Emotions» (ExE) states that material culture is an integral part of mechanisms of regulations of emotional states [18]. We manipulate with artifacts and space to (re)produce a certain practice and phenomenology of experiences [19]. In a war situation when familiar mechanisms regulations (home, clothes, music technologies) are destroyed or unavailable, personality finds himself in a state of «affective hacking» or disorganization caused by refusal of technical mediators.

In other words, thing acquires new statuses here – of a witness and of a mediator. In such contexts, the study of material cultures requires refusal of exclusively text or visual sources in favor of «empiricism of sensation». Methods of «sociomaterial network analysis» and «objective interviews» allow to identify meanings that cannot be articulated verbally. For things in war conditions perform as:

- *Transitional objects*: personal memorable things transported by refugees who encode feeling of family security and ensure continuity of their «I» in conditions of movements;
- *Containers of memory*: objects whose physical form (old age, wear and tear, breakdown) keeps traces of past, acting as «anchors» in networks of time and memory;

- *Agents social imaginary*: for example, photographs or symbols of disappeared states activating affective forces in the «spark gap» between image and relevance.

Thus, sociological study of things in war conditions opens opportunities for analysis of «depth ontology» hidden behind the facade of everyday life [9]. War problematizes materiality, transforming it from unnoticeable background in active, sometimes hostile, and sometimes saving participant of human dramas.

«Humility of Things» as a Concept and Phenomenon: Invisible Reality

The phenomenon denoted by Daniel Miller as a «*humility of things*», postulates that the most radical and profound impact on human behavior objects is not shown when they explicitly declare themselves. It is when they remain unnoticeable, familiar and trivial. In normal conditions material culture functions as invisible «frame» (in Goffmann's sense), which asks parameters of appropriate actions without requiring the subject's cognitive reflections. However situation of armed conflict radically destabilizes this material silence, transforming «modest» objects of everyday life into active, and often hostile forces that compel person to completely different strategies of existence.

This is the most acute ontological gap, and it turns out that when the gap goes from «handiness» to the reflexive and reflexed pain. Within the framework of M. Heidegger's phenomenology, deeply integrated into modern research materiality, things in everyday life are in the status of «handies» (*zuhanden*): we use a hammer or a door handle without realizing them as separate entities, while they are functioning properly. «humility of things» in peacetime time ensures that sociology calls ontological security – feeling stability of the world, supported by routine interaction with material environment [8]. War destroys this «humility» through physical destruction or deprivation of access to the familiar *Umwelt*.

When habitual thing breaks down or becomes inaccessible due to shelling or evacuation, she passes into the status of an «available» (*vorhanden*) and obsessive in its (anti)availability objectness, requiring forced attention and intellectual efforts. Behavioural patterns of people in war conditions are changing precisely because material framework of life stops to be a «modest» background. Subject is forced to reflect constantly on what earlier was automatic: how to get a water if the tap is not just an object, but a node in a destroyed network; how to warm up if clothes turned from identity marker to biological survival tool. Thus, the disappearance of the «humility of things» means collapse of *habitus*, in which body can't anymore rely on the usual material hints of environment [3].

The concept of «un-worlding» proposed to describe experience of residents of Sarajevo, demonstrates how loss of «humility» in things transforms to a perception [7]. «Modest» thing that has become a rare resource, begins to dominate behavior by causing «affective flashes» – from rage to despair. Whereas for children growing up in war conditions, the material world is created anew through sensory experience of interactions with what adults think ruins. What for one generation is lost «modest» everyday life, for another one becomes a primary material for «worlding». The ability of things to remain «modest» or become «flashy» depends on the historical context and personal biographies of subject.

For refugees and displaced persons the role of «humility of things» is replaced by the function of the «*transitional object*». In conditions when the entire social structure of the subject is destroyed, certain material artifacts – photographs, decorations, even children's toys – stop to be invisible elements of interior. They become «anchors» of memory, which personality physically carries across borders to provide continuity of «I».

Stickiness of things means here that they accumulate in themselves affects of past, peaceful relationships and broadcast them into the chaos of war time [6]. Behavior of person in this case is centered around preservation this minimum of materiality, which replaces lost social network. Paradoxically, it is in ultimate physical fragility these things acquire maximum agency, dictating routes of movements and priorities of security to a person.

From a systemic point of view, war reshapes the «socio-material networks» in which man and thing are equal actants. Social connections (friendship, cooperation) are materialized through common usage of objects or through immersion in general material contexts [12]. In the war context these networks are the object to «affective hacking»: when technical mediators (mobile devices, systems connections) come out from building, the social fabric begins to disintegrate, causing splashes of uncontrolled aggression or apathy, as well as other affects.

Humility of things in peacetime time supports «clean» social connections, but in conflict zone thing, as we already noted, becomes a «mandatory point transition». People's behavior begins to be determined by material assemblages: for example, the presence or absence of certain type of generator or special fuel dictates the structure of interaction inside communities, building new hierarchy of power and dependence. Thing is no longer «modest»; it is despotic distributor of chances of survival.

In war conditions things generally become witnesses and containers of memory, discarding the remnants of «humility». «Modest» objects of everyday life, remaining in destroyed houses, create «affective atmospheres» that Ben Anderson describes as something that «*haunt*» fixed places. Ruins are not silent; they possess agency, forcing people returning to their homes to enter into a painful tactile contact with the past.

Behavior of «returnees» is determined with these material traces: they are looking for «their» things in the rubble, so that they could reconstruct biographical identity. The thing that earlier was so «modest» that it was not

noticed (for example, an old cup), turns into a sacred artifact, capable of managing emotional condition subject through time, space and practices.

Thus, «humility of things» is a fragile state, possible only in a stable social environment. War transforms material background of an active participant of human drama and practices. Behavior of man in these conditions is a continuous process of adaptation to the «immodesty» of the material world, where every object either becomes saving medium of identity, or turns into material embodiment of threats and losses. Sociological understanding of this process requires recognition that in conditions of disasters things don't just symbolize social relationship, but directly constitute them, making people «feel their own way» through ruin of former material order.

One of the possible options for revealing the invisibility – and turning things into the visible – is the frame theory (E. Goffman and E. Gombrich [4; 5]). Based on the works of Erving Hoffmann and Ernst Gombrich, D. Miller claims that the material objects are functioning as «frames» – contextual framework that ask parameters of appropriate actions [2]. Just as a suitable picture frame does not draw itself to the eye, allowing to the viewer to focus on the canvas, material environment (interior, urban layout, clothing) directs our perceptions and reactions in a certain direction, remaining outside cognitive focus [7]. We don't notice influence of things because they form the very structure of the situation in which we are, becoming an «obvious background» that does not require reflections.

Another approach may be consideration of the processes and enculturation through *habitus* (P. Bourdieu). Here, the social order is enculturated into the subject not so much through explicit pedagogical instructions, as through routine interaction with the material order of things [13]. A child growing up in a certain type of housing (for example, in a Kabyle house) absorbs cultural dichotomies (top / bottom, male / female, light / dark) through bodily habits of handling space. Things silently «teach» a person, forming *habitus* – a system of stable dispositions that perceived individual as «second nature» [14]. As a result, the influence of material environment disguised under the natural inclinations of the subject.

The third approach is the above-mentioned approach of M. Heidegger to the phenomenological «readiness to hand». In it is described how functioning of material environment fundamentally cannot be noticed because its essence consists of uninterrupted provision of our «being-in-the-world» [1].

In the structure of **socio-material networks** we analyzed earlier the material context comes into play as a «given», which silently, modestly and without insistence, but confidently imposes restrictions on possible combinations actions. Objects in space are connected functionally (teapot and cup, computer and printer) and spatially, creating the basis on which unfold social relations [9]. These connections between things seem a person to be so self-evident that a person does not perceive them as a result of external pressure. Materiality has a «duration» which stabilizes social interactions, making them predictable precisely due to their «modest» immutability [16].

«Humility of things» interferes to notice their influence, because they work at the precognitive level of bodily practices. Things don't «shout» about their presence, but they softly direct acts of human subjects, forming *habitus* and creating frames for social actions. This leads to the fact that material environment in sociological research was ignored during long time as a secondary relatively to language or consciousness, although it is in its «silence» there is maximum of hidden power over human subjectivity [11; 19].

Affective Affordances, Extended Emotions, Stickiness, and «Transitional Objects»

In the theoretical landscape of «material turn» and «extended mind» affective affordances represent environmental elements that actually constitute subject of emotional life [20]. Traditional understanding of affordances, dating back to J. Gibson, were limited by the perception opportunities for motor action, however modern socio-philosophical reflection postulates availability of subjective-affective components that determine our interaction with environment. Part of this concept is the thesis of ExE, namely some emotional episodes deeply integrate external resources beyond neurophysiological borders of organism [10].

Affective affordance is determined as an object of material culture (artifact, tool, space) integrated into everyday life routine practice of the agent and capable to call stable certain emotional states and patterns of behavior [20]. In ExE system such objects are not considered as external triggers, but as constituent parts of emotional process [10]. This allows to overcome internalist orthodoxy and psychologistic reductionism, according to which emotions are locked inside individual brain or bodies. Key mechanism here is the formation of Functionally Integrated Gainful systems (FIGS) possessing three measurements:

1. *Coupling*, which means reliable causal connections between subject and object;
2. *Integration*, that is mutual influence of elements working as a united whole;
3. *Functional gain*, that is an implementation of new functions which are not available to subject and to object separately.

Affective affordances are functioning as external regulators of emotional practices and of *structuration*. In everyday life we manipulate with artifacts and spaces (music, lighting, clothing) to modulate their states that would be unattainable for the isolated subject without material equipment. For example, playing a musical instrument creates affective «reverse loop connections», where physical properties of object (tempo, sound intensity) control dynamics of experience in real life time, and experience controls the physical properties of the object.

From the point of view of social and material networks (structures of actants, according to B. Latour), the material context acts as a «given» that imposes limitations and possibilities for affective attunements [6]. The «humility of things» here manifests itself in the fact that they direct behavior most effectively exactly when they remain invisible «frames» for social actions [2]. Integration with such affordances increases trust agent to the object and allows to fit it into more broad, informed memory affective practices. In the era of digitalization status of critical affective affordances delegated to mobile devices [11]. The smartphone is becoming an «affective mobile self-object», providing ontological security and coherence of the self through constant access to archives of feelings and social networks. Affordances of mobile technologies allow to carry out the transfer and transposition of affective states through time and space that especially relevant in liminal situations such as experience of refugees.

Affective affordances also possess social length. For example, joint presence in the audience at a concert modifies aesthetic response of person, since reactions of other participants become a constitutive elements of one's own experience. This once again emphasizes that affordance is not static property of things, but a relational effect occurring in the «contact zone» between body, material object and social structure.

To describe critical, liminal and traumatic situations in a sociological perspective and analyse material cultures some psychoanalytic categories are mounted in sociological discourse. It is in this synthesis the conceptualization of *transitional object* (D. Winnicott's idea) is built. In other words, transitional object is a critical mediator of identity in the conditions of forced dislocations. For the subject who has undergone traumatic experience of refugees, such object is functioning as a link in the structure of the «ontological security», ensuring minimally necessary stability in a situation of total collapse of habitual social and material *Umwelt*. Such objects «work» in the integral biosphere of the «I». After all, transitional objects in a situation of movements are characterized by quality of «me / not-me»: they are perceived as a part of the subject's inner world, while remaining materially isolated entities. For example, a preservation of personal memorable things – photographs, jewelry or even elements clothes – for a refugee becomes a form of resistance to the «biographical rupture» caused by the war or persecution. These things act as «anchors» that fix identity in networks of memory and time when the physical «house» as a structure is destroyed or becomes inaccessible. Developing and sociologizing Heinz Kohut's ideas, one can interpret these artifacts as «self-objects» that are not perceived as something separate from the personality, but «complete» it, supporting internal harmony and coherence of adult «I». Personal things transported by refugees during their migratis, encode in themselves a feeling of family security, turning into portable containers of affective states. Here, of course, a more sociological turn would be to focus on the actants and non-human subjects of the social, but such a turn «hides» the production of emotions from the researcher.

Adapting another already given concept, one can say that *transitional objects* possess a property of «stickiness», accumulating «affective value» through prolonged contact with the body and social practice in the past. In the context of evacuation when social connections of subject are subjected to destruction, thing retains imprints of previous relations, allowing to individual to reconstruct one's biography in a new, often hostile context.

Materiality of these objects (their tactile characteristics, smell, wear) allows to «feel» the continuity of everyday practices and social connections even under conditions of absence of physical contact or institutional integration. Small items (watches, medallions, bags) worn directly on the body, act as the most effective *transitional objects* because they «absorb» the essence of owner and become an inalienable elements of his physicality.

In the digitalization era transitional status of object is delegated mobile more and more oftenly to devices and smartphones. For a refugee, a smartphone becomes more than just a tool of navigation, but an «affective mobile self-object», which mediates access to social networks, memories and archives feelings. Integration of the subject and the object reach the level when the object begins to be perceived as an «extension of oneself», providing presence of significant others through applications and media content. In situations of ultimate instability the digital environment of smartphone can be the unique guaranteed space of the «familiar» that protects from the final collapse of the identity into chaos.

In the conditions of crises or wars such a *transitional object* performs function of witness: its physical form preserves traces of violence or «miracle» of salvation, turning it into «sensitive object». Holding of such things allows to refugees to transform their passive role of «victim» into the active role of «memory keeper». Interaction with such objects turns out to be a constitutive part of the *worlding process*, shaping affective attachment to history of family or group. *Transitional objects* «stitch together» torned fragments of social time with the means of structures and emotions, allowing to save integrity for identity of refugee in spite of spatial and social disintegration.

Emotions and Things in Sociology Research: Towards a Sociological Synthesis

Synthesis of sociology of emotions and sociology of things marks by itself a transition from representative paradigms to relational ontology where affect and materiality are being considered as co-constituting elements of social reality [21]. The possibilities of such an interdisciplinary conjugations rooted in overcoming of Cartesian dualism, which during long time delegated emotions to mental sphere, and things – to the spheres of utilitarian or

symbolic [1]. Within the «material turn» framework thing stops to be only a passive sign and acquires the status of an «actant» capable to directing, modulating and accumulating of affective flows [13].

One of the most promising strategies of connecting of research of things and emotions is a concept of sociomaterial networks, which is based on the principle of Spinoza-Simmel duality [12]. In this model, social connections and material structures are being considered as two interconnected systems where «objects of usage» act as a binder link between actors. This study proves that the type of social connections determines the nature of interaction with materiality:

- Instrumental connections (*collaborations*) lead to joint use of specific artifacts (tools, materials), that creates «material body» for working processes;
- Expressive connections (*emotional affection*), on the contrary, not always suggest direct separation of objects, but contribute immersion of actors in general «material contexts» – spaces where things connected by the functional or spatial closeness (for example, being in the same kitchen with different cups, but within the same atmosphere).

Thus, emotions do not simply accompany interaction with a thing, but they structure the landscape of materiality itself, determining which objects become knots of solidarity, and which – individual markers of autonomy.

Second opportunity synthesis is revealed through ExE theory, which claims that material artifacts are not just external stimuli, but a constituent parts of emotional process [10]. Emotion does not end «under the skin», but is distributed in FIGS, including biological body and culture environment. An example of such integration can be musical tools or digital devices that perform as «affective affordances», providing subject possibilities for modulation of states that are inaccessible for isolated brain. In sociological terms, this means that research of «emotional habitus» (in the terms of E. Illouz) should include analysis of technological and material mediators that provide stability and coherence of the «I» [11]. The smartphone in this context turns into an «affective mobile self-object», supporting ontological safety of person through permanent access to archives of feelings and networks of recognition. All this allows us to analyze things through the prism of «affective economics», where feelings (hate, fear, love) are produced as an effect of circulation between objects and signs [10].

Synthesis of research of emotions and things allows to see the process of transformations of good in «singular object» (according to I. Kopytoff) as a process of affective investments [17]. Things become «memory containers» in which the work of care and emotional time of families «freezes», and in conditions of crisis or movements exactly these «transition objects» allow refugees to hold the integrity of biographies, being a material anchors in networks of lost time.

Study of materiality allows to sociology of emotions move from analysis of discourses to the analysis of «affective atmospheres» and spatial configurations [1]. W. Griswold and colleagues offer to distinguish:

- Physical position (*position*), that is material characteristics and mutual location of objects;
- Cognitive location (*location*), that is semantic framework that actors impose on this space.

Synthesis occurs at the moment when material «choreography» of the exhibition or home forces body to certain affective reactions (for example, feeling claustrophobia in a narrow corridor or reverence for the sacred object) [9]. Things create a «tuning» (*Stimmung*) which precedes rational comprehension of situations, forming invisible frame for social actions [8].

Compound of sociology of emotions and sociology of things requires specific methods capable of capturing «empirics of sensations». Among most productive opportunities one can stand out:

- *Object Interviews*, that is usage things as a mediator that stimulates memories and affective *splashes* that is impossible to verbalize within the ordinary interview;
- *Wardrobe Interviews*, or studying clothes as the most intimate materiality, «imbued with essence» of the owner [19];
- *Guided Tours* in which researcher as «embodied instrument» follows the informant in his *Umwelt*, recording not only his story, but also his «haptic contact», the rhythm of movement and emotional pauses before certain objects;
- *Visual mapping and photo-elicitation*, which allow to identify «dormant things» as the objects excluded from everyday usage, but retaining a potential of affective activations [14].

Integration of sociology of emotions and sociology of things allows to overcome reductionism of both disciplines. Emotions receive a «body» and material support, becoming observed through the practice of handling of objects, and things gain a «voice» by becoming active participants of social formation [6]. This synthesis opens access to the «deep ontologies» of everyday life, where social order is maintained not only through norms and values, but also through a dense fabric of affective charged materiality [2].

To verify these conceptual developments, a series of in-depth biographical interviews were conducted using remote, informal conversations (using Zoom videoconferencing services; the fieldwork took place in April 2026; average length of interview was 65-70 minutes). Eleven interviews were conducted with representatives of Kharkiv and the surrounding region, Donetsk, Sumy, Zaporizhia, and Dnipropetrovsk regions, aged 18 to 71; four men and seven women were interviewed. Analysis of empirical material allows to explicate deep isomorphism

between theoretical constructs of «material turn» and alive experience subjects in a state of extreme existential crisis. War as a limit manifestation of *social un-worlding* radically transforms ontological status of everyday things, turning them from unnoticeable background in active mediators of survival and guardians of identity. In particular, we have repeatedly recorded descriptions of things as «transitional objects» and «self-objects» when in the forced deterritorialization and rupture of social connections the thing takes on itself function of maintenance the continuity of the «I», becoming a material anchor that binds subject with a lost world or absent significant Others.

R3, F, 40, Zaporizhzhia: *«You know, I have an ordinary children's toy – my son's rabbit. We were separated when I took him abroad, and then I had to come back. This rabbit stunk with saliva, chocolate, it's dirty, but I don't wash it. I lie down when I'm sleeping – I put it next to my face... This the only thing that physically brings back the feeling that my child is so close that I can hear his breathing. I'm an adult woman, I understand that it's just a piece of synthetic, but my nerves are on the edge, and only this smell is calming me. It's like a drug. I can't sleep without this rabbit because there's silence in the house without a child. – the most loud sound in the war».*

R2, F, 69, Slavyansk: *«Oh, baby... I took that God's Mother icon, which I took out of the house in 2014... I still hold each one in my hands every evening. It is already completely worn, the paint has peeled off, but that's the only thing that smells as my old apartment – a little bit of incense, a little bit of wax, a little bit of dust... When I miss home, when I miss that life, I just pick it up and cry. This it's not even a prayer, this is a conversation. I talk to it like I talk to my mother. It absorbed all my tears. And when the exploded bomb I was in Kiev, I grabbed my bag with documents, and on top of it – this icon. Because if it survives, then I will survive too. Maybe it's funny, but it's true».*

Stickiness is also well pronounced: affect and affective economies in which affect «sticks» to objects through the history of contacts, turning them into concentrates of emotions that continue to «emit» and to affect the subject later.

R10, F, 24, Dnepr: *«My hope is the book «The Master and Margarita», I've read it to pieces. I took it with me on the train when for the first time I went to take a rest in the West Ukraine in 2023. It smelled with the paper, like in a library of my childhood. And I suddenly realized that culture is higher than wars, that manuscripts don't burn, and we won't burn. As for hopelessness – it is a mourning tape from a friend's funeral. I folded it and hid in a box, but sometimes I stumble upon her. Black, satin, and cold blows from it – so cold that me paralyzes. Every time I see it, I seem to back to the cemetery, and I understand that the war is a conveyor belt. And not a single yellow dress will never muffle this pain...».*

P1, M, 71, Kharkiv: *«There is, of course. It is an old Bernes' vinyl record «Dark night». I listened her in the basement when the light was from the power bank. I'm generally a music lover. And this melody stuck to me – and now it is spinning in my head at night. Emotion is sticky, viscous – longing for those who are no longer there, and at the same time hope... But mostly this is a negative feeling because I feel like I'm reliving that night when the neighbor was killed. The record became like magnet for my grief».*

We also discovered effective affordances and tactile regulation within the framework of ExE. If within the framework of the theory of ExE material objects perform as external regulators (*scaffolding*), allowing subject to modulate their states through sensory contact, our respondents demonstrate this in real practices.

R6, F, 32, Kharkiv: *«I bought a silk bed linen for me after the first month of war. It seemed as a madness, there is no money, they are shooting, and I am buying underwear. But I thought: if they kill me, at least on a beautiful fabrics. And I laid it out in the hallway where we slept during shelling. This my way to say to death: «Look, I'm still a woman, I'm still alive». When I am really scared I run my hand over this silk, it's cool and smooth, and this feeling of luxury among horror... It gives me back a sense of control over my body. I cling to tactile feelings like drowning at a straw. My husband says I'm crazy with this silk, but it helps more than sedative».*

In fact, we see a description of silk linen as a tool of the restoration of control over the body and life.

R9, F, 27, Kharkiv: *«My woolen sweater that my grandmother have tied before death. It is prickly, scary, with deer. However, when began explosions in Kharkiv and we were sitting without heating, I put it on and did not take it off for a week. Now for me it is an armor. I feel that my grandmother's hands give me a hug. I talk to her when it is hard. I run with my fingers through the wool, and this ritual grounds me. Mom says, «Throw it away, this junk». Nevertheless, I can't. There is so much anger and fear in me that the only thing that me does softer is her sweater. This is as a container for mine hysterics».*

Things are practiced also as «anchors» of memory and witnesses, that is, as «sensitive objects». This is especially significant in the context of destruction of habitual *Umwelt*, which translates things from the status of «helpers» to the status of «sensitive objects», which materialize history and make it tangible.

R4, F, 52, Sumy: *I now carry it with me in my bag documents for the house and an old key to the gate, which is no longer there – it flew off its hinges and broke after explosion. The key is heavy, produced in USSR. When they announce air-raid alarm, I grab my bag and feel this heaviness on the shoulder. It's such a nightmare, but I think: «Here, I'm carrying mine home with me». So I feel like I'm not homeless, though*

in fact I don't even know where my house is. I'm squeezing this key in my hand so much that it hurts to keep from screaming. It's cold, and this cold iron bring me back to reality. I hate it. I love this key and I hate it at the same time. It is a proof that my life was real, not just a dream».

R7, F, 59, Chernihiv: *«After we came out from basement in Chernihiv, I couldn't look at food. But I still had a can of canned tomatoes that I canned in the summer of 2021. I carried it around with me. under shelling. Now it stands on the shelf as a museum exhibit. I won't open it. I'll never open it – especially it is small, just a liter. This is a symbol of the fact that I was once the mistress, that I had a vegetable garden, that I built some plans for a winte. And when I look at it, I remember the smell of tops, summer, heat – it «covers» me. I cry and laugh. War did this can a monument of mine previous life. I don't know if it will be do I have I still have a garden, but this can is a proof that I can to create something, not just survive».*

There is also a collapse of the fundamental fact of the «humility of things», in which the formation of material agency happens. War exposes and deconstructs «humility of things», forcing the subject to fix reflexively on objects that in peaceful time were the invisible background of everyday life.

P1, M, 71, Kharkiv: *«Positive – this is, probably, gratitude. When I take this thermos in my hands, it brings me to tears. I'm grateful that I have it there is, that it survived everything, that I'm not alone. The warmth goes from it, and it seems that we'll endure it all. And the negative ones... that's it: anger. Wild anger when flew nearby, windows knocked out, and the first thought: « I hope only it doesn't hit the thermos». I'm standing among the glass and I realize that I'm more worried about this piece of metal than about the windows. I'm ashamed even».*

Otherwise, the thermos appears as an «accomplice» and a link to the family.

R8, M, 24, Kharkiv: *«I remember something like calm sadness, this even nice – look at your own student's document and remember what was. This is an anchor. And negative – this fierce anger. I look at this photo of me as a kid and think: «Why you stole these years from me?». I want to tear apart this document because it reminds me of how much I've lost. But I can't – it is also a part me».*

Student ticket exists here not simply as a thing, but as a «portal» to the pre-war «I», to its statuses, roles and connections. It is not surprising that in such conditions the reconstitution and actualization of the magical takes place. thinking where impenetrability and epistemicity (according to K. Knorr-Cetina) of digital actants becomes a powerful catalyst for different processes. Modern materiality includes digital traces that are endowed with substantial force of impact on reality (*quasi-objects*).

P5, M, 18, Kharkiv: *«Yes, I didn't even know that it's so important before it starts full-scale. I took with me to the bomb shelter headphones, but the point isn't the music. There was a recording of a voice message from a friend, who is at the front now. I don't listen it because I'm afraid that it will be erased by chance, but I'm looking at the line in the dialogue where it says «audio message 00:45». And it's like a talisman. I feel that if this recording is on the phone and in these specific headphones – nothing will happen to my friend. This is magical thinking, I know. But when hell is around, that's the only way you can hold on. I even charge my phone when there's no power with a power bank, so God forbid I don't lose it this number «00:45». This is my connection with him».*

Conclusions and prospects for further exploration in chosen direction. Our synthesis of theoretical reflections of the «material turn» with empirical analysis of living experience wars allows us to draw a number of conclusions about the transformation of ontological status of things in the conditions of extreme existential crisis. First of all, the concept of «humility of things», introduced for description of peaceful everyday life, finds in the situation of wars its own dialectical denial, becoming the key to understanding of the scale of rupture happened in society. In normal conditions material culture guides behavior, forms habitus and supports ontological safety precisely because of its stealth, functioning as invisible «frame» in the Goffmann's sense. War, as showed our analysis, produces radical destabilization this material silence, translates objects from the status of «handy» (*zuhanden*), smoothly integrated into bodily practices, to the status of «presented» (*vorhanden*), intrusive in their objectivity and requiring permanent reflexive efforts. Our data demonstrate that this transition is experienced by subjects as a painful collapse of habitual *Umwelt*. When a man in Kharkov is thinking that he worries about the safety of the old thermos more than about the windows broken with explosive wave; or when woman carries it around with her under by shelling the key to the gate that no longer exists, – we fix exactly that forced reflexivity and shift in hierarchy significances that signify transformation of material background in active dictating logic of behavior of drama participant.

Empirical verification of the concept of «stickiness» and «affective economics» confirmed that affects in conditions traumatic experiences do not dissipate, but «stick» to objects, transforming them into condensates emotions that can «glow» and cause powerful, bodily embodied reactions later long-term time. Stories of respondents about vinyl record that became a «magnet for grief», or about a funeral tape, which «blows with the cold» and which paralyzes only in appearance, are laboratory clean illustrations of how things become a memory containers at the same time retaining and activating affective charge of the past. It seems especially significant the identified phenomenon of «magical thinking» in relation to digital quasi-objects: a voice message from a friend on the front, or the line in the dialogue «audio message 00:45» is endowed with the substantial power of the amulet. In

this a specific to modern war form of affective economies manifests itself. In this form «epistemic impenetrability» of digital artifacts does not reduce them, but, on the contrary, catalyzes them, their agency, turning them into «self-objects» that support continuity of social connections in spite of physical distance and the threat of death.

Analysis confirmed high explanatory power of the theory of «Extended Emotions» and the concept of «affective affordances» as applicable to the military experience. Stories about silk bed underwear purchased during the first month of full-scale wars as a method of bodily re-articulation, or about the prickly grandma's sweater that functions as «armor» and «a container for hysterics», indicate that subjects in extreme situations are spontaneously building Functionally Integrated Gainful systems (FIGS). They manipulate tactile characteristics of materials objects (smoothness silk, prickliness of wool) to modulate their emotional states in ways that would be inaccessible for isolated psychics. This is direct empirical confirmation of thesis that material artifacts are not external triggers, but constitutive parts of emotional process. Under the war conditions this material regulation affect becomes literally vital practice replacing destroyed social mechanisms of support and pharmacological means.

The study made it possible to explicate mechanism transformations things in «transitional objects» and «memory anchors» in the situation of forced dislocations and «un-worlding». Things that in peacetime life were parts of unnoticeable household background, – old icon, can of tomatoes, children's toy with the smell of saliva and chocolate, – acquire the status of sacralized artifacts that materialize history and those who make it her tangible. In its quality of sensitive objects they become links in the structure of the «ontological security», ensuring minimally necessary stability in conditions of total collapse of habitual social and material order. The function of «witness» and «memory container» performed by these things, allows to individuals to transform the passive role of «victim of circumstances» into the active role of the «keeper of memory», that is critically important for maintenance of integrity of biographical narrative. These objects operate in the «me / not-me» modality, being simultaneously and deeply an intimate part of a subjective world, and material isolated an entity capable to retain on oneself imprints of previous relationships even when these relationship are physically lost.

From a theoretical point of view, the study contributes to overcoming the Cartesian dualism in sociology of emotions, demonstrating productivity of relational ontologies where affect and materiality, social connections and structures of material environment are being considered as two interrelated, co- constitutive systems. War appears in this context as a marginal, almost an experimental case in which mechanisms hidden in peaceful everyday life for «humility of things» are exposed. It is precisely at the moment of breakdown, loss or forced deprivation of material mediator its fundamental role in the assembly of subjectivity and social fabrics becomes visible. Synthesis of the theory of «sociomaterial networks» with the concept of «affective atmospheres» and theory of ExE opens an opportunity to create complex analytical models that allow to describe the behavior of man in conditions of disasters. This behavior is described as not as a reaction to isolated incentives, but as a continuous process of «feeling» of his own way through ruins of former material order.

Perspectives of further research in the selected direction are seen in several planes. Firstly, cross-cultural and cross-conflict verification of identified mechanisms is necessary: are described patterns of transformations of things in «transitional objects» and the collapse of «humility» universal; what specifics is imposed by the cultural context and by the nature of combat actions. Secondly, special attention deserves further in-depth studying of «digital materiality» and its role in «affective war economies». If in our research we only recorded the phenomenon of «magical thinking» in relation to voice messages and digital traces, then in perspective systematic analysis of how exactly smartphones, cloud storage and social networks are becoming «affective» mobile «self-objects» is necessary, as also their role in post-traumatic reconfiguration identity. Thirdly, methodological program research should be expanded towards more active use of «empirics of sensations», especially «objective interview», method of «guided tours» with tactile contact, visual mapping and photo-elicitation. Only such multimodal tools will allow us to capture those layers of affective experience that elude verbal articulations, but which, as our study has shown, are central in understanding of connections of man and thing. Finally, theoretically the task of building a «depth ontology» of everyday life in conditions of chronic instability, that took into account not only heroic narratives survival, but also the «dark side» of affective materiality – processes of aggregation of aggression, resentment and trauma fixations, deposited in «sensitive objects». Such a program will allow not only promote fundamental sociological theory, but also to develop practical recommendations for specialists in the field of psychosocial support and humanitarian work.

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РЕЧІ У (ВІД)ВТОРЕННІ ЕМОЦІЙНОГО: СКРОМНІСТЬ, ЛИПКІСТЬ І КОНТЕКСТИ НАДЗВИЧАЙНОЇ СИТУАЦІЇ

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У статті здійснюється соціологічний аналіз трансформації онтологічного статусу матеріальних об'єктів в умовах війни. На основі теоретичного синтезу «матеріального повороту» в соціології, феноменологічної теорії М. Гайдеггера, теорії практик П. Бурдьє, акторно-мережевої теорії та теоретичного доробку в галузі соціології емоцій концептуалізується перехід речей зі статусу «скромного» фону повсякденності у статус активних актантів соціальної дії. Досліджується феномен «скромності речей» (за Д. Міллером), який у мирний час забезпечує онтологічну безпеку завдяки функціонуванню матеріальної культури як невидимого фрейму, що не потребує когнітивної рефлексії. Надається характеристика війни як процесу «роз-світування», що спричиняє колапс звичного *Umwelt*, перетворюючи «підручні» (*zuhanden*) об'єкти на «наявні» (*vorhanden*), нав'язливі у своїй ворожості або рятівні значущості. Особлива увага приділяється аналізу афективних економік, де речі набувають властивості «липкості» (*stickiness*) (за С. Ахмед), акумулюючи та транслюючи емоційні стани крізь час і простір. Обґрунтовується твердження, що в ситуації вимушеного переміщення речі виконують функцію «перехідних об'єктів» та «селф-об'єктів», підтримуючи цілісність біографічної ідентичності в умовах розриву соціальних зв'язків. Презентується методологічна рамка дослідження, що інтегрує теорію «розширених емоцій» з аналізом соціоматеріальних мереж, де емоційний процес не обмежується нейрофізіологічними межами індивіда, а конститується завдяки функціонально інтегрованим системам «суб'єкт – артефакт». Емпірична верифікація теоретичних конструктів здійснюється завдяки предсталенню серії глибинних біографічних інтерв'ю з використанням об'єктноцентрованих технік. Доводиться, що матеріальні об'єкти в умовах війни виступають контейнерами пам'яті, афективними аффордансами (підказками) щодо тактильної регуляції

емоційних станів, якими ідентичності та агентами магічного мислення. Цифрові артефакти розглядаються як «афективні мобільні селф-об'єкти», що забезпечують мінімальну когерентність «Я» завдяки постійному доступу до архівів почуттів. Робиться висновок про внесок здійсненого дослідження у розвиток реляційної онтології, зокрема у подолання картезіанського дуалізму суб'єкта та об'єкта.

Ключові слова: речі, матеріальний поворот, скромність речей, афективні аффорданси, розширені емоції, перехідний об'єкт, влада, соціоматеріальні мережі, онтологічна безпека, роз-світування (unworlding), афективна економіка, «липкість» речей, габітус, Umwelt, чутливі об'єкти, війна.

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