

Discourse studies and the material turn: from representation (facts) to participation (concerns)

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Journal for Discourse Studies

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Discourse studies and the material turn: From representation (facts) to participation (concerns)

Abstract: Discourse studies has shown how language use matters in various political and societal settings. With the »material turn«, the focus on language has meant that discourse studies have been deemed as a symbolic and representationalist approach. In contrast, this paper shows how discourse studies have been concerned about material issues, language included, in local achievements of sense. »Nexus analysis« is introduced as an ethnographic framework to study »assemblages« and affects as entangled material-discursive practices, where close analysis of embodied practices is crucial. Nexus analysis encourages participatory research, providing a framework for agential research on matters of concern.

Keywords: assemblages, agential realism, new materialism, nexus analysis

Zusammenfassung: Die Diskursforschung hat gezeigt, welche Bedeutung der Sprachgebrauch in verschiedenen politischen und gesellschaftlichen Bereichen hat. Mit dem »material turn« hat die Konzentration auf Sprache dazu geführt, dass die Diskursforschung als symbolischer und repräsentationalistischer Ansatz betrachtet wurde. Im Gegensatz dazu zeigt dieser Beitrag, wie sich die Diskursforschung mit materiellen Aspekten, einschließlich der Sprache, in lokalen Sinngebungen beschäftigt hat. Die Nexus-Analyse wird als ethnographischer Rahmen zur Untersuchung von »Assemblagen« und Affekten im Sinne verflochtener materiell-diskursiver Praktiken eingeführt, in dessen Kontext die eingehende Analyse verkörperter Praktiken entscheidend ist. Die Nexus-Analyse fördert zudem partizipatorische Forschung und bietet einen Rahmen für die agentielle Erforschung für »matters of concern«.

Schlagwörter: Assemblagen, agentieller Realismus, Neuer Materialismus, Nexus-Analyse

1 Introduction

Discourse studies have in various ways tried to learn from the past, analyse the present, or look for under- or overlaying structures to identify various trends, trajectories and ›taken-for-granted‹ ways of being and doing. The concept »discourse« covers a lot of methodological ground in humanities and social sciences. In linguistics, the term denotes an interest in language in use, rather than language-internal syntactic structures. Both linguistic and social scientific discourse studies have interests in revealing the power of language in the construction of identity, political and in general societal issues. Coming from applied linguistics I have always had a strong interest in how language means, also as a visual or material entity, and how that meaning is accomplished through interaction – whether

co-present, mediated, synchronous or asynchronous (e.g. Raudaskoski 1995, 1996, 1997, 1999), in other words, what nowadays is generally called »multimodal discourse« or »interaction analysis«. This is why I have been following with interest the recent material turn in social sciences and humanities. One of the aims that the material turn has is to come close to the concreteness of action and practices, instead of considering them through pre-defined concepts that established theories and, therefore, established analytical tools can increase knowledge about. Language in its many manifestations has a role in this, but not on its own and not separated from its context of use, the ongoing practices. There seems to be a need to revise or find analytical methods that would match the theoretical interest in the material-discursive or material-semiotic nature of emergent phenomena. The present paper offers one solution that combines close analyses of actual practices and their linkages through tracing the connections to other people, places and material-discursive practices. The approach is called »mediated discourse analysis« (MDA) and the framework for practical research »nexus analysis« (NA). I find NA a very flexible way of starting analysis from concrete phenomena that are always enmeshed in political and social realities. In the present case, NA provides a way to combine close, ethnomethodological conversation analysis (EMCA) inspired, multimodal (material) analysis with the same level of concreteness and a path for tracing the complex connections to other places, participants and practices. Importantly, NA also encourages a more participatory approach to attending situations. This way, the researcher becomes a visible participant (cf. action research), also in the data, which means added transparency to the collection of research material, making possible an analytical disentanglement from the *in situ* complexities of practices as local accomplishments (researcher reflection as participation, rather than reflecting pre or post data gathering). What people do is important, but always as potentiated in the actual material situation – both as affording or inhibiting certain actions but also as affording or inhibiting certain types of »normal« participation. The former has been a focus in recent multimodal EMCA (»why that now?« (e.g. Bilmes 1985)) research, but for me the latter makes it possible to ask another type of why that now questions that connect to larger issues. The general hope for applied studies is to be able to instruct in the improvement of existing places and processes. Instead of aiming at upgraded stability, the new materialist logic focuses on the fluidity and situated fixity of situations and, therefore, a possibility to explore and open up new avenues of participation.

»Assemblage« is an important concept in new materialist research, as it focuses on local doings, sayings and feelings and at the same time highlights the role of other places, people and practices as fundamental for what is felt and what is going on in the situation (see e.g. Müller 2015 for an introduction). Assemblage tackles the two aspects of discourse that I have always found central for understanding concrete practices: how do we carry out various types of activities locally and how do these accomplishments relate to the larger goings on in the world? »Actor-network theory« (Latour 2005) has a focus on the connections between phenomena/practices (assemblages) and especially on the impact of the material surroundings on those, without anthropomorphizing objects. Deleuzian relational affective assemblages have been important for many feminist new materialists, especially within the strands of psychology where bodily sensations have

become a special interest. Both types attend to what Latour (2004) calls »matters of concern«: rather than solely producing (remarkable) facts about the world, research should seek for more direct contribution to the world's ongoing becoming.

Karen Barad (2007) with her »agential realism« has become a household name in the new materialist circles. Her background is in quantum physics. She has widened Niels Bohr's understanding of the material empirical test situation as having a crucial impact on the results. Bohr showed that light manifests as a particle or a wave depending on the material setup that is used to measure it. That is, the way we understand the basic nature of the material world depends on the material setup of the measuring devices. Barad has broadened the sphere to outside of the lab to show how certain types of research come about and with what consequences. She accentuates the importance of understanding that every type of (research) practice excludes another possibility. Quantum physics is not about uncertainty (we cannot know what is going on) but about indeterminacy (we fix certain outcomes). Research contributes to the »becoming of the world«, instead of just finding out about how it works: researchers have no time out from responsibility to the world. In her »ethico-onto-epistem-ology« the division into nature, culture and society disappears. Barad, like Latour, starts with local phenomena out of which types of people, understandings, facts, and so on, arise through material-discursive practices. As the material essence of light can be regarded as a wave or a particle depending on the measuring devices, Barad insists that evidence (empirical methods) should be part of all theory building.

For both Barad and Latour, epistemology does not concern the theorists' »better-knowing« take on the world, but, rather, which effects the research undertaking that always is part of the world's becoming leaves in the world. The present paper aims at showing how the onto-epistemological work concerns all material-discursive undertakings, with a special focus on how human participants' knowledge production takes place in all its (embodied and material) concreteness; how onto-epistem-ology works in practice. An example of empirical data analysis is based on video footage where the task-at-hand for the discourse team was to document an experimental situation. However, they were also participants and visible their 360° video materials. The work of the team is not the core focus in the analysis, though its potential for supporting recent methodological developments will be discussed. Instead, a framework is presented for how to approach analytically practices where the material environment enables different knowledges for those who participate in concrete situations.

»Representationalism« is regarded as one of the serious problems in traditional approaches to study the world that Barad wants to challenge with »agential realism«. Barad explains:

»representationalism is the belief in the ontological distinction between representations and that which they purport to represent; in particular, that which is represented is held to be independent of all practices of representing.« (Barad 2003, S. 804)

In other words, epistemological interests are blind to ontological realities. Barad connects this to a problem with language:

»Language has been granted too much power. The linguistic turn, the semiotic turn, the interpretative turn, the cultural turn: it seems that at every turn lately every ›thing‹—even materiality—is turned into a matter of language or some other form of cultural representation.« (Barad 2003, S. 801)

This is why discourse studies, with its origins in language (use) have been deemed inherently representationalist among many feminist and other new materialists (e.g. Lather 2016). My own discourse studies researcher history could be seen, pace the discursive psychologist Jonathan Potter (1996), a development from being interested in various types of linguistic and visual representations to studying practices (e.g. Raudaskoski 2010) in which language also is a material »affordance«, instead of contributing as a purely symbolic entity.¹

The research methods used with humanist and social scientific agential realist research do not seem to follow the principle of evidence being part of theory, at least if the interest is in the evolving phenomena and the ensuing exclusions and inclusions. Barad (2007) emphasizes the emergent, rather than predefined, features and figures of practice through the concept »intra-action« (in contrast to *interaction*). Instead, the agential realists often use interviews or literary works, in other words representations of the phenomena that are of interest. Other traditional quantitative and qualitative methods also are in use, even if the analytical diggings would differ from traditional foci (e.g. Fox/Allerd 2017). Of course, scholars generally have a good understanding of the limits of their research methods. The question in this paper concerns whether discourse studies for its part have potential for a framework for empirical methodology that would enable studies of situated practices as »assemblages« and »entanglements« in order to provide agential realistic evidence for world making.

In education research, St. Pierre (2014) has launched a post qualitative movement to overcome some of the problematics of established qualitative research methods. This central point sometimes leads to the analyst's very creative and as such interesting takes on traditional research data: the data becomes mouldable clay.² One can ask if this type of analysis, welcome as such as a new method, represents more the researcher's imaginative abilities to experience the world from the point of view of another person. How best to get to the *participant perspective* has been a central theme in EMCA, too, but the pursuit starts with the *in vivo* participation itself (e.g. in an interview). Therefore, the focus in the present paper is on how participants in different configurations refigure the world; *their* onto-epistem-ology. This is why humanistic scholars in an experimental workshop were analysed closely from the perspective of their embodied, materially situated practices, including language use while (accounting for) perceiving: »Humans do not simply assemble different apparatuses for satisfying particular knowledge projects but are themselves specific parts of the world's ongoing refiguring« (Barad 2007, S. 184 f.).

1 Raudaskoski (2009) provides a thorough ethnomethodological discussion of this Gibsonian term.

2 e.g. Lenz Taguchi's (2012) re-analysis of interview

2 Connections to discourse studies

As noted by Keller (2019) there is a wealth of discourse analytic studies that have taken materiality (of bodies and environments) into account and done that from a practice perspective. Among the key thinkers in general discourse theory that have included materiality in their definition of social practices as discourse are Laclau and Mouffe (1985). Their approach underlines both the contingency and indeterminacy of conceptualising the material world. However, the analytical focus is not so much empirically on practices and material settings, but more on how the ›real/material‹ is represented or interpreted through local signification. Most of the analyses where discourse theory is used concern media and other representations, inclusive interviews, rather than considering discourses as materially *place-bound* processes, something the present paper hopes to exemplify through analysis. Iedema's (1999) analysis of recontextualizations (that he later called »resemiotization«) is a good example of how materiality was first tackled in discourse analytically. The study was not a multimodal analysis of institutional interactions, but – as such interesting – systemic functional linguistic analysis of a succession of significant talk and text in relation to future material reality (hospital building). However, Iedema's was not just a »troubling« but a »useful« discourse study (cf. Childers 2009). Childers regards feminist approaches as a general way to focus on becoming, materiality and critical engagement, and uses especially Barad in her studies (Childers 2013). I find Barad's approach a theoretical understanding of phenomena which makes it possible to diffract two discourse studies approaches that have been deemed to be inconsumerable: (the multimodal turn in) ethnomethodological conversation analysis (EMCA) and critical approaches to discourse and society.

Barad highlights »becoming«, the processual nature of phenomena, that is, how (material) entities, ideas, discourses, etc. emerge, and does that with a full understanding of their complex entanglements to other places, practices and participants. Meanwhile, Latour has been questioning about the academy's ability to change their research to tackle new threats. This should also be a concern for discourse studies: »Are we not like those mechanical toys that endlessly make the same gesture when everything else has changed around them?« (Latour 2004, S. 225). Garfinkel (1967) started ethnomethodology with a relatable point, as a reaction to the fact producing machinery that sociology had become with its standardized theories and research methods that for Garfinkel took societal phenomena for granted. St. Pierre's (2014) questioning of qualitative methods that have turned out to be fixed rules blindly followed has the same implications. Garfinkel's take on social practices as the site where social order is constantly sustained comes close to, among others, Barad's agential realism: we accomplish practices in concrete situations that we cannot predict beforehand and so doing orient to (or challenge) existing morals and norms. Importantly, language and other constitutive elements are *approximations* the meaning of which is fixed for »all practical purposes« (Garfinkel 1967, S. 7) in the situation. That is, indeterminacy is fixed by the participants (embodied in material surroundings), ›moment-for-moment‹, in order for them to be able to accomplish meaningful activities. In ethnomethodology and conversation analysis (EMCA) one of the ana-

lytical questions is how participants orient – in their ways of doing and saying – to them being *accountable* for their contribution to the situation as both intelligible and morally and normatively acceptable. I have suggested »Accountability« and »Participation« (Raudaskoski 2013) as concepts to distinguish when participants in their situated participation directly or indirectly orient to and therefore enact larger ethical and social questions, be it legal and moral issues in transnational adoption or in relation to material practices in nature conservation areas. Thanks to their interest in practices, Barad, Garfinkel and Latour are often mentioned in relation to »practice theory« (Knorr-Cetina/Schatzki/von Savigny 2001). Schatzki's »social ontology« provides a way to understand human practices as always materially based. His historical analyses (Schatzki 2010) are typically at a fairly general level and explain a posteriori how his model works; how local practices relate to others and combine to higher-level entities (cf. Norris 2016). What lacks from Schatzki is being in the emerging practice as a researcher to be able to study how exactly the mutuality of materiality and discursivity takes place.

3 Two types of assemblages: »actor-network theory« and affect

Agential realist »entanglements« and ANT »assemblages« that accentuate the complex connections between practices and sites have been extensively used in »Science and Technology Studies« (STS). Another type of assemblage, drawing especially from Deleuze and Guattari (1984), has been recently discussed in certain strands of »process psychology«, where the interest is in bodily sensations as having an assemblic nature.³ Again, discourse studies have been deemed incapable to analyse these internal processes (e.g. Blackman/Venn 2010). Margaret Wetherell has given an interesting methodological suggestion in her dialogue with processual psychologists about this ontological turn and the role of discourse studies in tackling the theoretical interests, especially in relation to »affect«. Her main point is that studies of »discursive practices« as they unfold can shed light on how affective activity in its assemblic nature looks like from a social, other-oriented, rather than individualistic point of view (cf. Latour 2004 on affect as agency). She undertakes diffraction (Barad 2007) by combining discourse and affect studies through fine-grained analytical methodology of (material-discursive) practices. By turning to an analytic method where the participants' practices, rather than theories about them, are the important evidence, she joins ethnomethodologists and Latour in exercising »critical proximity« (Latour 2005, S. 253) where the effects of objects as things with their past and present participations can be seen in practice: »*how many participants* are gathered in a *thing* to make it exist and to maintain its existence« (Latour 2004, S. 246, emphasis in the original). Wetherell (2013) promotes Marjorie H. Goodwin's multimodal analysis of girls playing hopscotch.⁴ Marjorie H. Goodwin uses contextual configuration, Charles Goodwin's (2000) development of multimodal interaction analysis about how exactly the

3 see Raudaskoski/Klemmensen 2019 for discussion

4 cf. Evans' (2016) point about affect being both relational and embedded in movement.

human participants use language and bodies, together with the material setting (that often involves language too) in order to accomplish the situated activity in question. I have in earlier publications (e.g. Raudaskoski 2010, 2013) discussed how central concepts from Barad's agential realism such as »intra-action« could be studied with Goodwin's »contextual configuration« (»here-and-now« use of body, material environmental and language) and »lamination« (building on each other's contributions and relaying past practices through use of objects) (Goodwin 2013). The Goodwins' background is in (linguistic) anthropology, which explains their interest in developing analytical tools to »discourse-centered methods« (Farnell/Graham 2014) for this type of ethnography. That Wetherell finds contextual configuration as a beneficial approach for a process psychological analysis, too, points to a robust analytical tool, especially as »there are few studies that bring ANT and assemblage thinking themselves into dialogue« (Müller 2015, S. 35). Müller accentuates the importance of discourse in both approaches but seems to have a typical new materialist attitude: language use is only symbolic.

4 Studying assemblages through time: »nexus analysis«

One of the central aspects of a processual, generative, understanding of practices as realising assemblages is their connections through time. Goodwin's lamination deals with two extremes of temporality. First, he shows the creative way that people in interaction use, turn by turn, each other's contributions when they build the intelligibility of the ongoing situation. Goodwin showed already early in his career (Goodwin 1979) how in this sequential analytic process it is important not just for Conversation Analysis' »next turn proof procedure« (Schegloff 2007) but to analyse how speakers' turns are shaped through their monitoring of the other participants. Second, he discusses how manmade tools (also those including language) through their use not only bring material developments from past socio-historical time to the situation but also help relay cultural knowledge.

Scollon and Scollon's (2004) »nexus analysis« (NA) is a framework that not only covers similar interests but also asks to study the inherent relationality of any concrete situation.⁵ Nexus analysis was devised as an ethnographic framework to study what Ron Scollon called »mediated discourse theory« (Scollon 2001) and later »mediated discourse analysis« (MDA) (e.g. Scollon/Scollon 2004). It was a development in discourse studies to loosen the focus on language and instead to start the analysis from where social action is taking place (cf. Barad's intra-action). MDA is built on the »socio-historical school« of Vygotsky and especially Wertsch' (1991) development of the mediated (i.e. material) and socio-historical (learnt) nature of both language and practices. Goodwin's contextual configuration has similarities; it is also inspired by the socio-historical school, but it offers a more detailed approach to how language, the body and the material envi-

5 Cf. Barad's »co-existing multiplicities of entangled relations of past-present-future-here-there that constitute the worldly phenomena we too often mistake as things existing here-now« (Barad 2010, S. 264, emphasis in the original).

ronment are entangled in moment-for-moment sense making. Nexus analysis is based on trajectory thinking (semiotic circles or itineraries; see Figure 1 below), as well, but the focus is on longer-term relevant trajectories. This is why I find a combination of the strengths of nexus analysis and contextual configuration as a development within EMCA one methodological answer to the new materialist understanding of entangled phenomena.⁶ Nexus analysis offers a framework to attend to affects and assemblages both as material socio-historical entanglements and complex *in situ* achievements. The organisation researcher Nicolini saw nexus analysis after Ron Scollon's untimely death in 2009 as »a missed possibility and a fruitful possibility« (Nicolini 2012, S. 207) to study assemblages as practice (bundles).

MDA and NA grew out of appreciation of the critical discourse linguists such as Fairclough and their aim at social change and, at the same time, frustration of how little impact the critical, often text-based studies, seemed to have on solving the problems.⁷ Ron Scollon (2003) suggested critical realism as one possibility to get away from focusing on the schisms between different types of academic knowledge production because it provided for him a way to come closer to the lived experiences of people and *their in situ* knowledges. This was, of course, a human-centred approach, however, not individualism but historicity and (material) realism through a close study of practices.⁸ Scollon's focus turned to actions in their concreteness and texts as part of those actions, that is, his »critical« seemed to turn towards the »critique« à la Derrida and Foucault as discussed by St. Pierre: »critique examines the assumptions that structure the discursive and the nondiscursive, the linguistic and the material, words and things, the epistemological and the ontological« (St. Pierre 2014, S. 4 f.).

The human body is entangled in the socio-material situation: what kind of relationalities are possible through the body's affordances and limitations in relation to the ongoing situation where the other people are among those oriented to? For a researcher, these emergent relationalities are observable through shifts in bodily orientations (e.g. gaze and gestures) and participants' accounts of ›inner‹ bodily sensations.

The role of the researcher does not have to be a ›fly on the wall‹ that does not ›disturb‹ the ongoing event. Rather, they can be part of it and the focus in NA has traditionally not been so much the sensations and reflections of the researcher (cf. phenomenology) only, but, rather, how the researcher becomes part of the ongoing relationality. To follow or trace means that NA is an open approach (cf. St. Pierre 2014). Instead of a strict pre-formulated research design, NA offers a heuristic that asks to be alert to what becomes relevant to study next, be it following participants in different situations, the types of events, or material places (that always imply each other). The focus on social change makes it

6 cf. also Wetherell's (1998) appreciation of EMCA as an analytical tool and her problematisation of EMCA's myopic focus on stretches of talk instead of taking account of the historical, political and social context.

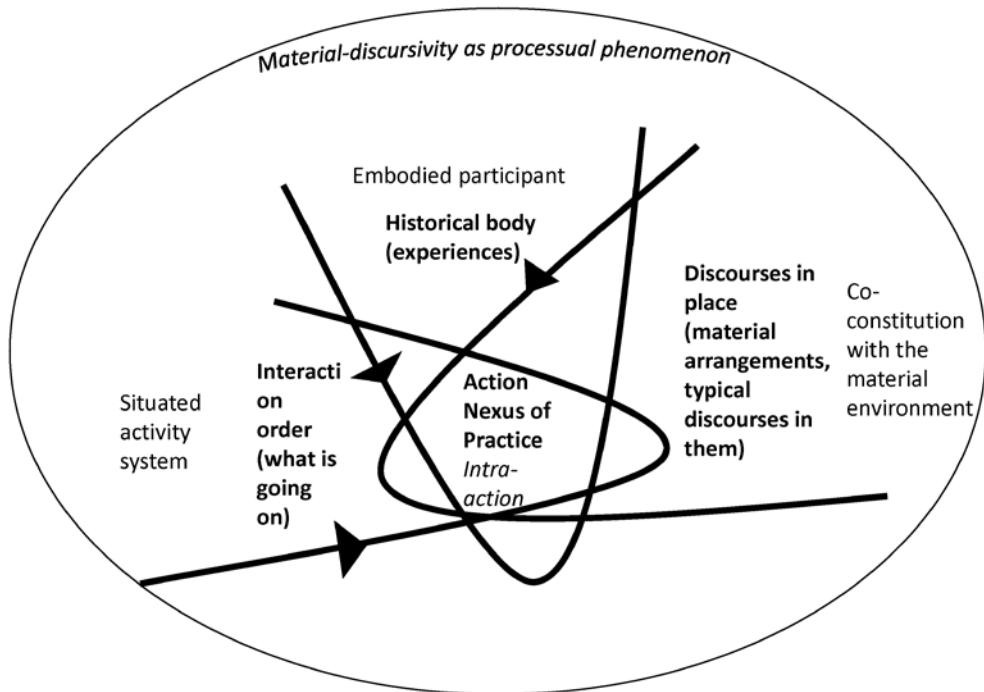
7 cf. Macgilchrist's (2016) review of postfoundational material, feminist generative research vis-à-vis critical discourse studies.

8 cf. Gunnarsson (2013) on gender studies and critical realism

understandable that nexus analysis starts with people, how they get things done together in certain types of activities and material surroundings and how these relate to the participants' (people, material objects and environments) and routines' (types of activities) pasts. Materiality gets a core status through the materiality of human bodies that always function in material environments and have consequences for the material environment. Concepts get the same interest and their emergence can be followed: how do certain ways of speaking originate, develop and get normalised or established?

The following figure visualises the overlapping interests of both NA and contextual configuration. The text in italics shows how these relate to Barad's intra-action and generative material-discursivity:

Figure 1. Comparing nexus analysis and contextual configuration (my illustration)



The lines with arrows in Figure 1 depict the pasts and futures that any social action is based on and that emit from the situation (or nexus of practice, a situated combination of learnt embodied ways of doings in material surroundings). This is why nexus analysis recommends longitudinal studies, through which the development of the phenomenon in question can be studied. The fieldguide in the book *Nexus Analysis* (Scollon/Scollon 2004) gives an example of one year's study where the researcher first establishes their understanding of the nexus of practice in question, analyses core mediated actions and gives suggestions for change. However, it is not a model, but a flexible framework. Any concrete

situation is very complex analytically. The Scollons offer a way to dissect that complexity by concentrating on the three, always interweaved, aspects of practices, which might make it easier to keep track on or decide the circumference (following the timeline of the element to the past or to the future) of the internal complexity of any practice. Participants are involved in a practice, sometimes routinely, sometimes not, but always at a material site. All these aspects of a phenomenon (people, type of activity and place) have past histories that are implied in how the action proceeds: people's experiences (»historical body«), the way actions are undertaken in this specific situation (»interaction order«) and the material setting (»discourses in place«). Thus, the complexity of this entanglement is present in the situated actions that the human participants realise through the mutuality of language, body and the material environment (cf. Barad's material-discursivity). The focus on action as it evolves and the three aspects of it have counterparts in Goodwin's contextual configuration. In Figure 1 they are marked as »embodied participant«, »use of material environment« and »situated activity system«. The latter concept comes from Goffman, as does NA's interaction order, so Goffman's work is another common inspiration for Goodwin and Scollon. With longitudinal studies, it is possible to document parts of the trajectory. However, nexus analysis can also concentrate on time frames (circumference) of seconds if an interesting phenomenon has been detected, as long as the researcher is aware or can detect connections otherwise (Scollon/Scollon 2007; cf. Goodwin's 2013 »lamination«). Ron Scollon's last framework, Geographies of Discourse (GoD) (Scollon 2013), starts with the material setting: any nexus of practice, concrete situation, can be analysed as being made possible by following the materials that are used; the quest starts with the concrete objects used and their connections. A power plug in a socket gets electricity from a grid that gets its power from certain modes of production that can be detected; the wheel of a bus hitting the road combines various types of material production from tarmac to the bus itself, where the fuel used comes from. Scollon saw strong affinities with actor-network theory in this way of going close to the material practices.

5 »Nexus analysis« as ethnography

Nexus analytic research gets to decide which practices to zoom in through ethnographic heuristics. Firstly, through »engaging«, the researcher positions themselves in the nexus of practice they study such that they gain the participants' point of view of what is going on and how they as a researcher are part of it. Engaging phase resembles thus traditional ethnography. There is no limit to how the understanding is enhanced (e.g. questionnaires, interviews, observations), as long as the analytical focus stays with what is important for the participants, rather than aiming for clinical objectivity or the researcher's imagination. The engaging phase could be combined with GoD to detect the materials used and where following them leads. Engaging helps decide which actions and practices to concentrate on and how to »navigate« the data that has been gathered or that should be gathered to shed light on. This all to achieve social »change«, to transform the nexus of practice with the participants.

There has been an understandable affiliation between ethnography and the discursive approaches that concentrate on situated practices. Blommaert and Huang (2009) welcome the ethnography of nexus analysis as a more theoretically sophisticated version, because it expands from the situated events to the history of the participants and to the space as an active, non-neutral ingredient to what is going on. Nexus analysis can help analyse how representations that all manmade spaces are – with or without language – contribute to the world's becoming. Therefore it seems to be a discourse analytic version, for instance, of Latour's (1999) following and participating in a group of interdisciplinary researchers during their fieldtrip to the Amazon. Latour described how inscriptions (e.g. a Munsell chart) were used and produced during the trip and how the final article about the results came about. Representations were present in all the phases of the trip and they often became the *material* tool for the next step (cf. Iedema's 2001 »resemiotization«). Latour calls this type of representation »circulating reference«. What is important is that when the materiality of local things (»earth samples«) diminishes, what they mean travels far (is amplified) in the final linguistic products (»articles«). Each step in the process of natural science research was a phenomenon, the final, amplified, outcome of which helped the international research community to understand how a forest and a savannah work under the surface. Latour's study of the field trip with excavations and transformations of materials from matter to a scientific article can be regarded as an empirical example of agential realism where also language has a central role. Latour followed material-discursive practices where representation is a chain in which earth samples become data that is categorized, for example, with colour, into increasingly iconic and textual references. He followed a trajectory (NA), the crucial situations of which could have been analysed even closer in the way Goodwin (1994) studied the work of archaeologists and how they mapped features of their excavation site, using the same Munsell chart in their research.

Nexus analysis has thus practice/phenomenon as the starting point and is as interested in the material as in the discursive side of how actions take place in various settings. Actor-network theory deals with connections between phenomena/practices (assemblages) and especially on the impact of the material surroundings on those. This is what »discourses in place« (see also Scollon/Scollon 2003) also is interested in: objects and places witness of institutional decision making and concrete practices. In other words, material objects can be regarded as frozen practices that influence (or participate in) the ongoing situation (cf. Latour 1996 on »interobjectivity«). For instance, a traffic sign is in place because of national laws, municipal decisions, and how those get materialised through work practices into a concrete sign that only has an impact (or not) after its placement in the world of traffic. In that way, the traffic sign is an affordance with a history, and in that way can be said, if not a *participant*, an agential force à la silent police officers in the British roads. Combining geographies of discourse with discourses in place when a longitudinal study is not possible gives a strong tool to do discourse analysis of assemblages. Goodwin's (2013) »lamination« has similar interests: the material surroundings (tools, objects, spaces) are results of material developments that are used in an ongoing, turn-by-turn (action-by-action) co-operative building of a situation. The notion historical body combines the interests of assemblage and affect by treating a participant's here-and-now actions as connected to past, always *in situ*,

experiences (e.g. routinized vs. visibly uncertain participation). In this way, it is possible to analyse empirically Barad's (2007) conceptualisation of the ongoing realisation of the world that is entangled with a plethora of other people and entities, situations, and places, both past and future. What is important for both Barad, Goodwin and Scollon is that the focus on the co-constitution of the material-semiotic situation is not on producing (social) constructions as representations, but on the affects/effects those co-constitutions have within the evolving situation and their later consequences.

5.1 Data collection as material practice

As discussed above, the material turn has put emphasis on the processual and unpredictable nature of the world's becoming that asks for taking stock of taken-for-granted analytical methods. In the type of discourse studies this paper promotes, video footages have been important evidence for what goes on in the various types of situations. That is, the aim has been to analyse the process itself (first order interpretation), rather than stories or other second order interpretations of it. In addition to regarding social order as a »situated accomplishment« (cf. EMCA) Garfinkel was also interested in how phenomena are turned into data in practice. Video footage is, of course, not the same as the situation: with traditional 2D cameras you must choose the angle(s) from which the situation is recorded, and most often the idea has been that the researcher is a silent witness, an observer in the situation. However, with the recent developments in video technology, namely 360° cameras to capture a situation with the sound, the data itself covers more and makes the researcher visible, too. The work of the cameraperson becomes different: you cannot escape being part of the footage and instead of deciding where to point the camera you have to decide where to place yourself in the situation such that you can capture as much as possible (Raudaskoski 2017). This also demands a group effort: several camera and sound persons, maybe with different type of gear (McIlvenny/Davidsen 2017), which is especially important if the aim is to capture mobile bodies, in particular if they do not form a uniform group. The camerawork in plural can also inform the development of contemporary scholarship on ethnographic research methods towards »fractal methodology« where ethnographers knowingly »play« or produce *versions* of »the real« »by producing ethnographic accounts that are pluralistic, that acknowledge researcher–author positionings and locatedness and that are presented as at-best partial truths« (Lynch/O'Mara 2019, S. 168). The combination of types of camera and a division of labour in mobile gatherings is a very concrete example of »partial truths«. However, the practices covered with 360° camera data provide a concrete locatedness of researchers' positionings and the ability for the researcher to *revisit* the situated positions to analyse »the real« as situated fixation, instead of playing with versions of »the real« (cf. Macgilchrist 2016).

5.2 Two analytical examples

In the following, I make the methodological discussion above more concrete by using experiences and preliminary analysis from a data collection trip to an academic explorative workshop on abduction held in a Viking museum and its adjacent burial site. The longitudinal aspect in this case becomes a fairly short one-day seminar, but as the setting is a museum, the past is present in a very concrete material way. The data extracts exemplify how the two types of assemblage work in practice.

The aim of the abduction seminar was to make thinking and discussing abduction more tangible. The workshop was called »The science of the invisible«, and the workshop website had a photo of the Viking graveyard. The workshop description had several references to Peirce's writings on abduction and a reading list on abduction for the PhD students. One of the organizers approached a group of video researchers in order to widen the interdisciplinary group that otherwise consisted with participants from archaeology, cultural psychology, psychoanalysis, semiotics and practice studies.

The workshop started with a general orientation about the day. The attendants were divided in two groups (a mixture of academic fields) that had to explore both the exhibit in the museum and the burial site outside alone and afterwards discuss in the group how they imagined the everyday life to have been in the past. The day ended with a general discussion about their experiences and about abduction as a concept. Therefore, the setup of the occasion was highly discursive to begin with. The team of video researchers followed both groups outside (with two one-lens 360° cameras) and inside (with an eight-lens 360° camera and a 4G Panasonic camera) to try and cover as much as possible about the concreteness of their wondering about the sites and their discussing together about what they had encountered (the eight-lens camera footage includes everything else but the camera itself and what is under it). One of the researchers was also actively attending the workshop as a PhD student. In general, to gather footage in three dimensions, the researchers had to be situated in the groups as Goffman's (1979) ratified (often quiet) participants, not as distant observers. With the setup, the problem of the researcher's ontological separation from the data (Lenz Taguchi 2012) subsides.

It turned out that the indoor museum and the Viking graveyard occasioned different types of meaning making activities. The graveyard was what had been excavated from under a thick layer of sand: the graves from different timescales were displayed exactly as they were uncovered. In the museum, the objects were exhibits that had gone through a circuit of reference (Latour 1999) from archaeology to museology. Archaeology relies on material evidence, which adds to the interest to explore the topic of materiality and discourse studies with this data. The present analysis concentrates on the effects of archaeology through museology: how the material environment of a museum with its two types of archaeological remnants affects what emerges in the situation. This means that the focus is on the analysis of materiality and agency (Barad 2007) and the »agential cuts« (effects and affects) that ensue.

A closer multimodal analysis of one of the two groups shows what kind of noticings and experiences the indoor and outdoor sites afforded (cf. Schmidt 2019). The analysis

is based on two talks (McIlvenny/Raudaskoski 2018, Raudaskoski 2018). It shows how different accounts of experiences (trying to understand the exhibits through textual depictions; feeling meaninglessness in the graveyard that did not have many information signs) and professional orientations (archaeology/museology; psychoanalytical theory) emerged, partly by the same human participants. In both cases, the material setting was an important element in the »assemblic apparatus of abduction«: what did the expressed indeterminacy allow emerge (what is that element? what was that feeling?). One effect was a centripetal scholarly practice that closed down the discussion with the help of framed material and textual facts, the other (centrifugal) force resulted in an agential cut that allowed for another type of experiencing body (with the sensory feeling of hotness) and account, in contrast to the academic inspection frame of the museum. Close multimodal analyses of any practical phenomenon (interviews included) can be regarded examples of intra-action analysis; what emerges from the concrete material-discursive situations (cf. Bodén 2015). This is why I find it fruitful to explore and develop the discourse analytic methodologies with similar material-discursive interests.

5.3 Examining the data

I will now provide a closer look at what happened in one of the two groups, more specifically at two snippets of data that I find help show how discourse studies can help with analysing the two new materialist assemblic takes on practices: connections and affects. The group followed for this paper started indoors. They individually roamed the indoor exhibits first. In their group discussion indoors, the material and textual representations seemed to give a lot of food for imagining about what the Viking everyday life was like in the past. However, there were also some critical voices about the museum recreating one type of »truth« about the past practices. The group discussion took place in front of two stratigraphic sections from below the surface of the earth. Figure 2 shows the corner of one of them on the wall on the left, whereas the other exhibit can be seen in the middle of the photo.

As can be seen from figure 2, the participants' trunks are directed towards the section on the left in the picture. This because the cut-out had invoked a participant's telling of how she was trying to imagine what it was like to farm in the past. Figure 2 captures the


moment when another member thanks the first speaker for orienting to the material extracts. As is visible in the pointing finger in the right-hand lower corner, she asks a




Fig. 2 Group discussion corner

question about the other stratigraphic section. (The visible participants had given written consent to use the visuals in academic publications). To convey what was happening in the situation, I provide two types of transcription. In the verbal account, I am using a rough Jeffersonian transcription convention.⁹ To transcribe is another Latourian reference, an abstraction away from the original situation (the first one being the video footage). This representational practice is used in this type of discourse studies to represent the original, material features of talk as closely as possible, in the same way as when archaeologists and geologists map out the exact structure of the earth they have dug holes in, rather than abstract away from the situation. The video footage is the actual research material, and the transcript a way to relay it through written publications. However, in multimodal interaction analysis, pseudonymized photos are increasingly used to convey better the material situation. In my version, the transcript is placed under frames such that what each of them depicts corresponds to what is heard. Any movement is marked by arrows and the simultaneous talk by grey shadowing.


Extract 1:



P: what (up) NOW got my i- in this (.) is getting my- is getting my curiosity is this kind of white (.) strip (uh) there >it's actually there<



((to F)) I didn't notice this before so thanks for making me h: for (F: m:) pointi(h)ing thi- this part ((smiley voice)) (F: m:)



>I was a- somewhere else< (.) so (.) what is that? D: it's the floor of the house P: yeah? (h) really? D: =yeah (.) I was reading it (h) {over there
P: [ok(h)Ay

9 (LOUD voice; (.) a short pause; > < faster pace of talk; .h inhale; : stretch of sound; (h) laughter particle; – cut off; ((...)) explanation about sound quality or action; ? rising prosody; = = no pause between turns; [overlapping talk or action]; () hard to hear; [–] cut out).

This short extract provides a glance into the nexus of practice of the workshop at this point. The participants with their different professional backgrounds, the concrete setting (a Viking museum with stratigraphic exhibits, often with written explanations), and the ongoing activity, in this instance a discussion of the impressions that the participants had had when walking about the museum space. In other words, P's question arose in this specific nexus of practice, with these historical bodies, discourses in place and interaction order. It gives us a peek into a Baradian phenomenon as it emerges. The transcripts are »resemiotizations« of the moment-for-moment *actions* that took place *in situ*. They show a changing contextual configuration where the attention of the participants moves from a stratigraphic section in front of them to another one on the side. The analysis also concerns communication, that is, language use, as that still is one way the discursive in the material-discursive becoming becomes inspectable with the present paper's suggested framework. The point with the analysis is to show how exactly the material arrangement is involved in the ongoing co-constitution.

P's pointing gesture resembles that of Latour's (1999) scientists' or Goodwin's (1994) archaeologist's pointing. As she talks about pointing out when referring to a colleague's mention earlier, we have a wonderful example of material-semiotic discourse: a white stripe in a stratigraphic section becomes a centre of attention in a Viking museum. »What is that?« would not make as much sense had the section been hanging out in a modern art museum where the origin of the colour would not be of interest, but, rather, its symbolic meaning.¹⁰ In an art museum, any question about the meaning goes back to the artist and their intention with a colour. In the museum setting, the question seeks a factual answer, and gets it immediately, without any hesitation markers. Only P shows hesitation with the answer with the inquiring »yeah« and »really«, which is solved by D's reference (also through a finger movement) to the written text next to the section. P does not start questioning the science that had produced the result of the white stripe being the remnants of a floor. What this turn-by-turn solving a problem of understanding a colour in an earth sample shows how archaeology and museology as practices had not just amplified the results of how to interpret layers of earth, but, also, that we trust those results, those references. In this assemblage, we can also see Foucault's »governmentality« as the conduct of conduct (see McIlvenny/Klausen/Lindgaard 2016 for a discourse studies take on governmentality) at work in relation to the material evidence: it is not questioned. The referential meaning is not at the centre of the analysis, but how it »functions in connection with other things, what it makes possible« (Rose 1999, S. 28). The material setting is a »dispositif« (Foucault 1980) that has a taken-for-granted nature which is not questioned.¹¹

We now move with the group to the outdoor Viking graveyard site. It did not have so many written explanations, especially not next to the Viking graves from various centuries that are scattered around a hill. The graves were not placed there but exhibited as they were found after a thick layer of sand was removed that had buried them underneath

10 cf. Hofsess (2013) on aesthetic experience

11 cf. Bager/Mølbjerg Jørgensen/Raudaskoski (2016) on conduct of conduct

for centuries. When the group settled to discuss their thoughts about what they had seen and experienced, they did not address the past everyday life that the graves were traces of. Rather, the place itself and its atmosphere was, according to P, gloomy due to the cloudy day and loud ravens that inhabited the trees nearby. The participants also shared stories of other similar places (graveyards and catacombs) they had visited or lived by earlier. In other words, they made sense of the atmosphere based on their historical bodies, their past experiences. What was disturbing for some of them was the anonymity of the graves. One participant, P2, said she had not read the few available texts first (like she did in the museum) and that she found the place meaningless when walking around the graves. However, the hollow sensation disappeared when she stepped into one of the graves where she felt hotness. The first part of abductive reasoning this time deals with her inner experience thanks to her bodily actions in the material setting which she demonstrates again. This time the transcript with pseudonymized photos has less of them. P2 was moving her hands all the time, this is why only the clearest gestures supporting what she was saying are shown. D also did some minimal movement with the right hand along his chest, so only the bigger movement is demonstrated.

In extract 2, P2 explains about her experience through »Deixis am Phantasma« (deixis in the imagination) (cf. Stukenbrock 2014). So, in her account, she does not only visualize her movements through moving arms, but enacts her earlier stepping into the Viking grave, laminating her present corporeal frame with the earlier one and, also, the space to show how she steps into the grave. P2 provides a vivid description of the affective experience (being attracted by the nature, perceiving the surroundings with a feeling of being overwhelmed and meaninglessness until she steps into the circle of stones that form a grave, which gives her hope and relief). Combining the verbal description about the bodily sensation with the actual bodily movement emphasizes her point about the change in her state of mind. Not just the situation she had experienced, but giving an account of it, makes her move. The transcript of P2's turn ends with her abductive wondering about her feelings in the graveyard and in the grave. D, who indoors referred to a text box at the exhibition to solve the problem of the white stripe, now turns to a psychoanalytic account where he provides an explanation for the bodily vibrations and feelings as being an unconscious baggage from our destiny as human beings: we are aware of our mortality. In this group the possibility of, for instance, Viking spirits having the positive effect are not entertained. After this (not in the transcript) P gestures as if digging into the earth underneath, wishing that they could zoom in on a stratigraphic section to see what was going on in the past. She brings to the situation both a recent event (at the sections in the museum) and the actions in a very distant time (what was going on *in situ* at the burial site). When in the museum building, a »truth-seeking« question was possible to ask and a text on the wall connecting to archaeology and museology gave the answer, outdoors the question became about another kind of materiality, an embodied sensation, where the scholarly explanation was given by D, whose professional background is in psychoanalysis. Language was involved in both cases, but through different possibilities for mutual constitution (also in relation to the bodies involved through gesturing and posture) and effects.

Extract 2:



P2: [-] when I arrive here (.) I: was not attracted by the signs but from the nature, and: I er:: arrive and I I just came in this direction where there are not so much stones,



but now I feel very overwhelmed by all this absence of a sign or the- and I go through the (.) that circle. (.) and I try to: follow the: boundaries of circles. hh and then



I feel like at sea I was comple- like- I was (.) m: I feel like the waves and I can't explain er: the m: the meaningless or what I what I was (you know) in that situation, .hh



hh and (.) I feel er (.) I feel a relief when I (.) go into the circle even if it is the place in which (.) they are they are buried, and then I feel to feel hot ha ha because- but I feel (.) okay (.) now I'm in this circle without any kind of information but now I: but (.) i- when you see outside you can feel the meaningless of- and I try to find a reason for that situation [-]

D: [-] ((moving right hand slightly from home position while talking)) this i- eternity idea is one of (.) the first things for human beings (happening) like knowing we are dying so how to make sense of a period of time like sixty seventy eighty hopefully ninety years () to everybody here. but uh what is after us, and what what is focussing over here also is like (the scene) what is left after us (P: yeah) some hundred some (P: yeah) thousand years, (P: yeah) and it's a little bit collapsing for our minds (P: yeah) so we need to find strategies to put meaning into it again and even if you say like just an unconscious feeling like I'm going into the circle



so I'm feeling protected by the circle now, uh it gives you meaning it it constructs something for you you don't have when walking around and uh (.) I think that's the main topic being here it's a connection [-]

To sum up, in both extracts a surprising observation gets a plausible explanation (abduction) through a scholarly justification. Both cases were instances of perception as »a highly provisional material encountering between bodies« (de Freitas 2016, S. 188). In the museum, the explanatory text on the wall was a result of archaeology and museology, whereas at the

burial site we witnessed an embodied telling and reconstruction of a moment of surprise. P's question about a feature in the material world was seeking a rational answer based on scholarly knowledge (that any participant in the group could have provided by reading the sign), whereas P2 accounted for her unusual experience *in*, or at least in the remnants of, that same material world. P's question »What is that?« was not speculative because it sought and found *making-sense at* an object whereas P2's account of her *sensation* when *moving into* the object was an attempt to help signify an extraordinary experience that then could be captured into a psychoanalytical proposition (cf. Manning 2007, S. 131). P2's experience also showed how the material configuration of an excavated Viking grave area did not produce the predicted effect of exploring a historical site, but, instead, P2 felt uneasiness that was solved through stepping in a grave (cf. Evans' 2016 discussion of active matter). It looks that for P2 the site allowed for experiences typical for art exhibitions (cf. Hofsess' 2013 aesthetic swell). Even if psychoanalysis could give one explanation to that experience, it might not have occurred without P2 having been in the material site (and D being a psychoanalyst). We do not know if P2 accepts D's explanation about the mortality of human beings and the impossibility to know what happens to us or to our burial sites after hundreds or thousands of years. However, the extract accentuates the importance of a material setting to any kind of bodily experiences; the Deleuzian and Latourian assemblages combine in this specific experience. P's going back to the stratigraphic sections in the museum through the pretended cutting through the earth below them is a good example of an assemblage that refers to something the group has experienced earlier. The two extracts exemplify new feminist materialism in the sense that meaning(fullness) is a matter of both language use and the material setting:

»Matter is not a linguistic construction but a discursive production; discursive practices are themselves material reconfigurings of the world through which the determination of boundaries, properties, and meanings is differentially enacted.« (Barad 2007, S. 151)

In other words, knowledge production is ontological, »knowing is a matter of a part of a world making itself intelligible to the other part of the world« (Barad 2007, S. 185). This concerns also human beings. Inside the museum, the soil sample had been moved, through archaeology and museology, to the wall with a text to mediate its meaning to the wondering visitor. Outdoors, with few texts and the Viking graves in their original position, other type of intelligibility occurred; the open material setting made it possible for many types of engagement. The extract showed how »the possibilities from which knowledge emerges do not stand still but are constantly reconfigured – giving hope for alternative ways of thinking and being« (Evans 2016, S. 70).

6 Discussion

Barad's agential realism concentrates on the emergence of the (material, natural and social) entangled world, and the role of the research(er) in that becoming. Actor-network theory accentuates the developing and stabilizing of assemblages, encouraging to find

out how that happens. Both concentrate on practices as they evolve. Process psychologists focus on the more individualistic, affect oriented version of the assemblic nature of embodied emotions and feelings. The present paper claims that discourse studies can offer a framework to the new materialists seeking for methods that fit the theoretical ideas overlapping in assemblage, whether one of actor-network type or the Deleuzian rhizomatic affect: nexus analysis. Margaret Wetherell's take on affective assemblages is that they also can be treated as other-oriented social practices. Wetherell appreciates a Goodwinian multimodal analytic approach to study these practices. When placed within nexus analysis, multimodal approaches of this kind can be used as a close analytic approach that connects to the ethnographic following of people, places or practices. Speech and text have a role in all this, but always as ongoing practices or resemiotizations of them; language matters, too. However, it is one of the tasks of the researcher to decide, for instance, which texts are being ›translated‹ in practices to actions and what is the connection between those. So, one starts with *presence* but as always entangled to other presences (and futures) that come with *perception* as a context-bound biological, cultural and societal activity (cf. de Freitas 2016). Therefore, nexus analysis provides a flexible framework for both new materialists and for the discourse analysts that regard situated practices as complex phenomena. Nexus analysis is as interested in the local accomplishment of (anticipatory) actions as in the historicity of those actions through the participants, the material site's and the activity's emergence, in other words, the network or assemblage that the local knowing and acting relates to. This relates to Iedema's (1999, S. 63) note on ›local‹ always mobilising resources spanning over time-spaces and Latour's (1996) point about the material setting always being *complicated* through objects that ›time-shift‹ to other places and practices. Importantly, NA recognizes language use as also an embodied, material and not just symbolic action. In its framework, ›discourse‹ does not amount to language use, but covers how the material setting contributes to what emerges. In the extracts, discursive practices of museology/archaeology include a framed (not to be touched) cut out of earth and a printed explanatory text next to it, being part of the material-discursive cut that the participants enact differently from what they do outdoors among and in the exhibited unearthened Viking graves.

The topic of the workshop was abduction which typically is thought about as a fairly abstract logical, philosophical or analytic exercise. However, in the empirical examples abduction is analyzed as a shared, intra-active effort instead of being a solitary exercise of the analytic mind or an abstract logic of beans in a bag that often is used as an example of inductive, deductive and abductive reasoning. The analytic claim was that the material setting governed the practice (Lemke 2015) and could therefore be promoted as actant or participant in the ANT and agential realist sense of influencing what is going on. The concreteness of the situation (how exactly does the material setting govern the practice) could be analyzed through close multimodal analysis of what actually took place. In the first extract, one-to-one references, pieces of earth, from archaeological sites now hanging on the walls of a museum with written explanations next to them occasioned an abductive wondering and evidence –circle of ›immutable mobiles‹ (Latour 1987). The second extract widens the analysis of meaningful human action to cover the material

setting that not only affords (typical or normal) actions, such as quoting a visible sign, to answer a question to being truly entangled in the experiential immediacy of the material situation: finding relief from meaninglessness through the bodily sensation in a Viking grave. In both cases, the materials that were part of the action had pasts that had shaped them in different ways (cf. nexus analysis' »submerged« discourses). We could not follow those professional or everyday practices, but we could follow the researchers visiting the two locations and see how these pasts influenced their interpretation of the surprising experiences in these specific material settings.

The workshop data was used to demonstrate the usefulness of discourse studies, in this case nexus analysis, for material-discursive (material-semiotic, sociomaterial) analysis. As academic communities we produce versions of the world; representationalism is not bad as such, but the evidence for how we got there might be questionable. This means going close to the gaps in Latour's circuits of reference: how exactly are material surroundings constituted and made use of together, achieving situated meaning not just for oneself, but for and with others, as embodied participants, always set in material circumstances? In the data extracts, we could follow references in the making (cf. Smith 2019). Inside the museum building, a soil sample was, with the help of archaeology/museology (a text box next to the exhibit), conceptualized as floor; outside in the graveyard a situated account of the bodily effect of stepping into a Viking grave was conceptualized through psychoanalysis as signifying of the awareness of human condition. Both extracts exhibit how the material and the discursive entanglements, the onto-epistemological reference making, can be teased out from the available materials as the *participants'* concern.¹² (cf. St. Pierre 2014 on Foucault's and Derrida's »criticism«). Both extracts were examples of knowledge and mutual learning: the text on the wall was relayed, as were the bodily sensations in a Viking grave. Thus, we can also analyse how learning functions as »entanglements between bodies, concepts, and signs« (de Freitas 2016, S 192).

It is important to remember that the way we (video) document the practices matters: with 360° cameras you get, if placed in the middle of the scenario, a much more comprehensive picture and sound of what is going on than in traditional, even wide lens, cameras. This means that the researcher is not (aiming at being) an interested observer from the outside, but in the midst of the action that they also can be a participant in. In ethnographic research, the participation aspect is not new, but the documentation of it has not been possible to this extent with traditional cameras (if they have been used). In this sense, the material setting of the empirical data collection must be a concern for the discourse analysts in the same way it is for the nuclear physicists whose idea of the material world hinges on that apparatus. By being able to *revisit* the situation, now as an analyst with a more »omnipresent« view than what one's situated, embodied presence permits, the material, context-bound sensory and sense-making practices become available for inspection in a much more holistic way than in traditional, always partial, 2-D video views. This way, both the participants' and the researchers' »ontological practices of knowledge production« (Childers 2013, S. 603) are captured closely in the concreteness of »the materiality of field-

12 cf. St. Pierre (2014) on Foucault's and Derrida's »criticism«.

work« (ibid.). This memory device, also for situated embodied affects and effects, provides even more »real *beyond*« (Lenz Taguchi 2012, S. 267) data. This way Haraway's (2008) »becoming with« the data can now be exercised as *becoming within*.

We have dealt with a highly complex methodological issue: practices as they emerge in and through materiality, embodiment and language use; the connections to participants' past experiences and to the discourses that created the material environment. As mentioned at the start of the paper, I finish this discussion on the topic of the participation of the researcher as an interested party instead of observing from a distance or concentrating solely on their own »embodied involvement in the materiality of the event of analysing data« (Lenz Taguchi 2012, S. 278). Thus, going beyond what the data analysis for the present paper concentrated on, nexus analysis can disrupt »power relations between ethnographer as participant and observer and those observed who are now participants and observers in partnership« (Scollon/Scollon 2007, S. 608) – that is, the researcher can become active on the scene. In other words, there is room for discourse analytic studies to be more agential. Discourse analysis can proceed from documenting how phenomena occur as »little d« and »big D« discourses (Gee 2019) to being part of a team effort, an active supporter of the change in and through material-discursive interventionist (e.g. Iedema 2019) practices. With nexus analysis we can regard – in line with agential realism – the research process itself as an important material-discursive practice. This means that we could concentrate more on the *participatory* approach to studying phenomena (cf. Iedema 2011) that is already recommended in nexus analysis. A possibility for »care« (cf. Adam/Groves 2007) emerges, not just in the form of suggestions on the basis of factual studies, but as »commitment« (cf. Ingold 2018) of both the research and the practice communities to change. This is important especially if the research methods themselves, not just the research setup in general, are understood as a way to move the world to a certain direction. In other words, the methods should be able to potentiate (Iedema 2021) development *while being used*, that is, to provide a space mutual (>researcher-researchee<) learning. Participatory approach like this would make sure that the results of one's research are not misused because the results are the research process itself. This is why the inherently exploratory approach of nexus analysis for realising and not just suggesting social change could be enhanced, as it fits well the post qualitative methodology agenda that Bodén and Gunnarsson finish their recent article with: »As such, it provides us with nothing. Instead, it offers us a tool to navigate and can turn into anything. But it implies hope and therefore is everything« (Bodén/Gunnarsson 2021, S. 196).

7 Conclusion

Nexus analysis differs from action research in that it requires close analysis of the material-discursive practices that it is part of. It is important that decisions are based on thorough understanding (studies) of the phenomenon in question (cf. Evans 2016 on critical awareness). Nexus analysis also provides a framework for the different branches of discourse studies – rather than juxtaposing them, a new methodology open to development

and change can be achieved. Nexus analysis invites to explore the »constitutive relationality, or intra-action, between theory, methodology, the researcher, the participants, and the agential nature of the field site« (Childers 2013, S. 603). Instead of regarding partial truths as those depending on the analyst's personal imaginings or takes on the issue and/or data at hand (cf. some posthumanist analyses), nexus analysis provides a heuristic if the attempt is to do an agential cut from within the epistemo-ontological complexity of the world in its becoming.

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