

## **Lines that do not speak: Multispecies hospitality and bug-writing**

Olli Pyyhtinen  
Tampere University

Published in *Hospitality & Society* 12(3): 343–359.

### **Abstract**

The article, situated at the crossroads of hospitality studies, human–animal studies and writing studies, offers a more-than-human perspective on hospitality by exploring the book *The Language of Bugs* (2018) by Chinese book designer and artist Zhu Yingchun and its crafting process. In existing scholarship, hospitality has been mainly considered in anthropocentric terms. The article suggests that the multispecies relations that unfolded between the artist, his garden and bugs not only unsettle and disrupt this anthropocentric bias but also complicate the predominant dyadic understanding of hospitality: their hospitable entanglement needs to be analysed as a triadic configuration, where there are no fixed positions, but each member may in its turn be placed in the position of the host/guest/third. Ultimately, the paradox of the hospitality offered by the artist to the bugs is that he was only possible to welcome their visitation by endangering the life or well-being of his other guests, the plants. The article also highlights the non-phonemic, material and performative ‘asemic’ aspects of writing by considering writing in terms of traces and lines and argues that bug-writing has great theoretical potential for liberating the notion of writing from its anthropo-, phono- and logocentric subordination.

Keywords: art, asemic writing, human–animal relations, insects, line, trace, triad, visitation

### **Introduction**

In *Writing* (2011), author and filmmaker Marguerite Duras insists that writing is an activity that does not belong to humans alone. On the contrary, she suggests:

Around us, everything is writing; that’s what we must finally perceive. Everything is writing. The fly on the wall is writing; there is much that it wrote in the light of the large room, refracted by the pond. The fly’s writing could fill an entire page. And so this would be a kind of writing. From the moment that it could be, it already is a kind of writing. One day,

perhaps, in the centuries to come, one might read this writing; it, too, will be deciphered, translated. And the vastness of an illegible poem will unfurl across the sky.

(2011: 35)

Clearly, the idea of a fly that writes runs counter to the conventional understanding of writing, as it is usually only humans who are deemed to write. Writing is assumed to presuppose intentionality, cognition, introspection and fine hand-eye coordination, for example. That Duras is using the notion of writing in a manner different from how it is usually understood is further supported by her suggestion that the fly's writing is 'illegible', not clear enough to be read. To what extent can writing be illegible and still count as writing? Where and when does writing begin? The question of 'when' should not so much be understood in the sense of an historical origin, but in a 'logical' sense, so to speak, referring to the constitution of writing. What marks the threshold of writing? Where does one pass from laying a trail to 'a kind of' writing that could 'fill an entire page'?

In this article, situated at the crossroads of hospitality studies, human-animal studies and writing studies, I engage with the question of non-human animal writing to explore *multispecies hospitality*. The shift of perspective from the human to the non-human is already inscribed in Duras's depiction. Nevertheless, in the article I do not interrogate Duras's fly per se, but examine its fellow non-human writers, more specifically bugs observed by Chinese book designer and artist Zhu Yingchun. Over a period of five years, Zhu Yingchun collected natural marks left behind by bugs in his garden and compiled them into a book, titled *The Language of Bugs* (2018). The entire book consists of 'writing' by bugs. Attending to how the bug-writing displayed by *The Language of Bugs* came to be in the first place opens up a perspective onto multispecies hospitality. Zhu Yingchun deliberately made his garden welcoming for bugs to arrive and generate writing by crawling through 'ink ponds' of vegetable juices. It was his invitation that worked as an initiative and opened up a possibility for the bug-writing to take place in the garden, though the hospitality that he offered ultimately extended beyond invitation to visitation, which allows space for intrusion and disturbance and does not efface or suppress the otherness of the bugs.

I explore hospitality from a more-than-human perspective (see e.g. Whatmore 2002; Pyyhtinen 2015). More specifically, my approach is informed by human-

animal studies, which is an interdisciplinary field studying for example the relationships between human and non-human animals, the experiences, treatment and actions of non-human animals, and the roles non-human animals play in human lives and society (see e.g. DeMello 2012; Wilkie 2015; Taylor and Twine 2015; Carter and Charles 2018). In existing scholarship, hospitality has been mostly considered in anthropocentric terms, as a human affair (for exceptions, see e.g. Derrida 2000b, 2009; Lemelin 2012; Kakoliris 2016; Leep 2018; Dashper 2020a, 2020b; Valtonen et al. 2020). Hospitality stems from ancient customs and practices related to hostelry and relations with strangers (e.g. Berking 1999). Stressing the hospitality that takes place between species is a way of escaping and undermining this anthropocentric bias. Addressing multispecies hospitality enables us to decentre the sovereign human actor. Artist and researcher Tuija Kokkonen, for example, has stressed how '[w]e are dependent on non-human hospitality, in the end they form the condition that makes our lives possible' (Kokkonen 2014: 202; trans. Onali 2021: 15). I greatly empathize with this point and think that engaging with non-human hospitality supplements and complicates existing scholarship on hospitality in an important way and also helps us problematize the idea of the separate and isolated human being by showing its entanglement with non-human others both inside the body and outside of it that nevertheless belong to its make up (see also Shildrick 2022). Nevertheless, in this article I explore multispecies hospitality from a different perspective, by paying attention to how non-humans may be dependent on the hospitability given by humans. When doing so, I wish to venture beyond such more evident cases as the hospitality towards stray dogs (Leep 2018) or pet hotels and examine hospitality towards hitherto more or less overlooked animal others: insects. In their article 'Living with mosquitoes' (2020), tourism scholars Anu Valtonen et al. suggest that while animals have increasingly moved from the margin to the centre in contemporary tourism (or hospitality) studies, the existing body of work nevertheless tends to concentrate on such large animals as tigers, whales, elephants and polar bears that are conceived as somehow 'charismatic by human standards'. In this article, I participate in the collective effort to unsettle the understanding of hospitality as an exclusively human phenomenon, yet unlike for example Valtonen et al. (2020) or Amira Benali and Carina Ren (2019), I do not explore multispecies encounters in tourism but in art by focusing on the book *The Language of Bugs*.

The argument is laid out as follows. Before examining the multispecies hospitality between Zhu Yingchun, the bugs and the garden, I will first engage

with the writing of bugs to counter the privileged position given to speech, language and meanings over the materiality of writing. As I see it, *The Language of Bugs* points in a fascinating manner towards a notion of writing that questions and unsettles its predominant 'logocentric' and 'phonocentric' (Derrida 1988) understanding. 'By common understanding', as Stephen Houston suggests, 'writing is a graphic means of recording sound and meaning' (2018a: 21). In contrast to this, the writing manifest in the traces left by bugs and collected by Zhu Yingchun does not have these usual strings attached. No amount of effort can ever elicit sounds or meaning from the shapes, width, density and rhythm of the lines drawn by the bugs. The lines of bug-writing do not speak. They communicate nothing but their own nature as writing. The next section draws inspiration from Jacques Derrida and Tim Ingold and addresses the material and performative dimension of writing by considering writing in terms of *traces* and *lines*. In the section after that, I examine the coming into being of the book *The Language of Bugs* in the intermediate space of human and non-human entanglement, taking the form of triadic multispecies hospitality. In addition, I will argue that the hospitality offered by the artist can be understood in the sense of welcoming visitation that may exceed invitation. By choosing not to chase the bugs away but let them arrive and give them a place, he also allowed space for intrusion and the unexpected. Finally, I conclude the article by summing up its main contributions and reflecting how engaging with bug life may enable us to explore our relationships and companionship with non-human animal alterity beyond the affinity of humans and their more accustomed companion animals.

### **Bug-writing: Crazy grass style**

Zhu Yingchu's work *The Language of Bugs* (2018) is an extraordinary book, as not a single line in it is written by humans. On the contrary, the entire book - from the catalogue to the preface, the annotation and even the page numbers - is made by bugs. The leaflet, titled *The Birth of the Language of Bugs* (2018), accompanying the book states that the book originates in a surprising observation. One day, book designer and artist Zhu Yingchun was gardening and noticed two leaves with white bite marks by bugs. He was amazed by the white patterns and started to observe bugs more closely. Soon he encountered another leaf. The pattern on it reminded him very much of the calligraphy of 'Tao'. On another occasion, as he recounts, he

[S]tood under the leaves and saw a spot clothing wax cicada on a leaf. Just as I was painting, it jumped into my paint palette and crawled onto my sketch book and began 'painting'. It leaped onto my hand and then on to the sketch book again. I sprinkled some water. It swam in it. The marks it left looked very nice.

(Zhu 2018: 7)

Inspired by these encounters with bug life, Zhu Yingchun made a deliberate effort to systematically gather the mesmerizing traces left by bugs. He made 'little ink ponds' of vegetable juices and then collected the pieces of paper he had placed in the garden once the bugs had crawled through them. In a sense, then, Zhu Yingchun acted as an archivist or curator, who facilitated, collected, assessed, organized and preserved the traces and marks left by bugs. He gathered more than 10,000 leaves and sorted out various kinds of character patterns. The specifications of this particular writing experiment were the following: 'A half-acre of land, five years of time, inviting one hundred species of bugs, collecting a thousand kinds of traces, finally, we have a book' (2018: 2).

Zhu Yingchun's artistic project reveals a hint of anthropomorphism. He to some extent sees the bugs like us and attributes certain human mental states, feelings and responses to them. In the leaflet accompanying the book *The Language of Bugs*, the artist explicitly likens the bugs to humans: '[T]he calligraphies are like the bugs; the bugs are like the people' (2018: 9). On the pages of the leaflet, the bugs are further referred to for example as 'bug gentlemen and ladies' (2018: 8), the ladybug is introduced as a 'die-hard fan of Joan Miró' (2018: 14) and the traces of the earthworm are likened to the work of the British artist Richard Long (2018: 12). While anthropomorphism has been - justly - criticized for failing to acknowledge non-human animal otherness (e.g. Regan 1985; Taylor 1996; Derrida 2008; see, however, also Fisher 1991), it was interestingly precisely Zhu Yingchun's anthropomorphism that catalysed his remarkable, exceptional curiosity about the bugs.<sup>1</sup> As the leaflet states: 'The bugs seem insignificant, but their strokes are beautiful' (Zhu 2018: 9). Paradoxically, the anthropomorphism of the artist's perception ultimately opens up a perspective beyond anthropocentrism: *The Language of*

---

<sup>1</sup> Jane Bennett argues that we might in fact 'need to cultivate a bit of anthropomorphism [...] to counter the narcissism of humans in charge of world' (2010: xvi). It has been suggested that anthropomorphism can be a useful communicative strategy for example in animal ethics (Karlsson 2011).

Bugs insists that art and beauty are not something that humans alone make, but '[e]verything in the world, including every life in nature, has the power to create beauty, and "art is all around us"' (2018: 9).

Nevertheless, while the hint of anthropomorphism in Zhu Yingchun's gaze increased his sensibility towards seeing the traces left by the bugs as beautiful strokes, at the same time the anthropomorphizing fails to recognize the specificity of the bugs and their writing. The bugs were denied of their otherness, because they were made into man's own image. Perceiving the visible traces left by the bugs on leaves and pages of paper as 'language' fails to take seriously the *illegibility* of the writing of bugs. Bug-writing is not a graphic means to record or mediate sound and meaning, nor is it a code to be cracked, at least not for the human eye. Or, if there is 'meaning' in the marks that the bugs make, for instance for the bugs themselves or other creatures, we humans do not understand it. Thus, analogous to the voices of animals which can 'challenge us to listen to their own sound, and to ways of speaking that are radically strange to us' (Höckert 2020: 61; see also Despret 2016), the writing produced by the bugs invites - in its alterity and strangeness - us to reimagine writing and what it can be for instance by decoupling it from attributes that are usually attached to it, such as habitual movement and endogenous patterns. I want to suggest here that, for the human readers of *The Language of Bugs*, the lines and marks are best described with the adjective 'asemic', referring to writing that borders on illegibility and is characterized by the absence of meaning. In asemantic writing, '[t]he signs before our eyes don't belong to any familiar system' (Schwenger 2019: 2). The word 'asemic' consists of the linguistic term *seme* (derived from the Greek word *sema*, 'sign'), preceded by the privative *a-*, which negates it (Schwenger 2019: 1).

In their preface to *An Anthology of Asemantic Handwriting* (2013), which was the first book-length publication of asemantic works, the editors Tim Gaze and Michael Jacobson, together with the publisher Vincent W. J. van Gerven Oei, note how several cultural traditions have produced asemantic written forms. For example, the legend has it that whenever he was drunk, the famous Chinese calligrapher and poet Zhang Xu who lived in the eighth century would use his hair as a brush to produce exuberant and energetic calligraphy, in a style which became known as 'crazy grass style', works so wild that he was unable to read them himself the morning after. Within the western artistic tradition, asemantic writing is closely linked especially to visual poetry. Movements as

diverse as Dada, Russian Futurism, Surrealism, Fluxus and Abstract Expressionism, have all produced asemic texts (Gaze et al. 2013: 5-7).

The bug-writing displayed by Zhu Yingchun's book quite literally amounts to writing in a 'crazy grass style' par excellence, though the obvious difference to Zhang Xu being that we cannot really tell whether the bugs actually were *trying* to 'write', in the way that the Chinese calligrapher might have been when drunk. But as all of us who write know very well, the existence or non-existence of the intention to write does not count as much as the *practice* of writing. No matter how persistently one may for instance intend to write, one does not get any writing done without getting to work and adding marks on paper or screen. Overall, I would suggest that cognition or intentionality should not be privileged when considering the material and performative dimension of writing or of any action, for that matter. Not even human writing is an activity confined within the mind alone, but it amounts to a craft mediated and supported by various extra-somatic materials like pen and paper as well as a seat and a table, for instance. Intentionality is itself a property of entanglements, a product of the coming together and interfolding of variegated actants, materials and processes (see Latour 1999: 192; Bennett 2010: 31; Pyyhtinen and Tamminen 2011; Pyyhtinen 2015).

While the writing produced by the bugs may resemble and look like human writing, it does not carry and express the meanings of a natural language or adhere to its grammar or linguistic conventions. Bug-writing does not 'speak'. It is unspeakable to us, as it cannot be articulated in human language. To quote Stephen Houston's definition of pseudo-scripts, it is writing that 'evoke[s] the look of graphs but not their substance' (Houston 2018a: 22). At least for us humans, it only bears 'spectres' (Derrida 2006) or shadows of meaning, not meaning itself; the viewer is forever left oscillating between reading and looking. Thereby, the writing produced by the bugs challenges the common notions of writing and reading. It does not communicate to us anything else but 'its own nature as writing', as Peter Schwenger (2019: 1) notes of asemic writing. The attention of the spectator is turned to the configurations of the material traces on the surface.

### **Trace and line**

When we read, we usually tend to look 'behind', as it were, the lines drawn on the surface before us. They 'direct us immediately to what they are supposed

to stand for, namely ideas or concepts' (Ingold 2007: 11). With the exception of for example hieroglyphs or some Chinese pictograms which were created in accordance with the real images of what they stand for, the signs are not thought to bear any physical resemblance to the thing being represented, but they stand as symbols of what they represent. Interestingly, in contrast to this, bug-writing amounts to writing before language and meaning; it is writing that is not at home in language. Its graphic marks may resemble the letters and words of natural language systems, but they do not form any known words or communicate human meaning. When we look at bug-writing, we do not hear the kind of inner voice that people usually hear when reading to themselves; the visual imagery does not evoke subvocalization and auditory imagination. We cannot read the marks as a message. The lines do not stand for anything else.

For me, the notions of *trace* and *line* present themselves as useful means to get at the heart of this kind of writing. In *Of Grammatology* (1988), Derrida uses the name 'trace' to refer to that which remains absent in the structure of the sign. The meaning of the French word 'trace' is very similar to its English equivalent, though it also carries connotations of track, footprint, even spoor. As such, it would seem to present itself as the mark of an anterior presence, of an 'originary nontrace', but such 'metaphysics of presence' is exactly what Derrida tries to get away from. He tries to 'wrench the concept of the trace from the classical scheme which would derive it from a presence' (Derrida 1988: 61). In Derrida's usage of the term, trace marks the always-already absence of presence, originary lack and the lack of origin. Trace is not simply 'the disappearance of origin' but suggests that the origin 'was never constituted except reciprocally by a non-origin' (1988: 61). What is original is the trace as non-origin; 'the origin is a trace' (Spivak 1988: xviii). The 'language' of *The Language of Bugs*, too, remains always-already absent to us. Rather than offering itself to be thought in terms of language, the asemic writing of bugs displays the always-already absent presence of language. In a sense, then, the book bears within itself the necessity of its own critique. There is no transcendental signified that would be always-already hidden inside or behind the traces and lines laid by the bugs. What the traces express is only their nature as writing before all signification.

Derrida stresses very explicitly that the trace should not be reduced to an 'empirical mark' (Derrida 1988: 61). However, unlike him, I am interested here in the empirical occasions and material performances of writing. I wish to



explore the nature of writing as traces of bodily gestures and the production of those traces. Therefore, I think that Derrida's concept of the trace only takes us so far. While it is helpful in enabling us to escape the subordination of writing to language and meaning, when examining bug-writing as concrete marks on a material surface, Derrida's approach needs to be supplemented by a perspective emphasizing the material dimension of writing. And to this end I turn to anthropologist Tim Ingold's (2007, 2013, 2015) work on lines.

In his book *Lines: A Brief History*, Ingold examines writing as 'a special case of line-making' (2007: 122). He thereby links writing with drawing and suggests that in the case of both writing and drawing, 'the line is the trace of a manual gesture' (Ingold 2007: 120). Ingold suggests that '[s]o long as writing is understood in its original sense as a practice of inscription, there cannot then be any hard-and-fast distinction between drawing and writing' (Ingold 2007: 3). The hand that writes is always-already also drawing. It is fascinating that the link between the two gestures is expressed already by the etymology of the words for writing. Both 'the Old English *writan* and the Greek *graphein* carried connotations of scratching, engraving or incising a surface with a sharp point' (Ingold 2013: 139; original emphasis). This connection of writing and drawing is of course something that also aseptic writing in general and the writing of bugs as a particular kind of aseptic writing manifest in a discernible manner. Aseptic writing oscillates between writing and drawing, disentangling itself from the conformity of language and signs. Aseptic texts at once 'encourage us to read them' and 'systematically frustrate our reading' (Schwenger 2019: 2).

What for Ingold makes writing a *special* case of drawing is that what is drawn in writing 'comprises the elements of a notation' (Ingold 2007: 122). Writing, according to him, is part of a system of graphic marks or symbols that are used to visually represent ideas and meanings. Interestingly, bug-writing, as a particular case of aseptic writing, breaks with this. In it, the lines and traces may only *resemble* symbols of a notation (let me remind here, once again, of the Derridean understanding of the trace as the mark of the absence of a presence), and thereby they refer to the history of writing though without actually signifying anything. Bug-writing has no representative content. It is about the patterns, rhythm, shapes, width and density of lines, not about conveying meaning.

There is also another sense in which the writing of bugs differs from Ingold's notion of writing as a way of drawing. Bug-writing does not bear a relation to

the *hand*. In his examination of the relationship of writing to drawing, Ingold understands the line as 'the trace of a manual gesture' (Ingold 2007: 120). In bug-writing, by contrast, the line becomes the trace of a *bodily* movement: something passed through here. *The Language of Bugs* attests to the body of the bug itself becoming a brush or a writing instrument. Here I find helpful the distinction Ingold makes between two major types of lines, namely *threads* and *traces*. He defines a thread as 'a filament of some kind, which may be entangled with other threads or suspended between points in three-dimensional space' (Ingold 2007: 41). The bodies of the bugs may be said to have - and be made of - various kinds of threads, such as hairs, antennas, wings, feet and whiskers. Yet, they also have surfaces, and they also draw on surfaces wherever it is that the bugs move. In other words, the bodies of the bugs leave traces, which Ingold defines 'any enduring mark[s] left in or on a solid surface by a continuous movement' (2007: 43). As the leaflet *The Birth of the Language of Bugs* explains it:

Each bug's painting method is different; their tools are different, too. The caterpillar relies on its belly to draw, but some parts were created by the steps of its six feet and the beating of its wings. The pine caterpillar uses its body hair. The textures are different. The traces left by its waling on paper are also very different. (Zhu 2018: 8-9)

The marks described in this quote amount to traces that, following Ingold (2007: 43), could be called 'additive' in that they form 'an extra-layer' on a surface. After having crawled through the tiny ink ponds prepared by Zhu Yingchun, the bugs laid dark-coloured trails on the pieces of paper placed by the artist in the garden. In addition to these kinds of additive traces, there are also other kinds of traces manifest in *The Language of Bugs*, which could be termed 'reductive'. They are lines scratched, etched or scored on a surface. Instead of adding an extra-layer on a surface, they remove material from it (Ingold 2007: 43). These reductive traces are most notably apparent in bite marks, such as the white bite patterns Zhu Yingchun observed on a leaf and that supposedly gave the impetus to the entire project of collecting the writing of bugs.

By considering writing in terms of traces and lines, in this section I have wanted to explore the materiality and performative aspects of writing over the meanings it might express and convey, thereby also unsettling the anthropocentric understanding of writing. In the following section, I take a

closer look into how the bug-writing displayed by *The Language of Bugs* came to be and examine the question of who is/are the author(s) of the work. This necessitates that we deal with the questions of hospitality and agency.

### **Multispecies hospitality beyond invitation**

While not all bugs disturb by feeding on plants and causing damage, few people nevertheless want to attract more insects to their living spaces. Bugs are typically considered as a nuisance people wish to get rid of rather than seeking ways of co-existing with them, not to speak of deliberately inviting them over and encouraging their populations. Mosquitoes, for example, make 'a most maddening noise, foretelling pain, itching, vexation, disease' (Houston 2018b). Pests are kept at bay by chemical and biological means and by cultivating land. Pesticides tend to be the fastest and most effective means of pest control, but as many of them have been reported to be harmful to both humans and the environment, the current trend is to limit their use. Be that as it may, our relationship to bugs is nevertheless characterized by exclusion; keeping bugs at bay or killing them tends to be an integral part of gardening, for example.

Zhu Yingchun opted a different relation to bugs. Instead of embodying the usual oppositional approach that pitches the bugs simply as enemies, he welcomed them and tried to make his garden as inviting as possible. To quote the leaflet *The Birth of the Language of Bugs*:

Zhu Yingchun mounted a lot of pieces of paper on flat boards and left them in the garden. He made a few 'little ink ponds' with mulberry and other dark-coloured vegetable juices and let the bugs crawl through and collected the natural marks they left behind. (Zhu 2018: 7)

In a sense, the crafting process of *The Language of Bugs* attests to an effort to live peacefully with the bugs and work with them. The book project involved the bugs as an integral part of artistic practice.

I argue that the preparations made by Zhu Yingchun and this living and working with the bugs are best understood within the framework of *hospitality*. Without hospitality, no book would have ever come out. The entanglement with the bugs created capacities to generate a work of art that would not have been possible otherwise in the form that it took. My approach to hospitality

aligns with social scientific and philosophical studies of hospitality, and thereby dissociates itself from the managerial perspectives predominant in both the academic and public discourses on the topic (see Lynch et al. 2011). Instead of reducing hospitality to the provision of food, drink and accommodation and seeing it as an economic activity at heart, I understand hospitality in terms of welcoming the other, as a friendly reception of the guest or the stranger (e.g. Derrida 2000a; Selwyn 2000; Bell 2007a, 2007b; Höckert 2018). Hospitality also entails a relationship to place, in this case the garden, as it involves the opening up of one's private, enclosed space and transforming it into something accessible, inviting and accommodating for others.

In a sense, the hospitality offered by Zhu Yingchun to the bugs could even be said to amount to what Derrida (2000a, 2000b) has called 'unconditional hospitality', insofar as it did not set as a condition that the arriving other must be a human being. In an interview, Derrida notes about unconditional hospitality that 'a "come" must be open and addressed to someone, to someone else whom I cannot and must not determine in advance - not as subject, self, consciousness, or even as animal, God or person, man or woman, living or nonliving' (Derrida 2000b: 94). A hospitality that would determine in advance that the coming other should be human would not be true or real hospitality in the Derridean sense, as it sets limits and conditions on itself. Nevertheless, the hospitality offered by Zhu Yingchun was conditional insofar as he did not welcome anyone and anything (like carnivores), but his come or welcome was addressed particularly to bugs. In addition, he also had an idea under what conditions he was to offer them hospitality: he welcomed them so that they would write.

And when it comes to the bugs themselves, hospitality was the ground or foundation of their coming into being as published authors. Anything we want to see as bug-writing only ever came to be after the hospitable act. The bugs constituted themselves as writers not only through their own actions and performances but also through the hospitality received: the positioning of the bugs as in-house or, rather, in-garden artists was a condition for their own ability to produce publishable writing. So, in a sense, logically and semantically, the host preceded the guest. *The Language of Bugs* depends in its very existence on Zhu Yingchun acting not only as a host but also as an archivist or curator, who collected the traces and marks left by bugs into a book which he then designed. Yet, it is only in relation to a guest whom one addresses that one may become a host (Pyyhtinen 2020), and it was only

thanks to the activity of the bugs that Zhu Yingchun was able to compile their writing into a book. The bugs needed to arrive and do their thing and, by doing so, they in a sense accepted their positioning as guests and enabled Zhu Yingchun to occupy the position of the host. The agencies of the host and the guest are thus distinct only in a relational, and not absolute, sense; by drawing from Karen Barad, they can be said to 'emerge from/through their intra-action' (2010: 267).

While it must be admitted that hospitality does not appear for much of the narrative in the leaflet *The Birth of the Language of Bugs*, its shadowy presence is nevertheless felt throughout the text; it is easy to see how the entanglement of the artist, the garden and the bugs created conditions of possibility for the entire artistic project and drove it from the very start. And the leaflet also does contain an explicit – albeit passing – reference to hospitality, when it mentions Zhu Yingchun 'inviting one hundred species of bugs' to the garden (Zhu 2018: 2). To be sure, invitation as an act of welcoming the other is crucial to hospitality; it amounts to a hospitable act (see e.g. Derrida 2000a; Pyyhtinen 2020). The bugs accepted the invitation and the roles suggested to them by arriving, by chewing on leaves, by crawling through the ponds of vegetable juices and by leaving traces behind. What is more, to succeed in 'interesting' (Callon 1986) the bugs so that they would come to the garden and write, Zhu Yingchun first had to interpret the bugs and their ways. Interpreting the bugs was about knowing with juices, for example: it was only after knowing for example what kind of juices the bugs were drawn to that he was able to build the kind of 'interestment devices' (Callon 1986) that would seduce the bugs to come to the garden.

Yet, the framework of invitation does not quite succeed in capturing the complexity of the hospitality assemblage of Zhu Yingchun, the bugs and the garden, for their relations also extend beyond invitation. For one thing, as the already mentioned bite marks on plant leaves attest, some of the bugs had already arrived there in the garden before the invitation as *visitors*, irrespective of Zhu Yingchun's actions (see Derrida 2000b for the distinction between 'invitation' and 'visitation'). Their arrival and presence in the garden were not solely dependent on the invitation made in the context of the human project. Besides having to do with an invitation, the hospitality offered could thus also be understood in the sense of welcoming the visitation that may exceed invitation. By choosing not to chase the bugs away but let them arrive and give them a place, Zhu Yingchun interrupted the banishing of the bugs that would

strive to interrupt them from causing interruption in the garden. He welcomed the interruption that they carried with them. The bugs were quite literally disruptive and 'untidy guests' (see also Veijola et al. 2014), as they soiled the pages by leaving stains and traces besides marking plant leaves with bite marks.

In a sense, the fact that at least some of the bugs were already there in the garden, irrespective of Zhu Yingchun's actions, makes the hospitality that the artist showed towards the bugs 'noncontemporaneous with itself' (Barad 2010: 268). It was conjoined with other processes and actions that came from different times and had their own temporality that differed from it. Like all action, it 'took place in a field already crowded with other endeavors and their consequences, a crowd with which the new entrant immediately interacts, overlaps, interferes' (Bennett 2010: 101). While hospitality is without doubt also a means of social control, and there is an asymmetry at its core insofar as it is always the host who 'sets the conditions' for the transitional 'period of grace', whereas '[i]t is always the guest who obeys' (Berking 1999: 92), the host is not an autonomous and isolated source of hospitality, simply generating its own action. Let us remember here how the white bite marks observed by Zhu Yingchun gave the initial impetus for the book. This suggests that his own action was not so much a sovereign initiative as a response, a reply to a preceding invitation manifested in the bite marks that he observed. As a host, he was not the sole originator of the book. His own action was conjoined with the bugs and the garden and was to some extent thus received as a gift. Since any agent or any-body is always immersed in ongoing activity (Whitehead 1938: 217), '[n]o one body owns its supposedly own initiative' (Bennett 2010: 101). Zhu Yingchun, the bugs, the garden, the pages and the ink ponds were all part of a heterogeneous assemblage (or intra-action), in which action had no single source or locus, but was 'distributed across a swarm of various and variegated vibrant materialities' (Bennett 2010: 96).

Because the action of each party - both the artist and the bugs - was conditioned by each other, the authorship of *The Language of Bug* did not play out as a zero-sum game of either-or. While Zhu Yingchun the designer mobilized the bugs so that he would be able to carry out his art project, bug-writing is not the product of a mastermind pulling the strings. The bugs did not merely represent and execute Zhu Yingchun's artistic vision as sheer passive and perfectly loyal instruments. He did not exert full control over them, but the bugs came to live, grow and move independently of him, and he was also

more or less *taken by surprise* by what they did and were capable of. Even though the resistance that the bugs most certainly also have shown is absent from the book and the accompanying leaflet, it is more than likely that the bugs did not always and inevitably perform and act the way that Zhu Yingchun would have wanted or expected. This can already be inferred from the fact that he collected the traces left by the bugs as long as a period of five years, and only a small part of the thousand traces and the more than 10,000 leaves that he gathered ultimately made it into the book.

What is more, Zhu Yingchun could not have published the book without the bugs. It was the bugs that produced the writing. It is their beautiful traces that the book displays. Not a single line, as it was already stated, was written by Zhu Yingchun. By soiling the pages, the bugs marked them as their own. This is in line with philosopher Michel Serres's proposition that 'appropriation takes place through dirt' (Serres 2011: 3). According to Serres, beings take possession of space and things by way of 'pollution', in the broadest sense of the term. It is by leaving a stain or some mark that one makes something one's own. Several mammals mark their territory, define their habitat, by filth and dirt, for example by urinating on the edge of their lair or by marking the boundaries of their niche with excrement. Serres (2011) suggests that human ways of soiling or polluting repeat this bodily, animal gesture. Following this line of thought, the bugs could be said to have made the pages their own in a very material sense by leaving their marks on it.

And yet, as we know very well, bugs are not capable of crafting books on their own just by themselves, through their own powers. Zhu Yingchun was an obligatory passage point in the project, as the book would not have seen daylight without his design vision and effort. In a sense, Zhu Yingchun acted as a spokesperson for the bugs. As beautiful and amazing the 'art' produced by the bugs is, they needed a representative for it to gain broader appreciation. The bugs were not able to speak for themselves, so their writing needed someone to act and speak in its name. Bugs are not legal subjects, either, so the copyright statement of *The Language of Bugs* identifies Zhu Yingchun as the 'author' of the work. Therefore, it was not the bugs themselves but their self-nominated representative who brought the book into existence and published it but who could not have achieved it alone, without the bugs.

We must therefore take *entanglement* as our point of departure when examining the coming into being of the book (on entanglement, see e.g.

Barad 2007, 2010; Hodder 2012; Pyyhtinen 2015; Shildrick 2022). The book came into existence in the intermediate space of human and non-human entanglement. The bugs needed to surrender to their host and accept the welcome by arriving and doing their thing *and* their host needed to accommodate to their ways for the project to succeed. Ultimately, Zhu Yingchun subscribed to a kind of artistic - and even ontological - democracy in that while he completed the book on behalf of the bugs, he nevertheless saw himself as being on the same footing with them. To quote his own words: 'Making a book on behalf of bugs, I hope to [...] complete the book on an equal footing with them' (Yingchun 2018: 8). The crafting of the book was thus a process of human and non-human collaboration, a collective effort by Zhu Yingchun and the bugs.

To be precise, the production of bug-writing and the multispecies hospitality thanks to which it came to be did not, however, involve only the artist and the bugs, but the garden too played a part. While hospitality is typically considered in dyadic terms, as a host-guest relation, in this case it needs to be understood as a triad with the artist, the bugs and the garden as its three elements. A triad does not only consist of a set of direct relations between two of its members ( $A \rightleftharpoons B$ ,  $A \rightleftharpoons C$ ,  $B \rightleftharpoons C$ ), but in addition to the direct relationships between one member and another, there is also their indirect relationship which is mediated by or derived from their common relationship to the third member (Simmel [1908] 1992: 114) as well as the relation of each member to the whole. It is also crucial to note that this 'thirdness', any more than the roles of the host and the guest, is not a fixed position, but each member may in its turn be placed in the position of the host/guest/third, as they swap places. For example, for Zhu Yingchun the plants of the garden were *both* his guests which he gardened, tended and nourished *and* his hosts insofar as he was able to enjoy their beauty and find solace and peace in the garden. What is more, it could even be said that the better he would treat the plants as his guests, the more generous hosts they would become, lifting his mood and health with their increased beauty and vitality. At the same time, to the bugs the plants were their hosts which provided them food and shelter. Through their very existence, the plants unintentionally invite their bug-visitors and host them, which nevertheless are likely to cause harm to their hosts.

Ultimately, the paradox of the hospitality offered by Zhu Yingchun to the bugs is that he was only possible to welcome their visitation by endangering the life or well-being of his other guests, the plants. By introducing a ban on pesticides



in the garden that would exterminate the bugs or keep them away, he to some extent sacrificed the plants whose leaves the bugs devoured on and ate away. The hospitality he offered to the bugs as their host thus made the plants the *tertius miserabilis* in this case. Zhu Yingchun was able to give the bugs a place only at the expense of failing in his responsibility to the plants (cf. Derrida 1995: 70),<sup>2</sup> not to mention how he also plucked the bitten plant leaves to add them to his collection.<sup>3</sup>

## Conclusion

In this article, I have examined the production of bug-writing by engaging with the book *The Language of Bugs*. I have not so much 'analysed' the book as research data as tried to *think with it*. The endeavour was driven by the idea that sometimes art may enrich and intensify concepts (see also Pyyhtinen 2014); the book provides us with fascinating clues to the rethinking of both writing and hospitality in non-anthropocentric terms.

First, as regards the question of writing, attending to the lines and traces left by bugs enabled me to counter the conventional anthropocentric and logo- and phonocentric notion of writing. With regard to this, the book *The Language of Bugs* nevertheless has certain limitations. While its way of anthropomorphizing the bugs may make the readers more sensitive towards and appreciative of the beauty of the lines created by bugs', the very same anthropomorphizing also prevents the book from seeing the bugs in their own right and articulating what makes bug-writing distinctive *vis-à-vis* writing by humans. I argued that instead of considering it in terms of 'language', it makes more sense to explore the writing of bugs as a case of 'asemic' writing that does not communicate anything else but its own nature of writing in the form of visible traces on a surface. In a sense, as the lines drawn by bugs with their bodies exist outside traditional (human) language systems yet resemble linguistic symbols, they present a non-human 'shadow' of the writing practices of humans. As such, I think that bug-writing has great theoretical potential for expanding the notion

---

<sup>2</sup> For an exploration of pests and more-than-human ethics in the garden, see Ginn (2013).

<sup>3</sup> It would also be interesting to ponder whether the hospitality offered to the bugs was entirely without violence made to them - let us think of for example the occasion when the artist sprinkled some water on his hand onto which the spot clothing wax cicada had jumped from the pain palette (Yingchun 2018: 7): how was he to make sure that it would swim or that it would not swim for its life? However, the book and the leaflet themselves do not offer enough to pursue this line of analysis.

of writing as we have come to know it and for liberating it from its anthropo-, phono- and logocentric subordination. Thereby it also helps us challenge human exceptionalism: what if human writing was only one – and not even the primary – case in the wide variety of writing practices to be found in the world? After all, life generates lines and leaves traces and marks wherever it unfolds.

Second, the article offered a kind of double exposure of bug-writing and hospitality: on the one hand, I examined the production of bug-writing through the framework of hospitality and, on the other hand, suggested that an investigation into how the bug-writing displayed in *The Language of Bugs* came to be problematizes the conventional anthropocentric understanding of hospitality by opening up a perspective onto multispecies hospitality. The examination of the crafting of the book as a result of multispecies hospitality also addressed the crucial difference between invitation and visitation when thinking about hospitality. Whereas the invited guest is expected to arrive without an element of surprise, the hospitality that the artist offered the bugs extended beyond invitation to visitation: it did not efface or suppress the bugs' disruptiveness. On the contrary, it was by welcoming visitation that Zhu Yingchun not only retained the bugs' otherness and welcomed intrusion and the unforeseeable but also gave rise to creative and transformative entanglements through which the bugs could become published writers and the work of art become actualized. This is also to say that the hospitality event did not merely connect previously unconnected beings, but the host(s) and the guest(s) (and the thirds) were all changed and emerged from it in a different state from the one in which they entered it. It made authors out of bugs, which produced strange and wonderful illegible writing, and raised a book designer to international fame.

Third, and finally, by engaging with bugs I have wanted to examine our relations with non-human others beyond familiarity. 'Philosophers thinking with the non-human animal', as Jane Sayers has aptly pointed out, 'usually choose companion species [...] or familiar wild animals to write with' (2016: 374), the most famous examples being Derrida (2008) and his cat,<sup>4</sup> Haraway (2008) and her dog, alongside Bateson's ([1972] 2000) cat and dogs and Irigaray's (2004) rabbit and birds. While the reader's compassion for and affinity with these animals is more or less pre-established, bugs invite us into a more unfamiliar

---

<sup>4</sup> See, however, the first volume of *The Beast & the Sovereign* (2009), where Derrida discusses the poem 'Snake' by D. H. Lawrence as an example of hospitality offered to a repellent and frightening animal. See also Kakoliris (2016).

and alien landscape of non-human alterity, where the otherness of the non-human animal others is not diluted or dispelled through familiarity, and thereby they attract ways of exploring multispecies hospitality in more radical terms, beyond kin and kind.

### **Funding**

This work was supported by the Kone Foundation (grant number 202009490).

### **References**

Barad, K. (2007), *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Barad, K. (2010), 'Quantum entanglements and hauntological relations of inheritance: Dis/continuities, spacetime enfoldings, and justice-to-come', *Derrida Today*, 3:2, pp. 240-68.

Bateson, G. ([1972] 2000), *Steps to an Ecology of Mind: Collected Essays in Anthropology, Psychiatry, Evolution, and Epistemology*, Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press.

Bell, D. (2007a), 'Hospitality and urban regeneration', in C. Lashley, P. A. Lynch and A. Morrison (eds), *Hospitality: A Social Lens*, Oxford: Elsevier, pp. 89-100.

Bell, D. (2007b), 'The hospitable city: Social relations in commercial spaces', *Progress in Human Geography*, 31:7, pp. 7-22.

Benali, A. and Ren, C. B. (2019), 'Lice work: Non-human trajectories in volunteer tourism', *Tourist Studies*, 19:2, pp. 238-57.

Bennett, J. (2010), *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Berking, H. (1999), *Sociology of Giving* (trans. P. Camiller), London: Sage.

Callon, M. (1986), 'Some elements of a sociology of translation: Domestication of the scallops and the fishermen of St Brieuc Bay', in J. Law (ed.), *Power, Action and Belief: A New Sociology of Knowledge?*, London: Routledge, pp. 196-223.

Carter, B. and Charles, N. (2018), 'The animal challenge to sociology', *European Journal of Social Theory*, 21:1, pp. 79-97.

Dashper, K. (2020a), 'Holidays with my horse: Human-horse relationships and multispecies tourism experiences', *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 34:100678.

Dashper, K. (2020b), 'More-than-human emotions: Multispecies emotional labour in the tourism industry', *Gender, Work & Organization*, 27:1, pp. 24-40.

DeMello, M. (2012), *Animals and Society: An Introduction to Human-Animal Studies*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Derrida, J. (1988), *Of Grammatology*, corrected ed. (trans. G. C. Spivak), Baltimore, MD and London: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Derrida, J. (1995), *The Gift of Death* (trans. D. Wills), Chicago, IL and London: Chicago University Press.

Derrida, J. (2000a), 'Foreigner question: Coming from abroad/from the foreigner', in A. Dufourmantelle and J. Derrida (eds), *Of Hospitality* (trans. R. Bowlby), Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, pp. 3-72.

Derrida, J. (2000b), 'The deconstruction of actuality', in *Negotiations: Interventions and Interviews 1971-2001* (ed., trans. and with an Introduction by E. Rottenberg), Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, pp. 94-95.

Derrida, J. (2006), *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International* (trans. P. Kamuf), New York and London: Routledge.

Derrida, J. (2008), *The Animal that Therefore I Am* (ed. M.-L. Mallet, trans. D. Willis), New York: Fordham University Press.

Derrida, J. (2009), *The Beast & the Sovereign, vol. I* (trans. G. Bennington), Chicago, IL and London: Chicago University Press.

Despret, V. (2016), *What Would the Animals Say If We Asked the Right Questions?*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Duras, M. (2011), *Writing* (trans. M. Polizzotti), Minneapolis, MN and London: University of Minnesota Press.

Fisher, J. (1991), 'Disambiguating anthropomorphism: An interdisciplinary study', in P. P. G. Bateson and P. H. Klopfer (eds), *Perspectives in Ethology*, vol. 9. New York: Plenum Publishing Cooperation, pp. 49-85.

Gaze, T., Jacobson, M. and van Gerven Oei, V. W. J. (2013), 'Preface', in T. Gaze and M. Jacobson (eds), *An Anthology of Asemic Handwriting*, The Hague and Tirana: Punctum Books, pp. 5-9.

Ginn, F. (2013), 'Sticky lives: Slugs, detachment and more-than-human ethics in the garden', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 39:4, pp. 532-44.

Haraway, D. (2008), *When Species Meet*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Höckert, E. (2018), *Negotiating Hospitality: Ethics of Tourism Development in the Nicaraguan Highlands*, Abingdon and New York: Routledge.

Höckert, E. (2020), 'On scientific fabulation: Storytelling in the more-than-human-world', in A. Valtonen, O. Rantala and P. Farah (eds), *Ethics and Politics of Space for the Anthropocene*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 51-70.

Hodder, I. (2012), *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things*, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Houston, S. (2018a), 'Writing that isn't: Pseudo-scripts in comparative view', *L'Homme: Revue française d'anthropologie*, 227-228, pp. 21-48.

Houston, S. (2018b), 'Maya Creatures III: Mosquitoes and Maddening Noise'. *Maya Decipherment*, <https://mayadecipherment.com/2018/05/20/mosquitos-and-maddening-noise/>. Accessed 30 July 2022.

Ingold, T. (2007), *Lines: A Brief History*, London and New York: Routledge.

Ingold, T. (2013), *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture*, London: Routledge.

- Ingold, T. (2015), *The Life of Lines*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Irigaray, L. (2004), 'Animal compassion', in M. Calarco and P. Atterton (eds), *Animal Philosophy: Essential Readings in Continental Thought*, London: Continuum, pp. 192-202.
- Kakoliris, G. (2016), 'Hospitality and non-human beings: Jacques Derrida's reading of D. H. Lawrence's poem "Snake"', *Hospitality & Society*, 6:3, pp. 243-55.
- Karlsson, F. (2011), 'Critical anthropomorphism and animal ethics', *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics*, 25, pp. 707-20.
- Kokkonen, T. (2014), 'Kun emme tiedä. Keskustelemassa "meitä" uusiksi: lajienväliset esitykset ja esitystaiteen rooli ekokriisin aikakaudella' ('When we do not know: Renegotiating "us": Interspecies performances and the role of performance art in the time of ecological crisis'), in K. Lummaa and L. Rojola (eds), *Posthumanismi*, Turku: Eetos, pp. 179-209.
- Latour, B. (1999) *Pandora's Hope. Essays on the Reality of Science Studies*, Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Leep, M. (2018), 'Stray dogs, posthumanism and cosmopolitan belongingness: Interspecies hospitality in times of war', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 47:1, pp. 45-66.
- Lemelin, R. H. (2012), *The Management of Insects in Recreation and Tourism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lynch, P., Germann Molz, J., McIntosh, A. and Lugosi, P. (2011), 'Theorizing hospitality', *Hospitality & Society*, 1:1, pp. 3-24.
- Onali, A. (2021), *'I love plastics': A diffractive material-cultural analysis of human-plastic relationships in Finnish cultural landscape based on Yle's plastic awareness campaign*, master's thesis, Tampere: Faculty of Information Technology and Communication Sciences, Tampere University, <https://trepo.tuni.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/125130/OnaliAlma.pdf;jsessionid=0A8CC48BF7402683524A36FEA2124D59?sequence=2>. Accessed 7 December 2021.

Pyyhtinen, O. (2014), *The Gift and Its Paradoxes*, London and New York: Routledge.

Pyyhtinen, O. (2015), *More-Than-Human Sociology: A New Sociological Imagination*, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pyyhtinen, O. (2020), 'Friends of relational sociology? The relational current as a space of hospitality', *Digithum*, 26, pp. 1-12, <https://www.raco.cat/index.php/Digithum/article/view/n26-pyyhtinen/470881>. Accessed 17 January 2021.

Pyyhtinen, O. and Tamminen, S. (2011), 'We have never been only human: Foucault and Latour on the question of the Anthropos', *Anthropological Theory*, 11:2, pp. 135-52.

Regan, T. (1985), *The Case for Animal Rights*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Sayers, J. (2016), 'A report to an academy: On carnophallogocentrism, pigs and meat-writing', *Organization*, 23:3, pp. 370-86.

Schwenger, P. (2019), *Asemic: The Art of Writing*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Selwyn, T. (2000), 'An anthropology of hospitality', in C. Lashley and A. Morrison (eds), *In Search of Hospitality: Theoretical Perspectives and Debates*, Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, pp. 18-37.

Serres, M. (2011), *Malfeasance: Appropriation through Pollution?* (trans. A.-M. Feenberg-Dibon), Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Shildrick, M. (2022), *Visceral Prostheses: Somatechnics and Posthuman Embodiment*, London: Bloomsbury.

Simmel, G. ([1908] 1992), *Soziologie*, Georg Simmel Gesamtausgabe Band 11, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Spivak, G. C. (1988), 'Translator's preface', in J. Derrida (ed.), *Of Grammatology*, corrected ed. (trans. G. C. Spivak), Baltimore, MD and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. ix-lxxxvii.

Taylor, N. and Twine, R. (eds) (2015), *The Rise of Critical Animal Studies: From the Margins to the Centre*, London and New York: Routledge.

Taylor, P. W. (1996), *Respect for Nature*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

*The Language of Bugs* (2018), Suffolk: CC Art Books.

Valtonen, A., Salmela, T. and Rantala, O. (2020), 'Living with mosquitoes', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 83:102945.

Veijola, S., Germann Molz, J., Pyyhtinen, O., Höckert, E. and Grit, A. (2014), *Disruptive Tourism and Its Untidy Guests: Alternative Ontologies for Future Hospitalities*, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Whatmore, S. (2002), *Hybrid Geographies: Natures Cultures Spaces*, London: Sage.

Whitehead, A. N. (1938), *Science and the Modern World*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wilkie, R. (2015), 'Multispecies scholarship and encounters: Changing assumptions at the human-animal nexus', *Sociology*, 49:2, pp. 323-39.

Zhu, Y. (2018), *The Birth of the Language of Bugs* (trans. C. Yu), Suffolk: CC Art Books.

#### CONTRIBUTOR DETAILS

Olli Pyyhtinen is a professor of sociology and the founder of Relational Studies Hub (RS Hub) at Tampere University, Finland. He is the author of for example *The Gift and Its Paradoxes* (Routledge, 2014), *More-than-Human Sociology* (Palgrave, 2015) and *The Simmelian Legacy* (Palgrave, 2018). Currently Pyyhtinen is leading the project 'The meanings and workings of the gift: From modernity to the era of new technologies' (Kone Foundation, 2021-



24) and the projects WasteMatters (ERC Consolidator Grant, 2022-27) and DECAY (Academy of Finland, 2022-26) on waste and the circular economy.

Contact: Faculty of Social Sciences, 33014 Tampere University, Tampere, Finland.

E-mail: [olli.pyyhtinen\(at\)tuni.fi](mailto:olli.pyyhtinen@tuni.fi)