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Neurodivergent Narratives, Fatness, and New Materialistic Agencies: Rethinking Traumatised Bodies in *Double XL* and *Disfigured*

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Abstract

Food and clothes are essential aspects of human life; they transcend mere necessity and become what Jane Bennett calls 'vibrant matters' that shape bodies' internal and external realities.[1] Through the intra-action of vibrant materials, fat bodies' internal realities (psychological complexities) and external realities (societal perceptions) develop and affect their lives. Food and clothes intra-act differently with both slim and fat bodies, enacting transcorporeal bodies as porous and fluid, as they shape bodies and minds irrevocably and inescapably. While recognising the greed for food and clothes, this paper identifies how these nonhuman agencies of food and clothes control human bodies and infuse, in cases of fat bodies, traumatic and neurodivergent traits. Although neurodivergent experiences are not directly connected with food and clothes, they accentuate and emerge from the experiences of fatness, which are defined and shaped by food and clothes. While recognising matters, in Karen Barad's terms, as the entangled entities of the mind,[2] which are extended selves, the paper explores the concept of fatness through the lens of new materialism, focusing on the neurodivergent narratives of traumatised bodies in the films *Double XL* and *Disfigured*. By analysing the traumatic and neurodivergent narratives of the characters, the study critiques societal perceptions of fatness and the implicit biases that accompany them. It argues that traditional structures of society overlook the agency of food and clothes,[2] subjecting the bodies to their fatness and inflicting perpetual trauma. Ultimately, the paper advocates rethinking the concepts of fatness through new materialisms, highlighting the complexities of fatness in contemporary media.

Keywords: Neurodivergent, new materialism, fatness, gender, trauma, *Double XL*, *Disfigured*

Introduction

Since the collapse of anthropocentric visions of humanity, subsequent developments in literary and philosophical discourse have focused more on the nonhuman or 'other than human' entities. It has become an acceptable norm in academia that the debate on objects

[1] Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Duke University Press, 2010), https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv111jh6w.

[2] Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Duke University Press, 2007), https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822388128.

[2] Quan Zhou, 'New materialist inter-ethnic crossing in Jen Sookfong Lee's *The Better Mother*,' *Literature, Critique, and Empire Today* 60, no. 1 (February 2025), https://doi.org/10.1177/30333962251314714.

and nonhumans garners attention. This is where posthumanism, which decentres humanist traditions of positioning humans at the centre of the world, becomes relevant in discussions, as it allows theoreticians and scholars to devise ways to counter the Anthropocene. Rosi Braidotti associates the Anthropocene with the historical moment that ends the Humanist tradition by offering newer alternatives.[3] This is a defining moment as it has global repercussions and builds upon the interconnections between humans and the non-human environment.[4] Pramod Nayar also recognises this interconnected network and calls it critical posthumanism, which advocates a symbiotic relationship with nonhuman entities.[5] It must be said that most scholars avoid considering posthumanism as antihumanism, and instead, they view it as a movement that questions human exceptionalism or an autonomous self.[6] Here, the focus is on how the intricate web of connections, consisting of living and non-living objects, constitutes human subjects. This interconnectedness and mutual constitution of bodies is an essential posthuman idea embraced and developed by the proponents and advocates of new materialism.

New materialism, sharing the contexts with posthumanism, explores the intricate relationship between humans and nonhumans. Deviating from social constructivism, which builds on the concept of knowledge generation through social contexts, new materialism develops a model of meaningful interaction between humans and nonhumans devoid of any hierarchy. In other words, new materialism, while rejecting Individualism and independent bodies, investigates how nonhumans contribute to the meaning-making process. It justifies the material turn as 'human and inhuman are responsive to and responsible for each other in a relation of mutual nourishment.'[7] Looking through these cohesive and symbiotic perspectives of new materialism, we investigate objects of food and clothing in two movies: *Disfigured* and *Double XL*.[8]

Both movies reveal the nonhuman force, which we can identify in four major categories. First, Bruno Latour's concept of 'Actants' indicates that all the agencies, whether human or nonhuman, can perform the role of an actor in the larger web of interconnected agencies. Second, Jane Bennett's 'Vibrant Matter' observes that a nonhuman entity possesses an inherent vitality which can change or modify human subjects. Third, Stacy Alaimo's 'Transcorporeality' recognises porous bodies of human subjects that proportionately change in response to the actant roles of the nonhuman environment. Lastly, Barad's 'Intra-action' focuses on the mutual constitution of human and nonhuman bodies, in which human bodies are never independent, and they imbibe the nonhuman actants in the form of entanglements. Such entanglements occupy the extended form of human bodies, which involve both human and nonhuman elements and co-evolve in the process. These theoretical concepts become a

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[3] Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Polity Press, 2013), 37.

[4] Braidotti, *The Posthuman,* 40.

[5] Pramod K. Nayar, *Posthumanism* (Polity Press, 2014), 170.

[6] Edgar Landgraf, Gabriel Trop, and Leif Weatherby, 'One Introduction: Posthumanism after Kant,' in *Posthumanism in the Age of Humanism: Mind, Matter, and the Life Sciences after Kant*, ed. Edgar Landgraf, Gabriel Trop, and Leif Weatherby (Bloomsbury, 2019), 1.

[7] Alison Ravenscroft, 'Strange Weather: Indigenous Materialisms, New Materialism, and Colonialism,' *Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry* 5, no. 3 (September 2018), 355, https://doi.org/10.1017/pli.2018.9.

[8] Glenn Gers, Director, *Disfigured* (Dialogue Heavy Pictures, 2008), 96 min; Satram Ramani, Dirctor, *Double XL* (T-Series Films, Wakaoo Films, and Elemen3 Entertainment, 2022; distributed by AA Films), Netflix, 128 min.

part of our analysis that aims to identify different material agencies and their intra-active connections with humans. In the paper, we investigate the disruptive and recalcitrant nonhuman agency of food in *Disfigured* and the supplementary and celebratory agency of clothing in *Double XL.*

The movies share a common theme of fatness and its related socio-cultural prejudice. They describe the plights of fat women in their pursuits of socio-economic goals. Food is portrayed as a common cause of fatness, and clothing is both a solution and a problem in their constrained lives in a biased society. *Disfigured* relies on the food narrative that governs the storyline and affects the lives of people. Alternatively, *Double XL* offers the clothing narrative through which fat people exhibit both confidence and trauma. In *Disfigured*, the focus is on how food transcends the binary of the mind and body through the intra-active connections between them. Here, food becomes a recalcitrant or a disruptive agency that causes neurodivergent conditions among the characters. By contrast, *Double XL* offers material recalcitrance through both food and clothing, and material supplementation through clothing that enlivens the trauma caused by fatness and social prejudice. The movie shows how clothing becomes an empowering agency that inescapably lifts fat bodies out of their plight, offering an optimistic worldview for the isolated fat community.

In the paper, we discuss related scholarship of nonhuman studies in 'Texts and Contexts,' offer theoretical negotiations of new materialism in 'Theories and Practices,' analyse the movie *Disfigured* through the new materialistic perspectives invoking neurodivergent conditions through the food narrative in 'Food and Material Reconfigurings,' and examine Double *XL* unravelling material recalcitrance through food and material celebrations through clothing in 'Material Discursivity and the Agency of Clothing and Food.' In conclusion, we provide a general overview of our argument and highlight the theoretical implications of new materialism in cultural studies.

Texts and contexts

Several scholars have discussed connections between humans and nonhuman objects around them.[9] They have shown the agentic forces and vibrancy among nonhuman elements and correlated them with humans' actions and behaviour. It is curious to note how nonhuman elements, usually portrayed as passive and ineffective entities, constantly interact with humans and motivate them to undertake specific actions which they would not normally consider. Quan Zhou, for instance, recognises inter-ethic crossings through the new materialistic perspectives on food and clothing. While analysing Emily Shiner's *The Better Mother,*[10] Zhou describes the role of clothing and food in 'generating, sustaining, and fortifying inter-ethnic crossing.'[11] The focus is to unravel the vibrancy and vitality of the objects, instead of terming them passive and inanimate. Zhou argues that food and clothing, in the context of the novel, transcend their traditional roles as cultural symbols by assuming 'power,' in Bennett's terms, and influencing the protagonists to form inter-ethnic bonding. This is

[9] Zhou, 'New Materialist Inter-Ethnic Crossing'; Anneke Smelik, 'New Materialism: A Theoretical Framework for Fashion in the Age of Technological Innovation,' *International Journal of Fashion Studies* 5, no. 1 (1 April 2018), https://doi.org/10.1386/infs.5.1.33_1; Megan Catherine Rose, Haruka Kurebayashi, and Rei Saionji, 'Kawaii Affective Assemblages: Cute New Materialism in Decora Fashion, Harajuku,' M/C Journal 25, no. 4 (2022), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.5204/mcj.2926.

[10] Emily Shiner, *The Better Mother* (Inkubator Books, 2023).

[11] Zhou, 'New Materialist Inter-Ethnic Crossing,' 170.

achieved by the agentic qualities of food, which include its smell, texture, taste, and look, and clothing, which include fabric and designs. They motivate Val, a Canadian woman, to form an intimate relationship with a Chinese Canadian, Sam Chow. Here, Shiner focuses on highlighting the positive possibilities and optimistic vision constructed through the nonhuman agents, such as food and clothing. The inter-ethnic relationship builds on the desire for physical pleasures. It invokes the utopian dream of cross-culturalism and multicultural idealism, foregrounding the material agencies only on the conducive sides of the intra-active possibilities. While Zhou's work mainly concerns the utopian vision of cross-culturalism acquired through intra-active nonhuman agencies, we incorporate the agentic properties of food and clothing, advancing a new materialistic debate by connecting them with neurotic possibilities in fat studies. The agencies of food and clothing occupy an inseparable affinity with human bodies, offering multiple opportunities for criticism from different disciplines to identify their vitality in various contexts.

Anneke Smelik, recognising the agency of clothing and its intra-active possibilities, investigates how bodies, fabrics, garments and technology are intricately entangled. Smelik argues that all objects, including humans, are eventually material elements such as minerals and other matter, making it conducive for matter to intra-act and enact mutual modifications.[12] These intra-active connections help us 'to understand fashion as materially embedded in a network of human and non-human actors,'[13] through which they constitute one another in the process of mutual becoming. Megan Catherine Rose, Haruka Kurebayashi, and Rei Saionji, while referring to *Kawaii* fashion, recognise matter in terms of its qualities, such as cuteness and the soothing and playful experiences of happiness that it provides through its intra-action with humans.[14] Although Rose, Kurebayashi, and Saionji mainly focus on the connection between fabrics, fashion styles and humans, they acknowledge how matter affects human behavioural patterns, especially in relation to feelings and emotions towards fashion styles. Another example of the vibrant materiality of clothing is visible in Quiping Liu and Quan Zhou's analysis of clothing patterns in Amy Tan's *The Valley of Amazement*. Liu and Zhou reveal how clothing patterns and materials, such as colour, style, and texture, intra-actively influence and relate to the novel's heroine. They describe how clothing constitutes the characters' identities in their multiple roles. Equipped with different sets of clothes they intra-act with themselves and others, allowing them to assume powers and different 'possibilities of existence.'[15] Liu and Zhou's arguments encompass the intra-active agency of clothing concerning fields of fashion or in the daily lives of people, but they fail to include how clothing can shape fat identities, involving a complex relationship between fat people and clothing.

Megan Fourqurean takes a different turn in this debate of new materialism through its ecocritical connections in her analysis of Kiran Desai's novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*.[16] While focusing on environmental exploitation in a postcolonial world, Fourqurean identifies transcorporeal human bodies that do not end at the skin but rather transgress

[12] Smelik, 'New Materialism,' 34.

[13] Smelik, 'New Materialism.'

[14] Rose, Kurebayashi, and Saionji, "Kawaii Affective Assemblages."

[15] Qiping Liu and Quan Zhou, 'The Agentic Force of Clothing in Amy Tan's *The Valley of Amazement*,' *Journal of Language, Literature and Culture* 69, no. 1 (2022): 24, https://doi.org/10.1080/20512856.2022.2071812.

[16] Kiran Desai, *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* (Faber and Faber, 1998).

boundaries through human-nonhuman entanglements in their routine intra-active engagements. For example, Fourqurean argues that the transcorporeality of human bodies is measured during their interactions with toxic and unhealthy chemicals that permeate the environment.[17] Pauliina Maapalo and Tone Pernille Østern describe the intra-active agency of wood in its interaction with humans. Drawing from Bruno Latour's actor-network theory, Maapalo and Østern highlight wood as 'active actants' that influence teaching and learning in early education. They further argue that the teacher's bodily engagement with wooden material in a school system is intra-actively connected with the teaching and learning processes.[18] Maapalo and Østern refer to material agencies in various fields, including the environment and education. In this study, we incorporate the ways in which nonhuman environmental factors affect humans and thus advance the material debate in fat studies.

There is a trend among scholars to examine human positions from the perspective of new materialism. Most scholars have identified how external bodies, behaviour, and actions are intra-actively connected by the things surrounding them or that come into contact with human bodies. They have chosen fields such as fashion and technology, education, environmental criticism, Marxist criticism, and cross-cultural connections, but they have overlooked the field of fat studies. These scholars, though they have examined clothes, food, wood, and the environment as powerful material agencies in shaping human bodies, have not examined the traumatic and neurodivergent conditions of fat bodies, which are caused by material interactions. We reveal the intra-active possibilities of food and clothing in relation to fat female bodies, where matter has a different effect than on normal bodies, which causes multiple psychological problems, including neurodivergent conditions.

Theories and practices

Our research relies on a deep understanding of bodily realities, which necessitates our interpretive analysis, supported by a critical theory lens of new materialism. New materialism offers an interdisciplinary perspective that builds upon a theoretical approach, encompassing a range of diverse fields of social sciences and humanities. Our approach is to recognise new materialism as a suitable theoretical lens through which to study nonhuman objects and their impacts on human subjects. As argued by several scholars, we advocate that objects have an impact on both physical and psychological actions. We also recognise that the enmeshment between humans and nonhumans allows for an adequate understanding of human subjects, as studying them in isolation is likely to produce an incomplete picture. The nonhuman enmeshments, which constitute the extended bodies of humans and nonhumans, intensify the dwindling of binaries between humans and nonhumans, living and non-living, and material and immaterial. Humans do not evolve in isolation or independently, as their beings are both simultaneously and mutually dependent on nonhumans. We also acknowledge that 'people and things are not separate entities but constitute one another in the process of becoming.'[19] Mutual modifications, simultaneously shaping each other, are both physical and psychological, as matter exists both within and outside of human bodies. While adopting a

[17] Megan E. Fourqurean, 'Agential Realism and Trans-Corporeality in Contemporary South Asian Literature,' *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 59, nos 2–3 (2022), 133, https://doi.org/10.1177/00219894211064301.

[18] Pauliina Maapalo and Tone Pernille Østern, 'The Agency of Wood: Multisensory Interviews with Art and Crafts Teachers in a Post-Humanistic and New-Materialistic Perspective,' *Education Inquiry* 9, no. 4 (October 2, 2018): 389, https://doi.org/10.1080/20004508.2018.1424492.

[19] Smelik, 'New Materialism,' 7.

qualitative and interpretive analysis, supported by critical theories of new materialism, we draw on Barad's intra-action, Alaimo's transcorporeality, Bennett's Vibrant Matter, and Latour's notion of matter as an actant.

These theoretical practices enable us to analyse interactions between human bodies and matter, which confirm the material discursivity enacted through interactions between fat female bodies and food and clothing. Material discursivity is part of the analysis, as matter and meaning are inseparable in the ongoing materialisation of discursive practices. We analyse this material discursivity, recognising thing-power which assumes vitality among nonhumans, to identify ongoing material reconfigurings between bodies and matter, which constitute one another in the transcorporeal process of becoming. The transcorporeal process, as identified through our interpretive analysis of the narrative and coding, enables us to advocate for the blurring of human and nonhuman boundaries. Therefore, we undertake a qualitative analysis of the two movies, *Disfigured* and *Double XL*, following the theoretical framework offered by new materialism. The following is a detailed explanation of the theoretical framework utilised in the analysis of the two movies.

The framework of new materialism clearly and outrightly involves the nonhuman factor in knowledge construction, subject formation, and the worldly changes that constantly shape internal and external realities. The nonhuman, here, does not differentiate between the living and non-living organisms, as due credit is also given to nonliving entities in the process. The traditional division between human and nonhuman becomes obsolete, and human exceptionalism, as it has always been privileged in Cartesian dualism, makes way for the nonhuman agencies to share their voices. Several new materialist thinkers, including H. Kessler, criticise the Cartesian move to separate mind from body and to harden the division between the human and the nonhuman.[20] Bruno Latour, too, criticises the project of the Enlightenment as it has always divided the human and the nonhuman, privileging the former over the latter. He calls the division 'superfluous, immoral, and – to put it bluntly – anti-constitutional.'[21] Further, while emphasising the role of nonhuman objects in actions, Latour argues that actions cannot be ascribed to human intentions, as objects play a vital role in causal relations in subsequent actions, and points out that '*anything* that does modify a state of affairs by making a difference is an actor [original emphasis].'[22] Latour also goes one step further than criticising the division between human and nonhuman by ascribing the nonhuman to the role of actants, who are actors that equally participate in the course of action. Latour identifies the challenges in social relations between humans and nonhumans (inorganic) by using the example of sheep controlled by fencing, which is more efficient than a barking dog. However, the social relationship between the barking dog and humans is quite understandable, while the social relationship between the fencing and humans remains hard to fathom, despite the fencing's efficiency in this case.[23] Given the scenario, Latour argues that as long as the roles of the nonhuman are tied to social commitment, they must be taken into account.

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[20] Neil H. Kessler, *Ontology and Closeness in Human-Nature Relationships Beyond Dualisms, Materialism and Posthumanism* (Springer Nature, 2019), 46, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-99274-7.

[21] Bruno. Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Harvard University Press, 2006), 142.

[22] Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford University Press, 2005), 71, https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780199256044.001.0001.

[23] Latour, *Reassembling the Social,* 77.

Bennett, too, invalidates the binary of the human and the nonhuman when she defines thing-power and advocates 'thinking beyond the life-matter binary.'[24] Just as Bruno Latour endorses the social cause and participatory nature of the nonhuman in action, Bennett proposes that nonhuman agency requires collaboration and cooperation with the human faction. Bennett goes a step further and describes these nonhuman actants as possessing vitality, capable of altering human actions and invoking possibilities that defy human expectations. Bennett suggests these matters have thing-power, which has the potential to act outside of human expectations and present independent expressions.[25] For Bennett, matter, by virtue of its existence, imbues vitality that is recalcitrant and defies conventional human considerations of matter. Bennett's belief that humans are also matter, or that human bodies are nothing but material assemblages, implies that humans are, in the end, nonhumans; this adds the further implication that nonhumans possess the required vitality, blurring the divisions between what is human and nonhuman. This is why Bennett refers not to human power or any other power, but to thing-power, which she describes as 'the curious ability of inanimate things to animate, to act, to produce effects dramatic and subtle.'[26] Bennett further contends that the essential vitality present in matter must be acknowledged, rather than dismissed as merely subjective human experiences of specific materials. Additionally, she argues that it is vital to recognise that the human experience itself embodies this inherent vitality, which is made up of matter. Humans ultimately consist of various materials, such as minerals and bones, and these nonhuman entities possess a certain level of inherent vitality that exerts its influence regardless of human impact.[27] Bennett's vital materialism is a broad concept that involves both humans and nonhumans as actants, and through their mutual interactions, thing-power emerges. Interestingly, in a chapter entitled 'Edible Matter', in her book *Vibrant Matter,* Bennett comments on food as an agency having thing-power. As an actant, food can create cells and take control of human intentions in the actions. Additionally, Bennett informs us about how food can change people's behaviour, referencing several other food studies that connect food with violence, attention and focus, and depression. For Bennett, the relationship between the eater and the eaten is intricate, and the eaten has a role to play in shaping the bodies and minds of the eater, altering 'psychological, cognitive, aesthetic, and moral complexions.'[28]

Supplementing what Bennett offers in her vital materialism, Karen Barad challenges the utopic vision of individualism, as she 'calls for a rethinking of the very nature of knowledge and being.'[29] Along with individualism, Barad also contests the ancient project of representationalism, which prioritises humans above other nonhumans and which relies on the power of words. Just as Bennett describes matter as having vitality, Barad explains matter as having agentic qualities of being productive and generative. Barad proposes intra-action as opposed to interaction between human and nonhuman; interaction, which presumes the boundaries between various entities, become obsolete as intra-action establishes

[24] Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Duke University Press, 2010), 20.

[25] Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, xvi.

[26] Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 6.

[27] Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 10.

[28] Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 43.

[29] Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Duke University Press, 2007), 23, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv12101zq.

determinate boundaries and generates conceptual meanings among them.[30] Barad argues that it is through intra-action that an agential cut emerges, drawing a line in the fluid boundary between subject and object. Intra-action establishes matter as an active partner during its conversation with humans and a force that can influence human actions. Barad reiterates this notion about the dynamism of agency: 'agency is not an attribute but the ongoing reconfigurings of the world. The universe is agential intra-activity in its becoming.'[31]

This connection between the universe, consisting of the nonhuman environment and entities, and humans with their porous bodies finds its space in another theory of new materialism, Alaimo's transcorporeality. Transcorporeality 'explores interconnections, interchanges, and transits between human bodies and nonhuman natures.'[32] Alaimo focuses more on porous human bodies that constantly interact with nonhuman elements surrounding them. Alaimo investigates the contact zone, which allows for the Transcorporeal enmeshments of more-than-human natures to form extended bodies of the human. Alaimo also emphasises the agency of food, which, according to her, is 'the most palpable trans-corporeal substance,'[33] and which, through eating, transforms from one material to another: human flesh, in this case. Like Latour's Actants, Barad's intra-action and Bennett's thing-power, Alaimo's transcorporeality, too, keeps its foundations on nonhuman agency that enmeshes itself around porous human bodies, and by which the boundary between the human and the nonhuman dissipates. Alaimo's transcorporeality endorses that the idea of materiality, as constitutive of bodies, is also valid in cases of gender construction—material forces being enacted upon gendered realities, as in how matter affects different gendered spaces and disability studies differently, wherein it is constituted by material forces, not only in the cases of natural disability but in the cases of normal human bodies.[34]

Such a framework of new materialism offers a platform from which to analyse how nonhuman agencies of food and clothing make and unmake the fat bodies of women. Drawing from Latour's notion of matter as an actant, Bennett's thing-power, Barad's intra-action, and Alaimo's transcorporeality, the paper interprets material reconfigurings among the fat bodies of women, who pass through the changes in their external (fatness) and internal realities (traumatic and neurodivergent conditions), incurred by matter, residing within and outside.

Food and material reconfigurings

The movie *Disfigured* opens with a critical line spoken by a character: 'Why are we ashamed of that word (fat)?' (Figure 1).[35] The movie begins with a heated discussion on biased perceptions and discriminatory remarks about fat people, and the simultaneous helplessness of fat people against such verbal attacks. The root cause of such biased perceptions, as it appears in the discussion, is the mainstream idea of the standard of physical beauty, which relies on the body's shape, and which also results in the loss of equal opportunities for fat people. We also observe Lydia's announcement of a Fat Acceptance Walking Group, which is

[30] Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 139.

[31] Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 141.

[32] Stacy Alaimo, *Bodily Natures* (Indiana University Press, 2010), 2, https://doi.org/10.2979/6079.0.

[33] Alaimo, *Bodily Natures*, 12.

[34] Alaimo, *Bodily Natures*.

[35] Glenn Gers, *Disfigured* (Dialogue Heavy Pictures, 2008), 0:32.

disturbed by a skinny figure, Darcy, who suffers from anorexia and wishes to join the Fat Acceptance Group of people. The opening scene reveals contradictory realities that are connected to food. The side of fat people represents those who have developed fat and heavy bodies due to their compulsive habit of eating excessively, or who are supposedly believed to eat more than required. In contrast, the other side represents an anorexic person, Darcy, with a compulsive desire to avoid consuming a necessary quantity of food for living. Food is associated with both types of people, and it is quite common for many individuals in society to blame overweight people for overeating or for not maintaining proper dietary habits. Although the group gathers to celebrate the fat body and to avoid joining the race to eliminate fat from their bodies, food is, in one way or another, associated with their problems of heavy bodies. This parallel of two types of bodies remains a dominant narrative pattern in the movie, and it offers an opportunity to reveal intra-active connections between food and the body.

Figure 1. A group of fat people discuss how shame is associated with the word 'fat.'
Source: Glenn, *Disfigured*, 0:32.

Given the above scenario, new materialism offers different insights about the connections between food and the body. Traditionally, food is treated as an indispensable necessity and a passive object that serves the purpose of fulfilling the nutritional needs of humans. However, in the movie, food occupies the status of what Bennett calls 'vibrant materials,' enacting physical and psychological changes on the bodies. Fatness, as a phenomenon, emerges out of the material interaction, mediated through the intra-active agency of food. Gai Farchi associates plasticity with human bodies in contact with material entanglements, that is food. Plasticity is a type of mutual correspondence, as both matter and bodies are required to participate in the decomposition cycle.[36] Such plasticity is more relevant in the case of bodies and food, as they directly change one another in the process of

[36] Gai Farchi, 'A Matter of Life and Death.' *French Forum* 46, no. 1 (2021): 58, https://doi.org/10.1353/frf.2021.0003

decomposition, and food is the matter that eventually constitutes the human body. This further corroborates what Farchi terms as 'the becoming-stuff of objects' and 'the becoming-stuff of people' that work in tandem.[37] In this paper, we explore how food, in relation to fat studies, affects human subjects entangled with 'the becoming-stuff of objects,' causing experiences of trauma and neurodivergence. Food, being a constitutive material agency, can showcase recalcitrance and defy standard human expectations. Farchi describes food as a recalcitrant material agency while analysing Florent-Claude's *Sérotonine,* in which Farchi identifies Captorix (fictional anti-depressant) and nicotine as recalcitrant matters that pose challenges to the digestive system, making the body gain unwanted weight.[38] This logic of the recalcitrant material agency of food is applicable to the parallel struggle of Darcy and Lydia in *Disfigured*. But the notion of food as an agency, in this case, becomes wider and includes all types of food, not solely relying on unhealthy food. Food, as a recalcitrant material agency, is not just restricted to unhealthy items such as Captorix and nicotine, but it includes even mainstream food items. The dynamism of food's recalcitrant nature varies from hygienic to unhygienic food, as can be seen in the case of Lydia, who suffers from eating more food and tries to control her diet, and that of Darci, who suffers from anorexia and is incapable of eating sufficient food.

Scholars such as Zhou view food as a positive agentic matter, which builds an optimistic vision of the surrounding world. Zhou observes food as a matchmaker when Val, a Canadian lady, develops an intimate relationship with Mr. Chow, solely because of the Chinese food's agentic quality to create an inter-ethnic relationship, in which food as a vibrant material enables Val to cross the ethnic boundaries and fall for the Chinese man. This positive vitalism of food, capable of developing 'the inter-ethnic romantic intimacy,'[39] looks at the brighter side of the agentic quality of food. For Zhou, the amalgamation of food, body and bodily desires becomes a fertile ground of agentic forces to trigger a cross-ethnic romantic relationship. Opposed to this utopic vision, the movie *Disfigured* offers an unexplored portrayal of trauma and neurodivergent conditions associated with fatness. A scene in which Darcy inspects her skeleton-like body for the extra fat vouches for this claim of actant food, as Bruno Latour would call it, and it correlates with how the same food becomes the reason for traumatic conditions. Darcy's conversation with her mother during her father's party reveals her psychological crisis about dealing with eating. A small and casual conversation between them about Darcy possibly eating pizza turns into a heated discussion: Darcy responds to multiple questions asked by her mother, 'Look, you wanna just run through the rest of questions now and get it over with?'[40] Here, food is not a means to supplement the need to fulfil physical needs, but provokes the conditions of psychological disturbances in an anorexic patient, leading to neurodivergent conditions as her behaviour changes from calmness to intensified anger and depression. Darcy's case is not just about vibrant matter and the body, but about a question of what the parameters of fat bodies are or what constitutes fatness, as she, being an anorexic patient, constantly battles against fatness, or the fear of fatness. Besides, her failure to eat a morsel of pizza to make her mother happy complicates her relationship with her mother, and in this case, pizza, despite representing her mother's care and affection, causes her to feel

[37] Farchi, 'A Matter of Life and Death,' 57.

[38] Farchi, 'A Matter of Life and Death,' 62.

[39] Zhou, 'New Materialist Inter-Ethnic Crossing,' 171.

[40] Gers, *Disfigured,* 27:22.

more depressed and traumatised. Her eating and not eating pizza brings forth abnormality in her behaviour and becomes a reason for a tense relationship with her mother. The agency of food crosses the thresholds of subjects and objects, as can be found in Zhou's analysis of the novel *The Better Mother,* and the discursive food switches back and forth between bodies and relationships. Unlike Zhou's analysis, food, in the present analysis, shows the recalcitrant agency.

On the other side of the anorexic body and its trauma of the imagined fatness resides the case of overweight bodies. Bennett calls food 'conative bodies' and argues that

> food will appear as actant inside and alongside intention-forming, morality-(dis)obeying, language-using, reflexivity-wielding, and culture-making human beings, and as an inducer-producer of salient, public effects. We can call the assemblage formed by these human and nonhuman bodies "American consumption" and name as one of its effects the "crisis of obesity".'[41]

For Bennett, food is an agency that not only constitutes bodies but also becomes an extension of bodies, highlighting how food, as an actant, forms obesity. In a similar vein, Bennett suggests that an actant food, after constructing fatness, proceeds to deliver psychological problems, which potentially lead to neurodivergent conditions in the movie, so much so that they attempt to eliminate the food-bodies, either by eliminating fat through surgery or via a strict diet. The term 'food-bodies' refers to bodies that have become obese through the actant food, and many people wish to eliminate either food from their diet or fat from their bodies through surgery.

Fatness is often associated with shame, and it does not allow fat people to free themselves from the clutches of fatness. In the movie, Bob vents his frustration and responds to Lydia when she rejects the idea of having weight-loss surgery: 'Everybody is always saying how unhealthy it is to be fat.' He further adds, 'My life sucks because I am fat.'[42] His frustration is visible when he responds to consolatory remarks by Lydia about the positive side of fatness. He responds, 'I am fat because I eat too much candy, and soda pop.'[43] His recognition of shamefulness is not new and understandable, but, in this case Bannett's argument of an actant food is relevant when she argues that 'in the case of some foods, say potato chips, it seems appropriate to regard the hand's actions as only quasi- or semi-intentional, for the chips themselves seem to call forth, or provoke and stoke, the manual labor.'[44] In this case, it is candy, which forms Bob's semi-intentionality in the act of eating, and which adds to the fact that obesity is not merely the product of cultural or economic factors, as it also emerges from the force of materiality.[45] The intention to eat and candy's provocation are lopsided, wherein the latter is more potent than the former. Therefore, food is not just a material entity that constructs flesh but one that disrupts the mind through intra-action between food and humans.

Food and mind are not separate anymore, as Bennett also mentions in her argument that food and mind are invariably connected. While referring to relevant studies, Bennett

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[41] Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 39.

[42] Gers, *Disfigured,* 34:55.

[43] Gers, *Disfigured,* 35:08.

[44] Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 40.

[45] Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 43.

maintains that food can cause positive or negative changes in people's behaviour and actions, such as a reduction in violence, depression, hyperactivity, and an increase in focus.[46] Instead of focusing on the benefits of food, the movie reveals the adverse side effects of compulsive eating disorders: Darcy's inability to eat proportionately and Lydia's inability to resist eating disproportionately. Their friendship relies on the agentic quality of food, as food keeps them connected. Additionally, their physical problems correspond to psychological vulnerability, enacting mutual transformations and blurring the borders between inside and outside,[47] as Bennett calls it, between food and mind. Alaimo, too, describes food as 'the most palpable trans-corporeal substance,'[48] and acknowledges that humans are transformed or changed by the food they eat.[49]

Figure 2. The image shows how Darcy finds faults with her body in an anorexic way.
Source: Glenn, *Disfigured*, 01:35:05.

Towards the second half of the movie, the physical battle of food becomes more psychological, invoking an intense battle between food and mind. While Alaimo's focus lies on the physical damage, including the foodstuff's toxic effects, which could cause severe health issues, the movie reveals how food can cause mental disorders. This neurodivergence is reflected intermittently in Darcy and Lydia's conversations, which mainly focus on food. It is visible in their attempt to save each other from the unwavering food trap. Darcy, while helping Lydia to manage her diet, mentions, 'Because I am socially retarded and I don't know what normal people do.'[50] Here, food becomes symbolic and an agentic matter that causes physical

[46] Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 41.

[47] Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 49.

[48] Alaimo, *Bodily Natures*, 12.

[49] Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 13.

[50] Gers, *Disfigured,* 1:05:09.

and mental instabilities. The mental instabilities are visible when Darcy, possessing a slim body, constantly attempts to reduce her weight (Figure 2), and Lydia, possessing an overweight body, attempts and fails to lose weight. It is not about food and the physical needs, but about how food intra-acts with human bodies and shapes minds and bodies in unexpected ways.

Food, at times, becomes a source of shame for those with overweight or anorexic bodies, and can be a cause to see the end of one's life as soon as possible. Darcy responds to the question asked by Lydia about ending life in the following manner: 'It might feel good.'[51] Food is an indispensable element for life to sustain its functioning, but it can also, as Alaimo claims, endanger human bodies when it contains toxic elements. Alaimo further argues that 'people continually negotiate the intra-acting material agencies of every place, every stream of air, every food and personal care product that they encounter, experiencing their bodies as scientific instruments.'[52] This intra-active possibility, emerging through physical contact with food, affects bodies and minds unsparingly. Both Darcy and Lydia pass through neurodivergent conditions caused by the food-thing, a vital matter that can be both beneficial and detrimental at the same time. On the one hand, the food-thing strengthens the bonds between the two women, and on the other hand, when Lydia offers a binge eating celebration to anorexic Darcy for one night, Darcy, being forced to face her horrors of eating, feels insulted, and the event disrupts their camaraderie. Their friendship is further disrupted when Lydia asks Darcy aging questions pointing out her anorexic tendencies to isolate herself from society, to starve herself for societal acceptance, and to assume dehumanisation in the process.[53] This dialogue highlights not just anorexic tendencies but also intensified neurodivergent conditions.

Interestingly, the case of Darcy and Lydia shows a contradictory affair of the compulsive desire for eating and a compulsive desire to avoid eating, enabling food to be an agency that works both ways, whether one eats it or not. The logic of fatness naturally involves shame and guilt, for which the fat bodies are not always responsible. Alice, a member of the Fat Acceptance Group, mentions: 'Fat people are dying of isolation, of shame and fear instilled by doctors.'[54] The trauma of being fat or having a fat body is often attributed to an imbalance in dietary practices. Further, new materialism, while acknowledging the vitality in the agency of the nonhuman, absolves humans of absolute responsibilities in the changes of their surroundings.[55] This stance recognises agentic qualities in the nonhuman force. Clearly, the same logic is applicable in the case of the intricate relationship between humans and food, in which food, with its agentic force, plays an equal part in the outcome of fat bodies. Ejsing is right about this new materialist perspective that 'everything must matter *in the same way, all the time* [original emphasis].'[56] All matters matter in the construction of fat bodies, which are no longer entirely the result of a human act of error, that society blames and isolates from the mainstream. This position does not absolve humans of their responsibilities, but enables them

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[51] Gers, *Disfigured*, 1:8:18.

[52] Alaimo, *Bodily Natures*, 116.

[53] Gers, *Disfigured,* 1:19:27.

[54] Gers, *Disfigured,* 1:22:23.

[55] Mads Ejsing, 'The Arrival of the Anthropocene in Social Theory: From Modernism and Marxism towards a New Materialism,' *Sociological Review* 71, no. 1 (January 1, 2023): 57, https://doi.org/10.1177/00380261221106905.

[56]Ejsing, 'Why the Turn to Matter Matters,' 62.

'to reach a better, indeed more "realistic", understanding of the complex relationship between agency and moral culpability.'[57] This perspective enhances humans' understandings of the nonhuman or more-than-human agency around them and facilitates a better and more responsible interaction with them.

Material discursivity and the agency of clothing and food

While fatness easily connects with food, it has a material relationship with clothes and their designs. In addition to food, clothing is an object that surrounds and constitutes human subjects in their different phases of life. The relationship between people and clothes is an ongoing dynamic of intra-active enmeshments that make and unmake human bodies. It is also an established fact that human identity is attached to clothes in most cultures across the world. This has motivated scholars to investigate this intricate and lifelong negotiation of human bodies in their pursuit of acquiring individual or collective identities, which are inseparably tied to clothing.

Since clothing is also related to the fashion industry, scholars have revealed how the fashion industry, negotiated through the framework of new materialism, relates to the entanglements of different types of clothes with human bodies. New materialism's blurring of absolute boundaries between objects and humans 'helps [us] to understand fashion as materially embedded in a network of human and non-human actors.'[58] In this way, the fabric and texture of different clothes form a unique and intricate relationship between humans and non-human objects. The exterior material of clothes is not separate from the interior materials of human bodies, making the non-human objects entanglements that form the extended shapes of human bodies. Satram Ramani's *Double XL* interweaves both food and clothing narratives in the characters' journey to establish their career roles. The 'foodstuff' is the point of highlight in the narrative, but it is through the interconnectedness with clothing that defines identities in the end. While the entire movie is based on the struggle of fat women to advance their careers and assert their identities against the backdrop of conventional Indian society that privileges slim bodies as the criterion for physical beauty, we discursively analyse specific scenes in the movie that reflect women's interaction with food and clothing. These scenes indicate how the women build their identities, how they are intra-actively connected to food and clothing, and how they set the thematic narrative of the entire movie. In other words, these scenes are the threshold points in the movie, which define both the vocational pursuits and identities of fat women in Indian society.

The movie is a typical Bollywood drama about the journey of simple women in their pursuit of greater heights. Clothing offers a simultaneous narrative, although it is not always apparent, with the storyline of the movie. The opening scene shows the glittering image of high-class society, marked by their luxurious lifestyle that includes opulent apparel. From the beginning, it is noticeable that clothes and humans are co-constitutive objects, and instead of considering them separate, the focus is on how they co-constitute each other. The relevance of clothing is not new if we take into account the fields of sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies, as they have long acknowledged the vitality of clothing. However, new materialism offers fresh ideas that negotiate with the set patterns of dualism and intensifies such dualism

[57] Ejsing, 'Why the Turn to Matter Matters.'

[58] Smelik, 'New Materialism,' 34.

that existed in the studies of deconstruction.[59] In this case, the movie presents clothing as an active agent of non-human objects that participate in human actions that intra-actively constitute bodies and minds, allowing meaningful interactions between them.

The movie progresses with the complex cultural issues of fatness, in which social bias against fat people, especially fat women, resurfaces with a comic yet deeply ironic and melancholic tone. The engagement meeting between Rajshri and Ratan not only highlights social bias against obese women but also reveals social perceptions about women who wear certain types of clothes. Here, the skewed perceptions of Ratan uncover the double standards of society. He takes pleasure in viewing cheerleaders of sports and yet looks down on them with criticism. Clothing does not remain neutral or a nonhuman object for humans' use and disposal, but an intra-active agent that connects with the larger social framework and social structures of the male gaze. Humans' interaction with clothes is what Barad terms 'the ongoing practice of being open and alive to each meeting, each intra-action, so that we might use our ability to respond, our responsibility, to help awaken, to breathe life into ever new possibilities for living justly.'[60] An individual subject is never independent of the web of interconnectedness of nonhuman objects that form a perpetual chain of entanglements. Owing to its closest affinity with bodies, clothing becomes a vital force that influences the wearing bodies and those who observe the wearing bodies. This bodily affinity claims the division of exteriority and interiority obsolete, rejecting the anthropocentric perception of bodies as 'pure cause or pure effect.'[61]

Rajshri's desire to become a sports presenter and the associated corporate expectations contradict one another, as the corporate sector expects a slim body that can fit in revealing clothes. Clothing and bodies must mutually supplement and make meaningful interactions for the sports industry to recognise the body's potential. The possible intra-action between them is due to their inseparable proximity to one another and the dwindling of the binary of subject and object, as clothes are extended bodily enmeshments that dynamically situate the bodies in the larger structures of socio-cultural environments. Interestingly, Smelik recognises the dynamic relationship between fabric and bodies and how this proximity forms the subjectivities of extended bodies.[62] While Smelik accurately portrays bodily interactions with nonhuman objects, the object-body relations mainly involve physical interactions, leaving psychological questions about the mind-matter connections unanswered. Smelik does not include how matter (clothing), while supplementing the bodily performance of the wearers, enacts a reconfiguring of the human mind. The material reconfiguration, involving the dissolution of the mind-body binary, asserts that mind and body function together in the meaning-making process. It also supports Larry Shapiro's embodied cognition, which presents the body as a constituent element of the mind rather than a silent or passive entity serving the cause of the mind.[63] Here, material discursivity not only dissolves the boundaries between mind and matter but also between mind and body.

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[59] Smelik, 'New Materialism,' 38.

[60] Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, x.

[61] Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 136.

[62] Smelik, 'New Materialism,' 43.

[63] Larry Shapiro, 'The Embodied Cognition Research Programme,' *Philosophy Compass* 2, no. 2 (2007), https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-9991.2007.00064.x.

As the movie continues to reveal how body and clothing interact, Rajshri and Saira, the leading women characters, struggle to navigate their bodies in their desired clothes. This indicates their frustration in finding a cohesive interaction with clothes, which aligns with corporate expectations. The movie's focal point is to relate the challenge associated with women's fat bodies fitting into the stereotypical imagination, which consists of slim bodies and attractive attire. Rajshri, who aspires to be a sports presenter, and Saira, who dreams of being a fashion designer, share their struggles with fat bodies and their plans for acquiring success in their respective corporate sectors. Although clothing is the focal point of the narrative in the movie, food, as a villainous character, appears infrequently to disrupt normalcy. Since fatness is inescapably associated with dietary practices, intra-actions between food and mind continually develop traumatic conditions for both women, as they associate their problems with food. During one such situation in which her plan to film a fashion travelogue gets a setback, Saira speaks in front of the mirror, addressing the plight to herself, 'You know why this happens to you. You know, don't you? Chomping on pizzas and burgers! Hogging on chocolate mousse! Go on! You deserve this, Saira! You freaking deserve this!'[64] Such recalcitrant objects (in this case, pizzas), arouse negative feelings. They relate to the type of harmful experiences that depend on how objects affect human subjects.[65] Sara Ahmed's concept of objects and feelings correlates with the vitality of the nonhumans. Although Ahmed does not vouch for nonhuman agencies in the way that new materialist critics do, the identifiable point of agreement between humans and nonhumans in the shared experiences relates to the new materialistic perspective. This correlation allows us to assert that both clothing and food appear to be recalcitrant matters that affect minds in neurodivergent ways, invoking trauma and frustration.

Liu and Zhou, in their analysis of Amy Tan's *The Valley of Amazement*, investigate how matter performs its roles marked by Latour's notion of actants and Bennett's theory of vibrant matter. Liu and Zhou's focus is on how vital forces of clothing elevate the status of courtesans, associating them with fortune, prestige, and high rank in society.[66] Liu and Zhou, too, keep the focus on intra-action between body and matter, leaving aside the questions of mind and matter, whether positive or negative. It is valid when Liu and Zhou claim that garments, as vibrant matter and actant, produce women,[67] but vibrant matter, going beyond the positive construction of bodies, also disrupts any positive self-image. Unlike Liu and Zhou's, we analyse both bodies and minds intra-acting with objects such as food and clothing. The purpose is not to create division between body and mind, but to describe how vibrant matter can permeate recalcitrance while interacting with human bodies, which can cause not just physical changes, but also invoke the possibilities of neurodivergent or traumatic conditions for the characters that undergo psychological transformations in the process. This act of the mind-body and its intra-action with objects transcends static borderlines by recognising the inherent fluidity that forms inescapable intertwinement. The vitality of objects, as Bennett recognises it, fills human bodies with matter-energy,[68] which flows within and outside the human body, and which is

[64] Satram Ramani, *Double XL* (AA Films, 2022), 37:25.

[65] Sara Ahmed, 'Collective Feelings,' *Theory, Culture & Society* 21, no. 2 (April 1, 2004): 31, https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276404042133.

[66] Liu and Zhou, 'The Agentic Force of Clothing,' 24.

[67] Liu and Zhou, 'The Agentic Force of Clothing,', 28.

[68] Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, x.

transcorporeally connected to the surrounding environment. The movies, therefore, identify this matter-energy which negotiates with human bodies, transcending the mind-body binary, only to suggest the physio-psychological transformations of bodies and minds among the characters.

Figure 3. In the scene, Rajshri is seen interviewing Kapil Dev, a legendary Indian Cricketer.
Source: Satram, *Double XL*, 01:03:25.

The movie interweaves clothes with bodies, intersecting with fatness, gender, individual aspirations, and cultural bias. In a scene in which Rajshri interviews Kapil Dev in formal attire, consisting of a suit, she intersects and defies the cultural bias of not just gendered roles but of fatness (Figure 3). It transforms Rajshri's demeanour from a fat and helpless woman to a confident, defiant, and modern one. Material reconfigurings, enacted through clothing, a nonhuman object, allow for mind-body transformations. This is not to disavow human will, in reaching such a pivotal opportunity, but it shifts the agency from the human to the nonhuman and recognises the nonhuman agency in the cause-effect calculations of material realities. Here, instead of the disruptive recalcitrance of food, as observed earlier, clothing becomes an empowering agency for fat bodies, shaping the mind-body-matter intra-actions.

Figure 4. In the scene, Saira showcases her designs for different body types.
Source: Satram, *Double XL*, 39:38.

In a similar vein, Saira launches designer solutions for 'every bodies,' in which her designs ensure they fit all types of bodies, whether fat or slim. In addition, she advocates special designs for ordinary people, who are not role models in the fashion industry. She famously states, 'You don't have to fit into the design. The Designs will be done keeping your bodies in focus' (Figures 4 and 5).[69] This empowering of bodies through clothes is visible in her efforts when she designs fancy clothes for fat bodies, changing the trend from body shaming to body owning and body celebrating. Clothing becomes an empowering agent, as opposed to the disruptive agency of food observed in *Disfigured*. It becomes a modifier of human subjects, who transform obese and isolated bodies to flamboyant and expressive bodies. One of the wearers opines, 'It feels like it was designed for me. I can feel fashionable but without being afraid.'[70] Vibrant matter finds its space in everyday life, not as a passive entity, but 'matter in this context is a social actor in its own right, energising and compelling practitioners to incorporate it into their everyday lives.'[71] Rose, Kurebayashi and Saionji, while referring to *kawaii* fashion, have also identified that it can evoke feelings of calmness and reduce stress in everyday life.[72] This substantiates that clothing has always been a vibrant matter, continually shaping and changing human subjects to enact an ongoing transformation.

Figure 5. In the scene, ordinary women, fat or slim, participate in a fashion parade showcasing Saira's designer solutions for 'every bodies.'
Source: Satram, *Double XL*, 01:03:25.

Conclusion

Disfigured and *Double XL*, have different themes and strands connected by common objects, such as food and clothing. They offer different material conditions enacted by food and clothing. Food becomes a tormenting object in both movies, as it creates traumatic food anxiety among the characters. In *Disfigured*, food perpetrates extreme anxiety, leading to neurodivergent conditions for both Darcy and Lydia. Here, food serves not as a fulfilling substance, but rather as a recalcitrant and unreliable matter which causes the body and mind

[69] Ramani, *Double XL,* 1:24:51.

[70]Ramani, *Double XL*, 1:38:23.

[71] Rose, Kurebayashi, and Saionji, 'Kawaii Affective Assemblages.'

[72] Rose, Kurebayashi, and Saionji, 'Kawaii Affective Assemblages.'

to submerge in perpetual agony. Alternatively, *Double XL* offers relatively milder conditions of anxiety among the characters. Indeed, food and clothing create different levels of anxiety and trauma. But the difference is that clothing, while being traumatic at times, also offers possibilities of reinvention for fat female identities. Therefore, while food becomes a tormentor in the cases of the movie characters, clothing emerges as a saviour that momentarily lifts them from the mundane reality of fatness. While *Disfigured* narrates the characters tormented by the fat body constructed by 'foodstuffs,' *Double XL* allows the characters to lift their bodies from the torments and rejoice in their physicality through the clothes narrative. The movie narrative highlights how the vitality and vibrancy of clothing empower human bodies, rescue fat bodies from body shaming, and enable the fat characters to own their bodies and celebrate fatness, disowning the socio-cultural prejudices that have pervaded all corners of society.

Our study allows the mind and its neurodivergent conditions to swing back and forth between trauma and celebration. It connects mind and body relationships with material discursivity, in which intra-active possibilities between objects and human subjects become responsible for neurodivergent conditions such as extreme anxiety and intensified trauma. We have revealed how objects, through their vibrant vitalities, control and manage the way human mind-bodies feel and experience the situation. We assert that matter (food and clothing) enacts different reconfigurings of the fat female bodies, as they are invariably associated with society's stereotypical notions of beauty and associated conventions. We also propose that humans are never in control of the nonhuman world of objects and must learn to adapt to co-constitutive relationships. In just the same way as we make objects; objects also make us. Humans, as objects or things, live as objects and eventually turn into objects. It is this transcorporeal relationship with objects that defines human evolution and lasting futures.

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