

Two Years or More of Co-Speculation with the Tilting Bowl

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This paper is an account of a study with five trained philosophers who, for up to two years or more, lived-with and speculated on a counterfactual artifact we designed called the Tilting Bowl. In a previous study, we examined the human technology relations of our counterfactual artifact (Wakkary et al 2018). In this study, we ask what of those relations in a broader sense and, how to refine our posthumanist commitments in asking this question? A counterfactual artifact, like the Tilting Bowl, is part of a methodological approach we call material speculation in which the aim is to defamiliarize norms or create what-if alternatives of particular technologies that we want to critically and materially investigate. In addition, we asked the philosophers in our study to participate as co-speculators, meaning they actively and knowingly speculated with us on our research questions while living with the Tilting Bowl for an extended period of time. In this study, we held posthuman commitments to ways of knowing that include a *realist attitude* (Latour 2004), philosophical empiricism (Verbeek 2005), and *situated knowledges* (Haraway 1988). In this context, co-speculation served well as both an analytical and materially speculative tool for investigating posthuman relations. Together we offer situated knowledge of the counterfactual artifact and its relations in which our participant philosophers *thought-with* as well as *lived-with* the Tilting Bowl, to be in effect its “spokepersons” (Latour 2004). Our findings, in the form of co-speculative dialogues, collectively describe mediations or interactions as matters of non-anthropocentric and existential care; non-presumptive knowings; and ideologized relations of autonomy and control.

References

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