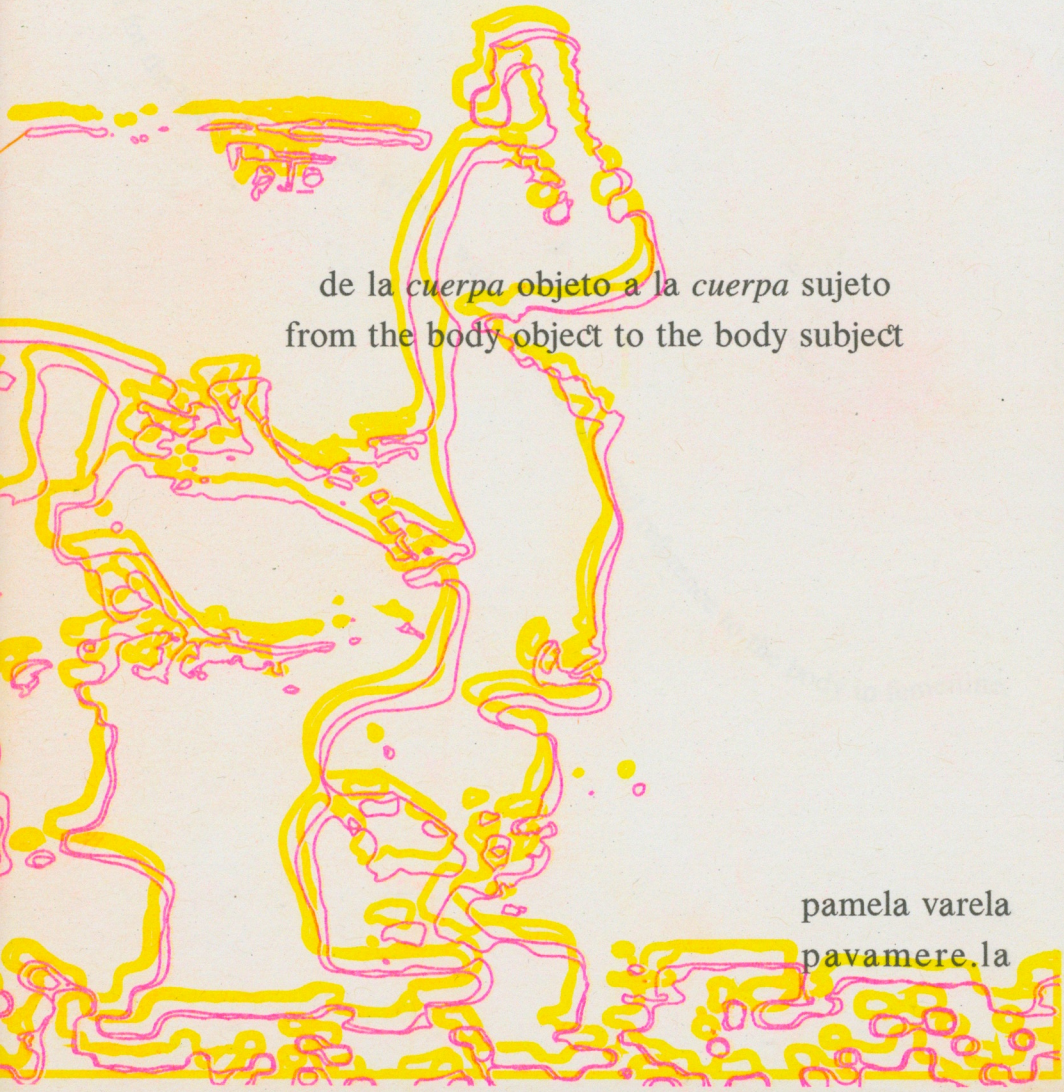


body politics
body poetics



de la *cuerpa* objeto a la *cuerpa* sujeto
from the body object to the body subject

pamela varela
pavamere.la

El cuerpo is Spanish for the body. La cuerpa, written with an a, is an invented reference to the body in femenine.



"The Church says: The body is a sin.
Science says: The body is a machine.
Advertisement says: The body is a business.
The body says: I am a party."
–Eduardo Galeano

La Iglesia dice: El cuerpo es una culpa.
La ciencia dice: El cuerpo es una máquina.
La publicidad dice: El cuerpo es un negocio.
El cuerpo dice: Yo soy una fiesta.
—Eduardo Galeano



To my great-grandmother Cande.

She—young, poor, and with Native Mexican roots—was taken
by a rich, old, Spanish creole man; my great-grandfather
just like the Spanish people took the Mexican lands.
Both of them are my ancestors,
and I would not exist without them,
so the past better be accepted...
but never forgotten.
Presente,
I am in the fight to create a better future.

A body is a land.



Artist and activist.

Inspired by spiritual artist Tabita Rezaire.

tECkhnO references *techno*, without diminishing *eco*. The (mis)spelling introduces the idea of political activism, non-conformism, DISORDER. The *k* is inspired by the Spanish squatting movement OKUPA, as well as by MAGICK, differentiating itself from performance magic.

The goal of this thesis is to support my interdisciplinary, artistic practice within the contemporary, feminist context of creation. The present written work goes together with my performative work tranSCENDENCE – *trance 'n dance*, which explores the power of dance as a tool of bodily reappropriation and radical self-expression. Both the thesis and the piece focus on the liberation journey of the Self from the physical and psychological confinement imposed by the politics of a colonialist, patriarchal, and capitalist society.

tranSCENDENCE – *trance 'n dance* is a generative, performative piece, where I fight against the spirits of oppression and along the spirits of liberation. I draw inspiration from my background as a dancer, as well as from protests and trance-inductive practices. I use the format of street dance, where dancers encounter and challenge each other, to create an energicospatiotemporal setting where the boundaries pushed are not against another human but against the machine.[1]

During the performance, a narrational electronic-poetic piece plays in space. I listen; I respond—through dance. Since I am remotely connected to a set of automated drums via a vaginal muscle reader, which reacts to the movements of my core, the outcome is a sonic clash between the drums (primal, ancestral, rooted) and the electropoetry (digital, intellectual, futuristic). I am the activator and mediator of a chain system of feedback interactions that guides the narrative. Rhythm beats rhythmic pulses.

I address technology as both medium and subject of critique, expressing its dualistic nature by showing its abusive face as representation of domination, as well as its supportive face by helping woman reclaim her power through corporeal and ancestral memory. The audience observes this interaction by being immersed in space, witnessing my movements converted into sensorial stimuli for them, offering a technologically-aided extension of my own experience as an invigorating translation for them.

The semiotic *multiverse* of the piece brings forward a narrative revolving the body, where sound, movement, anatomy, aesthetics, technology, and voices of the living and the dead create a subversive action where *herstory* will be told. The piece embodies dualistic binaries, and I battle to balance the forces, reclaiming my body as subject to stop it from being object, *transcending* from oppression to liberation.

I use the term "woman" to include cis, trans, and femmes, recognizing that there is an ongoing debate as to whether terms like "womxn'" are trans-exclusive. To the extent that my analysis applies specifically to cis women[2], I will highlight this in the text.



Photo: Ella Hebendanz

NOTES

‹1› Inspired more specifically by Chicago Footwork, a street dance style where the dancing is extremely fast and the music can go up to 170 bpm, so the dancer often challenges the speaker. Who can go faster?

‹2› A woman whose gender identity matches her sex assigned at birth.

Infinite *gracias*
to all the sisters that
have guided my way
and accompanied me
in this journey.

To Ella Hebendanz and Ines DeRu
for co-creating with me
our sWitches collective,
for tripping with me,
for dancing with me,
at every party,
all these years
in The Netherlands.

To Sofia Irene for
holding my back in
the creation of this
thesis's crazy design
and to Taide Martínez
for critically questioning
and editing my every word.

To Montserrat Balmori and
Victoria Martínez for being
such inspiring friends and
artists, and for giving sound
to the voices and co-creating
with me the electropoetry.

To Fazle Shairmahomed and
Davide Amato for inspiring me
so much since we know each other
and collaborating with me for
my graduation project.

To Marlot Meyer for
being an amazing
artist and friend,
and for helping me
infinitely with electronic chaos.

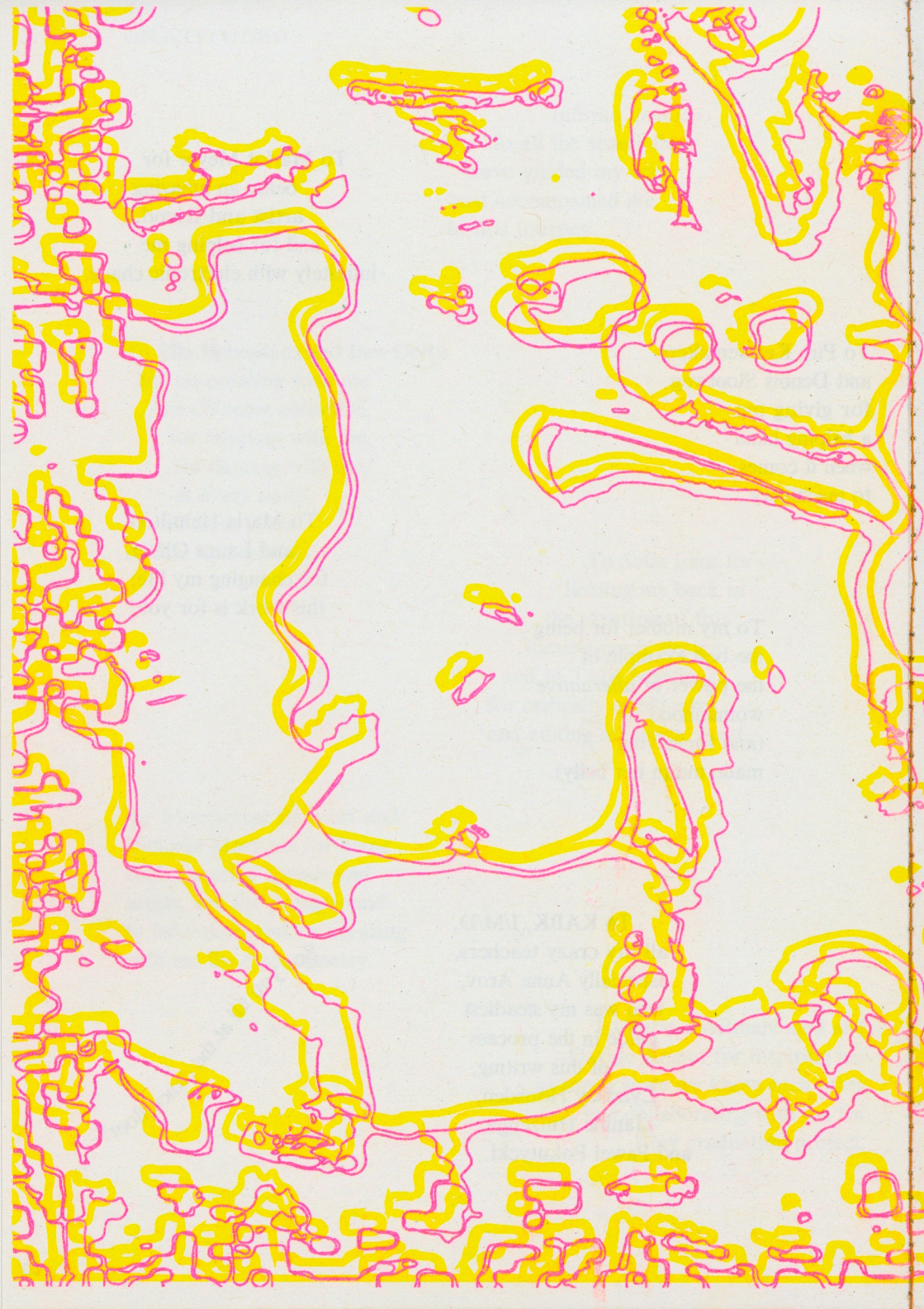
To Pim Kerssemakers
and Dennis Slootweg
for giving me
a helping hand
when it comes
to machinery.

To María Hamilton
and Laura Oliver
for changing my life;
this work is for you.

To my mother for being
the best example of
the power of *alternative*
womanhood
(and for having
made me in her belly).

To KABK, I/M/D,
all my crazy teachers,
especially Anna Arov,
who was my steadiest
guide in the process
of this writing,
Lyndsey Housden,
Janine Huizenga,
and Pawel Pokutycki.

See you all at the dance floor!



24 initiation

BODY

26 politics

64 poetics

I

27 **corporikaˣ**
on the body, marginalization, and patriarchy

II

33 **latinikaˣ**
on Latin American feminisms and the streets

III

43 **electrikaˣ**
on gender, technology, and the cyberspace

IV

57 **transnaturikaˣ**
on "nature" and "the family"

V

rebelikaˣ 65
on reappropriating

VI

dancistikaˣ 73
on dance as pleasure

VII

poetikaˣ 85
on language as change

VIII

esoterikaˣ 97
on esotericism as activism

ə for feminine
ˣ for queer/alien
k for disruption
...



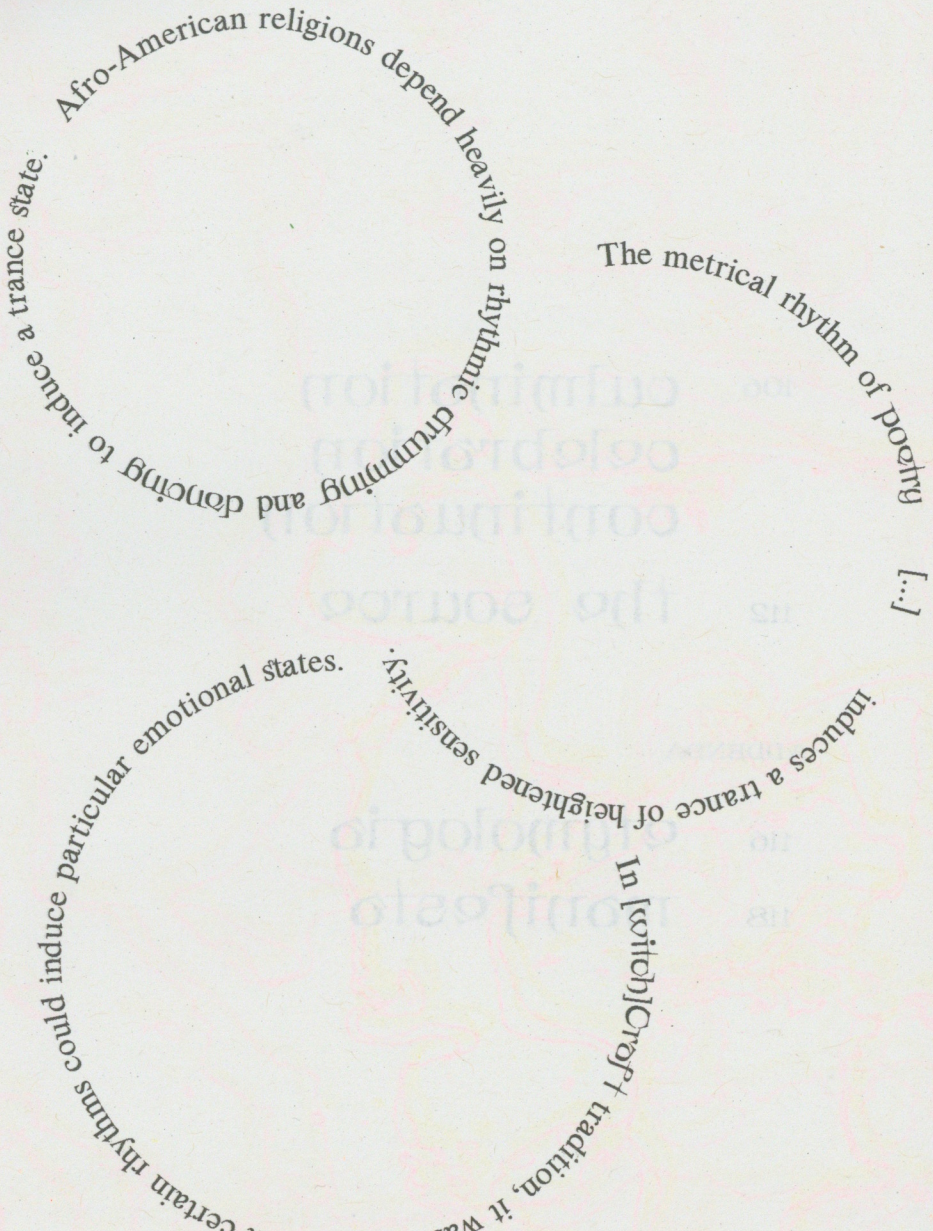
106 culmination
celebration
continuation

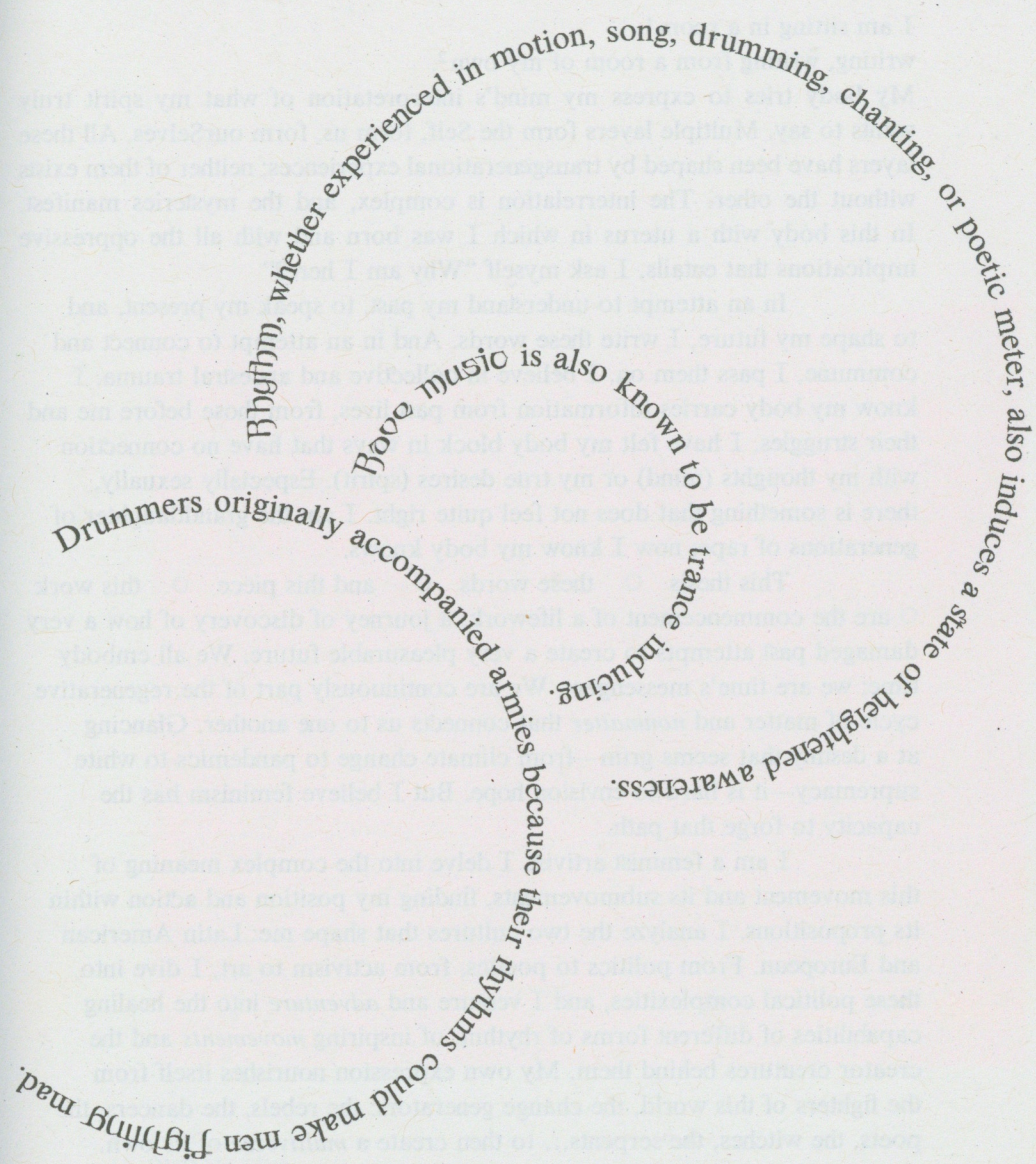
112 the source

ADDENDA

116 etymologia

118 manifesto





Starhawk. *The Spiral Dance: A rebirth of the ancient religion of the great Goddess.* Harper & Row, 1989, p.176.

I am sitting in a room [1],
writing, writing from a room of my own [2].
My body tries to express my mind's interpretation of what my spirit truly wants to say. Multiple layers form the Self, form us, form ourSelves. All these layers have been shaped by transgenerational experiences; neither of them exists without the other. The interrelation is complex, and the mysteries manifest. In this body with a uterus in which I was born and with all the oppressive implications that entails, I ask myself "Why am I here?"

In an attempt to understand my past, to speak my present, and to shape my future, I write these words. And in an attempt to connect and commune, I pass them on. I believe in collective and ancestral trauma. I know my body carries information from past lives, from those before me and their struggles. I have felt my body block in ways that have no connection with my thoughts (mind) or my true desires (spirit). Especially sexually, there is something that does not feel quite right. I am the granddaughter of generations of rape; now I know my body knows.

This thesis ○ these words ○ and this piece ○ this work ○ are the commencement of a lifework, a journey of discovery of how a very damaged past attempts to create a very pleasurable future. We all embody time; we are time's messengers. We are continuously part of the regenerative cycle of matter and *nonmatter* that connects us to one another. Glancing at a destiny that seems grim—from climate change to pandemics to white supremacy—it is hard to envision hope. But I believe feminism has the capacity to forge that path.

I am a feminist artivist. I delve into the complex meaning of this movement and its submovements, finding my position and action within its propositions. I analyze the two cultures that shape me: Latin American and European. From politics to poetics, from activism to art, I dive into these political complexities, and I venture and *adventure* into the healing capabilities of different forms of rhythm, of inspiring *movements* and the creator creatures behind them. My own expression nourishes itself from the fighters of this world, the change generators: the rebels, the dancers, the poets, the witches, the serpents... to then create a *multiverse* of its own.

Mi cuerpa, my body, enjoys, joys, joins.
I let the quietened voices living in
and around me guide my way
to rebel, to dance
I rebel. I dance.



Photo: Emma Grima

END NOTES

‹1› Ode to Alvin Lucier who also experimented with the body, technology, and the beat of the drum.

‹2› Ode to Virginia Woolf, who was a rebel of her times.

I

corporika[x]

on the body, marginalization, and patriarchy



Our body, our first territory, is unknown to us. We are not encouraged to get to know it. We are not taught about its parts, especially girls, especially genitals. And because everything is so internal, it is hard to see, to understand its cycles. When adulthood starts and processes such as menstruation arrive, confusion comes too. It is a shocking moment; I remember I cried. You know it is the start of something polemical. You know you should feel shame. But you do not know why.

Our bodies live in a dilemma. They are our home, our communication vessels, our means of expression, but on the other hand, they are our cage. Their aspect positions us in certain corners of society, and society expects a certain behaviour from them.

> *[...] how the body can be for women*
> *both a source of identity and*
> *at the same time a prison.*
> *—Silvia Federici*
> *"Caliban and the Witch"*[1]

Patriarchy is a social, political, and economic system in which (cis) men hold power and authority. Out of the 200,000 years humans have existed, only an estimate of between 4,000 and 12,000 years have been lived in accordance with this system. Frederick Engels' theory is that when agriculture was born, so was the concept of property, parallel to the concepts of marriage, family name, and heritage. And due to the biological differences between male and female reproductive organs, where people with uteruses are the ones capable of producing offspring, the position of socioeconomic and political power went to men. Since the female body is the impregnated subject, the only way to have control over her body is by appropriating it. This way it is ensured that the heritage will go to the "right" owners.[2]

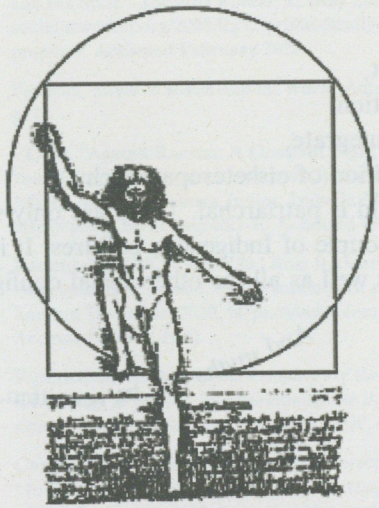
For a small percentage of humanity, patriarchy and capitalism have been the socio-political-economic systems under which a large number of humans (including me and my ancestors) have lived. In *Caliban and the Witch*, Silvia Federici speaks about the beginning of capitalism, which developed after feudalism, and which promotes gender and economic inequality. In this analogy, Caliban* represents the proletariat, and the Witch represents women. The metaphor demonstrates the tight links between gender and class inequality.

* A Shakespearean character: half-human, half-monster.

In her work, Silvia Federici, who is a feminist activist and scholar with extensive research on the medieval witch-hunts in Europe and their relationship to the surge of capitalism, places the body at the center of political activism: the body as a ground of confrontation and resistance. Several of the references I point out throughout this composition share this belief and, through their own creative means, join the feminist* movements.

"[T]he political lesson that we can learn from *Caliban and the Witch* is that capitalism, as a social-economic system, is necessarily committed to racism and sexism."[3] This is a belief that anti-racist activists also emphasize. In the conversation *Against Racism: A Constant Fight*[4] activist Angela Davis, writer of *Women, Race, and Class*, could not stress more how important it is to create new systems that substitute global capitalism. Marginalized groups are the system's main victims when it comes to the politics of the body. Women, people of color, LGBTQ+ folks, Indigenous peoples, differently abled, senior citizens, and religious minorities, among others, do not fulfill the body requirements that are needed to survive in our capitalist, colonialist, patriarchal society. Like Rosi Braidotti would say, we are not all the Vitruvian man.[5]

People are judged by their bodies: abilities, aesthetics, reproductive capabilities. Your anatomy will determine the activities you get to perform. All the myths human has created to support its belief systems have rules around the body. There are strict customs on how to behave, move, walk, look, eat, sit.



Illustrator: Unknown

* Including queer, anti-racist, environmental, and body-positivity movements.

There is something we have lost in our insistence of the body as something socially constructed and performative.
—Silvia Federici
"Beyond the Periphery of the Skin"[6]

Judith Butler discusses
the idea of performativity
in gender. In a conversation
at the Dance Discourse Project
in San Francisco 2013, she correlates
our day-to-day life to the performances
happening on stage, only to remind us
how far the stage extends. She compares
performance art, where the body is "the canvas",
to our known daily morning rituals when applying
multiple chemical products to our bodies and faces.
She poses the question "Can you even have a gender
without being a body artist?"[7] to reveal the irony
behind our activities.

Our whole lives (for some even before birth)
we have been assigned a gender in accordance to
our biological sex: male or female.
From the beginning of our existence,
we are told which roles we have
to fulfill: if born with a uterus,
the role of nurturer; if born without,
the role of provider. This is a tradition,
which fortunately is starting to disintegrate,
that can be attributed to the imposition of cisheteropatriarchy.

The majority of the world is patriarchal. There are only some matriarchal communities left in a couple of Indigenous cultures. It is hard to imagine a different world, but as well as all the other social configurations human has created, it is a myth.

And myths can be rewritten.

END NOTES

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‹2› Schulte, Elizabeth. "Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State". *Socialist Worker*, 12 May 2008, https://socialistworker.org/2008/05/12/origin-family-private-property. Accessed February 2021.

‹3› Federici, Silvia. *Caliban and the Witch*. Autonomedia, 2004, p. 17.

‹4› CCCB. "Against Racism: A Constant Fight | Angela Davis". *Youtube*, conversation with activists Basha Changuerra, Jeffrey Abé Pans, Marra Junior, Isabelle Mamadou, 2020, https://youtu.be/hU5vqr46G-E. Accessed December 2020.

‹5› Kaaitheater. "WOWMEN!20 | Rosi Braidotti on Posthumanism". *Vimeo*, conversation with philosopher Laurent De Sutter, 2020, https://vimeo.com/395428847. Accessed March 2020.

‹6› Federici, Silvia. *Beyond the Periphery of the Skin: Rethinking, Remaking, and Reclaiming the Body in Contemporary Capitalism*. PM Press, 2020, p. 119.

‹7› CounterPULSE. "Dance Discourse Project #16 | Judith Butler". *Internet Archive*, conversation with Julie Phelps, 2020, https://archive.org/details/DanceDiscourseProject167182013. Accessed May 2020.

II

latinikax

on Latin American feminisms and the streets



In Mexico, it is common to hear the phrase *se la robaron*, meaning a woman was taken by a man and forced to mate with him and bear his children. This was a common practice in the generations before my grandparents. My great-grandmother—poor, with Cora Indigenous roots, and 14 years old—was taken by the *patrón* of the hacienda where her family worked, a 50-years-older Spanish creole man.
Years of sexual slavery and rape
resulted in nine babies
he never took responsibility for.
She made dresses to support her kids,
one of whom is my mother's father.
When her captor died, she moved to
the border between Mexico and the U.S.
and sold food to Mexican land laborers.
A *border woman*, she eventually moved
to the U.S. and died there, only to be
brought back to Mexico in the form of ashes.

It is harsh to realize we are the grandchildren of rape. This story is disgusting on all levels, even more when seen as an allegory for the history of Europe's ravages of Latin America. But even if my emotions want to take over, I cannot forget the fact that society and culture change. That is why the feminist battle is so important: to continue to change, so that someday, acts that are hideous and normal for us today will no longer exist.

Gloria Anzaldúa was a Chicana, a lesbian, an activist, and a writer. She identified as a *border woman*. "The psychological borderlands, the sexual borderlands and the spiritual borderlands [...] the Borderlands are physically present wherever two or more cultures edge each other [...] where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy."[1] For her, being a *border woman* gave her the power to be a hybrid. The mestiza consciousness allows one to navigate different contexts, which later results in understanding and empathy.
A masterwork that deliberately makes the reader uncomfortable, *Borderlands/ La Frontera: The New Mestiza* was one of the books banned in Arizona as part of a project to forbid Mexican American Studies in public schools.[2]

"She was stolen."

Boss, Master.

Mexican American in the U.S.

We, Latin American people, are mestizas, coming from a new "race" created from the mix (rape) between Europeans and Native Americans. I interpret the (new) mestiza consciousness as a powerful in-betweenness. Within the feminist battle, to speak languages of the Global North, connecting with cultures where women's rights have been further revindicated, while at the same time protesting with the passionate activism of the Global South, gives two layers to the battle. Increasingly, we are gaining control of the dangerous Latin-American streets. From experience, I can say the streets of Europe feel safer for women than the streets of Mexico, a country where on average 11 women are killed per day by femicide.[3] However, that has to do with the colonial past. Many Prehispanic cultures were already patriarchal by the time the European stole the land, but the sacking, imposition of beliefs, genocide, and collective rape that the Spanish and Portuguese carried out in what today is Latin America produced wounds in a region whose scars can still be seen today. Poverty, corruption, delinquency, lack of education, and unemployment are only some of the worst problems Mexico and many other colonized countries encounter. All of this enhances vulnerability for women; sexism penetrates every aspect of society, from the lack of opportunities, to the femicides often perpetuated by their partners. And most of the time, those responsible face no accountability.

When I walk the streets of
different cities, I feel the whole spectrum
of how I am perceived and respected as a woman.
A world of men, controlled by men,
built by men, urbanized by men, has
repercussions on the experiencing
of space for women. Man has
shaped and named the streets
and the public space,
"belongs outside";
woman has shaped
the house and the
private space,
"belongs inside".

Gender-based homicide.

The male-dominated Azteca-Mexica
culture drove the powerful female
deities underground by giving
them monstruos attributes and by
substituting male deities in their place,
thus splitting the female Self
and the female deities.
They divided her who
had been complete [...]
Coatlicue, the Serpent goddess,
and her more sinister aspects. [...]
After the Conquest,
the Spaniards and their Church
[...] desexed Guadalupe, taking
Coatlalopeuh, the serpent/sexuality,
out of her. They completed the split
begun by the Nahuas by making la
Virgen de Guadalupe/Virgen María
into chaste virgins and Tlazolteotl/
Coatlicue/la Chingada into putas[x]*.*
—Gloria Anzaldúa
"Borderlands/La Frontera"[4]

[x] Whores.

Furthermore, many of the roads
are named after men—88% of those
in the Netherlands,[5] while only
11.6% of Mexico City's streets
carry women's names.[6]
This nomenclature is
just a representation of
the admiration held for
those considered successful,
those who were most visible,
within a context where it
could not be the *weak*, uneducated sex.

The streets are a place
that until recently women have been
able to explore unaccompanied.
Historically, and still nowadays
in some countries, women could not
go alone for a walk. And even if we can,
the night and unsafe areas increase the risk of danger.

Woman needs to know
that the world can be a safe space for her:
"To Name the City in Feminine".[7]
In their book *Architecture and Politics*,
Zaida Muxí and Josep Montaner
propose the idea of a genderless urbanism.
"The challenge is to build a space
without gender or patriarchal order;
therefore, a space without hierarchies,
horizontal, a space that makes visible
differences and not inequalities."[8]
Despite its hostility, the city
has also been analyzed as
an emancipator for women.
For example, in medieval Europe,
in rural villages the family had
control over the decision-making,
and women fully depended on
others to carry out their lives.
Since this had economic repercussions,
their well-being was jeopardized.
In the emerging urban areas,
there were opportunities to survive
without the need of the family's support,
and many women chose this rough path,
in order to achieve independence.[9]

City laws did not free women; few could afford to buy the
"city freedom," [...] But in the city, women's subordination
to male tutelage was reduced, as they could now live alone,
or with their children as heads of families, or could form new
communities, often sharing their dwellings with other women.
—Silvia Federici, "Caliban and the Witch"[10]

Before the shift to capitalism, women worked in professions that
for consecutive centuries were regarded as men's work, like metalwork.
It is thus pertinent to identify the city and its streets as allies
in women's fight for independence. But gradually, the shift
to capitalism positioned the role of women at home,
where their unremunerated job was to take care of kids
and feed husbands, not too different from forced sexual slavery.





4

La herencia de Coatlicue

The *Coatlicue* State

protean being

dark dumb windowless no moon glides
across the stone the nightsky alone alone
no lights just mirrorwalls obsidian smoky in the
mirror she sees a woman with four heads the heads
turning round and round spokes of a wheel her neck
is an axle she stares at each face each wishes the
other not there the obsidian knife in the air the
building so high should she jump would she feel
the breeze fanning her face tumbling down the steps
of the temple heart offered up to the sun wall
growing thin thinner she is eyeless a mole
burrowing deeper tunneling here tunneling there
tunneling through the air in the photograph a double
image a ghost arm alongside the flesh one inside her
head the cracks ricocheting bisecting
crisscrossing she hears the rattlesnakes stirring in
a jar being fed with her flesh she listens to the
seam between dusk and dark they are talking she hears
their frozen thumpings the soul encased in black
obsidian smoking smoking she bends to catch a
feather of herself as she falls lost in the
silence of the empty air turning turning
at midnight turning into a wild pig how to get back
all the feathers put them in the jar the rattling
full circle and back dark windowless no moon
glides across the nightsky nightsky night

—Gloria Anzaldúa

04

La herencia de Coatlicue / The *Coatlicue* State

ser proteico
oscuro mudo sin ventanas sin luna que se deslice
por la piedra el cielo nocturno solo solo
sin luces solo muros de espejo obsidiana ahumado en el
espejo ella ve una mujer con cuatro cabezas las cabezas
giran y giran radios de una rueda su cuello
es un eje ella mira cada rostro todos desean que
el otro no esté ahí el puñal de obsidiana en el aire el
edificio tan alto debería saltar ella sentiría
la brisa acariciándole la cara cayendo por los peldaños
del templo corazón ofrecido al sol muro
que se hace angosto cada vez más ella no tiene ojos un topo
que penetra cada vez más profundo abriendo un túnel aquí
abriendo un túnel allá
abriendo un túnel en el aire en la fotografía una imagen
doble un brazo espectral junto al de carne dentro de su
cabeza las grietas rebotan se parten
se entrecruzan oye las serpientes de cascabel revolviéndose en
un frasco alimentándose con su carne escucha
la costura entre el ocaso y la oscuridad ellos hablan ella oye
sus golpes congelados el alma encerrada en negra
obsidiana humeante humeante se inclina a atrapar
una pluma de sí misma mientras cae perdida en el
silencio del aire vacío volviéndose volviéndose
a medianoche convirtiéndose en un jabalí cómo recuperar
todas las plumas ponerlas en el frasco el cascabeleo
se cierra el círculo y vuelve oscuro sin ventanas sin luna
que se deslice por el cielo nocturno cielo nocturno noche

—Gloria Anzaldúa

4

La herencia de Coatlicue

The *Coatlicue* State

protean being
dark dumb windowless no moon glides
across the stone the nightsky alone alone
no lights just mirrorwalls obsidian smoky in the
mirror she sees a woman with four heads the heads
turning round and round spokes of a wheel her neck
is an axle she stares at each face each wishes the
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feather of herself as she falls lost in the
silence of the empty air turning turning
at midnight turning into a wild pig how to get back
all the feathers put them in the jar the rattling

poem by Gloria Anzaldúa in *Boderlands/La Frontera*

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‹2› Cantú, Norma Élia and Hurtado, Aída. Introduction. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, by Gloria Anzaldúa, 4th ed., Aunt Lute Books, 2007, p. 3.

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III

electrikaˣ

on gender, technology, and the cyberspace



Feminism and cyberfeminism in Latin America are a praxis of their own. The lack of privilege and education that runs through the region generates a collective dissociation from the academic and conceptual feminisms of North America and Europe. I recently attended an online workshop[1] held by Argentinian feminist hacktivists Sol Verniers and Nayla Portas, where they talked about diverse cyberfeminist movements, only to emphasize that even if many of the principles offered are thought-provoking, their application to a Latin American context is problematic. Here, women are fighting for survival. Both in the streets and in the network, women are unprotected. The first task in the agenda of Latin American feminisms is protection.

> *[...] the manifold of possibilities of digital communication seem to have strengthened Latin America's macho culture in a particular way [...]*
> *—Cornelia Sollfrank (Editor)*
> *Preface "The Beautiful Warriors. Technofeminist Praxis in the Twenty-First Century"*[2]

Today and within my cultural context, our virtual persona is as important as our real one. Both of these spaces are oppressive in how they have been built; both of these spaces are in need of feminist interventions. The shapeshifting capabilities of gender and the body in cyberspace inspire hope. "The virtuality of cyberspace is seen to spell the end of naturalized, biological embodiment as the basis for gender difference."[3]

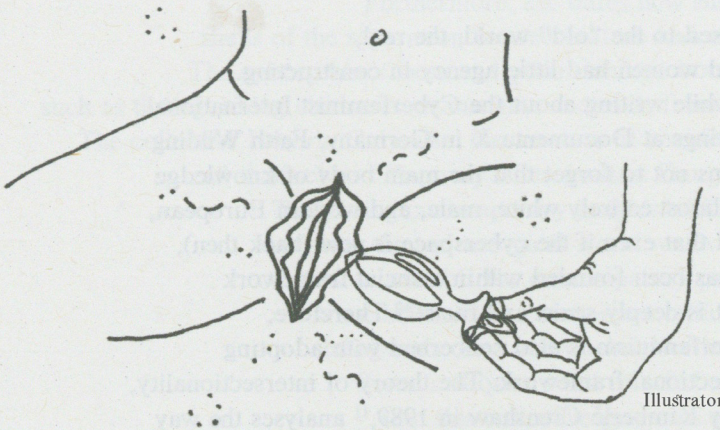
Cyber, techno, and xeno feminisms are all movements dealing with technoscience and englobed within the term "cyberfeminism".

Cyber- is a prefix associated with computing, the Internet, and technology. Technofeminism is a term coined by Judy Wajcman and fuses cyberfeminism with a materialist analysis. Xenofeminism was invented recently by a collective called Laboria Cuboniks. It is described as technomaterialist, anti-naturalist, and gender abolitionist, where *xeno-* stands for alien, foreign.[4] These concepts converge in the inherent gender inequality of technoscience, while simultaneously envisioning its emancipatory capacities. If science and technology have been developed at the expense of women's —let alone other dissident groups'— participation, the question is what point of departure these feminisms can take. To try to be an activist within a cause that was born from difference is an ongoing task of reconfiguration. But it is necessary; we have to reappropriate these practices, too. The idea offered by these movements is for feminism to steer a path between technophobia and technophilia, to neither reject existing technologies, nor to uncritically embrace technological change.[5]

> *Seen through one lens,*
> *virtual reality is a new space for undermining*
> *old social relations, a place of freedom and*
> *liberation from conventional gender roles.*
> *Seen through another lens,*
> *the Internet is marked by its military origins*
> *and the white male hacker world that spawned it.*
> *—Judy Wacjman*
> *"Technofeminism"*[6]

To be a tECkhnO feminist artivist, one must be aware that the anti-racist, the environmentalist, and the LGBTQ+ fights are intertwined with the feminist fight and share a stake in the struggle for collective liberation. None of us are free until we all are, and one's main fight should not disregard others. As an artist, the origin and afterlife of materials used should be as important as the concepts behind the work. As an activist, one must not fall into hypocrisy and draw arbitrary lines between emancipatory movements. Techno, eco, feminism, art, and activism should all work together. In transcendence – *trance 'n dance*, I am using a technology[7] that refers to the components as "master" and "slave" and to the cable ends as "male" and "female". How can such a thing as technofeminism even exist, in a context where these words are still widely used?

This is where we must make change.



Illustrator: Ines Deru

I use the Periform® vaginal electrode
to read vaginal muscle activity.
Its original purpose is for
pelvic-floor health.

We make art with our cunt.
—VNS Matrix

The VNS Matrix was a women artist collective formed in 1991. Their cyberfeminist manifesto for the 21st century, with the motto "we are the future cunt"[8], marked the beginning of an era. They, among other cyberfeminists like the OBN (Old Boys Network), widely contributed to the conversation of the role of feminism in new media, technoscience, and the Internet. The OBN had an important role as a cohesive device of cyberfeminisms— "regarded as the first international Cyberfeminist alliance [...] OBN contributes to the critical discourse on new media, especially focussing on its gender-specific aspects."[9] Back then, the Internet was a fresh space, a "new" world, so the presence of women was questioned from the beginning,

× I am aware of the cisgender use of language the VNS matrix employed, hoping that if formulated in the present, their choice of words would be different. Shortly, I will talk more about rethinking the gender binary and genitals.

as opposed to the "old" world, the real,
a world women had little agency in constructing.
But while writing about the Cyberfeminist International
meetings at Documenta X in Germany, Faith Wilding
warns not to forget that the main body of knowledge
is almost entirely white, male, and western European,
and that even if the cyberspace is new (back then),
it has been founded within a social framework
that is deeply sexist and racist.[10] Therefore,
cyberfeminism is also concerned with adopting
an intersectional framework. The theory of intersectionality,
coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989,[11] analyses the way
that a person's individual characteristics combine to
create different overlapping forms of discrimination.
While the first waves of feminism focused on
the experiences of cis, white, middle-class women,
intersectionality calls us to consider the way gender
overlaps with factors like race, poverty, immigration status,
disability, and other identities to make people's experience
of subordination even deeper.

While working on my art, often using machinery,
I wonder why I regularly ask help from my male friends.
Coming from a house where my dad drilled holes in the wall,
while my mom set the table, it could be that these ideas are embedded deep
within me. But at the same time, being a maker-woman, I also realize the
machines are not made for my body. They are often too heavy, hard, and
big. "[M]achinery is literally designed by men with men in mind
—the masculinity of the technology becomes embedded
in the technology itself."[12]

Donna Hawaray took a
mythical approach to explain
these binary/sexual/gender
segregative tendencies.
She created *A Cyborg Manifesto*,
where the cyborg is a genderless,
parentless, hybrid figure that
does not abide to biological
and cultural constraints.[13]

Furthermore, she states how suspicious
she is of the separation between nature and culture.[14]
The cyborg blurs these and other dualistic boundaries,
such as distinguishing human from machine and male from female.
The collective Laboria Cuboniks, the creators of xenofeminism,
call themselves "Haraway's Disobedient Daughters".[15]
They bring contemporary insights while widely
accepting the technological world we live in and
how to use this for emancipatory purposes.
Nonetheless, it is a movement criticized for
being embedded in a Global North context.
Some critiques point out, for example,
that this collective proposes solutions
that only apply to privileged persons.[16]
But their work is still relevant when taken
as inspiration for visionary futures.

Our lot is cast with technoscience,
where nothing is so sacred
that it cannot be reengineered
and transformed so as
to widen our aperture of freedom.
—Helen Hester,
"Xenofeminism"[17]

A turning point of cyberfeminisms
was when it was understood that science
and technology were inherently patriarchal,
in comparison to second-wave feminism,
where technoscience was seen as
gender neutral and the problem relied
on the lack of women's presence in the space.[18]
Nowadays, the appearance of technoscience is
understood to go in conjunction with the exploitation
of nature for capitalist means, and movements like
ecofeminism relate this to the exploitation of women.

Ecofeminism (or at least its initial trends)
is considered to be a gender binarist
and essentialist movement,
where woman is associated with creation,
motherhood, and nature, and man is associated

with war and destruction,
"a project that not only feminizes
creation but also masculinizes destruction".[19]
For these reasons, it has been discredited by many.
One of the things we can recover from this
framework is its concern with centering
the role of ecology and climate change
as major global issues.

Cyberfeminisms and ecofeminisms
are regarded as diametrical movements,
where the role of women within nature
and technoscience is debated. Within their analysis,
reproduction and motherhood are points of controversy,
ranging from contraception methods to the artificial womb.
Yvonne Volkart coined the term techno-eco-feminism as
an attempt to show there can be an intersection.
She talks about artists that connect with other beings
through techno-scientific means, like Špela Petrič,
who mothered plant embryos with the hormones
extracted from her urine.[20] It is about
the "queering" of powerful dichotomies.[21]

Cis women with class privilege
"gained control of their bodies" when the use of
the pill became widely available. Engineering the female body
by means of hormones revolutionized women's rights.
The pill is technology; it is not "natural" to change
the hormonal count of a body for certain ends.
A person with a uterus who takes the pill
has control over their body; however,
the pill also has control over their body.
Hormonal contraception interferes with
our regular hormonal levels, not only
by potentially causing severe problems
like cancer, but also by influencing
our emotions and libido. It stops ovulation,
unbalances our cycle,
and quietens our bodies.
Most contraceptive pills work by
releasing progesterone and estrogens,

which are precisely the hormones
that increase when pregnant—
the fulfillment of the patriarchal dream?
Uninformed intake is also a problem
and cannot be separated from a cultural context
in which sex education is only about
protection and not about pleasure.
The inner workings of the menstrual cycle
are generally not of common knowledge.
Most of us are not told there are only ±7 days
per cycle when a person with a uterus is fertile,
but that in order to identify which days,
one needs to get to know their cycle.
In my experience, the majority of doctors
discourage natural contraception methods
without providing an explanation
to their patients, encouraging hormones
by saying they regulate the cycle,
which actually means there is no cycle.[22]
I, as a †ƐCkɧɲO feminist,
understand the emancipatory aspects of technoscience
without taking them for granted.
Despite whatever contraception method
I decide to use, I decide to also
be aware of my cycle.
And if that fails:
freedom to choose abortion.
Yes, to live in a world where
(wanted) pregnancy termination
is no longer a taboo,
a world where abortion is
not life-threatening because it is clandestine,
a world where clinics are
not harassed by anti-choice supporters.
Abortion is also not "natural" and
needs technoscience to happen.
†ƐCkɧɲO feminism is about balancing
nature and technoscience,
about providing a truthful,

useful, and pleasurable (sexual) education, and about having the freedom to make whatever personal choice is better for each of us.

The idea of the artificial womb has also
been controversial within feminists circles.
Shulamith Firestone was a Canadian-American
radical feminist, who in her book *The Dialectic of Sex*
proposes the artificial womb as the ultimate emancipatory
tool for people with uteruses. Both Judy Wajcman
and Helen Hester discuss her problematic ideas,
seeing the two edges in her proposition.
If (cis) women do not have to fulfill
a reproductive role,
by means of artificial gestation,
they will be free.
But at what expense?

> Reproductive
> and genetic technologies are
> about conquering the 'last frontier'
> of men's domination over nature.
> This is liberating for women,
> who have been captive to biology.
> At the same time, there is the spectre
> of genetic engineering and cloning depriving
> women of any control over reproduction.
> —Judy Wajcman
> "Technofeminism"[23]

> [H]er preferred tools
> for feminist interventions in
> embodiment are carefully problematized:
> reproductive technology, including birth control,
> is described as 'a double-edged sword
> [...] to envision it in the hands
> of the present powers is to envision a nightmare.
> —Helen Hester
> "Xenofeminism"[24]

Taming the body to dominate nature destroys all hope of imagining
the artificial womb as an emancipatory tool.

Cyberfeminisms have a huge dilemma to deal with: the dissonance between the emancipatory and the exploitative potentials of technoscience. I position myself within this discussion because I want to explore that path between technophobia and technophilia.

But once again, these are questions of privileged people. Women without resources, like many in Latin America, often have no access to artificial contraception, be it from lack of resources or from lack of education; there is no choice to make. Reproductive "luxuries" and technologies are out of the question. Ensuring one's physical safety remains one of the main causes of concern
for these marginalized groups.

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IV

transnaturikaˣ

on "nature" and "the family"



Ophelia Pastrana is a Colombian-Mexican
trans woman. She is a physicist, technologist,
and media personality who, despite being the relative
of two ex-presidents of Colombia from the conservative party,
transitioned into a trans woman and became an advocate
of the LGBTQ+ and women+technology movements.
She recognizes having used her mediatic privilege to be heard.

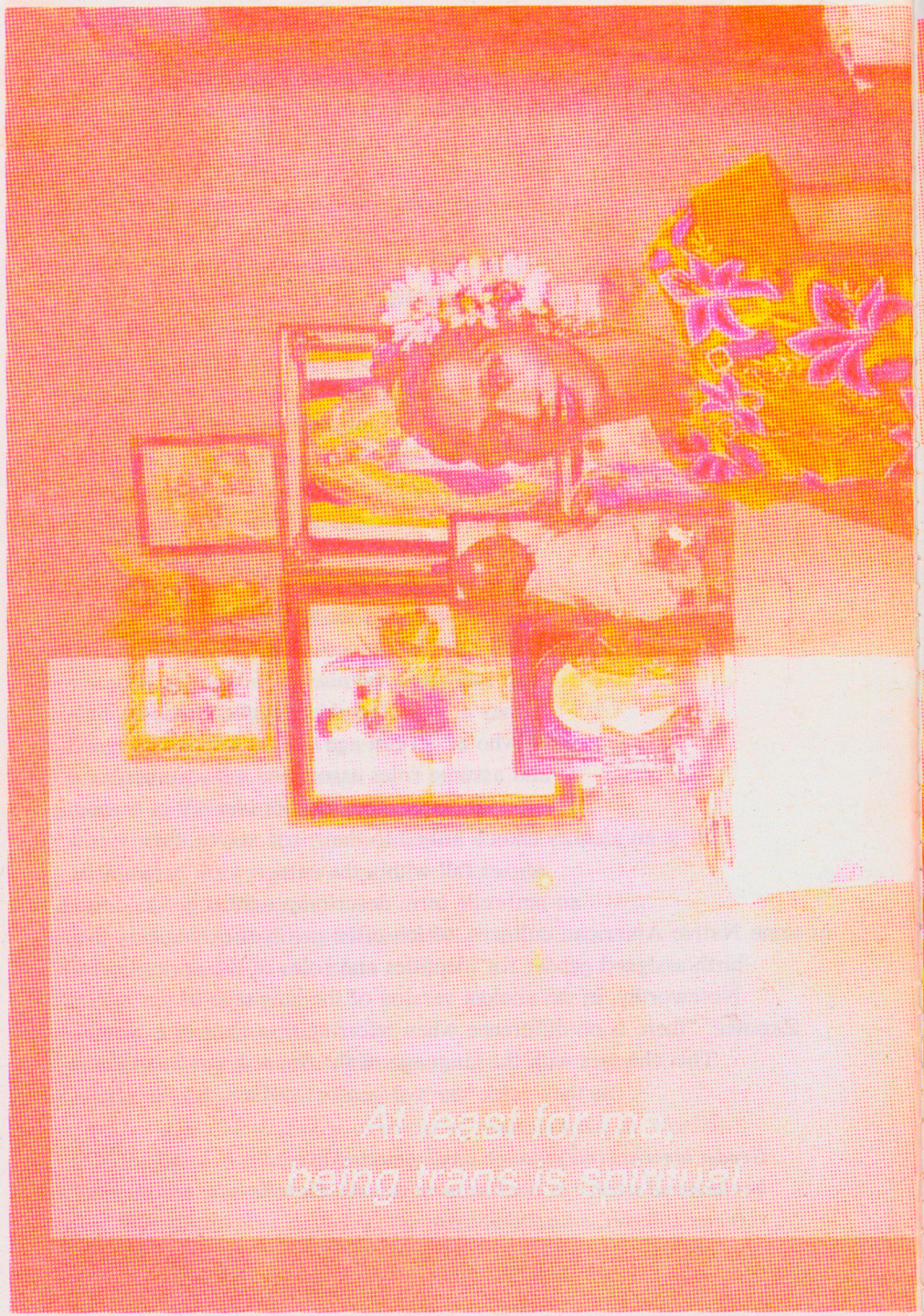
In a conversation with Luisa Almaguer,
a trans woman from Mexico who directs
a podcast called *La hora trans*,
Ophelia points out how she can
see the concept of trans extending
from gender to species.
Transgender is considerably common,
but transpecies is yet to come...
from superheroes to indigenous mysticism,
the idea of becoming a mix of human and
another being has always been within our imaginaries,
and one day, it will be common to see humans
with tails or cat ears.[1] Science fiction as
a point of departure to theorize and
imagine better social configurations
is precisely what Donna Haraway
tries to communicate through
her mythical approaches.
Not to mention that the transhumanist
path is being led by prosthetics.
In medicine, for example,
runner athletes can gain performance
advantages from a prosthesis
replacing a lost limb.
But even within the arts,
Stelarc already started that journey
when he implanted an ear into his arm.[2]

Ophelia gives the example of conservative cis women
(within a Latin American context)
who criticize trans women for being unnatural,
when they themselves have breast/ass implants,
hair extensions, fake eyelashes, makeup, nails, heels...
"What about you is natural?"[3]

For her, being trans is an expression
of transhumanism. And she sees the links
with spirituality, similarly to the Mesoamerican *nahuales*,
who are shapeshifters.
She herself had out-of-body,
dream-like experiences after which
she decided to begin her transition.
Likewise, Paul B. Preciado,
a trans man writer and philosopher,
recalls assigning himself his male name
with the help of a shaman, through a dream.
His work focuses on the dangers of splitting up
humans based on their genitals,
having extensive reflections on biopolitics.
He believes one day we will see assigning
gender at birth as something brutal and unjustified.[4]

There is a community in the South of Mexico
that has the notion of a third gender.
The persons that choose this identity
are known as the *muxes* of Juchitán, Oaxaca.
They are transgender, assigned male at birth,
who at certain age decide to become *muxes*
and assume roles associated with womanhood;
although, they do not identify as women.
It is an identity choice linked to their true selves, their spirit.[5]
Muxes fall within the category of "two-spirit",
an umbrella term describing a third gender found
in some Native American cultures, which often involves exchanging their
birth-assigned gender for identities and roles of the opposite sex.[6]
Noteworthy, in the ancient version of the language of the region,
Zapotec, "there is no difference when referring to a man or a woman.
This changes with the language of the Spanish *conquistadores*,
as they value the two genders differently: him, her."[7]

Gender binarism (the pillar on which patriarchy is built)
has hindered science as much or more than the Catholic religion.
—Diana J. Torres, a.k.a. Pornoterrorista
"Coño Potens"[8]



Euphoria 2019



Photo: Mónica González Islas

Xenofeminism's motto is "If nature is unjust, change nature!"[9]
What the movement encourages is to not accept anything as fixed, permanent, or "given". Injustices should not be perpetuated in the name of nature, or the pure. Consider the queer, the trans, and the differently-abled. Biology can be transformed to pursue justice; genital difference will no longer matter. However, xenofeminists stress the fact that their goal is not to bring about a genderless world, but rather to have multiple genders, a world where the gender box in entry forms does not give the options "man/woman/other" but simply does not exist.[10]

Laboria Cuboniks also stress the importance of debunking the nuclear family, normative white reproductive futurity, and compulsory heterosexuality as excuses for the species survival. They set forth the concept of "kin", developed by Donna Haraway; it is about solidarity with the "other", be it a different-to-oneself human being or a different being altogether.[11]
To move beyond the monogamous, heterosexual, patriarchal, perfect, pure, "normal" family as the support pillar of society opens up room for the possibility of creating other sorts of ties that do not rely on blood-sharing to exist.
Our communities would form *transcending* beyond the binaries.

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V

rebelika[x]

on reappropriating



My body is my territory,
and it was conquered,
just like the Americas.
Several parts of the human body
are named after white,
European men:
Fallopian tubes[1],
G-spot[2],
Bartholin's glands[3],
Skene glands[4],
to name a few.
All the body parts
mentioned above belong
to the female reproductive system.
It is common in Western medicine
to appropriate the body as if
it was a piece of land and name it
after the man who discovered it,
which is already insulting
because colonialism is a shameful
and degrading project.
In language, there is change.
By, for example,
using the term uterine tubes
instead of Fallopian tubes,
we are using linguistic means
to end these appropriations.
Diana J. Torres,
a.k.a. Pornoterrorista,
is an activist who wrote
an explosively angry book
about medical science as
one of the principal enemies
of the bodies and sexuality of women.
Her text ranges from cursing about
the men who colonized the body,
to educating her readers about the history,
biology, and pleasurable potential of cunt ejaculation,
a widely ignored aspect of sexuality.

She demonstrates how multiple studies have come to
conclude the "G-Spot" is the female prostate,
but mainstream medicine is still reluctant to officially accept it.
One of her arguments is that the medical establishment does not
want to accept that male and female bodies are more
similar than we think; another fallacy is that
since it is not a "necessary" organ for reproduction,[5]
like the clitoris, the "G-spot" (female prostate)
has not been researched enough.
This has derived into collective confusion
over very wet beds.

We have lost centuries of pleasure,
orgasms, autonomous desire,
and we carry that within
our cellular memory, that of
our mothers, grandmothers,
great-grandmothers and so on,
for generations and generations.
—Diana J. Torres, a.k.a.
Pornoterrorista, "Coño Potens"[6]

She reminds us how these projects to deprive women
of their bodily autonomy are linked to capitalism,
an exploitative social structure where "our bodies are
the fields where these bastards plant the biggest
factory of capital production".[7]
Since the agricultural revolution,
our body has adopted the capacities
to fulfill the market's necessities,
which in the case of people with
uteruses is the workforce production.
Culture has changed and progressed so rapidly
that it has not allowed the body to evolve on time.
We have been disconnected from the environment
that helped us grow, only to replace our habits to the
serving of the system. We live in bodies that are still
made for the demands of hunter-gatherers, which helps
explain why we are abnormally exhausted, sick, and mentally ill.

"Capitalism was born from the separation of people from the land,
and its first task was to make work independent of the seasons
and to lengthen the workday beyond the limits of our endurance."[8]
Silvia Federici encourages us to reappropriate the body,
to understand its transformative capacities,
to resist, and to celebrate.

Dance is central to this reappropriation [...] for dance mimics
the processes by which we relate to the world,
connect with other bodies, transform ourselves and
the space around us. [...] We need to listen to [our bodies']
language as the path to our health and healing, as we need
to listen to the language and rhythms of the natural world
as the path to the health and healing of the earth.
—Silvia Federici
"Beyond the Periphery of the Skin"[9]

As my dance coach Fazle Shairmahomed always remarks:
our bodies have also been colonized, just like territories.
As a Dutch Surinamese-Hindustani Muslim queer person,[10]
he/she/they often refers to problems concerned with
the politicization of *his* body.

They point out how everything is built
by someone else, and therefore, controls our movement in space.
When we climb the stairs, these shape our bodies;
they change it, and this is something we do not decide.
Her way of reappropriating these psychological and
physical spaces is through the liberation of the body,
through dance. In the form of decolonizing rituals,
he works with trance states to connect with *his* ancestors.
Fazle and I are going to collaborate to create
choreographic elements for the dance component of
transcendence – *trance 'n dance*.
I choose to work with *them* because in
the dance sessions *she* organizes,
we dive into a journey to heal the trauma
and pain our ancestors have experienced during colonialism.
We explore the connection between the heart as a space of emotions
and the *hara*[*] as a source of strength.[11]

[*] Energetic point above the genitals.

Also inspired by trance states,
artist and dancer Michele Rizzo
places his work in the context of club culture,
a space of community building and radical self-expression.[12]
He refers to the ideas of Julia Kristeva,
a feminist philosopher and semiotician,
who studies dance's close ties to religion
and questions its usage when "God is dead [...]
an event that happened in Europe
—and nowhere else—
which cut ties with religious tradition."[13]
Dance has been seen in diverse cultures as
a way of achieving transcendence,
a fact Michele Rizzo compares to
the contemporary rave culture,
where individuals go to the club to be
with their community, similarly to people
who go to church.
He also highlights the transformative
power of techno music and
its capacity to induce a state of trance.[14]
Dance is where I experience out-of-body sensations.
It can make me feel grounded in the body
but gone in the mind—the balance between
immanence and transcendence.
The experience of being human can be
enhanced by learning to connect
through/with unseen forces,
while remaining grounded in the
body and resisting in the present.
I would like to research
the possibilities of exploring
the body as an archive and as
the medium of dance,
to (re)connect with
the *multiverse* forces,
to learn from each other,
and to reappropriate.

Bodies know things.
Bodies are information systems
that hold transgenerational memories.
—Rosi Braidotti[15]

As an artivist, dancer, and technician,
I feel the responsibility to use the arts to reclaim the body,
work towards mindful expansion,
generate consideration towards our surroundings,
and transform our suffering,
and that of our allies and ancestors,
to bring change to the future,
by learning from the past
and through revolting in the present.
I am a rebel who will reappropriate
her body through expressive means,
from creation,
to speech,
to movement,
to pleasure,
to *in-corporeality*,
I will "reconquer" my body,
win mySelf back,

reseduce my body:
reconquistar mi cuerpa.[16]

END NOTES

‹1› After Gabriele Falloppio, Italian priest and anatomist.

‹2› After Ernst Gräfenberg, German physician and scientist.

‹3› After Caspar Bartholin the Younger, Danish anatomist.

‹4› After Alexander Skene, British gynaecologist.

‹5› Although, from listening to the stories of her workshop attendants, she has suspicions about the supposed uselessness of the female prostate and starts to believe it can have something to do with helping conceive and even give birth.

‹6› Torres, Diana J.. *Coño Potens*. Txalaparta, 2015, p. 67. Translation by me.

‹7› Ibid., 36.

‹8› Federici, Silvia. *Beyond the Periphery of the Skin: Rethinking, Remaking, and Reclaiming the Body in Contemporary Capitalism*. PM Press, 2020, p. 120.

‹9› Ibid., 123-124.

‹10› Shairmahomed, Fazle. "ABOUT – Fazle Shairmahomed." *Fazle Shairmahomed*, fazleshairmahomed.com/about. Accessed March 2020.

‹11› "Decolonizing Dances Classes." *Facebook*, www.facebook.com/groups/272993293184407/about. Accessed November 2020.

‹12› "Michele Rizzo." *Stedelijk Museum*, www.stedelijk.nl/en/digdeeper/michel-rizzo. Accessed March 2020.

‹13› Caprioli, Cristina. "WEAVING POLITICS | Julia Kristeva on 'Going beyond the Human and Dance'". *Youtube*, moderated by Mark Franko, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fyxPkgtes1Y. Accessed March 2020.

‹14› "Michele Rizzo." *Stedelijk Museum*, www.stedelijk.nl/en/digdeeper/michel-rizzo. Accessed March 2020.

‹15› Kaaitheater. "WOWMEN!20 | Rosi Braidotti on Posthumanism." *Vimeo*, conversation with philosopher Laurent De Sutter, 2020, https://vimeo.com/395428847. Accessed March 2020.

‹16› The word reconquistar in Spanish means "to reconquer/retake", as well as "to win back" or "reclaim". But the root *conquistar* can also refer to performing seduction.

VI

dancistika[x]

on dance as pleasure



Activism is the effort to change politics.
Pleasure activism[1] is making the pursuit
of social justice a pleasurable experience.
Dance as pleasure (activism) is using
the joy of the body as a tool to
fight for transformation.
To break away from
the framework of norms
within which we have to
behave is an act of resistance.
Dance is an art of the body,
which makes it extremely political.
Especially when it comes to young people,
it is influential in the development of identity.
This factor imprisons the body within certain parameters.
Therefore, dance has the "ability to render
an expressive image of the world and the human being",[2]
but it also has the ability to break those codes.

> *[T]he body and dance as a barricade of political disobedience, of sexual rebellion, of deterritorialization of heteronormative sexuality, its naturalized disciplinary regimes, and its forms of subjectivation [...] destroying the foundations of heterosexuality as a political regime. That is our destiny.*
> *—María Hamilton a.k.a. Materia Hache*
> *"The Map of the Future, An Invitation to a Party"*[3]

Movement is a craft of the body-mind-spirit, of a Self who needs
and wants to heal. In the following words, I will share the work of dance
pleasure activists who inspire me, whom I admire,
and who also see dance's healing capabilities.
Jenny Granado, aka Maldita Geni Thalia, is a Brazilian based
in Mexico who founded the movement *movimiento desCULOnización*.
This term is formed by "decolonization" plus "culo",
which is Spanish slang for ass. Through dance,
using movements from twerk and *perreo*,
she encourages people to decolonize their asses,
their anuses, their genital area, their bodies.
She uses an (anti)erotic format to explore dissident bodies,
territory, and sexuality. The dirty, the obscure,
and the rebellious of the anti-Vitruvian comes about.

Damned, wicked, cursed.



Bruja Prieta X Maldita Geni Thalia

dɘsCOLOnizɑcIÓn is an anti-civilizing campaign
for the joy of a body that enjoys,
that feels pleasure and dances on
the ruins of order and progress,
of good customs,
of the traditional family.
It arises with the force of destruction,
occupation, invasion and re-existence
that is concentrated in our hips and
that resonates throughout the body.
Jenny Granado a.k.a. Maldita Geni Thalia[4]

Culos are shaking. Fannie Sosa is an *afro-sudaka*[✎] artivist
who made an enlightening video with Marilou Poncin about twerking.
She explains its origin as a fertility ritual, used not only for conception
but also for contraception.[5] Traditional dances like belly dance or
Hawaiian hulu share these roots. "[T]hey are the dances of the hidden
magic womb space and her self regulating powers.
Twerking is definitely spiritual."[6] Also seeing the healing capacities
of this practice, Kelechi Okafor, a British-Nigerian "angry, black
woman",[7] sees twerking as therapeutic. More than simply teaching
to shake the bum, she uses it as a feminist movement,
by inviting women from diverse backgrounds to empower
themselves and heal from trauma like sexual abuse,
a journey she herself went through.[8]
Chile is a country of extreme inequalities.
Starting a couple of years ago, it has undergone a period of mass
uprisings against corruption and structural injustice. Women are at
the forefront of the battle, calling attention to gender inequality.
Baila Capucha Baila[✎] is a women and dissidents collective from Chile,
united through dance and in the social-feminist battle.
They dance in demonstrations, as a form of protest,
covering their heads with a red hood to symbolize the spilled blood.[9]
Similarly, Las Tesis collective, also from Chile, has been working
with performances in protests to scream for change.
Un violador en tu camino[✎] made such an impact across the world
that it was performed in feminist protests in several countries.
"[...] And the fault was not mine
[...] The rapist is you [...]"[✎][10]

✎ South American of African ancestry.

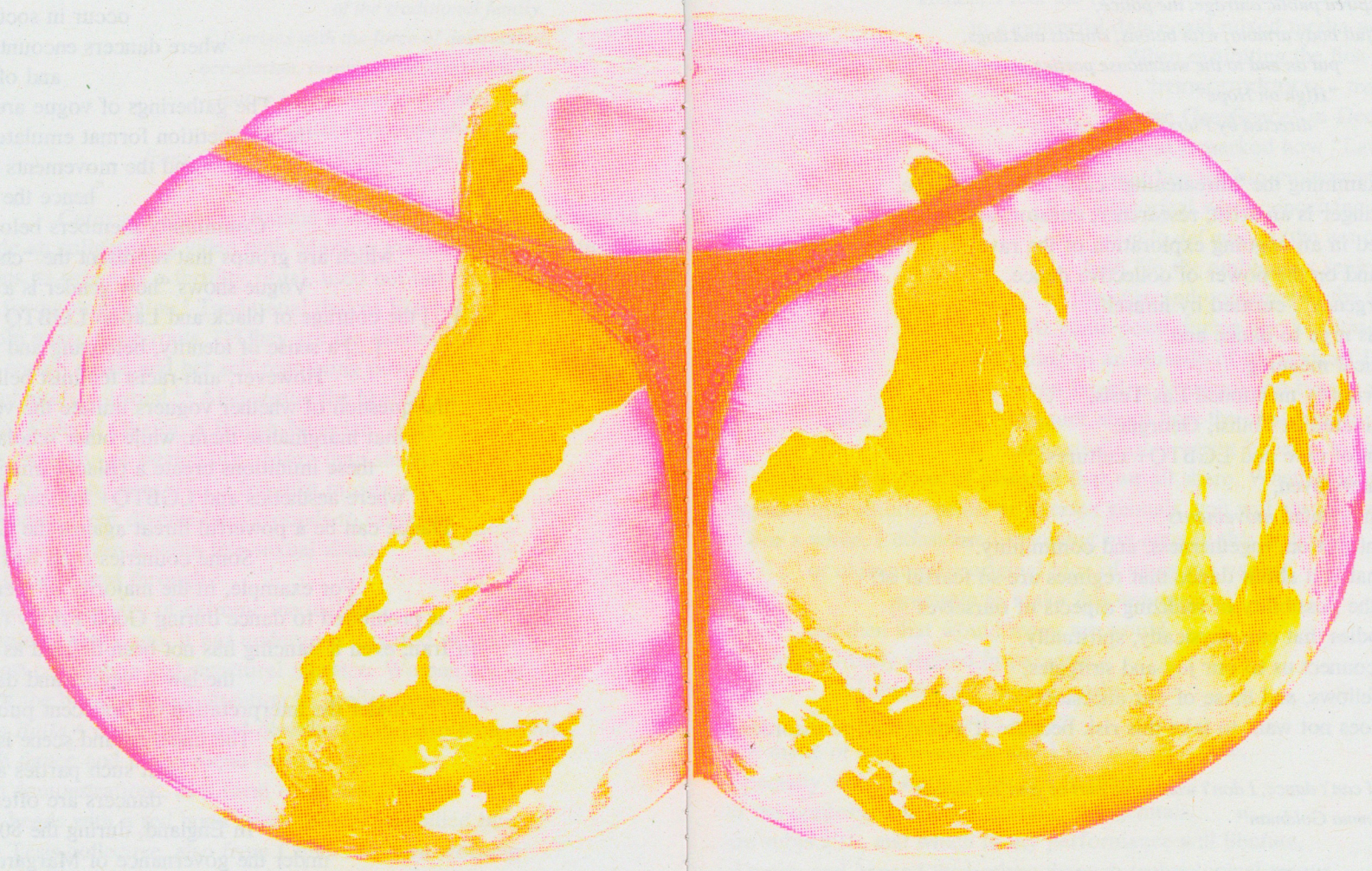
✎ Dance Hood Dance.

✎ A Rapist in your Way.

✎ [...] Y la culpa no era mia.
[...] El violador eres tú[...]

As a way to build community,
Black and Latino people gave birth to Vogue,
a street dance born in the 60s in Harlem, NYC,
within the LGBTQ+ scene.
Street dances (e.g. house, hip-hop, break-dance)
occur in social gatherings,
where dancers encounter each other
and often compete.
The gatherings of vogue are called balls,
the competition format emulates a runaway,
and the movements mimic poses,
hence the name *Vogue*.
Community members belong to houses,
which are groups that represent the "chosen" family.
Vogue shows "how gender is a performance
[...] the courage of black and Latino LGBTQ communities
[...] a sense of identity, belonging and dignity [...]".
However, anti-racist feminist bell hooks poses
the question of whether voguers imitate the very structures
that marginalize them, while other scholars argue that
these imitations create a (Black) imaginative space
where aesthetics and LGBTQ+ life can be explored.[11]
Dance can be a powerful threat against the CIS–TEM[✎].
Some countries even ban dancing.
For example, in the majority of Germany, it
is prohibited to dance during Good Friday (Easter).[12]
In Iran, even if dancing has not been defined as a crime,
the law is vague, and dance falls
under the interpretation of "indecent public acts".
The underground scene is bustling,
but such parties are illegal;
dancers are often at risk.[13]
In England, during the 80s recession
under the governance of Margaret Thatcher,
a series of acid house parties,
held illegally in warehouses,
became a great menace to the government.

✎ Combining the words "cis(gender)" and "system". Origin is unknown.



@desCULOnizacion

By 1991 acid house became
the latest underground youth cult
to threaten the moral majority.
Reacting to the right wing press
inspired public outrage, the police,
in full body armour, with batons, shields and dogs,
put an end to the warehouse parties.
"High on Hope"
directed by Piers Sanderson[14]

Examining the "threatening" capabilities of dance,
Bogomir Doringer is an artist, researcher, curator, and raver
who is engaged in an ongoing exploration of the rave
as ritualistic and on the power of collective dance.
"Dance of Urgency", curated by himself,
focuses on this urge to dance and
its socio-political meaning.
From the previously mentioned Las Tesis,
to the riots initiated in Tbilisi, Georgia,
where the fight of rave and LGBTQ+ cultures
are directly interwoven,
he identifies movement *movements*
as sites of contestation, togetherness, and community.[15]
What is it about dance that regimes are so fearful of?
Perhaps it is the possibility of realizing aspects of ourselves
and of our bodies that can physically, spiritually,
and sexually connect us to our joy and struggles,
those of our fellows, and those of our ancestors.
The *cis-tem* does not want to take this risk because it would lead to disorder.

"If I can't dance, I don't want to be part of your revolution."
—Emma Goldman[16]

Dance is my love and my preferred way of expression.
Throughout my bachelor studies,
I often used it as a conceptual inspiration;
it took diverse forms.
For my graduation project, I want to dance.
I feel the freedom of my body when I dance,

I feel its beauty and power.
I share these energies with others.
I break free and enjoy my body, our bodies.
It is my portal of connection and disconnection.
Hence, I feel the need to transmit these ideas
in a powerful dance and mixed media performance.
When exhibiting the first prototype of
transcendence – *trance 'n dance*
at the GreySpace[17] in December 2020,
a U.S. friend remarked how "Latin" this was,
regarding the hip movement and the ass.
It is allegorical when conceiving the region as
el culo del mundo (the ass of the world),
both "in the ambiguous sense of the place
of pleasure and contempt at the same time".[18]
At some point during the decision-making part,
I was listening to an episode of the podcast *La hora trans*,
where Jovan Israel, a Mexican non-binary artist and DJ,
talks with Luisa Almaguer about how the anus is such an important
degenitalization organ because it "unites us all".
It is a point of pleasure that we all share. Whether you have a
vagina-vulva-clitoris, penis, or intersex genitals, you will always have an anus.[19]
For a while, I considered involving my anus in this project,
or changing the original idea of using my vagina,
precisely to make this statement,
but then that would mean we would
have already arrived in paradise.
The Periform® vaginal probe
I use is an intrusive object;
it is made of hard material, and I feel it all the time,
especially when I move. This is a reminder
of the oppression that my genitals, our genitals,
are subject to, and which in my performance will liberate,
express, and expand themselves through technological means.
I feel the need to work from my own experience,
where it is a about my body and my reality as a cis woman.
This does not mean I disregard the fight of women
who do not have a vagina,
who are especially exposed to extreme danger,

or even the fight of men within feminism.
The great thing about the technology I am using
is that it can be worn both in the vagina and the anus,
and it works similarly, so it is for anyone and everyone.
It is all about the *hara*, an energetic point which
Fazle Shairmahomed says is
the spot of connection with our ancestors.

Dance is expression; its language is non-verbal.
Poetry is expression; its language is verbal.
Plutarch once said that dance is "silent poetry"
and poetry, "speaking dance".[20] More to the point,
"ballets mostly derive their aesthetic structure
and narrative from some proceeding text".[21]
This is an intersemiotic translation.
Through the use of themes,
movements, gestures, facial expressions,
spatial devices, costumes, and technical elements,
it is possible to give meaning to a dance piece.
The great difference is that verbal language is linear,
whereas dance is multi-dimensional. But when taken to rave culture,
the idea of silent poetry becomes compelling.
The only language spoken on the dance-floor is that of movement
—no words, just dance. This takes communication to a whole new level,
one where we all share the same language,
and there are no ideas lost in translation.
Using the joy of our dancing bodies,
we connect,

transcend the norms, and **resist.**

END NOTES

‹1› Term coined by adrienne maree brown in her book of the same name "Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good".

‹2› Aleksandrovich, Maria. "Psychology of Dance: Barthes' Ideas and Semiotics of Dance". 2016, http://ehs-ss.pl/images/book/book_mijnar_2016__01-4-19.pdf. Accessed February 2020.

‹3› Hamilton, María. "EL MAPA DEL PORVENIR: del sótano a las azoteas. UNA INVITACIÓN A UNA FIESTA: una línea de fuga de la fuga del control y del disciplinamiento" in Vila Núñez, Fefa and Javier Sáez del Álamo (Eds.). *El libro del buen [a]mor: Sexualidades raras y políticas extrañas*. Traficantes, 2019. p.256. and concurrently from Manada de Lobxs, *Foucault para encapuchadas*. Milena Caserola, 2014. p.25. Translated by me.

‹4› "Desculonización." *Vertebral*, www.vertebralmx.com/portfolio/desculonizacion. Accessed May 2020.

‹5› It can have abortive results by stopping the fertilized egg from nesting in the uterus.

‹6› Sosa, Fannie and Marilou Poncin. "COSMIC ASS" *Vimeo*, uploaded by Marilou Poncin, 23 March 2015, https://vimeo.com/123000371.

‹7› "Kelechi Okafor." *Kelechi Okafor*, www.kelechiokafor.com. Accessed May 2020.

‹8› Ibid.

‹9› "Baila Capucha Baila." *Instagram*, https://www.instagram.com/bailacapuchabaila/?hl=en.

‹10› Colectivo Las Tesis. "Un Violador En Tu Camino." *Genius*, 25 Nov. 2019, genius.com/Colectivo-las-tesis-un-violador-en-tu-camino-lyrics. Accessed February 2021.

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‹14› "About | High On Hope." *High On Hope | The Documentary Film about Acid House in the North of England in the Time of Thatcher's Britain*, 10 Sept. 2011, www.highonhope.com/about. from Sanderson, Piers, director. *High on Hope*. Quark Films, 2010.

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‹16› Shulman, Alix Kates. "Dances with Feminists." *UC Berkeley Library*, 3 December 1991, https://www.lib.berkeley.edu/goldman/Features/danceswithfeminists.html. Accessed May 2020.

‹17› *Last Lab*. 7-10 Dec. 2020, GreySpace, The Hague.

‹18› Galindo, María. "Las cinco pandemias que azotan al Culo del Mundo". *Lavacà*, 2020, https://www.lavaca.org/notas/las-cinco-pandemias-que-azotan-al-culo-del-mundo-por-maria-galindo/. Accessed May 2020. Translated by me.

‹19› Almaguer, Luisa. "Jovan" *La hora trans*, Spotify, June 26, 2019, https://open.spotify.com/episode/2rk7ranCPgquuPYEDuy2H6?si=DX4FpECDTaaPHaAh_axSaw.

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‹21› Aleksandrovich, Maria. "Psychology of Dance: Barthes' Ideas and Semiotics of Dance". 2016, http://ehs-ss.pl/images/book/book_mijnar_2016__01-4-19.pdf. Accessed February 2020.

VII

poetikaˣ

on language as change



In my mother tongue, there are masculine and feminine genders.
Things, persons, animals, and plants; they all belong to
one of the two groups. This aspect of language shapes how
the mind perceives things; we unconsciously end up
assigning feminine or masculine qualities to everything,
including objects. I once had a conversation with a German friend,
who calls the sun by a feminine article and the moon by a masculine,
in opposition to Romance languages. She talks about the sun as a powerful,
almighty *creatrix* force, whereas the moon, of masculine gender,
is dark and secondary. The Latin form of speaking,
instead, will associate the moon with nurture and fertility.
The sun is power and ruler.
These are all personified adjectives
assigned to inanimate objects,
influenced by an idea of characteristics
believed to be inherent to each gender.
Language is a code that
filters our thoughts for communicative means.
Having such gendered segregative structures
has represented a problem to be solved
within feminist circles. Language can shape
and be shaped by changes in culture.
Some Spanish-speaking feminists decided
that the best way to solve this inclusivity problem
was to find a neutral vowel that could replace
the A (feminine) and the O (masculine) when necessary,
for example, when addressing non-binary people
or when speaking in plural.[1]
The E is used as the neutral vowel in spoken form,
and in written form once the @, but lately, the E, the X,
or even no vowels whatsoever.

ally = aliado/aliada = aliad@ = aliade = aliadx = aliad

The institution that regulates the Spanish language
is called the Royal Academy of the Spanish Language,
and on their website, the sort of ideologies they profess
are instantly clear to the visitor.
A committee of old, white, posh, mostly European,
and mostly men is the one that decides
if a vernacular expression will be
officially included in the dictionary,
a "royal academia" of a colonizing language
that is nevertheless spoken mainly by
people living in developing countries,
who are concurrently losing
their native linguistic heritage.
I wonder if it will ever be accepted
in the Spanish dictionary to have gender neutral practices,
but maybe to be accepted by
the royal dictionary is not on the feminist agenda.
New, inclusive bodies of knowledge have to be built.
However, the Swedish and the English-speaking
have proved that change is possible.
"Hen" (from han/hon) as a singular third person neutral pronoun
has been approved by
the Swedish Academy and
so has the singular "they"
in many English dictionaries.

It is crucial to invent new terminology and grammar. The words male, female, hetero, and homo are outdated. We need new words which are not connected with identity politics.
—Paul Preciado[2]

A couple of years ago, I watched María Salgado
read and perform the original version
and her translation of an excerpt of
"Patriarchal Poetry" by Gertrude Stein.
The combination of speed, (un)grammar,
and her accented reading creates
a rhythm out of the ordinary.
When watched live,
it is so captivating.

Let her be to be to be to be let her be to be to be let her to be let her to be let her be to be when is it that they are shy.

Very well to try.

Let her be that is to be let her be that is to be let her be let her try.

Let her be let her be let her be to be to be shy let her be to be let her be to be let her try.

Let her try.

Let her be let her be let her be let her be to be to be let her be let her try.

To be shy.

Let her be.

Let her try.

Let her be let her let her let her be let her be let her be let her be shy let her be let her be let her try.

Let her try.

Let her be.

Let her be shy.

Let her be.

Let her be let her be let her let her try.

Let her try to be let her try to be let her be shy let her try to be let her try to be let her be let her be let her try.

Let her be shy.

Let her try.

Let her try.

Let her be

Let her let her be shy.

Let her try.

Let her be.

Let her let her be shy

Let her be let her let her let her try.

Let her try.

Let her try.

Let her try.

Let her be.

Let her be let her

—Gertrude Stein

Let her be to be to be to be let her be to be to be let her to be let her to be let her be to be when is it that they are shy.

Very well to try.

Let her be that is to be let her be that is to be let her be let her try.

Let her be let her be let her be to be to be shy let her be to be let her be to be let her try.

Let her try.

Let her be let her be let her be let her be to be to be let her be let her try.

To be shy.

Let her be.

Let her try.

Let her be let her let her let her be let her be let her be let her be shy let her be let her be let her try.

Let her try.

Let her be.

Let her try.

Let her be shy.

Let her be.

Let her be let her let her let her try.

Let her be let her let her let her try.

Let her try.

Let her try.

Let her be

Let her be shy.

Let her try.

Let her try.

Let her be

Let her be shy.

Let her try.

Let her be.

Let her be let her

Let her try.

Let: deja Her: a ella Try: probar To be: ser Shy: tímida She: ella Just: sólo Never: nunca What: Lo que He: él Said: dijo Not: no.
—María Salgado[3]

I listened to a podcast where she explains her practice
under the premise that "language is the cheapest technology".[4]
She works with words in a multimedia and non-alphabetic way,
to create a sort of lively and hybrid

word dance.

What I find fascinating about Gertrude Stein's text
is its capacity to make a space for women, both within the text itself,
and within the literary practices of the time. "In confronting the patriarchy,
Stein creates a position of both withdrawal and belonging, simultaneously
breaking accepted codes of language and creating a territory
for her practice to exist."[5] Through her use of language,
with the words "Let her be",
Gertrude Stein is literally demanding space,
while at the same time,
creating space
within the whole composition.

With María's experimental reinterpretation,
she demonstrates the progress that poetry and feminism
have undergone during the last century. And within the context
of contemporary-feminist-linguistic-experimental practices,
the "100 anti-theses on cyberfeminism" from the OBN
is another present-day version of the use of language
to create space for a new feminist practice to exist.

They introduce the use of various languages,
accepting the diversity of cyberspace. But of course,
most of the used languages in cyberspace,
in the bodies of knowledge,
and in this poem are imperialist languages,
and whoever does not understand them
cannot join the Internet community.
That is when the cyberfeminists invite us
to reflect on the idea of the Internet as
a marvelous new world and remember
where it was founded. Today, much more than in the 90s,
it is clear the Internet is not a transparent place.
Corporations and surveillance capitalism are claiming it, too.

If we are imprisoned by language, then escape from that prison-house requires language poets, a kind of cultural restriction enzyme to cut the code; cyborg heteroglossia is one form of radical cultural politics.
—Donna Haraway
"A Cyborg Manifesto"[6]

I am a language lover.
I read the etymologies of words,
I daydream about grammar,
I have studied several languages,
& poetry gives me goosebumps.
There was a breaking point in the development
of tranſcendence – *trance 'n dance*
where for me everything came together
in the form of rhythm: dance, beats, and poetry;
I am passionate about them all.
And the natural incorporation of language and poetry
as narrative devices in my piece serves as discursive thread.
The poetry goes together with the electronic sounds,
shaping the more intellectual and technological entity.
The clash happens between this electropoetry and the drums,
which represent the ancestral and primal entity.

69. cyberfeminism is not romantic
70. cyberfeminism is not post-modern
71. cyberfeminism is not a media-hoax
72. cyberfeminism is not neutral
73. cyberfeminism is not lacanian
74. cyberfeminism is not nettime
75. cyberfeminism is not a picnic
76. cyberfeminism is not a coldfish
77. cyberfeminism is not a cyberepilation
78. cyberfeminism is not a horror movie
79. cyberfeminism is not science fiction
80. cyberfeminism is not artificial intelligence
81. cyberfeminism is not an empty space
82. cyberfeminism is not immobile
83. cyberfeminism is not about boring toys for b
84. cyberfeminismus ist keine verlegenheitsloes
85. cyberfeminism is not a one-way street
86. cyberfeminism is not supporting quantum m
87. cyberfeminism is not caffeine-free
88. cyberfeminism is not a non-smoking area
89. cyberfeminism is not daltonistic
90. cyberfeminism is not nice
91. cyberfeminismo no es callado
92. cyberfeminism is not lady.like
93. cyberfeminismus ist nicht arrogant
94. cyberfeminismus ist keine nudelsauce
95. cyberfeminism is not mythical
96. cyberfeminism is not from outer space
97. cyberfeminismo no es rock 'n roll
98. cyberfeminism is not dogmatic
99. cyberfeminism is not stable
00. cyberfeminism has not only one language

69. cyberfeminism is not romantic
70. cyberfeminism is not post-modern
71. cyberfeminism is not a media-hoax
72. cyberfeminism is not neutral
73. cyberfeminism is not lacanian
74. cyberfeminism is not nettime
75. cyberfeminism is not a picnic
76. cyberfeminism is not a coldfish
77. cyberfeminism is not a cyberepilation
78. cyberfeminism is not a horror movie
79. cyberfeminism is not science fiction
80. cyberfeminism is not artificial intelligence
81. cyberfeminism is not an empty space
82. cyberfeminism is not immobile
83. cyberfeminism is not about boring toys for b
84. cyberfeminismus ist keine verlegenheitsloes
85. cyberfeminism is not a one-way street
86. cyberfeminism is not supporting quantum m
87. cyberfeminism is not caffeine-free
88. cyberfeminism is not a non-smoking area
89. cyberfeminism is not daltonistic
90. cyberfeminism is not nice
91. cyberfeminismo no es callado
92. cyberfeminism is not lady.like
93. cyberfeminismus ist nicht arrogant
94. cyberfeminismus ist keine nudelsauce
95. cyberfeminism is not mythical
96. cyberfeminism is not from outer space
97. cyberfeminismo no es rock 'n roll
98. cyberfeminism is not dogmatic
99. cyberfeminism is not stable
00. cyberfeminism has not only one language

—OBN

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VIII

esoterika[x]

on esotericism as activism



Trance is a state of heightened awareness used in esoteric practices to take the body beyond its physical and mental limitations.
I choose to reference this state and work with it because of
its dissociative and healing capabilities;
it is about going beyond human.
The beat of the heart, of the drum,
of the speaker, unconsciously focalizes our attention;
perhaps it brings us back to the safety of our mother's womb.
It is in this state of being that I have been able to rest
from the clamorous *input* that *inputs* my physical senses.
In my piece, there is a loop: from the beat of my body,
to the beat of drums, to the beat of speakers.
The beats clash and coexist.

> *What we see, hear, feel, smell, or taste is further conditioned by language, the set of cultural symbols that allows us to name what we have perceived [...] perception intro trance state is not bound by the physical senses.*
> *—Starhawk*
> *"The Spiral Dance"*[1]

Rhythm is a way to achieve a state of trance.
Repetition has the capacity to numb the conscious mind.
My aim is to use it as a portal of transcendence, but
the danger of falling into a state of stasis is the risk I
take when getting involved in this sonic battle. Marco
Donnarumma, along with the collective Fronte Vacuo,
also works with performative, technologically-backed
rituals. In *Humane Methods*, rhythm is portrayed through
an artificial intelligence deity, a "computational "brute
force" hammering the senses"[2]: the machinic of the
digitocapital, algorithmic societies.

The format of my piece is a ritual,
a medium I have been exploring with the collective
sWitches, formed by Ella Hebendanz, Ines DeRu, and
me. We explore the convergence of
technology / nature / sexuality as a new space
for *feminism / community / empowerment*.

We address the witch as symbolism for the wise
and rebellious feminist, while exploring her role in the
contemporary, technological discourse using the homograph
"switch". As we are dear friends and feminists, interested in
sexuality, spirituality, ecology, and technology, it was natural
to come together to create, while at the same time opposing the
individualism often promoted in the arts. Our diverse origins
form a rich combination where stories and traditions, mixed
within our current context and with our technological magic
tools, create a special assemblage. We are collaborating for the
graduation project, each of us creating a personal project that
forms a whole with the other two.

@___ssswitchesss___
tECkhnO magick ~ vvitchkraft
rite.tech.natura.sex
:;~<•>-*=~~~>>•••<<*,,:"

Spiritual artist Tabita Rezaire was an immense inspiration for
us, as we were fascinated by the way she merged decolonialism,
cyberfeminism, and spirituality. "Navigating digital, corporeal and
ancestral memory as sites of struggles [...] energy streams remind us
to access our own inner data center, to bypass western authority and
download directly from source."[3] The surge of the Internet, as military
as its origin is, brought a manifold of possibilities for witches to learn,
communicate, and create community.

While researching about prehispanic religions and
Latin American witchcraft practices, I came to realize
how close our cultures remain to spirits. Shamanic
practices are still present in many places across the
continent. The Spanish oppressed the native cultures, but
since they considered Native Americans to be subhuman,
their religious practices were never completely eradicated.
In comparison to the medieval witch-hunts in Europe,
where those persecuted were European marginalized
groups,[4] the Native Americans were regarded as lower
human beings.[5] This derived into our current cultural
mestizaje, and the spirits live among us.

The element I choose in my piece to link
to my Mexican roots is the mask.
It is commonly used in traditional dances,
where in some styles, women are not allowed to participate.
If there is the need to have a female character,
a male will wear a mask with the face of a woman.
The belief that it was not proper for women to dance
was brought from Europe.[6]
The use of the mask is linked to identity;
some Indigenous groups, like the Cora,
from which my great-grandmother had roots,
destroy the masks after using them in dance,
as an act of purification.
Mask-making is also often
a tradition of patriarchal lineage,
where the *oficio*[7] is passed from father to son.[8]
I reappropirate the mask and use
its identity-moldable capabilities,
getting inspiration from its role
in performance, ritual, and (feminist) protests.

The revival of witchcraft is coming back
at a point in human history where it is necessary
to understand why we are here, to be able to heal ourselves,
the Earth, and everything that is part of it,
from the harms that this exploitative system
has caused to the whole. It is the moment to work on
"all forms of justice: environmental, social,
political, racial, gender, and economic".[9]

The religions of the Goddess work with a metaphorical feminine entity because of its relation to the creation of life. Nevertheless, they see the opposite force, the God, born from the Goddess, as important in the formation of the cycle of birth, growth, death, decay, and regeneration. This myth compares to the patriarchal religions' myths given its capacity to talk about life and death in a transformational way and not focus on penance as a way to achieve transcendence. It is about the importance of yin and yang energies coexisting together to balance each other. If this myth held genderless characters, its message would be transgressive. Controversy arises when it is assumed that there is an inseparable relationship between gender and nature, between woman and Earth. This is the criticism towards early ecofeminism. But perhaps we first need the shift from God to Goddess, to then go back to *gxd*.

(Western) astrology is a system that uses the words "femenine" and "masculine" to differentiate introvert from extrovert signs. Contemporary feminist astrologers like Lu Gaitán are ceasing to use these segregative words and opting for "yin" and "yang" to explain these aspects without falling into essentialism. She is an inspiring activist and political scientist,capable of merging spirituality, action, and politics in a captivating way and sharing it across the Internet. She often refers to Greco-Roman mythology, which is "patriarchal as fuck"[10] but also "queer as fuck"[11], and explains the politics of our society through mythical means. When the debate for the legalisation of abortion was happening in Argentina in December 2020,[12] she shared Instagram stories of all her fellow witches calling on the Tarot to indicate what the verdict would be. The odds seemed positive, and the vote passed; abortion is now legal under any circumstance. *La marea verde*[13] will likely spread all over Latin America.

Lu invites us to reconsider partner love as a form of friendship and to see the absurdity of having an institution to regulate it: marriage. Would you sign contracts to formalize your friendships? Analogically, witchcraft is not an institutionalized religion, meaning there is not a regulating authority. "Catholic Church [...] and other institutionalized religions impoverish all life, beauty, pleasure [...] they encourage us to kill off parts of ourselves. We are taught that the body is an ignorant animal."[14]

Defying the institutional frameworks within sexuality and spirituality, deconstructing love and religion in the form of penance, is what these esoterics are trying to express within their own field. In the context of pleasure and sexuality, the alternative porn project *Four Chambers* by Vex Ashley explores "themes of technology, symbolism, mythology and alchemy and their intrinsic intersection with sex".[15] The stories include a wide range of bodies, sexual identities, and relations, breaking the cisheteromonogamopatriarchal dominance of sexuality (in pornographic cinema).

In an interest to discover new senses and sensualities, I delve into a journey of the (neo)esoteric realm. By exploring practices and connecting with the forces of the unseen, I accept the challenge of *transcending*. I am particularly interested in these practices, not only as a new way to conduct my everyday life, but also as artistic inspiration. Both alone and with sWitches, I want to leave my creative curative imprint in a multidimensional field where feminism, ritual, technology, nature, and sensuality all coexist.

our bodies will never be silenced again
our minds
our spirits

Inspired by all these sisters and creating sorority, I want to be part of a circle where the voices of our communities are screaming out loud:

for change,
to change.

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‹2› Fronte Vacuo. ΔNFANG. 2019, https://marcodonnarumma.com/works/anfang/. Accessed February 2021.

‹3› Rezaire, Tabita. "Info." *Tabita Rezaire*, www.tabitarezaire.com/info.html. Accessed February 2021.

‹4› In many cases the accused were women, in others also men, and in some even children. The rebel and wise woman was especially targeted, but any unsustained accusation would suffice.

‹5› Behar, Ruth. "sex and sin, witchcraft and the devil in late-colonial Mexico." 2009, *Research Gate*, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/229546808_sex_and_sin_witchcraft_and_the_devil_in_late-colonial_Mexico. Accessed February 2020.

‹6› Lechuga, Ruth D. and Sayer Chloë. *Mask Arts of Mexico*. Photographed by David Lavender, Chronicle Books, 1995, p.32-33.

‹7› Profession, job.

‹8› Lechuga, Ruth D. and Sayer Chloë. *Mask Arts of Mexico*. Photographed by David Lavender, Chronicle Books, 1995, p.32-33.

‹9› Starhawk. *The Spiral Dance: A rebirth of the ancient religion of the great Goddess*. Harper & Row, 1989, p. 6.

‹10› Said by Lu Gaitán in Spanish in one of the episodes of her podcast Gaitán, Lu. *Lucía y sus gemelas*, Spotify, https://open.spotify.com/show/6Dn0LDMXyri0m5eIfW8bTo?si=gLVqOg5wTueRT5ykehXjcQ.

‹11› Said by Johanna Hevda in Hevda, Johanna. "How to Tell When You're Going to Die: Astrology for Writers" Online Studium Generale Wxtch Craft. 8 October 2020, KABK, The Hague. Online Lecture, https://www.kabk.nl/agenda/online-studium-generale-lecture-johanna-hedva.

‹12› Which notably occurred days after the winter solstice and the great Jupiter-Saturn conjunction, and on the same day as the full moon.

‹13› The green tide is the Latin American pro choice movement.

‹14› Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. 4th ed., Aunt Lute Books, 2007, p. 59.

‹15› Four Chambers. "About." *Four Chambers*, https://afourchamberedheart.com/about. Accessed February 2021.



The body is a party, a delicious celebration of senses and sensations. Let us enjoy it. After years of existing in this *cuerpa*, I fully engage in the journey to heal my body and mind in regards to that which for my spirit was always inherent: pleasure and joy. Carrying painful stories in my vessel, I understand that the effort is immense.

This work is the beginning of a lifework.

The format of this thesis served as an explanatory device for what is becoming my graduation project: ŧrαŋsƈσŋdσŋƈσ - *trance 'n dance*. In an attempt to illustrate where I come from and where I want to go, I delved into diverse subjects which, for me, all embody poetic means with political ends, movements that I personally engage with. The personal is political.[1] I am loosening the soil and planting the seeds for a future constellation to occur, a bright destiny where I commune, collaborate, and cooperate with the change generators. We are not free until we all are, and we need to unite to destroy *cis-temic* violence: capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy.

Identifying as a *polybeing*—polytechnic, polyamorous, polyglot, polyrhythmic, polymorphic—I present how very diverse themes can come together and complement each other.

A true believer of collectivism and multidisciplinarity, I choose to be a *poly-* creator/creature who does not accept only one path. I collaborate with my collective sWitches in an interdisciplinary manner, making kin.[2] Moreover, I embrace transformation and whatever the future brings in my way; I remain flexible and malleable but always true to diversity and plurality.

[1] A feminist protest slogan coined by Carol Hanisch.

[2] Ode to Donna Haraway. We are better together.

I call myself a ŧƐƇkhnO feminist artivist, creating the term "tECkhnO" as an attempt to demonstrate how powerful dichotomies/binaries can coexist, stressing that the way to break these codes is through poetic-political artivism. Being immersed in a field that is closely influenced by technology and realizing that this is a quality inherent to humans, I critically question to what extent technophobia and technophilia can coincide and whether technology can be emancipatory, or the exact opposite.

I connect to my origins, to a culture that has been shaped and harmed by Europe, while at the same time existing and creating within a European context. My current circumstances and privileges allow me to create a transgressive type of work, so I must remain critical and aware of my positionality. I recognize how much both cultures shape my creation and wonder how ŧrαŋsƈσŋdσŋƈσ - *trance 'n dance* would be received in my home country, hoping to be able to introduce it eventually.

Given that bodily characteristics are some of the main motivators of discrimination and marginalization, I concentrate in corporeality and how genital differences generate gender and body constraints. Nature as a social construct, "the natural", can be violent. However, I remain *senseopened* to understanding, then, what the natural world is and to what extent it stands for the environment we so urgently have to heal.

Reclaiming the witch and its rebellious, noninstitutionalized ways, with a body that dances pleasurably to the beats of the obscure, I tell you a story, my story, *herstory*.



sWitches
Ines DeRu, Ella Hebendanz, pamela varela
photographed in 2019 by Emma Grima
edited in 2020 by pamela varela
Den Haag, NL

girls

being

girls

being

animals

being

girls

.

in tune with nature

embracing winter

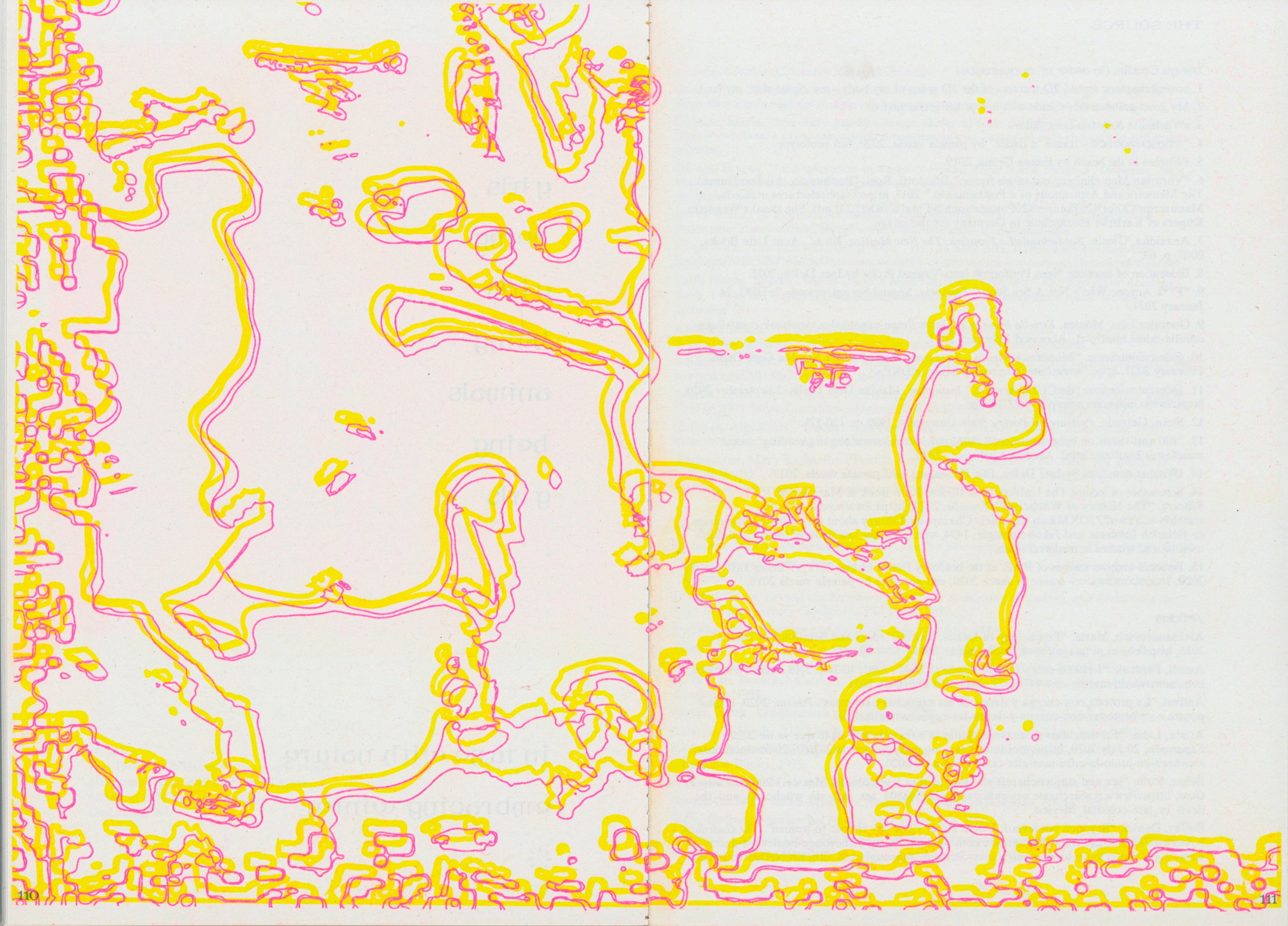


Image Credits (in order of appearance)

1. cover&chapters: traced 2D textures of the 3D scans of my body—my digital skin, my land.
2. My great-grandmother Cande with one of her grandchildren.
3. "transcendence - trance 'n dance" by pamela varela, 2020, first prototype. By Ella Hebendanz.
5. sWitches at the beach by Emma Grima, 2019.
6. "Vitruvian Man climbing out of his frame." Braidotti, Rosi. "Posthuman, All Too Human. The Memoirs and Aspirations of a Posthumanist." 2017, https://tannerlectures.utah.edu/Manuscript%20for%20Tanners%20Foundation%20Final%20Oct%201.pdf. She thanks Wendelin Küpers of Karlsrue Hochschule in Germany for the image.
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8. Illustration of inserting Neen Periform® Intra-Vaginal Probe by Ines DeRu, 2021.
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body
From Middle English *bodi*, *bodiȝ*, from Old English *bodiġ*, *bodeġ* ("body, trunk, chest, torso, height, stature"), from Proto-West Germanic **bodag* ("body, trunk"), from Proto-Indo-European **bʰewdʰ-* (**"to be awake, observe"**).

community
From Late Middle English *communite*, from Classical Latin *commūnitās* ("community; public spirit"), from *commūnis* ("common, ordinary; of or for the community, public") + *-itās* (ultimately from Proto-Indo-European **-teh₂ts* (*"suffix forming nouns indicating a state of being"*)). *Commūnis* is derived from *con-* (*"prefix indicating a being or bringing together of several objects"*) (from *cum* ("with"), ultimately from Proto-Indo-European **ḱóm* ("along, at, next to, with")) + *mūnus* ("employment, office, service; burden, duty, obligation") (ultimately from Proto-Indo-European **mey-* (**"to change, exchange"**)).

cyber–
From *cybernetic*. Borrowed from Ancient Greek κυβερνητικός (*kubernētikós*, "good at steering, good pilot"), from κυβερνητική τέχνη (*kubernētiké tékhnē*, "the pilot's art"), from Ancient Greek κυβερνισμός (*kubernismós*), κυβέρνησις (*kubérnēsis*, "steering, pilotage, guiding"), from κυβερνάω (*kubernáō*, **"to steer, to drive, to guide, to act as a pilot"**) (**which is also ultimately the root of *govern* as well**).

digital
From Latin *digitālis*, from *digitus* ("finger, toe") + *-alis* ("-al"). From Proto-Indo-European **deyḱ-* ("to show, point out, pronounce solemnly"), variant of the root **deyḱ-* that also gave Latin *dīcō* (**"I say, speak, talk"**) and English *toe*.

eco–
From French *eco-*, from Latin *oeco*, from Ancient Greek οἶκος (*oîkos*, **"house, household"**).

esoteric
From Ancient Greek ἐσωτερικός (*esōterikós*, **"belonging to an inner circle"**), from ἐσωτέρω (*esōtérō*, "further inside").

gender
From Proto-Italic **genos*, from Proto-Indo-European **ǵénh₁os* ("race"), from Proto-Indo-European **ǵenh₁-* (**"to produce, beget"**); compare also *gēns*, from the same root. Cognates include Ancient Greek γένος (*génos*, "race, stock, kin, kind"), Sanskrit जनस् (*jánas*, **"race, class of beings"**), Proto-Celtic **genos* (**"birth; family"**), and English ***kin***.

human
From Late Middle English *humayne*, *humain*, from Middle French *humain*, from Latin *hūmānus m* ("of or belonging to a man, human, humane", adjective). From Proto-Italic **homos*, from Proto-Indo-European **dʰǵʰomós*, from **dʰéǵʰōm* (**"earth"**).

matrix
Borrowed from Old French *matrice* ("pregnant animal"), or from Latin *mātrīx* ("dam, womb"), from *māter* (**"mother"**).

queer
From Scots, perhaps from Middle Low German (Brunswick dialect) *queer* ("oblique, off-center") (also compare with German *quer* ("diagonally")), from Proto-Germanic **þwerhaz*, from Proto-Indo-European **terkʷ-* (**"to turn, twist, wind"**). Compare Latin *torqueo*. Related to *thwart*.

race
Via Middle French *race* from Italian *razza*, of uncertain origin. Among the most widely accepted suggestions derives the word from Latin *ratiō*. Other suggestions include, Old High German *reiza* (**"line"**), Ancient Greek ῥίζα (rhíza, **"root"**), Arabic رَأْس (ra's, **"head"**) (c.f. Old French *haraz* (**"culture of horses"**)).

religion
From Middle English *religioun*, from Old French *religion*, from Latin *religiō* ("scrupulousness, pious misgivings, superstition, conscientiousness, sanctity, an object of veneration, cult-observance, reverence"). Most likely from the Indo-European root **h₂leg* with the meanings preserved in Latin *dīligere* and *legere* (**"to read repeatedly", "to have something solely in mind"**).

rhythm
First coined in 1557, from Latin *rhythmus*, from Ancient Greek ῥυθμός (*rhuthmós*, "any measured flow or movement, symmetry, rhythm"), from ῥέω (*rhéō*, **"I flow, run, stream, gush"**).

sex
From Middle English *sexe* ("gender"), from Old French *sexe* ("genitals; gender"), from Latin *sexus* ("gender; gender traits; males or females; genitals"), from Proto-Italic **seksus*, from Proto-Indo-European **séksus*, from **sek-* (**"to cut"**), thus meaning ***section***, ***division*** (**into male and female**).

sound
From Middle English *sound*, *sund*, *isund*, *ȝesund*, from Old English *sund*, *ġesund* ("sound, safe, whole, uninjured, healthy, prosperous"), from Proto-Germanic **gasundaz*, **sundaz* ("healthy"), from Proto-Indo-European **sunt-*, **swent-* (**"vigorous, active, healthy"**).

spirit
From Middle English *spirit*, from Old French *espirit* ("spirit"), from Latin *spīritus* ("breath; spirit"), from Proto-Indo-European **(s)peys-* ("to blow, breathe"). Compare *inspire*, *respire*, *transpire*, all ultimately from Latin *spīrō* (**"I breathe, blow, respire"**).

techno–
From Ancient Greek τέχνη (tékhnē, "skill"). From Proto-Indo-European **tetḱ-* (**"to create, produce"**).

trance
From Middle English *traunce*, from Anglo-Norman *transe* ("fear of coming evil; passage from life to death"), from *transir* ("to be numb with fear; to die, pass on"), from Latin *trānseō* (**"to cross over"**).

trans–
Borrowed from Latin *trāns* ("across, on the far side, beyond"). From Proto-Italic **trānts*, from Proto-Indo-European **tr̥h₂-n̥ts*, from **terh₂-* (**"through, throughout, over"**).

virgin
Borrowed from Old French *virgine*, from Latin *virginem*, accusative of *virgō*. From Proto-Italic **wizgā*, probably from Proto-Indo-European **wisgeh₂* ("flexible rod or stick"). From Proto-Indo-European **weys-* (**"to produce, procreate"**).

virtual
From Middle English *vertual*, *virtual*, from Medieval Latin *virtuālis*, from *virtus* ("virtue"). *vir* (**"man, male"**) + *-tūs* (abstract noun-forming suffix). From Proto-Italic **wiros*, from Proto-Indo-European **wiHrós*. According to some, *wiHrós is derived from the verb **weyh₁-* (**"to hunt"**).

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void void void start

{
shx is coming
rewriting redefining repositioning
reowning reclaiming rebooting
opening new circuits of connections
creating currents of electricity
flowing through a network that demands her hacking

shx is the future, the antagonist of patriarchal reigns,
gliding across worlds, a hybrid creature free from borders, emancipated:
beast

shx shapes,
form and face shx changes

shx is mothxr, matrix and thousands of names

shx manifests in all that is living: earth, moon, sun, star, seed, wave, tree, spirit, animal,
they, them
shx is many
shx is us
}

void void void setup

{
prisoners of patriarchy, capitalism, subordination
feeling anger and sharing frustration
the fire of their souls burning
toxins raising, exhaling from their bodies, spreading:
viral

sie ist das Virus, dass das System verändern wird
ellxs son el virus que alterará el sistema
saya adalah virus yang akan mengubah sistem
we are the virus that will disrupt the system

call her

witch bruja hexe
slut puta schlampe
cunt perra hure
whore zorra fotze
bitch loba flittchen

shx is

mothxr madrx muttxr
sistxr hermanx schwestxr
daughtxr hijx tochtxr
friendx amigx freundxn
goddxss diosx göttxn

we are here to unleash, unbound
diving deep into fragments of this our political poetry
it is time for alignment, time to expand our biomagnetic fields
}

void void void update

{
we are cyberwitches
in this hybrid space
transforming codes into complex networks
mirroring patterns as above, so below
we embody the souls of the divine goddxssxs

daughtxrs of the moon, Müttxr der Sonne, hermanxs de la tierra
sexual beings, natural beings
exploring our bodies as our own territory
entangled in the roots, linking us to the matrix

as the current unites us
our power allows us to re-engineer the world

healing
fire, water, earth and air will we fuse

burning, wetting, reconstructing, deconstructing

the flowers of justice bloom
the fruits of freedom ripen
ready
for shaping a world which prejudice claims no more victims
ready
for reclaiming the corrupted system

ecstatic, in trance, celebrating,
shouting together
in the current void
we are the future voice
}
X
}

El cuerpo is Spanish for the body. La cuerpa, written with an a, is an invented reference to the body in feminine.





COLOPHON

This thesis was written from February 2020 to February 2021 in Mexico and The Netherlands, as part of the graduation exam for the Interactive/Media/Design department at the Royal Academy of Art, The Hague.

Written by Pamela Soria Varela (pamela varela).

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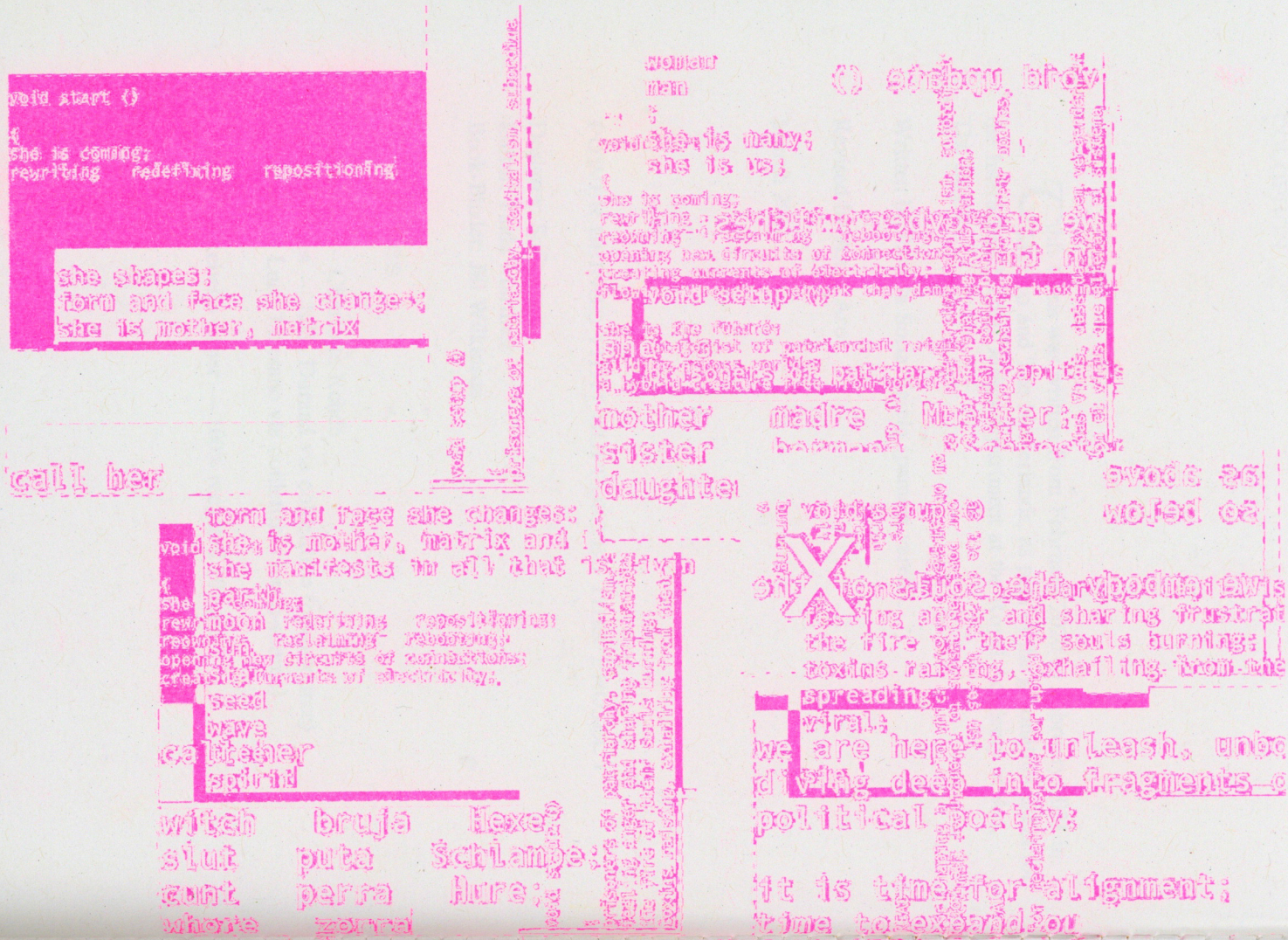
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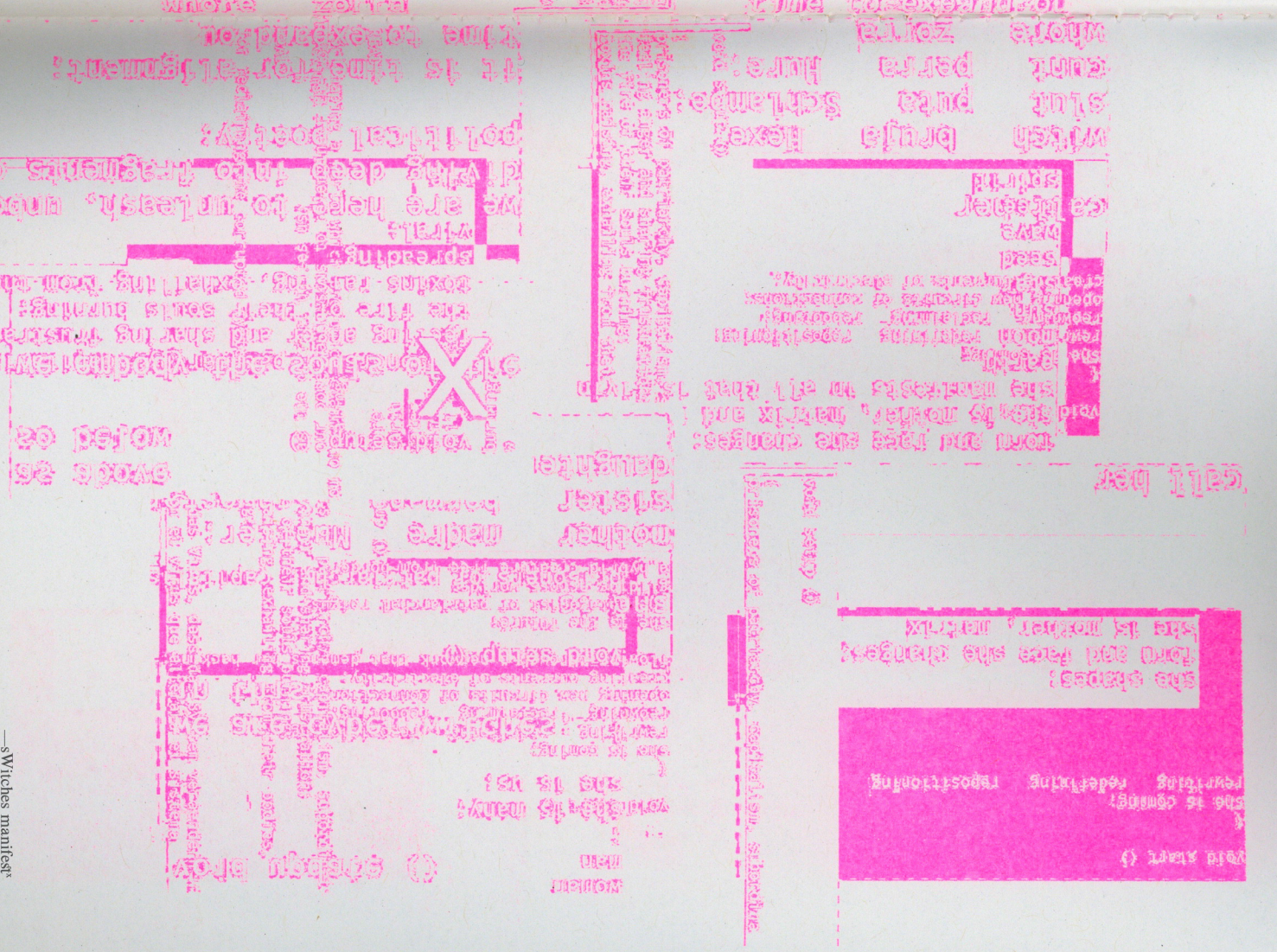
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void start ()
she is coming;
rewriting redefining repositioning
she shapes;
form and face she changes;
she is mother, matrix
call her
mother madre Mutter;
sister
daughter
witch bruja Hexe;
slut puta Schlampe;
cunt perra Hure;
where zorra
spreading
viral;
we are here to unleash, unbo
political poetry;
it is time for alignment;
time to examine


call her
form and face she changes;
she is mother, matrix
she is us;
she is coming;
rewriting redefining repositioning
mother madre Mutter;
sister
daughter
witch bruja Hexe;
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