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BECOMING MOLECULAR AS A CONDITION FOR CREATING NEW SPACES OF FREEDOM¹

Introduction

According to psychotherapist, activist, and philosopher Félix Guattari, the intensification of the dynamics of hierarchization, segregation, and exploitation that emerged with the advent of neoliberal capitalism converges with the development of a new type of fascism of a planetary scale. His thesis is that fascism has abandoned the order of molarities – i.e., political parties and ideologies – and nowadays exists in a molecularized form, dusty and imperceptible in the social body. Unlike earlier forms of authoritarian fascism, this unprecedented biopolitical force operates within the interiority of subjects, and it aims at making

¹ This article draws in part on my doctoral thesis, Christian Alonso (2020). *Ecosophical Aesthetics and the Production of Posthuman Subjectivity in the Age of Semiocapitalism*. Barcelona: University of Barcelona.
<http://diposit.ub.edu/dspace/handle/2445/178137> (Accessed: 14.09.22).

sure that “each individual assumes mechanisms of control, repression, and modelization of the dominant order” (Guattari, 2009, 258). By way of a miniaturization of its logistics, machinic capitalism manages to seep into our psychic territories, intervening in the “basic functioning of the perceptive, sensorial, affective, cognitive, linguistic behaviours” (Guattari, 2009, 262).² The Guattarian account of molecular fascism operates within the coordinates of what he calls integrated world capitalism, and it helps us grasp how libidinal production is currently being captured and remote-controlled by an economy that drags everyone and everything into the axiom of profit. The hypothesis is that capitalism produces and distributes a “subjectivity of generalized equivalence” (Guattari, 1995, 22), by which modes of being are absorbed by semiotic operators in accordance with a logic in which values of use, exchange, and desire are situated on the same plane.³ Under which conditions do these new forms of subjugation emerge? How can mechanisms of resistance be conceived and put into practice? Lastly, what might be the role of artistic practice in the context of these repressive dynamics and emancipatory possibilities?

² Guattari liberates the concept of the machine from its association with the question of technique (as a tool or mechanics), to define it as a set (assemblage) of human and non-human instances that encompasses both the technical machine and more-than-human bodies (animals, people, phrases, signs, the media, markets, etc.) and that have the capacity to produce subjectivity. The concept of machinic refers to the way in which these assemblages operate: by contingent and consequential exchange, not by substitution (Guattari 1995, 31).

³ I have written on the Guattarian notion of molecular fascism and how it can be counteracted by bio-art practices in Christian Alonso (2022). “Generative Contaminations: Biohacking as a Method for Instituting an Affirmative Politics of Life”, in Rick Dolphijn, Rosi Braidotti (eds.). *Deleuze and Guattari and Fascism*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 65-83.

Personalizing and depersonalizing semiotics

When trying to understand the functioning of molecular fascism, one should turn one's attention to the distinction made by Guattari – both singly and together with Gilles Deleuze – between signifying and asignifying semiotics, which describes different functions of signs operating within the economy, power relations, and subjective production. Advanced capitalism relies on a twofold semiotic register when mobilizing mechanisms of social subjection and machinic subservience by which subjectivity is homogenized. Social subjection produces us as subjects through the assignment of personological codes, inducing individuals to mould themselves to prefabricated representations in relation to sex, race, identity, nationality, job sector and position, etc., their respective relations of antagonisms and consciousness (Lazzarato, 2014, 12). It exerts control through subjective delimitation in a similar manner to Foucauldian disciplinary techniques, which are based on an “individualizing governmentality” (Foucault, 2008). Relying on the molar logic of representation and meaning, and operating according to the paradigm of communication, subjection through signifying semiotics comes about through the forced necessity to adapt to well-defined roles and functions according to the requirements of power – such as the entrepreneur or the person in debt – in which we all remain trapped. This homogenization narrows subjectivity's intrinsic qualities of alterity, singularity, difference, and therefore ends up impoverishing it.

Machinic subservience, on the other hand, operates through asignifying semiotics. Examples of these signs are musical and mathematical writing, scientific diagrams, data syntax, and stock-market codes. Although they might engender an effect of signification, they do not function as

such. Because they handle figures of expression that attach bodies (not persons) to material flows in an act that bypasses representation, these signs remain in direct contact with their references, and thus engage in myriad experimentations that unfold within the paradigm of enunciation. As pointed out by sociologist and philosopher Maurizio Lazzarato (2014, 37), the Guattarian notion of machinic subservience transforms the idea of the individual (*I*) into the notion a relay (*it*) constituted of inputs and outputs, capable of allowing the circulation or the interruption of the informational and operational flows that stream within the capitalistic, productive, and consumerist cybernetic regulatory system. The deterritorialization of the individual into a relay turns the subject into a hybrid entity, at once subject and object, a component of a more-than human assemblage that is exposed to “a whole set of techno-scientific, macrosocial and microsocial, and mass media procedures of subjection” with which capital produces a new surplus value that goes well beyond the labour’s force variable capital (Guattari, 2009, 250). The relevance of Guattari’s post-representational thought is that it is able to explain the production of a subjectivity that is not only logocentric but also “machinocentric” (Lazzarato, 2006).

Whereas signifying semiotics refers to the molar level of well-defined representations that operate upon individuals, asignifying semiotics works at the molecular level of existence (pre-individual, infra-social, and post-representational) in which subjects are recognised by their capacity to be traversed by signs that swirl in flows of information, capital, data, consumption, and desire. Also at play in this elemental change of perspective, is a shift from transcendental identity, and its consideration of being as a compound of matter and form, to the

immanence of relations that conceives subjectivity as an intensive and differential operation. We are thus confronted with two types of “semiopowers” at work in the production and reproduction of capitalistic forms of life to control the social body. Advanced capitalism has biopolitical coordinates which are defined both by functions of induced acquisition of massively produced subjective avatars and by the capture of individuals as new components of its productive machinery. The object of subjection is still the population. Here however, coercion is being exerted in the liminal space between the adjustment to individualized representations and the coupling of each individual’s nervous system to capitalistic machinery. Seen in this light, management or control is not only described in terms of external interference but also of interiorized configuration, signalling a transformation of the individual into a “dividual” entity, that is, a singularity that is not understood as an indivisible, totalized wholeness, but as a multiplicity that divides itself by changing its nature (Deleuze, 1992, 7). As we will see, the concept of the dividual can be defined as a type of subjectivity that is fragmentary or partial, yet also collective and transversal, processual and contingent.

Shifting from the individual towards collective assemblages of enunciation

The combined operations of the two types of semiotics lead to what Guattari called the “society of integration” (Guattari, 2009, 77), that is, a new order that would coexist with the Foucauldian disciplinary society and the Deleuzian society of control. The microfascism of machinic capitalism materializes when desire remains subjected to redundancies of signification and interaction. When this happens, subjectivity becomes emptied of its inherent polyvocality – or, as Guattari would say, it gets

dragged into a “black hole” inhabited exclusively by the semiotics of power. Nevertheless, understanding how capitalism colonizes the social body through signifying and asignifying semiotic functions does not amount to saying that subjectivity is produced exclusively by operators at the service of capital. In fact, the hypothesis of Guattari and Deleuze is that the character of subjectivity is not homogeneous – it is not confined to the one-dimensional universes of Being, Signifier, or Capital – but rather its nature is decidedly heterogeneous, that is, it is produced by all kinds of agencies and values that challenge any enclosure and axiomatization. Existence is characterized by a radical diversity and heterogeneity that is being impoverished by the media and semiotic systems that diminish our relationship with alterity. The effects of signifying and asignifying semiotics prove that the ontological character of subjective formations is neither homogenetic nor something that belongs to the realm of the individual; on the contrary, it is heterogenetic and made up of collective assemblages of enunciation inhabited by a myriad of economic, technological, and ethological components that cannot simply be considered as human.

The monistic conception of subjectivity developed by Guattari replaces the notion of substance with matters of expression. Seen in this light, subjectivity does not refer to any personological identity, but rather is produced by a multiplicity of non-human instances. Singly, and together with Deleuze, Guattari elaborates a plural, polyphonic, and collective conception of subjectivity, which is formed by different (heterogeneous) matters of expression (human and non-human, organic and inorganic bodies) with the capacity for enunciation (rather than communication). This perception involves a critique of the notion of the unitary subject,

which has traditionally been defined as the essence of individuation, where consciousness operates as the principle of unity and universalization of experience. The unitary subject is impervious to the world and perceives itself as an autonomous nucleus of sensibility and expression. In the thought of Deleuze and Guattari, the representation of the individual as a universalist subject that has been internalized by the West is replaced by contingent arrangements (assemblages) of subjectivity. These are what Guattari refer to as collective assemblages of enunciation. Seen in this light, subjectivity strips itself of the embodied imaginary and connects with the social field, overcoming the classic individual-society opposition. The outside, the exteriority vanishes in favour of an immanent, alterified subjectivity that is arranged in collective assemblages. Each assemblage will have to be analysed by a variety of semiotic codes (economic, legal, techno-scientific) that produce and experience subjective effects and affects.

Collective assemblages of enunciation can be considered as transversal, contingent, existential systems in which my subjectivity coexists with other subjectivities, over which I have no authority. This principle compromises the subject-object function of the paradigm of communication. The subject is not a condition of language, nor is it the cause of the statement. It is not an "I" that generates statements, but a set of complex, constitutive multiplicities of which this "I" is a part. There is no subject that communicates, but rather heterogeneous agencies that generate enunciation.⁴ It is from these multiplicities that statements are produced. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the collective

⁴ As stated by Deleuze and Guattari, "the statement [is] always collective even when it seems to be emitted by a solitary singularity like that of the artist". Deleuze, Gilles; Guattari, Félix (1978). *Kafka. Toward a Minor Literature*. Minneapolis / London: University of Minnesota Press, 83.

assemblage of enunciation, the philosopher and art theorist Gerald Raunig reinvigorates the concept of the *dividual*, as it allows for shifting attention from the individual towards modes of collective subjectivation. This amounts to understanding that the existential vulnerability we experience today is not confined to an individual person's body detached from others, but significantly starts from the social. That is to say, the subjective precariousness that affects us today is something always shared within an "endangered sociality", one that includes the non-human (Raunig, 2016, 98-99). To further elaborate on the repressive and liberating aspects of our condition as assemblages that operate across *dividual* lines, Raunig has developed the notion of "subsistential" territory, one that "enables considering each singular subsisting in relation to 'its' respectively singular subsistence," without presupposing a given essence prior to the pragmatics that are required for becoming, in and with a world of contingency and uncertainty (Raunig, 2016, 100).⁵

Ecosophy as a pragmatics of existence

In light of the existential homogenization caused by capitalistic subjectivation, Félix Guattari considers that it is imperative to forge a politics of self-management that would be able to imagine, construct, and sustain relatively autonomous existential territories.⁶ He names his non-

⁵ "I write *subsistential*, because I think that concepts like ontological or existential are too closely tied to notions of the unified and antecedent essences of a ground, a cause, a *quo est* [...] The subsistential territories, the subsistential de/foundations of dividing imply an asymmetrical intercourse, which is not necessarily an exchange, not a measuring and adapting of the parts, but also not a tribute in the sense of cutting off a part (the minus of the *munus*) as precondition for coherent individuation and unified community" (Raunig, 2016, 100).

⁶ Some of the synonyms that Guattari uses to refer to the process of self-production and self-management of subjectivity are the concepts of existential singularization or machinic autopoiesis.

dualistic model of political ecology “ecosophy”, which is an analytical and methodological perspective that is engaged in a proliferation of relational, creative, and transformative modes of life. This pragmatics of existence is articulated across the ecology of the environment, the ecology of the socius, and the ecology of the psyche. The underlying idea is that a progressive intervention on the ways of being, however imperceptible it may seem, can have immediate consequences in collective becomings, which can lead to transformations in broader biogeophysical systems. Ecosophy refers to a mobilization of the creative energy in all practices and fields of knowledge, one that overflows the all-too-disciplined “world of art”. Importantly, this transversalization of aesthetics does not imply the discrediting of art. Quite the contrary, it plays a decisive role, since its disposition toward invention makes it possible to intensify, on the one hand, the rupture with dominant significations on a social level and, on the other, the singularized production of existence on a subjective level. The encounter with art facilitates the reappropriation of the means of production of subjectivity, or – which amounts to the same thing – it facilitates the production of a self-managed existence, or a politics of singularization, in Guattarian terms. Seen in this light, art becomes an instituting practice, first because it resists the biopolitical control of dominant representations, and second, because it is involved in the production of heterogeneous forms of life.

The ecosophical writings developed by Guattari during the 1980s and up until his death in 1992 have a common goal: to describe the creative dimension of subjectivity, that is to say, to grasp the aesthetic function of existence, whether in everyday life, in the relationship with ourselves and with the other, in the field of politics, in science, in psychoanalytic practice, and so on. His books *Schizoanalytic Cartographies* (first

published in English in 2013), *The Three Ecologies* (2000), and *Chaosmosis* (1996) culminate this project. In them, one can find both a new conception of subjectivity and the development of a diversity of methodological tools – schizoanalytic metamodeling, ecosophical articulation, the politics of chaosmosis – for the differentiated self-subjectivation that counteracts the repressive biopolitics of Being, of the Signifier, and of Capital.⁷ One could say that what may guarantee the creation of new spaces of freedom is the process of molecular becoming. In other words, the molecularization of the subject (into dividual fragments) and its rearrangement into collectively assembled components of subjectivity constitute an opportunity to enable new existential possibilities. The molecularized, dividual singularities mentioned earlier are governed by the pre-personal, the pre-individual, the infra-social, the non-human, and the non-significant. The ecosophical inflection is placed in this pre-personal logic that is presented as a zone of indeterminacy where the inside and the outside coexist, where the sense of self is not dissociated from the sense of the other. The register of the pre-personal is the register of machinic interfaces, which operate without a “univocal ontological foundation” (Guattari, 1995, 52). It is from this register that we can assume the mutual co-dependency between human and non-human bodies and establish new systems of affinities with otherness in the natural-cultural continuum. This horizontal ecosystemic alterity defines the principle of heterogenesis that defines the Guattarian radical ecology.⁸

⁷ *Schizoanalytic Cartographies* and *The Three Ecologies* were originally published in French in 1989, whereas *Chaosmosis* was first published in 1992.

⁸ “Machinic autopoiesis asserts itself as a non-human for-itself through zones of partial proto-subjectivation and it deploys a for-others under the double modality of a ‘horizontal’ eco-systemic alterity” (Guattari, 1995, 54).

Heterogenesis as complex, singularizing, and constitutive processes of differentiation

An indefinite number of matters of expression intervenes in the collective assemblages of enunciation, i.e., biological codes, forms of social organization, together with non-human, technological, and aesthetic extra-linguistic elements.⁹ We are faced with a machinic configuration of subjectivity when these heterogeneous enunciations are assembled and sustained in a relation of multiplicity across existential territories and in incorporeal virtual universes. According to Guattari, every form of life has an ethical (relational), aesthetic (creative), and political (transformative) propensity. All subjectivity constitutes a modulation between the actual and the virtual, between effects and affects, between the possible and the real. And it is precisely the fact of conceiving the dimension of the virtual (that of the unformed, of what is yet to come) that allows the opening of new spaces of freedom. What Guattari calls “machinic heterogenesis” is the “singularizing, irreversible processes of necessary differentiation” (Guattari, 1995, 55). The conditions of the production of subjectivity may be reappropriated (singularized) only after disorganizing the internalized psychic faculties of the individual (as a unitary subject) and linking interiority with its external world. It is only insofar as a mode of subjectivity loses its consistency, that it can find its way to a “coming into existence” (Guattari, 1995, 26). The impure, pre-personal, and collective subjectivity engendered by the ecosophical articulation questions the dualisms of mind-body, reason-emotion, subject-object, conscious-unconscious, etc.,

⁹ Subjectivity is defined by Guattari as “the ensemble of conditions which render possible the emergence of individual and/ or collective instances as self-referential existential Territories, adjacent, or in a delimiting relation, to an alterity that is itself subjective” (1995, 9).

through the notion of ontological intensity, which implies a sense of responsibility towards the created existential territories.

The ecosophical methodology enables the modelling of a singularized existential territory. The singularization is reached when the subjective territories are traversed by psychic, collective and material registers. As Guattari points out, “the important thing here is not only the confrontation with a new material of expression, but the constitution of complexes of subjectification: multiple exchanges between individual-group-machine” (Guattari, 1995, 7). Importantly, these exchanges are not overdetermined: they can be both vital and lethal. Ecosophy provides a method for remaking a new “existential corporeality” that flees from repetition and differentiates itself through complex singularization. It is a process of recomposition or aggregation, not of synthesis: “grafts of transference operate in this way, not issuing from ready-made dimensions of subjectivity crystallized into structural complexes, but from a creation which itself indicates a kind of aesthetic paradigm. (Guattari, 1995, 7). This grafting may enrich the modes of being by realizing the creative and processual potential of subjective expression and enunciation. Ecosophy requires cross-fertilization not just between three ecologies (mental, social and environmental), but between multiple ecologies: of art, art history, urbanism, architecture, geography, philosophy, institutional practice, etc. The ontological, epistemological, and political tool that enables the connection between all these ecologies – which allows uniting singularity and multiplicity – is Guattari’s original concept of transversality.

Guattari coined and implemented the concept of transversality from the clinic of La Borde, particularly in the field of therapeutic practice and

institutional psychotherapy. It was in this context that he strove to replace indoctrinating and universalist magisterial discourses with concepts and projects that respond to practical and concrete needs. The concept of transversality describes above all a pragmatics, referring to a type of organization that rejects hierarchical structures. This pragmatics is aimed at promoting an affirmative becoming of psychotic patients through the activation of processes of singularity involving both patients and therapists. And this is done through the confrontation with matters of expression that were unfamiliar to the patients.¹⁰ The process of existential singularization should not be understood as a remodelling of subjectivity, but rather as an attempt to (self-) generate coordinates and reference points (existential territories) that can be habitable. The collective assemblages of enunciation can be articulated in an affirmative or negative way, that is, they can infuse power or impotence. We speak of affirmative articulation when subjective machinism is concerned with generating existential territories and universes of reference, emphasizing the power of action in the Spinozist sense (machinic heterogenesis). On the other hand, we speak of negative articulation when subjective machinism homogenizes ways of life, which ends up sterilizing the power of action (capitalist homogenesis). And it is desire that, according to Guattari, triggers a nascent subjectivity that we find in dreams, in delirium, in the feeling of love, and in artistic practice (Guattari, 1995, 6).

This volume includes texts by authors who are explicitly inspired by the ecosophical pragmatics of Félix Guattari or who resonate with it.

¹⁰ I have written on the relevance of the experiences in the field of institutional psychotherapy in Christian Alonso; Montserrat Rodríguez Garzo (2021). "La cura no es una obra de arte". In Nora Ancarola (Ed.). *Abans el Llenguatge*. Amposta: Centre d'Art Lo Pati, 3-8.

Published in a blend of English and Spanish, the thirteen articles were written by researchers, artists, art historians, philosophers, and schizoanalysts from Asia, America, and Europe. Their methods, ideas, and approaches highlight the ability of creative practice to map and engender complex, relational, singularized, transversal, and constitutive forms of life. Departing from bold analyses of capitalism's mechanisms of subjection, their contributions describe how art is able to resist the repressive politics of dominant representations and mobilize processes of existential heterogenesis through molecular becomings. The origin of this publication is the IV International Symposium *Mutant ecologies in contemporary art: machinic capitalism, molecular beings, and subsistence territories* that took place online on November 25-26, 2020, which had as special guest the philosopher and art theorist Gerald Raunig.¹¹ This special issue of the *Journal of Global Studies and Contemporary Art* builds on the project started with the book *Mutating Ecologies in Contemporary Art* (Edicions de la Universitat de Barcelona) which investigated the conjunction of the ecological turn in contemporary art and Guattarian ecosophy to inquire about the role of art in light of the challenges posed by the environmental degradation and the socio-political crises of today.¹² Thirty years after Guattari's death and the publication of

¹¹ The symposium was directed, coordinated, and moderated by Christian Alonso, in partnership with the research group AGI (Art, Globalization, Interculturality), University of Barcelona, the Department of Geography, History and Art History, University of Lleida, and MACBA Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona. See <https://artglobalizationinterculturality.com/symposiums/mutating-ecologies-in-contemporary-art-2020/> (Accessed: 8 September 2022) and <https://caosmosis.net/Mutating-Ecologies-in-Contemporary-Art-IV-Machinic-Capitalism> (Accessed: 8 September 2022).

¹² Open access, free download is available at http://www.edicions.ub.edu/ejecuta_des_carga.asp?codart=10336&cc=&mp=43L41o31B75I&formato=pdf (Accessed: 9 September 2022).

Chaosmosis (1992), this collection of texts testifies that Guattari's clinical and critical analyses continue to infuse artistic, ecological, and political practice with a revolutionary potential.

The contributions are organized in three sections: the introduction, a selection of revised and reworked texts by authors who participated in the symposium, and a collection of articles selected through a call for papers. In *Ecosofía: una nueva sensibilidad política*, Gabriela Berti argues that the ecosophy developed by Félix Guattari constitutes a form of political philosophy that is linked with the question of the territory. Far from being reduced to a set of green ideas about the environmental emergency and global ecosystem crisis, Berti maintains that the Guattarian paradigm offers a critical look at the conditions of overexploitation by capitalism and the multifaceted consequences of the current technical-scientific mutations. In *Sound Art and the Ecosophical Object*, Matías G. Rodríguez-Mouriño analyses the role of sound art in the production of subjectivity. Given the current capitalist subjective homogenization and its confrontation with chaos and meaning, Rodríguez-Mouriño explores sound art as a collective enunciation that goes beyond the human realm. Lastly, he resorts to asignifying semiotics to argue for the need for a non-humanist, trans-species, machinic comprehension of the sonic imagination.

In *Environments of Control in the Films of Melanie Gilligan*, Holger Kuhn focuses on the cinematic works by Canadian artist Melanie Gilligan to investigate how the biopolitical techniques of late capitalism have intensified in the face of digital environments. By working through Gilligan's video pieces and drawing on the Foucauldian notion of governmentality, Kuhn reveals that the power-formation of machinic capitalism does not aim at the production of subjects (as disciplinary

techniques), but rather at control over their milieus (considering subjectivities' infra- and supra-individual data traces). In *Planetarnost: el concepto de planetariedad en los discursos sobre terraformación*, Toni Navarro places the concepts of "planetarity" and terraforming within the framework of the "planetary turn" and considers them as an anti-hegemonic alternative to the discourses of globalization. Proposing Yuk Hui's notion of technodiversity as a third way that addresses the possible contradictions between planetarity and terraforming, Navarro argues that technologies allow us to better understand the functioning of the planet and determine our worldviews.

In *Gandhi, Guattari and the Decolonization of the Anthropocene*, Ishtiaque Ahmed Levin describes Guattari's ecosophy and Gandhi's ecophilosophy as providing an ethico-political, anti-colonial response to anthropogenic climate change in the Indian subcontinent. By facilitating a cross-cultural confluence of philosophical ideas, Ishtiaque develops an ontological framework for addressing the question of human agency in an era when ecologies of both humans and nonhumans are globally reconfigured according to the logic of neoliberal capitalism. In *(Re)thinking critique: Transversal and ethico-aesthetic dimensions in partaking practices*, Elke Bippus and Ruth Lang examine the notion of critique in contemporary art and argue that the concept of "partaking critique" provides a more committed activism in light of the current challenges brought by climate change, migration flows, inequalities between the global north and south, and the mistrust of democracy. By analyzing a range of artistic case studies and resorting to queer and feminist concepts, Bippus and Lang state that partaking critique allows a move from a negative, judgemental ethos to an affirmative, situated, local, transversal, and

reparative agency that counteracts the mechanisms of paralysis and paranoia.

In *The Artwork as Assemblage. New Materialist Perspectives on Aesthetics*, Hauke Ohls draws on Deleuze and Guattari's ideas to define the assemblage as the active linking of heterogeneous parts and a dynamic conjunction of semi-autonomous formations that articulates new affiliations of entities and discourses. Ohls then describes artist Xinhao Cheng's multimedia installation "The Naming of a River" (2014-2018) as an assemblage, as a self-productive setting, given its manifold time-space dimensions and the multiplicity among the material artefacts of the installation and the artist, the institution, the recipients, and the river. In *Cartografías cimáticas a través de la ecología acústica de los principales sistemas fluviales de la geografía catalana*, Ferran Lega describes his artistic research project that analyses, in a situated way and focusing on water, the relationship between listening, subjectivities, and the environment. By relying on cymatics as the science of acoustics, Lega made recordings of rivers in the Catalan territory and has transformed these sound records into eco-acoustic maps. In this way, he makes visible the wave patterns of the soundscapes of each place.

In *Knotting the humanimal assemblage. Race, animals, and art in post-socialist Belgrade*, Andrija Filipović defines the notion of the "humanimal" assemblage as the weaving and knotting of various bodies and flows of matter, where processes of racialization, animalization, and humanization take place. By borrowing concepts developed by Deleuze and Guattari and by Afro-pessimism, and by thinking through Zoran Todorović's video piece *Gypsies and Dogs* (2009), Filipović shows the ways in which art and art institutions plays an important role in this humanimal assemblage and proves how this assemblage produces

ontological rigidity in the Roma people and their relation with their companion dogs, as well as in ethnic Serbs and their pet dogs. In *Blobs, Slime and Fungi. The queer potential of a Mediamycology*, Maja-Lisa Müller describes the acellular, slime mould popularly known as “the blob” (*Physarum polycephalum*) as a figuration for thinking of a networked, complex notion of life and its queering ontological, biological, and disciplinary spheres. Drawing from biology, anthropology, and queer theory, and by thinking with a range of artistic case studies, Müller argues that blobs question scientific, philosophical, and aesthetic categories, and reveal their world-building and connecting abilities across species and spheres.

In *Lo siniestro ayer y hoy: las conjuradas*, Vanina Rodríguez Garcés focuses on a comparative study between the engraving *The Four Witches* by Albrecht Dürer (1497) and a journalistic photo taken in a feminist mobilization in 2021. The engraving is a portrait of three female nudes depicting three witches. The photograph captures the back of a woman on which the sentence “we are the granddaughters of the witches you could not burn” is written. Drawing on thinkers such as Rita Segato and Silvia Federici, Rodríguez-Garcés links the historical phenomenon of the witch hunt with the inequalities, discrimination, and oppression experienced by women in our patriarchal societies, and shows how feminism proposes new ways of thinking, acting, and living. Lastly, in *Subversiones sexo-afectivas a través de lo grotesco en La región Salvaje de Amat Escalante*, Violeta Alarcón Zayas turns to Deleuze and Guattari to define the concept of the grotesque as a rhizomatic device and takes as a case study the Mexican film *La región salvaje* by Escalante (2016). Borrowing ideas from art historian Frances Connelly, Alarcón shifts the

analysis from the grotesque to the traumatic and monstrous, arguing that the grotesque is a tool for questioning hegemonic models of sexuality and heteronormative gender roles.

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