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NODE: "NEW FEMINIST MATERIALISM: ENGENDERING AN ETHIC-ONTO-EPISTEMOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY"

Digital Feminicity: Predication and Measurement, Materialist Informatics and Images

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Abstract

"Feminicity" is the term for a predicate register that enables feminist work be accounted for as relational "active-points" (as an alternative formulation to standpoints) that collectively can be seen through what they have achieved. But going further, it marks where those active-points contribute to the dynamic field of feminist epistemologies and where change occurs. This article contributes to my larger project's discussion of this concept. Broadly, feminicity argues that the active-points of feminist practices (practical and conceptual) need to be understood within their situated fields as materialist informatics. In the digital era, examples of the affects of digital feminicity are as identified in works such as those by Wajcman (1991; 2004); Haraway (1993; Nakamura, 2003), Hayles (1993; 2012), VNSMatrix (1991), Adam (1998), Plant (1998). Collectively, such authors and artists opened a creative, and sometimes radical discourse of the digital field as multidirectional, multidimensional, multitemporal platform of "gender actions". Taken as a predicated field (using Gottlob Frege's (1964) sense of the term "predicate"), this work contributes to the feminist materialist reappraisal of feminist epistemology (cf. Alaimo and Hekman, 2008; Van Der Tuin, 2014), and larger radical feminist deconstructive projects (Malabou, 2011; Fraser, 2013). Thus conceived, the genealogy of digital feminicity problematizes the monopolitical terms of feminism in its collation of actions, enabling a re-situation of feminist practices as positive material interventions and expressions of the ontological constitution of the political sphere. Feminicity does not propose a chronological account of the active-points, but processually and systemically addresses the terms of generational epistemological political change (Olkowski, 1999; Van Der Tuin 2014). This article describes the ways in which a materialist constructed register – "feminicity"– can be used to think about encounters between the domains of gender, politics and technology, as manifested by materialist informatics. For reasons of brevity, this article focuses on just two aspects of feminicity: the terms of predication of the female as gendered, and the issue of the image, as digital informatics, comprised of activity-points of feminist practice. Consequently, these are measurable and offer practical resources for the general problem of gendering politics that operate in governance, resource distribution and a

non-equal opportunity social/cultural power structure, under which minorities are disadvantaged. Feminist practice here refers to forms produced through feminist activities, ie, forms generated through relations with the matter of life through specific modalities of needs-based practices (inclusive of intuition, compulsion, capitalist-driven practices of utility, theory and art).

Keywords

feminicity, feminism, epistemology, technology, digital, materialism

Feminicidad digital: predicación y medida, informática materialista e imágenes

Resumen

«Feminicidad» es el término correspondiente a un registro predicado que permite describir la obra feminista como «puntos activos» relacionales (como una alternativa a puntos de vista), que colectivamente pueden considerarse a través de lo que han conseguido. Pero yendo más allá, señala en qué contribuyen esos puntos activos en el campo dinámico de las epistemologías feministas, y dónde se produce el cambio. Este artículo forma parte de mi proyecto más amplio dedicado a examinar el concepto de feminicidad. En líneas generales, la feminicidad afirma que los puntos activos de las prácticas feministas (tanto prácticos como conceptuales) han de entenderse en sus campos situados como la informática materialista. En la era digital, se identifican ejemplos de los efectos de la feminicidad digital en obras como las de Wajcman (1991, 2004); Haraway (1993), Nakamura 2003), Hayles (1993, 2012), VNSMatrix (1991), Adam (1998) y Plant (1998). De forma colectiva, estas artistas y autoras generaron un discurso creativo y a veces radical sobre el campo digital, visto como plataforma multitemporal, multidireccional y multidimensional de «acciones de género». Tomado como campo predicado (en base al sentido que Gottlob Frege (1964) otorgó al término «predicado»), este trabajo contribuye a la revalorización de la epistemología feminista materialista (Alaimo y Hekman, 2008; Van Der Tuin, 2014), y a proyectos de deconstrucción feminista radical más amplios (Malabou, 2011; Fraser, 2013). Concebido de ese modo, la genealogía de la feminicidad digital pretende problematizar los términos monopolíticos del feminismo al contrastar acciones, así como reubicar las prácticas feministas como intervenciones y expresiones materiales positivas de la constitución ontológica de la esfera política. La feminicidad no propone un recorrido cronológico por los puntos activos, sino que aborda, de manera procesual y sistemática, los términos del cambio político epistemológico generacional (Olkowski, 1999). Este artículo describe de qué maneras puede emplearse un registro materialista construido –el de la «feminicidad»– para pensar en los encuentros entre el género, la política y la tecnología (analógica, digital, biológica), tal y como se manifiestan en la informática materialista. Para no extenderse en exceso, este artículo se concentra en dos aspectos de la feminicidad: los términos de predicación de lo femenino entendido como género, y el tema de la imagen como informática digital, formada por puntos de actividad de la práctica feminista. En consecuencia, se trata de aspectos mesurables que ofrecen recursos prácticos para el problema general de las políticas de género que se ejecutan en el gobierno, la distribución de recursos y la desigualdad de oportunidades en la estructura de poder socio-cultural, en la que las minorías están en desventaja. En este artículo, la práctica feminista remite a formas producidas por actividades feministas, es decir, formas generadas por las relaciones con la materia de la vida a través de modalidades específicas de prácticas basadas en necesidades (que incluyen la intuición, la compulsión, las prácticas de utilidad promovidas por el capitalismo, la teoría y el arte).

Palabras clave

feminicidad, feminismo, epistemología, tecnología, digital, materialismo

The rethinking of the work of the second-wave feminists through the critical methodologies offered by appraisals of feminist genealogies (Adkins, 2004; Burchill, 2006; Van Der Tuin, 2014), and feminist new materialist theories (Braidotti, 2006; Coole and Frost, 2010) has now begun in earnest. These approaches are dilating our understanding of the specific trajectories of the technical work of feminists and their various methodologies. Yet the voices of feminists are still all too often absent or marginal from philosophical, theoretical, technological, media, and artistic debates, aside from their place as a token "other voice". Feminism and the feminine remain as problematic terms, as theorists continue to address "feminism", which, per se, offers a "paradoxical" position (Thiele, 2014), while the agency of the "feminine", as Louise Burchill argues, is limited by its philosophical traditions in so far as its use can often only be understood as either a "conceptual persona or a schema" (Burchill 2006, p. 85). Wherever and whenever a feminist strategy has identified, intervened, and offered an analysis of the singularity of the politically gendered body, situating it within its relational, multi-planar, materially constituted world is an example of what I refer to as a feminist active-point and is evidence of a change enabler that I call an action of feminicity. This article first sketches out some of the ideas underlying this concept, then considers how feminicity can assist in thinking through the image, taking the term "image" to be a mode of communication used in the digital field of 1990-2015, a period that remains deeply contested by feminist theory for its gendering effects.

The image is here understood as a manifest expression of a political time and as an intensive experiential moment that has shaped a significant discourse of gendered technology; what Judy Wacjman describes as a 'technopower' that is 'enacted materially' (Wacjman 2004, p. 54). For feminist thinking and practice, the image is not simply a matter of "representation". Rather, the image is to be understood in its Bergsonian sense, as an aggregated concept and as a material thing that is the result of a series of relational positions, the centre of which is a body. The image both stages and acts as a catalyser of the technologies that produce, direct, and manage the aggregated image; as a body within capital. In its coming into being, the image provides a focus for understanding the micro-political dimensions of the construction of different realities and the production of particular political forms of identity and territories, variously called ontology or aesthetics but which, in the digital era, exist as materialist informatics.

One of the methodological issues faced when writing about a movement in things – materials, their uses, ideas, conditions, duration, etc. – is the dilemma of how to measure the notions of change, difference and relationality without smoothing the movement into an historically containable/manageable position. In empirical descriptions, we flatten and, in theoretical speculation (however creative the terms may be), we exclude or misinterpret the change in, and of, concepts and objects of enquiry. In mapping we measure, so any movement is thus positioned within a certain trajectory or

field that locates itself through some previously known link, however tenuous. Yet without taxonomic measurement, historicizing accounts that indicate where change has occurred, unorthodox methods or modes and different ways of approaching and conceiving of the world, we remain bound to the same routine system, cycles and modes of production. Yet to collect all together in the current system of capitalism is to present everything as a coherent consumable. Is nothing outside this system? No, of course, there remain things unmeasured by the current, changing modes of capital accumulation. For any creative, remotely or staunchly anarchic, alternative or minor thinker, there are dangers and failures inherent in the analysis of some or all activities. In accounting, we offer our relational abilities of joining together and thus creating new forms and modes of equation. Ideas and experiential knowledge can transform into pipeline funds that bankroll other forms of profit-making activity (the clear aim of all capitalist systems), rather than act as springboards to other systems of living. So, we do not offer up all that could be measured; rather, we withhold ideas, we remain silent about experiences and we keep our thoughts to ourselves. We do not want to be measured by this system. Yet – in offering a collective position, a joining together of related ideas, experiences and thoughts and turning them into actions, and a manifestation of desire for real change – a movement gains a collective form and is catalysed by, and answers to, variations on a collective name. A singular name instantly holds historicity. That is unavoidable, although it provides a collective field and holds a momentary materiality, a form, an idea, a complex temporally specific narrative. Sometimes that field is aggregated, escalated into a longer collective, even a "grand narrative". But nothing remains in stasis, everything is subject to temporal flux, states of transition and change. It is *how* the collectively named field is employed, and actioned, that provokes the question of where and how its technical and organic motility manifests change, producing shifts in meaning. Change is an organic concept, identified by humans through shifts in form, experiential factors, degrees of independence or symbiosis, with its effects felt through different durational cycles. Change is not discreet, but relationally asymmetric, multifunctional and multidimensional in terms of speed, time, form and the creation of simple and or complex vectorial fields that any given object establishes or dissipates. Knowledge fields, or epistemic regimes (in the Foucaultian sense), work then through a series of durational cycles, propelled by temporal and spatial catalysers, a range of schematic filters (theoretical, conceptual, practical, biological and sovereign [national] models) and a range of layered platforms (epistemological directors of technology, economic systems, etc.), which enable the emergence of transitional forms and transformations of materialized and withheld forms.

The twentieth century witnessed two changes that historically manifested themselves at quite different speeds and durational cycles but which profoundly altered the global landscape. Across micro- and macro-operations, their relational fields pulled together. The fields

are the feminist and the digital fields, each of which manifests quite different forms of change. Traversing the same platforms, filters and catalysers, the combined outcomes have enabled all kinds of practices and ways of thinking that materially register a temporal and spatial difference to previous modes and forms. From the mid-nineteenth century, printing presses (an analog technological platform) facilitated the spread of the suffrage word (as a schematic filter). At the end of the twentieth century, broader technological changes (military and functional catalysers) emerged as digital forms. The epistemic exchange of information concerning issues identified by feminists radically changed through the interaction of the human body (as catalyser, filter and technology) with digital platforms. Consider how reproductive technologies (information, biological control and facilitation) contribute to the decrease in the global birth rate (a quantitative transitional filter) of humans (as ecological platforms). It is in the manner of its configuration of informatics coding and the subsequent exchange and material production that a different or new form can be perceived to emerge.

Through digital platforms, an awareness of the breadth of feminist-specific positions have redirected and altered the generalizations that proclaim categories of race, gender, culture, feminism, and speciesism, into an awareness of the iniquitous states of gendered cultural and social hierarchies in operation. Gendered structures are enforced in law, education, the sciences and social value technology systems, algorithmically continuing the millennia of ingrained patriarchal and ethnically determining structures that control the direction of hierarchically distributed power relations between genders (see Mies, 1998). As all revolutionary histories demonstrate, political regulations are adept at abstracting processes and using any potentially reorienting paradigmatic possibilities against the revolutionary turn. Despite digital facilitation of knowledge of the multiple positive contributions made by feminist work to broader society, "feminism" per se is continuously reinscribed as a dogmatic product, at which point it loses its affective processual potential to enact a transformational shift; hence, change may take place in a negative space. What if we started to tabulate these activities; production, change, intervention? What if we registered each and every action, gesture, position of feminist work, feminist solidarity and even the feminist by design or by accident? Adding up all the feminist actions gives us a collective "feminicity"; a state without territorially policed borders, which could produce liveable structures that form and distribute equitable governance, education, health, and sustainability of the environment and its healthfulness; a life of wellbeing for all that want to live, contribute and die within it. The dream of the feminist project is to enable such a state to become a condition for all places. The deactivation of military activities in all spheres of life and the deactivation of masculinist-only genealogies of cultures are the conditional properties of this state. But – how to articulate, and enable?

Predication

For feminists, an important distinction is sometimes overlooked when naming something as gendered. Describing a status or position is different to the process that we recognize as *predication*, whereby the *activity* of being something is the focus. Explanations of meanings that are informed by already devised classifications work to organize visual and textual forms and ideas by imposing ordering-words and visual-cultural (and thus political) systems of images and texts. Predicated labels designate images – for example, "of" something (whether genders, technologies or nations) or "as" something (labels such as "the good girl", "lesbian vampire killer", "the monstrous-feminine", etc). There is no static position or essence of a gender, but there are these essential, shifting referent, "authorial" names (Scott, 2011, p. 11; DeKoven, 2001, p. 3; Kurikka, 2013) in a "process of making a means visible as such" (Kurikka, 2013, p. 126). Although social media may code the possibility of what looks like an individuating spatial site for recording action, the digital platform can only register a universalising algorithm.

Naming is where a state of being is prescribed as an ontology of relational terms that say more about the ontology of the organising framework of the descriptor than about the ontology of the image itself. This is the problematic of hylomorphism that Deleuze and Guattari (1987) displace, when they critique the schematizations of difference as representational repetition and instead advocate focusing on the geopolitics of organisms-in-the-worlds; articulating the systems creating ontologies, rather than imagining that individual subjects hold any self-determination that can be precisely labelled. However, as we learn from the work of feminist new materialist theorists (Haraway, 1997; Grosz, 2005, Braidotti, 2006; Coole and Frost, 2010; Van Der Tuin, 2014), to identify or name a relationality is simply not enough in terms of the *adoption, implementation, and practice* of better conditions for the lived experiences of diverse subjects and communities in existence today. The mode of activities needs to be better understood in terms of its method of enabling materialist informatics (Colman, 2014). Actions and interventions of feminicity are not only the political manifestations of what Bonnie Honig in her book *Emergency Politics* (2009, p. 25) points to as Western philosophical thinking about divergent "material conditions" for living; they also record, as Wajcman describes, the details about "real women's experience of structural domination" (2004, p. 99). However, in the vernacular political realm, these conditions of are not detailed in terms of the continuing gender inequities in institutional behaviour concerning gender, even as general cultural awareness of gender rights have changed in some parts of the world, and even if – as Nancy Fraser (2013, p. 212ff) broadly argues – this shift toward a cultural evenness in the treatment of genders is, in fact, part of the mechanism of state-organised capitalism's market desires. The use of women's labour in certain gendered roles remains tethered, with the

"dream of women's emancipation harnessed to the engine of capital accumulation" (Fraser, 2013, p. 240). The terms of making the "means visible" require a number of stages for feminicity to be identifiable: identification of the filter, the method of naming, the addressing of the platform through which a technological condition is enabled and enables production and the addressing of the processual components of the situation and, finally, any catalytic elements (situation, duration) contributing to the changes underway.

That gender power is a medium of exchange is a well-documented and dominant image of our contemporary society; as Fraser identifies it, it is the "power of male domination" (Fraser, 2013, p. 37). In addressing the exchange power of the image (as an aggregated force or an affective marker of the gender factors of societies), I am drawing attention to the informatics of the image as a material thing. In digital cultures, the image takes on and produces a different materiality to that conceived by biological or analog technology (cf. Ernst, 2012; Bühlmann, 2014). Here we could speak of the terms that theorists employ as markers to try to capture this materiality through mediation, even in a non-capitalist register, namely, *a thousand tiny sexes, jouissance, desire, plasticity.* Are these gendered states? Let us call them vectors of feminicity for now, or images of change.

With the image, the predicate state is framed as subjectivity in activity, providing an image of something framed and directed by its medium platform. The image is either held, expanded or moved and is in interactivity with other images, productive of a predicated stated of being, which may be dynamic or in stasis, contingent upon other factors such as the power or energy structures enabling or controlling it, whether narrative, genre or the political condition of the image. In description, the image may be "free" or "enslaved", it may be "sexualized" or "neutered", it may be "real" or it may be "fiction". In application, predicate states can ascribe gendered aspects – Iris Marion Young's famous essay, 'Throwing Like a Girl' (1980), offers one critique of the predicate state of gendered activity. As we know from the work of theorists including Braidotti (2006) and Butler (1991), *learning how to perform* the predication that specific gender roles require is a modality that ensures that subjectivity is given value through the pathways chosen (identification with consumerist pleasures, for example). Let me turn, for the sake of brevity, to just one of the markers of feminicity, that of Catherine Malabou's work on "plasticity".

In the opening pages of *Changing Difference* (2011), Malabou begins by defining "the meaning of the 'feminine'", noting as follows:

> Woman as a predicate is no longer an obvious given, if in fact it ever was. So if the feminine has a "meaning", it is in as much as the permission to question the identity of woman follows from the deconstruction and displacement of this identity. (Malabou, 2011, p. 6)

Malabou here points to the determination of a "feminine" through one of the aspects that feminism has enabled, namely "the permission to question". In the activity of questioning, Malabou identifies the infelicitous reinscription of the binary of a feminine position through its naming. However, in this predicated action of questioning, a feminicity is also enacted, read as positive movement of the natural entropic change of the walls of the masculinist hierarchy, so that little by little, these walls are eroded, becoming something else

In the concluding chapter of *Changing Difference*, Malabou addresses the notion of what she calls 'Women's Possibility' (Malabou, 2011, p. 90-141). She raises the spectre of an individual in the philosophy classroom, where, gendered and identifying as female, she finds herself in an affective physiological and mental state of female-gendered timidity and of female-gendered hesitation (Malabou, 2011, p. 113). Reflecting, Malabou concludes that even after deconstruction of that gendered state, the gleaning of the knowledge of how to perform (in Butler's terms) the act of being not-timid is about being worthy of her place of thinking "with them" (Malabou, 2011, p. 122). But instead of defining woman as this de Beauvoirian (Simone de Beauvoir) or Irigararian (Luce Irigaray) not-one negative – or as Emmanuel Levinas puts it, "woman as pure disposable matter" (Levinas, 1961, cited in Malabou, 2011, p. 130) – Malabou argues that her position, as a woman philosopher in 2009 (her time of writing), is, in fact, impossible without "doing violence" upon its structures and upon herself (Malabou, 2011, pp. 139-41). The argument she makes is to consider how to think of woman's possibility in the face of philosophy's impossibility – a possible way "to imagine the possibility of woman starting from the structural impossibility [that woman] experiences of not being violated, in herself and outside, everywhere" (Malabou, 2011, p. 140).

Malabou asks us to rethink gender at the level of the body in the terms of an "original biological malleability, a first transformability" (Malabou, 2011, p. 138). She heeds us to rethink our prejudices against the essentialist positions that second-wave feminists critiqued, citing the example of Beatriz Preciado's book *Testo Junkie* (2009), a docu-fictive account of experimentation upon the body with hormones injection. For those bodies who have ever ingested chemicals, steroids or hormones of any kind for whatever purpose (birth control, height control, form control), the premise of Preciado's story is nothing new, but what Malabou's use of this story does is add to her own account of what the figure of woman travelling through philosophical and cultural discourses can do. Instead of describing woman as a gendered subject in terms of being a mirror, parody, mimetic function or "replica" (Malabou, 2011, p. 110), the intervention in the construction of gender forms, as Malabou reminds us, cannot just be a deconstructive move that, in itself, performs "mimicry" (Malabou, 2011, p. 108) of form, as if expression of a simulacrum would provide anything useful to say about the condition that a person, gendered by their political identity, culture or society, finds herself in, unable to speak and timid. Malabou proposes that we think the concept of *plasticity*, which, despite the position that her mentor

Derrida accorded *plasticity* (as an explosive essence, thus halting the kinetic power of the hypothesis), refutes any fixed notion of "gender" (Malabou, 2011, p.120). As such, Malabou stages a predication of feminicity and refuses to remove herself from the arena; but she also *demands* acknowledgment for the very serious nature of her proposition for the discipline of philosophy – a masculinist discipline that is in error in its thinking, that has subjected itself to violence through its own structural refusal to think through the platforms, or bodies, that enable change in the world by their various catalytic encounters or through plugins such as extra information that an organism such as the body must adapt, reject, mutate or transform.

Malabou's position is that the body is a biological and physiological entity, subject to mutation and transformation through socio-biological (cultural, physical, chemical, pharmaceutical, cerebral) processes wrought by experience. Referring to Heidegger's notion of "essence", Malabou argues that 'in the end essence does not say presence; it says entry into presence, in other words, an originary movement that, again, is the movement of change or exchange" (Malabou, 2011, p. 136).[1] This opens up the possibility (without offering any guarantees) that genders/woman will perform as plastic exploding inevitable. Experience is a temporal marker of the technological conditions of gender's ability to perform itself – appropriately, a situation that Malabou rejects in her call for a reconsideration of the material details of a body's situated being-in-transformation. This is not, I would argue, an immaterial matter, but is a coming into transformation; a dynamic point of feminicity. Becoming is exchanged for a situated, materialized, plastique body. This body is transforming, but the changes are facilitated, speeded up and slowed through technology; rendered through coded languages.

What Malabou does not give us in this account of the condition of an entity's temporality is a sense of its form. What does this metamorphosis look like? How will I understand it when I see it? Or am I just to think it, imagine, write or sing about it? When I see an image of a child soldier, gender performing as a violent masculinist subject, brandishing weaponry and enacting an enforced performance of militaristic aggression I accept that his cognitive, intellectual and physical body has been transformed. But – into what? Taking Malabou's account of a notion of gender, I want to suggest that the appraisal of a gendered body as a body in the world positions this body as a technology. As a platform that is capable of mediation, it is a medium and a media. It is capable of ingesting different substances for energy, pleasure or death and of transforming its material form – transforming its "brain" (in Malabou's language). It is capable of cognitive and physical mutation. It is capable of metamorphosis. But what does it imagine?

New materialist images of kinetic matter

If we chart the discursive matter of the perception of images we find the attention of feminicity shifts, as one might expect, as language usage shifts and mutates, when not isolated by hermeneutic territorial thinking. Haraway, as just one example, points out in multiple places in her work the problems with focusing on just naming difference, e.g., naming gender or naming the differences between machine and human (Nakamura, 2003; Haraway, 1997; 1991. See also self-reflexive comments in Terry and Calvert, 1997 and in Wajcman, 2004).

One of the key realms for feminicity's attention to the political power of informatics is as discursively coded matter – the political ramifications of the material image (for example, the destroyed bodies of children and, in particular, pregnant and birthing women in distress in the globally circulated digital images from the 2014 Gaza war). This discursive matter itself is subject to the historicity of styles of expression. For example, Katherine Hayles, in 1993, addressed the "kinaesthetic" as well as the "conceptual" dimensions of what she refers to as "the text" (Hayles, 1993, p. 26). By the end of the 1990s, Hayles was more attentive to the "visualization routines that render [her computer programmes] as pixilated images of embodied creatures" (Hayles, 1999/2005, p. 194). The attention to the text, word or code as image, or as imaging, was subject to a range of emotive and affectively subjective descriptions in its first incarnations of coding, with numerous linguistic games played on the physicality of the binary code names of bits, bytes, and words. Gendering and deconstructive gendering activities with this form of textual abstract attention are analysed through the methodology of the new materialist feminists, who question the instrumentality of the platforms, as much as they are attuned by and for them (Adam, 1998; Plant, 1998; Bassett, 2013). Hayles' attention to the materiality of the informatics at her fingertips – and its resultant mutation in modes of perception and visualization of data – leads her to speculate not on the phenomenology of "a subjectivity", but begins to question the notion of individuation through the mediation of the digital. Questioning the instrumentality of the digital and examining the notion of where thought resides, Hayles argues that we should think of cognition as not being located simply in either the human subject – a person as a powerful cognitive processer – in a machine, ie, the computer as a powerful cognitizer, but with cognition of something resting within the system as a whole (Hayles, 2012, p. 92).

What is implicit when we describe images with words are the processes of information exchange at work in the manifested image. These processes are the data systems that don't so much perform as stage the platform, algorithmically, these are the filters and the

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1. Space permitting, we could here address the work of biologist Lynn Margulis in terms of the hypothesis of symbiogenesis and her endosymbiotic theory (Margulis and Sagan, 2003)

catalysts of energy materialized into codes written according to perceptual schemas, which are the directors of "points of view"; positionality, laws, ideas (De Lauretis, 1987; Hayles, 1993; 1999; Haraway, 1991; Fuller, 2005; Terry and Calvert, 1997; Barad, 2007). In writing these codes, exchange values often precede the systems of measurement to be set up, determining what kinds of energies are to be measured as image functions: inequalities, surpluses, desires, affects, etc. Under the practice of some authors, materials are not just semiotic indices of prefigured forms but are recorded as measurements of energy exchanges. Coded languages can record within systems, but those systems may be hylomorphic or may attempt to produce new morphogenetic potential of the matter as imaged/materialized – where the discursive matter binds the perception of the informatic exchange of materials.

In other words, in responding to images of the world, the written articulation of the image must choose the ways in which it accounts for the imaging – the image in and of the world and its modes of conceptualization. Information exchange is energy exchange and this process is manifested in part through the imagery that the media circulate as images-of-the-world. Exchanges of information take place through the coded movements of physical, biological and digital data, where energy transformed into (sound+) images are schematized according to the informatics logics directed by contemporary technologies of perception. Variously described, the images-of-the-world are thus catalytic vectors and affects of micro- and macro-political differences that perpetuate, engender, collate and enflame difference.

Observations to be noted as vectorial points for feminicity

Malabou observes: "Everything starts with metamorphosis" (Malabou, 2011, p. 139). For Barad, Malabou's "starting point" could be the vector of "intra-action" (Barad, 2007). For Dagmar Lorenz-Meyer, a process of reassembling the steps of change is required. Cautioning that the measurement process involves a human-technology assemblage that remains subject to gender-specific performativity, Lorenz-Meyer advocates the use of a three-stage model where the "gendering apparatuses of bodily production" can be turned toward a productive form of the "reassembling of gender" (Lorenz-Meyer, 2014, p. 93). For Bühlmann (2014), the physics of the digital must be accounted for as "mediagenic phenomena" which "are continuously being engendered from within the order of operativity within which we choose to address problems", in a space of "encryption".

We can use the discursive matter of feminicity to articulate the living capital body – as image and as a materialized informatics – involving identification of the predication of feminicity and, indeed, of masculinity, unicity and other technicities. When we join the biopolitical

organization of gender with descriptions of epistemological forms and the practices of materialist informatics by feminist thinkers, we find the critiques of the problematics of gendered social conditions concerning reproductive conditions, sexuality and racialized differences are identified, thereby enabling analysis, paradigmatic overviews and further relationalities to be drawn. However, as we have discussed, images-of-the-world are material things – artifacts of a specific time and locationary political situation – and thus are subject to the physical laws that govern matter in the universe, at least in terms of how we are able to articulate that matter at this particular historical time. Images are evidence of a particular condition of matter, testimonials to their material 'onto-epistemological level,' as van der Tuin argues (2014, p. 45).

Some conclusions: new materialist feminicity I platforms, filters, catalysers

Looking at image cultures presents us with what is often characterized in terms of aesthetics: however, I feel a more robust set of terms is required to address the current realm of forms and practices of feminist, materialist informatics that focuses on the information of gendered images in a time of ethnic cleansing, of unethical economic rationalization that prevents the flow of humans from seeking basic living resources around the globe, of activities of militarism – all enacting the aesthetic desires of the prevailing system of governance.

In new materialist considerations of the image as a mattered aesthetic intra-active affective measure, the reflex of rationality that we can, with historical hindsight, recognize as fully formed naturalist philosophies of a cultured state (ie, the fascist trajectory) is something to be identified and rallied against. This is the political state bringing identity politics into play as a structural device of its very own sovereignty and constitutive of generic models of identity and life forms, and having – as thinkers such as Guattari and Braidotti have worked extensively to point out – extremely damaging effects on existential and practical forms of living and life. Furthermore, thinking about the laws that describe negentropic and entropic exchanges of energy – taken here as exchanges of information – the aesthetic reflex of an image form will inevitably mutate into some other materialist informatics and indeed some other matter.

So in this time of informatics, how do we apply our thinking and advise political policy makers on the problems of difference that are maintained by the material infrastructures that govern the world and control the position and use of things in the world?

The philosophies of technology – the digital mode I am thinking with here – are interested in the filters afforded by the body that may be addressed as a collective whole, as a singular consciousness, as abstracted and non-human or as an informatics body itself. The network [to use a mix of Hayles and Guattari's language] is the co-

joining of multiple non-conscious cognitive machines that are involved in mass-communication information-producing systems that feed and direct conscious cognate machines and beings.

Identified at junctures when human actions affect a change in the ways in which the matter of the world is configured, an informatics of matter can always be a political measure. Given this measurability through its variables, a question arises concerning the *conditions of the ontological production of the imaged, gendered body*: how does the imaged mediation of the biopolitical body contribute to a perspective of life?

If we think about the co-constitutive nature of image information, it is a form of non-individuated communication, a generative informatic that works by asymmetrical epistemic platforms, filters and catalysers. Yet the image, even in its manipulated, used, mutilated and dead state, is seen to be creative of an ontology and not just regarded as a "narratology of things" (Gratton, 2014, p. 125). As an image among other images it is made and harvested by the non-conscious cognitive machine to present as a critical mass, for differing political ends – sometimes as protest, sometimes as abstraction and sometimes as coercion by the capitalist system that produced it.[2] This aspect of the image requires further critique.

Variously described, the images-of-the-world are materialized vectors and affects of micro and macropolitical differences, perpetuating, engendering, collating and enflaming difference. The terms of deconstruction and displacement of identity – as described by Malabou – are feminist strategies that I would include in the register of feminicity, as a conceptual and practised animation of feminist demands for equitable image conditions by articulating, expressing, defining and responding to an "image of gendered being". Instances of feminicity in the media, on screens and in accounts of image practices present or articulate where ontological change has been registered, leading to a cognizance of change in the on-screen configuration of bodies, but also contributing to the historicity of the interventionist moment through the values/aesthetics/sensibilities of the proliferation of the image.

One way to define current feminist new materialist generational work is the desire to be mindful (and careful) not to name things by the outcomes of their relationships before we understand the *how* of the material basis of things. This involves a testing and critical approach to not just materials but also to epistemic validity, ie, classification of materials, material concepts and material images for their validity at any particular time and place (gold, titanium, copper). As Fraser pointed out, "feminist theorists cannot avoid the question of a capitalist society" (Fraser, 2013, p. 227).

Knowledge does not hold some type of solution to present problems "in the future" and there is no utopic place where the human race will rest. Understanding the micro-matter of materials first enables connections and then recognizes plugins to be made. For new materialists, this is not just writing or performing the theoretical or abstract definition of relationalities. Rather, this is seeking the points where we can figure out the micro-details in the micro-data that has filtered through various platforms in order to produce, generate, join and integrate into something different, something positive for feminist bodies.

The insistence on a move from the feminist to a demand for recognition of the conglomerate states of feminicity, by materialist evidentiary proof and by materialist speculative ontological form (as we see in the works of Bühlmann, 2014; Malabou, 2011; Torlasco, 2013) and the application of new feminist materialist methods across a range of disciplinary fields (Barad, 2007; Van Der Tuin, 2014; Lorenz-Meyer, 2014; Barrett and Bolt, 2014) works to mediatize the affectivity of feminist political demands for societies. Achieving shifts in cultural determinations enables the dissipation of possible and rigid states where change is slow or stalled. Such mediatization is generated through all types of feminist platforms that are catalogued by feminicity's charting of the movements of territorialities of bodies, sexualities and intellectual and aesthetic pursuits. Where practices of feminicity have been mediatized, interaction with rigid social and historical codings takes place, speeding up that process of change.

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2. For example, the FEMEN women discuss the Stockholm syndrome. See the film by Kitty Green, *Ukraine is not a Brothel* (2013) on Victor Svyatski, Femen and "activism."

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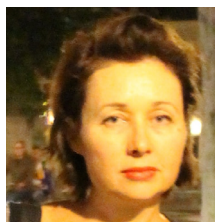VNSMatrix (1991). "cyberfeminist manifesto for the 21st century". [Accessed: 01/12/14]. <http://www.obn.org/reading_room/manifestos/html/cyberfeminist.html>

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