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SUBVERSIVE FLORI.CULTURES. Ecological *manoeuvres* from the re-existing South

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Translated by George Hutton

Abstract: The article deals with the need to approach a decolonial critique of the notion of nature, both in its theoretical and methodological dimension, since it has been clearly reified by Western scientific knowledge to sustain inequalities of power or the essentialisation of cultural and subjective identity, whose consequences have been and are the dehumanisation and the production of non-existence in multiple aspects that sustain life. At the same time it has been institutionalised through different mechanisms, in order to depoliticise the challenges of colonial difference and alterity. Based on the concepts of the "epistemology of the South" by Boaventura de Sousa Santos, and "manoeuvre" by Chela Sandoval, we propose the work *Flori.cultura subversiva*, from the Spanish collective O.R.G.I.A, as a methodology of re-existence built from reciprocal recognition.

Keywords: nature-dehumanisation, ecological manoeuvres, re-existence, epistemology of the South, countervisuality.

Bienvenu à le grand spectacle de la nature! [1]

The complex relations between nature and culture constitute a zone of conflict in which the battles of politics and technologies of gender and sexuality, identity and knowledge, as well as the mere possibility of the existence of alternative cultural policies, of divergence and dissent. The appropriation of the concept of nature by modern Western knowledge, deproblematising it and depoliticising it in order to overcome it in a reductionist scientific sense, has concluded by reifying the binary opposition between nature and culture. The consequence is the creation of a link between nature and dehumanisation that maintains its validity through both the "symbolic basurization" [2] (Silva, 2009, p. 18), and the concrete basurization of those who are seen as inferior, unnatural and even animals, turned into a waste product of society. It is a way of visualising the other as a surplus element of the symbolic system.

This monocultural logic (Santos, 2006) of the modern dichotomous paradigm abounds in the conception of nature as an essential principle, "an independent field of intrinsic value, truth or authenticity" (Soper, 1996: 22), while it is conserved in favour of colonial difference along with other natures: natures of the *South*, women's bodies, sexual dissenters, non-white people, among others. All of them are located in the exteriority of the eurocentric heteropatriarchal world.

In accordance with the concept of the coloniality of seeing, by Joaquín Barriendos (2008, 2011), this gaze was initiated, organised and transferred, through a series of processes and mechanisms that, from the fifteenth century onwards, disseminated the the visual rhetoric of American nature. The initial means for this were the story, the chronicles and the diaries of the first soldiers, explorers and missionaries. Cartography and engraving were also important in this regard (Barriendos, 2008, 2011). Afterwards, the literature of travel and exploration (Pratt, 1992), which would later be joined by landscape painting, photography and cinema, which would add a degree of exhibitionism and sensationalism to the scientific discourses on otherness.

In the present case, we will focus our attention on the links that natural history and the techno-scientific gaze made with the history of art and artistic practice from the eighteenth century, influencing each other to create a form of global Eurocentric consciousness, useful for the construction of Europe's economic and geo-body-political power. A waste of experience (Santos, 2006) that nullified the multiplicity of cognitive possibilities, reducing the description of the world to the tyranny of vision as implanted by natural history (Foucault 1966), for empirical observation had to be satisfied with seeing, but also in a very limited way.

As part of this operation, representations of *otherness* encompassed tropes such as infantilisation and bestialisation (Césaire, 1972 [1955], Fanon, 1963 [1961], Shohat & Stam, 1994) as well as gender metaphors that would continue to use nature as an excuse to undermine the other (Espinosa, 2009, Lugones, 2010, McClintock, 1995). Such is the case of tropicality, which would become especially linked with Latin America and to Latin American women, one of the most persistent and durable tropes: in the first instance, a paradisiacal, exuberant and virginal chimera, willing to be penetrated; and ultimately, the land of danger, degenerate, wild and libidinous.

In this sense, the feminisation of nature, the naturalisation of women and the anti-naturalisation of sexual dissidents, as a naturalist discourse that legitimises the practices of domination and exploitation, continues to be recurrent within the normalisation of prejudices thereof. It presents as normal those perpetual servitudes, humiliations and marginalisations, as well as the devaluation of their cultural practices and knowledge. In fact, the images generated, both rooted in the discourse of art, and from Western science, have not only served to establish some aesthetic canons as far as beauty is concerned, but their universalisation (as something already given, even beyond our cosmovision), has contributed to represent, sustain inequalities and essentialise other cultural identities. It is a visual violence that does not only happen in the past as a historical fact, but is reproduced continuously in the present. This leads us to think that the notion of the natural has been fundamental in the coloniality of seeing, since it is intimately linked to modes of knowing, producing knowledge, producing visions, images and patterns of images, symbols and models of significance.

This is not simply due to the fact that they make particular visual qualities seem natural due to their being legitimised by racial, patriarchal and capitalist discourse, the basis of the complexes of hegemonic visuality (Mirzoeff, 2011), but these qualities have rather led to the construction of a hierarchial place of existence that determines what exists and what does not exist or is not worthy of existence, depending on whether it is accepted as human or not, according to its degree of nature (Césaire, 1972 [1955]; Fanon, 1963 [1961]; Santos, 2006). In this way, the colonial difference is fundamentally an incarnate visual difference, which is epistemic and ontological, and which alludes to the subjects, peoples, knowledge and territories as inferiorised by the colonial gaze. [3]

According to this logic, the Art and Aesthetics produced within academia would revalidate this hegemony as legitimate spaces for the production of knowledge, because in the universities there is also a distancing from the realities of the people and their social and cultural existence (Castro-Gomez, 2010 [2005]; Escobar, 2002; Lander, 2000; Santos 2007; Walsh, 2003). In addition, in its very vocation to "modernise", it promotes discipline and utilitarianism in the face of the needs and interests of the market, favouring old and renewed forms of dehumanisation and dehumanity.

From these critical questions, the production of knowledge appears to us as a space of conflict that raises the initial questions: can we continue to think about the production of knowledge, in particular aesthetics and artistic practice, in the same way and with the same methods and job positions?

This initial questioning provokes the need and the interest to consider (ourselves) in/with other methodologies, epistemologies and practices of emerging actors that are adapted to the current realities. An interest that involves extending the History of Art and Aesthetics, opening them to the existence of the people, and bringing to their core *other* social and cultural experiences.

In this context, the concept of "epistemology of the South" [4] , by the Portuguese sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2009), acquires meaning in a real and profound way, since it alludes to knowledge that comes from the practices of those subjects, groups, communities, peoples or cultures who have systematically endured the oppression and discrimination caused by capitalism, colonialism and the patriarchy in which both phenomena have been sustained.

Even if these do not emerge nor insurge from colonial subalternity alone, they do so, in the same way, from the incorporation of this subalternatity into the hegemonic perspective. This reminds us that coloniality also acted, and still acts, facing inward. In fact, non-normative identities continue to be the object of conflict and discrimination in our societies, since the colonial framework transcends our everyday experience. To think that we are exempt from coloniality would be unhelpful and a fundamental mistake. Thus, we have to start by considering the forms of coloniality that cross our body, our gaze, our existence, given that presuming the problem does not directly concern us would be an incomplete endeavour.

For this reason, we stitch together codes, we connect the concept of *manoeuvre*, by Chela Sandoval (as a type of revolutionary practice, of a *movement* towards the decolonisation of being) (2000, p.140), with the ecology of knowledge, by Santos (2006), (which emphasises the interaction/translation of practices and knowledge), with the aim of highlighting the view of the Eurocentric, colonial and patriarchal hegemonic view, and its devices for the production of epistemic racism by means of visuality and cognitive universalism, at the same time as we propose other non-hegemonic, decolonial-feminist-queer visualities.

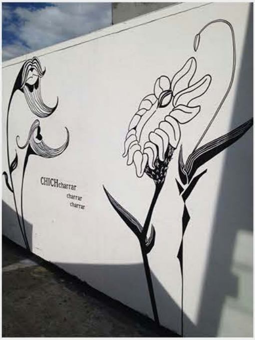
As we will see in the following text, we formulated *Flori.cultura subversiva* ("Subversive Flori.culture", 2007) , from the Spanish collective O.R.G.I.A [5] , as an ecological *manoeuvre* [6] . A metaphor that works as a methodological strategy and particularly contingent in order to allude to those artistic and/or cultural practices that are able to transform and mitigate the persistence of the coloniality of nature, both in its theoretical and practical dimension, from a redistribution of the geo-body-politics of knowledge. These are practices of re-existence [7] , that is, of political imaginations exercised or inspired by the daily experience of those who suffer the effects of humiliation, inequality, injustice and unworthiness, but which, at the same time, have an imaginative potential for reinvention, to create alternative solutions or adapt to new circumstances, with which to develop the fabric of life and prevent it from disappearing.

Flori.cultura subversiva *versus* botanic cunning

Flori.cultura subversiva is conceived by its authors as a "complex and mutant" project, which has been continually reproduced since the year 2007 through different forms, such as installation and sound-based happenings (2007), conference-performance (2008-2009), installation (2010), or the combination of sound installation and muralism (2013) [8] . A complexity that is understood, in equal measure, via multidimensional analysis and criticism.

O.R.G.I.A, *Flori.cultura subversiva*, 2008-2009
Lecture-performance. Menéndez y Pelayo International University.

0:00 / 0:01



O.R.G.I.A, *Flori.cultura Subversiva*, 2013.
Sound installation and muralism. CCEMx, México D.F.

It is precisely this complex and mutating character that is particularly valuable to our argument, because together with its various modes of creative re-production, it offers us one of the radical possibilities of the epistemology of the *South*: far from a rationalistic universalism or a relativist favouritism, it defends the differences of subjectivity, the importance of the different lived experiences of oppression that make up "fluctuating, unstable and illegitimate identities" (O.R.G.I.A, 2008). This means understanding knowledge as a situated action (Haraway, 1988) [9] , that is, as the result of a corporeal and historical context in which knowledge and practices are joined with artefacts, places and traditions, which constitute a way of life. Therefore, these positions and interactions would be in constant transformation.

Following these approaches, *Flori.cultura subversiva* begins by detaching itself from the dichotomous vision of modernity, hierarchical and exclusive as it is, as well as the representations that reiterate and expand it. To this end, it stands in the face of universalisms related to art, science and culture, so that it serves to unveil and question the link between dehumanisation and certain iconographic disciplines around the idea of nature. Thus, in the face of the techno-scientific view, which came to determine all representations of the natural from the eighteenth century, O.R.G.I.A proposes "visual disobedience" (Cornejo, quoted by Godoy-Anativia, 2014) [10] as a political attitude and a methodology that tries to move away from the aforementioned logic; but at the same time it entails having available those narratives that have been and are still excluded from the Western canon, feminist, queer and decolonial narratives, with which to counter-visualise the normative story of natural history and its botanical astuteness.

These tricks consisted of rearranging, in visual terms, all objects/subjects of the world into abstract categories, beginning with formal similarities based on a conventional interpretation of sexual organs. The abilities of the eighteenth-century European naturalists in classifying nature by giving names to plants, animals, and human beings -in short, their techniques of representation- became instruments of appropriation on many different levels. In fact, the economic, cultural and ecological difference to indigenous, peasant and ethnic knowledge would lose importance, being ignored and suppressed due to their being considered pre-scientific.

It follows that knowledge, colonisation, appropriation and power are key concepts to understand the role of the study of nature in the European Enlightenment.
With this perspective in mind, the strategy followed by O.R.G.I.A becomes radical for our argument, by reappropriating the modes of representation of natural history, both linguistically and visually, by means of the following *manoeuvres*.

The first one consisted of parodying the dominant norms of gender and sexuality in the public space, through a conjunction of installation and sound happening. This included a series of illustrations of flowers made by them, nailed to the ground with stakes in the garden of the Ortega y Gasset Foundation (Madrid), among which several loudspeakers had been placed. Through these loudspeakers, the nocturnal walker could hear the sounds that the members of the collective were making from the balcony of the foundation, making use of certain rhetorical figures of language, such as alliteration or onomatopoeia. Through this mixture of aesthetic experience and ritual act, they question the idea of representation as proposed by the principles of the Enlightenment, which imposed an all-encompassing epistemological, ethical and aesthetic model.

To do this, they outline a particular discourse around the idea of garden, traditionally understood in the western sphere as an idyllic frame of heteronormative courtly love. In fact, what is considered as the first theoretical text on gardens, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, by Francesco Colonna (ca. 1499), tells the story of Polifilio, who seeks a tryst with the young Polia, who in turn symbolises ancient wisdom. In the prologue to its Spanish edition, Pilar Pedraza explains that it is "a combination of allegorical poem of medieval origin and wide-ranging humanistic encyclopedia, since it contains an enormous amalgam of archaeological, epigraphic, architectural, liturgical, gemological and even culinary knowledge"(Pedraza, 1999, p.23).

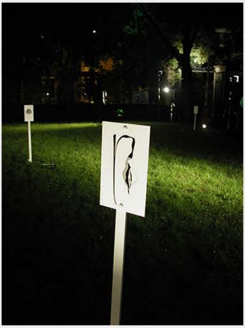
O.R.G.I.A, *Flori.cultura Subversiva*, 2007.
Sound happening, Ortega y Gasset Foundation, Madrid.

0:00 / 0:23

The methodological and political importance that this space would later acquire in the Enlightenment is not due to the desire for knowledge, but rather to a "new way of tying things together with the gaze and with discourse" (Foucault, 1966, p. 132). As Foucault explains, the appearance of botanical gardens and zoological collections did not respond to the birth of a new curiosity about exotic plants or animals, but instead to the desire to obtain a space in which they could become normative by means of description. If in the Renaissance they were exhibited as a spectacle at festivals, jousts and combats, as a carousel of the specimen, the cabinets of natural history and gardens do so by "framing" (Foucault 1966: 132). The garden as a sequence of ordered engravings had the capacity to transfigure, to turn the vast into something tangible, and finally to make the strange become familiar. A narrative continuum, like a dictionary and natural grammar.

It is precisely this quality that opens the possibility in *Flori.cultura* of supplementing an interminable vocabulary, which can subvert old meanings and reinvent other syntaxes with which to name new subjectivities.

From here, O.R.G.I.A transforms the garden as a laboratory, a permanent, neutral, cold space, with suitable methodologies and stable protocols, in search of fixed laws and the controlling of every possible eventuality, in the garden as a place of action, incarnate, where de-mechanisation and sense-based knowledge operate. A dynamic space built through transitory actions and subjectivities, which generate other realities. This appropriation is carried out with a diverse range of plurisexual botanical specimens and fictional, extra-scientific, zoomorphic sounds that emulate common names and appeal to closeness, to the familiarity of an audience that participates and interacts with all of them, breaking with the epistemological objectivity that enforces a distancing from the world, in order to get to know it with certainty. They turn it into a political artifact which, through a new visual narrative of subversive, dissident sexualities, denaturalises the privileged place of heterosexuality and counter-visualises heteronormative images that construct an excluding significance from bodies. In this way, they make the *South* "appear" as an enactive epistemology that emphasises performative and transformational processes, creating conditions for "the development of the possibility of dialogic scenarios in which a fractured enunciation is acted out from the subaltern perspective as a response to a hegemonic discourse" (Mignolo, 2000, p. xxvi), defying all the essentialisms of visuality.



O.R.G.I.A, *Flori.cultura Subversiva*, 2007.
Sound happening. Ortega y Gasset Foundation, Madrid.

0:00 / 0:12

The next *manoeuvre* of our narrators is to reappropriate the image of the "beast-woman", simultaneously dehumanised and animalised, as with parrot, vixen, crow or harpy (degrading terms used to identify women metaphorically with animals, which take on a particular negative characteristic that usually focuses on the woman's physical defects, mental capacity or behaviour – i.e. stupidity, dirtiness, aggression, greed, sexuality, etc.), in order to turn her into an icon that is too noisy, transgressive and unsettling for the patriarchy, which spreads throughout the performative character of language.

This *manoeuvre* abounds in an intersectional analysis of the power relations produced in the crossover of oppressions, such as gender, race, sexuality, class, among others. In this regard, it should be noted that gender technologies operate under the same logic in the reproduction of racist, sexual and colonial discourses, due to the ability of certain expressions to become actions and to transform reality or the surroundings.

Such is the case of bestialisation, a trope that, as María Lugones suggests, is linked to racial discrimination. Racism, she argues, is based on the modern dichotomy between the human and the non-human, which is sometimes expressed as "not completely human", and in the reducing of people to animals, and therefore, to instruments belonging to humans [11]. In addition, racialisation has a dual nature. On the one hand, there is the transformation of colonised subjects into animals, and on the other, the absolute devaluation of all knowledge, articulations, ritual knowledge, cosmologies and life practices (Abellón, 2014, p. 224).

In line with this argument, O.R.G.I.A collectively embodies a series of sounds using rhetorical forms such as onomatopoeia or alliteration, which repeat or combine several phonemes to achieve a noisy effect that materialises the animality with which Western modernity has deemed white and non-white women inferior. With this, they manage to turn sound into something political, resulting in other re-visions [12] [13]:

0:00 / 0:12

[mantis] **mantis**
yo soy autónoma tú eres autónoma ella es autónoma nosotras somos autónomas vosotras sois autónomas ellas son autónomas

[mantis] mantis
I'm autonomous you're autonomous she's autonomous we're autonomous you're all autonomous they're autonomous

0:00 / 0:00

[araña] **araña**
ellas crean redes, claro

[spider] spider
they weave their webs, well of course

0:00 / 0:11

[cucaracha] **cucaracha**
ella quiere batir un record
vive para batir un record
se entrena para batir un record
se esfuerza por batir un record
va a batir un record
ha batido un record

[cockroach] cockroach
she wants to break a record
she lives to break a record
she trains to break a record
she strives to break a record
she's going to break a record
she's broken a record

0:00 / 0:28

[la culebra] **culebras**
ellas mutan
Sssssssi mutan
Sssssssi mutan
Sssssssi mutan
Sssssssi mutan
Sssssssi mutan

[the serpent] serpents
they mutate
yessssssss they mutate
yessssssss they mutate
yessssssss they mutate

yessssssss they mutate
yessssssss they mutate

0:00 / 0:07

[pulga] **pulga**
entra al gimnasio y levanta ciento cincuenta kilos se seca el sudor y **se va**

[flea] *flea*
she goes to the gym and lifts a hundred and fifty kilos she dries her sweat and she leaves

0:00 / 0:06

[polilla] **polilla**
ella-tri-co-ta-y-co-me-la-na

[moth] *moth*
she knit-knit-knits-and-nibbles-on-wool

0:00 / 0:21

[hormiga] **hormiga**
trabaja trabaja trabaja trabaja trabaja trabaja trabaja **trabaja trabaja trabaja trabaja trabaja**
trabaja trabaja **trabaja trabaja trabaja trabaja trabaja trabaja trabaja** **trabaja**

[ant] *ant*
she works

0:00 / 0:22

[mariposa] **FLA-FLA**

FLA

FLA FLA

FLA

FLA

[butterfly] *FLAP-FLAP*

FLAP

FLAP FLAP

FLAP

FLAP

The sound production in *Flori.cultura* tries to look deeper into how the reproducibility of sonorities has been made as a tool for domination and control with a direct implication on the coloniality of the body. This places the sonorous as a place of struggles and resistances, closely linked with social and cultural practices, a circumstance that allows sound to be used in order to keep tracks on and question the established social order (Estévez, 2015 [2012]) [14] .

This *manoeuvre* acts, therefore, on different planes. On the one hand, through parody, they reproduce and discuss the colonial-patriarchal ideology that denies women the human condition, but they introduce a paradox by suggesting that, nevertheless, they can exercise their agency from this natural-animal place that would seem to be the denial of knowledge or intellectual ability. From a decolonial view of gender (Lugones, 2008), these sonorised zoonyms would be introduced into an ironic mimicry, a type of locution with which the artists reproduce or imitate aggression and hysterical, haunted or savage behaviour, usually associated with what oppresses them: a "natural" conduct of the feminine and racialised gender.

This is produced via a parodic mime, analogous to Judith Butler's "subversive citation of performative genre codes", which we will return to later. But also, it touches upon the "dissonant repetition" that Luce Irigaray puts forwards in *Speculum of the Other Woman*, in which she maintains that mimicry is an effective path "which means already to convert a form of subordination into an affirmation, and thus to thwart it" (Irigaray, 2007 [1974], 56).

In this sense, the dissonance as posed by *Flori.cultura subversiva* is a device that screeches, that creates distortions in the dominant codes of meaning with which to unveil, through an effect of playful repetition, what should remain veiled: the concealment of the feminine in language (Irigaray, 1985 [1974]). From an aesthetic point of view, this playful mimicry produces counter-visualisations to the hegemonic system, which invert the value between the copy and the original. The purpose, as this author explains, is to arrive at a "hysterical mime" that exceeds the mimesis imposed by phallogocentrism. This mimicry breaks the illusion of an equivalence between mimesis and truth, subverting the traditional form of representation of women (Irigaray, 1985 [1977]). Thus, sonorised zoonyms are a mirror that reflects or uncovers the very violence with which the patriarchy operates. A practice of the "as if" (Braidotti, 2011) committed to the repetition, difference and subversion of the dominant codes, which is dealt with in a playful, unstable and shifting way.

0:00 / 0:27

Simultaneously, in the context of political-cultural colonisation, they question the mechanism of representation of natural history that privileged looking, using the image as a guarantee of certainty, and therefore, the consideration of the other senses as an "epistemological obstacle" (Castro-Gómez, 2010 [2005]). This also happened in aesthetics, in an equally effective way, since it intervened disregarding those experiences and sensations that did not conform to the taste norms.

In this way, the sound landscapes produced by O.R.G.I.A lift the veil of empirical observation that imposes a distance from the world, to reconnect with the sounds and other delegitimised forms (smells, flavours, textures, colours, etc.) of getting to know the world. This statement reminds us once again of the possibility of *aesthesis*, sensation, the emotions derived from the senses, as a process of perception common to all living beings, which extracts from the residual place to which Western aesthetics had relegated movement, touch, smell or taste. At the same time, they represent a strategy of decolonisation of the gaze, in the sense to which S. Rivera Cusicanqui alludes:

> Visualisation refers to a form of memory that condenses other senses. However, the mediation of language and the overinterpretation of the data provided by the gaze causes the other senses, touch, smell, taste, movement, hearing, to be diminished or erased in the memory. The decolonisation of the gaze would consist of liberating the visualisation of the bonds of language, and of reactualising the memory of experience as an indissoluble whole, in which the bodily and mental senses merge (Rivera, 2015, p.22).

In another instance, this decolonial methodology is condensed into *Flori.cultura subversiva*, and it operates as an alternative epistemological device to representations of natural history based on descriptive knowledge. Recall that the technique of description makes us see via the word, even when the thing is present, because as in the case of botanical specimens, reference was made not only to the plant exhibited, but also to all those named in the same way and which were absent for the interlocutor. To this end, its function was eminently didactic, of demonstration, which is why the new descriptions realised by the European naturalists would have to be registered in order to structure all the human knowledge about the world (authorized knowledge, or rather, European).

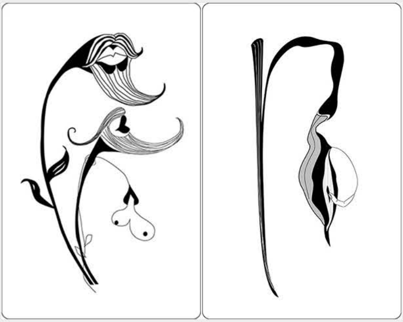
Thus the encyclopedia was invented, which, with an all-encompassing character and associated with a formal, ecumenical language, allowed the reader to traverse the whole of knowledge, in addition to compartmentalising it within a homogenous and simplifying system. This was another mechanism by which the new scientific knowledge about nature was legitimised, even translating popular or indigenous experience into an enlightened science.

In order to go deeper into this debate, O.R.G.I.A imitates the encyclopedic style by introducing a series of "bastard" concepts, to which it affords credibility. That is, their mimicry adopts new meanings to constantly redefine itself in each story. It is here that we return to Butler's theses about the mimesis of identification, for although we are obliged to cite existing norms in accordance with existing codes, there is the possibility of circumvention by using subversive citations (Butler, 1993): in the different ways of repeating the encyclopedic style there will be possibilities for transformation, escape and rupture. That is, if Linnaeus under*stands* plants ("herboriza"), O.R.G.I.A's *stand* on end ("herboeriza") [15] . "The ironic record," says Braidotti (2002), "is an orchestrated form of provocation and, as such, uncovers a kind of symbolic violence", which is clearly present in *Flori.cultura subversiva*.

> ***Herboriser***, v. neut. (Gramm. & Botan.) c'est parcourir les campagnes pour y reconnoître les plantes qu'on a étudiées dans l'école. M. Haller en Suisse, & M. de Jussieu à Paris, tous les deux grands botanistes, vont herboriser & sont suivis par une foule de jeunes étudians; ces courses utiles sont appellées des herborisations. On dit aussi de celui qui parcourt une contrée dans le dessein de recueillir les plantes qu'elle produit, qu'il herborise. Feu M. de Jussieu avoit herborisé en Espagne & en Portugal; M. de Tournefort avoit herborisé en Grece & en Egypte. (Diderot, D'Alambert, 1751-1765: 8 p. 149)
>
> ***Herboerizar*** (from lat. hĕrba and ericĭus) tr. 1 To make something stiff or rigid so that it stands on end, particularly one's own bodily grass, or that of others. 2 To erect a wall of follicles as an act of defence (O.R.G.I.A, 2007).

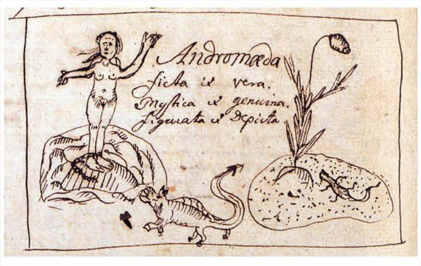
But, in addition to the practices of classifying, naming and defining natural objects, visual representation was radical in legitimising the new botanical knowledge. As we indicated above, in botanical drawings the selection of information was inevitable and deliberate, while requiring precision in the representation of nature that was not only based on detailed observations, but that required "an orderly vision, of codes of representation and observational standards"(Nieto, 2006 [2000], p. 117).

To subvert these codes and standards, O.R.G.I.A develops a joint botanical practice that will consist of a collection of illustrations of plurisexual flowers that intersect with the theatricalisation of the political space of the garden. The analysis and re-appropriation of technologies for the production of biodiscursive objects, produced as normalised species, serve to convert these objects of knowledge into agents of change. Each flower is a "political micro-passion" (Preciado, 2006) [16] . That is, micro-acts based on politics of experimentation and not of representation, which comes about through bodies, sex, and pleasure, and which, in this case, operate as visual devices through subtle post-pornographic codes which maintain that link between the genital and the cultural in order to play with double meanings.

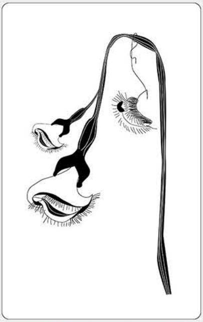


O.R.G.I.A, *Flori.cultura subversiva*, 2007.

Thus, if Carl Linnaeus personified the bog-rosemary as Andromeda, a symbol of virginity, humility and Western discretion, O.R.G.I.A uses a version of the lily – a flower which is assigned similar characteristics - to attach new meanings to it. These meanings are related to the vindicating of those alternative sexual practices that challenge dominant heterosexual normativity, and they take sides by articulating intersectional, dissident, queer sexualities.


Andromæda
ficta & vera.
Mystica & genuina.
Figurata & Depicta.

Drawing of the plant "bog-rosemary" in one of Linnaeus's field journals of his trip to Lapland (1732)
(Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Linnaeus_Andromeda.jpg)



O.R.G.I.A, *Flori.cultura subversiva*, 2007.

These images express the will to reveal that the discourse of sexuality, like that of botany and medicine, is governed by a geopolitics of knowledge that naturalises sex, gender and race, classifying bodies and practices, producing as a result one of those *souths* to which History always denied existence. Bodies and epistemes that have been and continue to be discredited, undervalued and overlooked, but who possess the political potential to fight for the dignification of life. For the right not to be represented as sick, abnormal, unnatural or essentially natural.

Hence, the authors strategically use this stigmatisation of the *other* and the different in order to produce new epistemic cartographies: "unauthorised cultural tours, avoiding the surveillance map that came as a result of the ethnographic study of minorities, are reversible in their work on the production of subjectivities" (O.R.G.I.A, 2008). They thus demonstrate their ability to re-render those images that basurise and criminalise the other, subverting these images to defend their deep humanity and indefatigable instinct for life, with which recognition may ultimately be achieved.

To not conclude...

Flori.cultura subversiva is constructed as "subversive complicity with the system" (Castro-Gómez & Grosfoguel, 2007, p.20), which is exercised through an inventive capacity of semiotic (and semantic) resistance to re-exist the hegemonic forms of knowledge from the perspective of suppressed subjectivities. An artistic practice that shows us the border status of all knowledge about nature, always a product of translation, pollution and traffic, while, through a mimetic exercise, it denaturalises the sonorous and contra-visualises the "epistemic deafness" (Estévez, 2010, p.60) of the modern thinker who updated colonial domination, hierarchisation, and subalternisation with his enlightened, liberal and encyclopedic ideal.

We understand, in this way, that the struggle for recognition is really a struggle for existence. What compels us to re-exist, even though one does not exist in History, and it makes us realise that gaining recognition through visuality, is always a political act.

From here, O.R.G.I.A joins the voices, experiences, and ways of seeing the world from the *South*. The critical and re-existing *South* that answers and proposes from inside western modernity, undermining it and contaminating it with epistemologies, in order to dissipate it. With this we have tried to build bridges between *Souths*, between *Souths* and *Norths*. Bridges that transcend the disciplinary and disciplinary limits to bring into the University those kinds of knowledge and practices that the peoples possess in their daily work, that make dignity dignified life possible. A pluriverse of infinite cognitive possibilities with which to articulate ecologies of recognitions and knowledge.

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[1] This expression is taken from the popular work of Noël Pluche, *Le Spectacle de la Nature:* ***or, Nature Display'd. Being Discourses on such Particulars of Natural HistoryaAs were thought most proper to Excite the Curiosity and form the Minds of Youth.***(9 volumes appeared between 1732 and 1750, reedited countless times and also translated into Spanish). In it, the Jesuit attempted to explain the complexity of nature's functioning in the light of new scientific developments. Its purpose, however, was eminently moralizing, seeking to arouse a greater reverence for divine intelligence and omnipotence, i.e. the creators of this complexity. Its success was due its not being aimed at scientists or philosophers, but, as the subtitle indicates, it started from an informative approach, approaching natural history in a "friendly and accessible" way through abundant dialogues and images of plants, animals, flowers, gardening, crops, rivers, mountains, seas, metals, the sky, the air, the underworld, parts of the universe, man, society, science and, finally, religion.

[2] "Basurización" is a Spanish neologism, taking as its root the word *basura* ("rubbish", "garbage"). An English approximation might be "rubbishing" (i.e. the rubbishing of somebody/something; a forced downturn in the perception and/or appreciation thereof) (Translator's Note).

[3] For a more detailed approach to this subject, you can consult the article *The coloniality of nature. Decolonial visualizations and contra-visuals to sustain life* (Romero, 2015). Available at http://www.uv.es/extravio

[4] The reference to the *South* requires a preliminary clarification, since its meaning varies depending on the place of enunciation and the political, economic and cultural intentions of the user. The most frequent and, we could say, hegemonic sense in current political and economic language is that produced by international organisations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, or the Inter-American Development Bank. According to them, the South refers to countries in the process of economic development, as well as those in which human rights, democracy, security, or those that have failed to overcome poverty, or do not have produce scientific output. However, this reductionist and dominant representation that homogenises diverse contexts, experiences and knowledge according to its economic growth and the logics of sustainability, is not what interests us. As we will emphasise throughout the text, the vision of the *South* that we propose attends to the concept described by Boaventura de Sousa Santos, as a material and symbolic territory of systematic domination and resistance, possessing a geopolitical and ideological potential of critical knowledge with Eurocentric interpretations of modernity. However, it should not be forgotten that all these perspectives are linked and in constant tension. From this point on, this author suggests a "Southern epistemology", that is, "to learn that the *South* exists, to learn to go *South*, to learn from the *South* and with the *South*" (Santos, 2009). , p.11)

[5] The name of the collective, O.R.G.I.A, stands for (in English) the Reversible Organisation of Intermediate and Artistic Genres. In turn, *orgía* is the Spanish word for "orgy". The members of the collective are, in alphabetical order: Carmen Muriana, Beatriz Higón Cardete and Tatiana Sentamans.

[6] To choose certain terms (ecological *manoeuvres*) over others, to use some notions of "nature" and "ecology" instead of others, is one of the radical arguments of this work, because it implies a critique of our understanding of the world just as relevant as the theories on which we base our work in order to obtain it. The term ecological

manoeuvres is produced as a real need that signals a point of view, a unique way of linking words, artistic and cultural practices, and life. A concept in rebellion that puts our languages under suspicion and turns writing into a laboratory of performative experimentation. To do this, we need to coin new terms, or redefine existing ones, to generate new metaphors that reveal new interrelationships and perspectives.

[7] The notion of "conditions of re-existence" (beyond resistance) was proposed by Adolfo Albán Achinte in the context of the meeting held in Caracas in May 2007 by the Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality group, where, among other issues, the question of visualising the types of decolonial societies they might wish to construct was discussed (Escobar, 2010 [2008]: 351). In one of his texts he describes it as follows: [...] devices that communities create and develop in order to invent life on a daily basis and thus be able to confront the reality established by the hegemonic project that from the colony to the present day has deemed inferior, has silenced and negatively portrayed the existence of Afro-descendant communities. Re-existence aims to decentralise the established logic in order to scour the depths of cultures, in this case indigenous and Afro-descendant cultures, for the keys to organisational, production, food, ritual and aesthetic forms that allow for a dignified life, re-inventing it so as to remain transformed. Re-existence points to what the community, cooperative and union leader Héctor Daniel Useche Berón "Pájaro", murdered in 1986 in the Municipality of Bugalagrande in the center of Valle del Cauca, Colombia, once brought up: "What are we going to to invent today to continue living?" (Albán, 2009 [2008]: 94).

[8] *Flori.cultura subversiva* was part of the transversal project "Poetics and ecofeminist practices or how to stray from the script..." which was curated by Belén Romero, in the Cultural Center of Spain in Mexico, within the framework of the Film Festival with a Gender Perspective (MicGénero 2013).

[9] Donna Haraway's proposal is radical in the articulation of our work, since it implies that when we look, speak or write, we always do so from a specific position that can only give us a contingent and limited vision of reality. For this reason, it combines effectively with Boaventura de Sousa Santos's ecology of knowledge and the idea of pluriversity, of the decolonial option, while calling for dialogue between different perspectives with which to achieve a broader image of the world. In this sense, "situated objectivity" will be a frontier knowledge that comes neither from an individual subjectivity nor from an essential identity, but that consists of a collective disposition resulting from a transversal relation of the differences within and by means of the communities. Similarly, Haraway (1991, p.50) points out that what we need "is to learn collectively to inhabit other histories," always seeing alongside the other, but not in their place, let alone pretending to do so.

[10] Electronic resource without paging.

[11] In this sense, as Maria Lugones clarifies: "I want to point out [...] that the internalization that constitutes racism dehumanizes beings that are perceived as beasts through treatment in economic production, in the production of knowledge, in sexual imposition , in the determination to destroy their forms of life, in their sense of themselves, in their relationship with all that sustains their life. (Lugones, 2012: 130).

[12] With the exception of [butterfly], which was reproduced in the performance, all the other audios have been transcribed by me. The importance of painting the sounds on the walls next to the drawings of flowers links with the idea that alphabetic writing, like other scriptures, is also a matter of visuality and, therefore, to speak of semiotics only at the level of signs hides the coloniality of seeing (Mignolo, 2009)

[13] The selected creatures featured in this sound performance are all feminine-gendered nouns in Spanish (TN).

[14] Electronic resource without page numbers.

[15] The wordplay in the original Spanish cannot be directly translated into English. It depends on the similarity between the verb *herborizar* ("to botanise", "to study/collect plants etc.") and the neologism *herboerizar* (the extra 'e' forming the verb *erizar*, "to stand on end [i.e. one's hair]", also with overt connotations of its being a defence mechanism (TN).

[16] Electronic resource without page numbers.