More-Than-Human Practices

Feminist Ecological Potentials of Working With More-Than-Humans in the
Performing Arts

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Abstract

This thesis examines artistic practices developed through co-working with more-than-humans and maps the wider feminist ecological potentials of practicing such multispecies environments in the performing arts. The theoretical framework takes feminist discourse on water from Mielle Chandler and Astrida Neimanis's article "Water and Gestationality: What Flows beneath Ethics" as a departure point to conceptualize more-than-human collaborations in the performing arts and to generate grounds for articulating ethics that enable responsivity to the entanglements with 'natural others'. This framework is intertwined with the discourse on dramaturgy to reapproach the practice of dramaturgy through collaborations and articulate it as a shared practice and collective thinking that emerges from the relations between diverse bodies. In the thesis, I map the main aspects of 'more-than-human practices' and 'interspecies practices' in the performing arts. Characteristics and challenges posed by co-working with more-than-humans are further unfolded by drawing on the two longer artistic practices and researches, *Rooted Hauntology Lab* by Ingrid Vranken, potted plants, and ghosts, and *Cosmologies of Attention and Spectatorship*, practice-based research by Julia Willms and Andrea Božić in collaboration with the Moon. By analyzing specific modes of relating and co-working with them, and by researching the main aspects that their collaborations bring in the front, the feminist ecological potentials that lie in cultivating responsivity to more-than-human co-workers, are defined.

Ursula K. Le Guin: The Marrow

There was a word inside a stone.
I tried to pry it clear,
mallet and chisel, pick and gad,
until the stone was dropping blood,
but still I could not hear
the word the stone had said.

I threw it down beside the road
among a thousand stones
and as I turned away it cried
the word aloud within my ear
and the marrow of my bones
heard, and replied.

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Table of Contents

Introduction

"How we live in the world is contingent upon how we imagine that world to be." (Neimanis and Walker 563)

In 2019, I developed a growing fascination with the power of narratives, especially for cultivating different 'environmental imaginaries'[1] that would overcome the western distinction between humans and the environment, and instead cultivate the awareness of interconnections and interdependence between all the participants in the ecosystems. Concomitantly, I began to wonder how such an understanding can be practiced in the performing arts, particularly through creating or inviting narratives for existing with the environment otherwise, cultivating the perspective that we are "*of* the world" (Barad 185). Namely, living in a society where the economy is privileged before care, learning about the growing acceleration of climate change, and being exposed to catastrophic narratives of 'solving' or 'stopping' the climate change, underline the necessity for systemic change. I believe that potentials for this lie first and foremost in mobilizing alternative narratives generated through the entanglements between the diverse agents in the environment that are therefore able to grasp the complexities.

Although discourses around the performing arts and ecology are by no means a new territory[2], they are, as Lisa Woynarski suggested, "somewhat at the periphery of the larger theatre and performance studies discipline" (3). The initial research for my thesis led me to Carl Lavery's writings on the ecological potentials of theatrical apparatus itself (beyond performances that would directly deal with environmental issues and represent them) – potentials for unrooting it from humanist tradition, and human centeredness. This work enriched my imagination for intertwining performance studies and ecology and I slowly articulated that ecological potentials of the performing arts for me lie in drawing attention to the intra-active relations between humans and the environment, which is very close to Timothy Morton's definition of 'ecological thought': "a practice and a process of becoming

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[1] I encountered the term 'environmental imaginaries' in the article "Four Problems, Four Directions for Environmental Humanities: Toward Critical Posthumanities for the Anthropocene" by Cecilia Åsberg, Johan Hedrén, and Astrida Neimanis, where the attention to 'environmental imaginaries' is one of the four proposed shifts for environmental humanities. They write how 'environmental imaginaries' strongly influence the way the environmental crisis is dealt with (81).

[2] For further reading see writings from authors such as Una Chaudhuri, Baz Kershaw, Bonnie Marranca, and Augusto Corrieri.

fully aware of how human beings are connected with other beings – animal, vegetable, or mineral" (7).

Around the same time, thanks to my supervisor Konstantina Georgelou, I was introduced to Astrida Neimanis's work that led me to intensely research the field of feminist environmental humanities. Their texts intervened in my imagination and enthralled me, by combining precise critical analysis of the established modern thought in western societies with numerous propositions for articulating the relationship between humans and environments through their entanglements. Reading these voices[3] while researching the artistic practices led me to define my research niche. Namely, I feel that there is an emergent field of artists dealing with the alternatives to western dualisms and reconceptualizing relations between humans and other-than-humans through feminist, decolonial, and queer discourses. Amongst them are Daniela Bershan, Ama Josephine B. Johnstone, Deborah Birch, Maria Lucia Cruz Correia, Clementine Edwards, Victoria McKenzie, Marit Mihklepp, Maja Smrekar, and Sissel Marie Ton. These practices are often developed by women and non-binary artists that remain in the shadows not only because of gender inequality but also because it seems that there is a lack of feminist environmental discourse in performance studies reflecting on them.

The two case studies studied in this thesis are both shared and interdependent practices generated through the relationship between humans and more-than-humans: *Rooted Hauntology Lab* is a shared practice between Ingrid Vranken, potted plants, and ghosts, and *Cosmologies of Attention and Spectatorship* is practice-based research by Julia Willms and Andrea Božić in collaboration with the Moon. To think through them and research the possibilities to engage with and generate multispecies thinking and knowledge in the performing arts, I decided to craft a feminist ecological lens to reapproach dramaturgy as a collaboration. This approach allows me to question, challenge, and dismantle some of the currently established, violent western logics that ignore many other bodies that are unable to exist in human-centered scales.

In employing such a relational approach I found it important to approach it through a feminist lens. Firstly, because of the clear orientation towards a social change through researching the possibilities of generating different politics of relating in the performing arts and secondly, because of the feminist work about the violence of 'objective' knowledges, the

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[3] Stacy Alaimo, Cecilia Åsberg, Karen Barad, Cecilia Chen, Rachel Loewen Walker, Donna Haraway, Johan Hédren, Janine MacLeod, Astrida Neimanis, and Nancy Tuana amongst many others.

awareness that we can never know everything and that knowledge production should not be only in the domain of those in positions of power. Namely, the feminist lens in environmental humanities calls for a very situated and intersectional approach[4] that disables flattening. Therefore, my research sits at the intersection between feminist environmental humanities and performance studies, and focuses on the potentials of more-than-human practices for cultivating modes of existing otherwise starting from the following research question: In what ways can more-than-human practices in the performing arts contribute to cultivating a feminist and ecological relationship between humans and more-than-humans more widely?

Defining More-Than-Human and Interspecies Practices

For conceptualizing practices between humans and more-than-humans, I wanted to emphasize the fact that they are generated through the relations between humans and more-than-humans, so I developed the term 'interspecies practices' in order to acknowledge the interconnectedness and interdependence between all of the included agents and expand the human-centered scales.[5] This term points to the complex interrelations between diverse bodies, mobilizes the dismantlement of binarism, and employs a relational understanding of practice that is not arising from individual bodies but is instead shared and collectively shaped and arises from actively engaging with the entanglements between diverse bodies. At the same time, there are some limitations with this term because it encompasses only the natural bodies that are considered as species. Therefore, it seems accurate for the *Rooted Hauntology Lab* as a practice developed between humans and plants, but less sufficient for the practices that are extending the human scale through building relations between humans and other agents that cannot be described as species, such as the Moon in Božić and Willms's practice. Therefore, I am proposing the overarching term 'more-than-human practice' that acknowledges the agency of other bodies but does not have such a strong emphasis on the relations from which the practices emerge.

In the following sections, I sometimes use the term 'to collaborate' as a verb that produces their shared practice, but with it, a question of what does it mean to claim a

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[4] Please note that I am not following the intersectional approach in my thesis, but I acknowledge the importance of it. To position the research in the field of performance studies, I decided to work with a method closer to dramaturgical analysis that is strongly informed by discourses from feminist environmental humanities and shares a lot of affinities with the intersectional method.

[5] I later found an article by Lisa Jevbratt where she developed the term 'interspecies collaboration' for collaborating with non-human animals in the arts.

collaboration with bodies that made no consent for entering such a context and include them in this whole context of (artistic) labour comes to the forefront. Additionally, the term 'collaboration' echoes the discourses in the performance studies that were very present around 2010 and raised concerns that, after structural changes in the field, collaboration was becoming very individual-oriented and it appeared to be the only way for artists to stay visible themselves in the precarious market.[6]

With the awareness of all of the non-innocent connotations that 'to collaborate' brings, together with the ones that come in in the context of the global pandemic and the dangerous relationship between the virus and the human, I nevertheless decided to employ the verb 'to collaborate' in terms Neimanis writes about 'posthuman collaborations' with an aim to cultivate a new possibility for using it as a "more-than-human endeavour" ("On Collaboration" 217) and to denote the agency of all the included agents.

Theoretical Framework & Methodology

To address the research question and to craft a feminist environmental lens, I employed qualitative research methods comprised of conducting interviews with artists and literature research, drawing primarily from the domains of feminist environmental humanities, feminist studies, posthumanism, new materialism, and performance studies. Most of the literature was accessed online through the Utrecht University Library and WorldCat search engine and in my own collections, while some of the information about the case studies were collected via the internet.

I approached both of the chosen case studies by conducting interviews with human participants and reading some of their writings. I met with Ingrid Vranken twice. In February, we had a semi-structured interview and in April, I developed a questionnaire[7] that insisted on claiming more-than-humans as collaborators to, through 'crossing' all the boundaries, detect them. A very similar questionnaire was used in my conversation in May with Andrea Božić and Julia Willms[8]. I was also included in their creative process for the performance *How to Exit a Reality (Attempt 1 of 19)* as part of my internship. The quotes from the interviews that I refer to were authorized by Vranken, Božić, and Willms and I received consent for using them.

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[6] See for example Cvejić 2005, Gorgelou 2013, Kunst 2010, Laermans 2012, Van Imschoot and Le Roy 2004.
[7] Attached as Appendix 1.
[8] Attached as Appendix 2.

The thesis is structured in 4 main chapters, a short interlude, and a conclusion. In the first chapter, I frame my research with a feminist discourse on water that allows me to conceptualize the types of collaborations with more-than-humans in the performing arts by highlighting the constant interrelations between bodies. The chapter is generated through the sub-question: What does feminist discourse on water contribute to thinking about more-than-human practices in the performing arts?

Posing this question helped me highlight four important aspects for establishing more-than-human environments and thus articulating the feminist environmental potentials of them: overcoming binarism, reconceptualizing the status of differences, deconstructing the ignorance, and accepting the unknowability. To conceptualize relating through differences and unknowability, I decided to mobilize 'ethics of encounter' (Neimanis, Åsberg, Hédren) that arise from the relations and not from an 'individual subject'. Doing so helped me establish a relational approach aware of the entanglements and shared flows between diverse bodies.

In Chapter 2, the introduced discourse on 'watery sociality' is employed to answer the sub-question of how can the practice of dramaturgy be understood as a more-than-human collaboration and hence craft a lens for thinking through more-than-human practices in the field of performing arts. I propose understanding dramaturgy as a practice generated through collaboration (in this case, collaboration between humans and more-than-humans). Namely, after introducing 'ethics of encounter', I realized that it is exactly the field of dramaturgy that has the potentials for 'being-with-an-Other' (Noeth, "Protocols of Encounter" 252), for nourishing multispecies environments, and maintaining the differences as manifestations of the entanglements.

The first part of the chapter draws from the established discourses in performance studies that deal with dramaturgy as a practice. The main sources that helped me to intertwine the practice of dramaturgy with the 'ethics of encounter' are the book *The Practice of Dramaturgy: Working on Actions in Performance*, Maaike Bleeker's text "Thinking No-One's Thought" and Sandra Noeth's text "Protocols of Encounter: On Dance Dramaturgy". Bleeker's text helped me to articulate dramaturgy as shared multispecies thinking and the latter helped me to approach dramaturgy through collaborations between diverse bodies. The second part of the chapter tries to perform the crafted lens and reflects on some main aspects of multispecies togetherness as a prelude and speculative prognosis for the second part of the thesis that focuses on the two artistic practices and arises from the third sub-question: How

are the more-than-human environments nourished in the artistic practices, and what does working with more-than-humans require and challenge?

Since I am dealing with more-than-human practices in the performing arts as shared practices between humans and more-than-humans that arise from multispecies environments, my two case studies are two longer artistic practices and two diverse forms of practicing responsivity to entanglements with more-than-humans. The third chapter focuses on Vranken's practice *Rooted Hauntology Lab* that Vranken described in our conversation in April as "a container that gives me two very important co-workers or entities to think through and with and take me to different avenues". My research shares a lot of conceptual affinities with it and I believe that it will be possible to address most of the main orientations and aspects by analyzing it through the formed lens. A little different is the case of *Cosmologies of Attention and Spectatorship* from Andrea Božić, Julia Willms, and the Moon that centers around the potentials of generating different modes of spectatorship through shifting the attention and perception in order to shift the established logics and cultivate possible new ones. Their research strongly influenced my thinking about the transformative potentials of remodelling the attention, but it is important to note that they are not directly dealing with ecology and are therefore not raising these questions from a similar motivation as my research. With focusing only on their shared practice with the Moon, some of their other important aspects and methods might be overlooked. Nevertheless, thinking with and through two practices raised from very different research interests will help me to critically reflect on the lens, recognize the potentials of acknowledging their diverse expressions of realities, and really focus on the implications of working with more-than-humans to map the challenges and negotiations through which, I argue, the different ethics for relations to more-than-humans are mobilized and practiced.

1 Looking into the Water: Conceptualizing More-Than-Human Practices through Feminist Discourse on Water

More-than-human practices that arise from the collaborations between diverse bodies highlight the differences and the unknowability that emerges between bodies (not sharing the same space-time logics, modes of existing, thinking, and experiencing reality) and call for different modes of relating. I argue for the feminist ecological potentials of such practices in the performing arts because of the potentials that lie in experimenting with relating and collaborating otherwise.

To establish a discourse about the more-than-human practices that will allow me to reflect on their potentials for cultivating more feminist and ecological relationships to the environment as a complex web that connects all the included agents through the nets of interdependency, I decided to craft an intersectional lens derived from reading feminist voices that share a lot with fields of posthumanism and new materialism but are first and foremost ecologically oriented. Although coming from diverse disciplines and backgrounds, they are all important contributions to the field of feminist environmental humanities, where environmental challenges and eco-political concerns are addressed with feminist, queer, and anti-colonial theories that have already done a lot of work, especially in critically reflecting and analyzing different kinds of violence in dominant cultures where the human scale is a departure point for explaining the world. Some of them that importantly shaped my research and my approach are Stacy Alaimo, Cecilia Åsberg, Karen Barad, Mielle Chandler, Cecilia Chen, Rachel Loewen Walker, Donna Haraway, Johan Hédren, Janine MacLeod, Astrida Neimanis, and Nancy Tuana.

As I show, the feminist ecological potentials of more-than-human practices lie in practicing responsivity[9] to more-than-humans, and to approach this through all its complexities, addressing the acceptance of the unknowable and the coexistence with the otherness as a crucial orientation for relating with bodies with which we don't share any recognizable similarities is of great importance. In this chapter, I address the reconceptualization of the relationships between humans and more-than-humans through cultivating grounds for different ethics to emerge. Namely, I argue that relating through

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[9] A note on terminology: I use the term responsivity as a capacity to respond to the environment and also, based on Chandler and Neimanis writing, as "a process of affecting and being affected" (72) which points towards a specific sensibility needed to recognize the environment around us and a specific dialogue needed to respond to it.

unknowability and difference is enabled by ethics that are not centered around humans as the only condition but are instead extended to more-than-humans. As illustrated, this generates a different attitude towards the existing differences. It is important to note that I am proposing ethics as a foundation, a base from which we interact with the environment. Barad's writing about ethics foregrounds the reason I incorporate them in thinking on more-than-human practices in the performing arts:

> ethics is not simply about the subsequent consequences of our ways of interacting with the world . . . Ethics is about mattering, about taking account of the entangled materializations of which we are part, including new configurations, new subjectivities, new possibilities – even the smallest cuts matter. (384)

In my research, I explore two case studies, each with an emphasis on a different kind of sensibility that comes from practicing the capacity to be responsive to different bodies and their expressions of reality (plants, ghosts, and the Moon). For this, the model of recognition is not enough, or, as Neimanis writes, it "is too limited and, to put it bluntly, too self-referential (and self-preserving?) to serve as an adequate basis for interaction with bodies of alterity" ("Strange Kinship" 122). Therefore, to reframe sociality[10] as more-than-human in order to conceptualize these collaborations, I lean on Mielle Chandler and Astrida Neimanis's text "Water and Gestationality: What Flows beneath Ethics" where they focus on water's materiality, especially the gestational mode of water as a form of sociality (78) that enables decentering humans and human scales.

1.1 Dissolving Binary System

      Understanding sociality, a mode of relating and coexisting responsively (Chandler and Neimanis 71), as a 'watery sociality' (73) shared by all the 'bodies of water' first requires us to dissolve the western tradition of dualisms that produces boundaries between humans and more-than-humans. It is one of the main concerns in mobilizing and maintaining the multispecies environments in the performing arts. These boundaries position nature in opposition to culture and strongly influence our perception and our attitude towards our

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[10] I am focusing on sociality as a mode of existing and as a condition from where more-than-human practices can arise.

'natural others' (Neimanis, "Natural Others" 27). Neimanis writes that this bifurcation foregrounds other dualized pairs such as subject-object, human-nonhuman, live-dead, animate-inanimate, female-male, body-mind, etc. that then establish two sides; one valorized, the other denigrated (27). With such a firm dualized structure, power relations get placed, formed, and concentrated at the one side, where a privileged species, gender, race, and class are gathered (27). In western culture, the denigrated side is that of nature. Nature thus implies the "otherness of others" (28) to the categories that are placed on its pole (non-human natures, woman, non-western societies, etc.) – to the oppressed and subordinated with the, as she writes, "not only colonial or masculinist but also distinctly *human* norm" (28).

These oppositional pairs affect the discursive system that gives voice only to groups placed on the powerful side and therefore, according to Neimanis, strongly influences and guides our behaviors and beliefs and affects especially the 'natural others'. It produces mechanisms of ignorance and exclusion that are embedded in the way more-than-humans are perceived in western culture. With this in mind, it is necessary to form a different relationship to nature, that is not, as Neimanis quotes Haraway, "reification, possession, appropriation, and nostalgia" (qtd. in 40).[11]

1.2 Reconceptualizing the Status of a Difference

Chandler and Neimanis's theory thinks of all the bodies as first bodies of water and unties the term gestationality from only the female or human body and broadens it to encompass an immanent feature of all 'bodies of water'. It highlights that, although different and necessarily diverse, bodies are nevertheless connected "in and as watery milieux" (69). With the question of "What flows beneath ethics?" they articulate how water "*models* a mode of sociality" (62) that is a multispecies, or, a more-than-human one that calls for ethics that "*flows beneath the human* as its condition of possibility" (64). Hence, ethics is not only a human domain. Their thinking of sociality through water points to two crucial aspects for thinking about feminist ecological potentials of more-than-human practices: dismantling human-centered scale and understanding differences as places of entanglements.

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[11] One of the concepts that intervene in our imagination and overcome this binary is Haraway's concept of 'natureculture'. It underlines the impossibility of separating nature from culture and calls attention to the fact that, according to Haraway, "nature cannot pre-exist its construction" ("The Promises of Monsters" 296) but is instead "a co-construction among humans and non-humans" (297). This concept opens up potentials for different modes of ethics that would also include more-than-humans and would therefore reshape the relations between humans and 'natural others'. Neimanis warns that this requires a different epistemological direction: "a respect and humility for that which we do not know and cannot know – or perhaps, more precisely, for that which our knowledge can never fully master" ("Natural Others" 40-41).

To think about the mutual implication of different bodies in different environments, Neimanis and Chandler employ Gilles Deleuze's theory of repetition and difference wherein what is repeated is the manifestation of the unknowable (73). By employing this theory, similarities as crucial means for relating to other bodies are substituted with the differences that are understood as the new articulations and proliferation (73). Since 'watery sociality' is gestational and mobilized from the flows beneath the sovereign ontologies, it helps to highlight the entanglements between these always differently repeated water flows, or, as they write: "only difference – or the manifestation of the unknowable – can repeat" (73). This means that difference is the only possible manifestation of our entanglements.

To further understand the importance of this shift, I turn to Denise Ferreira Da Silva's writing that "[w]ithout *separability*, difference among human groups and between human and nonhuman entities has very limited explanatory purchase and ethical significance" (65). She acknowledges that changing epistemological principles causes the difference to shift from "a manifestation of an unresolvable *estrangement*" to "expression at an elementary *entanglement*" (65). Therefore, a crucial shift for changing the status of a difference is an understanding of difference as a place for entanglements and as a process, instead of a fixed and given feature of the body's 'nature'. Such a turn establishes a non-separational model for the difference that does not have the power to categorize elements anymore but can instead importantly influence the understanding of the worlding with our planetary others because it calls for more responsive practices, or, as Chandler and Neimanis write: "we not only respond to others but also in turn comprise the fluid social gestational condition of possibilities beyond ourselves" (73).

Thinking about more-than-human sociality with water thus enables me to approach more-than-human practices more relationally, through interconnections and interdependency, and helps me to understand the potentials of more-than-human practices as practices that are always foremost collaborations with the unknowable. This requires a certain responsivity and intimacy:

> Becoming gestational for the gestational requires that we respond to the needs
> of habitats, the ecological dwelling places and sources of nourishment that
> give rise to and support life as plural. . . . What is required of us is to take
> upon ourselves the labor of providing the resources necessary for nurturing the
> interhuman and lifeworld possibilities currently under erasure. An ethical

response to water requires becoming more watery, becoming for pluralities beyond oneself. Participating in material infinity. (Chandler and Neimanis 79)

1.3 Towards Relational Knowledge

Introducing the importance of dismantling the binary system and the awareness of the mutual implication between more-than-humans brings me to another important aspect for thinking more-than-human practices: employing a relational approach to knowledge and articulating more-than-human practices as shared practices of collective thinking. Namely, understanding humans as separated and in charge of the environment, importantly shapes also the practices of knowing and hence the ways we think about our 'natural others'. Cecilia Chen, for example, writes how the established human-centered scale constructed a model that limits intelligibility: "each human practice of "knowing" simultaneously articulates and delimits what may be intelligible" (276). She focuses on how water exceeds intelligibility in the established knowing practices that shape the attitude towards waters and, consequently, motivate understanding them only as resources. To overcome that, she, in the title, proposes "[t]hinking with watery places" (274). According to Chen, many other bodies that might exist in different temporalities and spaces end up as unrecognizable noises (interpreted as unknowable, represented by humans, or just ignored) that maintain the status quo of those who are already heard (278).

Such mechanisms produce ignorance and, as I show in the next section, one of the feminist ecological potentials of more-than-human practices lies in mobilizing more relational ways of knowing (thinking with), as well as in understanding thinking as a correspondence that emerges through entanglements. To elaborate further, I employ the way knowledge is understood in posthuman theories because it enables me to approach agents in more-than-human practices as equals with an agency to reshape collective thinking. Karen Barad writes:

There is an important sense in which practices of knowing cannot fully be claimed as human practices, not simply because we use nonhuman elements in our practices but because knowing is a matter of part of the world making itself intelligible to another part. Practices of knowing and being are not isolable; they are mutually implicated. We don't obtain knowledge by standing outside the world; we know because we are *of* the world. (185)

16

Acknowledging the relationality of knowledge opens up space for diverse actors to shape and create the knowledge and define the known. Knowledge is therefore not gained independently: the thinker and the thinking object are partners in a conversation and methods of objectifying and claiming a total knowability of something outside of 'us' become impossible. Instead, such understanding establishes a certain acceptance of the unknowable and a specific kind of responsivity and attentiveness.

"Nature is a commonplace and a powerful discursive construction, effected in the interactions among material-semiotic actors, human and not." (Haraway, "The Promises of Monsters" 298)

To sum up, 'watery gestationality' forms firm grounds for mobilizing the different ethics that arise from the entanglements between different bodies and accept the "ineradicable alterity" (Chen et al. 13). To name these feminist environmental ethics, I am borrowing the term from the text written by Åsberg, Hédren, and Neimanis, 'ethics of the encounter' (83), because it points to the place of relation from where the ethics arise and creates grounds for cultivating relations that are not based on any form of affinity. These ethics highlight the responsibility that lies in our material entanglements that are far broader than the ones that we are attuned to. It also removes the category of agency as the condition for being included in the ethical and political sphere and opens up space for other voices that are unlike us. This enables a different approach to the world, the one that can shape, as Haraway put it, "more vital multi-species futures" ("The Companion Species" 63).

If recognition is not a measure for relating anymore, then different attentions might be formed. How Haraway's 'multi-species futures' can be shaped depends on the way we understand the world, the way we choose to "reorient our attention" (Tsing 22), and on "what we insist on noticing" (Neimanis, "The Weather" 494). Thinking about more-than-human practices through 'watery sociality' helps me to deal with the questions of collaborating with alterity because it mobilizes grounds for ethics around differences and unknowability, for 'ethics of encounter' that have the potential to reorient our attention to the entanglements we are part of. In the following pages, I show how more-than-human practices are reorienting and navigating attention, and therefore generating more feminist and ecological modes of socialites built on 'ethics of encounter'.

2 Dramaturgy and/as Collaboration

For my research, the most important aspect of the introduced feminist environmental ethics is the place from where they arise: not from an individual body but from the intermediate space in which the agents are entangled. They do not operate as acknowledgments of something that would move the ignored to an already existing logic, nor do they maintain the power to decide to speak for or to give a voice to somebody. Instead, they propose a new logic for co-worlding in multispecies environments with the awareness of the limited knowledge that can nevertheless take care of and assume responsibility for the relations in which each body is embedded.

As I already wrote, for more-than-human practices in the performing arts, the question of relating through difference or unknowability is at the forefront. In the previous chapter, I focused on 'watery sociality' to conceptualize the more-than-human sociality from where the more-than-human collaborations and practices can arise. I mapped some of the important aspects for them to be generated through the responsivity to the other bodies (dissolving binaries, reconceptualizing the status of difference, and approaching knowledge as a shared activity), and in this chapter, I will focus on these intermediate spaces of unknowability that are formed between different bodies. For this, the practice of dramaturgy that operates in the spaces of encounters is of great importance. Therefore, I propose re-approaching dramaturgy through collaboration to conceptualize more-than-human practices in the performing arts and to understand the feminist ecological potentials that lie in cultivating responsivity to our material entanglements. Namely, I argue that it is within the domain of dramaturgy to cultivate spaces where relating to more-than-humans can be mobilized and nourished.

To reconceptualize dramaturgy as collaboration through the established feminist ecological lens, I am departing from understanding the practice of dramaturgy as a shared practice between different bodies that has the potential to extend the attention to *our* 'natural others' and operate as a cultivator of unknowability. A note to terminology: in my use of the term 'attention,' I do not simply refer to extending the ethics to more-than-humans, but instead to practicing the 'ethics of encounter' for the relations which we are part of, in order to develop forms of responsivity to other bodies. This can enable the integration of the unknown and unseen, or not yet visible, into shared structures of relations where ideas and actions emerge. How might the dramaturgy generated through more-than-human practices reconfigure agency and mobilize more ecological arrangements in relations between diverse bodies?

Please note that I am not aiming to propose anything that could be understood as a strain of dramaturgy or even as a new trend that would have the potential to be appropriated as a category. On the contrary, as my case studies will show, such procedures are already embedded in very diverse practices in the field. Therefore, the aim of my research is to turn the focus toward existing practices and to approach them by thinking through them with the feminist ecological lens to reflect on their planetary potentials.

2.1 Dramaturgy as a Shared Activity and More-Than-Human Collective Thinking

To frame dramaturgy as collaboration and vice versa, I will first elaborate on dramaturgy as a shared practice, mainly through Sandra Noeth's article "Protocols of Encounter: On Dance Dramaturgy" (2011) and Maaike Bleeker's article "Thinking No-One's Thought" (2015). Georgelou, Protopapa, and Theodoridou write that "in order to work dramaturgically during an artistic process and to let an idea/project develop, one has to practice it in relation to others" (55), which shows that the dramaturgical practice operates through the relations, in-between the agents that are part of the process, not necessarily only human ones. Or, as Noeth quotes Janez Janša: "dramaturgy happens in dialogue" ("Dramaturgy – Mobile of Ideas"). I argue that, on the one hand, dramaturgy cultivates and arranges the existent relations and mobilizes new ones, and on the other, as a practice, invents itself through them. This underlines its interdependence; each change in the arrangement affects dramaturgy. Even more, dramaturgy responds and reshapes itself through changes in the dynamics.

A similar approach is developed in Noeth's article but her suggestion to think of dramaturgy "as a shared practice of encounter" ("Protocols" 253) instead of dramaturgy as a field that deals primarily with forms, structures, and questions of efficiency (254), puts bigger importance on the moment of encounters in the process. In understanding dramaturgy as "protocols of encounter", an interesting connection to the attempt of informing the practice of dramaturgy with 'ethics of encounter' arises, but it is important to mention that this discourse is not related to posthuman theories. Noeth writes that the focus of dramaturgy is on the question of "how the different formative elements are to be handled" (254). In my case, I understand it also as elements that were produced in the more-than-human practices, meaning between all the included agents. It could be said that re-approaching dramaturgy as collaboration leads to understanding dramaturgy as a mobilizer of procedures for organizing and generating structures of relations and hence a mode of finding ways for collaborating

through the differences and nourishing them as spaces of entanglements. For that, Noeth's writing on encounters is helpful:

> dramaturgy writes a protocol of encounters, which develop in the shared period of time, in the contributed vocabulary of the situation. Dramaturgy means thinking about these traces of delegating and sharing, about how information is generated, produced, communicated, rejected, reapplied and finally brought onto the stage – in this respect, it is not about communication and not about the representation of a prefabricated status, but about the contemplation of strategies and processes of community and participation. ("Protocols" 255)

Since my research is centered around generating more-than-human socialities and about practices shared between diverse species, I would like to put more emphasis on the importance of modes of togetherness and of thinking-with in reframing dramaturgy as collaboration. Namely, I argue that it is through practicing the more-than-human sociality that more-than-human practices arise – from the responsivity and correspondence. Therefore, using the term 'encounter' seems suitable for the starting point, for opening up practices to the encounters with more-than-humans, for navigating the attention to the unseen, ignored. Later on, questions of radical coexistence, of nourishing differences, maintaining the conditions to exist together, and taking care of the existing relations and entanglements, come to the forefront, highlighting the importance of constant responsivity in established modes of sociality.

　　To highlight this and to better understand the position of more-than-human collaborators, I will, through reading Maaike Bleeker's article "Thinking No-One's Thought", show how dramaturgy can be understood as a mode of collective thinking between humans and more-than-humans. In a more-than-human environment, this requires a specific sensibility and responsivity built beyond human-centered scales and generated from 'ethics of encounter', which brings in the notion of response-ability[12] and responsibility[13]. Here, feminist environmental ethics can have a crucial role, because, to lean on Kathrin Thiele's

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[12] I use the term 'response-ability' in order to emphasize the ability to respond to the environment one is part of, to the seen and unseen phenomena.

[13] I use the term responsibility to denote that which is happening within the entanglements.

text, it is not about "*responsibility for* the other", but about "*response-ability with* others" (213).

I've already written about understanding thinking as a correspondence between different participants, and understanding dramaturgy as a mode of thinking is crucial for focusing on more-than-human practices because it points to the agency of all participants to affect the thinking processes and the outcomes. Namely, if dramaturgy is happening in-between the participants and can be understood as a mode of thinking, this means that dramaturgy is a mode of collective thinking that is happening between all the participants in the process.

Bleeker elaborates on "the relationship between dramaturgical practice and thinking" ("Thinking" 69) and argues that creative processes are forms of collaborative thinking (68). She understands thinking the way Deleuze and Guattari understood it: as "a process that transpires between people rather than an individual action" (68), and proposes understanding thought itself as "a process that takes place in and through material practice" (69). Such an understanding turns the focus away from an independent individual and instead focuses on the mediations, or more precisely, on shared spaces between all the agents.

Extending the category of "people" in the above-mentioned quote to encompass all the diverse and not necessarily human agents that are part of a given creative process enables me to frame dramaturgical practice as collective thinking between humans and more-than-humans. Georgelou, Protopapa, and Theodoridou write about dramaturgy "as an attentive engagement that is distributed among everyone who is taking part in a process, including the eventual audience" (59), which helps me conclude that dramaturgy is generated through the relations between different bodies. To understand the expansion to more-than-human bodies, recalling Baradian agential realism is helpful. In Barad's framework, thinking cannot be an independent process but is instead an "ongoing flow of agency through which part of the world makes itself differentially intelligible to another part of the world and through which causal structures are stabilized and destabilized" and it "does not take place in space and time but happens in the making of spacetime itself" (140).

2.2 Multispecies Togetherness

After reconceptualizing dramaturgy as a responsive structure of entanglements that is produced, reshaped, and shared through relations between all the participants, I will focus on the modes of togetherness in multispecies environments. In collaborations and shared practices, questions of finding methods for co-working, for generating the material and

sharing it, and for mobilizing collectivity are brought to the fore, and my research focuses on the modes of thinking and collaborating that is practiced in more-than-human practices to articulate their possibility for producing different modes of sociality.

Since understanding differences as places of entanglements is crucial in more-than-human practices, the important aspect of such modes of togetherness is to insist on maintaining them through a more relational approach that dismantles any possibility for determination and instead enables a conception of bodies in which, as Stacy Alaimo writes, "social power and material/geographic agencies intra-act" (63). This already requires acceptance of multiple and different scales that are not human-centered and practicing mutual response-ability which points to the responsiveness that is beyond familiarity and acknowledgment and has the potential to produce different kinds of realities. Therefore, practicing modes of multispecies togetherness requires nourishment and maintenance of the conditions for connections to exist, or in other words, taking care of collective spaces between the agents that are either known or unknown.

This points to an important and potentially transformative sensibility practiced in more-than-human practices: thinking the unknowable. Such sensibility is also the sensibility in shifting the attention to some of the already existing relations that are not yet acknowledged; I will show through the two case studies how collaborating with more-than-humans enables that. To expand thinking and perceiving, imagination and speculation can play an important role. Here, I will refer to Bojana Cvejić's text "The Ignorant Dramaturg" where she writes about dramaturgy and speculation. She uses the term speculative as an opposition to the normative based on the theory of Isabelle Stengers: "In dramaturgy, we practice speculation. We practice "standing-under"(support) before we "under-stand". We learn to do and say, "let's think again", because we don't know now, but we will have known by then".

To Cvejić, speculation means putting "a perspective on a situation" ("The Ignorant Dramaturg") which is importantly connected to mobilizing a shift in attention through 'ethics of encounter' that, as I will show in the two case studies, creates new observations and narratives. Thinking about speculating, having a closer look, and 'standing-under' brings me to the second important shift generated with more-than-human practices. Namely, to speculate and to 'stand-under' requires a much more situated position and knowledge. It requires "thinking which does not stand outside the material" (Bleeker, "Thinking" 72) but instead, as Bleeker continues, "emerges through it" (72). Practicing such thinking means practicing a different mode of attention and navigating perception differently: departing from

the situated position in the process, accepting the entanglements, and gestating them in the work. Therefore, a collaborator is not always the one that would set things in motion but is often the one that is responsive to the generated material. This brings back the importance of thinking-with.

Neimanis writes that posthuman collaboration "constantly creates and recreates itself and its co-laborers as part of the currents and waves of the seas" ("On Collaboration" 217), and the same could be argued for the dramaturgy as a collaboration – generated through relations. Hence, it is not fixed but exists in-between in their potentiality which demands a different approach that is based on conditioning ourselves with the alternative reality, perhaps the future. That makes it an important place for producing social imageries and different socialities.

Thinking about the multispecies togetherness in the performing arts can therefore create a place for practicing the attentiveness to the multiplicities, diversities, and so a place where we can exist together with, or even through, unknowability. In the next two chapters, I will focus on the two more-than-human practices to see what the challenges of multispecies thinking and researching are, how the relations are mobilized, and to map the feminist ecological potentials in their practices.

3 Thinking-with and Thinking-as: Attending to Multispecies Environments With Plants and Ghosts

Rooted Hauntology Lab is a shared artistic-curatorial practice and research between Ingrid Vranken, potted plants, and ghosts that focuses on the relationship between humans and plants. Through generating the spaces for coexisting with plants and the "ineradicable alterity" (Chen et al. 13), it researches the possibilities for mobilizing modes of relating to plants beyond the criteria of usefulness as potentially transformative for reconceptualizing the relationship between humans and nature. Until now, there were 4 public iterations[14] (one lecture performance and 3 séances) and multiple workshops. I approached their practice by reading Vranken's text and conducting interviews with her. This chapter focuses on the way their co-working is generated and practiced, as well as on the position and agency that more-than-human collaborators have in it, to see how the more-than-human and interspecies practices are shared and nourished. Focusing on their shared space of multispecies knowledge will help me to precisely articulate feminist ecological potentials of more-than-human practices.

As Vranken explained in the interview in April, *Rooted Hauntology Lab* was mobilized from the realization that artistic burnouts, extraction of natural resources, colonial violence, etc. are, although on very different scales, all results of an "extractivist paradigm" (Vranken). In order to shape a practice that would, as she said, resist "the (self-)exploitation of human and other-than-human resources" she needed to firstly find a way for reconsidering the established systems and hierarchies (Vranken 237). The path for mobilizing alternative modes of thinking was strongly informed by biomimicry and studies about plant communication. For example, one of the important impulses came from a card in a facilitation game based on biomimicry principles that suggested to "think like a forest" (Vranken). It opened a path to new ways of thinking about her collaboration with others as a forest (Vranken) and defined the main orientation for searching and practicing more feminist and ecological ways of coexisting: thinking-as and thinking-with. Such an approach could be understood as an approach to open up the established knowledge, based on the awareness of the limitations of human perspectives. By inviting other perspectives to coexist, the

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[14] First iteration was a lecture performance in the first year of studying at *DAS Theatre*, Séance 1 was a graduation project at *DAS Theatre*, Séance 2 (*A Gathering of Ghosts*) consisted of presentation and publication of the *Grand Reunion* issue in November 2020, Séance 3 (*Unisnging Linear Time*) was part of the *On Enclosed Spaces and the Great Outdoors - 4. Grounding* in February 2021.

entanglements with our 'natural others' become visible and they open space for responding to them.

Plants were invited in her practice "because of their different relation to presence/absence, visibility, time and generosity", so she "turned towards plants and ghosts as my teachers and allies who could point me towards strategies of being-with, generosity and sympoiesis" (Vranken 237). This clearly illustrates how thinking-with and thinking-as influence the practice. Through understanding and trying to understand the reality that other beings are expressing, the spaces for new modes of being-with are generated. In these spaces, human-centered and dualistic modes of thinking and ethics that are established as given get to be reconsidered and reconceptualized.

Since human relationships to plants can often be affected by symbolic systems and fixed cultural positions that are ascribed to them, Vranken decided to invite ghosts and only work with potted plants, in order "to find a different strategy to engage with plants in a way that could truly challenge the automatic, anthropocentric and romanticised associations around working with plants" (Vranken 237). In their practice, ghosts have a slightly different position. She proposes to think of a human relationship with plants as a ghostly relationship in order to find a way for the unseen entanglements to be taken into account (240). She writes that they are "an unmissable tool to rethink relationships both with the human and other-than-human" (239). Therefore, it is through thinking through ghosts that different and alternative ways of relating to plants, to more-than-humans are practiced.

The first séance of the *Rooted Hauntology Lab* was at *Zone2Source* in Amstelpark, Amsterdam in 2019. Vranken decided to "broaden the practice of being-with to other humans" (242) and invited three artists, Špela Petrič, Vinny Jones, and Sepideh Ardalani, to share a 4-week residency and explore how being-with plants affect their practices (243). To extend being-with plants to the audience, they created a 14-hour long séance[15] that consisted of "various ways of entering into dialogue with the research of the Lab and all the entities (present, absent, human, other-than-human) that had been part of that research" (244). In conceptualizing the séance, Vranken worked with the concept of generosity as a curatorial approach, which was inspired by Michael Marder's proposition "that plants are ontologically generous" (Vranken 246). She tried to translate vegetal generosity of "making life possible for others – human and other-than-human alike" (246) to all the diverse aspects of curating,

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[15] The schedule of the event is accessible here: https://zone2source.net/en/5989-2/

suchlike distribution of the budget, attitude in working in residency, organization of feedback sessions, helping each other, an invitation for the audience "to approach all elements present, visible and invisible, as a commons", and sharing all the sources for their research with the audience (246).

To sum up, *Rooted Hauntology Lab* is a practice of committing to being-with (241) as an attempt to nourish a multispecies environment of multiple knowledges, grounded in the awareness that specific worldviews and modes of knowledge bring with them specific kinds of exclusion and violence. It could be understood as a collective mode of thinking with more-than-humans that is mobilized through thinking-with and thinking-as plants and ghosts. Since it strongly informs and navigates her work in all the different positions that she is taking (independent artist, curator, dramaturg, producer, and teacher), it is crucial to approach it as a practice and not only through a specific project. Namely, it is through *Rooted Hauntology Lab* that all the different spheres of her work and life can be understood as parts of a bigger ecosystem and modes of thinking where multiple activities and relations interact with and influence each other. Understanding it as a 'container' of multiple knowledges, therefore, enables me to analyse what the aspects questioned specifically by coworking with plants and ghosts are.

3.1 Dissolving the Concept of Linear Time

"Whereas Progress trained us to keep moving forwards, to look up to an apex at the end of a horizon, ghosts show us multiple unruly temporalities." (Tsing et al. G8)

The "time of modernity" (Tsing et al. G10) is a concept through which many entities that don't share the same mode of existence as humans in western society are excluded and I argue that for co-working with more-than-humans and nourishing the multispecies environment, linear time and the mechanisms that produce it need to be disestablished. What kinds of time are expressed and lived by plants and ghosts? Vranken is proposing to think of plants as ghosts exactly because of time:

I am proposing that plants are ghosts because of their material and physical expression and because of their very material relation to time, life and death. Simultaneously, they are mainly ghosts in the limited and limiting experience of humans, who seem to have developed a "plant blindness"

(Wandersee and Schussler 2001) and in doing so have outcasted plants to
the realms of invisibility. (239)

Tsing, Swanson, Gan, and Bubandt write that ghosts remind us that "the time of modernity is
not the only kind of time, and that our metronomic synchrony is not the only time that
matters" (G10). Besides diverse expressions of time, ghosts also show the virtual agency of
other times, or, as Mark Fisher writes, past "*remains* effective as a virtuality" (18), and future
"is *already* effective in the virtual" (18). They point to the impossibility of dividing past and
future from the present and instead introduce a layered time where different moments are
stacked, entangled, and influenced by each other.

I argue that working in and with multiple time expressions in a multispecies
environment is an aspect of practicing 'ethics of encounter' because, as Neimanis, Åsberg and
Hedrén write, 'ethics of encounter' "encourages more sensitivity to alternative (more-than-
human) time scales and possible environmental futures, such that both our bodily inheritances
and our legacies are carefully considered" (84). Layered time, such as that which is practiced
in working with plants and ghosts, not only enables the coexistence of multiple realities but
also implies a deeply relational understanding in which it is possible and necessary to be
responsive to more-than-humans and nourish relations with them. Understanding time as
layered with multiple expressions could be associated with the concept of 'thick time';
recalling Neimanis's definition will be helpful for understanding the implications of
practicing it:

> time is not a path, stretching behind and beyond us. It is not something we
> are simply "in," or which we progress "through." We (in the most expansive
> sense possible) are spacetimes gathering our pasts and making multivalent
> futures possible. Thick time is made by material agents, including but not
> limited to us, in collaboration. ("Speculative Reproduction" 118)

Hence, it could be said that ghosts and plants express 'thick time', reminding us that the
perception of time is not a universal and given thing, but is instead constantly shaped. As
James Williams writes: "We live as time makers – anything exists as a maker of time" (37).
This highlights the interconnectedness of diverse 'time makers' and points us to the
consequences of other's activity that might act upon us and vice versa. Such an
understanding of time disables an attempt to unify the time experience as a condition for

relating with 'the other' and instead introduces an environment of multiple perspectives that are nevertheless entangled and do interact and influence each other. Therefore, it could be said that through thinking-with and thinking-as ghosts and plants, *Rooted Hauntology Lab* opens up the possibility to think and live in a time that is not a line but a complex system of sediments.

One example of how such an understanding of time was reflected, also in the format of the public iteration, is the decision not to frame the first iteration in 2019 as an event with the consumable time but instead creating a séance that lasted throughout the whole day. The audience had to commit to being there the whole time. Through the format of the séance, they tried to introduce a different relation to "spending" time, the one "that is not 'extracting' or 'consuming, but based on 'being-with'" (Vranken) which was also one of the main orientations in Vranken's curatorial approach where, as she said in our talk, she focused on curating breaks and informal moments for the audience to share the space and time together. Namely, the 14-hours long séance consisted of diverse presentations and if the presentation was not durational, there were at least 2 hours long breaks in between (Vranken 244) that emphasized the notion of sharing time and space.

3.2 Negotiating Asymmetrical Power Relations

I have seen that practicing and acknowledging the 'thickness' of time is one of the crucial aspects of generating the conditions for other bodies to exist. But inviting more-than-humans in artistic practice, taking care of them, and maintaining the conditions for the emerging and acknowledged relations also forefronts the question of asymmetrical power distribution. By deciding to invite more-than-humans into the artistic practice the power is already discrepant – it is the human who decides to insist on paying attention. This is even slightly highlighted in working with potted plants that are totally dependent on the help and care of a human. Nevertheless, asymmetrical power relations are at the core of any multispecies environment and I will show how putting them in front and dealing with them is important for generating different modes of responsivity.

Namely, practicing responsivity to the entanglements with more-than-humans and making them visible, as an attempt to overcome the violence of the dual system of opposition between nature and culture, requires constant negotiations and reflection on power relations. As Vranken said in our conversation, it also offers a lens to look through the questions that are present in any constellations, because plants and ghosts

make this uncomfortable point of working together or being together even
more uncomfortable once you start thinking about what the relationship
actually is and what it is based on. . . . Working with plants thought me to
which extent violence is unknowable and to which extent oppression is
unknowable. And how do we not make this into something that kills our
connection (that either makes me freeze and afraid of action, or that makes
me numb to the boundaries of the other), but how do we make that into
something that can become so explicit that we can actually start allowing the
unknown between us to inform how we work. (Vranken)

Hence, it is precisely in experimenting with the boundaries and through finding ways to be
attentive and responsive to the unknowability that feminist and ecological modes of thinking
and relating are occurring. Firstly, responding to the unknowable requires accepting the
unknowable, shifting from ignorance to acknowledging the entanglements that don't
necessarily need to be perceived or seen by us. In an interview, Vranken exposed this by
saying: "I don't know to what extent ghosts, plants, and I are always working on the same
project, but we are working in each other's presence and I want to be attentive to how that
changes my work". This quote precisely describes the first and the main potential of more-
than-human practices that lies in navigating the attention and extending the lens to the
entanglements in which one is existing, acknowledging them, and working in their presence
because this acknowledgment already shapes one's way of thinking and working.

Secondly, the acceptance of unknowability generates searching for modes of coexisting
with it. To further elaborate on the importance of attempting to attune to this unknowability, I
offer a quote from Giovanni Aloi:

Human-animal and human-plant relationships have always entailed forms
discipline in which the human sets specific rules around the limitation imposed
by the biospecificities of the bodies of the nonhuman. Although at first glance
it might seem that the human is the sole operator of agency, more careful
consideration can reveal that the nonhuman always poses a form of resistance
of some sort, or that, in not very obvious ways, the nonhuman responds to the
disciplining of domestication with subtler form of re-wilding. In these
instances, plants and animals change human behavior by determining

29

economies of care, regimes of sustenance, production of wealth, and inscribing

power and economic value. (33)

Exposing the forms of the non-obvious resistance that reshapes human behaviour helps me to conclude that the constant attempts and experiments to reconfigure the power distribution are, even if they 'fail', exactly the ones generating the field full of potentials for reconceptualizing and finding new modes of perceiving, existing and attending to the environment.

3.3 Practicing Responsiveness to the Absent

Responding to the unknown is closely connected to the third crucial aspect of *Rooted Hauntology Lab*: practicing attention for the absent. Paying attention, observing, and noticing other mechanisms of existing is strongly shaped by the limits of what is perceivable for humans and for established western logic and I argue that it is exactly the awareness of its limitations that can enable responding to the "ignored". The ways of thinking, perceiving, and forming relations to plants and ghosts, to the other, unseen or ignored, in *Rooted Hauntology Lab*, are informed by following scientific research about plant communication, reading plant histories, following esoteric practices and practices of other knowledges that are developed around plants and ghosts, working with spells, etc. For example, Michael Marder's writing about vegetal generosity informed Vranken's approach in curating a public iteration, plants and their role of nurturing the soil might inform the way we think about death, about time as layered, about the interconnectedness between diverse agents, etc.

The way the absence is dealt with in *Rooted Hauntology Lab* is strongly influenced by Jacques Derrida's concept of 'hauntology' that, as Vranken writes, "points at the idea that everything that exists is also constructed through what it is not. Everything is defined by absence. To haunt is to be present through absence" (239). The figure of ghosts was importantly employed in addressing the environmental concerns in the book by Tsing, Swanson, Gan, and Bubandt that write: "To track the histories that make multispecies livability possible, it is not enough to watch lively bodies. Instead, we must wander through landscapes, where assemblages of the dead gather together with the living" (G5). Thinking plants as ghosts, therefore, points to the series of the unseen entanglements with plants that nevertheless have, as Fisher writes, virtual agency (18). Hence, instead of taking into account, and for granted, only the things that are seen, working with absence means paying attention to the things in between, to the things that are not seen, and to the ones that can be seen only

through another presence. This is a much more relational perspective in which all the related agents, absent and present, have agency and matter and co-shape each other.

Additionally, developing attention for the ignored and unseen also highlights the importance of practice. Attention is one of the most powerful tools for shaping the world, and it is culturally shaped and influenced. Therefore, practicing different attention is of great importance. Vranken tries to pay attention to the more-than-humans with which she shares spaces as often as she can. One example is starting the working day only after she has spent some time paying attention to all the other beings that she shares space with. While working on the final presentation in *DAS Theatre*, she also developed her own simple method of practicing constant attunement and attention to her co-workers through radical observation where she would set a timer of at least 45 minutes and just observe one of the plants with trying not to get distracted, not to narrate the situation on her own (Vranken). As she said and also wrote in the article, focusing on another body slowly gives a feeling of entering to another sensitivity: "I slow down and try to observe details with full attention. An observation without judgment, without the desire to get something from the other, a radical noticing" (241).

As she continues in the article, such practice requires the development of "attitudes of listening" (242), and "it requires a suspension of one's own desires to dominate right away what we are listening to and what for" (242). This shows how working with more-than-humans requires unlearning certain modes of attention and practicing different methods for attuning which is again connected to the previous conclusion about resistance in power relations that mobilize transformation in behaviour. Searching for different modes of attending can be based on different practices that aim to enable gaining knowledge through the whole body, such as diverse forms of meditation, exercises for body awareness, attentiveness, etc.

Practicing attention to the absent therefore has the potential to influence one's attitude and approach to the world: it enables approaching the world as an intra-connected multispecies environment. As I saw in the first chapter, reorienting and developing attention to the absent, might be mobilized through the 'ethics of encounter'. Through mobilizing responsivity to the relations that do not have to be recognized or similar anymore, they enable the acceptance of the unknowable and of the unbridgeable space between plants and humans. This means unlearning or challenging the limiting mechanisms that produce separation and accepting that our knowledge is partial and limited and that also other-than-humans perceive the world around them "in ways we cannot yet even conceive" (Aloi 7). The acceptance of

unknowability is grounded in dismantling the idea of colonial knowledge that has the power to understand everything and, through it, possess everything. Instead, as I saw, collaborating with unknowability requires the shifting of power relations.

To sum up, *Rooted Hauntology Lab* could be termed as an interspecies practice that, through insisting on being-with plants and through expanding the perspective by thinking-as and thinking-with plants and ghosts, opens a space for collective multispecies thinking of multiple perspectives and alternative narratives. Moreover, it points to a fact that things are not given but are instead shaped and reshaped by the perspectives and logics that we apply to them. To borrow Aloi's words: "it reminds us that nothing ever really *is*, in a universal sense, but that every encounter with others, nonhumans, objects, particles is utterly defined by the materiality, modality, structure, and histories of the epistemic spatializations in which the encounter takes place" (31).

Working in the presence of ghosts and plants that express different types of realities, exposes several challenges to attune and coexist with difference and unknowability and I mapped the aspects that seem crucial for nourishing the shared practice: creating conditions for practicing a thick time in which several time expressions can coexist, attentiveness to the limitations of the established systems and relational approach in order to practice different forms of attention, attention for the absent or unseen, and constant negotiations with power relations that have a potential to evoke different modes of coexisting and responding to 'the other'. Hence, *Rooted Hauntology Lab*, through introducing different concepts of times, dealing with power relations, and practicing attentiveness to the absent, mobilizes spaces for other forms of reality. It could be understood as a more feminist and ecological way of approaching the world because it nourishes new modes of relating and of attention and perception that are grounded in the awareness of the complexity of the entanglements with our natural others. Such an approach, to borrow Aloi's sentences again,

> understand plants as integral, coexisting *actants* that play defining roles in the functioning of ecosystems on this planet. What we look at, and how we look, constitute essential parameters in the recuperation of "alternative gazes" and the crafting of new ones—modalities of engagement that entail more than the ocular—modalities that can lead to a reontologization of the living. (xx)

To conclude, through thinking-with and thinking-as, *Rooted Hauntology Lab* mobilizes a space of thinking through the space of otherness that has the potential of redefining the

relationship to the environment. It shows that more responsive ways of encountering the environment have to be mobilized with accepting the unknowability and generating multiple knowledges. While Chen proposes thinking with water as an approach to develop different attitudes towards it, Vranken proposed being with plants and thinking them through ghosts as a means of cultivating a different relationship to them. Climate change points to the necessity of relational thinking and of understanding ecosystems in all their interconnectedness. Cultivating narratives that navigate attention to our multispecies 'sympoiesis'[16] mobilizes grounds for 'ethics of encounter'. Therefore, Vranken's practice as an interspecies practice of a shared knowledge enables them to create and apply a different logic, a logic of the multispecies presence, to the world around us.

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[16] The concept of 'sympoiesis' is introduced by Donna Haraway in her book *Staying with the Trouble. Making Kin in the Chthulucene* and described as: "*Sympoiesis* is a simple word; it means "making-with." Nothing makes itself; nothing is really autopoietic or self-organizing. . . . *Sympoiesis* is a word proper to complex, dynamic, responsive, situated, historical systems. It is a word for worlding-with, in company. Sympoiesis enfolds autopoiesis and generatively unfurls and extends it." (58)

4 Between Me and the Moon: Expanding the Attention to the More-Than-Human Sociality With the Moon

Collaboration with the Moon and its Metonic cycle is part of Andrea Božić and Julia Willm's practice-led research *Cosmologies of Attention and Spectatorship*. I approached their practice by conducting interviews with them and through some of their private writings that they kindly shared with me. I also had an opportunity to come closer to their practice with a part of my internship where I joined them in the creative process for the performance *How to Exit a Reality (Attempt 1 of 19)* that premiers in October 2021. This chapter focuses especially on their relationship with the Moon and on the agency the Moon has in it. Focusing on the way their more-than-human practice is realized will help me to see how the Moon affects it and tackle some of the main feminist ecological potentials of more-than-human practices.

Cosmologies of Attention and Spectatorship is practice-based research on the relationship between attention and space with the question of how altering the attention alters the space and the perception of reality. Their aim is to develop "an experience of multiple perspectives and modes of attending simultaneously and an extended range and quality of attention - as part of the artistic work - which can then be taken further into the world" (Božić and Willms). Their interest highlights attention as one of the most powerful tools for reshaping the world, which is also a very important aspect for cultivating responsivity to more-than-humans, and the field of performing arts as a field of potentials for creating the experiences of attending differently.

Since their practice of collaborating with the Moon is strongly connected to working with attention, it is important to note that although paying attention was also an important part of *Rooted Hauntology Lab*, the way they are working with it is much different. In *Rooted Hauntology Lab*, extending the attention is part of destabilizing the boundary between humans and nature and a way for taking the entanglements we are part of into account and responding to them. Božić and Willms's research into attention is closely connected to its social constructed-ness and to the modes of spectatorship in a theatre as a cultural activity. Maaike Bleeker writes that "[w]e always see less than is there" ("Visuality in the Theatre" 18), arguing that "we always see more or less than what is there and that, therefore, seeing is always affected by with ideals, values, presuppositions, fears, and desires" (18). Their work could be understood as research in challenging and destabilizing the established modes of attention as potentially transformative for attending to the world otherwise. For

experimenting with the possibilities of "freeing" attention, the Moon as a collaborator has great importance.

4.1 Collaborating With the Moon

Collaboration with the Moon was initiated with Božić's performances in collaboration with the weather that started in 2007 and continued in 2009 as collaboration with the night sky that slowly focused on the Moon. They were first organized only as announcements of weather events or night sky events that were spectacularized in the media[17] and later, from 2015 onwards, they started organizing live events in order to gather audiences to further organize 'the gaze'.

These 'announcements' as performances in collaboration with the weather and the night sky played, as Božić said, with questions of authorship, by experimenting with extending the stage and the spectatorship and by applying theatre logic to the whole world and emphasizing it. They were concerned with the power of claims to shift attention and with the effects of navigating attention to the ongoing and always present things that are often ignored. As Božić said in our first conversation,

> although the performances in collaboration with the weather playfully confused what are all the elements that belong to the performance, where is the performance taking place and when it begins and ends, a very important aspect of these performances was that they were not only conceptual announcements but that there was a real event, where people could follow the performative instructions and go out at the specific moment to watch or observe something happening in the night sky, even if it was not perceivable.

The interesting aspect of these projects is that the 'spectacular' events of the Moon and the night sky conditioned the time and the schedule of their work, so, productional aspects and their way of working were closely tied to following events on the night sky and planning public events together with them, or, as Božić said referring to the performance *Orange Night* in Centre Pompidou Metz in 2019: "we could only do something for that exhibition if

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[17] For example performances *Weather Alarm Snow* and *a Choreography for Moon and Venus*.

something was actually happening in the sky at that time, which is an interesting approach in relating to curating".

After the performance in Metz, they decided to work intensely with the Moon's Metonic cycle which brought into their practice the idea of the expanded time. With this shift, spectacular night sky events were not a condition for collaborating anymore. Instead, collaborating with the Moon all the time in any of its phases makes their practice much more involved and connected to the Moon's processes and changes. Such a continuous artistic practice developed in collaboration with the Moon brings to the forefront the question of how – and through which methods – is the ongoing collaboration mobilized and what does it change.

In the interview in May 2021, I insisted on questioning this collaboration and the Moon's agency to detect the boundaries of collaborating with the Moon and to better understand its position. At one point Božić referred to Gurdjieff and his idea that we are all slaves to the Moon and in that context, a little bit humorously said: "I am associating the Moon with all the things that are driving you without you being aware (internalized culture archive, gender, relationship to family …) and in that sense, I am collaborating with the Moon all the time".

Although intended as a bit of a joke, such an understanding of collaboration[18] is, as I show, very connected to the way they work with attention and highlights one of the aspects for ecological potentials of more-than-human practices: collaborating with more-than-humans emphasizes the awareness of the environment one is in, of the relations one is entangled in, and of the context that shapes and influences one's decisions. This awareness introduces a much more relational and situated perspective and influences the way of thinking: the awareness of our relations with the Moon enables thinking certain elements through the space between me and the Moon, which brings in the most important aspect of their collaboration: expanding attention to the environment as a complex web of diverse agents and shifting perspectives, which can strongly influence and shape the way we 'imagined the world to be'.

Working with the Moon also requires finding ways to attend to and relate to it. One of their important methods is the method of 'site responsivity' which incorporates the spatial features and histories of the space they are in. This principle has great importance also for relating to the Moon: each performance or public iteration incorporates the Moon's phase. The way they relate to the Moon is also strongly informed by reading about and researching

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[18] As Božić and Willms said later in our conversation: "If I see it, I collaborate".

different practices and different knowledges around the Moon – Moon rituals and their beliefs around the Moon, science and especially quantum physics, cosmology – and bringing the different concepts to their practice. Thinking of their practice through these diverse concepts[19] and playing with them which, as they said, "produces a certain creative space".

Hence, in their practice, the Moon is an agent that reveals some other spacetime logics and enables them to think through them. Or, as Božić said in one of our talks: "I shifted the interest to what is the agency of that collaborator that you are working with - it is a different kind of agency than your own – the Moon cannot sign it. Because I am working with it, things get revealed to me and are involved with me, I share with". In the next sections, I will expose and dive deeper into the two crucial aspects that are introduced with the collaboration with the Moon: working with a different time logic that the Metonic cycle emphasizes and expanding the attention together with the Moon.

4.2 Layering the Time

The Metonic cycle is a period of approximately 19 years when the phases of the Moon recur at the same time in a year. That means that star constellations and the Moon appear in almost the same position every 19 years. They decided to incorporate this 19-years cycle in their work as a loop for bringing in histories and futures layered around performances and places where they are happening. Such a way of working with the Metonic cycle emphasizes the perception of time as cyclical and layered instead of linear and progressive. In the creative process *How to Exit a Reality (Attempt 1 of 19)*, the Metonic cycle is for example used to

> construct a spacetime journey through times and spaces separated by 19 years
> and create a loophole between them pursuing an (impossible) attempt to exit
> it. We will travel through a tapestry of dreams, personal and collective
> memories and histories, scientific models and witchcraft rituals, future
> projections and SF fictions relating to the Moon spanning into deep time
> (extremely far past and future realities). (Božić and Willms)

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[19] For example, Gilbert Simondon's concept of preindividual being: Simondon claims that each individual goes through the process of individuation. Before this process, there is "preindividual being" that "exists as realm of potentialities which contains within it the possibility for potential individuations" (Bluemink, "Gilbert Simondon"). This idea is connected to his idea of "co-individuation between the individual and the milieu in which it exists" (Bluemink).

As seen, the Metonic cycle is employed as a kind of lens for looking at the world that connects and links the events divided by 19 years toward each other and incorporates them in their work. Through such a lens, the entanglements between these different times have a space to emerge or to be seen. Highlighting the connections and interdependencies between them gives the events and stories a slightly different status because it raises the awareness of their shared milieu and of the fact that it's both, past and future, that are influencing the environments and our perspective on it. Such an emphasis on the layering and on the agency that these non-present, or, to come back to Fisher, virtual presences have, could be understood as an example of a feminist and ecological approach. Namely, connecting these diverse materialities mobilizes relational thinking and understanding that the actions taken have consequences and are sedimented in the milieu that influences all included agents. It also points to the fact that things are not just coming out of anywhere, but that each has its own specific history and context. While it can be said that *Rooted Hauntology Lab* is working with 'thick time' as a space to enable the inclusion and the coexistence of diverse time experiences, the notion of the layered and expanded time that comes with a Metonic cycle introduces a more relational perspective that highlights the entanglements and interdependencies between diverse 'time-makers'.

Generating materials through the lens of the Metonic cycle therefore strongly affects the way the material is both gathered and organized, which shows the agency that the Moon has, or is at least ascribed to it, in their practice. This already indicates the approach in their practice that could arguably also be called 'site responsive'. Namely, they respond to and incorporate the things that are coming to them and are opening up the agency to other elements. As Božić said, they are "interested in contingency, questions of agency, and in working with something that is given . . . working with what is arriving". Such openness and responsiveness are connected to a specific type of sensibility that emerges from a responsivity and playfulness, seen from the below quote:

> the deep time that comes with the Moon brings in the idea that things are not
> fixed: it goes against the perception of understanding things as given and that
> they are like they are and will not change. If you zoom out a little bit, nothing
> is fixed, everything is moving, even if we are not able to perceive it. (Willms)

Their practice approaches reality as constantly changing. If reality is constantly changing, then practicing the sensibility to respond to it is of great importance. This is also present in

the modes in which they construct forms of spectatorship: "at the core of what we are trying to do with our performative work is this idea that it is possible to play" (Božić and Willms). Accepting things as non-fixed calls also for constant attention and responsiveness to it, which introduces a different concept of encountering the world: instead of perceiving things as they are and just accepting them, such an approach requires taking them into account and paying attention to them all the time. It also, as seen from the above-mentioned quote, introduces the possibilities of playing and restructuring things, which is an important aspect of organizing the material: putting side-to-side diverse stories gathered with the Metonic cycle, searching for unexpected relations and similarities between them, playing with them through shifting and multiplying the perspectives that the space between us and the Moon is offering, and changing the reality through shifting the perspective to play with the fact that each perspective shapes the space and the perceived reality in its own manner.

To sum up, the Metonic cycle is a container of multiple bodies and perspectives that coexist and create multiple realities and functions as a lens to see how each of them reshapes the others and vice versa. It could be said that the Moon as an agent that connects all the diverse bodies and phenomena, mobilizes practicing the ethics of encounter because it brings attention to the diverse agents and emphasizes the environment as shared between diverse bodies. Understanding diverse stories as different aspects of reality itself results in destabilizing our attention and remodelling reality through making things seen, or seen differently.

4.3 Navigating the Attention

As said, the Moon as a kind of a carrier of diverse materials and perspectives has agency to collect and connect many elements that seem unrelatable. Their work aims to expand attention together with the Moon through two methods[20] they have developed in their artistic practice: differentiating the attention and overlapping several different narratives and logics to incorporate them into the 'here and now' of the perceived reality.[21] Both of these methods work as multipliers of perspectives by simultaneously applying these diverse materialities to destabilize the established 'reality' and generate dynamic space, or, as they call it, 'imaginal space'. In the case of differentiated attention, this can be simultaneously

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[20] More about their practice of 'divided attention' can be found in their article "Undoing What We Know: Dramaturgy as Cosmology-in-the-Making" where they describe it as: "you look at something and at the same time you are aware of yourself looking" (230).

[21] In case of performances or exhibitions, into the physical space where they take place.

having a perspective from yourself and a perspective from outside, while the method of overlapping is more concerned with fictionalizing spaces through mapping diverse space-time logics with their own narratives into the physical space. This 'imaginal space' that emerges from, as they said, "overlapping the fictional and real, imaginary and physical spaces" (Božić and Willms) creates a different experience of the reality or, to put it differently, generates tools to attend to it and perceive it differently. This shows that they work with reshaping the attention as a social construction or at least culturally specific act through reshaping the logic of the space because the architecture of space directs our attention. Hence, these two methods seek to reconfigure the attention and 'free' it from the established narrow mode of attention[22] in post-capitalist society, or as they say, they are "emancipating attention from automation" in order to generate potentials for differently approaching the reality.

The other important aspect of the way they work with diverse perspectives is the embodied experience of these imaginal spaces: "Differentiated attention and re-organized spacetime at the core of our work is an embodied practice of sustaining expanded attention to sensorial, affective, and mental aspects simultaneously, including to oneself attending as part of the field" (Božić and Willms). The importance of the embodied experience lies in the fact that it activates the whole affective apparatus of the body and enables the emergence of other knowledges that are gained through the interaction of all the sensorial experiences. Therefore, as they said in the conversation, these 'imaginal spaces' don't have the status of the imaginary narrative but are approached as environments that can be entered and experienced with the whole multisensorial body.

To sum up, their work with attention is grounded in the awareness that spaces organize our attention, and that attention is culturally conditioned. Hence, paying attention is a political act and their collaboration with the Moon is mostly centered around shifting the gaze and enabling different logics to navigate the attention otherwise as a potentially transformative act because, as they said in our talk: "as soon as you have seen it, you cannot undo it seen". Awareness affects our way of attending the world and through paying attention to the Moon, the space of attention expands.

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[22] A mode of paying attention to only one phenomenon that excludes the environment and the context. An important writer to whom they refer is Jonathan Crary. In the book *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture,* he writes about the connections between modernization and industrialization and the current mode of attention and perception.

For my research, the crucial aspect of both of their methods is that they mobilize new relational spaces of expanded attention that emerge from in-between, from interactions and relations between different logics (for example, dreams), and that they are destabilizing the established logic. One of those constant but dynamic and relational spaces in their practice is a space between me and the Moon. Hence, it is not as much based on navigating the attention and paying it to the other unseen spaces as it is concerned with expanding it and playing with it through reshaping and remodelling it to introduce the possibilities for changing it. So, their collaboration with the more-than-human agencies extends the attention in order to confront possible perspectives and create a dynamic and changing space as a playground for diverse spacetime logics that can introduce different modes of imagining and attending to the world. These are environments where present and virtual agencies of different bodies can coexist and interact, and since these are multi-perspective and multiscale environments, they could be understood as spaces where multispecies environments can emerge. With differentiating and extending the attention, agents in the environment get introduced as interdependent agents that are all the time changing the environment and responding to it. Through such an understanding a much more responsive mode gets introduced, a mode of paying attention to the complex entanglements between the diverse agents from different spaces and times. To conclude, collaborating with the Moon enables them to encompass the complex web of connections and mobilize grounds for the awareness that we are "*of* the world" (Barad 185). I argue that in their practice a transformative place for experimenting and creating different logics to attend to the environment is the space in-between.

5 Interlude: Challenges of Multispecies Environments in the Performing Arts

The two chosen case studies were not brought into the research to conduct a comparative analysis, but since thinking with and through them revealed some of the common aspects that seem to come in with more-than-human co-workers, I decided to open the space for this intermission to map some of the common principles for cultivating responsivity to more-than-humans. As said, *Rooted Hauntology Lab's* spheres of interest are very close to my research, while in *Cosmologies of Attention and Spectatorship* environmental topics are not at the forefront of the research. Because of that, analyzing *Rooted Hauntology Lab* through the established lens allowed me to encapsulate the practice while analyzing *Cosmologies of Attention and Spectatorship* through the feminist environmental lens brought forward the collaboration with the Moon, but some of their other main approaches[23] had to be omitted. Although that was one of the main concerns in the middle of my research, thinking through it exposed some of the connections and similarities that seem to reveal crucial aspects of more-than-human environments in the performing arts and therefore helped me to tackle the main feminist ecological potentials that come with the attempts to collaborate or co-work with more-than-humans.

The first common thing that stood out during my research was the importance of time and the necessity to question and disestablish the idea of time as a progressing line. Namely, both of the practices show the limitedness of the concept scaled upon the ideal of the modern western human that overlooks many other 'time makers'. Anna Tsing writes: "as long as we imagine that humans are *made* through progress, nonhumans are stuck within this imaginative framework too" (21) and shows how such a concept fixates the environment and all the bodies in it and transforms them into resources. Hence, I argue that more-than-human practices are, in order to co-work or collaborate with bodies that are expressing different realities and different times, navigating the attention to the "multispecies time making" (Tsing 21) of diverse rhythms.

Rooted Hauntology Lab and *Cosmologies of Attention and Spectatorship* are sharing dealing with time as layered: in bringing in the concept of the 'thick time' that acknowledges the sediments of actions and events that have an influence on us and vice versa. 'Thick time' works as a concept that situates, contextualizes, and generates a relational approach to the environment. It highlights the impossibility of conceptually distinguishing the past and the

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[23] Mapping the dreams, fictionalizing the space, thinking about spectatorship.

future because both of them have agency in the present. Additionally, both practices are also attending to the Moon, ghosts, or plant's time expressions, but *Rooted Hauntology Lab* focuses more on the importance of developing sensitivity and responsivity to diverse temporalities and more directly addresses the coexistence of multiple time expressions as an important part for enabling multispecies futures. This might be the case because of co-working with living organisms which leads me to one of the differences between interspecies practices and more-than-human practices

Secondly, both practices are concerned with acknowledging the unseen connections between diverse agents, which shows their orientation to create spaces where these entanglements can be acknowledged in order to generate responsivity to them. They both approach this by navigating attention to these entanglements which lies in the belief that the awareness and the knowledge of these entanglements might inform one's way of attending the world. Coming to the end of my research, this aspect appears to be one of the most important: reshaping the attention – expanding it to the unknown, navigating it to the entanglements, and relationally approaching the world through it.

I already wrote that Božić and Willms's work with attention is very connected to constructing the modes of spectatorship. After analyzing both practices, I would argue that their work is much more centered around researching the transformative potentials of expanding attention through generating and introducing simultaneously diverse narratives and hence requiring different modes of attending, while Vranken's work with attention comes from insisting on paying the attention to more-than-humans and to the ignored bodies, from where other possible methods of attending are revealed. It could be said that paying attention to the ignored generates alternative methods of attending through practicing the otherness by co-working with plants and ghosts. To sum up, if Božić and Willms are working with the attention through reconstructing it by bringing in different logics (dreams, but also the Moon and events from the Metonic cycle), Vranken's work is reversed – from paying attention and practicing becoming other, different possibilities got revealed.

The differences in working with these common topics are probably also consequences of different interests and motivations that generate orientations that were discussed in the previous chapter: thinking-with and thinking-as, or thinking-in-between. Božić and Willms's work seems to be focusing on their collaboration with the Moon specifically through their research on attention. The Moon as a collaborator functions as a generator for creating imaginative and speculative narratives and as a source of knowledge for connections between diverse perspectives that enables expanding the attention. That is, actually, very close to the

way Vranken works with ghosts – as tools for thinking through which might again highlight the differences between working with living organisms or other non-humans. Namely, plants function very differently because they are often directly dependent on Vranken's care. As I saw, it brings in the problem of asymmetrical power, but there are also transformative potentials that lie in taking care of them, attuning to them, and hence changing Vranken's own behaviours and habits.

Different distributions of power are not at the forefront of Božić and Willms's collaboration with the Moon. Nevertheless, their work is importantly oriented towards disempowering the established narratives. The way they work with it is through offering a multitude of other possible narrations that are generated through specific frameworks and destabilize the established or "given" logic and lower its power. Therefore, if Vranken's questions of power come from trying to attune and relate to the plants, their work with power comes through questioning the reality as it is and showing and exposing the possibility to destabilize and shift it.

To sum up, although these two practices show two different collaborative formats, they both are, through different methods and research questions, methodologically exploring the nature of collaborations, of "doing in common" (Neimanis), and of working in other's presence, which opens up a space for responsivity to the entanglements we are part of, for more-than-human agencies, diverse expressions of time and reality, diverse and particular knowledges, and connections, and ways of existing otherwise. This highlights their orientation towards creating or inviting alternative narratives to form other possibilities of attending the world.

6 Conclusion

In the preceding chapters, I have examined how more-than-human and interspecies practices may generate a space for multiple perspectives extended beyond human-scale and hence cultivate a more feminist and ecological mode of understanding and engaging with the environment which is based on attentiveness and responsivity to the complex webs we are part of. It is important to note that I am not proposing that feminist ecological potentials necessarily lie in every practice of co-working with more-than-humans, neither that it is only in these practices that feminist ecological potentials are mobilized. Instead, I propose an intersectional lens for expanding dramaturgy and understanding it as a shared more-than-human practice generated through working with the unknowability and bringing in the otherness. Hopefully, that offered some productive space for rethinking dramaturgy, performing arts, artistic research, ideas, authorship.

After crafting the intersectional lens of dramaturgy as collaboration, I approached two very different practices to see how working with the otherness and expanding the human-centered scales influence the thinking in the artistic practice. Featuring longer ongoing practices and artistic researches as case studies was one of the main challenges in my research, firstly with finding ways of approaching them and later with finding methods to analyze them. I am aware that I employed a rather affirmative approach to their practices and their thoughts about it which stems from my utmost respect for their work and from the importance that I recognize in their work and in the modes of thinking their researches generates. Namely, these studies were chosen to broaden and expand my proposition and my interest and to open up a discursive space, because I identify very important orientations of both of these practices: firstly, radical responsivity to the environments and context they are working in, secondly the immense importance of the way they work and potentials that lie already in their practices of attuning themselves to the entanglements, and thirdly, a different approach to working with the present concerns: instead of generating passivizing catastrophic narratives of hopelessness that would come from being convinced that anything in the world is study-able and knowable these two practices are examples of a deep awareness that knowledge can never "fully master" (Neimanis). Instead, they offer places for generating ways of knowing otherwise.

Through experimenting with and showing the possibilities of attending differently to the world, they are also not examples of creating utopian futures unrelated to the present situations but are instead generating possible futures through showing that it is possible and

necessary to shift the established narratives and logics and to attend to the present situations differently. With such an orientation they are radically attentive and responsive to the western violence and injustices and are working towards remodelling the present established western mechanisms that produce them.

"We need to borrow the energy from the future to overturn the conditions of the present." (Braidotti)

Thinking the two chosen case studies through the conceptualized framework of dramaturgy as collaboration with more-than-humans unveiled certain common aspects that are perhaps exposing some of the main challenges through which more-than-human practices generate feminist ecological potentials. They lie in the fact that more-than-human practices require exiting the binary opposition of nature and culture, dismantling human-centered scales, the western concept of progressive time, and the established modes of attention. That is to say that merely including more-than-humans as agential in the already established system is not enough. Instead, a transformation of the system in which they are included is crucial and I believe that attempts to relate and co-work with more-than-humans in shared artistic practices could be understood as attempts of building systems for multispecies socialities where the other's alterity is accepted through suspending human centeredness and accepting the unknowable.

These attempts are firstly attempts of paying the attention to "multiple temporal rhythms and trajectories of the assemblage" (Tsing 24) in order to grasp the interconnectivity between diverse bodies and enable understanding the sociality as more-than-human which "enables a reconceptualization of our own human modes of sociality" (Chandler and Neimanis 71). Namely, both of the practices include bodies that we are already entangled with, but the relations might be overlooked, or, more precisely, western culture might distance itself from them throughout history. Through navigating the attention 'back' to them, they foreground the fact that we are all collaborating all the time (Neimanis) and that it is necessary to take care of these relations.

They are calls for living multispecies environments and furthermore, as Anna Tsing framed it, "collaborative survivals" – survivals from collaborating with others that we are entangled with beyond the differences between us. Moreover, they are storytellers of "collaborative survival". Nevertheless, as she notes, these collaborations are never just for everyone: "Every instance of collaboration makes room for some and leaves out others.

Whole species lose out in some collaborations. The best we can do is to aim for "good-enough" worlds, where "good enough" is always imperfect and under revision" (255), but having multiple of such collaborations can challenge many public spheres.

"What pasts will we acknowledge, and what futures will we grow?" (Neimanis, "Speculative Reproduction" 125)

In addressing some of the limitations and possible paths that this research is leading me to, I would first like to note that my research and the way I am thinking about potentials is very closely tied to the potentials for dismantling western logic and cultivating other understandings of the world and of the relations between humans and nature. These ideas are everything but new: there are a lot of diverse and important narratives and systems in the other-than-western or other-than-capitalist cultures and traditions, especially in the indigenous communities and Buddhist traditions. Secondly, although I work with two practices created by three female artists, feminist environmental potentials are not gendered.

Having two such diverse case studies enabled me to tackle the possible differences between collaborating with live organisms or other more-than-humans and further research from my thesis will go to focus on the differences of collaborating with our 'natural others' or with 'non-species' agents to nuance the potentials for further cultivating responsivity to our entanglements. The second path that this research is opening is investigating some of the wider more-than-human practices. Namely, both of my case studies are dealing with very specific co-workers/collaborators and very specific relations that are still often minimized. Although I argue that they are, through these limited relationships, investigating the possibilities to relate differently and thus functioning as smaller playgrounds for opening up potentials to attune to entanglements and nourish the multispecies environments, it would be interesting to think further about interspecies practices that would not be centered around a specific relationship.

Analyzing two ongoing artistic practices as case studies to tackle feminist ecological potentials of more-than-human practices also brings in the aspect of infrastructures for producing art, of ways for existing in the cultural field, the importance of working methods, and politics of working. I believe that more-than-human practices are an important field for analyzing the established models (authorship, payment, extending *human* rights, taking care of all the authors – watering plants) and researching new ones, perhaps more sustainable

ones, as *Rooted Hauntology Lab* is doing and this is surely opening up a path for further research.

To sum up, through this research I hope I created an environment for gardening the importance of the performing arts in creating multispecies environments and for expanding the specter to more-than-humans to enable generating collective and multispecies modes of thinking and coexisting, because, to conclude with one of my favourite quotes:

It matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what descriptions describe descriptions, what ties tie ties. It matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories. (Haraway, "Staying with" 12)

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire for the Interview about *Rooted Hauntology Lab*

1. Can you shortly describe the trajectory of *Rooted Hauntology Lab* and elaborate on how your collaboration with plants and ghosts started? Why plants and ghosts?

2. If potted plants are a "visible otherness" in your collective, how did you invite ghosts? Which ones?

3. What is their status as collaborators? How do you deal with power relations?

4. How do you communicate and collaborate? Are there any crucial requirements for such collaborations?

5. Did you develop any specific methods for creating the conditions where relations can be nourished and visible? Did you develop any specific methods for being with/engaging with plants and ghosts?

6. Could you elaborate a little bit on thinking-with and thinking-as? What are some crucial categories that change?

7. What do plants and ghosts bring in? How do they influence the way you work?

8. How do you deal with absence in your collaborations? How do you work with the unseen, virtual, ignored? What are the mechanisms of making it visible?

9. An important part of your practice seems practicing being with otherness. How do you practice it? How are private practices and life and your artistic practice intertwined?

10. Could you elaborate a little bit on the comparison between only human collaboration and posthuman ones? What are the crucial differences?

11. How, if, working with ghosts and plants question established working methods?

12. An important part of such collaborations seems to deal with the impossibility of it, which probably opens the process to multiple perspectives, alternative temporalities, and alternative narratives. What do you think about the role of different ethics in such processes?

13. Do speculation and imagination play an important role in your work?

14. How are different contexts and positions that you take reshaping and reinventing your practice? Could you extract some crucial elements that are always present?

15. It is very interesting to think about *Rooted Hauntology Lab* as ongoing research and practice. How does it influence your work as a dramaturg? Are ghosts and plants always collaborating with you in all the projects? How can this affect the dramaturgy?

16. The 1st Séance was a curatorial event and you had a position of a curator. Is this position and form connected to some of your principles of working with posthuman collectives?

17. How has generosity influenced your process?

18. How would you think about ecology in your practice?

19. How is anticolonial thinking mobilized in your practice? How does it reshape it? Where do you see the embedded elements of colonial logic?

Appendix 2: Questionnaire for the Interview about *Cosmologies of Attention and Spectatorship*

1. You first started with announcements of collaborations with the sky. Now you are also adding performative elements. How did you decide on that transition? What are the main differences for you and what changed, how has your ways of working changed?

2. Do you think about space, the Moon, the dreams and the weather as collaborators? How are they different?

3. What is the status of your collaborators? What is their agency and how can it be manifested? Are there any crucial requirements/conditions for such collaborations to be realized?

4. How do you collaborate with the Moon (and/or Metonic cycle)? Did you develop any specific methods for creating the conditions for engaging with it?

5. Would you say that it is more about performances as collaboration with the Moon or also the two of you collaborating with it?

6. How does the Moon transform your practice and how does it influence the process? How is it included in it? In which parts of the process is it present? Which choices are informed by the Moon?

7. Collaboration with the Moon, and especially with its Metonic cycle emphasizes a different time logic, the cyclical and layered time instead of the linear and progressive perception of it. When does the collaboration start and end?

8. If you would agree on establishing them as your collaborators, how are these collaborations affecting the collaboration between you two or how is it different from only human collaborations?

9. The Moon as a collaborator helps to expand the attention, to create a different perspective. Could we say that it is a tool for thinking through other spacetime logics? An agent that reveals the logic and mechanisms of the established ones?

10. If we could say that space is also an important collaborator, it seems that the method through which the collaboration is realized is your method of 'site-responsivity'. Could you elaborate a little bit on it and the way you work with it?

11. How do you deal with the fact that the Moon can be very abstract or hardly imaginable in your collaborations? Is this perhaps one of the reasons you decided to collaborate with it?

12. What new modes of attending and modes of spectatorship and engagement with the world can emerge from this practice?