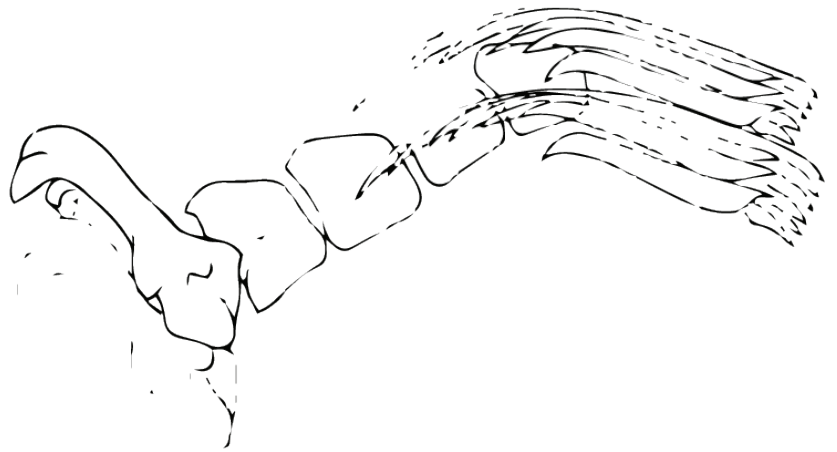


WET TOGETHER

HYDROFEMINIST MANIFESTO



VANESSA BOSCH

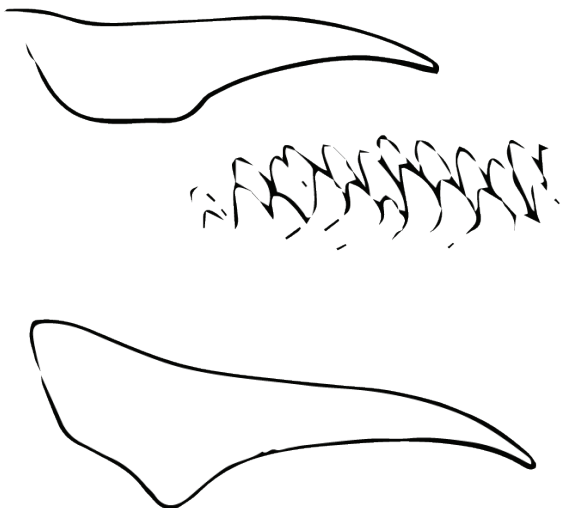
There is no such thing as dry land. Wetness is everywhere to some degree. It is in the seas, clouds, rains, dew, air, soils, minerals, plants, animals. The sea is very wet; the desert less so. So, when we experience 'water' on the other side of a line that allegedly separates it from 'land', we know it to be by design, design that articulates a surface for habitation. This surface has served as a ground for experience, understanding and knowledge.

– Anuradha Mathur & Dilip da Cuna

We could also tell the story this way: water connects bodies across times and spaces, through various complex movements and cycles to other bodies and beings in diverse exchanges, gifts, thefts, and forsaking. We could think of this work of water as flow, or more specifically, as a logic of connection or communication.

– Astrida Neimanis

Evolutionary we arose from the sea, so we folded the water within. Everything touched by water is connected - bodies of flora, fauna, tech, meteorology, geology and so on. Thus bodies of water can be energy, life, habitat and spirit...



COMMONING

Our bodies are a fundamental part of the natural world, neither separated from it nor privileged to it. Biologically this might be easily approved, but ever since technology has been detected as a tool for humankind, we set ourselves apart. Water surrounds us in entities like the ocean and the rain, that nourishes everything we feed on and even within ourselves. Since all living beings consist of at least some watery parts, either animal or plant, all lives are bodies of water. Thus we have a fundamental common with even the smallest plankton. Environmentalism starts with the acknowledgment, that the human consists of the same material as the material world.

The problematic nature of this relation is becoming increasingly clear in contemporary water crises and the suspect ways in which we are managing this planet's water resources. While these crises have led to international calls for recognizing water as a human right, an ontology of amniotics requires us to rethink this ecopolitics; I suggest that the promotion of a *hydrocommons* might be better suited for negotiating the interbeing of bodies of water on this planet.

– Astrida Neimanis

Environmental consciousness means being aware of the diversity of perceptions.

– Timothy Morton

There is no certain order, the human scaled perception is just one of a billion. We will always have an anthropocentric scaled perception of things. But it is an essential step to see, that humans will never be self-sufficient.



CIRCULATING



Today, philosophy and science grow more strongly together in their common belief of the *holobiont* (Lynn Margulis), a term to describe all subjects of planet earth as an intra-dependent whole, instead of individual units. It becomes important to acknowledge objects and substances not as isolated entities, but to recognise their lasting intra-actions and effects within human and non-human lives and ecologies, in private as in planetary scale.

This politically oriented onto-epistemology can be described as *transcorporeality*: Seeing humans and humanity less as isolated entities but more as *oceanic eddies* (Astrida Neimanis) to overcome borders and segregations to expand our understanding of what needs to be taken care of.

Perceiving things as fluid instead of solid, as transition instead of state, everything becomes vibrant and everything becomes matter. Water is circulating, everything is.

Ecology itself is nothing localised, it's fluid and migrating, circulating, transforming like water. The glass of water we drink has come from the tap, filtered water, originated from some spring or rainfall. And it will go back there, after we digest, we drained it into a system, streaming towards the closest ocean.

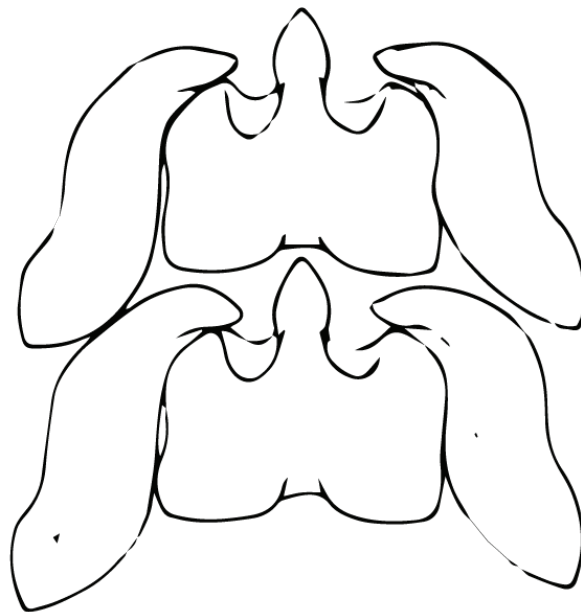
Circulation is not only a question of place, but also of time.

To drink a glass of water is to ingest the ghost of
bodies that haunt that water.

– Astrida Neimanis

Water circles and so does biological seep into cultural means. Investigating when do they become gift, when theft, are critical perceptions needed, to differentiate natural from unnatural streams, which are both human impacts on nature.

Already in the 18th century, James Hutton compared the global cycling of water with the blood circulation of an animal. Today, our bodily flows find comparisons in the way of thinking, writing and being. The watery body is not only a metaphor, but is a vibrant fact and (in)fluence - here, women's fluidity such as the menstrual cycle is an obvious spectacle to witness.



MERGING

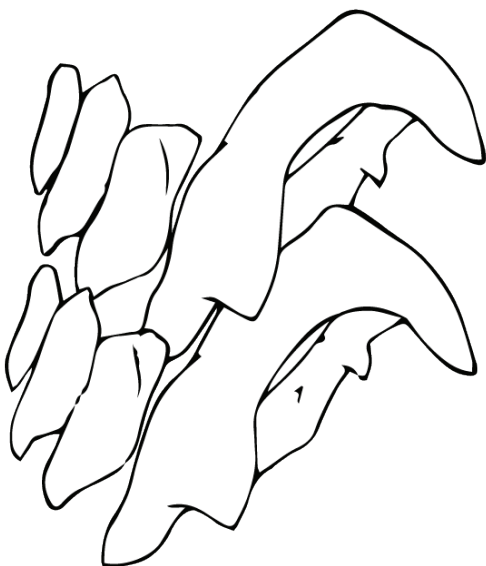
Bodies of water seem more differentiated by how not by what. Viscosity draws attention to sites of resistance and opposition rather than only a notion of open possibilities that might suggest one indiscriminate flow. Still, everybody requires membranes to keep from being swept out to sea altogether, because there is always a risk of flooding.

In acknowledgment of this corporeal connected aqueous community, the distinction between humans and non-humans start to blur.

Hydrofeminism suggests a new ontological understanding of body and community. The aqueous understanding of interbeing is not to become another appropriation of non-human existences. Hydrofeminism is not supposed to expand existing biases, but to overrule them. It incorporates the understanding of intra-active material agencies and thus requests shapes of scientific acquisitions, which are interwoven with economical, social and political powers at all times. As material media, water as body is individualised and so is not to be understood as homogenised.

We are all bodies of water in the constitution
and the geographical sense.

– Astrida Neimanis



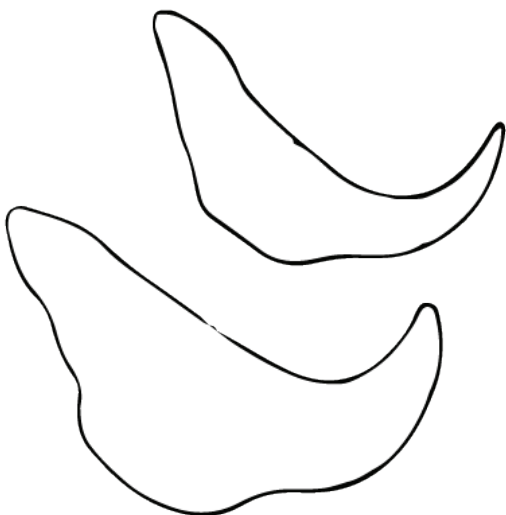
Bodies of water are fluid, constantly in motion and exchange. Water in bodies is communicator between bodies and facilitates bodies into being. Gilles Deleuze delivered the image of the virtual world, in which every realisation of objects is a nexus of virtualities, which essentially incompletely intra-act. The idea of nexus becomes important in hydro-feminist theories, when bodies of water are imagined as closed bodies.

But every body consists of something like a membrane, holding it together, without interfering with the constant flow and intra-action (Karen Barad) with each other - a nexus like a liminal space. Where there are liminal spaces

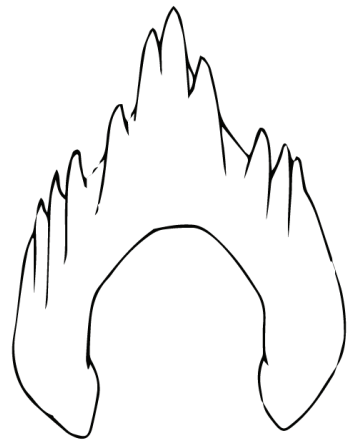
in forms of delta, where river and ocean merge, there are liminal spaces, gap junctions, where biological cells connect. Fluvial corpor(e)alities are capable to diminish biases such as ego & omni consciousness and diversity & commonality. The simple reference to our entanglements within this world seems enough to overcome such assumptions, that political matter is solely human matter.

In any case, bodies of water recorporalise in response to each other.

The borders between outside and inside become blurry, a chain of unpredictable actions is immediately set in motion, which indicates that all bodies acting and re-acting are members of a political system with the ability to transform it.



SENSING



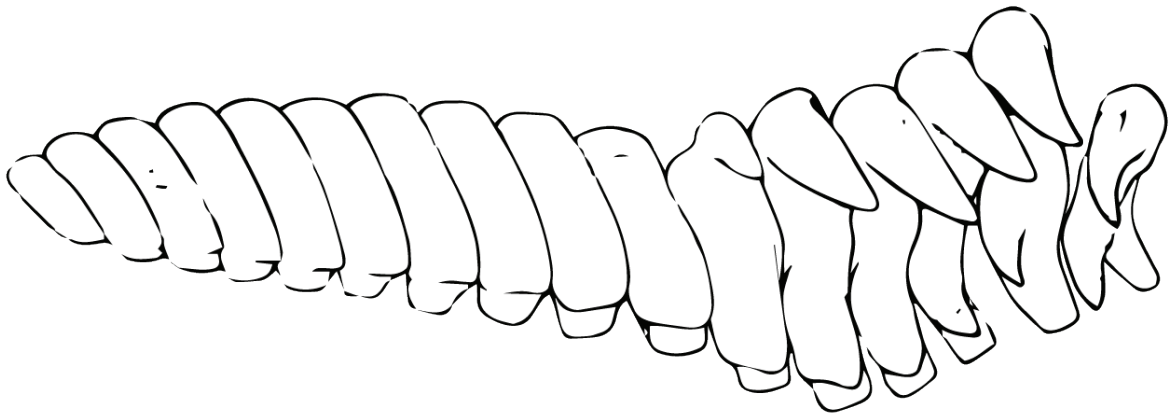
Still these anti-egocentric theories often count as speculative and especially too abstract. Coring our perceptions of our surroundings around water, could not only provide an illustrative notion, but inspires spiritual and thus sensual understandings, which science and philosophy have been lacking during the last decades.

Abstraction of nature and humanity is one way to gain a new perspective and greater understanding, however abstraction does not mean debasement! But the arts can draw awareness on seemingly remote problems that need to be acknowledged not as something that happens in other places, but as something that happens everywhere. Facing climate changes and the speed of evolution, tuning in for modification through sensory stimulations becomes methodical: mutation in visual and audible perception, breathing, communicating, (interspecies) communication...

We need to treat thoughts as if they were substantial units. But how do we limit our awareness without getting lost in the endlessness of co-existing universes? Here again, the concept of the body of water comes in handy, with its fluvial membrane, holding it together, but not completely closing off to its surrounding. The membrane as nexus, can be adjusted depending on individual needs, but it will always be open for exchange. We should not, we are not even able to, close off towards *outer* problems and situations. Understanding oneself as the community helps, to see frustration as a shared state of mind and not something that someone is left alone with. This also teaches us to shift our attention to things, that are actually desirable and wholesome. Teaching what a desirable future may look like, and not teaching oppositions or subjective pasts can be a start of adjusting constitutions.

Bring wetness into language! Because language does not display reality solely, but forms it through categorising and differentiating, making it subjective.

Furthermore, we should handle historic consciousness differently. Instead of a linear view on it, we could look at evolution more fluidly, like a permanently everting donut for example - anti-chrononormative.



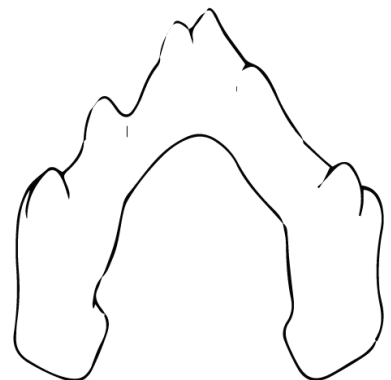
ARCHIVING

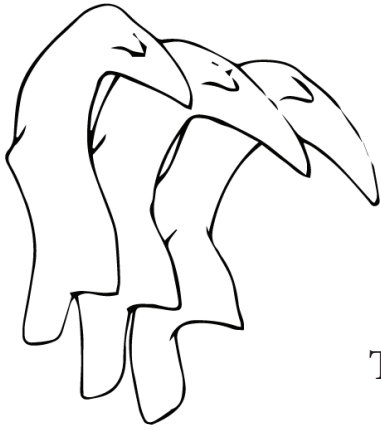
Our bodies seem like a threshold of both, the past and the future. Ann Cvetkovich suggests to see trauma as a fascia that can suture pasts and presents, as a collective experience that potentially gathers different kinds of *we's*, instead of many individuals. Traumas, in her sense, can make certain kinds of publics possible, because they have the ability to parse the lineaments of more systematic or structural social and political relations. Is the Anthropocene one of such traumas?

Hydrofeminism can exercise our way of archiving thinking with a greater sustainability in view of the water as the immortal carrier of *life data* or *planetary life*. Astrida Neimanis speaks on the basis of Ann Cvetkovich's understanding of trauma of an *Archive of Feelings*. Water is circulating and moving not only in space, but in time as well. Water remembers. By including other water-binding forms as mediums of this archive, we* could be blow up these systemic structures, which are so capable to endure over generations of human beings.

As Janine MacLeod calls it the *Sea of Memory*, water is infinite, it does not forget and it endures, enabling the sensuous life, bodies of water are the past, the present and the future at the same time. Can we use water as a queer archive and let ourselves be guided by it to break free from chronologically ordered and stacked schemata, without forgetting the past, but being more collective instead?

This is a contemporary movement, a material eco-criticism, feminism and vital materialism, to think of a world beyond the world divided into hierarchy of subjects and objects.





The political goal of a vital materialism is not the perfect equality of actants, but a polity with more channels of communication between members.

– Jane Bennett

Extending awareness of what we so far considered passive and instrumental is a tenet for Hydrofeminism. If we dissolve the subject-object binary, we can improve ecological sensibility and thus experience relationships between persons and other materialities. The challenge remains to find ways of communication with non-linguistic participants of our systems, which request humans to enhance the sensitivity of our potential perceptions. Acknowledging that political action can originate from all bodies of water, not only human bodies, brings an important shift of political implication: Materiality is experienced as lively force and it could animate a more ecological sustainable community, in which the terms subjects and objects can be replaced with *actants* and *assemblages* (Bruno Latour). Ecosystems and political systems are approached in the same way, it has the hereto-generosity to solve shared problems.

All bodies are wet collective bodies defined by how they link to other bodies, places, environments, technologies. Think of breathing, clogging, decomposing, discharging, flushing, lubricating, melting, menstruating, transfusing. Bodies exist as trans- and extra-territorial beings. They live in hybridity. This porous condition produces a planetary wet-togetherness, a *commoning* force that constitutes all bodies as collective hydro-subjects.

– Cecilia Vicuña

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