

Is she?

an aeroelastic flutter,

which weeps the witch which weeps each witch,

or

that is

Marina Cyrino

a

The witch-hunt, then, was a war against women; it was a concerted attempt to degrade them, demonize them and destroy their social power. At the same time, it was in the torture chambers and on the stakes on which the witches perished that the bourgeois ideals of womanhood and domesticity were forged.

— Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 2004, p.186

likely story.

first a bird then a flutist was

The earliest known flutes were made of birds' little bones. We know they were made at least about forty thousand calendar years ago. A bird-bone flute is so far one of the oldest musical instrument ever found alive, although in pretty bad shape¹. At that time, flute players practised stealing flying voices. They knew that music hides in the bones of things. We do not know if flute playing was then about playing the flute, if it was a bird-becoming or if it was all one and the same thing. We only know that much later all this magic was named "flute playing", as if we knew what it is all about. Flutists nowadays do not care much about bones, they want shiny gold instead.

¹_ See Nicholas J. Conard, Maria Malina & Susanne C. Münzel. *New flutes document the earliest musical tradition in southwestern German*. *Nature*, volume 460, pages 737–740 (06 August 2009).

How to speak out of the exotification of bewitching flutes, of bewitching prophetesses, of bewitching female bodies?

– *By bewitching myself another spell.*

I invoked a bird-becoming in order to call on the remains of the tragic female voice, of the restless wondering: Who shed so much tragedy, and put it into the mouths of female-figures?

For Adriana Cavarero, a tragic confirmation: “In the large range of samples available within (Western) tradition, it is not possible to find a single female figure that meets the declared needs of female subjectivity”². Cavarero reacts by stealing. She steals female figures from their contexts, in order “to relocate them suitably within the compositional canvas of a feminine symbolic order that is ready to embrace the free-flowing gestures of other female weavers”³. If **Adriana** steals and weaves and plays with words through a hermeneutic game in order to find our way out of such a tragedy, I create with leaves, with feathers without ink: *Urutau, Mother of the Moon*⁴, a piece for feathers, tree leaves, and a bicycle wheel.



A small miss-spell(ing): I am not playing the flute. I dislodge the flute as an external object. I search for my relation flute-body-flutist in winged things. A search that moves around a wheel that spins air like a flute, a wheel of fortune, a whirlwind: my mouth, my cauldron. I grow a forest. I listen to the beats of wings, of leaves. I let rhythms form, transform, organize, deform, disappear. I surrender to the rhythmical breath of spinning.

²_ Adriana Cavarero. In *Spite of Plato: a feminist rewriting of ancient philosophy*. New York: Routledge; 1995, p.4.

³_ Idem, p.8.

Urutau, Mother of the Moon is already a telling, a remembering of a co-creation, which I now tell again. I start to tell a story

⁴_ <https://vimeo.com/332893372> - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7VQfMuhZN2w&t=607s>

within a story, in which I play a text-collage of voices that I stole from their contexts, like leaves, like feathers. For this particular spell, I relocate the stolen voices, transferring them into the voice of a particular bird, which is bound to the female tragic voice: the Urutau, also called Mother of the Moon. Commonly found in the deep forests and urban spaces of South America, from deep forests to urban spaces, but rarely seen because of its wondrously artful camouflage, this bird is most famous for its song: A nocturnal, mysterious, haunting, sensuous chant, commonly interpreted as a jinx, and thus feared. “Melancholic and strange, recalling a guffaw of pain” were the words chosen by Luís da Câmara Cascudo in his dictionary of Brazilian folklore⁵. If I could summarise, with “a measure of inherent arbitrariness”⁶, the various stories that live within a variety of traditions in Brazil, it would be:

The bird is a she.

Her bird-fate is to weep weep weep.

*

⁵_ Luís da Câmara Cascudo. *Dicionário do folclore brasileiro*. 10. ed. São Paulo: Ediouro, 2000, p. 533. Original “[...] seu canto melancólico e estranho, lembrando uma gargalhada de dor, cercou-a de misterioso prestígio assombrador. [...] Só quem haja ouvido o grito da mãe-da-lua pode medir a impressão sinistra e desesperada que ele provoca durante a noite”. My own translation.

⁶_ Adriana Cavarero. In *Spite of Plato: a feminist rewriting of ancient philosophy*. New York: Routledge; 1995, p.7.

Bewitching ingredients are:

–*Dry twigs full of leaves, of flowers, sundry.*



I remember the sounding of leaves traversing the work of musicians: *Gotlhar* (2010) by Mauricio Rodriguez, *Plant Orchestra* (2011) by Luke Jerram and Matt Davies, *Groene Ruis* (2007) by Cathy Van Eck, *Living instruments* (2016) by Serge Vuille, Luc Henry and Vanessa Lorenzo, Diego Stocco's music from a tree, music from a bonsai, duet for leaves and turntable (2015–2018); the bio-sensing art of the 1970s. I remember the Australian Aboriginal gumleaf tradition as a practice of leaf music that reveals the existence of “a close relationship between musician and plant in the Australian Aboriginal societies of which Western philosophy has little awareness”⁷.

⁷_ Robin Ryan. “Not Really a Musical Instrument?” *Locating the Gumleaf as Acoustic Actant and Environmental Icon*. *Societies* 2013, 3, 224–242; doi:10.3390/soc3020224. p.225.

⁸_ Christopher J. Clark, Alexander N. G. Kirschel, Louis Hadjioannou, Richard O. Prum. *Smithornis broadbills produce loud wing song by aeroelastic flutter of medial primary wing feathers*. *Journal of Experimental Biology* 2016 219: 1069–1075; doi: 10.1242/jeb.131664

⁹_ see: <https://www.caveurban.com/sbts-bondi/>

¹⁰_ see: <https://www.caveurban.com/sbts-bondi/>

–*Found feathers, three or four or five, the ones one is most fond of.*

If the Urutau became famous for her bewitching singing, not all birds sing with their voices. Some sing with their feathers: a wing singing, an ‘aeroelastic flutter’⁸. I remember winged sound installations: *cristo fué y guacamaya* by Rubén D’hers (2015), *Mengenang* by Lachland Brown and Cave Urban⁹, *Tremor* by Carri Fucile¹⁰.



Each feather and each branch is collected by me in the different places I have been. The spell begins in the woods, at a lakeside, on a roof top, following animal and vegetable traces. Carrying dry twigs through city trams, through airplanes. Waiting for leaves to dry, to crackle. Waiting for spring to offer feathers, waiting for autumn to offer the crackling sound of sleep. Waiting for the metamorphosing whirlwind of a wheel spinning.

– *A bicycle wheel.*

– *Stolen voices, sundry, as many as you can spin, carefully, before they turn against you.*

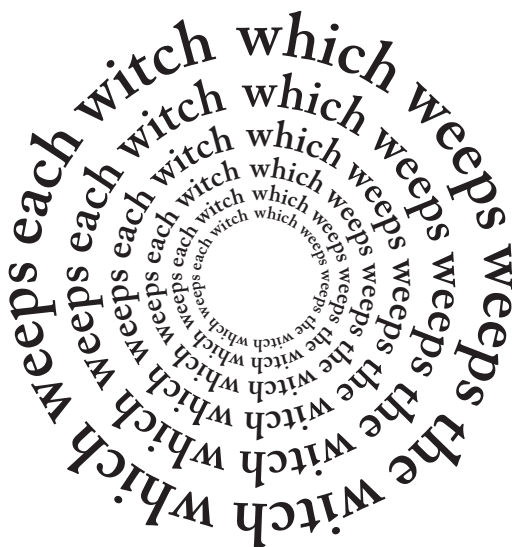
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Spell-instruction: spin until feathersorrows are gone.



spell I spin around my
counter-spell

I start as she said "*once upon a time*
the world was round and you could go on it around and around."¹¹
I think she said it when she said.



¹¹_ Gertrude Stein, *The World is Round*, found in Writings 1932 – 1946. Literary Classics of the United State, Inc. New York: 1998, p.543.

Voices start spinning when all the world is asleep.
When we hear *"only the bushy weeping, that comes below the silences,
and an uh-uh-uh of the Urutau, very sad and very loud"*.¹²
That is what he once said, but if you are there to hear she might
not uh-uh-uh at all.

¹² J. Guimarães Rosa, *Grande sertão: veredas*. 19a ed. Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 2001. p. 576. Original: "Todo o mundo dormindo. Só o chochôrro mateiro, que sai de debaixo dos silêncios, e um ô-ô-ô de urutau, muito triste e muito alto." My own translation.

who hear too many stories of sadness might be only in the ear of those

Once upon another time
instead of weeping she was singing around and around:

*(...) But don't get sentimental
Since the beginning it is the world against us
whence every year the apocalypse is sworn
The moon wants to be black, black
She paints herself in the eclipse
I'm part of the night*¹⁴

to own the light that lights the moon wants to hide from a culture of light that wants to

¹⁴ _Baco Exu do Blues,
A Pele que Habito, track
from *Esú*, 2017. Original:
"Mas não se emocione /
Desde o começo é o
mundo contra nós / Por
isso todo ano juram o
apocalypse /A lua quer ser
preta, preta/ Se pinta no
eclipse / Eu faço parte da
noite." My own translation.

she is a bird is little known

If humans mistake flutists for birds they also try to explain their names as if such names could say it all: *"a corruption of Guarani's language 'guyra' (bird) and 'táu' (ghost) made 'urutau', the name of one of the birds most cultured in the tradition of the 'sertanejo' (inhabitant of Sertão, backcountry of the Northeast of Brazil) and curiously little known to most of the Brazilian people."*¹⁶

¹⁶ Fernando Costa Straube, *Urutau: ave fantasma*. Atualidades Ornitológicas N.122, nov/dez 2004. Original: "O nome já diz tudo: uma corruptela do guarani guyra (ave) e táu (fantasma) fez "urutau", nome de uma das aves mais cultuadas na cultura do sertanejo e curiosamente pouco conhecida da maior parte do povo brasileiro." My own translation.

But a bird

- as all things -

has many names,

those that humans gave it, and that are still remembered.

Urutau jurutau, jurutauí, urutágua, urutago, urutauí, urutavi

mãe-da-lua: mother of the moon

manda-lua: bossing-the-moon

ibijaú, cacuí,

chora-lua: cry-moon

preguiça: lazy
(Brazil)

urutaú (Argentina),

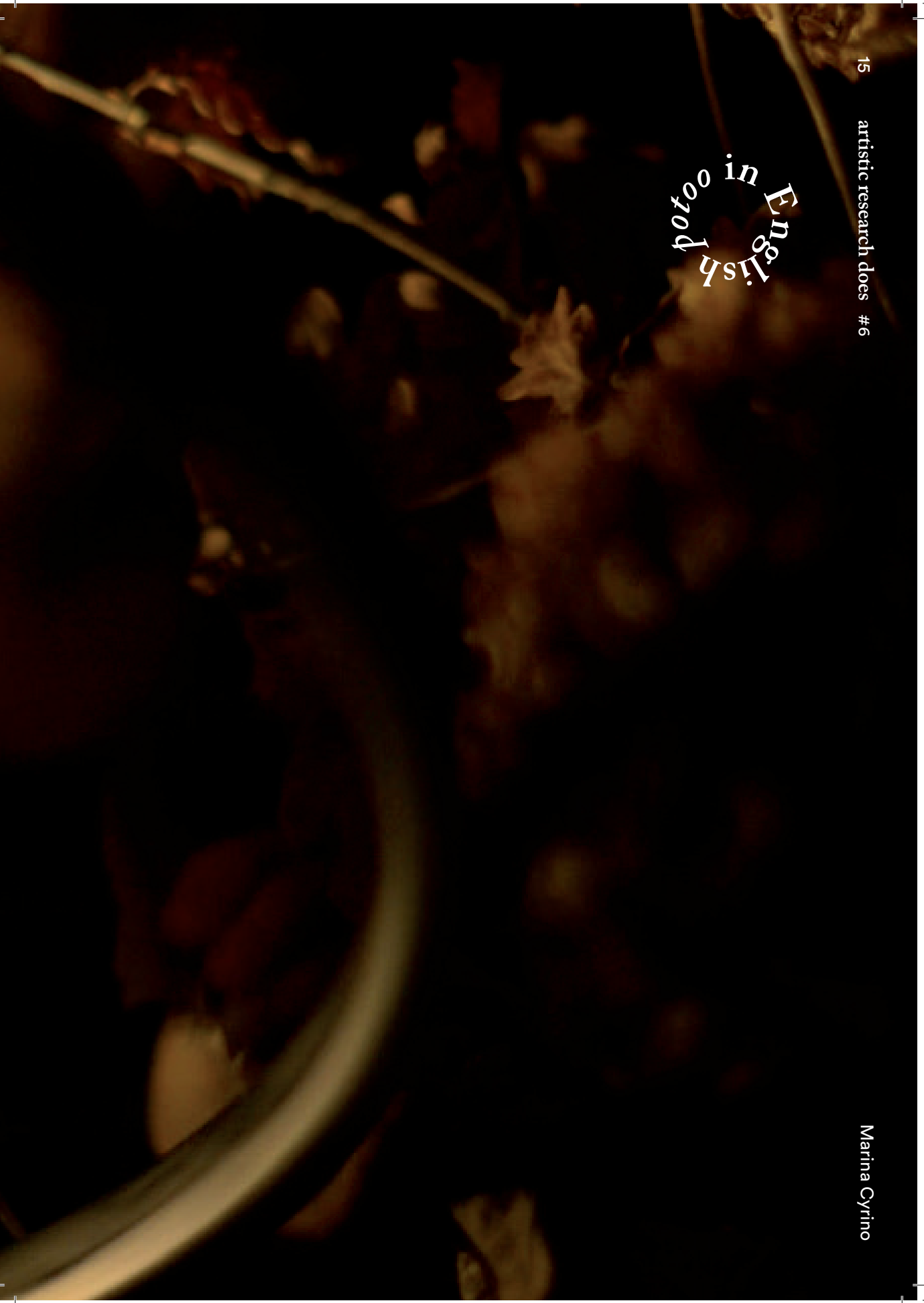
guajojó, uruta (Bolivia),

urutau, guaimingüe, judío (Paraguay),

ay-ay-mama (Peru). ¹⁷

English
in
oozod

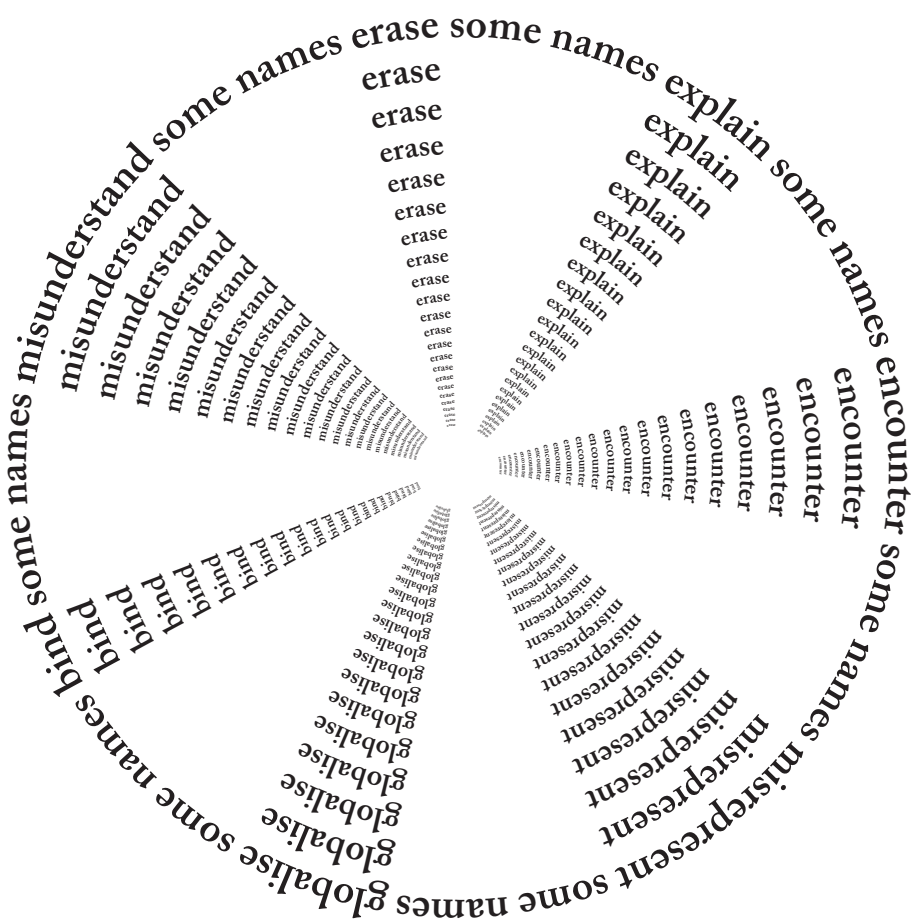
Marina Cyrino



Once upon a time, far up North, in the Faroe Islands, humans practiced a *Sealanguage*¹⁸. Birds had as many names as possible encounters. Practising names was an art, a pleasure. This pleasure was misunderstood by researchers who thought that the *savages* – that is how researchers named inhabitants of places they wanted to own – were unable to discriminate clearly between words and things. The researchers thought that the savages would deliriously invent a bond between a human and a non-human body in such a way that magic could be wrought on the savages themselves just as easily through their name as through their hair as through their nails or any other part of their being.¹⁹

¹⁸_ Simone Kotva.
*Sealanguage: Field Notes
from the Anthropocene.*
Parse Jornal, Issue 6,
Autumn 2017, p.26.

¹⁹_ Idem



It was only later on that another researcher concluded that magic is a practice that describes “*the environment of a way of acting, it becomes superstition only when mistaken for science*”.²⁰ To this voice, another researcher added hers, challenging the socially progressive character of a scientific revolution. She made audible the thought that “*the advent of scientific rationalism produced a cultural shift from organic to a mechanical paradigm that legitimised the exploitation of women and nature*”.²¹

magic by hunting witches now haunting back scientific rationalism legitimised mechanical exploitation by delegitimising

20_ Simone Kotva's remarks (2017) on Wittgenstein's *Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough* (1979). Simone Kotva. *Sealanguage: Field Notes from the Anthropocene*. Parse Jornal, Issue 6, Autumn 2017

21_ Silvia Federici remarks about Carolyn Marchant's *The Death of Nature*. Silvia Federici *Caliban and the Witch*, 2004. Automedia, Brooklyn USA. p.13.

Once upon another time the Urutau travelled around and around, crossing oceans and entering the mouth of colonisers-researchers. It has been said that of all the birds of the earth, there was one that the savages would not kill, nor would injure for anything of this world. It is said that her chant reminded the poor creatures of the departed loved ones; that the poor creatures believed that the bird would bring them good luck. ²²

poor creatures
what men like
to teach

²²_André Thevet (1503-1592) transcribed by Nomura (1996), apud in Fernando Costa Straube, *Urutau: ave fantasma*. *Atualidades Ornitológicas* N.122, nov/dez 2004. Original: "Entre todas as aves da terra, existe uma que os selvagens não matariam nem mesmo feririam por nada deste mundo [...]. Dizem as pobres criaturas que esse canto lhes faz recordar os entes queridos que se foram. Este pássaro seria um enviado dos mortos, trazendo boa sorte para os amigos que ainda viviam e azar para seus inimigos". My own translation.

- "that the world was round
that the sun was round
that the moon was round
that the stars were round
And they were all going around and around
And not a sound.
It was so sad it almost made her cry
But then she did not believe it."²³

might be round as a cry of a female mouth

But once upon a time instead of weeping she was
hearing an Omágua/Kambeba woman singing:

*"Maá munhã ira apigá upé rikué
Waá perewa, waá yuká
Waá munhã maá putari."*²⁴

²³_ Gertrude Stein, *The World is Round*, found in *Writings 1932 – 1946*. Literary Classics of the United State, Inc. New York: 1998, p.543.

²⁴_ "what to do with men in life/ that hurts, that kills, that do as they please". Márcia Wayna Kambeba,. *Poemas e crônicas: Ay Kakyri Tama = Eu moro na cidade*. Manaus: Grafisa Gráfica e Editora, 2013. My own translation.

with what to
do

A cursed body
a bird became: she
her female body shuddered in shivers
she let out repeated moans
she disappeared completely
into the woods with wings
wandering through the branches
she would not need her beauty anymore
she had become a being of unspeakable ugliness
she had been condemned
to perch on the end of a dead trunk
dead as her dead hopes
and from there
staring at the moon
spending all her time singing
her sorrow for the misadventure of her love. ²⁵

²⁵_ My mash-up of different versions of the woman transformed into an Urutau based on a mash-up found in Fernando Costa Straube, *Urutau: ave fantasma*. *Atualidades Ornitológicas* N.122, nov/dez 2004.

your beauty your hope of love is a misadventure
that takes away your body your
cry, but then she did not believe it was so sad it almost made her

Once upon another time humans conceived of beauty in birds and the Urutau became estranged from the patterns by which we got accustomed to think about birds. Then “*in literature her ugliness became almost unanimous.*”²⁶

²⁶_ Fernando Costa Straube, *Urutau: ave fantasma*. Atualidades Ornitológicas N.122, nov/dez 2004. Original: “É uma verdadeira contradição de beleza que nos permite reavaliar nossos conceitos de beleza, ainda que na literatura sua feiúra seja quase unânime.” My own translation.

accustomed to conceive females are threateningly strange to the patterns with which we got

27_A Pataxó's myth.
 Anghichay, Arariby,
 Jassanã, Manguadã e
 Kanátio. *O Povo Pataxó e
 sua história*, 1997, p.14.
 Original: "A Mãe-da-Lua
 abriu uma boca tão grande
 para rir, que o noivo
 Bacurau ficou assombrado
 e fugiu para a floresta. A
 noiva, percebendo que o
 noivo não voltaria mais,
 resolveu partir para a sua
 velha morada, onde até
 hoje canta: foi, foi, foi..."
 My own translation.

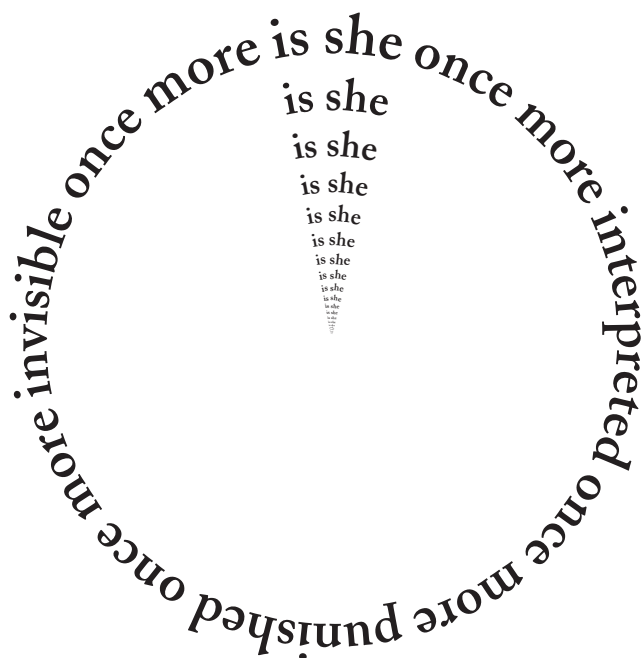
Once upon another time, the Urutau – going by her other name, Mother of the Moon – was happily in love with a Bacurau, a Brazilian Nighthawk. That was until one night, when at a dinner she opened *"such a big mouth to laugh that her bird bridegroom got scared and fled into the forest. The bride, realising that the bridegroom would not return, decided to go to her old home, where she still sings: gone, gone, gone..."* ²⁷



too loud too loud of males run when haunted
 when love laugh too loud
 loud
 loud
 loud
 loud
 loud
 loud

she did not believe it was so sad it almost
 made her cry but then
 sad
 sad
 sad
 sad
 sad
 sad
 sad

Later on, birds became the newest dish on the academic Otherness menu, “*waiting for hungry researchers to theorise them.*”²⁸ Later on, academics started to talk about birds in the way that I am talking about “*the transformation interpreted as a punishment, in the form of a bird that could not be seen and could only regret.*”²⁹



²⁸_ Fabio Prikladnicki, *Relendo o animal, da metáfora domesticada à alteridade radical*. XI Congresso Internacional da ABRALIC Tessituras, Interações, Convergências. 13 a 17 de julho de 2008 USP – São Paulo, Brasil. p.1. Original: “ (...) que os animais são a mais nova alteridade disponível no cardápio acadêmico, à espera de pesquisadores famintos por teorizá-los”. My own translation.

²⁹_ Paulo Victor Albertoni Lisbôa, *O Escritor Jekupé e a Literatura Nativa*, 2015, p.65. Master Thesis. Instituto de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas da Universidade Estadual de Campinas. My own translation. Original: “a transformação em urutau pode ser interpretada como uma punição, sob a forma de uma ave que não podia ser vista e só podia lamentar.”

*"Sad, mad or bad, will be qualified, she who refuses,
to follow the one recipe. I cannot see myself in the word Female:
a hunting target."* ³⁰

30_ Francisco, el hombre.
Triste louca ou má.
Track from the recording
SOLTASBRUXA, 2016.
Soundtrack of the Brazilian
soap-opera *O Outro Lado*
do Paraíso (2017-2018) /
The Other side of Heaven
– Rede Globo. Original:
“Triste, louca ou má / Será
qualificada / Ela que se
recusar / Seguir a receita
tal [...] Eu não me vejo na
palavra/ Fêmea: alvo de
caça.” My own translation.

when too close to what she can see with her eyes closed eyes trained to close

She can see with her magic eyes that the body *“has been for females in capitalist society what the factory has been for male waged workers: the primary ground of their exploitation and resistance, as the female body has been appropriated by the state and men and forced to function as a means for the reproduction and accumulation of labour.”*³⁴

³⁴_ Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 2004. Autonomedia, Brooklyn USA. 2004 p.16

It is a body-politics spell. It is a spell-refusal to identify the body with the sphere of the private. "It is to claim the female body as a source of identity and at the same time a prison. It is why the body is so important and so problematic to valorise." ³⁵

that imprisons a body
that resists a body

Once upon another time instead of weeping, she listened.
She heard a Guarani man singing:

*"In the twenty-first century, rivers
from all over Brazil,
will be polluted and dead,
and they will end with fish.*

*The animals will also be,
All destroyed, the trees,
There will be none,
Men will feel lonely.*

*They will have no more joy,
That they will come to have will
Of not existing,
Said the shaman."* ³⁶

36_ Jekupé, Profecia do Pajé apud Paulo Victor Albertoni Lisboa, *O Escritor Jekupé e a Literatura Nativa*, 2015, p.65. Dissertação de mestrado. Instituto de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas da Universidade Estadual de Campinas. Original: "No século XXI, os rios / De todo canto do Brasil / Estarão poluídos e mortos / E acabarão com os peixes. / Os animais também serão / Todos destruídos, as árvores / Não vão existir nenhuma / Os homens se sentirão só. / Eles não terão mais alegria, / Que chegarão a ter vontade / De não existir, / Disse o pajé." My own translation.

prophecy from another prophetess forms another prophecy

She now sings what she sings out loud:

Capitalism undermines our capacity to understand the rhythms of nature; it destroys our sense of the magical in nature.³⁷ (...) It is impossible therefore to associate capitalism with any form of liberation (...) The difference is that today the resistance to it has also achieved a global dimension.³⁸

why we cannot hear her big mouth spells out loud now we might hear

³⁷_ Austin, Arlen; Capper, Beth and Schneider, Rebecca. "Times of Dispossession and (Re)possession: An Interview with Silvia Federici". *TDR/The Drama Review*. Vol. 62. 2018. pp. 131-142 (p. 139).

³⁸_ Federici, Silvia. op. cit., p. 17.

Once upon a time music, performance art, theatre and dance allowed us *"to enter into cross-temporal scenes that interrupt the temporality of capitalism", enabled us to sense our bodies differently, "invoked speculative possibilities for other worlds and other modes of social reproduction, where "magical" knowledges permeate our lives."* ³⁹

I think she said it when she said.

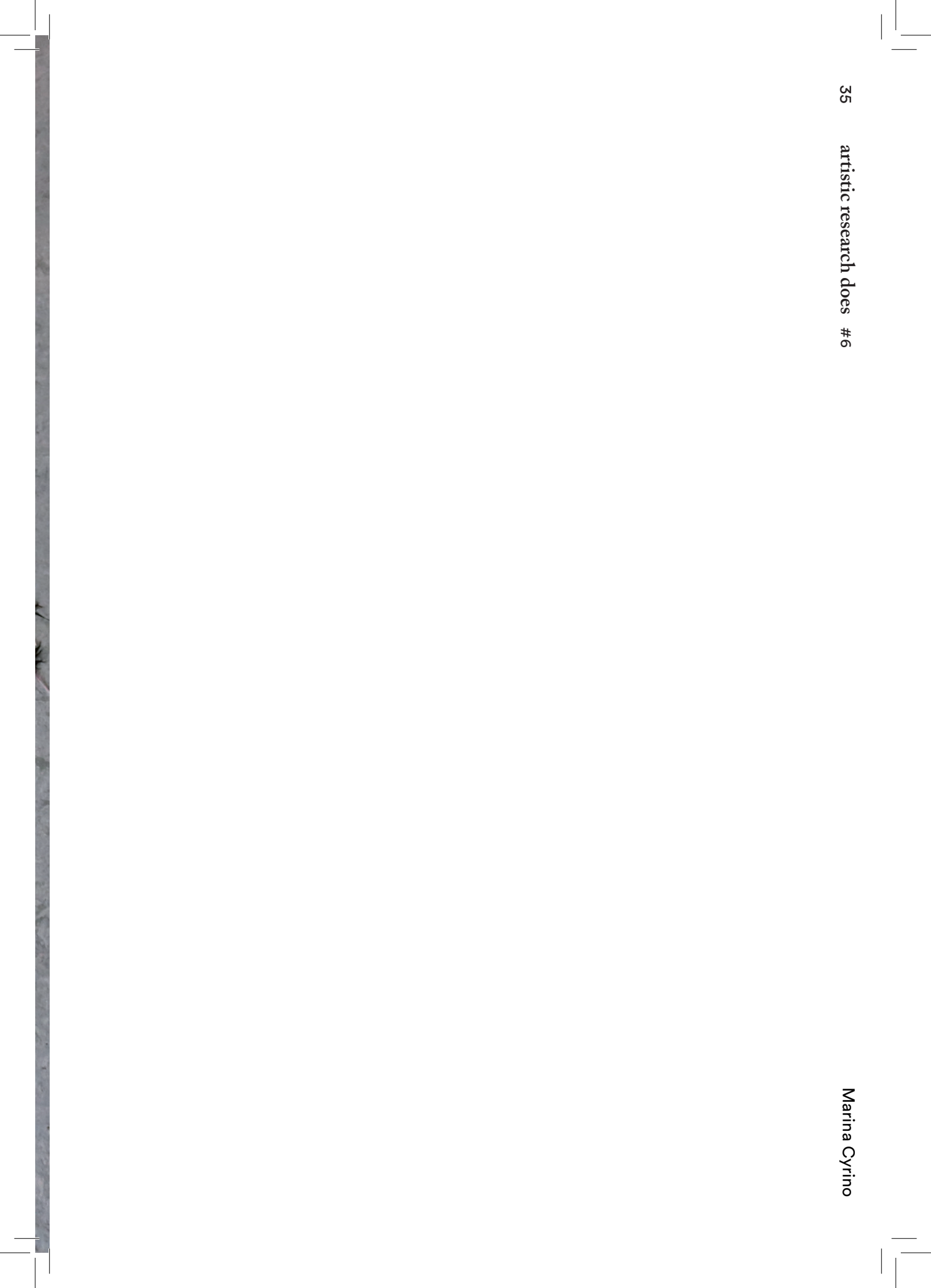
that is likely a story that is likely

*

What is left from the voice of a flutist without her flute, a love misadventure? I spin and bewitch the rhythmical pulsating of leaves and feathers. An aeroelastic flutter. A love spell, womanly, without punishment. It is the possible of a bird becoming, a bird celebrating that sings the rhythmical delicacy of sounds that traverse the world that transforms a body. It is a joyful curiousness, a humorous spell, like hearing the chant of an Urutau.

³⁹_ Austin, Arlen & Capper, Beth & Schneider, Rebecca. (2018). Times of Dispossession and (Re)possession: An Interview with Silvia Federici. TDR/ The Drama Review. 62. 131-142. 10.1162/DRAM_a_00723. p.133.





Marina Pereira Cyrino

Short Bio

Marina Pereira Cyrino (Brazil) transits between improvisation, composition and interpretation, focusing her musical practice on mixture and experimentation: the possible (re)sound(ing) of the body-musician crossed by images, objects, scenic elements, utterance, darkness, movement.

Active in different artistic constellations in Brazil and in Europe, she holds a PhD in Musical Performance and Interpretation by the University of Gothenburg.

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