

Nina Cvar\*

## Extended Review of *Political Choreographies, Decolonial Theories, Trans Bodies*

### Keywords

body, race, decolonization, modernity, Eurocentrism, trans\*, futures

### Abstract

This article offers a comprehensive review of *Political Choreographies, Decolonial Theories, Trans Bodies*, the latest book, a volume edited by Marina Gržinić and Jovita Pristovšek in intensive collaboration with Nomusa Makhubu and Tjaša Kancler, published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing in 2023. This volume takes as its starting point the body as a structural signifier, which is conceptualized in seven chapters. Each of them addresses the question of movement, politics, revolt, action, etc., in a variety of ways to de-link ourselves (especially us Whites) from colonial modernity as the organizing principle not only of capitalism but of a whole range of processes that emanate from modernity, i.e., forms of domination and oppression such as racism, sexism, Eurocentrism, and environmental destruction. What makes this book special, however, is not only the positions presented but also the way in which they are presented. Each conversation begins with a carefully selected starting point, linked to the interlocutor's\* work and accompanied by a rich citation system of references and additional information. This opens up the formation of epistemic counter-narratives that confront the violent history of capitalism and form possibilities for yet unidentified bodies, movements, politics, and political action as future potentialities.

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## Razširjena recenzija knjige *Politične koreografije, dekolonialne teorije, trans telesa*

### Ključne besede

telo, rasa, dekolonizacija, modernost, Eurocentrizeem, trans\*, prihodnosti

\* Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia | Laboratory of Multimedia, Faculty of Electrical Engineering, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia  
nina.cvar@ff.uni-lj.si | <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7404-2778>

## Povzetek

Članek ponuja celovit pregled najnovejše knjige *Political Choreographies, Decolonial Theories, Trans Bodies*, ki je leta 2023 izšla pri založbi Cambridge Scholars Publishing, uredili pa sta jo Marina Gržinić in Jovita Pristovšek v intenzivnem sodelovanju z Nomuso Makhubu in Tjašo Kanclerjem. Knjiga izhaja iz telesa kot strukturnega označevalca, ki je konceptualiziran v sedmih poglavjih. Vsako od njih na različne načine obravnava vprašanje gibanja, politike, upora, akcije itd., z namenom, da bi se (zlasti mi, belci) razvezali od kolonialne modernosti kot organizacijskega načela ne le kapitalizma, temveč cele vrste procesov, ki izvirajo iz modernosti, tj. oblik dominacije in zatiranja, kot so rasizem, seksizem, evropocentrizem in uničevanje okolja. Posebnost te knjige pa niso le predstavljena stališča, temveč tudi način, na katerega so predstavljena. Vsak pogovor se začne s skrbno izbranim izhodiščem, ki je povezano z delom sogovornika, sogovornice ali skupine, spremlja pa ga bogat sistem navajanja referenc in dodatnih informacij. S tem se opira oblikovanje epistemskih kontranarativov, ki se soočajo z nasilno zgodovino kapitalizma in oblikujejo možnosti za še neidentificirana telesa, gibanja, politike in politično delovanje kot potencialnost, ki prihaja.



Nothing is, nothing is safe  
 Nothing is sacred  
 Nothing is safe, nothing to pray for, nothing is safe, nothing is  
 Nothing is<sup>1</sup>

This excerpt from clipping., an experimental hip-hop group from Los Angeles, describes the structural conditions of so-called historical capitalism, which, according to Ramón Grosfoguel, is “the result of the civilizational logic of modernity as a civilization of death.”<sup>2</sup> Historical capitalism is not only about an economic system—contrary to what 20th century Marxism thought—but also about

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<sup>1</sup> Lyrics from clipping., hip hop trio, “Nothing is Safe,” by Daveed Diggs, Jonathan Snipes, and William Hutson, released August 14, 2019, as the first single from the album *There Existed an Addiction to Blood*, Sub Pop SP1330.

<sup>2</sup> Ramón Grosfoguel, “Insurgent Flows. Trans\*Decolonial and Black Marxist Futures: A Conversation with Ramón Grosfoguel,” conversation by Marina Gržinić and Tjaša Kancler, in *Political Choreographies, Decolonial Theories, Trans Bodies*, ed. Marina Gržinić and Jovita Pristovšek (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2023), 205.

the fact that modernity is the organizing principle that produces different hierarchies of power and that literally no one or nothing can escape.

However, if one had to identify the core point of these power relations, it would undoubtedly be the body.

Since Foucault, the body has functioned as an inscribed surface of events of historical tensions and social transformations—the body is never just a body, it is a site where various discourses and power relations collide and a site of resistance.

Yet, there is no resistance without knowing the genealogy of oppression. We live in the time of neoliberal global capitalism, and in conversation with Bogdan Popa, Marina Gržinić notes that in neoliberal global capitalism, we have nothing but our bodies.<sup>3</sup> Or, to paraphrase, what we have is the fear of losing our bodies, as the body not only reveals the cartography of power of modernity, but is also a site of power. What *Political Choreographies, Decolonial Theories, Trans Bodies*, the latest book, a volume edited by Marina Gržinić and Jovita Pristovšek in intense collaboration with Nomusa Makhubu and Tjaša Kancler, published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing in 2023, does, and it does efficiently, is that it provides a nuanced genealogy of the modernity colonial matrix of power.

The body can thus be understood as this volume's structural signifier, treated in seven chapters, each of which addresses the question of what kind of body, movement, and politics can be conceived to emancipate ourselves (mostly us Whites) from modernity as the organizing principle not only of capitalism but of a whole range of processes that emanate from modernity, i.e., forms of domination and oppression such as racism, sexism, Eurocentrism, environmental destruction.

What is special about the book, however, is not only the positions presented but also the way in which they are presented. Each conversation begins with a carefully selected starting point linked to the interlocutor's work and accompanied

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<sup>3</sup> Marina Gržinić in Bogdan Popa, "Insurgent Flows. Trans\*Decolonial and Black Marxist Futures: A Conversation with Bogdan Popa," conversation by Marina Gržinić and Tjaša Kancler, in Gržinić and Pristovšek, *Political Choreographies*, 150.

by a rich citation system of references and additional information. This contributes to the epistemic treasury of counter-histories of historical capitalism and promotes possible forms of body(s), movement(s), and politics/political action in today's neoliberal (technocratic) global world.

Moreover, by including not one but at least two interviewers in each of the conversations conducted, an epistemic and political openness is ensured that fosters a much-needed de-articulation of some of the most fundamental Eurocentric academic knowledge conditions, which in their economic system are indispensable to the creation and reproduction of inequalities under the guise of modernity.

This process of de-articulation is reinforced by interlinking theory and practice, as some of the correspondents are activists or artists. What they all have in common, however, is that they provide an in-depth overview of positions and current developments in decolonial theory, Black Marxism, trans\* studies, and contemporary performance research and practice, following the conceptual vectors of thought of race, class, and trans\*, and moving along the lines of the colonial/racial divide.

This process of epistemic de-articulation thus takes place on two levels: the conceptual level, which includes a glossary of terms that act as a conceptual, epistemological guide, and the level of the form itself, which, needless to say, is not unimportant in undermining the conditions of neoliberal global capitalism that reproduces itself by rendering content obsolete.

This thesis on the redundancy of content in neoliberal global capitalism is also about the need to re-read Louis Althusser's theory of ideology, as first pointed out by Marina Gržinić in her 2009 "Capital, Repetition."<sup>4</sup> But with the rapid spread of digital technologies into all social spheres, digitalization has prioritized form over content even more, mandated individualized communication, and diminished or even abandoned thinking about the social itself. Needless to say, this suits global capitalism very well, as its globality, its transposition of finance capital, is saved and protected by these processes of endless individualized fragmentation and fixation. How can one question this configuration of death, all sorts of violent dispossession of everything worth expropriating?

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<sup>4</sup> Marina Gržinić, "Capital, Repetition," *Reartikulacija* 8 (2009): 3–4.

All the interviews presented could be seen as testimonies to the barbarism of modernity, but their reflections also ceaselessly attempt to break through the façade of the inevitability of modernity, which virtually perpetuates the entanglement of capital and power. If entanglement is, according to Achille Mbembe, “an interlocking of presents, pasts, and futures that retain their depths of other pasts, presents, and futures,”<sup>5</sup> then as such it functions almost like Walter Benjamin’s mechanism of redemption, prompting us to reflect on the interplay of pasts, presents, and futures and to strive for certain connections between disastrous forces just to stop their repetition and advance futures beyond modernity.

Interrogating the body from angles of history, politics, protest and dance, music, performance, and visual art in the entanglement of this harrowing global moment of a “sunken place,” adhering to “the feeling that your body does not belong to you and your space does not belong to you. Your whole being seems to have been colonized and appropriated by others,”<sup>6</sup> opens a space for empowerment and, above all, democracy.

The opening of the book brings a glossary to facilitate the entrance in the next six chapters.

The first interview, in chapter two, “Other Knowledge, First Move” with Nomusa Makhubu, probes the power relations between post-apartheid South African and African art and Western art that cannot be understood without its own structural debt to the regime of Whiteness and the Western colonial matrix of power. Makhubu’s mapping of the contemporary African art scene is always accompanied by a radical epistemology that entails new interventions at the level of reproduction, which is delegated by race and reproduces itself under entirely mechanistic terms. The structural inevitability of racial differences created by colonization and imperialism is emphasized, especially to subvert racial categories and intervene in the existing, constructed nature of racial categories manifested in Whiteness.

The pressing question, however, as always, is about the future—the future of art and strategies in South Africa or in Africa. The unfolding of the future, how-

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<sup>5</sup> Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 83–84.

<sup>6</sup> Popa, “Conversation with Bogdan Popa,” 143.

ever, is inextricably linked to the present, and it is at this point that Makhubu intervenes. By disclosing the entanglement of art, institutions, and governance with the Western epistemic and political heritage, the future is about questioning, and consequently leaving behind, the constructed limitations imposed on worlds forcibly subjected to racial difference.

Different bodies are assigned different meanings that translate into different actions, with radical implications for marginalized bodies. The presentation of different positions opposing global capitalism is one of the great features of this volume. In chapter three, “Bodies in and as Political Intensities,” artists from different parts of Asia not only presented their research on bodies, politics, transnational culture, community, technology, and performative tools of analysis in conversation with Mika Maruyama, but also challenged Western modernity in Asia. But how can Western modernity in Asia be understood, and how is it to be understood? How does a global disruption like the Covid-19 pandemic affect marginalized, particularly quarantined LGBTQI+ bodies, and what is the role of performance art in uncovering connections between structures and legacies of violence, as well as in seeking forms of persistence and resistance? The conversations with Xiao Ke, Eisa Jocson, Yuki Kobayashi, Yu Cheng-Ta and siren eun young jung provide detailed insight into specific assemblages of histories and experiences of resistance related to the local background of each of the featured positions.

Similarly, the conversation with Karla Max Aschenbrenner in the chapter four, “Asian Roots and European Ignorance,” moderated by Gržinić and Pristovšek, continues the discussion on Asian roots and the European matrix of power, exposing constructions of power with a particular focus on the relation between art, politics, and critical historicization of the Western art canon. This relation is addressed through the distinction between theater and the performing arts, arguing that theater can be associated with the Western *dispositif*, while the performing arts can be viewed in a much broader spectrum. This stated difference can be identified as key to this paper because it opens up the relationship between politics and art and leads to examining the relevance of some fundamental Enlightenment concepts, such as emancipation.

Given “the tireless self-destruction of enlightenment,”<sup>7</sup> due to their contamination by the colonial/racial divide, are these Western concepts still relevant? Aschenbrenner contends that the Enlightenment is relevant only insofar as the duality of its own dialectic is considered, which means emphasizing the unique structural synonymy between the West and the practice of philosophy. Aschenbrenner clearly refers to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s text “Can the Subaltern Speak,”<sup>8</sup> but contribution to contemporary times can be identified in its interlinking to politics of art via advanced explanation of processes of colonization applied to the dispositif of theater.

Chapter five, “Insurgent Flows. Trans\*Decolonial and Black Marxist Futures,” moderated by Gržinić and Kancler, consists of eight subchapters by eight positions that aim to rethink the relationships between trans\*decolonial insurgent politics and strategies, decolonial feminist struggles, and Black thought with reference to Black Marxism and 1990s post-socialism.

This chapter also connects theory and practice. Starting with Basha Changuerra, readers are introduced to strategies of self-organization of the Black, African, and Afro-descendant community in Spain through the organization Comunidad Negra Africana y Afrodescendiente en España (CNAAE). The challenge of articulating an autonomous Black political subject at the intersection of the individual and collective levels can be seen as the theoretical glue that holds together this particular chapter, which begins with the reawakened multitude that took to the streets *en masse* after the murder of George Floyd. This tragic event, however, is subjected to close historical analysis in order to tease out the patterns of colonialism, fascism, White supremacy, and the politics of memory. Nevertheless, as with all contexts presented previously, the materiality of singularity is always considered and thus never subjected to simplification.

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The conversation with Danijela Almesberger continues with dissecting homophobic, neoliberal, fascist, discriminatory, and other realities in the former Yugoslavia. Similar to the interview with Basha Changuerra, the conversation with

<sup>7</sup> Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 18.

<sup>8</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak? Speculations on Widow Sacrifice,” *Wedge* 7–8 (Winter/Spring 1985): 120–30.

Almesberger offers insight into the post-Yugoslav homo-transphobic context through the lens of the work of the Lesbian Organization Rijeka (LORI), whose goal is to inform and raise public awareness about the acceptance of sexual and gender minorities (LGBTQI+). LORI works to eliminate prejudice and homo/bi/transphobia, as well as discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender/gender identity, and/or gender expression, in order to enable full equality before the law.

By presenting the organization's activities, such as the first international queer and feminist festival in Rijeka, various structural relationships are revealed. Particularly meaningful is the analysis of a larger political structure in Croatia, which could be applied to other post-socialist countries by analyzing the rise of ultra-conservative, radical right ideology and its material manifestations under the conditions of primitive accumulation processes that Yugoslavia faced during its disintegration and later,<sup>9</sup> accompanied by the reintroduction of capitalism in these regions.

Relations between sexual and social transgressions within capitalist accumulation are discussed in a conversation with Nat Raha. Raha is interested in how sexual subjects are constituted, and in her research, referring to Kevin Floyd's *The Reification of Desire: Toward a Queer Marxism*,<sup>10</sup> provides an interesting account of how desire is controlled. Raha's focus on desire is thus not only an insightful critique of the existing interpretation of the concept of desire in psychoanalysis but also an attempt to ground the concept beyond the entanglement of heteronormativity and capitalism. In this way, Raha brings in the discussion on Marxist feminism but emphasizes that a path toward Queer Marxism cannot be envisioned when queer sexualities are not addressed, resulting in the invisibility of queerness, transness, race, and disability. Raha then describes the material relations of survival and sexuality under capitalism, underscoring its compelling contextualization and concretization of the broader scene of queer and trans\* social reproduction under racial capitalism. The concluding remark about

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<sup>9</sup> The thesis of primitive accumulation and the connection with the criticism of the transition to capitalism in the former Yugoslavia was elaborated by various researchers, from Ana Veselinović, Ana Podvršič, to Rastko Močnik, etc.; this topic was also treated in connection with fascism by authors such as Marina Gržinić, Žarana Papić, Šefik Tatlić and others.

<sup>10</sup> Kevin Floyd, *The Reification of Desire: Toward a Queer Marxism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009).



racial capitalism affirms Raha's critical view of capitalism and brilliantly opens the following five conversations, beginning with Bogdan Popa, who throughout the interview conducted emphasizes the importance of dialectical thinking and historicizing in order to think about what comes next—the revolution.

In “Vampiric Necropolitics: A Map of Black Studies Critique from Karl Marx’ Vampire to *Get Out*’s Politics of the Undead,”<sup>11</sup> Bogdan Popa, along with Kerry Mackereth, shows a shift from a Marxist conception of labor and racial exploitation to a critique of the exploitation of the body and the politics of death toward Black people in the United States. As Popa argues, this shift is actually necropolitical, but he and Mackereth were able to show that the Marxist image of the capitalist exploiting workers by sucking their labor power was replaced by a new image of a vampiric capitalist. This visualization allows them to propose two model types of capitalism: the first is a classical Marxian model in which capital is a dead labor force that vampire capitalists suck out of the living labor force, while the second model is best demonstrated in Jordan Peele’s 2017 film *Get Out*, in which White capitalists reproduce their power by literally sucking the mind, soul and the body of Black people. The term “sunken place” is an exemplary conceptual site for the second identified model of capitalism, which involves the production of racism as a function of ordinary and normalized racial capitalism in the United States. What the conversation in the book reveals, however, is that “sunken place” could very well be considered one of the central features of contemporary global capitalism, embodying, to use Gržinić’s term, a shift from labor to affect<sup>12</sup> and, as Popa argues, also linked to technology, technology being essential for the reproduction of contemporary capitalism, which underlines the arguments of Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology*, where they identified the structural relation between the so-called productive forces and condition of society in distinct historical formations.<sup>13</sup>

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In the conversation with Aigul Hakimova, both current and historical issues concerning migration and European asylum policy are addressed. As in the con-

<sup>11</sup> Bogdan Popa and Kerry Mackereth, “Vampiric Necropolitics: A Map of Black Studies Critique from Karl Marx’ Vampire to *Get Out*’s Politics of the Undead,” *National Political Science Review* 20, no. 3 (2019): 165–79.

<sup>12</sup> Marina Gržinić in Popa, “Conversation with Bogdan Popa,” 139.

<sup>13</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology*, 3rd rev. ed. (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976).

versations with Changuerra and Almesberger, the importance of the symbiosis of theory and practice is emphasized, on the one hand, the work in rescue and support teams trying to help people fleeing war, violence and destruction, and on the other hand, dealing with robust migration policies, with Hakimova explaining in detail the specifics of individual countries along the Balkan Route. Another invaluable element of this chapter is the detailed account of successful community practices as well as geopolitical relations in the European Union, as manifested in the elaboration of the legal framework (from the Dublin Regulation to the EU Migration Pact), the political processes of the rising of right-wing politicians in the EU, and the EU's relationship with the UK and the US in terms of its geopolitical role in the transmission of global power relations manifested in today's border regimes. As with all of the book's contributions, the goal is to find a way out of this confluence of global malaise.

Continuing with Piro Rexhepi's interview, Rexhepi introduces us to anti-Muslim racism and anti-colonial resistance. He does so by first defining what anti-Muslim racism is historically and how it operates today. By innovatively contextualizing anti-Muslim racism and homonationalism in relation to socialist and post-socialist Yugoslavia, Rexhepi extends his theoretical efforts. Building on four key conceptual lines of research, namely capitalism/socialism, colonialism, and race, Rexhepi illustrates the epistemic mechanism on the basis of which the Occident is defined, which is always directed against the Orient, and, most importantly, how various types of racism are generated, including the racialization of Muslims. This configuration of power is the basis on which anti-Muslim racism continues to operate today, notwithstanding what may be reconfigured racist tropes. In doing so, Rexhepi prepares a methodologically robust foundation for discussing a relatively neglected topic, namely how socialist Yugoslavia dealt with Muslims and understood socialist emancipation. It is precisely this aspect that illustrates the differences in the way capitalism and socialism are "modern" and the relations of socialism to decoloniality. But for Rexhepi, the only future for overcoming racialized, gendered, and embodied forms of domination that have emerged from colonial capitalism is trans\*decoloniality.

This extended review of the book began with Ramón Grosfoguel's radical critique of modernity. Grosfoguel's viewpoint could be defined as decolonized historical and dialectical materialism. On the one hand, Grosfoguel provides a detailed historical account of the power relations of modernity; on the other hand,

he points out the shortcomings of Western Marxism. Grosfoguel draws on the concept of epistemic extractivism, which, it could be argued, provides a general theoretical framework for Grosfoguel's theoretical work and its ramifications by pointing out that the extraction of concepts must be understood along with the processes of extraction under capitalism. In any case, this model functions as a model of power relations that illustrates the dynamics of racial capitalism. Grosfoguel, along with Cedric J. Robinson,<sup>14</sup> argues that capitalism is never just an economic system, but also a civilization, and this civilization is inherently linked to racism, and delegated by modernity, as the "organizing principle of historical capital."<sup>15</sup> What Grosfoguel does is to create a different cartography of power in order to avoid 20th century mistakes and unresolved problems.

By bringing the notion of the "interlocking matrix of domination" into the debate, he not only highlights the powerful legacy of Black radical feminism, but also raises questions about the threshold of what it means to be human, even as we are once again warned about the danger of epistemic extractivism and its depoliticizing effect that prevents the formation of a coalition of the oppressed to fight against the death logic of modernity.

Conversation with Ruth Wilson Gilmore also takes a central conceptual approach, with Gilmore's unpacking of what she calls carceral geographies. First, Gilmore explains what carceral geographies are, and does so by identifying the institutions of carceral geographies, as "diverse, including, analytically, normative regimes of sexuality to seemingly natural but actually social relations we call 'race.'"<sup>16</sup>

The importance of Gilmore's proposed explanatory approach lies in its simultaneous analysis of racial capitalism, particularly with the notion of the "extraction of time." Gilmore's theoretical efforts, discussed through the dispositif of detention, take a fresh look at the category, which, at least in critiques of neoliberal global capitalism, is thought of in terms of acceleration. In this way, Gil-

<sup>14</sup> Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

<sup>15</sup> Grosfoguel, "Conversation with Ramón Grosfoguel," 205.

<sup>16</sup> Ruth Wilson Gilmore, "Insurgent Flows. Trans\*Decolonial and Black Marxist Futures: A Conversation with Ruth Wilson Gilmore," conversation by Marina Gržinić and Tjaša Kancler, in Gržinić and Pristovšek, *Political Choreographies*, 219.

more is able to show how time, space, and being are interconnected and how these categories become the object of commodification, class division, and racialization, leading to unique processes in the shaping of futures, including the delegation of forms of death.

But can this structurally delegated death be defeated and an emancipatory future unlocked? Gilmore, like Grosfoguel and Robinson in particular, emphasizes the importance of consciousness, a consciousness that does not imply essentialism, but rather a kind of brotherhood and sisterhood of understanding historical geographies and thus opening up different futures. Or to quote Robinson via Gilmore: “It’s not the experience, it’s the consciousness. If it were just about the experience, capitalism would be over.”<sup>17</sup>

In relation to the trend toward extractivism in global capitalism, Macarena Gómez-Barris’s contribution on the so-called extractive zones in chapter six, titled “Other Knowledge, Second Move,” is of great importance. Quoting Gómez-Barris: “Extractive zones are sites of colonial and neocolonial plunder, but these are also highly contested spaces, often defended and protected by Black and Indigenous peoples and social movements as land and water stewards within regions and territories rich in natural and finite earth resources such as rare minerals.”<sup>18</sup>

On the other hand, Gómez-Barris seeks to identify what she calls the extractive gaze, the gaze of a dominant point of view and, especially how the signifiers of extractive zones are looked at. This gaze can therefore be understood as a channel of power that is structurally intertwined with art and its institutions, once again underscoring the genealogy of coloniality as a matrix of power.

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Gómez-Barris takes the “given reality of coloniality” and twists it to go beyond the colonial condition and open up a different future—a future that is not the reality of White supremacy, war, and toxicity, but a future of care, as Raha, Makhubu, or Gilmore would have it.

<sup>17</sup> Cedric J. Robinson in Gilmore, 236.

<sup>18</sup> Macarena Gómez-Barris, “Other Knowledge, Second Move. A Conversation with Macarena Gómez-Barris,” conversation by Marina Gržinić and Jovita Pristovšek, in Gržinić and Pristovšek, *Political Choreographies*, 241.

The ideas presented in this conceptually rich book challenge not only Western notions of what it means to be human, but rather, who gets to be human. Yet, Western ideas historically tend to be mediated in a particular way, which makes the format of mediation equally important. Indeed, it seems that this dialectical relationship is ingrained in the Western matrix of power, and that perhaps the only way out is to work on both at the same time—the question of the idea and the question of its formalization.

The book concludes with the aim of excavating new, decolonial, trans\* futures by twisting power relations in art and engaging in a dialog, or a triologue, etc., with a public interview with the Indonesian artist collective ruangrupa, heard and commented on by an audience of at least 100 people in the public space of an academic institution (the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna). ruangrupa has curated documenta fifteen, 2022's world exhibition of contemporary art, which has been held in Kassel every five years since 1955. ruangrupa's activities address some of the relevant issues of the Western matrix of power, but in a way that holds up a mirror to its own symptoms—after all, as we learned from Rexhepi, the West always defines itself through constructing the Other(ness), which is nothing more than an act of aggressively emptying everything that is not the West (that is an equally constructed notion).

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