Experimental Publishing as Collective Struggle. Providing Imaginaries for Posthumanist Knowledge Production

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Experimental publishing in an academic setting entails, among other things, a critical re-examination of how our systems and structures of knowledge production are currently constructed and reproduced in ways that are both exclusionary and legitimise the structural violence of our neoliberal publishing institutions. Reimaging and, crucially, reperforming the way we publish and make research public by experimenting with alternative more critical and relational ways to share our research, forms part of a wider attempt to create more ethical and equitable scholarly forms, institutions, and practices.

This article expands existing research on experimental publishing by making connections to current work done by critical feminist, postcolonial, and anti-racist scholars. Drawing on this work and on two recent publishing projects (Cita Press and the *Combinatorial Books* book series) that are experimenting with *republishing* and *rewriting*, this article puts forward the argument that experimental publishing is an inherently interventionist and activist practice that plays an essential role in firstly breaking through how knowledge is disciplined, reproduced, and normalised, while secondly providing imaginaries for how authors and publishers can start to make interventions in the way they publish and share research.

Situating Experimental Publishing

Experimentation in and with academic publishing plays an important role in shaping research and publishing imaginaries, welcoming new forms of knowledge, and making interventions in the institutions that have been set up to share this knowledge (Adema, 2021).[i] In previous

work on experimental publishing in the arts, humanities, and social sciences (AHSS), instead of defining what constitutes an experimental academic book or publication, my colleagues and I have focused on situating experimental publishing in relation to (and responding to) the practices and conditions it currently is both embedded within and produced through.[ii] This includes the legacy of the codex format (or the book as a bound object and commodity), innovations in digital publishing, and discourses around open access (OA) publishing (Adema et al., 2022).

Extending this perspective, I want to put forward in this article that experimental publishing can best be positioned and perceived as an ongoing critique of our current academic publishing systems and practices, especially of the hegemonic position of the large publishing monopolies (i.e. 'the big 5' commercial publishing companies (Posada & Chen, 2018)) producing and controlling academic knowledge and of the commodification of scholarship into knowledge objects (from the book as a stable print-based commodity to individual humanist authorship and ownership regimes).[iii] Yet, next to being a critique, experimentation in publishing should also be envisioned as an affirmative and speculative practice, as a means to reperform our research and publishing institutions, as well as how we publish. This to explore and speculate on different futures for research, and to allow for the emergence of new, potentially more equitable forms, genres, and spaces of publishing, open to critical change, ambivalence, and failure.

In this sense, experimenting in and with academic publishing in the AHSS can take different forms in the current conjuncture. These include experiments with collaborative and anonymous authorship (e.g. Anon Collective, 2021; The Multigraph Collective, 2018; uncertain commons, 2013); with open and community peer review (e.g. Fitzpatrick, 2011; Méndez Cota, 2023a), with scholar-led and not-for-profit publishing models (e.g. ScholarLed, the Open Book Collective[iv]); with the various (multi)media or practice-based formats through which research can be performed (e.g. Kuc & Zylinska, 2016; Schultz, 2016; Sousanis, 2015); with computational, processual, and versioned works (e.g. Soon & Cox, 2020; Trettien, 2021); and with new publishing infrastructures (e.g. Scalar, Mukurtu[v]) and relationalities, including with the ways in which scholarship can be produced, shared, and consumed, as well as reused, remixed, and interacted with (e.g. Amerika, 2011; Méndez Cota, 2023a). This comprises speculations on what the future of the book and the humanities could be (envisioning what I have elsewhere explored as a posthumanities (Adema, 2021: 9-12)).

The speculative nature of experimental publishing, to some extent, resists clear-cut definitions or mappings, or the provision of fixed classifications and definite delineations of different types of experimental publications – beyond providing specific snapshots in time (or temporary stabilisations).[vi] Any analysis of experimental publishing's material-discursive practices requires a continuous re-mapping due to the nature of its critical and emergent form. This re-mapping should be seen as an attempt at keeping 'open the politics of knowledge and communication in a context in which these are being closed down' (Kember, 2014). Even more, not giving space to the potential of the experimental could close down what politics itself is and what it means to be political, where 'there would be no responsible or ethical opening to the future, the unknown, uncertain, unseen, and unexpected' (Hall, 2008: 36) and this would foreclose the ability of publishing or the book to act 'as a medium through which politics itself can be rethought' (Adema & Hall, 2013: 138; Drucker, 2004).

It is in this resistance to being foreclosed where the performative and interventionist nature of experimental publishing can be located as a political and activist project, where it forms a critical response to how academic publishing is currently set up and is continuously reproduced. This reproduction is both visible in and maintained by the enduring dominance of commercial interests in academic publishing, the way print-based practices continue to be uncritically upheld as being the most appropriate and most natural for scholarly communication, the ingrained authority and perceived superiority of Global North epistemologies, and the neoliberal focus on individual, original, bound knowledge objects in the form of book commodities. As a result of this, and as I want to outline more in detail in what follows, the structural violence that underlies forms of academic capitalism and the fixtures it continuously re-produces, creates non-subjects and non-humans, those that stand outside the normative processes of knowledge production.

Instead, by experimenting with the idea and the concept of the book, with the relationalities of publishing, and the system of material production surrounding it, we can ask important questions that lie at the basis of what scholarship is and what doing scholarship entails – questions concerning authorship, writing, the fixity of the text, quality, authority, and responsibility. Publishing thus offers us an opportunity to explore our practices as scholars, to explore how we can 'operate differently with regard to our ways of being and doing in the world as theorists' (Adema & Hall, 2016). Here, experimental publishing should indeed be perceived as an alternative way of 'doing scholarship' as an active and interventionist engagement (Adema et

al., 2018; Marczewska, 2018), which, as Kiesewetter has argued, also involves an 'undoing scholarship', in other words, taking 'an effort towards deconstructing structures of oppression based on class, gender, and race within everyday academic practices' (2020: 115). This would include setting up new institutions, such as experimental presses or book series. As Kember argues, experimenting here involves the remaking of infrastructures as a 'direct politically activist critique', a form of academic activism that she emphasises should be seen in terms of 'an emerging ethics of scholarly publishing, a concern with power and difference in academic life and a possible return to inventiveness and interventionism that runs counter to the emphasis on research as innovation' (2014).

Importantly, the interventionist and activist potential of experimental publishing invites connections with other, what Kiesewetter has termed 'critical OA' projects, or 'towards those who share a similar politics of struggle against neoliberal domination and its colonial, classist, and patriarchal ramifications', such as she has explored in relation to establishing alternative genealogies of OA publishing (also see Moore, 2020) that take connections with previous activist movements into account, presenting 'a take on OA publishing in which academic and activist work is not perceived as separate but is embodying different aspects of the same praxis' (2020: 115).[vii]

In a similar vein, I want to explore in this article connections between experimental academic publishing and current work done by (a selection of) critical feminist, postcolonial, and anti-racist scholars who have worked tirelessly to explore, devise, and share ways to break through patterns of repetition in knowledge production and academic ways of thinking, and, more in specific, how – through this repetition – knowledge is continuously re-produced and normalised in exclusionary ways. Taking their work into consideration, I want to examine what the implications of their thought and activism are for the doing of scholarship and publishing as a critical process and practice (while highlighting some of their own critical and experimental publishing, research, and writing practices at the same time). Further building on their thoughts and arguments, I will put forward how experimental publishing, as I will present it in this article, can be positioned as an inherently interventionist, performative, and activist practice. Here, I want to provide some initial thoughts on how experimental publishing can play (and is already playing) a key role in breaking through how knowledge is reproduced and normalised (and remains overwhelmingly dominated by white, male, cisnormative-heterosexual voices and by a narrow set of epistemological approaches). In doing so, I want to explore how experimental publishing can be an activist practice of resistance

against practices and systems of oppression and violence, which are structurally being reproduced within our neoliberal institutions of knowledge production.

To further illustrate what experimental publishing can be, as a situated and contextual practice, I will discuss several of the imaginaries for posthumanist knowledge production [viii] these theorists have put forward (ranging from collaborative authorship, rewriting and remix strategies, citation as a liberatory practice, and interdisciplinary methods, to intersectional sharing, planetary community-forming, and formulations for a black feminist poethics).[ix] I will do so alongside a discussion of two examples of experimental publishing projects that are making an intervention in the relationalities of publishing and how knowledge is re-produced and that embody some of these imaginaries. I will discuss Cita Press, a feminist press that republishes and carefully designs books in the public domain written by women, and the *Combinatorial Books: Gathering Flowers* book series, which explores the rewriting of books in the Open Humanities Press (OHP) back catalogue.[x] I will focus in particular on the potential of two key publishing practices that these projects put forward: *republishing* and *rewriting*, to explore how certain forms of experimental publishing have the potential to break through repetitions in knowledge production. Highlighting the performative and interventionist potential of experimental publishing is important to show what different kinds of knowledge production are possible, to promote and give visibility to the rich diversity of research, ways of knowing, and publishing. In this sense, experimental publishing provides an imaginary to illustrate what is possible, which can help support authors and publishers to critically examine their own research and publishing practices and can inspire them to conduct similar experiments themselves, to explore what scholarly forms and relations would best support their research and would ensure it is shared and conversations around it are supported. And again, as I and others have argued before, we believe 'space needs to be provided to these forms to actually experiment and intervene (for opacity and disorientation) beyond institutionalising measures that fix these experiments down again' (Adema et al., 2022).

In the next two sections, through an engagement with a selection of current work in critical feminist, postcolonial, and anti-racist thinking, I want to explore how experimental publishing can be positioned as an activist endeavour, part of an intersectional struggle for a different kind of knowledge system that is based on two main aspects: 1) a resistance to and an overturning of normative systems of knowledge production and of how knowledge is being (re)produced in a neoliberal context, and 2) the creation of strategies, practices,

methods, an imaginaries for new ways of (collective) living, being, and doing as scholars.

Critiquing Normative and Repetitive Fixtures and Classifications

Experimental publishing, as I have outlined above, plays a key role in critiquing established, normative forms of knowledge production and distribution, which, as I will discuss in this section, are plagued and upheld by various forms of structural violence. Within this context, writers and theorists such as Cristina Rivera Garza, Katherine McKittrick, Gabriela Méndez Cota, and Denise Ferreira da Silva have explored what it means to think, write, and share knowledge today 'against the status quo'. This is especially crucial, as they write, in a context where extractive capitalist systems increasingly control our knowledge production. What does it mean then to write and publish research when – as a result of aggravated neoliberalism – violence, conflict, and death have become part of everyday life for so many?

Author and scholar Cristina Rivera Garza picks this up in her book *The Restless Dead. Necrowriting and Disappropriation*, via Adorno's astute analysis and warning in the 1940s and 1950s of the commodification of language and the growing 'pervasiveness of instrumental reason under capitalism' Rivera Garza, 2020: 3). This galvanised new forms of experimental writing and publishing 'against the status quo', as adopted by modernist and avantgarde movements in the second half of the 20th century, which were focused predominantly on a critique of the singularity of the author, referentiality, and 'the transparency of language (and the very idea of such transparency)' (Rivera Garza, 2020: 3). Yet, as Rivera Garza contends, many of these once subversive experimental strategies focused on the de-subjectification of language (i.e. removing the subject from language) have become obsolete and even highly suspect today. As part of a critique of appropriative writing strategies and practices in particular, Rivera Garza argues how, in the current literary context (and we can apply this to academia too, I would argue), appropriating others' voices and experiences functions *less* as a critique of liberal humanist authorship and its reification under capitalism and *more* as something that actually benefits and promotes the individual author. Appropriative strategies have been very much co-opted by semiocapitalism,[xi] she contends, and are leading to the erasure of co-authorships and the subsumption of the voices of others, resulting in 'the re-instauration of the professional writer as the ultimate owner of discourse' (Rivera Garza, 2020: 6; also see: Adema, 2021).

We see similar forms of appropriation work through academic authoring and publishing practices, where the norm of the single author as the original, proprietary owner of works is continuously reinforced and repeated under the guise of either profit or prestige, built up around mechanisms 'that permit an unequal exchange of labor: the labor that uses the language of collective experience for the author's individual gain' (Rivera Garza, 2020: 4). See, for example, the frequent erasure of the multiple human and non-human agencies involved in the publishing process – from reviewers, designers, and writing platforms to computational processes – as well as the preference in research and publishing cultures for strong authorial voices and arguments at the expense of literature reviews and overviews. Rivera Garza instead wants to explore how we can develop (alternative, communal) writing strategies that bear witness to these appropriative mechanisms within semiocapitalism, which remain focused on the concept and practice of property and in this way are directly linked to 'the violence and death resulting from the neoliberal state that has embraced maximum profit as a guiding principle' (2020: 10). Here, echoing Adorno's warning, she argues that both in the 'state war machines' (following the political theorist Achille Mbembe) as well as in what she coins as the figure of the 'corpse text' (plagued by the death of the author), the ethics of accountability have been replaced by logics of extreme profit, or 'profit-at-all-costs'.

Geographer Katherine McKittrick similarly explores the role of predatory capitalism in her work on citational politics. [xii] In connection to this, her analysis focuses on how the political economy of academic and non-academic *disciplinary thinking* is underpinned and buttressed by racism and other forms of oppression. As she states, 'the rigid and restrictive underpinnings of disciplinary thinking become apparent when we notice that categorization – specifically the method and methodology of sustaining knowledge categories – is an economized emulation of positivist classificatory thinking (thinking that is produced in the shadows of biological determinism and colonialism)' (McKittrick, 2021: 38). Disciplines are inherently normative in how they set up disciplinary knowledge apart from other ways of knowing and, with that, also determine how we study identity from a confined perspective. In this context, the institutionalisation of identity within disciplined learning systems in the university has split collective (intersectional) black and indigenous relationalities and struggles against oppression. McKittrick argues that this has resulted in the reification of a *biocentric order* (in which identity is conflated with flesh) and the segregation of ideas and idea makers, creating financial hierarchies between disciplines (classifying 'good' identity disciplines and 'bad' ones).[xiii] Identity disciplines are hence clear examples of how 'academic institutions colonize the production

of knowledge by defining, policing, determining, financing, what categories (genus, studies) should live and die' (McKittrick, 2021: 40), or which struggles are lucrative enough for universities to support. The publishing industry plays an important role in this too, as it is similarly highly stratified according to disciplines and fields, where certain 'diversity' categories are also perceived as more profitable than others (Saha & Van Lente, 2022). Related to this, scholar-led presses such as punctum books and Open Book Publishers have chosen not to focus on a (book) series structure or operate a flexible series structure to accommodate works that don't easily fit within fixed classifications.

McKittrick therefore posits that in order to explore and methodologise, following the cultural theorist Sylvia Wynter, the unfinished possibilities of truly collective struggle, we need to disrupt disciplined ways of knowing. In this context, she argues for the practice of citation within black studies as an important liberatory practice in the struggle against multi-scalar injustices. Importantly, for McKittrick, the work of citation is not about inclusion or exclusion as liberation is not theorised through categories or as part of identity politics but from a perspective of shared struggle (doing the work of liberation): 'citations are tasked to resist racial and gendered violence through the sharing of ideas' (McKittrick, 2021: 30). Especially in the context of individual proprietary authorship where the authorial names in citations are substitutes for the supposed ownership of ideas, it is important to 'refuse the crude capital economization of collated names standing in as ideas', McKittrick argues (2021: 25). Through her experimental, performative publications and writings, McKittrick shows how the practice of citing differently, not as 'a quotable value', but as 'learning, as council, as sharing', has the potential to untangle systems of oppression and to resist racist violence. As such, she argues that 'referencing in black studies is a lesson in living', it is an affirmative practice of how to 'live this world' differently (McKittrick, 2021: 26).

For McKittrick then, anticolonial thought starts with a disobedient relationality that is focused on undoing discipline and that questions and is not beholden to normative academic logics. Part of this involves a method-making that (following the philosopher Édouard Glissant) remains open to the unknown (McKittrick, 2021: 45). This disobedient relationality is what I would argue is inherent in experimental publishing projects that question the epistemic fixtures and solidifications that have become normalised in knowledge production and distribution too. For McKittrick, following Sylvia Wynter, radical theory-making takes place outside of existing systems of knowledge (on 'demonic grounds') yet at the same time involves

'those who are intimately aware of and connected to existing systems of knowledge (as self-replicating)' (2021: 24).[xiv] It is this awareness (similar to what I have called elsewhere a 'critical praxis' developed through experiments in publishing (Adema, 2013, 2021)) that provides theoretical insights and imaginaries for new ways of being and doing as scholars that critically consider our publishing practices. McKittrick (building on Wynter and the biologists Humberto Maturana and Fransisco Varela) explores this through the concept of autopoiesis, which identifies a recursive looping system. Observing our knowledge systems from a different radical perspective, she argues, allows us to name its normalcy and provides us conditions to breach the existing social system (McKittrick, 2021: 115).

Critical race theorist Denise Ferreira da Silva has likewise analysed how our knowledge system, supported by scientific reason, reproduces thought in concepts and categories. This includes the category of Blackness, which (like other social and juridico-economic categories) is based on scientific universality and perceptions of historical and biological essence and is steeped in the violence of slavery, racism, and colonialism. This categorisation is what arrests Blackness' creative potential, she argues, yet at the same time she contends that 'the Category of Blackness already carries the necessary tools for dismantling the existing strategies for knowing' (Ferreira da Silva, 2014: 82-84). Blackness has the creative capacity to signify otherwise, it asks us to review our categories, opening up other ways of knowing and doing, as part of what Ferreira Da Silva outlines as a 'Black Feminist Poethics, a moment of radical praxis' (2014: 85).

Categories tend to reduce what exists to the register of 'the object, the other, and the commodity' (Ferreira da Silva, 2014: 91).[xv] The colonial and the racial lie at the basis of this objectification and remain integral to the functioning of global capital too, Ferreira da Silva points out. To tackle the objectification of the black other that runs through Western thought and upholds the global capitalist system, Black studies and feminist interventions should therefore aim at the dismantling of Western thought, which should include the move to 'design ethical and epistemological programs that released the enslaved and the black body from the grips of commodity' (Ferreira da Silva, 2014: 91). What is also crucial here is a move away from a representational perspective – based on universal scientific reason – that distinguishes subject and object (or *subjectum* and *mundus*), a distinction Ferreira Da Silva wants to collapse (2014: 86). In this context, a Black Feminist Poethics for Ferreira da Silva also questions time and linear thinking and how this works through social and scientific categories, which is key to understanding the workings of raciality and the decolonial in the global present (2014: 88). She

instead promotes a fractal poethical thinking that aims to interrupt this repetition of linearity. What happens is 'a composition (or de-composition or re-composition), always already a reassembling of what has happened before and of what has yet to happen' (Ferreira da Silva, 2016). And this is important when we come back to the concepts of rewriting and republishing at the end of this article, as these experimental publishing practices challenge how the focus on linearity in Western humanist thought works through writing and academic publishing too.

In an article for the journal *Women's Studies,* the philosopher Gabriela Méndez Cota critiques disciplinary and Eurocentric knowledges and ways of knowing in relation to Science and Technology Studies (STS). Méndez Cota shows how feminist theory and critique – if at all present in STS – tends to focus predominantly on liberal issues of representation and inclusion, rather than on the performativity of neoliberal knowledge and the interventionist potential of activism and feminist critiques of the knowledge economy (2019: 191). Following the philosopher of science Sandra Harding, she questions why women would argue for gender equality and inclusion in 'sciences that have become so intimately involved with militarism, ecological disaster, social control, and capitalist exploitation and abandonment of the world's majorities?' (Méndez Cota, 2019: 194). This also extends to citing more women, if this simply feeds further into the impact factor and a system based on measuring value in an exploitative manner. As Méndez Cota argues, beyond just 'adding women' to the sciences, feminist STS needs to involve a disruption of science and its objectivist masculinist perspectives and structures, arguing for the inclusion of social justice as part of its feminist agenda. To address this disconnect between academia and activism, between theoretical and practical interventions, Méndez Cota further argues for a wider transformation of science, academic work, and our institutions from a feminist perspective 'toward a cultural, political, and ethical critique of the gendered dimensions of knowledge production under conditions of structural violence' (2019: 198). This, she argues, opens space for local knowledges and situated praxis and for the standpoint of social movements contesting the structural violence of neoliberalism. Similar to McKittrick's critique of identity politics, she argues that Western liberal commitments to inclusivity are not obsolete as such, but we must question their 'cultural, political, and philosophical limitations' (Méndez Cota, 2019: 202).

In the above, I have shortly outlined how critical feminist and anti-racist scholars have analysed patterns of repetition in knowledge production and thinking or, more in specific, how knowledge is reproduced and normalised within capitalist systems and upheld by

institutional and – as I have put forward – publishing industry classifications and remains overwhelmingly dominated by a narrow set of (Western, humanist) epistemological approaches and (white, male etc.) voices. These theorists, whose work I have discussed on the previous pages, all in their own contexts and fields and as part of situated writing and research practices, have explored how to undo disciplinary, categorical, fixed ways of thinking and their repetition and reproduction through violence, racism, sexism, and a focus on profit-at-all-costs, which has been separating intersectional struggles and further strengthening the objectification of the other. Next, I want to provide some initial thoughts on how scholars, writers, and publishers can play a role in breaking through how knowledge is reproduced and normalised as part of the creation of alternative liberatory practices and imaginaries.

Posthumanist Practices and Imaginaries for Liberation and Resistance

How then can we start to more closely connect and relate some of the direct activist and performative strategies and methods developed within black, feminist, and postcolonial studies to break through repetitions in knowledge production and to move away from representational or identity positionings, to experiments in academic publishing? In this section, I want to highlight some of the strategies developed within these realms and how they can function as imaginaries for new ways of being and doing as scholars. These strategies include, as I will describe in what follows, a renewed focus on the labour of research (including publishing, editorial, and citational labour) as a key practice of critique; a focus on sharing research (in opposition to emphasising value extraction) through methods that draw intrinsically on interdisciplinarity and remix; a focus on strategies of collaborative authorship, intrinsic to a critique of the ownership of research and ideas; and a focus on how research can reproduce life or our ways of living and being (as researchers) with communities in common, instead of through individual value extraction and subsumption. I will then, in the next section, show how some of these strategies can be practically applied by outlining two case studies of experimental publishing projects that are exploring how rewriting and republishing practices can provide new imaginaries for how to break-through repetitions in knowledge production. In doing so, I will argue, they can be seen as inherently activist forms of experimental publishing, doing the work of liberation from a perspective of shared struggle.

A renewed focus on the labour of knowledge production comes to the fore in different ways, including in, as Méndez Cota has noted, a

growing recognition of communal editorial labour as essential to support the material infrastructure of knowledge. In this context, she pleads for an extension of feminist posthumanist critiques of androcentric universalism, technological determinism, and the commodification of knowledge, to include forms of academic activism that have emerged in and are transforming the field of academic publishing. This, she argues, includes experimental publishing practices and new types of plural and collaborative work that are oriented towards the construction of new spaces for thought. These forms of direct intervention can play a key role in the transformation of knowledge, she argues, as active or practical epistemic critiques or interventions in the modes of production and reproduction of intellectual work, especially crucial in the context of current struggles against the privatisation of knowledge and the neoliberal restructuring of the university (Méndez Cota, 2023: 156-157). In this context of publishing activism, we should also place the move away from a liberal demand for OA (in which OA is simply being co-opted by commercial presses in their profit-driven business models) to critical and feminist perspectives on OA, focused on regaining control of knowledge production and circulation while 'poner en práctica nuevas concepciones éticas y políticas de la autoría y la publicación' (Méndez Cota, 2023: 162).[xvi] This crucially includes editorial and publishing projects such as CLACSO, Ediciones Mimesis, and the Radical Open Access Collective, [xvii] as these recognise 'las prácticas editoriales como la infraestructura material del conocimiento' (Méndez Cota, 2023: 163). Experimental, processual, or performative publishing, Méndez Cota argues, helps reposition editorial practice as intellectual and political work in its own right, aimed at a radical transformation of knowledge, its methods, and its infrastructures.

Rivera Garza similarly emphasises in her work how, from the perspective of writing as labour, there is now more interest in the politics or the material contexts of knowledge production and distribution (including publishing) and how this again connects to writing as a community-making practice. To provide alternative imaginaries to the way texts are currently being produced, Rivera Garza explores knowledge practices and theories of *communality* to forge a poetics that helps us experience, following the philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy, a 'being in common'. In doing so, she emphasises that writing is a key cultural process through which communities are (re)produced and argues for forms of collaborative authorship as a critical strategy to accommodate this (Rivera Garza, 2020: 18). Her plea for collaborative authorship is also very much a posthumanist one, where drawing on the literary theorist Gayatri Spivak's concept of 'planetary subjects' (which questions the universality of the 'global'

subject), she argues for the acknowledgement of 'planetary authors', for a nonhuman expansion of (authorial) agency, to include and connect a range of materialities: 'territories and languages, history and cosmos, human and nonhuman agencies, and the body right in the middle of it all' (Rivera Garza, 2020: 22). By making connections between bodies, communities, and nature, planetary authors and writings bring community together.

Rivera Garza draws on Mesoamerican Mixe understandings (especially those of Mixe anthropologist Floriberto Díaz) of communality in relation to writing, juxtaposing these with European views by highlighting the importance of labour in the Mesoamerican context, or of how 'shared labor, material reciprocity, and a relationship of mutual belonging with the earth are basic components of survival', especially for indigenous communities (2020: 47). Labour as the material production and reproduction of the world is reflected strongly in the Mixe concept of *tequio,* 'a form of free, obligatory, and collective labor that benefits the community at large' (Rivera Garza, 2020: 47). Tequio incorporates practices of reciprocity based on forms of unpaid, obligatory service labour – not unsimilar to the form of service work, including publishing, reflected in the concept of academic citizenship (Adema & Moore, 2023) – which are types of labour crucial to maintaining communities (or, in extension, academic communities or fields), Rivera Garza explains.

She goes on to connect these understandings of communality directly to collaborative authorial strategies of *disappropriation*, explaining that 'writing with and through others, that writing as a practice of disappropriation, is writing in communality' (Rivera Garza, 2020: 47). The overarching goal of disappropriation is to return writing to its plural origin, away from the singularity of the author, opening it up to include the voices of others (importantly, without subsuming them) to ensure future writing contributes to the common good. This is crucial, Rivera Garza argues, to acknowledge the labour that goes into writing as a collective experience while securing the 'collective re-appropriation of the material wealth available' (2020: 4-5). Disappropriation as a practice or poetics thus constantly challenges the concept and practice of (individual) property and propriety that is abundant in cognitive global capitalism and comes to the fore in what Rivera Garza calls 'necrowritings,' print or digital works that in different ways resist the violence of the neoliberal state and its focus on maximum profit. Current capitalist forms of writing stand outside of community, a separation that is generated, Rivera Garza argues, by the impression of individuality, of authorial genius, 'que hace aparecer como individual una serie de trabajos comunales' (2019: 67).[xviii] This is further exacerbated by the distinction between the writer and those

who produce the book where the author is seen as the genius and (quoting Ulises Carrión) 'the rest is done by the servants, the artisans, the workers, the others'. The crucial link between writing and the reader lies exactly there, in the publishing process (Carrión, 1975; Rivera Garza, 2020: 52).

For Rivera Garza disappropriation starts from the acknowledgement that writing is always rewriting, there is no originality, only a 'going-back to what others have put into words and sentences' (2020: 48). Disappropriation is therefore focused on making visible what appropriation conceals, the material traces of communal work, highlighting 'the labor of production and distribution carried out by entire communities' as part of the writing process (Rivera Garza, 2020: 52). Just as writing creates communities, communities produce writing; writing is collective work, often made invisible or unnoticed in interactions of capitalist exchange. As Rivera Garza argues, it is a political act of material recognition and acknowledgement to make visible and tangible the plurality that lies at the core of writing, that proceeds individuality in the creative process (2020: 55). The disappropriative author is directly involved in knowledge production, in the actual making, reproduction, and distribution of books (beyond just contributing to the writing of texts), which Rivera Garza classifies as a fusing of 'intellectual work with manual work'. Hence, for her, writing directly involves publishing labour, something that is also emphasised in experimental publishing projects blurring and questioning the boundaries between research and publishing. What is in-common is not the book as object or thing, but 'rather the process of production, re-appropriation, and disappropriation through which the book itself is generated, in constant bodily contact' (Rivera Garza, 2020: 67). Rivera Garza refers to this as a communalist book, which does not have a *proprietary*, but an *indebted* author.

Similar to Rivera Garza, for McKittrick it is also important to emphasise the labour of research in relation to publishing, 'specifically the exertion that lies within studying and writing and making and grooving', which 'somehow seems to disappear after issuance' (McKittrick, 2021: 15). References are one key way in research and publishing to make this labour visible and relational as they 'signal stories of other stories that direct you to a story and place connected to, but not of, the story you began' (McKittrick, 2021: 19). In this sense, working from within and opening out from the context of black studies, the practice of citation is a key liberatory practice for McKittrick, paying specific attention to the question of how to cite well – a demand as crucial as how to cut well (Kember & Zylinska, 2012) – a question that needs to be reassessed continuously according to changing conditions, making it an inherently political

act. This question includes an acknowledgement through our citational practices of what came before, of the collaborative praxis of research. Yet citation or referential work for McKittrick is also a practice of sharing how we know and of sharing practical ways to live and struggle together in this world. Our current knowledge system is self-referential and repetitive, it normalises established practices, and McKittrick – following Wynter – encourages us to look at this from the perspective of struggle and to explore how we can breach and overturn these normative systems to achieve liberation (2021: 44). This includes the sharing of resources and 'ideas about liberation and resistance and writing against racial and sexual violence' (McKittrick, 2021: 18), to help us build up capacity for social change. McKittrick is keen to emphasise the performative power of citations and references as agentic forces with direct, material effects in and on the world, starting from the acknowledgement 'that references and citations are concretized, that colonialism and positivism have referential consequences, that references concretize inequity, and that referencing is a spatial project' (2021: 33).

There is a clear connection here between citation and the (re)production of ourselves as scholars too. As McKittrick states, engaging with *how we know* (through engaging with the materials we read) can be an undoing of *who we think we are,* and how we can *share what we know differently* (2021: 18). Citations in this sense offer advice, suggestions for (black ways of) living and knowing differently, they can be a lesson in living and what it means to be human – and how the human should not be perceived as singular in this understanding, but very much from an interspecies perspective (McKittrick, 2021: 42). Following Wynter, McKittrick thus moves here from the processes of knowing to grappling with who and what we are, where the question of being and (un)doing is a crucial one for scholars who are continuously being reproduced through their research and publishing practices.

This is also visible in some of the other key affirmative strategies or practices of resistance through knowledge production that McKittrick highlights in her work. These methodological knowledge practices, developed within black studies and anticolonial thought to explain, explore, and story the world and to invent and reinvent knowledge, question in particular representation or the analytical work of (racist/oppressive) capturing that, as previously discussed, lies underneath (non)academic disciplinary thinking. These practices of undoing discipline (method-making as a verb) comprise what she calls the rebellious methodological work of sharing ideas and practices for different ways of being and living and to engender a radical scholarly praxis (McKittrick, 2021: 6, 35). McKittrick has, in

this context, explored interdisciplinarity as a key methodological practice, alongside cultural remix as a form of black cultural production to call into question racial authenticities, as 'remixing and mashing-up reconfigure text on the page' (2021: 148-149). But beyond interdisciplinary methods and remix, she also sees an important role for sharing and telling better stories (including theory) to enact resistance. As a collection of stories, too, her monograph *Dear Science* understands theory foremost as a form of storytelling (McKittrick, 2021: 7). We need to pay close attention to the materiality of the black story and its performativity as a liberation practice, she states, as 'the stories we tell and share—that the metaphoric devices we use to think through black life are signaling practices of liberation (tangible, theoretical, imaginary) that are otherwise-possible and already here (and over there)' (McKittrick, 2021: 12).

In the next section I will discuss two experimental publishing projects that can both be seen as significant interventions in normative and repetitive forms of knowledge production, and which draw on and support many of the strategies for resistance and liberation that we have discussed up to this point. They focus in specific on practices of re-publishing and re-writing as activist forms of resistance to how our exclusionary neoliberal knowledge systems are being reproduced. What is important here is the reappraisal or reclaiming of the prefix 're' in these practices from its use in concepts such as re-petition and re-presentation(alism), which, as I have discussed previously, have been criticised from within black studies (in the context of a critique of identity politics and positionings) and posthumanist discourses (arguing for the performativity of our knowledge practices instead). This also connects to a more active (or activist) and affirmative understanding of the 're' prefix, as part of an exploration of the interventionist potential of critique and the doing of scholarship and publishing to break-through repetitions in knowledge production or how knowledge is being structurally reproduced and normalised in exclusionary and violent ways. This understanding echoes (readings of) the work of the literary theorist Rita Felski, who juxtaposes the 're' prefix with the 'de' prefix: 'We shortchange the significance of art by focusing on the "de" prefix (its power to demystify, destabilize, denaturalize) at the expense of the "re" prefix: its ability to recontextualize, reconfigure, or recharge perception' (Felski, 2015: 17). Although Felski is careful not to make too strict a comparison between negative critique and affirmative ways of thinking when setting up this comparison, there is a connection in her work to the move away or reappraisal of a 'hermeneutics of suspicion' (following the term coined by the philosopher Paul Ricoeur), also in line with

the queer theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's discussion of forms of paranoid and reparative reading (Sedgwick, 2003).

The prefix 're' then can also be perceived as a 'going back', a highlighting of our links to the past and to the (communal) thinking that has come before, connections which have the potential to provide space for difference and transformation in the repetition of our exclusionary knowledge production practices (Holzhey & Wedemeyer, 2019). Here, as we will see in the examples below, the 're' in republishing and rewriting relates to a form of repetition that is inherently anti-capitalist and communal, focusing instead on 're' as a return to and acknowledgement of previous work and connections.

Cita Press: Republishing as Recognition

Cita Press is an OA feminist digital library and press that publishes, promotes, and distributes OA books written by women whose works are either openly-licensed or in the public domain. Cita was launched by the designer Juliana Castro Varón in 2018 to create a library of, as they describe it, carefully, collaboratively designed books that are available free in both web and print formats and honouring principles of decentralisation, collective knowledge production, and equitable access to knowledge.[xix]

One of Cita's key aims is to increase the visibility of female-created content, prompted by the underrepresentation of women in archives and top lists of public domain books. As Castro Varón explains, due to the systemic effects of patriarchy and sexism women have had to fight for centuries to get their work published and recognised, resulting in the literary canon today still consisting predominantly of men (Castro Varón, 2018: 12). Even more, the works by female authors that are available in open archives are not necessarily accessible. Internet-based archives such as HathiTrust and Archive.org make an enormous corpus of public-domain books available for free online, but do so, Castro Varón explains, predominantly as scans or in poorly designed digital formats that are hard to navigate and print or incompatible with certain devices (2018: 6). As such, archives of public domain works are not considering the importance of design and curation in making works available online and in print, a need that Cita is fulfilling.

Through their focus on good design-sense, Cita wants to extend this accessibility, enticing more people to read women authors. Cita should therefore be seen as both an archive and a graphic-design project, Castro Varón explains. Their website is designed in such a way that all their publications can be accessed in low-connectivity

areas and their interface complies with all accessibility standards (Castro Varón, 2018: vii). Their editions can be viewed online using any device or can be downloaded and, as of 2023, they have entered into a partnership with Digital Public Library of America to create downloadable EPUB versions. They also create printable PDF versions that can be printed at home or downloaded and their texts can thus be reproduced easily and inexpensively. Cita also uses an accessible typeface, designed by a woman, Sol Matas, and their colour scheme flips the binary gendered standards, using 'bright yellow and blue, not only because it rejects color stereotypes, but also because it is not targeted exclusively towards female readers' (Castro Varón, 2020). But beyond making publishing more 'inclusive' through its design, Cita apply their feminist principles to the way they publish in other areas too, through their focus on collaboration, open licensing, and distribution, for example.

Cita position themselves as an inherently collaborative project, working together with international scholars, writers, illustrators, translators, and designers to create and distribute their editions. The collaborative nature of their work is acknowledged in various ways, for example all collaborators and Cita's wider community are listed on their website, Cita's books have the name of all collaborators on the cover, and contributors are also promoted and presented in digital editions. Cita also add new introductions to the public-domain books they publish, written by experts on the book, its author or subject, in addition to creating reading guides and handouts for educational purposes. These 'situate the piece in today's context and under a feminist perspective' (Castro Varón, 2020: 297).

Cita thus perceive books not as individually authored objects but, following feminist traditions, their focus is on making new connections with existing scholarship (through the new introductions) and with new readers (through their curation and accessible design), opening up the texts anew. As Castro Varón indicates, they have been successful in doing so, with a lot of scholars, writers, illustrators, translators, and designers reaching out to inquire about collaboration, highlighting the strong community-forming potential of a project such as Cita Press (2020). What Cita does as part of their republishing project therefore differs fundamentally from commercially-oriented republication projects focused on republishing out of copyright works to subsequently copyright them again as special editions, annotated editions, or editions with a new introduction, profiting from them and closing them down again. This similarly happens with translated editions, another focus point of the press to increase readership and recognition.[xx]

Cita see the process and act of publishing as an act of curating and care for books that extends beyond their mere open online availability. Books in the public domain often exist in obscurity, don't tend to get republished by commercial publishers and if they do are published in copyrighted, paid-for editions (rarely in an OA format), which 'limits the circulation of books in affordable and accessible print formats' (Castro Varón, 2018: 6). Print distribution structures make it hard for presses such as Cita to be sustainable within the publishing industry, and Cita therefore align themselves with the mission of the small press and independent publishing, highlighting issues of autonomy in print publishing and the way distribution is controlled by large corporations. However, as Castro Varón states, the advent of digital printing technology, print-on-demand, and open licensing frameworks, has helped grow the number of small, independent publishers, without much capital investment (2018: 7).

Castro Varón also draws connections between Cita's distribution and longstanding cultures of self-publishing and do-it-yourself reproduction in the Americas, including zine production and distribution in Latin America, where zines have been key forms to reflect and respond to political, economical, and religious issues: 'oftentimes punk, anti-fascist, and feminist, these manifestos elevated do-it-yourself practices, community-created knowledge, and peer-to-peer distribution while demystifying publishing', just as nowadays the internet and digital distribution have the potential to do so (2020: 298). Cita places themselves within this tradition by making use of the Internet, social media, and home printers, self-publishing and online distribution, while experimenting, alongside their book publications, with releasing zines and reading guides that can be printed off at home.[xxi]

Cita's use of open public domain or Creative Commons licenses, to encourage access to and further republishing of their works, is quite rare, as these licences are still not widely used in literary publishing. Cita are also committed to openness from a technical perspective: for example, their website is open source and they maintain an open repository on Github under an MIT License (with their books available in markdown format for others to adapt and version depending on the license), while actively crediting the open-source resources they use and are built upon (2018: 16). Openness for them is, however, not only about sharing but also about bringing in input from others, ensuring that people can directly or indirectly take an active part in the project, while also again 'uplift[ing] and prais[ing] the work of those contributing' (Castro Varón, 2020: 310).

What Cita exemplify with their republishing project is a strong form of collective knowledge production and community-forming, actively targeting 'small communities in which collective bookmaking can easily happen' (Castro Varón, 2018: 26) (e.g. libraries and schools), while rethinking the function of publishing, what it is and does, and how we relate around books as readers and writers. As Castro Varón emphasises: 'Cita is a project built upon existing material with the help of others who believe in the importance of collective inquiry and building shared knowledge' (2018: 25). Next, I will discuss a further publishing project that builds on and engages with existing materials.

Combinatorial Books: Rewriting the Commons

Combinatorial Books: Gathering Flowers is a book series published by Open Humanities Press (OHP) and developed as part of a pilot for the *Community-led Open Infrastructures for Monographs* (COPIM) project.[xxii] This book series explores the rewriting of books in the OHP back catalogue to experiment with and encourage readers and writers to actively reuse, engage with, and rewrite existing OA book content licensed for reuse. Open licences remove (most) legal barriers to more radical reuse of texts, enabling collage texts or a remix in which several existing texts are woven together, for example. Additionally, collaborative open editing and writing tools further enable the reworking of published works by communities of authors. Yet, other than producing translations, few people have taken advantage of the possibilities for interaction, experimentation, and reuse this affords. The *Combinatorial Books* book series thus aims to promote forms of collaborative editing and writing within an academic publishing landscape that remains dominated by closed access fixed book objects and where the 'integrity of the text' and authorial ownership are strongly ingrained. It wants to address the unfamiliarity of scholars and authors with the tools and environments that enable more radical engagement with books, as well as the cultural barriers that continue to exist around the integrity of the book and the fear of derivatives.

The series developed out of a pilot project which established research, editorial, and publishing workflows that enable the creation of new combinatorial books out of existing books (or book collections). Combinatorial creativity, the process of combining existing ideas to produce something new, can be perceived as a critique of the idea of the original genius – or, in the context of academia, of the liberal humanist author (Popova, 2011). Contemporary digital experiments with reuse and remix form the inspiration behind the focus on combinatorial books, but the cutting and pasting of texts to create new manuscripts as a form of 'remixing' can be traced back to the

Early Modern practice of compiling scrapbooks or so-called commonplace books. Commonplacing, as a method or approach to reading and writing, involved the gathering and repurposing of quotes, passages, or other clippings from published books by copying or pasting them into a blank book. Commonplace books, or *florilegia*,[xxiii] were utilised as information management devices and functioned as pedagogical tools, personal compendia, memory aids, and aspirational devices. From a feminist perspective, commonplace books were an important aspect of identity formation for women, and commonplacing an active creative practice, creating new narratives. Alongside reading and writing, commonplacing was thus a different mode of engagement with texts and their consumption and production (Mecklenburg-Faenger, 2007; Trettien, 2021). Cutting and writing were not fundamentally different acts of textual production, where both are based on a process of selection, curation, and re-combination (Smyth, 2013). From within this tradition, commonplacing as a format and practice of combinatorial creativity can therefore be envisioned as a form of writing, and combining, remixing, and cutting and pasting as writerly interactive methods (Adema, 2017).

Combinatorial Books takes inspiration from this tradition, developed in a period in which the book as a format was less fixed than it would be under a print regime, and explores how current developments with the digital book open up similar opportunities to question its stability and its regimes of author and ownership. This connection also invites conceptual questions around what reuse, rewriting, and remixing means in different historical and material settings and under specific cultural conditions. The book series, as an experimental intervention in current conditions of knowledge production, therefore further considers what writing means and what it does; how texts, writers, and other (non) human agencies relate to each other in the rewriting and publishing process and how they can engage with and respond to each other in potentially more ethical, accountable ways. Both in relation to what the rewriting is responding to (i.e. the book(s) being rewritten) and the specific conditions from which the rewriting is occurring and is situated within (i.e. the authors doing the rewriting).

In response to these conceptual questions about what rewriting is and can be, the editorial and publishing workflow that was subsequently designed for the press and authors to create and publish combinatorial books, was deliberately designed to be modular and flexible and to be adapted to the specific form of the rewriting project proposed. It allows authors to start annotating books from the OHP catalogue and from there to move to a collaborative writing environment, or it allows them to remix, add to, or reconfigure the

original text directly in a collaborative writing environment. From there, peer review and editing processes can take place at various stages of the book's development as per the needs of the authors, publisher, or the project. This workflow and the documentation around it has been developed in response to more standardised or established book publishing workflows. It is built around open-source tools, software, and platforms that support annotation and collaborative writing, to make it easier for other publishers to incorporate it into or adapt their existing print or digital workflows and to do similar experiments.[xxiv]

The workflow has been created as part of, out of, and in response to the first book that has been written for the *Combinatorial Books* book series, a book-length response to a volume published by OHP, Michael Marder and Anaïs Tondeur's *The Chernobyl Herbarium: Fragments of an Exploded Consciousness* (2016). This response, titled *Ecological Rewriting: Situated Engagements with the Chernobyl Herbarium* was collaboratively authored by a group of rewriters (scholars, technologists, and students) from the Universidad Iberoamericana Ciudad de México, and is a new book in its own right. The rewriters collaboratively annotated *The Chernobyl Herbarium* online PDF using the open-source hypothes.is plugin, while categorising or ordering their annotations with the aid of custom tags. The workflow enables the exportation of these annotations, grouped per tag, into a collaborative writing environment where the writing process can be captured and showcased as a way of exploring what it means to rewrite or produce research in a (semi-)open setting alongside open review and archiving processes. The resulting book, *Ecological Rewriting,* has been written collectively and has been published as a bilingual print and online publication.

Less than being a book 'coming out' of this book series, *Ecological Rewriting* has been a fundamental part of designing and shaping what the series focuses on and has added further reflections and context to the questions around reuse and rewriting the series is considering. The authors started their rewriting project with an in-depth reflection on how they understand rewriting, both from their own material and historical context,[xxv] and in response to the 'vegetal thinking at work in *The Chernobyl Herbarium*', exploring rewriting conceptually and epistemically, and from a practical editorial perspective (Méndez Cota et al., 2021). Initially, as they state, their writing focused on reusing and rewriting *The Chernobyl Herbarium* as part of a 'situated response' to the book from the perspective of Mexico and the Global South. Against this background, they 'pirated' Rivera Garza's understanding of rewriting as disappropriation to highlight and expose the incomplete, processual nature of the book, while being

considerate to questions of how to relate to others: for example, to the book and its authors, in accountable ways. Following these reflections, the rewriters concluded that for them re-writing didn't mean a direct intervening into the original text. Rather, they took Marder and Tondeur's work as a basis to elaborate a narrative on Mexico's relation with Chernobyl, not by adapting, editing, or remixing the original text, but by expanding upon it (Méndez Cota et al., 2021).

Yet, the process of rewriting and the questions they encountered and decisions they had to make as rewriters and editors during this process, went beyond merely developing 'a '"Mexican" analysis of Chernobyl'. Instead, it encompassed many of 'the material and performative aspects of digitally mediated reading and writing' the book series as a whole engaged with and which invited the rewriters to make 'a critical intervention in the academic institution, too', again highlighting the importance of publishing and editorial labour to critical thinking (Méndez Cota et al., 2023). As such, in line with Rivera Garza's thinking, instead of appropriating the book, they therefore chose to focus more on 'the *Herbarium*'s invitation to think', which for them involved, as part of the material process of rewriting and of becoming-rewriters, letting themselves be re-written by the book as part of this collective exercise, letting themselves, following the fragmented nature of the book, be 'rendered unfinished in creative fragmentation and montage' (Méndez Cota et al., 2023). The fragmentary nature of their response was part of an effort and authorial strategy to disappropriate their 'own habits of writing and thinking', and this process of 'becoming rewriters' was very much embedded into the writing process, where initially full draft chapters were created in response to *The Chernobyl Herbarium*, which were subsequently broken down 'into a dynamic set of fragments that attempt to repeat, in the Kierkegaardian sense of remembering forward, the latter's style of assembling personal memories and meditations' (Méndez Cota et al., 2023). As Méndez Cota et al. outline, from a technical perspective, this was reflected in the remixed nature of *Ecological Rewriting* and the non-linear ways of engagement with the chapters and collated and translated fragments on a dedicated online publishing platform. Yet in addition to that, from a conceptual perspective the rewriting and remix process facilitated their invention of themselves as a 'rewriting community', where, as they say 'the poetic complexity of the assemblage process and the wider possibilities it allowed us to think, in practice, collectivity or community itself' (Méndez Cota et al., 2023), highlighting again the importance of writing and experimental publishing projects to the creation of scholarly communities.

Conclusion

To keep the conversation on experimental publishing open, I have, in this article, built upon on and made connections, opening out from publishing studies to thinking and strategies developed from within black feminist, anti-racist, and postcolonial scholarly traditions. This as a way of sharing, crediting, extending, and keeping alive what experimental publishing is and does, based on an essential intersectional tradition of shared struggle, and to further support my argument that experimental academic publishing forms a direct, practical critique of and intervention into our humanist systems of knowledge production and ways of thinking, writing, and publishing. I have explored feminist and postcolonial critiques of the humanist aspects inherent in and structuring knowledge production, and the racial and capitalist forms of oppression that uphold these and ensure their reproduction. I have outlined how this works through publishing and how experimental forms of publishing have the potential to break through this. By developing new imaginaries (such as those provided by the rewriting and republishing projects initiated by Cita Press and the *Combinatorial Books* series), enabling the formation of new relationalities and communities, and alternative ways of being, doing, and living as scholars around books as a collective effort, we can start to break through these repetitions in knowledge production to explore how scholarship can be performed differently.

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End Notes

[i] This article has benefitted enormously from an open peer review process facilitated by Rebekka Kiesewetter with very generous and helpful comments and feedback from my reviewers, Nikki Fairchild and Matías Milia. I wanted to thank all involved in this process for helping me develop and clarify my thinking and argument in this article further.

[ii] A lot of exemplary experimental publishing work is being done within the AHSS. I am much obliged to Nikki Fairchild, one of the reviewers of this article, for drawing to my attention the work they and

others have been doing critiquing and performatively disturbing the 'academicwritingmachine' through forms of collective and embodied writing and authoring (i.e. publishing under a collective name). See, for example, Benozzo et al., 2019; Fairchild et al., 2024; Henderson et al., 2016; Mycelium, 2020; Swift, 2022.

[iii] In this context, it is important to note that most experimentation with the form and idea of the book within humanities publishing has been initiated by small, not-for-profit, community-led presses and projects (Adema & Stone, 2017: 45-46).

[iv] ScholarLed: https://scholarled.org/; Open Book Collective: https://openbookcollective.org/

[v] Scalar: https://scalar.me/anvc/scalar/; Mukurtu: https://mukurtu.org/

[vi] One such snapshot or temporary stabilisation would be the *Experimental Publishing Compendium*. My colleagues and I compiled the *Compendium* as one of the outcomes of the *Community-led Open Publishing Infrastructures for Monographs* (COPIM) project and are currently developing it further as part of the *Open Book Futures* (OBF) project: https://compendium.copim.ac.uk/.

[vii] As part of her feminist historiography, Kiesewetter looked at the connections that exist between the OA movement and collectives such as Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press and Precarias a la deriva, the pamphlet series *Midnight Notes*, and *Triple Jeopardy,* the newspaper of the Third World Women's Alliance.

[viii] Without wanting to condense a very heterogenous tradition and discourse, in the context of this article, posthumanist knowledge production can be perceived as a performative critique of the 'rational, liberal, human subject, and the associated concepts of the author, the journal, and copyright we have inherited with it', part of an exploration of 'how we can operate *differently* with regard to our ways of being and doing in the world as theorists' (Adema & Hall, 2016; Adema, 2021).

[ix] It is important in this context to highlight the intervention and critique put forward by black, indigenous, and postcolonial theorists in relation to the hegemonic conception of the human evident in posthumanist discourse (i.e. in its critique of western modernity, the liberal humanist tradition, and the Anthropocene), and in relation to the lack of engagement with black studies within this discourse. The work of Sylvia Wynter –especially her questioning of the stable and

homogenous category of the human – has been fundamental in this context as have more recent interventions by Kathryn Yusoff, Alexander G. Weheliye, and Zakiyyah Iman Jackson (Jackson, 2020; Weheliye, 2014; Wynter & McKittrick, 2015; Yusoff, 2018). This includes critiques of the genealogy of (post)humanism, highlighting the inherent link between colonialism, racial slavery, and capitalism in the construction of Man or how humanist definitions of the human emerged from a context of violent oppression of enslaved and colonised people. It also includes criticism of posthumanism's critique of the binary between human and non-human agency (or the split between human and machinic/animal/plant entities and agency, between humans and things) without addressing or acknowledging the inherent racialised concept of the human in the first place, or who have been excluded from the ontological and normative category or definition of the human from the start (i.e. those humans who are not white, male, cis-normative or heterosexual) – a critique also echoed by posthumanist feminists. As black studies scholars have shown, it is crucial to recognise here that these violent exclusions (e.g. of people of colour and women) were constitutive to the emergence of the concept and category of the human, hence they stand at the ontological foundation of humanism, similarly to how race or blackness as a category emerged together with these humanist discourses.

[x] I am intrinsically connected to both projects, being an Advisory Board member of Cita Press and a co-editor of the *Combinatorial Books* book series and hence I don't write about these projects from a position of detachment but from a situated position of sharing, extending, and making connections. This relates to how I see my research as a scholar working within the wider tradition of arts and humanities research. My research consists not only of theoretical interventions in disciplines and discourses ranging from scholarly communications and publishing studies to cultural studies and critical theory, but also of more practice-based and activist interventions (without wanting to put theory and practice in a binary opposition here, both are inherently material and performative). The latter involve experiments with various (mostly collaborative and community-led) publishing projects, both conceptualising and supporting these to explore (and perform) alternative futures for scholarly communication.

[xi] Rivera Garza uses semiocapitalism as a synonym for cognitive capitalism.

[xii] McKittrick refers to predatory capitalism in relation to 'the rapacious qualities of corporate capital' (2021: 22).

[xiii] McKittrick uses the term 'identity-disciplines' to refer to disciplines such as 'women's studies, feminist studies, ethnic studies, queer studies, African American studies, and so on' (2021: 37).

[xiv] See for example, as earlier discussed, how experimental publishing remains integrally connected while also being a response to the conditions it is embedded within, from the printed codex book to digital publishing and OA. Similarly, many scholar-led presses were set up as a direct response to the lack of interest within university and institutional presses in OA and experimental publishing, yet in their independence they continue to scaffold on these institutions and structures, often upheld by para-academic connections (Adema & Stone, 2017).

[xv] This breaking through of established ways of thinking also lies at the heart of a conversation between Saidiya Hartman and Frank Wilderson, who, in this context, draw connections with the objectification of the black other as property, exposing the impossibility, the limits, of most available narratives to explain the positionality of the enslaved. In other words, the slave occupies 'the position of the unthought' and the possibility of becoming property defines the difference between blackness and whiteness. In this sense there is an impossibility of commonality as exploited subjects, which again reduces them to objects. Rather than fitting into the existing social order, Hartman and Wilderson argue that black freedom should focus more on transforming the social order instead of conforming to it or making it more inclusive (Hartman & Wilderson, 2003).

[xvi] '… putting into practice new ethical and political conceptions of authorship and publication' (my own translation into English).

[xvii] CLACSO: https://www.clacso.org/en/; Ediciones Mimesis: https://edicionesmimesis.cl/;
The Radical Open Access Collective: https://radicaloa.postdigitalcultures.org/

[xviii] '… that makes a series of communal works appear as individual' (my own translation into English).

[xix] Cita includes Juliana Castro Varón as Cita's Founder and Design Director, Jessi Haley as Cita's Editorial Director, Fabián Ríos as Cita's Web Developer, and Daniel Saldaña París as Cita's Literary Translation & Technology Fellow, alongside a large community of collaborators.

[xx] Cita has already published several freely accessible multilingual editions and is working with translators to explore how AI digital technologies and machine translations can facilitate their focus on open-licensed literary translations, to improve the accessibility, reach, and recognition of female-authored texts. See: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QwHGnS3_06HM0LWzJPyhpiwDy-zofhCh_fqZI9u97iQ/edit#heading=h.oxefphja8b9f

[xxi] Cita's zines and reading companions can be downloaded, printed, and assembled at home, see: https://citapress.org/downloads/Voices-Around-Me-Szymborska%20(1).pdf and https://citapress.org/downloads/The%20divine%20right%20of%20learning%20-%20Cita%20Press%20Reading%20Companion.pdf

[xxii] I am one of the co-editors of this book series and supported the development of the connected pilot project. This series and pilot were intrinsically collaborative projects, developed by authors, editors, publishers, technologists, developers, translators, and reviewers, and informed by the tools and platforms they utilised. The pilot project created elaborate documentation produced by me and others as part of blogposts, presentations, and reports, to share our findings with publishers and authors. This documentation is available here: https://copim.pubpub.org/wp6-pilot-case-combinatorial-books. The following section draws on this documentation and reproduces parts from it, but I want to emphasise that much of the thinking in this section has been developed collaboratively and borrows from and further adapts this collaboratively authored documentation.

[xxiii] The *florilegium* (plural *florilegia*) is an earlier medieval version of the commonplace book. Literally a collection of illustrations of plants, the term was also used to denote a compilation of excerpts from other writings.

[xxiv] The publishing and editorial workflow we have created for OHP's *Combinatorial Books* book series is available at: https://copim.pubpub.org/pub/workflow-for-combinatorial-books.

[xxv] For example, within a Mexican context, as Méndez Cota (2021) explains, experiments with writing, writing technologies, and media have been less tied to the context of avantgarde art and scholarship but emerged from community-building and grassroots organising in response to various forms of structural violence, e.g. 'economic

inequalities, internal colonialism, ecocidal extractivism, authoritarianism, organised crime, etcetera'.