

Sonic Cyberfeminisms: Introduction

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Since the mid-2010s, there has been a surge of interest in the relations between sound, gender and technology. Debates taking place in contemporary arts, music, education and audio technology pointed to the continued lack of women and non-binary people represented in areas of these fields. Particularly in the technocentric fields relating to electronic-based musics and sound arts, a masculinist and heteronormative bias has compounded an often under-acknowledged hostility to feminist agendas of change or reform. Various initiatives, in the form of networks, conferences, educational programmes and online campaigns, have sought to redress this.¹

Many of these projects have undoubtedly made valuable interventions, bringing greater visibility to inequities and leading to some significant changes in their respective fields.² However, while there has been a variety of approaches and feminist ambitions attached to them, a significant proportion of these initiatives cohere with what feminist scholars have referred to as “popular feminism”: a contemporary, media-friendly mode of feminism that places emphasis on empowerment, visibility, and success; and is indebted to both liberal feminism and neoliberal political rationality (Banet-Weiser 2018; Hemmings 2018). The coherence between the two is traceable in figurations of inclusion and diversity as “good for the market”; the presentation of entrepreneurialism, empowerment, and self-development as strategies for achieving ‘success’ within the sound and music industries; or the conflation of women’s ‘success’ with gender equality or challenges to sexism within contemporary music cultures. It is also traceable in

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¹ A non-exhaustive list might include: Sound:Gender:Feminism:Activism Conferences at Crisap LCC in 2012, 2014, 2016 (London) and 2020 (Tokyo); female:pressure’s “FACTS” initiative (2013; 2015; 2017; 2020); SoundGirls (2013-onwards); Women In Sound Women On Sound (WISWOS) 2015-onwards; Yorkshire Sound Women Network 2015-onwards; Feminoise Latinoamerica Compilations Volume 1 & 2 2015; PRS Foundation’s Keychange Initiative (2018-onwards).

² For example, a cursory look at female:pressure’s “FACTS” initiative in 2020 shows an overall increase in the average number of “female acts” at the festivals included in the survey between 2012 and 2019, from 9.2% to 24.6%. See figure 2 and table 2 at: http://femalepressure.net/FACTS2020survey-by_femalepressure.pdf (Accessed 20 Aug 2020). This is not necessarily to imply the campaign itself is solely responsible for these changes, but the greater visibility raised around gendered representation in festival line-ups does appear to have accompanied tangible changes in festival programming in recent years. Similarly, the Yorkshire Sound Women Network, which provides resources and skill sharing on sound and music technology for women and gender-variant people, delivered over 80 workshops between 2015-2018. These educational workshops have undoubtedly effected change in the lives of their participants. See: <https://yorkshiresoundwomen.com/about/> (Accessed 20 Aug 2020).

their mobilisations around representation and inclusion that leave unquestioned the power structures, ideologies, and social divisions through which gender is constituted: indeed, in keeping with popular feminism, some of these recent initiatives conceptualise gender as singular, oppositional and universal (i.e. 'women in music technology') and thus obscure its co-constitution with sexuality, race, class and disability (Goh, 2014; Thompson, 2020).

Responding to the motivations and limitations of some of these recent initiatives addressing gendered representation and participation in auditory technocultures, sonic cyberfeminisms is proposed as a productive combination of "the sonic" and "cyberfeminism" that can understand and develop feminist thinking and practices. In a rudimentary way, there is a complementary horizontalism and anti-hierarchical character implied in both. The post-war field of cybernetics which emphasized decentralized structures, feedback loops between sender and receiver and prized a notion of homeostasis (Wiener, 1948), formed the backdrop of the cyberfeminism of the 1990s which challenged the masculinist domination of information and communication technologies (ICT) (Haraway, 1991; Plant, 1997; Sollfrank, 1999; Oldenburg & Reiche, 2002; Fernandez et al., 2002)³. The "acoustic" or "sonic" turns of recent years in academia have often pointed to the secondary attention given to sound and modes of listening and hearing in contrast to the primary role played by the visual and modes of seeing in Western modernity (Levin, 1988; Jay, 1993; Levin, 1993). Thus, the sonic is often implicitly or explicitly framed as a subaltern or "minoritarian" position, even if, in many instances, it reinforces hegemonic normativities (James, 2012, 2019). Concurrently, the non-linear feedback loops and notion of "steering" embedded within cybernetics aligns itself with acoustic models of sound waves which have long-held historical associations with fluidity and water wave propagation, which in turn have been characterised as feminine.⁴ Taking these broad affinities between the sonic and cyberfeminism as a starting point, these variegated thematic fields can be explored for more expansive understandings of the relations between sound, gender and technology.

What constitutes cyberfeminism has been subject to much debate. The term often appears vague and resistant to consistent definition, having been associated with a variety of critical, creative, technological and feminist standpoints. The '100 Anti-theses

³ It is important to note that although Donna Haraway's widely read 'Cyborg Manifesto' [1985] cited here was hugely influential on those who participated in the various strands of cyberfeminism, Haraway herself resisted affiliation with the term.

⁴ Fluid mechanics in maritime contexts as well as audio-technical descriptions of sound waves have been invoked as a feminised metaphor of unruly nature (Rodgers, 2016).

of Cyberfeminism', collectively written by the participants of the 1st Cyberfeminist International in 1997, has endured as a fitting encapsulation of cyberfeminism's self-understanding in that moment; it exemplifies a playful approach to definition by multitudinal negation and yet a persistent ambiguity.⁵ Nonetheless, cyberfeminism typically refers to a particular historical moment: specifically, an amorphous and disparate set of events, debates and publications that took place between the late-1980s and the turn of the millennium, which explored the

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possibilities of technology, computing and cyberspace for feminist praxis. From this perspective, one might suppose 'cyberfeminism' to be as outdated as the term 'cyberspace', itself a term associated with this period.⁶ Although the framework of 'technofeminism' and its broader understanding of the mutual relations between gender and technology remains profoundly useful (Wajcman, 2004), and as a strand of scholarly work preceded the coining of 'cyberfeminism' (Wajcman, 1991), the term cyberfeminism has continued to resonate. Recent years has seen a revival of interest in it, including the introduction of the term "Post Cyberfeminism" to describe the changes in technomaterial conditions over the past two decades and encourage a renewed look at its theoretical frameworks (Hester, 2017).⁷ This has resulted in retracings of cyberfeminist histories⁸ and – as this special issue elucidates – attempts to critically expand the moment of cyberfeminism to include contemporary concerns, practices and technocultures.

⁵ The 1st Cyberfeminist International took place at Documenta X, Kassel in September 1997. See the full 100 "anti-theses", which contains snappy, sardonic and humorous negative descriptions of cyberfeminism, such as: "#18 - cyberfeminism is not an ism"; "#83 - cyberfeminism is not about boring toys for boring boys"; "#68 - cyberfeminism is not a single woman" & "#65 - cyberfeminismo no es una banana", at <https://www.obn.org/cfundef/100antitheses.html> (Accessed 20 Aug 2020).

⁶ The science fiction writer William Gibson famously used the term "cyberspace" in a short story in 1982 and the use of the term proliferated from the 1990s as the internet and digital communications became increasingly wide-spread.

⁷ The 2015 Xenofeminist Manifesto (Cuboniks, 2015), collectively written by six women under the pseudonym Laboria Cuboniks as a feminist response to the Accelerationist Manifesto (Williams and Srnicek 2013) has likely been the most prominent of cyberfeminist revivals. It has also been the subject of various criticisms (De Sena 2019; Gleeson 2019; Goh 2019; Lewis 2019). The manifesto was followed up by a monograph by one of its members Helen Hester (Hester, 2018). Other notable activities from this later generation of artists and scholars drawing on cyberfeminism includes Mindy Seu's *Cyberfeminism Index* (cyberfeminismindex.com) and Legacy Russell's *Glitch Feminism* (Russell, 2020).

⁸ For example, ICA London hosted the "Post-Cyber Feminist International" in November 2017; the FACES listserv and international online feminist community celebrated 20 years at the Ars Electronica, Graz with an exhibition and panel discussion in October-November 2017 (Curated & organised by Kathy Rae Huffman, Eva Ursprung, Valie Djordjevic, Diana McCarty & Ushi Reiter); a group exhibition entitled "Producing Futures—An Exhibition on Post-Cyber-Feminisms" at Migros Museum for Contemporary Art, Zurich in February-May 2019.

The cyberfeminist project - or rather, projects - have been met with important criticisms: it is a contested discursive space. Cyberfeminism's frequent centering of white, middle-class, educated women in the global North, its repudiation of other, historical modes of feminism and lack of coherent political ambition have led some, such as Faith Wilding, to ask 'where is the feminism of cyberfeminism?'. Writing in 1998, Wilding calls on cyberfeminism to 'use feminist theoretical insights and strategic tools and join them with cybertechniques to battle the very real sexism, racism, and militarism encoded in the software and hardware of the Net' (Wilding, 1998). Judy Wajcman comparably critiqued cyberfeminism's utopian and post-feminist characteristics in which 'technology itself is seen as liberating women' (Wajcman, 2004, p. 7). There are also questions as to whose cyberfeminism is considered representative as narratives around it have consolidated. Where standard understandings of cyberfeminism might typically reference Australian artist collective VNS Matrix, the Germany-centred Old Boys Network (OBN) and British cultural theorist Sadie Plant's book 'Zeros and Ones', other contemporaneous activities such as those by Toronto-based Nancy Paterson or St. Petersburg-based Alla Mitrofanova – which represent significant expansions regarding gender-queer politics and non-Anglophone cyberfeminisms respectively – are often occluded (Paasonen, 2011). Radhika Gajjala's body of work which combines perspectives of cyberculture from the Global South – South Asia in particular – with questions of labour and digital subjectivities, has notably not seen much cross-citation from other cyberfeminist initiatives, despite Gajjala's explicit framing of the work in these terms (i.e. her 2012 co-edited volume 'Cyberfeminism 2.0') (Gajjala & Oh, 2012). Cornelia Sollfrank, artist and founder of Old Boys Network, has criticised nostalgic and celebratory attempts to revive cyberfeminism for failing to attend to the substantive techno-material and techno-political changes that have occurred since the 1990s. For Sollfrank, it is necessary for contemporary users

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of the rubric of cyberfeminism to provide some indication of how this term is understood (Sollfrank 2019). In light of these evident diversities, we seek to outline the ways in which we approach cyberfeminism here.

First, we understand cyberfeminism as pertaining to both a specific historical moment and a contested mode of feminist thought and practice that endures beyond this historical moment. There is not one cyberfeminism but plural cyberfeminisms - both historic and contemporary. Second, we understand the technological concerns of cyberfeminism to include but also extend beyond computing and cyberspace. Although often associated with the possibilities afforded by the internet, cyberfeminism has

addressed a range of technological practices, histories and concepts – including cybernetics, biotechnologies (including reproductive technologies), artificial life, information society, electronic culture and telecommunications. Third, we are interested in the historical failures, limitations and exclusions of cyberfeminism as well as its successes. Cyberfeminism’s ambiguous and sometimes ambivalent relationship with feminist politics, its emphasis on the (over)developed world, its Eurocentrism and whiteness are significant inasmuch as they can reveal something about wider and ongoing omissions from discussions about gender and technology; but also point to alternative directions from which perspectives on cyberfeminism might be developed. Fourth, we understand the project of cyberfeminism to involve critique as well as speculation. It is undeniable that much cyberfeminist theory and practice has adopted a celebratory, affirmative or utopian perspective on technology. Yet cyberfeminist writers and artists have recurrently critiqued both technocultures and cyberfeminism itself. We therefore seek to amplify cyberfeminism as a mode of feminist critique oriented towards techno-social relations. Fifth, although the remit of our enquiries aligns closely with technofeminism, we remain attached to the cyber of cyberfeminism, for its etymological connection to steering, governing and control. We therefore approach cyberfeminism as a project that involves directing critical and creative attention towards both technological presents and possible futures. Sixth, we embrace the capaciousness of cyberfeminism, including within its frame a range of past, present and possible future technological practices. Indeed, if we are to accept that ‘cyberspace’ has become increasingly ubiquitous since the 1990s, then there is ever more a need to make space for the mundane and everyday, as well as the spectacular.⁹

We (Annie Goh and Marie Thompson) have previously used sonic cyberfeminisms as both a conceptual tool and an organising rubric for a series of events and projects that interrogate the relationship between gender, feminist praxis, sound and technology. The term first emerged as part of a panel discussion at the Berlin-based CTM Festival for experimental music and arts in 2014 entitled “Sound, Gender, Technology: Where To? With Sonic Cyberfeminisms”.¹⁰ This initial discussion was a loose attempt at exploring affinities

⁹ This suggestion resonates with Eric Drott’s recent keynote presentation at *Recursions: Music and Cybernetics in Historical Perspective* at the University of Edinburgh, on 24th October 2019, in which Drott diagnosed a ‘cybernetic mundane’ within contemporary music cultures, in contrast to the ‘cybernetic spectacular’ of various twentieth century avant-gardes. Comparably, Wilding’s criticism of cyberfeminism also pointed to the frequently overlooked topic of the ‘mundane realities’ of women’s work and experiences on the internet (Wilding, 1998).

¹⁰ The panelists included “cyberfeminist” author Sadie Plant, founder of the female:pressure network of women in electronic dance music Susanne Kirchmayr aka Electric Indigo, multimedia artist and designer Fender Schrade and writer and academic Marie Thompson; it was organised and moderated by Annie Goh (the latter two are editors of this special issue). Goh’s short article published at the time, “Sonic Cyberfeminisms and Its Discontents” (Goh, 2014), probed beyond the representational debates around sound and feminism which were dominant at the time.

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between the sonic and cyberfeminist discourses of the 1990s, which this special issue continues and expands upon. A number of related events followed: an online reading group; a panel discussion at Goldsmiths, University of London; a 2-day symposium at the University of Lincoln; a reading group at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London and a week-long residency with ten participants at Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge UK (with Robin Buckley, Marlo De Lara, Jane Frances Dunlop, Natalie Hyacinth, Miranda Iossifidis, Louise Lawlor, Frances Morgan and Shanti Suki Osman). The residency produced an hour-long sonic cyberfeminisms podcast and a zine; both were published online.¹¹ Stemming from these events, and inspired by (cyber)feminist community-building projects such as female:pressure and the FACES mailing list, sonic cyberfeminisms has emerged as a small network which has continued to examine this set of issues¹²

As a discursive intervention, sonic cyberfeminisms reveals some conspicuous absences. Emerging around the beginning of the twenty-first century, sound studies names a broad and interdisciplinary field concerned with the study of sound, sonic media, listening and aurality. Although feminist musicology has formulated critiques of the traditional masculinist narratives of musicology in terms of its canon and analytical approaches (Oliveros, 1970; McClary, 1991, 1993; Citron, 2000), there has been comparatively little sustained engagement with feminist theory and discourse in sound studies. Likewise, while the voice and notions of listening have been recurring themes within feminist thought and praxis, feminism's engagement with auditory culture in a more expansive sense has been limited. There is, however, an emerging body of scholarship broadly belonging to a nascent sub-field of feminist sound studies (Ehrick, 2015; Ingleton, 2014; Rodgers, 2010, 2016; James, 2015, 2019; Thompson 2013, 2017; Goh 2017; Morgan 2017). Sonic Cyberfeminisms builds upon this work, whilst also engaging with the debates of feminist technoscience and wider queer and feminist theory. In so doing, it aims to amplify the resonances between sound, technology and feminist thought; and the insights they can provide on the gendered constitution of auditory technocultures.

¹¹ Podcast: <https://soundcloud.com/soniccyberfeminisms/sonic-cyberfeminisms-wysing-podcast>
Zine: <https://www.scribd.com/document/396134789/Sonic-Cyberfeminisms-Zine>

¹² The female:pressure network, database and mailing list of women and non-binary people in in electronic music and digital arts set-up by Susanne Kirchmayr in 1998 has over 2500+ members at the time of writing. <http://femalepressure.net/presstetext.html> The FACES network and mailing list of women working in new technology was founded in 1997 by Vali Djordjevic, Kathy Rae Huffman, & Diana McCarty, Ushi Reiter joined in 2003, and has over 300+ members. <https://www.faces-l.net/>

Responses to the open call for this special issue have taken up the invitation to play with the term “sonic cyberfeminism”, a nod to the “playful” nature in which 1990s cyberfeminism itself was proposed. The range of subjects covered in this issue encompass contributions from a variety of scholarly perspectives, critical reflections on practice, and textual and auditory interventions from musicology, sound studies, technology studies, art theory, philosophy, critical race theory and feminist activism, reflecting the expansiveness of a yet-to-be-determined proposal such as “sonic cyberfeminism”. The perennial challenge of sound studies - which in its guise as an academic field remains wedded to a predominantly text-based mode of communication - is: how does sound relate? How is sound incorporated into sonic thinking? Taking advantage of the format of online publishing, three Open Space pieces which contain or exist as audible interventions are included.

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This reflects Sound Studies’ priorities to relate theory and practice evident across the field since its inception and expands the horizons of challenges which traditional academic knowledge production faces. What can these auditory interventions provide or provoke which text alone cannot? We leave these open questions.

The articles and Open Space pieces represent intersectional feminist approaches to sound, gender, technology and social life. Race and colonialism have arguably been absent from certain incarnations of cyberfeminism past and present; and critiques rightfully launched at the oft-expressed implicit superiority attached to hi-technologies of the Global North (Gajjala, 1999; Fernandez, 2002; Wright, 2002; Nelson et al., 2001; Nakamura, 2002; Goh, 2019). Similarly, an implicit whiteness (Stadler, 2015) or a “white aurality” (Thompson, 2017) has dominated scholarly work in sound studies, while a white supremacist ‘listening ear’ (Stoever, 2016) has often remained unacknowledged. Responding to these silences, this special issue necessarily foregrounds race, coloniality and racial politics: they are critically present in many of the analytical frameworks presented here, as are critical perspectives on queer and trans politics, capitalism, masculinity, reproductive rights and labour. In seeking to build upon the global nature of the networked world which cyberfeminism addresses there is a commonplace difficulty in talking between the general and the particular. Technology (particularly as it relates to gender) is often talked about in terms of universal opportunity, accessibility and potential. Whilst technology is certainly embedded within global circuits, this globality is not interchangeable with universality; technologies and their uses are situated in the political material contexts in which they arise and proliferate. The articles and pieces included address a need to unpick this.

A key question that circulates amongst the pieces included here echo Wilding's question cited above, in asking: 'what is the feminism of sonic cyberfeminism?' Some pieces articulate and build upon important critiques of cyberfeminism, calling into question feminist strategies focused on inclusion, representation and hagiography. **Asha Tamirisa's** Open Space piece **'Sounding Beyond: Feminist Activism in the Integrated Circuit'** provides a critical perspective on activist initiatives in feminist audio technologies and its discourses of 'empowerment', which often exist without deeper consideration of the oppressions embedded within technologies themselves. Tamirisa points to different racialisations of gendered relations to technology, which distinguish a white middle-class femininity from a women-of-colour underclass and how correspondingly disparate these dreams of liberation are. Speaking as a participant in the circuit design/bending/'maker' audio tech scenes, Tamirisa's intervention makes explicit the connections between gender, racial capitalism and these sonic practices. ***FR-19-0132* 'Sonic Cyberfeminisms, Perceptual Coding and 'Phonographic' Compression'** articulates a critique of the hegemonic logics of some sonic cyberfeminisms. Using the notion of perceptual coding as a means of discerning how patriarchal racial capitalism functions in sound, James delineates a sonic cyberfeminism that reproduces white aurality from a progressive sonic cyberfeminism that amplifies the social inequalities and injustices that are often tuned out from theory. Drawing on musical examples by Paula Temple and Masters at Work, James exemplifies a non-ideal sonic cyberfeminist praxis.

The relationship between race and different manifestations of sonic cyberfeminism are further addressed in **Meina Yates-Richard's 'Hell you Talmbout?': Janelle Monae's Black Cyberfeminist Sonic Aesthetics'**, where Janelle Monae's audiovisual performances are posited as a critique of cyberfeminist and posthumanist desires to escape from embodiment. Drawing on theorisations of the

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liminal status of black women under slavery vis-a-vis distinctions of the human and non-human, the author demonstrates how Monae's performances as Afrofuturist cyborg and android present 'genres of human'; and make clear specific modes of oppression that affect black women. These are proposed as forming the basis of a Black sonic cyberfeminism. The enduring resonances of coloniality and anti-blackness are made audible by **Ruby Thelot and Emile Hastymart** in the Open Space piece **'Crimes: A Sonic Exploration of Colonial Injuries.'** Combining written text with audio, 'Crimes' reflects on French imperialism in Haiti by mobilising oral histories in Creole, moving between intelligible and unintelligible speech to re-perform the loss of histories through French colonial oppression. Haunting beats and brash digital textures are presented as

an insurrectionary sonic warfare campaign against colonial oppression, where the audible deconstruction of words into sounds operates as a 'reversal of master-slave hierarchy'.

In contrast to other, earlier manifestations of cyberfeminism, the Internet is notably absent as a focal point within this special issue. In this regard, we depart from cyberfeminism as a project focusing on the problems and possibilities of web-based practices and communications. Yet, at the same time, the internet is present as a meta-technology or infrastructure that is implicated in many of the sonic practices, media and discourses discussed here. In this regard, this special issue reflects some of the key techno-material changes that have occurred since the cyberfeminisms of the 1990s and early 2000s: the increasing ubiquity of the internet and the expansion of digital culture. Furthermore, cyberfeminisms' interest in technology has always extended beyond cyberspace: cyberfeminists have addressed various technological practices and futurities, and have historically engaged in emerging reproductive technologies. **María Murphy's 'Voicing the Clone: Laurie Anderson and Technologies of Reproduction'** reads Laurie Anderson's 1986 short musical film 'What You Mean We?' in the context of emergent new reproductive technologies, including cloning, and the concurrent socio-cultural enthusiasm and anxieties. Murphy analyses Anderson's construction of the technologised body and examines how the gendered voice is brought to bear on the fictionally cloned subject. The technologised voice at the intersection of reproduction and biocapitalism plays out in the clone version of Anderson, complicated by its intentionally imperfect performance that disrupts normative auditory logics. **Marie Thompson's 'Your Womb: The Perfect Classroom: Pre-Natal Soundsystems and Uterine Audiophilia'** addresses the recent phenomenon of pre-natal speakers. Highlighting the elision of individual, familial and maternal responsibility in the context of 'reproductive sound technologies', Thompson identifies a shift from biological to financialised investment in the figuration of pre-born as future-child. Drawing attention to a 'uterine audiophilia' that often circulates in discussions of sound and music, and which is underpinned by politically regressive understandings of pregnancy and femininity, Thompson suggests that pre-natal soundsystems both reinforce and reconfigure the naturalisation of reproductive labour.

Joanne Armitage and Helen Thornham use sonic cyberfeminisms as an invitation to interrogate performance, artistic practice and audio technologies. **'Don't touch my cables: gender, technology and sound in live coding'** addresses the contemporary practice of live-coding, theorising its live technological-human relationships. The authors challenge the dominant narratives around live-coding, which tend to valorise both technology and the (masculine) composer, using empirical material from women live-

coders to offer an alternative feminist account which embraces failure, slowness and embodiment. With this, an emphasis is placed on non-linear process,

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rather than an 'output' or performance, while notions of 'agential control' are resisted. Open Space piece '**In a Queer Time and Space**' by **Sherry Ostapovich** is a critical reflection on an audio piece of the same name by the author, intended to be played on a 360 degree ambisonic diffusion system, itself conceived of as an audio technological form which can challenge gendered binaries and standardised set-ups. Using audio material of recordings with members of London's LGBTQI+ community, the work meditates on queer geographies, memories, acoustics, and the inter-relation between architectural and sociopolitical space which disrupts a cis-het white male dominance of audio engineering. In Open Space piece '**Virtual communities and experimental music in Latin America, an interview with Susan Campos**' *FR19-0165* engages with the Costa Rican composer on her body of work whilst re-visiting aspects of cyberfeminism. Similar to the approach of Tara Rodgers in *Pink Noises* (Rodgers, 2010), this profile of Campos is not an uncritical hagiography but instead an expansion to existing canons which are dominated by white European men. The possibilities of networked communities and their relevance especially in a Latin American context, are affirmed as important feminist spaces.

Whilst the term sonic cyberfeminism may understandably invoke the technoaesthetics of avant-garde or dance-oriented electronic music, the themes of this special issue incorporate other musics and media. In '**Yr Beast: Gender parrhesia and punk transwomanhoods**', **Jan Szpilka** examines the oft-overlooked presence of trans women in punk. Using Foucault's notion of *parrhesia* or 'courage of truth', trans womanhoods and other forms of 'dissident womanhoods' in punk are analysed, revealing the corresponding double-standards in the scene's dominant historization. Anti-assimilationism as a refusal of the politics of 'passing' is proposed as a further assertion of parrhesia which shuns gender normativity.

Radio has been a rich terrain for women's sonic participation in diverse historical and geographical contexts (Lacey, 1996; Himes, 1997; Ehrick, 2015) and community radio in particular has been highlighted for its ability to empower and connect social movements and offer marginalised genders an alternative to the hierarchies of mainstream radio (Mitchell, 1998, 2000; McCarty & Shultz, 2012). Given the medium's (cyber)feminist potential, it is perhaps unsurprising to note that the feminist activist, FACES co-founder and early participant in cyberfeminism Diana McCarty, later went on to found and direct the free artists radio station Reboot.fm in Berlin since 2010. Two

Open Space pieces in this issue extend questions of what a feminist radio might sound like and what form it might take, whilst capturing a segment of the multiplicity of autonomous feminist movements globally. **Inés Binder's 'The Sonic Memory of a Feminist Strike: A Review of the 2019 'Radio 8M' in Madrid,'** recounts the complex organisation of a feminist radio initiative, a ten-hour broadcast around the Feminist Strike in Madrid 2019. This opportunity for a group of women and LGBTQI+ people to engage in experimental radio with attention to issues of intersectional structural violences and inequalities, reveals the thoughtful detail required to rethink organisational and power structures around sound, radio and technology. Applying activist principles to radio production entails actively diffusing hierarchies and rotating voices and roles. In a complementary way, **Valéria Bonafé and Lílian Campesato's 'Many voices, resonating from different times and spaces': a script for an imaginary radiophonic piece on Janete El Haouli'**, celebrates the plurality of voices which radio affords. In this creative radiophonic script based around Brazilian sound artist Janete El Haouli, the authors describe and practice a feminist politics of listening as one which

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encourages active, imaginative and reflexive listening. With its sonic pieces embedded, listening itself is centred and an intersubjective network is revealed between El Haouli, the authors and the reader/listener of the imaginary piece which challenges dominant univocal narratives.

With this diversity of voices, Sonic Cyberfeminisms embraces a plurality of themes and perspectives on the interrelations between sound, gender and technology. These articles, artefacts and reflections, brought together under the speculative rubric of sonic cyberfeminisms, push at the boundaries of what can be called cyberfeminism or cyberfeminist. In this regard, we might be considered rather unfaithful to an originary ethos or premise. However, contrasting the seemingly infinite open-endedness of many cyberfeminist interventions of the 1990s which were criticised for techno-utopianism and a post-feminist depoliticisation, the issue proposes a new inflection in the notion of steering embedded in cybernetics. The contributions collated here begin to establish a direction, in which certain agendas and thematics are purposefully amplified which contemporary debates across these related fields might currently lack. Thus, we aim to make clear our understanding of cyberfeminism as a feminist practice of steering: in this case, highlighting the complex imbrication of gender, sound and technology that both endures and transforms, whilst attending to but also moving beyond questions of representation and inclusion. It does so at a time when the gendered makeup of different audio technocultures are subject to increasing scrutiny. Including contributions

from activists, artists and composers alongside scholars is intended to highlight the limitations of academic knowledge production which many of us in the academy are bound to, and all too often unable to acknowledge subservience to. Sonic cyberfeminisms is something that is done and practiced, as well as something that is thought about and reflected on. Indeed, we are also mindful that this special issue constitutes one of many possible answers as to what sonic cyberfeminism is, or might be. In revisiting the topic of cyberfeminism in this particular historical moment as Sonic Cyberfeminisms, a critical conversation has been opened that seeks to enable not only a re-evaluation of the boundaries of cyberfeminism but also to assess what productive resonances with the sonic may emerge.

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