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**‘BE KIND TO STRANGERS, THEY ARE YOUR ENTANGLEMENT’:
INTERCONNECTIONS, TRANS-CORPOREALITY, MULTIPLICITY, AND
HOMINID ECOLOGIES IN ANNE WALDMAN’S POETRY**

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Introduction

Anne Waldman was born in 1945 in Millville, New Jersey, when the whole world was trying to rebuild its foundations after the Second World War. She was, in a way, shaped by the surroundings that had been already influenced by the Beat Generation, post-war politics and the general mood of revolution. As she stated in her *Fast Speaking Woman*: “I’m the raised-on-jazz woman” (Waldman 1996: 21). Inspired by the Beat’s spontaneity and jazzy stylistics, from the beginning, she knew that her path would be connected with poetry. In addition to the publication of over forty books of poems, plenty of articles, and even more performances of her poetry, she has a lot of other artistic achievements. To name only a few, in 1974, along with Chögyam Trungpa, Allen Ginsberg, and Diane di Parma, she co-created the Naropa Institute; with her son, she established Fast Speaking Music, an independent label predominantly preoccupied with jazz, the literary and performance art, and connected with movements such as the Beat Generation, Conceptual Poetics and Conceptual Art, New American Poetry, Nuyorican Poetry, Black Arts Movement, Dematerialised Art, and New York School; since the 1960s, she has been an active member of the Outrider experiment poetry community. Throughout her

life, she has been interested in exploring the topics of feminism, ecology, art, and spirituality related to Buddhism. This article aims to interpret her poems, considering the concept of trans-corporeality introduced by Stacy Alaimo, as well as the idea of multiplicity and hominid ecologies depicted by Levi R. Bryant. These concepts challenge the scrupulous anthropocentric perspective of human/nonhuman relations. In the article, I argue that—although not directly associated with ecopoetry or ecological artistic movements—Anne Waldman embraces ecology as a significant aspect of humanity and challenges the fixed boundaries that people tend to impose on the nature/non-nature distinction. In the analyses of “Battery,” “Manatee/Humanity,” “Holy 21st century,” and “entanglement” I will try to demonstrate that in her poems Waldman emphasises, similarly to Karen Barad, that we are “a part of that nature that we seek to understand” (Barad 67).

Trans-corporeality

The concept of trans-corporeality, which I would like to address in this section, was introduced by Stacy Alaimo in her *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment, and the Material Self* (2010). In her opinion, the social aspects of life, such as culture or gender, being heavily linked to material networks, create interdependence between the environment, bodies, and nature, and generate a physical interrelation between human substantiality and nonhuman nature. Thus, trans-corporeality, according to Stacy Alaimo, proves the existence of “the interchanges and interconnections” that link different compounds of bodily matter (Alaimo 2). Also, according to Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, the authors of *Introducing the New Materialisms* (2010), trans-corporeality implements the idea of human/nonhuman organisms as actors in the bioethical context of the infinite games of power relations. It has been stated that any entity that exists has a “body” and is composed of units. What is important to notice is that a body is an entity, regardless of functions that those cells/units perform (Coole and Frost 11-12). Thus, a cell in a human body might have

different purposes than human genes or the human body as a whole. This claim may sound counterintuitive at first but is valid, given the findings of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) that state: “90% of cells in the human body are bacterial, fungal, or otherwise non-human” (www.mpkb.org). During the last decades an increasing number of scholars have been concerned with the idea of human bodies’ porosity. As commented on by Levi R. Bryant, “[e]verybody is a heterogeneous and complex network of entities that is itself an entity or unit” (1). According to Sernella Iovino, “existing as humans means, literally, going past the boundaries of human ‘nature’” (4). In Jane Bennett’s opinion, in human body’s complexity and foreign aspects of its nature

one can invoke bacteria colonies in human elbows to show how human subjects are themselves nonhuman, alien, outside vital materiality. One can note that the human immune system depends on parasitic helminth worms for its proper functioning or cite other instances of our cyborgization to show how human agency is always an assemblage of microbes, animals, plants, metals, chemicals, word-sounds, and the like. (121)

Thus, human bodies, which, at first, might be perceived as finite, singular entities, are an intricate dovetailing of various components. As Bennett states, humans themselves are “alien” in a typical understanding of this word as something foreign. Therefore, as it is “an assemblage of microbes, animals, plants, metals, chemicals, word-sounds, and the like” (Bennett 121), some parts of our bodies will always be something from the outside, something unfamiliar and foreign.

The concept of porosity of bodies, discussed in the previous paragraph, was used as early as in the first century BC in a didactic poem *De Rerum Natura* by Lucretius. The poem explores Epicurean concepts related to atomism, nature and soul, and the world’s development along with its phenomena. Lucretius wrote that “all things are not held close pressed on every side by the nature of body; for there is void in things” (38). Bodies in a void are not comatose substances, but active matter “at times quite undetermined and at undetermined spots,” (72) which:

push a little from their path: yet only just so much as you could call a change of trend. But if they were not used to swerve, all things would fall downwards through the deep void like drops of rain, nor could collision come to be, nor a blow brought to pass for the first-beginnings: so nature would never have brought aught to being. (72)

Lucretius's first-beginnings would be nowadays called atoms or particles, however, the idea remains the same. What determines a body is that it is not a lifeless matter, a static entity, but a creation of convergence and progress, always moving and evolving. Jane Bennett comments on Lucretius in her *Vibrant Matter* by referring to the statement of Louis Althusser, who addressed this phenomenon as "materialism of the encounter" (Althusser in Bennett 18).

Bennett also argues that:

[a] primordial swerve says that the world is not determined, that an element of chanciness resides at the heart of things, but it also affirms that so-called inanimate things have a life, that deep within is an inexplicable vitality or energy, a moment of independence from and resistance to us and other bodies: a kind of thing-power. (Bennett 18)

Bennett's "primordial swerve," despite being "the smallest constituent parts of being" (18), have their own aims and incentives for existence that are independent of the more complex configurations they create.

Multiplicity in Trans-corporeality

The complexity of the human body and the influence that every cell has on others might be discussed in all its nuance when considering the idea of multiplicity. This philosophical concept was developed around the end of the nineteenth century by Edmund Husserl and Henri Bergson, drawing from Riemann's mathematical concept of multiplicity. Later, the concept of multiplicity inspired two philosophical schools of the Twentieth Century: phenomenology and Bergsonism (Deleuze 1991: 115–118). Edmund Husserl, one of the most important representatives of phenomenology, presented his idea of phenomenology and unity in his habilitation thesis in 1887 *On the Concept of Number* (German: *Über den Begriff der Zahl*) on the example of a rose. He claimed that:

[i]n order to note the uniting relations in such a whole, analysis is necessary. If, for example, we are dealing with the representational whole which we call 'a rose,' we get at its various parts successively, by means of analysis: the leaves, the stem. Each part is thrown into relief by a distinct act of noticing, and is steadily held together with those parts already segregated. (Husserl in Roy 14)

Husserl understands multiplicity as a strictly psychological process, which comes from the activity of perception and combining of various components into one entity. The second philosopher concerned with multiplicity, Henri Bergson, presented his ideas in 1889 in his doctoral thesis *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness* (French: *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*). As the title suggests, Bergson focuses more on the concept of free will and the "immediate data of consciousness" (1), which may be named also a direct/immediate experience. Bergson's idea came from an experience of a thing and reflection on whether we consider it a single entity or a construct made up of smaller parts.

The idea of multiplicity developed throughout the twentieth century and influenced many philosophers, including Gilles Deleuze, particularly in his works written in collaboration with Felix Guattari—*Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1972; 1980). In 1993, commenting on Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz's philosophy, he stated that matter "offers an infinitely porous, spongy, or cavernous texture without emptiness, caverns endlessly contained in other caverns: no matter how small, each body contains a world pierced with irregular passages" (Deleuze 1993: 5). Four years later, his opponent, Alain Badiou, expounded in his study of Deleuze's works, *Deleuze: The Clamour of Being* (1997), that the problem with multiplicity is immanently related to an approach to the multiple as having a lesser value than the One. Badiou claimed that "it is not enough to think the univocity of being via simulacra to overcome the philosophy of the One" (Beaulieu 2014: 140), and that Deleuze tended to treat "the multiple in terms of 'impurity' by invariably submitting the ensembles to the law of the univocity of being" (Beaulieu 2014: 140). Treating multiplicity as "impurity" would be a wrong assumption considering the fact

that everything, as I have mentioned earlier, is created of smaller parts/units. Thus, there is no such thing as the One that is compatible with its own self. The relation between different “multiplicity of multiplicities” (Bryant 1) is related to matter-energy flows discussed by Alaimo. In her *Bodily Natures*, she states that “[b]y emphasizing the movement across bodies, trans-corporeality reveals the interchanges and interconnections between various bodily natures” (Alaimo 2). She remarks that the environment is not an “inert, empty space or (...) a resource for human use” (Alaimo 2), how some people might perceive it. It is a world full of other endless individuals with their own components, pronouncements, needs, and characteristics. Therefore, it is possible to say that nature is a complex, incomprehensible entity inseparable from the human.

Hominid Ecologies

To emphasise that humans are a part of nature and “organisms among other organisms” (Bryant 1), and to move from the strictly anthropocentric perspective on human/nonhuman, where nature is something unimportant and foreign, Levi R. Bryant proposes the term ‘hominid ecologies.’ Replacing the terms ‘human’ with ‘hominid’ and ‘culture,’ or ‘society’ with ‘ecologies’ indicates that society is just another type of an ecosystem, much as a pack of wolves, a forest, or a coral reef. As he points out in his article “Stacy Alaimo: Porous Bodies and Trans-Corporeality,” an introduction of a new term “helps us to move beyond the anthropocentric privilege of humanism and helps to remind us that we too are animals embedded in a world that isn’t entirely of our own making” (Bryant 1). Putting nature in a distant, separate position, where it “is always over there, outside of our social dealings” (Bryant 1), naturally creates a distinction in people’s minds. Moreover, Bryant refers to Alaimo’s statement:

[i]magine human corporeality (...) as trans-corporeality, in which the human is always intermeshed with the more-than-human world, underlines the extent to which the substance of the human is ultimately inseparable from “the environment.” It makes it difficult to pose nature as mere background (...) for the exploits of the human since “nature” is always as close as one’s own skin—perhaps even closer. (Alaimo 2)

Nature emerges not as something “over there,” unrelated to humanity and people’s actions, but as a whole organism, which we are merely a part of, and also in a peculiar, intermingled way it is a part of us. As Jagodzinski and Wallin stated in their *Arts-Based Research: A Critique and a Proposal*: “[i]ntelligibility is a relational structure, and relations in-themselves are simply multiplicities that have ‘neither subject nor object’” (32). Hominid ecology that we live in “shapes and is shaped by the materiality of ‘things’ as they intercommunicate between each other by means that is beyond our comprehension” (Jagodzinski and Wallin 32). Jagodzinski and Wallin point out the importance of the dialogue between humans and nature, which is still beyond our comprehension. The problem with this type of communication comes from the limited and sometimes solipsistic anthropocentric perspective, which we automatically apply, as it is our anthropomorphic assumptions that impede understanding.

Trans-corporeality, Multiplicity, and Hominid Ecologies in Anne Waldman’s Poetry

Anne Waldman, in her poems, often refers to the influence that the surrounding world exerts on her and the fact that she is only a part of the larger ecosystem. In her *Fast Speaking Woman, Manatee/Humanity*, or “Holy 21st century,” and many other books and poems, human experience is connected with the rest of nature. As a matter of fact, considering the perspective of Alaimo’s and Bryant’s theories, everything she creates is already nature by itself. One of her biggest inspirations, in the context of interconnections, was Chatral Rinpoche, whom she has met in India in 1973. Waldman said that she “learned most from Chatral observing him in his environments in Ghoom and also in Parphing in Nepal. (...) He was modest himself. Dharma seemed natural in him” (Clay 2009). He did not differentiate between people, and everyone was equal in his understanding of the world. Waldman acquired his ideology and approach towards people quite naturally. She continues: “He seemed close to the land, to the animal realm, to the mountains, rocks, trees. A rock himself, weathered and strong” (Clay 2009).

The way Waldman presents Chatral Rinpoche, as she emphasises his close relation to nature, is a reflection of trans-corporeality. Many of her poems contain a similar theme and focus on the relation between matter, energy, the world and its inhabitants. In my analysis, I will point to the entanglement and influence of nature on humans and their entanglement, the responsibility we have for the environment and other species, the multiplicity of human beings, and the relatively minor role that we play in the universe.

“Battery”

“Battery,” which originally came from Waldman’s collection *Fast Speaking Woman*, was published also, after its earlier publications, in 2017 as a part of her album *Recorded Live In Amsterdam 6.2.91*, released on the occasion of the National Poetry Month organised by poets.org. As a response to her performance, Waldman received many positive letters claiming that this particular poem is the most beautiful celebration of life one can ever imagine and that its rhythm expresses the world’s musicality. Simple opinions like: “I hope one day I, myself, will be able to truly live your words and be a battery,” (Carissa 2017) “I like the way you used many different types of imagery to make the poem realistic and come to life” (Kirstin 2017) are mixed with complex comments of gratitude for inspiration she gave them. “Battery” is a poem that shows there are connections between everything in life and that humans are simply a part of nature:

we will never agree the world contains
so much phenomena we’ll put on glasses
abstract it give it structure make a frame
inversely proportional to the square of
two distances apart
make us a family of celestial bodies that we
be one we ellipse about a warming sun
love that sun
dual nature of electrons heal us o heal us
(Waldman1996: 62)

Not only does she present the relations between different aspects of life (“make us a family of celestial bodies that we be one”), but also points out its uniqueness (“we will never agree the world contains so much phenomena”). Moreover, as in Deleuze’s philosophy quoted above, where “each body contains a world pierced with irregular passages” (1993: 5), she acknowledges also that we are creating this world, being in fact a world on our own. This duality of human bodies—to be a part of something bigger, and respectively also a final result of many different components—is very similar to what she proposes in the poem as “dual nature of electrons.” Waldman comments on the beauty of those minuscule elements of life also in one of her responses to the letters she received:

Ultimately I wanted to write an inspired passionate positive poem for the world! and include the natural world and also appreciate of the smaller things—the “minute particulars” of our existence—the modest grasses, “watercress so good to eat” ... and I wanted to capture the energy, the force of a battery, of a symphony. I wanted it to be a spoken- poem- that was important too. And that it could extend around the room, and beyond. (Waldman 2017)

Waldman wrote “Battery” to share a simple glimpse of appreciation for her surroundings and to teach her readers how to value the simplicity of the world which we partly create, and with which we are connected. The next passage from the poem focuses more on our relation to this world and the so-called home:

I would come back not hide be in motion
I would attach myself to home again
I would be sister mother lover brother
I would be father I would be infant animal awesome
I would be he I would be she I would be they
I would suffer & become extinct again
(Waldman 1996: 62)

In the above lines, Waldman presents her reflections on people’s nature and points out that we are all equal in relation to the world and to each other. By listing diverse relationships she shares with other people: “I would be sister mother lover brother,” she refers also to the multiplicity of every single person,

and the idea of universal love (Waldman 2017). Additionally, the constant repetition of “I would...” at the beginning of every line, gives the impression that the poem is a mantra. In Buddhism, a repetition of sound structures in mantras is used to focus on something bigger and beyond strict borders of the anthropocentric perspective (in the same way as in Waldman’s comment quoted above: “I wanted it to (...) extend around the room, and beyond” [Waldman 2017]). As repetitions are important for the anticipation of what sound sequences will come next, they build the rhythm and help to focus on the more general structure. Mantra is a sound of the surroundings in itself, it echoes in the universe, and is “meant to release the mind from all the anxieties of material life” (Dudeja 1). By repeating the phrase, the poet shows her attachment to the universe, fixing readers’ attention on a sound of the repetition itself. Anne Waldman commented on this poem also by saying that: “I wanted the poem to be a ‘Battery’ for others. A way to plug into the language (logopoeia), sound (melopoeia), and image (phanopoeia). This impulse leads to a much later and longer book/poem: *Manatee/Humanity*, where the endangered sea creature—the manatee—is a kind of battery” (Waldman 2017).

Manatee/Humanity

Published for the first time in 2009 as a book, the above-mentioned *Manatee/Humanity* explores new aspects of interspecies communication, the relation with nature, and genuinely magical and spiritual connection between two different representatives of mammals (humans and manatees). The poet herself commented, after the performance of this poem as a part of the Academy of American Poets’ educational project, Poet-to-Poet, created for the National Poetry Month in 2014, that she wanted to depict an amazing connection with one of the manatees she had seen months before. She indicated that her main concerns are centred around the question “what it is to be a human, what it is to be in a relation with this slow-moving creature” (Waldman 2014). The relation between the manatee and humanity is visible

not only in mantra-like structures that those names create. In terms of trans-corporeality, the connection comes from interspecies communication based on empathy and non-verbal will to understand each other's needs. Waldman calls her readers to focus on the endangered part of nature and to notice that humans are also at risk. Even though the threats people cause to the world are mostly small in scale (sometimes relatively minimal in relation to the whole world), the ecological crisis is the humongous danger that eventually might affect every living organism. However, despite its universality, only humans bear the responsibility and have the opportunity to reverse the effect:

man who makes no concession to manatee
nor cares of manatee life manatee fortune
the manatee dies in collision with watercraft
man who does not protect the manatee
what steward of the earth is this unnatural man
man who makes no concession to manatee
the manatee dies with the ingestion of fishhooks
man who unnaturally makes no concession to manatee
the manatee dies from litter & monofilament lines
(Waldman 2009: 92)

The poem alludes to human compassion and subtleties of interspecies connectedness. If a human being ceases to protect its aquatic, herbivorous, and somehow powerless cousin, it will die. The manatee's death will not be a result of some alien predator, or some external power, by an effect of the pollution and damage done to the Earth by human beings. Anne Waldman's poem functions as a wake-up call for humanity to realise the tremendous impact our species has on the planet. Additionally, the aforementioned mantra-like structure of this poem not only emphasises the reaction between a manatee and humanity, but lifts this majestic herbivorous mammal to a unique, god-like level:

mean world: humanity
dream world: manatee
secret world: *om mani padme manatee hum*
om mani humanity padme hum

the center of reference becomes movement in this ritual
(Waldman 2009: 106)

Writing this poem, Waldman was highly inspired by the Kalachakra initiation, which she went through a few years earlier. Because of the practice involved in *Manatee/Humanity*, a manatee becomes some kind of a divine creature. She commented that her projects are very similar to mantra-like practices and that “it is also an archive and a conglomeration of seed syllables” (Clay 2009). In this poem, by presenting it in a mantra-like sound “*om mani padme manatee hum/ om mani humanity padme hum,*” she tries to capture the irreplaceable notion of sounds and inner rhythms. Her “*om mani padme manatee hum/ om mani humanity padme hum*” relates also to the most popular Buddhist mantra: “*om mani padme hum,*” the six-syllabled Sanskrit mantra of compassion that “generates positive energies within the body through mystical vibrations and frequencies when chanted repeatedly.” (Pereira 761). In *Manatee/Humanity* she depicts different living beings that seem particularly threatened by people’s exploitation of natural environment. By pointing out those threats she emphasises the connections of different living organisms. The poem’s structure with its litanies to animals, especially manatee, is created as both a plea to the society that neglects the natural world and a praise for every living creature.

“Holy 21st Century”

Written in 2012, “Holy 21st Century” with its structure similar to Allen Ginsberg’s footnote to “Howl,” works not only as a tribute to his work but also as a reminder that everything is connected, and every event is at the same time a result and a cause of some other occurrences. While Ginsberg’s poem refers mainly to the simplest affirmation of life, and as Stephen D. Edington points out “he affirms the essential holiness of life; holiness that is contained within horror” (Edington 32), Waldman, in turn, focuses on people’s interaction with the surrounding world. Everything that is happening in life, every place and every person that we come across, has an influence on our existence:

Knocking on tenement doors get a fresh martyr for!
Holy Creeley! Holy Lucia Berlin! Holy Jackson MacLow!

Holy Brakhage! Holy Carl Rakosi! Holy Philip Lamantia!
Holy Steve Lacy, blowing his saxophone in heaven!
(Waldman 2012)

Referring to her personal experience, she recalls Robert Creeley, Lucia Berlin, Carl Rakosi, and other poets or writers, who had an influence on her life and work. Additionally, in her poem she focuses on the idea of multiplicity. The so-called unholiness is not an entity in itself, but rather an embroilment of events and occurrences that create the final entity of “unholy.” Every single component listed in her poem cannot be perceived as the One, an unambiguous manifestation. By emphasising the communication between disparate components (here: between various events and people), “trans-corporeality reveals the interchanges and interconnections” (Alaimo 2). This connection and the mutual interdependence of each other proves that nature, and everything that this nature creates (thus also people and man-made events), is a very intricate and complex structure:

Holy impermanence! Holy the inter-connectedness of all beings!
Karma of atrocities holy and un-holy!
Is 21st century endless continuation of 20th century war holy?
Environmental degradation continuation
Of 20th century environmental degradation holy.
(Waldman 2012)

She emphasises the “Environmental degradation continuation” and points out that what connects people are not only the fortunate but also, and probably primarily, the unfortunate events we experience. Out of the examples presented in her poem, Waldman refers both to the environmental and social degradation as the result of our ancestor’s activities. She indicates that an event seemingly without any effect on our immediate reality has an enormous impact on our daily life, because everything connects and creates a closely related dependency grid. Times of unrest and uncertainties from the past construct the feeling of ubiquitous anxiety, which results in the substandard quality of human lives in mental and spiritual terms:

Holy Baghdad! Holy Dharamsala! Holy Columbine!
Holy Kabul! Holy Israel/Palestine! Holy Bosnia! Holy Rwanda!

Holy Manahatta Isle! Holy Trade Center! Holy East Timor!
Holy Justice! Holy forgiveness! Holy Truth! Holy Accountability!
Baghram holy? Guantánamo holy? Abu Ghraib unholy!
All hooded torture un-holy! All bodily sadistic harm un-holy!
All the hate un-holy! Big lies unholy! All the rape un-holy!
Unholy! Unholy! Unholy! Unholy! Unholy! Unholy!
Holy rap! Holy hip hop! Holy klezmer! Holy Afro-pop!
Holy jazz! Holy gamelan!
(Waldman 2012)

Waldman draws her readers' attention to the interconnectedness and the relation between the "holy" and "unholy" events from the past and the aftermath of those events in the twenty-first century. What she depicts as "holy" is pleasurable and inspiring: holy and beautiful places, the concepts of justice, forgiveness, truth, accountability, music, et cetera. Everything that is related to the beauty of life and to what created this planet a safe and enjoyable place. This state of "holiness" is compared with the "unholiness" of war conflicts and the practices of dehumanisation, such as tortures or rapes. Each of the listed places is a centre for an "unholiness." In her poem Waldman alludes to particular political events, such as an unholiness of East Timor struggles for independence (from Portugal [1769-1975] and neighbouring Indonesia [1975-2002]), the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict ongoing from the mid-twentieth century, and Abu Ghraib torture and prisoner abuse from the early stages of the Iraq War.

Furthermore, the constant repetition of "holy" and "unholy" makes the structure of this poem similar to those analysed above. Its matra-like structure is additionally exposed by religious connotations of the two adjectives. The repetitions come rapidly in a dynamic sequence that imitates chanting. The purpose of such a proceeding is to detach the reader/listener from his or her surroundings and allow them to transfer the concentration into something above their own physicality. Thus, as the rhythm of "Holy 21st century" is meant to copy patterns of religious chants or mantras, it might be perceived through its spiritual aspect as a hymn for those who suffered as a result of other

people's choices. This dependency on others and their decisions is an example of the world's "inter-connectedness of all beings," which she depicted as "holy."

"entanglement"

Created in 2018 as a part of her (probably) most revolutionary book, *Trickster Feminism*, "entanglement" works on many different levels as a noticeably unique poem. It is a very personal confession, made about the world, humanity, and herself as a part of both. What is worth noticing in the analysis of this poem is that the term "entanglement" comes from quantum physics, where it means "a mechanical phenomenon in which the physical states of the subatomic particles that form matter, after having been joined and spatially separated, can become intertwined, interacting despite physical distance" (Catanzano 2019). In other words, it "occurs when two particles become inextricably linked, and whatever happens to one immediately affects the other, regardless of how far apart they are" (McDonald 2019). By choosing this title for her poem, Waldman refers to the "inter-connectedness" of all life aspects (the expression she has used in "Holy 21st century"). She also emphasises her deep connection with the surrounding and the effect this "entanglement" has on her life:

Entanglement is my ransom
Entanglement imagines when we shed our skins
Skins keep talking
And shed our sex the sexes keep talking
(Waldman 2018: 115)

Entanglement never rests
But rest now from circumambulation *Om Con Be Gone*
(118)

How not become our own volcano? Visit a ring of fire
Volcanoes were entangled
Act as mirror into my lower atmosphere Entanglement eschews boundaries
Politics of sonorities
All the organs collapse
(123)

Entanglement: spellbind phenomena
Be kind to strangers, they are your entanglement
(124)

In the theory of entanglement, disparate particles can influence each other no matter how far apart they are. In her poem, Waldman points out that entanglement indeed “eschews boundaries” and is a “spellbind phenomena” that connects various components into one unity that “never rests.” Every living creature and every part of nature is equal in the huge plexus of life. Moreover, a fragment where she calls to her readers “Be kind to strangers, they are your entanglement” reflects on her belief in a special bond between all living beings. In Husserl’s understanding, a society would be a system of separate parts “held *together with* those parts already segregated” (Husserl in Roy 14). In the same way, as in Husserl’s interpretation of multiplicity, we interpret a rose as an entity, we tend to look at the concept of a society. However, only when “we get at its various parts successively” (Husserl in Roy 14), we start to realise that this supposed entity is not an individual in itself. A rose, in Husserl’s example, is not a univocal object but consists of various components such as a stem, sepals, petals, a peduncle, thorns, et cetera. In the same way, we may interpret society. It is never a finite, singular unit but rather a network of families, communities, organisations, and individuals. Those individuals, sometimes mere strangers, are in fact, at least according to Waldman’s poem, connected to us.

In addition, throughout the poem she encodes some names of ubiquitously known feminists who inspired her on different levels of life and/or work: “Auld tray lured” (Audre Lorde), “Barb a guest” (Barbara Guest), “Loud her back” (Ann Lauterbach), “May may bur sin brooch” (Mei Mei Berssenbrugge), “Claw din rank kin” (Claudia Rankine) (Durand 2018). This list makes her poem not only a reflection of her views about the world but a very private testimony about her liaisons. She presents herself a sum of different entanglements and connections gathered during her life.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Anne Waldman, in her poetry, shows that humanity is a part of nature and that everything around us creates a net of relations, to which we also belong. The fact that the world is created of many different components, and nothing can exist as a separate entity, is what makes nature so exceptionally personal and vivid. The interconnections of life create equality between its participants and components. Dated back to the times of *De Rerum Natura* by Lucretius, through Stacy Alaimo's research on trans-corporeality published in 2010, the idea of life as a convoluted web of smaller and very complex units was present in people's minds for centuries. Despite the assumed singularity of human bodies, every individual is entangled in an intricate mesh of different components. The poems I have analysed above bring together the concepts of the porosity of humans and the minor part we play in the universe, which the poet juxtaposes with the major influence humans have over the world and other organisms. In "Battery" Waldman presents herself as a porous, undefined, and not unified part of the world, in which, as she also points out, beauty and simplicity should be more appreciated. In *Manatee/Humanity* she emphasises the influence that different organisms exert on each other, whereas in "Holy 21st century" she comments on the "inter-connectedness," which glued together events of our history and our nowadays reality. Last but not least, in "entanglement" not only does she present the connections of all life aspects through the medium of quantum physics but also gives a very personal statement on her own entanglements and inspirations. Waldman's poetry reaches beyond fixed borders of human/nonhuman distinction and provides examples of how various components of life are interconnected. In her poems, she proves that understanding this entanglement and relationships, which we create with other organisms and nature, are the key to comprehend humanity itself.

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Abstract

In this article, I present Anne Waldman's poetry from the perspective of trans-corporeality, introduced by Stacy Alaimo (2010), as well as the ideas of multiplicity in trans-corporeality and hominid ecologies that challenge the scrupulous anthropocentric approach to human/nonhuman relations. I analyse some of Waldman's well-known poems, "Battery" from *Fast Speaking Woman* (1996), fragments of her book *Manatee/Humanity* (2009), "Holy 21st Century" (2012), and "entanglement" from *Trickster Feminism* (2018). Moreover, I demonstrate that although not directly associated with ecopoetry or ecological artistic movements—Anne Waldman is highly

inspired by the surrounding world and identifies ecology as a significant aspect of humanity. Her poetry, by challenging the fixed boundaries that people tend to impose on the nature/non-nature distinction, explores the relations between human and nonhuman in order to reflect on the interchanges and interconnections that exist in the universe.