

The Anthropussy

Revised Edition



an ecolesbian manifesto



welcome to the Anthropussy

a better world is waiting



Introducing Ecolesbianism

This manifesto is a how-to guide on **ecolesbianism** – a term that we first birthed as a small collective (cli-lective) of queer students in Singapore. We inhabit queer bodies on a planet in crisis and declare a new lesbian love for the Earth. We hope to welcome you into these ways of loving, and cultivate our new ecolesbian community together.

Rather than just trying to include lesbians in the environmental movement (we are already there!), we are asking what it would mean to structure our environmentalism – and our own personal ecologies – around lesbian principles. As our predecessors in the political lesbianism movement proposed lesbianism as an answer to patriarchy, we propose it as an answer to climate and nature crises.

Ecolesbianism is our addition to the growing pool of studies connecting gender, sexuality, and the nonhuman environment; we are walking in the fresh footprints of ecofeminism, queer ecologies, ecosexuality, and transecolgy. Rather than buying into an exclusionary (meaning, transphobic) brand of lesbianism, we are expanding it to ask: What can my lesbian self and my ecological self learn from one another? What do we have to offer the world?

We are not trying to gatekeep lesbian labels and wisdom from anyone, and we also aren't trying to make the whole world lesbian (although... what if it were?). We are using lesbianism as a pathway to reconceptualise intimacy and the erotic when it comes to environmentalism, to embrace queer directives in climate justice movements, and to centre the queer interconnectedness of all beings human and nonhuman.

This zine was originally self-published in 2022 Singapore: An island nation that has adopted a technocratic, isolationist approach of “national greenwashing” (Schneider-Mayerson, 2017), and at that time was persistently holding onto the colonial anti-homosexual law 377A. There are parallels we cannot ignore between the organised attempts to control the nonhuman environment and attempts to control human genders and sexualities. Sabine LeBel provided a seed for this connection when she argued that queer youth and climate change narratives share a struggle of imagination: “The future seems unimaginable, even impossible at times” (LeBel 2021). The ecolesbian task is to imagine and build that “impossible future” together.

ANTHROPOCENE



ANTHROPUSSEY

The ecolesbian future we envision is **the Anthropussy**: The erotic and utopian potential we carry within this era of unprecedented anthropogenic climate change.



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Find us in the *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, special issue on Lesbian Earth!

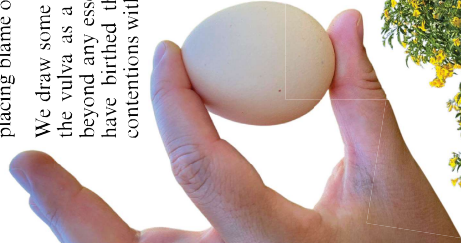




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The Anthropussy is not an era – we have replaced the “-cene” with the queer scene. “Pussy” is both an iconic label reclaimed into the queer cultural lexicon and a literal sex organ. The same is true of its synonym “cunt”, once a misogynistic insult and now a flamboyant compliment amongst queers. The pussy is a site of vast potential, pleasure, intimacy, and expansiveness. It is our eclesbian duty to seed these into our futures on this planet.

The Anthropussy is also a pun, poking fun at the “anthropos” of “Anthropocene.” “Anthropos” linguistically comes from the Greek word for “man”, so the use of it to describe our current geologic era is inherently universalising the male experience. To meld the masculinised and patriarchal prefix “anthropos” with the word “pussy” is thus an act of linguistic resistance. The Anthropussy is by definition genderqueer.

At the very least, we should flip how we use “Anthropocene” to an acknowledgement that if anyone is to blame for our environmental crises, it is indeed the men (the ‘anthropos’) and not all humankind. We are not all equally or individually responsible for this destruction. Alternatives to “Anthropocene” such as “Capitalocene” (Moore, 2016) and “Plantationocene” (Haraway, 2015) have already been thoughtfully offered by environmental scholars. These names point out that the blame for our global climate predicament should be traced back to capitalism itself, and the economic, social, and ecological ruins caused by plantation agriculture. Scholars like Jayna Brown have gone even further to criticise the aspiration to be included in the ‘human’ label at all. If the bodies of the queer and colonised are already rejected from ‘humanity’, shouldn’t we embrace our affiliation with the nonhuman?

“When we estrange our perceptions of life itself away from the sanctity of the human, we can think expansively about what it means to be biological entities. As work in queer theory and science studies suggests, expanding our thinking temporally, as life forms transform across greater expanses of time than we can see, and in noncontiguous and unexpected formations helps us think of the notion of species and selfhood in new ways.”

(Brown, 2021)

We are also inspired by Donna Haraway’s “Chthulucene”, which calls for an era of multispecies collaboration. Think of the Anthropussy as the Chthulucene’s hot lesbian friend. Rather than placing blame on individuals, we are looking for a way forward – through the pussy.

We draw some of our pussy appreciation from Luce Irigaray (1985), who wrote beautifully of the vulva as a site of autoeroticism and plural sexualities for the feminist agenda. Moving beyond any essentialist understanding of the feminine as confined to the body-with-vulva, we have birthed the Anthropussy in an effort to bring the vulva energy into our worldwide contentions with the more-than-human.

“She is neither one nor two. Rigorously speaking, she cannot be identified either as one person, or as two. She resists all adequate definition.”

(Irigaray, 1985)



What's so special about lesbians?

We are not the first to claim that lesbians have something unique to offer the world. Julie Enszter has called it "lesbian vitality." It is broadening the label rather than constricting and essentialising it that keeps us vital and vibrant. What is special about lesbians is our intimacy, not any genitalia. Though we have taken up the vulva as a symbol of strength and elasticity, this vulva is NOT a prerequisite of lesbian or ecolesbian power and identity. We say "pussy" not as a criteria for entry but rather as the iconography it has always been in the queer community. Pussy as adjective, verb, symbol, shelter, and strength.

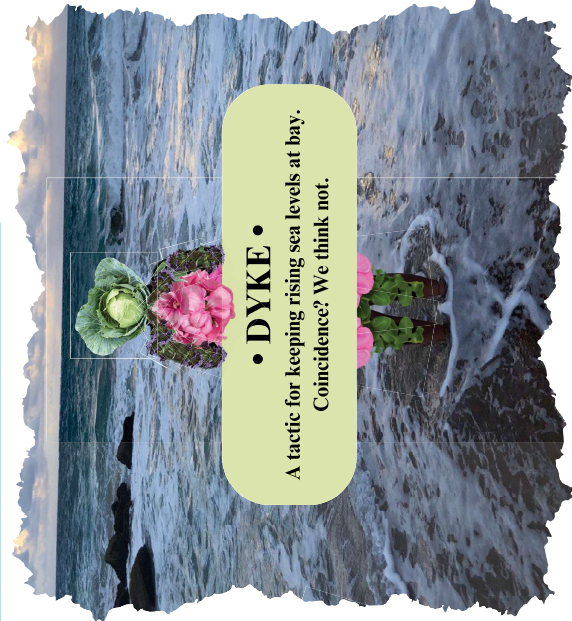
As co-authors, we don't bring conventional or uniform expressions of lesbian identity to the table. We are nonbinary and trans, lesbians and bisexuals and more identities from the queer beyond. Regardless of genitalia, we are serving cunt! And we're looking to see what happens when we bring our shared intimacy and vibrancy to face our ecological crises.

As ecolesbians, we define 'lesbianism' as *an intimacy held between gender-marginalised beings*. Narrow expectations for gender identity and performance in the lesbian community have excluded so many of our trans and nonbinary kin and limited the love we give each other. As such, if you have been pushed away from the 'lesbian' label before, we hope that you find a welcome home in our new flourishing garden of ecolesbianism. We are here to address our relationship with the Earth. The soil and bugs and worms and trees and fungi, none of whom are preoccupying themselves with your gender or your 'sex.'

"A political definition of lesbian identity that defines lesbianism as a continuum, as fluid, and as nonessentialist is important to sustain lesbian identity today."

(Hagai & Seymour, 2022)

To be an ecolesbian, then, is to extend our gender-marginalised intimacy to more-than-human kin. For example, the relationship between our moon and our ocean is an ecolesbian one. Neither entity has a gender (and if we as humans gender them, they are often femme), and they ebb and flow together in an intimate, beautiful reciprocity.



• DYKE •

A tactic for keeping rising sea levels at bay. Coincidence? We think not.



In Conclusion: We Are Climate Cunts

To be an ecolesbian is to be a climate cunt: an iconic, fierce, and elastic member of the ecologies that we inhabit. As climate cunts building our new Anthropussy world, we make the commitment to harness the powerful pussy energy needed to keep living and life-giving through all of the challenges that lie ahead. We are growing the garden that so many communities of cunts before us have tended before us.

The core purpose of our manifesto has been to welcome you into the new ecolesbian movement: A movement for holding loving lesbian relations with the Earth, and embracing the power and complexity that comes with that. To make this vision clearer, we have outlined four starting values that came to us through lesbians and must stay with us in the climate crisis: Intimacy, interdependence, processing, and resistance. Rather than claiming any of these values or earthly connections as wholly our own, we are seeding ourselves into the rich, humic soil that has been built up by our fellow queer ecologists, ecofeminists, ecosexuals, transecologists, present-day farmers and through-the-ages queers of all kinds. We hope the garden guide above helps to bring theory into the reach of our hands and soils, and to bring you as the reader into practice and action alongside us.

As ecolesbians, we are DIY-building the better world we want and know is possible, and we call this world-building scene the Anthropussy. It is a project of multispecies cojustice, of lesbian life-giving among ruin, and of the creativity we will need if we are going to survive.

We will leave you with a final reminder that this work should always be a little fun – or as we ecolesbians say, a little cunt. We invite you to play with our Anthropussy, to take this final definition we offer you and to have fun with it from here:

The Anthropussy: The opportunity to turn our climate from crisis to cunt

"MOM, I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY YOU'RE WORRIED / THERE'S NOTHING MORE POWERFUL AND INVINCIBLE / THAN A CUNT WHO HAS FOUND THEMSELF AND IS SURROUNDED BY COMMUNITY OF CUNTS WHO HAVE TOO."

(Zenon, 2022)

From the *Cyberfeminist Manifesto for the Twenty-First Century*:

"We are the modern cunt positive anti reason unbounded unleashed unforgiving we see art with our cunt we make art with our cunt we believe in jouissance madness holiness and poetry we are the virus of the new world disorder ... infiltrating disrupting disseminating corrupting the discourse we are the future cunt"

(VNS Matrix, 1991)



Step 4: Compost Your Exes, and Save Your Seeds

A plant dying is a type of breakup. Even if you saw it coming, you still see it dying and mourn the parts that are going to waste. The answer to this pain is compost, and we are advocates of taking this philosophy into your human relationships as well.

When a plant's life-cycle is coming to an end*, there are two important things you can do as a soon-to-be ex-partner: Leave the roots in, and save the seeds.

Leaving the roots of a plant in the soil is a great tactic for soil health. When you break up, you cannot just banish your ex-lover from your city – even if you wish you could, the more responsible thing to do is to harness the connections made along the way to help you continue your growth. Whether you are rotating in a new crop lover or entering a well winter, these roots will naturally decompose and serve your soil in the new year.

Before you throw the rest of your plant into the compost pile, be sure to save your seeds. Seeds are the real-life picture of queer abundance. They are the millions of children we nurture each year, possibly in resistance to the pressure to produce biological children. And as a gardener, seed saving is a great way to cultivate a plant family resilient to your local ecological conditions – plus you can swap seeds to make human friends along the way! Seed saving is not difficult to learn. There are essentially two types of seeds: dry and wet. Wet seed saving is a bit harder, but any ecolesbian is surely up for the challenge. Saving seeds takes time more so than skill, and as such it is best done in community – rally your five favourite lesbians, and the seeds from your whole garden can be saved and sorted in a day.

Then to the remainder of your bounty that you cannot eat or seed: it is time for their rebirth through compost. A compost pile is not simply a heap of dead and dying plant matter – it is as intentional and complex as a well-cooked meal. It is a living community of organisms, as messy and interwoven as the queer community. Things will have to get hot and heavy, as you invest your time and sweat into the life-giving feat of turning waste back into food. Like any ex-lover, your relationship is never over but simply transformed. To compost is to resist the understanding of death as waste.

“Compost is proof of life after death.”
(Penniman, 2018)



*NOTE: This page is mostly instructions for annual plants and plant/food waste. Let your perennials flourish on their own!

“I am a compost-ist, not a posthuman-ist: we are all compost, not posthuman.”
(Haraway, 2015)

Lesbian Values for the Anthropussy

As the old-time feminist saying goes: “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman” (de Beauvoir, 1949). Today, we are **not born, but rather become ecolesbians together**. This is to say: If you’re not a lesbian, it’s not a problem – at least not to us. You can still embrace your ecolesbian potential.

But what exactly does it mean to be a lesbian, in terms of shared values and experiences? Judith Butler phrased this dilemma best:



“What, if anything, can lesbians be said to share? And who will decide this question, and in the name of whom?”

(Butler, 1991)

It is only our overenthusiasm that allows us to start to answer this question, and to do so in the name of the Earth.

We propose four simple values to start with. We have recognised these as contributing to the beauty and depth of lesbian relations, although we of course cannot claim them as exclusive to lesbians. We don’t “own” these values, and we should hope not! The Anthropussy we seek requires them from everyone.

1. Intimacy

3. Processing

2. Interdependence

4. Resistance



1. Intimacy

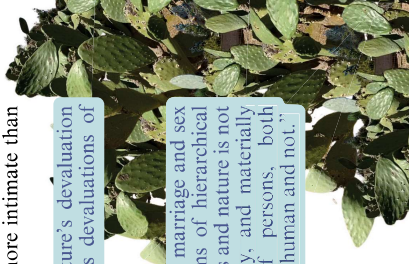
Don’t understand how you can be intimate with the Earth? That’s okay, plenty of people don’t understand how lesbians have sex anyways.

In the midst of the climate crisis, it is time we stop shying away from the erotic, from the fact we can genuinely *love* the nonhuman. Around half of the cells in our bodies that we rely on to stay alive are not actually human (Sender et al., 2016) – and it doesn’t get any more intimate than that. Perhaps all of the fungi and bacteria in our guts are lesbians, too.

There are many ways to be intimate, though. We caution against fetishising hierarchical forms of intimacy with the Earth; this is just as problematic as straight people fetishising lesbian sex. The narrative of connecting to an ‘untouched wilderness’, for example, parallels a patriarchal desire for ‘untouched women.’ Both stem from a purity culture rooted in white settler colonialism and the desire to conquer. Fetishising the ‘untouched’ in nature has created a ‘conservation’ movement with insidious ties to conserving white settler power (Powell, 2015).

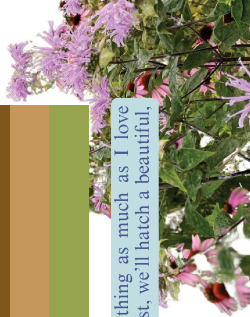
“Dominant Western culture’s devaluation of the erotic parallels its devaluations of women and of nature.”
(Gaard, 1997)

“Settler relations, be that marriage and sex between humans or forms of hierarchical intimacy between humans and nature is not economically, emotionally, and materially sustainable for lots of persons, both indigenous and not, both human and not.”
(TallBear, 2016)



The Compost Pride Flag
(By authors)

“I cannot imagine loving anyone or anything as much as I love Annie. Maybe when we do become compost, we’ll hatch a beautiful, magnificent redwood tree.”
(Sprinkle & Stephens, 2021)





In reality, we have always been connected to the more-than-human worlds that surround us; we've never stopped touching each other. Kim Tallbear has argued that heteropatriarchy and monogamy are colonial tools to create hierarchy, both among humans and in our relationship to the nonhuman. As such, the queer impulse for new relationship structures is also an anti-colonial one that we must apply to our interspecies relationships.

Part of the lesbian relationship structure is the fact that both/all partners share in the experience of *gender marginality*, and in that way we recognise a certain *sameness* in one another.

sameness + *marginality*

It has been said that lesbian intimacy is like a mirror. It's about seeing parts of yourself in another, in a romantic and sexual partner (or partners), and in doing so rejecting the heteronormative mandate for difference in sexual relationships.

"To confront another woman is finally to confront one's self — the self we have gone to such lengths to avoid. And in that mirror we know we cannot really respect and love that which we have been made to be."

(Radicalesbians, 1970)

Lesbian relationships are part mirror and part collective struggle. Bringing this into our relationship with the Earth means seeing our nonhuman kin as mirrors of ourselves and vice-versa: We are entangled in the same ecological web, and mirror each other's experiences of marginality. Take "mother Earth" for example. Earth as "mother" is a gendered position of a non-sexual caretaker, exploited by the polluting forces of capitalist patriarchy. It is a *compulsory motherhood*, an expectation which also alienates many human women and queer people. To hold lesbian intimacy with the Earth is to reject this compulsory motherhood, and to hold the Earth instead as an equal.

(VI) THE ECOSEX PLEDGE

I promise to love, honor, and cherish you, Earth, until death brings us closer together forever.

(Sprinkle & Stephens, 2020)

Ecolesbian intimacy is inspired in equal parts by the ecosexual and transecology movements. Instead of admiring the Earth as an 'other', we must embrace it as part of ourselves — a part we want to heal with gentle care, joyful ecosex, and fierce activism.

"When we know and experience our vulnerability, we can start to rethink the previous, hierarchical model of intra-human relationships."

(Freyne, 2020)



磨镜

(mójiǐng)

Mandarin slang for lesbian intercourse

Translation: "rubbing mirrors"



Venus Is In Retrograde

We were two seedlings tending towards the sun and to each other.

I liked the shape of her leaves and she liked how many shades of greens I had.

Slowly, we crept towards each other Growing closer with every new moon until one day, we touched.

Our buds began to flower.

Her vines wrapped around me and her roots pushed me apart.

We danced and swayed in the soft glow of a full moon.

And for a couple more moons after that. But on one night of a waning crescent moon, the ridges of my leaves began cutting into her and I got tangled between her vines.

Earthworms wiggled their way between us. We giggled.

For unlike the plastic beer pong cups that lay beside us on that first night, and we were doomed (blessed?) to change, to decompose.

Slowly, we returned to the earth souls still intertwined and from death of our dance came the birth and flourishing of our new forms. Taking on a new, more harmonious form, we nourished various forms of fungi, laying under a new moon.



Step 2: Soil Love

The soil, too, is alive, and requires the most love in your garden. Much like your own body, the soil is hiding so many nonhuman kin under her surface. She is probably the oldest lover you have ever met.

You can learn a lot about soil these days — from books, online, or in a lab if you have the resources for that. And we shouldn't forget about intuition either. Soil that looks, feels, or smells like it is not in good shape it probably is, and as it responds to your love you will be able to tell. If your soil is indeed contaminated, you do not need to abandon it altogether. The simple sunflower and oyster mushroom are some of your greatest and most accessible allies in bio- and myco-remediation. And a raised bed can help you to work around some of the harsher urban contaminants.

"We can tell a lot about soil using only our senses and direct experience."

(Penniman, 2018)

where the sunlight falls, and for how long. Seek seeds from your neighbors and get to know them: where in the world are these plants from, and where were these particular seeds saved? How much sunlight and water do they need? Will you and the land be able to provide that for them? Do you have the capacity not just for labor but for love?

Remember that the soil is not a thing but a community of beings. Through the food you eat and land you walk on, you came from the soil yourself, and will someday return to it.

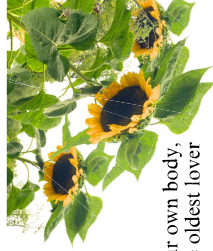
Step 3: Plant Queerly

If the plants and insects and microscopic beings in the garden are your partners, then let your gardening be an intimate experience — maybe even an erotic one. What kind of lover will you be? How often will you water these plants? How often will you smile at them? Think about your garden plant lovers as mirrors: they are reflecting the work of your hands, and maybe you are reflecting something about them as well. As you plant, think about your commitments to one another, as partner beings.

An easy way to bring queerness into your garden is to invite the pollinators in — after all, they are basically the sex party facilitators of the plant world. If you want your garden partners to have a good time, you need to bring them pollinators, which means you need to bring them flowers. Do some sexy garden research and find pollinator plants that are native to your area. Plenty of these flowers might be queer too, like the famously bisexual marigold flower which is a popular companion plant.

To plan a garden is to start a queer relationship with a new lover, and to nurture it is to keep that commitment. As the plants mature, stay intentional about your role of caring for them; you are a partner, not police. Let the mystery sprout grow a bit before labeling it a weed. Practice, consent, gratitude, and reciprocity.

In gardening, you will flourish by acknowledging that plant life does not follow our human whims. When plants consistently wither despite your care, or overgrow despite your diligence, admire them as actors of resistance. You may learn something from them.





An Ecolesbian Garden Guide

Because it's not an ecolesbian manifesto without a DIY home project guide

Sadly, gardens can be spaces of reproductive control: Human gardeners exercise control over the aesthetics and sexuality of plant life. Only certain species' offspring are wanted – though never in excess, or overgrowth – and the unwanted forms of life are made killable. Industrial agriculture and manicured state-owned gardens are symbols of patriarchal domination over all things 'natural', and this nature is coded as feminine.

But there are many types of gardens. And to be a lesbian is in part to resist imperatives to (re)produce, re-centering desire and pleasure. The ecolesbian offers us a different kind of garden – a sexy one.

Step 1: Garden Processing

Step into the earth with your bare feet. Lay down on it naked if that's your deal. Hold a conversation with the beings around you. How many critters and fungi and microbes lie beneath your feet? They are not workers in 'your' garden; they are your partners, and their visions for the space must be heard. This is your opportunity to make-with.

Processing is about the past, present, and future all at once, so it also means historicising. Learn about the land you are on. Was it stolen, and from whom and when? Who labored on it before you? Are you approaching this relationship as one of ownership, stewardship, or partnership? The truth is that reparations are due on local, regional, and global scales, and if the Earth is calling for someone else you should listen to her.

The ecolesbian garden must lead with *consent* – a piece of wisdom we have learned from Soul Fire Farm. In asking for consent, you are not separate from your place in history, and your ancestors' relationship to this land. Even if the practice is new to you, or if you are scared of the answer, try asking the land for permission.

If this patch of earth allows you to garden with it, think intentionally about its future. Think about power: Will this garden be a space where you alone reap benefits? Who will breathe its air, see its colors, and eat its bounty? How will you use it to connect with others, human or nonhuman? Remember that your decisions are not final, and that all gardens are always communal. The garden is a space of multispecies flourishing, where you are not the most important being.



Gardens by the Bay, Singapore (not sexy)



Transecology has taught us the piece on gentle vulnerability: To be trans is to be an expert on otherness, change, and vulnerability, and to hold a connection with all of the natural life-cycle transformations that occur in nonhuman ecologies (Seymour, 2020). And the ecosexuals have taught us just how fun and beautiful it can be to be intimate with the Earth, echoing arguments also made by indigenous scholars. We appreciate their broadening of the concepts of sex and the erotic. It is not about having genital sex with plants and rivers. The much more important value is learning how to hold the emotional intimacy of a lover with our nonhuman kin and environments.

The ecolesbian intimacy we seek is vulnerability, joy, and mirrorship with the Earth. Seeing our more-than-human world as a mirror would mean that we see ourselves as personally afflicted by its degradation, and that we feel an emotional intimacy with it on par with our lesbian lovers.



"Sex is one way of relating, just one way. We have other forms of intercourse. We have conversation as a form of intercourse. We have various forms of touch. We have intellectual kinds of intercourse."

(TailBear, 2016)

2. Interdependence

Lesbianism is about community: Being historical pillars of the diverse queer community and embroiling ourselves in the messy dating-each-other-sexes lesbian network. To be a lesbian is to know the practice of queer interdependence all too well.

To be an ecolesbian, then, is to realise our interdependence not just with other gender-marginalised humans but with our non-human ecologies as well. The body is our first environment, and rather than separating ourselves from what we call 'nature', we must practice "transitioning to the ecological self" (Freyne, 2020). We can transition back into understanding ourselves as ecological beings, and to having a stake in the ecological ruin around us.

Interdependence is often positioned as a choice or a value, but it is also a biological and ecological reality. Evolutionary biologists have come to realise that evolution itself depends on the intimacy of strangers: All species including our own have only developed because of symbiosis, both to each other and to our greater ecologies (Margulis & Sagan, 2002). We are already and always interconnected, and our actions continually impact our ecologies whether we recognise it or not. Other species are a model for ways of life that embrace connectivity and collectivity.

"Ants tell each other where the food is, not hoarding individually, but operating on a principle that the more of them that gather food, the more food they will have as a community. In nature, everything works in collaboration. The hummingbirds and flowers are in such deep coordination that they need each other for survival. How vibrant and alive and successful could our movement be if we moved with such coordination and collaboration."

(Kariissa Lewis in Penniman, 2023)

Our ecolesbian take on interdependence is a bridge from Donna Haraway's (2008) assertion: "To be one is always to become with many." Each individual human life depends on more-than-human beings: Our gut bacteria, our food, water, pets, and more. As ecolesbians we respond: **To be queer is always to become queer with many.** Queer people depend on each other and on nonhuman others to survive. Any lesbian with an attachment issue to their cat would know. And just as we have lived within systems that don't consider us in their plans for futurity, our current economic and ecological norms treat our nonhuman kin with that same ignorance.

In the Anthropoceny, we must move beyond this. We call our fellow ecolesbians to own our rippling role in surrounding ecosystems (both biological and social), and to actively embark on projects which world-make together with our nonhuman ecologies. We are always becoming-with and becoming queer.





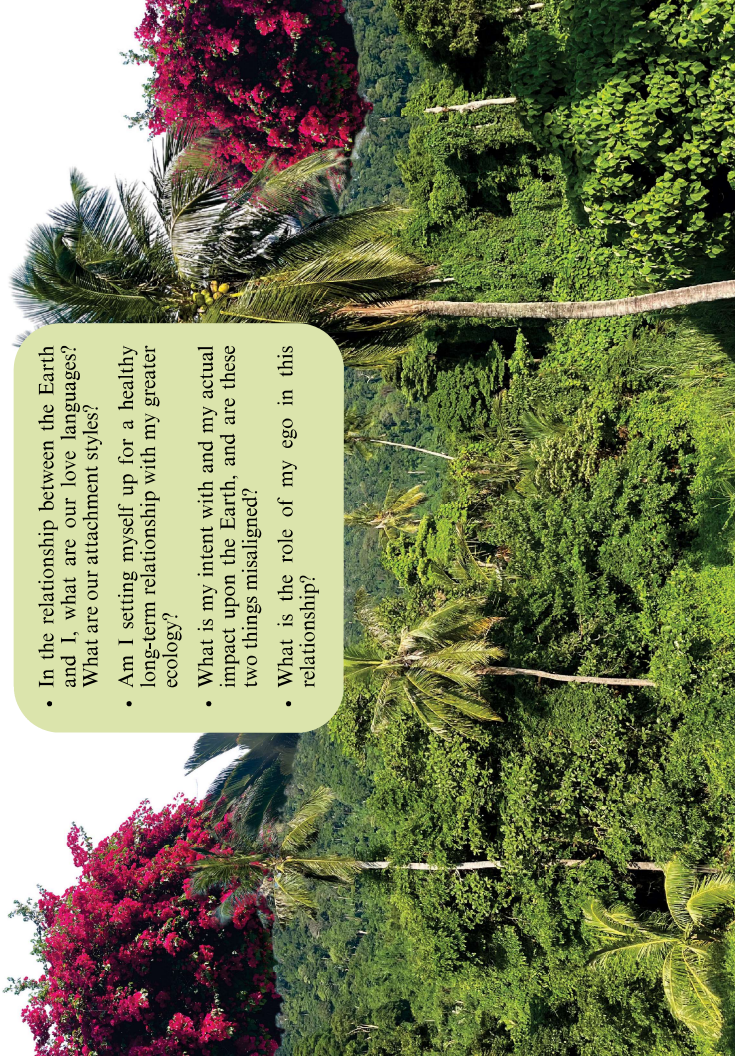
3. Processing

Processing is a classic lesbian value. Scheduled relationship check-ins, long moonlit conversations about our feelings, and assessments of relationship ethics are all lesbian stereotypes. We joke about these pictures of lesbian over-analysis, but as LeBel (2021) has argued, processing is ultimately a valuable skill for navigating ethics of queer futurity in the climate crisis. Processing takes into account current and future implications of any given action and emphasises ethical relationships with others by considering feelings, power dynamics, and forms of injustice. The Anthropussy will not be possible without it.

What would it mean to incorporate the nonhuman into our messy lesbian love lives? And to process our relationship ethics together with them? Processing with the Earth would force us to recognise the stake that nonhuman entities hold in our futures, and the interconnectedness of our multispecies struggles. Embedding the ecolesbian work of processing into our everyday lives and our ecological relationships ensures a justice-centred approach that is absolutely crucial in our present time of planetary crisis.

Of course, there is such a thing as too much processing, of asking so many questions that the conversation becomes circular and leads to inaction. It is important to ask meaningful questions, with the intent to act upon what is asked of you. Consider asking questions like these to get you started on a processing journey with the Earth:

- In the relationship between the Earth and I, what are our love languages? What are our attachment styles?
- Am I setting myself up for a healthy long-term relationship with my greater ecology?
- What is my intent with and my actual impact upon the Earth, and are these two things misaligned?
- What is the role of my ego in this relationship?



4. Resistance

To hold lesbian and queer relationships is to live in resistance to heteropatriarchal relationship norms. Lesbianism calls us to be independent from the social and sexual domination of men, and in doing so, realise solidarity and interdependence with fellow lesbians — with anyone 'oppressed by heteropatriarchy, really. From this solidarity, many different movements for political resistance become possible.

Ecolesbian resistance, like lesbian resistance, can mean a lot of things. It means firstly ditching the long-standing association of 'heterosexuality as "natural". Nature is weird and diverse; it never conformed to heterosexual patterns to begin with, and we cannot separate the nonhuman from our own queer bodies.

Indeed, ecolesbianism resists any patriarchal separations between 'nature' and the self. 'Nature' is part of the self, meaning it must be part of how we understand intersectional feminism. Any separations between the feminist cause, the lesbian cause, and the environmental cause are as false as the divide between 'personal' and 'political'. Our lesbian foremother Judith Butler (1991) argued that "Heterosexuality is always in the process of imitating and approximating its own phantasmatic idealization of itself—and failing." We argue that the world's most powerful human forces have had a *heterosexual approach to the climate crisis*: the "phantasmatic idealization" in this case is not just heteropatriarchy but also unbridled capitalism. Both of the competing desires to go back in time to an 'untouched' environment, or to live out a golden age of limitless capitalist growth that may somehow engineer solutions, are myths serving a worldview that has never intended to include us.

Ecolesbian resistance is the practice of turning away from these myths, and instead finding queer strength and intimacy in the ruins of the present. **Our world and our pussy are both on fire.**



Coming Out Ecolesbian

I was outed to my father as an ecolesbian first, before anything else. He was searching my name online and found the word in my biography for work, which I had added there on a whim. Of course, he was too preoccupied with the 'lesbian' to ask what ecolesbian meant to me.

He called me the next day and asked: "How could you feel comfortable telling this to the whole world, but not to me?" I told him that the world was more accepting than he is, that it was his discomfort that should be under question. But there is more to it.

I tell the world I'm an ecolesbian because the world (the earth, really) has told me there is no other option. I am an ecolesbian not because it is fun and soft and gay and green, but because the harsh reality of this dying planet requires knowing myself and holding myself in loving relation to everything around me if I wish to keep my joy.

My father is concerned about grandkids, and I am concerned about ancestors. He wants his paternal legacy to live on, to imitate the false limitless growth of capitalism. How many generations of future men can I provide for him as a daughter? The question disgusts me. How many generations of our mothers have lived before us on this land, unable to stop our own alienation from and exploitation upon it?

I often wonder if I had any ecolesbian ancestors. Women and queers in the family who farmed and ranched in their rural homeland and craved earthly connection but were given childbirth. I refuse to espouse an environmentalism grounded in hypothetical grandchildren and the world they will inherit. I would rather ground myself in my imperfect ancestors. I want to create the worlds that they could not.

And when my father asks me if I'm still a lesbian I will tell him: no, I'm more.

