



dear friend,

I would like to share a few things with you before you read this zine. This zine is one in a series of six, made in six days, during my stay at PAF residency in France in the very sunny October 2022. I made these zines out of a desire to trace entangled thoughts, to assemble and disassemble experiences and theories, to weave a container of ideas to hold my relation to queer ecology.

These texts are epistemologically rooted in my own experiences, and therefore also in my affinities with the written word. I want to acknowledge the written word as a white + colonial + patriarchal tool of existing power, and my (inherited) affinity with words as a privilege in these systems of oppression. To offer a small way of breaking through the paradigm of the written word, as offering "truth" and "universality", these texts are being edited with associations, contradictions, anecdotes, by hand after print by me - and, as I'd like to invite you to, also by you. My hope is for this ongoing editing to destabilize and reimagine the printed texts.

I would also like to think of "the importance of 'mistakes' in queer reading and writing". I am most likely wrong about things - and I did not write these texts with an intention of being smarter or "more right" than others, but for making relations and rupturing open "rooms to realize that the future may be different from the present". (Sedgwick, Paranoid vs. Reparative Reading). I'd like to invite you, as you read this, to consider this the subjective and personal project that it is and to allow for ambiguity in your reading. As in queer ecology, let's get lost together in the web of tentacles, hyphen, entanglements.

With the form of zines, I align myself with the radical tradition of self-publishing arising from feminist movements. Zines have long been a cherished tool for sharing with small and large communities, for political agitation, for forming knowledge, for distributing art, without the apparatus of "legitimation" by institutions. Zines thus enable and invite "illegitimate", autotheoretical, activist epistemologies and the distribution of those knowledges in accessible ways for the addressed community. Embedded in this tradition, I made these zines to now share with you.

And one more tiny thing: some of these zines are very personal, so please be gentle & I trust you with this.

Warmly,

Toni

02 towards a resilient queer ecology

With this text, I would like to propose an intervention to the train of thought that queer ecology is following and point to the weeds growing in the railways: to reiterate the potential of queer ecology as a world-building movement, but also as a deeply urgent project to get into, as a site of HOPE.

Queer ecology is an alliance founded on shared suffering: Like Greta Gaard writes in "Critical Ecofeminism", "standing with the oppressed majorities of the world" has been learned through many forms of social justice movements. Or Eva Hayward: "geopolitical trauma is the landscape through which trans* and animals meet". (Transmalities, Hayward) As queer and more-than-human folks have suffered the violence of white, cis-heterosexist and colonial scripts of dualistic categorization, "standing with" (Kim Tall Bear) each other in solidarity is necessary for the work towards justice(s). I want to examine those relations by situating them in space and time, by specifying them, and thereby propose an intervention to re-silience queer ecology.

I will therefore begin by trying to root queer ecology in the present.

In short: the world is utterly fucked. The climate catastrophe is - even in the less affected and historically most guilty countries - not longer a future event, but a continuity of crises, causing incredible despair and death globally - but most profoundly for marginalized communities, and the global south. It becomes increasingly hard to imagine any type of livable future. Many are ridden by ecological grief, species loneliness, climate anxiety. Things are really, really bad, and the idea that they could get better eventually seems downright naive.

— "This is our damaged planet, and this is our planet of hope." (- Marianne Elisabeth Lien)

(the end of the world)

dystopic presents

Juri Koch, the pain of the dying species:

"They, we, those who are still here, know, feel, suspect the destruction before it has occurred. We are the ones that who can give an account about the nature of this fear that befalls us when our own historical end approaches. For us, it has become imaginable. We know what it is like when something comes to an end. We can describe the pains of the ending species."

"In us is the supersense of self-preservation, the madness of the fir tree that, in fear of its death, drapes itself with an unnatural number of cones."

While writing this text, a critique I was trying to formulate lodged itself in my minds and grinded my thoughts to a halt. Trying not to become too frustrated, I walked out into the garden, sat down, breathed, had some coffee and bread, a conversation about the baby chickens... Then, the younger one of the two peacocks walked out of the rose tunnel, emerged and - puffed out his tail feathers in the wheel. The stems of the feathers softly rattle against each other as he turns around, slowly, perfectly aware of the spectacle he is. He turns towards the white rooster, positioning his wheel in the sunlight. The white rooster is sceptical -

Queer and trans folks, as other marginalized communities, have known this for a long time: As Kathryn Yussof states brilliantly: "the Anthropocene might seem to offer a dystopic future that laments the end of the world, but imperialism and ongoing (settler) colonialisms have been ending worlds for as long as they have been in existence." (A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None). The end of the world is already here.

Calls for queering nature, for decolonizing our relations to nature are repeatedly yelled against what seems like a void of futurity. So how to "risk hope, feeling and thinking that obliges me to think and feel in a new way, a way that induces the powerful sense that something else is possible"? (Isabelle Stengers, in Zournazi.)

I'll be writing more on the void.

So what might queer ecology be able to offer in this time? A long time has passed since the idea was first formulated, and even though incredible scholars have been writing incredible texts, the world is still ending.



what a beautiful queer scene!

It's cool that penguins are gay, but penguins are going extinct slowly on a heating planet.



I want to ask: what can queer ecology become? How might queer ecology become a survival strategy on a damaged planet? How can we, as queer humans, play a role in ensuring the survival (and thriving) of our more-than-human siblings?

Queer ecology needs to become a verb. It needs to become resilient, active, attacking the technologies that kill us and others. When Donna Haraway wrote of "contact zones, where the outcome, where who is in the world, is at stake" queer ecology is one of those contact zones.

"The point is not to celebrate complexity but to become worldly and to respond" (Haraway, 2008)

Queer ecology is, at its core, relational. Both queerness and ecology describe complex sets of being with each other, in relations that might be parasitic, symbiotic, destructive, world-making. If one "follow(s) the plants", an uncountable amount of entanglements arise, opening up "a thick thinking together" (Haraway). This challenges us to find solidarity with many struggles, like decolonization* ~~as mentioned above~~. It links us together in infinite webs of relations, and in order to relate in ways that are less destructive towards the planet, we need to begin by situating ourselves in this web. As Max Liboiron writes: "You are not obliged to all things the same way. Hence there is a need for specificity when talking about relations."

Pollution is colonialism, 2021

especially in the generation of knowledge, we need to be cautious of "the god trick: seeing everything from nowhere" (Haraway).

** there is a hidden text on this xine.*



the queer community has been naming these specificities with more and more "labels" - it is a common misconception that these labels only create more boxes. Instead, they create (more specific) relations and community.

Specificity, here, resonates with the idea of eco-social niches, that the people of Queer Nature have laid out beautifully in "Beyond the human": "There can be liberation in specificity". In naming our specific relations, we can form solidarity without leaving behind our situatedness. This does not clash with the idea of a global solidarity with the oppressed of the Earth, quite the opposite: being specific about our relations makes solidarity possible, and therefore, makes our good relations more resilient.

(and maybe points to ways of healing our bad ones)

"This is an ecology inspired by a feminist ethic of response-ability, in which questions of species difference are always conjugated with attentions to affect, entanglement and rupture; an affective ecology in which creativity and curiosity characterize the experimental forms of life (...)"

- Haraway in *Arts of living on a damaged planet*.

Queer ecology needs to grow resilient structures of solidarity in order to meaningfully disrupt hegemonial systems of violence. Good relations are more resilient than bad relations, so this is where we can start. So what might disruption mean in these contexts?

Turning towards our chlorophyllic companions, I want to focus on weeds and their resistance strategies. When we let ourselves be taught by weeds, we encounter stories about cracking through the established infrastructures, about resistance and resilience. Futuralities rupture open in every crevice: continuous efforts, sprouting up everywhere, challenging the idea of "Nature". Constantly dismantling fundamentals of buildings, pushing through asphalt, thriving in ruins, weeds are finding cracks and crevices to blossom. Entering a relation with these chloroplastic teachers, we might devise new strategies of resistance, or find hope in the despite. Thriving within areas scarred by human disturbance, these multi-species communities are always-already entangled and irreversibly related.

On our damaged planet, weeds are truly the ones that have found the arts of living. There are others: Jellyfish doing extraordinarily well in human-disturbed oceans, japanese knotweed settling especially in concrete-closed areas due to its enormous strength. Things are always already better.

ours is an organic revolution.
(Lavender Menace, 1970)

When Jose Esteban Munoz writes that "Queerness is not yet here", I want to point at the pansies, the lavender, the dandelion, the fungi and scream BUT IT IS! It's here, it's already there, cracking through the asphalt, blossoming in everyone's garden, even in front of the very institutions that aim to make queerness impossible. We might not yet be queer, but we find queerness alive and thriving in the most adverse conditions - simply not always in human form.



every blooming pansy is proof of the possibility of (queer) beauty.

If we were to transform these resistance strategies into action, could we be spreading these "bright spots" further?

Queer ecology has the power to disrupt scripts of violence. If queer ecology is to grow teeth, we need to form structures with activists of all kinds, human and more-than-human. Relations might be tricky, might be anthropomorphic, might be soaked in oppressive systems: but if we - through specificity, attention and solidarity - transform those into potential webs of care, queer ecology can become ever so strong of an idea. Rather than giving into the doom, we can find eco-social niches of resistance. Ecology, therefore, is not (only) dark - there are many bright spots, as tiny as they might be, proving that we are, surprisingly, still alive.

Derek Jarman in *Modern Nature*.

"Ours is a separate and parallel world, under the stars. Here you can fade away into the dark."

QE is so inherently radical + potent we really need to stretch our tentacles further, seek more entanglements: contamination as collaboration (Anna Tsing, the mushroom...)

I wonder how (if) dark ecology as well as a particular notion of queerness = strangeness is informed by oppression, and the experience of the AIDS crisis, overcasting all future relations. There needs to be space for mourning. We should not forget that Derek Jarman built a garden in this ravaged landscape "of geopolitical trauma". There is hope in the ruptures, and that is what I am searching for: the despite.

multi-species friendships (and love)
sitting in the garden with another person,
having lunch. The peacock, who is in love
with the white rooster, blessed us with
his wheel again. We talked about how
we both had close friendships with
trees, growing up in the countryside, not
fitting into the local human society. We
found so much solace and safety and
belonging in the crowns of our maple/willow.

There is so much joy, desire, utopian potential, solidarity found in the understories of queer ecology, that it has changed me and my being in this more-than-human world thoroughly. Thinking (and feeling) queerness and ecology together ruptures open and abundance of ways of being with each other, human and more-than-human. The potentiality of this is not something to be underestimated - it is crucial to our earthly survival.

Queer ecologies potential is rendered visible as a possible "line of flight". Many lines of flight. Those lines take off and land: in the here-and-now utopias. (witches flight: keeling.)

"It is power to imagine beyond current fact and to envision that which is not, but must be. It's a politics of prefiguration that involves living the future now-as imperative rather than subjunctive-as a striving for the future you want to see, right now, in the present."
(Campt 2017, 17)

There are so many trans-species friendships:
human/tree, cat/deer, swan/plastic swim...



I would have loved to live in a world
of women and men gaily
in collusion with green leaves, stalks,
building mineral cities, transparent domes,
little hubs of woven grass
each with its own pattern -
a conspiracy to coexist
with the Crab Nebula, the exploding
universe, the mind -

(Audre Lorde)