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A Very Basic Introduction to Queer Ecologies

The field of queer ecologies is elusive and difficult to define. I think that one of the simpler ways to approach it could start with Anderson's definition:

. . . [queer ecologies] might also include: challenges to notions of normalization/naturalization and redefinition of queerness and other sexualities; establishment of homes, spaces, and/or ecosystems as queer-friendly or at least productive of non-heteronormative lifestyles; highlighting of alternative family formations and reproductions; and rejection of "traditional", normative, middle-class comprehension of life that include consumerism and unquestioned dominance of the natural world" (83-84).

When we do queer ecologies theory, we basically look at un-natural constructions of the natural. Although it is extremely hard to homogenize the academics writing from a queer ecological perspective, the common denominator remains an against-the-grain reading that de-naturalizes all critical discourses that have taken natural / biological / genetic discourses for granted. At the same time, a queering of such discourses takes place. This means, for example, taking apart a "traditional" homonormative¹ narrative—like the claim that since homosexuality exists in non-human animals it is therefore *natural* in human animals—and deconstructing it to make it *truly* queer, in its most radical sense. Stating that homosexual acts take place in the non-human animal kingdom / queendom to justify the okay-ness of homosexual human acts without first questioning the ontological, epistemological, and phenomenological bipolar opposition HUMAN vs. NON-HUMAN is an extremely fruitless activity. It leaves everything in its "proper place" and blatantly

¹ Homonormativity is exactly like heteronormativity but with gay characters. It is the ridiculous and hegemonically-sanctioned credo that erases all radical difference and queer-ness from the LGBTQI community and claims that "we just want to be like you," leaving all other types of social struggle behind in the Land of Unsavory Countercultures.

ignores the most exciting critical areas for queer ecological discussion. Authors such as Mortimer-Sandilands, Erickson, Alaimo, McWhorter, Sturgeon, Bell, Gosine, Unger, Di Chiro, and many others emphasize the need to re-evaluate and question any and all discourses of Knowledge (most notably, Science) that have helped maintain the exact same power distribution dynamics in the world for so many years and which is clearly leading the planet to its destruction: global warming, genocide, terrorism, war, starvation, complete depletion of resources. This paper also looks at the ways in which queer ecologies build on ecofeminism without ever giving credit where it is due. In doing so, these critics coldly distance themselves from fundamental ecofeminist issues (and ecofeminist intellectual engagement strategies) that are incredibly relevant in precisely the discussions that they are undertaking, such as the brutal influence of speciesism in the violent practices of domination of the global north over the global south, pinkwashing², and homonormative narratives, to name just three examples.

² Pinkwashing refers to claims of “gay is okay!” in states where not only is this not true, but where other horrors such as state-sanctioned racist violence against ethnic minorities is condoned and enforced, such as the case of Israel.

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Biografía:

Adriana Jiménez labora como docente en la Universidad de Costa Rica desde hace catorce años. Sus áreas de especialidad son el ecofeminismo vegano, las ecologías queer, estudios sobre la sexualidad de las mujeres, pornografía / erotismo feminista y la literatura de mujeres, entre otras. Le interesa sobre todo la vinculación inter y multi-disciplinaria y el posicionamiento de las interconexiones de opresión como base de una política personal, académica y artística radical y transgresiva.