

LITERARY ECOWITCHES IN THE SYMBIOCENE: HEALING THE WOUNDS OF THE EARTH AND ITS PEOPLES THROUGH LUNARPUNK POSTHUMAN RE-STORY-ATION NARRATIVES

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the contemporary literary ecowitch as a transformative figure within ecofeminist, ecocritical, and posthumanist thought. Grounded in ecofeminist revisionism and ecospiritual animist movements, the ecowitch (Sotelo 2025) is portrayed as a symbol of ecological resistance and healing that challenges dominant androanthropocentric worldviews through multispecies collaboration. The article analyses two stories from the new *Lunarpunk Anthology* (Norton-Kertson 2023) –to highlight storytelling as a form of magical activism. These narratives demonstrate speculative fiction's capacity to imagine symbiotic, posthuman possible futures. Ultimately, the literary ecowitch becomes a visionary force in the Symbiocene (Albrecht 2019), fostering ecological reparation and resisting systemic eco-social injustices.

KEYWORDS: Literary Ecowitches, Lunarpunk, Ecocriticism, Ecofeminism, Symbiotic Post-humanism, Re-story-ation.

ECOBURJAS LITERARIAS EN EL SIMBIOCENO:
SANANDO LAS HERIDAS DE LA TIERRA Y SUS PUEBLOS A TRAVÉS DE NARRATIVAS
POSHUMANAS LUNARPUNK DE RE-HISTORIA-CIÓN

RESUMEN

Este artículo analiza la figura de la ecobruja literaria contemporánea como un agente regenerativo y crítico en el contexto de los marcos ecofeministas, ecocríticos y poshumanistas. Arraigada en el revisionismo histórico ecofeminista y en movimientos ecoespirituales animistas, la ecobruja (Sotelo 2025) se reivindica como símbolo de resistencia, sanación y sabiduría ecológica que cuestiona paradigmas androantropocéntricos mediante colaboración multiespecies. Se analizarán dos relatos de la nueva *Antología Lunarpunk* (Norton-Kertson 2023), donde la ficción especulativa actúa como activismo mágico y propone imaginarios utópicos de restauración planetaria. Así, la ecobruja emerge como figura visionaria del Simbioceno (Albrecht 2019), promoviendo la reparación ecológica y resistiendo las injusticias eco sociales sistémicas.

PALABRAS CLAVE: ecobrujas literarias, lunarpunk, ecocrítica, ecofeminismo, poshumanismo simbiótico, re-historia-ción.

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1. INTRODUCTION¹

In recent years there has been an increase of (eco)feminist and ecocritical scholarship that challenges the historically entrenched and patriarchally constructed figure of the “witch” as a malevolent and demonic agent. Indeed, a solid body of feminist historical revisionism (Christ 1997; Cook 2007; Daly 1978, Federici 2012; Murry 1921; Sjöo and Mor 1997; Starhawk 1979), objectively argues that characterizations of witches as evil creatures do lack factual basis. What is more, they are unearthing a very perverse but prevalent patriarchal strategy: demonizing independent, powerful and revered women as horrendous “witches” who must be annihilated for the common good, as a very successful instrument of patriarchal control and systemic misogyny. In this line, one of the main contributions of ecofeminist thinkers is to reinterpret the “witch” as a historically marginalized figure intimately connected to Nature, healing, and community care. Far from being sinister, these women –herbalists, midwives, and custodians of ecological knowledge were crucial for the well-being and survival of their communities (Federici 2004; Ehrenreich & English 2010[1973], Sotelo 2022), both human and non-human, since they embodied a holistic and animistic worldview rooted in collaboration and respect for the more-than-human world (Blackie 2018, 14). An animistic world perceived as “a cosmos in which theoretically everything is alive and communicating and potentially possesses the qualities of being “a person” or, at the very least, an agent of some kind” (Braidotti & Hlavajova 2018, 39). Acknowledging multispecies agencies and trying to heal the wounds of such a historical injustice, many modern self-identified witches are reclaiming with pride an ancestral heritage through practices that can be labeled as ‘green witchcraft’ which emphasizes territorial rootedness, embodied knowledge, and collective wellbeing (Murphy-Hiscock 2017, 23; Sotelo 2022, 10).

Nevertheless, despite a growing recognition of their role as mediators and healers, there still remains a critical gap in ecofeminist revisionism and in an ecocritical Earth-centered literary analysis, concerning the potential of earth-based witches to address contemporary ecological and social crises healing the patriarchal neocolonial wounds of the earth and its peoples. Trying to bridge this gap, the term “ecobruja-ecowitch” has been recently proposed as a figure that not only reclaims historically marginalized knowledges and practices associated with women, Nature, and ancestral indigenous wisdom, but it also embodies a critical, regenerative response to the socioecological crises of the past and contemporary worlds (Sotelo 2025, 21-23). Framed thus within an ecofeminist tradition, the “ecowitch” emerges as a radical, intersectional agent of healing, resistance, and transformation, deeply

¹ The authoress wishes to acknowledge the funding provided by the Ministry of Universities and the European Union –NextGenerationEU within the framework of a postdoctoral contract for the requalification of university teaching staff during the 2022-2023 academic year in the Research Group GIECO-Franklin I.-UAH, which enabled a specialization on ecocriticism, ecofeminism and posthuman approaches.



attuned to the interdependencies between human and more-than-human life. Furthermore, embodying ethical ecocritical positions in defense of all living beings (31) ecowitches are positioned against the backdrop of the Anthropocene, a term coined by Paul Crutzen² that marks the geological and existential rupture caused by anthropogenic environmental degradation (Braidotti & Hlavajova 2018, 1)³. To this regard, ecowitches, argues Sotelo, perform a reparative function (2025, 20-21). That is, they act as harmonizers that work across cultural, ecological, and symbolic registers to counteract the fragmentations produced by andro-anthropocentrism (Puleo 2019, 46), extractivism (Machado Araújo 2013), colonial legacies and capitalist patriarchy. To these means, ecowitches also align with contemporary critical theories within the field of ecocriticism, an earth-centered approach in Literary and Cultural studies, such as a critical posthumanism,⁴ in its attempt at “deconstructing discourses and concepts (like, for example, the Anthropocene) that reify and reproduce, unwittingly or not, Enlightenment conceptions of a universal humanity” (Tan & Altaç 2024, 4). In this vein, by de-centering the human (Wolf 2010, xv) through spiritual activism (Norton-Kerston 2024), animist epistemologies, and embodied ecological knowledge, ecowitches actively participate in the current posthuman conceptual and material construction of the “Symbiocene” (Albrecht 2019, 102) –a proposed post-Anthropocene epoch characterized by ecological symbiosis, multispecies coexistence, and systemic balance.

To this regard, the ecowitch is not merely a symbolic figure but a visionary and utopian practitioner of interspecies solidarity and a conscious “inhabitant of a landscape of trans-corporeality, where people and place are substantially interconnected” (Alaimo 2010, 68). In this interconnectivity, ecowitches look through a symbiotic lens and enact a *Symbiotic Posthumanism* (Karpouzou & Zampaki 2023), a new kind of posthumanism that accounts for the ecological and its symbiotic nature. As posthumanists, grounded on a tradition that honors the legacy of the “green witch” practice, ecowitches nonetheless take a politically committed step further to creatively feel-think the planet in the fight against climate change by advocating for a symbiotic “wood.wide.of life” (Simard 2016, 249) in which life itself is appreciated as “the result of cooperation and not competition, dependency and not isolation, co-survival rather than autonomous existence” (Nayar 2023, 8).

Drawing therefore on previous research on the re-signified figure of the “witch” through the term “ecobruja-ecowitch” (Sotelo 2025) the main objective of this paper is to expand on the regenerative role that ecowitches are exercising in the

² The Anthropocene, a new phase in Earth’s history triggered by human action, was coined by Paul Crutzen and Eugene Stoermer in 2000 and can be considered one of the most influential concepts in Ecocriticism and Environmental Humanities during the last decade (Moore 2016, 2).

³ Nuanced as the Capitalocene (Moore 2016) to highlight its capitalist exploitation and colonial legacy.

⁴ See for example pioneering works such as Donna Haraway’s *When Species Meet* (2008) & *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (2016); Rosi Braidotti’s *The Posthuman* (2013); or T. Morton’s *Humankind: Solidarity with non-human people* (2017).

here and now through literary platforms, by underscoring the power of storytelling to creatively resist and make progress toward a world of greater justice. Stories shape our imagination and our ideas of the possible (James & Morel 2020). Thus, in the examples of literary intellectual ecowitches that will be presented, writing and teaching are the specific expressions in which their magical activism channels the power of storytelling to help us envision a positive future and inspire people to take some action. In particular, two literary works from the new Lunarpunk Anthology *Bioluminescent* (Norton-Kerston 2023) will be approached as symbiotic posthuman narratives of self-identified witches. On the one hand, it will be analyzed a short story by Starhawk called “The Timid Librarian,” and on the other hand, a story by Brightflame titled “When the web went down.”

With a particular focus on resilient and utopian⁵ imaginaries of possible futures, these literary ecowitches will be examined as promoters of posthuman re-story-ation narratives aimed at healing the wounds of the earth and its peoples through a kind of pharmacopeia in which, as Robin Wall Kimmerer reflects in *Braiding the Sweetgrass*, “the interweaving of science, sacred transcendent vision, and storytelling –old and new– can be explored as a kind of medicine for our broken relationship with the Earth” (2013, x).

As will be explained, their secret ingredient will be to stir in a little magic –the art of shaping and shifting consciousness, of connecting with the deep creative energies of nature, bending time and opening awareness. Magic that is understood as “life-enhancing” (Palin 2013, 437) and it “is not illusion, nor is it the artificial manipulation of unnatural forces, (...) but it is about realizing that we can change the world, often with our thoughts” (Murphy- Hiscock 2017, 24) our words and our stories.

2. LITERARY ECOWITCHES REIMAGINING AN EARTH COMMUNITY IN THE SYMBIOCENE

Building upon the definition of ecowitches in “De ‘brujas’ verdes a ecobrujas: revisión ecocrítica y ecofeminista de la figura de las ‘brujas’ en tiempos de injusticias, colapso ecológico y regeneración”⁶ (Sotelo 2025), the concept of “ecobruja-ecowitch” and “eco-witchcraft” is articulated as a framework that illuminates earth-centered practices, epistemologies, and ontologies historically linked to so-called green witchcraft, yet reimagined to actively foster resilience, regeneration, and transformative utopian visions in response to ecological and sociopolitical injustices

⁵ By “utopian” this research refers to visions of hope (Weik von Mossner 2017, 164-66), not just as the projection of perfect worlds but as the ability to imagine “something sustainable and just through the Anthropocene’s despair and still finding hope” (Wagner and Wieland 2022, 1-2).

⁶ My translation: “From green ‘witches’ to eco-witches: an ecocritical and ecofeminist review of the figure of ‘witches’ in times of injustice, ecological collapse, and regeneration.”

(20-21). In the same vein, highlighting a commitment to the “ethics of the Green Witch Path” (15), Murphy-Hiscock explains:

If you love and respect the world around you, you will not abuse it. The more empathy and sympathy you have for your surroundings, the better you will treat them. This is tied in to the basic Golden Rule found in several religions. It's ethical reciprocity: if you treat those around you with courtesy, they will extend the same to you. What you put out into the world returns to you, and that goes for thoughts, acts, and energy. (16)

A strong ethical positioning of love and respect for the interconnectedness of life that ecowitches share with green witchcraft, along with a common historical ancestral lineage of “spell weavers, diviners and fortune tellers, healers and herbalists, workers of magic and brewers of potions” (Green 2001, x). However, underscoring a strong political commitment to responding to contemporary (or past) crises of climate collapse and systemic oppression, ecowitchcraft is introduced as an evolution of green witchcraft into a distinctly ecofeminist and ecocritical praxis. As ecofeminists, ecowitches understand that the same patriarchal force that oppresses women is the same one that exploits nature and the non-human world and therefore, that there is a close relationship between a disenchanted world, the imposition of a patriarchal mentality, a colonial capitalist system, and ecological destruction and pollution. “A disenchanted world is a desecrated world,” Sarah Lyons and Rebecca Mitchell remind us in *Revolutionary Witchcraft: A Guide into Magical*, “a world where what our pre-capitalist ancestors recognized as sacred are now considered raw materials/profits” (2019, 164-165). This paradigm shift brought about by the scientific revolution and, in particular, by Cartesian mechanistic philosophy (Merchant 1983), it is precisely the one which ecowitches have been resisting from symbiotic posthumanist positions since ancestral times by actively challenging human exceptionalism, andro-anthropocentrism, specism and the destructive logics of the Anthropocene/Capitalocene (Sotelo 2022, 2025) Hence, the practice of an ecowitch arises from a deep, “spiritual commitment to the earth, to healing, and to the linking of magic with political action” (Starhawk 1979, 8) through activist witchcraft. A “witchcraft activism” that is earth- centered and “inherently political” (Salisbury 2019,1) and where transcendence and the physical energy-materiality go hand in hand to create effective social and environmental change.

In the act of not just honoring the Earth but standing up to defend it, antecedents of ecowitches can be found in long-time communities in the US, such as the well-known Tradition of Reclaiming witches⁷, where self-identified modern witches have “taken part in marches, rallies, meeting disruptions, and other forms of street activism (...) against a local pipeline as well as against international fracked gas and oil infrastructure and for divestment of fossils” (Moon 2023, 60). As Irisanya Moon recalls in *Honoring the Wild*, “I’ve worked between the worlds with Starhawk,

⁷ <https://reclaimingcollective.wordpress.com/reclaiming-tradition-witchcraft/>.



Laurie Lovekraft, and other pagans to create change via magical activism: scrubbing or burning away roots of injustice, fostering new growth of justice and liberation, working with nonhuman Allies” (60). In their alliance and collaboration with the more-than-human world, nonetheless, even though previous research on green witches and ecowitches (Murphy-Hiscock 2017; Sotelo 2022, 2025) illustrates how it can be claimed that they embody critical posthumanist values and that they potentially function as ecocritical and ecofeminist agents of ecological harmony within the broader current theoretical framework of the Symbiocene (Albrecht 2019, 158-160), this analysis stresses the particular transformative role of literary ecowitches through posthuman storytelling in times of climate change, earth repair and harmonizing the Anthropocene.

Through their writings, resilient and utopian imaginaries for planetary healing will be examined reflecting a transition from the description of ecological damage (Anthropocene), to naming its systemic capitalist roots (Capitalocene) to envisioning a symbiotic (Symbiocene) post-andro-anthropocentric, sustainable, inclusive and relational paradigm for life on Earth. That is, a critical evolution in ecological thought from diagnosis to critique and later to reimagination.

And it is precisely in this process of reimagination and sympoiesis (co-creation) where literary ecowitches such as Starhawk and Brightflame are articulating posthuman imaginaries that heal the effects of the Anthropocene, harmonize the Capitalocene and promote a Symbiocene through a resilient and regenerative vision for an *Earth community*, a term that Thomas Berry,⁸ a pioneering cultural historian, spiritual ecologist and eco-theologian, first created to indicate our shared sense of belonging to something greater, humans and nature in continuity (1988, xiv). In this continuity, symbiotic posthuman positions allow Nature to become a kind of “primary text” (Berry 1988, 123) in which its own agency is revealed in the very process of storytelling.

In the following examples of literary ecowitches, Starhawk a witch, writer, director of Earth Activist.org⁹ and permaculture instructor (Norton-Kertson 2023, 224), and Brightflame, a witch that is a tree-talker and a writer (225), they will use the particular venue of Lunarpunk to exercise their magical activism through a symbiotic posthuman storytelling aimed at healing the wounds of the Earth and its peoples.

⁸ Thomas Berry (1914-2009) was a historian of world religions and one of the first voices to awaken moral sensitivity to the environmental crisis. He is known for articulating a “new history” of the universe that explores the implications of evolutionary science and cultural traditions for creating a flourishing future.

⁹ <https://earthactivisttraining.org/>.

3. POSTHUMAN RE-STORY-ATION NARRATIVES IN THE NEW ANTHOLOGY OF LUNARPUNK

When interrogating what are the literary imaginaries (both fiction and nonfiction) that ecowitches are currently articulating to combat climate change in this new Symbiocene era, two great examples (one by Starhawk and another by Brightflame) are found in the recent publication of the first Lunar Punk anthology *Bioluminescent* (2023).

Providing a brief genealogy, Solarpunk fiction firstly originated in the late 2000s¹⁰ rooted in Science Fiction (Dincher 2017, 7-8), but with the particular standpoint of a punk¹¹ spirit centered on the value of creative rebellion (Norton-Kertson 2024, 8-9). As such, it uses “radical hope as fuel for creative disruption in the service of a better future” (11) and it sets collective imaginations in motion towards green futures based on renewable energy and a DIY aesthetics (Wagner & Wieland 2022). It is an artistic, aesthetic, literary, and political movement founded on ecology, decentralization, non-hierarchy, community and mutual aid, individual liberty, liberatory technology, diversity, (eco)feminism, and the merging of art, science, and politics (Rupprecht et al., 2021; Ulibarri 2018, 2020). Underscoring thus Greentech, renewable energy and social cooperation, it asks the questions: how would sustainable, inclusive, multispecies and compassionate societies look like? And how do we get there?

Counter-narrating dystopias are driven by a radical hope which dares to envision societies able to overcome the challenges of a changing climate and to achieve sustainability, egalitarianism and social justice (Wagner & Wieland 2017). Although often considered a subgenre within science fiction, as current global catastrophic events rapidly unfold, it will be approached as speculative fiction as many of the impacts of climate change are no longer futuristic. In this regard, “SolarPunk is a wonderful example of speculative fiction (...) with a hopeful, utopian tone” (Norton-Kertson 2024, 8) that puts environmental issues at the very center of imaginary futures. As a result, it has emerged as an increasingly popular genre within the theoretical framework of ecocriticism and environmental humanities (Glottfelty & Fromm 1996; Oppermann & Iovino 2017) in its conscious articulation of ethical narratives that confront our current globalized and neocolonial context of ecocide and progressive mass extinction of species and ecosystems (Higgins 2015, 11). Undertaking a new creative revolution in thought, these posthuman subjects are optimistically envisioning a world of post-climate change, where “hope is more than a driving factor (...), it’s the very heart” of possible futures (Arseneault & Pierson

¹⁰ First coined in an article called “From Steampunk to Solarpunk” posted on the blog entitled The republic of bees: <https://republicofthebees.wordpress.com/2008/05/27/from-steampunk-to-solarpunk/>.

¹¹ The rebuilding idea is where the ‘punk’ in Solarpunk comes in while punk subgenres of literature are born out of the same general punk movement that began in the 1970s in Britain, they have also grown into their own unique phenomenon” (Norton-Kertson 2024, 8-9).



2015). A defiant hope that is projected through literary imaginaries into technologies that range from “solar panels to 3D printing, vertical farming to permaculture, (...) into a world where humanity has overcome eco-disasters, mega corporations, and dystopian governments (...) and inequalities have flattened” (Arseneault & Pierson 2015). As Justine Norton-Kertson¹² further elaborates:

Solarpunk stories are about futures where humanity seeks to live in harmony with nature. They're tales where we've either solved or are in the process of working together to creatively and optimistically adapt to climate change. Stories in the genre are about social justice and equality, Indigenous sovereignty and leadership, antiauthoritarianism, and ending the system of capitalist, western, white, cis-male-hetero supremacy. (2024, 8)

Seeking to live in harmony with both nature and technology, rather than in conflict in a development that can be characterised from ecological technology to ecological spirituality, Solarpunk imaginaries have taken a step further to reconnect with the Earth's unseen roots and connective webs of life. As such, LunarPunk has been recently born as its new subgenre through a new anthology called *Bioluminescent. A Lunarpunk Anthology*, edited by Justine Norton-Kertson and published by Android Press in January 2023. In the exploration of this new emerging subgenre of Lunarpunk, this pioneering anthology presents twenty one stories and poems that blend ecological consciousness with spiritual and fantastical elements including well-known (Solarpunk) writers such as Starhawk, Wendy N. Wagner, Sarena Ulibarri, and BrightFlame.

As the first science fiction and fantasy anthology of its kind, in its analogous relationship with solarpunk it can be claimed to expand on its creative rebellion not just against the fossil fuel industry and the idea that a climate apocalypse is inevitable, but mostly, a literary and cultural reaction against a status quo based on despair and defeat (Ulibarri 2018, 2020). As it will be argued, it complements a Solarpunk rebellion through a Lunarpunk resistance in which genuinely inclusive and diverse communities, powered by renewable energy, do not only look to the sun but to the moon and to the earth, that is, not just solar-wind panels turbines but the energy of natural forces and the grids of vibrations that stem from life beneath our feet. As a result, it explores the poetic imagination of the ‘wood.web. of life’ as astonishing networks of support that connect all vegetable and animal life (Trewavas 2016; Wohlleben 2015). Indeed, in its emphasis on the “vegetable turn” it emphatically incorporates indigenous wisdom and a cosmovision in which non-human animals and plants and trees are seen as akin, that is, as non-human family members as much as teachers and allies (Wall Kimmerer 2013). Moreover, exploring glowing lights in plants and ocean creatures, the word “bioluminescence” reminds us of the existence of a dark and glowing aesthetic “in the spectrum of darkness

¹² Co-editor in chief of Solarpunk Magazine entitled *Demand Utopia*: <https://solarpunk-magazine.com/editorial-team/>.

and light, of introspection and hope” (Norton-Kertson 2023, 82) that might come from naturally occurring glowing plants or plankton or be created in labs through genetic modification or other methods. As editor Justine Norton-Kertson suggests, the glowing in the bioluminescence could also “be one of the side effects of a magic spell meant to inspire communities to tangible action around climate change in the process of building ecotopias” (Norton-Kertson 2023, x).

3.1. “THE TIMID LIBRARIAN”: COMMUNAL RESILIENCE THROUGH SYMBIOTIC POST-HUMAN AGENCIES AND FLUID IDENTITIES

Within the Lunarpunk anthology *Bioluminescent*, in “The Timid Librarian,” Starhawk presents a narrative that blends ecological spirituality, fluid identities and introspective transformation in line with communal resilience –hallmarks of the emerging Lunarpunk subgenre. The story follows a quiet and seemingly inconsequential librarian and tailor named Sorrel through an intense love story set in a post-apocalyptic, post-capitalist world (Starhawk 2023,17) which foregrounds ecological technology along with symbiotic interdependence with the more-than-human world, especially with the vegetable realm and their wise trees that are considered akin to humans. Humans live now in societies that are inclusive, diverse and multispecies in “redwood” forests, and have reconnected again with the ancestral rhymes of nature and its wheel of the year. As the story unfolds, this reconnection is more than the celebration of solstices and equinoxes in search of an ecological balance that has been disrupted by climate change. It will incarnate seasonal fluidity and continuity in their own flesh and bodies.

The story begins with Sorrel immersed in custom preparations for the celebration of the “Grand opening of Lammass Fair (...) before the summer solstice, when dancers in bright plumage whirled about under the redwoods, and Sorrel was kept busy draping robes and sewing crowns” (Starhawk 2023,16). This year’s theme is the ‘Fourth of July and Liberty’ and Sorrel, carefully customizing the festival clothes for the community members, plays a pivotal role in catalyzing social and ecological healing within her community of ‘Furies,’ a short name for “Forest Clan of Religious Order of regenerators” (17). As regenerators, Furies are in the lookout for invasive species, removing fits that threat to overtop the oaks, and do “their best to restore ancient art cultural burnings that indigenous folk had practiced for more than ten thousand years!” (18). And it is choosing a custom for the Gala when Sorrel meets Cedar, one of the most popular and handsome of the “Furies celebrities” (21). Physically opposite, Cedar being “tall, slender and with a natural grace” (23) and Sorrel described as “short, timid and shy” (24) an unlikely match turns into a passionate desire and love as Cedar realizes that “True, (...) her body lacked grace, but she was so talented” (24). It is in the cyclical move from the Summer Solstice to Fall equinox where their intense romance unfolds in ecological attunement with the vegetable world. As summer solstice symbolizes a time of “bounty and abundance (...) pure vitality. The Earth delights in a full expression of life” (Cook & Roux 2023, 49), so does their love. As one of the most skillful tree-jumpers, Cedar pursues Sorrel to rise to the skies.





No longer perceived as mere resources, the non-human are seen as akin and family members. Indeed, one of the most cherished is “Antie Marple” (Starhawk 2023, 19), which represents how trees are not mere individuals but rather members of a supportive and interconnected society, within the “wood wide web.” Furthermore, validating indigenous knowledge, trees are also approached in terms of magic. For millennia, trees have been revered as wise beings, keepers of ancient knowledge and guardians of the natural world. Each species of tree carries its own energy, wisdom, and unique magical properties. For instance, the mighty Oak, revered for its strength and endurance, can offer protection and grounding. The graceful Willow, with its flowing branches, is associated with intuition and emotional healing. By forging a connection with these arboreal spirits, a door to a world of magic and wisdom can be opened, where humans can seek guidance, healing, and enlightenment. A vision of an animate earth that Starhawk honors as an ecowitch through a symbiotic storytelling that celebrates what Thomas Berry described in *The Great Work. Our Way into the Future* as the great law of Nature, “a transition from a period of human devastation of the Earth to a period when humans would be present to the planet in a mutually beneficial manner” (1999, 20). What is more, deeply rooted in ecofeminist philosophy articulated in her ground-breaking work *The Spiral Dance* (first published in 1979), Starhawk shares with Thomas Berry the confidence in the continuous revelation that unfolds in the cyclical rhymes of Nature and the universe in which *a story* is told in every star that shines in the sky and the shape and move and the sound of the earth as a living entity; in the sound of a bird, the shape of a bee, and the feel of the rain. Hence, working with trees as the protagonists of this story do, is a profound reminder that even in the seemingly simplest of beings, there are depths and breadths that we did not even know existed. We are simply limited by our own understanding of what it means to be sentient. Moreover, trees and the vegetal realm are a reminder that the Universe is constantly communicating with us through the whispers of the leaves, the crack of branches, the hum of insects in the air. They remind us that silence does not indicate a lack of intelligence, that strength is not only present in physical muscles and that wisdom does not only come from sources we already know. Recovering this natural wisdom is at the center of a process of posthuman re-story-ation in which the story of Nature and the deep mystery of existence are brought to human consciousness to treasure Nature’s gifts and feel the pain of the earth as it suffers from its living energy being choked by industrial pollution. And although trees are incapable of producing complex narratives characterized by features such as focalization, representations of characters’ consciousness, metalepsis, metanarration, and heteroglossia, they can nonetheless convey sequences of events through the patterns recorded in their tree rings. As Gagliano, Ryan, and Vieira elaborate in *The Language of Plants. Science, Philosophy, Literature*:

tree rings tell a story of annual recording of events. ...and suggest that the very idea of narrative is not limited to human storytellers. Although human storytellers must interpret and can elaborate upon the events that trees record in their rings, tree rings are sites of narrativity that suggest that trees are capable of producing

their own meanings. They are, in other words, examples of a material language at work –a plant language that can in turn inspire human language and new human imaginations. (2017, 266)

A material language in which trans-corporeality, where “the human is always intermeshed with the more-than-human world” (Alaimo 2010, 20), tells the story of Nature and humans transforming and rebirthing together through a “great Transformation (...) a Festival of world renewal” (Starhawk 2023, 34) in which the community of Furies embark as the Fall equinox is approaching. It is at this time of the year where their invocation of elements (fire, earth, water, fire) is channeled through a communal spiral dance (34). At this point, the protagonist questions: “would the perfect summer romance survive the change?” (33), since not only do seasonal cycles bring transformation but human bodies do too. That is, the feminine becomes masculine, and the masculine turns into feminine. And Sorrel, now a short, slim masculine body fears the tall and strong female body of Cedar will no longer feel attractive to their new queer trans-corporeality; a trans-corporeality driven by queerness that it can be claimed to destabilize binary hierarchies and challenge andro-anthropocentric paradigms through an animistic view of the “world in which all social and ontological boundaries are porous and can be crossed under specific circumstances, a world of becomings and metamorphoses, in which no entity precedes the sets of relations that bring it into being (Braidotti & Hjalava 2018, 39). A process of becoming in which trans-corporeality allows for the “recognition not just that everything is interconnected but that humans are the very stuff of the material, emergent world” (Alaimo 2010, 20).

In this context, the Furies can be approached as harmonizers in an Anthropocene/Capitalocene scenario that is adapting to a post-climate change, post-capitalist multispecies society while, at the same time, they embody posthuman symbionts able to enact forms of social justice by “magnifying the visibility of intersectional queer identities and experiences” (Sotelo *et al.* 2025, 271). Hence, “Surrendering form and identity to the Great Transformation” (Starhawk 2023, 35), Sorrel admits that s/he has been “an idiot” since s/he did not think Cedar could love now “a short little man who is too timid to keep up” with him (Starhawk 2023, 38). In the same way, we learn that Cedar was afraid that Sorrel “couldn’t love a tomboy who was taller than” her (38).

Thus, projecting imaginaries in which “queerness is constitutive of all human beings,” Starhawk creatively denounces “cisheterosexist classist whiteness as a historically imposed social and cultural norm’ (Beacon et al. 2025, 2) while recovering Nature as a primary text that is queer at heart. As a result, it can be argued that trans-corporeality can be explored as a creative “theoretical site, (...) where corporeal theories, environmental theories”, gender/feminist studies dialogue in imaginary ways (Alaimo 2010, 3). As Alaimo explains in *Bodily Natures*:

the movement across human corporeality and nonhuman nature necessitates rich, complex modes of analysis that travel through the entangled territories of material and discursive, natural and cultural, biological and textual. (2010, 3)



In these “entangled territories of material and discursive” Lunarpunk becomes a productive literary platform for the cultivation of regenerative lifeways, rewilded imaginaries, and collective resilience. A resilient queer community of Symbiotic Posthumanist Ecologies¹³ that favor “co- evolution, symbiosis, feedback and responses as determining conditions rather than autonomy, competition and self-contained isolation of the human” (Braidotti 2013, 81-89). Based on previous work of Elizabeth Grosz’s *Volatile Bodies*, Stacy Alaimo affirms “we need to understand the body, not as an organism or entity in itself, but as a system, or series of open-ended systems, functioning within other huge systems” (2020, 10). In this vein, queerness is envisioned as a key component of adaptation, evolution, and collective survival. As Albrecht claims in *Earth Emotions* (2019, 3) “Human life sits within larger patterns and rhythms” and “we are products of a larger system that had its own existence long before us” (2). Being part of this preceding life cycle system, reflects Sorrel as concluding thoughts, “maybe the Founder’s true design” (Starhawk 2023, 45). As she clarifies:

All the dress up and role playing and endless games of romance and all the stress of Transfiguration, the changing and adapting and playing new roles again – maybe all of that was meant to bring us to this moment when it all dissolves and we are just two beings together, remaining distinct while becoming one. (45)

As thus revealed in these ending realizations, the process in which ‘I becomes we’ lies upon “posthuman realizations in the Era of the Anthropocene” in which “we are the Earth; we are Everything (...) we are part of a planet” (Ferrando 2023, 9). An earth that is alive and where all “life is sacred and interconnected (...) through the earth’s cycles of birth, growth, death, decay, and regeneration” (Starhawk 1979, 8).

As a conclusion, it can be claimed that “The Timid Librarian” envisions a regenerative future wherein collective healing, social justice and ecological stewardship are inseparable. The story embodies therefore the principles of spiritual activism and offers a utopian imaginary in which harmony with the more-than-human world is not only possible, but essential for collective survival. Through a combination of symbiotic trans-corporeality, ritual, and ecological knowledge, the story interrogates conventional notions of posthuman agencies and fluid identities. Furthermore, it underscores the value of ancestral knowledge and inner strength, through a process of story-a-tion that redraws the borders of climate conversation, using nature as a lens for exploring the most essential issues facing our planet, including social discrimination of queer identities. In doing so, Starhawk, as a literary ecowitch, amplifies the Lunarpunk ethos, which privileges emotional depth, liminal, and symbiotic relationships over technological dominance or Andro-anthropocentric hetero-normative individualism.

¹³ See also Braidotti’s & Bignall’s edition of *Posthuman Ecologies. Complexity and Process after Deleuze* (2019).

3.2. "ALL ARE WE": SYMBIOTIC POSTHUMANISM AND RHIZOMATIC RESISTANCE IN BRIGHTFLAME'S "WHEN THE WEB WENT DOWN"

Continuing projecting literary imaginaries that offer an example of how the techno-logic of domination and extraction can be supplanted by symbiotic posthumanism, in "When the Web Went Down" Brightflame, an ecowitch that self-identifies as a 'tree-talker' (Norton-Kertson 2023, 225) explores human plant-connections in a post-digital, post-capitalist society. This society is called the Threads, emerging from the ruins of anthropocentric collapse, known as the 'Crumble'. Approached again as speculative fiction rather than Science fiction, the story tells how climate chaos was triggered by "infrastructure collapsed in the wake of worldwide power grid failure. Cyber-warfare annihilated all satellites (...). All communication was lost and millions died in the migrations that followed" (Brightflame 2023, 84). The roots of a past Anthropocene/Capitalocene are identified as the lack of "no resilience, disconnected from the land, divorced from non-human kin" (84) since people clustered in cities, all their "needs flown in, shipped in, driven to their doorsteps. Giant shops stocked with goods from all around the world. Cables and pipes carry energy and communication infrastructure, satellites beaming information all around the world" (83). Hence, it is against the backdrop of the Crumble that a new kind of posthuman subjectivity unfolds, no longer separate from or superior to the natural world. On the contrary, Tree-talkers as our protagonist, act as mediators between humans and the non-human world which is referred to as 'the Guardians'. In balance and communication with the non-human akin" (Brightflame 2023, 84), the narrator recounts:

They say we rose with the sea. But really, we rose with mycorrhizae, like fruiting fungi popping up around the Guardians through an interconnected web that sustains us. My Ancestors fought for our communities, the Threads. They created tech in order to grow food underground, safe from extremes and mega storms. Now, nine generations past the Crumble, we have relaxed into balanced relationships with Earth akin and set former worries sailing. (80)

Expanding on Starhawk's reflection on queer ecologies and the fluidity of identities with 'Earth akin', Brightflame introduces queerness in language through the gender-neutral pronouns ze-zir for humans and non-human alike. Living now in rhythmic attunement with fungal networks and plant kin, the non-human Guardians are not only seen as allies but family members. As the protagonist explains when referring to the wise tree Bur Oak "Ze raised me as did my bio-mother" (Brightflame 2023, 84). However, one day, communication abruptly stops:

Bur Oak spread zir arms wide and tall. I approach and lean my cheek against zir furrowed bark. Will you speak with me? (...) I sense zir life force, and open myenergy beyond my physical edges to click into connection with the Guardian (...). Nothing. (81)



The protagonist's temporary inability to communicate with the Guardian and the interrogations of "What's wrong with me? Why I cannot hear zir voice again?" (84), introduces a moment of ecological dissonance. It is not a loss of technological signal, but a rupture in relational harmony, underscoring the story's central premise: Communication is more than linguistic; it is vibrational, energetic, and embodied. It is so constitutive that, without communication, there is no certainty whether "Are we still we? (Brightflame 2023, 84). Hence, this last question exemplifies the intimate and symbiotic interconnectivity of the Threads with the more than human world. A 'we' in which the human and non-human entangle, and boundaries collapse, and the mycorrhizal web becomes a literal and symbolic infrastructure for this new world, offering an organic counterpoint to the shattered digital networks of the past.

As the story goes on, to find a solution, the council representative decides that a fungi-talker must be found to be able to communicate directly with mycorrhizae and discover the source of the lack of communication with the Guardians through trees. Once the protagonist finds the fungi-talker "ze shakes zir head and describing the (...) ecstasy of connection and Exchange" (98) excitedly relates stories "of zir mycorrhizal friends" (96). Echoing Donna Haraway's conception of 'tentacular thinking' in the 'Chthulucene' –a paradigm of becoming-with across species boundaries (Haraway 2016, 55)– the protagonist engages in interspecies communication not through mastery, but through relational openness: "They take me to places (...) in a bioluminescent web," the funghi-talker explains, "and I *know* things- I absorb information from them" (Brightflame 2023, 96). This is why the funghi-talker knows that communications with the Guardians have been disrupted due to the intrusion in the web of an "alien orange fungi who they cannot get through to" (95). We learn, nonetheless, that disruption is temporary, because albeit alien, "Orange is also akin" (95). In this vein, the experience of being-with fungi, mediated through a luminous, mycorrhizal network, models what Anna Tsing calls "contamination" as a condition of livable collaboration: a dynamic process by which "working across difference" ensures survival and mutual flourishing (2015, 32). Furthermore, this idea of alien as akin favors an indigenous-informed ethic of 'right relation.' In this vein, as Robin Wall Kimmerer affirms, to be in right relation with the land is to recognize the spiritual and material agency of all beings (2013, 65) –a worldview enacted in the story's repeated invocation of kinship: "Here and now, we live in balance among non-human akin" (Brightflame 2023, 84). This language of kinship –"Guardian," "myco-friends," "Orange is akin"– signals a shift from domination to communion, where even the most seemingly marginal forms of life (fungi, roots, bacteria) become central actors in ecological restoration. Additionally, both tree-talkers and fungi-talkers can be approached as posthuman bridges –not merely between human and fungi and trees, but between technology and ritual, queer futurity and earth-based spirituality. Indeed, reconnection is achieved not through force but through observation, patience, and reverence: "Let us observe the land and its interactions", as the elderly of the Threads advice (Brightflame 2023, 84). This speaks to the Lunarpunk valorization of 'rhizomatic resistance' –slowness, intuition, and cyclical time as subversive acts to reclaim interconnectivity and solidarity with the more than human people (Morton 2017).





Consequently, Brightflame's "When the Web Went Down," not only imagines a post-capitalist, symbiocenic future, but it also queers our very conception of nature by dissolving rigid binaries –between human and nonhuman, masculine and feminine, technological and organic. The consistent use of the gender-neutral pronoun 'zir' in reference to both trees (the Guardians) and humans is not merely a linguistic innovation but an ontological statement that affirms the queerness of the natural world itself. In doing so, the narrative aligns with 'queer ecocriticism', which resists heteronormative and binary taxonomies of nature by emphasizing multiplicity, fluidity, and relationality (Mortimer-Sandilands & Erickson 2010). The use of "zir" to refer to a Bur Oak –"Bur Oak spread zir arms wide and tall" (Brightflame 2023, 81)– is emblematic of this queering of nature, acknowledging the tree's sentience, agency, and non-binary existence. Thus, in a queer ecological framework, the plant and fungal worlds exemplify non-normative life systems in which mycorrhizal networks defy linear hierarchies, and plants, as Emanuele Coccia asserts, "live without killing, in a non-hostile premise," existing outside of predatory models of masculinity or dominance (Coccia 2018, 220). Furthermore, the fluid, non-anthropocentric forms of reproduction, communication, and symbiosis in the fungal and plant kingdoms mirror and validate queer and trans modes of being. Thus, the use of gender-fluid pronouns in this story is not merely inclusive but deeply ecological –it reflects a worldview in which identity, like ecology, is dynamic, entangled, and resistant to essentialism. This linguistic queering becomes a vital tool in resisting not only gender binaries but also the binary logic of extraction versus preservation, progress versus decay, and human versus nature –thereby offering a radically inclusive vision of ecological kinship. To this regard, Brightflame's speculative society exemplifies what Thomas Berry terms an "intimate Earth community," where humans finally learn to "listen to the various creatures of Earth, each telling its own story" (1988, xiv). The story is, in this sense, an act of "re-story-ation," a term that Robin Wall Kimmerer uses to describe the healing power of narratives to regenerate cultural and ecological memory (2013, preface).

At the end of the story, by gathering at the base of the Guardian "for storytelling, for celebration, for rituals of life" (Brightflame 2023, 99), the Threads enact a collective posthumanist symbiotic re-membling in the realization that "All are We" (99). In this recognition, it can be claimed that a revolution of thought is fungal and plant-based driven, and as such, it is rhizomatic. Indeed, through this rhizomatic imagination, Brightflame becomes another brilliant example of a literary ecowitch re-weaving the web of life through storytelling.

4. CONCLUSION

As we have seen, framed within the lunarpunk ethos of cyclical, lunar-based time and trans-corporeal collaboration and resistance, Starhawk's and Brightflame's narratives are not merely post-apocalyptic but symbiocenic –a vision of thriving through entangled interdependence between humans and nonhuman agents, natural cycles and a re-storied Earth community. In this line, this research examines

these contemporary witches, Starhawk and Brightflame, as examples of literary ecowitches currently promoting narratives of resilience, regeneration, social justice and multispecies futures through the power of storytelling.

Unlike general representations of “green,” or nature-based witchcraft, the vision of a literary ecowitch in these texts is explicitly political –grounded in a renewed *ecological knowledge*, ethics of care and relationality that dismantle paradigms of exploitation, human exceptionalism, and patriarchal heteronormative masteries. Thus, the stories analysed challenge andro-anthropocentric frameworks by embodying symbiotic *posthuman subjectivities* and advocating *fluid, relational ontologies* that speak to a world in which biodiversity is not only celebrated, but fundamentally queer –fluid, expansive, and interdependent. Moreover, these narratives present a *fluid ecology of becoming* in which collective survival is contingent upon reimagining identity, kinship, and agency beyond anthropocentric confines.

As examined, through posthuman imaginaries within this new subgenre of Lunarpunk, in literary terms, it can be claimed that ecowitches serve as harmonizers of dystopian landscapes, weaving regenerative imaginaries through ritual, community care, and environmental stewardship. What is more, far from being a symbolic or mythologized construct, the literary ecowitches operate at the intersection of storytelling, political activism, and eco-spirituality, bridging ancestral knowledge systems with speculative imaginaries that envision sustainable, multispecies worlds. As we have seen, hope, for these literary ecowitches, becomes both a spiritual force and a political act –a refusal to surrender to eco-apocalypse and a commitment to restoring the *web of life* that sustains all beings. Indeed, through the power of the written word, the restoration of symbiotic living relations allows for a process of posthuman re-story-ation in which literature becomes an act of worldbuilding that affirms the possibility, and necessity, of regenerative futures. In sum, from ecological technologies to ecological spiritualities, the written words of literary ecowitches in these Lunarpunk stories magically transform into a *pharmacopeia* where literature itself becomes a kind of medicine to reimagine how to heal the current wounds of a damaged Earth and its peoples; that is, how to creatively and poetically collaborate with our non-human allies to manifest healthier and more resilient, compassionate, utopian and inclusive ecosystems.

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