

**Reclaiming Lesbian Feminisms:
Beginning Discussions on Communities, Geographies and Politics**

ABSTRACT

In the late 1980s, critiques of the universalism of second-wave feminism led to the re-evaluation of lesbian feminism, a diverse movement that had been developing in North American and West European context since the early 1970s. New generations of lesbians increasingly rejected many of its ideals and stereotyped past lesbian movements as essentialist and exclusionary. Contending that as gender continues to be relevant to sexuality politics, in this paper we discuss whether lesbian feminisms might have something to offer contemporary LGBT and queer politics. Our investigation focuses on re-examining the limitations and possibilities of lesbian feminisms for contemporary politics, practice and theory. Using a question-and-answer format, the paper is structured as a discussion between three separate/individual authors, each of whom is differently situated. The result is a cross-cultural, interdisciplinary, and multi-generational assessment by three post-lesbian feminists working with gender and sexualities in geography and sociology.

KEYWORDS: Lesbian feminisms; queer theory; queer geographies; cross-cultural analysis

Reclaiming Lesbian Feminisms

INTRODUCTION

Emerging in response to a sense of invisibility within the gay liberation and second-wave feminism in the 1970s, lesbian feminism developed as a diverse political movement with a unique critique of heteropatriarchy, the systemic reinforcement of unequal gender relations by heteronormativity. Insisting on the inseparability of feminism from lesbian politics, lesbian feminism includes a wide array of practices and ideology ranging from lesbian feminism (claiming a lesbian position within feminism), radical lesbianism (claiming a separate and autonomous movement for lesbians) and cultural feminism (the creation women-only spaces for the production of a women-centred culture) (Myers, 2003). Formed primarily in the contexts of Western Europe and North America, by the 1980s the movement was adopted and reinterpreted within politicized lesbian communities in a variety of contexts, including women involved in the lesbian land movement and by groups in smaller and rural communities (Bell & Valentine, 1995; Taylor & Whittier, 1992; Valentine, 1997). However, by the late 1980s it was increasingly rejected and stereotyped by new generations of lesbians, who were critical of its universalism, essentialisms, and exclusions (Phelan, 1989; Stein, 1993). More recently, North American lesbian-feminist institutions such as dyke marches and the Michigan Women's Music Festival have struggled to find their constituency and the cis-normative ideal of creating 'women's' spaces has been challenged by

both more mainstream LGBT calls for coalition building and queer and trans critiques of gender and sexuality politics (see, for example, Browne, 2011). Given the long-term devaluation of lesbian feminist politics and an awareness that gender continues to be relevant to sexuality politics, we decided to begin discussions about the potential relevance of lesbian feminist politics. Fully aware of the foundational limitations of lesbian feminisms but critical of contemporary gender dynamics within LGBT and queer politics, we decided to explore its potential through a written exchange. This paper is the result of those discussions. We argue that lesbian feminisms may well have the potential to address gender issues within contemporary sexuality politics, but, in order to allow for this possibility, it needs to be reconsidered and reworked in light of contemporary sexuality and gender politics. Specifically, lesbian feminisms need to be reclaimed from a monolithic association with essentialism, separatism and anti-trans rhetoric. Thus, we offer this article as a challenge, in the hope that it results in debate and dialogue that refuses the reductive closing down of what activism and approaches might fall under the umbrella lesbian feminisms.

We come from very different perspectives and geographical contexts (Marta from Poland, Julie from Canada, and Kath from the UK), career paths (early and 'mid' career) and institutional positionings (Julie, a Quebec college professor, Kath, a professor at Brighton University, and Marta, at the end of a PhD programme), yet the idea of queering and reclaiming lesbian feminisms appeals to us all. We do not investigate ourselves, instead allowing our conversation to highlight our differences: throughout the article we interrogate what we mean by queering and reclaiming, starting from the base that queering seeks to disrupt current dominant modes of engagement, in this case, how

lesbian feminism might be adopted. In reclaiming, we deploy these queer disruptions to move beyond critique and think about what lesbian feminism has to offer, whilst refusing certain stereotypes and tropes associated with this way of engaging.

We are all 'post'-lesbian feminists, by which we mean that we came out and developed our politics and thinking after the 1980s. However, we do not adopt post-lesbian-feminism as a political stance, often equated with the post-lesbian subjectivities or identities in general. Rather, while working more broadly on contemporary sexuality politics, we wish to simultaneously take into account the never-ending struggles, in various feminist and mainstream spheres, for the acknowledgment of non-heterosexual/queer female/lesbian sexuality by those who claim this label and those who seek to address heteropatriarchies. We do this while recognising that the sign *lesbian* is contested (not all agree with it, use it, or see it as a useful tool) as it is produced. In addition, we all define ourselves in relation to geographies of sexualities, and for Julie and Kath this is where the main body of their work sits. Despite this commonality, we are of different ages (late twenties, late-thirties and late forties), and so, our discussion spans three different post-lesbian generations.

We are also variously placed in geotemporal ways. Marta is engaged with lesbian feminism through written and verbal sources, the reinvestigation of which continues to be the axis of her argument and conceptualisations in her institutional struggles for the emergence of a lesbian studies faculty in Poland, indeed the first separate faculty of this kind. She works towards lesbian studies that would be based on queer politics of difference, self-reflection and the individual power of subversion, and thus claims the identity of a queer lesbian

scholar. Kath's engagement with lesbian feminisms has been through the UK/North American Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT), queer and feminist politics. Coming of age in the 'equalities era' of the UK, where the country moved from the removal of homophobic legislation to the instigation of civil partnerships and then to a far reaching 'Equalities Act' in 2010 (Browne & Bakshi, 2013; Richardson & Monro, 2012), has profoundly influenced her expectations and agendas. Julie's politics has been shaped by the confluence of North American early-1990s queer politics, third-wave feminism and living in Québec, where these ideas intersect with its Francophone context.

The paper will take question-and-multiple-answer format. This unusual configuration allows us to reveal our differences as we reflect, in various ways, on the questions that we have posed. It is, therefore, written primarily in a conversational style, referencing academic texts where necessary. We use this strategy to contest the 'god-trick' (Haraway, 1991) and to enable multiple accounts to be presented simultaneously. This draws on our stance of seeking plural engagements with lesbian feminisms, by methodologically critiquing the monolithic presentation of lesbian feminisms through one authoritative voice. Rather than providing a historical analysis of particular texts, the thoughts gathered herein reflect our visceral and personal responses to what we felt were the most pressing matters when we discussed and formulated the questions we felt were most important. To structure this, we chose questions that we felt got to the root of some contemporary issues in lesbian feminisms in light of community issues, geographies and politics. We did this through email discussions that refined the areas we believed would address our goal of exploring the fuzziness of lesbian feminism, including plurality, and the ways in

which it can be simultaneously confined to the 1980s and 'dead' (see, for example, Valentine, 1997); and yet also offer insights and possibilities for contemporary thinking and activism. These questions are: what attracts you to lesbian feminism?; what does queer have to offer lesbian feminisms and vice versa?; what is the potential contribution of lesbian feminisms to contemporary political and conceptual issues?; what can lesbian feminist perspectives bring to queer geographies and vice versa?; can lesbian feminisms constitute modes of resistance today? Once we had posed the questions, we each took one to answer and then circulated our responses by email. Each question was answered in turn, as we reflected on what was said before. We then edited and refined our responses.

Drawing on our diverse positioning and experience of lesbianism and feminisms, as well as lesbian feminisms, we hope to use these questions to illustrate the potentials and multiple possibilities of lesbian feminisms, and the necessity to continue to engage in multi-layered conversations about gender and sexuality. The use of lesbian feminisms in the plural indicates our interpretation of these practices and positions as multiple. We use the plural to query the reduction of lesbian feminisms to an essentialist and anti-trans politics. We undertook this writing project to open up debates on the possibilities of diverse lesbian feminisms.

WHAT ATTRACTS YOU TO LESBIAN FEMINISM?

KB: Lesbian feminism for me has significant potential to rework and reconsider the power relations that continue to inform our everyday lives. Emerging from a critique of both feminisms' heteronormativities and sexualities that focus on gay

men, a form of theorising that directly addresses the ways in which heteropatriarchies can manifest (Wilton, 1995).

And yet I can't write about what attracts me to lesbian feminism without acknowledging what moved me away from this label, this collective, and this way of knowing. The strict reading of lesbian under the sign 'real woman' and the use/development of these theories in ways that are discriminatory towards trans women is thoroughly antithetical to my ontological and epistemological engagements with both the academy and activism.

So what attracts me about lesbian feminisms now is the possibility that we might create more than transphobic (and indeed biphobic) lesbian feminisms (see also Ahmed, 2015). I think this lies in some of the debates around the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival and the inclusion of trans women, but the maintaining of a space where the central tenet is to create something different to patriarchal, white, heterosexual cultures. This form of lesbian feminism creates the possibilities of re-engaging with how the intersections of patriarchies and heterosexisms continue to manifest in everyday lives. In considering how cultural constructs now normalise some gay men, but continue to vilify lesbian women—Clare Balding, a UK television and radio presenter, comes to mind. As an out lesbian who has had fame and recognition in the UK, her acceptance in the public sphere indicates some inclusions of lesbians in the British cultural context. This inclusion is nevertheless contingent and contested. In 2014 a journalist, AA Gill, called her 'a dyke on a bike, puffing up the nooks and crannies at the bottom end of the nation'. It is important here that she was not called 'gay', that the insult was not uniformly applicable to men and women, it was lesbophobia and Balding's gender mattered to her positioning at the 'bottom end

of the nation' and, as one reviewer of this paper noted, 'the image of puffing into the nook/crannies of a bottom ... [is a] dramatic instance of mocking and making disgusting lesbian sexual practices'.

Lesbian feminisms offer not only a way of engaging critically with heteropatriarchies and specific manifestations of lesbophobia, they also force an examination of these. This is important because they are often made invisible both in the academia and in wider public cultures, and can be subsumed under discussions of homophobia or homonormativities (that is the normalisation and acceptance of certain forms of homosexuality, Duggan, 2002, often discussed in relation to privileges and acceptances of 'lesbians and gay men') that fail to examine how gender matters (see also Browne & Bakshi, 2013). When we fail to examine the intersections of genders and sexualities, heteropatriarchies can be overlooked and forgotten, and a key hegemony goes unanalysed, and more importantly, remains a common sense norm.

JP: This is such a complex question for me to answer. In the 1990s, I defined myself by rejecting all forms of lesbian feminism (feminist, radical, separatist, and cultural) both subjectively and politically. Entering the lesbian scene that was emerging in Montreal in 1991 as a middle-class Anglophone meant strong alliances with gay men and the outright rejection of the essentialism of lesbian feminism, especially the radical lesbian movement, which was especially strong in France and Quebec in the 1980s (Turcotte, 1992). I recall often stating that I was a lesbian *and* a feminist, but that I was not a lesbian feminist. To be honest, I only had a vague idea of what lesbian feminism was about. The cultural-political world in which I defined myself involved the rejection of women-only spaces,

gender neutral (or neutered) identities, and the desexualisation of lesbianism. This process of identity construction was very much relational: we defined ourselves in opposition to the essentialism of 'women's culture', experimented with butch-femme roles, and immersed ourselves in gay male commercial and political culture as queer dykes. We were a mixed group of young Anglo and Francophone bilingual dykes who were also more ethnically diverse and hung around in the dyke bars and mixed nightclubs of the gay village. In retrospect, there was a certain lesbophobia informing this position as we rejected what we saw as a limited and separate lesbian culture which, in this context, was feminist and predominantly Francophone. It was also generational, shaped by the impact of American queer culture on younger, especially Anglophone, gays and lesbians. And yet, this more queer and third-wave critique of lesbian-feminist essentialisms, normativities, and exclusions was also an important part of this political process.

But, throughout this period, I was also completely entranced by writing projects that centred on recuperating lesbian histories and writing from lesbian perspective. I read everything I could find about lesbian histories (Chamberland, 1993; Faderman, 1991; Kennedy & Davis, 1993). In my writing, my local heroines were Nicole Brossard, Elspeth Probyn and Gail Scott, lesbian writers who disrupted established genres (academic, literary, etc.) whom I saw as writing from a lesbian subject position. My favourite quote at this time came from Nicole Brossard's work of experimental prose *L'Amér*, in which she wrote: "If it were not lesbian, this text would make no sense" (Brossard, 1977, pp. 16; also famously cited in de Lauretis, 1988). I wrote this on a card and posted it on my refrigerator. Daringly lesbian-centric, and yet completely deconstructive, it

provided the pleasure of complicity and the idea of an identity in the face of lesbian invisibility.

So, like Kath, I have been both repelled by lesbian feminism's essentialism and normativity, and, at the same time, attracted to its potential in the face of persistent societal lesbophobia and lesbian invisibility. Certainly, the 'sex' essentialism and cis-normativity that lies at the core of the 'woman-identified woman' concept – originally proposed by Radicalesbians as a means by which to define their movement (Radicalesbians, [1970] 1992) – has the potential to create multiple exclusions, including for trans-identified people, but also in the ways that it normatively proposes that this container serve as the primary political location to the exclusion of all other aspects of identity such as 'race' or ethnicity, thus reinforcing the Whiteness of the movement and excluding gender and sexual differences among lesbians. At the same time, lesbian feminisms have provided some of the only theoretical frameworks that address the intersections of heterosexism and patriarchy. I find these critiques appealing not only in relation to studying heteronormativity and societal lesbophobia, but also because they may apply to homonormativities and the uncritical ways in which lesbophobia operates within LGBTQ activism and in queer theory. Early lesbian feminists (Radicalesbians, Les Gouines Rouges) emerging from the intersections of the gay liberation and second-wave feminist movements at the start of the 1970s clearly located (along with gay liberationists) sexual liberation in the overthrowing of the capitalist system with its oppressive gender regime (Bonnet, 1998; Kissack, 1995). Capitalism and patriarchal gender norms were seen as working together to create 'norms' that oppressed not only women but also 'homosexuals' and lesbians. Indeed, we might today see this as an early version

of queer politics that adopted a structural approach, but importantly took patriarchy more seriously. Wittig's (1992) argument that lesbians are not women clearly initiated this type of materialist structural approach. I find some aspects of this argument compelling in terms of thinking through the gender asymmetries of both hetero and homonormativity.

MO: When we first drafted questions for this dialogue, I was particularly curious and excited about our interaction regarding this question. Since each of us represents a different geo-temporal, generational and institutional perspective, it was somehow uncertain to what extent our stances would converge and/or differ. Indeed, I took great delight in reading the input from both of you.

Both lesbian feminism and separatism have been a major discovery and trigger for my perspectives and pursuits, be it academic or more personal. I am immensely attracted by the movement's revolutionary character, eagerness, innovation, subjectivity, cheekiness, boldness, unity. To borrow Julie's phrase: "daringly lesbian-centric, and yet, completely deconstructive." It is precisely this re-evaluation of the roots of heteropatriarchy and heteronormativity that particularly appeals to me as a queer lesbian scholar. The strategy of so-called 'justifiable anger' (Lutz, 1988) and the explicit revealing of heterosexuality as a system and institution is what makes lesbian feminism quite pre-queer (I use 'pre-queer' to indicate how intuitively lesbian feminism can be defined as queer, as in non-normative, long before the first official social and academic discourses). And yet, it does take some effort to have its relevance appreciated today.

Importantly, I like to use word 'comprehensive' with regard to lesbian

feminism. Though the non-heterosexual women in question were not always inclusionary and open to alternative gender diversity, which both Julie and Kath emphasised, there is a special kind of comprehensiveness to their agendas—one regarding the women’s productivity and written contributions. Never before (or after, for that matter) had there been so many manifestos, academic works, analyses, lesbian fiction and non-fiction, poetry, personal accounts, self-help volumes, etc. They covered subjects like lesbian culture, lesbian ethics, lesbian friendships, lesbian sex, lesbian community, lesbian dictionaries, lesbian coming-outs, etc. This prolific abundance was once referred to as the process of ‘developing lesbian consciousness’, and I think this is very accurate on many levels. The multi-tasking, the network of support and the diversity of the published heritage was directly proportional to the homogeneity of the women’s interpretation of lesbian identity, and the exclusions it created. What is striking is that, precisely—this tendency to produce and generate has never been repeated on such a large scale. Indeed, part of my PhD dissertation’s methodology involves justifying the immensity and relevance of 1980s references I use, as opposed to those that are more recent. Being much less experienced than both Julie and Kath, I must admit that for the most part I have been uncritical of lesbian feminisms, but this is also because there is much appeal in them for my specific purposes in the Polish context, the main goal of which remains to evoke space and possibilities of auto-identification by building queer lesbian awareness. It is only recently that I have consciously examined the trans-phobic episodes in the histories lesbian feminism and this is a critique that still has importance. One aspect that I have been consistently countering is lesbian feminists’ underlining of the role of lesbian community as a basis for

resistance to heteropatriarchy. Exclusions and internal homo- or bi-phobia that the maintenance of this strategy required are dangerous. This choice is, however, political on my part, the adoption of an educational tool, and by no means does it mean the rejection of the term 'community' for the purposes of debates like this one. After all, we still do need to communicate effectively with the language that connects us.

Altogether, I consider it important to approach lesbian feminisms with decisiveness and reflection at the same time. On the one hand, I strongly believe in reinforcing the 'justifiable anger', subversion, and eagerness I described. On the other, what can be derived from lesbian feminisms, or even radical separatism, and how it can evolve and be modified, depends on the perspective, position, and contexts one represents. The three of us gathered in the belief that there is a need to push lesbian feminisms beyond its limitations in order to find more complex meanings. A variety of contemporary analyses and elaborations on the subject are yet to be produced, but with a greater consideration of the merits and prospects they offer. Only then can lesbian feminisms be appreciated as a valid strategy for re-constructions of gender and sexuality throughout and within a number of disciplines. In other words, there still may be some potential for lesbian feminist as a means of social and verbal subversion when put into various interdisciplinary frameworks available today.

WHAT DOES QUEER HAVE TO OFFER LESBIAN FEMINISMS AND VICE VERSA?

JP: Certainly, queer's focus on normativities is very instructive for lesbian feminism. It has perhaps made works like Alison Rooke's (2007) investigation of the normativities of the lesbian habitus, what she sees as constructed through

specific forms of embodiment and performances, possible. This is a really an important new avenue of research and political critique, with many writers beginning to call into question the whiteness and classed specificity of this location (see, for example, Hoffman, 2014). Also, at an ontological level, it is important to consider the relationship between queer and lesbian identities. Where I live, queer is increasingly an identity in itself as younger generations reject the gendered boundaries drawn around the subject by the terms lesbian and increasingly associate the term – along with ‘gay’—with homonormativity. The fact that many who might have identified as lesbian in the past now reject the label and chose queer (while young gay men are less likely to do so) leads me to believe that a rethinking of this relationship is necessary. At the same time, I find it difficult to do so without thinking about 1990s warnings by feminists (even post-modern ones) that queer theory may not be adequate due to its disruption of the idea of more specific and socially meaningful sexual subject positions (Cohen, 1997; de Lauretis, 1994; Martin, 1994; Walters, 1996). Like those third-wave feminists facing post-modernism, I worry about queer theory’s emphasis on discourse and representation rather than on ontological justice. Queer theory’s erasure of the subject is also difficult to swallow in the face of everyday concerns faced by many with regards to sexism, racism, heteronormativity and homophobia, especially the most marginal LGBT or queer subjects. At the same time, I feel compelled by queer’s attempts to deconstruct everything; I especially like the way that queering time can reposition and make subjective sense of a lifetime of resistances in relation to reproductive temporal norms (Halberstam, 2005).

Ultimately, I am probably more interested in what lesbian feminism might

contribute to queer. Since the intersections between multiple hegemonies are central to contemporary queer critique, lesbian feminism could contribute by calling attention to patriarchy, currently a neglected hegemony that might be recuperated and integrated alongside colonialism, racism and capitalism.

Perhaps by broadening and de-essentializing the gender asymmetries created by patriarchy (instead of assuming an opposition between patriarchy and 'woman'), there could be potential for moving queer theory towards a more critical analysis of gender. As it stands, it remains quite focused on constructivist interpretations of the performative in a way that both feminists and some trans scholars find inadequate (Namaste, 2000). I also think that rather than being placed in opposition to each other, we need to explore the potential alliances between trans populations, queer women and lesbians. Often when I am writing about gender in LGBTQ politics, I realize that a claim that I might be making is relevant primarily to lesbian, gender-queer and trans populations, rather than to the broader umbrella, due to unequal gender relations within the coalition.

Yet a reworking of such an approach would require the reconsideration of a number of central concepts within lesbian feminism. First, lesbian feminism did emerge out of the 'woman-identified woman' ideal (Radicalesbians, [1970] 1992), which created specific forms of inclusions and exclusions. By proposing that lesbianism was a feminist political stance rather than a sexuality, a political practice of devotion to other 'women', this concept is at least partially responsible for the desexualisation of lesbian feminism in the early 1970s and the great debates about sexuality during the sex wars of the 1980s (Nestle, 1987). I think that it can also be argued that many of the contemporary conflicts regarding sexual and gender identities reside in the woman-identified woman

concept. Although it need not necessarily be read as referring to a cis-gendered 'woman', as trans scholars and activists have pointed out (Manion, 2014; Peetoom, 2009) this principle is often used to draw boundaries around lesbian identities and communal practices in ways that depend on authenticity of the cis-gendered female body. For example, Peetoom (2009) argues that the distinction between "butch women" and "trans butches" depends on this cis-gendered boundary regarding masculinities. Secondly, some real rethinking of lesbian separatism would be required. When and how would lesbians and other queer-identified women work separately from other movements to focus solely on building their own political projects? Finally, the concept of patriarchy would have to be reworked in light of the development of feminist theory since the 1970s. I'm not sure how to do this, and it is beyond the scope of this article, but I do know that there has been some return to feminist materialism in other disciplines, and that this stance remains radically central among French-language feminists.

MO: Yes, the relationship between lesbian feminism and queer does seem very complex. What should be a common denominator is the need for constant negotiations of notions like 'womanhood' or 'lesbianity' (I deliberately choose to use this term in place of the more popular 'lesbianism', which has medical and stigmatising roots and connotations; as bell hooks [1990, p.145] said, "Language is also a place of struggle"; lesbianity and 'lesbianism' do not, then, differ semantically.) It is curious that in Julie's geo-temporal reality gay men are unlikely to identify as queer these days, while lesbians increasingly so—in Poland it seems to be exactly the opposite! I would like to try and shift this

reluctance of non-heterosexual women to assume a variety of identities or explore possibilities of auto-creation, by which I understand a conscious multi-faceted process of self-reflection with regard to one's own intimacy and desires. As a queer *and* lesbian academic I am often asked how I reconcile my queer background and practice with the active focus on the lesbian and promoting the need for explicit lesbian studies, both in my locality and in general. My answer to this is—it all depends on how we choose to understand the term 'queer'. Sure, there is no one meaning and one way of doing queer and, to some extent, it should be just left alone; I am very much opposed to any attempts to define the term. But I feel and observe that queer perspectives and politics have been too often abused and misused, not to mention globalised. If we objectively continue to equate queer with all-or-nothing deconstruction of all sorts of identities, labels and categories, there will be no ontological justice, and I fear that societies and communities will not undergo any serious changes based on reflection. I choose to understand queer as a contextual *tool* to explore, investigate and reveal given cultural types of violence—especially those based on depriving individuals of intimacy (i.e. desires and choices made outside of societal assumptions, pressures and 'the default mode'). Here, deconstruction is meant to be a method of exposing the roots and origins of cultural mechanisms and constructs rather than entirely getting rid of labels. With such grounds we can contest and negotiate the meaning of a given label—be it womanhood or manhood—at a grass-roots level. While there is a danger of being accused of utopianism, this can sometimes be desirable, depending on how we choose to define it. This interpretation allows me to pursue the lesbian *within* a queer perspective. We all mentioned before that the movement is very pre-queer—or,

more specifically, Foucauldian —as it offered the first ever exploration and critique of the very roots of the heteronormative and heterosexual (also worth mentioning is Mary McIntosh, an anthropologist who further worked with Foucault's assumptions and, importantly, was one of the first people to point out its non-existence). And so, like queer, lesbian feminism came into existence through a social and political revolution. From my point of view as a queer sociologist, these are the most significant common denominators, and so I have been *merging* lesbian feminism with queer perspectives rather than juxtaposing them. I am thankful to Julie for mentioning Monique Wittig's statement—one of my inspirations and precisely the point behind my use of both lesbian feminism *and* queer.

I too am definitely concerned about the over-eagerness to assume a fixed identity. Lesbian feminism as we know it could derive from queer its focus on diversity and self-reflection, leading to a social agenda that would modify and re-adjust those debates over the category of 'woman'. What is more, deeper and more queer-like involvement in the matters of sex and sexuality could be vital to a much needed critique of the discourses of the desexualisation of lesbians. This would help lesbian feminisms to move beyond old rigidities. Academic queer discourses, meanwhile, could regain their original subversive politics and character, of which lesbian feminisms has made good use.

Both might broaden a scope of interest in the way Julie suggested, and continue to engage with related hegemonies of various types in order to subvert them. The relationship will remain complex anyway, but it is important to keep it also productive. I sense a mutual passion between the two. Both lesbian feminism and queer perspectives and politics have now had the opportunity to,

together and separately, engage in social practices of identitarian, non-identitarian and beyond-identitarian self-development.

KB: When reading Julie and Marta's entries I find myself nodding. I agree with the dangers of queer in losing the sign lesbian, and what this might entail for women/lesbians in ways that are different for men. That is not to reaffirm gendered binaries, and I think this analysis of forms of gendered power relations/boundary-making is one of the key things that lesbian feminisms could offer to queer. It is to insist that gender continues to matter and needs to be critically explored.

In addition to all the points that Marta and Julie have made, I would add that queer and lesbian feminisms can also offer each other insights into diverse utopias, into the hopes and worlds that we might strive for. If we are to focus on the practices of separatism, might queer lesbian feminisms offer a chance to create new worlds to exclude that which you feel oppressed by, and to work with those who want to dream and put into practice new ideals? What queer forces us to consider is how these worlds are always multiple, and the dangers of hegemonies within these worlds, as well as at the margins of those who are excluded. And yet, for many, queer also offers glimpses of, and strives for, utopias. Queer as 'not yet here' in Munoz's (2009) terms can deconstruct normativities in hopes for better worlds. What is of interest to me in queer utopias is not only their multiplicity, but their ever-changing nature. As new normativities arise, as we supposedly 'get what we were looking for', queer asks us to question, to see the failings, the exclusions, the otherings, to further pursue gender and sexual liberations. The purpose is not to create a utopia, but to

pursue the possibilities of different utopias. What lesbian-feminist separatisms (and, of course, lesbian feminisms are not necessarily separatist) remind us of is that these utopias may need to be built apart from the world, and created through generations of discussions, trials and errors, and a feminist ethos of collaboration and cooperation. The key bone of contention continues to be that at times not everyone is included. Is it ever possible or desirable to create new worlds that (temporally?) exclude those who embody particular forms of privilege?

WHAT IS THE POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION OF LESBIAN FEMINISMS TO
CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL AND CONCEPTUAL ISSUES?

MO: The 'political and conceptual' is a broad generalisation in any circumstances and spatial contexts. What lesbian feminisms have revealed is that no matter where the action takes place, the political and the conceptual, if put together, can constitute a source of social power for particular and geographically-adjusted purposes. Above all, the movements showed the power of women's extreme disobedience within a social order that tries to have them silenced or 'abjected', be it by the heteronormativities of the state or the exclusionary elements of mainstream feminism. While it is impossible to translate this course of action into every social and spatial reality of resistance, inspiration can emerge. The conceptual politics that was developed at that time should therefore be remembered by any emancipatory and/or social initiative that is active nowadays. Any movement or resistance is primarily about an identity (however broadly defined) that has been oppressed, subjugated, and targeted, and what lesbian feminists did was to show how the concept of identity can be

subversively maintained and further developed so that we can change the existing 'order of things', to borrow Foucault's phrase (1994). The power behind concepts such as solidarity, community, or group anger, which the separatists emphasised and exercised, has been forgotten in contemporary struggles for social and individual rights, and should be pursued. The motivational perseverance has gotten somewhat lost. At the same time, it is hard for movements such as, let us say, ecologists or alterglobalists, to be restricted to particular and more localised objectives. LGBTQIA people also forget about their own localisations in the wake of global identities and politics. But lesbian feminists did create a whole range of perspectives and concepts for their own struggle, which could really be a valuable source of ideas for contemporary social realities. The concept of (lesbian feminist) ethics is one such example. If changed into separate local strategies and applied to, let us say, the problem (!) of the media, it could try and reshape mainstream values that are fostered and preserved unreflectively, e.g. those concerning the representation of women. While it may already be happening in some spatial realities, I believe it is not too prevalent outside of a theoretical framework. Furthermore, geo-social context must be of relevance as well. For this instance, more open and radical resistance to mass media and the information they generate would probably prove inefficient, unsuccessful and socially disapproved of in my native country. Back to the main point, lesbian feminists showed us how fruitfully and powerfully 'lesbian meaning' and 'lesbian focus' (Hoagland, 1988) can be created through 'justifiable anger' and grass-roots rebellion, leaving a lasting impression on the social thinking patterns, responses in literature, and academic prospects. While, several years later, a queer social movement successfully emerged from similar

strategies, the empowerment of non-heterosexual women was not one of its key objectives. It was not until the emergence of Lesbian Avengers—a radical feminist initiative of a very queer character—that the aim was to increase the status and well-being of lesbian women specifically.

Perhaps one problem with effectiveness of contemporary struggles today is that not much conceptualisation is going on in a focused way with regard to grass-roots experiences. Perhaps we became too global. I believe the lesbian feminists, and by extension also separatists, provided us with a framework for a social politics that can now be geographically updated and developed via specific grass-roots initiatives. While I do not expect leaders of every resistance movement today to go through the heritage of lesbian feminisms specifically, it was, in many ways, exemplary and I would encourage deriving from the character of these bold manifestos, demonstrations, and attitudes. Of course, lesbian feminists' conceptualisations remain particularly valid for the LGBT and queer perspectives today, and, as such, have the power to provide grounds for reflection and further social and cultural resistance. Importantly, I believe that knowledges and experiences within both lesbian communities and academic lesbian studies faculties could benefit from being revised and reflected upon in the context of the 1970s and 1980s legacy. As it is now, this potential seems to be neglected and/or diminished.

For example, when writing this, International Women's Day (2015) has just been celebrated. Interviewed on this occasion, Joan Nestle—a leading lesbian activist as of early 1970s and beyond in the US—said that the biggest current challenge that feminism needs to face today is the inclusion of sex worker rights in the postulates and demands of any women's movement. It is a

nice example of a productive change in the big picture over the years and I could not emphasise more how important it is to become more persistent in acknowledging people of different genders and sexualities within the sex industry. Highlighting the situation of lesbian sex workers would be even one step further. This is just one random example, though. The bottom line is that there are plenty of dimensions of 'womanhood' to be accounted for, many identities to fight for, and new social circumstances to adjust to in various spatialities. The contemporary realm of 'the political and conceptual' is indeed full of challenges that lesbian feminisms can help to face.

KB: Marta has spoken of the important ways that lesbian feminisms in the 1970s were located in this era and specific places. I want to develop from this to argue that lesbian feminisms are relevant to contemporary political and conceptual struggles. Patriarchy and heterosexism/homophobia are pertinent and pressing issues, both politically and conceptually, *now*. The intersections of gender and sexualities are crucial in understanding the power relations that constitute lives, desires, identities, relationships, embodiments, materialities, and much more. The challenge for contemporary lesbian feminisms is to engage, as lesbian feminisms have done both theoretically and practically, with other social differences and powerful intersectional movements—I am thinking of race, disabilities and, given the age of 1970s lesbian feminists, age, but of course there are many more. The debates regarding 'solidarity' versus 'difference' within feminisms continues to rage, and engagements with the power/privilege of whiteness, able-bodiedness and the privileging of youth is crucial for contemporary lesbian feminisms. As I mentioned above, lesbian feminisms also

need to address the views of patriarchy that see trans women as ‘men’, and heterosexisms that view bi people as ‘traitors’ (for example, the work of Jeffreys, 2003; Raymond, 1979).

Despite, indeed because of, these challenges, I see the potentials of lesbian feminisms politically and conceptually as being wedded to contemporaneous engagements with the challenges of intersectionalities as well as to its own histories. Key to these potentials are the multiplicities of lesbian feminisms that recognise, engage in and rework the local, as well as global issues, contexts and power relations. Moreover, this plurality is necessary to release lesbian feminisms from one strict route that has, to date, dominated writing in this area. Patriarchy and heterosexisms are key to social, political, economic and cultural contexts and struggles, and this is where the potentials of lesbian feminisms lie. But there is much conceptual and political work to be done to identify and harness this potential, and I hope that brilliant scholars from across the academy and diverse activists will take up the challenge.

JP: Having read both Marta’s and Kath’s thoughts, I keep thinking that we are witnessing movements that draw on some of the principles of lesbian feminism. The performance tactics of Femen, for example (see Langman, 2014), resemble those of radical feminists in the early 1970s in the US and France, some of whom went on to be involved in lesbian feminism. They also echo American queer tactics from the early 1990s such as staging kiss-ins and holding topless demonstrations to protest the objectification of women’s bodies by capitalism (reminiscent of the New York dyke marches originally organized in the early 1990s by the Lesbian Avengers). Femen protests against heteropatriarchy’s

sexual violence, exploitations and its homophobia. But, this is queer radical feminism, not lesbian feminism. Meanwhile, there are echoes of lesbian feminism in the reigniting of dyke marches in North America (and the conflicts surrounding their inclusions) and practices of lesbian 'desolidarization' from the LGBT pride movements. In both cases they not only demand a separate 'lesbian' (or dyke) march, but they do so to contest the commercialism, normativities and exclusions of contemporary pride movements (see Podmore, 2015). Like the Lesbian Avengers, they do this from a lesbian-centric position that includes other queer populations that share this critique. So, yes, I think that these movements demonstrate that elements of lesbian feminism are very relevant today. But after forty years of change in feminist, gender and sexuality politics, an essentialist lesbian feminism that draws boundaries around itself and does not engage in broader political concerns, thereby constructing new normativities, seems untenable and undesirable. Indeed, the power of a renewed lesbian feminism would lie in a critique of heteropatriarchy and other related power relations, and the embracing of solidarities with the wide array of subjectivities that are positioned on its margins. That sounds quite queer to me.

WHAT CAN A LESBIAN FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE BRING TO QUEER

GEOGRAPHIES AND VICE VERSA?

KB: Queer geographies have encouraged the discipline of geography to critique gender, sexuality, and many other normativities, both in the discipline and in wider social, cultural, urban and rural forms. Geographies' critical explorations of homonormativities have been key to developing nuanced conceptualisations of how power operates through complicities (Oswin, 2005) and diverse

economies (Brown, 2009), that question the kinds of globalising thinking that emerges from the Global North (Brown, 2012). For me these forms of queer engagements can contribute to moving beyond the 'rut' that I see lesbian feminism currently in. I see this impasse as located in the oppositional positioning of lesbian feminism against queer/trans theorisations. Allowing for a multiplicity of lesbian feminisms and refusing the reduction of lesbian feminisms into transphobic epistemologies (although this is undeniably one aspect of lesbian feminism and a key part of its most recent history) has the potential to open up the possibilities of this epistemological and political positioning, creating something that is perhaps impure. Similar to a more third-wave feminist interpretation that sees these as multiple and formed through and within place and space, lesbian feminisms can be retheorised as plural, open to discovering how it might contain contradictions and open to alliances and changing perspectives and positions.

Recreating lesbian feminisms in this way poses numerous challenges for queer geographies, not the least of which is the centrality of the gay male subject to the interpretation of or production of queer geographical knowledge. In often unacknowledged ways gay men are positioned as the subject of queer geographical research, reiterating the position of gay men in the 'canon' of queer geographies (Browne & Ferreira, 2015).

JP: I will take this in a slightly different direction than Kath. Certainly, queer theory and queer geography in addition to other post-modern theories have had important impacts on lesbian geographies, especially regarding the conceptualization of space and place. But, I would argue that lesbian geographies

have been confined to geographies of sexualities rather than queer geographies (see Oswin, 2013). While there has been some updating of lesbian geographies in light of the more epistemological challenges posed by queer geographies since the mid-2000s (Browne, 2007), work on lesbian geographies has mostly developed within the more material realm of geographies of sexuality. As a result, the contribution of lesbian geographies often goes unrecognized at a conceptual level: these works are generally cited as contributing case studies of a particular sexual sub-culture, or demonstrating gender differences between lesbians and gay men, but rarely as works that make any larger contribution to geographical knowledge production. Despite Nast's (2002) critique of queer patriarchies, the gendered critique of the practice of queer geography remains underexplored. Instead, queer geography's critique has focused primarily on the metronormativity, colonialism and whiteness of geographies of sexuality. All are obviously significant and even urgent, but it is interesting to ponder why some normativities are so central to queer critiques, while others, such as patriarchy, but also classism and Anglo-centrism, remain peripheral.

A revised lesbian-feminist stance in geography might call attention to the intersections between queer theory, homonormativity and unequal gender relations in the production of geographical knowledge. At the same time, recent critical attention to lesbian geographies (Geiseking, 2013), especially by geographers outside of the Anglophone world (Cattan & Clerval, 2011; Clerval & Brunner 2013; Ferreira & Salvador, 2015; Rodó-de-Zárate, 2015) and beyond geography itself (Banerjea, 2014; Held, 2009, 2015; Kawale, 2004; Millward, 2015; Rooke, 2007; Taylor, 2007), demonstrates that the continued investigation

of lesbian geographies is important outside of the post-identity world of Anglo queer geography.

MO: I am relatively new to the fields of geographies of sexualities and queer geographies, but I chose to pursue this path because of the possibilities that the relationship between them and lesbian feminism offers, let alone because of the importance of my own social and geographical position, which has been discussed throughout this article. I agree that lesbian geographies have a much larger role to play within queer geographies than is currently recognised, and I believe lesbian feminism could facilitate this by engaging the lesbian in the network of power dynamics not based on limiting essentialist discourses. I am particularly drawn to the power and potential of refocusing attention back onto female sexualities and their role in grass-roots feminism. This should be seen and done from anti-general and anti-universal perspectives.

I like the phrase 'queer geographies'. I have always refused to use the common 'queer theory'. To me, the words are contradictory. Theories tend to aspire to objectivity and universality, while queer refers to either practices of cultural deconstructions, or grass-roots individual processes of auto-creation—either way, it will always be plural, always multi-dimensional and localised. Teresa de Lauretis (1991, 1994), who coined the term, quickly withdrew from it precisely because, contrary to her intentions, the phrase was co-opted and quickly transformed into grand theory. And, perhaps this is my radical lesbian side, but to me *queer* put with *theory* loses its default objectives. Queer is a *perspective* and it should be seen as such. Perspectives can be innumerable—lesbian feminist is just one of them. Geographies can recognise this fact by

asserting a spatial perspective that has been quite neglected, therefore the field of queer geographies, with lesbian geographies within, seems to be a promising solution.

As queer comes down to the process of rethinking, queer geographies could be translated into the rethinking of multiple power relations that need to be re-investigated and re-shaped in ways that are respectful towards, and sensitive to, spatial and geo-temporal conditions. It is one thing to speak of certain cultural tendencies and processes—be it with regard to gender, race, disability or poverty—but it is quite another to be able to filter them through a relevant lens. Academics and activists tend to forget about the latter. Cultural critiques are what both queer geographies and lesbian feminisms need and share, or should share. I would like both of them to join in struggles to constitute a framework of grass-roots social practices. For now, I fear that lesbian feminism is seen as too old-fashioned and ridiculous regardless of where it takes place. Queer, on the other hand, has in many ways yielded to globalisation and/or commercialisation, as well as in some circumstances and spatial contexts—perhaps predominantly those that are less experienced in reshaping and reworking queer legacy—queer can easily forget about power relations other than those based on sexuality. On top of this there are tensions within queer geographies and geographies of sexualities that both Kath and Julie described. The continual development of these themes within already ongoing research projects, academic programmes, discussions and conferences will further help avoid such clashes.

Kath reminded me once that what we say and do is dependent on *where* we say and do this. By the same token, how lesbian feminisms and queer

geographies can benefit from one another depends on political, geographical, social, spatial, and historical circumstances and positionings in which they are considered. The significance of geographical discourses outside of the 'Western' contributions is an ongoing issue that certainly needs responses. In this context it is quite telling that while Julie is, as she said before, drawn to the notion of queer time, I am mostly preoccupied with the notion of queer space. Coming from Poland, I have assumed a geographically queer *and* geographically lesbian perspective, and I have been involved in the critique of the objectivity and superiority of what is considered 'Western' LGBT and queer discourses. In contrast, lesbian geographies came to me as a huge aid and potential on my way to initiate queer lesbian studies in Poland. This is a locality that is geographically and conceptually beyond 'the Western', and yet in which identitarian activists are trying to faithfully follow in the Anglophone footsteps that seem to be recognised as that universal default mode. In the pursuit of a separate lesbian discourse that would be independent of general LGBT activism, I sometimes use strategic essentialism, but I do not promote the emergence of a lesbian community or lesbian movement in Poland. I believe that due to the social and historical circumstances we simply cannot afford to risk the reinforcement of limitations that the notion of community brought 'in the West'. While the term 'community' was of utmost importance in 1980s lesbian-feminist theories, it tends to unify and essentialise all its members, therefore replacing a politics of difference with impositions and self-discipline. For me, the formation of a kind of lesbian coalition would be a much better solution. And yet I am perceived as controversial precisely because I am suggesting paths that are alternative to that of 'Western' models, and that transcend our space and time. I would like the

research within queer geographies to allow for such deliberate alterations, and in this debate, both lesbian feminism and queer geographies have an alliance to make.

Queer geographies can therefore try new methods and localities, and broaden the scope of interest, while lesbian feminism could be used to rethink certain concepts. Engaging in pluralities and different axes of representation is a must. In the past, the movement was quite universalised, both geo-temporally and in terms of the policy, manifestos, and outcomes. It now has the opportunity to multiply and be revived in relation to particularised (and) contextual spaces, dimensions, and needs. The tasks for both queer geographies and lesbian feminisms are thus multi-dimensional, interdisciplinary, and intersectional.

CAN LESBIAN FEMINISMS CONSTITUTE MODES OF RESISTANCE TODAY?

JP: I do think so. In terms of activism, we are witnessing moments in which the gender dynamics in the LGBTQ movement are being contested and some lesbian feminist institutions are being revived. I can cite a few examples from Montreal recent years: the republication of the radical lesbian review *Amazones d'hier, lesbiennes d'aujourd'hui* (Amazons of yesterday, lesbians of today); the relaunching of the annual Journée de visibilité lesbienne (Lesbian visibility day); and the development of city's first dyke marches in 2012. However, these revivals are occurring in a very different time period in which the dynamics of LGBTQ and feminist politics are very different. For example, one lesbian-feminist practice that these Montreal movements share is a return to "non-mixity" (for lesbian and queer-identified women only) in order to increase lesbian visibility

and autonomy, but most of these activists (with the exception of the radical lesbians) do so by defining the movement broadly or discussing with allies rather than excluding differences. Moreover, while some lesbian feminist practices and institutions are being revived, they are but part of a wide array of diversified queer and LGBT political practices in which lesbians simultaneously engage. Certainly, these are intergenerational moments of lesbian feminist renewal, but beyond recovering lost lesbian feminist histories and practices, the extent to which lesbian feminist political ideals are being embraced and reconsidered remains unclear. I tend to think that young queers are attracted by the radical critique provided by lesbian feminism and young lesbians are inspired by the idea of lesbians creating spaces for themselves. So, yes, I do think that certain aspects of lesbian feminism can serve as a mode of resistance today, and that a small revival is occurring, but much more research is needed in order to understand how and why.

In terms of research, a queer approach to lesbian feminism might be an avenue through which lesbian geographies (and lesbian studies generally) might begin to engage more critically with epistemology. If nothing else, we may draw from lesbian feminism a standpoint approach in the work that we do that does not give up the critique of unequal gendered power relations in LGBTQ studies and activism as well as in our analysis of the production of sexualities and space.

MO: Absolutely. The heritage of lesbian feminisms remains valid and it is crucial to finding suitable space and resources for its reinvention and readjustment. My concern is not about the potential or possibilities within lesbian feminism, but about the overall reluctance to reach for them. I am appealing for reflexivity

upon—and usage and re-usage of—all the sources, materials and attitudes that lesbian feminists produced. It is a long way from my own locality and lesbian experience until it is even possible to dream of changes within Polish activism, like the introduction of lesbian/dyke marches, and I suppose I rely on academia much more and above all. As it is today, the country's post-communist reality and mentality has led to an exceptionally hermetic character of feminist discourse that is limited and lacking in a lesbian component. What we do have are three established feminists, who are considered radical by the media even though all they have been talking about for years now is visibility/roles of women in politics. This is so different and distant from my academic reality and from what I aim at that, sadly, I hardly get a chance to use any of the noted women as a reference in any context! From my pioneer perspective, not only do we need lesbian feminism as a whole, but it is absolutely necessary that it should be plural and diversified from the very moment it emerges. Easier said than done, but only then can we put forward alternative knowledges that are free of 'Western' paradigms and adjusted to local specificities and women's experiences. A multiplicity of lesbian feminist initiatives will then constitute a powerful mode of resistance with a cross-disciplinary character, one rich in new approaches and tools with which to fulfill its potential. This is why the new perspective and attitude towards lesbian feminisms at large can have multiple strategies and objectives—my own are quite radical because of the local experiences I have just mentioned, then it will be different for Julie's personal and social reality, and different for Kath's area and purposes. There is no *one* resistance really, but I see the 1980s as the greatest time of lesbian visibility and audibility, and hope it will be continuously re-visited. It is simply necessary to revise, rework, and apply

this subversive era in more diversity-oriented, flexibility-based, trans-friendly and spatially-aware mode. At the same time, our discussion has been an invaluable experience and an important lesson for me as a young scholar. It has also enabled me to look from a different angle at the relevance of lesbian feminist solutions to modes and facets of resistance that would not be based on 'Western' experiences and demands.

KB: My answer is less positive than Julie's and Marta's. This is not because their points are not valid, or because there is no potential for lesbian feminisms to act as modes of resistances. My answer is: I hope so. This is because the tarnish of the vilification of lesbian feminism and feminism more broadly may prevent effective reclaiming of this term. Whilst I think we have all argued the case for a reworking of lesbian feminisms, this may not be politically viable. Similar to how radical feminism is categorised, unified, stereotyped, labelled as anti-trans, and associated with particular individuals in ways that foreclose discussion and arguments and the radical potentials that characterise this form of feminism, lesbian feminism may well suffer the same fate. Critiques of lesbian and radical feminisms have resulted in the polarisation of particular forms of feminisms from each other, the 'enemy within' becoming more important than those 'without'. When considering whether lesbian feminisms can act as a mode of resistance, then we need to be clear: who is being resisted and how?

CONCLUSION

We have presented our discussion of lesbian feminism as a challenge, a discussion that attempts renew debate and dialogue regarding its potential for

critical analysis and activism. The nexus of our differing global positions, career paths and institutional placings has offered various perspectives on Lesbian Feminisms. Specifically, we have questioned whether or not lesbian feminism can be reclaimed from its monolithic associations with essentialism, separatism and anti-trans rhetoric. We have also suggested that reassessing and using lesbian feminisms can benefit contemporary struggles within power relations, including those that are based on gender, sexuality, race, disability, religion, etc. This discussion is an invitation, therefore, to further conceptual and empirical considerations and research projects within many fields and disciplines. Our interaction is merely an example of the possible diversity (geographically, generationally, culturally and socially) of lesbian feminist perspectives and objectives, while, at the same time, drawing attention to the more universal significance their academic and activist potentials.

While we have tried to offer a point of departure, there are a number of themes that emerge from our multi-dimensional, cross-cultural, intergenerational and interdisciplinary discussion. First, because we remain within social matrixes that take feminine subordination for granted, be it heteronormative or homonormative realities, we believe that it remains vital to continue to problematise gendered power relations when considering, politicising and researching sexualities. Feminist movements have a particularly pivotal role, but only the plurality of (lesbian) feminisms can seek to challenge the multiplicities of gender and sexual oppressions, accounting for spatial, social, political, and geotemporal circumstances. Secondly, we have all suggested that a lesbian feminist form of analysis, with its focus on gender asymmetries, can offer an ability to analyse, critique, resist and create alternative strategies and spaces

to address patriarchal and capitalist power to queer politics and theorising. Our discussion highlights the limited integration of a feminist perspective into queer geographies in particular, and the ways in which lesbian feminisms might challenge the production of knowledge and academic practice in this field. Finally, our discussions led us to conclude that new links between and within feminist/lesbian/queer/trans theorists and activists from various perspectives might be an important means of reconsidering lesbian feminisms. As Judith Butler has argued, “coalitional politics” is a means of “dialogic encounter” (Butler, 1990, p. 20). Developing such coalitions could open conversations and reinvigorate discussions, thus deepening the idea of reinvestigating lesbian feminisms.

Lesbian feminisms might act as an effective aid to a variety of contemporaneous modes of resistance and placing lesbian-feminist perspectives in relation to queer seems to be a promising tool. However, what we hope is clear is that there is no *one* way of re-investigating and re-invigorating lesbian feminisms. For the three of us, this encounter has been an enriching experience, particularly in the context of our cross-generational, multi-spatial and cross-disciplinary cooperation. It was born out of our curiosity about the contemporary possibilities of lesbian feminisms. We hope that it will prompt the pursuit of rich, if intricate, paths of lesbian feminisms, and attract the attention it deserves from various academic and non-academic arenas. We encourage scholars to engage in theoretical and/or empirical research on the history, uses and futures of lesbian feminisms. This will hopefully be only a beginning, where the questions that we have posed, and many others, are raised and responded to

by a plethora of different scholars and activists in ways that augment resistances to patriarchy and heterosexism.

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