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LOOKING INTO THE INVISIBLE:

Attempts to find unspoken connections between
the health of the Earth and the well-being of humankind

Written Component of the MA Thesis

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Abstract

The purpose of this work is, for me as an author, to see if I can connect topics that otherwise do not find a shared space too often. Psychoanalysis, mythology, climate change and people's health, are the areas I have at hand and what I'm otherwise interested and passionate about.

Thanks to this work I have had a reason to investigate my ideas and questions of the hidden and invisible connections between people's mental and physical health, between people's body and Earth's body, the possible root causes of addiction and destructive behavior, mythology regarding the creation of the world and so much more.

First I will introduce how I found my way to this topic, then lead the way asking questions and looking for answers through several authors of psychoanalytical works like Erich Fromm's "The Art of Loving", Judith Harris's "Jung and Yoga – The Psyche-Body Connection" and Murray Stein's "Jung's Map of the Soul: An Introduction". On an ongoing basis I'm illustrating their theory with my own thought processes, illustrations, and health experience.

The weight of this work has its focus on psychoanalytical theory and on looking for the clues of connections between Earth and people as two separate, although intertwined entities. The amount of theory regarding the human psyche is vast and by not wanting to stay superficial in numerous topics, I have decided not to involve many examples of art. Rather it's a work presenting theories thanks to which I have found my way to art.

The theoretical part is also the basis for the artistic component of my Master's project which I will open up in one of the last paragraphs. The keywords to give some hints of my artistic work are: recycled textiles, photo collages, human body, plants, and creation of a space.

For the reader it hopefully gives some new ideas on how to think of health, nature and to notice more of these invisible strings and threads that link together everything and everyone around us.

At the end of writing this work, I feel like I have just started to scratch the surface of an enormous area, not to even mention the possibilities of going deeper into it. I'm taking that as an opportunity for further research and therefore turning this writing into one big introduction for my further investigations and artistic practice. Having had the topics at hand interested me for over long periods, I have enough trust in that I will not get tired or incurious about them any time soon.

Kokkuvõte

VAADATES NÄHTAMATUSSE:

Püüd leida vaikivaid seoseid Maa ja inimkonna tervise vahel

Selle kirjutise eesmärk mulle kui autorile, on peamiselt soov näha, kas suudan ühendada teemasid, mida muidu liiga tihti ühisala jagama ei panda. Psühhoanalüüs, mütoloogia, inimeste vaimne ja füüsiline tervis ning kliimamuutus on teemad, millega ma siin tegelen ja millest ka muidu väga huvitatud olen.

Tänu sellele tööle on olnud mul põhjust oma ideid ja tekkinud küsimusi vaimse ja füüsilise tervise, inimkeha ja Maa keha, sõltuvusliku ja hävitusliku käitumise juurpõhjuste ning Maailma loomise mütoloogia ning palju muu osas lähemalt uurida.

Lugejale annab see loodetavasti samuti uusi ideid, kuidas mõelda tervisest, loodusest ning aitab näha neid nähtamatuid seoseid ja ühenduslülisid, mis meid kõigi teiste ja kõigega seob.

Selle töö lõpuks on mul tunne, et olen alustanud vaid ühe üüratult suure ala pinna kriimustamist, rääkimata selle sügavuste uurimisest. Samas, võtan seda kui võimalust edaspidise uurimustöö jätkamiseks ja teen seega käesolevast kirjatükist ühe suure sissejuhatause oma edaspidisesse töösse ja loomepraktikasse. Mainitud teemad on olnud mu huviorbiidis juba pikka aega ning seega usun, et need ei ammenda end niipea.

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Introduction

The written component of my Master's thesis is looking into subjects like climate crisis and mental health through the prism of psychoanalysis and mythology with the help of my own empirical experiences.

The main goal is to research if and how climate catastrophe and people's mental state and well-being are related proportionally. In other words, if the health of the Earth is getting worse according to the worsening of the mental and physical health of humankind. These topics are mostly handled interdependently in the context of eco-depression¹ where the problem is occurring interchangeably compared to my idea, meaning that I am interested in how people's mental health might affect the state of the Earth.

The above-mentioned crises are continuously getting worse all over the globe, and by having the belief in the interconnectedness of all that is, it seemed to be unavoidable to research how these topics are connected in less studied and spoken ways.

First I will introduce how I found my way to this topic, then lead the way asking questions and looking for answers through several authors of psychoanalytical works, and on an ongoing basis illustrating their theory with my own thought processes, illustrations, and health experience.

The theoretical part is also the basis for the artistic component of my Master's project which I will open up in one of the last paragraphs. The keywords to give some hints of my artistic work are: recycled textiles, photo collages, human body, plants, mythology, and creation of a space.

¹ also eco-anxiety, eco-guilt, eco-grief, eco-coping – effect of climate change on people's mental health, Csilla Ágoston et al., Identifying Types of Eco-Anxiety, Eco-Guilt, Eco-Grief, and Eco-Coping in a Climate-Sensitive Population: A Qualitative Study - PMC, 15. XI 2019, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8875433/> (accessed 14. III 2023).

The weight of this work has its focus on psychoanalytical theory and on looking for the clues of connections between Earth and people as two separate, although intertwined entities. The amount of theory regarding the human psyche is vast and by not wanting to stay superficial in numerous topics, I have decided not to involve many examples of art. Rather it's a work presenting theories thanks to which I have found my way to art.

The Question

What leads you to develop a conscience about something? Well, love for it. A feeling that you want that thing to continue so much that you are prepared to alter your behavior so that will happen. You are prepared to not gratify yourself in the most obvious immediate way if it's going to damage this thing that you love.²

Hearing this sentence for the first time was eerily synchronistic – I was listening to the podcast, paused it for something, and had a thought about people having first to love life and Earth before being able to make some changes or take responsibility for it. I then continued playing the podcast and soon Brian Eno came through with the given thought. As if for my help, he put the idea into words beautifully and well enough for me to make a remark about it and want to continue contemplating it. It helped me to take a starting point for my Master's project at the beginning of my studies.

As per my interpretation, he implies the living nature on planet Earth and its balanced and harmonized concurrence together with us humans, and our giving up whatever is pleasurable for us but harmful to the Earth. He also hints at the lack of love – people's general lack of love for life and for the Earth, as I understand it. That doesn't mean people are damaging the world on purpose. I take it rather as people are living their lives as they know, doing things out of habit or for traditions that are not serving the world anymore or just by being unconscious. For example, over consuming and consuming in general – by eating high-calorie foods, at the same time while having a sedentary lifestyle. Or by celebrating holidays and making presents on compulsion for receivers who don't even need them.

Thinking further from Brian Eno's thought, can we really say that people do not love the Earth enough? Not enough to give up these quick pleasures that often harm a person's body as much as the production and usage of those "pleasure sources" hurt the Earth's

² Brian Eno, Serpentine Podcast: Back to Earth: Drops Make an Ocean, IV 2020, 15 min 03 sec, Available: <https://open.spotify.com/episode/2WiyTkitUktB48BqStOwu1?si=8add3cdd7e374cad> (accessed 20. I 2023).

body? Like puffing disposable vapes³ as a pastime activity or using Chinese lanterns⁴ for celebration.

Does love really have something to do with climate change?

³ Vapes: 3 types of toxic waste in 1, Undo. End tobacco damage now. 22. III 2022, <https://www.undo.org/environmental-impact/vape-waste-is-toxic-waste> (accessed 06. IV 2023).

⁴ Rethinking The Celebration: The Not-So-Beautiful Aftermath of Sky Lanterns and Balloons, Waste 4 Change. 07. XII 2020, <https://waste4change.com/blog/rethinking-the-celebration-the-not-so-beautiful-aftermath-of-sky-lanterns-and-balloons/> (accessed 06. IV 2023).

On Love and Lack

In his book “The Art of Loving”, Erich Fromm considers the awareness of being separated from each other as people’s biggest hardship in this earthly existence.

*Man is gifted with reason; he is life being aware of itself; he has awareness of himself, of his fellow man, of his past, and of the possibilities of his future. This awareness of himself as a separate entity, the awareness of his own short lifespan, of the fact that without his will he is born and against his will he dies, that he will die before those whom he loves, or they before him, the awareness of his aloneness and separateness, of his helplessness before the forces of nature and of society, all this makes his separate, disunited existence unbearable prison. He would become insane could he not liberate himself from this prison and reach out, unite himself in some form or other with men, with the world outside.*⁵

This in turn, when not found a positive solution, could cause people to fill the lonely moments in life with short-lived pleasures which I was referring to in the previous chapter.

In the book, E. Fromm is tackling the subject of being connected under the umbrella of love as an art that can, and if wanted to be practiced, must be learned. He says that love is just one way to get over separateness.

*... the question of how to overcome separateness, how to achieve union, how to transcend one's own individual life and find at-onement [---] The answer varies. The question can be answered by animal worship, by human sacrifice or military conquest, by indulgence in luxury, by ascetic renunciation, by obsessional work, by artistic creation, by the love of God, and by the love of Man.*⁶

⁵ Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, Harper & Row, Printed in the United States of America, 1956, page 8.

⁶ Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving*... pages 9–10.

As I have taken interest in this topic of love versus the world, I believe that it's something important to think about and although E. Fromm is not a writer from our times, I believe in timeless values and ideas that need to be rediscovered.

In all of this twenty-first-century information overflow, noise, and pollution, there also seems to be a lot of confusion in love relationships, be it platonic, romantic, or parental – what they are, what they should be, and how to get them right. Seems like love is still one of the biggest mysteries – even listening to songs, old or new, a question arises: is there any song that is not about love? And secondly, is there a song that is not about the pain that love causes? Is that the same pain that the general separateness and fear of being alone causes? For some reason, these painful emotions lead people to destructive behavior like it is described in the following song lyrics that recently caught my ear, by Easter.

*...You had told me it's over because you need time to grow
I was dealing with this new information in the old way that you know
Breaking chairs, clearing bars, ruining lives, and wasting chances as I go...⁷*

Might we speculate that the inability to feel connected and to give or receive love can be the root cause of destructive behavior by overusing whatever is pleasurable or fills the blank as a replacement for the connection with other human beings and the world? And that it's done in especially hard ways when the attempts to form connections have failed or when the connections have been lost? I think there is at least some truth in it.

These replacements that are used to fill the so-called blanks are often addictive and destructive in the long run, for a person, and for the planet as well. The list is long. Named a few from today, the most popular ones would probably be alcohol, coffee, sugar, food in general, drugs, porn, overworking, overtraining, and overachieving. By overindulging in these substances, habits, or behaviors, addiction is often formed.

⁷ Easter, Bone Marrow Stem Cell, Single, Written and recorded in Gesundbrunnen, Berlin (Omar, Boss), Released 07. VII 2022, Available: <https://easterjesus.bandcamp.com/track/bone-marrow-stem-cell>

Once, when contemplating addictions myself, I concluded that any kind of them is just a repetitive attempt to fill the void inside of oneself with the wrong means. What seems to be happening is that the void will be filled for a short period of time, but soon will be depleted again – the fix will be temporary as “the thing” used is not “the thing” missing. So, after a while, there will be a need to do it again. This throws a person into a vicious cycle as the moment when the substance has left the body, the void shows that it is still there and often feels even more significant than before. The idea of void can be related to E. Fromm’s theory of separateness, or not being in love with the world enough, as B. Eno put it.

In the process of feeding people’s addictive behavior, if taken by an example of a physical substance, the derivation, and production of necessary compounds often hurt the Earth’s body the same way as its consumption hurts the body of a person addicted to it. To demonstrate what I mean by that, here are two examples of alcohol and drug production and the damage it can do to Earth.

A study on rum production’s distillery wastes found the following:

*Observations at the three distillery sites indicated that the rum effluents as presently discharged are harmful to the marine environment. Certain indigenous organisms were absent or rare in the presence of the discharge. These observations were confirmed by field and laboratory bioassays...*⁸

According to the Vice documentary one kilogram of MDMA produces between 6-10 times that amount of toxic waste.⁹ In the documentary, forest ranger Erik de Jonge is showing a drug waste spot and commenting:

One of Brabant's worst ever drug dumping happened here. It was a huge barrel and 1000 liters of drug waste spilled into the soil. In a large area, the soil was dug up, the trees died

⁸ Douglas M. Costle, Caribbean Rum Study, Effects of Distillery Wastes on the Marine Environment, U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, 26. IV 1979, <https://nepis.epa.gov/Exe/ZyPURL.cgi?Dockey=P100U83P.TXT> (accessed 14. II 2023).

⁹ MDMA Is Killing Trees + 4 Other Ways We’re Trashing the Planet - VICE Video, 16. XII 2019, https://video.vice.com/en_uk/video/vice-extinction-update/5d791b56be4077032927c2b1 (accessed 22.03.2023).

*and were removed. You can still see it. These trees have absorbed drug waste and the leaves curl up and they'll die in the summer.*¹⁰

In the same way, as these leftovers from the production of various substances harm the planet, the products made for people harm them as well, if used excessively. And all this excessiveness, according to E. Fromm, is rooted in not feeling connected:

*... the human race in its infancy still feels one with nature. The soil, the animals, the plants are still man's world. He identifies himself with animals, and this is expressed by the wearing of animal masks, and by the worshiping of a totem animal or animal gods. But the more the human race emerges from these primary bonds, the more it separates itself from the natural world, the more intense becomes the need to find new ways of escaping separateness.*¹¹

Further on he discusses different ways how people through time have tried to bridge this gap of separateness.

*One way of achieving this aim lies in all kinds of orgiastic states. These may have the form of an auto-induced trance, sometimes with the help of drugs. [---] In a transitory state of exaltation, the world outside disappears, and with it the feeling of separateness from it.*¹²

When writing about societies where these kinds of rituals are not practiced any longer, he explains what people are going through instead.

*Alcoholism and drug addiction are the forms which the individual chooses in a non-orgiastic culture. In contrast to those participating in the socially patterned solution, such individuals suffer from guilt feelings and remorse. While they try to escape from separateness by taking refuge in alcohol or drugs, they feel all the more separate after the orgiastic experience is over, and thus are driven to take recourse to it with increasing frequency and intensity.*¹³

¹⁰ MDMA Is Killing Trees + 4 Other Ways..., 4 min 26 sec.

¹¹ Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving*... page 10–11.

¹² Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving*... page 11.

¹³ Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving*... page 12.

When I used the figure of having an unfillable void inside, then E. Fromm puts it as escaping from separateness. Seems like at its core both ideas mean the same thing and lead me to the following questions:

- How to get over the separateness more effectively, healthily and feel connected to the world even without having other people around or without using destructive coping mechanisms?
- Is it even possible?
- What is the proof that we really are connected – with each other as people, with the rest of nature, and why not with all of the universe, beyond our human understanding?

For these questions, I aim to find answers or at least speculations in the following paragraph.

On Consciousness and Interconnectedness

“What leads you to develop a conscience about something? Well, love for it...”¹⁴

In his quote, B. Eno uses the word “conscience”. It is similar to the words “conscious” and “consciousness”. What I found is that etymologically speaking these words have the same roots.

Conscious derives from con or cum, meaning "with" or "together," and scire, "to know," or "to see." It has the same derivation as conscience. Thus the root meaning of both consciousness and conscience is "knowing with" or "seeing with" an "other." In contrast, the word science, which also derives from scire, means simple knowing, i.e., knowing without "withness." So etymology indicates that the phenomena of consciousness and conscience are somehow related and that the experience of consciousness is made up of two factors – "knowing" and "withness." In other words, consciousness is the experience of knowing together with an other, that is, in a setting of twoness.¹⁵

Thereof,

- if love is the premise for developing conscience about something as B. Eno said,
- if conscience has its root meaning in "knowing with" or "seeing with" an "other", as C. G. Jung found,
- if knowing and seeing with another excludes separateness,
- then in order to feel love for the world, we need to notice the interconnectedness of it all, consciously.

Emanuele Coccia puts the thought of interconnectedness into the following words.

¹⁴ Brian Eno, Serpentine Podcast... 15 min 03 sec.

¹⁵ The Creation of Consciousness: Jung's Myth for Modern Man, page 36. in Judith Harris, Jung and Yoga – The Psyche-Body Connection, Inner City Books, Thistle Printing Limited, 2001, page 14.

*To identify nature and cosmos means first of all to make nature not a separate principle, but that which expresses itself in everything that is. Conversely, the world is neither the logical combination of all its objects nor a metaphysical totality of beings, but the physical force that traverses all that comes to be and that transforms itself. There is no separation between material and immaterial, or between history and physics. At a more microscopic level, nature is what allows the world to be; on the other hand, everything that ties a given thing to the world is part of nature.*¹⁶

Throughout his whole book “The Life of Plants”, E. Coccia compares and unifies philosophy with atmosphere¹⁷, contemplator with the subject contemplated¹⁸, intellect with matter¹⁹, and so on. He is using the word “immersion” which in summary gets it all together under one term.

*Immersion, as we have seen, is first of all an action of mutual compenetration between subject and environment, body and space, life and medium. It is impossible to distinguish them physically and spatially.*²⁰

Could it be enough that an idea, or a way of thinking like this, would help people to feel more connected with the world? Something so abstract, invisible, and at the same time so real. For me, it feels like E. Coccia does help to recognize and re-awaken a deeper knowledge that we all carry in ourselves, but has so far been dormant and forgotten. In a world dominated by linearity, categories, frames, and boxes it’s often difficult to find relatedness, fluidity, and creative gray areas that would offer us a bridge to walk on, a shoulder to cry on, or a shadow to rest in.

C. G. Jung is writing about connections between the invisible psyche and the material body in his own terms.

¹⁶ Emanuele Coccia, *The Life of Plants - A Metaphysics of Mixture* [2017], Polity Press, LSC Communications, 2019, page 17.

¹⁷ Emanuele Coccia, *The Life of Plants*... page 120.

¹⁸ Emanuele Coccia, *The Life of Plants*... page 107.

¹⁹ Emanuele Coccia, *The Life of Plants*... page 107.

²⁰ Emanuele Coccia, *The Life of Plants*... page 37.

*In 1946, Jung wrote a landmark paper that forms the bridge to his late works entitled "On The Nature Of The Psyche," in which he says that most probably psyche and body are two different aspects of one and the same thing. Jung knew that they were essentially connected through reciprocal action...*²¹

This is an excerpt from the book named "Jung and Yoga, The Psyche-Body Connection", where the author Judith Harris brings together Jungian analysis and yoga practices. She focuses on the understanding of Jung's ideas through working with the body, and on the other hand, offers a new psychological perspective to the practitioners of bodywork.²² That book was a good find for me as it brought together my own various interests – the human psyche, the human body, and spirituality.

J. Harris is a yoga instructor, who has studied Jungian analysis and due to her own experiences with trauma and physical pain, she developed a form of therapy not only for herself but also for her clients. In the book, she describes the connections between the psyche, the human body, and the Earth.

*Prima materia is the earth and earth is the basic substance of the human body. This tells us that the prima materia is, among other things, the human body. Humankind is ashes and to ashes shall we return, as we read in Genesis.*²³

Besides, she describes the therapy sessions that she has put through with her clients who have had physical ailments that J. Harris treated through exploring the patient's psyche, dreams, and memories, meaning that the book doesn't only stay on the theoretical level. The body-psyche connections are explained theoretically and then demonstrated through descriptions of these sessions. As I believe in the effectiveness and validity of emotional and psychological reasons being the root cause of physical ailments, I deeply appreciated finding this book in the context of my Master's project and also for my own personal healing.

²¹ The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche, CW 8, pars 343ff. in Judith Harris, Jung and Yoga... page 19.

²² Judith Harris, Jung and Yoga – The Psyche-Body Connection, Inner City Books, Thistle Printing Limited, 2001, back cover.

²³ Aurora Consurgens, p. 343. in Jung and Yoga – The Psyche-Body Connection, Inner City Books, Thistle Printing Limited, 2001, page 17.

*It is here in the subtle body that the psyche and the body have a mutual influence. The body will exhibit symptoms until the psyche becomes strong enough to contain and carry the conflict.*²⁴

Having battled lower back pain that went to extremes on the scale of pain, I inevitably researched all the possible reasons behind it. And to be honest, the more I read about it, the more puzzling and mysterious it became. There is an enormous list of reasons that can cause it and it is one of the most widespread illnesses in the world. It's stated that up to 23% of the world's adults suffer from chronic low back pain.²⁵ I guess, if it would be a well-understood medical problem, it wouldn't exist in that kind of enormous range.

*In fact, when an illness manifests itself in the body it is easier to deal with, though the symptoms can be torturous. When the illness is in the psyche, however, it is invisible and harder to treat.*²⁶

While I did my back pain studies, I stumbled upon info on how the given condition has been associated with depression through many researches. Back pain and depression are known to be comorbid conditions, meaning they frequently occur together.²⁷ Putting together the info from medical research, my own experiences and the theory of how the psyche influences our bodies, I couldn't deny that perhaps my problem had come about due to my unharmonized and invisible side of my human self.

Believing that the cause of this very real and torturing pain that I could physically and so tangibly feel in my muscles, hips and even spreading into my legs, is having its roots somewhere else than in my flesh-and-bone body, took some time for me to fully accept. Was it really easier for my body to experience the pain and was it just its way of helping my psyche that was too weak to deal with it, as J. Harris put it? As I left the doctor's

²⁴ Judith Harris, Jung and Yoga – The Psyche-Body Connection, Inner City Books, Thistle Printing Limited, 2001, page 21.

²⁵ Vincent E. Casiano et al., Back Pain, 20. II 2023, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK538173> (accessed 12. IV 2023).

²⁶ Judith Harris, Jung and Yoga – The Psyche-Body Connection, Inner City Books, Thistle Printing Limited, 2001, page 25.

²⁷ Haiou Yang et al., Bidirectional Comorbid Associations between Back Pain and Major Depression in US Adults, 27. II 2023, <https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/20/5/4217> (accessed 12. IV 2023).

office many times, as seemingly a healthy person with just some muscle tension, I started taking the psyche theory seriously.

If it would be possible for people to become more aware of the hidden strings that attach each of us to everybody else and every particle of the Earth, there might be less of a need to bridge the separateness with unnecessary production, consumption, and achievements that will not do the job sustainably either for people or the planet.

To illustrate how I understand the term interconnectedness in the context of my artistic practice and thinking in general, I drew the following scheme (ill. 1).

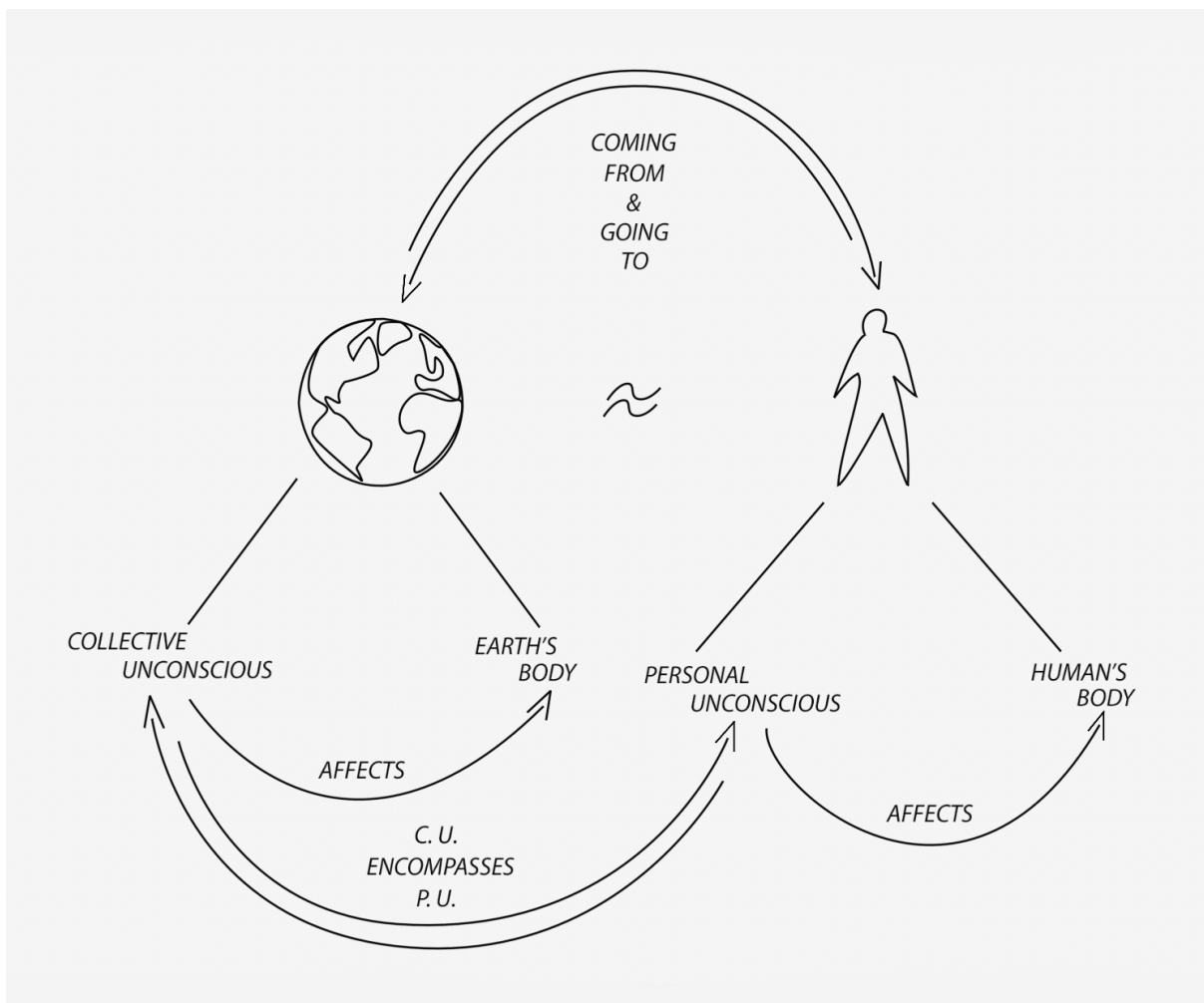


Illustration 1.

The scheme is influenced by C. G. Jung's theory of the psyche. It shows how I consider people and the rest of the world to be connected through consciousness, matter, and

how they influence each other. There is the Earth and a figure of a person. The wavy lines are used to show the approximate equality or a strong connection between the two.

A human being's physique has developed over time from bacteria into a complex living organism²⁸ that can move freely on the planet with no roots stopping it, only the gravitation is keeping us close to the ground. Maybe that's why we tend to forget that initially, our bodies do originate from the Earth, chemically and biologically.²⁹ How exactly that happened, is a question, and there are still various theories. Regardless, one thing is for sure – the constitution of the human body by its chemical components is not alien to the crust and atmosphere of the Earth.³⁰

There is a connection between our bodies and the Earth from the start and when we are finally done with this earthly existence, we descend and our bodies become one with the Earth again.

Where C. G. Jung's theory comes into play, is the aspect of consciousness, which is still a great mystery for people nowadays. Here is an extract from an article about consciousness in scientific terms:

For much of the 20th century, there was a great taboo against querying the mysterious inner world of consciousness – it was not taken to be a fitting topic for “serious science”. Things have changed a lot, and there is now broad agreement that the problem of consciousness is a serious scientific issue. But many consciousness researchers underestimate the depth of the challenge, believing that we just need to continue

²⁸ Maria Gloria Dominguez-Bello, Filipa Godoy-Vitorino, Rob Knight, Martin J Blaser, Role of the microbiome in human development, National Center for Biotechnology Information, 2019.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6580755/> (accessed 06. IV 2023).

²⁹ Charles Q. Choi, Scott Dutfield, 7 theories on the origin of life, 14. II 2022,
<https://www.livescience.com/13363-7-theories-origin-life.html> (accessed 07. IV 2023).

³⁰ The Elements of Life Mapped Across the Milky Way by SDSS/APOGEE, 5. I 2017,
<https://www.sdss.org/press-releases/the-elements-of-life-mapped-across-the-milky-way-by-sdssapogee/#:~:text=sdss.org,-,Images,%2C%20oxygen%2C%20sulphur%20and%20phosphorus.> (accessed 12. IV 2023).

*examining the physical structures of the brain to work out how they produce consciousness.*³¹

For me, it sometimes feels funny or unnecessary how people often want to explain and understand things with and through the material world. No mysteries allowed. And if they are, they are often lowered down into terms like “just philosophizing”, “magical thinking” or “some esotericism”. In a way, I understand that kind of behavior. It seems to be just human – wanting to understand things for the sake of development. And looking for proof in theories just makes them more reliable. Still, I think that a little bit of trust in the unknown mysteries would leave a positive space for different ideas and options to come about at the right time. Or not at all, and that would be just fine too.

Going back to my scheme, what does the collective unconscious and personal unconscious denote? To explain where the terms come from, let’s take a look at the following scheme of C. G. Jung’s ideas. Please note that this is a visual version out of many that can be found over the Internet. While reading the book “Jung’s Map of the Soul”, written by Murray Stein, I even started making my own scheme, to better understand visually where everything is placed. So, the variety of schemes, all coming from the same theory, but different authors, is understandable. I have chosen the following as it matched best with my own version and understanding of the theory (ill. 2).³²

³¹ Philip Goff, Science as we know it can’t explain consciousness – but a revolution is coming, 01. XI 2019, <https://theconversation.com/science-as-we-know-it-cant-explain-consciousness-but-a-revolution-is-coming-126143> (accessed 07. IV 2023).

³² Centre of Applied Jungian Studies, Map of Jungian Psyche, <https://appliedjung.com/the-objective-psyche/map-of-jungian-psyche/> (accessed 07. IV 2023).

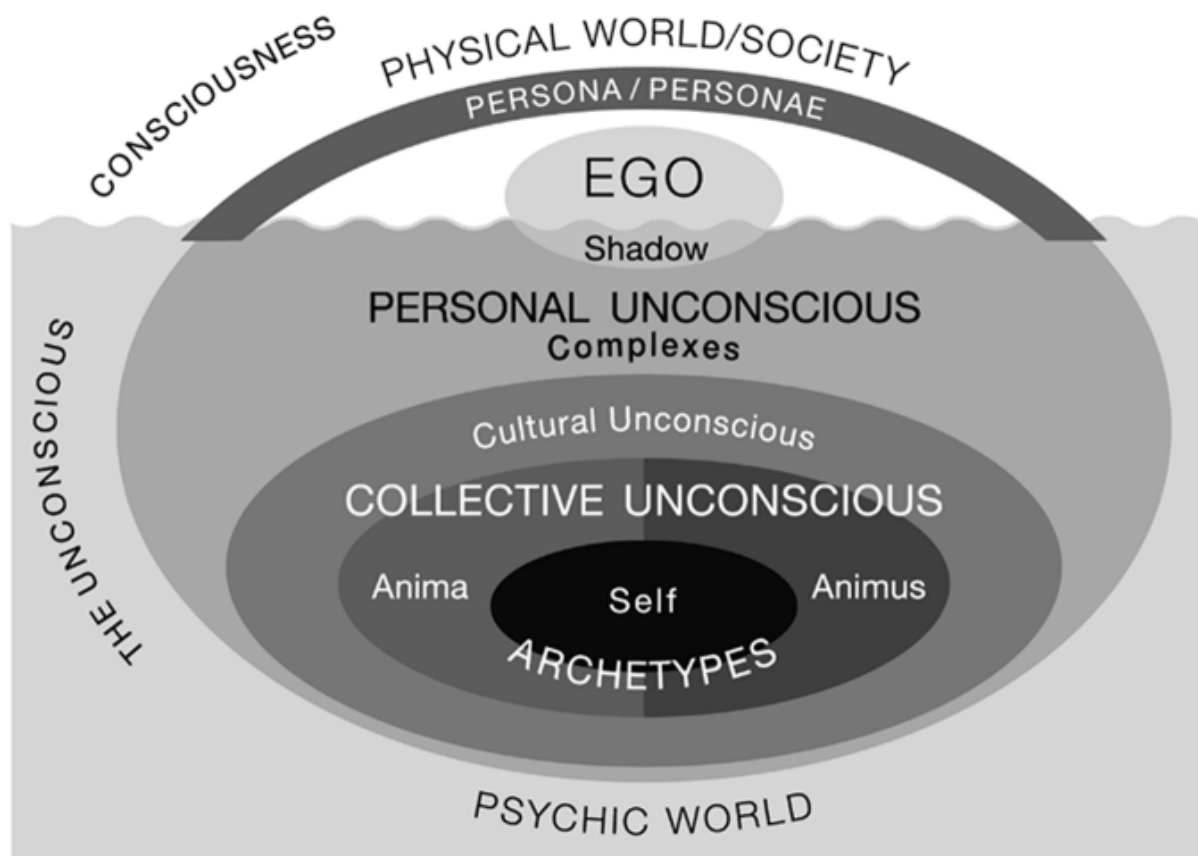


Illustration 2.

It was an early observation of Jung's—later developed into theoretical propositions—that the psyche consists of many parts and centers of consciousness. In this inner universe, there is not simply one planet, but an entire solar system and more. One can speak of people as having a personality, but in fact this is made up of a cluster of subpersonalities.³³

The comparison of the psyche with the solar system feels on point. The sun has its influence on the planets and just the same planets affect each other. For example, the climate on Earth has been affected not only by the Sun but also by Jupiter and Saturn³⁴, even though they seemingly exist separately. The same logic goes for the human psyche. Different layers, parts, or areas – none of them stay untouched by another and neither do the material bodies as stated earlier on page 18.

³³ Murray Stein, *Jung's Map of the Soul: An Introduction*, Open Court, Chicago and La Salle, 1998, paragraph 5.

³⁴ Michael Monet, *How Does the Solar System Affect the Earth?*, 25 IV 2017, <https://sciencing.com/solar-system-affect-earth-10027301.html> (accessed 07 IV 2023).

The Shadow Archetype

The Shadow is a subpersonality also called an archetype. It complements its opposite, Persona, and is named after the Roman term for an actor's mask. Persona is the face we wear to meet the social world around us.³⁵ The Shadow is located in the unconscious, but it is not equal to it.

I don't exactly remember when I became interested in people's behavior exactly, but I believe it was from quite an early age. I noticed how people act contrastingly with different individuals and circumstances, when using alcohol, dealing with problems, or when having fun. In a way, it seemed natural, but on some level, I couldn't understand the very big contradictions I saw. As if people sometimes became someone else. Of course, I noticed the same about myself too, just a little bit later, when bigger self-awareness was gained through getting older. I guess these questions I got about people, accompanying me from my early life, got me hooked on C. G. Jung's ideas later. He seemed to have answers to my questions – Persona makes a person act like one, and the Shadow like another.

Rather than referring to the shadow as a thing, however, it is better to think of psychological traits or qualities that are “in the shadow” (i.e., hidden, behind one's back, in the dark) or “shadowy.” Whatever parts of the personality that would ordinarily belong to the ego if they were integrated, but have been suppressed because of cognitive or emotional dissonance, fall into the shadow. [---] Generally, the shadow has an immoral or at least a disreputable quality, containing features of a person's nature that are contrary to the customs and moral conventions of society.³⁶

In my own words, the Shadow can be imagined as a place, where people set aside everything negative and unpleasant that they do not want to or know how to deal with. It's like a dark space under the bed where it's good to push away all kinds of stuff that otherwise would hurt the eye or disturb the everyday life experience. By C. G. Jung's

³⁵ Murray Stein, Jung's Map of the Soul... paragraph 5.

³⁶ Murray Stein, Jung's Map of the Soul... paragraph 5.

theory, everyone has a Shadow, it's impossible not to have it. The scheme (ill. 2) shows the so-called architecture of every person's psyche. The Shadow often consists of similar attributes like repressed emotions, thoughts, and memories.

*Jung tells us that instincts and archetypes together form the collective unconscious, meaning that both are universal and regularly occurring phenomena which have essentially nothing to do with individuality.*³⁷

It is difficult to track down literal sentences written by any of the authors I have researched, that would exactly confirm what I have in mind. Shortly said, my idea is that if all the personal parts of the psyche are connected to the collective (un)conscious, then the misharmonized parts must and will inevitably affect the overall consciousness of humanity and thus can not stay as anyone's private problem, at least not for forever. Here, I attempt to reflect on why the personal Shadow needs to be taken into account, so that its contents do not leak out to the rest of the world, joining forces with other Shadows and causing trouble and tragedy to both people and Earth.

*The collective unconscious contains the whole spiritual heritage of mankind's evolution, born anew in the brain structure of every individual.*³⁸

If there is a spiritual and universal heritage that each of us carry within us from our birth, and if that is evolutionary, then it must be ever evolving, giving us the possibility to expand as a species that ultimately could live without repressing everything that is not likeable on the first glance.

There is a special term coined by C. G. Jung – Individuation, meaning the opposite of keeping the Shadow aspects repressed. It is noticing, admitting, and accepting one's own denied attributes – not to become perfect, but to become familiar with them.³⁹ By doing that one can become closer to being whole rather than unstable and variably taken over by the different parts of one's psyche. Individuation can be defined as the

³⁷ Judith Harris, Jung and Yoga – The Psyche-Body Connection, Inner City Books, Thistle Printing Limited, 2001, page 21.

³⁸ Daryl Sharp, Jung Lexicon: A Primer of Terms & Concepts, 1991, <https://www.psychceu.com/jung/sharplexicon.html> (accessed 9. IV 2023).

³⁹ Daryl Sharp, Jung Lexicon... (accessed 9. IV 2023).

achievement of self-actualization through a process of integrating the conscious and the unconscious.⁴⁰ Not to mix C. G. Jung's Individuation with the word "individual", meaning "a person as standing alone"⁴¹, it's important to bring out that Jung's term doesn't lead us to separation, but rather to interdependence:

*"Individuation does not shut one out from the world, but gathers the world to itself."*⁴²

In colloquial language, Individuation is also known as Shadow Work⁴³. The word "Shadow" is coming from Shadow Archetype and "Work" from "working with the unconscious"⁴⁴. As it is not an official term and mostly is used in written pieces of blogs and spoken language, I didn't find a specific explanation for where it's exactly coming from. Although "working with the shadow" is where I think it's coming from. As the process itself is not some easy and fun leisure activity nor is it happening on its own, it can understandably be called "work". Etymologically the word "work" has a wide range of meanings behind it, for example:

- *physical labor, toil; skilled trade, craft, or occupation; opportunity of expending labor in some useful or remunerative way*
- *Transitive sense "manipulate (physical substances) into a desired state or form" "have the expected or desired effect"*⁴⁵

Although the Shadow Work is not physical or monetarily paid, it does presume effort and if successful, is rewarding in other ways. It is work as an alchemical process and alchemy is notably a symbol of C. G. Jung's Individuation process.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ Journal Psyche: Jung and his Individuation Process, <https://journalpsyche.org/jung-and-his-individuation-process> (accessed 12. IV 2023).

⁴¹ Online Etymology Dictionary, https://www.etymonline.com/word/individual#etymonline_v_41887 (accessed 12. IV 2023).

⁴² Daryl Sharp, Jung Lexicon... (accessed 13. IV 2023).

⁴³ Jagjot Singh, Carl Jung's Shadow Work (Integrate With Your Dark Side), <https://jagjotsingh.com/shadow-work> (accessed 13. IV 2023).

⁴⁴ Maggie Wooll, The benefits of shadow work and how to use it in your journey, 13. VI 2022, <https://www.betterup.com/blog/shadow-work> (accessed 13. IV 2023).

⁴⁵ Online Etymology Dictionary, <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=work> (accessed 12. IV 2023).

⁴⁶ Jung and Alchemy, Quotes from Memories, Dreams, Reflections, Vintage Books, New York, 1989, <https://www.carl-jung.net/alchemy.html> (accessed 13. IV 2023).

The perks of getting to know one's shadow side is not just about acceptance or making the world a better place, although that would already be a good enough reason to do it. Doing Shadow Work is said to result in enhanced energy and greater creativity to only list a few.⁴⁷ One reason for getting more energy is that without an integrated shadow, a person unconsciously uses lots of energy to repress and keep away the unwanted from their daily lives.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Scott Jeffrey, A Definitive Guide to Jungian Shadow Work: How to Get to Know and Integrate Your Dark Side, https://scottjeffrey.com/shadow-work/#3_Enhanced_Energy_and_Physical_Health (accessed 13. IV 2023).

⁴⁸ Scott Jeffrey, A Definitive Guide... (accessed 13. IV 2023).

About Lilith

In the artistic part of my Master's project, I have given forms and visuals to the previously discussed concept of Individuation or Shadow Work in the context of the mental and physical struggles of humans in relation to the Earth. I have named the project "Lilith" after the myth of Lilith which I will shortly introduce to you before continuing with the description of my project.

After hearing such a mythological character like Lilith existed, I got interested and wanted to know more. I read about the myth from different sources and found the story varied often. What got me intrigued was the part that she was Adam's first wife, who was sent away from paradise to the underworld: "*Lilith, the feminine opposite of masculine order, is banished from fertile territory and exiled to barren wasteland.*"⁴⁹ Underworld, barren wasteland, kingdom of demons⁵⁰ or just hell⁵¹ – all of these words are used to describe the place where Lilith went.

By the time I got familiarized with the story, I had already learned about C. G. Jung's Shadow Archetype concept. The word "shadow" fits just as well with the aforementioned listing of Lilith's new home. Plus, having been often working with plants, which in most cases start their earthly growing journey in the darkness, from the underground, I naturally found a relatability between all of these concepts. There truly is another world in the undergrounds, in the shadows, may it be taken literally or not.

Although at first I came to the analogy of Lilith and the Shadow Archetype myself, I later learned that Lilith is really meant to symbolize the so-called darker side:

⁴⁹ Janet Howe Gaines, Lilith. Seductress, heroine or murderer?, 04. II 2023, <https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/people-cultures-in-the-bible/people-in-the-bible/lilith> (accessed 13. IV 2023).

⁵⁰ Rev. Maggy Whitehouse, Lessons From Lilith, <https://www.unity.org/article/lessons-lilith> (accessed 13. IV 2023).

⁵¹ Enlightenment Through Hellfire, 25. IV 2023, <https://scarletarosa.tumblr.com/post/616341109222866944/lilith-demonic-goddess-of-transformation-dark> (accessed 13. IV 2023).

*The shadow personality is hidden away from sight and comes out only on special occasions. The world is more or less unaware of this person. [---] Shadow and persona are like two brothers (for a man) or sisters (for a woman); one is out in public, and the other is hidden away and reclusive. They are a study in contrasts. If one is blond, the other is dark; if one is rational, the other is emotional. Narcissus and Goldmund, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Cain and Abel, Eve and Lilith, Aphrodite and Hera—these figures are such pairs.*⁵²

In my project, I do not exactly present the underworld – rather like the power of life or energy that it takes to come out of it. The process and the result of becoming from a seed to a fragile state of being into the promising sunlight, still carrying the mothering embrace of the darkness, of the soil, of the unconscious that has been made conscious. It's a transformation from darkness to light. And that darkness cannot be skipped. It's a passing of seasons and a chance to embrace them all. Can't have one without the other. J. Harris describes the meaning of tree symbology which is analogical to what I mean:

*The tree is the quinta essentia of the union of opposites, of the upper and lower realms, of spirit and matter. The tree embodies the opposites of heaven and earth. Trees receive their nourishment from both above and below, from sunlight and from the water in the earth.*⁵³

As part of my artistic process, I have used pictures and made shapes of various plant buds as these are usually the first notable parts of plants that come out of the soil after germination. Whether it's a bud of a leaf or a flower appearing on a tree after a dark winter, it usually looks like it's compressed or tightly packed together, making it seem tough and full of vitality and at the same time vulnerable and soft.

On the white bud-like shapes made of recycled textiles, there are projections of collages depicting compressed human figures together and partly blending in with different kinds of buds (ill. 3). Using recycled textiles came as a logical solution in the world that is overproducing garments. For them to be white it is necessary to be used as screens for the visual projections, which are giving the fabric some colour and make the atmosphere.

⁵² Murray Stein, *Jung's Map of the Soul...* paragraph 5.

⁵³ Judith Harris, *Jung and Yoga – The Psyche-Body Connection*, Inner City Books, Thistle Printing Limited, 2001, page 126.

The compressed state of the human body is representing both the prenatal state and also the sufferer's pose which is often taken by a person who is either in mental or physical pain. It seems to be something instinctual and the overlapping of the pose of a fetus and a sufferer intrigued me.



Illustration 3.

While being in our mother's womb we are very, and quite literally, connected with the primal particles of our future and past physical being, the term that I referred to as *prima materia*, the basis of all life in paragraph 4.⁵⁴ The word *materia*, or matter in English, has an etymological connection with the word mother.⁵⁵

"Mother" is an archetype and refers to the place of origin, to nature, to that which passively creates, hence to substance and matter, to materiality, the womb, the vegetative functions. It also means the unconscious, our natural and instinctive life, the psychological

⁵⁴ Judith Harris, *Jung and Yoga – The Psyche-Body Connection*, Inner City Books, Thistle Printing Limited, 2001, page 13.

⁵⁵ Etymologeek, <https://etymologeek.com/lat/materia>, (accessed 13. IV 2023).

*realm, the body in which we dwell or are contained; for the "mother" is also the matrix, the hollow form, the vessel that carries and nourishes, and it thus stands psychologically for the foundation of consciousness.*⁵⁶

In the womb, we are probably most connected with materiality than we can ever be during our human lifespan. We live it, we breathe it, we count on it, and we are it, dependent of our mother's body. We don't have conscious memories of this period – does it mean that our psyche and body are operating more as a whole? I guess, that is the kind of question we might not get a full scientific answer or proof to, and I think we don't even need to.

If the human body is linked to the earth so strongly, then maybe that's why it is most comforting to go back into fetus pose when we "hit the rock bottom"⁵⁷, and get closer to the earth by either lying down on the bed, on the floor, on the grass, and even facing down rather than up. Not having our carnal mother to hold us when we are grown-ups, we do always have our primordial mother, also known as the goddess of the earth, Gaia,⁵⁸ there who catches us. We really have nowhere to fall, she is always there underneath us.

⁵⁶ The Practical Use of Dream-Analysis, the Practice of Psychotherapy, CV 16, par. 344 in Judith Harris, Jung and Yoga – The Psyche-Body Connection, Inner City Books, Thistle Printing Limited, 2001, page 21.

⁵⁷ the most unhappy that someone has ever been in their life, Cambridge Dictionary, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/rock-bottom> (accessed 13. IV 2023).

⁵⁸ Theoi Greek Mythology: Gaea Summary, <https://www.theoi.com/Protogenos/Gaia.html> (accessed 13. IV 2023).

Conclusion

Putting together this material has been an eye-opening experience by letting me understand better the potential and versatility of the areas and different fields which could be connected to this theme and researched more deeply. Having a very easily distracted mind I have had to force myself a little, to stay in my lane and not to get carried away with each wave of an idea or sub-branch that triggers my interest.

Checking back on my initial Master's thesis plan I made in the beginning of my MA studies, I'm happy to see that I have remained interested in the topic over the years and filled at least half of the plan. The first wording of the title was planned to be "Of Plants, Consciousness, Everyday Life and Their Less Common Connections with the Earth". What I planned, but didn't fill in the main body of the text was to include examples of artists who also work on the subject of Earth and climate in a similar manner as me, or whose practice I relate to for some other part. To bring out some of them who I have had in mind and who I've felt a bond with are Ana Mendieta, Pippilotti Rist, Laure Prouvost, Genevieve Belleveau, Melanie Bonajo.

What are the commonalities and characteristics of their practice, that I find compelling? To get the idea across in short, these are the main keywords that pop out for me when observing or reading about their work: spirituality, alternative belief systems, rituality, earth-body art, somaticism, healing, sensory spaces. These words represent the best what could be used to describe my own work as well.

Wanting this piece of writing to be a beginning rather than a finished and closed off work, I would like to leave it here, unfinished, as a plant bud, full of potential and information yet to be realized and explored.

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*Documentation of the artistic project to be added.

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