

ACADEMY OF PERFORMING ARTS IN PRAGUE

FILM AND TV SCHOOL

BACHELOR'S THESIS

Prague, 2021

Nikolaj Jessen

ACADEMY OF PERFORMING ARTS IN PRAGUE

FILM AND TV SCHOOL

Photography

BACHELOR'S THESIS

Cities of Individuals

Nikolaj Jessen

Thesis advisor: Tereza Stejskalová

Examiner:

Date of thesis defense:

Academic title granted: BcA

Prague, 2021

AKADEMIE MÚZICKÝCH UMĚNÍ V PRAZE

FILMOVÁ A TELEVIZNÍ FAKULTA

Fotografie

BAKALÁŘSKÁ

Mestá Jednotlivců

Nikolaj Jessen

Vedoucí práce: Tereza Stejskalová

Oponent práce:

Datum obhajoby:

Přidělovaný akademický titul: BcA

Praha, 2021

D e c l a r a t i o n

I declare that I have prepared my Bachelor's Thesis independently on the following topic:

Ecology

under the expert guidance of my thesis advisor and with the use of the cited literature and sources.

Prague, date: Signature

Warning

The use and public application of the findings of this thesis or any other treatment thereof are permissible only on the basis of a licensing contract, i.e. the consent of the author and of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague.

Abstract

While humans keep being reluctant to give up their consumption patterns, human's refusal to learn and to consider other alternatives to perceive our planet is the most extreme violence against nature. A revolutionary new phase on our planet has begun, the Capitalocene. It has been unleashed by corporations and they carry out their actions motivated by solely economic reasons. The moral code of human beings has become obsolete, and we need some radical thinking to turn the world upside down. To rethink our relations among non-human elements and the metaphors we use to describe them, can shift how we value our surroundings and thus change how we aim to protect our natural environment.

This text will challenge how modern-western societies conceive of the material world, and this proposition will be based on the commonality between humans and non-humans. The purpose of this research is to rethink and to understand life more broadly and understand that there are other patterns to follow instead of the Keep-Moving-Forward-Movement as an individual.

In my thesis, I focus on how we as individuals can change our behavior into becoming collaborators. Non-human elements have the power to teach us this, because of their evolution. They have a long history, they are far better capable of adapting and benefitting from the ecosystems that we drastically are trying to eradicate. I will therefore search for alternative ways to relate to the non-human world. What has been the problem so far, is that we have not archived a way for humans to represent an altruistic way to behave in nature and pioneer such an alternative way towards all species and our common future.

Abstraktní

Zatímco se lidé stále zdráhají vzdát se své spotřeby, odmítnutí člověka učit se a zvažovat jiné alternativní vnímání naší planety je nejextrémnějším násilím proti přírodě. Začala nová revoluční fáze na naší planetě, Capitalocene. Bylo to rozpoutáno korporacemi, které provádějí své akce motivované pouze ekonomickými důvody. Morální kodex lidských bytostí zastaral a pro převrácení světa vzhůru nohama potřebujeme radikální myšlení. Přehodnotit naše vztahy mezi nelidskými prvky a metaforami, které používáme k jejich popisu, můžeme změnit to, jak si vážíme svého okolí, a tím změnit způsob, jakým se snažíme chránit naše přírodní prostředí.

Tento text zpochybňuje, jak si moderní západní společnosti představují hmotný svět, a tento návrh bude založen na dohodě mezi lidmi a ne-lidmi. Účelem tohoto výzkumu je přehodnotit a pochopit život v širším smyslu a pochopit, že je třeba dodržovat další vzor místo hnutí Keep-Moving-Forward-Movement jako jednotlivce.

Ve své diplomové práci se zaměřuji na to, jak my jako jednotlivci můžeme změnit své chování ve spolupráci. Ne-lidské prvky mají moc nás to naučit, a to díky jejich vývoji. Mají dlouhou historii, jsou mnohem lépe schopni přizpůsobit se a těžit z ekosystémů, který se drasticky snažíme vymýtit. Budu proto hledat alternativní způsoby, jak se přiblížit k nelidskému světu. Doposud byl problém v tom, že jsme nearchivovali způsob, jak by lidé mohli představovat altruistický způsob chování v přírodě a propagovat takovou alternativní cestu ke všem druhům a naší společné budoucnosti

Contents

ABSTRACT	
INTRODUCTION	1
WHAT COMES AFTER THE CAPITALOCENE?	4
DIAGNOSIS OF THE CONTEMPORARY INDIVIDUAL	9
TOWARDS THE TERRESTRIAL	22
CONCLUSION	30
BIBLIOGRAPHY	31

Introduction

We are witnessing a melt-down of the planet, all the way from the Tundra of Siberia¹ to the arctic poles, blaming ourselves, driving each other mad morally, we teach each other, what is the right thing to eat, wear and how to travel.

Our individual needs have never been bigger, the feeling of keeping up with The Joneses² has reached completely new levels and every year it seems like the records are getting beaten.

To change human patterns would require a massive cultural overhaul, but does it matter if we flip the coin for every single human being? A decline in human needs might not be possible, but it seems like this is the only way to change the current flux of capitalism.

Humans have learned a lot, with new eco trends and fashions growing up from the mist of awareness, yet again, is that what we need? There is a need for radical changes in human awareness and how we perceive our surroundings. We ignore the fact that the earth is getting warmer, and we are solely thinking about ourselves and our egocentric behavior.

Something important to remind ourselves is that at the end of the day, the chaos that is created by corporations, what Vandana Shiva calls “the corporate control of life³”, we are all taking part in it. Moral codes⁴ towards the relation between humans and non-human that are supposed to guide us into a somewhat yet undefined new area of society seem to be neglected on the agenda of big corporations. Without any moral achievements, they proceed at a very progressive speed, extracting everything from Mother Earth, without any concern for the future of all living beings, humans or non-humans.

At the end of the day, corporations are exploiting our selfish needs to preserve our radical individualism, all while we are getting more and more separated into greater diversity. We can only hope that at the end of the tunnel can find solutions that will connect us all into a stronger unity and overcome the magic spell capitalism has put us under.

¹ Bridle, James. *New Dark Age, Technology and the End of the Future*: London; Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2018.

² Buying a new car, new cell phone, upgrading household and entertainment objects. Usually influenced by neighbors but everyone is affected by the commercial businesses.

³ Shiva, Vandana, *The Corporate Control of Life*, dOCUMENTA (13): 100 Notes-100 Thoughts, no. 12 (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2011).

⁴ N. I. Boldyrev, *The Moral Code of the Builder of Communism — the Basis for the Moral Upbringing of the Rising Generation*, *Soviet Education*, 2014 5:3, 42-49,

Through human activity we have become a part of a new ecological epoch: Anthropocene has been declared, reflecting the scientific fact that Anthropogenic change is now shaping planetary systems. While global warming has motivated us to write global history through initiatives such as IHOPE⁵, it becomes important to take the term Anthropocene into consideration. Allegedly the term has gained a lot of attention, since one of many now dedicated to explaining, the concept was introduced by atmospheric chemist Paul Crutzen and biologist Eugene Stoermer in 2000 to designate the era.⁶

But in the heart of Anthropocene lies the Anthropos: the human. It is argued, and I quote: *People have officially and geologically changed the course of nature at a global scale.*⁷ But who and what is this Anthropos? Should the term not be reevaluated? A lot of literature is referring to the term Anthropocene as a well-known phenomenon of capital, corporations, extractions, and extinction. All these phenomena are caused by humans but then again “Anthropos” concerns all humans and in that case- regarding the effect of the mentioned phenomena- it is time to become more accurate and precise and adopt the term “Capitalocene”. This term has been taken up by Jason Moore, Donna Haraway, and others in recent years. The term refers to the central drivers of the geological significant conditions in our present times, created by corporate globalization.

The natural world, particularly in the ecological humanities, where the ethical duty of care to the non-human world - which is just as affected by climate change - is prominent. The rights of the non-human entities and the responsibility of humans to consider non-humans rights have long been a concern for ecological humanities and environmental lawyers⁸. In a document from IHOPE, Robert Costanza acknowledges and attempts to heal the dualism

⁵ A major workshop was created by Hans Joachim Schellnhuber in May 2003 called “Earth System Analysis for Sustainability” The workshop evaluated the operation of the planet under such different circumstances as massive volcanic eruptions, bombardment by asteroids, differently distributed continental masses and other world-shattering events. H.-J. Schellnhuber et al. (eds.), *Earth System Analysis for Sustainability* (Cambridge MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2004).

⁶ Today there is an extensive introductory literature on the Anthropocene (Manifesto for Living in the Anthropocene (Brooklyn, NY: Punctum Books, 2015)

⁷ Robin, Libby & Steffen, Will: *History for Anthropocene: Fenner School of Environment and Society*, Australia National University, Centre for Historical Research, National Museum of Australia.

⁸ F. Mathews, *The Ecological Self* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1991). V. Plumwood, *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2001). C. D. Stone, *Should Trees Have Standing?: Toward Legal Rights for Natural Objects* (Los Alton, CA: W. Kaufman, 1974).

between human and non-human subjects, with statements that *“humans are a part of nature, not separated from it”*⁹.

The rationality of becoming more nuanced has been growing. For example, as Andreas Hejnl argues: *biologists no longer think in terms of “transitional” and hierarchical relationships among living species (i.e., “humans evolved from apes”) but instead think through genealogical cladistics that stress the ongoing changes of all organisms (i.e., “humans and apes evolved from a common ancestor”)*¹⁰. Hierarchical structures have always been looked from up above starting from God, Angels, Humans, Lions, Sheep, Fish and down it goes, always considered from a level of complexity. Today we need to experience such complexities with totally new visions and come to peace with our complexity. It is important to recognize the need for interrelations among new types of species, which is not necessarily something that is closely related to humans and mythologies but rather entangled within diversity and ecosystems.

The enormity of our ecological dilemma leaves a somewhat great amount of people in shock, because of the ignorance regarding planetary issues. In my proposal, I will try to find a different approach to this problem by showing readers how to pay better attention to our planet and each other. It is not simple work, and it requires a lot of discipline. I will tie some examples of how a human-trained mindset of power and profits is not the correct forward-looking sustainable future in our present society. How can humans start to recognize this crisis as a collective instead of dealing with the issues as an individual. Finally, the debates around the catastrophic climate breakdown also concerns what kind of world we want to live in and what role art might play to imagine, represent, and realize it. Such debates are shaping new languages, new understandings, and creating sustainable futures for both institutions¹¹ but artists are also invited to rethink the way to create art¹². By understanding other species than humans and how to interact with the rest of nature and future interactions. Art can help in such a sense, because art can touch people’s souls, in a rather different way than technology/data can, through public engagement or public dissemination

⁹ Costanza et al., ‘sustainability or Collapse

¹⁰ Gan, Elaine, Bubandt, Nils, Lowenhaupt Tsing, Anna, Anne Swanson, Heather: *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene*, University of Minnesota Press, 2017

¹¹ www.serpentinegalleries.org/general-ecology/ - initiated by curator Lucia Pietroiusti

¹² www.serpentinegalleries.org/whats-on/symposium-shape-circle-mind-fish-part-1/

such as Rugilė Barzdžiukaitė contemporary performance “Sun and Sea”¹³ which is questioning the anthropocentric worldview. we can attempt to create a sustainable and desirable future for everyone through such works, where an audience views a typical holiday consumerist behavior and perhaps in some cases views themselves. Vaiva Grainytė who is part of the project has explained the following: Holidays manifest the joyful consumption of planetary resources and our daily commitment to anthropocentrism.

What comes after the Capitalocene?

While you are sitting, reading this text I would like you to breathe in and when your lungs are fully expanded till the brim, breath out. Please repeat this task one more time and consider the air you are breathing. Perhaps there is someone else in the room with you, with whom you are sharing the same air. By that very act, we are all connected through the molecules, particles, and elements of that air that are exchanging between us and the environment that we are in. If we look a bit closer to the planetary awareness, looking below us, we have the soil, water, fungi, and the microbes that are living within that surface, but if you keep on going below and below that, you will end up at the core of the earth. A place that is hotter than anywhere else and completely inhospitable to life. And if you were to look the other way, looking up into the sky, there will be birds and microbes, but a bit further than that you will reach the universe where it is cold and dead. I remember some time ago, it was august 2018 and I was sitting in a pub in Glasgow, talking to a professor at Glasgow Art school, JoeHari Lee, while sharing an interesting conversation he mentioned the image of earth, taken by the Cassini spacecraft. In the image we see Earth as a tiny shining star approx. 1.448.409.600 km away¹⁴. I remember he started laughing, almost falling down his chair. When he came back to himself, he said: that pale little blue dot, that tiny little look-a-like star far away from Saturn, our home a place called earth, a tremendously beautiful place: we think we are so special, but the earth is literally just a little pixel on an image. That made me understand how unique and fragile that home of ours is. Earth is going back hundreds of millions of years. We know about how the earth has evolved and the creatures on the earth have evolved but as they have evolved, they have become able to carry out new ecological processes, they formed new interactions between each

¹³ www.english.lithuanianculture.lt/lithuanian-culture-guide/theatre/2018/05/30/rugile-barzdziukaite/

¹⁴ <https://www.nasa.gov/image-feature/cassini-earth-and-saturn-the-day-earth-smiled>

other, and life has become more complicated and more diverse and therefore the systems have become more complicated. More interesting is the last period when humans evolved known as the Pleistocene. Pleistocene went through several ice ages and today by drilling down into the depth of the ice, we can find out what past climates looked like, temperatures, and how levels of CO₂ in the atmosphere were like, only because the ice traps bubbles. Those bubbles can be analyzed and by analyzing we can go back hundreds of thousands of years in history and understand the evolution of Planet Earth¹⁵.

There is no doubt that the economic system has changed the way the world works dramatically and in other terms, globalization has turned the ecosystem upside-down. The accelerating trend can be seen in the oscillating upward-sloping graph, the Keeling Curve¹⁶, which shows the measures of atmospheric carbon dioxide and has come to stand as one of the most important and powerful scientific symbols of anthropogenic climate change. Not only does it convey the information about CO₂, but it also tells us that we must take it seriously in a time of unmanageable climate change. If extractions from the soil of Mother Earth keep increasing by its current pace, which seems rather possible than going the opposite way, atmospheric CO₂ will pass 1.000 ppm by the end of the century. In a simulated indoor environment quality test of conditions inside buildings, it was performed that the impact on higher Carbon Dioxide, had an impact on human performance and our ability to think clearly¹⁷. All that time we are spending in front of the television, phones, or another screen, not thinking but just observing and being persuaded. It is built to reduce our awareness exactly as Carbon does it. The representation of our in-hand technology is the reality of the human species, objects that mesmerize and suddenly you become the screen and every day becomes the same tape that goes in a loop, because it has become too difficult to think. Society is a magnetic tape¹⁸ that corporations have had control over for an exceedingly long time. Is there even anything to do about it or are human species lost in a labyrinth being measured every single day, like the rats in the psychology of B.F Skinner, who

¹⁵ Fischer, H. (1999). Ice Core Records of Atmospheric CO₂ Around the Last Three Glacial Terminations. *Science*, 283(5408), 1712–1714.

¹⁶ Joshua P. Howe, "This Is Nature; This Is Un-Nature: Reading the Keeling Curve," *Environmental History* 20 (2015): 286–293

¹⁷ Allen, Joseph G., Piers MacNaughton, Usha Satish, Suresh Santanam, Jose Vallarino, and John D. Spengler. 2015. "Associations of Cognitive Function Scores with Carbon Dioxide, Ventilation, and Volatile Organic Compound Exposures in Office Workers: A Controlled Exposure Study of Green and Conventional Office Environments." *Environmental Health Perspectives* 124 (6): 805-812.

¹⁸ Baudrillard, Jean, "Simulacra and Simulation", *The University of Michigan Press* (1994), pp. 51.

believed that who you became as a person does not matter, but what the world could do to you and shape you into was much more important¹⁹. It has been seen in history how psychology can change the behavior of humans in collaborations with governments, such as the Edward Bernays movement “Torch of Freedom” which made it acceptable for women to smoke publicly²⁰. Seen from this perspective, we are nothing more than a big group of lemmings being hustled around by rich and powerful identities, who are playing games with us and our lives.

We are now reaching new standards for global temperatures²¹ and as it seems with the predictability of 9 billion humans on Planet Earth by 2040, we need a radical change to sustain society, because fundamentally society relies on a stable climate. But while we are being anesthetized by carbon emission, climate keeps on taking drastic changes. We are seeing a rise in temperatures, all over the world. In 2003 it took headline in Le Monde, a French newspaper when 15.000 people died because of the heat. It might be a little over the top to fully accuse the deaths of these people because of climate change, but my point is that it is getting hotter and the standards of what was normal when your grandmother was born, compared to yourself and the era you are going through are dramatically different.

I remember, a family member of mine, a closely related, showed me an image from her childhood, with snowbanks 3 meters high, and the image I was watching was astonishing. This was in Denmark in the late '70s. Never in my childhood have I ever witnessed- or ever after- snowbanks that tall. I believe it is a strong argument when images from forty years ago give an impression of completely different weather conditions and it also becomes obvious that we are seeing major differences in different places in the world.

Whatever our Era will be named, it should give us hope, and create new forms and frameworks for the beginning of a time when all the squeaks apply. It is important that those who want to fight this battle find new ways to get closer to nature and new ways of

¹⁹ McLeod, S. A. Skinner – operant conditioning, simply psychology. (2018): [Operant Conditioning and Positive Reinforcement | Simply Psychology](#)

²⁰ Amos, Amanda and Haglund, Margaretha, From social taboo to “torch of freedom”: the marketing of cigarettes to women.

²¹ <https://climate.nasa.gov/vital-signs/global-temperature/>

relating to nature. Perhaps we are on our way to what Moon and Jeon's project is about "El fin del Mundo²²," which visualizes a world to an endangered species living in a toxic biosphere, where those who have survived have to rethink their philosophy of life. The film is divided into two separate screens: a man appears on one and a woman appears on the other. The artwork has been already described poignantly: *The film simultaneously depicts how the male character continues to work on his art even through the catastrophe and how the female character, a descendant of the survivors, becomes aware of the aesthetic senses after the catastrophe. The woman is sent by Tempus, one of the remaining companies, to a remote archive and happens upon the place where the man worked long ago, encountering traces of the man that transcend time and space²³.*

Through this artwork we are confronted with our probable fate, our world lost to climate change. We dwell on the image because it can be so hard to grasp the reality. Facing it can be more difficult than expected. Another artist who is dealing with the same matter as Moon & Jeon is Danish artist, Jakob Kudsk Sørensen who is visualizing his future world through projects such as, Catharsis. Jakob is facing the world after the apocalypse, re-imagining through a digital simulation of an old forest. *This imaginary forest has existed undisturbed for hundreds of years, free from human intervention and suffused with birdsong²⁴.* The digital simulation is so mesmerizing that one completely forgets about our present state and it leaves you to question our existence as humans and our footprint that we leave everywhere we go. He is questioning ways that digital technologies can be used to engage with past and present natural environments and leave the audience in an overwhelming sense of communion and harmony.

Both projects deal with hopeless circumstances, but they help us, as artworks and cultural productions, to face the truth. Ever since the tech-infrastructure, the internet, globalized images traveled across borders with alerting images, some more than others, but images that make us impotent to horrors happening around the world or artists as Edward Burtynsky who aestheticizing an extremely disturbing manner²⁵. In some way it is a very irrational visual behavior, where he is obviously creating his own concern about

²² www.moonandjeon.com/EL-FIN-DEL-MUNDO

²³ www.mca.com.au/artists-works/exhibitions/new-romance-art-and-the-posthuman/moon-kyungwon-jeon-joonho/

²⁴ www.jakobsteensen.com/#/new-page/

²⁵ www.edwardburtynsky.com/projects/photographs/oil

environmental ethics. The visualization of such images are making us insensitive to the catastrophe. David Attenborough and the team behind BBC's Blue Planet documentary series would surely agree with me here. His tactic is to show the actual beauty of the world through beautiful, constructed narratives, and thereby through empathy, we are told of the planetary crisis of manmade pollution and global warming. Rationally, we should not need Blue Planet to ring the alarm bells for actual reactions are triggered. Rationally, we know the situation is bad and, in my opinion, we do not need aesthetic pleasurable created images of oil drilling nor mines which romanticize a situation that should not be witnessed as an appealing condition of our planet. Through movies such as Children of Men or Snowpiercer we are also witnessing such horrors, of a rather dystopian future, but neither is it romanticized as BBC's Planet Blue, but rather a serious and an effective subjective opinion. Movies has the capacity to affect our emotions on a different level than Burtynsky's aestheticized dystopian image. They are in two different categories, and while - as explained – Burtynsky's images makes me insensitive, the movies make me feel compassion with those who are effected by the horrors. If we look at some earlier productions of sci-fi movies such as Independence Day who managed a cumulative worldwide gross of 817\$ million, it seems like we love to watch our fate falling into pieces. For instance, the whole world is facing a pandemic crisis, which apparently should have set its outbreak in Wuhan, China. The fact that a pandemic like this make people fear apocalypticism but at the same time we are getting attracted to it. We are drawn to the tales of survival knowing how people in danger make it out alive. How can we imagine a better way to respond to the brutalism of capitalism?

Without change we would not be able to make it until the next Era. Political change and a system change are what we are waiting for and has been the case fighting for, for environmentalist, labor activists, feminist activists and postcolonial third world activists. We have seen transformations through the *Votes for Woman Movement*, *Civil Rights Movement*, *Liberation Movement*, *Environmental Movement*. People all recognized that they had to come together, in clubs, in society, groups, and collectively bring change. Slowly we are starting to deal with the nature as a being, and yet we have still emitted more emissions for the past 30 years than in the entire history. James Hanson, who founded IPCC in 1988 stood at the pole back then and spoke about climate change as a real threat and

danger, and now we are in 2021 and we have not taken enough responsibility or action to change the hope for humankind. While we have created so many glorious things to make our lives better, easier, and pleasurable, we have not succeeded in developing ourselves into creatures worth these tremendous efforts. Our efforts concern only us and our needs without concern for the rest of the living elements on earth and future generations. So, how do we account for our evolutionary expansion? The pattern is in our hands, it is our responsibility to stand against the selfish capitalist society and create a better future. Humans and non-humans have the intelligence to evolve through these times – plants learned to use light to grow, and chemicals such as calcium to protect themselves. They even evolved so far as to communicate with each other from dangers. Therefore, to view others not as a threat but as neighbors to share and collaborate we can make changes to our habits and mindsets. We must share and reunite ourselves with others if we want to achieve evolutionary longevity.

Diagnosis of the Contemporary Individual

“A great presence is hard to see. A great sound is hard to hear. A great figure has no form.”
– Tao

Yamamoto Masao, a Chinese artist interpreted this to mean, that the world is full of noises that we humans are not capable of hearing. For example, we cannot hear the noises created by the movement of the universe. Although these sounds exist, we ignore them altogether and act as if only what we can hear exists. Lao-tzu teaches us to be humbly and accept that we only play a small part in the grand scheme of the universe”.²⁶

Lynn Margulis states, “ *Human beings are not particularly special, apart, or alone.*”²⁷ She makes this assumption: that our existence is not in any way a final rung on the evolutionary ladder, but that we insinuated ourselves into the life cycles of bacteria which then have

²⁶ www.pablogt.com/yamamoto-masao/

²⁷ Margulis, Lynn & Sagan, Dorian, *Microcosmos Four Billion Years of Evolution from Our Microbial Ancestors*, University of California Press, 1997. Pp. 197.

been trading and copying genes on their own²⁸. It comes down to the fact that humans see themselves as a species superior to others, that we have invented a lot of things, but without the biosphere, aiming a few kilometers into the atmosphere, to the deep-sea vents of the ocean, we would never have been able to create all these tremendously great things that we as an extraordinarily complex specie have created. She explains it further by using the word “*permutation*” which is an arrangement of elements or a combination that is a mathematical term that determines the number of possible outcomes. So as the bacteria evolved, our existence is in fact a permutation of endless opportunities that could have been evolved instead of us. That thought makes me feel more than lucky to be alive. We are all a part of the global ecosystem, composed of living organisms and the non-living abiotic. Unfortunately, humans are the only species that are eroding, extracting, and depleting Planet Earth. In that sense, we are separating ourselves from the rest of life and we have done quite well to separate ourselves by exploiting other organisms. What I want to convey here, by peeling off the human arrogance because we feel so incredibly superior, is to make us understand that by letting go of such kind of arrogance perhaps we would be able to approach an appropriately coexistence and understand that collaboration between human and non-human should be a top priority. We are all breathing the same air and we are all a part of the same multitude of bacteria which created all of us, it just so happened that human is a highly communicative species and therefore got far more complex than other species, and in that case, it also became simpler for humans to make of what we were surrounded by.

Am I not supposed to go confidently in the direction of my dreams or follow my strength and live the life I imagined without caring much for others and have pride by taking out my own decisions? At least that is how we presume our lives are socially structured in the Western culture. A culture that evolved in the '60s but took off in the '70s according to Adam Curtis²⁹. This culture is individualism and self-expression, but he calls it radical individualism. This has shaped our contemporary identity and has become an essential approach towards the rights for the functioning of liberal democracy – what is good,

²⁸ Margulis, Lynn & Sagan, Dorian, *Microcosmos Four Billion Years of Evolution from Our Microbial Ancestors*, University of California Press, 1997. Pp. 197.

²⁹ www.thecreativeindependent.com/people/adam-curtis-on-the-dangers-of-self-expression/

worthy, or virtuous. The dark side of this individualism is that capitalism reinvented itself quickly³⁰ and it adopted people's new individualism and started selling goods so we, the consumers, could express ourselves. It insinuates that an individual is the most important thing: what I feel, what I want; these are considered the most truthful and with a growing number of consumer goods the radical individual has come to stay.

To consider this new form of radical individualism creates a vast space in-between humans and diversity because your dreams become solely your own and do not manifest in a communion of sharing and exchanging thoughts and feelings. Can we blame the individual? Probably not, it is rather how a society is structured, composed, and made up of routines, how everyone is acting, the social system, institutions. All these things are making and shaping us, what we then can call the fundamental individual persona, or it makes us "*fundamentally individualistic*"³¹. The Life magazine captured some of this isolation. "Civilization has lost a sense of communal values"; advertising and political double talk have contaminated the symbols artists might have used to communicate with the society around them. Life magazine is referring to artists, but I would believe so that the same goes for the public who is also exposed to the same contamination. Many of the useful standards that sustained the people of the past and helped to make them comprehensible – religious beliefs, moral codes, aesthetic dogmas – the absolute of other ages. Now as if we were on our own. And our one remaining criterion is a kind of personal honesty, a kind of integrity³². Perhaps the question is, how to navigate around this and how to unite: the question remains, how to unite in individualism? Perhaps uniting by recognizing pleasure - "what might be possible if we were all living our full pleasure potential"³³ – – The pleasure potential can mean that you are doing something of satisfaction, enjoyment, or the feeling of happiness. To feel your life is meaningful. It is in rough terms the opposite of capitalism because in capitalism you get educated for a certain direction and you are getting told that

³⁰ Adam Curtis explains this in his series of "The Century of the Self". He is saying: "in the '70s capitalism went through a great big shift. It went away from this idea that it was just selling goods that are all like each other, so everyone looked the same and wore the same clothes. Capitalism reinvented itself and started to sell you a much wider range of products so you could express yourself.

³¹ Hazel Rose Markus¹ and Shinobu Kitayama², *Cultures and Selves: A Cycle of Mutual Constitution*,
¹Department of Psychology, Stanford University, CA and ²Department of Psychology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1995, pp. 426

³² Collins, *Life* magazine, pp 286-87

³³ Brown, Maree Adrienne, *Pleasure activism, The politics of Feeling Good*. Pp. 5

this is how things work while striving for your pleasure potential is racing against the power structures, and to reclaim our whole, happy and satisfied selves³⁴. Perhaps this can lead to the underlying harmony between the individual and a “universal voice”³⁵ as Kant believes, when someone speaks of beauty for the object, it is in his terms “universally valid” therefore, someone who judges something as beautiful speaks with a universal voice: We can all unite, to say a sunset or a sunrise is magic, and everyone understands the beauty of the earth spinning around, day becomes night. Though this does not reassure us in any political agreement, it shows that we have a common cognitive experience of the world. If we in any way can overcome our self-centeredness (greed and disregard for others), maybe we can create a utopian future community in which collective experience validates our beings instead of an individual society that is granted on higher social status and rewards to personal achievements³⁶. Community also expresses a need to cooperate and should be motivated not only because of a narrow individual self-interest but by a combination of moral obligation and concern for others, which gives the full pleasure potential: in Aristotle’s philosophy, *if one can do the good and rejoice in doing the good*³⁷. Community is often related to family, established on love and moral concern but in the past, it was also closely related to labor movements - founded at the beginning of the 20th century - who expressed themselves with chants like, “*An injury to one is an injury to all*”³⁸.

Technology is woven into our culture in different shapes. Mainly we think about technology like phones and computers that in one way or another has become the clay for how we gain information. It connects us with others from other parts of the world. Technology can also be interpreted in a broader sense and be described as electronics which are products that reach further into our pleasurable pyramid of objects, we “need” in our life, such as toasters, microwaves and fridges. Let us stick to the thought of computers and phones for now. As with everything else, capitalism has also gone wild, now within the digital art world. On the 23rd of Marts, the world set a record for digital sold art, when Beeple sold “Ocean

³⁴ Brown, Maree Adrienne, Pleasure activism, The politics of Feeling Good pp. 11

³⁵ Kant, Critique of Judgement, pp 60/Ak216.

³⁶ Gorodnichenko, Yuriy & Roland, Gerard, Culture, institutions, and the Wealth of Nations, 2010

³⁷ [Aristotle And His Definition Of Happiness - Overview \(pursuit-of-happiness.org\)](https://pursuit-of-happiness.org)

³⁸ Clawson, Mary Ann and Clawson, Dan, What has Happened to the US Labor Movement? Union Decline and Renewal, Annual Review of Sociology 1999 25:1, 95-119

Front” for nothing more than \$6 million. It was an auction that took place on Nifty Gateway and was a part of a three-day Carbon Drop initiative. The project was designed to offset the environmental costs of crypto art, so Bepple donated 100% of the profits to the Open Earth Foundation. The most contradictory part of this story is, crypto valuta is one of those techs who emits the highest amount of carbon emissions in the world, and adding up the numbers, it becomes equal to the carbon dioxide all the airplanes release into the atmosphere³⁹ – now because of the pandemic, these numbers probably do not even fit anymore. So, the world’s most expensive and detrimental tech-art is sold as a gesture to save the world from its own damage because of the creation of cryptocurrencies? The amount of energy required to generate and keep records of it is staggering⁴⁰ and there is no doubt that if humans want to save the planet, this trend of NFT must stop immediately, but that seems like a far-future utopia. Cherie Hu, a journalist has claimed in an interview that NFTs could save the music industry, “They need to find a better way to make money”⁴¹, but this certainly just sounds like an easy way out of a troubling capitalist industry controlled from top-down by major record labels. The fact that a lot of the headline such as; *NFT’s have already generated millions for artists, breaking digital art records; Crypto art could expand the music industry’s \$11 billion markets; Artists can claim independent revenue by selling NFTs on their own, cutting out major labels*, all sounds disturbingly terrifying but for a lot of reasons, it is appealing to those who believe that wealth is on one’s agenda. I do understand that there is a certain attraction to this sort of digital art-making because the artist becomes self-independent, unfortunately, this is at the expense of the environment. What all these articles seem to miss is the environmental damage – instead, it talks about independence, money, and new possibilities which fit so perfectly into contemporary radical individualism. There is a great deal of uncertainty about what role NFTs will play in the art world. Is it only a bubble or will it expand? In one way or another, someone will find a way to exacerbate the already existing inequalities in the art market. Like always, when money is involved, exploitation is inevitable, but let us hope that it can generate new opportunities to create self-dependent artists without harming the environment and by that, change the way the art market functions. Ollivier Dyen writes “Human beings are but a journey, an infinitely

³⁹ Bridle, James, *Dark New Age, Technology and the End of the Future*. Verso, 2019 pp. 63.

⁴⁰ <https://digiconomist.net/bitcoin-energy-consumption>

⁴¹ [Crypto Art Could Become Primary Income for Musicians \(businessinsider.com\)](https://www.businessinsider.com/crypto-art-could-become-primary-income-for-musicians)

small component of the immense and ancestral living body of humanity”⁴². There is no doubt that Ollivier intends is to elevate humans further into a cloud of quantum literacy, a cloud of numerical information to improve human life. And one thing is sure, as those new tech-inventions are being developed, some will become keen users of such developments as NFTs, because it appears in front of them, just as agriculture did many years ago. There is no doubt that it is possible to grasp onto potentially new futures in a different range of diverse fields within technology and we are going to see major changes as generations are being born into technology, though I want to believe that some limits within the field of arts, the creation of non-sustainable materials, will be arranged, with care for a sustainable and environmental future because exploiting yet another material for the gain of wealth is not the right solution for the survival of the planet and humans.

I have experienced that the pandemic has taught us a lot of things. What human environmentalists have been striving for since the celebration of the Earth on April 22, 1970, the pandemic somewhat put a hold on. Factories were shut. Flights were canceled. People had to be home, taking care of gardens, and their mental health through sports exercise. This could mean that a part of people allowed themselves to do less. There is no doubt that Coronavirus managed to put a whole economical system on hold quickly, an economical system that everyone believed was impossible to slow down or redirect. The pandemic suddenly made people much more aware of who they are, how they feel, and what they like: we have become less robotic. If everyone would keep on to this pattern, there might be a chance that humans also will be exploited less by the capitalistic society and feel more connected to being human, but yes being human in the 21st century means to be induced with technology in a traditional sense, phones, and computers. The virus has made us look differently at the world – we went from being dispersed into gathering – even though how crazy it may sound, but all around the world people connected from different parts of the globe to discuss the future and connecting on issues in a global scale in a completely new setup never seen before. Going from some sort of disconnection to an interactive mode, creating online gatherings, establishing art talks, so now everyone is able to receive everlasting information from important philosophers and artists and this must have created

⁴²Dyen, Ollivier, Metal and Flesh The Evolution of Man, Technology Takes Over (Leonardo Books) (2001)

a greater awareness of our surroundings. It is important to note, however, that technology nowadays is just like any other consumer product. If you consume it too much, it becomes detrimental to your health, on the other hand, as explained, technology also brings important information and the possibility to exchange and interact with like-minded humans. It has some great values, but unfortunately it is taking us down the wrong slope consuming too much energy than what good is for our planet. This moment we are living in right now is a moment, if changes can occur and we can clasp on to the opportunity to ask ourselves what we want to develop and what we would like not to come back, then we need to become active thinkers⁴³. This means that we need to leave some time to ask questions that not necessarily can be answered today because we need to take special care of sensible answers. To be an active thinker means that we question our morality towards our surroundings. We put a question mark on our identity and ask ourselves what we identify ourselves within a certain place, what we value, and how we see a potential purpose in life. These questions do not have a definite answer, because they will develop throughout our entire lifecycle, but the answers you will have now, fit into your persona and identity at this moment. Today we are sharing those emotions and feelings through technology, and in that sense, we are learning a lot from each other. I will try somehow to conclude this because it is obvious that tech is here to stay without a great deal of concern from my point of view, my only concern is that we continue in a digital disruption instead of creating a more personified future with less screen time and develop efficiency and solutions that enhance the wellbeing of humans. I am all for the connection we can establish around the globe and connect crowds that can create new establishments and thoughts through the connection of technology. At the same time, I am worried about the toll it takes on the environment. About the damage it makes to the environment and our planet.

Man has lived for thousands of years and yet we feel we only have one day left to live. We feel tremendously powerful and atop of anything else with which we share certain biological

⁴³ Latour, Bruno, What protective measures can you think of so we don't go back to the pre-crisis production model? 2020 (translated from French by Stephen Muecke) - Bruno Latour's essay: He is inviting us, the readers, to answer a self-describing analysis that will make us consider our morals, identity, and our health. He calls this an auto-descriptive questionnaire

elements, despite Darwin's demonstration that we are only one recent branch on an evolutionary tree.

What if we start to believe that humans are not the center of the world? Perhaps our minds could also expand on Lynn Margulis' thought that we might not be the last evolution on the ladder. Our evolution on the ladder is only a step further in evolution and wisdom. We can begin to consider ourselves a soul and our bodies are here to help develop humans. Perhaps this brings a holistic approach to our future, rather than a Western approach where all problems need to be isolated: Vernon Masayesva who is a founder and director of Black Mesa Trust⁴⁴ wrote *"Western science separates the human from the environment and then studies the parts separately as if they had little to do with one another. The Western European scientific tradition is one in which each piece can be isolated and separated from the larger context. The model is mechanistic, and the human runs it (or thinks he does) in the same manner that an engineer operates a train"*⁴⁵. There is no doubt that this strategy has led to the little-questioned development of technology we are experiencing today, which provides human being with many pleasures. We must not forget the beauty of nature and the connection we have to it, through our bacterial roots. I believe native science can bring us closer to such a connection where you observe the whole and the communication in between⁴⁶, such as circular manifestation. A fundamental viewpoint that combines both nature and human and acknowledges both. Western science separates man and nature and it probably also helps to create a kind of biological superior⁴⁷. If we feel we can communicate with souls other than humans, we are likely to feel more connected to the earth and what is around us.

It might be interesting to approach the problem epistemologically from the perspective of, 'how', we gain knowledge. It is also related to the topic previously discussed. How to find space and time to critically reflect, analyze and evaluate, find meaning and be committed to it. This is where art can play a role. Art can give us new beliefs and even new knowledge about the world. Perhaps through artworks that implement an epistemological approach, it

⁴⁴ www.blackmesatrust.org

⁴⁵ www.investigativemedia.com/western-science-vs-native-science-cultural-imperialism/

⁴⁶ Dimitrijević, Marta, Shaman's circle: Circularity in native American culture, Facta Universitatis, series: Linguistics and Literature Vol. 3, No 2, 2005, pp. 185 - 192

⁴⁷ www.investigativemedia.com/western-science-vs-native-science-cultural-imperialism/

would be possible to understand Science by the public. Such as Jakob Kudsk's work does of which I described earlier in this text. There is no doubt that we can learn from art and its perception of the world since art can describe the physical world in a myriad of ways, leading the audience into an emotional state. Even though that art does not necessarily depict the truth as in science, it still gives us a different degree of knowledge. Jakob's work *Catharsis* is all deep grounded on an overwhelming vicarious experience, perhaps even spiritual guidance, searching for non-humans that you can connect to; non-humans I consider to be the voiceless groups. These groups set roots within non-human entities. They have had a difficult political representation compared to the political representations of humans. The voiceless group also consists of those that do not yet live, humans or non-humans. All should aim to be included in a political spectrum of democracy. In a democracy, everyone should ideally have equal access necessities to participate meaningfully in decisions about things that affect their lives. I believe Jacob is trying perfectly, in a rendered world, to create a language for the non-human entities, and he purifies our emotional state while being led through his work. It sort of becomes a therapeutic work.

Getting back to circular manifestations is, challenges the idea of an experience of something radically different from us and something that does not share our human complexity: nonhumans. The question is if we can learn from circular manifestations: holistic science and attain knowledge that would help us to see the world in a new or different way. I also call this circular integrity. First, the "circular" is a fundamental building block in the Chinese mind. To take an example, controllability: a complex evolution of changing situations to which man has to adapt himself with a corresponding uncertainty and relativism – the idea of the Tao. In the Chinese mind, it is believed that when changes occur on our planet then humans have to adapt to evolution in a holistic⁴⁸ sense: everyone takes part. The circle

⁴⁸ The holistic concept in ancient theological belief, per Heraclitus (c.535-475 BCE), was strongly reflected in the concept of Logos and Pantheism. The Chinese philosopher Zhuangzi (c. 369-286 BCE) was an exponent of the holistic philosophy of life, projecting a way of understanding that is uncommitted to a fixed system, a way that is fluid and flexible, and that maintains a pragmatic attitude towards the applicability of the "multiplicity of diverse modes" of realization among different creatures, cultures, and philosophical outlooks. Philosophers and thinkers even before Socrates (c.469-399 BCE) have rationally as well as theologically speculated that wholes, both animate and inanimate, are real, while parts are abstract analytical distinctions, and that wholes are flexible patterns, not simply mechanical assemblages of self-sufficient elements. Implicit in this view is that, when individual components of a system are put together to produce a large functional unit, a holistic quality develops which is not predictable from the behavior of the components in their individual capacity.

represents the community's interests and serves as the common objective of all its members⁴⁹. While on the contrary, in the Western mind, the idea that man can control the static and unchanging world using abstract laws and universal rules – the ideal of the autonomous and acting hero. We believe we can save the earth by implementing just another technology, just another so-called (individualistic hero)⁵⁰. Second, the “integrity” is not only to be fixed on one specific object, such as technological solutions, no, instead we must fix ourselves. This can be solved by being open and honest not only about favorable issues but also about issues that are opposing one's self-interest. Without integrity, we will witness a growing polarization between humans, and social conflicts will remain. We need altruism and less selfishness to be able to understand both positive and negative feelings we have, to make it possible for us to understand all other species and their purpose on this planet and from there we can start to envision our purpose in the future of our planet. In an altruistic way, the individual exists in the community and finds the meaning of their existence through the community. Confucius advocated that "a public spirit should rule everything under the sun and the individual should put others' interests above their own." It is in one's main interest to cultivate moral character and to exert oneself in order, to achieve the goal of serving the community's interests. Lao-tzu and later Chuang-tzu have through poetry and philosophical discussions embraced the relationship between humanity and nature in a holistic sense.

There is no doubt that art can be the guideline to discover what an anticapitalist community might mean and how it is related to solidarity and collaboration. Art can be a site for dialogue, democracy, collective learning, imagination, community. It can be a site for building knowledge through sharing and mutual learning, also about the possibilities of exchange with non-human being, and phenomena. At least the idea of exchange has existed for a long time in science. There are many famous examples in the history of scientific methods where scientists develop a hypothesis, then deduce the consequences of those

⁴⁹ <https://www.theosophical.org/publications/quest-magazine/1286-lines-and-circles-west-and-east>

⁵⁰ A Clash of Thinking, Theme 03 Week 8.

https://gallery.mailchimp.com/a41093e2f8d1000bb6ffce0db/files/f14b04cb-ade7-4248-b122-df6b4ee2e576/20170505TheMacroscope_A_Clash_of_Thinking.pdf

hypotheses and then they go out into the world and observe those consequences in the natural world to claim the truth. There are many examples of science of scientists doing exactly this. One of the most famous examples is Albert Einstein who developed the theory of relativity. One of the consequences of his theory was that space-time was not just an empty void but that it had a fabric, and that starlight would bend around the sun. It took a few years before scientists were able to test it, but in 1919⁵¹ they tested it and it was true. It is important to mention that Einstein could not have made it without theories from both Newton and Maxwell. Through science, there is a certain consensus, which is the collective judgment and opinion of the community of scientists. It implies general agreement, a collective agreement which they will conclude about. It can easily be perceived as a hierarchy of people who tend to know more than others and then we should believe them. Indeed, science is hierarchical, however it is not based on any individual, no matter how smart that individual may be, but it is the hierarchy of the collective community and wisdom.

Artists as scientists must become better communicators – and it brings me back to my question from earlier – to tell us not only what they know but how they know. More transparency about how science functions - as a process in which people, politics, institutions, and so forth all play their parts – might make science more trustworthy and make general public believe more in scientific claims about climate change, instead of constantly obfuscate the reality by telling us that “more data are needed”, even though the evidence in support of global warming has long been overwhelming.

It might not be such a coincidence that Bruno Latour is heading towards *‘becoming Terrestrial’* (be earthbound). This new way of making new policies I believe can be a way to connect people from various groups and elaborate the values of being earthbound of our common earthly home. In a rather simple maneuver, he proposes to take the best from the left and the right and creates a third vector on the somewhat linear political string. Both of these sides he identifies as the “Local” and the “Global”. The local he identifies as soil, the backward-looking people who globalizers ought to defeat and see no values in any argumentation about the future and the non-human entanglements. The locals he explains

⁵¹ www.edn.com/einsteins-theory-of-general-relativity-is-tested-may-29-1919/

are deemed by the Global to be illegitimate and they see no need to negotiate with humans who do not have an urge to keep pushing forward. The Global which he identifies with “world”. Those who does not have time to negotiate and approach their surroundings in a rather exploitative and uncaring way to the earth and see the locals as an obstacle for advancement. In a modern take, the local is those who seek refuge in the regression and want to defend themselves against becoming a no-one. I use this word because Bruno Latour is asking: *Is it possible to make those who are still enthusiastic about globalization understand that it is normal, that it is just, that it is indispensable to want to preserve, maintain, ensure one’s belonging to a land, a place, a soil, a community, a space, a milieu, a way of life, a trade, a skill*⁵²? I understand from this, if we keep on globalizing, we will end up exacerbating a situation I see as emotionless and impersonal capital cities. Cities in equivalence with Beijing or Wall street and or any other capital of a country. Without stepping someone too much on top of their foot I would claim that a no-one is equal to those kinds of people who work in those environments. They are humble servants for globalization and are being told that this is the future⁵³.

I must argue that it is possible that both types of humans, those accepting the faith and see nobility in poverty or a stoic acceptance of poverty or the office worker who is deemed to the shackles of someone else dream, may have the same agenda, living ecologically, being aware of doing right/wrong choices, but one of these personas is falling for the fairytale of endless progression and fake pleasure. I cannot make sure that everyone will take part in becoming Terrestrial, but those who become part of such a “movement” whether reoriented from the Local or Global need to reevaluate what it means to become part of it and the negotiations, which will inevitably take place in a new vector, to settle at a place where everyone can find peace. We cannot think of ourselves as either regressionist or progressionist’s, but to reorient our perceptions and rethink those terms sustainable and ecological, which means, while we are progressing, we need to do that with care for the earth and living bacteria’s and while that may feel like a regression for certain globalists, they must come to terms with that there is a need for us all to gather in the middle, resisting the separation caused by politics. On the other hand, the Locals must come to terms with

⁵² Latour, Bruno, Down to Earth, Polity Press, 2017 pp. 20

⁵³ www.moderndiplomacy.eu/2021/01/12/future-is-globalization-economic-strategies-2021/

that a world without progression is inevitable. There is no doubt that the fight is going to be hard, but the time we already lost negotiation with people from both sides of the political spectra has delayed a new mobilization: *Bruno Latour says: redirect the interests of those who continue to flee toward the Global and those who continue to take refuge in the Local, to interest them in feeling the weight of this new attractor.* By adapting 'being Terrestrial' to human behavior, more people could find reason in this new vector and perhaps move towards a collaborative society. Let it expand in such ways as Christianity or any other religious profound believers have succeeded throughout history or as Raphael is suggesting in Thomas More's book Utopia, "*We'll never get human behavior in line with Christian ethics ... so let's adapt Christian ethics to human behavior. Then at least there'll be some connection between them*'.

Everyone today is aware of the damage that we are causing to the planet but to find a way to respond to such a catastrophe is difficult, especially also because everyone is not in an equal situation. To become a reactionary, everyone needs to stop playing along with the rules of those who rule the private properties and not act like a minion. I understand depending on which sort of social layer you are coming from, we must act differently, and perhaps acting at all is too overwhelming, because to earn-for-the day is causing exhausting situations. Thinking about nature as a first-world priority can for some be a luxury problem and therefore, I also understand to be a Terrestrial cannot mobilize every single human but those who have strength, opportunity, and a willingness to make changes in our world, should. Bruno Latour's proposal seems easier to propose than it is to implement, but it is provocative. If we want to experience a different future, we need to be provoked but not in such a sense that we become angry. I mean in such a way, that when we get provoked, it can relate to that we are experiencing something different from normal. If something is normal, it is comfortable. As soon as we step outside of our boundaries of normalized behavior, it can somehow be perceived as radical. When it comes to defining our future, we need to be radical in our way of thinking if we want to become Terrestrials. Such futures may seem like an alienation, but I honestly believe that such effects as stepping outside of the comfort zone will sooner or later result in an epiphany that can elevate an audience

outside of their sense of self. I am sure if David Thoreau were still alive, he would agree – we have to be provoked⁵⁴

Towards the Terrestrial

Where do we go from here? What steps do we need to take to reach the third vector? Sociologists, Anthropologists, Scientists, Artists, Water, Trees, rich, poor, and other species, who all need to collaborate to accomplish a new evolution of collaborative heroes and therefore perceive everyone as a part of the development for a better future in an extremely complex world. What can be done for those who have the least access to resources, jobs, and economically independency? There is so much we can benefit from each other and to do so, we must unite as Terrestrials. To be Terrestrial is not solely focused on these mentioned factors. There are several stages, which I have reduced to include: equality, community, and democracy, which I – as an individual - perceive as parts of crucial points to reach a collaborative future. I am very aware that these presented factors are very left-wing oriented at this stage, therefore, the formulation of such futures which encapsulates, equality, community and democracy is far from any sort of outcome, and therefore, the thesis also seems rather opposing a left-wing point-of-view.

Especially now, after the emergent behavioral changes we are seeing because of Covid: working remotely, reduced traveling, and social distancing. I do not think nobody could have imagined that the coronavirus itself could push the dark forces of oil companies down the unforeseen slope of bad luck, creating unthinkable new lows, but for renewable energies, there has only been a growth in demand⁵⁵. Our society is built on what we know as oil and gas culture, and it is quite hard to imagine something else that the historian Timothy Mitchell has called *carbon democracies*. Instead, Clark A. Miller asks, “*why do we not ask what it might be like to live, instead, in photon cultures and solar democracies?*” If we start to think differently, different outcomes will also appear. We will act differently, look at things differently and our mindsets will over time focus on other values as being human. As

⁵⁴ Thoreau, Henry David, *Walden Or Life In The Woods*, Pennsylvania State University, 1854. - We need to be provoked—goaded like oxen, as we are, into a trot.

⁵⁵ [Global Energy Review 2020 – Analysis - IEA](#) – A report made on data that are showing the global activity and demands during first quarter of 2020 relating to energy use and co2 emissions. They collected data from 30 countries until 14 April, representing over two-thirds of global energy demand, show that demand depression depends on duration and stringency of lockdowns.

Bruno Latour says in *“Down To Earth”* *“Saying “We are earthbound, we are Terrestrials amid Terrestrials,” does not lead to the same politics as saying, “We are humans in nature.” The two are not made of the same cloth – or rather of the same mud*⁵⁶. It is not unthinkable to believe that by changing our thought orientation, the potential of hope from both sides of the political spectrum has an opportunity to shift direction but it needs support from the right-wing politicians who needs to acknowledge that sponsored money from the fossil fuel industry is not going to sustain our environment, and new deals must be set into action such as the Green New Deal. Such transformation has the ability to change systems. In such new deals it is important to rely much on our current knowledge maintained during years of success, failures and experiences; to take an example, The New Deal who in many ways did change the equality in the US through social security⁵⁷. Above all, with new agreements on how we must begin to reevaluate our thought patterns, hopefully, it will also shape new deals within our depleting cryptocurrencies and the creation of NFTs and other systems equal to this who passively are a part of the capitalistic economy. Perhaps we have lived in this powerful structure for too long, that it seems implausible to imagine a different system, which will change our focus on a broad spectrum relating to energy, economy but also realizing the inevitable future of a meltdown of the planet. Perhaps the negotiations have never been oriented correctly because it always focuses on the individual or community changes such as recycle and water and energy efficiency.

In *“Cities of Light”*, a book with different essays from various writers, all imagining the cities of tomorrow in a Solar Punk perspective, Clark A. Miller want to perceive the future in a rather positive way, with new emergent ideas on how to escape the contemporary aesthetics used in mainstream media. His proposal contains the question: *how to shape the future of techno-human?* His attention is focused on solar energy as one of the future ideas that will help humanity out of the crisis. This is obviously on the agenda of Climate meetings, but he takes it a step further. One of his key proposals is to decolonize technology⁵⁸. One of his reasons, he explains is the consumption of electricity and how it colonized our life. He states: *The electric city really needed a world that was 24/7/365*. He

⁵⁶ Latour, Bruno, *Down to Earth*, Polity Press, 2017 pp. 65

⁵⁷ [The Development of Social Security in America \(ssa.gov\)](https://ssa.gov)

⁵⁸ Eschrich, Joey and Miller, Clark A, *Cities of Light*, A Collection of Solar Futures, 2021, Arizona State University pp. 76

also explains how energy during night is less expensive and how coal and nuclear power dislikes variation⁵⁹, and how it then suddenly colonializing our lives with all kinds of night-time pleasures⁶⁰. Of course, it is hard to predict if life would be better or worse and we will most likely never find out, but hopefully we can become less exposed, and instead take control of our bodies instead of being subjected into believing that we need all kinds of things. Maybe if it would be possible, we should warn the developing countries about the digital colonialism Facebook is implementing with free internet to developing countries⁶¹. While we should decolonize technology, developing countries are being colonized. While the Western society ideally becomes more present, from decolonizing technology, the developing countries are being overwhelmed with commercials from the Western Society. My contradiction is at this moment at high stake because I would like to believe that I do not have any major issues with these technologies, but unfortunately the surveillance of such structures and the intentions of technologies to take over the world, to make us digest it as a junk food material, create addiction patterns that you cannot escape unless you are willing to give up your life. I honestly do not believe Facebook cares about equality, democracy, and human rights⁶². As Bruno Latour states, *we understand nothing about the terrifying growth in inequalities or about the “wave of populism” ... the powerful reaction of the Earth to what globalization has done to it*. No, Facebook believes the more people they can connect on their platform and make them believe that this is THE internet, the more money, and power they can gain. I remember during an interview happening at a World Economic Forum Event, Sheryl Sandberg mentioned a few stories about people who had managed to create jobs because of Facebook, but these stories were all single individuals who had managed to create jobs for perhaps 8 other people – this is not going to solve the problems of inequality, democracy nor human rights. Instead, we need to focus on integrated solutions and jobs created in renewables.

Let us jump back to solar energy for a while. Is it possible that a renewable energy system will make revolution or change in the same way as coal and oil did and bring in new

⁵⁹ Eschrich, Joey and Miller, Clark A, *Cities of Light, A Collection of Solar Futures*, 2021, Arizona State University pp. 21

⁶⁰ Eschrich, Joey and Miller, Clark A, *Cities of Light, A Collection of Solar Futures*, 2021, Arizona State University pp. 76

⁶¹ www.pcmag.com/news/facebook-discover-app-provides-free-internet-to-developing-countries

⁶² Mark Zuckerberg: “connectivity is a human right” www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2014/jan/03/mark-zuckerberg-connectivity-basic-human-right

opportunities that will benefit people, who live in the cities, differently? Today's issues such as racial, economic, health, and environmental inequalities continue and during the pandemic, it became clear with large protests in solidarity with the threatened lives of Black Americans that there was a huge difference between how the injustice was unequal in the way they were treated when we look at situations such as how the police responded to Black Lives Matter protests and the Capitol assault. So, how are renewable energies going to stop the inequalities, or make urban more secure and healthier for all diverse inhabitants? Perhaps the answer lies in the new way we will begin to think about our surroundings when renewable energies are expected to create more jobs on a global level⁶³ or that renewable energies are going to create a greater workforce for women⁶⁴. The thoughts of the multidimensional meanings behind a renewable system: doing something good for the environment, others and oneself might start completely new thought patterns, if promoted. And let us just pause for a second, because I want to add, most fundamentally it will be important to ensure that those salaries from those new green jobs are not instantly thrown into the same high-consumerism lifestyle of today which is one of the main guilty of the escalating carbon emissions. Let make sure those hard-working incomes are not used on scrapyards imported from China. Perhaps such changes will by time create a greater union between humans. The Green New Deal is working intensively on creating a better society, where politics simultaneously working on lowering emissions and lowering the economic strain on working people⁶⁵, so yes this is exactly what we are heading for – if the deal is going to happen.

One thing is sure and we as individuals cannot change the world on our own, no matter how many changes we are going to do in our individual lives. It is ironic to believe that, if I become more aware of my individual daily choices, I can save the inequality in the world. On the other hand, I do not want to demean the work of those local activists who are doing major changes in our society⁶⁶. The beauty of when one organization is making changes and

⁶³ Employment in the Energy Sector, Status Report 2020 pp. 15, pp 23. - In a status report created in 2020, it is expected with the recent trends seen since 2018 that global renewable energy jobs can reach 42 million by 2050, which is already 12 million more jobs employing only fossil fuel industry.

⁶⁴ ⁶⁴ Employment in the Energy Sector, Status Report 2020 pp. 40 - Renewables industries are more appealing to the female workforce due to their multidisciplinary dimension, as well as the holistic, democratized energy future that they represent

⁶⁵ Klein, Naomi, On Fire, 2019, Penguin Random House pp. 244.

⁶⁶ www.unity.edu/unity-college-news/1st-in-the-nation-to-divest-from-fossil-fuels/

others slowly adapt. We must ignore what we are told from the powerful elite that we are powerful radical individuals. As consumers. To try to make changes as the individual is going to help absolutely nothing. Even though we are making individual and collective choices every day which are making changes that lead us to tomorrow; only by thinking on bigger scales are we able to imagine a different future; only when thousands of people will march together, are we able to take back our rights for a better future and this is going to happen within a new renewable age – perhaps not in a physical march, but can we imagine a tech-human-march? If we boycott products, tech, etc. not as individuals but as a union, companies must adapt. There is no doubt we have the power to do so, question though is how to persuade and organize such things if Facebook still has the power to stop us before such movements unite on such big scales. Fleeing to the local and become a solitary family in the woods, building your own house is not going to save the planet, though I do not want to belittle the choice of doing so. It is no doubt that such a movement inspires and creates curiosity and small examples inspire bigger ones. Neither is it helping if you are fleeing to the global, marching directly into the eye of the storm only to vote for lower taxes, but the drive to create inventions we need – this is why Bruno Latour is talking about the redirection before people are going too far to either left or right.

The theoretician of visual culture Nicholas Mirzoeff says, we must “*unsee*” how the past has taught us to see the world and begin to imagine a different way to be with what used to be called nature. What is this nature? Many different connotations hide behind that word: how we are acting in nature, how we act as nature, things that have always been a part of nature, human’s way to adapt to something becomes nature. The inherent of nature lies in both human and the actual nature. There is a deep grounded personality behind nature, something that carries an amount of knowledge, persona, and physiology, which all sounds very human, but all these terms can be adapted to non-human species. In an article about how the forests helps each other to survive, you see a lump of tree and immediately believe that this lump of tree is dead. Apparently, tree roots begin to be grafting between trees and living stumps and keeping the lump alive which suggests a communal physiology⁶⁷ in a time of crisis. Human and trees are related through the vertical axis; because of our balance and

⁶⁷ M.K.-F. Bader, S. Leuzinger, Hydraulic Coupling of a Leafless Kauri Tree Remnant to Conspecific Hosts, *iScience*, Volume 19, 2019, Pg. 1238-1247.

our eye orientation humans are sensitive to a “vertical dynamism”⁶⁸. As some of the most remarkable living forms on the planet, it is no surprise that trees influence identity formation and practice at levels ranging from the individual, through local, regional, and national scales, to the global. “We connect more fully and sensitively with the vertical relation between sky and earth or between soil and those things that grow upward from it”⁶⁹. There is a chance that trees and forests, and the spaces they form, are fundamental to the very construction of human identity. For many years they have become symbols of, and companions to people own passage through time and space. It can be witnessed in old mythologies, but also olive trees become a symbolic value for families in Palestine⁷⁰. In the book, *The Lemon Tree*⁷¹, Ahmed is returning to the home he was evicted from years earlier. He is now blind. He asks for a lemon tree he planted thirty-four years earlier. In the book it is described how he reaches out, running his fingers up the smooth, hard bark, over the soft knobs on the tree’s base and along the slender narrowing branches, until, between his hands, he feels a soft brush of leaves and, between them, a small, cool sphere: a lemon: he cried silently. Trees can become a powerful presence that articulates memories of home, identity, and belonging. Our whole existence could not have existed without trees.

Perhaps this is the time for Europe to show a time of great solidarity, for all the times when Europe have been taking from others or trying to conquer the world: *We came to you uninvited; you are now coming to us uninvited*⁷². Now it is time to give back from those resources to those who are in need and re-enter an era of solidarity with each other and show compassion, virtue, and a good example to the rest of the world. It is important to show collective identity, in a region of the world who is mixed up of different identities, who are all in one way or another shaping a region through collective actions and identities. Europe can become a region who is in the forefront of understanding the problem and make it a common purpose to stand together in solidarity.

⁶⁸ Bachelard, Gaston, *Air and dreams: an essay on the imagination of movement*, (1988), Dallas Institute Publications, Dallas

⁶⁹ Casey ES (1993) *Getting back into place: towards a renewed understanding of the place-world*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington, p 80

⁷⁰ Braverman, Irus, *Uprooting Identities: The Regulation of Olive Trees in the Occupied West Bank*, University at Buffalo Law School, The State University of New York.

⁷¹ Tolan, Sandy, *The Lemon Tree: An Arab, a Jew, and the Heart of the Middle East*, Bloomsbury, 2006.

⁷² Latour, Bruno, *Down to Earth*, Polity Press, 2017 pp. 77

We can begin to imagine how we would picture a city of tomorrow in our minds. How is this place powered – has it changed to renewable energy, such as solar energy? How does the place feel like, how is the atmosphere? Has it changed from the way it looked and felt? Do people work, and live differently? Who owns these places? Who does take the risk or benefit from new-age technology, economy, and political power that we as people generate? Could you imagine yourself inhabiting this city of tomorrow with like-minded Terrestrials? Can you imagine carbon-free cities and how fast can we expect it to happen? To reach such futures we must become better to collaborate. We can begin imagining living in green urban communities in the cities, where people are responsible to participate or take control of how neighborhoods should look by recognizing their surroundings. We collaborate with the sun – it becomes people’s liberation and inspiration of life. Whole new cultures and habits will be born, and it is only the imagination that can tell how it will be to live as a human under such conditions.

When we start to think differently, we can stimulate our imagination and dream about what sort of city, environment, or even what kind of life we want to live in the future. And by being imaginative, we are cultivating thoughts and bringing new life into a new way of inhabiting our cities. Being Terrestrial is to spend more time as an earthling connecting and collaborating with others, earth, plants, species, bugs, something that are equally important for diversity and our survival. It includes using the sun, wind, oceans, and other prominent geographic features to create sustainable futures. Therefore, we must also begin to appreciate life around us as kin. *The kin, or relatives, include all the natural elements of an ecosystem*⁷³. Being Terrestrial is being inventive and creating alternatives inventions that can elevate the life of humans, but it all must be done with the environment in mind. If it is not environmental, then it is not ready to become public.

There is no power in being an individual and it has long been recognized by workers in Indonesia and the Philippines: Noemi Klein explains in one of her many stories in her book “*On Fire*”, when she talked to a worker, making clothes and electronics- who also were wearing trademarks clothing who were responsible for these conditions we are living

⁷³ Salmón, Enrique, *Kincentric Ecology: Indigenous Perceptions of the Human-Nature Relationship*, *Ecological Society of America*, Vol. 10, No. 5 (Oct., 2000) pp. 1327-1332.

through. She explains the answer she got from the work labor about the contradiction: *“You see, for him and his colleagues, individual consumption was not considered to be in the realm of politics at all. Power rested not in what you did as one person, but what you did as many people, as one part of a large, organized, and focused movement. For him, this meant organizing workers to go on strike for better conditions, and eventually it meant winning the right to unionize. What you ate for lunch or happened to be wearing was of absolutely no concern whatsoever”*⁷⁴.

We are waiting for the inequality to unite, to become the catalyst for knitting peoples worth and values together into one powerful movement that will make sure everyone will have access to basic social protection. But how do we reach that point? Is it through conversation? The contradiction to this is demonstrations and as the BLM demonstrations did manage to create a big wave of attention, they only managed to involve one issue out of many issues and I believe we must focus on all of them, instead of isolating them separately. I do not think we can pick and choose each issue and claim something is more important than another. It has to be a holistic approach where no one is left out. I cannot force someone with gender issues to believe that going green is more important; I would argue that both issues are equally important and that we both have a problem that could culminate to become a better world if resolved.

When it comes to a conversation, a great example of this is the art projects that took place on the pleasure boat that set off for a three-hour cruise on Lake Zurich initiated by WochenKlausur⁷⁵. Around the tables, there were politicians, journalists, sex workers, and activists from the city of Zurich. They had been brought together, in a socially conscious light, to connect in a low-key environment, having a conversation about the difficult situations faced by drug addicts in Zurich who had turned to prostitution to support their habits. The goal was to reach a consensus supporting a modest but concrete response to the problem by creating a boardinghouse where these addicts could have a place to sleep⁷⁶. What is interesting about this is that hierarchy is suddenly non-existent. No visual pleasure,

⁷⁴ Klein, Naomi, *On Fire*, 2019, Penguin Random House pp. 113.

⁷⁵ www.wochenklausur.at/projekt.php?lang=en&id=4

⁷⁶ [.:wochenklausur - Shelter for Drug-Addicted Women.:](http://www.wochenklausur.at/shelter)

mainstream art, or critics are there to dismiss it as failed art⁷⁷. Also, maybe the most important factor, no one was killed, harmed nor any materialistic damage.

This reminds me somehow about Russell Brand - a YouTube left-wing phenomenon explaining his thoughts about society – and his latest talks with Jordan Peterson. This is two people with two different mindsets and agendas, but their conversation is inconceivable engaging because they sit down and listen to each other. Their conversations are not about winning an argument, they want to gain knowledge about each other's minds and thoughts. Because even though we have different minds, there is so much we can learn from each other in such conversations. Perhaps through conversation a growing compassion will elevate, and we do not need to say that we are either left or right ... *You have never been leftist? That doesn't matter, neither have I, but, like you, I am radically Terrestrial*⁷⁸.

Conclusion

In this dissertation, I have concentrated on the implications that man is in contact with, such as our consumer patterns and our powerlessness to be able to resist the joys of capitalism. I would like to conclude by discussing some of the implications that I consider important and which can help to reverse how we can change our current situation in the Climate Crisis.

Between many, some several artists and philosophers have done some of the most cogent writing on ecology and I am eternally grateful to them for their comprehensive work, many of whom I have cited several times in my thesis. We share a common general dissatisfaction with authority and the very traditional and institutional approach.

While writing my dissertation, I have repeatedly found myself in a situation where I have been asked why I want to change the way we view the planet. I think the question stems from deeper implications like a sense of being lost and powerless, a feeling of not being able to change anything. This may be correct enough in one way or another, but I keep convincing myself that, as long as I live in the belief that my thoughts and chores can have an effect or plant new seeds and thoughts in a third party, I have managed to do exactly what my thesis requires of me. There may still be a question to be answered: Will I be a better person by defining myself as Terrestrial? Here I can argue that challenging pre-

⁷⁷ Kester, Grant H, *Conversations Pieces, community and communication in modern art* pp. 11, University of California Press, 2004.

⁷⁸ Latour, Bruno, *Down to Earth*, Polity Press, 2017 pp. 45

existing definitions of what a good person is are the very essence of being Terrestrial. Not accepting anything and taking things for granted. Based on this, it requires us as consumers to reform our modern individualism. A long period that has done a lot of good things for us as human beings, but it's time to move on from here and not be stuck in a consumer society that is devastating to our health and planet.

Part of my thesis I focused on art, where I have given a few examples of how we are challenged as an audience to see the world from different angles. One could argue that challenging the definitions of what it means to see the world from a different angle should be the very essence of a modernist project dealing with ecology. On this basis, I have probably neglected to get around properly to also give an insight into other art forms that concentrate on equally important arts within other types of institutional problems, such as Gender or Racism.

In another part of the dissertation, I try to conclude on the implications of technology, whether we are talking about the opportunities it brings or what it prevents us from. There is no doubt that my thoughts revolve around our consumption patterns and how we are able as humans to navigate around the bad things that technology also brings with it. I have been misunderstood several times when I have tried to argue against technology because it seems like I am opposed to it, but it is about me being against those who control it and their agenda with it.

My desire, however, is to convey a lot of inspiring information that can benefit an audience and bring new angles, discussions, and views on the agenda. The whole idea is that by putting new seeds of thought, we affect ourselves, but we also affect our circumstances, however, I do not want us as humans to fight each other, but accept each other's inequalities, and begin to see our planet as a whole and not in separate parts.

My desire here has not been to impose a rigid direction for what is right and wrong, but simply to offer multiple approaches to a very complex situation. My research has evolved over the past few months, through ongoing conversations with artists who also oppose my thoughts, so that I could get a broader sense of what my real desire was by developing this text. This dissertation is my attempt to contribute to an ongoing conversation about the Climate Crisis.

Bibliography

- *Bridle, James.* 2018. *New Dark Age, Technology and the End of the Future.* Verso.
- *Costanza, Robert, Graumlich, Lisa J., Steffen, Will.* 2007. *Sustainability or Collapse, An Integrated History and Future of People on Earth.* The MIT Press Cambridge, Massachusetts, In cooperative with Dahlem University Press.
- *Demos, T.J.* 2016. *Decolonizing Nature, Contemporary Art and the Politics of Ecology.* Sternberg Press
- *Demos, T.J.* 2017 *Against the Anthropocene.* Sternberg Press
- *Godfrey-Smith, Peter.* 2016. *Other Minds, The Octopus, The Sea, and The Deep Origins of Consciousness.* Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- *Henschke, Dr. Natasha.* Volume 31, Issue 9, 2016. *Rethinking the Role of Salps in the Ocean.* *Trends in Ecology and Evolution.* (pages 720-733)
- *Moore, Jason W.* 2016. *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History and the Crisis of Capitalism.* Kairos books
- *Tsing, Anna. Anne Swanson, Heather. Gan, Elaine and Bubrandt, Nils.* 2017. *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet Ghost and Monsters of the Anthropocene.* University of Minnesota
- *Kester, Grant H,* *Conversation Pieces, Community and Communication in Modern Art,* University of California Press, 2004