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Grafting Alliance:

The Cultivation of Feminine-Vegetal Relationships in
Gerd Tinglum's *Usynliggjorte, utryddete og truede arter*
(1991)

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Master thesis in Curation, Critique and the Cultural Heritage of
Modernism
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Department of Philosophy, Classics, History of Art and Ideas,
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<http://www.duo.uio.no/>

Abstract

This thesis explores how Gerd Tinglums photographic series *Usynliggjorte, utryddete og truede arter* (*Invisible, extinct and endangered species*) from 1991 engages with the historical, present and potential future relationship between the vegetal and feminine. My exploration of the series is rooted in critical plants studies and ecofeminism as it focuses on the interconnected suppressive practices affecting both cultural and ecological groups, and the disruptive potential that can be found in a more vegetal and feminist approach to time, being and relationality. The photographic series consist of 30 portraits featuring a selection of ignored, forgotten and underappreciated female cultural figures that have been grafted together with rare, threatened, endangered and extinct plants from the Norwegian flora. Through grafting the feminine and vegetal together, the photographs question how women and plants have been conceptualized within western ontological structures, and disturbs the traditional ideas of the autonomous self, chronological and linear time, and relationality within and across species boundaries. Framing these discussions is the notion of the Anthropocene and Jeffrey Cohen's concept of a grey ecology that fosters a place where the excluded, spectral and monstrous can dwell. I will argue that through an engagement with vulnerable cultural and ecological existences, Tinglum's photographic series point towards alternative and productive ontological frameworks. These frameworks centre around a more interconnected, feminine, vegetal and metamorphosing way of being, alongside a hauntological notion of time and a vegetal form of relationality based on Irigaray's notion of sharing in difference. My argument will encompass the series in its entirety, but will pay particular attention to four specific portraits in order to bring to bear a level of specificity in my account of the series. The four portraits will be discussed primarily in relation to the issue of vegetal temporality, identity and hospitality, where information about the depicted plants and women will be weaved into the discussion. The aim of this thesis is to show how an approach to women and plants rooted in ecofeminism and vegetal philosophy can prove productive in our ecologically and socially troubled presence, and explore how this is reflected in the way Gerd Tinglum's photographic series questions and reformulates the traditionally devalued traits of the vegetal and feminine.

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1.0. Introduction

1.1 Presentation of the theme

The feminine-vegetal relationship has deep roots within western cultural history, which the Norwegian artist Gerd Tinglum's photographic series *Usynliggjorte, utryddete og truede arter* (1991) problematizes as it engages with the damaging effects and haunted nature of this union. The photographic series consist of 30 portraits which confronts the audience with a gallery of grey photographs where women, plants and their surroundings blend together in ways that both compliment and disfigure. The portraits feature Tinglum herself, her mother, and an international selection of ignored, forgotten or underappreciated women from cultural history grafted together with rare, endangered, or extinct plants from the Norwegian flora.¹ Through these grafts, the photographs hint at the interconnected forms of suppression affecting women and plants, and the potentially disruptive power of a reformulated feminine-vegetal alliance. This thesis will explore how Tinglum's visualization of the feminine-vegetal relationship problematizes our historical, present and potential future approach to both plants and women through critiques of classical western traditions of knowledge and ontological explorations of concepts such as time, identity and relationality.

The flourishing fields of critical plant studies and ecofeminism form the grounds out of which this thesis sprouts. The following explorations of new feminine and vegetal conceptualizations of time, being and relationality within multispecies ecologies will be framed by Jeffrey Cohen's concept of a grey ecology as an in-between space where the feminine, vegetal, monstrous and spectral can thrive. The grey is regarded as the colour of the excluded other, and through the photographic series we are invited to discover the potential that can be found in a grey ecological landscape as Tinglum weaves a narrative shaped by both suppression and resistance, where women from different locations and times come together with local plants to illustrate the historical and current vulnerability of feminine and vegetal beings on a local and global scale. The artwork thereby engages in an exploration of the growth, emergence, decay and extinction of disrupted identities shaped by and in opposition to western culture, and of the particular stories of those cast as 'others' who dwell in the grey landscapes that are becoming ever more prevalent in the Anthropocene.

¹ Personal communication with Gerd Tinglum via Skype, 16.10.20.

1.2. Thesis and Research aims

Currently one in every five plant species is in danger of going extinct,² and in less than a century it is expected that around 50% of the world's vascular plants will be threatened with extinction alongside a wide array of animal and human communities that will be severely affected by climate change unless drastic political, economic and cultural changes occur.³ These environmental challenges have partly inspired this thesis as our current western system of thought appears to do more harm than good to both ours, and others, prospects. I will therefore endeavour to step outside of this system and immerse myself in a more feminine and vegetal approach to being and life, which has traditionally been devalued, ignored, or regarded as suspect. My argument is that within the realms of the excluded, monstrous, and the radical other, we might find new ways of relating and being that can enable us to adapt to, and maybe flourish within, a rapidly changing world in more sustainable and just ways.

Essential to this endeavour is a critical analysis of our current ontological framework in order to open up a space for a more vegetal and feminine-oriented ecology that enables a form of in-between existence where one's own, and others' ability to flourish can be maintained. I will argue that within Tinglum's photographic series we encounter feminine-vegetal beings who highlight this form of existence through their symbiotic relationship, as they question and disrupt our traditional western ideas of materiality, temporality, femininity, and nature. The central question I will be exploring is how vegetal philosophy and ecofeminism can offer an alternative way of approaching the relationship between women and plants, and by extension how a transformation of this relationship can become productive in the Anthropocene as an era defined by the increasingly intrusive haunting of the excluded other. This thesis seeks to contribute to the growing and emerging field of critical plant studies that engages with ecofeminist theories, feminine identity and feminine aesthetics.

1.3. Theoretical Perspectives

In order to adequately approach the complexity of the relationship between gender, western thought systems and vegetal beings, this thesis will tie together various strands of feminist and ecofeminist theory, posthumanist theory, vegetal philosophy and hauntology to establish a rich theoretical framework within which the artwork can be analyzed. The hybridity and

² Marder, «The Time is Ripe for Plant Rights», 55.

³ Newell, Robin, Wehner, *Curating the Future: Museums, Communities and Climate Change* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 182.

grafted nature of the methodological and theoretical approach reflects both the fluid and intersectional nature of ecofeminism and vegetal philosophy as theoretical fields, as well as reflecting the artwork itself. While this thesis weaves together a wide range of scholarly work, there are some central concepts that will run throughout my arguments. Michael Marders work within vegetal ontology, or ontophytology,⁴ will function as a framework for my discussion of vegetal temporality and identity, while also serving as an essential element in my argument for a vegetal inspired form of kinship. Arguments pertaining to the vegetal will also be developed further through the work of Elaine Miller, Prudence Gibson, Olga Cielemeńska and Luce Irigaray who in various ways explore how the vegetal can constitute a foundation for a new form of feminine subjectivity and inspire new ways of relating to others. Jeffrey Cohen's concept of a grey ecology will function as a framework for the overarching discussion on how to live and adapt to the Anthropocene as a spectral age, where the unsettled grey will be explored as a potentially fertile ground from which to emerge.

The concepts of temporality and identity are of particular significance in this thesis, where an analysis of these concepts will be tied to four specific portraits from the photographic series that illustrate how time and being can be reconceptualized within a vegetal and feminine ontological framework. In the discussion of temporality, I will also draw on Derridean notions of hauntology in order to address the multitude of temporalities present within Gerd Tinglum's photographic series, which will be developed further by the ecofeminist Karen Barad's theory of a material hauntology. In relation to the concept of identity, the idea of grafted identities will be presented as an alternative to the western idea of the self-contained, autonomous self/being, supplemented by the scientific research conducted by Margrit Shildrick. The second part of the discussion of materiality will centre around the concept of material and vegetal hospitality, in order to frame an exploration of our relation to the external world, and our relation to other nonhuman, human, and inhuman beings.

Ecofeminism will be a recurring theoretical element throughout the text, and although the field itself includes a wide range of theoretical perspectives, such as new materialism, queer theory, psychoanalysis, and marxism, my approach will rely mostly on two conceptualizations. The first will be the structural critique of western systems of thought pursued by Val Plumwood, who explores the underlying suppressive structures within western societies

⁴ Marder, *Plant Thinking* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 95.

based on the dualistic opposition between ‘the master identity’ and the ‘other’ as it relates to the hyperseparation between humans and nature. The second will be an ecofeminist approach to time and identity inspired by thinkers such as Luce Irigaray, Margrit Shildrick, Karen Barad and Donna Haraway, focusing on interconnected, overlapping, and metamorphosing forms of existence.

I will be applying a feminist methodology, focusing on performing an intersectional analysis that explores the relation between the vegetal and feminine within our western society. Adopting this methodological approach allows me to explore the symbolic, cultural and mythological practices surrounding the conceptualization of women and plants, and the critique of these practices performed by Tinglum, ecofeminists and other thinkers.

1.4 Research material and Existing research

My primary research material is Gerd Tinglum’s photographic series *Usynliggjorte, utryddete og truede arter* from 1991, which exists in two editions. The series consists of 30 portraits and is owned in its entirety by Nasjonalmuseet. Little has been written about Gerd Tinglum and her work beyond short texts in exhibition catalogues, exhibition reviews and interviews. In addition to this material there is a book, *Gerd Tinglum: arbeider 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005*, that offers an overview of some of her work, and an edited book of essays, *Gerd Tinglum: Essays om Farge*, produced for an exhibition held in 2010 with the same name, containing contributions from the artist herself and various curators and art historians. There are currently no extensive essays or books exploring this particular artwork, despite it being one of the most well-known projects within her oeuvre. Seeing as there is little previous research done on Gerd Tinglum, I will mainly be relying on my own engagement with the photographs, an interview I conducted with Tinglum in October 2020, e-mail correspondence with the artist from 2021, the aforementioned exhibition catalogues and books, and secondary literature exploring the concepts that are central to my thesis.

Due to this lack of research my work will contribute to documenting and discussing an important contemporary Norwegian artist, as well as exploring a valued photographic series within Nasjonalmuseet’s collection. Analyzing Tinglum’s artwork from a perspective informed by ecofeminism and critical plant studies has also never been attempted before, although the artwork in question draws inspiration from the prominent ecofeminist theorist

Vandana Shiva, and the botanist Eilif Dahl.⁵ Adopting this framework suits the artwork's history and the artist's intention while also opening up for explorations of new forms of being, collectivity, relationality, and temporality that are tied to the continued relevance of the question of the relation between the feminine and vegetal. My focus will be on the artwork and my interpretation of it, and I will not put much emphasis on the artist's life in relation to the photographic series. As Tinglum herself often focuses on philosophical concepts and ideas in her work it seems fitting to analyze her artwork through this lens.⁶

1.5 Presentation of Gerd Tinglum

Gerd Tinglum was born in 1951 in Nord-Trøndelag and is regarded as a pioneer within Norwegian conceptual art. She attended art universities in Germany, Oslo and Tokyo between 1969-1982, and since 1996 she has worked as a professor at Kunsthøgskolen in Oslo, and as a professor and dean at Kunst- og Designhøgskolen in Bergen.⁷ Throughout her career she has participated in both group and solo exhibitions, and her artworks have been purchased by a multitude of Norwegian institutions, such as Nasjonalmuseet for kunst, arkitektur og design, Trondheim Kunstmuseum, Oslo kommune and Steinkjer Kunstforening amongst others.⁸

Similarly to other conceptual artists Tinglum's work centres around conveying ideas rather than the use of a specific form, and throughout her career she has worked with a variety of materials.⁹ Her approach to conceptual art, however, is one that embraces rather than rejects perceptual aesthetic qualities such as composition, form and colour in order to emphasize how traditional visual media can be used to convey conceptual ideas.¹⁰ Her work often negates and reconceptualizes the modernist approach to visuality as she imbues the choice of materials, colours, and composition with conceptual meaning, which is apparent in series like *Målinger*. The pictures in the series consist of a ruler-straight pencil line and a transparent brushstroke where the latter marks what Tinglum herself regarded as the centre, while the pencil line signify the objective centre line.¹¹ The introduction of the subjective line

⁵ Personal communication with Gerd Tinglum via Skype, 16.10.20.

⁶ Krogvik, «Bakenfor det synlige», 18.

⁷ QB Gallery, «Gerd Tinglum.»

⁸ Kunstnerforbundet, «Gerd Tinglum.»

⁹ QB Gallery, «Gerd Tinglum.»

¹⁰ Krogvik, «Bakenfor det synlige», 26.

¹¹ Krogvik, «Bakenfor det synlige», 21.

functions to question formalism's fetishisation of composition as an objective, universal and essential category through introducing an equally valuable, and often very accurate, subjective option.¹² Many of her artworks also incorporate accidental visual developments through her use of materials or technique in order to allow the work to unfold organically, as she actively promotes the uncontrollable as a way to resist western notions of control and domination. Tinglum also places a lot of emphasis on presenting her artwork, and their conceptual and material origin, as embedded in specific cultural, social and ecological settings on both a personal and public level, thereby resisting the autonomous status of the modernist painting.

An important facet of Tinglum's work is the invisible or untold, which permeates much of her art through a self-constructed system organizing visual elements according to personal associations, enabling her to encode her artworks with latent narratives.¹³ These stories are often combined with more public elements, which allows her work to fluctuate between the public and private in ways that pique the audience's interest. This ambiguity between revealing and concealing is also visually apparent in many of her artworks, such as in series like *Akt* (1969-1979) and *Porno* (1980) (Fig.1) where the nude (and often female) body is both hidden and revealed behind layers of paper and paint.¹⁴ Her work thereby invites the audience to engage with the in-visible within the visible, thus asking us to carefully explore the history, context and formal qualities of her artworks in order to discover the stories embedded within them, while also allowing certain aspects to remain concealed, opaque, and ambiguous.

The vegetal and feminine are recurring themes and motifs within Tinglum's art as she often produces work that brings attention to, problematizes, and reformulates our relationship and understanding of the vegetal and feminine. Many of her works featuring vegetation focus on both personal and public relations with the vegetal, often drawing on the concept of memories to frame our relationship with plants. This is apparent in the artwork *Om Minne* (2014-2018) where Tinglum displays a series of images featuring the plants she can remember the names of from her childhood, as well as in other works where these names are presented in a book/flora, or the audience are asked to write down the plants they

¹² Krogvik, «Bakenfor det synlige», 24.

¹³ Krogvik, «Bakenfor det synlige», 32.

¹⁴ Krogvik, «Bakenfor det synlige», 25.

remember.¹⁵ Other works feature and question scientific depictions of plants and how these idealized depictions often conceal or erase the identity of vegetal beings.¹⁶ This engagement with the forgotten or concealed is also carried over into other works that problematize femininity or the female body in relation to censorship or suppression, such as in series like *Porno, Akt, Broderi* (2000-2020) and *Usynliggjorte, utryddete og truede arter*.

1.6 Thesis Structure

This essay consists of six chapters, and in light of the complexity of the subject matter and my theoretical foundation the four main chapters and the conclusion will explore various themes where theory, analysis and historical information will overlap, allowing new hybridized ideas to fertilize and grow. Following the first introductory chapter, the second chapter will centre around the historical connection between femininity and the vegetal, and an exploration of the ecofeminist cultivation of this relationship. This chapter will create a framework for the following chapters by placing Tinglum's *Usynliggjorte, utryddete og truede arter* in a historical and philosophical context. The third chapter explores the concepts of grey ecology and vegetal ontology, as it relates to the issue of growth, indifference, and decay. The fourth chapter will investigate issues of vegetal temporality and hauntology in relation to the photographic series as a whole, and in relation to Tinglum's self-portrait and her portrait of Virginia Woolf. In the fifth chapter, issues related to feminine and vegetal embodiment will be explored through the concept of grafted identities, focusing on the portraits of Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas. The last chapter rounds off with a discussion of vegetal hospitality within multispecies ecologies and provides a brief conclusion.

1.7 The Exhibition Report

This essay is an outgrowth of my exhibition report *Monstrous TransPlants: Curating Feminine-Vegetal Relationships* (2020) as it explores the same questions, but from different perspectives and at a deeper level.¹⁷ While the report focused on feminine-vegetal forms of subjectivities, vegetal sexuality and the monstrous, this essay will look closer at how the feminine and vegetal can transform and deform western notions of temporality, identity, and relationality. Both texts also draw on similar frameworks: the report grounded itself in Myra

¹⁵ Personal communication with Gerd Tinglum via Skype, 16.10.20.

¹⁶ Personal communication with Gerd Tinglum via Skype, 16.10.20.

¹⁷ 'Monstrous TransPlants: Curating Feminine-Vegetal Relationships', project report for KUN4900, Master program in Curation, Critique and the Cultural Heritage of Modernism, Department of Philosophy, Classics, History of Art and Ideas, University of Oslo, Autumn 2020.

J. Hird's interpretation of the «uncanny valley», while this essay revolves around Cohen's notion of a grey ecology, both of which are conceptualized as spaces for the ontologically excluded.

2.0 Feminine Roots

2.1. The Vegetal-Feminine Relationship

In an interview conducted with Tinglum in October 2020 the artist stated that her intention with the series was to problematize how both women and plants have been made invisible within western society and cultural history.¹⁸ This shared invisibility relates to the long and intertwined history behind the conceptualization of femininity and nature, as they have been caught in systems of oppression linking the ontological devaluation of nature to that of women and other ecological and social groups considered as 'others'.¹⁹ The concept of the 'other' features heavily in Gerd Tinglum's photographic series as it highlights underappreciated female musicians, writers, anthropologists, artists and poets from cultural history alongside plants who are defined as rare, extremely rare, threatened, extremely threatened or extinct within the Norwegian flora. Both the women and plants embody various forms of vulnerable existences which serves to illustrate the consequences of structural oppression through 'othering' within social and ecological communities. Within ecofeminist thought this interconnection between the appropriation, exploitation and oppression of women and the natural world rests on hierarchical and interrelated dualisms that have functioned to define the authentic, masculine and rational subject, referred to by Plumwood as the 'master identity',²⁰ in opposition to everything natural, physical, biological and feminine. All beings associated with the lower end of the hierarchy are seen as exhibiting less, or no, agency and autonomy, which serves as the justification for 'othering' these groups.²¹ Karen Warren posits that these suppressive structures affect a multitude of cultural and ecological groups, including the poor, differently abled, the LGBT community,

¹⁸ Personal communication with Gerd Tinglum via Skype, 16.10.20.

¹⁹ Plumwood, «Ecofeminist Analysis and the Culture of Ecological Denial», 105.

²⁰ Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (London: Routledge, 1993), 4.

²¹ Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (London: Routledge, 1993), 39.

indigenous communities, women, plants, and animals, which makes the exploration of these structures essential in regards to achieving both ecological and social justice.²²

Ecofeminists argue that it is impossible to address the suppression of one group without also addressing the suppression of other interconnected groups.²³ Within the photographic series, Tinglum creates a clear visual and conceptual relationship between the vegetal and feminine as she intertwines their physical and symbolic existence with each other. This establishes how the dualistic relationship between nature and culture has been used to justify the devaluation of women's behaviour, societal gender roles and tasks by linking the female temperament, social status and reproductive work to the natural world of vegetation.²⁴ The vegetal, or nutritive, soul was by Aristotle defined as the lowest and most basic form of life in comparison to the more complex souls belonging to animals or humans.²⁵ Although the vegetal soul had its own purpose and fulfilment within the Aristotelian system it was still regarded as an embodiment of lack when seen in relation to the animal or human soul, which became associated with femininity as it was perceived as a lesser version of the complex and complete form represented by the adult male.²⁶ Luce Irigaray claims that this view has reverberated throughout western metaphysics, and is operative in the philosophy of prominent thinkers such as Hegel, Kant, Freud and Decartes, thus illustrating an underlying hostility towards all things feminine, natural, and material.²⁷

Still, the conceptualization of the relationship between women and nature has gone through many changes throughout history, many of which occurred in the temporal span that concerns the lives of the portrait subjects in Tinglum's photographic series. Caterina van Hemessen, a Flemish renaissance painter born in 1528 (Fig. 2), signals the start of the photographic series' timeline as it develops towards our present day with Tinglum's self-portrait. This timeline encompasses some of the most important reinterpretations of the symbolics associated with women and nature, alongside developments in women's relationship to nature. Some of the most drastic changes occurred during the 17th and 18th century with the emergence of the

²² Phillips and Rumens, *Contemporary Perspectives on Ecofeminism* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 2.

²³ Stevens, Tait, Varney, «Introduction: 'Street-fighters and philosophers': Traversing Ecofeminisms», 2.

²⁴ Lam, «A Zen-flavoured Feminist Environmental Selfhood and its Contemporary Implications», 103.

²⁵ Sandilands, «Vegetate», 17.

²⁶ Miller, *The Vegetative Soul* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2002), 187.

²⁷ Miller, *The Vegetative Soul* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2002), 16.

natural sciences, the switch from an agricultural to an industrial society, and the change from an organic to a more mechanistic view of nature.²⁸ The mechanistic worldview established a strong dualistic divide between the mind and body, and by extension culture and nature, where all nonhumans were defined as soulless and emotionless machines.²⁹ This divide separated the rational human from all aspects associated with nature, materiality, reproduction and emotionality, which enhanced the hierarchical separation between the masculine and feminine as the latter continued to be associated with the natural world.³⁰

Tinglum's photographic series references this historical relationship between the vegetal and feminine visually as the portraits present incomplete pictures of both the women and plants due to their disturbance of each other, thus visualizing how their relation is seen as embodying a form of 'lack' as both parties are disfigured by the other. This disfiguration is apparent in portraits such as *Margaret Mead (1901-1978) Søtmariland, Orchis sambucinus, meget sjelden*, (Fig. 3) where the plant both obscures Mead's face, and is interrupted by the darker sections around her eyes and mouth which almost appears to cut through the plant. The impression of bodily disfiguration or invasion is also enhanced by how Mead's face, similarly to many of the other women's faces, lacks details due to the high contrast between dark and light, reducing her features to a bare minimum. Simultaneously, this disturbance also opposes the hierarchical human/nonhuman divide as it places the vegetal within and alongside the human rather than it being separated and below it. In an interview, Tinglum stated that her intention was to make sure that none of the women, nor any of the plants, completely overwhelmed the other, as she wanted to create spaces where both could unfold in their own unique ways.³¹ This is achieved as the plants are granted an equal amount of attention and space compared to the women, thus fostering a relationship where culture and nature are presented as equally valuable and interconnected. The series adopts an ecofeminist stance, exploring how changing our approach to women also entails altering our relationship with nature, signalling that the fight for equality must traverse species boundaries.

2.2 Botanical Relations

The plants depicted in Tinglum's photographic series are reproductions of botanical

²⁸ Phillips and Rumens, *Contemporary Perspectives on Ecofeminism* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 193.

²⁹ Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (London: Routledge, 1993), 136.

³⁰ Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (London: Routledge, 1993), 71.

³¹ Personal communication with Gerd Tinglum via Skype, 16.10.20.

illustrations created by Carl Axel Magnus Lindman for *Bilder ur Nordens Flora*, which was first published in three volumes between 1901 and 1926. All the plants are depicted in great detail, featuring one large illustration of the entire plant alongside several smaller ones showing detailed closeup views of selected parts of the plant in different stages of growth. The names of the plants, which are included in the original illustrations and in the titles of Tinglum's portraits, are based on Carl Linnaeus' two-part naming system (binominal nomenclature), which was part of a shift within the natural sciences from observing to categorizing organic life.³² By including these names, Tinglum's series references the control and defining power exerted by western scientific discourse, as this abstract and utilitarian way of naming vegetal beings overlooks the local origins of the plants and the language of the people whose history is intertwined with them. Using red listed species also hints at how the instrumentalization of plants within capitalist systems has damaged ecological environments and exterminated certain species, illustrating the danger of overlooking the unique context and ontology of vegetal beings.³³

The botanical illustrations also hold gendered connotations as women and children, during the 18th century, were encouraged to pursue botany as it was regarded as a healthy activity that could assist in curtailing their undisciplined, frivolous, or perhaps vegetative, traits through more «rational» pursuits.³⁴ This encouragement to pursue botanical activities continued throughout the 19th century as women engaged in amateur collecting, gardening and illustration work. Towards the end of the century, however, their access to these activities became more limited as society deemed that the information about sexual acts and reproduction that women gathered from these botanical studies was improper.³⁵ This shift in attitude illustrates how western women, despite being defined in relation to the vegetal, often had little agency over their own relationship with plants. In Tinglum's series, this restricted relationship is challenged as the portraits establish a new alliance between the feminine, vegetal and botany that disrupts the masculine and scientific interpretation of the 'ideal' vegetal specimen. The original botanical illustrations, featuring plants floating in a scientific, objective, and abstract space, (Fig. 4) are disrupted by the women as they form new feminine-vegetal relations that resists control, domination, and boundaries. By merging the plants,

³² Miller, *The Vegetative Soul* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2002), 2.

³³ Sandilands, «Vegetate», 18.

³⁴ Salthe, *Flora* (Stavanger: Stavanger Kunstmuseum, 2019), 45.

³⁵ Gibson, «Eco-Feminism: Plants as Becoming-Woman», 124.

women and their environment Tinglum brings attention to the situatedness of each vegetal and human being, something that is further enhanced through the inclusion of the Norwegian names which ties the plants into a local environment. This points towards a more ecofeminist approach that emphasizes encounters between specific beings in local settings, highlighting the importance of viewing organic beings in relation to their environmental and social context.³⁶ By including this local element, as well as the more global aspect through the Latin names and the international selection of women, the series points towards both the overarching suppressive and patriarchal practices that have defined women and plants for centuries, while also bringing attention to how these structures affect vegetal and cultural beings on a local and individual level.

2.3 Transforming Feminine-Vegetal Relationships

The idea that something positive might come from women's connection with nature has been a central tenant within much ecofeminist thought, despite it often being interpreted as inherently regressive by many feminists.³⁷ Plumwood is one of many who argue that cultivating an alliance between women and nature is imperative if we are to transform western society, claiming that it is not enough to simply reverse who is most valued within a hierarchical dualistic relationship, nor is it adequate to just elevate femininity within the system as it stands.³⁸ The task of liberation is instead described as subversion, replacement and resistance, suggesting that one cannot deny the history between nature and femininity, nor the traits traditionally associated with these spheres.³⁹ Instead this relationship needs to be recontextualized so that the suppressed elements within western culture can be incorporated into our social structure in ways that create space for entirely new feminine, nonhuman and human identities to be formed. This recontextualization often evades the accusation of essentialism as it adopts a complex view of cultural and biological relations that remains sensitive to how the relationship between women and nature, and their interrelated causes of oppression, is always historically and culturally situated.⁴⁰

When working on the photographic series Tinglum was inspired by Gisela Breitlings book *Der verborgene Eros: Weiblichkeit und Männlichkeit im Zerrspiegel der Künste : Aufsätze*

³⁶ Marder, *Plant Thinking* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 4.

³⁷ Rigby, «Women and Nature Revisited: Ecofeminist Reconfigurations of an Old Association», 67.

³⁸ Rigby, «Women and Nature Revisited: Ecofeminist Reconfigurations of an Old Association», 75.

³⁹ Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (London: Routledge, 1993), 30.

⁴⁰ Rigby, «Women and Nature Revisited: Ecofeminist Reconfigurations of an Old Association», 75.

(Die Frau in der Gesellschaft), and she included a quote from the book that had been particularly important to her work in an exhibition held at the Hordaland Kunstsenter in 1991.⁴¹ The quote states that only when the female and male experience can stand side by side will the masculine demand for universality be rejected, and that women can reclaim their history by defying patriarchal notions of femininity through creating art that reflects their actual lived experiences.⁴² Only by making space for, and expressing, a specifically female experience can women introduce their own ontology into western society, which is a concept that is clearly articulated in Tinglums series as she brings attention to female cultural figures who engaged in this type of artistic expression. By including her own self-portrait, Tinglum also signals how the series functions as an expression of her own experience as a woman within the cultural world, illustrating what it is like to have one's cultural roots erased and suppressed alongside other associated ecological groups. By highlighting these vegetal and feminine stories, and reformulating the vegetal-feminine relationship into a partnership that disrupts rather than complies with the western view of nature and women, Tinglum hints at new forms of being that move beyond social norms and ontological categories. This approach to ecological others aligns with the ecofeminist argument that, due to their cultural and historical association and relationship with nature, many women may have alternative values and attitudes that could be ecologically significant as we attempt to live more sustainably.⁴³ Salleh posits that the traditional role of women as 'life producers', in the sense of performing work as mediators where they nurture life biologically and socially, gives them an ontological and epistemic advantage as they form a bridge between culture and nature that engenders a kinaesthetic and embodied way of being that like grafts, defy dualistic distinctions.⁴⁴

Plumwood also argues for the importance of critically affirming women's difference,⁴⁵ claiming that one needs to recognize female identity as a historical construct and find strength within this construction in order to create new feminine identities that are continuous with, while also being different from, our traditional conception of femininity and nature.⁴⁶ An essential aspect of this is the promotion of difference, relatedness and continuity as a way to

⁴¹ Personal communication with Gerd Tinglum via e-mail, 28.04.21.

⁴² The Norwegian quote, translated from German by Tinglum herself for the exhibition at Hordaland Kunstsenter, was sent to me by Tinglum via email (28.04.21). I am paraphrasing and discussing this version of the quote as I have not had access to the original German text.

⁴³ Rigby, «Women and Nature Revisited: Ecofeminist Reconfigurations of an Old Association», 71.

⁴⁴ Rigby, «Women and Nature Revisited: Ecofeminist Reconfigurations of an Old Association», 73.

⁴⁵ Rigby, «Women and Nature Revisited: Ecofeminist Reconfigurations of an Old Association», 75.

⁴⁶ Rigby, «Women and Nature Revisited: Ecofeminist Reconfigurations of an Old Association», 75.

oppose the instrumentalism and hyperseparation inherent in dualistic relationships.⁴⁷ Within the photographic series neither the women, nor the plants, deny the other or their relationship with them, nor do they fully incorporate the other as they remain visually distinct through Tinglum's use of textures.⁴⁸ Throughout most of the series the women are portrayed in a more pixelated manner than the plants, which have sharper and clearer edges, illustrating the coming together of two separate beings rather than the creation of a new unified whole. By making space for distinctly vegetal and human elements, while also blending them together in the lighter and darker areas of the portraits, Tinglum presents us with a view of 'others' that cannot be fully separated from us, nor completely subsumed by us, as they instead remain intertwined with and beside us. This type of reformulated alliance functions as a disruption of the traditional view of the feminine-vegetal relationship, and of the canonical version of cultural history, while highlighting its often ignored or forgotten feminine roots.

3.0 Grey Vitality

3.1 Grey Ecology

Gerd Tinglum has always placed a strong emphasis on her use of colour in her work as she is interested in how it affects us physically and mentally.⁴⁹ Throughout her career she has worked in both black and white, and in a multitude of bright, overlapping colours. Her use of colour often revolves around making things visible through obscuring or hiding them, or of visualizing the act of covering or concealing itself.⁵⁰ Towards the end of the 1980s she created a personal colour chart based on her own associations with various colours, which she has since then used to layer her images in an attempt to subvert our expectations by straying away from traditional colour symbolics.⁵¹ This deeply personal approach to the use of colour speaks to her desire to blend the formal, affective, and conceptual in her artistic practice, creating artworks that are both unified and multiple as they feature elements that harmonize and disrupt, conceal and reveal.

In *Usynliggjorte, utryddede og truede arter* the colour grey signals this form of disintegration

⁴⁷ Lam, «A Zen-flavoured Feminist Environmental Selfhood and its Contemporary Implications», 103.

⁴⁸ Lam, «A Zen-flavoured Feminist Environmental Selfhood and its Contemporary Implications», 103.

⁴⁹ Jaukkuri, «Innledning», 6.

⁵⁰ Krogvik, «Bakenfor det synlige», 24.

⁵¹ Krogvik, «Bakenfor det synlige», 32.

and multiplication of boundaries and limits, as it symbolizes a grey and indeterminate state of being in-between, opening up for an exploration of shifting, dissolving and multiplying boundaries. The personal meaning the colour holds for Tinglum still remains unknown, but the choice of a lack of colour is still significant within the portraits as it relates to the historical, ecological and cultural absences she portrays. The grey hints at the complexities of encountering, and perhaps inhabiting, the body of these excluded or extinct 'others' that have fallen outside of the seemingly black and white categories of nature and culture, femininity and masculinity, life and death, as they lack clear boundaries and an established ontology. This impression is enhanced through the images' pixelated texture, and by how the plants and women obscure and hide parts of each other as they merge together. This merging results in a mixture of abstracted and figurative visual elements, which is another recurring trend within Tinglum's art as she often hides and reveals her subjects in unexpected ways. Her explorations of the vegetal through the lens of black, white and grey also occurs in other series such as *Om Identitet III* (Fig. 5) where she similarly highlights vegetal beings through obscuring our access to them, oscillating between revealing and concealing their identity by painting over them with translucent black paint.⁵² Other works featuring vegetation include both bright and natural colours, but many still feature a colour range that moves beyond the lush greens and bright floral tones one might expect, delving instead into alternative and sometimes monstrous ecologies.

Jeffrey J. Cohen, a humanist specialized in monster theory and alternative ecologies, reflects on the concept of a «grey ecology» as a potentially productive framework for approaching and embracing the excluded and inhuman around and within us.⁵³ In his book *Prismatic Ecology: Ecotheory Beyond Green*, grey is described as a colour associated with mourning, withdrawal, slow loss and with what remains after the fact: with what is, purposefully or not, left behind.⁵⁴ In this sense grey functions as a form of materialized uncertainty as it holds the presence of the excluded and othered, or the spectral and monstrous, who to various degrees present us with complex ideas relating to death, the in-between, and alternative forms of life.⁵⁵ This disintegration of boundaries suits the concept of the Anthropocene, which was popularized by the atmospheric chemist Paul J. Crutzen who argued that humans over the

⁵² Personal communication with Gerd Tinglum via Skype, 16.10.20.

⁵³ Cohen, «Grey», 271.

⁵⁴ Cohen, «Grey», 270.

⁵⁵ Cohen, «Grey», 270.

past few centuries had become a geological force due to our increasing effect on the earth's atmosphere.⁵⁶ The concept of the Anthropocene, originating from the greek word *Anthropos*, meaning human,⁵⁷ has since been explored by numerous thinkers who have engaged in the contradictory nature of the concept. Many argue that the era is coloured by a collision of geological and human chronologies of history, as we have become a global force affecting (more or less) every other being on earth, while also becoming increasingly aware of our own dependence on, and vulnerability in relation to, the many unseen worlds and creatures around us.⁵⁸ With more volatile weather, polluted air and food filled with antibiotics and pesticides, the historical separation between culture and nature, past and future, mind and body are rapidly disintegrating. Grey ecological landscapes are thereby becoming more prevalent in the Anthropocene, as Cohen argues that the grey symbolizes an open aesthetic where distinctions both dissipate and multiply through continuous processes of growth and decay where the monstrous and spectral, or the 'other', become more prevalent.⁵⁹ A grey Anthropocene ecology thereby challenges western hyperseparation as it becomes a realm within which monsters and spectres can thrive both individually and within other lifeforms.

Within the series the vegetal grows inside, through and beyond the human, reminding us of Aristotle's idea of the vegetal soul as a fundamental inhuman part that exists within all living beings.⁶⁰ The vegetal as an essential part of all life symbolizes the act of growth, reproduction and decay, and Marder argues that it creates a basis from which the more complex forms seen in animals and humans can evolve, entailing that we can be conceptualized as outgrowths from our plant soul.⁶¹ This places the vegetal 'other' at the centre of our identity as living beings, and this inhuman presence is fundamentally disturbing within the context of the western ontological system as the cohabitation of the vegetal disturbs the clear boundaries between inside and outside, nature and culture. Cohen argues that accepting this suppressed otherness, and learning to dwell within an unsettled grey ecology, is essential if we are to develop in ways that enable us to recognize the possibilities and dignity of both human and nonhuman life.⁶² These ideas are captured in Tingle's photographs as they, through the

⁵⁶ Stevens, Tait, Varney, «Introduction: 'Street-fighters and philosophers': Traversing ecofeminisms», 2.

⁵⁷ Swanson et al., «Introduction: Bodies tumbled into bodies», M3.

⁵⁸ Hird, «Proliferation, Extinction, and an Anthropocene Aesthetic», 255.

⁵⁹ Cohen, «Grey», 271.

⁶⁰ Marder, *Plant Thinking* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 27.

⁶¹ Marder, *Plant Thinking* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 27.

⁶² Cohen, «Grey», 286.

unsettled union between the vegetal and feminine, presents us with beings who remain in the middle of transformation, thus illustrating an alternative form of life that makes space for the flourishing of both the vegetal and human through continuous processes of growth and decay.

3.2 Vegetating in the in-between.

The notion of a grey form of existence suits the vegetal, which has throughout history retained a status as ambiguous and withdrawn, with Hegel describing their existence as a grey area between the dead world of minerals and the living world of animals.⁶³ Marder similarly sees plants as in-between beings, as they are caught between the roots digging into the earth and the leaves stretching towards the sky, growing in all directions at once as each part adapts to, and helps create, the environment they are in.⁶⁴ This form of horizontal rhizomatic growth from the middle, where there is no beginning or end, opposes the traditional idea of vertical growth as something moving from lower levels of being to higher and more complex forms, instead proposing a more equal form of growth defined by its processual nature as it is always underway.⁶⁵ In the vegetal world no growth is higher than any other, and all parts of the plant are interrelated and dependent on each other and their external environment as they form a series of contingent and shifting intersections.⁶⁶ For thinkers such as Hegel, this growth has been described as monstrous due to its lack of moderation and limits,⁶⁷ but other philosophers, such as Goethe, or more recently Luce Irigaray, perceive this fluid form of existence as advantageous as they view more vegetal forms of indifference, plasticity and interdependence as something that should be emulated by all beings.⁶⁸

Vegetal beings are inherently indifferent to the distinction between the inner and outer, as they embody a pure form of externality where their meaning derives from their relation to the external environment rather than from something internal. Marder describes plants as being absolutely other to themselves as they lack all forms of interiority and rationality,⁶⁹ instead consisting of a disorganized multiplicity of parts that can be cut off and replanted, or remain part of a multiple whole.⁷⁰ Plants thereby adopt a superficial mode of living where they fall

⁶³ Marder, «How Plants Lead Us Beyond Organismic Logic», 64.

⁶⁴ Marder, *Plant Thinking* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 65.

⁶⁵ Marder, *Plant Thinking* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 66.

⁶⁶ Marder, *Plant Thinking* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 65.

⁶⁷ Miller, *The Vegetative Soul* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2002), 12.

⁶⁸ Miller, *The Vegetative Soul* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2002), 12.

⁶⁹ Marder, *Plant Thinking* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 32.

⁷⁰ Marder, *Plant Thinking* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 44.

apart and come back together without compromising their existence, all the while remaining rooted within a specific environment.⁷¹ Their ontology is in this sense post-metaphysical and self-deconstructive in its indifference, which is also reflected in their reproductive activities as most plants spread their seeds in seemingly reckless ways, unconcerned with whether or not the seed will germinate.⁷² In Tinglum's series this more 'random' form of vegetal transformation and growth is prevalent, as her work often involves promoting accidental visual developments as she attempts to give into uncontrollable processes as a way to resist the western approach to others as one largely defined by control.⁷³ All the photographs in the series are based on very small negatives,⁷⁴ which entailed that the finished image could not be fully predicted by Tinglum who instead allowed it to evolve organically. Tinglum also emphasises that she wanted the series to develop naturally both in the studio and through its encounters with the audience,⁷⁵ allowing the artwork to transform in the eyes of the audience where it may decay, flourish, fall apart or come back together in an almost vegetal manner.

3.3 Grey Decay

Dwelling in a grey ecology can be a restless experience, as Cohen argues that the colour grey embraces difficult pasts and makes us face the consequences of injustice, violence and trauma as those that inhabit it are the forgotten, ignored and suppressed victims of history.⁷⁶ A grey ecology is therefore partly shaped by destruction, but it also resists it by turning towards alternative frameworks defined by a more balanced relationship between growth and decay. Within the vegetal world, decay is the precondition for future growth, as plants embody rooted ways of growing alongside their own by-products and through their own and others physical decay, pointing towards ways of incorporating decay into one's own and others growth.⁷⁷ Freya Matthews argues that a natural conclusion to much ecofeminist thought must entail an acceptance of death and destruction, including our own destruction of the environment and ourselves.⁷⁸ To overcome the urge to control, dominate and destroy it is necessary to accept and become familiar with death, especially as it pertains to one's own mortality which often functions as a source for our destructive desires.⁷⁹ In the western

⁷¹ Marder, *Plant Thinking* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 132.

⁷² Marder, *Plant Thinking* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 89.

⁷³ Samuelsen, «Bevisst ubevisst», 49.

⁷⁴ Personal communication with Gerd Tinglum via Skype, 16.10.20.

⁷⁵ Samuelsen, «Bevisst ubevisst», 49.

⁷⁶ Cohen, «Grey», 272.

⁷⁷ Marder, *The Chernobyl Herbarium* (London: Open Humanities Press, 2016), 48.

⁷⁸ Mathews, «Relating to Nature: Deep Ecology or Ecofeminism?», 52.

⁷⁹ Mathews, «Relating to Nature: Deep Ecology or Ecofeminism?», 52.

world, and within the modern market economy, decay and mortality has been repressed and denied, and only through accepting the ongoing and future death and destruction we are causing and facing can we begin to honour nature in its totality as a sphere where decay plays an essential role.⁸⁰ Within a grey ecology, death therefore needs to be reconceptualised as a source of vitality in a way that allows us to cherish life without dominating it, and honouring death without giving up and abandoning ourselves and others.⁸¹ Learning to maintain and renegotiate the dynamics of a healthy mortality while facing difficult pasts coloured by death, extinction and suppression is therefore integral within a grey ecological system.

Tinglums photographs revolve around the concept of mortality in regard to their subject matter, as they feature women and plants who have died, gone extinct, or embody vulnerable states of existence. The grey colour palette, and the physical interrelation between the women and plants, also create associations with death where the women and plants are returned to the earth to nourish new life. The concept of death is also weaved into the medium itself, as Roland Barthes argued that death functions as the eidos of the photograph as each picture allows for an encounter with something that has been, but is no longer, serving as a sign of both presence and absence.⁸² Photography can therefore be said to be the perfect medium for a grey ecology as it signals an in-between, depicting the moment a subject is transformed into an object, or as Barthes calls it, a micro-death.⁸³ In Tinglum's series each portrait holds both past and future lives and deaths, but more than just signalling the former or eventual demise of a specific being or moment, they also signal unfathomable forms of death, as they point towards both cultural and biological extinctions.

4.0 Extinct time

4.1 Present Absences and Absent Presences

Marder describes vegetal beings as inherently temporal, as they grow, decay and transform in relation to their external environment and other living beings, continuously adjusting themselves to the rhythm of their habitat and keeping track of time to ensure their

⁸⁰ Mathews, «Relating to Nature: Deep Ecology or Ecofeminism?», 53.

⁸¹ Mathews, «Relating to Nature: Deep Ecology or Ecofeminism?», 53.

⁸² Barthes, *Camera Lucida* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 15.

⁸³ Barthes, *Camera Lucida* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 14.

reproductive success and survival.⁸⁴ Growth, the primary activity of vegetal beings, illustrates this hetero-temporal existence as one tied to their surroundings, as they remain underway, always transforming in slow and almost imperceptible ways that are influenced by environmental conditions and their interaction with other beings.⁸⁵ Their temporal multiplicity and lack of a clear self-identity makes vegetal beings non-contemporaneous, as they inhabit various stages of life all at once.⁸⁶ Heidegger, inspired by Husserl, argues that humans are also non-contemporaneous, but for us it is due to our inability to remain identical to ourselves as our ecstatic temporality projects us into the future, making our present self lag behind our future self.⁸⁷ This ecstatic temporality entails that we live out of season, always looking and moving forward, while plants live with the seasons as they remain inseparable from them, slowly changing in tandem with their surroundings.

Within Tinglum's photographic series we are confronted with a multitude of overlapping temporalities, forming a complex web of relations between the human, vegetal, living, dead and not-yet. The temporal multiplicities within the photographic series begins with its construction and material origin, as each photograph encompasses three moments in time. Every portrait features a photograph or painting of a woman created at different points in time depending on when the woman in question lived, alongside a botanical illustration created at the start of the 20th century. These two separate moments in time are then brought together by Tinglum in 1991, marking the third moment as that of the fusion between the vegetal and feminine. All the photographs, apart from Tinglum's self-portrait, also include the women's date of birth and death alongside the red listed status of the plant, which adds another temporal layer to the series as we are given the duration of each person's life and an insight into the development of vegetal populations in Norway. But the temporality of the artwork also stretches beyond its creation back towards the time Tinglum spent preparing and researching for it, as she spent a year reading the biographies and autobiographies of the women she included in order to get to know them as intimately as possible.⁸⁸ Throughout this process, Tinglum made sure to give the women the attention and time they had often been denied throughout history, as she approached each individual with respect and patience.

⁸⁴ Marder, *Plant Thinking*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 95.

⁸⁵ Marder, *Plant Thinking* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 108.

⁸⁶ Marder, *Plant Thinking* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 105.

⁸⁷ Marder, *Plant Thinking* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 104.

⁸⁸ Personal communication with Gerd Tinglum via Skype, 16.10.20.

In terms of the plants, the inclusion of their red-listed status propels them into the present and future, as each encounter with the series raises the question of how these vegetal populations have changed since 1991 - has a rare plant become threatened, or an extinct one rediscovered, or have any been removed from the red list since the artwork was made? This imparts the artwork with a sense of growth and change, as each encounter with it is framed by both social and ecological developments that might alter our understanding of the work itself. If many/any of the plants are removed from the red list and saved from extinction, our understanding of the work will be different from if we discover that more plants have gone extinct and become threatened. In this sense, the work itself functions as an organic entity that is always in dialogue with its environment, changing as it relates to its external other over time in an almost vegetal manner. This sense of open-endedness is enhanced through Tinglums self-portrait, as its lack of a date of birth and death brings the feminine timeline into the present and future, remaining open and underway. This also applies to the past represented by the other women, as their work and legacy functions as a continuation of their life in new forms, as their artwork, writing and music continues to grow through their encounters with new audiences. This strikes at the heart of Tinglum's own intention with the artwork as a problematization of how the cultural contribution and the lives of these women are often forgotten or devalued within western society,⁸⁹ marking this series as an attempt at engaging with the vulnerable and extinct by highlighting how they 'haunt' our presence.

Similarly to a plant, each photograph encompasses the living, dead and dying as the series engages with the question of existing on the brink of extinction. According to Aristotle the vegetal soul is the only one that does not survive the death of the body, making the vegetal other an embodiment of finite life.⁹⁰ In the past few decades the notion of existing on the brink of death has taken on a more foreboding meaning as many plants not only embody a diversity of life and death in their corporeal form, but also exist in dwindling ecosystems where their own populations slowly decline, pushing them towards extinction. Today, biological extinction is occurring at a rate several hundred times beyond historical levels,⁹¹ and this quenching of life differs from the major extinction inducing events of the past as it is driven by a single species. The sixth mass extinction is regarded as the result of human activity as we have annihilated animal and vegetal populations, destroyed natural habitats,

⁸⁹ Personal communication with Gerd Tinglum via Skype, 16.10.20.

⁹⁰ Marder, *Plant Thinking* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 53.

⁹¹ Gan, Tsing, et al., «Introduction: Haunted Landscapes of the Anthropocene», G4.

polluted oceans, rivers, and land and turned biologically diverse areas into monotonous landscapes in the name of profit.⁹² This is visualized in the photographic series as the plants we encounter are defined by how they have been instrumentalized within western culture through the use of botanical illustrations and their red listed status. The illustrations hint at why these plants embody precarious forms of life, as they represent a man-made vision of the plants rather than the plants themselves, functioning as a representation of our damaging, capitalist, attitude towards them. Including threatened or extinct plants also functions as a form of ecological haunting where we are confronted with those that have been, and currently are, driven out of existence.

Coll Thrush considers the Anthropocentric age as one plagued with ecological hauntings, where our attempts to dominate have resulted in defeat as our past haunts us by making nature less predictable and controllable, spiralling us into seemingly more inhospitable futures.⁹³ This threat of apocalyptic futures as one defined by the slow and painful collapse of vital ecosystems have in recent years invaded popular media and philosophical discourse. The obsession with the end of the world in both environmental prediction and speculative fiction can be seen to reflect our individual and collective anxieties about the future, illustrating how our past actions and present situation are influencing our visions of what is yet to come.⁹⁴ Marder suggests that these visions are a result of how our present is filled with traces of the past, as we are becoming haunted by present absences and absent presences as interconnected and interdependent ecological structures are increasingly inhabited by ghosts.⁹⁵ Tinglum's photographic series can be read as this form of ghostly assemblage, bringing together beings whose time and ability to flourish has been twisted and denied by damaging social structures, creating a toxic cultural and ecological environment. This twisting also connects the vegetal and feminine, as the time of plants is easily manipulated by humans as we place them in human-made environments, which illustrates the damaging effect these cultural environments can have on those whose time is partly or completely defined by the other.⁹⁶ Still the series also resists this oppression by presenting an alternative conception of temporality and being where the excluded spectres are given an equal amount of attention and value as the living, and where the vegetal stand beside rather than below the

⁹² Gan, Tsing, et al., «Introduction: Haunted Landscapes of the Anthropocene», G4.

⁹³ Thrush, «Haunt», 272.

⁹⁴ Toadvine, «Thinking after the World: Deconstruction and Last Things», 54.

⁹⁵ Marder, *Dump Philosophy* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021), 10.

⁹⁶ Marder, *Plant Thinking* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 101.

human. By bringing attention to the temporal vulnerability of plants, and by extension certain humans, the series emphasizes the importance of cultivating nurturing environments that facilitate rather than destroy ecological beings and their relations with others.

4.2 Floral Connections

Gerd Tinglums self-portrait, *Gerd Tinglum, Fjellsolblom, Arnica Alpina, sjelden*, (Fig. 6) represents an exception within the series as Tinglum is the only person depicted who is still alive, sharing this status with her vegetal partner, the Fjellsolblom, which still maintains a sustainable population within Norway today.⁹⁷ This marks the photograph as the only image that does not contain at least one extinct or dead being, although the photograph still holds the threat of the inevitable demise of the individual person as well as the potential extinction of the species the plant and Tinglum represent. *Arnica Alpina*, or the Fjellsolblom, is a small plant with yellow flowers that inhabit the rocky landscapes between Nordland and Finnmark where they protrude out of the otherwise flat vegetation present in the area.⁹⁸ The plant can grow to be between 10-20 centimetres tall and is currently categorized as LC, or *Ligustrum vulgare*, meaning that they are considered rare, but not directly threatened within the Norwegian flora.⁹⁹ The same illustration of this plant appears twice within the series as its leaves stretch across Tinglum's face, while its flowers burrow into Woolf's forehead. Repetitions like this occur multiple times throughout the series. Plants such as Froskebitt, Kammaribjelle, Myrsildre, Altaihoukeskjegg and Svart Kurle, all appear twice and link the female figures they are merged with. But what can be made of this connection in relation to Tinglum and Woolf's portraits, and how does their relationship reflect the broader relation between the self-portrait and the rest of the photographs in the series?

In regards to Tinglum's portrait the plant carries a geographical connection to the artist who was born in Namsskogan, which is close to where the plants currently grow.¹⁰⁰ However, this is not the case for Virginia Woolf, as the plant does not thrive in the UK, which is why it is necessary to look closer at other factors, such as the status the plant is given: rare. For Tinglum, referring to herself and her work as rare, can hold multiple meanings as this is both the least 'severe' vegetal status within the series, while also denoting a fragile existence in the

⁹⁷ Artsdatabanken, «Fjellsolblom *Arnica angustifolia* subsp. *alpina* (L.) I.K.Ferguson»

⁹⁸ Sunding, «Fjellsolblom.» Store Norske Leksikon. 03.10.20. <https://snl.no/fjellsolblom>

⁹⁹ Artsdatabanken, «Fjellsolblom *Arnica angustifolia* subsp. *alpina* (L.) I.K.Ferguson.»

¹⁰⁰ Kunstnerforbundet, «Gerd Tinglum.»

context of the Norwegian flora. As Tinglum is still alive and working actively as an artist her cultural contribution is still 'sustainable' as it continues to spread and grow, but the notion of rarity also reflect the historical and current neglect of female artists both nationally and internationally, making her work, similarly to that of the other women, rare within the art world. For Woolf the status of rare must be interpreted somewhat differently as she is no longer able to write, entailing that her continued relevance and presence within cultural history relies on the attention her work has garnered throughout the years. Through the engagement of scholars her work has continued to evolve and spread, which can be tied to the idea of 'rare' meaning something uncommonly good,¹⁰¹ or perhaps to the notion of the 'rare' female writer that has achieved a prominent position within cultural history. The meaning of the status 'rare' within the series thereby becomes a contextual matter, meaning that to fully understand the connection between these two cultural figures we need to delve into how their work expresses similar, but differently inflected, ecofeminist tendencies and ideas around temporality and identity, connecting them through their art. But before moving onto this analysis it is necessary to place the self-portrait in relation to the rest of the series.

Tinglum's self-portrait differentiates itself from the rest of the series visually, as the other photographs aligns more closely with the style of Woolf's portrait *Virginia Woolf (1882-1914) Fjellsolblom, Arnica alpina, sjelden* (Fig. 7). The fact that Tinglum is still alive is reflected in how the portrait allows us to encounter the artist in greater detail, as we gaze upon single strands of hair, the texture of her skin, the lines around her eyes and the fabric of her clothes. The foreground she inhabits is depicted in a clear and crisp way, which contrasts with Woolf, and the others', portraits as they fluctuate between being slightly unclear towards being almost completely abstract. Woolf's portrait also features a much more granulated texture than Tinglum's which emanates throughout the entire surface, forming a visual disturbance that also occurs in all the other portraits in the series. The original photograph of Woolf, taken by the female photographer Gisèle Freund, portrays the writer in a way more similar to what we see in Tinglum's portrait, as we can clearly see wrinkles, textures, and the gradual shifts between light and shadow on her skin (Fig. 8). In Tinglum's portrait, Woolf's face has lost most of its details, leaving only the areas marked by the darkest shadows in the original photograph.

¹⁰¹ Etymonline, «Rare.»

This erasure of Woolf's features via its pixelated texture, works to blend the background and foreground together, eliminating the viewer's ability to clearly separate the writer from her environment as both she and her surroundings are bathed in grey. In Tinglums self-portrait the background and foreground are clearly separated, and the contrast between black and white appears sharper as it divides her hair from her skin and her clothes, which in Woolf's portrait blends together. The separation between elements found in Tinglum's photograph is however less apparent in how the vegetal element has been implemented, as the plant melts more cohesively together with the artist as the range of hues present in the leaves echo the range of black, grey and white used to depict the artist herself. The plant also appears to be growing out of her shirt, which enhances the impression that they share a common body, or root system. In Woolf's portrait, there is more of a dissonance between the plant and the writer as the roots and leaves have a sharper, darker and stronger outline than we see in the rest of the image, which highlights the differences between the two depicted beings. This is mitigated somewhat by the flowers as they have a more delicate and grey quality to them which allows them to merge more harmoniously with the writer. The flower furthest to the left in the photograph becomes especially prominent, forming a focal point in the image, as it appears to almost grow out of her eye and into her head. In Tinglums photograph, this same flower is almost invisible, appearing as a dark and spider-like shadow in her hair, giving both photographs an uncanny sense of vegetal invasion.

The differences and similarities between the two photographs, and between the self-portrait and the rest of the series, serves to tie Tinglum's portrait into the series while also marking it as seemingly temporally distinct. While Tinglum is the only person to be contemporary in the sense of still being alive, the concept of contemporariness also suits the other women through their relation to the series and the self-portrait. In *What is the Contemporary?*, Agamben argues that the concept of being contemporary involves a disjunct and anachronistic relationship with time where a contemporary never perfectly coincides with their time as they embody a form of 'too soon', 'too late', 'already' and 'not yet'.¹⁰² Being contemporary does not necessarily entail existing at the same time, but rather denotes a state or quality of being contemporary that necessitates a certain amount of critical distance, as well as the possibility of both the past and future becoming contemporary through their recalled or potential presence. The present is thereby marked by an untimeliness that entails that one is always of

¹⁰² Agamben, «What is the Contemporary», 47.

one's time in a way that is anachronistic and that presses, transforms and deforms chronological progression.¹⁰³ Through Tinglum's photographic series the women are re-evoked and revitalized in ways that bring them back into the present through the series and the relations Tinglum constructs within it.¹⁰⁴ This enables interactions between the past, present and potential future,¹⁰⁵ and places all the women, their work and the plants in an ambiguous relation to the 'now' that disturbs chronological temporal progression. By rooting herself within the history of female and vegetal suppression, Tinglum illustrates how the past haunts the present and colour our vision of the future, creating a complex temporal network where all the women partake in the artist's contemporary state.

4.3 Temporal Entanglements

Since Tinglum's project attempts to highlight how the cultural contributions of the women included have been overlooked or undervalued, it seems only natural to pose the question: Does Virginia Woolf's writing relate to the issues raised in the photographic series, and could this be why she and Tinglum shares the same plant? In 1918 Woolf wrote: «To take up the pen directly upon coming back from Asheham shows I hope that this book is now a natural growth of mine - a rather dishevelled, rambling plant, running a yard of green stalk for every flower.»¹⁰⁶ This quote represents one of many instances where the writer connects her environment to her creative process as she describes her writing as a vegetal outgrowth.¹⁰⁷ In the book *Ecocriticism and Women Writers: Environmentalist Poetics of Virginia Woolf, Jeanette Winterson, and Ali Smith* Justyna Kostkowska examines Woolf's work based on the ecocritical premise that a text is never separate from its environment as every text functions like an ecosystem by remaining environmentally embedded from its conception to its reception.¹⁰⁸ This suits Woolf's writing as her work often blends characters together with their environment while simultaneously reaching out to the reader in a way that allows them to actively engage with the text. In her work, Woolf often criticised how western social and gender norms denied cultural authority to women, as well as how it disregarded the perspective and value of nonhuman beings, which for her included everything from plants to

¹⁰³ Agamben, «What is the Contemporary», 47.

¹⁰⁴ Agamben, «What is the Contemporary», 50.

¹⁰⁵ Agamben, «What is the Contemporary», 53.

¹⁰⁶ Woolf, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf, Vol I: 1915-1919* (Boston: Mariner Books, 1979) 150.

¹⁰⁷ Kostkowska, *Ecocriticism and Women Writers* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 16.

¹⁰⁸ Kostkowska, *Ecocriticism and Women Writers* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 12.

human made artifacts.¹⁰⁹ She approaches these issues in a way that has clear ecofeminist tendencies as her writing connects the feminine and ecological and attempts to rework the anthropocentric and androcentric worldview prevalent in her time by decentring the all-knowing and singular male narrator.¹¹⁰ Within her texts the feminine and nonhuman is often given a great deal of attention and takes up an equal amount of space to that of the humans. This is apparent in novels such as *Kew Gardens*, where we adopt the perspective of a snail, or *Jacob's Room* where the narrator is continuously changing, and in *The Waves* which blurs the lines between the human and nonhuman characters and their environment.¹¹¹ Within all of these novels, and much of her work in general, characters are situated in diverse and interconnected multisystems as she continuously moves between the perspective of social and ecological 'others', illustrating a different way of viewing and relating to the world.¹¹²

This way of integrating the nonhuman other into her texts functions to dissolve the dichotomy between nature and culture, creating a more equal relation between the nonhuman and human. This is exemplified in her novel *Kew Gardens* where we are introduced to a seemingly well-functioning ecosystem where humans coexist with nonhumans as they are presented as one of many ecological presences within the text.¹¹³ The specific location and its highly commercial and colonial approach to human and nonhuman beings, is only mentioned in passing and subtly hinted at as the daily challenges and interest of nonhumans take up most of the story.¹¹⁴ The institution's colonial approach, with its often singular and authoritative viewpoint, is replaced in Woolf's text by a multitude of diverse, interrelated and equally valuable voices, which opposes Kew Gardens devaluation and instrumentalization of its inhabitants while still subtly acknowledging the institution and its historical context.¹¹⁵ This approach to writing is one that instantiates many of the ideas prevalent within contemporary ecofeminist philosophy as it focuses on the idea of situated knowledge as a collection of contextually shaped and equally valuable perspectives, cultivating the idea of promoting difference as essential in approaching the other in a non-suppressive way. Kathleen Lennon posits that knowledge today can no longer be regarded as a neutral reflection of an

¹⁰⁹ Kostkowska, *Ecocriticism and Women Writers* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 14.

¹¹⁰ Kostkowska, *Ecocriticism and Women Writers* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 19.

¹¹¹ Kostkowska, *Ecocriticism and Women Writers* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 17.

¹¹² Kostkowska, *Ecocriticism and Women Writers* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 19.

¹¹³ Kostkowska, *Ecocriticism and Women Writers* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 17.

¹¹⁴ Alexander, «Kew Gardens as a literary space», 122.

¹¹⁵ Kostkowska, *Ecocriticism and Women Writers* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 21.

independent external reality, as it must instead be seen as inherently situated, always reflecting the position of the knowledge producer as a material being living within a specific historical and cultural context.¹¹⁶ This viewpoint is reflected in Woolf's method of writing, as she problematizes the boundary between inside and outside through portraying her characters through her famous indirect stream of consciousness, which unifies and blends the characters with their environment.¹¹⁷ This is apparent in novels such as *Jacob's Room* which is constructed around a specific environment that all the characters are tied to in essential ways.¹¹⁸ The way Woolf focuses on multiple nonhuman and female characters situated in specific environments creates a connection between the position and oppression of women and nature, which is also apparent in Tinglums photographic series as it creates this connection by visually grafting the women and plants together. Still their relation goes beyond this formal resonance as Woolf, similarly to Tinglum, also tries to reconceptualize our conception of time, placing it within a contextual and relative framework.

4.4 Disjointed Time and Hauntological Spectres

Derrida defines hauntology in his book *Spectres of Marx* as a form of atemporal haunting where elements of the past return in the form of a spectre or ghost.¹¹⁹ He posits that there is no fundamental point of origin, but rather an 'always-already absent present', where everything is defined by absence as we are revisited by our past.¹²⁰ Central to this idea is the concept of the spectre or ghost as a being which is neither fully alive, nor completely dead, as it exists between categories, remaining both present and absent.¹²¹ Olga Cielemecka, inspired by Karen Barad's conception of material hauntology, posits that hauntology functions as an 'ontology' for the weak presences of spectral beings.¹²² In this context, the spectral is interpreted as a being which can never be fully known or understood as they form a structural openness where voices from the past and future influence the present.¹²³ Spectres thereby remain inherently multiple, defying clear definition, dualisms, and homogenization. In order to engage with the spectral, Derrida claims that their elusive form of being needs to be

¹¹⁶ Lennon, «Feminist Epistemology as Local Epistemology», 37.

¹¹⁷ Kostkowska, *Ecocriticism and Women Writers* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 15.

¹¹⁸ Kostkowska, *Ecocriticism and Women Writers* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 24.

¹¹⁹ Derrida, *Spectres of Marx* (New York: Routledge Classics, 2006), 2.

¹²⁰ Derrida, *Spectres of Marx* (New York: Routledge Classics, 2006), 29.

¹²¹ Cielemecka, «All things Spectral», 249.

¹²² Cielemecka, «All things Spectral», 290.

¹²³ Davis, «Hauntology, Spectres and Phantoms», 378.

respected rather than categorized and framed.¹²⁴ Cielemeńska argues that all bodies which evade cognitive categories and frames are inherently spectral, entailing that the body of the 'other', whether they be disabled, queer, female, vegetal, animal, etc, share in this spectrality.¹²⁵ In the photographic series we encounter these spectral 'others' as they simultaneously belong to the past and project themselves into the future, creating an assemblage of women and plants who are neither fully present, nor completely gone.

Peter Read argues that those who are untroubled and unhaunted by the ghosts of the past have missed something profound,¹²⁶ which leads to the question of how to approach these ghosts in a way that does not chase them away, but rather attempts to nurture and foster their spectral existence. According to Cielemeńska, spectres do not need to be saved, normalized or categorized, which requires us to give up on the epistemological ambition to know them fully.¹²⁷ Instead a hauntological ethics, similarly to a vegetal ethics, requires us to abandon the schemata we have traditionally used to comprehend, accept, exclude and appropriate human and nonhuman beings. Only then can we open up for frameworks where we can approach spectral beings that remain incomprehensible within our dominant ontological framework in a way that does not appropriate or suppress their unique ontology.¹²⁸ The adoption of such an ethic could be said to be inherent in the concept of hauntology itself, as it encompasses past, future and present calls for justice and recognition.¹²⁹ A hauntological ethic also suits the concept of a grey ecology, as Cohen argues that a central element within such an ecology is the remembrance and processing of difficult pasts rather than the suppression of them,¹³⁰ which is reflected in the many histories present within Tinglum's photographic series.

The form of hauntology presented by Barad and Cielemeńska is a specifically material one as Barad argues that it can be empirically proven through quantum physics. Barad grounds her argument in the double-slit experiment, which demonstrates that matter and light can behave like both particles and waves, despite these two elements being regarded as distinct kinds

¹²⁴ Davis, «Hauntology, Spectres and Phantoms», 377.

¹²⁵ Cielemeńska, «All things Spectral», 250.

¹²⁶ Thrush, «Haunt», 269.

¹²⁷ Cielemeńska, «All things Spectral», 250.

¹²⁸ Cielemeńska, «All things Spectral», 251.

¹²⁹ Cielemeńska, «All things Spectral», 251.

¹³⁰ Cohen, «Grey», 272.

possessing different characteristics within the western ontological system.¹³¹ The experiment shows that the atom's ontology does not remain stable and that its identity can only be determined after the experiment has been conducted, entailing that its past identity is always open to future reworkings.¹³² This condition undermines the western concept of substance as something self-identical, pre-determined and present, as well as our idea of an object-subject dualism.¹³³ As clear separations are undermined, spectral beings begin to creep in, which in Derridean terms are the plus d'un, something that is always more and less than what it is, which is to say something disjointed.¹³⁴ As matter carries traces of the past, the future is created through the material returns of the past and the ethical decisions they lead to, which means that both the past and future remain reconfigurable, requiring us to make ethical commitments to how we want things to be reconfigured.¹³⁵ Learning to respond to spectral beings is therefore essential in a time where we are surrounded by the growing number of extinct, or near-extinct, beings that are depicted in Tinglum's series.

Surprising as it may be to some, Woolf's writing aligns with discoveries in twentieth-century physics both thematically and structurally, as argued by Paul Tolliver Brown. In her novel *Mrs. Dalloway* a more complex understanding of time and being is explored through the way Woolf entangles time and topology within the text to reveal how the characters inhabit a London that falls more in line with Einstein's special and general theories of relativity than the enlightenment inspired Victorian conception of time and space.¹³⁶ Einstein claimed that it would be impossible to view the universe from an objective and olympian perspective as we always exist within a specific context, making our view of the world partial and contingent.¹³⁷ Woolf's writing thereby resists the absolute and mechanistic worldview, as it instead adopts a view of time, space and being that is interactive and relational, where time and space fluctuate between various individuals within the novel.¹³⁸ In the text Woolf distinguishes between the past and present by situating individuals at different locations throughout London and by marking the hour as Big Ben rings. For Clarissa, Big Ben brings her back into the present day, and as we follow her character she imagines herself

¹³¹ Barad, «Quantum Entanglements and Hauntological Relations of Inheritance», 252.

¹³² Barad, «Quantum Entanglements and Hauntological Relations of Inheritance», 259-260.

¹³³ Cielemecka, «All things Spectral», 241.

¹³⁴ Derrida, *Spectres of Marx* (New York: Routledge Classics, 2006), 2.

¹³⁵ Cielemecka, «All things Spectral», 241.

¹³⁶ Brown, «The Spatiotemporal Topography of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*.», 22.

¹³⁷ Brown, «The Spatiotemporal Topography of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*.», 21.

¹³⁸ Brown, «The Spatiotemporal Topography of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*.», 25.

restructuring London as she moves through it, reflecting the general theory of relativity where space is defined in relation to the objects that occupy it.¹³⁹ This creates a highly elastic temporal and spatial setting throughout the novel, which is also apparent in how characters like Andy Wood move through the city at an impossible speed, or how St. Margaret's clock lags behind the Big Ben, offering an alternative temporal foothold.¹⁴⁰ This fluid spatio-temporal dimension draws attention to how all the characters inhabit an interactive and relative London, filling it with a multitude of different temporal perspectives that appear to be equally valuable to that presented by the Big Ben.¹⁴¹

Similarly to Woolf's novel, the photographic series also refrains from depicting a universal perspective in favour of a multitude of equally valuable times and beings that interact with and influence each other, highlighting the relative and temporal dimensions of the artwork. The meaning of the series is also altered as time passes and our relation, both individually and culturally, to the portrayed changes. Similarly to the photographs, where the past appears to haunt the presence, Woolf's novel also illustrates how the aftermath of the first World War and the system that propelled it looms over the shell-shocked character Septimus Warren Smith. As Septimus is unable to situate himself within the space of London and its modern system of time, he loses his connection to society, reaching out instead to the environment around him. He imagines himself merging with a tree as he turns away from the culture that lead to his trauma, instead choosing to connect with the vegetal in a similar manner to the women in Tinglum's photographs.¹⁴² His time is described as incremental, spanning both distant pasts and possible futures, illustrating a nonlinear and expansive form of temporality that reflects a more hauntological approach to time.¹⁴³ For Septimus, his disjointed temporal existence ends in a suicide, but for Clarissa the story ends differently. She adopts a relative view which allows her to unfold in ways unique to her own context, illustrating how one might adapt to a more multiple and complex form of temporality and being.¹⁴⁴

Woolf's approach to space, time and being combines strands from a variety of thoughts and theories, and in both Woolf's work and within Tinglum's photographic series we encounter

¹³⁹ Brown, «The Spatiotemporal Topography of Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway.», 23.

¹⁴⁰ Brown, «The Spatiotemporal Topography of Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway.», 24.

¹⁴¹ Brown, «The Spatiotemporal Topography of Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway.», 25.

¹⁴² Brown, «The Spatiotemporal Topography of Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway.», 29.

¹⁴³ Brown, «The Spatiotemporal Topography of Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway.», 30.

¹⁴⁴ Kostkowska, *Ecocriticism and Women Writers* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 32.

disjointed temporalities riddled with spectral beings that deconstructs our notion of linear time, the autonomous being, and the culture/nature dichotomy. The human and nonhuman beings we encounter are often haunted by their pasts and futures and present us with a multitude of equally valuable presences that are all interconnected as they relate to and shape each other.¹⁴⁵ This is apparent in Tinglum's photographic series where she weaves an interconnected web of stories spanning multiple centuries, while also inviting us to get to know the specific human and nonhuman individuals involved in this story. By following Tinglum's own example we can get to know and respond to the forgotten and ignored histories of the women and plants by reading their biographies, experiencing the work they left behind, and learning about the plants, allowing all of these different beings to haunt and shape us.

4.5 Wounds of Time and Repetition

A common feature in both Tinglum's photographic series and Woolf's novel *Mrs Dalloway* is their use of repetition. In the novel, Woolf includes an array of recurring images that bind together and foreshadow the events of the story, often including symbols that ties specific characters together such as birds for Clarissa and Reiza, and hyacinths for Clarissa and Elizabeth.¹⁴⁶ Kostkowska claims that these repetitions function as a way to reach out to the reader, leaving small hints and traces for them to delve into as a way of integrating the reader into the story being told.¹⁴⁷ In the photographic series there are also several repetitions that connect various women together through their vegetal partners, and although there may not be any obvious ties between them there could be hidden connections and similarities that can be found in their work. In relation to the vegetal, repetition is a vital aspect of vegetal growth, and a damaging force within capitalist culture, as the capitalist system turns repetition into a homogenizing refusal of difference. This approach to repetition is undermined by both Woolf and Tinglum in their work, and although the photographic series exists in two editions the photographs are based on slightly different negatives, entailing that no picture is the same.¹⁴⁸ As an artist, Tinglum seeks to never repeat images, instead cultivating a form of repetition that is more similar to that found in vegetal beings. Marder describes vegetal repetition as a repetition of difference as difference, where each new sprout, each repetition, always features

¹⁴⁵ Kostkowska, *Ecocriticism and Women Writers* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 40.

¹⁴⁶ Kostkowska, *Ecocriticism and Women Writers* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 39.

¹⁴⁷ Kostkowska, *Ecocriticism and Women Writers* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 39.

¹⁴⁸ Personal communication with Gerd Tinglum via Skype, 16.10.20.

alternations that correspond to the environmental context the plant grows in.¹⁴⁹ As the second edition of each photograph remains distinct from the first they reflect that they were created at slightly different times, illustrating a more vegetal form of growth that maintains difference as an important component in a biologically diverse system.

The photographic series also approaches the idea of repetition as trauma by featuring the individual and shared trauma suffered by the women and plants as it shows how their stories are linked to each other, creating a web of cascading and repeated acts of violence, extinction, and suppression. By visualizing these traumatic pasts and highlighting the hidden vegetal and feminine roots within our society, the series enables us to form new relationships with the past and grow in new directions moving forward. Kathryn Yusoff regards the Anthropocene aesthetic, rooted in enlightenment conquests, biopolitics, colonization and invasion, as an aesthetic of loss where we attempt to make visible species and ecological relationships that remain only vaguely within our field of vision.¹⁵⁰ This is a grey, and almost apocalyptic, aesthetic where we are asked to recognize those that are suffering and find new ways of growth that steer towards an anti-Anthropocene aesthetic focused more on cultivating a new form of life than preparing for the end.¹⁵¹ The future of the Anthropocene cannot be fully visualized, as it embodies an unknown aesthetic in excess of scientific prediction, human agency and good will, making it unpredictable and uncontrollable.¹⁵² For Yusuff, a defining feature of an anti-Anthropocene aesthetic would be the acknowledgement of the profound implications of the fact that our impact is defined by extinctions and unintended and unknown consequences rather than control, illustrating the failure of capitalism, enlightenment dichotomies, and scientific discourse.¹⁵³ Within the photographic series, and even within Woolf's writing, we encounter the victims of the western system, making us face the often invisible consequences of our mechanistic and rational worldview. Through the concept of vegetal growth and the spectral, the photographs present us with alternative ways of being and approaching the other in a non-oppressive manner that remain open to mutual transformation and growth. We are invited to contemplate embracing the time of the other, making us question what it would be like grow, decay and remain rooted in tandem with both humans and nonhumans.

¹⁴⁹ Marder, *Plant Thinking* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 114.

¹⁵⁰ Hird, «Proliferation, Extinction and an Anthropocene Aesthetic», 263.

¹⁵¹ Hird, «Proliferation, Extinction and an Anthropocene Aesthetic», 263.

¹⁵² Hird, «Proliferation, Extinction and an Anthropocene Aesthetic», 264.

¹⁵³ Hird, «Proliferation, Extinction and an Anthropocene Aesthetic», 264.

5.0 Grafts and non-identity

5.1 Grafted Identities

The double-slit experiment, alongside other modern scientific discoveries, not only destabilize our western notion of time, but also the Cartesian idea of the autonomous and impermeable being. These disruptions to our current ontological framework have led many to look towards more relative, overlapping and vegetal forms of being and relating that better suits the ecological and cultural entanglements we are confronted with in the Anthropocene. Tinglum clearly thematizes the concept of metamorphosing and disrupted identities in her photographic series as she grafts together women and plants in ways that allow the human and nonhuman, culture and nature, to overlap and transform each other in ways that point towards a more interrelated notion of being. By creating a visual bond between those that have suffered under the alienation of nature, Tinglum challenges western hierarchical dualisms as she turns the vegetal into a co-species which we can work with to discover new ways of cultivating ourselves and others.

In 1991 Donna Haraway asked why our bodies should end at the skin,¹⁵⁴ which in recent years is a question many scientists and philosophers alike have grappled with. Within feminist studies many have moved towards a phenomenological approach to embodiment where mind and body are seen as inherently intertwined, but despite a renewed focus on relationality the concept of separate subjectivities have been maintained by most.¹⁵⁵

Following Margrit Shildrick, a professor in gender studies at Stockholm University, I will approach Tinglums visualization of the graft as a form of connectivity where all distinctions become troubled, be they between self and other, nature and culture, or nonhuman and human. The term graft - or grafting – has, since at least 1530, referred to the act of artificially inserting twigs or shoots from one tree into another.¹⁵⁶ But the act of grafting can also pertain to humans or animals in the form of skin grafts, organ transplants or prostheses. It denotes a form of physical hybridity that contests our faith in corporeal integrity as it illustrates our ability to incorporate parts of the ‘other’ and point towards the many possibilities of co-

¹⁵⁴ Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 178.

¹⁵⁵ Shildrick, «Why Should Our Bodies End at the Skin?», 14.

¹⁵⁶ Marder, «Grafting», 15.

corporeality.¹⁵⁷ This lack of self-sufficiency and originary wholeness is something Derrida reflects on in his account of «the supplement» which exposes the fluidity of our categorical boundaries and the impossibility of reaching a form of completion.¹⁵⁸ The supplement, or in this case the graft, is regarded as an essential element in the continuous constitution of the object (or being) as such, which troubles the categorical distinctions between self and other.¹⁵⁹ Marder argues that this form of coming together is a vegetal activity we all partake in, as we are all constituted and transformed by the other, which is even apparent in our corporeal form as we consist of a complex mixture of bacterial, fungal, parasitic and viral components, in which only about 10% of our genomes are uniquely human.¹⁶⁰ The rest is shared with companion species, making us genetically multiple and unique as each individual has a specific microbial makeup that interacts with, and is shaped by, its external environment and the internal microbial communities present in their bodies.¹⁶¹ This refutes the traditional western idea of individuality as rooted in singular genetic codes, as it instead highlights how we are made up of complex intra-active microbial communities that make our form of being inherently multiple, permeable, and intercorporeal.¹⁶²

In *Usynliggjorte, utryddede og truede arter* Tinglum grafts together women and plants in ways where both are disrupted and changed by the other, forming additions and absences that highlights their status as being underway as they are caught between the physical form of the vegetal and human. The ambiguous nature of the term graft, as one that can pertain to both productive transformations and violent acts of cutting, dismemberment and removal, is reflected in how the portraits point to past suppression while also proposing a different way of being and relating where the ‘other’ becomes an intertwined part of oneself. Inspired by the Deleuzian concept of the rhizome and assemblage, Shildrick argues that living beings are always in the process of transformation as they are immersed in a proliferating system without origin or destination that consists of a multitude of connections and interruptions.¹⁶³ These rhizomatic relations form assemblages that enable mutual interactions that transform all parties involved, defining the body in terms of its permeability and ability to change.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁷ Shildrick, «Why Should Our Bodies End at the Skin?», 16.

¹⁵⁸ Shildrick, «Why Should Our Bodies End at the Skin?», 17.

¹⁵⁹ Shildrick, «Why Should Our Bodies End at the Skin?», 17.

¹⁶⁰ Shildrick, «Australian Feminist Studies (Micro)chimerism, Immunity and Temporality», 13.

¹⁶¹ Shildrick, «Australian Feminist Studies (Micro)chimerism, Immunity and Temporality», 13.

¹⁶² Shildrick, «Australian Feminist Studies (Micro)chimerism, Immunity and Temporality», 13.

¹⁶³ Shildrick, «Why Should Our Bodies End at the Skin?», 20.

¹⁶⁴ Shildrick, «Why Should Our Bodies End at the Skin?», 24.

This connectivity forms the foundation for survival and flourishing within the assemblage and marks difference, or the grafted body, as the default condition.¹⁶⁵

The photographic series takes on the form of a rhizomatic assemblage as the relationships between the vegetal and human, and between the different portraits, are presented as equal and non-hierarchical. This is illustrated by how the plants and women are granted an equal amount of attention, and through the similar visual style that ties the series together, creating a crowd where everyone is both similar and unique. The series also refrains from presenting an ideal and impermeable body, despite incorporating botanical illustrations showing the 'perfect' specimen, as they are altered through the graft, such as in *Irmtrat Morgner (1033-1990) Kubjelle, Pulsatilla pratensis, sterkt truet* (Fig. 9) where the plant disappears into Morgner's hair, neck and forehead. This form of connectivity, where the body is transformed by and with the other, points towards the idea of coming together in difference. Retaining difference in encounters is visualized in the series as the plants and women remain distinct through the use of textures, as most of the plants are clearer and have a more nuanced greyscale than the women who are depicted in a more blurry manner with either less or more intense contrasts. (Fig. 7) The graft is thereby not subsumed into the larger whole, nor is it completely separate from it, but instead creates a site for the interplay between the human and vegetal where it is unclear where one begins and the other ends. This form of vegetal connectivity is also evident in relation to Stein and Toklas, who both in their life and literary work challenge our notions of singular origins and autonomous identities.

5.2 Roots and Flowers

When one compares *Alice B. Toklas (1877-1967) Froskebitt, Hydrocharis morus rance, utryddet* (Fig.10) and *Gertrude Stein (1874-1946) Altaihaukeskjegg, Crepis multicaulis, utryddet* (Fig.11) one is struck by the strong, if not detailed, features presented by Stein and the soft and almost unrecognizable shadow that makes up Toklas's image. Historically this dynamic, where Toklas fades into the background while Stein takes centre stage, has echoed throughout stories about these women and in the critical reception and engagement with their work.¹⁶⁶ In her book *The True Story of Alice B. Toklas* Anna Linzie critically examines the exclusion of Toklas and argues that the hierarchization and separation of the two women is

¹⁶⁵ Shildrick, «Why Should Our Bodies End at the Skin?», 24.

¹⁶⁶ Linzie, *The True Story of Alice B. Toklas* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006), 1.

problematic due to the cultural, physical and domestic entanglements between them.¹⁶⁷ She argues that the authorial ambiguity raised by these women, who never co-wrote but whose co-presence is always thematically felt, linguistically and compositionally, throughout each other's work, speaks to the need to analyze the concept of authorial origin and identity in a complex manner that allows for a certain amount of ambiguity, and that include the often excluded feminine and domestic aspects of creation.¹⁶⁸ Both Stein and Toklas engaged in autobiographical writing where they created, dissolved and altered their own identities from one text to another, performing a form of metamorphosing and interconnected autobiographical writing that goes against the traditional idea of authorial origin and originality as they presented a 'self' that is ever changing and whose recollection of events is always slightly altered.¹⁶⁹ This is enhanced by the way they mimetically repeat each other, which is apparent in Stein's book *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* where Stein speaks for Toklas, and in Toklas' own autobiographical text *What is Remembered* which is mostly a slightly altered retelling of the stories originally told by Stein.¹⁷⁰ By mimicking and speaking for, or as, each other, Stein and Toklas presents us with texts where it is difficult to ascertain where one begins and the other ends, and where the use of repetition creates a fundamental ambivalence regarding the relationship between fiction and reality.¹⁷¹

In Tinglum's portrait of Toklas we are immediately drawn to the plant that makes up the foreground, the *Hydrocharis Morsus-Ranae*, or the common Frogbite, which is an aquatic freshwater plant that is native to parts of Europe and Asia.¹⁷² Toklas herself was born in America, where the plant is regarded as an invasive species, but she later relocated to France where the plant occurs naturally.¹⁷³ This geographical link suggests that only when Toklas moved to France, where she met, lived with and outlived Stein, had she found her place. The Frogbite is currently registered as EN in Norway, meaning that it is regarded as an extremely threatened species due to its few and fluctuating populations in vulnerable ecological areas.¹⁷⁴ The plant inhabits still waters, and although it is unisexual and can reproduce in a heteronormative fashion, it generally reproduces vegetatively by multiplying its leaves and

¹⁶⁷ Linzie, *The True Story of Alice B. Toklas* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006), 4.

¹⁶⁸ Linzie, *The True Story of Alice B. Toklas* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006), 79.

¹⁶⁹ Linzie, *The True Story of Alice B. Toklas* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006), 16.

¹⁷⁰ Linzie, *The True Story of Alice B. Toklas* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006), 16.

¹⁷¹ Linzie, *The True Story of Alice B. Toklas* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006), 17.

¹⁷² Cabi, «*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*.»

¹⁷³ Cabi, «*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*.»

¹⁷⁴ Artsdatabanken, «*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae* L.»

breaking up into new independent vegetal entities.¹⁷⁵ This ‘alternative’ form of sexuality could be a nod to Toklas and her romantic relationships with Stein, as both the plant and the author refrains from conforming to the heterosexual ‘norm’, which is also echoed in Stein’s plant which reproduces through self-pollination, eliminating the need for a separate male partner.¹⁷⁶ The Frogbite also embodies a form of rhizomatic growth as it branches out in all directions at once, forming large interconnected webs where there is no clear point of origin similar to the autobiographical writing by and of Toklas.¹⁷⁷ This almost vegetative approach to storytelling is also represented visually in the series by how roots erupt from Toklas’s mouth, hinting at how her persona and stories always change and how this obscures the ‘essence’ of Toklas, hiding her underground in a web of more or less real stories. The prominence of the roots in the image could also be read in relation to Stein, as many argue that Toklas enabled and facilitated Stein's writing, functioning as a root system that nourished the yellow flower blooming above ground. This reading also reflects how Toklas is often only mentioned in relation to Stein, and could be seen as a visualization of a form of (self) silencing performed by Toklas who, until Stein’s death, did not write or publish her own work.¹⁷⁸

In Gertrude Stein’s portrait we encounter the *Crepis Multicaulis*, or the Althaihaukskjegg, which like Toklas’s plant was registered as extinct at the time of the creation of the series, but which has since then been rediscovered in Norway. The Althaihaukskjegg is currently categorized as D1, entailing that there are less than 1000 reproducing individuals in the country, making it threatened.¹⁷⁹ Despite its small numbers the population is regarded as less vulnerable than that of the Frogbite, which reflects how Stein’s own legacy and work has remained more prominent in cultural history than Toklas’s writing. Still the rediscovery of both plants point towards how their work has experienced a renaissance within literary and feminist circles who are now increasingly engaging with the work of both authors.¹⁸⁰ The Althaihaukskjegg was first discovered in Norway in 1851, which led to a botanical frenzy amongst collectors that gathered the plants for personal use, drastically decreasing their population despite the government's attempts at protecting the plant until they completely

¹⁷⁵ Cabi, «*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*.»

¹⁷⁶ Artsportalen.artsdatabanken, «*Crepis multicaulis*.»

¹⁷⁷ Linzie, *The True Story of Alice B. Toklas* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006), 189.

¹⁷⁸ Linzie, *The True Story of Alice B. Toklas* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006), 58.

¹⁷⁹ Artsportalen.artsdatabanken, «*Crepis multicaulis*.»

¹⁸⁰ Linzie, *The True Story of Alice B. Toklas* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006), 3.

disappeared by 1943.¹⁸¹ Its extinction was seen as a result of the irresponsible desire to own, rather than protect, the plant by botanical enthusiasts and the poorly executed protection provided by the government, and in 2006 it was officially registered as extinct, only to be rediscovered again two years later.¹⁸² This continuously changing and endangered form of existence relates to the photographic series as a whole, but also to Stein, who during her lifetime and after her death has faced varying degrees of interest in her work, as well as criticism and praise for it.¹⁸³ Only after publishing *The Authobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, where she wrote in a manner inspired by Toklas rather than in her characteristically ‘grafted’ style, did Stein achieve commercial success, pointing to the difficult modernist form of her previous work with its sparing use of punctuation, recurring repetitions and seemingly illogical structure.¹⁸⁴ Her writing, which is usually riddled with unexpected disruptions, connections and meaning, is to some extent captured by Tinglum through the way the plant both merges with, and is fractured by, Stein, which is especially prominent in the dark surfaces around her eyes and mouth where the stem of the plant disappears before reappearing again on the lighter surfaces. (Fig. 11)

Stein’s vegetal companion functions as a clear contrast to the Frogbite, reflecting the domestic and historical dynamic of the relationship between Stein and Toklas. While Stein’s plant reaches upwards from a firm and rooted position, forming a focal point around her forehead and hair, the Frogbite grows horizontally across unsteady waters, obscuring what lives below the surface. Toklas spent most of her life working to promote, produce and distribute Stein’s writing, which she continued to do after her death where she focused on building up and maintaining Stein’s reputation.¹⁸⁵ Toklas can therefore be seen as forming the material ground for Stein’s cultural work as she was responsible for most of the housework, cooking, cleaning, and other practical matters such as transcribing Stein’s writing, publishing her work and keeping her legacy alive.¹⁸⁶ Stein’s writing can therefore not be separated from Toklas, as she enabled Stein’s work through adopting a more traditionally feminine role in relation to Stein who many argued took on the more masculine role of the writer/genius.

¹⁸¹ Artsportalen.artsdatabanken, «Crepis multicaulis.»

¹⁸² Artsportalen.artsdatabanken, «Crepis multicaulis.»

¹⁸³ Lénárt-Cheng, «Autobiography as Advertisement», 118.

¹⁸⁴ Lénárt-Cheng, «Autobiography as Advertisement», 118.

¹⁸⁵ Linzie, *The True Story of Alice B. Toklas* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006), 2.

¹⁸⁶ Linzie, *The True Story of Alice B. Toklas* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006), 98.

Still Linzie argues that the feminine/masculine dichotomy is inherently troubled in relation to these women as the domestic and cultural spheres continuously overlap in their writing, such as in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* where Toklas is described as reading Stein's text *Ada* while arguing that they should eat, thereby 'domesticating' Stein's writing by placing it in a specifically domestic setting.¹⁸⁷ Toklas herself also engaged in both cultural and domestic work as she edited and published all of Stein's writing, and many who knew the couple testified to Toklas being the one in charge in her and Stein's private life.¹⁸⁸ Stein herself also undermines this view in her own writing, as Norris argues that she often highlighted the work of the wives rather than the work of the 'geniuses', illustrating the value of this work and how it enables and relates to the masterpieces produced by the geniuses.¹⁸⁹ This echoes Linzie's own assertion that we must widen the circle around Stein's writing to include the kitchen and garden, to include the feminine, practical and material, in order for us to understand the significance of Toklas and how their work, life and identity was shaped by one another.¹⁹⁰ This speaks to a more ecofeminist desire to raise the value of feminine labour and embodied existence, encouraging an approach to cultural work that sees it as embedded and dependent on a larger social and ecological structure where all members promote and enable the existence of each other. This notion is also visualized in Tinglum's series through the merging of the human, or cultural, and the plant, or natural, illustrating how these spheres overlap and inform each other.

Linzie also argues that the more 'feminine' role adopted by Toklas and her subdued, or even absent, presence in the autobiographies should not be read as a sign of feminine passivity, but rather as a form of authorial agency.¹⁹¹ Her appearance, or lack thereof, in the autobiographical works can be read in terms of a form of self-silencing, as we, despite seeing the world through her eyes, often focus our attention towards Stein and the other characters featured in the work. Leigh Gilmore argues that Toklas's history is dispersed throughout a multitude of different texts in the form of autobiographies, letters, biographies and memoirs which present us with a radically partial and shifting image of the 'real' Toklas that unsettles

¹⁸⁷ Linzie, *The True Story of Alice B. Toklas* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006), 88.

¹⁸⁸ Linzie, *The True Story of Alice B. Toklas* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006), 85.

¹⁸⁹ Linzie, *The True Story of Alice B. Toklas* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006), 89.

¹⁹⁰ Linzie, *The True Story of Alice B. Toklas* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006), 13.

¹⁹¹ Linzie, *The True Story of Alice B. Toklas* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006), 114.

the call of authenticity in the autobiographical genre.¹⁹² In these texts Toklas presents herself, or is presented as, a multitude of different ‘characters’, such as the cook, the agent, the publisher, the cleaner, the wife, etc, which she uses to hide herself and her relationship with Stein.¹⁹³ This act of obscuring oneself is visualized in the photograph as Toklas, more than any other woman in the series, blend into her surroundings, becoming a visual representation of a form of non-identity. Tinglum also participates in this veiling as both Stein and Toklas are visually linked through their plants to other people rather than to each other, which obscures their relationship when encountered by audiences who do not already know about them. Even the material origin of the portrait speaks to Toklas’s success at obscuring herself, as Tinglum admitted in an email to having struggled to find an analogue picture of Toklas back in the 90s.¹⁹⁴ She ended up using a very small portrait she found in a feminist calendar, which resulted in the highly pixelated texture in the finale image that despite not capturing her facial features clearly, might actually present us with a more accurate representation of her elusive and ambiguous nature than the original photograph did. (Fig. 10)

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 Material Hospitality

In 1968 the botanist Eilif Dahl argued that any interference in an ecosystem always leads to secondary consequences, and that protecting a plant or an animal entails protecting the ecological niche, or the ecosystem, they depend on.¹⁹⁵ Tinglum found inspiration in this sentiment as she was working on the photographic series, which presents a fragile ecosystem on the verge of collapse as the effect of each extinction or rediscovery changes the meaning of the work.¹⁹⁶ The series explores what happens when human and vegetal beings exist in harmful and hostile environments that hinders their ability to flourish due to the interference of social, cultural and economic interests and norms. By placing the plants and women in a foreign, cultural, environment, the series remains attentive to their shared history of displacement, domination and occupation. The series thereby visualizes how the environment

¹⁹² Linzie, *The True Story of Alice B. Toklas* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006), 13.

¹⁹³ Linzie, *The True Story of Alice B. Toklas* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006), 12.

¹⁹⁴ Personal communication with Gerd Tinglum via e-mail, 28.04.21.

¹⁹⁵ I am paraphrasing a quote given to me by Tinglum via e-mail (28.04.21) that was included on a poster used to promote the exhibition at Hordaland Kunstsenter in 1991.

¹⁹⁶ Personal communication with Gerd Tinglum via e-mail, 28.04.21.

of both women and plants have often been dictated by external forces, hinting at the long history of colonial transportation of plants and how women's living situations were often shaped by gender norms, economic limitations and political policies. In this sense, the photographs highlight the consequences of removing someone from their natal environment, while also troubling our given notions of natality. By presenting us with intertwined cultural and natural beings, the series illustrates how ecological and cultural spheres are increasingly affected by climate change, as the images present us with beings who may no longer have a natal environment to return to due to how it has been shaped or destroyed by human activity. Still this act also points to the disruptive potential to be found within the grafts as they now become an invasive species within the art world, critiquing the western system that have shaped their expression and illustrating how the attempt at controlling the vegetal and feminine might lead to unexpected consequences.

Donna Haraway's concept of sympoiesis, meaning 'making-with', entails that nothing and no one ever makes itself as everyone is immersed in complex, responsive and historical systems where no one precedes their relations.¹⁹⁷ A symbiotic entity, or a holobiont, engages other holobionts in complex and contingent polytemporal and polyspatial knottings, forming a multitude of symbiotic assemblages without clear temporal or spatial boundaries.¹⁹⁸ This notion is apparent in Tinglums *Usynliggjorte, utryddede og truede arter* as the photographs defy the traditional notions of linear temporality and autonomous being, instead highlighting the many contingent, communal and complex relationships that occur as the women, their work, the plants and their environment intersect. These intersections, or knots, constitute the meaning of the series as it forms a symbiotic structure inspired by a feminine approach to sharing in difference and a feminist ethic of response-ability where we remain attentive to the many affects, entanglements and ruptures all living beings are involved in, taking seriously the creativity, curiosity and agency that characterizes all forms of life.¹⁹⁹

These thoughts can also be found in Irigaray's philosophy, as she links the concept of making-with to a specifically feminine and vegetal form of being. She regards the separation

¹⁹⁷ Haraway, «Symbiogenesis, Sympoiesis, and Art Science Activisms for Staying with the Trouble», M25.

¹⁹⁸ Haraway, «Symbiogenesis, Sympoiesis, and Art Science Activisms for Staying with the Trouble», M26.

¹⁹⁹ Haraway, «Symbiogenesis, Sympoiesis, and Art Science Activisms for Staying with the Trouble», M32.

between humans and nature as harmful as it cultivates a form of non-thinking, leading to a lack of living energy due to our suppression of our vegetal desires.²⁰⁰ She therefore seeks out ways to return to the elements of nature through the vegetal to make us more comfortable with experiences and ways of thinking that are not masterable and immediate. Central to this is a so-called ‘return to the shadows’ as an essential facet of growth, metamorphosis and blossoming, where beings fluctuate between flowering and receding as they breathe in and out.²⁰¹ She claims that the act of breathing like plants can allow us to continuously re-open the possibility of new growth, as plants breathe out and in alongside humans and animals who breathe in and out.²⁰² Breathing together in this manner illustrates the importance of acknowledging one's dependence on larger ecological communities and becoming attentive of the other through breathing as an interactive activity.²⁰³ The breathing community of plants allows for the process of becoming, but this process is hindered in the West as we are experiencing what Irigaray calls a ‘forgetting of air’ as a general forgetfulness of the silent ground out of which all conceptualization arises, that being the unconscious ground of nature as the feminine within the history of metaphysics.²⁰⁴ Making space for this ground within the western metaphysical system does not entail a rejection of the rhetoric that has structured it, but rather a subversion of that rhetoric’s privileged metaphors in ways that reveal the strength inherent in the concealed feminine.²⁰⁵ Her reading of the feminine as a form of silent ground in the history of metaphysics emphasizes the non-originary and indeterminate origin of subjectivity, exploring the plant as a subject that resists clear definition as it continuously evolves with each breath.²⁰⁶ Tinglum similarly presents us with images where each grafted being changes depending on whether we view it alone, in relation to another photograph in the series, or in relation to all the portraits, illustrating the multitude of possible relations between the portrayed, their histories, and the audiences the series encounters. The series thereby visualizes the unconscious ground without defining or categorizing it, allowing it instead to remain in flux. This notion is especially apparent in Toklas’s portrait if read in relation to how Toklas chose to only reveal certain aspects of herself, choosing to conceal parts of herself as she returns to the shadow in the waters underneath the Frogbite. Still the

²⁰⁰ Gibson, «Eco-Feminism: Plants as Becoming-Woman», 123.

²⁰¹ Irigaray, *Elemental Passions* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 31-32.

²⁰² Miller, *The Vegetative Soul* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2002), 200.

²⁰³ Gibson, «Eco-Feminism: Plants as Becoming-Woman», 125.

²⁰⁴ Irigaray, *The Forgetting of Air in Martin Heidegger*, 44.

²⁰⁵ Miller, *The Vegetative Soul* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2002), 199.

²⁰⁶ Miller, *The Vegetative Soul* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2002), 198.

idea of returning to the shadows also suits the series as a whole through Tinglum's inclusion of hidden personal associations in her choice of colour, which allows certain aspects of the work to remain hidden while others are more apparent.

Both Irigaray and Gibson point towards the Water Lily as an exemplary feminist plant as it breathes through its whole body, remains attentive to the other, and embodies fluid and feminine forms of sexuality and reproduction that are always situated and specific.²⁰⁷ Similarly to the Frogbite, the Water Lily can choose to reproduce alone through self-reproduction, or together with other plants, giving it a unique autonomy while it still remains vulnerable due to its dependence on an ecological community and environment.²⁰⁸ Gibson argues that the floating Lily, or in this case the Frogbite, speaks to a femininity that pushes through boundaries and dissolves the distinction between mind, body and environment while also allowing for difference in its encounters with others.²⁰⁹ This form of vegetal hospitality displayed by vegetal beings is based on a desire to encounter the other, but Irigaray posits that this encounter must be between two beings who are equally open to being transformed.²¹⁰ Only through these kinds of potentially disruptive encounters, where our image of the world and ourselves are left open to being altered, can we learn to approach the other without dominating them, instead cultivating a healthy desire to connect, communicate and contribute.²¹¹ Breathing with plants, vegetating amongst them, can give plants, women and other social and ecological beings room to grow and become as they illustrate that being rooted and dependent on others does not entail immobility, a lack of reason, or weakness.²¹² Instead it illustrates a way of being that invites others to participate in complex relations on equal terms, submerging humans in larger communities where we become one of many forms of sentient and thinking life that exist in never ending processes of becoming.

Tinglum's photographic series revolves around many of these ideas, as the women and plants encounter each other in disruptive, affirming, and unsettling ways that affect both parties equally, pointing towards Irigaray's notion of sharing in difference. The community that makes up the series consists of beings who share a long and intertwined history, and through

²⁰⁷ Gibson and Gagliano, «The Feminist Plant: Changing Relations with the Water Lily», 126.

²⁰⁸ Gibson, «Eco-Feminism: Plants as Becoming-Woman», 131.

²⁰⁹ Gibson and Gagliano, «The Feminist Plant: Changing Relations with the Water Lily», 129.

²¹⁰ Still, «Sharing the World: Luce Irigaray and the Hospitality of Difference», 50.

²¹¹ Still, «Sharing the World: Luce Irigaray and the Hospitality of Difference», 50.

²¹² Gibson and Gagliano, «The Feminist Plant: Changing Relations with the Water Lily», 133.

Tinglum's use of repetition the audience is reminded of both the recurring suppression suffered by the women and plants, while also being encouraged to get to know the women, their work and the plants better in order to understand how these beings intersect and relate. The series thereby encourages a more personal and attentive approach to those depicted, asking us to become familiar with the grey history of the feminine and vegetal as it highlights the sprawling cultural, ecological and metaphysical roots that have remained in the shadows. Only by spending time with the artwork and its inhabitants do we discover that beneath the seemingly uniform and grey surface there is an intertwined, vivacious and ambiguous community filled with complex temporal relations both within and beyond the artwork. This notion of relationality relates to the multiple spatial and temporal dimensions of sympoiesis as it consists of the living, dead, spectral and their potential futures, illustrating how the boundaries between past and future, culture and nature, and mind and body disintegrate within a grey ecology. In this sense each photograph composes and decomposes each other, making up an assemblage of beings who continuously engage in the process of worlding and unworlding as it tenderly embraces the ontology and epistemology of its inhabitants, allowing them to remain in-between.

This refusal to categorize and limit is a vital facet within a grey ecology as it enables us to interact with the many complex ecological and social beings and environments we are intertwined with, enabling us to form kinships with others. Only by reestablishing these relationships can we face and respond to the many consequences of our capitalist lifestyle and dualistic approach to social and ecological groups as we are confronted with the increasing haunting of in-between, extinct, and spectral beings that inhabit the grey landscapes in the Anthropocene. Learning how to remain rooted in grey and vulnerable environments, how to turn decay into growth and promote the flourishing not just of a few, but of all, is thereby becoming increasingly important as we face the many environmental challenges of our age. Through the series Tinglum invites us into a vulnerable community that illustrates a dynamic life within a grey ecology as it remembers its past, makes ethical commitments towards the future, and allows the permeable portraits to affect each other across species boundaries, temporal planes and dualistic distinctions. Rather than denying the spectral presences and monstrous grafts within the grey ecological landscape, we instead come to discover the potential of a rooted, yet dynamic, communal, feminine and vegetal form of life as one that finds vitality and strength within the grey as it allows for new feminine and vegetal forms of being to sprout.

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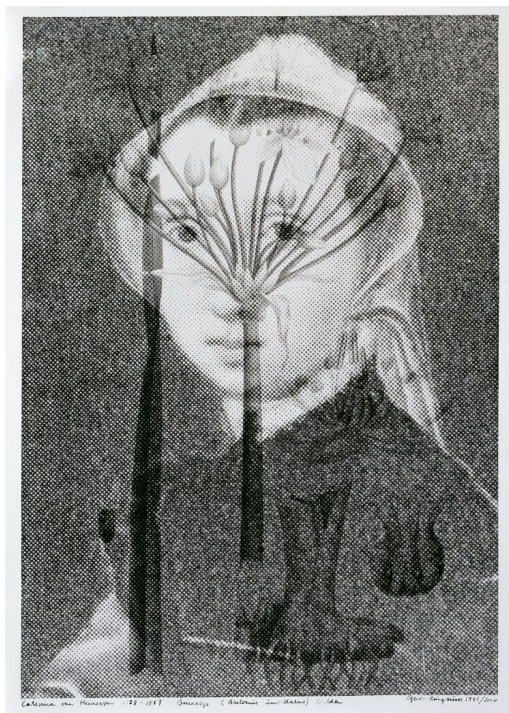


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