

The Mushrooms of Plato's Cave

Francesca Brunetti

This project is about an illustrated, re-designed, posthuman, ecofeminist narrative of Plato's Myth of the Cave. Plato's Myth of the Cave has been interpreted by contemporary thinkers as emblematic of Plato's philosophy and western culture and its anthropocentric and domineering approach to reality. By using watercolor and digital painting in my project, I transform this myth into an alternative eco-feminist visual narrative. The protagonist of my transformed myth is a person who—instead of going up, in the direction of the sun and abstract thinking, as does the male prisoner in Plato's myth—goes down, underground, in a world populated by fungi, worms and bacteria. Through imagination and drawing, I create a visual description where the protagonist of my transformed Plato's myth discovers a way to relate to her material world that challenges traditional western anthropocentric approaches to reality. In my story traditional western ways of relating to existence—based on a self-centered understanding of the self, the division between body and mind, the understanding of matter as homogeneous and passive and the importance of rationality and control—are replaced with actions and feelings that promote the protagonist's embeddedness in her material world, her understanding of her interconnection with the elements composing reality, and the transformative potential of ecological joy. By exploring nature's agency and creativity, the protagonist of my myth gains energies and resources to understand and transform her material existence.

Selections from Francesca Brunetti, *The Mushrooms of Plato's Cave*, 2023. Watercolor and digital drawing.





