



Wild Women of Anatolia

Anatolia



Aim & Scope of research

Aim

Honoring the voices of women's resistance, resilience and empowerment in Anatolia

Research questions

- How do Anatolian women define and experience the wild woman?
- Who were the wild women in the history of Anatolia?
- Do women of today feel connected to these historical women?
- Is there a collective unconsciousness of the wild women archetype that connects all women in Anatolia?
- How does the connection to the land, context and culture affect this unconsciousness?
- How can this idea of "wild woman" help to empower and unite women of Turkey?



Theoretical Underpinnings

- Tuhiwai Smith's (2013) decolonizing method: telling alternative stories
- DeLanda's (2006) assemblages
- Bakhtinian (1986) utterance
- Jung's (1936) collective unconsciousness
- Feminist theory & epistemologies of ignorance (Tuana, 2006)
- Critical bifocality (Weis & Fine, 1988)
- Liberation psychology (Martin-Baro, 1994)



An Ongoing Project

- Doing psychic-archeological digs in archives: discovering the wild women of Anatolia in history
- Collecting wild women stories from women all over Turkey; asking what it means for them and how they experience her (6 stories collected so far)





Wild Women in the History of Anatolia

Scope

- late 19th and 20th century
- stories of marginalized women, empowerment, resilience
- oral histories, books, stories, magazines, court cases, folk tales, publications about women & madness

Findings so far

- Suffragettes of the harem
- Resistance by the slaves of harem
- Gender bending poets (Mihri Hatun)
- Ottoman women who poisoned their husbands (Ayse Hatun)
- Portraits of women from leftist movements (first political party of Turkey established by Nezihe Muhiddin, Kurdish liberation movement, Armenian feminists)

Wild Women of Anatolia today

6 stories

Thematic analysis

Braun & Clarke (2014)

Wild women of Anatolia resist with natural resources. We connect with the soil and find strength with our mothers and our ancestors, we fight with wild tongues, rage and desire by feeding on from the fire inside us, we listen to our fluid emotions as they come and go in waves, and we seek freedom by flying away into the unknown.



Figure 1: The image of the wild woman

Oppressive Structure

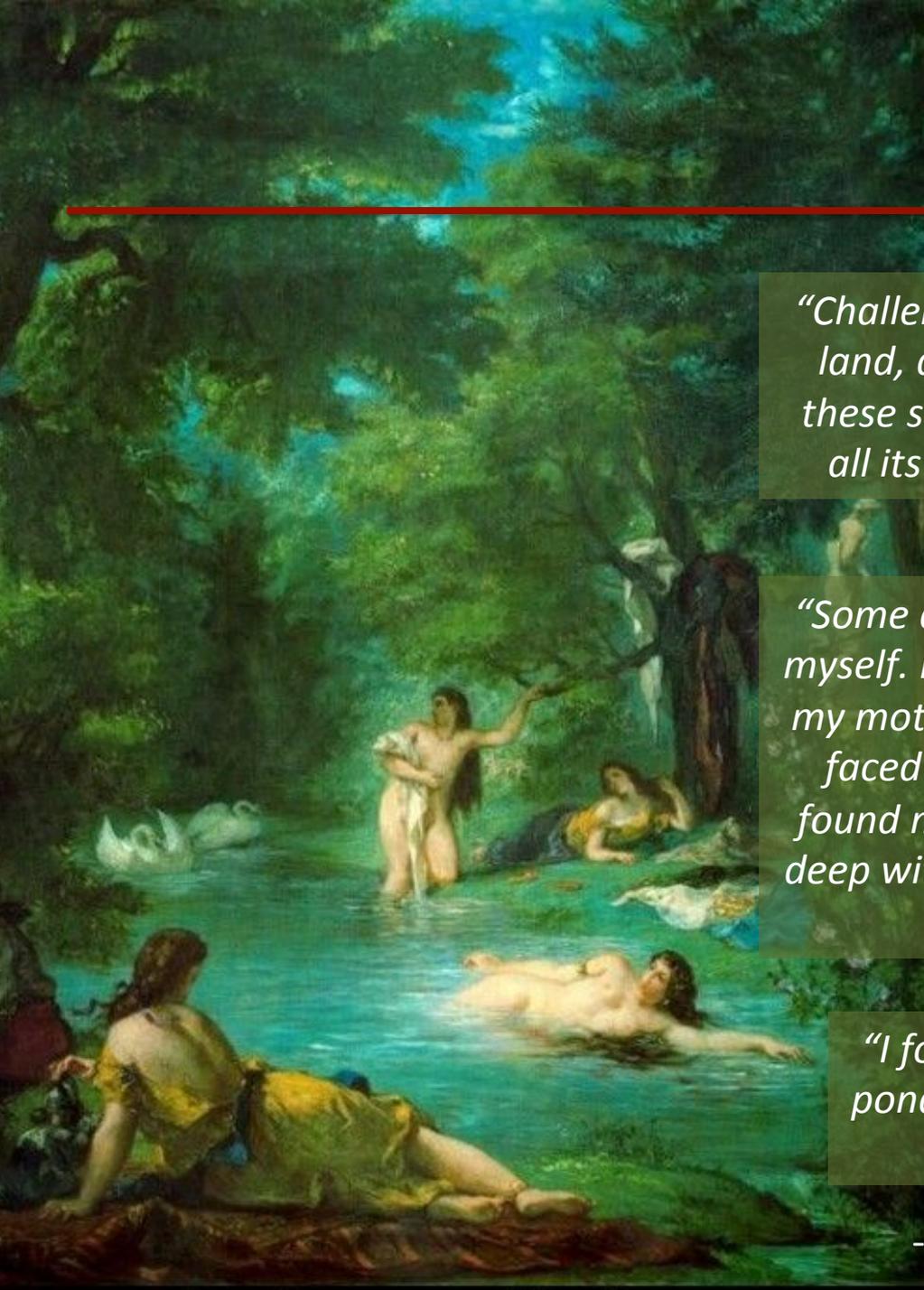
*“ ‘You are not going out wearing that!’
I cannot remember how many times I was forced to return to my room and change my outfit as a teenager as well as a young woman. Must be more than 100 for sure” (Ayse, Turkish, age 27)*

-Sociocultural control of a woman’s body & mind

“If only the lands had tongues so they could speak about the suffering.. In 1915, World War 1 was taking effect in the Anatolian land and the government decided the forced deportation of Armenian people. Filor yaya’s husband was killed on the road from Amasya to Tiflis, and her baby she was breastfeeding was taken away from her lap and was thrown into the river... I vaguely remember Filor yaya, but she would keep the horrifying catastrophes she went through to her self, as if she was afraid to relive them if she talked about them. “(Katrin, age 54, Armenian)

- Generational trauma

Earth

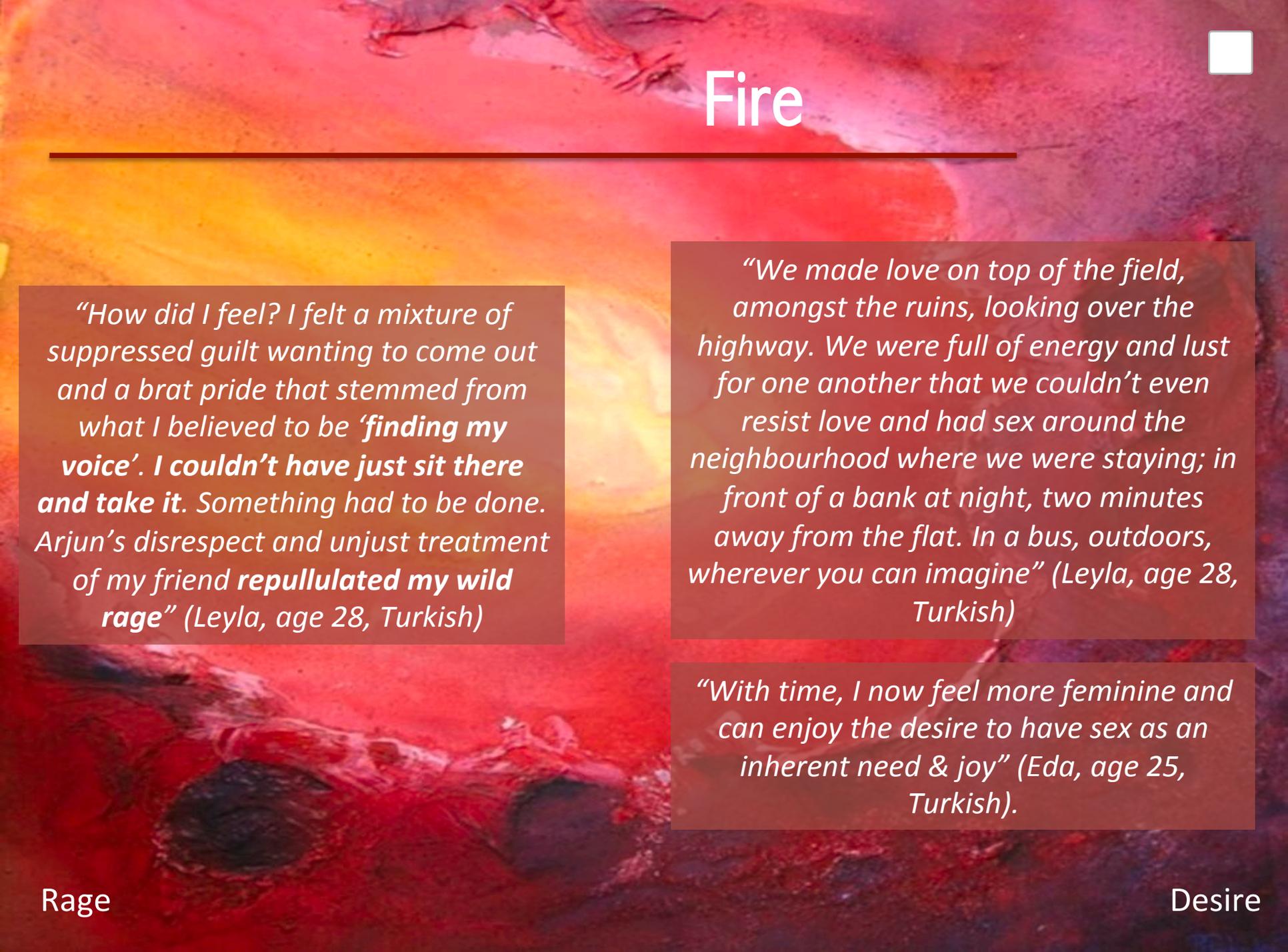
A painting depicting a lush forest scene with a river. In the foreground, a woman in a yellow and green dress sits on the bank, looking towards the water. In the middle ground, a man stands in the water holding a white animal, possibly a dog or a lamb. Another woman is lying on the bank. In the background, a man is visible near a waterfall. The scene is filled with green foliage and a bright sky.

“Challenging struggles are never-ending on this land, and women are the biggest heroines of these stories. Anatolia keeps standing tall with all its beauty...” (Katrin, Armenian, age 54).

“Some days, I was afraid to lose, some days, I lost myself. I couldn’t find what I was doing wrong. But my mother never gave up. I didn’t give up either. I faced my problems, I went deeper into them. I found mother halves that have the courage to go deep with me. They held my hands” (Ozge, age 29, Turkish)

“I found the truer meaning of wild in me upon pondering and thinking. It is in all of us” (Leyla, age 27, Turkish)

- Generational & collective wisdom



Fire

*“How did I feel? I felt a mixture of suppressed guilt wanting to come out and a brat pride that stemmed from what I believed to be ‘finding my voice’. I couldn’t have just sit there and take it. Something had to be done. Arjun’s disrespect and unjust treatment of my friend **repullulated my wild rage**” (Leyla, age 28, Turkish)*

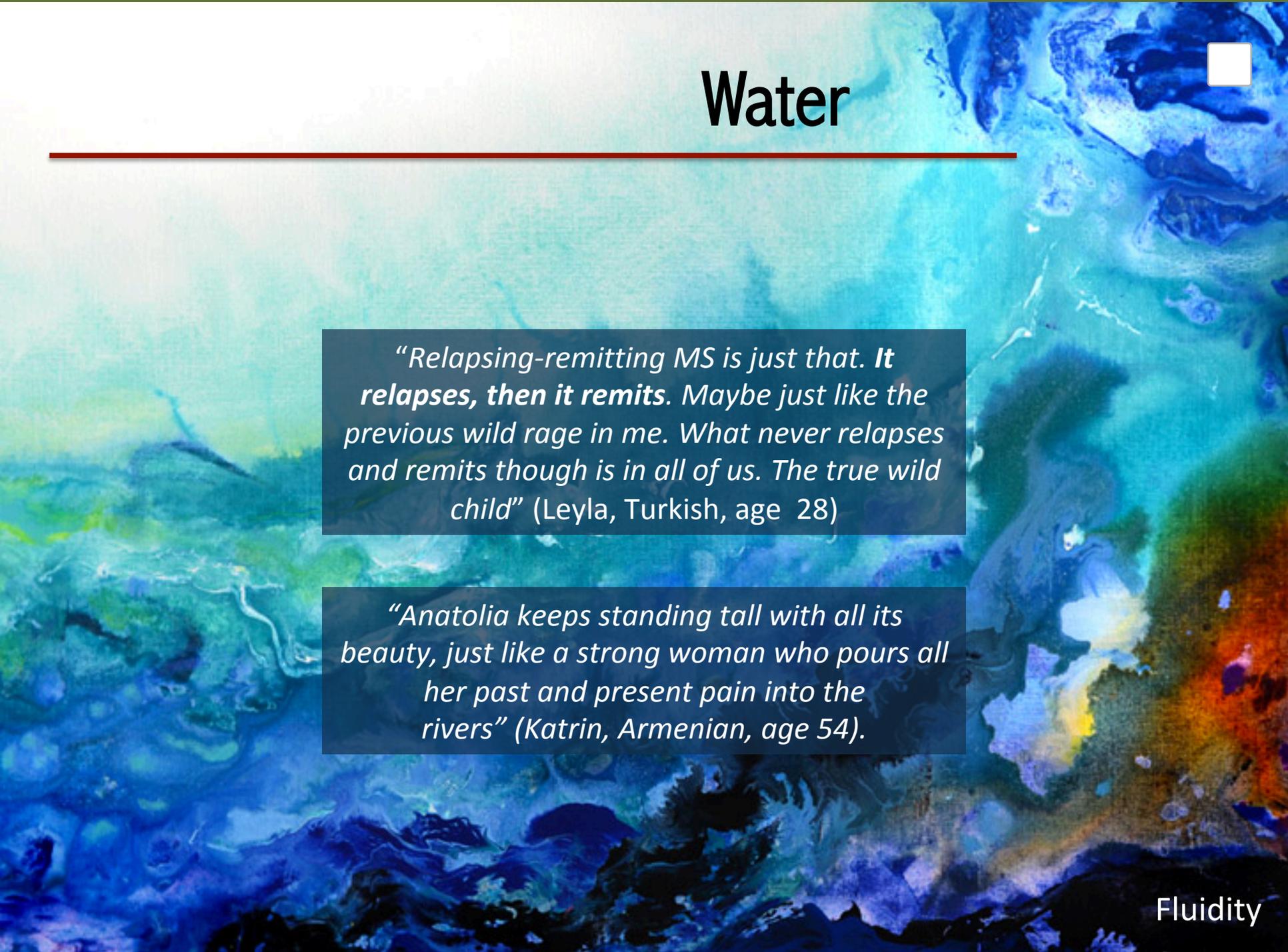
“We made love on top of the field, amongst the ruins, looking over the highway. We were full of energy and lust for one another that we couldn’t even resist love and had sex around the neighbourhood where we were staying; in front of a bank at night, two minutes away from the flat. In a bus, outdoors, wherever you can imagine” (Leyla, age 28, Turkish)

“With time, I now feel more feminine and can enjoy the desire to have sex as an inherent need & joy” (Eda, age 25, Turkish).

Rage

Desire

Water



*“Relapsing-remitting MS is just that. **It relapses, then it remits.** Maybe just like the previous wild rage in me. What never relapses and remits though is in all of us. The true wild child” (Leyla, Turkish, age 28)*

“Anatolia keeps standing tall with all its beauty, just like a strong woman who pours all her past and present pain into the rivers” (Katrin, Armenian, age 54).

Air



*“Was it worth taking the plunge, being alone, being far away? Of course it was!... So I returned to my humble room, to pack for my journey back to Turkey, back home. As I was packing, voices in my head were singing to me: ‘Where are the flowers on your dresses?’
Yes, I responded, I better pack my dresses with all types of flowers”
(Ayse, age 27, Turkish)*

“I felt liberated, having the courage to made such a move”. (Eda, age 26, Turkish)



Next Steps

- Collecting more stories: Reaching out to friends, community groups women and LGBTQ organizations across Turkey
- Forming a community, educational research center and social justice platform for and by the wild women of Anatolia



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