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In-Human Appetites and Mineral Becomings: Earthly Wit(h)nessing in Caitlin Berrigan's Imaginary Explosions

Callum Bradley and Georgia Perkins

“...I entered
The stomach of indifference, the wordless cupboard.

The mother of pestles diminished me.
I became a still pebble.
The stones of the belly were peaceable,

The head-stone quiet, jostled by nothing.”

Sylvia Plath, 'The Stones' in *The Colossus and Other Poems*, 1960

Caitlin Berrigan's body of work *Imaginary Explosions* (2018-ongoing) layers volcanology, “geological consciousness” and “radical planetary transformation”, with speculative fiction.¹ Berrigan links the subsurface of magma cores, to the minerals which conglomerate into stones within our bodies. The lithic cavities of rocks are in a process of mineralizing, causing plastic² and in/animate “movements and expansions of its magma chambers”.³ Creating what Donna Haraway would call unlikely “transformative merger practices”,⁴ Dr. Karen Holmberg in episode 2 of Berrigan's series describes how rock formations and sea lions mutually shape stomachs and magma chambers:

It appears these deep black rocks were swallowed by sea lions as ballast to weigh down their buoyant fat, and were smoothed in the chambers of their stomachs. When sea lions were brought to the caves to be eaten, the stones fell out of their bellies and piled on the floors along with the remains of other animals.⁵

The “shared aqueous kinship”⁶ in which the indigestible rock sits within the sea lions stomach, co-constitutes the depths in which they can collectively plumb deep waters. Here is an example of what Donna Haraway calls messmates, in which “eating one another and

developing indigestion [...is a] kind of transformative merger practice; living critters form consortia in a baroque medley of inter- and intra-actions".⁷ The in(di)gestable diffractive patternings of sea lion-rock entanglements, creates a rippling emergence of changes in co-buoyancy. Eating does not constitute full absorption of another, or produce a kind of sameness, but rather attends to the "patterns of differences that make a difference."⁸ In Karen Barad's essay *Nature's Queer Performativity*, she argues that "a classic diffraction pattern is the one produced by the interfering disturbances of water waves when two stones are dropped simultaneously into a pond. That is, it is a pattern of alternating regions of intensity."⁹ As the stones are 'dropped' into the hold of the sea lions' stomachs, different intensities in bodily waters or waves are produced, as well as differences in how they (multi-)navigate bodies of water.¹⁰ Diffractive watery movements pull in different directions between bubbles and subsurface magma cores rising, in conjunction with sea lion-rocks plunging into deep waters, stomachs and cave chambers.¹¹ Orienting the space differently becomes a space of alliance, resistance, and earthly transformation in the water column, which goes beyond the boundaries of a terrestrial and aquatic divide.¹²

Staked in similar differentiating processes to those voiced by Barad, artist and theorist Bracha Ettinger reconceptualises the structuring of "subjectivity [so that it] becomes both diffracted and assembled, both dispersed and partial, and part of an alliance."¹³ Subjectivity is emphasised as being constituted by diffractive alliances, as transformative practices, always already merging in/humans and Non/Life. This (de)constructs the self with-in the other in the same stroke as (re)structuring the other with-in the self. The stones in the sea-lions' stomachs parallel an instance of pregnancy, of carrying with-in an-other. These are watery, rippling differences, carried across terrains, scales and reiterating intensities. Stone is swum down into the depths of sea with-in stomach; the mineralised anti-floatation tool resurfaces, dredged up and deposited on the cave floor, becoming a part of its carpeted sea of stones. The translations of pregnancy across transgressions of inside/outside and self/other boundaries relays with processes of eating and being eaten, along with living and dying. In(di)gesting stone, returning (to) earth, then stories intra-actions that cut through in-difference, transforming relations with displaced and assimilated matter. For Ettinger, not only is "our consciousness linked to and is a part of the consciousness of the earth" from birth, but these archaic links can be thread through "artistic engagements", tracing a "spiralic movement of transformational eventing" between artworks and witnesses.¹⁴ Berrigan's videowork not only diffracts stones through

seas, stomachs and caves as transformed molten cavities, but the space of the screen itself and its bringing together of witnesses might also figure as part of this in(di)gesting economy, metabolising rock.

Reading diffractively through Barad and Ettinger's writing, this text creates waves and non-vacuous holes in its encounters with geology, orifices, memory and time. Berrigan's speculative renderings metabolize plosive transformations, (e)merging in/humans and Non/Life. This reverberates in the aesthetic dimension, as well as between Barad and Ettinger's quantum and psychoanalytic thoughts.

Metabolizing Rock

The space of Berrigan's video works intimately in-human. The artist's onscreen writing asks, "who is to say, that stones are exempt from metabolism?"¹⁵ Witnesses of the 'lithic choreography'¹⁶ in *Becoming Mineral* are suspended in an aesthetic assemblage that resonates beyond demarcations of interiority and exteriority, in-between human and inhuman, before any splitting of geos and bios. The metabolizing rock has a "warping surface,"¹⁷ which distorts the "material imaginaries"¹⁸ of rock formations as monolithic concretions. The three-dimensional rock at the heart of the image moves; audiences encounter something in-human, in themselves, when approaching the rock that spirals in random rotational patterns, anchored to an invisible axis in the middle of the screen. We follow Berrigan's moving image and resonate with her words, "in alliance, we move together, we mineralise."¹⁹ The seemingly inert minerals which are ingested into the body, complicates, as Elizabeth Povinelli argues, the 'geontopowers' of the dualistic dynamics between Life and Non-Life, according to Western metaphysics and imaginaries.²⁰ Invited in, the rock relays geometrical precision to the gaze that is fixed dead centre, between Life and Non-Life, holding the rock as it precariously swirls and loops in place. Its permeable, spongy texture further leads the gaze in-between its strata, into imaginaries that implicate witnesses of the rock within its formation and vice versa.²¹

Void of monolithic scale and monumentality, the rock is staged as an unassuming and microcosmic object constituted as much by its originary materiality as the assistive technologies resourced for its videographic representation; geo-metric witness working in the measure between Life and Non-Life. Its porosity bores passageways between the material and discursive, through technical figurations of rock that are held in tension at the heart of the screen. We are invited to ingest the rock as if it is a mediational morsel that might feed

geontological relations. Displacing styles of popular food advertisement, the rock is abstracted, emerging out of a dark background and rotating in space as if on a platter; fit for video consumption, invitingly lit and precisely placed. The morsel-lithic rock tempts our desiring, indigesting economy into exchange. Words layered over the image appear on screen; the artist is “reporting a shared mutual desire to erupt.”²² An in(di)gesting economy of metabolic interactions is figured through geos becoming food for thought in bios becoming mineral. Material-semiosis works through the pores of the aesthetic eruption on screen; the reproduction of rock relays in-human witnesses.

Beneath the rock, line drawings of mountainous landscape flash across the screen in split-second intervals, producing a sense of infinite webbing that cannot possibly be held by the frame. Computational radar topographies are blown up, zoomed into and panned across. The moving background transports witnesses across space whilst refusing any kind of anthropo-scenic view from above that might grasp and map out the landscape in its entirety. Witnesses are drawn into and across the depths of the land and dwell with-in the porous rock simultaneously. They are moved by the diffractive rhythms of the multiple representations of geos, the rock rotating in place composited with mountainous topographies that will not stay in place. A particular aesthetic-ontology suspends audiences between juxtaposed representations of geos in the space of the screen - a kind of situatedness in-situ – where witnesses feature as nonexhaustive components in metabolic relation with geological agencies and technological figurations in an aesthetic stasis.

Ettinger discusses “working-through and passing-through artistic pregnant dwellings...with-in the Other and with-in the Cosmos.”²³ Here, interest in pre-birth relationality and differentiation is taken up and mapped onto earthly relations where the human is always already co-constituted with-in-human others. A sense of differences that make a difference are located by Ettinger in the originary patternings of becoming-child and becoming-mother that are blueprinted during intrauterine development. These patterns refigure subjectivity as originating with-in an-other, and return from out of repression via engagements with aesthetic works, in “encounter-events.”²⁴ As with Barad’s diffraction, Ettinger’s difference between “I and non-I” rests on alternating intensities and reiterative agencies.²⁵ In-utero mother-child symbioses is refused as much as any complete contradistinguishing of child and mother, instead instating a pattern for “sharing-in-difference” between partial, hybrid and co-emergent transsubjects.²⁶ Ettinger’s sibling term, transject, figures a kind of horizontal ontology that does

away with the hierarchical grammars indexing sub- and ob-ject. Manifesting in and by a web of wit(h)nessing stringing together transsubjects in shared aesthetic encounters, the:

transject (patterned upon the figure of archaic m/Other to which the I is transconnected...) subjectivizes and differentiates by connecting between humans, between the human and the non-human, as well as between formations and expressions of Life and of Non-Life with-in the human...the artwork as a transject provides such an occasion.²⁷

The blueprinted patterns grounded in the womb instate the rhythm of the other in the heart of the self. I and non-I always already carry and are carried with-in each-other. Ettinger's term, co/in-habit(u)ation "with-in the other echoes bodily pregnancy, understood not as containing but as resonating together...while habituating to one another."²⁸ This is facilitated by transsubjects and transjects engaged in (e)merging practices, opening up to hospitality and co-response-ability as "expressions of communicating in a womb-like neighbouring."²⁹

In Berrigan's words, "renewal" is sought "from the erosions and hollows of patriarchy."³⁰ Toward facilitating ways of flourishing on a damaged planet³¹ – with Haraway's observance that "the fetus and the earth are sibling seed worlds"³² – an-other difference can be situated from the womb, through Ettinger, in-human. This locates an originary proto-ethics constituted by a sharing of situations in-difference, which might be returned in artworking, stitching the world-wounds that cut persons from relation through geographic displacement according to dominant geologies.³³ Following the words onscreen, "we are attuning to...metabolic transformations."³⁴ In Berrigan's art, the counterflows of the Anthropocene - as an event marked by anthropogenic effects in the geosphere is as much as an event affecting geontological stirrings in the heart of anthropos - is manifest in the engagement between Becoming Mineral and its witnesses.

Projections from the gaze touch at a transsubjective rock; we in(di)gest the heart of the screen turning (us to) stone. This transformation is not passive viewing; much like Michael Marder's writing on misconceptions of what it means 'to vegetate' - in likeness of wit(h)nessing stone or plant - is "to flourish" and be animate as opposed to lacking movement or vitality.³⁵ At stake is an embroiled and imbricated material-discursive metabolics between bios and geos. Further imaginaries for such intra-actions are shared through Berrigan's longer narrative-based

video series, *Imaginary Explosions*, episodes 1 and 2. Swallowing an egg and being swallowed in explosions caused by Eyjafjallajökull in Iceland generates a phenomenon that interweaves material agencies in unexpected ways, feeling out the tensions of in(di)gestion. This is rendered doubly unexpected in the register of Berrigan's speculative fictioning, storying differences onscreen before, beyond and between symbolic and stratospheric surfaces.

Swallowing Egg

In *Imaginary Explosions*, episode 1, another encounter embodies the felt tensions of in(di)gestion, as described by an off-screen voice assumed to emanate from the network of earthly alliances that scaffold Berrigan's speculative fiction: "When I feed an egg to my stomach, I sense it disappears down a dark, long, shaft into a molten cavity that is still mineralizing."³⁶ The speaking character along with the egg form an imageless presence throughout Berrigan's work, which is not an erasure through its absence, but rather a calling to what can not be seen in the in/visible of the 'absent real'. The egg is drowned in the depths of the stomach, in more than a repetition of impregnation as the impregnable bounds between in/humans are broken through. Viviparous gestation enfolds appetites attached to oviparous reproduction; becoming vivi/ovi-porous. The networking voice follows their in-human sensing with an indeterminate counter; "maybe egg is not the right food for this inhuman appetite."³⁷ When ingesting an egg, the matter moves through numerous pathways of chemical processes including constructive/destructive metabolism, involving the building and breaking down of bodily energy stores. Ingestion is seen as fundamentally swallowing the outside in, and in contrast, egestion is the expelling movement from inside out of the body. Berrigan's representations of oscillating in/ex-gestions resonate with Ettinger's argument that "when a world, internal and external...becomes shared with-in-difference via artwork, this world is... the process of making a difference" and marks "the opening of a space at the heart of the border."³⁸ The oval matter of invagination through ingesting seeds, pips and eggs, combines the process of inner and outer fleshy/shell bodies enveloping another. The explosive stories of trees growing from seeds in-human bodies comes to mind here, as a speculative investigation on the potentiality of bodies manifesting within other bodies through this co-metabolic openness. As Barad writes, through interstices of exchange "we are always already opened up to the other from the 'inside' as well as the 'outside'."³⁹ Thus, an 'inhuman appetite' can be read as the following: the desire to eat and become in/organic matter; of being

otherwise; and to acknowledge, and bring together alternative knowledges; in a way that does not also absorb and consume an-other.

Thus, maybe egg is not the right food as porous links are sought beyond biologies of the living, mapping the scaling between egg and earth, (e)merging with-in non/living geologies. Maybe earth is better than egg for decentring humans in the ripples and radiations of an enfolding eruption. Maybe egg too readily feeds Ettinger's warning, "if I expel or swallow the stranger it is me who will be reduced...who will freeze the becoming-threshold" creating "fixed frontiers."⁴⁰ Ettinger recognises that we in fact reduce ourselves in the consumption and appropriation of the other, realising an absent real in our h/earth/h, in place of "the stranger without whom I will not co-emerge."⁴¹ Maybe eruption is better than ingestion for decentering the centre, too, preventing "a retreat beyond the scope of shareability."⁴² Frontiers thaw out when they're erupted, when exploding and swallowing are locked in the oscillations of unsettling indigestion. Becoming "raging hot all of a sudden", the networking voice is further connected to "desires [they] never knew [they] could have", where egg is sensed as maybe not the right food, where inhuman appetite is thought as inhuman desire⁴³. In/human desires reverberate from the "erotic antenna" of each psyche as "an impulse toward the other" which for Ettinger "does not receive a human sense" though "does not remain inhuman" either.⁴⁴ This transgressive desire is paralleled in Barad's attempt to "confron[t] our inhumanity... [or] lack of compassion", by asking how we might reconfigure and turn to the inhuman as a way of coming "to feel, to care, to respond".⁴⁵

With Barad, inhuman desire acquires a new resonance with reparative potential, pertaining to ethical imperatives attached to ecological (in)justices. As the off-screen voice in *Imaginary Explosions* swallows an egg, they "ingest [an] event like radiation"⁴⁶ in Barad's words, becoming material-discursive food for thought in an explosive desiring that enfolds (e)merging inhumanities; "to take [this egg] into your gut, to feel it leach into your bones, mutate your innards, and reset your cellular clocks".⁴⁷ Materialising differences with-in-humans is, for Barad, "about the im/possibility of metabolising the trauma"⁴⁸ stemming from planetary destruction and the absent real of an earth going/gone extinct. Radioactive decay "frays time's coherence".⁴⁹ Our own inhuman histories have severed our relations to the other, however Berrigan's speculative indigestions confront this in-humanity, reworking relations inside-outside the body as well as the space of the screen. In this way, with Ettinger, Berrigan facilitates "wit(h)nesses to the trauma of the Other...and of the world," retracing this

“unforgettable memory of oblivion” through the earth and the work of art.⁵⁰ For Barad, “violence tears holes in the very fabric of the world in its sedimenting iterative intra-activity.”⁵¹ Wounding and tearing re-configures the landscape. Filling holes or gaps, as Berrigan suggests, can be enacted through imaginative processes or “material[...]data.”⁵² In more depth, “like breathing”, filling lungs with oxygen, “the deformation of its surface tells us some things about the movements and expansions of its magma chambers.”⁵³ Through Berrigan’s affective embodiment across inhuman temporal scales, and Barad’s inward and outward “trac[es] of [...] embodied [...] re-remembering,”⁵⁴ there is a “material reconfiguring of spacetime mattering in ways that attempt to do justice to account for the devastation wrought as well as to produce openings, new possible histories by which time-beings might find ways to endure.”⁵⁵ Open wounds and openings made for “justice-to-come” confronts the environmental in/justices and severed potentialities of being with those that cease to erupt.⁵⁶

Earthy Interruptions

The Eyjafjallajökull eruption in Iceland (2010) was witnessed across micro- and macro-cosmic scales. The (sm)othering of vast ash clouds, created conflicting dynamics in air time(-/)/travel, and generated an in/visibility of the surrounding area. The obstructive flows of lava and smoke, engendered the turbulent momentum of news reports across the globe, as well as restricted motions of worldwide air travel, in which approximately 100,000 passenger flights were cancelled. Beyond the statistical data of postponed flights, the eruption enveloped the holey flows and fleshy worldings of lived experience. The volcano’s inhuman smog was both ingesting and being ingested by multiple bodies; it subsumed multi-orifices, excretions and passageways. As the thick smoke seeped out into the atmosphere from the mouth of the volcano, it was indeterminately regurgitated across multispecies ecologies. Reports from the Shetland Islands described the mephitic sulphurous smell of the eruption, sniffing out the divide between Life and Non-Life further, as being similar to that of rotten eggs.⁵⁷ A miasma of decomposition, decay and sulphur fumes fill the atmosphere and fray the always-already incoherent times.⁵⁸

Newscaster 4: Satellite pictures track the clouds. What’s hard to calculate is exactly how dangerous it is.

Engineer: Speaking as an aeronautical engineer, I wouldn't want to be putting a big airplane up there at the moment. Uh... there's a lot of fairly nasty stuff there.⁵⁹

The seismic eruptions communicated across the network of multi-species ecologies, and affected the impetus of la(r)va(l) subjects' diffractive waves of becoming. To become mineral: the impulse for activation, of breaking into an-other, and transformation. Tracing 'mineral becomings'⁶⁰ across multiple bodies (of rock), involves an attunement to the particularities of those instances of transformation beyond a critical and objective distance. In the beginning of the film, as the camera pans in and follows the textural ridges of the ash and rock, the tactile quality of the image produces an empathetic exchange between the viewer and volcano. Berrigan develops this intimate encounter of being with the volcano, specifically with-in the hold of the magma chamber, attuning to the volcanic patterning of eruptions with-in her stomach:

Inside I'm changing and massively hungry – like an acid gas has imploded, disintegrated my organs, and left behind hardened deposits of sharp rock.⁶¹

Further witnesses to volcanic communications appear in episode 2 of *Imaginary Explosions*, in relation to Chile's Chaitén volcano. Chaotic and ecstatic representation of Eyjafjallajökul erupting is mirrored by the intimate, in-static encounters filmed with-in the Vilcún cave complex at the base of Chaitén. Berrigan collaborates with archeologist and volcanologist Dr. Karen Holmberg, who researches sustainability and conservation in "the linkage of the prehistoric caves" with "contemporary sites of volcanic disaster" following Chaitén's 2008 eruption.⁶² Holmberg locates archeological interests in common between the prehistoric caves and the contemporary landscape, where returning economic and geographic stability to the region rests on their shared "geoheritage" and preserving their ongoing alignment and alliance. Berrigan bears witnesses inside the Vilcún cave complex, in-forming a space with-in the heart of the eruption that is staked in ongoingness and facilitates generative alliances.

Becoming mineral, then, is not indicative of solely collapsing outwardly (erupting/exploding/being ingested) across a planetary dimension, but also of folding inwardly (imploding/ingesting) on a more localised, phenomenal or molecular scale. In(di)gesting rock and its gassy im(agine)ry ex)ploding, describes the inward and outward pull of the diffractive

(e)mergence between geological aesthetic layers within and out of the body and the landscape. The layering envisaged, creates a stark contrast to the ways in which monolithic strata layers have come to define linear, geological epochs. The spongy, porous layers of rock, space and time, is aligned to Neimanis' argument: after "capturing all the time in the world in a single stratigraphic snapshot...we need a different kind of archive. We need to talk about our feelings."⁶³ How does the body (of rock) feel and re-collect as it is witnessed across multiple scales breaking into an-other? Ettinger writes on "co-emergence" from "feeling-knowing": "I feel in you, you think in me",⁶⁴ this entails a "shareable memory"⁶⁵ of pain and wounding which resonates across multispecies ecologies. Not only to 'construct or deconstruct memory',⁶⁶ in a similar vein to how metabolism is not only constructive or destructive, this alludes to the transformative and energetic forces which extend our 'inhuman appetite' and settle in the future, as much as they do in the past.

Though not directly referenced in Berrigan's video work, the Icelandic huldufolk stir up geontologies and question the status of absented ecologies, repopulating the landscape and specifically its molten cavities with speculatively charged, in/human, in/visibility. The hidden or 'absent[ed] real' of huldufolk stitch the Icelandic landscape, implying a kind of absent presence in the act of becoming mineral. As Jon K Shaw writes: "the huldufolk (literally hidden people)...often dwell in the gnarled volcanic rock formations that jut through the island's ashen topsoil."⁶⁷ This knotted fabric of a landscape stitching molten rock-dwellers must remain undisturbed. Following Shaw, there is an emphasis on the way in which destructive anthropogenic effects, extending an homogenising anthropo-scenic gaze, are realised along "routes threaten[ing] the natural environment of the huldufolk."⁶⁸ The figure of the huldufolk, resisting scopic capture and camouflaged with-in the landscape, undoes the scopophilic and xenophobic mechanisms of the Anthropocene in the same stroke as their being seen as other. Their wavering in/visibility indicates a negative ontology from which in/human wit(h)ness to ecological injustice becomes possible. Seeing (with) the huldufolk returns the absented real of an environment destroyed; our sharing-in-visibility opens up landscapes (not-)seen as lacking out of which uncommon alliances might generate. Transformative (e)merging is not only stirred up in the transsubjective domain, with-in-human and huldufolk others, but also affects the landscape and the work of art as transjects. Diffractions differently map onto a landscape that re-collects absent presences as spatiotemporal deepenings in the knotted fabrics of earth. As in the temporal drag of disrupted air time(-/)/travel caused by Eyjafjallajökull erupting,

following Barad, we are tasked with “re-cognising material kinship with this exploded/imploded moment in time.”⁶⁹ Re-con-figurations of snails and sea lions along with spiders and manifold hidden others opens up alternate technologies, temporalities and cosmologies for earthly wit(h)ness.

Sounding Sibilant (Multi-)Species

Speculative figurations of sibilant, sibling (multi-)species others populate Berrigan’s films. The subtle forces of snails, sea lions, and spiders stir up hybrid in/human con-figurations, attuned to alternate signals and sounds for networking with-in earth. Specifically, episode 1 features “*Helix pomotia* (big fat hermaphroditic snail humans like to eat).”⁷⁰ Footage of the snails sliming over stones remembers our own enfolding encounter with rock in Berrigan’s *Becoming Mineral*. Wit(h)nessing as (e)merging practices between snails and viewers is instated, settling in the future, as we trace our shared secretions across stratospheric surface, deepening a space and time out of which in/humans and Non/Life might continue to reassemble. Mineral deposits are diffracted in their tropic figuration with snails in excess of our appetites and spatiotemporal limits. The big, fat snails are not only attractive when ingested in-human but, imploding desires, we in(di)gest with-in wit(h)ness of their own mineral becomings, expanding a shared horizon, feeling out tensions and tenses. As Barad writes:

“Past” and “future” are iteratively reconfigured and enfolded through the world’s ongoing intra-activity. [...] Even the ‘re-turn’ of a diffraction pattern does not signal a going back, an erasure of memory, a restoration of a present past. Memory—the pattern of sedimented enfoldings of iterative intra-activity—is written into the fabric of the world. The world ‘holds’ the memory of all traces; or rather, the world is its memory (en-folded materialization).⁷¹

Memory indeterminately implodes and collapses inwardly, into the ‘past’; and concurrently explodes outwardly into the ‘future’. We are wit(h)nessing explosions with-in the artist and artwork, through Berrigan’s speculatively imag(in)ed deep time. This is traced through the mineral deposits of memory settling into the worldly patterning and fragmenting of rocks assembling, making alliances, and continuously re-membling.⁷² Doubling crossings at the in/human divide, this is traced in snails sliming over rocks, further re-membling diverse populations and biochemical interactions with-in mineral deposits. The superposition between

a hereness and thereeness of memory-sedimentation, bridging the diffractive tempos, scales and distances between our disrupted air time(-/)travel and the snail's pace traversing rock, moves beyond the linear-archival framework of plumbing waters or capturing earth. In/human and non/living assemblages might intra-actively ally themselves, re-collecting bilateral and horizontal archives with-in the landscape as it im/ex-plodes with-in us.

Following Ettinger and Barad, a landscape materialised in and by acts of wit(h)nessing itself constitutes re-membering. The affective co-emergence between agents in an aesthetic encounter promises to re-turn otherwise repressed and absented transsubjective affects that support the co/in-habit(u)ation of reiterative agencies with-in both rock and screen. In *Imaginary Explosions*, the off-screen voice senses "communications" but they do not know "how to translate them into human language". In the second person, viewers are addressed directly by this networking voice, bringing them indirectly into communion with the snails: "Are you getting the signals? And the snails, are they sensing something, too?"⁷³

An extended shot follows this questioning, showing snails moving over a dark, textural background. Green-screening allows for the compositing of multiple images; the background appears to be a piece of fabric, perhaps it is rock, or a television screen on standby. Aesthetic horizons are adjusted by the snails, becoming co-constitutive actors with-in the art(net)work itself. Their figural, tropic agency is emphasised in the trails they trace across the screen, impacting the compositing of the image they occupy as they move through it. These "queer co-workers" produce a thickness to the material exchange, oozing amorphous inseparability against linear causal impressions as a way of introducing a series of more-than-human modes of communication.⁷⁴ Slime becomes another aesthetic layer, only partly visible through the outline of darkened patches smeared onto the background; the slime materially affects technological changes in the process of green-screening, participating in the post-production of visual effects. The shot features further flashes of an ambiguous light, emanating from the centre of the screen, from beneath the snails. These intermittent overexposures of light reflect the problem of the in/visibility of snails, or huldufolk, who become subject to anthropocentric scopism in the same stroke as signalling the instability and ultimate self-destruction wrought by this gaze. The dark background becomes a television lacking a sensible signal; cracks appear in the composition as visual effects of static electricity streak across the image, rearticulating the snail's slimy trails through technologies of the screen.

In *Imaginary Explosions*, episode 2, Berrigan bears witness to the ‘agential cuts’⁷⁵ in stone of spider and vulva communicators across the ‘unconnected’ network of caves, which risk being submerged by rising sea levels.⁷⁶ The unsegmented, invaginating alliance-network spins an heterogeneous transmission which loops and folds back in on itself across multiple locations. The multi-patternings of petroglyphs on Vilcun’s cave walls produce a “hybrid spider vulva” which are reverberated and imaged by the shape of the caves themselves.⁷⁷ Their image, as Berrigan states, “make us uncomfortable: the too-close-proximity of these mirrored shapes with their simple, metonymic alignment.”⁷⁸ Becoming mineral in episode 2 can be said to be a form of “proximate sensing” in which our “current embodiment” sounds a “non-linear movement across materialities”.⁷⁹ The space of the cave itself, its geo-metric metonymic alignments, in-forms the net(art)work that is followed by “an affiliation of transfeminist scientists” throughout Berrigan’s narrative, “cooperating with the desires of the mineral earth to simultaneously erupt all volcanoes.”⁸⁰ These desires follow in the metonymic footsteps of cave and vulva cross-inscriptions, rendering “landscape as birth canal.”⁸¹ The integration with-in and of geological and aesthetic networks emphasises our responsibility as wit(h)nesses in co-birthing ecologies of co-in/habit(u)ation between in/humans and Non/Life. Berrigan’s speculative network follows signals across lithic stratas in a kind of oro/ero-genous mapping of zones that stir desires for earthly wit(h)ness. Becoming mineral in and by metonymies of networking; invaginating appetites, turning inside-out, becoming-with-in manifold others across shared aesthetic and geological stratas, bearing “witness to impressive scenes of eruptions”.⁸²

The landscape, environmental and aesthetic, is constituted in and by transformative alliances, where witnessing becomes wit(h)nessing. From the limits of our own singular perspectives, a shared horizon staked in processes of ongoingness is marked by the frayed edges, knotted centres and indeterminate tenses thread through lithic layers as well as that of the screen. Earthly wit(h)ness is only possible in the porous diffraction of the limits between in/humans and Non/Life. The reparative potential of environmental justice to attend to world-wounds arises in the aesthetic dimension when our own landscape is destabilised in relation to the disruption of our singular gaze, encountering the other and sharing-in-difference the diffractive rhythms resonating a third space, in/ex-gesting from the h/earth/h of the work of art. Through co-metabolic openness, Berrigan writes: “The work finds its way into the bodies of the

audience, resolving the material and conceptual transfer to create a third space in which the boundary between the artwork and the audience is itself permeable and indistinct.”⁸³ The net(art)working promises a third imaginary explosion, imminently with-in-human. Berrigan’s upcoming episode 3 transmits the network’s reach through a signalling of infrasounds, an artificial, miniature of Vesuvius from the 18th century, and through creative modes of environmental sensing, inviting us as active participants to continue in our earthly wit(h)ness of the “collective desire to erupt”.⁸⁴

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