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Becoming-Grains-of-Mercury: Documentaries, Posthumanism, and the Entanglements of Traumas

Abstract

Félix Guattari, in his ecosophical work The Three Ecologies, urges us to contemplate and, most importantly, to live transversally with the entangled ecologies of nature and culture/society. Specifically, he states that "it is simply wrong to regard action on the psyche, the socius, and the environment as separate;" particularly, he adds, when it comes to the "simultaneous degradation of the three areas." Guattari's transversal process is more accurate than ever if we consider how human activity, in the context of the current geological epoch — the Anthropocene — has sent the Earth's natural ecosystems into a tailspin; into a course of environmental, social, and psychical post- and pre-traumatic syndrome of entanglements of trauma(s). At this moment, what roles do documentaries play in penetrating the geological scars of the becoming-traumatized Earth? How can they convey our transversal and posthuman understanding of the entanglements of traumas? More specifically, how do we consider the ecological disasters that have already occurred and have yet to occur on Earth as entangled human and non-human traumas, respecting that also the Earth-others have been undergoing a process of traumatization? As the entanglements of the traumatic syndrome are an ongoing, impeding, and imminent processual (and imaginative) catastrophe that has not yet happened, thus proclaiming a condition here defined as "pre-trauma," how do we re-think trauma through a temporal lens which incorporates the notion of pre-trauma? The proposition of this paper is to transversally think about the entanglements of trauma(s) by initiating a conversation between posthumanism, canonical trauma studies, and contemporary documentary ecologies in order to specifically disclose how it is necessary to radically question and renovate our perspectives on trauma and its temporal dimension(s), finally acknowledging the intermeshed amalgam of our terrestrial existence.

Keywords

Eco-Trauma, Pre-Trauma, Posthumanism, Trauma Studies, Experimental Documentaries, Documentary Ecologies

Introduction

Artavazd Pelechian's latest film, *Nature* (2019), opens with a series of shots juxtaposing grandiose, heavenly, and sublime natural sceneries with the violent tremors and deep wounds that those landscapes have suffered due to the traumatizing interventions of human beings on the environment. In the historical moment of the Anthropocene, a term coined by Paul J. Crutzen which characterizes the contemporary period of the Earth heavily impacted by human activities, the human species is not the only terrestrial being who has been and will continue to be traumatized as a result of the human-induced climate change. In this regard, following Félix Guattari's ecosophical thinking in *The Three Ecologies*, "it is quite simply wrong to regard action on the psyche, the socius, and the environment as separate. [Especially if we want to] confront the *simultaneous* degradation of these three areas. [...] We need to apprehend the world through the interchangeable lenses of the three ecologies."²⁾

Ahead of his time, in 1989 Guattari advocates for a process of considering and respecting the entangled connections between what he defines as the three ecological realms: mental, social, and environmental.³⁾ Guattari, therefore, explores the complexity of our assembled and dynamic planetary existence while announcing an ethico-aesthetic ecosophy which contemplates both human and non-human modes of existence as inherently transversal. Guattari proposes transversality as an ecological and political concept, according to which the subject is not divided from the natural, social, political, and environmental. A transversal conception of subjectivity is the result of a profound and inherent connection in an assemblage with the pluralities of modes of existence.⁴⁾ In line with this Guattarian reasoning, in The Posthuman Rosi Braidotti argues that the environment "rests on an enlarged sense of inter-connection between self and others, including the non-human or 'earth' others. This practice of relating to others requires and is enhanced by the rejection of self-centred individualism."5) Guattari's transversal subject and Braidotti's posthuman subject are more necessary than ever when we reflect upon our contemporary geological epoch as an alarming, problematic, and wounding moment in which human activities have sent Earth's natural ecosystems and all their inhabitants into a traumatized and traumatizing tailspin.

- 2) Félix Guattari, The Three Ecologies, trans. Ian Pindar and Paul Sutton (London: Continuum, 2008), 128.
- 3) Ibid., 135.
- 4) Félix Guattari, Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm (Sydney: Power Publications, 2006), 4–5.
- 5) Rosi Braidotti, The Posthuman (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), 48.

Although the purpose of this article is not to critically engage with the notion of the Anthropocene, it is important to bring attention to the problematic nuances and tensions it holds. According to David Shaw, the ambiguity of Anthropocene lies in the root of the term; anthropos generalizes and encapsulates all the humans and their activities on the planet in an all too unified level. As he explains in his entry to Genealogy of the Posthuman, "the Anthropocene reveals the standard conception of anthropos to be both too narrow and too diffuse, as it neither fully accounts for the broad assemblage of non-human elements implicated in the culpable 'human activities,' nor does it adequately specify exactly which humans ought to be held accountable" (David Shaw, "Anthropocene," Genealogy of the Posthuman, October 10, 2018, accessed July 20, 2023, https://criticalposthumanism.net/anthropocene/#_ftn1). In this paper, the accountability of the all-too-human activities which keep on traumatizing the environment is situated specifically within the context of Western Europe.

If we consider such environmental catastrophes as generating entanglements of human and non-human traumas, series of critical questions arise. What role do visual culture and, more specifically, documentaries play in penetrating the geological scars of the becoming-traumatized Earth? That is, how can they convey a transversal and posthuman understanding of the entanglements of traumas? More specifically, how do we consider the ecological disasters that have already occurred and have yet to occur on Earth as entangled human and non-human traumas, therefore respecting that also the Earth and nonhuman inhabitants have been undergoing a process of traumatization? As the entangled traumatic syndromes are an ongoing, impeding, and imminent processual (and imaginative) catastrophe that has not yet happened, thus proclaiming a condition here defined as "pre-trauma,"6) how do we re-think trauma through a temporal lens which incorporates a dimension of trauma from the future? In the proceeding pages, my approach builds on the theoretical work of "Trauma Studies, Critical Posthumanism and New Materialism" introduced by Deniz Gündoğan İbrişim.71 Yet, my focus shifts to what I define as the becomingtraumatized Earth and its inhabitants with the spectral temporal dimension of pre-trauma vis-à-vis the cinematographic renderings of the entanglements within experimental documentaries. I follow specific images of two contemporary experimental documentaries, the aforementioned Nature and Medusa (Chloé Malcotti, 2021).8) Through the idiosyncratic and diverse world-makings, these films show the vulnerability and the scars of human and non-human beings, and reveal singular alternatives for penetrating, experiencing, and understanding the Anthropocene through cinematic images. An ethico-aesthetic dialogue between experimental documentaries, canonical trauma studies, and posthumanism is here proposed to unveil how a transversal and posthuman recalibration of the anthropocentric solipsism of our planetary existence through the world-making of cinema might help us renovate the perspectives on ecological thinking.

⁶⁾ E. Ann Kaplan has also recently theorized a "pre-traumatic stress syndrome" (Pre-TSS) as a mental health condition by specifically looking at cinematic representations of climate change in science fiction and dystopian films (see E. Ann Kaplan, "Is Climate-Related Pre-Traumatic Stress Syndrome a Real Condition?," American Imago 77, no. 1 (2020), 81–104). This article, as we shall see, proposes pre-trauma as exposed by experimental documentaries while grounding the concept in the philosophy of the three syntheses of time introduced by Gilles Deleuze in Difference and Repetition.

Deniz Gündoğan İbrişim, "Trauma Studies, Critical Posthumanism, and New Materialism," in *The Routledge Companion to Literature and Trauma*, eds. Colin Davis and Hanna Meretoja (New York: Routledge, 2020).

⁸⁾ The proposition of the concept of pre-trauma is specifically geolocated with experimental documentaries from the Global North. Although the aim of this article is not to engage with such a critical question, it is important to highlight how the Global North cannot be understood as not a unified geographic group of countries. In accordance, the ends of the world and the exhaustion of the future do not work in the same way in Western Europe as in the rest of the world. For instance, for the Brazilian philosopher, thinker, and indigenous activist Ailton Krenak, the indigenous people of the Americas have been living for more than 500 years at the end of the world. Ailton Krenak, *Ideas to Postpone the End of the World* (Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2020).

Entangling Traumas: A Posthuman Perspective

Approaching and initiating a discourse on a traumatic syndrome inflicted on human beings and on the Earth, as well as its non-human inhabitants, sheds critical light on the Anthropocene and, specifically, on what human activity does to the environment. However, to argue for an ecological trauma as a contemporary diagnosis that does not only mirror the condition of human beings but also of our natural ecosystems, we need to revisit the canonical anthropocentric perspective of trauma studies. This approach encourages the discipline to consider and respect the Earth, nature, and, more importantly, the assemblage of our entangled planetary existence.

In her edited volume Trauma: Explorations in Memory, Cathy Caruth introduces the traumatized human psyche and the harrowing memories as experiences that cannot be fully remembered, penetrated, and possessed. However, those same haunting memories constantly come back within the survivor's mind in the form of hallucinations, dreams, or other mental phenomena.⁹⁾ At the same time, Caruth posits a way of approaching and thinking about trauma which is centered on interconnected groups of people traumatized by collective events. 10) By advocating for a notion of a shared post-traumatic syndrome, Caruth moves away from a conceptualization of trauma that focuses solely on the individual human subject, starting to think — we could say — transversally among humans and their mutual traumas.¹¹⁾ She cites examples, among others, such as the (traumatizing) consequences of World War II, the Holocaust, the Bosnia-Herzegovina conflict, or the AIDS epidemic in the 1990s in the US. However, as these cases show, Caruth and the contributors to Trauma: Explorations in Memory focus their interrogations, analyses, and conceptualizations solely on the traumatic events that occur within European and American contexts in the course of the twentieth century, highlighting the leading Western paradigm of cultural and historical trauma theory.¹²⁾

Without initiating the discussion on posthuman approaches to trauma studies, which considers the natural environment as a traumatized being, the traditional Caruthian trauma theory excludes the traumatic vicissitudes that colonized regions and their inhabitants had (and continue) to endure. As İbrişim outlines, a revolutionary step towards global perspectives on trauma is taken, which urges us to consider non-Western accounts of suffering. This has been addressed in the first half of the 2000s by the publication of *The Future of Trauma Theory: Contemporary and Literary Cultural Criticism*, edited by Gert Buelens, Sam Durrant, and Robert Eaglestone. In the introduction to this work, the editors draw from the study and theory initiated by Caruth, Dori Laub, Shoshana Felman, and Dominick LaCapra, among many others, while at the same time looking at the future(s) of

⁹⁾ Cathy Caruth, Trauma: Explorations in Memory (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1995), 6.

¹⁰⁾ Ibid., vii.

¹¹⁾ Other influential works of the late 1990s conceptualizing the notion traumatic events and memories include: Cathy Caruth, Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996) and Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History (New York: Routledge, 1992).

¹²⁾ Gündoğan İbrişim, "Trauma, Critical Posthumanism and New Materialism," 231.

¹³⁾ Ibid, 231.

the discipline. In accordance with this, Buelens, Durrant, and Eaglestone state that *The Future of Trauma Theory* "points to areas of change in the field, especially in relation to issues of globalisation and postcolonialism," moving the discipline away from its traditional Eurocentrism into a broader global and postcolonial framework;¹⁴⁾ an innovative theory and approach to trauma studies which therefore exceeds national and continental boundaries, as well as religion and ethnic associations.¹⁵⁾

Therefore, trauma theory has expanded its focus on traumatic events and post-traumatic memories experienced by humans by continuously questioning itself and increasingly trying to theorize the multiplicities and multidimensionality of human trauma. With respect to this development within the trauma studies discipline, in the midst of the Anthropocene, an epoch which has at its core the becoming-traumatized Earth and nature, it is now necessary to re-examine and re-evaluate the approach of trauma studies and its anthropocentric agenda on trauma by transversally reflecting upon the entangled planetary existence with the Earth. In doing so, this section confronts the supposed centrality of the human species within trauma studies and recalibrates the discipline through/within an ethical posthuman framework.

As mentioned in the introduction, Braidotti, in the wake of the rhizomatic philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, explores the flexible, fluid, and multidimensional human subjectivity in ways that displace the humanistic unity of the subject, rejecting the inherent dualism characterizing the traditional scholarship of the humanities. In doing so, she advocates for a non-dualistic understanding of the nature-culture continuum and intra-action¹⁶⁾ as the shared "manifesto" of the posthuman theory. A theoretical framework whose ultimate ethical purpose is to advocate for "the self-organising (or auto-poietic) force of living matter." 17) Within the spectrum of posthumanism, a transversal continuum, a porous and dynamic interrelation between the human and non-human, nature, and culture, is established. In posthuman ethics and philosophy, the human is thus removed from their central positionality and sovereignty as the only vulnerable and engendered species on the planet. According to Braidotti, the transversal attitude towards the non-human and the Earth or, as she touchingly defines it, the "trans-species embrace" of posthumanism is rooted in "the awareness of the impending catastrophe: the environmental crisis of global warm/ning issue, not to speak of the militarisation of space reduce all species to a comparable degree of vulnerability."18)

To concretely theorize the idea of a shared and mutual vulnerability that traverses across and permeates all the species on the planet and, consequently, retains the possibil-

¹⁴⁾ Gert Buelens, Sam Durrant, and Robert Eaglestone, eds., The Future of Trauma Theory: Contemporary Literary and Cultural Criticism (New York: Routledge, 2014), 41.

¹⁵⁾ Stef Craps, Postcolonial Witnessing: Trauma out of Bounds (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 89.

¹⁶⁾ Intra-action is a term used by Karen Barad to replace "interaction," which necessitates pre-established bodies that then participate in action with each other. Intra-action understands agency as not an inherent property of an individual or human to be exercised, but as a dynamism of forces in which all designated things are constantly exchanging and diffracting, influencing and working inseparably. Karen Barad, Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

¹⁷⁾ Braidotti, The Posthuman, 3-4.

¹⁸⁾ Ibid., 85.

ity of traumatizing the Earth and the natural environment, another "trans" concept of the posthuman ethical tradition needs to be further analyzed and unpacked. ¹⁹⁾ In her transdisciplinary study *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment and the Material Self*, Stacy Alaimo formulates the notion of trans-corporeality, a powerful ethical and political idea that originates from her argument concerning the literal point of connection between human corporeality and more-than-human nature. Alaimo states that:

Imagining human corporeality as trans-corporeality, in which human is always intermeshed with the more-than-human world, underlines the extent to which the substance of the human is ultimately inseparable from "the environment." It makes it difficult to pose nature as mere background for the exploits of the human since "nature" is always as close as one's own skin — perhaps even closer.²⁰⁾

By (re-)placing nature at the forefront of our contemporary discussions on environmental and ecological ethics and politics, Alaimo turns and challenges our gaze towards a conceptualization of nature as fundamentally dynamic, vital, energetic, and active. Through the notion of trans-corporeality, the Earth becomes a vibrant matter, a "fleshy being" which holds within itself its own claims, needs, actions, and vulnerable singularities.²¹⁾ Trans-corporeality, at the same time, creates bonds between and across the human and non-human agents. In this ethical space formed via the notion of trans-corporeality, the act of thinking, feeling, perceiving, and, more importantly, being affected by (human) activities is not confined solely to the human. In fact, by thinking transversally and transcorporeally about the Earth, the non-human environment and nature acquire claims to vulnerability, suffering, and being traumatized; the destructive affective responses that have been perpetually overshadowed by the anthropocentric solipsism of our historical moment. The dimensions of transversality and trans-corporeality of posthumanism create an ethical space within the discipline of trauma studies. More specifically, such posthuman ethics created gives us the theoretical tool for acknowledging and respecting the entanglements of trauma(s) of the Anthropocene, a geological time when humans are exploiting the environment's natural resources, threatening the organic ecosystem, and, consequently, traumatizing not only the singular (human) individual but, foremost, the Earth as a whole.

¹⁹⁾ The prefix trans* is one of the theoretical entries of *Posthuman Glossary*. In conceptualizing the transitive and prepositional nature of trans- and trans*, Goda Klumbyté argues that this prefix "proposes to see transness/transing [i.e., moving across, above and beyond] as a process, a 'becoming with,' that stretches across species, ecologies and matter itself." Goda Klumbyté, "Trans*," in *Posthuman Glossary*, eds. Rosi Braidotti and Maria Hlavajova (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 433.

Stacy Alaimo, Bodily Natures: Science, Environment and the Material Self (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 2.

²¹⁾ Alaimo, Bodily Natures, 2-3.

The Earth is Screaming: Pelechian's Nature

The environmental explorations of the entangled planetary existence of humans with the Earth are at the core of the ecological imaginary, conscience, and ethics of Pelechian's approach to documentary filmmaking. From his documentary The Inhabitants (1970), which captures the hostile activities of humans towards the animal world, to The Seasons (1975), showing the entangled (transversal and trans-corporeal) interrelation of a community of Armenian peasants across the natural environment, Pelechian's images are ecological, new-materialist, and posthuman avant la lettre; poetic, delicate, and caring odes dedicated to the vulnerable, dynamic, and vibrant Earth and its non-human inhabitants. Specifically, the already traumatized Earth is immediately perceptible and entangled within the cinematic world-making images of Pelechian's latest documentary. Nature, a blackand-white composition of archival amateur footage taken and chosen from the internet, exposes more clearly than his previous work the traumatizing precariousness of the Earth. It reveals the transcorporeal coexistence of humans and other inhabitants of the planet animals, plants, mountains, oceans — and a shared traumatic state. Pelechian's film urges us to reconsider and re-evaluate our relationship to nature in an inherently posthuman manner by respecting and caring about the Earth transversally and transcorporeally.

The initial sequence of Pelechian's Nature, as briefly sketched in the introduction, opens with a prolonged shot of mountainous sceneries, immersed in a sea of mist, accompanied by Mozart's "Kyrie in D Minor." Throughout the introductory sequence, the camera pans and reveals the (apparently) invulnerable force and majesty of nature, conveying to the spectator a sublime imagery of the natural landscape. As Adrian Ivakhiv explains in Ecologies of the Moving Images for contextualizing Terrence Malick's eco-sublime documentary Day of Heaven (1978), the sublime "strikes the viewers more forcefully and confronts them with a sense of their own limits."22) However, Pelechian, in his (re)collection and (re)montage of archival images, does not focus only on the sublime representation of natural landscapes; actually, he challenges Ivakhiv's idea of the sublimation of nature, choosing footage that portrays the limits of the Earth itself, showing what the environment has suffered through various local and global catastrophes. After the initial sequence of Nature, the spectator is confronted with the vulnerability and fragility of the organic ecosystem — consequently, with the reality of our planetary existence of the becomingtraumatized Earth. In these confronting moments, the images create a transversal and transcorporeal bond across the (already occurred) environmental disasters unfolding on the screen, presented to the spectator. Pelechian's documentary ecology stretches the awareness of the Earth's traumatizing condition outside the screen and onto the viewer. As Siegfried Kracauer illustrates in Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality, the viewer is able to truthfully "apprehend physical reality in all its concreteness" 23) through the power of cinematic imageries and the film experience. Moreover, Jennifer Fay notices

²²⁾ Adrian Ivakhiv, *Ecologies of the Moving Image: Cinema, Affect, Nature* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2013), 109.

²³⁾ Siegfried Kracauer, Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 303.

that cinema, for Kracauer, does not intend to preserve a world we (imagine to) love; quite the opposite. According to Fay, Kracauer sees cinema as "the medium par excellence that estranges nature and our contemporary moment with effect of dissolving reified history and the emotional and political investments that sustain it."²⁴⁾ In fact, during the documentary's climax, amateur footage taken during ecological disasters of the past two decades (specifically, the earthquakes and tsunamis that occurred in 2004 on the west coast of northern Sumatra, Indonesia, and in 2011 in the Töhoku region of Japan) disturbingly permeates the screen. The cameras have filmed the concreteness of those environmental catastrophes that marked the lives of Indonesian and Japanese inhabitants and, foremost, of the organic ecosystem of those lands, revealing to the spectator how the Earth has been screaming; how it has been — and continues to be — profoundly traumatized due to human activities.

Here, to understand and conceptualize the screams of the Earth and, more precisely, how the Earth becomes traumatized within the documentary ecology of *Nature*, I need to (re)consider the philosophers who inaugurated the ethical approach to the environment, thus (unknowingly) initiating the transversality and trans-corporeality of posthumanism: Deleuze's and Guattari's work, *A Thousand Plateaus*. This brief theoretical flashback further disentangles the film world-making of Pelechian's *Nature*, allowing us to comprehend how, in line with the aforementioned posthuman theory, the natural ecosystem of the planet in these images becomes a giant molecule alive with energetic dynamism, which, nonetheless, morphs into a becoming-traumatized Earth due to human-induced environmental degradation.

In "10,000 BC: The Geology of Morals (Who Does the Earth Think It Is?)," a chapter of *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari follow a lecture by Arthur Conan Doyle's Professor Challenger, who denotes the Earth as the giant Molecule, as a body without organs which is formed and "permeated by unformed, unstable matters, by flows in all directions, by free intensities or nomadic singularities, by mad or transitory particles." These bodily, energetic, and dynamic molecules (and movements) of/in the Earth occur upon it through a complex processual phenomenon defined by Deleuze and Guattari as stratification, ²⁶⁾ whose ultimate purpose is to lock and maintain the Earth's singularities and activities into an interconnected system of "resonance and redundancy;" of natural, geological, and biological functioning systems. Within the intricate process of stratification, each "strata are Layers, Belts" which connect, merge, and sustain the organic equilibrium; the flowing intensities and vibrant molecules of the Earth and the natural environment itself. Now,

²⁴⁾ Jennifer Fay, Inhospitable World: Cinema in the Time of the Anthropocene (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 167.

²⁵⁾ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 46.

²⁶⁾ Here, it is essential to note that, for the sake of this article, the complexities of the process of stratification, with its diverse layered and multidimensional articulations, as introduced by Deleuze and Guattari in their third chapter of *A Thousand Plateaus*, will not be unpacked. For a compelling engagement and critical exploration of Deleuze's and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*, see, for example, Brian Massumi's *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari* (Boston: MIT Press, 1992).

²⁷⁾ Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, 46.

²⁸⁾ Ibid., 46.

turning to our contemporary day and age, marked by exhaustive, unnatural, and damaging activities of the human species onto the ecosystems of the Earth, making it "scream with [our] pain machine(s),"²⁹⁾ those Deleuzo-Guattarian strata, layers, and belts that have served to retain and preserve the organic equilibrium of our planet have been placed on a course of permanent and catastrophic decline — both on local and global scales. Think of, to name a few, the wildfires that burned through (and down) the forests in the Amazon, California, Australia, and Southern Europe; the spreading drought in East Africa; the deadly floods in India, Bangladesh, and Nepal; the (human-made) extractions that are destroying, degrading, and depleting the natural resource of marble in the Apuan Alps in the northern part of Tuscany (Italy).³⁰⁾ Or, as Pelechian's documentary ecology shows, the disasters that occurred in 2004 in Indonesia and in 2011 in Japan, two distant moments in history when the energies, singularities, and intensities of the Earth have been unlocked and dispersed, thus going to traumatize those local organic ecosystems.

By following the series of specific images (see figures 1, 2, 3, and 4 inserted below), captured from one of the most challenging sequences of *Nature*, the traumatizing screams of the Earth are conveyed expressively and powerfully. In these terrorizing scenes, the telluric layers have been torn apart and destructed from within by the mechanisms of our anthropocentric culture of abundance and society of exploitation of natural resources. Here, the spectator sees the gradual and violent explosion of a mountain that resembles the mountainous landscape that has pervaded the opening images of *Nature* while, at the same time, being confronted with the power of the cinematic medium in conveying our









Fig. 1-4. Screenshots from Nature (Artavazd Pelechian, 2020)

²⁹⁾ Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, 46.

³⁰⁾ The catastrophic processes here mentioned are the protagonists of other contemporary documentary ecologies: *Koyaanisqatsi* (Godfrey Reggio, 1982), *Lessons of Darkness* (Werner Herzog, 1992), *Behemoth* (Zhao Liang, 2015), *The Anthropocene: the Human Epoch* (Jennifer Baichwal, Nicholas de Pencier, and Edward Burtynsky, 2018), *Earth* (Nikolaus Geyrhalter, 2019).

physical reality.³¹⁾ Specifically, the mechanical eye has rendered visible to the spectator how, in both the environmental degradations that occurred in Indonesia and Japan, as well as in the explosion of the sublime yet fragile mountainous landscape, the Earth is screaming louder, more frequently, and more intensively than ever before, in Deleuzo-Guattarian terms. In the powerful images of Pelechian's *Nature*, the audience is faced with the fragile and vulnerable reality of the vibrant, energetic, and dynamic Earth, witnessing the traumatization of the stratified equilibrium of the natural ecosystems with its geological archive and geophysical energies. Triggered by human intervention and the resulting human-induced drastic climatic changes, the images of *Nature* powerfully exemplify how our presence on Earth is threatened by an entanglement of human and non-human traumas. However, these entanglements of trauma embodied in ecological catastrophes, as we are warned, are still in the process of happening, leaving our transversal, transecological, and transcorporeal planetary existence in an ongoing, impeding, and imminent condition of pre-traumatization of the Earth and its human and non-human inhabitants — a hallmark of the Anthropocene.

Living in a Time out of Joint: The Pre-Traumatic Syndrome

As the previous sections have shown, our historical moment is completely and inherently out of joint; it lies between different but intra-active ecological temporal dimensions. On the one hand, environmental disasters on the Earth have already occurred: as Pelechian's *Nature* illustrates, with its images of the devastating earthquake and tsunami processes, the human and non-human inhabitants of this planet and the Earth as a whole have already been traumatized locally and globally. On the other hand, catastrophes are still occurring and will occur more frequently and more violently. In this sense, the Earth will continue to speak and scream back at us, expressing its increasing and impeding traumatizing state. As the editors of *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet* argue, "anthropogenic landscapes are also haunted by imagined futures." Such a haunting state finds its origins in the future. A speculative future in the living present that is imagined as a haunting temporal dimension of an eternal return of those same ecological catastrophes, inflicting, therefore, the humans and the Earth with a syndrome of pre-trauma.

Before defining the contemporary condition of pre-trauma, a brief conceptual detour through the canonical definition of the post-traumatic syndrome is needed to understand the intrinsic difference between the temporal dimensions of post- and pre-trauma. In this regard, Caruth explains that within the traumatized mind (and life) of a survivor, the past takes complete control of and over the present, thus trapping them in an eternal repetitive loop of those same traumatic memories.³³⁾ In fact, the singularity and peculiarity of post-traumatic syndrome consist in how the traumatic memory extends and stretches itself out

³¹⁾ Fay, Inhospitable World, 4-5.

³²⁾ Anna Tsing, Heather Swanson, Elaine Gan, and Nils Bubandt, "Introduction: Haunted Landscapes of the Anthropocene," in *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet*, eds. Anna Tsing, Heather Swanson, Elaine Gan, and Nils Bubandt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), G2; italics in the original.

³³⁾ Caruth, Trauma, 115.

from the past, possessing and haunting the present through "repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts, or behaviours stemming from the [overwhelming] event, along with numbing that may have begun during or after the experience, and possibly also increased arousal to (and avoidance of) stimuli recalling the event."³⁴⁾ At the same time, the survivor is denied the possibility of imagining a future existence detached and unhooked from the repetition of images of the traumatic event. When referring to the temporal dimension of the post-traumatic syndrome, it is therefore the memory of the catastrophic events that grounds (and traps) time for the traumatized subject, whose present and future are nothing but precarious elements constitutive of the dominating past.

With the disastrous events of the Anthropocene, it is crucial to address the question of the temporality of the becoming-traumatized Earth and its living (human/non-human) beings. Unlike canonical trauma theory, in which the dimension of the past constantly intrudes on the present of the survivors, when considering the living on a damaged and damaging planet, the (speculative) future appears, takes over, and becomes the most important dimension in the imagination of the living present. It becomes the temporal ontology that orients the thinking and imagining of/from a future which, nonetheless, retains the possibility of eternally repeating the same environmental disasters that have already occurred — inflicting the Earth's inhabitants with a pre-traumatic syndrome. In this contemporary condition, it is the imaginative traumatizing future that spectrally haunts our actual planetary existence.

The proposition of the future as the haunting and traumatizing temporality which creates a syndrome of pre-trauma needs here to be unfolded through an engagement with Deleuze's philosophy of time. In the second chapter of *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze makes time travel possible through the act (and voyage) of repetition:³⁵⁾ in fact, according to him, there is no such thing as complete independence of the dimensions of present, past, and future. Quite the opposite: within our minds, each dimension is repeated and continuously synthetizes the others via different processes of transformations. As James Williams puts it,

the best way of understanding these statements is through Deleuze's idea of times as dimensions of one another. For him, past, present, and future are not separate parts of time. Instead, they alternatively treat each other as dimensions, where to be a dimension means to be a subsequent process. These processes operate on a series of events. ³⁶⁾

Thus, Deleuze's (process) philosophy of time "sets each one [of these dimensions] into many different orders of dimension according to many different processes, [which] interacts and includes one another." In order to define (and create) the temporality of the pre-

³⁴⁾ Ibid., 4.

³⁵⁾ Williams states that "according to Deleuze, we are travelling back and forward in time all the time and we do not need for odd physical properties such as wormholes." James Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Philosophy of Time: A Critical Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 8.

³⁶⁾ Ibid., 9.

³⁷⁾ Ibid., 9.

traumatic syndrome rooted in the possibility of an ecological collapse, I specifically focus on the complex enfolding of the processes of imagination within the first synthesis of time (the present) and that of the eternal return within the third synthesis of time (the future).

The process of imagination is essential to Deleuze's "repetition for itself" and his conceptualization of habitual gestures experienced within our minds in the act of repetition. Referring to Hume, Deleuze states that "repetition changes nothing in the object repeated, but does change something in the mind which contemplates it."38) Particularly, Hume's cases AB, AB, AB, etc. are here taken into consideration (or imagination?), and by repeating each case, this repetition does not change anything in the nature of each duo; yet, a change and a difference are expected within the mind that thinks, contemplates, and imagines these "objects." A habitual and passive mental motion is grounded in the act of repetition of these exemplary cases; a power of the mind which is thus constantly and unconsciously able to contract situations, instants, concepts, and meanings within the passive synthesis of our living present. According to Deleuze, the contractile power is distinct from the imaginative ability of the minds: "the imagination is defined as a contractile power; like a sensitive plate, it retains one case when the other appears. It contracts cases, elements, agitations, or homogenous instants and grounds these in an internal qualitative impression endowed with a certain weight."39) Here, it is important to underline that Deleuze distinguishes this contractile power and passive movement of imagination within our mind's present from both "a memory and an operation of understanding: contraction is not a matter of reflection."40) In the conscious moment of remembering and reflecting upon an event that has passed, we actively go into the layers of our past, we choose a specific moment and, ultimately, we (try to) articulate and understand that same memory.

The act of imagination is, therefore, intrinsically passive. It constitutes a habitual and unconscious movement of contemplation that happens within our minds in the passivity of the present, a habit of living that is out of our control — as Deleuze argues, "we are contemplations, we are imaginations, we are generalities, claims and satisfactions." However, as aforementioned, the contemplation of the passive synthesis of time cannot occur without noting its past and its future dimension since, in Deleuze's philosophy, past, present, and future inherently coexist. In the passive synthesis of time of the living present, specific past events are contracted and can (unconsciously and passively) take the form of individual imagination within our minds. Meanwhile, the future is contemplated through a series of general, non-specific, and uncertain possibilities and expectations. In this regard, the living present is the arrow of time that goes from the particularities of the past to the generalities of the future, contracting these dimensions in a fundamentally asymmetrical manner. Considering the passivity of the contracted living present with its particular and general perceptual syntheses, it is important to emphasize that in Deleuze's terms, it does not enclose a psychological state: imagination, contemplation, retention, and ex-

³⁸⁾ Gilles Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, trans. Paul Patton (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 93.

³⁹⁾ Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, 94.

⁴⁰⁾ Ibid., 94.

⁴¹⁾ Ibid., 98.

⁴²⁾ Williams, Gilles Deleuze's Philosophy of Time, 28.

⁴³⁾ Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, 94.

pectation are the general and foundational processes that occur within the mind — and not by the mind — and can extend within many diverse human and non-human entities (from minerals to plants, from our geophysical system to our minds). For Deleuze, "every organism is a sum of contractions, retentions, and expectations."⁴⁴⁾ I return to the imaginative power of every organism in the next section. For now, it is important to highlight the relevance of habitual use of the imagination in the Anthropocene. As *Nature* has shown, what we are experiencing is a moment of constant occurrences of environmental catastrophes — both on local and global scales. Our imagination, therefore, cannot do anything else but still conceive those "habits" that the planet, in order to rebel against violent activities, has initiated. What we hear and imagine are the endless screams of the Earth; an eternal return of those traumatic and traumatizing screams.

Now that we have defined the habitual gesture of imagination within the living present, it is time to make a leap into the future and turn our attention to the last Deleuzian process that accompanies the making of the temporality of pre-trauma. When thinking from the speculative temporal dimension of the future, Deleuze moves away from Hume (and Henri Bergson), and Nietzsche's conception of the eternal return becomes the grounding for the third synthesis of time — the future. As Deleuze states, in telling the story of Zarathustra, Nietzsche narrated solely the past condition and the present metamorphosis, excluding, therefore, the third temporal dimension of his existence. For Deleuze, the future is crucial as it is "the moment of the revelation and affirmation of the eternal return. [...] The unconditioned which was to have resulted as the future."45) In this regard, the Nietzschean eternal return, far from being an affirmative way of thinking towards the future (thus, absent in his narration), expresses an influence and power on Zarathustra and the Self inherently destructive and dangerous, haunting and traumatic. Possessed by the tremendous event — or, as Deleuze defines it, the caesura — of the death of the God, Zarathustra is trapped within a limbo of threat of the return of the same event and anguish for his own death.46)

In Deleuze's process of repetitive eternal return in the third synthesis of time, the future, absent from Nietzsche's philosophical work, is speculatively created. Thus, we travel into the future, which becomes the temporal vector from/through which we reflect upon the dimensions of the past and present, as well as the *a priori* time of reference for the voyage of repetition. Repetition, therefore, is the royal category and process of/from the future which, at the same time, guarantees the possibility of repetition for itself and the openness of our future time through repetition: the future "ensures the order, the totality of the series, and the final end of time." The past and present, as synthetized in the temporal dimension of the future, become, respectively, a condition and an agent for the future. Particularly, in this synthesis, habit as the process founded the present and memory as that grounded in the past, become "superseded but a groundlessness, a universal ungrounding which turns upon itself and causes only the yet-to come return." The tempo-

⁴⁴⁾ Ibid., 96.

⁴⁵⁾ Ibid., 120.

⁴⁶⁾ Williams, Gilles Deleuze's Philosophy of Time, 119-120.

⁴⁷⁾ Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, 122.

⁴⁸⁾ Ibid., 118.

ral dimension of/from the future makes use of the repetition of habit (first synthesis) and that of memory (second synthesis), but deploys them only as stages from which the future will draw its own lines of flight; the production of repetition for itself which, in the eternal return, becomes difference in itself. For the making of the temporality of pre-trauma, it is sufficient to highlight that Deleuze's introduction of the dimension of the future within the eternal return is needed in order to manifest the repetition as a positive, different, and affirmative possibility. In summary, it is an opportunity to believe in the creation of this world anew. In Deleuze's words,

the eternal return is a force of affirmation; but it affirms everything of the multiple, everything of the different, everything of chance except what subordinates them to the One, to the Same, to the necessity, everything except the One, the Same and Necessity. [...] Repetition in the eternal return excludes both the becoming-equal or the becoming-similar in the concept and being conditioned by lack of such becoming.⁴⁹⁾

Traveling back now, to our living present, the affirmative, positive, and constructive power of Deleuze's eternal return, which influences the self with a forward-looking belief in this world, is constantly put into question by the alarming and precarious predicament of the Anthropocene. Our time is a time out of joint: our present is intermeshed with our future, and our future is intermeshed with our present — while existing in the present, we anticipate, live, and think of/from a future. Simultaneously, that future dimension holds within itself a spectral and haunting aura as it is constantly threatened by uncertain but possible violent ecological catastrophes such as those that have already happened both on local and global scales.⁵⁰⁾ In this paradoxical, bizarre, and broken time, which challenges and confuses the temporal positionality of our planetary existence, Deleuze's passive synthesis and static synthesis are — more than ever before — entangled and intra-acted within/through each other. In our contemporary day and age, imagination plays a crucial role within human and non-human entities which are simultaneously exposed to past and imminent ecological collapses. In this sense, imagination is the process towards the generalities of the spectral future, repetitively and imaginatively characterized by an eternal return of the same: it grounds itself in the condition of the particularities of the already happened traumatic disasters, as Pelechian's Nature shows, while finding its mental agency in the living present, where environmental disasters are still in the process of occurring. The asymmetrical temporality of the Anthropocene, which breaks into the precarious present and into the threatened anticipation towards a spectral future, and which is repeated within the act of speculative imagination, constructs the complex temporal foundation of the pre-traumatic syndrome. Instead of being possessed by hallucinations, dreams, nightmares, and phobias of the past within the mind of the traumatized survivor,⁵¹⁾ within pretrauma is the passive imagination of/from a future, conditioned by the repetitive contemplation/imagination of those same violent ecological disasters in the living present which

⁴⁹⁾ Ibid., 147.

⁵⁰⁾ Tsing, Swanson, Gan, and Bubandt, "Introduction," G10.

⁵¹⁾ Caruth, Unclaimed Experience, 11.

takes over. In the pre-traumatic syndrome, humans and non-humans are caught in an unconscious, passive, and repetitive limbo of imagining the (future) eternal return of the ecological events that already inflicted trauma. Thus, by contemplating and imagining of/from the future, the pre-traumatic condition cannot imagine anything besides the recurrence of an entangled becoming-traumatized Earth.

Becoming-Grains-of-Mercury: *Medusa* and its Speculative Imagination from the Future

The speculative dimension of the temporality of pre-trauma, which interweaves itself with the already traumatized (local) environment and its inhabitants while imagining the eternal return of those entangled trauma(s), is the element of representation that Chloé Malcotti follows and creates in her film *Medusa*, set in Rosignano-Solvay (Italy). In this experimental documentary, the filmmaker crafts the temporality of an Italian coastal town, Rosignano, traveling through the past, present, and future in a synthetized and intra-active manner. As Karen Barad argues,

time is not given, it is not universally given, but rather that time is articulated and re-synchronized through the various material practices. Time itself only makes sense in the context of particular phenomena. Physicists are actually making time in making time, and there is a certain way in which what we take to be "past" and what we take to be the "present" and the "future" are entangled with one another. What exists are intra-active entanglements [of temporality]. 52)

By creating time (Barad) and by traveling through the newly synthetized temporal dimensions (Deleuze), Malcotti unveils to the spectator how the seaside resort, its inhabitants, and its landscapes endured and will continue to endure a process of traumatization due to decades of pollution produced by Solvay chemical plant.

In the opening sequence of *Medusa*, a plastic bottle on a beautifully white beach appears on the screen. Then, the camera moves from the object to a group of children caught in contemplation. Through the words spoken by one character, the spectator now jumps into an imagined scene from the 1930s. The children, here, are imagining themselves as a part of their town's city council, Rosignano, during a meeting that (speculatively) discusses the naming of the town. At this moment, we hear the words of a young girl:

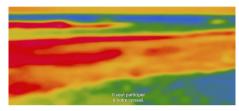
The owner and current manager of the Solvay plant made us a proposal, and we are urged to respond. Given the importance of the factory in the construction of our town, he would like us to add the name of the factory — Solvay — to the town's name. In this way, we would give justice, he believes, both to our town as well as to the company itself.

⁵²⁾ Iris van der Tuin and Rick Dolphijn, New Materialism: Interviews & Cartographies (London: Open Humanities Press, 2012), 66.

The discussion turns to whether the factory has occupied and will continue to occupy a crucial role in the development of the newly-founded Rosignano-Solvay. Most of the young characters agree that the company will help the town, especially since the construction of new factories will bring more employment opportunities and more economic relief to the population of Rosignano. "In my opinion, enough with the agricultural system! Rosignano must be distinguished for something else!," argues a conservative participant of the council. The characters continue to discuss their divergences until one of the most radical among them, who was refusing to add the name of the factory to his own town, literally turns into a grain of sand. On the level of the image, the becoming-grains-of-sand is rendered specifically through the use of thermal cameras, which enable the spectators to quite literally immerse themselves into the Earth. After him, all the other participants metamorphize, becoming themselves grains, and follow their "colleague" (and friend) into the layers of the Earth. It is after this sequence, and the alternative space it created, that the temporal dimensions of the past, present, and future begin to, as Barad would say, intraactively entangle, or in Deleuzian terms, interdependently coexist. In fact, the thermal camera technique employed by Malcotti enables the characters and spectators to embark on a (cinematic) journey into different temporal layers of time; into the archive of the Earth itself. At the same time, the pre-traumatic syndrome, as experienced by those young characters and the Earth-others, finally materializes on the screen, thus rendering the speculation of the temporal dimension of pre-trauma visually explicit to the spectator. Within the stratification of the Earth, the characters encounter diverse species of animals originating from different temporal dimensions who want to actively participate in the council as they want to submit some claims concerning the state of the environment, highlighting how they have been and continue to be traumatized by human activity.

On the level of the image, the thermal camera follows the chemical substances that have been polluting (and wounding) the maritime landscape of Rosignano-Solvay. Such a cinematographic technique, more specifically, renders perceptible what, according to Tsing, Swanson, Gan, and Bubandt, humans cannot see: they state that "human-made radiocesium has this uncanny quality: it travels in water and soil; it gets inside plants and animals, we cannot see it even as we learn to find its traces."53) Now, following the scene captured in figures 5 and 6 inserted below, these invisible contaminating traces become visible: immersed within the polluted sea, captured through the predominant and eerie red in the images, a fish begins by claiming its place within the anthropocentric meeting. It takes its place on the council by demanding that water pollution is decreased, the discharge of chemical substances into the sea is forbidden, and that divers entering the sea are prohibited — as even the simple act of a man diving into the sea can be traumatic. An aquifer and a pigeon then join the line of animals who want to become part of the council. By starting to listen to the mediated voices of the animal-others, the spectator is confronted with the violence of the acts he/she has inflicted on nature. On one hand, the dimension of the past, with its traumatic memories experienced by the animals, is captured; but, more importantly, it is the imaginative and speculative future that comes in, giving the

traumatized nature the opportunity to demand its place within the human council. In this long sequence, it is nature's fantasy and imagination — as represented by animal inhabitants — of the complete erasure of the environmental future that makes it possible for the animal-others to invoke its presence within the council. At the same time, in the transversal and trans-corporeal alternative space, the screen (and the thermal technique used by Malcotti) makes it possible for the spectator to perceive, access, and capture the chemical substances and the human actions that are traumatizing the species in the sea. Here, once again, the documentary ecology confronts the audience with the inherent transversal, trans-ecological, and trans-corporeal subjectivity which makes us — humans — always interconnected in a "global network of responsibility."⁵⁴⁾



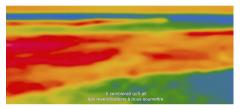


Fig. 5-6. Screenshots from Medusa (Chloé Malcotti, 2020)

In the final part of the sequence within the Earth, the entangled pre-traumatic syndrome is further exemplified by the impossibility of Filippo, the child who firstly metamorphized into a grain of sand, to bring everyone back to the Earth's surface — "the problem is that I do not know how to reverse the process," Filippo states. This troubling phrase is followed by nothing more than the repetition of the same image with the voices of the young characters who, once again, reflect upon our contemporaneity:

CHARACTER 1: I'm starting to feel too hot now!

CHARACTER 2: It is because of the greenhouse effect. It is the problem that lizards have to constantly face. Now, Filippo, take us back. We won't remain grains of sand, will we?

CHARACTER 3: Or grains of limestone.

FILIPPO: Actually, I would say that we became grains of mercury.

The becoming-grains-of-mercury as a speculative and imaginative metamorphosis perfectly encapsulates the entanglement of trauma(s) of our contemporaneity: the human is not the sole planetary species to be continuously traumatized as we also can become grains of mercury, a substance that so much pollutes our waters, consequently becoming transversally, trans-ecologically, and trans-corporeally entangle with the Earth. As Alaimo argues, by trans-corporeally becoming (a sea of) mercury grains, this process "entails a rather disconcerting sense of being immersed within the incalculable, interconnected material agencies that erode even our most sophisticated modes of understanding" and, thus,

⁵⁴⁾ Stacy Alaimo, "States of Suspension: Trans-corporeality at Sea," ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment 19, no. 3 (2012), 477.

of being in the world.⁵⁵⁾ Together with our central positionality within the earthly ecosystem, the understanding of the temporality in the Anthropocene is also questioned. As the sequences of Medusa show, our time is a time out of joint: it is a constructed and created time through the material, destructive, and catastrophic practices of humans which trap our planetary existence in an imaginative process of repetition of the eternal return of the same scenes. In the final, long, and repetitive sequence of *Medusa* mentioned above — as Deleuze argues in exemplifying Nietzsche's Zarathustra and his eternal return — the spectator cannot imagine anything else for those "imprisoned" characters who do not know how to reverse the process; how to go back to the surface of the Earth.⁵⁶⁾ Here, the temporal dimension of the future is spectrally haunting our entangled reality, while inflicting the human and Earth-others with a pre-traumatic syndrome characterized by the power of imagination in constructing an eternal return of the same. However, our imagination also retains the ability to envision a possibility and potentiality which is affirmative, productive, and constructive — referring to Deleuze's own eternal return of the difference. Consequently, (how) can we envision an eternal return of a potential difference towards and from the future within the Anthropocene?

Conclusion

Throughout this article, I aimed at thinking transversally and transcorporeally about the entanglements of post- and pre-trauma, as conditions that do not only pervade the human species but also, and foremost, extend themselves into the Earth and its non-human beings, thereby initiating an ethico-aesthetic discourse across trauma studies and posthumanism. The documentary ecologies of Pelechian's *Nature* and Malcotti's *Medusa* have been the trans-space and world-making images that made this juxtaposition of theories possible, forcing the spectator to reflect upon and face the traumatic and traumatizing realities of the planet in the time of the Anthropocene. As Fay rightly argues in her *Inhospitable World*, "the Anthropocene confronts us with the fact that we need to learn how to live and die in an unpredictable and increasingly inhospitable world. Cinema has something to teach us about how and why we got there and how we envision our unthinkable future as such." This ethico-aesthetic function (and responsibility) that Fay transmits to the cinematic medium allows me to start approaching the haunting question that emerged in the last part of this study, thus concluding the paper with a scene of potential towards an affirmative future.

Here, I want to return to the sequence of *Medusa* I followed in the previous section. By becoming grains of sand or, as Filippo states, grains of mercury, the characters change their perception and their way of seeing the world, therefore starting to *listen* to the claims that the animals inhabiting the polluted sea of Rosignano-Solvay want to take forward. Filippo and his colleagues-friends thereby initiate what Bruno Latour defines as a possible

⁵⁵⁾ Alaimo, Bodily Natures, 19.

⁵⁶⁾ Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, 160.

⁵⁷⁾ Fay, Inhospitable World, 12.

Parliament of Things. Within the trans-corporeal space created by the world-making images of Medusa, an imaginative, visionary, and creative parliament in which things, objects, animals, and other non-humans can speak in their own name, without having us to forcefully demand the right to claim in their place, has been established. In this Latourian cinematographic space, a transversal, trans-ecological, and trans-corporeal Parliament of Things is able to take shape, and its democratic inclusivity has been extended into the Earth's non-humans themselves. 58) Thus, Medusa shows us that our anthropocentric collective is profoundly inadequate in understanding the state of things during the Anthropocene and even more inadequate in envisioning a future without taking into consideration and listening to other non-humans. At the same time, the scene discloses precisely how we might be able to re-engage with the world by taking into account the Parliament of Things. Medusa, therefore, enables us to affectively see how we might become more ecologically attuned and perceptive if we start listening to the surrounding non-human world. To do so, we need to liberate ourselves from the negative practice of critique and, as Barad argues, we need to look for alternatives; we need to embrace creativity, thus becoming suggestive, imaginative, and visionary.⁵⁹⁾ In this regard, by following the world-making images of experimental documentaries, the powerful medium that cinema is might give us the ethico-aesthetic tools to change our perception while (re)enhancing a belief in an entangled planet, again.

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⁵⁸⁾ Bruno Latour, We Have Never Been Modern (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1993), 142.

⁵⁹⁾ van der Tuin and Dolphijn, New Materialism, 50.

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Filmography

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Biography

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