

## THEME 8: ARTIFICIAL AND INVENTED VOLCANOES

May 7

Alas, our final class day (sniff!) has arrived. In the beginning of the course we looked at the 'artificial volcano' cited by Ralph Waldo Emerson in 1844 as being one of the best lessons of science.<sup>1</sup> We also reviewed the recipe for an artificial volcano [THE AMMONIUM DICHROMATE VOLCANO  $(\text{NH}_4)_2\text{Cr}_2\text{O}_7 = \text{Cr}_2\text{O}_3 + 4\text{H}_2\text{O} + \text{N}_2$ ] as listed in 'The Young Man's Book of Amusement' from 1854. In our final meeting, each of you are assigned to 'make' your own volcano. Your volcano may take any form you would like and you should feel free to use your creativity but be prepared to explain what makes your creation 'volcanic'. Some of the possible prizes that will be awarded are as follow:

- most sublime
- most geologically accurate or interesting volcano
- most aesthetically pleasing
- largest disaster zone
- most explosive
- most apotropaically appeased
- most 'Romantic'
- worst/least convincing
- most metaphorical

Note that it is entirely optional for you to make a volcano 'product' either as a substitute for or in addition to your volcano (and there is no expectation of doing so for any kind of 'extra credit'; it is to be at your whim and discretion). While we did speak about the 'commodification' of the volcano through ecotourism or geothermal use, the invocation of the volcano in products is also quite common. For some reason, a large portion of products that use the volcano seem to focus on chocolate, coffee, or beauty products. Why do you think this might be?

Also remember that you will each present a short (5-10 minutes) recap of your final project in order for the rest of the class to know what you are thinking about and working on for it. There is no expectation that your project will be finished and complete realization that these will be works in progress as projects are not due until May 12 (or later if you have arranged an extension). This is just a chance for you to share your insights and anything interesting that has come to light through your research.

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<sup>1</sup> "The lessons of science should be experimental also. The sight of the planet through a telescope, is worth all the course on astronomy: the shock of the electric spark in the elbow, out-values all the theories; the taste of the nitrous oxide, the firing of an artificial volcano, are better than volumes of chemistry." Ralph Waldo Emerson - New England Reformers - 1844

## Readings (and non-readings)

It is with some pride that I have to point out that Providence's own Andrew Losowsky, husband of a Joukowsky Institute member, was featured on the Volcanism Blog after he described his 'Stranded' project to me and I told him he should contact the blog. It also means that I don't have to cut and paste the 'defeat volcano' sticker that an artist intends for people to print out and then plaster around town using a flour-based glue! You will have received the link via the Volcanism Blog RSS already, but for convenience I'll list it here as well: <http://volcanism.wordpress.com/2010/05/04/eyjafjallajokull-ash-victims-strike-back-with-eruption-of-creativity/>

Carson, Anne. 1998. *Autobiography of Red: A Novel in Verse*. New York: Alfred Knopf.

\*I am including some excerpts from this wonderful work because it would be criminal for you to get out of this class without reading some of it. The work takes its story from the fragments of a 6<sup>th</sup> c BC work about Geryon in which a volcano plays a prominent role.

Herzog, W. 1977. "La Soufrière - Warten auf eine unausweichliche Katastrophe ('La Soufrière - Waiting for an Inevitable Disaster')." 30 min documentary film. West Germany.

\*This documentary is set on the island of Guadeloupe when an eruption is predicted but never happens. It is short and available for streaming on Netflix:

[http://www.netflix.com/WiMovie/La\\_Soufriere/70084455?strackid=1675aa16ad49edef\\_0\\_srl&strkid=2070313830\\_0\\_0&trkid=438381](http://www.netflix.com/WiMovie/La_Soufriere/70084455?strackid=1675aa16ad49edef_0_srl&strkid=2070313830_0_0&trkid=438381) but unfortunately not on tvshack.net

Deleuze, G., and F. Guattari. 1987. "10,000 B.C.: The geology of morals (who does the earth think it is?)," in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, pp. 39-74. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

\* You mentioned wanting to return to the concept of the rhizome at the end of the class, so this provides a chance to do so and also to see how 'geology' is used by the authors. I would skim this and just get an idea of where the authors go with it; we will NOT have a detailed discussion of it; I include this as a pleasure/curiosity reading only and you should feel free to simply pick out one or two things that interest you from it to note in class.

Mirah. 2001. Mt. St. Helens (4:08), song from the album 'Advisory Committee', K Records, produced by Phil Elvrum. [lyrics attached below]. You can listen to it on Amazon.com at

[http://www.amazon.com/Mt-St-Helens/dp/B0013DBT44/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&s=dmusic&qid=1273008914&sr=8-1](http://www.amazon.com/Mt-St-Helens/dp/B0013DBT44/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=dmusic&qid=1273008914&sr=8-1)

**Mirah. 2001. Mt. St. Helens**

From the morning when I rise from my bed  
'Til the evening when I lay my head in slumber  
Oh, the loss of you does wreck my days  
Leaves me with a violent hunger  
I will never be free from you  
'Til I escape the lion's jaw  
There's no welcome in the end  
There's no reason to return again

The mountain stood so large  
We were humbled  
We walked a high and lonely path  
The sun beat down on the ground  
We looked around us  
There were no trees there  
We found a creek there  
We dipped our feet there  
We were alone there  
There was still hope there  
There had been a great disaster  
The hot winds came just after  
A tremendous shock was felt  
Survivors often tell  
The trees all hit the ground  
Death was all around  
And not a single lonesome sigh

The example lay before you  
You knew what you had to do  
You have a pressure in you  
To destroy the one who loved you  
The death was all around

You were hotter to me than the sun  
That burned me up the day we went  
To mount saint helens  
And if the special death you gave to me  
Is the prize i get to take home solemnly  
And suffer with the fact that  
I could never be your friend  
I could never come back home again