

Operation Anthropolysis:

Or Delusional Dream-Flowers of the Spinal Nerve Cell.

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Red earth, blood earth, blood brother earth

LINES OF SHITE:

"Man always increases the number of atoms leaving the ancient cycles – the geochemical 'eternal' cycles. He intensifies the breach of these processes, introduces new ones, and interferes with old ones. With Man, an enormous geological power has appeared on the surface of our planet. The balance of the migrations of elements that had been established in the course of geological time is being broken by the reason and activities of Man. At present we are changing the thermodynamic equilibrium inside the biosphere in this way."

It is hard for the mind to grasp the colossal amounts of living matter that are created, and that decompose, each day, in a vast dynamic equilibrium of death, birth, metabolism, and growth."

--Vladimir Vernadsky

Scrape away a little of the humanist hubris in Anthropocene discourses and the era of industrialisation has a bacterial foundation that is less about great white men and more about a super organism that digests binaries as a matter of course, across aeons of time.

"The further down the CNS you move, from the hind-brain through the medulla into the spinal cord, you descend back into the neuronic past. For example, the junction between thoracic and lumbar vertebrae, between T-12 and L-1, is the great zone of transit between the gill-breathing fish and air-breathing amphibians with rib-cages."

--J.G. Ballard

"These are the oldest memories on earth, the time codes carried in every chromosome and gene. Every step we've taken in our evolution is a milestone inscribed with organic memories. From the enzymes controlling the carbon-dioxide cycle, to the organization of the brachial plexus and the nerve pathways of the pyramid cells of the mid-brain. Each is a record of a thousand decisions taken in a chemical crisis. Just as psychoanalysis reconstructs the original traumatic situation in order to release the repressed material, so we are now being plunged back into the archaeopsychic past, uncovering the ancient taboos and drives that have been dormant for epochs."

--J.G. Ballard

Hence we return to Haeckel's recapitulation thesis. In his formulation of 'neuronics', Bodkin sought to understand the unconscious as a time-coded spinal memory, a series of evolutionary chemical-response triggers sensitive to climatic conditions. Neuronics sets out to empirically map the relation between psychic organization, biological phylogenesis, and environmental stimuli. Bodkin's disconcertingly prescient theory discusses the prospect of an inundation of the planet, during a runaway climatic shift, causing tropical heat and oceanic expansion. His experiments chart the resulting modifications of the unconscious, as climate change triggers the shutting-down or reawakening of behaviours belonging to prior evolutionary stages of the human.

--Robin Mackay

"That is, in what ways is a post-Anthropocene—a geo-historical era to come, eventually—aligned with *Anthropolysis*—or the *inverse* of Anthropogeny—a becoming inhuman, posthuman, unhuman, or at least a very different sort of human?

At this thin moment, the answers to this question are pressing because: (1) the very ongoingness of our ecological substrate is in question, and mass extinction (including perhaps human extinction) looms as one possible outcome of the human project, and (2) the explosive technogenesis of both organic and inorganic non-human species proceeds apace (animal, vegetable but especially mineral). The scientific possibility of marking basic terms of Anthropogeny occurs at the same moment (geologically speaking) that at least two paths of Anthropolysis—collapse and/or dissolution—come to the fore."

--Benjamin Bratton

"From symbiosis to parasitism is a short step. The word is now a virus. The flu virus may once have been a healthy lung cell. It is now a parasitic organism that invades and damages the lungs. The word may once have been a healthy neural cell. It is now a parasitic organism that invades and damages the central nervous system. Modern man has lost the option of silence. Try halting your sub-vocal speech. [...] You will encounter a resisting organism that forces you to talk. That organism is the word. In the beginning was the word."

--William S. Burroughs

"At the Berkeley Pit, a Superfund site filled with acidic and metal-laden contaminated waste from copper mining in Butte, Montana, microbes have learned how to digest toxic waste. The artificial lake, which is a mile wide and a mile-and-a-half long, is breeding a new form of life that has scientists bioprospecting for unusual bacteria to fulfill evermore intricate forms of nonhuman labour, from antivirals to anticancer drugs. Among the new forms of life, one bacterial agent has been found with the ability to digest metal waste. Weirdly, this bacteria is found only in the rectum of geese and had evidently found its way into the pit after a mass die-off of migrating snow geese that had stumbled into the toxic lake, impacting its ecology."

We may well spread our shit around to signal possession of the spaces in which we dwell, as Michel Serres suggests. We may even inject our excrement deep in the Earth to extend this stain into the layerings of geological time. Either way, what finally becomes of our defecations is up to the swarms of miniscule beings that ultimately engendered our existence.

--Myra J. Hird