

Ec(h)ology of the Désêtre (first draft).

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The *melanosis* (Latin *nigredo*) of a dark night's 'pitch black', the *leukosis* (Latin *albedo*) of a white cloud's 'silver sheen' and the *erythrosis* (Latin *rubedo*) of the fiery sun's 'golden blaze' are the classical stages of the alchemical/metamorphic/morphogenic process. Like the fractals of the late monsieur Mandelbröt (deceased during the period of this paper's composition), each of these 'stages' is in addition a recursion of the entire process--the *melanotic*, *leukotic* and *erythrotic* stages each in turn unfolding their respective *melanotic*, *leukotic* and *erythrotic* phases (these, of course, *in turn* recursing--i.e. being further recursions again). The process infolds and enfolds itself, subsumes and consumes its unfolding. Hence, indeed, what could be called the heraldic hieroglyph of 'the great work' as such: namely the drakon *ouroboros*, the ouroboric *drakontos*. This cosmic and chaotic dragon, like the fiery phoenix, suspires and expires in an autotelic *ekpyrosis*: its consuming conflagration ultimately eclipses and envelops its own ipseity.

Literally an unending, undulating, serpentine 'devourer', the Alchemists' *ouroboros* is akin to the *Shai-Hulud* (the enduring, apparently endless and eternal 'deviant') of Arrakis² and the *Phoorn* of Melniboné³ (that world-girdling 'serpent' the great black fangs of which

¹ *Volume Seven*, recalling here that the Hindu and Arabic glyph (7), which evolved from that of the one (1), has in its history been associated (especially in esoteric traditions) with the figure of the *curved sword* or *scythe*, the blade of the *great cultivator* qua *grim reaper*. Hence "the figure seven" and, here, *Volume Seven*, "is the number of transformation, of destruction, [and] of annihilation" (Jean-Julien Champagne, pseud. Fulcanelli, *Le Mystère des Cathédrales et L'Interprétation Ésotérique des Symboles Hermétiques du Grand Oeuvre, Troisième Édition*, Paris: Jean-Jacques Pauvert, 1964, 1^{ère} éd. 1926), 218. "In Hindu mythology," wrote Fulcanelli in the third published edition of a study completed in autumn 1922, "the entire cycle of human evolution is figured [...] in the form of a cow, symbolizing Virtue, each of whose four feet rests on one of the sectors representing the four ages of the world. In the first age, corresponding to the Greek age of gold and called the *Creda Yuga* or age of innocence, Virtue is firmly established on earth: the cow stands squarely on four legs. In the *Treda Yuga*, or second age, corresponding to the age of silver, it is weakened and stands only on three legs. During the *Dwapara Yuga*, or third age, which is the age of bronze, it is reduced to two legs. Finally, in the age of iron, our own age, the cyclical cow or human virtue reaches the utmost degree of feebleness and senility: it is scarcely able to stand, balancing only on one leg. It is the fourth and last age, the *Kali Yuga*, the age of misery, misfortune and decrepitude. The age of iron has no other seal than that of Death. Its hieroglyph is the skeleton bearing [...] the empty hourglass, symbol of time run out, and the scythe, reproduced in the figure seven, which is the number of transformation, of destruction, [and] of annihilation. The Gospel of this fatal age is the one written under the inspiration of Saint Matthew. *Matthaeus*, the Greek *Ματθαῖος*, comes from *Μάθημα* and *Μάθηματος*, which means Science. [...] It is the Gospel according to Science, the last of all but for us the first, because it teaches us that, save for a small number of the élite, we must all perish" (Fulcanelli, trans. Mary Swower, *Le Mystère des Cathédrales: Esoteric Interpretation of the Hermetic Symbols of the Great Work*, Albuquerque: Brotherhood of Life, 1971, 171). This will be of significance for the work that follows ...

² See Frank Herbert, *Dune I: Dune*, *Dune II: Dune Messiah*, *Dune III: Children of Dune*, *Dune IV: God-Emperor of Dune*, *Dune V: Heretics of Dune*, and *Dune VI: Chapterhouse Dune* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1969-1985); first volume first published in 1965 (Chilton Book Company, Philadelphia).

³ See Michael Moorcock, *Elric I: Elric of Melniboné*, *Elric II: The Sailor on the Seas of Fate*, *Elric III: The Weird of the White Wolf*, *Elric IV: The Vanishing Tower*, *Elric V: The Bane of the Black Sword*, and *Elric VI: Stormbringer* (New York: DAW Books, 1976); first volume first published in 1965 (Herbert Jenkins Books, London).

were found forged in the forgotten past as the twin swords ‘Stormbringer’ and ‘Mournblade’), referring here to the science-fiction⁴ of the ancient alchemists, of Franklin Patrick Herbert and of Michael Johann Moorcock, the illustrative references of this essay. This all-devouring dragon embodies the entelechy of alchemy, the golden goal of which points back to black--back to the beginning and foundation (the black ground, i.e. *al khem*) of all things. The beginning and foundation (*al khem* or *al kemi*) is in this sense not the past; it presents itself (paradoxically perhaps) as that which is *forthcoming*--that which is always *coming forth*--and yet, strange as it may seem, as that which ‘comes forth’ *backward*, *backbitingly*, *backstabbingly*, in the unutterably uncanny manner of Heraclitean *palintropos* (an ouroboric *enantri-dromos* that Virilio envisions as the dromological condition of our present age).

There is a *treachery*, a *trickery*, an inevitable *betrayal*--the aforementioned backstabbing and/or backbiting--involved in the convoluted course of alchemical transformation, transubstantiation and transindividual transduction. Morphogenesis and metamorphosis are revealed to be demonstrably monstrous--and yet by dint of being beyond the bounds of human reason and human measure, their demonstrable monstrosity is by [in]definition neither good nor evil, *ni mal ni bon né*: born[e] beyond the bounds of such *kategorikoi*. The all-consuming hence self-consuming cycle or ‘vicious circle’ of the ouroboric *enantiodromos* is moreover and more monstrously the feedback loop or cybernetic circuit of every existing thing (‘good’ or ‘bad’), of ‘existence’ as such. From this alchemi-cybernetic perspective--a perspective *ni mal ni bon né*--each and every existent thing turns out to be a coil or short-circuit (measurable in time and in space, hence chronotopological) in and of this overwhelming and overhuman ontological *ouroboros* (the latter chronotopologically *immeasurable* by dint of its *Shai-Hulud*- or *Shaitan*-like ‘deviations’, although accorded the immeasure of an *aion*: the range of an ‘epoch’, ‘era’ or ‘age’; *aion pais esti paizon pesseuon*⁵). The ontological dragon, or *drakontos* as such, is in this respect what Nietzsche called the *Wille zur Macht*: the *will to power* which infuses and suffuses existent things. Every thing is, from this perspective, an agent and *agencement* (i.e. an arrangement) of this more monstrous ‘will’, whether aware of it or not.

As our colleague Nicola Masciandaro⁶ has recently suggested via the title he has chosen for his recently-launched periodical, such a *gnosis*--such knowledge--would be a *hideous gnosis* indeed. The *hisda* here (the horror) is in point of fact a *horror vacui*, a fear of the void and of

⁴ ‘Science Fiction’: the speculative work with respect to which ‘philosophy’ is in a certain sense a specialized subset, as Gilles Deleuze suggested in the preface to his dissertation, *Difference and Repetition* (trans. Paul Patton, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), xx.

⁵ Heraclitus, Fragment 52.

⁶ For a precursor to the present *Collapse[d]* engagement with Frank Herbert’s *Dune*, see Masciandaro’s ‘Becoming Spice: Commentary as Geophilosophy’ in the previous issue of this journal: *Collapse VI* (January 2010), 20-56. In the present essay, transitioning between--and thereby transducing--culinary materialism and geophilosophy, human beings are themselves (as *selves*) the *spice*, *épice*, and *epi[ce]phenomenon* in the monstrous meal of materialism qua existent *entrée* of the earthly *ouroboros*.

being voided, of being devoid of self-will and of one's self as such. The void inscribed in the *ouroboros*-loop, the great *zero-summa* of the alchemists, is the very void that Giovanni⁷ Malfatti di Montereaggio discerned in the first part of his *Studien über Anarchie und Hierarchie des Wissens, mit besonderer Beziehung auf die Medicin*, 'Die Mathesis als Hieroglyphe und Symbolik des Dreifachen Weltelebens oder das Mystische Organon der alten Hindus', a treatise for which the late Gilles Deleuze in his 'early days' wrote an introduction (published on the first few pages of its 1946 French translation and thereafter translated into English in the 2007 issue of this very journal). In fine Pythagorean fashion, albeit making a *Pitha Guru* of the latter,⁸ Malfatti argued in his *Études sur la Mathèse*, a.k.a. his *Anarchie et Hiérarchie de la Science*, that "numerical characters"--and indeed all characters, *prosopa, personae*--are "nothing but [...] modifications of the elliptical zero qua hieroglyph of man and world"⁹ and that this "hieroglyph"¹⁰ (like the so-called alchemical or homeopathic "signature": the trace left behind after a substance has been diluted beyond any trace of itself¹¹ and thus the presence of an absence, "the place where the bottom has dropped out of everything"¹²) is by nature *obscure*,

⁷ Also known as 'Johann' and (in the 1946 French translation) 'Jean' Malfatti de Montereaggio.

⁸ "Pythagoras had travelled and learned much [...] in Egypt, Babylon, Crete, and perhaps even India, whence he would have acquired the designation Pitha Guru," but "from the Greek point of view what he taught and practiced was a form of Orphism. [...] Thus to understand the riddle of Pythagoras we must confront the prior riddle of Orpheus, from whom tradition asserts that Pythagoras derived most of what we associate with the idea of Pythagoreanism, including the Numbers. Witness Iamblichus, who writes: 'If anyone wishes to learn what were the sources whence these men derived so much piety, it must be said that a perspicuous paradigm of Pythagorean theology according to Numbers is in a certain respect to be found in the writings of Orpheus'. [...] In other words, as Syrianus says, 'The Pythagoreans received from the theology of Orpheus the principles of intelligible and intellectual numbers, assigning them an abundant progression and extending their dominion as far as sensibles themselves'." This from Christopher Bamford's 'Introduction' to the anthology entitled *Homage to Pythagoras: Rediscovering Sacred Science* (ed. Christopher Bamford, New York: Lindisfarne Press, 1980), 14.

⁹ Giovanni Malfatti di Montereaggio (Jean Malfatti de Montereaggio), *Études sur la Mathèse, ou Anarchie et Hiérarchie de la Science* (trans. Christien Ostrowski, intro. Gilles Deleuze, Paris: Éditions du Griffon d'Or, 1946), 11.

¹⁰ Samuel Beckett--poet, playwright, and philosopher of failure, of "failing as no other dare fail"--argued that the inspired investigator qua onto-speleologist "sees his regretted failure to observe artistically as a series of 'inspired omissions' and the work," whatever it is, "as neither created nor chosen, but *discovered, uncovered, excavated*," as if it were "a law of his nature" at once onto- and auto-speleological. "The only reality is provided by the hieroglyphics traced by [such an] inspired perception" (see Samuel Beckett, *Disjecta*, New York: Grove Press, 1984, 145; Samuel Beckett quoted in James Knowlson and John Pilling, *Frescoes of the Skull*, New York: Grove Press, 1984, xiii; and Samuel Beckett, *Proust*, New York: Grove Press, 1931, 64).

¹¹ The Paracelsian physician Christian Friedrich Samuel Hahnemann suggested in his 1796 *Versuch über ein Neues Prinzip zur Auffindung der Heilkräfte der Arzneisubstanzen, Nebst Einigen Blicken auf die Bisherigen* (his *Essay on a New Principle for Ascertaining the Curative Powers of Drugs*) that active, activated, or "succussed" dilutions exponentially increase the homeopathic (i.e. curative) 'force' of substances, and that the greatest homeopathic force is reached precisely at the point when the succussed dilution no longer contains any trace of the diluted matter; this is the point of both greatest or maximal dilution and force. At the point of total dilution all that remains of a substance is its force or energy 'signature'.

¹² "Let us imagine all things, beings and persons returning to nothingness," writes Levinas. "What remains after this imaginary destruction of everything is not 'something', but the fact that 'there is' (*il y a*). The absence of everything returns as a presence, as the place where the bottom has dropped out of everything, an atmospheric density, a plenitude of the void, or the murmur of silence. There is, after this destruction of things and beings, the impersonal 'field of forces' of existing. There is something that is neither subject nor substantive. The fact of existing imposes itself when there is no longer anything. And it is anonymous: there is neither anyone nor anything that takes this

occluded, occult¹³--an 'il y a' ill-seen and ill-said, the 'there is' of the *not*. There is, in the [k]not of this strange signature, in and as this hieroglyphic hem or hyperstitching (or again this hyperstition¹⁴), the autophagic autograph of an *ouroboros* again, occluded and occulted by its autoculinary feedback-loop.

What the ouroboric zero hems or hyperstitches is the matrix (hence *mater* and *pater*: progenitor) "of man and world":¹⁵ within its coil is an incalculable and ever-ingested/perpetually-digested *plenum*--the so-called *plenitude of the void*. Malfatti expressed the matter via the Pythagorean *mathesis universalis*, the founding and grounding decade which the Pythagoreans understood in terms of a tetract (since $1+2+3+4=10$)¹⁶ and figured in the form of a tightly-knit triangle (its most compact arrangement).¹⁷ Malfatti suggested in his study that the *tetractys* (i.e. the *mathesis universalis*) should be taken, like the drakon *ouroboros*, to be *coiled* rather than angled, thus more *circular* than angular, with *curves* instead of edges: hence in the end, from the very beginning, *ovoid*, *ellipsoid*.¹⁸ Everything that counts and can be accounted, every individual existent as such, has as pre-individual quantum this mystical matrix symbolically expressed as an ovoid (that is, a triangle the angles of which are oblique). As *mathesis universalis*, this ovoid *tetractys* has a universality that for all of its computational complicity must never-the-less (indeed, all-the-more) be distinguished from its various versions or actual aspects as an existence prior to, subtly sustaining, and eventually consuming its various existents, its distinctive *numbers*, *figures* and *forms*.¹⁹

existence upon itself. It is as impersonal as the 'it' in 'it is raining' or 'it is hot'. Existence returns no matter with what negation one dismisses it. 'There is' as the irremissibility of pure existing" (*Time and the Other*, trans. Richa Cohen, Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1987, 46-47).

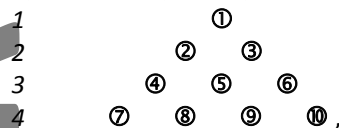
¹³ *Phusis kruptesthai philiei*: "nature loves to hide" wrote Heraclitus (Fragment 123).

¹⁴ <http://hyperstition.abstractdynamics.org/>

¹⁵ Giovanni Malfatti di Montereaggio (Jean Malfatti de Montereaggio), *Études sur la Mathèse, ou Anarchie et Hiérarchie de la Science* (trans. Christien Ostrowski, intro. Gilles Deleuze, Paris: Éditions du Griffon d'Or, 1946), 11.

¹⁶ Pythagoreans claimed that *all numbers* and thus *everything that counts* (and/or can be *accounted for*) exist(s) within the parameters of the founding and grounding decade (the *tetractys* of $1+2+3+4$ or 10) since every number after 10 is but a repetition of this first and fundamental set ($1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10$ followed as they are by $[1]1, [1]2, [1]3, [1]4, [1]5, [1]6, [1]7, [1]8, [1]9$ and so on). See the following footnote.

¹⁷ "The kernel of Pythagorean wisdom is the *tetractys* or 'four-group' made up of the numbers $1, 2, 3, 4$, which add up to 10 . They are represented in a pebble figure, in the form of the 'perfect triangle',



and the available sources, from Posidonius on, show how these four numbers contain not only the basic intervals--fourth, fifth, octave, and double octave--but also, according to the Platonic pattern: point, line, plane, and solid," explains Walter Burkert in *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, trans. Edwin Minar (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 72.

¹⁸ Giovanni Malfatti di Montereaggio (Jean Malfatti de Montereaggio), *Études sur la Mathèse, ou Anarchie et Hiérarchie de la Science* (trans. Christien Ostrowski, intro. Gilles Deleuze, Paris: Éditions du Griffon d'Or, 1946), 7.

¹⁹ In the *Dune* series to which we will turn our attention, it is explained that "only in the realm of mathematics" (or rather, cosmic *mathesis**) can the calculative visions of Dune's Nietzschean philosopher-of-the-future or so-

The ouroboric zero described by Malfatti as a *physical* and *technical* (κ)not as well as a *metaphysical* and (negative-)*theological* (κ)not (a (κ)not--plenitude and void--at once physical and metaphysical) seems utterly empty, devoid of content. "*Le zéro métaphysico-mathématique nous semble être nul, n'être rien, tandis que, dans le cas contraire, il est tout*".²⁰ the metaphysico-mathematical well-nigh-pataphysical void, far from simply being devoid, is (to repeat the potent paradox) the very *mater* and *pater panton*,²¹ the very engine of ontogenesis. This ontogenetic and autoconsumptive *kybernetes* qua cybernetic feedback-loop finds its echo, after Malfatti, in the the Deleuzo-Guattarian *corps-sans-organes*²² and Simondonian *centre actif initial*²³--the latter also called *l'unité magique primitive*,²⁴ ontos of the

called *Muad'Dib* (i.e. 'educator', from the Arabic مؤدِّب) be adequately contextualized. The *Muad'Dib's* matrix is described as a postulation "of point-dimensions in space" ("the classic *n*-fold extended aggregate of *n* dimensions") within the framework of which "time as commonly understood becomes an aggregate of one-dimensional properties," i.e. "separate systems which contain *n* body properties." With respect to the latter, "the point dimensions of the *n*-fold can only have separate existence within different frameworks of Time. Separate dimensions of Time are thus demonstrated to coexist. This being the inescapable case, *Muad'Dib's* predictions required that he perceive the *n*-fold not as extended aggregate but as an operation within a single framework. In effect, he froze his universe into that one framework which was his view of Time" and in that frozen moment bore witness to the hieroglyph qua hyperstitch of a vast macrocosmic *ouroboros* (see Frank Herbert, *Dune III: Children of Dune*, New York: Ace Books, 1976, 234). The previously-footnoted Samuel Beckett, in his earliest published poem on images of birth (hatched eggs) and the death of the freezing René Descartes, called such a vision qua educative (or *Muad'Dibian*) prosti(n)tuition a veritable *whoroscopy* akin to ouroboric *ooscopy* (see his *Whoroscope*, published in Paris by The Hours Press, 1930), and the American Terence McKenna, with reference to similar prognostications and foldings of spacetime (but focusing on the spacetime-folding 'I-Ching' or 'Yi-Jing' of Wang Wen rather than the Pythagorean matrix and Malfatti ellipsis), called such whoroscopological ooscopy a mathematical or mathetical mechanics "of nested cycles" (this in a 1988 interview with Jeffrey Mishlove on the topic of 'Time and the *I-Ching*', wherein he discusses ideas developed in the 2nd and 8th chapters--on 'Time, Change and Becoming' and on 'The *I-Ching* as Lunar Calendar and Astronomical Calculator' respectively--of his *Invisible Landscape*, published in New York by The Seabury Press, Continuum Books, 1975). "The hexagrams [of the *I-Ching* or 'Book of Changes'] are the elements in the Chinese physics of time," arranged according to the King Wen sequence as "nested fractals," he tells Mishlove. "Quite simply, what the Chinese discovered circa 3000 BC was the fractal nature of time." In his *Classical Combinatorics: A Derivation of the Book of Changes Hexagram Sequence* (Berkeley: University of California Sino-Tibetan Etymological Dictionary and Thesaurus Project 'STEDT' Monograph Series, Volume 5, 2006), Richard Cook brings McKenna's earlier insights to bear on the prognostic *matheses* of Pythagoras, Pingala and Pascal--namely Pascal's *triangle*, Pingala's *matrameru* and Pythagoras's *tetractys*.

* With respect to this *mathesis* understood as the (Pythagorean) ground or foundation for subsequent mathematical operation[s], see René Descartes' *Regulae ad directionem ingenii* §IV, in *Oeuvres de Descartes, Volume X* (eds. Charles Adam and Paul Tannery, Paris: Éditions J. Vrin, 1974), 375*b*, and Dennis Sepper on the latter, in *Descartes' Imagination: Proportion, Images, and the Activity of Thinking* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 150, <http://books.google.com/books?id=bDS1cCdw7oEC&pg=PA150&lpg=PA150&dq=%22mathesis,+the+way+of+cognitive+discipline,+as+a+prerequisite+to+the+study+of+wisdom%22> accessible online at <http://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=ft0d5n99fd&doc.view=content&chunk.id=d0e3277> (scroll to page 150).

²⁰ Giovanni Malfatti di Montereccio (Jean Malfatti de Montereccio), *Études sur la Mathèse, ou Anarchie et Hiérarchie de la Science* (trans. Christien Ostrowski, Paris: Éditions du Griffon d'Or, 1946), 11.

²¹ *Polemos pater panton*: "War [is the] father [of] all" wrote Heraclitus (Fragment 53).

²² The now-all-too-(in)famous concept first formulated in the late 1940s by Antonin Artaud and later developed in 1969, 1974 and 1980 by Félix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze.

²³ Gilbert Simondon, *Du Mode d'Existence des Objets Techniques* (Paris: Éditions Aubier, 1958), 159-160.

²⁴ Gilbert Simondon, *Du Mode d'Existence des Objets Techniques* (Paris: Éditions Aubier, 1958), 159-160.

universal cybernetic (Simondon's *cybernétique universelle*).²⁵ Its circuit is a circuit always in formation, a *dromology* the [dromo-]logos of which is (like the *logos* of Heraclitus and the Pythagorean *tetractys*) both *pagan aenaou* and *panta chorei*, ever-flowing and always-in-motion (dromological).²⁶ It "consists, abstractly but really, in relations of speed and slowness between unformed elements," explained Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*;²⁷ it is a void ovoid in and through which events, happenings, haecceities, differentiate themselves schizologically (that is, via schizogenesis, Simondonian *dédoublement*).

At this level--degree zero or zero intensity²⁸--"we discover nothing more than spatio-temporal dynamisms, that is to say agitations of space, holes of time, pure syntheses of *space*, *direction* and *rhythm*," explained Deleuze in a paper he presented to the French Philosophical Society during the time he was completing his doctorate. "The most general characteristics of branching, order and class, right on up to generic specifications, already depend on such dynamisms," he continued; for example, "beneath the partitioning phenomena of cellular division we again find instances of [this] dynamism: cellular migrations, foldings, invaginations, stretchings"--"these constitute," he argues, something along the lines of "a 'dynamics of the egg'," and "in this sense the whole world is an egg"²⁹ precisely in the sense the Dogons held (hence the diagram of 'The Dogon Egg and the Distribution of Intensities' that illustrates the relevant section of *A Thousand Plateaus*). Here (in this essay) we say the Dragon egg, or rather the Dragon *as* this ovum, this oosphere as veritable *drakontos* (which will be linked in a subsequent paragraph to the Greek *stomachos*). The drakon *ouroboros* is the oosphere or field of operation defined by Deleuze and Guattari as that "milieu of pure intensity" which could be called the veritable *ground zero* (*al khem*) of all production.³⁰ What is important is to understand that this *drakontos*, *tetractys*, or alchemical *kybernetes* "is not regressive": that "on the contrary, it is perfectly contemporary," since it is the field of every operation, of all that can and does take place. All that can and does take place can and does

²⁵ Gilbert Simondon, *L'Individuation à la Lumière des Notions de Forme et d'Information* (Grenoble: Éditions Jérôme Millon, 2005), 561.

²⁶ *Legei pou Herakleitos hoti 'panta chorei kai ouden menei', kai potamou rhoei apeikazon ta onta legei hos 'dis es on auton potamon ouk an embaies'*: "Heraclitus is supposed to say that 'all things are in motion and nothing at rest', and he compares them [i.e. 'all things'] to the stream of a river, and says that you cannot go into the same water twice" (Plato, *Cratylus* 402a). "It is frequently mentioned that the Pythagoreans, in their oath by the *tetractys*, called it the 'fount and root of ever-flowing nature': *pagan aenaou phuseos rhizoma t'ekhousan*" Hippolytus Romanus, *Philosophumena* I,§2:555, quoted in Walter Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, trans. Edwin Minar, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972, 72).

²⁷ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 507.

²⁸ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 164.

²⁹ Gilles Deleuze, *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953-1974*, ed. David Lapoujade, trans. Michael Toarmina (New York: Semiotexte, 2004), 96.

³⁰ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 164.

take place as metastatic calcinations, metastable calculations, contracted from the occluded tetract (i.e. the occulted *drakontos*, *tetractys*, *kybernetes*). Every existent or potentially existent thing can and does exist, in this respect, as a recoiling or contracting from the coils of the drakontological *tetractys* qua ouroboric *matrix*, as if recoiling and contracting-in-fear from the terrifying plenitude of the void. Here we are echologizing the first four books of Franklin Patrick Herbert's *Dune*, beginning with the first one, wherein the enlightened characters find enlightenment in the dark recesses of the desert and discover in so doing their status (i.e. their state of being) with regard to the ongoing ontogenetic and autoconsumptive *ouroboros* qua *Shai-Hulud*.

In Book One of *Dune*, a Hippasus-figure from the 'Bene Gesserit' society of sorceress-pharmatechnicians--one who divulged sisterhood secrets to her son the soon-to-be *übermensch* of Dune or 'Kwisatz Haderach'³¹--becomes what she is by becoming poison, by ingesting the matter that is precisely what's the matter with her. "This is a drug," she said to herself upon ingesting the poison, but a drug "unlike any other drug of her experience, and Bene Gesserit training included the taste of many drugs."³² Ingesting the drug, she experienced what William Burroughs famously called (via a concise Kerouacian gloss) the event of a "naked lunch": that frozen moment when one sees what is there at either end of one's fork ("a psychokinesthetic extension of herself"): "all this was happening in a frozen instant of time," she noted; a frozen instant when she "confronted [...] a pit of blackness" and "whirling silence" at her "core" ("a pit of blackness from which she recoiled").³³ "That is the place where we cannot look," she thought--the placeless, ever-displaced "place" that is always out of time, hence timeless.³⁴ Placeless, this place was neither (strictly speaking) within her nor without her or at once (intimately and timelessly) within and without her: a "danger boiling around her" "within" her (as and at the "cellular core": that "pit of blackness from which she recoiled").³⁵ This impersonal and/or prepersonal "pit" of autochthonic, alchemical "blackness" whirled in melanotic motion as the engine of her actual individuation, and in her individual recoil from it she initially mistook it--this pit of blackness, this *melanosis*, this whirling void--for the poison. "I could change it," she thought; "I could take away the drug-action and make it harmless."³⁶

³¹ From the Hebrew *Kefitzat Haderech* (קִפְצַת הַדֶּרֶךְ), the 'Contraction of the Path', originally referring to miracles involving prolonged or 'long-distance' travel in brief or 'contracted' periods of time. Moorcock's Melnibonéans achieve this on the dream-couches of *Imrryr*, the Dragon-Isle's 'Dreaming City' ("Learning his wizard's craft on the dream-couches, where one might live a thousand years in a single night, Elric was trained in the ancient traditions of Melniboné's sorcerer-kings. No mortal could learn all there was to learn in a single lifetime, and thus it was that the lords of the dragon empire conceived a means by which their sons might gain all their inherited wisdom. A wisdom of millennia" -- *The Sleeping Sorceress*, New York: Random House, 2008, 459)

² Frank Herbert, *Dune I: Dune* (Philadelphia: Chilton Book Company, 1965), 283.

³³ Frank Herbert, *Dune I: Dune* (Philadelphia: Chilton Book Company, 1965), 283.

³⁴ Frank Herbert, *Dune I: Dune* (Philadelphia: Chilton Book Company, 1965), 283. It is "always out of time, hence timeless" perhaps because it the very becoming of time--the *maha kāla* of Vedic philosophy. The Sanskrit *kāla* also designates darkness: the darkness of the aforementioned pitch-black pit, above.

³⁵ Frank Herbert, *Dune I: Dune* (Philadelphia: Chilton Book Company, 1965), 283.

³⁶ Frank Herbert, *Dune I: Dune* (Philadelphia: Chilton Book Company, 1965), 286.

But in the midst of *melanosis*, in the midst of this self-overcoming, “she sensed this would be an error”: she intuited in this instance (if only vaguely, ill-seen and ill-said) that she herself, as an individuated existent, might be the poison, rather than *it*, this *pit*, this melanotic *motor*, this ever-whirling *engine* or dromological *dragon* of ongoing individuation. Her action, her ‘being’, is itself “the drug action”: existent being, being at odds with the pre-individualized hence non-existent existence (understood as cosmogenic ‘chaos’, or in the words of Deleuze and Guattari via *Finnegans Wake*, a veritable ‘chaosmos’, *chaosmogenesis*), makes the entire *ouroboros* or *chaosmos* heave, expulsing it as [an] indigestible.

What the desert ecologist Liet Kynes described as “ecological literacy” in *Dune*³⁷ and his future-grandson-named-after-his-present-governor, Leto Atreides, described as “the eco-language of Dune”³⁸ is what Nietzsche in his *Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* described as an ecological or physiological translation (a translation back into *phusis* or nature). “To translate man back into nature,” back into “that eternal basic text of *homo natura*,” is “a strange and insane task, but it is a task [nonetheless]”:³⁹ the task of the one who is *attuned* to, and indeed an *echo* of, the earth (hence the *homo natura* qua physiological *homo logos*, being homologous with the *phusio-logos*). “I beseech you, my brothers, remain faithful to the earth,” pleads Zarathustra in the prologue to Nietzsche’s great work.⁴⁰ The logic or *logos* of the ecologist is not that of the ecological operative: its vernacular is instead *vermicular*, an unspoken and unspeakable *wormtongue*, the *logos alogos* of *earthworms*, which drags us back to the serpentine *dragon* (even, ironically, by its *etymon*⁴¹). It is the [non]language⁴² of egos [with]drawn back the dust, mixed into the mud, sunk into the sand from whence they distinguished themselves as environmentally indigestible existents. “To exist is to stand out,

³⁷ Frank Herbert, *Dune I: Dune* (Philadelphia: Chilton Book Company, 1965), 218.

³⁸ Frank Herbert, *Dune III: Children of Dune* (New York: Ace Books, 1976), 267.

³⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* §230 (trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 161-162.

⁴⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*, ‘Prologue’ §3 (trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York: Viking Books, 1954), 13.

⁴¹ See <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=worm> re: O.E. *wurm*, variant of *wyrm* ‘serpent, dragon’, also in later O.E. ‘earthworm’.

⁴² In some sense an *infancy*: a language, or rather a *non-language*, that is *infans*, speechless. Our neighbor and good friend Scott Bakker (who is a formidable speech-giver in his own right--far from *infans*!) provides an excellent passage in his *Thousandfold Thought*, the third novel in his *Dune*-series-inspired ‘Prince of Nothing’ saga, on the relation between infancy and ecophysiology, in this particular case with reference to an infant child or so-called “infant soul”: “There is no interval between the world and an infant soul. No deception. No language. An infant’s wail simply *was* its hunger. [...] This wail would not always be one with the child’s hunger. The interval would lengthen, and the tracks between its soul and its expression would multiply, become more and more unfathomable. This singular need would be unbraided into a thousand strands of lust and hope, bound into a thousand knots of fear and shame. And it would wince beneath the upraised hand of the father, sigh at the soft touch of the mother. It would become what circumstance demanded. Inrithi or Scylvendi, it did not matter. And suddenly, improbably, Knaiür understood what it was the Dûnyaïn saw: a world of infant men, their wails beaten into words, into tongues, into nations. Kellhus could see the measure of the interval, he could follow the thousand tracks. And that was his magic, his sorcery: he could close the interval, answer the wail, make souls one with their expression.” Scott Bakker, *Prince of Nothing III: The Thousandfold Thought* (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2005), 36.

away from the background [...] existence,”⁴³ *governor Leto’s* (Leto the *First’s*) offspring and *grandson Leto’s* (Leto the *Second’s*) father-turned-preacher Paul Atreides ‘The Preacher’ preaches; hence the background existence or milieu as such is affirmed when the foregrounded existent is translated, ingested and amalgamated into its alchemical context, its *drakontos*. Existents, for the ecologist and/or Nietzschean-Atreidian physiologist, are read in the context of their ultimate collapse, their eternal return to the earth (*al khem*); the ecophysiologist thus calls-forth the chthonic dragon, the serpentine destroyer and phoenix-like renewer. From the ecophysiological perspective beings are the pasigraphs of what “must come to pass”:⁴⁴ elements in a greater ouroboric hieroglyph. These elements are essential because they are ecologically instrumental in the face of the overwhelming *ouroboros* (i.e. *drakontos*): they are particular masks, façades, or phase-faces through which the otherwise inexpressible (i.e. that which otherwise would utterly overwhelm) is partially, pasigraphically, expressed. “Life is a mask through which the universe expresses itself,” the Bene Gesserit Jessica suggested;⁴⁵ before a universal expanse, before “a thing too terrible to face” (in the words of proto-worm ‘Leto The Second’),⁴⁶ the ecophysiologist wisely looks away only in order to look at it obliquely and thus objectively, “aware that if he witnessed further horror he would become totally insane” (as Elric the Eighth, sorcerer of Melniboné, states in the last book of his epic).⁴⁷ In the manner suggested again by ‘The Preacher’, one should look at--or rather, look through--the particular so as to behold the general. The particular is formed as a problem to be resolved: it is a problematic point or a crisis-point in ongoing ouroboric ontogenesis, hence the signature as such of a poison. “Don’t look at (this terrifying field of individuation), look at this person,” counsels the Preacher at one point in the *Dune* saga.⁴⁸ “He has been formed by crisis” and stands out from the background in a relation of mutual malignancy (the existent being as poisonous to its environment as the environment to the existent).⁴⁹ To stare at the serpent *ouroboros* is akin to staring into the sphere of the sun--an endeavour that ends in blindness (indeed the blindness and blind insight--blindsight--of the Preacher); blindness can be avoided and yet insight gained through techniques of ec(h)ology which read existent entities environmentally and their restricted economies within the purview of greater generality.

Such ec(h)ology is admittedly homeopathological, re-inserting or re-inscribing particular poisons into the poisoned system from which they were concocted and thereafter *decocted*, *decanted*, *recanted*. Each poison is existentially expelled in and as a crisis: expelled until its signature, i.e. the structure of its poison, has been resolved. The ec(h)ologist assists in and

⁴³ Frank Herbert, *Dune III: Children of Dune* (New York: Ace Books, 1976), 226-227.

⁴⁴ Frank Herbert, *Dune III: Children of Dune* (New York: Ace Books, 1976), 281.

⁴⁵ Frank Herbert, *Dune III: Children of Dune* (New York: Ace Books, 1976), 305.

⁴⁶ Frank Herbert, *Dune III: Children of Dune* (New York: Ace Books, 1976), 339.

⁴⁷ Michael Moorcock, *Elric VI: Stormbringer* (New York: DAW Books, 1976), 101.

⁴⁸ Frank Herbert, *Dune III: Children of Dune* (New York: Ace Books, 1976), 372-373.

⁴⁹ Frank Herbert, *Dune III: Children of Dune* (New York: Ace Books, 1976), 372-373.

attends to such a resolution so that the poison may be realized as such and re-integrated (i.e. re-ingested) into the general, overarching or underlying ouroboric system. Step one, then, recognize that existent things are poisons “held in cellular bondage”⁵⁰ (the latter being a kind of tactical *taqiyya*). Step two: rather than deny or work against such poisons, accept the poisons for what they are (as the Bene Gesserit Jessica did in the first book of *Dune*: “I could change it,” she thought; “I could take away the drug-action and make it harmless”--but she sensed that “this would be an error”⁵²). Step three: assist in its formation, formulation, realization, so that the existent poison can become precisely what it is--namely, the signature of an environmental symptom (which “stand[s] out, away from the background [...] existence,”⁵³ “spinning in relative stability”⁵⁴). Step four: have this signature resign-and-thus-resolve-itself within its greater context (“mingle the waters” homeopathically, as the Bene Gesserit Jessica says⁵⁵). “This will permit you to harness any relative stability” or existent being as such⁵⁶ as an ecological instrument. “Anything can be a tool,” the practitioner of *taqiyya* and Bene Tleilax ‘Bijaz’ explained in the second book of *Dune*--anything that exists, including individual *people*, individual *phenomena*, even *poverty and war*;⁵⁷ and as Liet Kynes stated in the first book, “to the working planetologist the most important tool is human beings.”⁵⁸ Kynes’ insights foreshadow those of the Bene Gesserit Jessica and Bene Tleilax Bijaz when he states for example that “men and their works have been a disease on the surface of their planets” and that “nature tends to compensate for [such] diseases, to remove or encapsulate them, [then] to incorporate them into the system in her own way.”⁵⁹ The “way” of the planet or of the ecological system is the “way” of its echo the ecologist. The wordless language of the world, its *logos alogos*, is (again) their mutual *mélangiue*. And this language is the language of alchemy, *al khem*: that of the earth and that of the earthworm earthworker (which we have called *wormtongue*: the *Dune*’s pasigraphic wormsign*langue*). To speak this language is to break with words and with the world of words in order to engage that of its ‘maker’, the worldmaking worm, the open-mouthed ontological *ouroboros*. Words and worlds--the word and the world--are ‘worked out’ from the belly of this beast: the great *drakontos*.

⁵⁰ Frank Herbert, *Dune III: Children of Dune* (New York: Ace Books, 1976), 32.

⁵¹ Frank Herbert, *Dune IV: God Emperor of Dune* (New York: Ace Books, 1984), 215.

⁵² Frank Herbert, *Dune I: Dune* (Philadelphia: Chilton Book Company, 1965), 286.

⁵³ Frank Herbert, *Dune III: Children of Dune* (New York: Ace Books, 1976), 226-227.

⁵⁴ Frank Herbert, *Dune III: Children of Dune* (New York: Ace Books, 1976), 251.

⁵⁵ Frank Herbert, *Dune I: Dune* (Philadelphia: Chilton Book Company, 1965), 286; her son Paul would later likewise mingle time and space ouroborically and thereby also “overrun himself” as well as “los[e] his position in time”--or more precisely *loosen* (rather than *lose*) himself into it “so that past and future and present mingled without distinction” (305).

⁵⁶ Frank Herbert, *Dune III: Children of Dune* (New York: Ace Books, 1976), 251.

⁵⁷ Frank Herbert, *Dune II: Dune Messiah* (New York: Ace Books, 1969), 210.

⁵⁸ Frank Herbert, *Dune I: Dune* (Philadelphia: Chilton Book Company, 1965), 218.

⁵⁹ Frank Herbert, *Dune I: Dune* (Philadelphia: Chilton Book Company, 1965), 220.

This beast, in some sense, is all belly: the *ouroboros* is the sovereign *stomachos*, the Greek *stoma* and its *Wille zur Macht* (its 'will' or *volonté d'estomac[ht]*). *Stoma*, in Greek, designates any orifice, any opening, any aperture--most commonly a mouth.⁶⁰ The worm (or *wyrm*: 'serpent, dragon'⁶¹) is one great mouth, one great stomach, one long esophagos or cyclonic aperture. We approximate the worm, or become a kind of dragon, whenever we are overwhelmed and, open-mouthed, throw back our heads in horror and/or laughter and/or anguish and/or ecstasy--this according to Georges Bataille, whose first name leads us back to dragons and second name forth into battle. "The overwhelmed individual throws back his head, frenetically stretching his neck in such a way that the mouth becomes, as much as possible, an extension of the spinal column, [...] as if explosive impulses had to spurt directly out of the body through the mouth in the form of screams" (horrific, ecstatic, dreadful and/or risible).⁶² In the midst of being overwhelmed, a human is thus somehow sub- or super-human, hence a veritable *über-* and/or *unter-menschliche Wurm*, if only for a monstrous moment--one wherein the individual human is no longer demonstrable. In this condition, a condition at once pre- and post-human (hence one might say *pre-posterous*), the inhuman *logos alogos* that arises from within the depths of human being (as if inhumed, entombed or encapsulated⁶³ therein) attests to the beckoning- and ultimate becoming-*worm/stomachos/Shai-Hulud* of man. Wormsign is a sign of overcoming (i.e. an *Überwindung*), a sign of the coming ecophysiological 'overhuman' or 'overman' (i.e. the *Übermensch*)--this according to Frank Herbert, whose name, like that of Georges Bataille,⁶⁴ leads us with burning flames into the very field of battle: *her[er]-bert*, frankly stated, being a bright battalion.

Bataille and Herbert, true to the omen of their nomen (hence in fine Stekelian fashion⁶⁵),

⁶⁰ <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=stoma>

⁶¹ <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=worm>

⁶² Georges Bataille, 'Mouth' in *Visions of Excess*, trans. Allan Stoekl (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 59.

⁶³ Frank Herbert, *Dune I: Dune* (Philadelphia: Chilton Book Company, 1965), 220.

⁶⁴ See the following footnote.

⁶⁵ Referring here to Wilhelm Stekel's essay on 'Die Verpflichtung des Namens' in *Zeitschrift für Psychotherapie und medizinische Psychologie* 3 (1911), 110ff. Stekel's colleague Carl Jung refers to this particular essay in a footnote to his *Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche* (trans. Richard Francis Hull, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960): "We find ourselves in something of a quandary when it comes to making up our minds about the phenomenon which Stekel calls the 'compulsion of the name'. What he means by this is the sometimes quite grotesque coincidence between a man's name and his peculiarities or profession [or even what he professes]: For instance Herr Gross suffers from delusions of grandeur, Herr Kleiner has an inferiority complex. The Altmann sisters marry men twenty years older than themselves. Herr Feist is the Food Minister, Herr Rosstäuscher is a lawyer, Herr Kalberer is an obstetrician, Herr Freud champions the pleasure principle, Herr Adler the will-to-power, Herr Jung the idea of rebirth, and so on. Are these the whimsicalities of chance, or the suggestive effects of the name, as Stekel seems to suggest, or are they 'meaningful coincidences'?" (427n.11). That *Bataille* and *Herbert* write of war, or that writers writing under the aegis of the Pelasgian *Melampus* (one who walks out of the black land--*al khem*--transformed, with blackened soles) write of transformative *melanosis* for one whose name--in ancient Persian rather than Pelasgian--designates a figure familiar with the glorious urban centers along the Nile River's black banks (the *nagrara stanam* of *al khem*), should be a coincidence or synchronicity perhaps altogether expected, if not already predicted. Such synchronicities tend to collapse into one another moreover, Mellamphy-as-*Melampus*-

lead us into the *stomachos* or “pit of blackness”⁶⁶ (i.e. the *maw*, the *mouth*, the yawning *chasm*) of a pitched battle which could indeed be called a veritable *estomachia*: a *stoma*-centric, *orifician* and ultimately *orphic* (nocturnal, pitch-black)⁶⁷ war. Reza Negarestani, author of (amongst many other works) an essay from 2007 entitled ‘Acephalous Mouth’,⁶⁸ might call this holey war “hole”- or “()hole”-warfare: the warfare of, and warfare in, “the whorled body of the Earth or non-holistic terrestriality,” as he states via the crafty Hamid Parsani in his 2008 *Cyclonopedia*.⁶⁹ The ()hole *stoma*, site of battle, is garrisoned by a chthonic demiurge: “the holey *Kerdegar*” or *Kareez’garrison*. “The term *Kareez’gar* technically and linguistically eludes translation, but might be rendered, with considerable mutilation, as ‘hole complex’ or more accurately ‘()hole complex,’” implying “both a destitute Whole [...] and a holey-ness.”⁷⁰ Here--in the present essay--the chthonic *Kareez’garrison* is equated (not without a considerable and inevitable mutilation of its own) with the *Shai Hulud* of Dune and Dragon *Phoorn* of Imrryr, the formidable forces and ultimate enforcers of inhumed inhuman ecology. “When a worm or a void-enforcer crawls the ()hole complex,” writes Negarestani, “it metamorphoses into a different geometrical structure”:⁷¹ the ouroboric operation of transduction *tout court*. “We understand by [such] transduction,” writes Gilbert Simondon,⁷² “an operation [...] which bases its propagation on a gradual [re]structuring of its operative domain” as it worms and works itself out; “each restructured region serves as [structural foundation or] constitutive principle for the following region,” changing the latter’s geometrical structure in the course or chthonic cycle (and/or cyclonic process) of its subversive and serpentine crawl (that which the proto-worm ‘Leto The Second’ described as a “transformational evolution” wherein “rules change with each surprise”).⁷³ This mutating *mathesis*, this mutable geometry, is (as Negarestani says) *nematic*, a *nemathesis*: its *topos* is the curved space or *ouroboros* of nematodes (“vermicular spaces [...] henceforth, *Nemat-space*”).⁷⁴ “Nemat- or worm-space is a complex with strange elastic geometry: its *porous* side consists of itinerant lines rendering synchronous possibilities of relaxation, metamorphosis, [...] dynamism and compositional

of-the-blackened-soles into Negarestani-as-negara-stanam-khod-al-kimya and the lot into *Collapse* here hear.

⁶⁶ Frank Herbert, *Dune I: Dune* (Philadelphia: Chilton Book Company, 1965), 283.

⁶⁷ Orphism, from the Greek *orphinē* and *orphinos*, designates that which operates under cover of night (i.e. in the dark, the pitch-black); see the entry from Henry Liddell and Robert Scott’s *Greek-English Lexicon* available online via the *Perseus Project* on the Tufts University website: <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=o%29%2Frfrn-h&la=greek>

⁶⁸ Reza Negarestani, ‘Acephalous Mouth’, in *Channel 93: The Journal of Wounding and Wounds*, <http://www.channel83.co.uk/articles/acephalous-mouth.php>

⁶⁹ Reza Negarestani, *Cyclonopedia: Complicity with Anonymous Materials* (Melbourne: Re.press, 2008), 42.

⁷⁰ Reza Negarestani, *Cyclonopedia: Complicity with Anonymous Materials* (Melbourne: Re.press, 2008), 42.

⁷¹ Reza Negarestani, *Cyclonopedia: Complicity with Anonymous Materials* (Melbourne: Re.press, 2008), 47.

⁷² Gilbert Simondon, *L’Individuation à la Lumière des Notions de Forme et d’Information* (Grenoble: Éditions Jérôme Millon, 2005), 32.

⁷³ Frank Herbert, *Dune IV: God Emperor of Dune* (New York: Ace Books, 1984), 66.

⁷⁴ Reza Negarestani, *Cyclonopedia: Complicity with Anonymous Materials* (Melbourne: Re.press, 2008), 47.

anomaly” while on the side of *aporia*--the metastable conspescence of its metamorphous current--it consists of dense interconnections “heavily interconnected as foundations [...] which give rise to a diverging series of becomings for each level of the composition” (“each level of the composition” being melanotic in itself, i.e. a plane of further putrefaction; hence its metastability rather than incontestably stable conspescence).⁷⁵ This is the ecophysiological *topos* of a sovereign *stomachos* qua esoteric *esophagos*--the *topos* of a kind of *Tiamat*: the dragonic demiurge of Babylonian mythology from the midst or belly of whose body the world is formed. The professorial protagonist of Negarestani’s *Cyclonopedia*, its missing mister Hamid Persani, states outright that “When I was at Tehran University, I taught the students how to turn the Earth into the coiling body of *Tiamat*, the Sumero-Babylonian Mother-Dragon”;⁷⁶ his is a *Tiamaterialistic* ecology,⁷⁷ or again: a drakontology.

The craft of Hamid Persani (H.P.’s lovely craft) is that of the proto₁-worm hence proto₁-dragon--that of ‘Leto The Second’ in the fourth book of *Dune*, who left in his ‘Stolen Journals’ word of his wonderous worm-work: namely “to bring this world back to the desert” so that the *Shai-Hulud* (*Dune*’s *Tiamat*, Melniboné’s arch-dragon) may once again emerge.⁷⁸ The second Leto Atreides, like the sequestered Hamid Persani, teaches his people “how to turn the Earth into the coiling body of *Tiamat*,”⁷⁹ the colossal *Shai-Hulud*; this is his *mathesis*, his *nemathesis*, his transductive *tiamathesis*. The task is one of monstrous *melanosis*: *al deshret* as *al kemi*’s primary principle, desert-like ‘wasting away’ as the first phase of regeneration, recultivation. The seed planted in the black soil must decompose like one in the desert: the desert (*al deshret*) is in league, ecologically, with its oft-opposed fertile black soil (*al khem*, *al kemi*), albeit only in the context of that “chemistry of openness”⁸⁰ which acephalously opens onto⁸¹ and is in this way radically open to *both ends* and *both beginnings*, enantiodynamically--i.e. only in the space-time of the nemathetic earthworm, the ouroboric serpent, the all-consuming dragon, qua sovereign *stomachos*--only in the space--“time of the stomach” as Leto The Second says.⁸² The stomach is the crucible, curcurbit and cavity (in sum, the kitchen: the crucible, curcurbit and cavity of culinary matters and of culinary materialism as such) through which transduction and transductive transmutation passes: “the hole in the nave of a wheel through which the axle

⁷⁵ Reza Negarestani, *Cyclonopedia: Complicity with Anonymous Materials* (Melbourne: Re.press, 2008), 48.

⁷⁶ Reza Negarestani, *Cyclonopedia: Complicity with Anonymous Materials* (Melbourne: Re.press, 2008), 50.

⁷⁷ Reza Negarestani, *Cyclonopedia: Complicity with Anonymous Materials* (Melbourne: Re.press, 2008), 42, 65-66, 94, 163, 165, 176, 240.

⁷⁸ Frank Herbert, *Dune IV: God Emperor of Dune* (New York: Ace Books, 1984), 66.

⁷⁹ Reza Negarestani, *Cyclonopedia: Complicity with Anonymous Materials* (Melbourne: Re.press, 2008), 50.

⁸⁰ Reza Negarestani, ‘A Good Meal’, <http://www.cold-me.net/text/meal.html>

⁸¹ Reza Negarestani, ‘Acephalous Mouth’, in *Channel 93: The Journal of Wounding and Wounds*, <http://www.channel83.co.uk/articles/acephalous-mouth.php>

⁸² Frank Herbert, *Dune IV: God Emperor of Dune* (New York: Ace Books, 1984), 237. One might here site a passage from the first book of *Dune*, where Paul Atreides “could not escape the fear that he had somehow overrun himself, lost his position in time, so that past and future and present mingled [ouroborically] without distinction”: *Dune I: Dune* (Philadelphia: Chilton Book Company, 1965), 305.

runs" (here understanding the axle as *alcheminement*).⁸³ The passage here *n'est pas sage*: it is neither a *wise way* nor a *way of folly*, neither the good nor bad road--or rather, again, it is both wise and foolish, very good and terribly bad. Such Janus-like conjunction, such a 'Hermes of the Ways', is pathologically indispensable, since (again in the words of Leto The Second) "you don't see much of any path unless you are [a] Janus, looking simultaneously backward and forward," open to ouroboric operations and an ouroboric operative as such.⁸⁴

Moorcock's eminently eldritch 'Elric the Eighth', four-hundred twenty-eighth and final emperor--hence ultimate eschaton--of the Dragon-Isle Melniboné, ventures in the very first book of his saga through the maw of the inter-dimensional 'Shade Gate' into the *stoma* of a netherworld ()hole-complex. Physiologically weak to an extreme degree, he lived, prior to his possession of and by the rune-sword 'Stormbringer', "thanks to sorcery alone, for he is naturally lassitudinous and, without drugs, would barely be able to raise his hand from his side through most of a normal day."⁸⁵ "By magic potions and the chanting of runes, by rare herbs had [he] been nurtured, his strength sustained artificially by every art known to the Sorcerer Kings of Melniboné"⁸⁶ until such time as he obtained the rune-sword from the *stoma* of its nether-location; sorcerous words and herbs were thereafter replaced by wordless runes and ruination by a heaving and cleaving and hacking and hurting which hurtled strange energy--a kind of negentropy or thanatenergeia--from the blade to his body (he "felt fresh energy pour up his right arm and into his body: this was what the sword could do. With it, he needed no drugs, would never be weak again"⁸⁷). The albino emperor obtained the black blade after "sen[ding] his mind into twisting tunnels of logic, across endless plains of ideas,"⁸⁸ and his body, through the 'Shade Gate', down similar tunnels--albeit ones that, rather than being "twisting tunnels of logic," instead "felt spongy beneath his feet, [had] the smell of brine" and "the peculiar nature of [...] flesh."⁸⁹ Worming his way down this worm-like subterranean subway, he finally found the twin rune-swords Stormbringer and Mournblade, the subterrene stomach's weapons of directed degradation, a.k.a. digestion (or in the *lingua franca--en français--les épées protéolytique de l'estomac(hia)*).⁹⁰

In the pre-Melnibonéan and hence abominably ancient past, Stormbringer and Mournblade were in fact one sword, the mythical 'Dragon Sword', so called because

⁸³ See Ananda Coomaraswamy, 'Kha and Other Words Denoting Zero', in *Coomaraswamy: Selected Papers Volume Two -- 'Metaphysics'* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1977) 220.

⁸⁴ Frank Herbert, *Dune IV: God Emperor of Dune* (New York: Ace Books, 1984), 66.

⁸⁵ Michael Moorcock, *Elric I: Elric of Melniboné* (New York: DAW Books, 1976), 12.

⁸⁶ Michael Moorcock, *Elric I: Elric of Melniboné* (New York: DAW Books, 1976), 12.

⁸⁷ Michael Moorcock, *Elric I: Elric of Melniboné* (New York: DAW Books, 1976), 147.

⁸⁸ Michael Moorcock, *Elric I: Elric of Melniboné* (New York: DAW Books, 1976), 77.

⁸⁹ Michael Moorcock, *Elric I: Elric of Melniboné* (New York: DAW Books, 1976), 142.

⁹⁰ Michael Moorcock, *Elric I: Elric of Melniboné* (New York: DAW Books, 1976), 142.

the sword housed the essence of a *Tiamat*-like entity even more *effroyablement ancien*.⁹¹

The Dragon Sword was broken and then forged anew, in unfathomable antiquity, as the twin rune-swords Stormbringer and Mournblade, alive with the will of their primordial progenitor--alive with the monstrous melanotic motives of one that would devour the world in a culinary conflagration and lay things to waste (or in the words of the dragon-like proto-worm Leto, "bring this world back to the desert"⁹²) in the course⁹³ of its alchemical passage.⁹⁴ The swords, in other words, are drakontological daggers as opposed to egological épées, even when conducted out of their cavernous confines and onto the epidermal exterior by Elric. They are the mechanism of melanotic metabolism. Stormbringer, as such, 'brings' with it the 'storm' of a growling gargantuan *stomachos*; instrumentalized in the hands of this Melnibonéan however, takes on an additional character--as will soon be explained.⁹⁵ Suffice it to say for the moment that removed from the recesses of its cavernous *chthonos* the swords which before had been "hanging in the air without any support"⁹⁶ like figures fastened to (or fused with) their magical milieu ('figure' and 'ground' in conjurous conjunction) found themselves technically divorced from (while nevertheless quintessential elements of) this magic milieu, and objects as such (if 'objects' such things can be called) in need a wielder. In exchange for being conducted (i.e. wielded) toward victims--be they men, gods or demons⁹⁷--the swords provide a kind of *allagmathesis*: a transfer of energy in the midst of combat from the victim to the sword-wielding victor (thus a degree of drakontological power, viz. *Macht*). Such an exchange and such energy was a positive boon for lord Elric, the "naturally lassitudinous" Melnibonéan albino--but one with grave consequences, since the sword he would wield would also in some ways wield him. Once Stormbringer, self-selected, slipped into his hand, the will of the sword (viz. *Wille zur Macht*) was made manifest; Elric found that he fought not only his opponent but the will of the black sword, or *Wille zur Macht*, as well.⁹⁸

Unlike his fellow Melnibonéans (all of them at home in a world of magical unity prior to the radical schism between subjects and objects), a schism or the start of a schism--the beginning of a bifurcation in being--seemed to plague this particular sword-wielding persona, this Elric of Melniboné. Yes he would accept the gift of the rune-sword, but no, he insisted

⁹¹ *L'Ancien, L'effroyablement ancien*, in the words of Maurice Blanchot which Roger Laporte used as the title for his study of the latter (Paris: Éditions Fata Morgana, 1987).

⁹² Frank Herbert, *Dune IV: God Emperor of Dune* (New York: Ace Books, 1984), 66.

⁹³ 'main course'

⁹⁴ 'alcheminement'

⁹⁵ 'spoiler': The "additional character" that Stormbringer acquires is that of a near-technical-object and is thus a weaponization of *the will to power*. Elric is the agent of a bifurcation which would split the previously magical Melnibonéan world in twain, scissiparously and/or schizologically engendering an age of technicity and religiosity (i.e. the era of religion and technics) in the place of primitive magical unity, and yet as the *hinge*, *axis* or *axe* of this schism, swordsman and sword are still magically unified, aspects of the magical world they would bring to an end.

⁹⁶ Michael Moorcock, *Elric I: Elric of Melniboné* (New York: DAW Books, 1976), 142.

⁹⁷ Michael Moorcock, *Elric I: Elric of Melniboné* (New York: DAW Books, 1976), 147.

⁹⁸ Michael Moorcock, *Elric I: Elric of Melniboné* (New York: DAW Books, 1976), 146.

(in the manner of the modern individual qua troubled *cogito*), “I’ll not be your puppet, rune-blade”;⁹⁹ Elric at once accepted (like a Melnibonéan) and resisted (like a non-Melnibonéan, a harbinger of the coming humanity, post-Melnibonéan¹⁰⁰ modernity) this sentient and sorcerous sword. Thenceforth, whenever “he drew his sword and felt the pulsating, evil power which lurked in rune-carved Stormbringer [...] he hated that power”¹⁰¹ even as “he realized how much of his strength he owed to [it],”¹⁰² how “he was horribly dependent on it. [...] Without the sinister sword, he would lose pride--perhaps even life--but he might know the soothing tranquillity of pure rest; with it he would have power and strength--but the sword would guide him into a doom-racked future. He would savour power--but never peace.”¹⁰³ But he also realized that although he himself needed the blade, “Stormbringer, parasitic, required a user--without a man to wield it, the blade was also powerless”:¹⁰⁴ they were thus in an “interdependent” relationship, “bound by hell-forged chains and fate-haunted circumstance.”¹⁰⁵ This realization was at once one of magical unity (hence of the Melnibonéan era) and of post-magical technicity (hence beyond the bounds of the magical world and a precursor of the techno-religious one); Elric, Janus-like or *ouroboros*-like, was a figure both Promethean and Epimethean.

The magical world would be split asunder, cut in twain, by Elric and Stormbringer, heralding a world of religious (hence *moral*, *moralizing*) subjects and technical (hence *mechanical* and *mechanized*) objects¹⁰⁶ the vague precursors of which were this very swordsman and this very sword, although the two were still riddled with and saddled upon a world of magical (hence not-yet-objectively-mechanized and not-yet-subjectively-moralized) unity.¹⁰⁷ Together this near-technical-object (the weaponized instrument Stormbringer) and

⁹⁹ Michael Moorcock, *Elric I: Elric of Melniboné* (New York: DAW Books, 1976), 147.

¹⁰⁰ The post-Melnibonéan would be *ou mal ou bon*--this rather than *ni mal ni bon*. Here we have a science-fictional/fantastic genealogy of morality.

¹⁰¹ Michael Moorcock, *Elric III: The Weird of the White Wolf* (New York: DAW Books, 1976), 65.

¹⁰² Michael Moorcock, *Elric III: The Weird of the White Wolf* (New York: DAW Books, 1976), 65.

¹⁰³ Michael Moorcock, *Elric III: The Weird of the White Wolf* (New York: DAW Books, 1976), 66-67.

¹⁰⁴ Michael Moorcock, *Elric III: The Weird of the White Wolf* (New York: DAW Books, 1976), 67-68.

¹⁰⁵ Michael Moorcock, *Elric III: The Weird of the White Wolf* (New York: DAW Books, 1976), 67-68.

¹⁰⁶ Here we articulate the proposed genealogy of Gilbert Simondon’s seminal study *Du Mode d’Existence des Objets Techniques* (Paris: Éditions Aubier, 1958), which “postulates [...] two fundamental phases of the mode of existence of the ensemble constituted by man and the world” (or in the words of Malfatti, of that “hieroglyph of man and world”; see his *Études sur la Mathèse, ou Anarchie et Hiérarchie de la Science*, trans. Christien Ostrowski, intro. Gilles Deleuze, Paris: Éditions du Griffon d’Or, 1946, 11), namely those of ‘technicity’ and of ‘religiosity’, which are respectively the “phase-shift[s] of a central, original, and unique mode of being in the world: the ‘magical’ mode” describes as the latter’s “primitive magical unity” (159-160). “By phase, we do not mean one temporal moment replaced by another, but an aspect that results from a bifurcation of being and that is opposed to another aspect. This sense of the word phase is inspired by the notion of phase relation in physics; one cannot conceive of a phase except in relation to another or to several other phases; in a system of phases there is a relation of equilibrium and of reciprocal tensions; the present system of all the phases taken together is the complete reality, not each phase itself, since a phase is a phase only in relation to others, and it is distinguished from them in a manner that is total independent of notions of genus and species” (159).

¹⁰⁷ “a more primitive form of the world” *ni mal ni bon né* (born[e] beyond good and evil) “in which everything

this near-religious-subject (the self-questioning hence self-individuating Elric) proceed in their mutual saga along the path of pure nihilation, Nirritian or Dhumavatian (hence Kalinary) doom. They are the manifestation of Mata Kali, the mother of *melanosis* according to the fourth Veda (Kali meaning melanotic blackness in Sanskrit), and as such they are the weaponization of the *Wille zur Macht*: the *will to power*, the *volonté d'estomac*(ht), 'weaponized' through the antics of an albino avatar (a kind of colour-inverted Kali, hence the Melnibonéan exponent of a quintessentially Kalinary *estomachia qua stoma-centric warcraft*). From the stomach of the magic netherworld the one-time Dragon Sword emerges orificially and orphically (pitch-black, nocturnally)¹⁰⁸ in the hands of this alienated all-annihilating albino. In black and white the concomitantly conjoined binary--sword and swordsman--proceed[s] in sum to bring things to a end and thereby bring about a new era, a new *aion*, a new *yuga* (the latter words denoting the rhythm and measure of existence or macrocosmic fluxion rather than of existents or microcosmic fixities).

This is the "hypothesis [that] must be hazarded"¹⁰⁹ according to Nietzsche: to perceive through the world's representation[s]¹¹⁰ (beyond "the Berkeleyan and Schopenhauerian" senses¹¹¹) the vast, intertwined, primitive and formative ("pre-form")¹¹² belly of a manifold beast,¹¹³ to see in the interplay of moralizing subjects and mechanized objects the mathetic *melanosis* hence *alcheminement* of an overarching or underlying *Wille zur Macht*. Understanding *will to power* in this way enables the inspired perception, ill-seen and ill-said, of existents as products of drakontological [in]digestion, of an ontogenic and ouroboric metabolism "in which all organic functions, including self-regulation, assimilation, nutrition, secretion, and change of matter" form *Machtkonstellationen* (that is, 'power-constellations') which even in the face of their existent individualities are never-the-less "contained in a mighty unity",¹¹⁴ this is why Nietzsche states

till lies contained in a powerful unity"--Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* §36 (trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 47; "a central, original, and unique mode of being in the world, the 'magical' mode"--Gilbert Simondon, *Du Mode d'Existence des Objets Techniques* (Paris: Éditions Aubier, 1958), 160.

¹⁰⁸ See footnote 66, above, re: Orphism, *orph[ī]n[e]* and *orph[ī]nos*.

¹⁰⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* §36 (trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 48.

¹¹⁰ i.e. through "the great third eye which looks out into the world through the other two" as Nietzsche states in *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality* §509 (trans. Richard Hollingdale, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 507.

¹¹¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* §36 (trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 47.

¹¹² Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* §36 (trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 47-48.

¹¹³ "the spirit most resembles a *stomach*," the *belly* of a beast, states Nietzsche in *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* §230 (trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 160.

¹¹⁴ "everything still lies contained in a powerful unity" states Nietzsche in *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* §36 (trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 47.

altogether ec(h)ologically that “the world seen from within, the world defined and designated according to its ‘intelligible character’, would simply be *will to power*,” *volonté d’estomac*ht, “and nothing else”.¹¹⁵ This inspired vision discerns the *désêtre* within and without every *être* from the peculiar perspective of the so-called “third eye”¹¹⁶ or volcanic “pineal eye”¹¹⁷ of a seer whose sight, like that of Kala (the fire-eyed counterpart of Kali), is a blinding blight searing all that it sees. The volcanic, dragonic, Kalinary eye of Kala--otherwise known as Shiva the Destroyer¹¹⁸--is a shiv¹¹⁹ in spacetime (or a splinter in, and splinter as, the conscious mind’s eye), “pineal” or “pineconical” precisely in the way that the Pythagorean *tetractys* is “triangular” (referring here to Malfatti’s *Mathesis*): that is, as a pyre or pyramid that burns all its edges and emerges as an ellipsis or ouroboric orb the centre of which is everywhere and circumference nowhere. The open “third eye” bears witness to the burning vision of the time--or in Sanskrit the *kāla*--of the *stoma*: “the time of the stomach”¹²⁰ that churns and burns all it consumes in accordance with “the eternal law of transformation.”¹²¹ The *désêtre* as such is drakontological, homologous with (and hence the *homo logos* of) the *drakontos*; the drakon *ouroboros* is its basic context, the “eternal basic text” of its nature (or *phusis*) and “the fundamental will of its spirit” (or *stoma*), as Nietzsche suggests in his ‘Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future’ *ni mal ni bon né*.¹²²

Standing out as individual existent from this basic context, one who would be drakontological (i.e. its *homo logos*), one who would open this eye (and therefore the ‘I’), is with respect to its ec(h)ology a *pharmakon*: an actual existent *poison*. The *pharmakon* is expelled (as the indigestible or the non-metabolizeable) from that ecophysiological *drakontos* which as sovereign *stomachos* consumes everything, hence it is expelled only to be re-ingested expelled so that it can be decrypted and then re-absorbed, re-encrypted. Thus becoming-*désêtre* is an ec(h)ological endeavour, assisting in this decryption through the self-realization, self-description, and pharmacological re-translation of the existent *pharmakon* as such. And this act of re-translation or gradual re-ingestion, propelled by pharmacological self-realization, itself in fact propels the ecophysiological engine: the indigestible is the impetus, the inciter, of ongoing ouroboric progression (which is a progression progressing enantiodynamically, since the

¹¹⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* §36 (trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 48.

¹¹⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality* §509 (trans. Richard Hollingdale, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 507.

¹¹⁷ Georges Bataille, *Visions of Excess* (trans. Allan Stoekl, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 74-90, *Inner Experience* (trans. Leslie Anne Boldt, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 77-98.

¹¹⁸ The Destroyer and the Transformer, N.B.

¹¹⁹ <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=shiv>

¹²⁰ Frank Herbert, *Dune IV: God Emperor of Dune* (New York: Ace Books, 1984), 237.

¹²¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Pre-Platonic Philosophers* (trans. Greg Whitlock, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 62-3.

¹²² Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* §230 (trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 161-162.

‘progress’ progressively signs the great signature qua *circulus vitiosus* of the void). Each indigestible concrescence is in other words the basis for further propulsion (and for *phusis* as such) in so far and in as much as it ‘figures itself out’ and thereby resolves its pharmacocophysiological equation. This strange or rather uncanny *mathesis* underpins the one Palimbasha presents in the third book of *Dune*, where the worm-work of Dune’s *Übermensch* is described as a thoroughgoing *mathesis universalis*.¹²³ In Simondonian terms this would be a veritable *kybernetes universalis*¹²⁴ the guiding or governing principle of which could be called the permutation or permugenerative individuation of the metaphysico-mathematical zero[uroboros].¹²⁵ The ec(h)ological cybernetician runs and thereby ruins the rune of its ecological circuit, tracing it--thereby de-scribing and de-lineating it--in order to ec(h)ologically re-inscribe it. This de-lineation has a Malfattiesque bent, ‘bending the bow’ so-to-speak¹²⁶ and making ellipses of what seemed to be angular edges; supposedly straightforward life-lines, biological and bio-graphical, are cybernetically shown to be ‘bio-logical’ and ‘bio-graphical’ in the sense of that other *bios* upon which Heraclitus played in his 48th fragment (*bios to toxo onoma bios ergon de thanatos*). “The name of the bow” (*bios* with emphasis on the ‘o’: a weapon) “is life” (*bios* with emphasis on the ‘i’: a life-form) but “its work” (*ergon*: its *oeuvre*, the shooting of arrows, killing existents) “is death” (*thanatos*), he wrote. Malfatti’s elliptical Pythagorean *tetractys* qua ovoid *mathesis universalis* reveals itself as Heraclitean, a weapon of war where war is the matrix (*mater* and *pater*) of all (*to panton*, as in the 53rd fragment). The work of the bow, which--when worked, weaponized, instrumentalized--takes the shape of an ovoid zero, is a translation or transduction back to the b(l)ackground or ec(h)ological zero[uroboros]. Every être (*bios*) ec(h)ologically works for and forth to the *désêtre* (qua double-crossed *bios*).

Ec(h)ological literacy or attunement to “eco-language”¹²⁷ in this context means becoming the consummate nihilist, ec(h)ological work being a nihilistic unworking pursued to its furthest extremes. This work of unworking, this *désoeuvrement*, is treacherous not only with respect to *existents*, with respect to every *existent*, but also (in addition) with respect to *the work of unworking or nihilistic endeavour* as such: nihilism pursued to its furthest extremes is a treachery treacherous even to its very treacherousness, a double-cross that double-crosses its double-crossing. This is the trick, truc¹²⁸ and truth of Nietzsche’s “great” rather than “petty” politics¹²⁹ and “great” rather than “particular” health¹³⁰--these designating nothing other than

¹²³ Frank Herbert, *Dune III: Children of Dune* (New York: Ace Books, 1976), 234.

¹²⁴ Gilbert Simondon, *L’Individuation à la Lumière des Notions de Forme et d’Information* (Grenoble: Éditions Jérôme Millon, 2005), 561.

¹²⁵ Giovanni Malfatti di Montereaggio (Jean Malfatti de Montereaggio), *Études sur la Mathèse, ou Anarchie et Hiérarchie de la Science* (trans. Christien Ostrowski, Paris: Éditions du Griffon d’Or, 1946), 8.

¹²⁶ See Nietzsche, in the ‘Preface’ of his *Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* §230 (trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 3, regarding “attempts [...] in the grand style to unbend the bow.”

¹²⁷ Frank Herbert, *Dune III: Children of Dune* (New York: Ace Books, 1976), 267.

¹²⁸ “le truc de l’oeuvre” as René Schwaller says; see André VandenBroeck, *Al-Kemi, a Memoir: Hermetic, Occult, Political, and Private Aspects of R.A. Schwaller de Lubicz* (Edinburgh: Lindisfarne Books, 1990), 61-62.

¹²⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* §208

the grand operation by which man overcomes nihilism through the affirmation of its most extreme and radical form (*viz.* eternal recurrence). The “great politics” of total affirmation proceeds by way of an ongoing double-crossing and betrayal of existents, as the Melnibonéan Sorcerer King ultimately discovers: “He saw [his own black] blade leave the ground, sweep into the air, and rush down upon him. ‘Stormbringer!’ he cried, and when the hell-sword struck his chest he felt the icy touch of the blade against his heart, [...] felt his body constrict, and felt [the sword] sucking his soul out from the depths of his being: he felt his whole personality being drawn into the rune-sword.”¹³¹ In order to carry nihilism to its furthest extremes Elric must destroy not only his friends and enemies (be they men, gods or demons¹³²) but must also be destroyed by the very force (i.e. the rune-sword) that had sustained him, thereby bringing about the total destruction of the *aeon* (i.e. the entire era, age, *aion* or *yuga*). The twist, of course (or the cyclonic twist-*within-the-twist*), is that the trajectory of negativity and negation (“the most world-denying of all possible ways of thinking”¹³³) leads ec(h)ologically to the affirmation of the eternity of all existence¹³⁴ which is nothing more and nothing less than the death of negativity--Nietzsche’s post-nihilistic insight. The consummate nihilist annihilates to the point at which nihilism consumes itself, to the point of nihilism’s *annihilation*, its ultimate *ungrounding* in and as the *zero(uroboros)* qua ouroboric ()*hole-complex* (a complex paradoxically, perplexedly and perpetually present in its absence as an un(re)presentable yet eternally-recurrent ontogenic immanence--one that Nietzsche called *will to power* as the “pre-form of life”¹³⁵ and that Simondon, presaging Deleuze and Guattari, called the pre-individual virtuality¹³⁶ which is the *syllapsis*¹³⁷ that holds together, via an almost Eckhartian *Abgeschiedenheit* or *Gelassenheit*, the heterogeneous unity of a well-nigh “magical” mode of being¹³⁸).

(trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 128-131.

¹³⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* §382 (trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York: Random House, 1974), 346-347.

³¹ Michael Moorcock, Elric VI: *Stormbringer* (New York: DAW Books, 1976), 219.

¹³² Michael Moorcock, Elric I: *Elric of Melniboné* (New York: DAW Books, 1976), 147.

¹³³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* §56 (trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 68.

³⁴ This is what Nietzsche calls “the ideal of the most high-spirited, alive and world-affirming” in *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* §56 (trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 68, and what Levinas instead calls an absolute “horror” in his early essay ‘Il y a’ (*Deucalion* 1, 1946, 141–154), in *Time and the Other* (trans. Richard Cohen, Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1987) and in his *Existence and Existents* (trans. Alphonso Lingis, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff 1978, republished in Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2001).

³⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* §36 (trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 48.

¹³⁶ Gilbert Simondon, *Du Mode d’Existence des Objets Techniques* (Paris: Éditions Aubier, 1958), 248.

¹³⁷ ‘Syllapsis’ is actually a Heraclitean term. *Sullapsies: hola kai ouch hola, sumpheromenon diaferomenon*, he wrote in the 10th of his posthumously-collected fragments--a fragment Charles Kahn translates as “Graspings: wholes and not wholes, convergent [and] divergent, consonant [and] dissonant” in *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus: An Edition of the Fragments with Translation and Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 85. The idea is something along the [oblique] lines of a taking hold by letting go.

Alchemical-hence-ec(h)ological *melanosis* is *destruction-as-transduction*: it is a destruction that transduces ec(h)ological existence. Stormbringer finally turns upon its wielder, killing Elric, in order to hasten the destruction of their world (which was their trajectory together all along), but this also (as an echo) hastens the ec(h)ophysiological genesis--via the ovoid *tetractys* qua *mathesis*, the metaphysico-mathematical plenitude of the void--of an entirely new constellation of forces. It is by way of its magico-mathetical/"metaphysico-mathematical" unity¹³⁹ that utter destruction can in its transduction reticulate the very void it destructively engineers and engenders, thereby (via its voidal criss-cross or double-cross, 'either-or'/'ether-net') inaugurating like an unspoken *aum*¹⁴⁰ another era, age, *aion* or *yuga*. Georges Bataille would call this a destruction of restricted economies that opens onto the general--in this case drakontological or ecophysiological--economy. The restricted opens onto the general, the individual onto the transindividual and transductive¹⁴¹ or ultimately overhuman/*übermenschlich* economy: this is what Nietzsche calls "great politics" and "great health" as distinct from those that are petty and personal. Great politics and great health (according to the works of Friedrich Nietzsche, Frank Herbert and Michael Moorcock here examined) are the transductive effects of drakontological digestion or Negarestanian *Tiamaterialism*¹⁴²--the effects, in other words, of *Wille zur Macht* (*will to power*) understood as an ouroboric and vermicular *volonté d'estomac**htj*. Rather than egocentric and egological, their operative principle or *kymatik kybernetes* is instead *ecological* and *alchemical*: a politics of putrefaction, to paraphrase Negarestani¹⁴³--a "*mathesis* and politics of decay."¹⁴⁴ *Will to power* is therefore far from psychological in nature; like Stormbringer, it is in principle and process a *psychophagy* as opposed to a *psychology*, a "force of violent destruction"¹⁴⁵ that ingests the individual--all individuals--and alchemically digests it or digests them. It is a process of *désêtrement* the '*désêtre*' of which is what we have called the [enantio]dromological drakon *ouroboros*, the *über-*and/or *unter-menschliche Wurm*, *Phoorn*, *Tiamat* or *Shai-Hulud* that is the very hieroglyph of Nietzsche's *Übermensch* and the vehicle as such of an otherwise *unmenschianable* *volonté d'estomac**hiaj*.

³⁸ Gilbert Simondon, *Du Mode d'Existence des Objets Techniques* (Paris: Éditions Aubier, 1958), 160.

³⁹ Giovanni Malfatti di Montereaggio (Jean Malfatti de Montereaggio), *Études sur la Mathèse, ou Anarchie et Hiérarchie de la Science* (trans. Christien Ostrowski, Paris: Éditions du Griffon d'Or, 1946), 11.

⁴⁰ ॐ

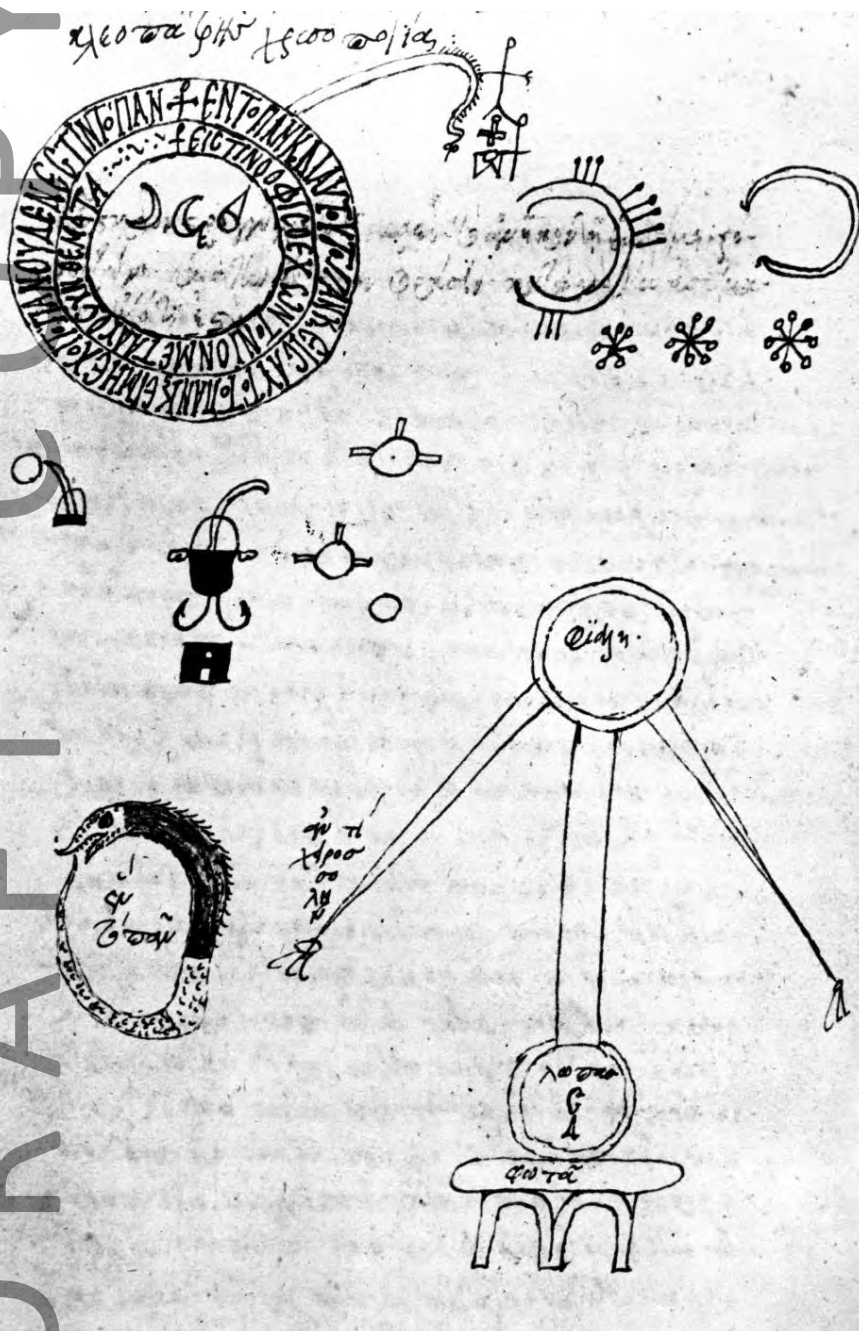
¹⁴¹ Gilbert Simondon, *Du Mode d'Existence des Objets Techniques* (Paris: Éditions Aubier, 1958), 248.

¹⁴² Reza Negarestani, *Cyclonopedia: Complicity with Anonymous Materials* (Melbourne: Re.press, 2008), 42, 65-66, 94, 163, 165, 176, 240.

¹⁴³ Reza Negarestani, 'Undercover Softness: An Introduction to the Architecture and Politics of Decay', in *Collapse VI* (January 2010), 379-430.

¹⁴⁴ Reza Negarestani, 'Undercover Softness: An Introduction to the Architecture and Politics of Decay', in *Collapse VI* (January 2010), 381.

¹⁴⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power* §23 (trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York: Random House, 1967), 18.



COLLAPSE VII

Ec[h]ology of the Désêtre

Dan Mellamphy & Nandita Biswas Mellamphy

Though the logos is common to all, the many live as if they had a wisdom of their own.

HERACLITUS

Under such flattering colour and repainting, the terrible ground-text of homo natura must again be recognized.

NIETZSCHE

The following is a work of geo-philosophy beyond the bounds of Friedrich Nietzsche (its 'founder' according to Deleuze and Guattari)¹ yet very much in the spirit of his Zarathustra: 'true to the earth'² and its 'terrible text'.³ What is terrible about the terrible text that is true to the earth is that, with and in it, there is no *hors-texte*⁴ – there is but one context to consider and to consume. With and in the context of planetary ecology, of a planet-wide ecosystem, everything is ecological – there is but one *logos*, one *logic*, one *world*:

1. G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *Qu'est ce que la philosophie?* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1991), 82.

2. F. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*, Prologue §3: 'I implore you, my brothers, remain true to the earth'.

3. F. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, §230.

4. J. Derrida, *De la grammatologie* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1967), 227. 'There is nothing outside of the text/' 'there is no outside text' (trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 158.

is no *hors-texte*⁴ – there is but one context to consider and to consume. With and in the context of planetary ecology, of a planet-wide ecosystem, everything is ecological – there is but one *logos*, one *logic*, one *world*: the geo-logical one. This accords with the statement of Nietzsche's great precursor, Heraclitus the Ephesian, that there is but one *logos*, hence no *dia-logoi*.⁵ Having no other context to consider or consume, no 'other' or 'outside' (or 'inside') as such, the planet turns upon and feasts upon itself, its own text, like the alchemical *ourobouros* or self-devouring serpent.⁶ To envision ecology in this way is terrible indeed, for one cannot engage it dialectically, one cannot have a dialogue with it. It has only one language, one *logos*: that of the *ouroboros* – this worm, serpent or dragon (old English

5. Hērakleitos ho Ephésios, via Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos* §7 §§132 3.

6. دوسال (*al khem*), the black or fertile earth, that compost which the Greeks called *chthonos* and the Romans *humus* (root of all things *human*), is the etymological origin of alchemy and current day chemistry. The Greek *ouroboros*, the self consuming serpent (*ουρο-βόρος*, 'tail devourer'), is an emblem of alchemical transmutation and of transmutation's mysterious reticulation (*mysterium coniunctionis*) as Carl Jung states in his *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, ¶1513: 'within the age old image of the ouroboros lies the thought of devouring oneself and turning oneself into a circulatory process'; the ouroboros symbolizes the 'feedback process' in which the supposed 'clash of opposites' turns out or turns *in* to be naught but the knot of 'the One' primal *logos*, the alchemical matrix, its transductive *prima materia* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1970), 365.



wyrm).⁷ Just as the worm translates all things back into black earth (*al khem*), Nietzsche suggests that to be true to the earth is to be retranslated and to retranslate things back into the 'terrible ground-text of *homo natura*', their vermicular black-earth b[l]ackground.⁸

The *melanosis* (Latin *nigredo*) of a dark night's 'pitch black', the *leukosis* (Latin *albedo*) of a white cloud's 'silver sheen' and the *erythrosis* (Latin *rubedo*) of the fiery sun's 'golden blaze' are the classical stages of the alchemical/metamorphic/morphogenic process. Like Mandelbrot's fractals, each of these 'stages' is in addition a recursion of the entire process – the *melanotic*, *leukotic* and *erythrotic* stages each in turn unfolding their respective *melanotic*, *leukotic* and *erythrotic* phases (these, of course, *in turn* recursing – i.e. being further recursions again). The process infolds and enfolds itself, subsumes and consumes its unfolding. Hence, indeed, what could be called the heraldic hieroglyph of 'the great work' as such: namely the drakon *ouroboros*, the ouroboric *drakontos*. This cosmic and chaotic dragon, like the fiery phoenix, suspire and expires in an autotelic *ekpyrosis*: its consuming conflagration ultimately eclipses and envelops its own ipseity.

Literally an unending, undulating, serpentine 'devourer', the Alchemists' *ouroboros*, the all-devouring

7. <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=worm>

8. F. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, § 230: 'under such flattering colour and repainting, the terrible original text of *homo natura* must again be recognized'.



dragon, embodies the entelechy of alchemy, the golden goal of which points back to black – back to the beginning and foundation (the b[l]ackground) of all things. The b[l]ackground is in this sense not the past; it presents itself (paradoxically perhaps) as that which is *forthcoming* – that which is *always coming forth* – and yet, strange as it may seem, as that which ‘comes forth’ *backward*.

The all-consuming, hence self-consuming, cycle or ‘vicious circle’ of ourouboros is moreover the feedback loop or cybernetic circuit of every existing thing (‘good’ or ‘bad’), of ‘existence’ as such. From this alchemi-cybernetic perspective each and every existent thing turns out to be a coil or short-circuit (measurable in time and in space, hence chronotopological) in and of this ontological *ouroboros* (the latter chronotopologically *immeasurable* by dint of its ‘deviations’, although accorded the immeasure of an *aion*: the range of an ‘epoch’, ‘era’ or ‘age’). The ontological dragon, or *drakontos* as such, is in this respect what Nietzsche called the *Wille zur Macht*: the *will to power* which infuses and suffuses existent things. Every thing is, from this perspective, an agent and *agencement* (i.e. an arrangement) of this more monstrous ‘will’, whether aware of it or not.

This is a *hideous gnosis*. The *hisda* here is in point of fact a *horror vacui*, a fear of the void and of being voided, of being devoid of self-will and of one’s self as such. The void inscribed in the ouroboros-loop,



the great *zero-summa* of the alchemists, is the very void that Giovanni Malfatti di Montereaggio discerned in the first part of his *Studien über Anarchie und Hierarchie*.⁹ Malfatti argued that ‘numerical characters’ – and indeed all characters – are ‘nothing but [...] modifications of the elliptical zero qua hieroglyph of man and world’¹⁰ and that this ‘hieroglyph’ (like the so-called alchemical or homeopathic ‘signature’ – the trace left behind after a substance has been diluted beyond any trace of itself¹¹ and thus the presence of an absence) is by nature *obscure, occluded, occult*.¹²

Malfatti expressed the matter via the decade which the Pythagoreans understood in terms of a tetract (since $1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10$)¹³ and figured in the form of a tightly-knit triangle (its most compact arrangement).¹⁴

9. See COLLAPSE III.

10. Giovanni Malfatti di Montereaggio (Jean Malfatti de Montereaggio), *Études sur la Mathèse, ou Anarchie et Hiérarchie de la Science* (trans. Christian Ostrowski, intro. Gilles Deleuze, Paris: Éditions du Griffon d’Or, 1946), 11.

11. The Paracelsian physician Christian Friedrich Samuel Hahnemann suggested in his 1796 *Versuch über ein Neues Prinzip zur Auffindung der Heilkräfte der Arzneisubstanzen, Nebst Einigen Blicken auf die Bisherigen* (his *Essay on a New Principle for Ascertaining the Curative Powers of Drugs*) that active, activated, or ‘succussed’ dilutions exponentially increase the homeopathic (i.e. curative) ‘force’ of substances, and that the greatest homeopathic force is reached precisely at the point when the succussed dilution no longer contains any trace of the diluted matter; this is the point of both greatest or maximal dilution and force. At the point of total dilution all that remains of a substance is its force or energy ‘signature’.

12. *Phusis kruptesthai philiiei*: ‘nature loves to hide’, wrote Heraclitus (Fragment 123).

COLLAPSE VII

(since $1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10$)¹³ and figured in the form of a tightly-knit triangle (its most compact arrangement).¹⁴ Malfatti suggested in his study that the *tetractys* (i.e. the *mathesis universalis*) should be taken, like the drakon *ouroboros*, to be *coiled* rather than angled, thus more *circular* than angular, with *curves* instead of edges: hence in the end, from the very beginning, *ovoid*, *ellipsoid*.¹⁵ Everything that counts and can be accounted, every individual existent as such, has as pre-individual quantum this mystical matrix symbolically expressed as an ovoid (that is, a triangle the angles of which are oblique). As *mathesis universalis*, this ovoid *tetractys* has a universality that, for all of its computational

13. Pythagoreans claimed that *all numbers* and thus *everything that counts* (and/or can be *accounted for*) exist[s] within the parameters of the founding and grounding decade (the *tetractys* of $1+2+3+4$ or 10) since every number after 10 is but a repetition of this first and fundamental set ($1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10$ followed as they are by $[1]1, [1]2, [1]3, [1]4, [1]5, [1]6, [1]7, [1]8, [1]9$ and so on). See the following footnote.

14. ‘The kernel of Pythagorean wisdom is the *tetractys* or ‘four group’ made up of the numbers $1, 2, 3, 4$, which add up to 10 . They are represented in a pebble figure, in the form of the “perfect triangle”,

1				
2		2	3	
3		4	5	6
4	7	8	9	10

and the available sources, from Posidonius on, show how these four numbers contain not only the basic intervals fourth, fifth, octave, and double octave but also, according to the Platonic pattern: point, line, plane, and solid,⁷ explains Walter Burkert in *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, trans. Edwin Minar (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 72.

15. Giovanni Malfatti di Montereaggio (Jean Malfatti de Montereaggio), *Études sur la Mathèse, ou Anarchie et Hiérarchie de la Science* (trans. Christien Ostrowski, intro. Gilles Deleuze, Paris: Éditions du Griffon d’Or, 1946), 7. See COLLAPSE III.



Mellamphy & Biswas Mellamphy – Désêtre

complicity, must nevertheless (indeed, all-the-more) be distinguished from its various versions or actual aspects as an existence prior to, subtly sustaining, and eventually consuming its various existents, its distinctive *numbers, figures* and *forms*.

The ouroboric zero described by Malfatti seems utterly empty, devoid of content. ‘The metaphysico-mathematical zero seems to us to be null, to be nothing, whereas, on the contrary, it is everything’:¹⁶ the metaphysico-mathematical void, far from simply being devoid, is the very *mater* and *pater panton*,¹⁷ the very engine of ontogenesis. This ontogenetic and autoconsumptive *kybernetes* qua cybernetic feedback-loop finds its echo, after Malfatti, in the the Deleuzo-Guattarian *corps sans organes*¹⁸ and Simondonian *centre actifinitial*¹⁹ – the latter also called *l’unité magique primitive*,²⁰ *ontos* of the universal cybernetic (Simondon’s *cybernétique universelle*).²¹ Its circuit is a circuit always in formation, a *dromology* the *logos* of which is (like the *logos* of

16. G. Malfatti di Montereaggio, *Études sur la Mathèse*, 11.

17. *Polemos pater panton*: ‘War [is the] father [of] all’ wrote Heraclitus (Fragment 53).

18. The now all too [in]famous concept first formulated in the late 1940s by Antonin Artaud and later developed in 1969, 1974 and 1980 by Félix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze.

19. G. Simondon, *Du Mode d’Existence des Objets Techniques* (Paris: Éditions Aubier, 1958), 159 160.

20. Ibid.

21. G. Simondon, *L’Individuation à la Lumière des Notions de Forme et d’Information* (Grenoble: Éditions Jérôme Millon, 2005), 561.

Heraclitus and the Pythagorean *tetractys*) both *pagan aenaou* and *panta chorei*, ever-flowing and always-in-motion (dromological).²² It ‘consists, abstractly but really, in relations of speed and slowness between unformed elements,’ explained Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*;²³ it is a void ovoid in and through which events, happenings, haecceities, differentiate themselves schizologically (that is, via schizogenesis, Simondonian *dédoublement*).

At this level – degree zero or zero intensity²⁴ – ‘we discover nothing more than spatio-temporal dynamisms, that is to say agitations of space, holes of time, pure syntheses of *space, direction and rhythm*,’ as Deleuze explains. ‘The most general characteristics of branching, order and class, right on up to generic specifications, already depend on such dynamisms’, he continues; for example, ‘beneath the partitioning phenomena of cellular division we again find instances of [this] dynamism: cellular migrations, foldings, invagi-

22. *Legei pou Herakleitos hoti ‘panta chorei kai ouden menei’, kai potamou rhoei apeikazon ta onta legei hos ‘dis es ton auton potamon ouk an embaies’*: ‘Heraclitus is supposed to say that ‘all things are in motion and nothing at rest’, and he compares them [i.e. ‘all things’] to the stream of a river, and says that you cannot go into the same water twice’ (Plato, *Cratylus* 402a). ‘It is frequently mentioned that the Pythagoreans, in their oath by the *tetractys*’ called it the ‘fount and root of ever flowing nature’: *pagan aenaou phuseos rhizoma t’ekhousan*’ (Hippolytus Romanus, *Philosophumena* 1, §2:555, quoted in Walter Burkert, *Love and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, trans. Edwin Minar, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972, 72).

23. G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. B. Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 507.

24. *Ibid.*, 164.



nations, stretchings’ – ‘these constitute,’ he argues, something along the lines of ‘a “dynamics of the egg”,’ and ‘in this sense the whole world is an egg’²⁵ precisely in the sense the Dogons held.²⁶ But the dragon itself *is* this egg, this ovum – for the drakon *ouroboros* is the *o*-osphere or field of operation defined by Deleuze and Guattari as that ‘milieu of pure intensity’ which could be called the veritable *ground zero* and b[l]ackground (*al khem*) of all production.²⁷ What is important is to understand that this *drakontos*, *tetractys*, or alchemical *kybernetes* ‘is not regressive’: that ‘on the contrary, it is perfectly contemporary’, since it is the field of every operation. All that can and does take place does so as metastatic calcinations, metastable calculations, toxic contractions from the occluded tetract (i.e. the occluded *drakontos*, *tetractys*, *kybernetes*). Every existent or potentially existent thing can and does exist, in this respect, as a recoiling or contracting from the coils of the drakontological *tetractys* qua *ouroboric matrix*, as if recoiling and contracting-in-fear from the terrifying plenitude of the void.

In Book One of *Dune*, a Hippasus-figure from the ‘Bene Gesserit’ society of sorceress-pharmatechnicians becomes what she is by becoming poison, by ingesting

25. G. Deleuze, *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953 1974*, ed. David Lapoujade, trans. M. Toarmina (New York: Semiotexte, 2004), 96.

26. Hence the diagram of ‘*The Dogon Egg* and the Distribution of Intensities’ that illustrates the relevant section of *A Thousand Plateaus*’

27. G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 164.

the matter that is precisely what's the matter with her. "This is a drug," she said to herself upon ingesting the poison, but a drug 'unlike any other drug of her experience, and Bene Gesserit training included the taste of many drugs.'²⁸ Ingesting the drug, she experienced what William Burroughs famously called (via a concise Kerouacian gloss) the event of a 'naked lunch': that frozen moment when one sees what is there at either end of one's fork ('a psycho-kinesthetic extension of herself'): 'all this was happening in a frozen instant of time', she noted; a frozen instant when she 'confronted [...] a pit of blackness' and 'whirling silence' at her 'core'.²⁹ 'That is the place where we cannot look,' she thought – the placeless, ever-displaced 'place' that is always out of time, hence timeless.³⁰ Placeless, this place was neither (strictly speaking) within her nor without her, or at once (intimately and timelessly) within and without her: a 'danger boiling around her', 'within' her (as and at the 'cellular core': that 'pit of blackness from which she recoiled').³¹

This impersonal and/or prepersonal 'pit' of autochthonic, alchemical 'blackness' whirled in melanotic

28. F. Herbert, *Dune I: Dune* (Philadelphia: Chilton Book Company, 1965), 283.

29. *Ibid.*

30. *Ibid.*, 283. It is 'always out of time, hence timeless' perhaps because it the very becoming of time – the *maha kāla* of Vedic philosophy. The Sanskrit *kāla* also designates darkness: the darkness of the aforementioned pitch black pit, above.

31. *Ibid.*, 283.



motion as the engine of her actual individuation, and in her individual recoil from it she initially mistook it – this pit of blackness, this *melanosis*, this whirling void – for the poison. 'I could change it,' she thought; 'I could take away the drug-action and make it harmless.'³² But in the midst of *melanosis*, in the midst of this self-overcoming, 'she sensed this would be an error': she intuited in this instance (if only vaguely, ill-seen and ill-said) that she herself, as an individuated existent, might be the poison, rather than *it*, this *pit*, this melanotic *motor*, this ever-whirling *engine* or dromological *dragon* of ongoing individuation. Her action, her 'being', is itself 'the drug action': existent being, being at odds with the pre-individualized hence non-existent existence (understood as cosmogenic 'chaos', or in the words of Deleuze and Guattari via *Finnegans Wake*, a veritable 'chaosmos', *chaosmogenesis*), makes the entire *ouroboros* or *chaosmos* heave, expulsing it as [an] indigestible.

What the desert ecologist Liet Kynes described as 'ecological literacy' in *Dune*³³ and what Leto Atreides described as 'the eco-language of *Dune*'³⁴ is what Nietzsche in his *Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* described as an ecological or physiological translation (a translation back into *phusis* or nature). 'To translate

32. *Ibid.*, 286.

33. *Ibid.*, 218.

34. F. Herbert, *Dune III: Children of Dune* (New York: Ace Books, 1976), 267.

man back into nature,' back into 'that eternal basic text of *homo natura*,' is 'a strange and insane task, but it is a task [nonetheless]':³⁵ the task of the one who is *attuned* to, and indeed an *echo* of, the earth. It is the ec[h]ological work. 'I beseech you, my brothers, remain faithful to the earth,' pleads Zarathustra.³⁶ The logic or *logos* of the ecologist is not that of the ecogological operative: its vernacular is instead *vermicular*, an unspoken and unspeakable *wormtongue*, the *logos alogos* of *earthworms*, which drags us back to the serpentine *dragon*. It is the language of egos drawn back into the dust, mixed into the mud, sunk into the sand from which they had distinguished themselves as environmentally indigestible existents. 'To exist is to stand out, away from the background [...] existence,'³⁷ Atreides preaches; hence the background existence or milieu as such is affirmed when the foregrounded existent is translated, ingested and amalgamated into its alchemical context, its *drakontos*. Existents, for the ecologist and/or Nietzschean-Atreidian physiologist, are read in the context of their ultimate collapse, their eternal return to the earth (*alkhem*); the ecophysiologist thus calls-forth the chthonic dragon, the serpentine destroyer and phoenix-like renewer.

From this ecophysiological perspective, beings are

F. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, §230.

36. F. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*, 'Prologue' §3

37. F. Herbert, *Dune III: Children of Dune* (New York: Ace Books, 1976), 226 7.



the pasigraphs of what 'must come to pass':³⁸ elements in a greater ouroboric hieroglyph. These elements are essential because they are ecologically instrumental in the face of the overwhelming *ouroboros* (i.e. *drakontos*): they are particular masks through which the otherwise inexpressible (i.e. that which otherwise would utterly overwhelm) is partially, pasigraphically, expressed. The particular is formed as a problem to be resolved: it is a problematic point or a crisis-point in ongoing ouroboric ontogenesis, hence the signature as such of a poison. To stare at the serpent *ouroboros* is an endeavour that ends in blindness; blindness can be avoided and yet insight gained through techniques of ec[h]ology which read existent entities environmentally and their restricted economies within the purview of greater generality.

Such ec[h]ology is admittedly homeopathological: it re-inserts or re-inscribes particular poisons into the poisoned system from which they were concocted and thereafter decocted, decanted or recanted. Each poison is existentially expelled in and as a crisis: expelled until its signature, i.e. the structure of its poison, has been resolved. The ec[h]ologist assists in and attends to such a resolution so that the poison may be realized as such and re-integrated (i.e. re-ingested) into the general, overarching or underlying ouroboric system.

38. *Ibid.*, 281.

Step one, then: recognize that existent things are poisons ‘held in cellular bondage’.³⁹ Step two: rather than deny or work against such poisons, accept the poisons for what they are. Step three: assist in its formation, formulation, realization, so that the existent poison can become precisely what it is – namely, the signature of an environmental symptom (which ‘stand[s] out, away from the background [...] existence,’⁴⁰ ‘spinning in relative stability’).⁴¹ Step four: have this signature resign-and-thus-resolve-itself within its greater context (‘mingle the waters’ homeopathically, as the Bene Geserit Jessica says).⁴² ‘This will permit you to harness any relative stability’ or existent being as such⁴³ as an ec[h]ological instrument. ‘Anything can be a tool,’ the practitioner of *taqiyya*⁴⁴ and Bene Tleilax ‘Bijaz’ explained in the second book of *Dune* – anything that exists, including individual *people*, individual *phenomena*, even *poverty and war*;⁴⁵ and as Liet Kynes stated in

39. Ibid., 32.

40. Ibid., 226 7.

41. Ibid., 251.

42. F. Herbert, *Dune I: Dune*, 286; her son Paul would later likewise mingle time and space ouroborically and thereby also ‘overrun himself’ as well as ‘los[e] his position in time’ or more precisely *loosen* (rather than *lose*) himself into it ‘so that past and future and present mingled without distinction’ (Ibid, 305).

43. F. Herbert, *Dune III: Children of Dune*, 251.

44. See R. Negarestani, ‘The Militarization of Peace: Absence of Terror or the Terror of Absence’, *Collapse VI*, 53 91.

45. F. Herbert, *Dune II: Dune Messiah*, 210.



the first book, ‘to the working planetologist the most important tool is human beings’.⁴⁶

‘Men and their works

have been a disease on the surface of their planets’ and ‘nature tends to compensate for [such] diseases, to remove or encapsulate them’.⁴⁷ The ‘way’ of the planet or of the ecological system is the ‘way’ of its echo the ecologist. The wordless language of the world, its *logos alogos*, is the language of alchemy, *al khem*: that of the earth. To speak this language is to break with words and with the world of words in order to engage that of its ‘maker’, the wor[ld]-making worm, the open-mouthed ontological *ouroboros*. Words and worlds are ‘worked out’ from the belly of this beast: the great *drakontos*.

This beast, in some sense, is all belly: the *ouroboros* is the sovereign *stomachos*, the Greek *stoma* and its *Wille zur Macht*. *Stoma*, in Greek, designates any orifice, any opening, any aperture – most commonly a mouth.⁴⁸ The worm (or *wyrm*: ‘serpent, dragon’⁴⁹) is one great mouth, one great stomach, one long oesophagos or cyclonic aperture. According to Georges Bataille, we approximate the worm, or become a kind of dragon, whenever we are overwhelmed and, open-mouthed,

46. F. Herbert, *Dune I: Dune*, 218.

47. Ibid., 220.

48. <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=stoma>

49. <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=worm>

throw back our heads in horror and/or laughter and/or anguish and/or ecstasy: ‘The overwhelmed individual throws back his head, frenetically stretching his neck in such a way that the mouth becomes, as much as possible, an extension of the spinal column, [...] as if explosive impulses had to spurt directly out of the body through the mouth in the form of screams [horrific, ecstatic, dreadful and/or risible]’.⁵⁰ In the midst of being overwhelmed, a human is thus somehow sub- or super-human, hence a veritable *über-* and/or *ün-ter-menschliche Wurm*, if only for a monstrous moment – one wherein the individual human is no longer demonstrable. In this condition, a condition at once pre- and post-human, the inhuman *logos alogos* that arises from within the depths of human being (as if inhumed, entombed or encapsulated⁵¹ therein) attests to the beckoning- and ultimate becoming-*worm/stomachos/Shai-Hulud* of man. According to Frank Herbert, Wormsign is a sign of overcoming (i.e. an *Überwindung*), a sign of the coming ecophysiological ‘overhuman’ or ‘overman’ (i.e. the *Übermensch*), in *Dune*.

Bataille and Herbert lead us into the *stomachos* or ‘pit of blackness’⁵² (i.e. the *mau*, the *mouth*, the yawn-

50. G. Bataille, ‘Mouth’ in *Visions of Excess*, trans. A. Stoekl (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 59.

51. F. Herbert, *Dune I: Dune*, 220.

52. F. Herbert, *Dune I: Dune*, 283.



ing *chasm*) of a pitched battle which could indeed be called a veritable *estomachia*: a *stoma*-centric, *orifician* and ultimately *orphic* (nocturnal, pitch-black)⁵³ war. The second Leto Atreides, like the sequestered Hamid Parsani in Negarestani’s *Cyclonopedia*, teaches his people ‘how to turn the Earth into the coiling body of *Tāmat*,’⁵⁴ the colossal *Shai-Hulud*; this is his *mathesis*. The task is one of monstrous *melanosis*: *al deshret* as *al kemi*’s primary principle, desert-like ‘wasting away’ as the first phase of regeneration, recultivation. The seed planted in the black soil must decompose like one in the desert: the desert (*al deshret*) is in league, ec[h]ologically, with its oft-opposed fertile black soil (*al khem*, *al kemi*), albeit only in the context of that ‘chemistry of openness’⁵⁵ which acephalously opens onto⁵⁶ and is in this way radically open to *both ends* and *both beginnings*, enantiodynamically – i.e. only in the space-time of the nemathetic earthworm, the ouroboric serpent, the all-consuming dragon, qua sovereign *stomachos*. The stomach is the kitchen – the

53. Orphism, from the Greek *orph[is]e* and *orph[is]os*, designates that which operates under cover of night (i.e. in the dark, the pitch black); see the entry from Henry Liddell and Robert Scott’s *Greek English Lexicon* available online via the *Perseus Project* on the Tufts University website: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l_orphos&la_greek

54. R. Negarestani, *Cyclonopedia: Complicity with Anonymous Materials* (Melbourne: Re.press, 2008), 50.

55. R. Negarestani, ‘A Good Meal’, <http://www.coldme.net/text/meal.html>.

56. R. Negarestani, ‘Acephalous Mouth’, in *Channel 93: The Journal of Wounding and Wounds*, <http://www.channel83.co.uk/articles/acephalousmouth.php>.

crucible, curcubit and cavity of culinary matters – through which transduction and transductive transmutation passes.

This is the ‘hypothesis [that] must be hazarded’⁵⁷ according to Nietzsche: to perceive through the world’s representation[s]⁵⁸ (beyond ‘the Berkeleyan and Schopenhauerian’ senses)⁵⁹ the vast, intertwined, primitive and formative (‘pre-form’)⁶⁰ belly of a manifold beast,⁶¹ to see in the interplay of moralizing subjects and mechanized objects the mathetic *melanosis* of an overarching or underlying *Wille zur Macht*. Understanding *will to power* in this way enables the inspired perception of existents as products of drakontological [in]digestion, of an ontogenic and ouroboric metabolism ‘in which all organic functions, including self-regulation, assimilation, nutrition, secretion, and change of matter’ form power constellations (*Machtkonstellationen*) which even in the face of their existent individualities are nevertheless ‘contained in a mighty unity’;⁶² this is why Nietzsche states altogether ec[h]ologically that

57. F. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, §36.

58. i.e. through ‘the great third eye which looks out into the world through the other two’ as Nietzsche states in *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, §509.

59. F. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* §36.

60. F. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* §36.

61. ‘the spirit most resembles a *stomach*,’ the *belly* of a beast, states Nietzsche *Beyond Good and Evil*, §230.

62. ‘Everything still lies contained in a powerful unity’ states Nietzsche in *Beyond Good and Evil* §36.



‘the world seen from within, the world defined and designated according to its ‘intelligible character’, would simply be *will to power*, and nothing else’.⁶³ This inspired vision discerns the *désêtre* within and without every *être* from the peculiar perspective of the so-called ‘third eye’⁶⁴ or volcanic ‘pineal eye’.⁶⁵ The open ‘third eye’ bears witness to the burning vision of ‘the time of the stomach’⁶⁶ that churns and burns all it consumes in accordance with ‘the eternal law of transformation.’⁶⁷ The *désêtre* as such is drakontological, homologous with the *drakontos*; the drakon *ouroboros* is its basic context, the ‘eternal basic text’ of its nature (or *phusis*) and ‘the fundamental will of its spirit’ (or *stoma*), as Nietzsche suggests in his ‘Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future’.⁶⁸

Standing out as individual existent from this basic context, one who would be drakontological (i.e. its *homo logos*), one who would open this eye, is with respect to its ec[h]ology a *pharmakon*: an actual existent *poison*. The *pharmakon* is expelled (as the

63. F. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* §36.

64. F. Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality* §509.

65. G. Bataille, *Visions of Excess*, 77–98.

66. F. Herbert, *Dune IV: God Emperor of Dune* (New York: Ace Books, 1984), 237.

67. F. Nietzsche, *The Pre Platonic Philosophers* (trans. G. Whitlock, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 62–3.

68. F. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* §230.

indigestible or the non-metabolizeable) from that ecophysiological *drakontos* which as sovereign *stomachos* consumes everything, hence it is expelled only to be re-ingested, expelled so that it can be decrypted and then re-absorbed, re-encrypted. Thus becoming-*désêtre* is an ec[h]ological endeavour, assisting in this decryption through the self-realization, self-description, and pharmacological re-translation of the existent *pharmakon* as such. And this act of re-translation or gradual re-ingestion, propelled by pharmacological self-realization, itself in fact propels the ecophysiological engine: the indigestible is the impetus, the inciter, of ongoing ouroboric progression. Each indigestible concrecence is in other words the basis for further propulsion (and for *phusis* as such) in so far and in as much as it ‘figures itself out’ and thereby resolves its pharmaco-ecophysiological equation. This strange or rather uncanny *mathesis* underpins the one Palimbasha presents in the third book of *Dune*, where the worm-work of Dune’s *Übermensch* is described as a thoroughgoing *mathesis universalis*.⁶⁹ In Simondonian terms this would be a veritable *kybernetes universalis*⁷⁰ the guiding or governing principle of which could be called the permutational individuation of the metaphysico-mathematical zero.⁷¹

69. F. Herbert, *Dune III: Children of Dune*, 234.

70. G. Simondon, *L’Individuation*, 561.

71. G. Giovanni Malfatti di Montereaggio (Jean Malfatti de Montereaggio),



Ec[h]ological literacy or attunement to ‘eco-language’⁷² in this context means becoming the consummate nihilist, ec[h]ological work being a nihilistic unworking pursued to its furthest extremes. This is the work of Nietzsche’s ‘great’ rather than ‘petty’ politics⁷³ and ‘great’ rather than ‘particular’ health⁷⁴ – these designating nothing other than the grand operation by which man overcomes nihilism through the affirmation of its most extreme and radical form (*viz.* eternal recurrence). The ‘great politics’ of total affirmation proceeds by way of an ongoing double-crossing and betrayal of existents. The twist, of course (or the cyclonic twist-*within-the-twist*), is that the trajectory of negativity and negation (‘the most world-denying of all possible ways of thinking’⁷⁵) leads ec[h]ologically to the affirmation of the eternity of all existence⁷⁶ which is nothing more and nothing less than the death

Études sur la Mathèse, ou Anarchie et Hiérarchie de la Science (trans. Christien Ostrowski, Paris: Éditions du Griffon d’Or, 1946), 8.

72. F. Herbert, *Dune III: Children of Dune*, 267.

73. F. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* §208.

74. F. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* §382, 346 7.

75. F. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* §56.

76. This is what Nietzsche calls ‘the ideal of the most high spirited, alive and world affirming’ in *Beyond Good and Evil* §56, and what Levinas instead calls an absolute ‘horror’ in his early essay ‘Il y a’ (*Deucalion* 1, 1946, 141 154, in *Time and the Other* (trans. R. Cohen, Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1987, and in his *Existence and Existents* (trans. A. Lingis, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff 1978, republished in Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2001).



of negativity – Nietzsche’s post-nihilistic insight. The consummate nihilist annihilates to the point at which nihilism consumes itself, to the point of nihilism’s *annihilation*, its ultimate *ungrounding* in and as the *zero ouroboros*.

Alchemical (hence ec[h]ological) *melanosis* is *destruction-as-transduction*: it is a destruction that transduces ec[h]ological existence. But it also (as an echo) hastens the ec[h]ophysiological genesis of an entirely new constellation of forces. It is by way of its ‘metaphysico-mathematical’ unity⁷⁷ that utter destruction can in its transduction reticulate the very void it destructively engineers and engenders, thereby inaugurating another era, age, *aion* or *yuga*. Georges Bataille would call this a destruction of restricted economies that opens onto the general – in this case drakontological or ecophysiological – economy. The restricted opens onto the general, the individual onto the transindividual and transductive⁷⁸ or ultimately overhuman/*übermenschlich* economy. Great politics and great health are the transductive effects of drakontological digestion – the effects, in other words, of *Wille zur Macht* understood as an ouroboric and vermicular will-to-power. Rather than egocentric and egological, their operative principle or *kymatik kybernetes* is instead

77. G. Malfatti di Montereaggio, *Études sur la Mathèse*, 11.

78. G. Simondon, *Du Mode d’Existence des Objets Techniques* (Paris: Éditions Aubier, 1958), 248.

ecological and *alchemical*: a politics of putrefaction, to paraphrase Negarestani⁷⁹ – a ‘*mathesis* and politics of decay.’⁸⁰ *Will to power* is therefore far from psychological in nature; it is in principle and process a *psychophagy* as opposed to a *psychology*, a ‘force of violent destruction’⁸¹ that ingests the individual – *all* individuals – and alchemically digests it or digests them. It is a process of *désêtrement* the ‘*désêtre*’ of which is the *über-* and/or *unter-menschliche* Wurm that is the very hieroglyph of Nietzsche’s *Übermensch* and the vehicle as such of a *volonté d’estomac(hia)*.

79. R. Negarestani, ‘Undercover Softness: An Introduction to the Architecture and Politics of Decay’, *COLLAPSE VI*, 379–430.

80. *Ibid.*, 381.

81. F. Nietzsche, *The Will to Power* §23.

