

# History, anthropogenic soil, and unbecoming human

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## ***ABSTRACT ORIGINAL***

This essay avows Chakrabarty's work on the humanities in the age of the Anthropocene, which shows us how climate change collapses the conventional dichotomy between natural and human history, forcing scholars to rethink basic categories of historical thought. It is concerned not with what happens in the air, above ground as it were, but with what is below the ground, the soil or the earth – anthropogenic soil change. Specifically, the essay focuses on the decomposition of human bodies and remains. Now, soil is one of the most diversified environments on the planet, a complex and living organism; and in cemeteries human remains are a part of this organism. Thus, while decomposing cadavers represent the loss of humanness from one perspective, from another perspective these dead bodies are, or become, elements of symbiotic collectivities made up of organic and inorganic being that are constantly commingling. The decomposition of human remains into humus not only marks a departure from the world of human collectivities, but also an entry into a collectivity of diverse forms of organic and inorganic existence. If Dipesh Chakrabarty shows us the complexity of what it means to be human in the era of the Anthropocene, this essay seeks to show us that humanity is a temporary state and a matter of degree, ever followed by unbecoming human.