**Preface: Becoming geological: mining dreams**

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Yes, reader, countless are the mysterious hand-writings of grief or joy which have inscribed themselves successively upon the palimpsest of your brain; and, like the annual leaves of aboriginal forests, or the un-dissolving snows on the Himalaya, or light falling upon light, the endless strata have covered up each other in forgetfulness.

Thomas de Quincey. *The Palimpsest of the Human Brain* (1845).

On the surface of these endless strata, within beads of ever dissolving sweat or breath, we have always been and will always be harshly geological and dirty. This is the condensing, self evidence of a material witnessing; so strictly much more than hydroxyapatite in bones, iron within blood, triple phosphate crystals in urine, and the painful struvite stones of calculi.

Cosmic geology defines and produces the contingent being; a singular psyche encodes millions of years of spinal depositions and other planetary intrusions and extrusions. Geology is both severely local origin and earthy destiny, as wilfully or necessarily inhaled and ingested matter, as both medicine and necessary poison or dose, as a divine or sublime power, and as god-treated adornment and technological extension. Being and thinking are forever involved in its lithic cycles and in its dusty futures.

This rotting, crystal world is not outside one as a study, survey or prospect. Just as nature loves to hide, it loves to eat (itself and every thing). We embody its own geophagic and wormy timescales of incorporation. Geology endlessly defines the human, and the realisation of both this "mineral becoming us" (which others us always) and our own becoming geological is uncannily rendered by means of extraction itself, which divines us towards the technological as some fumed destiny. Minerals are us, our desires, extending, undercutting ourselves in a strange, moribund and algorithmic loop.

Geology authors us, writing us. In this way, this book asks questions of what becoming geological means for our sense and our ethics.

**Excavation**

These excavations tunnel into and disturb a dark and poisonous world, creating new anthropogenic and non-anthropogenic cycles of lengthy incorporation and extraction, of radical in-human consumption.

We literally embed, inhale and ingest our own anthropogenic indicators; as particulate exhalations of burning forests, as isotopes from nuclear tests and manufacture, as metallic dust from global extraction, a wearing down and a recovery. These novel geo-cycles extend themselves, adit-ing or worm-like, strangely looping back.

Ores, such as cinnabar, a sulphide of mercury, are extracted by underground mining methods, heating the vermilion rocks to liberate a poisonous vapour which is subsequently cooled and condenses as liquid mercury. During cremation of human corpses, this death which enters as a miasmic, mercurial mineral breath into the living, alongside heavy metals and particulate matter, is further liberated (from dental amalgams, immortal medical devices) on subsequent heating, returned to the earth, or inhaled by other beings in further cyclings.

Native copper ores are excavated from beneath the earth, refined in smelting plants and plainly re-buried as filamentous underground cables, carrying human-decoded and insect-attracting screened signals, finally rendered obsolescent and later un-earthed and recovered. In this second, remembered smelting operation, deemed recycling, particulate copper and other matters are released which are then inhaled or ingested, entering active and passive species including humans.

There is no loss, and all living remediation is acephalic-recursive; hyperaccumulating grass such as *Imperata cylindrica[[1]](#endnote-2)*, are used to re-mine contaminated earths. One side from this recursion, decay or becoming earth opens another side of the black holes of the geo-logic, swallowing and eating its deep-timed self, so lively.

**They are called little miners**

They are called little miners, because of their dwarfish stature, which is about two feet. They are venerable looking and are clothed like miners in a filleted garment with a leather apron about their loins. This kind does not often trouble the miners, but they idle about in the shafts and tunnels and really do nothing ...

Georgius Agricola, *De Re Metallica* (1556)

A new form of mining prospect, a list of deposits or resources ripe for low cost exploitation, is produced by the German company Medivere, during the Tiny Mining collective sweatshop; a prospectus which is useful in determining which portion of a mineral can be considered as an exploitable ore reserve.

A daily, ritual cycle of incorporation, followed by chelation and finally extraction, or purgation, miming those prospective long adit-tails and tailings, begins with the new moon and lasts one lunar month. Hard scientific tests for the presence of heavy metals, including colorific tests on hair and urine, and voltametric tests on urine, accompanies a reflection on bodily impressions, feeling, thoughts and dreams over the course of the sweatshop.

These early attempts from the collective to mine certain metals from within their own bodies brought forth monstrous visions. What should have remained hidden (the secret life and genesis of metals for each individual, the strange and hidden things which define the geological) was exposed to the light and unearthed:

In the atelier floated a sphere, resembling the cryogenic containment unit from Akira, cables coming out everywhere. It had a brown copper hue to it, but that could also have been isolation material or even wood. How did it float? This ‘device’ allowed you to trigger ‘lucid déjà vu’ allowing you to relive memories as you wanted.

Denis de Bel. *A dream of copper,* (2020).[[2]](#endnote-3)

**We have to go much further, much further back. And faster**

A dream which eludes your recollection – like a rock in which some enchantress dwells which every now & then assumes the appearance of a portal machicolated & then again is barren rock. Thomas Lovell Beddoes, *Death’s Jest-book* (1850).

If the descent into the mine, into the earth, a hole to hidden and forgotten hells, is viewed as a journey towards a dark interior, into the unconscious, in a disturbed dream, or inside that old fossil, the profound soul, then what does it mean when that interior is mine, a fantastic voyage, into myself? And when both this dream descent, and its becoming interior, in-folding, are historically provoked by the excavation and opening of the earth, by extraction for technological extension of those guts and intestines.[[3]](#endnote-4)

The Tiny Miner coils inwardly on her own little mined depths, ouroboros worm-like, doubling back, an involuted mirror, on her own interior, but to one side, a green-washed dwelling-gut which is elsewhere, strangely, an oozing and lacking dream inside a dream. One is doubled but not as a human of light and phosporescence, and of darkness, the alien, the pagan, the nomad; this final, odd symmetry in which we are both material shades.

Perhaps the geological implies the very figure of the tiny, filleted double against the day, the figures of reason and the unconscious; this strange twin of the becoming both geological and anti-geological in not decaying. It cannot be anything but double in not being able to bear a full light, a full realisation of death always, of what this mineral life stands against.

The human of copper who you have seen is thus both the sacrificial priestess and the sacrifice and she who vomited out her own metals; a tiny puking miner, expelling the darkening day of a prima materia, unable as she is to fully digest the "planet's magmic inorganic depths" and so her "Spirit developed the ulcer we now call the Unconscious."[[4]](#endnote-5)

This crustal descent is also a retrogression in time. As Thomas Moynihan writes in Spinal Catastrophism, a geo-gnostic work which is precisely concerned with this internal depth as geotrauma, "depth is time."[[5]](#endnote-6) Further backwards or onward:

Historically speaking, I contain my outside. This is what time does to a body, as we shall see in tracing out this Secret History. The lesson is clear: psychosomatic containment of oneself, when percolated through Grandest History, equals hypogene alienation — the alienation of a body riddled with time. It is this realisation that is inaugural of the phylogenetic phantasy that is Spinal Catastrophism.[[6]](#endnote-7)

*I contain my outside* implies that this outside, my becoming-sentient outside, is within me, as a floating, rocky island bloated by a sudden burst of available and ethically-obscure nutrients.

**Sublimated time**

This opinion, in its general form, was that of the sentience of all vegetable things. But, in his disordered fancy, the idea had assumed a more daring character, and trespassed, under certain conditions, upon the kingdom of inorganisation.

The conditions of the sentience had been here, he imagined, fulfilled in the method of collocation of these stones – in the order of their arrangement, as well as in that of the many fungi which overspread them, and of the decayed trees which stood around – above all, in the long undisturbed endurance of this arrangement, and in its reduplication in the still waters of the tarn.

Its evidence – the evidence of the sentience – was to be seen, he said, (and I here started as he spoke,) in the gradual yet certain condensation of an atmosphere of their own about the waters and the walls. The result was discoverable, he added, in that silent, yet importunate and terrible influence which for centuries had moulded the destinies of his family, and which made him what I now saw him – what he was.

Edgar Allen Poe, *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1839).

[A]ll space and body is itself nothing but coagulated time ...

Thomas Moynihan, *Spinal Catastrophism* (2019).

Eating itself and un-conceding, condensed time again, loving or hating it, both adits or entrances, exit and entry ways, scarred in white mouldy spots by dragging knuckles. The body is a pharmaceutical resource, for itself, and for the others, packaged as a synthetic product, and with associated manufacturing and exit fumes, to be inhaled or sublimated within and by other bodies, other earths. Let the waters above the heavens fall and the earth will yield its fruit.

The body is a metallic ore, particulate in its spreading over a landscape. A crystalline, sparse clay mud of various sulphides, arsenic, lead and iron, smears across the SUV's interior dsiplay of Polypropylene (PP), Acrylonitrile-butadiene-styrene (ABS), Styrene maleic anhydride (SMA), Polyphenylene Ether (PPE), and Polycarbonate (PC). We gaze with dull eyes at the distant volcanic peaks, resting after the glazed claustrophobia of the tight undergrounds. These places externalise.

The forgetful, boggy body[[7]](#endnote-8) or inner mine is depicted, scanned and stretched, exhibited and re-skinned, inhaled as image, incorporated again. Geology is always said to be the biography or screened history of an earthy body.

Inside the mine workings, the body can now thanklessly become any landscape; a prospect with associated legal frameworks and permissions, an island of waste, a rosy site of tailings, a swamp in which there are no reflections, a vast dreamt suburb, a gas-exhaling oracular chasm (rich in CO2-H2S discharges), a rocky place or dump of dissolved refuse going mad, a logistics centre on the outskirts of a small town betwixt sliproads, an overgrown heap of rubbish grazed now by sheep, a new mountain amidst the dykes and drainage canals, "a drab accumulation of peat, muck and marls."[[8]](#endnote-9) This becoming landscape, and of landscape becoming ~~myself~~ is purely diluted, techno-pharmaceutical.

**Astral bodies**

“Our art rather requires us to familiarise ourselves closely with the earth; it is almost as though a subterranean fire drives the miner on.” The hermit replies, “You are almost inverted astrologers. Astrologers observe the heavens and their immeasurable spaces; you turn your gaze toward the ground and explore its construction. They study the power and influence of the stars, and you examine the powers of the rocks and mountains and the many and diverse actions of soil and rock strata. For astrologers the heavens are the book of the future, whereas the earth shows you monuments of the primeval world.”

Novalis, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1802/1987)

I am the revealer of secrets; in me are marvels of wisdom and strange and hidden things. But I have spread out the surface of my face out of humility, and have prepared it as a substiture for earth. **[islamic geomancy device poem]**

Becoming geological is a divination which comes before, in a distant past; the marks in the earth of geomancy or *ilm al-raml* (the science of the sand) signifying solitude, exile or gathering, hydromancy staring into the disturbed waters as gold fibres dissolved in the lake are set to colour it blood-red, the miasma of mantic vapours released from the undergrounds sheltering the rotting corpse of the slain serpent.[[9]](#endnote-10)

Within this interior divining, for possible and fragile contigent futures, which this publication sets out, the celestial and the earthy are not rended by the mirror or boggy judgement of god; all divination is inverted astrology, and all geology is mirrored divination. The astral bodies, those cosmic waters of the tarn, are our filthy prima materia, mucally involuted inside and outside this flesh of angelic knowledge.[[10]](#endnote-11)

1. Cecilia Jonnson [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
2. Sweatshop dennis [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
3. [Mackay note: It is the shaping and hauling and digging and layering of infernal machines that opened up new breaches and passageways through which the other soul could pass. p2 subtexts - much of this intro is indebted] [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
4. Spinal cat/schopenhauer? [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
5. Spinal cat [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
6. Spinal cat [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
7. Sissel [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
8. [Ballard-see remains] [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
9. [footnote: source of the original name of the oracle of Delphi] [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
10. Patricia [↑](#endnote-ref-11)