





*“Stones are alive and there are spirits inhabiting them— people heat stones in sweat lodges because they represent the ancestors that come to us with answers. Then, we pledge to them, we get reconnected, and we get healed. There is no equivalent practice in the Western rationale.” (Jesús Sepúlveda)*

First axiom: everything that exists is alive.

Everything that is alive has its own duration (*durée*), in the Bergsonian sense: it *passes through time* at a particular speed which is specific to its mode of being-in-the-world, and thus, it quilts the virtual with the actual in its own particular way.

Stones have a particularly long *durée*. Some of them are almost immortal.

But they still know something of the unfulfilling, predictable routines of daily life. And in some circumstances, they sing and dance.

Figuring out what stones think or feel or want is an intuitive practice. It means being receptive to the glowing trails which are left below the surface of existence. If stones have desires, then these are likely as resistant to being reduced to language as are those of human beings.

When does something become living or unliving?

Something with a long *durée* will seem utterly knowable because its speed of change is so slow, compared to that of “fleeting” humans.

There is only so much which can be captured by rigid sciences like geology. The results of scientific investigations are always indufficient, cursory, and in process, even when they come to “know” their object well enough that it no longer seems alive.

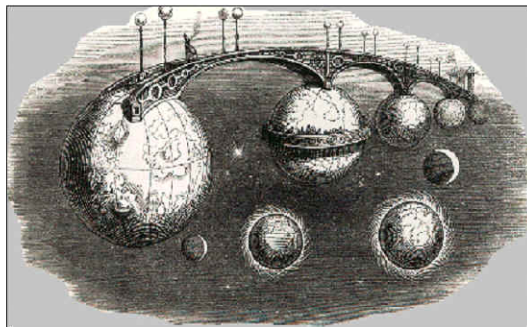


Ishmael in *Moby Dick* rails against the science of cetology for refusing to leave whales in an *unfinished state* – classifying them decisively as mammals, not fish. In this case, the statist reach a different judgement from the scientists: whales are the business of the Department of Fisheries and not the Department of Livestock. Two rigidities, with different trunks. Queequeg, the “savage” from a place unmarked on the maps, relates more fluidly. Humans are animals. Cetacea can still be fish. Stones can fuck. When we cross the oceans, do we become salmon who shatter themselves on concrete dams, or warriors throwing ourselves from the Nochixtlan Rock onto the conquistadors below – or something else entirely?

“If fossils are bones, how are they rocks? Christians 1 Atheistfags 0”  
(from 4chan, circa 2011)

Lacan's seminars include a queer discussion of *when and why planets ceased to speak*. Lacan's answer is that speaking (let's treat this as a metaphor for agency, animism... though we all know Lacan had a boner for language) requires unpredictability. As long as something is unpredictable, it's treated in an animist way, as a source of unique events which express something invisible and which *mean* something. Once the (apparent) movements of the planets in the night sky was precisely calculated, planets became "just lumps of rock". They are objects because they are captured by the scientific gaze. Though, for most of us the scientists' predictive power is as mysterious as that of an oracle, since we haven't ourselves mastered the science in question.

For the Ancient Greeks, planets were alive – the word literally means "wanderer", something which wanders across the sky. Planets ceased to speak once their motions could be predicted by science. At this stage, humans decided they were no longer alive – because humans imagine that unpredictable "speaking" is the criterion of life.



Fourier, ignoring astronomers, insisted on telling us that *planets make love*. Everything in the universe relates to everything else through relations known as "passional series", which create

harmonious affinities when things are properly arranged. But the planets have been knocked out of their orbits and their passionate desiring-production has been disrupted. All of this happened long before the Gaia hypothesis, which once more imputes life to planets.

Fourier was either a prophet, or a bit mad. Because they reintroduce an element of unpredictability, mysticism and madness restore a sense of life when we relate to stones. So do mind-altering drugs, especially if we start to see shifting patterns on rock surfaces.

Stones are rigid, but not in the same way as science and bureaucracy are rigid.

The map is not the territory, even when the territory is made of rocks and has been “the same” for centuries. Even as scientists cast their nets, the whale has already moved.

When the observed world – the world each of us passively receives through our senses, especially *sight* – is torn from the worlds of our bodies and desires, and our intersubjectivity (not only with other human beings but with all earth-beings), we risk losing full participation in life. What is only *seen* is already *dead*. Society of the Spectacle. Even an untainted, natural entity is Spectacle if it is only *seen*.



There is also a nomad science of stones, which works *with* them for particular purposes. The masons of the Middle Ages were nomad sciences. Even when they reproduced the same structure, they modified it each time, working with the local balance of forces, with *the stones themselves*. Today, we are still trying to figure out how they managed to build castles on top of mountains, or how the ancients built huge iconic structures like Stonehenge and the Pyramids, without modern construction equipment. The ancients, like some indigenous groups, probably believed that they were working *with* the stones, with a spirit of the stone which they did not reduce to an object and which cooperated in their endeavors (which is not to say they got consent from the stones, but is perhaps similar on a different *durée*).

If our purposes move beyond detached enquiry to attunement with the sediment, we can recapture the sophistication of a wild, primitive vision of the world – a neo-animism. We can *become-rock*: not by becoming rigid, but by living the flow of the long durée.

We can sense in things whatever patterns we are open to sensing – the same way we see patterns in the stars.

Chaos never dies – and the stones are still breathing. We, too, are creatures of chaos. We can have intense erotic relationships with stones, clouds, mountains. We can be penetrated by deer antlers or dissolve into the sediment of newly forming rivers – at least over the long durée.

Seeing a pattern is not the same as *projection*: the perception of a pattern inside ourselves as if it existed in the world. It is also not the same as scientific classification.

## **Hearts of Stone**

During what scientists call the Precambrian era – before the birth of life – the world metamorphosed when two continents collided. Two masses of rock, meeting in a primal ocean like combatants or lovers. Their collision, like some epic supernatural

battle, turned sedimentary rocks into metamorphic rocks, drew magma out of the earth's crust, and caused the land to fold, break and tumble until it became the Black Hills. In the north, volcanic activity spawned the Northern Hills. To the south, massive sheets of granite poked their way into the preexisting beds of 2 billion-year-old quartzite, phonolite, and abundant, dark-colored rhyolite. The granite spikes were laced through with crystals from the depths of the earth – quartz, feldspar, and beryl. Is this how rocks make love? In a sense, *everything fucks* (or loves, if you'd rather). Everything reproduces itself, splits or fuses with “separate” entities, undergoes metamorphosis or death or rebirth, moves through time – albeit in very different *durées*. Your flies live but a day, they say (your flies, your flies...) but galaxies take millennia to spawn new galaxies or to die. Fourier was right: things are bound by their passions (so long as we remember this is not a we-are-one harmony: nearly everything has aversions as well as passions, suitable and unsuitable habitats, albeit again in varying *durées*).

Love/passion is subjective and qualitative. It is impenetrable to the scientific gaze. We cannot precisely specify when it exists, in a context where we are observing (as we are with stones). Our conclusions have to be incomplete and partly speculative or hypothetical. The borders of concepts slip across into one another. Where on the path from lab chemicals to urea does a thing become capable of loving, having passions, or dying? Basically we're dealing with a continuum. Sometimes a wider use is preferable in one context, a narrower use in another. But the scientists' tendency to refuse human words to their objects (even when the objects are humans) carries a kind of passionate dissociation, an insistence that a thing is utterly *not* like oneself and is not to be understood by analogy with one's own experiences. Making love, fucking, mating, pollinating, geologically colliding, chemically mixing: are we not dealing here with something fundamentally similar, even if it is also necessarily carried out in the way specific to its “species”?

We don't really know – except for surface appearances – how much rocks are like us. Maybe they are, maybe they aren't.

*Aside on vitalism. Vitalism and animism are very similar, if not identical. Animism is a term invented by western anthropologists to describe beliefs found in other (usually indigenous) cultures that were distinct from the beliefs held in the Europe/America of their day. Roughly speaking, an animist attributes lifelike properties to entities the Euro-American considers unliving, whether in the form of a living soul specific to each entity or a general supernatural force which runs through and animates everything, Star Wars-style.*

*Vitalism is a philosophy based on the idea that living entities have an attribute, a kind of life-force (in Bergson this is called *élan vital*), which distinguishes them from nonliving entities. In philosophical terms, it originally referred to a dualism between living and nonliving, which was distinguished both from mechanicism (the belief that everything is unliving) and organicism (the belief that everything is living). In the hard sciences, you'd be told vitalism is a disproven theory. Urea is considered an organic molecule, because it's usually made by the digestive system (yes, it's in urine). In 1848, a scientist called Frederick Woehler managed to make urea, by heating up ammonium cyanite salts. This is taken to disprove vitalism. Usually scientists will take this as meaning either that living matter is basically unliving and mechanistic, or that life is some immaterial property outside the domain of science, or perhaps that life is what cyberneticians call an "emergent property", something which appears in complex systems but is distinct from their parts, because it only arises when a particular set of parts are combined (like a gestalt, but in reality rather than perception), and is thus both dependent on and autonomous from its components/preconditions. It is just as possible, however, the go the other way – to say that living matter can be made from apparently unliving matter because the life-substance is present in the materials deemed unliving. Therefore, the urea experiments do not falsify philosophical vitalisms such as Bergson's theory. In fact, in a strict sense, Bergson is an organicist, not a vitalist, and scientists have not falsified organicism except by fiat (though remember Lacan's planets). Today, however, the term "vitalist" usually refers to people like Bergson, Sorel, Nietzsche, and*



*Deleuze, who believe in a level of flow and becoming which has lifelike properties. (“Bergsonian vitalism” used to be one of the political slurs used by Marxist-Leninists).*

*Indeed, when scientists dig too deep into matter, they find subatomic particles which display a kind of individual-level randomness consistent with being alive. Imagine electrons as tiny free-willed fairies (or atomies) which move freely according to their passions, blink in and out of observable existence, and communicate with one another telepathically. It seems the regularities of higher-scale, “molar” sciences are effects of the passionate affinities of the fairies, or of the distribution of differences among them (such that predictability is not present for individuals, but emerges on a mass scale – much as it does with large-scale data about human beings). The mystery is not so much that electrons are alive, but that life can re-emerge at a higher scale from the more predictable molar aggregates once they combine to a certain complexity, meaning that each living organism in the molar sense is actually alive on two levels at once: a living individual composed of lots of living individuals mediated by many levels of molar, predictable, “unliving” material.*

*The usual direction, though, is to restrict the idea of life in such a way as to deny the existence of any specific life-force. One author who took the expansive direction was Wilhelm Reich, who claimed to have observed units of life-energy he termed orgones, using a procedure – unusually high magnification with microscopes – which is rejected by hard scientists. Orgonomic energy is similar to types of energy theorised in ancient medicine and cosmology, such as kundalini and feng shui. It’s quite possible that it can only be observed in altered-consciousness states, and is thus invisible to statist science. Incidentally, the idea that electrical and chemical flows are flying around inside and among humans is now completely mainstream (they’re called things like hormones, neurotransmitters, pheromones), but this phenomenon has been reconceived on a mechanistic or cybernetic model, and Reich’s pioneering work has been ignored.*

*Vitalism in the broader sense seems to annoy the hell out of statist scientists, and all kinds of other people. It's surprisingly unfashionable and very little developed in academic disciplines through time – even though it's often a good fit for the facts. When a vitalistic theory, such as the early Freud's libido theory or Marx's alienation theory, gets mainstreamed, it gets turned into a mechanical, cybernetic, or formalist view. Alternatively, the vital flows are moved within the theory from the level of material life to one or another of its immaterial sublimations: language, technology, economics, information, normativity, culture, politics, superficial social life, etc. On the other hand, all nomad sciences contain some elements which belong properly to vitalism or animism. This may, indeed, be the basic epistemological difference between the two kinds of science.*

*What the urea experiments actually falsify: the idea that organic chemicals contain some special life-substance incommensurable with the component-parts of living matter. What people who both broaden the definition of vitalism and take it as falsified want the experiments to falsify: the idea that there is a life-force, a kind of will or passion that provides motivation irreducible to external determinations.*

*Vitalism comes up against several sets of adversaries: mechanicians of various kinds, who maintain that everything is at its most basic level unliving, predictable, and will-less; formalists, who believe in abstract schemas or "forms" which are ultimately more real than the substance they arrange; cyberneticians, who focus on outer relations among things and deny them any depth; totalising holists, for whom only a single thing ultimately exists and everything else is a misperceived, partial view of this one thing; and a certain kind of nihilist, who wishes to leverage the imprecision of knowledge to forego epistemophilia entirely, either because nothing can be known, because nothing exists, or (in its currently fashionable form) because all knowledge is violence. These are diverse positions, but they have in common a preference for a passive but empowered, observing gaze. Some, such as formalists and nihilists, basically dispense with*

any relation to an outer world except to the degree that it can be perceived in terms of their rigid presuppositions. Others, such as mechanists and cyberneticians, are able to observe outer entities but only to the extent that these entities are conceived as unliving, or their life-force is bracketed-out.

*A nomad scientist has a kind of knowledge, but a kind which does not reduce what it knows to an unliving state, which does not try to create perfect control or perfect predictability, but which rather, works with the known at the level of vital forces. "All knowledge is power" only in the sense that all knowledge is related to pouvoir or mana, not in the sense that all knowledge relates to puissance or domination. Loosely speaking, we can generalise that statist science creates conditions for domination, so that dominatory power and statist science directly imply one another; however, nomad science creates conditions for dispersed autonomous power, so that autonomous power and nomad science directly imply one another. This is closely connected to the fact that statist science seeks exact predictability and thus removes the perception of agency and of ensouledness from its "object". And this, in turn, is linked to the fact that human rocks devivify what they perceive both in perception, by reifying it, and in action, by killing it or disrupting its action. The fear of vitalism might well be just another form of the fear of floods.*

*According to Virilio, people today see the world with the eyes of a machine. More precisely, the gaze of machines is an effect of humans trying to disempower one another in warfare. To scrutinise, freeze, pre-empt, or destroy the enemy, armies developed machines to control and devivify territory. Cameras, for instance, were used for reconaissance. These machines later spread into mass consumer culture and became the normal way of seeing for many people – despite their devivifying and disempowering effects. The Spectacle arose on this basis, and people now see themselves, not as they feel or as they observe directly, but in the way a machine would see them. But nobody can really understand how a machine sees.*

## How to Grow a Crystal Flower or Tree

watch it grow in minutes

- Urea (carbamide)
- Clear school glue
- Dishwashing liquid
- Food coloring
- Water
- Coffee filter



1. Add urea to ~ 1/2 cup water until it stops dissolving.
2. Stir in a squirt of glue, dishwashing liquid, and food coloring.
3. Stand a coffee filter in a small dish or glass.
4. Pour the liquid into the container base.

*Urea is also the main ingredient in the crystal flowers and trees people can grow. These crystal “plants” – which grow in minutes – are usually made from commercial kits these days, but they can also be made using simple ingredients. Dissolve some urea in water, stir in some clear glue, dishwashing liquid, and food colouring, and pour*



*the mixture through a coffee filter onto/into the surface or container you’re using for the “plant”.*

Love can take forms of *agape* (universal love, communion), Platonic love (affinity, friendship), or *eros* (passionate love, attraction, sex). It can also appear as desire in a wider sense: the Freudian id, which is the source of the rest of the psyche, or Deleuzoguattarian desiring-

production, where flows cross between molar entities. *Philos* is the ancient Greek word for love, from which we get *philosophy*, *philately* (stamp collecting), *bibliophile*, *Francophile*, *paraphilia*, *pedophile*, *necrophile*, *zoophile*. Some of these terms seem euphemistic if taken in the main sense of Greek *philos*: friendship. Yet the same energy can emerge in sexualities or in “sublimated” forms which are (in an everyday sense) non-sexual.

Just about anything can be an object of direct sexual attraction: thunderstorms, stockings, car crashes, shoes, buildings, fish (*ichthyophilia* is a thing). Do the bourgeoisie fantasise about being possessed by sinewy lumpen beasts – who they also cast as the villains in their dramas? Why do people really watch fictional police shows? Because they want to be stabbed, because they want to stab someone, or because they enjoy spoiling other people’s fun? (The one reason we can rule out is: *because we value protection of others*. Because most of the viewers are also supporters of the real police, which is usually what others need protecting *from*.)

From an early stage of infancy, everything imaginable is reversible: it can in principle be *done back* to whatever did it, and perhaps *has* to be, for cosmic order (in the child’s sense) to be restored. How far does this go? Do zoo animals imagine zookeepers in captivity, in the same way human prisoners imagine the guards in shackles? Do bears fantasise about inflexible park rangers when they masturbate? Or do they experience their arousal, or aversion, in the oral register? Carnivores get passionate pleasure when they hunt; they do not experience aggression or a desire to be cruel, but a desire for union with “food”. As Nietzsche puts it: the lambs think the eagles are evil, but the eagles adore the lambs.



Stones can do a lot of other things, too.

To begin with, they resist being transformed by humans. Smashing up stones is the archetypal work-punishment, sometimes used in prisons as a pointless (or profitable) but painful exercise for the punished. Is there not also an implied hierarchy here? “You, the punished, are scum, but you’re still better than stones. Take it out on them, not your human exploiters.” (By the same token: what did the pillow ever do to deserve it?)

*“In aesthetic terms, the fascist mode of reality production can best be described as a violation of material”* (Theweleit).

Rocks can fly. They might need some human assistance, but they are certainly said to fly (during a riot). “Stoning the devils” – throwing rocks at rocks – is a key element of the Muslim *hajj*.

According to the Saudi penal code, people who use marijuana will get stoned.

In *Flight of the Stone*, a rock thrown by a rioter flies all the way around the world and hits the person who threw it. This is a dubious way of reading doctrines of karma and destiny. Rather, if the story

takes into account that *the rioter is already returning the effects of a first violence from elsewhere*, the rock would hit its intended target.

Stones have auras. Crystal healing is a nomad science. Or it's woo. You decide.

Stones can also destroy civilisations. They all told the mailman it was plain that he was mad when he saw the great hill's gluttonous eyes and jaws stretched wide. But how many civilisations have been destroyed by the movements of stones?

## Geophilia

Ecology is a love for living systems. A joy or pleasure or awe in the presence of such systems – not simply a calculation of the dripfeed everything needs as a survival minimum (not, in other words, the current theories of degrowth). If one expands one's definition of *things like me* to the whole world, or to larger and larger sets, one tends to expand one's self-love to encompass all of these things/beings.

Love is accompanied by passion and spirit. People feel trauma and rage when the forests they live in, at protest camps for example, are cut down. Indigenous people, peasants, squatters, even on occasion the “masses”, will fight to defend the spaces they love. Sometimes, love is also masochistic. Love conceals a will to sacrifice. Eco-extremists like Reaccion Salvaje express such a will when they seem to say “Fuck the World!”

Individualidades tendiendo a lo Salvaje (ITS) recently left an envelope containing an explosive device that was found by a young girl in Mexico City. Their communique expressed a desire for ever growing attacks on the social fabric in all directions – but in a form where, in such dark circumstances, the wish for death is a type of love, an *agape* against general suffering. “May explosive love letters proliferate!”



*“Under the paving stones, the beach”*

What if “I love the sunset” actually carries the intention – from the unconscious level of the id – “I am unbearably aroused by the Sun’s rays”, or “the ocean gets me so wet”?

Setting – which is to say, *the sexuality felt by humans towards inanimate objects* – is a major factor in both romance and pornography.

*“Eat penguin shit, you ass spelunker.”* (Spelunking is the activity of exploring caves).

Exploring caves often has a maternal symbolism. Ancient Mesoamericans located the supernatural world on the reverse side of the earth, in an underworld beyond the layers of rock. Rituals would often be carried out underground.

## **Fucking Rocks in Indigenous Cosmologies**

People inhabiting the same streams and valleys draw on different origin stories, different versions of how stones make love. These stories influence how we perceive our world and what we are drawn towards or repulsed by within it. A trickster figure can subvert and reshuffle these patterns. Omaha rabbit anally impregnated Iktinike when they became spirits for a day. In Polynesia, Māui (the trickster god voiced by “The Rock” in Disney’s *Moana*) crawled up the vagina of the Goddess Hine-nui-te-pō – but was crushed by the obsidian teeth inside her vagina. He was trying to make humans immortal.



According to Lakota stories, the world was created in a state of peace. Every animal was vegetarian. Then, the bison noticed they were stronger than other creatures and started to eat the humans. At some point, the humans – good Batailleans, it seems – carried out a fatal reversal. They started to eat the bison – or perhaps, to eat them *back* (as a raided band might raid its predator). To settle the vendetta, a great race was held. The track laid down for the race created the boundaries of Paha Sapa – the Black Hills. In the story, of course, the humans won (for now).

There's over a billion cows in the world. If they ever became carnivores, humanity would be in a lot of trouble. In paleolithic times, there were giant carnivorous kangaroos, and carnivorous baboons bigger than humans. Among bovids, the duikers – a type of antelope – are omnivores.

Over 1.8 billion years, the kisses of the sea altered the Black Hills even more. Its jumble of angles was converted to rocky hillsides, pebbles, sand and clay. These in turn joined together into outlying sandstone, which is now the main rock formation of the area.

The locations where rocks fought or loved have been recognised in Lakota culture as sacred sites. A range of astronomical and mythological beliefs are associated with these sites. Some of these involve the idea of a dual universe, in which a second set of people live in the sky. Falling stars pass between the two worlds. Star people and earth people occupy similar and sometimes interchangeable positions.

Throw a rock at ice and it will shatter. Throw it at water and it will make a splash. But over time, ice and water are stronger than rock. Water cannot pass through ice, but mountains succumb to it.

Here's the story told by geologists. 40 million years ago, on the far side of the continent from the Black Hills, a crescent of granite

mountains was born. They pushed themselves up above sea level, as the land around them descended in height, creating the Columbia Basin. Volcanoes flooded the basin with lava, which hardened into a thick layer of igneous rock, now known as the Columbia Plateau. Water flowing from an inland sea pushed through the rocks in the form of a river, slowly parting the mountains and creating damp valleys leading to the sea. Millions of years later, massive glaciers during the Ice Age formed in the area, which could be as high as 10,000 feet. The glaciers funnelled even more water into the Basin. The original valley was covered in ice, and above it, the Grand Coulee was born. Geologists today can't tell us how it was formed or how long it took. They argue about whether it was carved by floods or gnawed out of the mountains by ordinary erosion.



The indigenous Colville people tell a different story. Kingfisher was having bad luck catching salmon. He requested the aid of his friend, the trickster Coyote. Coyote found that a group of sisters had been trapping fish further upstream behind a dam, so none went downriver. Coyote turned into a wooden bowl and allowed himself to be caught in the trap, floating down the river. The sisters used the bowl to hold some of the salmon. When the sisters found the bowl empty the next day, they became angry. One of them threw a stone at the bowl – whereupon it turned into a human baby. The sisters kept the child, which they thought would be useful to them. But the moment the sisters were out of sight, Coyote changed into an adult man and dug

holes in the dam. This is why today, there are rocks and rapids in the Columbia River basin.

The tribal trickster also affirms life, but usually by means of upsetting the peculiarity of communal stillness. In Gros Ventre mythology, Nixant came upon a deer-skull on his wanderings, and noticed white mice dancing inside. Either he wanted to stick his head inside and dance with the mice, or he inserted some object inside and it got stuck. The desire to have others take our inclinations as universal is a wish to make frozen the constant movement in this moment preceding the void of non-life, to try to hush a screaming world into silence. If the political pessimist finds love privately in a clenched fist, social anarchists live to jerk-off on other people in the streets. The indigenous eroticism of trickster sexuality leads us to question who and what we should be defiling.

A Ho-Chunk trickster treats his dick as a grammatical third person. He is thus rather like Mr Dillermann. Each of his parts are individual personas, not components of a molar personality. The tribe becomes, through such stories lived in the imaginary, a body-like form which circles towards a hardening unity. Yet the trickster's sense of self is fragmented and worse: it is flayed by metaphysical conflicts. The trickster Wakjungkagas is driven by insatiable lust. He wears a stone around his neck to "get hard". When his penis is severed, five useful herbs grow from his phallic root. There are cases where egoists point to a self-devouring urge which prefigures an expanding but self-referential union. To be clear we can become clowns in this world but never incarnate the trickster's irreverent flesh.



The same kind of things are said about rocks all over the world. In “Voices of the Governed”, S.B. Banerjee discusses the conflict between indigenous ecologies of place and the utilitarianism of extractive industries. One of his examples is the conflict between the Vedanta mining corporation and the Dongria Kondh indigenous communities over the Niyamgiri hills. On a concrete level, mining in the hills harms local communities by polluting the land and water. But it is also a conflict of worldviews. Here is quote from a tribal elder:

““We are not going to allow Vedanta at any cost. Even if you cut our throats, even if you behead us we are not going to allow this. We will fight with weapons and drive away whoever comes. Without Niyamgiri we cannot think of life. If we lose the mountain we will end in great trouble. We will lose our soul. Niyamgiri is our soul. If Niyamgiri goes our soul will die””.



The mountain itself is part of the community – indeed, it is the community’s soul. Banerjee describes this belief, in relation to Vedanta’s neoliberal developmentalism, as ‘a profound incommensurability about the cultural, political and economic meaning of land and nature’.

Half a world away, rocky mountains are similarly considered living and part of the local community. Ausangate, a peak in the Andes which is considered locally to be an earth-being (*tirakuna*, in distinction to *runakuna*, humans). He was considered to be at risk because of plans to build a mine which would cut through him. Mining would kill the earth-being – and he would not tolerate it and would defend himself. So far, according to researcher Marisol de la Cadena, the community has prevented this, but only by downplaying the existence of the earth-being. The Peruvian state, which claims the area, ignores the indigenous views of Ausangate as a superstition or “belief” (in a pejorative sense).

An earth-being is part of the local *ayllu* (the community or lifeworld). It is not a spirit, since it is the same as the physical, natural entity (in this case, the mountain). Earth beings like inhaling ground coca leaves, which can be burnt so the smoke goes in their direction (yes, earth-beings get high). Their will can be read in coca leaves. Speaking of an earth-being summons its presence, because its name is part of its being. But an image or other representation (including a definition) is different from the earth-being (who is indefinable).

Ausangate is taken to have enormous power, in the sense of capacity to do things. He intervenes in legal processes. He causes potatoes to grow well or badly. He controls hail. He is in charge of the llama herds, and maybe the entire region. He appeared in human form to fight the invading Spaniards, driving them into a lake. He “eats” people who anger him (causing them to die) – such as those who become too commercialised. The rivers flowing from Ausangate are drying up because he is enraged by passing air traffic.

A person can relate to an earth-being through local knowledge and ritual appeasement. In Andean culture, someone is described as a *yachaq* – a knower – if they have the ability to ‘relate assertively’ with their surroundings, including powerful earth-beings. A knower’s role is to mediate in relationships between humans and other beings so they bear the best fruit (which does not mean to capture or exploit the other). Knowledge is inseparable from practice. To be a knower, one needs *suerte* – something somewhere between luck and mana – and *istrilla* – an affinity or ability to relate to an earth-being so that an effective relationship is possible. *Suerte* is indicated by the ability to find small rocks shaped like animals and plants. A person becoming a *yachaq* undergoes *qarpasa* – an initiation which entails immersion in the earth-being’s water, such as a stream descending from the mountain.

De Cadena is a typical identitarian academic, and far too obsessed with onto-epistemic violence as opposed the content of the claims made about earth-beings. Still, the same is said by anarchists:

*“A year or so ago, as I was having a conversation with a Bolivian friend about the U.S. culture and the modern industrial complex, he pointed out to me with surprise that there were people who believed that stones were not alive. He mentioned this as an example of alienation—because he knew that everything from this planet is a living creature, even a stone.”* (Jesús Sepúlveda)

There are rocky earth-beings worldwide. In the Malaysian part of Borneo, a group of tourists were accused of causing an earthquake by

posing naked on the summit of Mount Kinabalu. The mountain tolerates tourists, as long as the local Dusun people perform a ritual (including sacrificing chickens) each time. Are earth-beings really so prudish? After all, they tolerate animals fucking on their summits and in their caves. In the Australian outback, Uluru does not like being climbed at all, ritual or no. In Europe, an *Alp* refers both to a mountain in the range at the centre of the continent, and a magical creature similar to an incubus or vampire, which causes sleep paralysis or hallucination, and magics dirty diapers back onto babies unless they are ritually warded. The English word *elf* is a derivative from *Alp*.

Among the Evenki (in eastern Russia), people constantly interact with rock-art sites and other landmarks. Some of these sites do not want to be photographed, and associated spirits systematically misguide researchers so they repeatedly miss the site. Spirits residing in mountain passes need to be appeased with offerings, or disaster occurs. Rock art is attributed to master-spirits, rock-spirits and other such beings. The paintings can spontaneously appear or disappear, depending on the will of the spirit. People can “fetch luck” (or mana) by leaving offerings at the sites. Nomadic herders passing the site will (at least) stop, make a fire, and burn some tea as an offering. When miners in the area vandalised the rock art sites, the master-spirit reputedly burned them alive. Every local has their own stories about unusual experiences at such sites – most often, an inflow of energy.

*The Onen rock art site has a rather familiar shape.*

Tourists go places to see things. No touching. The formic flow of tactile tourists is enough to corrode even rock. The conservationists restrict us to Spectacle. No free festivals at Stonehenge, please.

What’s there already is rock art – what’s added to it is graffiti, vandalism, anti-social, a desecration of history. But wasn’t rock art itself a living addition in its day?

Perhaps it depends on the rock itself.

Some Australian Aboriginal peoples believe that a living creature's spirit can be transferred to a rock wall using rock art and shamanism.

This might also be why paleolithic peoples drew images of animals on cave walls. Were they worried the spirits of hunted deer and bison would haunt them otherwise?

Peoples such as the Cree, Anishinabe (Ojibwa/Chippewa) and Innu prefer to place rock art on jutting-out cliffs near lakes and rivers (the rock-penis, reaching out towards the rock's partner, the river?). In many cases, the art is produced by a person undergoing a vision quest or other form of seclusion, in a state of altered consciousness, using red ochre applied using hands or fingertips. In some cases, earth-beings known as *maymaygweshiwuk* (which lived in cracks and crevices in the rock) are said to have created the art; in some, the drawings are said to record historical or future events. (The idea that the landscape can be used as proof of historical events which are inscribed into it is fairly widespread worldwide). Sometimes crevices in the rock are used as the genitals of painted female figures. In other cases, cracks are considered portals to other worlds, and paintings are arranged to point them out.





*The Cerne Abbas giant, in England*

We don't know why the Mound-builders, who once inhabited what is now the southern USA, created massive images of animals which seem designed to be viewed from the sky. The local Ho-Chunk people (probably the descendants of the Mound-builders) may know, but keep it secret. Peter Lamborn Wilson (aka Hakim Bey) has sought to reconstruct the shamanic meanings of the mounds, probably in an altered consciousness state. He suggests they might have to do with shamanic cloud-walking (flight), and that they provided a kind of encyclopedia of rewilded living. "The telluric geomantic ethereal energies of Earth herself are channelized in the Effigies, just as the Australians crystallized them as song-lines or the Chinese as feng-shui. The Effigies amount to a Wisdom-Teaching - about animals, birds, plants - about landscape and Earth - about *dirt*" (Wilson).



The Nine Ladies are a circle of standing stones in England, which were saved from encroaching quarrying by eco-warriors in the 1980s-90s. Legend has it that the stones are seven witches, who were turned to stone. Veterans of the protest camps at the site of the stones report having seen them come to life – perhaps with the usual help of exhaustion or entheogens. Couldn't a witch outlast the witch-hunts by transitioning to a longer *durée*?

We don't know why stones were dragged to the site of Stonehenge – Britain's best-known neolithic stone circle – either. We do know that they are positioned so that the sun rises between two of the stones on the Summer Solstice.

However, we know about interactions with similar circles in the Andean region, during the Incan period, and those elsewhere. They were often places for ritual, ceremony, tribute, trading, or other gatherings – and were designed to coincide with natural cycles which were also mapped onto the surface of the earth (for example, the directions from an Inca stone circle corresponded to those tied in a circle of *quipus* (knotted strings) which showed the position and cosmological place of surrounding towns, to the days of the year, and to the cosmic order of gods and spirits. The hippies and Travellers who held celebrations and raves at the event, until suppressed by the police state, probably intuited the original use more closely than the “heritage industry” or the state.



Humans often carve rocks into sexual shapes. Sheela na Gig is an Irish spirit-being usually found carved in stone – in the form of a woman performing a massive vaginal goatse. These were placed around sites such as tombs and churches – sometimes for good luck, sometimes to deter thieves or evil spirits. In ancient Greece, it was common to place statues of Priapus in gardens to encourage plant fertility. Priapus represented the male fertility principle and is usually depicted with a massive erect penis, often trying to fuck everything that walks. In ancient Rome, drawing or carving phalluses onto walls and buildings was considered good luck. All Rome's border forts are covered in phalluses.

Is this why today's teenagers feel an urge to add dicks to public statues, posters, etc.?

## Magic Fucking Rocks

Before the robot (and providing its model), there was the golem. A golem is a creature made from supposedly inanimate matter, which is turned through some magical or mystical-religious process (originally Kabbalist) into a will-less servant of its creator. Rock or stone is one of the more common materials used to make golems (the earliest versions were said to be made of hardened mud or clay). They would often be used to do physical shitwork and chores. And in some golem stories, their creation involves a hubris which rebounds on its creator, in a Frankenstein-esque manner. Golems might be perfectly obedient, but perform tasks too literally. Or they might become massive, uncooperative, or outright violent, and resist being deactivated. In one story, the rabbi who created the golem was crushed by its falling remains when he managed to deactivate it. It's easy to see from these accounts where the more recent idea of out-of-control robots wreaking havoc comes from. In fact, the word "robot" was first invented for a stage play which closely resembles the classic golem stories.



In golem stories, the procreative process consists of a mixture of natural and supernatural: the inscription of a holy word onto inert matter. Rabbi Eleazah of Worms wrote detailed instructions for creating a golem in the 1100s. First, you'll need to memorise lots of formulae and Hebrew phrases, with precise pronunciation. Then you'll need to mix virgin (previously undug) soil with fresh water from a spring. Then, recite every letter of the Hebrew alphabet combined in sequence with each of the letters of the true name of the Hebrew God (YHWH) while meditating on each of the parts of the golem's body. This takes many hours. Now, you have a complete mental image or soul of the golem. Then, you need to transfer this image into the construct.

The most famous version of the story has Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel of Prague creating a golem from clay from the Vltava riverbank, to protect the Jewish ghetto from pogroms and anti-Semitic attacks (yes, it's an antifa golem). The golem had to be deactivated every week before the start of the Sabbath, to let it rest. But one week, Rabbi Loew forgot. (Was this a parapraxis?) Then the golem either falls in love, desecrates the Sabbath, or goes on a murder spree. Eventually the rabbi managed to deanimate it, and its remains were stored in the synagogue attic. It reportedly killed a Nazi who went up there in the 1940s, then disappeared.



Animate matter does not want to be devivified. “*When the Gaon saw that the Golem was growing larger and larger, he feared that the Golem would destroy the universe. He then removed the Holy Name that was embedded on his forehead, thus causing him to disintegrate and return to dust. Nonetheless, while he was engaged in extracting the Holy Name from him, the Golem injured him, scarring him on the face*” (Rabbi Jacob Emden, 1748).

In Jewish tradition, humans were created as golems, then imbued with life by God. On death, people return to clay: “ashes to ashes, dust to dust”.

There is a golem in the Bible: Psalm 139:16. A blockhead might also be called a golem in the Hebrew and Yiddish languages.

Not to be confused with *Gollum*, a Tolkien character who sought to uncover *the mysteries at the roots of the mountains*. Gollum eventually got bored, finding nothing but dark lakes and tunnels.

Though, another of Tolkien's statements suggests that there are eldritch horrors beneath the mountains.



Golems aren't the only rock-creatures. Galeb duhr look like what might happen if a human fucked a rock. They look like boulders, sometimes with arms and legs, and can disguise themselves as ordinary boulders if they close their eyes and stay still. They are slow-acting but intelligent, and don't like intruders or inquisitive people. They both nurture and have magical powers over the surrounding stone. They reproduce in the following way: when one dies of old age (after an immensely long lifespan), it splits into three small boulders, which eventually animate as young galeb duhr.



*Stone Giant by  
Rzanchetin*

Then there's earth elementals. In the sixteenth century, alchemists

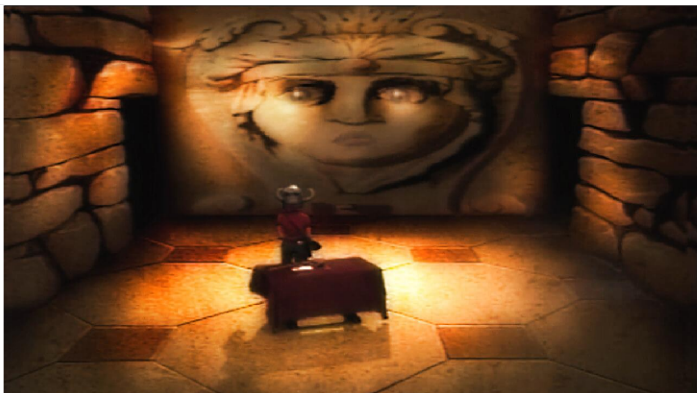
believed that there are four basic elements – earth, fire, air, and water. Each of these has its own class of elemental. According to Paracelsus, gnomes are elemental creatures of earth. Gnomes could swim through rock and earth as birds in air or fish in water. (Notice how garden gnomes are often depicted fishing in soil or rock. Garden gnomes are descended from fertility statues of the ancient deity Priapus – with the latter’s prominent penis replaced by a fishing rod or similar item). Rosicrucians claimed to be able to see elementals.

Elementals later became popular in Romantic fiction, and more recently, in fantasy literature, games, and so on. They are usually depicted as massive, unintelligent, powerful creatures



composed of the source element. Earth elementals are usually made of some combination of rock and soil. They might exist in some other dimension or plane, or be generated from earth (sometimes damaged earth). Usually they are only in the material world if they are summoned. Michael Moorcock has vehicles pulled on land while reined to earth elementals which remain underground. In some fantasy systems, they’re vulnerable to wind or thunder. Either they reproduce by splitting off fragments which grow into new elementals, or they are immortal on their own plane.





*The Wall Monsters in Nightmare ask riddles, much like the ancient Sphinx.*

An idea similar to Paracelsus' gnomes leads to some creepy sequences in the *Belgariad*, when characters are terrifyingly dragged along through rock. Creatures such as elves and dwarves are often depicted living underground, in rock caverns. In the Middle Ages, these creatures were often depicted as amoral, genderless, and procreating in ways different from human sexuality. Generation from a rock, or the corpse of a rock giant, were some of the theories. Giants and trolls are sometimes thought to be made of, or animated from, rock (Tolkien's trolls turn to stone if they are caught in sunlight). Stone features are sometimes given names suggesting a historical association with giants or trolls.



*“A fund set up to repair a penis-shaped rock formation in Norway has been given 160,000 kroner (£19,000) in public donations. The Trollpikken, or “The Troll’s Penis”, was apparently knocked down by vandals.” (BBC News).*



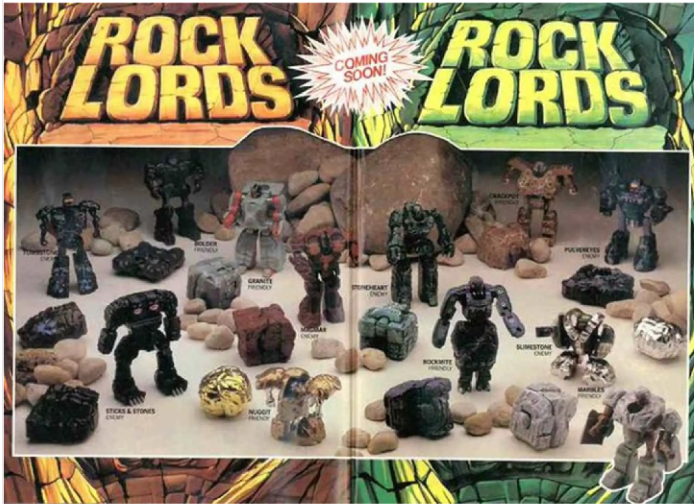
In Turkey, Love Valley and Gorkundere Valley are both full of naturally-occurring stone phalluses.



The depictions of rock-creatures with male or female traits says more about human views of rocks than it does about the sexual life of rocks themselves. It’s far more common to find male rock golems – representing human rocks – roughly fucking human women. Female rock-creatures, such as gargoyles, are given more human-like forms.

Rule34.us has collected more than 300 sexual images of golems.

“When the sun rises, the two having sex will become stone. Even during this time, pleasant pleasure continues to flow through their bodies.” (Monster Girl Encyclopedia entry for Gargoyles).



We're not quite done with fantasy rocks, yet. Some sentient robots have the ability to transform into rocks. It's a handy skill because you can't be arrested for *being thrown at* a cop.

Most Rock Lords are male, with the evil faction often resembling rock-monsters, and the good faction often being more human-like. However, there are three female figures which were released, all made of translucent material and represented as jewels. It seems in the world of rocks, humans attribute male traits to most rock but make an exception for gemstones and certain other precious substances found in the earth (for example, silver). This reverses the usual metaphors, since the male element is treated as the container and enveloper (the symbolic womb) of the female element.



## The Geodipus Complex

Stones are creatures of the long *durée*. From a human standpoint, this means they seem extremely long-lived or even eternal. This in turn, generates the fantasy of *being a rock* or *becoming like a rock*.

A human imitating the *durée* of a rock is living at a lower duration than their own energy would generate, and neglecting *human* and *animal* aspects of sexuality and passion, usually with the purpose of being more durable or longer-lived.

*Toughness* and *resilience* are rock-ideals posed for humans. A tough, macho man might be described as *hard as a rock*. A conventionally beautiful woman might be described as *statuesque* (though the rock-ideal is more often hypermasculine). Action heroes and wrestlers get nicknames like *The Rock*, *The Golem*, *The Mountain*.



*Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson*

Klaus Theweleit provides an account of a psychological complex found among fascist men, soldiers, and other tough-guys: *the rock/flood complex*. In this complex, the primal interaction of rock and water is reconfigured as a model for the relationship between human desire, stimulation, overstimulation, symbiosis, and immersion – the *flood* – and a response which puts up character-armor to resist or survive the flood an triumph over it – the *rock*.

The flood is water or blood, but it can also be a stream (from above), a process of being boiled or liquified, a process of being swallowed by the earth. Emotions and desires are floods. Demonised “others” are floods. Migrants are floods. Inactivity is a flood. Subversive pleasure is a flood (reality is always set against pleasure). Unruly crowds are floods. Anything which triggers a strong emotion is a flood. Floods are always repugnant, terrifying. Fusion with the flood is both desired and feared. The fear is annihilation of the ego, the armor. Floods erode rocks. Comfort and pleasure are seen as erosion. The role of the state is to purge the national body of “dirt”.

Floods do not metaphorically overwhelm human rocks. Each tough-guy finds himself actually disintegrating, dissolving, becoming-molecular, as perceived floods produce emotional reactions which overwhelm. Political reactions are not “narratives”. They stem from bodily reactions. They are usually true, to the extent that one describes the reactions of a human rock. The purpose of the rock’s

armour is to protect the body-ego from fragmentation. Ideology does not come from “radicalisation”. It is not a pollutant introduced by an uncontrolled flood. It comes first of all from the inside. The external ideology is simply a channel for a certain way of being.



Faced with threats to the integrity of a weak ego or a body with rigid boundaries, the human rock *freezes up, stiffens, hardens, clenches*. Becoming-rock, becoming-corpse, becoming-ice, becoming-anus.

*“What fascism, therefore, produces is not the microcosmic multiplicity of a desire that longs to expand and multiply across the body of the world, but a “desire” absorbed into the totality machine, and into ego-armor, a desire which wishes to incorporate the earth into itself” (Theweleit).*

Rocks in a human context are phallic symbols. *A rock-hard cock*. Hard, towering things defend against being dissolved by floods: the flood breaks against the wall, the wall towers over the flood. Rocks are also clean, in distinction from dirt, symbolic shit. A rock does not need to shit.

Fear of floods can also be fear of castration. Desire has been defined as a flood – so the fear of castration itself produces castration.

Anyone less dammed-up than the tough guy is easily associated with floods and morasses.

“Stones”: balls, testicles. Doubtless named for their shape, but when combined with the desirability of “hardness” (metaphorically: erect penis) in men, there is a sense here in which *modern culture believes that the source of fertilisation on the male side is a stone, a rock*. The stone fertilises an “egg” (a fragile rocklike object) inside the maternal cavern, the womb. Dreams about caves and tunnels are often references to the insides of human bodies: a womb, a colon, a throat. To have balls is to have courage, to stand against the flood. Rock as source of spirit, as the element of continuity provided by character or ethos.



*“Fuck you Mongolians! Stop breaking my shitty wall!”*

The world-visions of statisticians are often expressed in architecture and monuments, built of rock for (relative) permanence. One of the agents of metamorphosis in such cases is pigeon shit.

The human rock is historically descended from the noble warrior, the knight. In the Middle Ages, rocks – arranged into castles – formed the heart of warfare. The difficulty of storming an enemy who is aided by rocks acted as a check on aggression. Rocks have been a lot less immortal since cannonballs were invented. As cannons and firearms

made knights obsolete, the knights tried to compensate with more armour, more intense training, self-mechanisation in imitation of the new weapons. Thus was the human rock born. A line can be traced, for instance, from German knights through the aristocratic officer corps, to the cadet school tradition and the Freikorps, and finally to the Nazis. A vain attempt to preserve an aristocratic superiority which more and more lost its substance.

Later, rulers found that militarism and securitisation could bind marginalised youths to the system – or to whatever economic or political project they might want to advance. They still find *capitalism* repugnant, but they come to feel in militarism and security a promise of life – a source of prestige, identity, income, power, outlets for aggression, life-purpose. A way to sublimate their suffering by considering it as “learning”, “character-building”, “self-improvement”, and to find in it a kind of pleasure. A claim to superiority, to a right to revenge, which is grounded in the fact of having conformed and suffered. (Most of today’s “learning” and “healing” ideologies, political visions and spiritualities, are re-tweaked of this basic model: sublimation of suffering and a right to revenge).



The human rock lives by an aesthetic modelled on an ideal object. The ideal object is the human body conceived as rock or metal. Drill, health and fitness practices, training, are ways to remould people into



artworks in line with this aesthetic vision. Through self-change, the remoulding of the body and the personality, human rocks imagine they can heal their own wounds and right the world. But objects resist being remade. Only when something is destroyed or killed is it rendered predictable enough to be unthreatening.

The flood-rock complex is highly binarising. When flood mixes with rock, the result is a “morass”, a slippery slope, a dangerous exposure. To mix rock with flood is to dissolve the rock. The rock protects everyone else from the flood. It sucks energy from the mass, but imagines it *nourishes* the mass. Its struggle is unwinnable, because the struggle continues as long as any element of the flood, the “lower” flow of desire and life, survives. But the eradication of every such element means the death of the human rocks along with everyone else. The human rock’s right to murder is built as a compensation for their renunciation of the “lower” forces, of pleasure, fusion, creative flow. The ordering of reality in line with lifeless categories is at once a fusion with the environment (the maternal body) and an act of revenge against it. The human rocks, organised as a collective body, at once capture and control, kill, and simulate or substitute for the body of nature.

A rock can also be a flood, in special circumstances. Lovecraft’s work is full of terrifying rock edifices which are usually concealed beneath water or ice. Often, they’re also arranged at odd angles. These flood-rock borderlines are the places where cosmic horrors break through. Then there’s *The Color out of Space*: a meteorite of unknown substance which lands in a well and infects the surrounding countryside, from the crops and wild animals to the human farmers. One of the meteorite’s properties is that it dissolves unusually rapidly (for a rock). Its power of pollution (or procreation-by-hybridity), and its uncanniness, derive as much from its flood-like properties as its rockishness.

Remember: in the Andes, some aspect of the earth-being of a mountain of rock is also contained in the flood, the rivers flowing

from it – and one becomes a knower, in relation with the mountain, by immersing oneself in its flood.

Floods are most dangerous when someone is passive. The point of acting is to make it so the other, not the self, dissolves in the flood. Floods always bring death, castration, erosion, but the act of destruction allows the human rock to apportion this death to the other – thereby re-establishing order, growing new boundaries, and experiencing a rebirth of the body-ego.



*Pic by Alexei Kazansky on DeviantArt*

In disorderly conditions, the structure decomposes, and bits of human rock fly across the landscape like shrapnel. In orderly conditions, there has to be someone whose boundaries are torn open, to keep the rest of the body-egos intact.

This is the sexuality of human rocks – *which differs fundamentally from the sexuality of real rocks.*

## **Excursus on Rocking and Rolling**

The phrase “rock and roll” was originally slang for having sex (and for ecstatic rituals in black churches). This comes from the verb *to rock*, rather than rocks. (Before this, the phrase “rocking and rolling”

referred to ships thrown around by the ocean: already we are close to the flood-rock complex: rocks gonna rock, but only when they collide with floods).

Later, *rock music* is hard music, though not as hard as *heavy metal*. Rock and metal belong to the world of human rocks, but with a twist: the music speaks from the point of view of the inner energy, not the character-armour. Sex as war, war as energetic freedom, and seduction as danger are all common themes – but so is the idea of an angry, hateful, or monstrous inner force which seeks to break through the carapace. Rage against society and its institutions is also never far from the surface.

*Where do I take this pain of mine  
I run but it stays right by my side  
So tear me open and pour me out  
There's things inside that scream and shout  
And the pain still hates me  
So hold me until it sleeps*  
(Metallica)

*The secret side of me, I never let you see  
I keep it caged but I can't control it  
So stay away from me, the beast is ugly  
I feel the rage and I just can't hold it  
I feel it deep within, it's just beneath the skin  
I must confess that I feel like a monster*  
(Skrillex)

*I've felt the hate rise up in me  
Kneel down and clear the stone of leaves  
I wander out where you can't see  
Inside my shell I wait and bleed*  
(Slipknot)

*The cracks between the pavement stones  
Like rivers of flowing rain*

*Strange people who know me  
From behind every window pane  
Can you see the real me  
Can you, can you?  
Can you see the real me  
Can you? Whoa, yeah  
(W.A.S.P)*

## **The Sexuality of Human Rocks**

*“The leader copulates the mass to a corpse... The leader attains potency by desexualising and devivifying “the mass”” (Theweleit).* Most often, this is male-on-male procreation – but without any gay sexual content. (If every affinity is ultimately derived from sexual libido/eros, via various “sublimations” and “displacements”, at what point does a practice cease to be sexual enough to count as “queer”?)

A human rock is built from determination and will, and from the muscles, developed as a second skin, an inner rock, which is kept clenched against feeling or which is clenched to avoid being overwhelmed by the flood. The human rock is formed through experiences of pain and suffering, as a barrier against an onslaught of brutality. Someone who survives and absorbs harsh external demands or conditions might well become a human rock.

*“The body swallows attack after attack until it becomes addicted. Every exertion becomes a “means of enhancing an already intoxicated consciousness, of adding strength to strength”. The boy who fails to transform rituals of bodily pain into “intoxicated consciousness” (the mental intoxication of a head that crowns a powerful body) is cast out.” (Theweleit)*

For soldier-males, combat is sex.

Is this anything like the sexuality of rocks?

The closest parallel is the flow of lava and the eruption of a volcano. If one digs deep under the earth, the heat increases, eventually the

“hard” substances melt, and one finds a hot, liquid core beneath the rocks. One also finds areas where – from build-ups of flammable gases – entire tunnel systems are constantly on fire (is this where the idea of Hell comes from?).

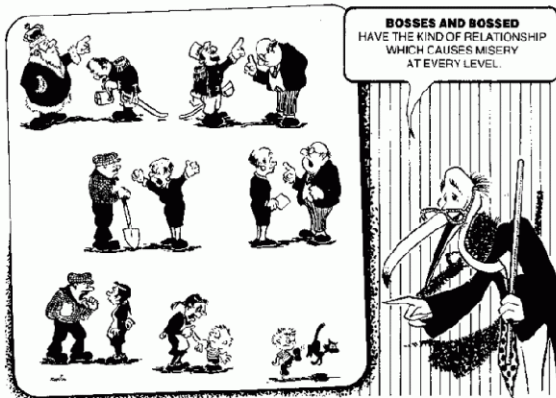
But a human rock is just a simulated rock.

The real rock copulates with the flood, the water, to produce landscapes, rock formations, the courses of rivers. Real rocks do not have the property of hardness as a means to ward-off the flood, but as an element of their *durée*. A real rock does not become hard to prevent flows; its immanent flows are already contained in its hardness. A human body can never have the hardness of a rock, a hardness which is also part of the rock’s immanent becoming. A rock’s hardness is simply a metamorphosis occurring over a longer-than-human *durée*. A human rock cannot know or experience the sexuality of rocks.



*From Wilhelm Reich, “Listen, Little Man!”*

For a human rock, all emotions are threatening. Pleasure and freedom are regarded as senseless, dangerous. Sex is feared as corrupting. Only pain is felt. The desire for pleasure is transformed into a perception of pain. The flows of desire transmute into a wish for destruction, for oblivion – often experienced vicariously. What is left once desire is trapped behind armour is the *potential for a trancelike act of violence which is the main source of passion*. This never fully satisfies, because all the time, consciousness is radically split from sensation. Bodily experience is fragmented under stress; consciousness is not. Sensations are viewed *from outside*. A human becomes a rock *to distance themselves from sexuality*, or more precisely, from their own loss or renunciation of libidinal becomings. Still, a human rock needs aggressive action to maintain itself.



Violence is a necessary release. “Every blow sends something spinning outward; he emerges a good deal lighter from the act of beating” (Theweleit). The burden of unpleasure, the sting of obedience, are passed on down the chain of authority, thus relieving those on the higher levels. The person passing on their pain in this way things they are *teaching a valuable lesson*, or *moulding someone’s character (for the better)*. Initiating them into the world of human rocks.



*This is the sexuality of human rocks.*

This is why cops, soldiers, bigots, often desire above all a permission to kill – why they react to humane restrictions as others react to a restriction on pleasures. The ego and its armour can only be allowed to dissolve in destructive agency. Only in massacre do a human rock's emotions erupt in their full intensity. Despite superficial similarities, this is utterly different both from indigenous violence (such as headhunting) and from the affects involved in mass uprisings and so-called riots, in which life becomes magical.

Fascism articulates a theory of desire in which such eruptions are perceived as natural, as liberation.

In his head, a tough-guy breaks with childhood, with the 'mother-ocean', at least in his mind. In reality, he never gets out of a symbiotic way of being, but the mother is replaced by a unit, a gang, and organisation, an army. The group functions as a substitute for the

ego and the conscience of the individual. This is one of the things which distinguishes a modern soldier-male from a warrior-hero, whether Greek, Ghanaian, or Guarani. A warrior-hero is an assertive, empowered individual, noble in the Nietzschean sense, whose status is earned by feats of heroism. A soldier-male is an obedient person who requires a surrounding institution to sustain their ego, whose status arises from their obedient endurance and their ability to transfer pain to others, and thus “survive”. They have little in common except their endurance and their violence.

Let us also distinguish here the misanthropy of human rocks from the misanthropy of eco-extremists (and bury once and for all the myth of an “eco-fascism”). A human rock hates what is human because it is soft, un-rock-like, bestial, inferior, molecular, flood-like, disorderly. A human rock hates in a human what is soft, living. An eco-misanthrope hates what is human because it is hard, life-destroying, domesticated and domesticating, alienated, massified. An eco-misanthrope hates in a human what is hard, unliving. Humans to the extent that they are human rocks, and thus, neither true rocks nor true animals. Leftists who cry “eco-fascism” cannot recognise this, because they themselves are human rocks (at least to a degree), and they themselves value in humans what is hard and unliving (at least to a degree).



In modern soldier-males, there is little individual heroism. The group as substitute ego is continuous with the character-armour, the human rock. Once an authoritarian institution is not felt as external, it feels



protective instead of threatening. On the other hand, anything which rips apart the artificial unity which is built by subordinating the “lower” to the “higher” is felt to rob the human rock of the means to cement their inner fractures.

A human rock is created through memories of pain (also known as traumas). The more rock-solid the memories, the less capable the organism becomes of absorbing new material. Tough-guy language tends to *overwrite* reality with myths and stereotypes, responding to any living intensity with a similarly intense denial, a substitution of the imagined for the real object. The gaze is scanning like a searchlight or a camera, looking for threats. The threat is often hallucinated: anything that produces an emotional response is a flood. It is then annihilated.

Nomad sciences involve contact with, and sympathy for, living processes. Rigid quantitative sciences systematically keep the observed within limits set by a mind within a rock-body. In more extreme cases, the role of science is dispensed with: everything is already known, in a formalistic way. Reality is seen as a set of massive blocks, each defined by an abstraction, each with its “place”. An empire of dead matter, not life.

But there is life below the surface. “Only in the act of killing or dying – penetration or explosion – can he burst his boundaries; this rule is never broken. There must be a rush of blood, either within him, or out of the other” (Theweleit). This raging *interior* is distinct from the raging *exterior* of floods (associated with women, “lower” groups, etc.). “Blood” is a transformed *eros* – and the part of tough-guy language which talks about these inner flows is not a destruction of reality, but an expression of a particular configuration of desire. This is the aspect which forms the core of action movies, war stories, violent video games, macho music styles, contact sports, etc. Desire is not renounced – but the desire which is retained is profoundly distorted by the rock-flood structure.

In Theweleit's case-studies, the rock-complex has its origins in military boot camps, cadet schools, and other such brutal total institutions.

There are a lot of human rocks around today. Conditions of police-state brutality, performance management, disciplinary systems, austerity, zero tolerance, operate as a system of constant bombardment and siege which breaks down the autonomous spirit of the humans and other beings subjected to it. Only the meanest survive. Today, psychological torment has partly substituted for physical pain.



*Full Metal Jacket*: a metaphor for armour. In the movie, a harsh drill instructor singles out an overweight, dumb kid for special abuse. By threatening to punish the whole platoon for the scapegoat's offences, he induces the other recruits to beat him. After this, the targeted man becomes an ideal recruit. But after graduation, he has a breakdown, eventually shooting the instructor and himself. (How many of today's spree killers are variants of this character?)

## Dead Matter

Devivification: the removal of life. If life is a threatening flood, a human rock responds based on threat-perception with devivification. Something can be devivified by being killed – preferably, reduced to a bloody mass which is not recognisable as formerly animate. Something can also be devivified by being cut-off from its own life-force or from flows more broadly – by being confined to a cell, for example. Finally, something can be devivified in perception, by replacing any participatory awareness with rigid stereotypes or categories which are perceived *instead of* whatever is perceived (not just as ways of theorising what is perceived).

Human rocks have three preferred ways of devivifying: the bloody miasma, the empty space, the black hole. The bloody miasma is the destruction of living things to such a point that they no longer appear to contain life-force. To murder and mutilate. Certain types of verbal aggression are displaced, civilian versions of the same process.



The empty space is the clearing of space filled with living things so as to create a space which seems full of dead or predictable matter – “sterile zones”, “defensible space”, “safe space”. Life, seen as threatening, is replaced by dead matter, and the world seems clean again. Crowd dispersal and containment are empty-space practices.

The corresponding civilian technique is “discussing reality out of existence”.

The black hole is a type of experience where the ego is allowed to collapse in the face of overwhelming stress or pain. One withdraws from threatening situations by blacking-out, dissociating, fainting, hallucinating. Blackouts, extreme drunkenness, exercise (or working) through the pain barrier. Twilight states, experienced as fusion with the other, as being outside oneself, as a rebirth as a new, self-born person, a god, a titan, as a hallucinated union with the ruler, as a death-and-rebirth through fusion with and annihilation of the other. Austere meditative practices may well be a variant of such ego-destruction, which is distinct from the *creative* dissolution of the ego into the flow of desiring-production which occurs in moments of flow-state and in liminal moments. Pure versus absolute deterritorialisation.

Lockdowns (and the broader preventive, network-disruptive securitisation they exemplify) are exemplary cases of devivification. “Removing the swarming mass from the streets” as Theweleit puts it. *Life means death.* (The flow of life is a site of uncontrollable and/or unpredictable contacts which escape securitised control). *Social distancing is pro-social.* (Social normativity can now be distanced from actual social relations).

Today’s consciences are far more attuned to outrage at bloody miasmas than to objections to empty spaces. As a result, the empty space has become the normal form of power.

Lockdowns evolved from prison ideology, the prevention of unpredictable explosions of will or desire or rage and the unpredictable flows of uncontrolled networks by means of isolation, to counterinsurgency ideology, the devivification or capture of *all civilian life* within a zone deemed insecure (leading to such phenomena as the survivors of a massacre being held at gunpoint or lined up against walls – sometimes in circumstances where there is no threat at all, the attacker is already dead or captured), to the

general prohibition on unmediated social life as a technique designed theoretically to prevent viral transmission (and which could be used, by extension, to shut down all social life so as to contain revolts, protests, asymmetrical warfare, deviance, etc.). Lockdown is not a particularly rational response to a pandemic, but it's the go-to response of human rocks faced with something which seems like a flood. Civilian life as such, logistically uncontrolled life, is the target of such measures, along with their various continuations in ordinary social practices.

*“Soldiers and police officers in Brussels held an orgy while the city was in lockdown over fears of a Paris-style attack by Islamist extremists, according to Belgian media reports.”* (The Guardian)

Fear of the unpredictable, and resultant devivification, is the driver of today's totalitarianism. When something cannot be “managed”, a panic reaction sets in among the powerful and the good sheep. Their preferred way to combat this panic is by shutting down life.



Today's ego-ideal of the powerful is a particular kind of adept, authoritative, entrepreneurial leader with a keen sense for opportunity-structures and for manipulation of appearances. The hopes neoliberals invest in such leaders are almost messianic: the miracle of strategic leadership will magic away problems like climate

change, peak oil, automation-induced job loss, general psychological collapse, social conflict, geopolitics. Third Way discourse rhetorically resolves opposites and trusts to culture and self-change to bridge the gap in reality. In practice, this mostly means that leaders pretend there isn't a problem, wish the problem away, and leave it up to someone else to actually sort it out. If the problem won't go away, they use more and more thought-control, imperative signalling, or outright coercion until it does.

The glib cruelty of today's psychopathic managers involves an addiction to pain, the "intoxication of a head that crowns a powerful body". It may not involve physical brutality (many of these types today are conflict averse); instead, it involves a kind of constant stress, judgement, reshaping, a superficial self-change behind which a dominating mind survives. The head quantifies, controls, regulates, manages, the affairs of the body, subordinating expression to strategic performance. The head is the bourgeois, the body is the proletariat – and their relation is that of a neoliberal workplace.

Others' expressive, involuntary, and other non-strategic actions are persistently misread as if they are strategic. Someone who is not capable of sufficient self-control, flexibility, self-management, or strategic performance is brutally disposed-of – fired, expelled, banned, cancelled, jailed, etc. When all the humans are removed, only the rocks remain.

A psychopathic manager can be a classic neoliberal, a deluded Third Way rhetorician, an identity politician, an outright fascist. There is little difference in *how* they function or in their effects. The more progressive variants are differentiated only in holding the ridiculous belief that the genocide against sections of humanity can be reversed or stopped or mitigated by acting like a human rock – in other words, by acting in a way which entirely incarnates the process of genocide against the vibrantly human. It is very noticeable that today's identity politicians value the experience of trauma and suffering as the basis for their identity, far more than they value its expressive aspects.

Queer Theory values gay sex for its transgressive aspects, a public martyrdom which disrupts others' expectations – not because it's fun. Indigenous Theory is uninterested in how uncolonised cultures operate, and instead fetishises the experience of being colonised, of suffering trauma in boarding schools, concentration camps, slave plantations. Being “seasoned” into a human rock.

The contemporary self is its own shrink. The self does not feel emotions; it observes and describes them, like a psychiatrist describing a patient. Contemporary psychology mistakes observable, predictable physical processes for life and the mind. A self-describing, self-narrating person in today's world is never far from being a life-denying observer describing lifeless functional processes in a lifeless language.

*“Today, lack seems to be installed in men's relationships with women (and others) primarily in the form of their own distrust of themselves as the “aggressive” partner”* (Theweleit).



Among shy inquisitorial mice, there is never enough agency, enough contact, to produce a relationship. Since communication is imperfect, one always holds back a little too much.

In the ideology of the WEF, humans jump through hoops set by technology, the economy, and a hundred other reifications of human agency. The economy is speeding up, machines are getting faster and smarter, jobs are getting more scarce, humanity is faced with unprecedented challenges (such as ecological crisis). Humans – or at least, *some* humans – need to become stronger, faster, more adaptable, more skilled, to keep up with machines. To out-compete

robots, humans become rocks. *Or else*: those who do not adapt well enough or quickly enough, or who deny the imperative to adapt to “the economy” or “technology”, will die out Darwin-style (a good excuse for a genocide carried out *indirectly*).



I’m not quite ready to die out yet. Neither are the rocks. There’s plenty of fucking stuff to be done. And even if the *runakuna* die out, the rocks and the earth-spirits will still be there – and still be fucking away.



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