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Performing Enclosures (Great Arenas Won't Lie Fallow)

Through productive disagreement with Bruno Latour, Timothy Morton and Michel Foucault, in this paper I observe some of the core dynamics of archaic world-making combining archaeology and theories of entanglement, anthropology and material studies. I generally don't do vibrant matter or deep time, and on this occasion too I have got primarily the present in mind. In what amounts to a personal manifesto, I have exploited the book stacks that made my lockdown bearable to understand why it is that I wish that I could work in my spare time; I have looked into my long domestication as a white westerner to avoid kidding myself that the concentrationary husbandry may one day be over; I have spoken from a complete lack of trust in the one symbolic WIPP (Waste Isolation Pilot Project) where dominant debates want us to put all of the trash and do all of our deep future confessing; I have challenged the fuzzy super construct of the Great Divide between Western Modernity and the "Rest", and turned to pre-western sites of human domestication – the Caves of the Last Ice and the Monumentality of the Earliest Neolithic – to note how through the vertiginous alliance of fabrility and belief we have mobilised ourselves out of the chance of changing the way we change. As over the eons of time a light foot is among the net gains of a bipedalism obsessed with hands and handiwork, I have tried to drive a set of pretty tough questions and still give a light-hearted reply. As well as a short paper with plenty of footnote work, this is of course a story rather than a history, as I can only leave that lightheadness to others.

Hold firmly, without wavering, to the hope that we confess.

Barack Obama / *Hebrews* 10:23

I generally don't do deep time, the vibrant planet is outside my range and even the natural museum leaves me somewhat dull. I prefer the contested man-made transitions, the artificial mound sitting atop of a limestone ridge, the dolmen outwitting the glacial erratic in the bid against erosion and gravity. Of course the earth is «a gigantic machine for producing strata»; of course it is «the apex of insanity» to proclaim ourselves «a geological force» and then pack the trash into one symbolic WIPP (Waste Isolation Pilot Project). This is why in this paper I seek productive friction with dominant theoretical positions and end up straddling several debates across a number of disciplines. The Committee that wishes to remain invisible calls the «entire Western apocalyptic» a falsity and a pornography («its particular existential pornography involves ogling prefigurative documentaries

[...]»); having looked lately into the pornography of war, I visibly agree and continue to target the «psychotropic economy» of the overall vertiginous self-exploitation.¹ I want, that is, to mistrust the disjunctives of collapse – the «feverish crisis pronouncements», the «urgent crisis analyses» – even where they articulate the prophetic threat affirmatively («It is up to us to change our ways of changing. Or else it will have been for naught that the Berlin Wall fell during the miraculous year of 1989»); I want to defend a position of no confidence in the credibility of the «other last chances» that those disjunctives project as part of the claim to reputable credentials.²

I want to work on the «lies that bind», and given that these insist on running in c- («classification, creed, country, colour, class, culture»), compact their catalogue down to the core triad («credo credit crisis») and ask to what «pursuit of our total perfection», yes, to what collusions without account or end human capital gets put in order to arrive at the humanised world – the bridge, say, gathering «the earth as

¹ I found my premises in dialogue respectively with the following: J. Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, Durham and London, Duke UP, 2010, pp. 1-19; N. Clark, *Politics of Strata*, in «Theory, Culture & Society», 34, 2017, 2-3, pp. 211-231 («gigantic machine», cit. Jan Zalasiewicz, p. 213); The Invisible Committee, *To Our Friends*, South Pasadena CA, Semiotext(e), 2014, pp. 31, 32, 35 («apex», «force», «Western apocalyptic», «pornography»). Other active premises include: F. Ginn, M. Bastian, D. Farrier, J. Kidwell, *Introduction: Unexpected Encounters with Deep Time*, in «Environmental Humanities», 10, 2018, 1, pp. 213-225; C. Malabou, *The Brain of History, or, the Mentality of the Anthropocene*, in «South Atlantic Quarterly», 116, 2017, 1, pp. 39-53 (pp. 40-41, in particular the lines: «man cannot appear to itself as a geological force, because being a geological force is a mode of disappearance»); M. Armiero, *Wasteocene*, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2021, especially pp. 1-22 setting up the case for waste being «the essence of the Anthropocene», hence the coinage; D.L. Smail, *On Deep History and the Brain*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, California UP, 2008, especially pp. 157-189, on the metabolic allurements and altered states («psychotropic economy», p. 180) giving rise to the teleological force of the civilisational package. On the concentrationary enclosures and mobilising lines of war, see F.G. Pedriali, *Bared and Grievable: Theory Impossible in No Man's Land*, in Ead. and C. Savettieri (eds), *Mobilizing Cultural Identities in the First World War: History, Representations and Memory*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2020, pp. 149-181 – among the provocations behind that chapter was the cover image on N. Stone, *World War I: A Short History*, London, Penguin, 2007, featuring what to me looked like the timeless warrior never anachronistically over-equipped to face profitable civilisational slaughter in the man-made arena of the state of nature. For this paper I instead rely on the «tyranny» of the archaeological «tangible» springing back as soon as one starts a dig (A. Nowell, *Growing Up in the Ice Age: Fossil and Archaeological Evidence of the Lived Lives of Plio-Pleistocene Children*, Oxford and Philadelphia, Oxbow Books, 2021, p. 144) to show that our great arenas, contrary to what Richard Schechner states (*Performance Theory*, London and New York, Routledge, 2003, p. 14: «Great arenas, stadiums, churches and theaters [...] lie fallow during great hunks of time»), refuse to go fallow even as decommissioned matter, i.e., despite having broken up into a dissolved «parliament of things». With an eye for the latter, here I am keeping another war icon in the background, this time from the playfully *passée* jacket installation chosen for the cover of Bruno Latour's *We Have Never Been Modern* (Cambridge MA, Harvard UP, 1993) and framing the culturally hyperactive and nearly radioactive dance hat made by a Chang Naga on the Burmese borderlands of north-east India from a German pickelhaube helmet picked while serving on the Western Front, France – the unsourced and unreferenced wonder object is returned to the proprieties of catalogue reproduction and referencing in J. Coote, C. Morton and J. Nicholson, *Transformations: The Art of Recycling*, Oxford, Pitt Rivers Museum and University of Oxford, 2000, p. 33, fig. 30.

² Citations respectively from: J. Roitman, *Anti-Crisis*, Durham and London, Duke UP, 2014, pp. 1-14 («feverish», «urgent», p. 6), but see also at least the lines «Crisis-claims evoke a moral demand for a difference between the past and the future» positing «*history as a temporality upon which one can act*» (pp. 8-9, italics at source); closing lines in Latour, *We Have Never*, cit., p. 145 («It is up to us»); C. Keller, *Facing Apocalypse: Climate, Democracy and Other Last Chances*, New York, Orbis, 2021, pp. vii-xvii – on the «*revealing fatal patterns*» of late-last chances, see pp. xiii and ix, italics in the original. Also active in the background D. Gentili, *The Age of Precarity: Endless Crisis as an Art of Government*, London and New York, Verso, 2021.

landscape around the stream»; the banks that «emerge as banks only as the bridge crosses the stream».³

I want ritual to stand as «though it were a building», because having indeed become a building, it commands those gathered to lend capital whatever capacity for imagination and content capital does not have («Capitalism lacks narrativity. It does not narrate anything; it merely counts»). I want to resist world-saving binarisms dependent on such lack («Capitalism is anything but a religion because it lacks any force to assemble, to create a community») to insist that biopower gets its traction formally and precisely from them («You must simply listen and trust, as the Pueblo people do, that meaning will be made [...]. You may even find repetition or rhythm»). I want to refute the fiction and the platitude that a human world in balance will stop «altering the earth», whereas the only way out right now is to successfully quit («We cannot keep doing what we have always done [...]. We need to struggle to disentangle, to swim against the tide, to seek alternatives, to slow things down»).4

I want to capitalise – yes, risky vocabulary – on the disciplinary call to divest, delink, decolonise, and still side in earnest and for the sake of coherence with those who dedicate their work «To Our Enemies» («the “ecological crisis” is not the result of a modernity and a humanity blinded to the negative effects of technological development, but the “fruit of the will” of some people to exercise absolute domination over other people») – the whole moral point of demanding a total break with the likes of ourselves being indeed that of matching accusation and identification correctly. This is why in this context I want to carry on disagreeing in particular with Bruno Latour’s classic *We Have Never Been Modern*. A “pornographic Western apocalyptic” hanging on a Final Exit designed as a Great Departure from all things European has in fact not just “landed” on Earth as the dominant «critical zone»; besides, this being a Wasteocene with a mission, clearance operations aimed at the West are not merely “bulldozing” the scene of project Europe

³ Respectively, K.A. Appiah, *The Lies That Bind: Rethinking Identity. Classification, Creed, Country, Colour, Class, Culture*, London, Profile Books, 2018, in particular pp. 189-211 on «how the West was spun», and citing from Matthew Arnold’s *Culture and Anarchy* on culture as «the pursuit of our total perfection»; L. Milesi, C.J. Müller and A. Tynan (eds), *Credo Credit Crisis: Speculations on Faith and Money*, London and New York, Rowman and Littlefield, 2017, pp. 1-18; M. Heidegger, *Building Dwelling Thinking*, in Id., *Poetry, Language, Thought*, ed. by A. Hofstadter, New York and London, Harper Perennial, 2001, pp. 141-160 («earth as landscape», «emerge as banks», p. 150).

⁴ B.-C. Han, *The Disappearance of Rituals: A Topology of the Present*, Cambridge, Polity, 2019, pp. 1-15, 27-46 («as though they were», p. 40; «Capitalism lacks», «[...] is anything but», pp. 43-44); E. Wemytewa and T.O. Peters, *Zuni River–Shiwinan K’yawinanne*, in R. Solinger, M. Fox, K. Irani (eds), *Telling Stories to Change the World: Global Voices on the Power of Narrative to Build Community and Make Social Justice Claims*, London and New York, Routledge, 2008, pp. 15-22 («You must simply», p. 22); R. Bradley, *Altering the Earth: The Origins of Monuments in Britain and Continental Europe*, Edinburgh, Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 1993, p. 1, explaining the book’s title with Raymond Williams’ Neolithic story *With Antlers to the Seariver* from the novel *People of the Black Mountains* («Why do these people need so many antlers, they ask: “Is it for the digging and shaping?” [...] “We are altering the earth”»); I. Hodder, *Where Are We Heading? The Evolution of Humans and Things*, New Haven and London, Yale UP, 2018, pp. 133-147 («We cannot», p. 145; «We need», p. 147) – also quite useful on environmental modification by human inscription M. Ferraris, *Documentality: Why It Is Necessary to Leave Traces*, New York, Fordham UP, 2013, pp. 7-54.

while at the same time parading the typically “modern” doubletalk that won’t at all “want out”:

We do not wish to become premoderns all over again [...] Now we seek to keep the moderns’ major innovation: the separability of a nature that no one has constructed – transcendence – and the freedom of manoeuvre of a society that is of our own making – immanence [...]. What are we going to retain from the moderns? Everything apart from exclusive confidence [...]. The moderns’ greatness stems from their proliferation of hybrids, their lengthening of a certain type of network, their acceleration of the production of traces [...]. Their daring, their research, their innovativeness, their tinkering, their youthful excesses, the ever-increasing scale of their action, the creation of stabilised objects independent of society, the freedom of a society liberated from objects – all these are features we want to keep.⁵

The problem I want to have with this style of isolation plant separating “us” from “them” won’t stop at the brand captioned on the tin («we have never been modern»; we cannot stand «sky-gazing Homo»; we had better “take nature down” given that it too has served Europe’s suspect exclusionary horizons etc etc) – nor do I want merely to find fault with a formidable theoretical kit that drives the more progressive conversations of our time but struggles even to start to “decolonise” the forward projection, the «directional forces set in train» by the combined rhythm, repetition and ritual giving status and consistency to “a present time in between” tasked with “putting out the lines” of the various “urgent” and “critical” disposal imperatives of hope («*The past was the confusion of things and men; the future is what will no longer confuse them*»)⁶.

⁵ É. Alliez and M. Lazzarato, *Wars and Capital*, South Pasadena CA, Semiotext(e), 2016, pp. 11-33 («ecological», p. 30) – the dedication-title «To Our Enemies» gets remodulated throughout the Introduction (e.g., «We will cut it short, in addressing *our enemies* [...]», p. 32, italics in the original); B. Latour and P. Weibel (eds), *Critical Zones: The Science and Politics of Landing on Earth*, Karlsruhe and Cambridge MA, ZKM Centre for Art and Media and MIT Press, 2020, pp. 13-19, explaining the idea behind the title and the preference for the word *zone*; Latour, *We Have Never*, cit., pp. 140 («We do not wish»), 132-133 («What are we going») – much of the closing chapter *Redistribution*, pp. 130-145, plays in rhetorical earnest with the drive to sort out epochal matters (e.g., «all these are features we want to keep [...] Let us keep what is best about them [...] On the other hand, we shall not retain [...] I want to keep [...] all the advantages of the moderns’ dualism without its disadvantages [...] all the advantages of the premoderns’ monism without tolerating its limits», pp. 133-134); see p. 130 for the «bulldozer operation» supposedly pursued by modern action alone. In my background also D. Tarizzo, *Life: A Modern Invention*, Minneapolis, Minnesota UP, 2017, pp. 15-52, 185-220, especially the lines «*exiting modernity* is an illusory task. It is precisely an imperative of this kind, *exiting modernity*, that makes us modern and makes us, ultimately, so *powerful*», p. 220, italics at source – but see also Pedriali, *Bared and Grievable*, cit., pp. 169-172, where I again put capital to work, and exploit the potential for clash between Latour and Tarizzo, siding with the latter’s unremitting closing statements («We are the “living” [...] we are the *warriors of life* [...] we, the moderns, live» – *Life*, cit., pp. 209 and 1 respectively).

⁶ D. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, Durham and London, Duke UP, 2016, pp. 1-29 («sky-gazing», p. 2); T. Fry, *Defuturing: A New Design Philosophy*, London and New York, Bloomsbury, 2020, pp. x-xxx («directional forces», p. xxix); Latour, *We Have Never*, cit., p. 71 («*The past was*», italics in the original). On taking nature down see T. Morton, *Ecology without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics*, Cambridge MA, Harvard UP, 2007, pp. 1-28, and *Dark Ecology: For a Logic of Future Coexistence*, New York, Columbia UP, 2016, pp. 3-59, especially but not exclusively the lines «The Anthropocene doesn’t destroy Nature. *The Anthropocene is Nature* in its toxic nightmare form. Nature is the latent form of the Anthropocene waiting to emerge as catastrophe» (p. 59, italics at source). On organic life (blobs and volumes) putting out lines so that scattered we cling and adrift we fasten *or else* there is no social life and no onward cultural transmission for what nonetheless remains sheer biological motion «on the way to nowhere», see T. Ingold, *The Life of Lines*, London and New York, Routledge, 2015, pp. 3-8, 146-153, in particular p. 151, and citing Arendt, p. 150 («the matters of the world [...] are that “which lies between people and therefore can relate and bind them”»).

If I express resistance in these notes, it is because this manner of radical openness calling for justice of redress and “redistribution of symmetry” retains all of the asymmetrical economy that gives a fuzzy inflationary super construct – “the West” – its distinct domain and clout. “We have never been modern”, we say («Modernity has never begun [...] we never have really left the old anthropological matrix behind»); we can no longer tolerate the «vast saga of rupture, fatal destiny, irreversible good or bad fortune» upon which western modernity stands. Yet as theorists spanning the breadth of the Humanities we indifferently cling on to the «Great Divide» that separates us from everything else, as we go on forging the one divisive story and keep claiming to have caused the world single-handedly («So is modernity an illusion? No, it is much more than an illusion [...] It is a force that [...] had the power to represent, to accelerate, to summarise»). The net gain is clear, ours alone are the trash and the curse, and so is the conviction that we must have kidded ourselves, for weren't we building for Thekla-the-project? But, look, we only produced Leonia-the-refuse – and have you spotted those collusive “enemies” in the very junk heap that endlessly recirculates the society we “must defend”?⁷

Requisitioned through «multiple gestures of oblivion» for the exclusive convenience of asymmetrical extraction, premodernity in this scenario, I want to insist, is left with nothing to offer. Premoderns past and present never in fact imposed anything, never contemplated forcing «the impossible on the possible», in themselves just a “repetition” and a “rhythm” totally synced on the affordances of their environments; while the things that they made, because they did somehow make and modify things, did not go on “designing” people after people had «designed and made them», there not being or showing or surviving, in the few things and environments that they did pull together, enough motivation or appetite for our mode of self-exhausting enculturation even where they may have done some “tinkering” and some “daring”. In short, and to keep putting pressure on a current mode of thinking which for the purposes of this minimal counter-manifesto I want to find suitably and typically compromised, for “them” no “excesses” and no “youth”, whereas “we” by the same token and on this side of the same self-centred, self-preserving erection have lived, exploited and thrived, uniquely full of colonial agency even as in dubious quasi

⁷ Latour, *We have Never*, cit., respectively: pp. 130-145, in particular 136-145 on the “redistribution of symmetry”, including a “redistributed Humanism” (p. 136), and resulting in a relaunched «Parliament of Things» (pp. 142-145); pp. 46-47 («Modernity has never», p. 47); p. 48 («vast saga»); p. 39 («Great Divide»), p. 40 («So is modernity») – for Thekla, the city that never stops building itself *or else*, and Leonia, the quintessential refuse metropolis, see I. Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, London, Vintage, 1997, pp. 115 («“Why is Thekla’s construction taking such a long time?” [...] “So that its destruction cannot begin”»), 102-103 («A fortress of indestructible leftovers surrounds Leonia [...] the more Leonia expels goods, the more it accumulates them», p. 103). Regarding the world-reproducing collusion between “defending society” and “preserving our enemies”, see M. Foucault, «*Society Must Be Defended*»: *Lectures at the Collège de France 1975-1976*, London, Penguin, 2004, in particular pp. 1-64, noting the following lines: «the political structure of society is so organised that some can defend themselves against others, or can defend their domination against the rebellion of others, or quite simply defend their victory» (p. 18); «what we see as a polarity, as a binary rift within society, is not a clash between two distinct races. It is the splitting of a single race into a superrace and a subrace [...] “We have to defend society against all of the biological threats posed by the other race, the subrace, the counterrace that we are, despite ourselves, bringing into existence”» (pp. 61-62).

earnest we gesture that we will, that we are “finally” caving in as part of our “continuous self-reconstitution” – or else.⁸

I know, I am myself putting non-existent pressure on the ongoing “order of things”, «a twelve-thousand-year structure, a structure that seems so real we call it Nature. The slowest and perhaps most effective weapon of mass destruction yet devised». Luminous, personal, presentable, my home, for instance, served me well in lockdown. There I had all the civilisational clutter I could want to display on video calls, and in between those like Husk Mitnavn I was privileged, «I Wished I Could Work in My Spare Time». I stayed, that is, admitted to “this” precinct – I made it work, remained steadfast at my desk, reached for the book stacks staged in domesticated symmetry in my background on Teams, as ever fully and perfectly stabilised-mobilised for the duped concertation of those ontological commitments which each time produce the ultimate performance, the spirit of the age, the sense of the contemporary, «my century, my beast», that *saeculum* which perhaps originally really only meant «the period of a person’s life»:

The ecological era we find ourselves in – whether we like it or not and whether we recognise it or not – makes necessary a searching reevaluation of philosophy, politics and art. The very idea of being “in” an era is in question. We are “in” the Anthropocene, but we are also “in” a moment of far greater duration.⁹

Ecocriticism has been more vocal than most on these matters recently, challenging especially the whole Neolithic Great Leap Forward by deuniversalising the agrarian package and calling it the exclusive business, the «agrilogistics» of the West. Timothy Morton’s ecocritical set provides a prime provocation in this regard. *Dark Ecology*, in particular, collapses Modern Europe and the Neolithic Revolution, latest and first full sedentism respectively, to the theoretical white westerner *eureka* «We Mesopotamians». Faced with this unrelenting identifier and charge, and with my positionality manifestly in view, this once I want to accept in principle the

⁸ H. Schmigden, *Bruno Latour in Pieces: An Intellectual Biography*, New York, Fordham UP, pp. 134-142 («multiple gestures», p. 134) – on the unsustainability of man-made worlds arising from having forced the «impossible on the possible», and on worlds and things going on «designing after we have designed and made them», see Fry, *Defuturing*, cit., pp. xi, citing Heidegger, and 10. On the “unity of capital” understood as a «dynamic, lived social relationship» and the aggregate extractivism and extortionism resulting from the «matrix of oppositional strategies» employed by capital, see at least S. Mezzadra and B. Neilson, *The Politics of Operations: Excavating Contemporary Capitalism*, Durham and London, Duke UP, 2019, pp. 1-54 («dynamic», p. 33; «matrix», p. 43). On the periodicity required to embed «symbolic structures in living behaviour» and producing the “perform or else” of the «continuous constitution of bodily acts» within forms of spatial and temporal “containment” see also J. McKenzie, *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance*, London and New York, Routledge, 2001, pp. 3-25, 29-53 («symbolic», p. 35), and E. Fischer-Lichte, *Cultural Performance*, in Ead. (ed.), *The Routledge Introduction to Theatre and Performance Studies*, London and New York, Routledge, 2014, pp. 164-184 («continuous», p. 184).

⁹ Morton, *Dark Ecology*, cit., pp. 5, 159 («twelve-thousand»; «ecological era») – see also, from the opening skirmishes, «I take *present* to mean *for the last twelve thousand years*. A butterfly kiss of geological time» (p. 2, italics at source), and «We are still within this twelve-thousand-year “present” moment, a scintilla of geological time. What happened in Mesopotamia happens “now”» (p. 39). On Husk Mitnavn’s inspirational mural, see A.R. Kristensen and M. Pedersen, «*I Wish I Could Work in My Spare Time*»: *Simondon and the Individuation of Work-Life Balance*, in *Culture and Organisation*, 23, 2017, 1, pp. 67-79. For a brilliant reading of Osip Mandelstam’s 1923 poem *The Century*, see G. Agamben, *What Is the Contemporary?*, in Id., *What Is an Apparatus? And Other Essays*, Stanford, Stanford UP, 2009, pp. 39-54 («my century», «the period», p. 42).

partisanship of the claim and grant on condition that indeed «I am the criminal». After all, my white westerner stock, removed as it was by war from lands close-by in that beast of the last century, did come from the Levant “originally” – and yet, who knows, really, what blood and what skin one stands for, given how little we each have on record past, say, the great-grandparents, and how many times, in the “era” that so provokes Morton, my lot, having maybe left the Levant, maybe “rebarbarised by design” to return beyond the bounds of capture, «out of range», «fiscally sterile», runaway, fugitive, of the “hill people”.¹⁰

So, wait – when exactly did my clan become criminal? As former primates we knapped flint to a fine art to get the best kill. As early hominins we tooled fire, cooking, shelter, sex to suit top-predatory “needs”. As *Sapiens sapiens*, we emerged from the Last Ice, having possibly done in both the last of the mega fauna and our last remaining first cousins. Were we already criminals by then? With most of the perishables and even the semi-hard durables of Deep Human Time gone, for its part this side of the performing circus never stops, never gives up churning a heady mix of irrepressibles, hope, bias, despair, to try to figure out the Alternative that got lost at the all-important junction, for weren’t we too unfettered, free-roaming, “affluent” – once?¹¹

¹⁰ Morton’s phrasal *eureka* «We Mesopotamians» drives the argument also by reiteration (*Dark Ecology*, cit., pp. 6, 9, 15, 39, 42-45, 47, 51, 54, 58, etc) – worth noting here, given my reuse in the text: «We “civilised” people, we “Mesopotamians”, are the narrators of our destiny. Ecological awareness is that moment at which these narrators find out that they are the tragic criminal [...] I am the criminal» (p. 9). For a pounding «brief history of agrilogistics» whereby Mesopotamia and agriculture form one and the same “aggressive vector” pointed westwards and causing the wiping out of the «indigenous European human social forms», see pp. 38-59 (p. 43). Interestingly, Morton avoids mentioning other autonomous Neolithisations, with further non-exception where reference is non-committally made («[...] The same can be said for rice growing in China; corn [...] growing in America; sorghum and yam in Africa. Significantly, the taro of New Guinea is hard to harvest [...] so the farmers in the highlands never “advanced” from hunter-gathering. The taro cannot be *broadcast* [...]», pp. 43-44, italics at source). For the rest of the ecocritical set see Id., *Ecology Without Nature*, cit., 2007; *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World*, Minneapolis, Minnesota UP, 2013; *Humankind: Solidarity with Nonhuman People*, London and New York, Verso, 2017. For a powerful counter-reading of the «deep history of the earliest states» with equally provocative but differently oriented eye-opening analysis of the dark sides of human domestication see J.C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*, New Haven, Yale UP, 2009, and *Against the Grain: A Deep History of the Earliest States*, New Haven, Yale UP, 2017 – the latter sets out on an uncomfortable question: «How did *Homo sapiens sapiens* come, so very recently in its species history, to live in crowded, sedentary communities packed with domesticated livestock and a handful of cereal grains?» (p. 1); the former provides evidence of self-barbarisation or “barbarianism by design” in reaction to being «incorporated, registered, tax-paying» subjects of the state («What is striking about this civilisational discourse is its staying power. Its permanence is all the more remarkable in the light of the evidence that ought to have shaken it to its very foundations. It survives despite our awareness that people have been moving, for millennia, back and forth across this semipermeable membrane between the “civilised” and the “uncivilised”», pp. 98-99). On China’s autonomous “Neolithisation”, namely fixed field agriculture, earth alteration projects, hierarchical sedentism, environmental exhaustion, “raised platform” living by jade elites, see at least L. Bin, Q. Ling and Z. Yijie (eds), *Liangzhu Culture: Society, Belief, and Art in Neolithic China*, London and New York, 2021, which on touching upon the labour force required to build Liangzhu City, Lower Yangtze River, 3300-2300 BCE, asks the same question of Poverty Point, «a “cosmopolitan” society» built by sedentary hunter-foragers in the Mississippi Delta, 1800-1200 BCE (pp. 14-16), as one must query not just how hunter-forager labour could be “mobilised” on such scale, but also what we should make of the “Deep Basics” shared by these different cultures.

¹¹ On *Sapiens sapiens*, the “phenomenal bestseller”, see Y.N. Harari, *Sapiens: A Graphic History*, London, Jonathan Cape, 2020, vol. I, *The Birth of Human Kind*; T. Higham, *The World Before Us: How Science Is Revealing a New Story of Our Human Origins*, London, Viking, 2021; S. Stewart-Williams, *The Ape That Understood the Universe: How the Mind and Culture Evolve*, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2020 – on the technical complexities of knapping flint, see C.

Again, and to continue to disagree productively with Latour, Morton, and why not, even Foucault. By the time those upcoming Homos were gathering in caves, we practised biopower like pros. We did not just “need” shelter – and cave systems armed and barbed with our camp fires did not simply provide “much needed” protection from the Hyenas & Co. There, in fact, we would pack and sort our people, “dramatising” social access and making initiation “unequal”, the very many outside, those meaning business inside, with the further “people separator” conjured from breathing poisonous manganese dioxide (charcoal) and hubristic saliva into the rockface, in an dare-devil alliance between rock, mind, body, hands performed as deep into the Gathering as any of the more select parties could make it or take it. And who were the criminals in our midst, at that stage? Their moment, for sure, had not been short in coming, for hadn’t the fabrility of some, of the sets of hands of some, got seriously crazied once bipedalism was installed for good? The size of the middens of knapped flint worldwide, where flint, that is, was available or traded, are a thing to behold. And have you by any chance tried the 3D navigation of Lascaux, keeping in mind that in the real biopower down there you would not have been able to attend proceedings in the unencumbered weightlessness of the “modern” digital?¹²

Butler, *Prehistoric Flintwork*, Stroud, The History Press, 2005; on the world emerging from the Last Glacial Maximum and the see-saw of lesser climate changes faced by the people of the Terminal Upper Palaeolithic / Epipalaeolithic ahead of full sedentism, see S. Mithen, *After the Ice: A Global Human History 20,000-5000 BC*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2003, pp. 3-55; on the extinction of the last mega fauna (was it humans? impacts? climate? or a combination of all three?), see A.J. Stuart, *Vanished Giants: The Lost World of the Ice Age*, Chicago and London, Chicago UP, 2021, pp. 1-66; on our close encounters of the DNA type with the Neanderthals during the very eons of time when we may have fragmented their habitat and reduced their opportunities for genetic diversity through other overkills, see D. Papagianni and M.A. Morse, *The Neanderthals Rediscovered: How Modern Science Is Rewriting Their Story*, London, Thames & Hudson, 2015, and D. Reich, *Who We Are and How We Got Here: Ancient DNA and the New Science of the Human Past*, Oxford, Oxford UP, 2018, pp. 3-50 (pp. 25-50). On pre-Neolithic stone age affluence (the “original” affluent society) the classic remains M. Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*, London and New York, Routledge, 2017 (1972), but for a contemporary application see also at least J. Suzman, *Affluence without Abundance: The Disappearing World of the Bushmen*, London and New York, Bloomsbury, 2017.

¹² D. Lewis-Williams, *The Mind in the Cave: Consciousness and the Origin of Art*, London, Thames and Hudson, 2002, pp. 7-40, 100-135, 204-286 – in particular pp. 234, 236 (on “dramatising” social divisions in a supposedly egalitarian society), 219 (on the health hazards of mixing manganese dioxide and saliva in the mouth before blowing “the paint” onto the rock), 266 (on naturally high concentrations of CO₂ at Lascaux). J.J. Cohen, *Stone: An Ecology of the Inhuman*, Minneapolis, Minnesota UP, 2015, makes fabulous reading on the «ontological vertigo» (p. 3) arising from our contact with rock – also extremely useful, on the manual fabrility triggered by bipedalism, D.B. Boles, *Cognitive Evolution*, London and New York, Routledge, 2019, pp. 136-189; while a site well worth a visit, in case you want to get a sense of the consuming search for flint, is the large mining complex known as the Grime’s Graves, Norfolk, UK, primarily 2600-2300 BCE, hence Neolithic, but mined into the Bronze and Iron Ages given low cost of flint compared to metals by that stage. Another flint-poor area allowing us to get a fair idea of the size of trading networks generated around flint procurement is again Poverty Point, north of the Mesoamerican Belt, Northeastern Louisiana, 1800-1200 BCE. It is on the back of such things, also considering how mechanically we tap into Great Divide Discourse, that I disagree with Foucault’s later positions on the transformation of power in the West since the classical age (of France). In asking, «Why Biopower? Why Now?», for instance Cisney and Morar produce the following passage: «A more insidious and *expansionary* model appears (or is invented): “a new mechanism of power which had very specific procedures, completely new instruments, and very different equipment [...] This new mechanism of power applies directly to bodies and what they do rather than to the land and what it produces.” Power now appears not to limit but to provoke, purify, and disseminate force for the purposes of management and control, ramified throughout all areas of life, the expansion of which is now its *raison d’être*. This new form of power is “working to incite, reinforce, control, monitor, optimise, and organise the forces under it: a power bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them, rather than one dedicated to impeding them, making them submit, or destroying them» – V.W. Cisney and N.

Let me just insist on this one. There, down there, I mean, in a proactive social environment with plenty of purpose, we would manipulate the artificial night to extract group action from biochemical by-products induced collectively. We would hook up the proxemics afforded by interconnected enclosures to bring forth the normed “enchancements” of «alter-reality», what some have more correctly called the «domestication of trance». We could exploit, yes, the toxicity as well as the spatiality of this awkward place to impose sense and purpose, narrative and spectacle, over and above our material condition, as crowded caves already rich in unbreathables get dangerously high in carbon dioxide and low in oxygen once you and your empowering mates really want to stay down there. Ecocriticism is right to lend spin to this spectacular proto-cinematic age, for, not so jocularly put, in their busy pre-Platonic nights-in «the Neanderthals would have loved Coca-Cola Zero». Yet our delightful Flintstones were not just phenomenal social junkies, the Sistine Chapels of Chauvet and Lascaux proving the point in excess; they were not merely technically like us, “modern” purely and solely by scientific classification, but “premodern” in everything else.¹³

Those highly strung Upper Palaeolithic folks were “young”, “excessive”, “opportunistic”. People ready to risk it, crave for it, exploit others by it – addicted to overdosing through literally “painting themselves” into the mind-blowing «subterranean corner» of a close encounter with the Lithic. And while the Cave and the Corner didn’t as yet constitute the criminal «European *cul de sac*» feeding the shrewder broadcaster of human exceptionalism which we now so want to resent in the “Neolithic intelligence”, the monomaniac alliances these guys pursued to harness

Morar (eds), *Biopower: Foucault and Beyond*, Chicago, Chicago UP, 2015, pp. 3-4, italics at source, citing respectively Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, cit., p. 35, and *The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality I*, London, Penguin, 1990, p. 136. See Pedriali, *Bared and Grievable*, cit., pp. 169-170 for a different articulation of the same disagreement.

¹³ Morton, *Dark Ecology*, cit., p. 15 («Neanderthals»), looking across to Plato, *Republic*, VII, 514a-520a, for those proto-cinematic nights in, but see also M. Rosengren, *Cave Art, Perception and Knowledge*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, pp. 9-18, for «some Platonic qualms» regarding the study of caves (p. 9); Lewis-Williams, *The Mind in the Cave*, cit., pp. 132 («alter-reality»), 131 («domestication») – on the interplay between images and acoustics (as «findings suggest that resonant areas are more likely to have images») see also p. 225. On global cave art, its evolution in the «European backwaters», its preservation in the depths of glacial-postglacial Europe, see at minimum B. David, *Cave Art*, London, Thames & Hudson, 2017, in particular pp. 139-201. On the daytime bias of archaeology, a must read is N. Gonlin and A. Nowell (eds), *Archaeology of the Night: Life After Dark in the Ancient World*, Boulder, Colorado UP, 2017 – but see also again the latter’s *Growing Up in the Ice Age*, cit., in particular pp. 104-145, on more junior “participatory” uses of caves revealing the co-creation processes behind the “Sistine Chapels” of the Upper Palaeolithic. Quite touching, for instance, is the snapshot narrative of a 3D reconstruction of a 14,000-year-old cave outing into Grotta della Bàsura, Italy, by a 5-strong family, two adults, one adolescent, two young kids, plus one canid, leaving traces of their journey, including evidence of clay-play around the stalagmites, handprints on ceilings, and finger flutings on walls at the appropriate height of each participant (pp. 73-74). On caves being «convenient cavities» for the full range of human activities, habitation, ritual, performance, burial, disposal, despite the challenges of the extreme sheltering they provide, see also C. Bonsall and C. Tolan-Smith (eds), *The Human Use of Caves*, Oxford, Archaeopress, 1997 – but do check out *Cave of Forgotten Dreams*, dir. W. Herzog, USA, IFC Films, 2010, looking for the expert reiteration («They were mad») by the team of speleologists taking part in Herzog’s Chauvet expedition, and the Lascaux 3D navigation, <https://archeologie.culture.fr/lascaux/en/visit-cave/puits> [last accessed on 8.9.2021] as neither visits spare the viewer the vertigo of that style and “era” of appropriation of the “impossible” while saving them CO₂ poisoning especially in the Shaft at Lascaux, which is where the erectile *Wounded Man* is iconised as suitably falling-swooning backwards.

“their” symbolic version of “our” “impossible” landscape («The landscape is one of extremes, allowing no middle ground for humanity») did blueprint and did go on “designing” the core and essential surplus extractions which drive us “Neolithics” to give scope, direction and framework, not to say ritual, rhythm and repetition to world- and meaning-making from the trusted «effect of an obsession».¹⁴

Can we change the way we change? I may be wrong, but since I suspect that you had rather I disagreed with the implications of my rhetorical questions, not to say with my counter-manifesto altogether, I want to insist just once more. Could you have stopped us? It is comforting, or more affirmatively put, it is great to be able to think that «we do not know exactly what we need from others – or what they ought to want from us», considering that «as the world clogs up with physical stuff» we seem not to understand, not really, how to engage well with the social materialities, the networks of people, places, things, other life that we set in motion through action in and on the world. It would be high time, that is, we let the more robust non-human agencies do more for us more officially, so that we may “reform” rather than “resubjugate” the future by “rebinding” ourselves in less outrageously self-possessed ways. But, you see, my doubt is hanging in here, as I am trying hard to stand by your hope, which I read, and do forgive me, for I do mean well, as a powerful driver for concerted containment and even suppression of the kind of future we want to feel justified and entitled to take out now, which is exactly what I find entirely disturbing in the unsaid-in-the-gap of the sentence cited earlier – «*The past was the confusion of things and men; the future is what will no longer confuse them*».¹⁵

Could you have changed, say, Çatalhöyük? Yes, Çatalhöyük, Konya Plain, South Central Anatolia – a dense settlement with houses sharing all four walls back to back, access exclusively via roofs and ladders, middens and latrines squeezed in between the mudbricks, the dead buried below the floors in rising layers marking the *saeculum* of that human time. All popular guides to this site will ask you whether you could or

¹⁴ Lewis-Williams, *The Mind in the Cave*, cit., pp. 101 («European *cul-de-sac*»), and 286, worth noting here at some length: «Lévi-Strauss spoke of myth growing “spiral-wise” until the “intellectual impulse which has produced it is exhausted”. So, too, I suspect, did the Upper Palaeolithic nexus of mental states, fixed imagery, social relations, and caves, until, approximately 10,000 years ago [...] social, environmental and economic changes made it necessary for the locus of the spirit world to be built above ground, and cave art came to an end. Upper Palaeolithic religious and political leaders had painted themselves into a subterranean corner» (p. 286). Other straight citations respectively from F. Berardi, *And: Phenomenology of the End*, South Pasadena CA, Semiotext(e), 2015, p. 14 («reality is the effect on an obsession», paraphrasing Witold Gombrowicz, but see also at least, pp. 9-29 and 293-321) and K. Bauer, *Adorno’s Nietzschean Narratives: Critiques of Ideology, Readings of Wagner*, New York, State University of New York UP, 1999, pp. 6-7 («the landscape is one of extremes»), p. 7, cit. Adorno) – while Lévi-Strauss is behind an indirect further provocation, having surfaced via C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York, Basic Books, 2007, p. 367 («My intelligence in Neolithic»).

¹⁵ Citation and re-citation, respectively, R. Sennett, *Together: The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation*, London, Penguin, 2012, pp. ix-xi («we do not know exactly»), «as the world clogs up», pp. x and ix) and 3-29 more generally, and Latour, *We Have Never*, cit., p. 71 («*The past was*», italics at source). On the “subjugation of the future” by a “colonialist” present see at minimum F. Berardi, *Futurability: The Age of Impotence and the Horizon of Possibility*, London and New York, 2017, pp. 1-29, more specifically pp. 16 and 12 – a position which I like to combine and have already combined (Pedriali, *Bared and Grievable*, cit., p. 155) with the notion of cultural “fuels” «powering the species» in very much doubtful «new directions» which I extract, among others, from K. Pinkus, *Fuel: A Speculative Dictionary*, Minneapolis, Minnesota UP, 2016, pp. 3 and 1-19 more generally.

would live in a totalising place like this, the expected answer of course being no – just imagine being little, sick, pregnant, or disagreeing, in a place where you have got to replaster every other month to maintain your «exuberant murals» as you struggle to keep the faecal matter down, or where someone might remove your ladder leaving you entombed in your clay while you are diligently drilling down in perfect cultural compliance to reach for the ancestral bone that will tell you the time. Yet the Early Neolithic, technically the PPNB (Pre-Pottery Neolithic B, fully domesticated), bang in Timothy Morton’s Age of the Western Criminals, packed a daringly large settlement there, but no State or Supra Institutions, and this proto-city, some eight to ten thousand people at its peak, was committed to and coped with without breaks for some twelve hundred years of its overall life (7500-5500 BCE). Today its remains, an artificial mound 21 metre deep, testify to all that there is to be testified – resilience, fabrility, hyper mania – even if eventual societal collapse is not what we are there to find conclusive evidence of.¹⁶

And it is not that, once you start looking, you just find “Neolithics” and “Neolithic Revolutions” everywhere, which also means where they shouldn’t be, especially as they do not happen in a “West” yet to be invented and charged with the full catalogue of evils to save *en bloc* the utopia of the missed Fairer Chance – which is indeed what none of us has had, even as on each of the life-deciding calls we did strive to pass for the committed, the converted, the “modern”-through-and-through, whenever, that is, it was our “modernity” that was being expected. By the time houses “agglutinised” around the appropriation of resources for permanent domestication of all and sundry in a “Fertile Crescent” soon to turn into the Advancing Dustbowl coming to your Neighbourhood, you would have already exhausted zillions of nested and interlocked

¹⁶ On the material and symbolic entanglement producing the «drama of domestication» at Çatalhöyük see I. Hodder, *Two forms of History Making in the Neolithic of the Middle East*, in Id. (ed.), *Religion, History and Place in the Origin of Settled Life*, Boulder, Colorado UP, 2018, pp. 3-32; *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things*, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012, pp. 179-222; *The Domestication of Europe: Structure and Contingency in Neolithic Societies*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1990, pp. 1-43 («exuberant murals», p. 7); «Always Momentary, Fluid and Flexible»: *Towards a Reflexive Excavation Methodology*, in «Antiquity», 71, 1997, pp. 691-700; *Probing Religion at Çatalhöyük: An Interdisciplinary Experiment*, in Id. (ed.), *Religion in the Emergence of Civilization: Çatalhöyük as a Case Study*, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2010, pp. 1-31. On the civilisational costs of the stratified proto-city producing memory, see also at minimum C.S. Larsen et al., *Bioarchaeology of Neolithic Çatalhöyük Reveals Fundamental Transitions in Health, Mobility and Lifestyle in Early Farmers*, in «Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America», 116, 2019, 26, pp. 12615-12623, and T. Hardy-Smith and P.C. Edwards, *The Garbage Crisis in Prehistory: Artefact Discard Patterns at the Early Natufian Site of Wadi Hammeh 27 and the Origins of Household Refuse Disposal Strategy*, in «Journal of Anthropological Archaeology», 23, 2004, pp. 253-289. On people being staged, measured and «made to appear as repetitions» in a «totalising building» being replicated without variation from layer to layer and making strata as part of a «complex game with time», see M. Bloch, *Is There Religion at Çatalhöyük... Or Are There Just Houses?*, in Hodder, *Religion in the Emergence of Civilization*, cit., pp. 146-162 (pp. 149, 153, 157 respectively). For an anti-monocausal regenerative view of civilisational collapse (for what’s left after collapse? Nothing, it would seem, if one looks at things from the biases of History, whereas what has really taken place is the passing of an elite and their world order, and what opens up could even be “new possibilities”), see G.M. Schwarz, *From Collapse to Regeneration*, and A.L. Kolata, *Before and After Collapse: Reflections on the Regeneration of Social Complexity*, in G.M. Schwartz and J.J. Nichols (eds), *The Regeneration of Complex Societies*, Tucson, Arizona UP, 2006, pp. 3-17 and 208-221 respectively – also quite useful for a review of positions, G.D. Middleton, *The Show Must Go On: Collapse, Resilience and Transformation in 21st-Century Archaeology*, in «Reviews in Anthropology», 2017, pp. 1-27.

lives, as their respective habitats kept some “channelled for movement” more than others, making whatever archaic time and space could be amenable to their developers the foundational axis for the toxic states of deliberate collective action. If you were sufficiently criminal to have managed to pass on your genes and move onwards and upwards from the exploitative darkness of Chauvet and Lascaux, before you could sit back and thrive from the «differential densities» of social experience of the many “exuberant” but still quite impenetrable Çatalhöyüks of the established Early Mesopotamian Neolithic, you would have had to take in the further unchanging excess and non «Zero Point in Time» produced by Göbekli Tepe – yes, Göbekli Tepe, the one surviving *Potbelly Hill* of its time, at least according to us so long as no competing remains emerge. A tell some 15 metres deep and 20 acres across a limestone ridge not far from today’s Şanlıurfa, South-eastern Anatolia – roughly 9500-8200 BCE in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic A (9500-8700 BCE) but verging on to the PPNB in the later stages (8700-8200 BCE).¹⁷

Allow me to press you again. Where exactly in this hyperactive Anatolian arena would you have stopped us? What here once stood “as though they were buildings”, stone circles, other stone structures, a plethora of carved pillars brought together by tireless human modification of a high plateau, now recirculates precisely the exceptionalist “broadcast” we would rather no longer subvent, or at least cease to applaud, even as the archaeological dig itself, the latest in the scientific re-edition of the “Mesopotamian” subjugation to presence, does its mediatised best to surpass the spontaneous “industrial moraines” of “Nature”, thus also surplussing whatever signature function the site had “originally” presumed for itself in order to hold on to its synthetic license, its departure from the things not made by us – for the quivering “Sputnik” cannot be “Nature”, can it? Just try to tell me what you think we have erected here and for what posterity through devising, coordinating, procuring, delivering, attending to etc etc and now through digging out a mega site so worthy of

¹⁷ C. Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths, and Monuments*, Oxford, Oxford UP, 1994, pp. 7-67 («channel for movement», p. 17; «differential densities», p. 11) – well worth noting here the cautionary warning, not least given the wording of the title of my paper: «A culturalist view of landscape as a highly specific, symbolic and cognitive ordering of space offers far more potential in understanding but [...] encloses humanity into a series of separate cultural worlds constituted as structured sets of shared representations divorced from “nature” or the physical world» (p. 23). A different type of warning arises from the technical literature on Göbekli Tepe, first dug by Klaus Schmidt between 1994 and 2014 to prove the presence of a stone age sanctuary created well ahead of the onset of even the earliest stages of agrarianism by what were supposed to be still primarily highly mobile hunter-foragers – K. Schmidt, *Göbekli Tepe: A Stone Age Sanctuary in South-Eastern Anatolia*, Berlin, Ex Oriente e.V., 2007; A. Bachheimer, *Göbekli Tepe: An Introduction to the World’s Oldest Temple*, Ardross, Birdwood, 2018. That view has come increasingly under pressure, following further findings pointing in the direction of “agglutinative” domestic settlements on site already in the PPNA stage, not surprisingly an unwelcome piece of news for the eminently marketable previous narrative of the “World’s First Temple” built by hunter-gatherers – see L. Clare, *Göbekli Tepe, Turkey: A Brief Summary of Research at a New World Heritage Site (2015–2019)*, in «Forschungsberichte des DAI», 2, 2020, pp. 81-88 («Zero Point in Time», p. 82), also noting these lines: «The interpretation of Göbekli Tepe as a mountaintop sanctuary that was constructed by hunter-gatherers soon prompted a fitting narrative [...] Subsequently, religious zeal was catapulted to the fore as a serious contender for Neolithisation (domestication), an idea that was ground-breaking at the time because it contradicted earlier notions that (organised) religion only emerged much later [...] This paradigm will doubtlessly prove difficult to dispel, especially given its prominence in current marketing strategies around the UNESCO World Heritage Site» (pp. 82-83).

so much muscular masculinity that its stratified sum-total symbolic storage capacity, including the monster megalith breakages still lying unincorporated in the nearby quarries, at the time could only be terminated by being fairly rapidly fully returned to the commerce of forces other than human. How do you permanently divest from such dogged and resurrecting intensity of cultural overspend?¹⁸

Whether or not you and I can ever agree to call these energy exchanges overdosed lives, those “middens”, if they were finally treated as such in the intentional backfilling by those appointed to keep upgrading the site, or temples, if they ever were temples erected to dare, among other sensory implications, the human voice through its earliest public projection, or residential agglutinations, if these were homes on the cusp of an infinite forward regress into a future that could only be faced through interacting with yet more durable social effects, a Glennol Lioness here, a Lion Man there, within tightly controlled enclosures – in sum, regardless of what those fixtures and those portables really were and stood for, these Anatolian thresholds on the way to further transitions are not something at least I can or want to condemn (“bulldoze”) under the one partisan identifier tag (“western agrilogistics”), this despite disputing their toxic blueprint, and quite separately from my ongoing disagreement with Latour and Morton and even Foucault whenever he wants to sink just “classical France”.¹⁹

¹⁸ Still on Göbekli Tepe, and in particular on (a) social surplus and size of labour required to generate a site on this scale, (b) symbolic storage obtained via large carvings and “small signs”, the latter arguably one of the earliest forms of proto-writing, (c) overall gendering of the symbolic package justifying the hypothesis that this might well have been a men’s-only “hunting club”, and (d) opportunities for further sensory enculturation obtained via the interaction with the buildings and more specifically with their acoustics, see at minimum: T.B. Henley, *Introducing Göbekli Tepe to Psychology*, in «Review of General Psychology», 22, 2018, 4, 477-484; A. McBride, *The Acoustics of Archaeological Architecture in the Near Eastern Neolithic*, in «World Archaeology», 46, 2014, 3, pp. 349-361; B.G. Trigger, *Monumental Architecture: A Thermodynamic Explanation of Symbolic Behaviour*, in «World Archaeology», 22, 1990, 2, pp. 119-132. More generally on how monuments “scaffold” preliterate symbolic storage and “subject” their makers, in our case in all likelihood “watershed” hunter-gatherers developing forms of agglutinated living and ritually which led to the very monumentalisation that would eventually “neolithise” them, see T. Watkins, *Building Houses, Framing Concepts, Constructing Worlds*, in «Paléorient», 30, 2004, 1, pp. 5-23; J.F. Osborne, *Monuments and Monumentality*, in Id. (ed.), *Approaching Monumentality in Archaeology*, Albany NY, State University of New York Press, 2014, pp. 1-19; R. Bradley, *The Significance of Monuments: On the Shaping of Human Experience in Neolithic and Bronze Age Europe*, London and New York, Routledge, 2018, pp. 3-35 – also quite useful on archaic monument repurposing and modification till the final loss of symbolic inscription, C. Scarre, *Monumentality*, in T. Insoll (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Ritual and Religion*, Oxford, Oxford UP, 2011, pp. 9-23, and C. Cordova, *Geoarchaeology: The Human-Environmental Approach*, London and New York, I.B. Tauris, 2019, pp. 122-167, the latter in particular covering the cycles of growth and contraction of the Anatolian “mega sites” between the earliest PPNA and the final PPNB, while also noting and warning, at the more theoretical level, against the professional archaeologist’s bias for the less perishable, hence more rewarding “monumental” remains. Plenty of the latter certainly keeps being noted, as Neolithisation, having been relatively slow in establishing itself in the Fertile Crescent, swept relatively quickly north-westwards once it had landed in Europe – on route from, say, Lepenski Vir, Danube Iron Gates, Serbia, to Brittany, Carnac, Avebury, Stonehenge and into the Scandinavian beyond, growing in both ambition and range through both higher density sites, e.g., the three thousand standing stones avenue at Carnac, and ever greater megalith mass and height, such as the nearly 21 metre tall Menhir Brisé, Locmariaquer, Brittany, compared to the 3 to 6 metre tall monoblock pillars at Göbekli Tepe. The former supergiant may never have stood but met its breakage without a doubt on location, having been transported over land and maybe water for some 10-12 km – R. Hornsey, *The Grand Menhir Brisé: Megalithic Success or Failure?*, in «Oxford Journal of Archaeology», 6, 1987, 2, pp. 185-217; J. Martineau (ed.), *Megalith: Studies in Stone*, Glastonbury, Wooden Books, 2018, pp. 3-121 (pp. 63-95).

¹⁹ In these paragraphs my own monumentalist bias is in evidence also as I call upon two stunningly small artefacts that belong to neither this period nor the Göbekli site, namely the Guennol Lioness, roughly 3000 BCE, Southern Iran, a

With these notes I am not trying to pass the buck. And I am certainly not mixing my premises if at this stage I say that like “green ideas” our great arenas “sleep furiously”, refusing to go fallow even as a dissolved “parliament of things”. Have you noticed and noted, for instance, that as we rebel against our imminent extinction we keep feeding the statues in the ziggurats, for they too are hungry, and they too, like capital and capitalism, can only count and call us to account, so that one “apocalyptic” protects the other “apocalyptic” as together they profit from both the shortest- and the longest-term product placements – the latter consisting in that quarter million years, this by the safest estimates and we are generally really good at the «explicit calculations», which must pass before our nuclear waste from our cold wars may again hide as negligible matter under negligible warning markers. Weren’t you too looking for our enemies? Human agency, the way I see it, call it «cognitive automation» or «neuro-totalitarianism» or even «neural-hijacking» by alpha individuals, is never anachronistically over-equipped for the embodied, entangled, embedded etc etc “burnout” required to mobilise the bottom reserves, the ultimate symbolic fast carbs. The «circularity of festivals»? The blessed time of “sacred assembly”? As opposed to the alienating dispersal of dehumanised work? Who, in their right mind, can still write with genuine nostalgia about the «disappearance of rituals»? But do rest reassured when it comes to me. For all my will to live, I have not written these pages lightly, even though thanks to my bipedalism I have tried to stay light-footed.²⁰

cubist punch packed in a mere 8.4 cm, i.e., a small object powerful enough to fit in one’s palm (Osborne, *Monuments and Monumentality*, cit., pp. 1-3), and the Lion Man, Stadel Cave, Baden-Württemberg, a staggering 40000 year old piece of mammoth tusk which roughly 400 hours of human work transformed into a 31 cm tower of a human figure with upper torso and head of a cave lion. This was a much passed-round object, as can be surmised from the signs of hand wear, over and above the myriad fracture lines of the final breakage, and “monumentally” stating, as Neil McGregor fittingly puts it in one episode of *Living with the Gods*, BBC Radio 4, 27/10/2017, that «believing is belonging» (still available in trailer version, <https://thekidshouldseethis.com/post/lion-man-of-the-hohlenstein-stadel>; last accessed on 8.9.2021)– no small token of human hubris, and no irrelevant indicator of the metabolic conversions required for belief to stay on top of the effort to survive, not least given that at the time the Lion Man was made humans and cave lions coexisted in their respective roles as prey with predator ambitions and straight top predator. It is, I want to stress going back one tier in these paragraphs, from the “deliberate accident” of having managed to deviate from our low station in the food chain by infinitesimally minimal degrees that eons of time later we unparadoxically arrive at the moment when it is the natural world that can end up looking like an “industrial” imitation of our “industrious” work but only so long as in the world out there we can still pick our giveaway signature, the flawed beat embedded in our “brand” (in the text, the quivering “Sputnik” to be spotted as “our” Sputnik in Adorno’s night sky above Sils Maria, whereas the glacial moraines must be “humanely” constructed and understood as the planet leaving its own junk heaps behind, having materially intruded upon itself – cf. Bauer, *Adorno’s Nietzschean Narratives*, cit., pp. 6-7, and citing T.W. Adorno, *Aus Sils Maria*, in Id., *Ohne Leitbild: Parva Aesthetica*, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1967, pp. 326-327).

²⁰ Citations respectively from Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge*, cit., p. 143 («one would have to speak of *bio-power* to designate what brought life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations», italics at source), Berardi, *Futurability*, cit., p. 20 («cognitive automation», «neuro-totalitarianism») and Smail, *On Deep History and the Brain*, cit., p. 173 («neural-hijacking») – call it indeed a fact of gregarious species life, this is, in short and citing the phrase for the second time, classic «psychotropic economy» (p. 180). Already dormant in my subtitle, the “furious sleep” of great arenas here finally plays openly on the nonsensical / fully sensible challenge launched by N. Chomsky, *Syntactical Structures*, The Hague and Paris, Mouton, 1976 (1957), p. 15 («Colorless green ideas sleep furiously»). On Deep Future “confessing” with regard to the geological repositorying of nuclear waste see at least S. Skrimshire, *Confessing Anthropocene*, in «Environmental Humanities», 10:1, 2018, pp. 310-329, looking into what I sarcastically term “product-placement” at the Onkalo Waste Repository, Olkiluoto, Finland, and the WIPP, Carlsbad, New Mexico, USA. As a narratologist I find particularly rich to observe the spin that “we” are ready to lend to those Deep Future

Operations, as Capital, as ever “lacking narrativity” and waiting to pick some winner of a story from Ritual, sets itself up for the staging and performing of a semblance of compunction over its own environmental “accounts”. Stone circles having a magnetism as well as a radioactivity of their own now, I must admit I also particularly relish the narreme of the warning markers we are planning to erect to fend off future people intrusion on those sites for maybe a handful of millennia, if our technology can take it, as those people may well not heed our warning, may not be able to understand our languages, or may simply want to intrude anyway, all things and stories, however, to be statistically and rigorously “modelled for”. But there you go. In the name of the fraudulent father, we still produce lines as story-rich and as grabbing as this – from the documentary *Containment*, dir. P. Galison and R. Moss (2019): «The future will come. We cannot stop there being a ten thousand years from now [...] “These standing stones mark an area once used to bury radioactive waste. Do not dig here. Do not drill here. These markers were designed to last 10,000 years”» (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUXwrWMS-x8>; last accessed on 8.9.2021). And from another trailer, given that we are at it: «You are heading towards a place that is dangerous, you should have not come here [...]», admittedly the most powerful toxic attractor there is – *Into Infinity*, dir. M. Madsen, 2010 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qoyKe-HxmFk>; last accessed on 8.9.2021). For a self-questioning docu-comedy portraying radical extinction rebellion literally and metaphorically lost in the corridors of the British ziggurat, see the rather wonderful *Extinction*, dir. J. Cooper Stimpson, starring Emma Thompson, 2020 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pD24LntwRow>; last accessed on 8.9.2021). More generally, and as ever highly provocative on these and other related matters, F. Luisetti, *Geopower: On the States of Nature of Late Capitalism*, in «European Journal of Social Theory», 22:3, 2019, pp. 342-363, the focus in this case being on the profitable and even docile «political myths and figures of chaos», Gaia, Chthulu and Climate Leviathans, which the neoliberal agenda feeds to our receptive if rebellious fears. B.-C. Han, *The Burnout Society*, Stanford, Stanford UP, 2015, is instead directly behind my final lines, at least as much as it is behind the work of my students as part of my course on *Biopower*. For a truly delightful killer of a video essay from that course, Class of 2021, see N. Picon, *The Last (Wo)Man*, https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/THE+LAST+%28WO%29MAN+/1_lpwgw7b3 [last accessed on 8.9.2021] – for the source of my closing disagreement see again Han, *The Disappearance of Rituals*, cit., right from the title, and in particular pp. 36-46 («circularity», p. 39; «holy period of assembly», p. 43) on festivals and religions.