

CORNUCOPIA

In the sunshine

Signs are not seen immediately. It has been observed that my gait is abnormal, taking long sunken strides with a centre of gravity slung too low, too low for balance, instead indicating some loss of muscle control or irregularity of functions, alternately gathering myself up above my knees and mincing across rooms out of kilter with shoulders and arms tightly bunched and discoordinated by occasional tremors. My temperament is liable to shift, in certain conditions my behaviour is aggressive, particularly in situations don't don't which induce anxiety such as the dinner table or the supermarket. In the case of the latter I am liable to lose track of time persistently pacing the aisles creating ciphered patterns along the pathways of these repetitions, the continuous perambulations coding an encrypted signal or ataxic anagrammatic message which is mouthed quietly whilst pacing, C!C!C!C!C!C!C!, it is possible for this to escalate to a frenzy, a bird's-eye view might read these movements like a waggle dance. Whilst at all times remembering to be diffident and deferential to other people, shining a soft silverside smile as I swing past them, and remembering to keep gathering myself, keep it together, gathering my gait up again and walking with rump pushed backwards and out and toes curled inwards. At this slower speed I have time to look more closely at surfaces and products, the misty doors of the refrigerated section bear traces of greased finger tips and quickly nobody is I rub my cheek along collecting the condensation like cool morning dew,

wet fields, I rub my flanks along delicately rustling packets and alone in an aisle with my tongue I draw the clean lines and corners of a cardboard container, which softens slightly with this licking tasting lightly lactic like oats.

The cornucopia – the mythological horn of plenty – disgorges a copia – a torrent of goods that is more than anyone can consume. Fundamental to The Restaurant is the cornucopian promise that what is on offer is inexhaustible – not only in sheer mass but in variety too, in variety of flavour and colour and size, variety of origin, variety of method of cultivation. If the effect is dizzying that is part of the plan. Wandering the lower halls of the restaurant the atrium of fruit and vegetable is indeed like being in the mythic Land of Plenty ... The new fashion is rough, homely mock rustic – fruit and vegetables cascading out of bushel baskets with folksy handwritten signs planted in them telling where they come from, what they taste like, how to cook them. A spectacle – in other words – of origins.

Will Benedict and Steffen Jørgensen, *The Restaurant*²

*The Pheasant, Partridge, and the Lark
Flew to my house as to the Ark.
The willing Oxe, of himselfe came
Home to the slaughter, with the Lamb,
And every beast did thither bring
Himself to be an offering.
The scalie herd, more pleasure took
Bath'd in the dish than in the brook.*

Thomas Carew, 'To Saxham'

² Will Benedict and Steffen Jørgensen, Episode 2 'Mother' of *The Restaurant*, digital video, accessed June 2019, <https://dis.art/series/the-restaurant/>.

Vertumnus

The first Janus face of the cornucopia is an oil portrait of a man's face composed of compacted vegetables and fruit. Vertumnus is a changer or a turner, poised like a harvest day spectacular with a studied joviality that does not reach those opaque berries pushed into shallow eye sockets and a drunkard's pear nose. In mock rustic maquillage, he seduces with a pretence of earthy authenticity, in a headdress of golden wheat he performs a pageant of origins. The second face of the cornucopia is a hypertrophic, disarticulated synthetic meat product, a face like bruised pink paint rubbed into canvas in a cack-handed sort of way, set down into collar bones that bend inward like soft cartilage carrying the face deep inside like a pushed in football, and eyes like bashed out windows.

(1) XENOBIOTICS

And I never left a trace other than these steps of infamy

Our environment is distinguished between what is eatable and what is not; this is an important distinction to make for survival. The cornucopia produces a realm of edible slopes and hollows, beyond the pale of which are amassed deep drifts of foreign matter which can be collectively described as xenobiotic substance. The doctor says to Clarice, I do wish we could chat longer, but... I'm having an old friend for dinner, a xenobiota is a stranger at the door, an alien quantity arriving at the threshold, or a threat in the shape of a friend, who eats who? A loosely hung genealogy

of xenobiotics might pin its origins upon Louis Pasteur studying beer in his laboratory in the newly created Faculty of Sciences in Lille in 1857, as the earliest pioneer of biotech, in its primordial phase in the field of zymurgy – the alchemy of fermentation. The father of microbiology and the first zymologist develops a protocol of exclusion and inclusion, xenobiota cannot exist as a category without an etiquette for what is accepted and what is rejected. The pasteurian paradigm ushers in the apparatus of process optimisation. This apparatus has two prongs. The first prong is a taxonomic project that articulates and excludes xenobiota, it is the project for the removal of the undesired or superfluous microorganism from the production of food and drink. The second prong is at this point only indicated as an inevitable companion logic to the first: its project is the hybridisation of a different genre of xenobiota: it is the enthusiastic welcoming in of synthetic actors to the foodchain. Stretching between all this is an aetiology producing new relationships; restructuring the interrelation of parts. *From this point on society is reorganised around new actors not all of whom are social.*²

Pasteurian pastoral

There is many a slip twixt cup and lip! Simple accidental contaminations, colours and cancer-causing chemicals, cruciferous weeds, honey poisoned by rhododendrons, preservatives, emulsifiers, perverted foods, cooking fats, solanine sprouting potatoes, antibiotics, drugs, hormones,

² Bruno Latour, *The Pasteurization of France*, trans. Alan Sheridan and John Law (Cambridge, Massachusetts & London: Harvard University Press, 1988), 38.

pesticides, fabistic broad beans, herbicides, dental decay, soft drinks, laxative salts, fluoridation, congenital abnormalities, diseases of the arteries, heart, kidneys, nervous system, poisoned foods of wild animals, birds, bees, worms, fish. *No one towards the end of the century could do without contagion in connecting men, plants and animals.*³ Pasteurisation is the simple process of the heat attenuation of the microbe, the partial sterilisation of a substance permitted a complex revolution in production and consumption. At the turn of the century pasteurisation provides a fulcrum, a structure of feeling; pasteurianism produces a new pastoral mode that now persists as the defining modality of the cornucopia. A narrative is set in motion but also a means by which it is revealed, a system of capture or a way of seeing; a species of optics that is endoscopic. A network of contaminants, contagious elements, pollutants, undesirables, telluric identities, goitrogenics, zoonotics, filiations and inbreds, dead-wells, artificial actors, toxic aliens, cannibal castrates, transgenic organisms, bdelloids and other freshwater rotifers, hypertrophic monsters and persistent pathologies emerge. Some of these might already have been here but they are now regurgitating in a technicolour torrent rendered in a subdigital kind of granularity.

Endoscopy

2 days ago. So much bubbles AAA – 47-year-old female patient have multiple erosion in jejunum and ileum how can treat through double balloon enteroscopy REPLY I hate touching saliva. Initial polyps first encountered, as tactile button like

growths on the ribbing of the intestinal tract, oftentimes due to the angle on being able to remove pieces of the polyp and eventually the entire lesion. Suspicious lesions resist identification, polyps 1.5 metres into her organism an area of concern was encountered, early on it had an irregular mass like appearance and at that time we could not determine if it was a mass within the wall of the small intestine or was something outside the wall that had invaded or pressed into the wall, due to the appearance and nature of this lesion the possibility of a malignancy was seriously considered and a small limited resection and underwent recovery.⁴

Titans

Nudging the other side of the turn of the century from Pasteur was the launch of another titan: the genesis of the Monsanto corpus. Followed by more innocuous beginnings: a small lot adjacent to Monrovia airport was to become a future site of humble pilgrimage as the first Macdonalds restaurant opened in 1937; M M M M M M M M we pass under these golden arches and nothing will ever be the same again. The following year the hormone diethylstilbestrol (DES) was synthesised for the first time as an orally effective oestrogen for humans to prevent miscarriage.⁵ In July 1940, Colonel Sanders finalised his 'Original Recipe' of eleven herbs and spices and in 1943 Lorenz published a finding of the threefold increase in the fat

4 Nationwide Children's Hospital, 'Using Capsule Endoscopy and Double Balloon Enteroscopy for Complex Small Intestinal Disease', accessed June 2019.

5 A. P. Raun and R. L. Preston, 'Impact of Implants on Performance and Carcass Value of Beef Cattle', (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University; 1997), 10.

content of the breast and leg muscle of cockerels after implanting DES subcutaneously.⁶ In 1946 chickens fed by-products of tetracycline fermentation led to the discovery of the rapid growth potential of antibiotic growth promoters (AGPs), a programme of long-term sub-therapeutic doses of antibiotics was readily adopted as an industry standard alongside DES implants for broilers, which provided a kind of low level mood music for what was to come.⁷ 1947 saw the first experiments with DES implants for ruminants with the following conclusions: improved gain and feed conversion, although carcass quality was degraded, and implants caused vulvar swelling and extended the heat period for females, producing a nymphomaniacal stance, elevated tailheads and pronounced mammary and teat development as well as toxicity symptoms such as rectal prolapse.⁸ The following year the McDonalds brothers remodel their restaurant and implement their ‘Speedee Service System’.

Many a slip twixt cup and lip

The brothers had realised that the most important thing is the mode of transmission, the means of diffusion. The cornucopia is not a process but a process-of-process-optimisation: conveyance logistics or a shifting abstraction of the relationship between factors in motion. The Speedee Service System can be twinned with the first long range shipment of frozen meat in 1876 from Ar-

6 Ibid,12.

7 Manuel Gonzalez Ronquillo and Juan Carlos Angeles Hernandez, ‘Antibiotic and synthetic growth promoters in animal diets: Review of impact and analytical methods’, *Food Control* 72, 255e267 (2017).

8 Raun and Preston, ‘Impact of Implants’, 10.

gentina to France on the SS Paraguay at minus 30 degrees Celsius – the precursor of a translocal terroir(ism), shifting the paradigm towards a kind of placemaking that sets up localities as nodalities traversed by non-spatialised flows. Let’s call it alimentary lubrication. Speedee Service finds its mirror image in the conception of the Feed Conversion Ratio (FCR), the protocol animating cornucopian logic. The other side of this coin is horizontal gene transfer and the accidental hybridisation of non-GM crops, antibacterial resistances and the forming of eco-niches. (One bright morning a farmer walks out to a fallow field, Google search: ‘The Zombie Wheat Mystery’.) A 2015 study found the genomes of 40 animals (including ten primates, four *Caenorhabditis* worms and twelve *Drosophila* insects) contained genes, which the researchers concluded, had been transferred from bacteria and fungi by horizontal gene transfer, estimating that for some nematodes and *Drosophila* insects these genes had been acquired relatively recently.⁹ Forget about filiation, genes slip guilefully between organisms, oh dear, too much lubrication! Is this what you mean when you say there is many a slip twixt cup and lip? This refrain dogs the cornucopia, undoing all its industry, this slippage between the mouth and the morsel: the unforeseeable consequences of alimentary lubrication.

CJD

Sometimes it feels like the hardest thing in the world is to walk across a room, I feel so awkward

9 Jyoti Madhusoodanan, ‘Horizontal Gene Transfer a Hallmark of Animal Genomes?’, *The Scientist*, accessed July 2019, <https://www.the-scientist.com/news-opinion/horizontal-gene-transfer-a-hallmark-of-animal-genomes-35791>

as if my body was hitched up under my armpits like a pair of crutches and I would sooner dissolve into this corner quietly and gently into a puddle, I would sooner slide across the floor like a squid, but you. My head is as light as a pumice stone, and facially fluttering like soft wings under the skin of my cheeks, to talk to you, my arms lunge about with amazing spasms knocking glasses off the bar in extravagant sweeps, when I move across the room my whole body tremors like a cat whose belly vibrates when you rub it, oh do you like animals? I say, did I tell you!!! Did you watch last night? On tv. I'm so interested in everything at the moment, the flat, what's in the fridge, HA HA HA HA HA HA, sometimes I just laugh and laugh but its difficult to remember where is began, sorrysorry, you said you like the way I smile so aimlessly like a little old lady with nothing to hide, you say my brain is full of holes like a sponge, you could use my head like a pillow it's so soft! Sometimes I itch and itch when I'm in the bath I use the green side of the sponge to scrape until the water looks like soup, that's disgusting you say, HA HA, tangled lumps of fibrils and my face like a mask to hang on your wall.

Recursion

The logic of the cornucopia is recursive. Like the family tannery in Franche-Comté where Pasteur spent his childhood the cornucopia functions to produce and preserve skins, its operations occur at its outer limit, the membrane that performs its boundaries: skins are soaked, limed, dehaired, scudded, bated and pickled. He says, *if I could only smell the odour of the tannery, I am sure I would feel*

*much better.*¹⁰ However this intensive focus on surface membranes renders the cornucopia vulnerable to contaminants when leakages and slippages do occur. The interior feeds on itself and reproduces itself within a closed system. One bright morning in 1984 a farmer in Sussex notices a cow staggering and acting aggressively. Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, an infectious incidence of a misfolded protein, the practice of feeding meat and bone meal to cattle containing the remains of other animals carrying the disease means the disease is contained within a closed loop, a continuously fed mother culture. Nothing ever escapes the cornucopia, instead it expands like the Pacific Garbage Patch, like ectoplasm, to encompass everything, you cannot think without it, cannot think beyond it. 'Food for thought' is an inaccurate aphorism, food is thought. Food expands aggressively across consciousness, etymologically too: food, fodder; foraging; pillaging, looting. *Oh I feel so hangry all the time!* Thinking amounts to no more than following a series of choices on a menu, *how else would I know the right word for what I want?* The cephalic phase of digestion, indicated by the transmission of neurogenic signals that precede the actual ingestion of foodstuffs, is entirely analogous to our world-cognition: a continuously anticipatory condition, *I can only consider what is laid on the table before me.* Pasteur's father stitched into the flap of his leather satchel the pasteurian credo: *Never think about anything but what you are doing at the time.*¹¹

10 Patrice Debré, Louis Pasteur, trans. Elborg Forster (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998), 12.

11 Ibid., 14.

Supermarket

Hushed bare legs and arms are surface chilled and bristling as they move through aisles and into fridges, we are not dressed for the occasion but everyday there is something we need we forgot some times we go and we forget what we forgot and buy something else, get home come back, I can't even remember how we got here, everyone's limbs moving drowsily as if the interior was a kind of synthetic velour, and we drift idly trailing eyes along products lined on shelves in an abundance as so many fingerlike villi beckoning and undulating like bright coral in the passing of peristaltic waves. Product labels are limpid pools, we peer in with tightly drawn brows. The camera perspective so often is within the trolley, angled upwards at unnaturally expanded chins or at low level, swung around aisles detailing lower pelvis sections and ogling idiot children. A flattened quotidian like marbled lino, the supermarket is always the background, a perfect place for a shoot out, a perfect place to pick up, the kind of place to meet someone special although in real life everyone seems weird and buys such weird stuff. It's the perfect place to rub your face with blood, shout abuse at old ladies, create chaos, to run an angry arm along shelves and send things scattering on shiny floors, I quit! I quit! to muffled screams, to rampage, pull a knife, take hostages.

Ubiquitous

The cornucopia is ubiquitous, it is on the table when you sit down to eat with your family, it is your friends and do they even like you? It is a walk along the river in the rain to 'clear your mind', it is

smiling at you in the mirror behind the bar as you order one for the road. Its presence is penetrative and persistent. For instance: synthetic growth producers exhibit high levels of chemical stability and low rates of deactivation leading to a persistent environmental presence. Concerns regarding groundwater contamination from wastewater lagoons of synthetic hormones and the manner in which these bioconcentrate in aquatic biota. Experiments in 1996 indicated the inhibition of testicular growth in rainbow trout exposed to representative levels of estrogenic alkylphenolic chemicals. A 2011 study detects wastewater contamination associated with proximity to CAFOs, (concentrated animal feeding operations). This study investigates the occurrence of seventeen veterinary pharmaceuticals and thirteen steroid hormones and hormone metabolites in lagoons and adjacent groundwater at operating swine and beef cattle facilities. Estrone, testosterone, 4-androstenedione, and androsterone were detected in wastewater impoundments. Results from this study indicate that groundwater underlying swine and beef cattle CAFO facilities is susceptible to contamination by veterinary pharmaceuticals and steroid hormones originating in wastewater lagoons. These data represent the first study to show simultaneous groundwater contamination by a wide range of antibiotics and steroid hormones.¹² The cornucopia is washing up on your doorstep any day now!

¹² Shannon Bartelt-Hunt, Daniel D. Snow, Teyona Damon-Powell, David Miesbach, 'Occurrence of steroid hormones and antibiotics in shallow groundwater impacted by livestock waste control facilities' in *Journal of Contaminant Hydrology*, (Volume 123, Issues 3-4, 25, Pages 94-103), April 2011.

Clingfilm

Oh yeah I wake up late, I lay in bed just can't get the guts to get up I just want to lie here all day and someone to bring me chips and a pan to piss into and I never have to move and people will come to visit to sit with me and tell me little things if they like but no one can pierce the skin of my great disinterest which is universal and very wonderful to me to finally have achieved some dignity. A 2017 study shows that nanoplastics have reached a size they can penetrate that highly selective membrane: the blood brain barrier. Researchers involved in the study of fish brains have demonstrated the occurrence of behavioural disorders in fish that are affected by nanoplastics. They eat slower and explore their surroundings less. The researchers believe that these behavioural changes may be linked to brain damage caused by the presence of nanoplastics in the brain.¹³ This is new ground, new territory for anxiety. No amount of sustainable bamboo charcoal filtration water bottles will save you! Previously we had confined our worries active agents in the foodchain causing growth abnormalities, compromising immune systems, genital malformations, cancerous growths etc. The plasticisation of the brain, shepherds in an inertial era of xenobiotics: sluggish foodstuffs; the dawning of an age of great disinterest. The clingfilmed segmentation of the brain is an appropriate endgame for the cornucopian regime of disarticulation.

13 Brigitte Toussaint, Barbara Raffael, Alexandre Angers-Loustau, Douglas Gilliland, Vikram Kestens, Mauro Petrillo, Iria M. Rio-Echevarria & Guy Van den Eede. 'Review of micro- and nanoplastic contamination in the food chain', Food Additives & Contaminants, Part A, 36:5, 639-673, (2019).

(2) TOPOLOGY

Doughnut

The alimentary canal is a series of hollow organs joined in a long, twisting tube from the mouth to the anus. *The digesting organism appears topologically as a doughnut: a cylindrical body whose external skin becomes its 'internal' lining at the lips and turns back into skin at the anus, forming one continuous surface in constant contact with the outside world.*¹⁴ The internet tells me topology means the equivalence of a doughnut to a cup of coffee, there is a 'classic joke' about the topologist who eats his coffee and drinks out a doughnut. Homeomorphism means: a bagel ≠ a doughnut ≠ a pretzel. It's about the number of holes, you see, which is the topological invariant that cannot be changed without tearing, surgery, rupturing, etc. The digesting individual manifests a destabilising of the categories of interior and exterior, undermining the conception of his very individual integrity. This, according to Gilbert Simondon: 'The entire content of internal space is topologically in contact with the content of external space at the limits of the living; there is, in fact, no distance in topology; the entire mass of living matter contained in the internal space is actively present to the external world at the limit of the living'.¹⁵ The description of the digesting organism as a doughnut can be extended to describe it as being a doughnut-in-process; constant-

14 Eszter Timár, 'Eating Autonomy' Parallax, 19:1, 38-49 (2013), 42.

15 Gilbert Simondon quoted in Gilles Deleuze, The Logic of Sense, trans. Mark Lister (London: Athlone Press, 1990), 104.

ly articulating the form of the torus as a surface formed by rotating a closed curve around a circle. This form is rendered more complex by variations in the surface membrane, the mucous membrane lining the intestinal wall of the small intestine is thrown into transverse folds called plicae circulares, and in higher vertebrates minute fingerlike projections known as villi project into the cavity.¹⁶ The transverse folds in the small intestine point towards what is integral to describing the process of digestion: a continuous folding.

We have shown how any organization (differentiation and integration) presupposed the primary topological structure of an absolute outside and inside that encourages relative intermediary exteriorities and interiorities: every inside-space is topologically in contact with the outside-space, independent of distance and on the limits of a 'living'; and this carnal or vital topology, far from showing up in space, frees a sense of time that fits the past into the inside, brings about the future in the outside, and brings the two into confrontation at the limit of the living present.

(Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*)¹⁷

The first river in hell

This is the first fold, the first river in hell, *the material part of ourselves which is to be surrounded and enfolded*.¹⁸ This Deleuzian folding expresses the continuity of the internal and external environments, that is only interrupted in the case of a misfolding, for instance when one part of the intestine

slides inside another part, the intestine then folds into itself like a telescope, this creates a blockage or obstruction and stops food that is being digested from passing through the intestine. *If the inside is constituted by the folding of the outside, between them there is a topological relation: the relation to oneself is homologous to the relation with the outside and the two are in contact, through the intermediary of the strata which are relatively external environments (and therefore relatively internal)*.¹⁹ The folding of dry sifted ingredients into a wet batter is done taking care to maintain volume and aerate the mixture, the folds are always closing as the passage of the spatula leaves no line of distinction but instead mixes indiscriminately. When the mixture has been folded it does not present a millefeuille or striated structure like a tidy linen cupboard but rather a soft dropping consistency, an amorphous mixture without surface or interior distinction; in short an open system analogous with the digesting organism. But the cake is never ready for the oven, the folding which is assimilation and externalisation is continuous as a balanced batter is never reached, *individuation is not synthesis, a return to unity, but rather the being passing out of step [se déphaser] with itself, through the potentialisation of the incompatibilities of its preindividual centre*.²⁰ What does it mean to de-phase, or to slip out of step with yourself? Does it mean to evert your stomach out of your mouth like a shark, a purple flag fluttering in the dappled shallow water (*the flag of my disposition, a call to arms*).

¹⁶ Britannica Online, 'Small Intestine', Accessed April 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/science/small-intestine>

¹⁷ Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 118.

¹⁸ Ibid, 104.

¹⁹ Ibid, 119.

²⁰ Gilbert Simondon, 'The Genesis of the Individual' in *Incorporations* (New York: Zone Books, 297-319, 1992), 314.

Brucellosis

Solid traffic along the highway lasts all night, unbelievable, held in place by cushioned upholstery like so many airless eggs in a box we are tensely sweating, compressed limbs migrating between arthralgia and myalgia, admonen painfully bloated and saliva tasting frowsy like the smell of wet hay. It is hard to share the space, every mouthful of air I am aware has already been inside your lungs passed along narrow canals into little sacks of membranes and then expelled again. Feeling sick, and so discomforted, bones shrieking and a rigid bowel like a rock and pushing up against a deflated diaphragm, ribs slipping downwards and putting painful pressure on intestines, a swollen spleen and the aggregate amount of faecal mass being carried in this vehicle is quite incredible. If this goes on we will have forage along the verges for edible shrubs and insects and drink the water from the wiper ducts. We'll have to talk to our neighbours and organise patrols. The temperature has become feverish but in damp clothes my teeth are chattering, every night waking up in wet clothes is a nightmare and you don't mind telling me how much you hate it.

My foothold is tenoned and mortised in granite / I laugh at what you call dissolution

Becoming-machine does not mean literally to become a machine, like RoboCop or a forklift truck for instance, but to become more like grass or fields of intestinal villi, hundreds of thousands of more subtle symbiotic becomings along mucosal membranes which inhabit a fragile multiplicity always grasping at grassness and greenness but li-

able to turn yellow and patchy and then no longer be the kind of surface on which people will have a picnic or play football. Becoming is always sliding down the razor edge of this ambivalence. *For example, the Wolf-Man's pack of wolves also becomes a swarm of bees, and a field of anuses, and a collection of small holes and tiny ulcerations (the theme of contagion): all these heterogenous elements compose 'the' multiplicity of symbiosis and becoming.*²¹ The becoming-machine of the metabolising organism is an amorphic condition of heterogeneity, a sort of somatic solubility that is constantly reframing the terms of intimacy. *I keep as delicate around the bowels as around the head and heart.*²²



²¹ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* (London: Bloomsbury, [1988] 2017), 291.

²² Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (London: Penguin, [1959] 1986), 48.