

REVERSIBLE DESTINY by S.T. LORE

Its 1993

Finally, after two claustrophobic years, the resident crew of eight "bio-spherians" exit the domed structures of BIOSPHERE 2—site of the largest artificial and materially closed ecological system on earth. Outside the glassy and corporate visions of Buckminster Fuller, the crew acknowledge heavily publicized reports of problems with food and oxygen, radical die-offs of animal and plant species, invasive pestilence of ant and cockroach that exacerbated a tense group dynamics and caused two factional splits. In the end, complex social incest and outside financial politics compounded a power struggle with management. The result is another failed experiment for 'a closed ecological system' to support and maintain human lives.

In the same year, government officials stormed a religious compound in WACO, Texas. In the recollection of over one-hundred Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agents—*only one*—who leapt from the reinforced balustrade of a borrowed cattle trailer, told the Texas Ranger investigators that the first shots heard that fateful morning [Feb. 28, 1993] came from ATF agents shooting Branch Davidian dogs. The tragic event and resultant cock-up incinerated approximately 52 people [including infants] but excluded a mortally wounded canine tally—'the dogs'—our loyal and secular beasts if ever there was any.

Its 1952

The first mechanical heart, constructed of artificial pumps, valves and levers is being plunged into the chest cavity of a human patient. As this miraculous medical transformation is deforming an 'inside out human being' the first British nuclear weapon is quietly detonated. The destructive resonance is absorbed by the expansive, yet socially rich interior desert environment of Australia. Although confirming the UK as only the third nuclear weapons state, at the same time, in the fall out [north of the desert containment] a reclusive bearded man, dressed in the bewildered and tattered garb of a beachcomber, squats on recycled planks of timber lashed to three Japanese aircraft petrol tanks. Quietly launching his hand built vessel from a sheltered Darwin beach [timing it with an elusive 'king tide'] he pushes it loosely in the direction of East Timor. Taking minimal provisions he straps himself to the raft and drifts across a black ocean but also the deeper recesses of his mind. He sails out of geographical orbit and into cultural obituaries. Lost and alone, swept out of social responsibilities, he begins to hallucinate surrealist grids and dancing figures 'a vision of the best companions he has ever known'. He misses his destination, lands elsewhere, and is imprisoned.

Its 2020

Piles of rubble, burned-out buses, bullet-holes and concrete foundations are all that remain of the WACO compound. BIOSPHERE 2 houses research facilities, a museum and tourist paraphernalia. A replica of the Timor Sea 'raft' sits in Queensland to honour 'gift-giving' and existence of non-monetary economies. Among other evidence of isolated ecological and human social experiments, rich psychological studies are archived in well-wintered Antarctic research stations. Catalogued as "confined environment psychology", they may ignore other 'fridge-dweller lifestyles' where refrigeration to control temperature is essential to the domestic and developed human. Lowering the spread and reproduction rate of bacteria and chance of spoilage brings notable improvement to home environments and transit of goods from distant places.

But in the benthic zone where 'domesticity of the dog, and of the human' becomes essentially useless, we discover a variety of grimy exploratory techniques to mine our subversive yet collective autobiography. In thawing the slow-creep of societal processes of control and high-technological modulation, is a virulent strain of 'psychobiological' companionship. When visiting a decrepit warehouse above CENTRAL STATION, ignoring a network of graffiti-proof and air conditioned trains ferrying people west and east [to airports and to wilderness] a man wearing a dust mask, manicures replica poodles and strange nomadic miniatures.

Ignoring moralistic clamp downs on pornography, polygamy, occult leadership and home-made weapons, among the well-researched items and scraps of paper I find a printout of a young studio artist from rural, California. While attending a famed city “art school” he secured gallery management with David Zwirner and suddenly burst from under-employment into a cloistered ecosystem of finance, patronage and elitism. Channelling his childhood experiences into material visions of a ‘rideable steer’ made of buckets, a scooter and a power lasso, I stare at the faded newsprint titling *The Future Is Filled With Possibilities (Ridable Steer)*. The paper scrap is an ‘ontological shaggy-dog story’¹ to prompt and mutate these humans to each other.

POST-SCRIPT — *The Future Is Filled With Possibilities*

This is a short history of “Benthos”—social organisms that live in the benthic zone, requiring a nomadic temperament different from those elsewhere. Many of these organisms have adapted to exist on the substrate [or the bottom]. But in their habitats they are considered to be the dominant creatures; yet confusingly can become a source of prey or amusement for higher environment creatures. Their energy source is dead and decaying matter—detritus, discarded materials, and off-cast processes from higher ups that sustain their survival. Most are crudely labelled scavengers or “bottom feeders”, but this terminology ignores their peculiar genius—a spectacular material synthesis ability to transform ‘life-design’ ecologies, architectures and biomass. Foul pollutants are deftly extracted from all the older vices; intuitive logistics to cleanse the objects of capital value and human control. This ‘species-being’ represents an idealist thinker-labourer experimenting with chemical and synthetic abstractions of a ‘third-nature’.² In the unnatural and simulated orders of deviance an essentialist world-view of experimental discovery is performed. Benthic organisms or *Benthos* are maniacally essential to other hidden but life-supporting functions. Of those who make their home on the surface of the social we class *Epic-fauna*. Those who burrow beneath the capital substrates are *Inbred-fauna*. But it is *Extremophiles*, who thrive in high pressures, we are most interested in.

Text for Fraser Anderson Swami’s *Gremlin Retreat* Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney 07 March - 04 April 2020

¹ Chris Kraus. *Social Practices* (2018) Semiotext(e) / Active Agents, MIT Press, page 197

² Mackenzie Wark, *Molecular Red* (2016) Part One ‘Labour and Nature’, Verso, page 19