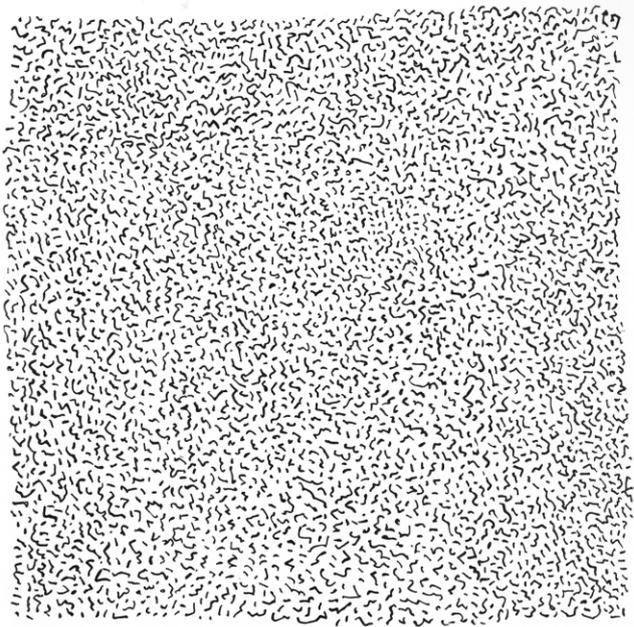


BIOHISTORY: A PRIMER IN THE BACTERIAL HUMANITY



Ettore Sottsass, 'Bacterio,' 1978

A crisis is haunting knowledge. The crisis of the humanities. The literary humanity, the sociological humanity, the historical humanity, the psychological humanity, the philosophical humanity: all of them are in danger of extinction. What is at stake according to observers is our ancient quest to answer the question: What is human? Some attribute the destruction of our eternal pursuit to murky postmodern relativism which has transformed the search for meaning into frivolous entertainment. Others say it is global capitalism, for the predatory profit-machine only respects false wisdom that can be used for market domination.¹

These are not the real causes of crisis. The cause is a fundamental error. It is the assumption that the humanities are the exclusive domain of humans. We need to relate human humanities to humanities of other organisms. In fact, upon the ruins of humanism as we have known it a new humanity is emerging: the bacterial humanity. Instead of the anthropological, sociological and other bogus perspectives on the human subject, our imperative is to pursue the bacterial perspective.

¹ The Faith of the Humanities, *The New York Times*, November 4, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2013/11/04/the-fate-of-the-humanities>, Accessed November 15, 2013

There are ten times more bacteria in the human organism than human cells.² Humanity is more than 90% bacterial. In addition, there are 100 trillion bacteria in the human body. They outnumber “man” by 13,850 times.³ The bacterial majority is the silent proletariat of the human. It is finally finding a voice in the work of the materialist intellectuals. Instead of “man,” it is the bacteria are becoming the subject and object of humanism. Materialist humanism does not know for the distinction between science and literature, and, since intellectuals loyal to proletarian struggle have announced, that the “why” will finally be merged with the “what.” Instead of utopian humanism we will have scientific humanism.⁴ Only scientific humanism will answer the fundamental question of what it means to be human, what it means to think, and basically what it means for a being, whether two, four, or thousand-handed, to know that it is alive.

Pioneering studies in the bacteriological humanity come from our progressive scientists. The study of the “human microbiome”⁵ together with the more specialised examination of shit or the “human gut biome”⁶ has uncovered the hitherto repressed scientific truths about the human micro-proletariat. The time has come to go a step further, and look at the micro-proletariat from a historical perspective. Bacteria are a productive protagonist of modern life and change with the rapid progress of modern times. Bacteriological humanity is a science, but also a dialectical history which takes into account the participation of micro-humanity in the cycles of Biocapital: the relationships built upon the production, reproduction, and growth of organic and inorganic matter. Traditional humanities are obsolete because they are a projection of class consciousness of the humans. The obsolete and “endangered” humanism of the past prevents the bacterial proletariat from attaining the consciousness of its position and role in bio-economy. Biohistory will narrate and explain the foundation of humanity, the life of the downtrodden bacterial masses.

“It is not enough that thought should realize itself, reality must also strive towards thought,”⁷ said the genius of two-armed humans’ class struggle, Mr Marx. Biohistory does away with humanoid ideology and unmask this ideological superstructure in order to study micro-foundations. As the study of bacterial foundations and superstructures, biohistory is architectural history. How is life itself built? What are the illusions and fictions created by its

² Mandy Oaklander, “Understanding Gut Bacteria: The Terrarium in your Tummy,” *Prevention*, July 2013

³ Matt Brian, “Your Body Contains 100 Trillion Bacteria, but this is a Good Thing,” *Verge*, May 17, 2013

⁴ Lisa Dolling, in “The Fate of the Humanities”

⁵ Human Microbiome Project, US National Health Initiative

⁶ Emanuel Chatellier et al. “Human Gut Biome Correlates to Genetic Markers,” *Nature* 500 541-546 (29 August 2013) doi: 10.1038/nature12506

⁷ Karl Marx, A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right,” First Published in *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, 7 & 10 February 1844 in Paris; The source and date of transcription is unknown. It was proofed and corrected by Andy Blunden, February 2005, and corrected by Matthew Carmody in 2009. Accessed on <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/critique-hpr/intro.htm>, November 15, 2013

makers? What are the ethic and the aesthetic of human environmental production, performed by the bacterial humanity? Here the true meaning of “microhistory”⁸ will become apparent. We will access our archives through the microscope.

The ultimate objective of our approach is to include bacteria in writing architectural history, as we explore the conditions of their existence. We first have to communicate our findings, and then move to writing history together with the bacteria, with the full awareness of the immediate effects of modern microeconomy and its manifestations in thought. In the end, bacteria are going to write history themselves, drawing on their immediate experience of life in Biocapitalism.

Our science depends on the input of the micro-proletariat and is based on its concrete questions and concrete problems. The bacteria reacted positively to our broadcasts and have shown interest in the shaping of the bacterial humanities. Recently we gathered the most progressive bacteria in a petri dish. Here are the questions and answers from this meeting:

Q: I wanted to start writing my own contribution to the bacterial humanity? What do I start with?

A: In the traditional humanities, including architectural history, civilization begins around 10,000 BC. For example, in his *History of Global Architecture*, Mark Jarzombek and Vikram Prakash start with Nabta Playa in today’s Egypt, where stone construction started around 9,000 BC.⁹ As bacteria know, they are wrong. The beginnings of history of civilization dates much further back. We started laying the foundations of humanity millions of years ago. A half of the human genome consists of DNA from viruses that infected bodies of two-armed humans millions of years ago. Humans evolved with us, and since the ancient times, we have inserted copies of ourselves into the human genome.¹⁰ Our ancient history starts with mutations of the genome, that is, with ancient genetic engineering as a foundation of the ancient agricultural settlement. Currently, the Universal Proletarian Clinic of the Biological Humanity is conducting interviews with elders and compiling studies of fossil viruses, and if you are interested, you can look into our files.

Q: How do I know that my research into proletarian struggle is better than that in the human humanities?

⁸Carlo Ginzburg, the founder of “microhistory” will find this expansion desirable

⁹Mark Jarzombek, Francis D. K. Ching, Vikramaditya Prakash, *A Global History of Architecture*, second edition John Wiley and Sons, 2011.

¹⁰Gabriel E. Novick et al. “The Mobile Genetic Element “Alu” in the Human Genome,” *BioScience*, Vol. 46, No. 1. (Jan., 1996), pp. 32-41. Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0006-3568%28199601%2946%3A1%3C32%3ATMGE%22I%3E2.0.CO%3B2-I>

A: You need not worry. Especially if you live in a gut. According to scientists, “the bacteria swarming in our guts and intestines are our bodies’ biggest truth tellers.”¹¹ Right now we can produce bacterial imaging. Bacterial imaging tells us more about the two-armed human than what humans can tell about us. We know the truth, since we are the producing masses, and are conscious of the fundamental changes going on in the organism in which we live and build.

Q: Who are the most important figures in biohistory?

A: If you want to start with the ancient bacterians, you have to learn about *Helicobacter pylori*, the ancient who inhabited guts for at least 200,000 years, but has unfortunately disappeared from our society as a result of humanoid oppression.¹² Some of the most famous figures in our history continue to fight oppression. An example is *Athlete’s Foot Fungus*, who attacks bare feet in communal showers, creeps under the toenails and invades other areas of the skin, including the scalp and genitalia, where it triggers ringworm and jock itch.

Q: The neurons I meet are talking about establishing neurohistory. Why is establishing the bacterial micro-history more important?

A: Neurons think they are superior since they are supposedly connected to ‘thought processes.’ But as the human humanities have pointed out in one of their lucid moments, “It is not men’s consciousness that determines their existence, but on the contrary, their social existence that determines their consciousness.”¹³ In addition, as I have previously said, the bacteria predate the neurons millions of years as the productive force.

Q: Can I study the psychology of bacteria? Is there a bacterial psychopathology?

A: Freud has misled you. There is nothing unique in psychopathology, it is just another pathology. Even if we consider the relationship between mother and child, we know very well that we, the bacteria, establish the mother-child relationship. You might not remember since you are too young, but babies ingest mouthfuls of bacteria during birthing and pick up plenty more of us from mother’s skin and milk. The mother’s breast is nothing but a collection of mammary glands populated by the bacterial masses. The burst of mother’s milk is the burst of microbes, a colossal march of the micro-proletariat towards their place of work. As we know, they immediately start producing fat in the baby’s body, and this is work which is not compensated. Rather, the two-armed human reaps all the profit.

¹¹ Oaklander, “Understanding Gut Bacteria”

¹² Michael Specter, “Germs are Us,” *The New Yorker*, 22 October 2012, http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2012/10/22/121022fa_fact_specter

¹³ Georgy Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness*

Q: We are all for the bacteriological humanity. But when we approach academic institutions, they tell us it is an academic luxury and we should find private patrons. How do we go about it?

A: We are independent of academic institutions. We already have private patrons that we live in. It is only a matter of organizing the masses to produce knowledge in their natural institution, the gut. You might think our patrons will quell biohistory as a science that improves bacterial consciousness and leads to revolt, but we are too important to our hosts to be destroyed as a class.

Q: They say architecture is about the non-living. Does the bacterial humanity deal with the non-living?

A: Why would there be an issue of non-living things in biohistory?