

"I am a cartographer," Michel Foucault said of himself in an interview for *Nouvelles littéraires*, published on 17 March 1975. A map is a record of tensions, of power relations, and is thus constituted through territories full of tensions of social and political ties. As a result, the earth has become the centre of the universe, again, since only man<sup>1</sup> is able to create such a network. Foucault's new Ptolemaism examines the tensions and interests within society, the whole landscape of these links and its horizon. What lies beyond it? The outside? The edges of maps, the *parerga* we speculate about, are horizons emerging from the darkness. After all, speculation about horizons was part of the eight books of Ptolemy, maps that later became a guidebook for the medieval traveller. And when Marco Polo travelled to the edge of the then-known world, he found and described his ideas of the unknown quite easily.

Where do we travel when we can travel anywhere? In the age of globalisation, our destination is the planet. It is made up of an imaginary network of (power) relations and tensions that are so interconnected that it is impossible to get out of them. "We encounter our first cartomagramaniac," writes Jason Bahbak Mohaghegh, "incorporating the figure of the mapmaker into that of the net-maker, for whom borders are but supple matters of woven twine, meshing, overhanded slopknots, and the symmetrical geometry of loops and rows. He brings the city's houses themselves into his 'thousand-fold web', a restrictive, twisted fabric that prompts us to interrogate the various intentions of different net-makers: on one hand, there is the net as entrapment device [...], on the other hand, there is the net as corralling chambre [...]."<sup>2</sup> When the globe of the Age of Enlightenment replaced the maps with dark inscriptions *hic sunt leones* and the entire bestiary was replaced by the names of oceanic mountain ranges, the dark places seemed to have disappeared. And yet today, when the notion of a planet with a "thousand-fold web" has been replaced by the modern-age globe, the dark places abounding in the unknown have returned. The term *planetary*, unlike the concept of the global, also involves the unknowable, however related and connected it may be to the known. Sigmund Freud described the oppressive and the unknown with the German word *Unheimlich*, which he used to express how the familiar and the domestic is transformed into the frightening unknown. The planetary has moved our perception up an imaginary level, but it has also made the dark places visible (this includes colonization, decolonization and all other terms for "the others"<sup>3</sup>).

What remains in the dark? The outside. Demons. Planetary *Unheimlich* uncovers an entirely new bestiary of the Anthropocene, one that is built on the basis of relations that result in the intertwining of the often unobserved, such as a hermit crab taking up residence in a sardine can or the fiery tornadoes devastating California.<sup>4</sup> In our travels, we no longer have to fear the sea monsters that Christopher Columbus anticipated during his voyage across the Pacific Ocean, as he had read about them in *The Million*, or from all available maps placing their entire imagination on the edge of the known world. We have new demons, ones that mankind has created without being aware of it: pharmaceuticals, virtuality, capitalism, et al. The Anthropocene has opened a Pandora's box full of *Das Unheimliche*, something oppressive. The demonology of the "post-natural" era is a way of quasi-spirituality to cope with the anxiety of the unknown this era brings. The planetary structure is a complex decentralised network operating on many levels, yet despite its *logos* nature, it still abounds in *myth*.

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<sup>1</sup> Presuming we are alone in the universe.

<sup>2</sup> Jason Bahbak Mohaghegh, *Omnicide: Mania, Fatality, and the Future-in-Delirium* (London: Urbanomic, 2019), pp. 179-180.

<sup>3</sup> Comp. the usage of *Unheimlich* by Jacques Lacan (seminar 1962-1963 *L'angoisse* /Anxiety/) and Julie Kristeva (*Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* /New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1982/).

<sup>4</sup> See Nicolas Nova – Disnovation.org, *A Bestiary of the Anthropocene: On Hybrid Minerals, Animals, Plants, Fungi...* (Eindhoven: Onomatopée, 2021).

This particular kind of paranoia is perhaps our defence system to cope with what is external to us, what lies beyond the horizon which Foucault sought to explore as a new cartographer. Speculations about the outside, demonology, are developed by Reza Negarestani in his book *Cyclonopedia*, for whom they are xeno-agents that influence us.<sup>5</sup> It is them who create that demonic "darkness" that is so strangely terrifying about the *Unheimlich*. It is an uncomfortable darkness that accompanies climate and planetary change, as well as fast-learning and emotionally competent AI. Despite being a human creation, mankind is losing control (and in some cases already shortening the time when we will even be able to change anything anymore /like with climate change/). We need to know the dark ecology in order to know the planetary relations, the oppressiveness. But it also brings a strange fondness for the unknown, is it the *fate* of civilization that is so *faerie* about it?<sup>6</sup> "*Though the web of fate is so often invoked in tragedy [...], words such as weird and faerie evoke the animistic world within the concept of the web of fate itself. The dark shimmering of faerie within fate is a symptom of what Dark Ecology is going to attempt. [...] So little have we moved that even when we thought we were awakening we had simply gathered more tools for understanding that this was in fact a lucid dream, even better than before.*"<sup>7</sup> Such is the strangely delightful planetary oppression, the *Unheimlich*, which brings both the vision of the end and the purgatory of the age of man.

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<sup>5</sup> Reza Negarestani, *Cyclonopedia* (Melbourne: Re.press, 2008), specif. pp. 118-119.

<sup>6</sup> Timothy Morton points out the connection between the English words *fate*, *fay* and *faerie*, see *Dark Ecology* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2016), p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.