

NOTES TOWARDS THE SCIENTIFIC UNDERSTANDING OF AN ENLIGHTENED XENUOLOGY, CONCERNING THE RECENT DISCOVERY OF THE MARSH ARCHIVES

The subject of this paper has been of recent the focus in several respected journals of a heated debate, not seen perhaps since the violent reaction of certain authors to the Stein-Grün controversy, almost two decades ago. Even this very publication, regarded by many to be above such matters, which are usually left to the social columns of the daily papers, has gone as far as printing as many as six different views on this inflammatory topic. In the midst of this uproar, few readers will have noticed Dr. David Stanter's excellent paper on condensed matter and self awareness, or the illustrious review of two remarkable discoveries by the San Diego Institute of Insular-thermodynamics that appeared in the February issue. And indeed, as some have remarked, the entire field of psycho-physical Xenuology may never be regarded without reference to this seismic chain of events.

For the benefit of those who, for reasons unknown, have been struck by a severe form of cultural blindness, we shall attempt to briefly survey these recent developments. Last July, Dr. Sergey Romanov, a young researcher at the University of Minsk's department of Xenu-theology came across an outstanding discovery. Inside a dusty copy of a six hundred year old crossword magazine, Dr. Romanov discovered several faded notes (written on soft tissue paper, bearing the mark 'Piz za Hut' – which Romanov has taken for an unknown Peruvian research institute). These notes contained only a few cryptic remarks which, Dr. Romanov instantly realized, were the oldest testament to the formation of Xenu-theology. For years it has been agreed in academic circles that the myth of Xenu was popularized by one L. Ron Hubbard, the leader of a peculiar late twentieth century cult called 'Scientology'. It is still unclear

how such a conventional theological structure, a chaotic replication of folk tales and pseudo scientific data, became the hotbed from which Xenuism emerged. From surviving reports from the period, it is now apparent that the cult gained momentum after a few notable personalities (actors, businessmen, politicians etc.) became involved in its activities. In a short allegorical text dating back to 1967, Hubbard describes Xenu, a mythological cosmological evil being, "The head of the Galactic Federation (76 planets around larger stars visible from here) (founded 95,000,000 years ago, very space opera)". In a creation myth of sorts, "Incident I", is followed by the unfolding of catastrophe, original sin reformulated as an intergalactic conspiracy, also known as "Incident II":

Incident II is over 36 days long. Capture on other planets was weeks or months before the implant. Those on Teegeeeack (Earth) were just blown up except for Loyal officers who were (shortly before the explosion on Earth) rounded up.

The sequence of events is cryptically listed as:

... DROPPED ON VOLCANO
...
TERRIFIC WINDS
THETAN CARRIED OVER PEAK
ELECTRONIC RIBBON CAME UP
HE STUCK TO IT
IT WAS THEN PULLED DOWN AND HE WAS (AS PART OF A GROUP)
IMPLANTED WITH R6
PICTURE OF PILOT SAYING HE IS MOCKING IT UP

It would appear that the deity variously known as Xenu or Xemu was an administrative titan. Confronted with the problem of overpopulation in the domain, Xenu collects superfluous beings and deposits them around several volcanoes on Earth. The volcanoes are then destroyed, and the souls of those deposited around them are collected and reprogrammed. These adhere to the unfortunate bodies of the local populace, passing on an implanted false consciousness. While the formidable Xenu is eventually vanquished and contained within a mountain, the implants are said to continue to wreak mental havoc, the only remedy for which is confidentially dispatched to those willing to part with significant quantities of their local currency.

That the myth of Xenu existed in writing as early as the late twentieth century has been posited by a few brave individuals even in the years prior to Romanov's great discovery. But only one, the Swiss psychophysicist André Semian, could offer a more comprehensive understanding of this curious belief system. With patience, insight and a touch of his famous dry humor, Semian analyses Romanov's findings. In



• Mount St. Helens displacement map used to re-create the 3D model for *Volcano* and *Crater* animations. Data courtesy of NASA/Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) from field measurements collected by the United States Geological Survey (USGS)

September of that year he published his *Religious life of the Americans before Xenu: a comparative study of late twentieth century myths*. The renowned Swiss author isolated one thread of thought from the Piz za Hut manuscript and traced its origins and influence in other common beliefs of that historically insignificant but scientifically intriguing era. In the first two chapters, Semain points out that a confusion arises in many period texts and studies between the physical terrain and the mental projections of those dwelling within it. In attempting to map out the landscape of the mind, the people of the twentieth century seem to have inadvertently given birth to, or rather brought back to life, a new, or hitherto dormant, form of sentience: the mind of the landscape.

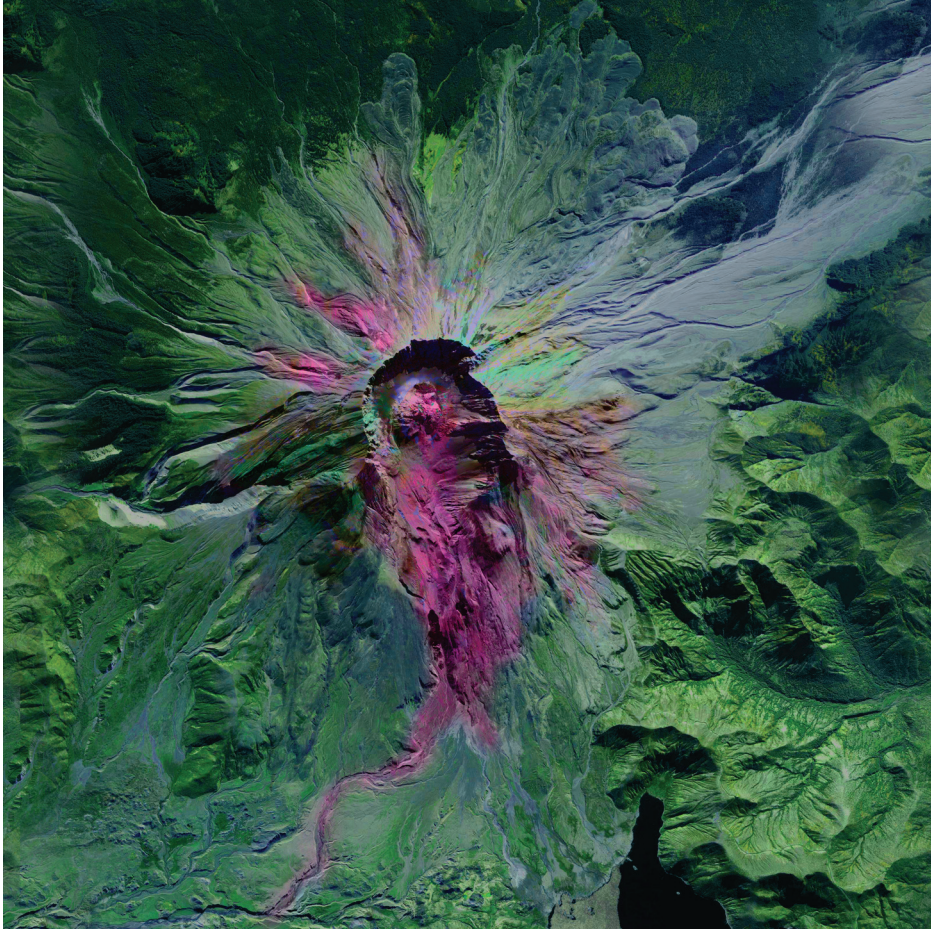
This reluctance to differentiate consciousness from matter has been interpreted in earlier times as a kind of primitive animism of the type common in pre-Microsoftian societies, but Semain proposes to read it as a singular example of unity and liberation from philosophical quandary in a period otherwise torn between the extremes of faith and reason. The spirit infested, exploded volcano is a site of trauma that marks gaps in the understanding of the physical world as well as in human memory. The volcano is already a signifier of a rupture in the fabric of matter, even before this cataclysmic narrative is imposed on it. But the Hubbardian myth further teases out meaning from the volcanic break in the illusion of stasis that the slow pace of most natural life cycle creates for us. In Semain's view, it is not surprising that this image of a 'mental landscape' eventually takes root, defeating competing systems of belief which existed at this time in history. One of these was the belief that nature can be best understood as a kind of data structure. The coastline that then famous mathematician Benoit Mandelbrot draws, an endless fractal of infinite depth is, for example, a geometrical entity that could be formulated mathematically but never experienced in reality. At this early stage in the development of Xenuism, many still adopted the view that the natural world could be rationally quantified and empirically explained. Semain reminds us that the state organised religion of NASA was at this time supplying believers with detailed maps of planet surfaces, ignoring the obvious psycho-physical implications of this data.

It was not long after the publication of *Religious life of the Americans before Xenu* that the intellectual world was again split in half. In December last year, the team headed by Professor Goh Kun of the Seoul Centre for Primitive Thought and Costumes published their own lengthy report, concluding that other manuscripts of the time demonstrate the existence of a competing cult, promoting similar ideas. The notion of Gaia, or the earth as a living organism, was the foundation of this cult's faith, started by a renegade priest in the order of NASA in the 1970s. James Lovelock was originally appointed to the diocese of Mars and Venus, but his observations of the gaseous composition of these planets led him to perceive that their relative stability – being composed of about 95% carbon dioxide – was startlingly in contrast with Earth's unlikely mixture of oxygen and nitrogen. What had seemed static and balanced about his own surroundings was thrown into question, and he had to concede that far from being dead matter, the planet was not just something he lived on but an organism he himself was a part of, just like the bacteria that dwelled within his body. Upon closer observation, the Earth was revealed to possess

breathing cycles, its own delicate equilibrium attained by a kind of metabolism that involved all the plants, minerals and life forms that comprised its cells and lifeblood. Like Xenuism, the team claimed, here was a system of thought that set aside the question that had so troubled antiquity of what it was that differentiated life from dead matter. The team also unearthed writings by Erwin Schrödinger, whose own existence has not been proven, but whose cat's remains have been registered by archeologists of the museum of antiquity in Vienna. Life, writes Schrödinger, as early as 1944 in a book called *What is Life?*, is organized around the same basic principle that governs all physical phenomena in the universe: they are shaped by entropy, moving towards greater order, the ultimate form of which is death. That which is alive differs from that which is not only in its attempt to resist this force and avoid stasis for as long as possible.

It is only with these findings in mind that we can address the present controversy, that surrounding the discovery of the MARSH archives. Here we find two communication devices of the type known as 'video art', both containing traces of Xenuist animism. A surviving fragment from the archaic filing system 'exhibition catalogue', attributed to a P.G. Kollektiv, makes the following statement about the artifacts: "Marsh appropriates data collected by NASA and Jet Propulsion Lab's Thermal Infrared Multispectral Scanner and transforms it into a living landscape, a haunting sense that between the fluorescent greens and luscious purples of the volcano's seemingly dormant terrain something is pulsing into life, not just a panoramic view tracked by the simulation of the giddy camera movement but the portrait of a presence coming alive in reaction to its seductive dance. Rather than explore the virtual, both *Volcano* and *Crater* document the way sheer complexity can transform pure data into something approximating an organism... [a stain that has been analysed as a combination of tomato, basil and yeast – probably a twenty first century delicacy - obscures the following lines] The mediation of the camera turns Mt. St. Helens from a place that can be quantified, mapped, to the site of a spatial performance in which the viewer is as much a participant as the crater and the volcano. What begins as an almost scientific description of an object becomes, through acceleration and disorientation, an experience that exists beyond the object. From the total entropy of objective data, Marsh creates life by introducing the subjectivity that arises from disorder". It is my esteemed colleague, Dr. A. S. Tarantoga's contention that the MARSH archives were the output of a Canadian artist named Lynne Marsh. In the recent debate over the artifacts and the above quoted fragment, others have posited a community of Marshians working in tandem. According to this hypothesis, the Marshians were a matriarchal tribe that sought to challenge the masculine biases of Xenuism, recasting the volcano as the site of desire rather than destruction. However, it is common knowledge that the acronym stands for Matching Aid to Restore State Habitat, a program established by NASA to promote improved relations between man and planetary environment. High time, then, that this gossip, so out of keeping with the seriousness of the work at hand, ceases to distract our Xenuologists, from whom much labour yet – and many years – will be needed to plumb the depths of life inside the volcano and fathom the being that is the crater.

PIL & GALIA KOLLECTIV



- Mount St. Helens colour map used to re-create the 3D model for *Volcano* and *Crater* animations. The image data was acquired with NASA's Airborne Thermal Infrared Multispectral Scanner (TIMS) on September 1, 1988. Colours (hue) represent changes in the surface composition and texture. Brighter colours signify higher temperatures.