

CYCLONOPEDIA

complicity with anonymous materials

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incognitum hactenus by Kristen Alvanson

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DECAY

According to articles published by middle-eastern critics, the development of Parsani's writings on the Middle East throughout the years can be read through his approach to three enigmas. These three middle-eastern conundrums that recur in Parsani's writings can be enumerated as follows: (1) the degeneration of the whole in the absence of complete erasure or destruction (referred to as poromechanics and ()hole complex); (2) petrological reason and the geo-politics of petropolitical undercurrents (referred to as Tellurian Lube); (3) the enigma of openness on ail levels of economics, politics, religion, life, communication, etc. If the Middle East, for Parsani, is a sentient living entity, its activities swirl around these three enigmas, riddling them to a greater extent with its each and every twist.

Squirming its way into ever more convoluted coils, the Middle East develops a life-form of its own which by any standards must be admitted as a peculiarly middle-eastern response to these three ancient enigmas. By casting creation aside, this life-form builds worlds and corpses more efficiently than God.

Certainly the juggernaut of Parsani's *Defacing the Ancient Persia* — always politically labeled by Parsani himself as *mde mecum* — had a name for this life-form whose basis was 'anti-creationist creativity or perversion': Decay.

In his later writings, which carried the stigmata of topical diaspora and oily density, Parsani changed the name of this 'concrete middle-eastern approach to building and the perversion of creation' from 'decay*' to 'undercover softness', a nomendatural shift more in tune with the three ancient enigmas as explicated in Parsani's later writings. In his discussion of the relation between petroleum

and monotheism in the Middle East. Parsani hints at the reasons behind this name change: '()hole complex [*Kareez'gar*] is the model of participation or complicity with the earth's narrations, and oil organizes these narrations in a vigorous and lively manner. The model of this livelihood and vigor in the Middle East is decay or undercover softness. The undercover softness of the Middle East defies both the vitalistic model and the necrocratic submission to death. The progressive softness of decay evades consolidation, but does not escape solidity; the cosmogenesis of decay unfolds within solidity, spreads from interior to outer surfaces. Through decay, the solid entity is taken over neither by integrated life nor death, but by irresolution. If contemporary socio-economical and political formations in the Middle East effuse a rabid liveliness as well as the stench of corruption, it is because they have betrayed death by undergoing decay. In the same vein, the greater disintegrations which the Middle East brings to the rest of the world through its populations, politics, religions and even its mere existence can be explained by the middle-eastern approach to death, living and softness: A deliberate undertaking of decay as an autonomous building process — the undercover softness of decay.'

Despite all the materials on decay or 'the middle-eastern model of impossible death' Parsani's later writings provide us with, the role of decay in the socio-political bedrock of the Middle East can only be mapped out by appropriating a highly technical vocabulary. However, a pseudo-ideological adaptation (in effect, a total retardation) of Parsani's discourse can be recapitulated here.

Heroic or romantic approaches to decay take decomposition as a process of naturalization (or return to nature), utter disappearance and destruction, deliverance and rebirth. However the ultimate aim of such heroic views is political or economical domestication and appropriation, for decay cannot be captured as either formation or destruction. Decay is an artificializing process that is promulgated on the substratum of all modes of survival (beings). In other words, decay — unlike death — is not external to survival, for it perpetuates itself on the substratum of survival, in order to indefinitely postpone death and absolute disappearance. In decay, the being survives by blurring into other beings, without losing all its ontological registers. In no way does decay wipe out or terminate; on the contrary it keeps alive. This is where the process of decay — despite all the apparent connections — separates itself from the transgressive warmachines of termination, annihilation, tragedy and violence. Decay undermines death and destruction by bringing them to a place where there is no formative power (*Puissance* = p) and hence where formation defies both wholesome integrity and death or erasure. By degenerating all aspects of formation, decay ungrounds the very ground upon which power is conducted, distributed and established. In line with poromechanics, decay perforates the formation of power to no end, and by doing so, prevents power from investing in the consolidation of its formation. Accordingly, decay builds a world where power can only contribute to the degeneration of the formation into never

ending waste — alt dejected domains of beings. For this reason, decay neither brings power ($p/0$, as in *La Volontt de Puissance*) to erasure and utter eradication ($p * 0$; or nihil without solid) nor provides power with a structural and utilitarian ground. The so-called corruption or decline of the Middle East is the result of an infinitely-perforated ground of social, economical and political formations which prevent power from being effectively utilized or efficiently pressed into service.

By undermining the ground upon which power can be effectuated and lines of destruction mobilized, decay misdirects — in the sense of a permanent derailing — the processes of terminus. If the social, economic and political definition of power is determined by its formation, and the formation itself is decided by its ground, then decay's peaceful (non-annihilative) assault on the ground of power formations is effectuated as a concrete sabotage against the very definition of power.

Decay can extract softness from despotism, political persistence from the abolition of utilizable power. This is the arcane *modus vivendi* of undying middle-eastern power systems, the effects of whose contagious poverty and tyranny upon the world are without any geographical restriction. In the absence of any consolidated surface capable of effectively solidifying, conducting, transporting, conserving and developing power formations, power conforms to nothing but a decomposition of the system. The deterioration of formative platforms leads to the dissolution of the line of command and the failure of tactics, which requires formations for its dynamism and modes of conduct. But this collapse of command and tactics does not leave the decaying system or political entity defenceless or even pacified, because such a collapse opens up a sinister paramilitary arena for which every activity or use of power turns into a pilotless strategy, a strategy without the line of command. The result of this para-military unfolding is the Middle East as havoc. To decay is to lose the distinction between soft and solid. In fact, one cannot tell the difference between irresistible softness and unyielding solidity when dealing with middle-eastern states and systems of power. (Hamid Parsani, *Defacing the Ancient Persia*)

Decay can concretely (in the sense of pragmatism and political consequences) erase the definition of power by positioning p (*Macht*) over the Zero-without-solid ($p/0$), a process delineated not by dissolving power but by keeping power alive within obscure hosts. An undead political machine, a middle-eastern system reveals its true lineaments in its decay. The utilization of power in a decaying system is a necrophilic experience. Decay mars power on virtual surfaces of zero, there to be rotten and reeked up; but above all. decay leeches death from the living without falling into the black transparency of death. While the advent of death heralds the end of any capacity for affording more, the reign of decay begins with the loss of such capacity. This progressive

death — which cannot eventuate complete removal or total destruction — can only be tasted through decay and its differentiated mess.

Decay introduces power to the misadventures of matter. But it is 'entities as beings' which narrate the adventures of decay as a cosmic odyssey between themselves. In decay, the limit and lineaments of objects are put to the test: a hyena is built out of a dog's corpse which in turn generates plants, small mag* gots within smaller worms within smaller worms within countless squirming bodies. The awakening of different species from a corrupting entity is inherent to decay. In an unsettling revelation, the German scholastic philosopher Henry of Hesse the Elder suggests 'that it is not clear whether all men are of the same species or not, and so too with dogs and horses ... ICJorpses which had been of the same species when living might differ in species from one another when corrupted.' During decay, taxonomic indetermination and sheer equivocality blur the boundaries not only between different species but also between entities of the same species. When associated with decaying political systems, such obscurity suggests an ominous socio-political twist. To say that a decaying political system traverses and encompasses other political systems is dismaying enough; but to add that any political system — whether developed or democratic — might be a differentiated gradient of a decaying politics is an unfathomable insinuation.

In decay, every instance of dynamism or regulation modulated by the equilibria! difference between the horizons of life (as living) and death is incapacitated. One is thrown beyond death and living (affordance of life) as existential extrema. Traversing the differentiating softness of decay, beings are introduced to modes of survival which are not established on the economical domains of dying and living. These modes of survival or being are characterized by simultaneous envelopment and development. The decaying object or system folds back into its minimal body and lineaments (less than a thing, more than nothing) and at the same time unfolds into other beings which are differentiated from it through decay.

As a middle-eastern political system decays, it contracts to its irreducible body and infinitesimal existence. Concurrently, as it decomposes it devel* ops outward into unexpected systems and modes of politics. The corpse of a political system is in fact its actual body (*sumnia actualis*), whose chemical potentials are limitless. (H. Parsani)

The envelopment and development of the decaying entity describes an event which oscillates between the abstract (folding to the minimum body and lineaments) and the concrete (differentiating to other actual beings). The cosmogenesis of decay is built between dimensions Through decay, life and death multiply and putrefy each other to no end (for what could the end be, for decay?) There is no deliverance for the system which falls into the economic confusion and absence of cakulative affordability (of either death or living)

induced by the process of decay; no salvation, either through dying or through living. The decaying entity becomes a laboratory slab upon which base-necrophilia (where death is infinitely deferred but progressively approached) is germinated. Decay is a limitropic process through which the object shrinks progressively toward zero without eventuating the act of annihilation (complete dissolution into nihil). Infinite contraction or shrinkage of the decaying entity is equal to the evaporation of the qualities or attributes by which the object is transcendently grasped or accessed by the human — sensed, experienced, recognized, afforded and judged. Such evaporation of access points (or transcendental portals) folds the entity back to itself. As the object flees us, it looms out in its own realm — all this through the intervention and the aid of nothingness, whose proximity and remoteness are both infinite. For this reason, Parsani poses a political question which he expects to be answered in developing an ethics of decay; 'If a decaying political system eludes us in all respects, abstractly, concretely and existentially, but does not completely perish, then how exactly can it be judged?'

The convoluted and pink space of decay — pink in the wake of the semiotics of war and peace, of redness and whiteness and their contamination — enacts the logic of blindness upon human knowledge.

The first thing that one notices living in the Middle East is that decay shrouds its objects in an obscurity which processes of termination and of growth equally find repugnant. For middle-eastern political states, this obscurity takes the form of a blindness-toward-death, which can be contrasted with being blinded by death. (H. Parsani)

Lost in such an obscurity, bit by bit, one is laid bare to mess, liquidation of borders, infinitesimal extinction, base-necrophilia. and fluent rot which murmurs 'taste your mortality' while erasing all routes to death.

Planting *puissance* on cold zero is the mechanism of decay ($p/0$); it is also the unground from which sinister middle-eastern systems emerge without genesis. Decay builds without creation. Power requires a ground in order to turn into a formative power (power of law, the State, religion, et cetera), and decay incapacitates the ground by which power is instrumentalized. But how does the rotting process or decay put the puissance over zero so as to unground power? The answer lies in decay's differentiating delirium and its cancerous attitude towards *niefun* (scale).³⁵ Formation in general requires scales to maintain its consolidation and to support the process of regeneration or termination. On the one hand, decay is the differentiation of being (as attributed to an entity) into other beings; on the other hand, it is the metastasis of scales and dimensions through the act of decomposition or unfolding scales and dimensions inherent to the forms of new beings which emerge from the decaying entity. For a human corpse, there is no anthropomorphic scale — either abstractly or concretely — but only different dimensions, scales and latitudes attributed to

new forms and entities: scales of vermiculation (maggots), parasitic dimensions (fungi), aromatic latitudes (malodors) and the magnitude of the unknown. Although these scales are already present in the body, decay unbinds them with new rates of differentiation and irrespective of the body as a host of potentialities. Here, the machinery of decay overlaps with the mechanism of excessive scarring or fibro-proliferation. If scales are used in formative maintenance and in the perpetuation of integrity, they can also degenerate formation once their rate of proliferation or differentiation surpasses the capacity of the formation and its regenerating speed.

By proliferating scales and differentiating the latitudes of form, decay estranges itself from both nature and the natural, since it diverges from the great formlessness of nature that abhors the dimensions, standards, scales, metrons and measures from which systems, territories, and assemblages are put together, fabricated and configured to function. The process of decay, in fact, develops its machinery precisely from that which nature abhors — that is to say, scales and dimensions as matrices and frameworks of power formations. However, decay's approach to dimensions and scales is the approach of the hole complex to the Whole — the degeneration of the consolidating whole and the incapacitation of formation in regard to its range of differentiation or the ability to reform. Decay traverses and grasps dimensions as irreducible convolutions of solid and void, objects of infinite differentiation, to the point where measures or dimensions lose their capacity to scale or to determine formative regulations. This event, however, does not lead to the erasure of dimensions or measures — Decay degenerates dimensions by proliferating (turning into vermin) and convoluting them (vermiculation); fouling up everything dimensional. This does not mean that decay undertakes the Will of Nature and its unhinged Capital by vitiating dimensions and scales. Decay's malevolence toward scales suggests that decay unfolds through dimensions and formative scales to eventually descend into the unground of the wreckage of dimensionality or demonic solid (that is, the corpse of solidus). There is far more to 'being solid' than one can imagine, since if solid were inferior to the void and simply a symptom of it, then why wouldn't decay's infinite brutal process eradicate solidity once and for all?

Immersed in the undercover softness of decay, dimensions and metrons deteriorate beneath the machinery of rot. Excessive dimensioning is the strategy of decay, just as solidity is its fuel. In decay, disintegration is a means for excessive dimensioning and proliferating scales, because disintegration is a terminal tactic to progressively breed more dimensions in the absence of any force of consolidation and utilization of them as a whole or a formation. A disintegrating entity is a vermiculate excretion of its former scales; it spawns more and more measures, micro-scales, metronic cells, patches of solid, labyrinthine nexuses of dimensions, and wasteful dumps of scales. To this extent, to speak of local decay (as related to one object) is problematic, for decay works externally to all scales and dimensions by which the local can be separated from the epidemic and the global:

My decay is not only mine but the decay of the whole world which is differentiated from me. The Middle East might be an obscure geo-political decay, but the developed world, too, might in fact be said to be the decaying Middle East on an epidemic and global scale. (H. Parsani)

The disintegration introduced to an object by rotting processes is not a regular disintegration as of separation into component parts, fragments or constitutive atoms. Decay is a non-fragmentary disintegration in which everything remains connected to the decaying entity. Continuity is preserved in the absence of consolidated dimensions and coherent measures. Consequently, the disintegrative process of decay expresses the logic of terminal softness (or goo) where continuity is the result of wasteful bonds and the impossibility of rejecting such bonds. Integration, too, is impossible because scales and dimensions no longer maintain the capacity of their formative powers. Decay creates a mucoid continuity in disintegration. What happens in decay is a drastic collapse in the depth of composition where the contrast between solid and void is radically blurred. The wasteful bonds between solid and void are in subversive opposition to the economic effectivity and the stability of whole. Disintegration is a lysis followed by the subversion of the capacity to determine the quantity and the quality of the incoming and the outgoing. For decay, softening and disintegration coincide, as formation is taken over by poromechanics. In poromechanical events, the hard exists through the soft. Decay's line of initiation corresponds to that of chemistry, from the inside to the outside, from hard and rigidly connected components to soft parts. Chemistry starts from within, but its existence is registered on the surface; ontology is, so to speak, merely a superficial symptom of chemistry. Decay extorts softness from the hard, making the hard an infested factory for breeding a softness which again is anonymous even to the formlessness of nature. The softness of decay is precisely a production of its irony.

Monotheism presupposes that any dissolution or breakdown of solid is a vitally safe process moving in the direction of a Return (to nature, creation and the divine). According to the doctrine of Return, any instance of solidity will be safely delivered to its basic elements or origin during its dissolution. Such a Return to the basic or original elements or matrix of existence is necessary for the horizon of purity — from ashes to ashes or dust to dust — which is the groundwork of the Divine's creationist project and the proof of its correctness. During decay, however, this course of Return (creationist advent?) through which deliverance or salvation is expected, deviates to something fundamentally deranged, a mess external to the recycling utopia of the Divine. In Zoroastrianism and medieval chemistry, this unrecyclable production of decay is addressed as fume or miasma — GAS. Plastic spirit or gas delineates the ultimate unlocalizability of decay as an epidemic rather than a local phenomenon. It is no accident that the miasma and the plague were frequently equated with each other. Along the same lines, the Flemish alchemist Jan Baptista van Helmont

associates putrefaction with the aporia of mixed bodies. Spirit is an epidemic which ends the myth of the soul by taking it into the outer nights of existence.

Chemistry (alchemy) begins with decay. Stripped before the mess-agents of decay, one can always ask, 'Isn't thought a gaseous rot?' ... the question reverberates cancerously through the fetid air. Resistance to decay is both futile and fertile. But then, what is fertility in the sense of resistance toward decay? There is a yawning horror in this question.