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Games of Ceres

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1. INHERENT VICE

In the language of library & archival science, *inherent vice* is the tendency of materials to deteriorate due to the fundamental instability of the components of which they are made, as opposed to deterioration caused by external forces. Everything has some kind of inherent vice as a result of the baseline law of entropy.

Thus, to archive something is to create an index of loss—a recognition of a future disappearance—and to halt progress in its tracks. The archive becomes the antecedent to entropy, a way of holding onto what's not yet been lost, a manipulation of time and recognition of the “slow cancellation of the future.”

2. ON CERES

1801 marked the discovery of the first asteroid known to humankind. Large enough to be considered a dwarf planet, Ceres is made up of a rocky surface painted with ice formations and carved with series of craters and impact sites from contact with other asteroids. The surface is rife with tension, with cryovolcanic events often occurring. Ceres is one of the few bodies in our solar system that has the potential for its own independent organic life; the dwarf planet has a remnant internal ocean buried beneath the layers of ice, above its mantle.

Ceres, at 945 km in diameter, is 200,000 times larger in mass than Chicxulub, the last major asteroid to come in contact with the Earth 66 million years ago (and causing the mass extinction of the dinosaurs). If Ceres was to come in contact with the earth all traces of our civilization— as well as all existing complex life—would be completely obliterated.

3. TOWARDS A SPECULATIVE ECOLOGY

To imagine an human-centric ecology of the future is to extend the earth beyond its uncertain trajectory, and to speculate that existing man-made institutions of organization will further exist. Humanity seeks extension, in the immediate through the development of new technologies and power structures to build upon the existing human physicality--Grosz writes that “living bodies tend towards prosthesis,” to say that the inherent entropy of the human body creates a desire for these extensions to accelerate the self (individual and as a species) into immortality.

What's lost, though, in this tempest of progress and promise of extension, as well as the common critique of manmade ecologies of language, power, and capital, is a recognition of the failing ecologies that exist outside of the man-made, or the imminent threat of extinction by way of climate change or cosmic mishap.

It's not in the consideration of objects as subjective through which a speculative ecology can be approached, but by understanding and examining the organic materials that make up things (including the physical body) external to human thought and agency.