Value and of Corals

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MUSEUM FRIEDER BURDA BADEN-BADEN

Margaret and **Christine Wertheim** Transformation



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Donna Haraway

Sym-chthonic Tentacular Worldings: An SF Story for the *Crochet Coral Reef*

The *Crochet Coral Reef* is an SF story of string figures, science fact, science fiction, stitched fantasies, and speculative fabulation. This hyperbolic reef is material, figurative, collaborative, tentacular, worldly, dispersed within the tissues and across the surfaces of terra, playful, serious, mathematical, artistic, scientific, fabulous, feminist, exceeding gender, and multispeciesist. Its story is brave; the *Crochet Coral Reef* risks making—actually making—real and fabulated things together in order to open up still-possible times for flourishing on a diverse earth. The time for this story is now; and without overturning the old prick stories, the time could be too short. The threads of the stitched figures made by the tentacular ones could be cut; or, just possibly, the human and more-than-human beings of the planet could loop and knot and tie and braid in generative play tanks and open matrices for still-possible ongoingness.

The *Crochet Coral Reef* takes shape in terran holobiomes inhabited by myriad tentacular ones in a time of response-ability that we yearn to name the Chthulucene. The reef holobiome is the whole assemblage of diverse species, whose living and dying well in ongoing generations and lateral weavings depend on the health of the symbiotic animal cnidarians and algae-like zooxanthellae of the coral. Now cannot continue to be the age of two-armed, radiant-visioned, exterminationist, plastic-saturated, fossil-burning, fossil-making prickmen. Now is already the surging, hyperbolic, non-Euclidean time of many- and snaky-armed ones entangled in the collaborative work and play of caring for and with other earthlings amidst hot and acid seas laced with every kind of toxin. This is the time for overthrowing both the overreaching Anthropocene and the petrodollar-ensorcelled Capitalocene in order to nurture still possible flourishing, still possible recuperation, still possible arts for living in multispecies sympoiesis on a damaged planet. This is the time of consequences.

The Chthulucene draws its name from the awe-ful chthonic ones, the abyssal entities of the underworld, those ongoing generative and destructive powers beneath seas and airs and lands, those who erupt into the affairs of the well-ordered, upward-gazing, progress-stunned, and star-besotted ones, who forget and so dismember their multispecies-tangled flesh. The Gorgons, especially mortal and snaky-headed Medusa, whose blood from her severed head gave rise to the corals of the western sea, are tentacular chthonic powers. They are not finished. The gorgeous sea whips and sea fans of the reefs—the Gorgonia of modern biology remind terrans of their collaborative mortal lives that are at risk to each other. The chthonic ones empower the symbiotic coral reefs and all the other holobiomes of a thriving earth. These are the powers that the makers of the *Crochet Coral Reef* stitch in non-Euclidean yearning and solidarity.

Sym- means "with"; *poiesis* means "making"; sympoiesis, "making-with." Nothing makes itself, nothing assembles itself, living and dying well as mortal terrans must be sym-chthonic, or they are not at all. The *Crochet Coral Reef* is sym-chthonic. It is for and with the multispecies critters, including human people, of the deep and ongoing earth. The *Crochet Coral Reef* is palpable, polymorphous, terrifying, and inspiring stitchery done with every sort of fiber and strand, looped by tens of thousands of people in dozens of nations, who come together to stitch care, beauty, and response-ability in play tanks. This SF worlding is enabled by Margaret and Christine Wertheim's outrageous, chthonic symbiosis of science, mathematics, art, activism, women's fiber arts, environmentalism, fabulation, and sheer love of the critters of terra. This is truly an Institute For Figuring.





Fig. 9 → Coral growing on plastic trash and discarded car parts in a tank at the Monterey Bay Aquarium







