

THE OTHER LIFE

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"The lowest, benthic step of ecosystems is the aim of life on earth. There the focus is energy kindled by life's engine, the life-giving rain. The living organisms there are the furthest link of the earth-grasping life chain. They are swimming, walking, digging themselves in, anchored in the sea ground, animals of considerable size. There are no more plants, just plant-like animals. And there reigns *Vampiroteuthis infernalis giovanni*, the master of life on earth. Its environment is the center of all life — the big hole which sucks all life into itself (From: Vilém Flusser, Louis Bec: *Vampiroteuthis Infernalis*)

One of the most exciting books about life and our ideas about it is a volume edited in 1987 by the Czech-French philosopher Vilem Flusser and the zoosystemist Louis Bec: *Vampiroteuthis infernalis*.

Behind that demonic name there is a being which exists like an animal on the ground of the Chinese Sea, the life-kind, culture, sexuality, society and art of which are described by Vilem Flusser. This wonderful fable about *Vampiroteuthis* represents a philosophical approach, based on the attempt of representing one perception of the world by another. Through the birth of *Vampiroteuthis* from the binarian ocean Flusser throws the whole big question of (artificial) life back to us: as long as we have not recognized ourselves, the attempt of life only can fail.

The *Vampiroteuthis* represents in two ways the fascination of artificial life: on the one hand it is a creature from a world of fantasy, fairy tales, fable and science fiction, a world which in the meantime has become more real than we have ever dared to dream, and which because of its reality and genuineness for us is no longer conceivable with the help of the conventional media of language and communication. On the other hand in its function as reflection of the self it is that other, in which alone we can recognize ourselves.

Only through recognizing the vampiroteuthic existence we can recognize ours. Does the great desire of man to create his spitting image derive from here? And doesn't the idea of making usable robots, animates and computer programs contribute only irrelevantly to the idea of artificial life?

Nevertheless, artificial life research questions all previous definitions of life, it speaks as it were a new language. In it we can try once more to understand our life by discovering the Other. For that it is necessary to accept the strangeness, the new and the unusual, to work on it and not to be cold and hostile to it. For, incompleteness connects us and *Vampiroteuthis*:

"... That we both are products of a silly coincidence, we look phenomenal. We are badly programmed beings full of defects. This shows before all because we always require something, we always are in distress. Amongst other things we need each other. It's not to complete each other — a synthesis man (*Vampiroteuthis* still was an imperfect being) - but to reflect each other

"But of course I know what this means, Henry", Hammond said. "It means you screwed up."

"Absolutely not."

"You've got breeding dinosaurs out there, Henry"

"But they're all female", Wu said. "Its impossible. There must be a mistake ..."

(from: Michael Crichton, *Jurassic Park*)

Vampirochironomus	
Classe	10
Ordre	
Famille	
Genre	
Espèce	
Autres noms	

VAMPIROTEUTHIS INFERNALIS G. ORNETAIRE TAPAREGONIS

Un nouveau genre de vampire de la classe des vampirochironomes a été découvert par le Dr. G. Ornetaire Taparegonis. Les caractéristiques de ce genre sont les suivantes: ...

