

On Luka Cvetkovic's "Lamb (History always begins with you)"

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Preparation

There are endless jokes starting with - a man walks into a bar, but what about when he walks out? There are no jokes about leaving, departing from the enclosed environment over-saturated with conventions dictating forms of behaviour, social conduct and subjectivity. In the bar you intoxicate yourself, you loosen up, but always in a context that confirms normalised forms of exchange, embodiment and life. We need jokes about walking out of bars, out of over-saturated spaces that generate jokes that are degrading and sexualised, jokes that instead resonate with places that undermine and dilute forms of subjectivity, corporeality and belonging.

The other day I flew from Geneva to Paris. Across the aisle a somewhat mature flight stewardess of duty is seated. She wears big expansive headphones that looks like they cancel out any kind of noise or disturbance. When I return after visiting the lavatory, I accidentally peak at the screen of her phone, and realise that she is listening to something. Perhaps music which I in the first-place thought was surprising. On the screen a configuration announcing that iTunes is active. Under the arrow proposing play, a single word "Metallica".

What does it mean to prepare? To prepare implies to compartmentalise, to frame some form of openness, straighten up something vague or to discontinue a movement. To prepare means to ready oneself for unexpected turns of event, perhaps even worse to obliterate any form of asymmetry or anomaly.

On the flight to Geneva from Berlin earlier the same week, the young man sitting next to me wrote on his phone "Packing List". For real.

But how does one prepare for the unknown? Well, you don't, or isn't that what is known as contingency plan. In other words, to straighten out the unknown already before it has announced itself. To prepare for the unknown is not so different from building a wall or fence around oneself.

A thousand years ago I studied in the north of Sweden, there everybody has an axe in the trunk of their cars. You never know, you never know.

Thinking about it, doesn't this make adventure tourism a kind oxymoron. Tourism evidently is another word for fending off the landscape in favour of a staked-out path.

Gertrude Stein, the American author and art lover, at some point were fed up with having to befriend her characters, meeting them on the path towards dramatic climax, being forced to learn about their less attractive *Eigenschaften* or characteristics, their sticky tendencies and sickly breathing. Characters are predictable and a drama is at best surprising, and can't be anything else, after all, what goes around comes around. Stories comes to an end and that's a destination, not an adventure.

Instead Stein proposed a kind of drama that operates like a landscape, where each and every one can meander their own ways, ending up where they end up for no particular reason. Moreover, she could simply avoid meeting up with characters, duck and cover behind a stone. Or perhaps behind herself, Stein, which both might be one and the same and not such a bad idea? Ultimately, it's the one preparing that is the biggest obstacle away from the staked-out path towards the uncharted.

In Lewis Carroll's poem "The Hunting of The Snark", the captain presents his crew with a map that's an absolute blank, which they praise and solute. What's good with the North Poles and equators, tropical zones and meridian lines, they are merely conventional signs, and conventional signs will only bring us places conventional and known.

So how can one prepare in ways that renders the landscape active and expanding, because without preparations you might simply end up following in others' footsteps, walking in circles or get stuck on those paths that therapy since centuries has laid out. Going to the shrink, or doing cognitive behaviour therapy, is equally a means to un-see the landscape and instead listen to all those known voices of knowledge and conduct. Analysis on the other hand is a departure point, or terminus where one leaves the path trauma has kept us on.

This form of preparation is obviously much more complicated, irritating and anxiety generating, but could perhaps be thought of in respect of relations. Conventional forms of preparation are premised by strong and sustainable relations. Anything that falls outside those relations can be ignored or overlooked. Only what is essential must be practiced repetitively, only what is necessary can be included. Learning is a means to hierarchise knowledge. Curiosity is an active approach and therefore selective.

Preparing for the unknown, an unfolding terrain, implies to avoid the forming of relations and instead a matter of preparing, perhaps one could say with a molecular attitude, making sure there are no or at least only unintelligible bonds formed between entities that present themselves incompatible. The unknown is a place where impressions and things, sensations and time, remain but without forming relations.

Moving in the direction of something smooth, an indivisible terrain where everything is everything and all the time could on a critical level be understood as a schizophrenic momentum. Great, but might the strategy hide a sense of bravery, show off or even vanity? The schizo has swagger and carries a sense of arrogance. The paranoid prepares differently, maybe in reverse. Instead of leaving out, forgetting and hence ending up in the smooth, uncharted, the paranoid prepares for everything, absolutely everything building an intense, exaggerated, knotted network or mishmash of relations that finding the right, or the wrong way becomes an absolute impossibility. Moreover, the paranoid cannot at any moment choose or make a distinction but prefer to keep all options open, staying up all night because nobody can be hundred percent certain nothing will go wrong, break, fail, run dry, backfire, disengage, fuck up, deviate, malfunction or slowly decay. The compulsive paranoiac has absolutely no swagger, but is instead smiling somewhat forced trying to hold it all together, but the smile is honest and it has nothing to hide. If the schizo is standing on the beach looking out over the ocean, or if the schizo is standing on the edge of the desert he can clearly see a mirage out there somewhere, the paranoid's preparation is more like messing up the cue-cards ten seconds before going live, or better like actively inviting an avalanche and having a bunch showing up at the party. It's in all that mess that the paranoid sink into the landscape, into the open and where the unknown is not in front, nor under them but within.

Trauma

A trauma is private or one could even say, it is privatising. It is something an individual can use to hold onto when under pressure, identify with, not because it feels good but because what caused the trauma gave rise to a threat to the subject's ability to confirm itself as a whole. For the haunted individual the trauma is their most precious property, because it is what keeps the individual alive, whole and capable of functioning in society. This is also the case concerning a group of individuals, a community, a people or nation. The trauma is what distance us from the threats experienced to the subject and it is what brings us together, what we share and nobody else.

Somebody proposed that a society has the psychological symptom it deserves, and whatever the symptom is it is correlated to the society's general modes of production. Late 19th century was the epoch of hysteria – often considered related to redistribution of power in respect family constellations, forms of labour and the forming of the modern city. The 60's and 70's experienced the emergence of psychosis, most certainly associated to, especially, the wars in Korea and Vietnam and the notion of the veteran. It's not an accident that our contemporary times favour trauma, not least because of how it underpins forms of property suitable for neoliberal capitalism, in particular north American understandings of property in relation to subjectivity, privacy and liberty (perhaps next to depression which evidently is a cash cow for big pharma). On the somewhat conspiracy theory side of argument, it's not far-fetched to consider that trauma is deliberately promoted by identifiable forces in the western world. Trauma is a form of economy that consolidates fear and build fences around subjects, communities and forms of belonging, but also performs a passive threat to difference in opinion and anybody who tries to dissolve or even analyse the trauma. This is particularly true in respect of forms of transgenerational trauma where, however actual and deep, conservative, if not extreme right-wing political forces can use trauma as a means to obstruct or block any form of change or redistribution of power.

Perspective

A perspective is never innocent, but always submerged in moral, ethical, political, ideological etc. conditions. These circumstances govern what can be exchanged and control forms of confirmation. At times conditions are stable and self-confirming, at other conditions can generate tensions that can be both healthy and malevolent. Perspectives always perform forms of violence in the sense that they establish borders, regulate and exclude. Over-stable perspectives tend to escalate violence or completely exclude, to the extent of not being able to perceive certain forms of actions, identities, inequalities or damage. Climate change denial, or denial in general, could be examples of coagulated perspectives. Perspectives whose inner tension dynamic is positive since in ways make the conditions generating the perspective tangible and something that can be laboured with. When tension become too strong, we know what can happen and explosions isn't something we favour.

There is no experience, observation, reflection or critique that's not filtered through some or other perspective, in fact perspective gives us criteria to select, distribute and archive impressions. Never the less perspective is also a form of prison both on a micro and macro lever. It is impossible to fully perceive and understand another culture, as you will always understand from your ground, your departure point, etc. It is well known how anthropology has struggled with this issue, in researching and observing for example indigenous societies. On a macro level we human have to surrender to the fact that we cannot not perceive the world in

any other respect than as humans. We are humans and the end of the world starts there to where human perspective cannot reach. We can of course imagine how a cat experience and capture the world but it's still us imagining. We can walk on all four and bark but we will never forget to be human. Neither can we imagine a world without us. Every imagination is carried by a perspective and ours is human no matter what. In our contemporary times, perhaps even on a global level, we face an additional problem which is that every imagination is not only human but also capitalist. Capitalism has become ubiquitous to the extent where every perspective thinkable and non-thinkable is a capitalist perspective.

Knowing that the positions from which a perspective emanates always is charged, an important inquiry concerns how to acknowledge how the position is biased, and possibly engage in practices that neutralises the vantage point, a point that in many cases is a position of power and dominant discourse, and hence, by some, is vital to defend and equally often pretend is non-existent. "-What do you mean I speak from a position of privilege?"

Animals practice and are caught in their own perspectives, a lamb looks at the world like lamb. Humans cannot share perspective with a lamb and we won't learn anything from the lamb even if we try really hard to take the perspective of the animal. We'll always look through the viewfinder of humanity, no matter what, but that does not say that we can't learn from a perspective generated through an epistemology incompatible to ours, we just have to be careful about what we think we learn?

There is hell of a difference between learning about the animal and learning from the animal. Learning about the animal is what we do in biology class or as kids. Dogs bark, cats have four legs, lions eat meat and elephants hide out when dying, none of which cause any problem for humans or perspective. Learning from an animal is something altogether different, as it implies a transfer or some thing from one dynamic of being in the world to another that are little or not at all shared. We cannot learn what it is that we learn from an animal more than on an affective level, in other words not in the form of knowledge but instead on the basis of sensation, touch, proximity, perhaps desire. These sensations can be transformed into recognisable forms of knowledge which at the same time is a process of distancing.

In times of ecological crisis, associated activist movements and scholarly trends it can certainly be tempting to proliferate the animal's point of view, that we can learn about the world would we only be familiar with the experience of the animal. We certainly should take on all opportunities to know more about other species, the more intimate or close range the better, but we should simultaneously keep in mind that the world that most of us want to save is a world that still "belongs" to us.

There is a third opportunity for learning in company with animals that proposes interesting registers, which is a matter of deterritorialization of human perspectives and where it is in the collapse of intersecting perspectives that something can emerge or we can experience a kind of corruption of established positions. By strategically superimposing perspectives, in particular seemingly incompatible ones, movements of tension can be initiated that potentially forces us beyond the secure perimeters of established perspectives and instead can generate contingently other forms of framing mental, social and environmental realities.

If we understand perspective as an opportunity to select and compartmentalise impressions on different levels, we can also confirm that perspective also operates as something that confirms, positively or negatively, the individual and its subjectivity. In other words perspective is a means of power, as certain individuals or populations are granted access to certain perspectives whereas others are not, and yet others are forced into certain perspectives or not given permission to develop specific modes of framing realities. Dominant power distributes

rights and opportunities in regard of perspectives, forms of power that is particularly tangible for forms of minorities, may those be political, social, gender, racial, physical etc.

This further means that perspective can be understood in terms of value, hence also as property and thus privatised.

This third strategy, superimposing incompatible perspectives, therefore implies a departure towards a public domain, a becoming public.

It is conventional to argue that the sum of all perspectives is equal to horizon. Perspectives is partial, dividing the possible range of opportunities into handleable snippets. If we put all those snippets next to each other we'll sooner or later end up with a horizon, but this is of course naïve and myopic. There is a kind of holistic touch to it all, the horizon is not the sum of perspectives, on the contrary it is own capacity, beyond the realm of possibles and probabilities. It's not just that the whole is bigger than the sum of its parts, it's an entirely different story, approach a realm that could be described either as a dynamic of potentiality and contingency, or as a plane of consistency, even immanence.

Our problem however is that there is not bridge between perspective and horizon, and it's not as simple as just opening one's eye extra wide. One cannot walk out of a bar and encounter the horizon, meaning that the horizon that the schizo rendezvous with only is an illusion, a look alike. The horizon is not accessible in respect of strategies entangled by causality, but only through oblique forms of conspiracy, self-defeating prophecies or the elaboration of a space consisting of superimposed incompatible phenomena.

Needless to say this is where paranoid modes of preparation resurface and crack open as, if not excellent, so at least a possible entry point, however without any guarantees.

An image could function as an example. The paranoid preparation is like building a scaffolding so complex it can no longer be navigated, so knotted it loses any sense of reason. Residing on top the paranoid prepare to jump but instead of taking of the scaffolding collapses and the movement is reversed into a falling through, falling through a structure that simultaneously is caving in, thus a fall without ground and without direction which in other words a plunge out of a formulated whole subject coalescent to value, property and privacy towards a prominent publicness, which is also the non-extended place of aesthetic decision or experience.

Public

It is widespread that public space or publicness is an actual space. Like an abandoned parking lot, a public square, a park or the beach. But in societies governed by omnipresent capitalism the notion of publicness cannot exist, all spaces are in some or other way privatised, temporarily or permanently. The annihilation of prominent public realms however has powerful consequences on subjects, communities and the world, but also on the possibility of forming intelligences, intellects and the emergence of new thought or ideas. But perhaps it is not too late, not yet a moment of complete resignation. Instead of elaborating the public sphere as an actual space, something existent, it might be considered as a form of production, the production or practice of the possibility of extensions that has no ground and cannot be owned, captured or taken home. To become public first of all implies to lose ones subject and thus become available to the world, and it is in this non-place that encounters can take place that are yet to be conditioned, yet to establish relations and value. To become public is another wording for a form of autonomy, that instead of building walls around itself, is autonomous exactly because it lacks relations. To become public means to encounter the horizon, to leave the bar, to dissolve ones and our trauma. To become public is to forget ones maps. To

become public is to make oneself innocent and carry a lamb through a landscape yet uncharted.