

Buried Life

A Digression of Life Underfoot
Ture Bural

*"But often, in the world's most crowded streets,
But often, in the din of strife,
There rises an unspeakable desire
After the knowledge of our buried life"*

The Buried Life

Matthew Arnold

How did they get here? There is nothing particularly lucid about THIS night fall, about THIS twilight, this soft simmering of summer into a hissing pool of insectile quaverings and scratchings and thummings. It was a slow walk past tiny green mansions to the bottom of what COULD be a lake but was simply flayed open space, more or less, below the curve, down under the radar of gigantoid walls which everywhere sprouted radiantly around the cabin, fell, sprouted again at the tip, like that great Jack Arnold film *Monolith Monsters*: giant meteorite falls to earth 'out west', spires emerge when rain moves in, rise and become unwieldly, falling, at the tip come more vast columns, which fall and rise, fall and rise. Like so much of everything, except some green thing itself, some rockness obdurate obsidian almost in its withdrawal, it seems like an allegory, a projection outside the small round of the campfire, a bit of violence restored to thought, moving it out beyond the claustrophobic hold of the self, just one step beyond the expanding stone walls moving everywhere where beyond the self, crushing all the little buggers who live underneath, incapable of understanding any of it, certainly not capable of escaping any of the falling shards, always thudding in the distance.

*Now I study the scratched diary
of the slate's summer,
the language of flint and air,
a layer of darkness, a layer of light.
I want to thrust my hand
into the flint path from an old song
as into a wound, and hold together
the flint and the water, the horseshoe and the ring*

Osip Mandlestam

This is an advent of smallness, a feat almost unheard of now, an arrival that is not considered to be any sort of presence or arrival at all. The life of the cabin is now the life of vacation, of re-creating to proceed back into the fray, back into vocation. The gigantism of the approaching world settles onto the back of the hut

like a shell on a turtle, but policing it, not allowing it to open into the void, as it always has done previously, but rather under the tutelage of a guiding protectorate, 'for its own good,' which means for the good of it's neighbors and the tutelage of their own guiding excess, which is seen as their own proper due.

Martin Heidegger says of the gigantic:

"The forms in which the gigantic appears are various; above all the gigantic is not seen suddenly and overwhelmingly in each of its forms. That which claims large numbers and measures for its representability is only the appearance of the gigantic, which of course belongs to the gigantic, since it legitimates the kind of magnitude that relies essentially on settling down and representing.

The forms of the gigantic include:

1. The gigantism of the *slowing down* of history (from the staying away of essential decisions all the way to lack of history) in the semblance of speed and steerability of 'historical' [*historisch*] development and anticipation.
2. The gigantism of the *publicness* as summation of everything homogeneous in favor of concealing the destruction and undermining of any passion for essential gathering.
3. The gigantism of the claim to *naturalness* in the semblance of what is self-evident and 'logical': the question-worthiness of being is placed totally outside questioning.
4. The gigantism of the *diminution* of beings in the whole in favor of the semblance of boundless extending of the same by virtue of unconditioned controllability. The single thing that is impossible is the word and representation of 'impossible.'

The gigantic unfolds in the calculative and thus always manifests the 'quantitative.' But is itself -- as the unconditioned domination of representing and producing -- a denial of the truth of be-ing in favor of 'what belongs to reason' and what is 'given,' a denial that is not in control of itself and, in heightened self-certainty, is simply never aware of itself."
[...]

The hidden history of be-ing does not know what is calculative about 'large' and 'small' but rather knows 'only' what pertains to be-ing in what is decided, undecided, and decisionless."

Martin Heidegger, **Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)**

Later, in section 261, Heidegger comments that "What is at work here is the most indifferent and most blind denial of the incalculable." Does anything escape the incalculable and the decisionless today? Assuredly the large must be determined

as 'large' because of stochastic calculations but mustn't the small also be included in calculability? Is there a limit to calculation, one which arises OUT of the event and not imposed ON the event?

This is presumably what Heidegger means in his distinction between the two forms of the historical: *geschichtlich* and *historisch*, also seen as the historic and the 'merely' historical. The incalculable can only arise from the historical as *geschichtlich*... which in turn leads to a diremptive mode, to a 'left' Heidegger of , eg, the nihilism of the 'weak thought' of Vattimo, and perhaps post-structuralism in general such as Derrida and deconstruction, then and a 'right' Heidegger of blood and soil and decision. Nihilism would perhaps always be an overturning of metaphysics or trans-valuation of values even. Hut life, buried life then resurrected life--perhaps --- exemplifies Nietzsche's thought that 'since Copernicus, man rolls from the center into an X,' ever diminishing frailty, from empire, from center, to periphery rolling right into hut life, into buried life, a fragile disappearance into humus, with green shoot following outward from periphery, escaping from the bell curve/black hole of enumerative possibilities only ---real transvaluation of values into panic from Pan, into enthused state, and back again.

There would be no point in speaking of an 'empire of huts' except in a poetic sense, since the spectacularity of gigantism must be an intrinsic part of empire, along with calculability. From the perspective of those who calculate, hut life is deserted life, barren life, a life given to *geschichtlichkeit* and given over to an on-going bottom line of collapse, an inverted gigantism if you will. (It should be noted that *geschichtlich* does not denote ahistorical but rather an event which closes in on itself to provide the foundations for its own interpretation no matter the historical milieu as per the advent of Jesus Christ: a true 'historic' event. The diremption of 'history' into the historical (*historisch*) and the historic (*geschichtlich*) seems to have been first codified by theologian Martin Kahler (1835-1912) in dealing with 'Jesus' and then taken up by Martin Heidegger.

The hut is the realm of the *geschichtlichkeit*, simultaneously in history and out of time, or, as Jacques Derrida will put it, time unhinged. It is not thereby a transcendental time but a time that has dropped, to be picked up some time 'later,' and always in the 'time that remains,' to rapidly gloss Agamben. In that latter sense the hut life is always prelude to the yet-to-come/never-to-come Thing that always promises to come; for lack of a better phrase, the messianic event, or Badiou's 'true' event. The hut waits, even before the promised Coming, at the threshold and at the back door as the Coming always collapses in on itself.

Nevertheless, this 'empire of huts' marks a signal failure every time it appears, such that through this dysfunctionality (what has also been called its weakness) is

able to welcome the coming of another event, the horizon of which the hut demarcates. Even the bare life of hut life itself cannot delineate the contours of this new situation for to do so would be to enter a realm of force, totally at odds with and negating the eventual destination of 'hutness'; the hut life is truly buried life, life underfoot and forgotten.

The phenomenology of the hut also includes impoverishment, silence, abrogation, decay.

IMPOVERISHMENT

Perhaps nothing will be better than a quote:

'The hermit's hut is a theme which needs no variations, for at the simplest mention of it, "phenomenological reverberation" obliterates all mediocre resonances. The hermit's hut is an engraving that would suffer from any exaggeration of picturesqueness. Its truth must derive from the intensity of its essence, which is the essence of the verb "to inhabit." The hut immediately becomes centralized solitude, for in the land of legend, there exists no adjoining hut. And although geographers may bring back photographs of hut villages from their travels in distant lands, our legendary past transcends everything that has been seen, even everything that we have experienced personally. The image leads us on towards extreme solitude. The hermit is alone before God. His hut, therefore, is just the opposite of the monastery. And there radiates about this centralized solitude a universe of meditation and prayer, a universe outside the universe. The hut can receive none of the riches "of this world." It possesses the felicity of intense poverty; indeed, it is one of the glories of poverty; as destitution increases it gives us access to absolute refuge.'

Gaston Bachelard, **The Poetics of Space**

Perhaps an accompaniment to impoverishment is silence, both sketching an etiolation while filling to the bursting point on other scales.

SILENCE

"Silence, the crystallization of the soul sleeping in peace far removed from the present; sacred silence...sweet taciturnity which allows us to hear the inner melody."

Camille Mauclair

"For silence to be rendered visible, it must rely upon a dynamic stasis between violence and the deserted space that violence leaves."

Dylan Trigg, **The Aesthetics of Decay: Nothingness, Nostalgia, and the Absence of Reason**