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## **ANABASIS. PSYCHOGRAM OF WONDERING THE UNCHARTED TERRITORIES**

I tried to write poetry in this language those years. Writing to speak, to look for reference points, to find out where I was and where I was going, to map the reality out for myself. It was, you see, an event, a movement. Being on the road was an attempt to determine a direction.

*Paul Celan*

Paul Celan, whose centenary was celebrated in 2020, is a key figure for the study of those tragedies, cracks and traumas that are imprinted in the collective body of humanity of the twentieth century and prompt questions today regarding the search for new biopolitical forms of coexistence in the present world. So how did Celan become a key figure? Let's start from afar. The Enlightenment project was an inescapable utopia, the apotheosis of which was the modernity. The Enlightenment desacralized everyday life, emancipated the subject, brought the masses into the arena of history, buried God and the figure of the Master, and eliminated rigid hierarchies in art, politics, and culture in general. But as a result, we have received a neuroticized subject who is unable to appropriate the pleasure of the freedom that has been bestowed upon him. The imaginary master as well as the imaginary slave are today alienated on an equal footing, which means that the old dispositions of Marxism have been revoked. We are in a state of diffused cynicism (P. Sloterdijk's term), in which everyone is aware of being cheated, but continues to passively accept the dispositions of power on both the political and the everyday level. Something has gone wrong...

### **1.**

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the phrase "If there is no God, then everything is permitted" was so true. And in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Jacques Lacan turns it upside down and says: "If there is no God, then nothing is permitted". If there is no God, the spectacle remains. The subject plunges into melancholy. And "Me\_alone\_holy" must be comforted. Death must be silenced. Peter Zapffe calls this reaction "anchoring", throwing an anchor, closing off from death. The brain understands too much about reality and constantly undermines itself. Whilst reality is ghostly. Jacques Lacan showed how the protocols of the unconscious work, how anxiety is displaced into the unconscious, and most importantly the causes of this very anxiety. Celan is the figure through whose heart all these cracks run (K. Marx's expression). Birth on the edge of the empire in Chernivtsi, the loss of his parents in Transnistria, the tragedy of the Shoah (Celan never said Holocaust or Shoah, preferring to say "what happened"), emigration through Romania and Vienna to Paris. At the beginning of his exile\_tation along the Bucharest-Vienna-Paris line there was no question of "To be or not to be," the question was on the plane of Marcel Proust's "To belong or not to belong". But to whom? If you are a Jew, from an Austrian province, your parents were killed in your mother tongue, and you live in Paris. The isolation, the dizzying state of immeasurable loneliness. "Sticking out like a

splinter, Life" ("Steckst du mit einem / Splitter / Leben"). Celan seems to be all cut from these fragments of solitude – "isolates". And this seems to be the fee charged to anyone who understands anything about the real state of the world. He has been known to reinvent the German language. He uses absolute metaphors, hermetic constructions of composites, which can be seen even in the titles of his poetry collections "Die Niemandrose" (The No-One's-Rose), "Atemwende" (Breathturn), "Fadensonnen" (Fibrous Suns), "Lichtzwang" (Lightduress), "Schneepart" (Snow part), "Zeitgehöft" (Homestead of Time), and there are also "Herzstein" (Heart-Stone) and "Herzzeit" (Time of heart). These are clots, shards and crystals about "having nowhere to live and only thinking into the head" (Platonov's expression) and feeling into the heart (to add from us). Celan is absolutely homologous to reality, is isomorphic in its texts-crystals. These are the apotheosis of the traumatic modernity to which humanity has been heading for so long but recoiled when it saw the consequences of the catastrophe. Celan sang revolutionary songs to his son Eric, was sympathetic to the leftist movement, like virtually all French intellectuals, and supported May '68. But, nevertheless, his poetics is already a disbelief in collective humanity. And instead of big utopias, micro-utopias. In one of his letters, we read: "Tonight I will read them poems, over their heads, as if I wanted to find an audience not among them, but in some other reality that I am going to give them." And "...there are still songs to sing beyond mankind." (es sind noch Lieder zu singen jenseits der Menschen).

## 2.

It doesn't sound like frustration with people. It is difficult to demand that people be held in a state of "falling into understanding" while in this, an abnormal wandering of uncharted territories. From the very beginning, Celan stakes on the ultimate micro-sensibility. In place of We, You increasingly transpire: "...I stood in the middle of you" (Es stand / der Feigensplitter auf deiner Lippe / es stand / Jerusalem um uns / es stand / der Hellkiefernduft / überm Dänenschiff, dem wir dankten / ich stand / in dir), Rimbaud in the "letters of the seer" (voyant) wrote: "The poet determines (establishes) the measure of the unknown of his era". And then the programmatic statement: "The poet is an abnormality, gravitating toward the norm. The poet enters the unknown and, even if he does not understand his own visions, he nevertheless sees them. He may perish in a gigantic leap over the unheard and nameless: other, terrible workers will start from the horizon where he crashed". Celan replies: "You who measure the depth of the wound with an eyelash" (du, mit der die Wunde auslotenden Wimper). In any case, after the disaster, Celan raises the stakes so high that the bottle with the message – the poem (Celan quotes Mandelstam here) that the poet sends to nowhere – cannot be caught by everyone. And understanding the message even less so. There is always hope, though, which is why poems are written after Auschwitz. Just in a different language and by different means. Heiner Müller once remarked in an interview that after Auschwitz, poetry (art) is the only thing that makes sense in the world. Language structured us. Accordingly, a new language (Celan's language, for example) constructs a being of a different kind. Let's recollect Ted Chan's story called "The Story of Your Life".

## 3.

If one has a tool for knowing the World-in-itself at all, it is not science, but art. M. Heidegger wrote "science does not think." Which certainly does not diminish its value to the world. Exact science is doomed to literalism – you can describe an eagle mathematically, but a mathematical model of an eagle will not fly. On the contrary, one strong metaphor can decode any thing through another in their essential juxtaposition. "we crumbled apart, we brittled back together" (wir bröckelten auseinander / und bröselten wieder in eins). We are

crumbs. And further, "the Lord broke bread, the bread broke the Lord" (der Herr brach das Brot / das Brot brach den Herrn). Perhaps the act of breaking of bread means launching the universe. But a few billion years have passed, and something has gone wrong. We are destroying each other for no reason. And to have a reason, a justification for destruction, is probably even worse. Modernity has demystified everything that was previously in a sphumatized state. God is discounted. Although some believe that perhaps God is not dead, but is yet to come (Q.Meillassoux).

#### 4.

Reality is unravelled. So what? The configuration of contradictions thickened even more. Clarification turned into an even greater darkening. A demon emerged from all corners. And it's not that there is nowhere to hide, but that man has nothing to hide. Very few people realized this: Nietzsche, Artaud, Mandelstam, Beckett, Celan – all of them either went mad, or were deeply melancholic and depressed, or committed suicide. The 20<sup>th</sup> century invented imagined communities, nation states and the concept of the nation has emerged. Nation and identity: "I - dent I Fuck nation!" Once large-scale fictions were generated (hyperstition, as Nick Land calls it), we got a cascade of disasters. Identity wars, racial supremacy, the nation, the imagined community... As Gilbert Simondon, philosopher of technology, pointed out, the individual is an incorrect naming for the human being. The in\_dividual is the Indivisible. A person, as it turns out, is a crystal. But it is not. We are rather "fluid" mutants and "floating" cyborgs. Individuals are a table, a glass, because their form and essence are already unchanging, while ours can contingently mutate at any time. We are not inDVDs, we are DVDs. The subject is not an atomized individual, but an assemblage, an assembly, a collision of forces and components of quite different natures, from chemical reactions and viruses to metaphysical discourses and gender performances. We are not encapsulated entities. Therefore, identity is something static, fictitious, artificial, and therefore doomed in advance. Donna Haraway has discerning reflection. "Every knowledge is contaminated. It is contaminated by the tools used (optical, discursive and imaginary, by social and material relations, by the intersections of oppression, power and resistance. All these elements affect not only the knowledge produced, but also the production of the subject of knowledge itself. Identities are the effects of optical tools". Simultaneously without optics, we run the risk of slipping into anarch\_aos.

#### 5.

Consider the following example. "Companion" comes from the Latin cum panis ("with bread"). Companions at the table. Food is the basis of companionship, which is a long chain of mutual digestion. The food we eat transforms us, and we ourselves become food for others as we die. Companionship is inextricably linked to what Haraway calls compost-ability (the ability to digest and be eaten) or inclusion in the process of mutual reconfiguration in the context of nature culture. Companionship lay at the foundation of biological life and interspecies relatedness when, millions of years ago, colonies of cells joined together in a tube to absorb food. When discussing the corporeality and subjectivity of animals, people, and plants, Francesca Ferrando observes that the English word "human" comes from the Latin humanus, "human," which is an adjective related to humus, "earth, soil". Human is a compost, something processed, digested, part of an ecosystem that nourishes and constitutes its wealth. At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, philosophy and sociology, in particular Bruno Latour and posthumanism, were known to criticize anthropocentrism and the false separation between nature and culture. People, objects, and animals are actors woven into networks through the operation of translation. Technology is not hostile to man. And the ideal technical invention is comparable to natural phenomena

(Simondon again). Today we return to more fluid, hybrid states and build new networks within nature. Donna again: "Objective knowledge is an open knowledge that can connect and interact with other partial perspectives, experiences and positions, while not merging into some whole, but forming unstable aggregates and assemblages."

## 6.

In this sense, one of the ambitions of this project and my curatorial vision is to explore through digital media models of the posthumanist imagination, using on the one hand the poetics of P. Celan's method of wandering uncharted territories – "anabasis", his composite thinking, where objects and non-human agents coexist with the human in a strange way (it is no accident that his texts appeal to botanics, geology, biology), and on the other hand to apply the optics of posthumanism (D. Haraway, R. Braidotti), object-oriented ontology, speculative realism (G. H. Harman, J. Bogost, L. Bryant, J. Bennett) and dark ecology (T. Morton). Celan was attentive to the appeal of the famous call "back to objects: "The poem is dark, first of all by virtue of its handiness, its subjectivity, its thing-density: dark, therefore, in the sense of the phenomenal opacity peculiar to every object; that is, in the sense that it must be understood from itself, as something handi-nalistic." He goes on to ask about the direction, the anabasis, the cartography of this World-in-itself: "Things approach one another, but even in this coherence of them the question is announced about their Where from and Where to, a question which remains open, which leads to no goal, but draws away into the open and accessible, into emptiness and gaping". And elsewhere he quotes a letter from Flaubert to Louise Collet: "Looking at a stone, an animal, a painting, I felt as if I had entered them." In his notebooks, Celan writes: "To make things solid, the ultimate thingness in a poem is the yard of time! Things always stand in their ultimate thingness." As a rule, Celan is seen in the disposition of the Holocaust and adjacent territories. But he is hardly limited to the theme of the "Todesfuge" or "Stretta" where a nuclear catastrophe is already implied. No one testifies for the witness. Yet there is something else about him. It is an actor-network intimacy and sensuality. This is what we will try to explore.

Celan's psychogram will become for us a beacon, a spark, a compass on the path of wandering the uncharted territories, where man is open to a world of weird and eerie objects, a world of instability, hybridity, and ultimate sensuality. The expanded reality of posthumanism, where the human and the nonhuman coexist in symbiotic hybrid states, looks utopian today, and in conjunction with Celan, suicidal. But, following T. Adorno, art is a model of the future life of society. Art is today, in symbiosis with philosophy and science, a laboratory of imaginary, sensual production of truth, in which what is known to exist in nature is not so much discovered as constructed.

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