Inoperativity in the Garden

Preliminary Notes on the Fifth Hut

Leonardo Caffo

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Anticipationism is not a grand philosophical program for the global transformation of the world, nor a strategy for reassembling what is already assembled. On the contrary, it is the deliberate decision to stop working *for* the world as a totality and to begin working *inside* a landscape. Far from being a quietist surrender, this is an act of extreme conceptual lucidity: the recognition that the only space in which human action can still make sense is not the world itself, but the point of view from which the world appears.

Here, finally, one ceases "working" in the sense of the great historical project, collective redemption, or the universal correction of the real. Instead, one begins to care for a fragment, knowing that this fragment is all that remains habitable.

What, then, is a "landscape"? Giorgio Agamben, in his dense reflections on the visible and the invisible, defines landscape not as an objective portion of territory or a mere collection of things arranged in space, but as the encounter between eye and world. Following Wittgenstein—particularly the *Remarks on Colour*—we can sharpen this by noting the obvious yet decisive point: landscape exists only as a point of view. There is no landscape *in itself*; there is only a collapse between world and self that we call "landscape." Hence, there exists only a landscape-for-me, a landscape that looks at me as I look at it. It is pure relation, a perceptual event, a threshold where subject and entity touch without ever fully coinciding.

There are, strictly speaking, no landscapes—only perspectives, cuts, openings through which the world manifests itself to someone. Yet—and this is the crucial paradox—these points of view do not remain private. The moment they are experienced and, above all, shared, rendered visible, painted, filmed, or described, they become public. They enter the common patrimony, even if no one can ever inhabit them exactly as the one who first opened them did.

Consider Van Gogh's landscapes: the wheatfield with crows, the starry night over Saint-Rémy, the twisted olive trees beneath a turquoise sky. These are not faithful representations of a slice of Provence. They are extreme, almost unbearable points of view in which light becomes matter, colour becomes emotion, and sky becomes vortex. Van Gogh does not paint "the" landscape (which ontologically does not exist by itself) but the landscape-that-looks-at-him, the landscape that is devouring him. Precisely for this reason, those paintings escape his retina and become public landscapes—landscapes that millions have inhabited with their gaze, even though no one

can inhabit them with Van Gogh's eyes. The same holds for Turner's seas, Cézanne's cypresses, and Caspar David Friedrich's snow-covered expanses.

Landscape is always already public the moment it is experienced as such. Like Leibniz's monad as reinterpreted by Husserl, it exists only insofar as it becomes intersubjective.

Ecology, then, always and only concerns a landscape. You cannot fix the world. Anyone who tries commits the supreme anthropocentric error: believing that the world is an object to be repaired, a machine to be optimized, a project to be completed by reaching some moral equilibrium—which is usually nothing more than bourgeois moralism disguised as a false will to power. This is cognitive anthropocentrism in its most insidious form: turning the WHOLE into a human task.

Genuine ecology can only tend to a landscape—and must do so while knowing its irrelevance with respect to the total world. You can care for a garden, a wood, a river, a stretch of coastline. You can decide that this fragment of the visible deserves to be preserved in its present form. But you cannot "save the planet." You can only save the point of view from which the planet still appears worthy of care. Everything else is ideology, infinite labour, the old theological pretension to redeem the entire creation.

The garden is the micro-landscape par excellence. It is the place where the encounter between eye and world contracts to its smallest dimension, yet retains its full ontological power. Derek Jarman's garden at Dungeness exemplifies this: not an allotment, not a park, not an extension of natural landscape, but a point of view made material. Every circle of pebbles, every piece of driftwood, every poppy sprouting among the shingle is a cut, a frame, an act of delimitation. Jarman did not "fix" the world; he chose to inhabit a landscape that the world had already declared irrelevant and radioactive. He transformed black gravel and salty wind into a point of view from which the sunset of the world becomes visible—and therefore habitable.

The garden is a micro-landscape because it reduces the whole to a fragment; yet in that fragment the whole still shows itself—not as a totality to be dominated, but as a totality to be welcomed in its mutation.

Salvation, at this point, becomes inextricably linked to landscape. Salvation is no longer eschatological, universal, or collective. It is a form of *landscape salvation.* One is saved only by accepting to inhabit a point of view. And here Wittgenstein's decisive critique of private language becomes relevant. Just as there can be no private language (meaning is use, shared rule, common form of life), there can be no purely private landscape. The moment a landscape is experienced as such, it ceases to belong exclusively to the self. It becomes public, shareable, a form of life.

Landscape salvation is therefore always public at its most intimate core. One is saved only by sharing the point of view, even when that point of view is tiny, marginal, and destined to disappear.

The original garden—the Eden of Western tradition—makes the point inevitable. Eden is not a place of solitude. It is God's private garden, yet salvation there always occurs in twos. Adam and Eve are not isolated individuals but a relation, an encounter, a shared point of view. Original sin is not merely disobedience; it is the attempt to move from landscape to the entire world, from point of view to totality. Eating the apple means claiming to know everything, to see the world from God's perspective, to overcome the limitation of one's own landscape. The expulsion is not punishment but the forced return to the landscape condition of human existence. After Eden, one can no longer know everything. One can only know *from* a point of view.

In this accepted ignorance, in this resignation to one's own irrelevance, in this sharing of fragile landscapes, real salvation is played out. One is not saved by claiming to embrace the entire world, to understand it, or to judge it with a morality or perspective that seeks to "crush" others. One is saved by accepting to tend a garden, inhabit a hut, film a uniform blue, or plant seeds knowing the harvest will be partial.

The fifth hut, ultimately, is this: the refusal to work for the world and the decision to work for a landscape—not to redeem it or save it from its sunset, but to make it habitable a little longer, together with someone else, while resigning oneself to never reaching the apple.

If salvation resides in this shift from working for the world to working for a landscape, then we must ask about the political nature of this garden-project that is the fifth hut. Jarman's garden at Dungeness was never an idyllic escape; it was an act of ontological insubordination. In an era that demands we be everywhere—constantly connected to global tragedy, constantly informed about collapses occurring ten thousand kilometres away—deciding to care for a limited perimeter is perhaps the last revolutionary gesture remaining.

The great error of the twentieth century, which we continue to inherit and which underpins contemporary technology, was the belief that care, understood as knowledge, had to be universal in order to be valid. But the universal is the abstraction that has led us to the atomic paralysis in which we find ourselves. The "world" is a category of marketing and geopolitics; "landscape" is the measure of the human and of our limits.

When we stop seeking the apple—the total knowledge, the definitive judgement—we do not become ignorant. We finally become inhabitants. Accepting that the story we can tell of the world, like the harvest of a garden, will only ever be partial means making peace with entropy. Anticipationism, in this sense, is not the prediction of the future but the preparation for its fragmentariness.

The fifth hut is thus an act of desertion: "Today I stop." It is the cancellation of much of what we have been told matters. It is the decision to make of oneself a living (and dying) book of philosophy—a book that does not survive in archives but is consumed in the landscape, eroded by wind, time, virus, and silence.

All these threads—inoperativity, bare life, animality, silence—converge in the fifth hut as their concrete figure. Inoperativity is not idleness or simple refusal of work. As Agamben has shown throughout his work, it is the suspension of the operativity that defines the human as subject of a destiny, a task, a vocation. The Western human is the animal that must always "do" something with itself: produce meaning, accumulate knowledge, redeem History, optimize life. Inoperativity is the crisis of this anthropogenetic machine.

The fifth hut is precisely this subtraction: ceasing to be the worker of meaning, the guardian of history, the redeemer of the world. It is the act that says: today I stop being "useful." This desertion is not abstract but animal. It touches the heart of bare life—the life that remains when every qualified form, every political garment, every social role has been stripped away. It is life exposed.

The fifth hut realizes this bare life concretely: no longer the philosopher as profession, the musician as career, the intellectual as function. It is the speaking being who renounces speaking *for* the world and decides instead to inhabit a landscape. It is the animal that, instead of rising to the human condition, takes the opposite path: descending back into its own animality without shame or regret.

Here the silence of Wittgenstein becomes decisive. The *Tractatus*ends with the famous proposition: "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent." Wittgenstein's silence is not muteness; it is the silence of the animal that has seen the limit of language and chooses to inhabit it. His Norwegian hut at Skjolden, the house he designed for his sister in Vienna, the rooms in Cambridge where he taught without respecting academic rules—all these are forms of animal silence. To be silent means ceasing to speak *for* the world, ceasing to pretend to say the whole by sacrificing the parts. It means letting the landscape speak in our place.

The garden, then, is nothing other than the lair: not a romantic refuge, but an ethological den—the place the animal digs, modifies, defends, and abandons according to rhythms that are no longer those of human history. The fifth hut is this philosophical lair: the place where the speaking being renounces public speech in order to return to a form of life that is already, in itself, sufficient.

At the frontiers of the human, what remains is not regression but a progression beyond the human: beyond specialization, beyond infinite narration, beyond the pretension to save the world. It is the act by which the philosopher, the mathematician, the physicist, the writer decide to become a living and dying book—one that is consumed in the landscape, eroded by wind and time and silence.

This is the only life still worth living: a life that has made peace with the partial, the fragile, and the shared. A life that tends its small garden knowing it will never reach the apple, yet finds, precisely in that resignation, the only possible salvation.

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