

Old Growth Review Committee

In what follows I will sound not as a champion of science nor as a perseverating pragmatist in the name of what is 'right' regarding 'old growth forest(s)'. Though, so mentioned, either of these can be taken in some sense as a measure of respect.

To read further invites patient studied attention (something particularly challenging nowadays in/by the general public) if only to juxtapose one's own 'thinking place'.

Part 1

In brief, what follows is an attempt to attune the committee's work to a listening (at times) otherwise than to the plethora of prosaic announcements, those "do this to fix things", of what is considered necessary to be done.

To initiate a listening-otherwise one need posit a question of critical significance. "Here ('now'), what is founding of one's listening, what informs one's listening, what discloses (closes), limits 'hearing's' hearing in the first place?" Again, "what informs the (committee's) 'ear' such that only a certain (possible) hearing hears here, now?"

Perhaps too coarsely asked, this question... Is it possible that the committee is incarcerated in a certain enframement of listening, of the probability of having it's hearing perseveratively programmed by a certain a priori?

This question is prompted by a wondering in a rather pedestrian way about whether there is a need to dust out one's ears, clear the channels of a certain listening jammed by the residue of a rhetoric solidified of the 'economy of self-interest (humanism) from, throughout the industrial age, the 'modern' epoch (era of instrumentalism).

Such rhetoric obstructs the channels of listening, of careful listening, listening thoughtfully attuned to a future-coming whose frequency is of a discordant reverberation with respect to modernity. This requiring of the listener to tune in to a completely different dis-closing of, an opening up to a future-coming. So doing would affirm that attempts to inoculate, immunize ourselves with self-interest against 'otherness', life-writ-large, is, it would seem, a fool's game.

Part 2

From what I can gather thus far of the committee's 'listening' I am given to hope for, to anticipate... I am sensing that its listening is at the very least becoming, is coming to be tuned in to, attuned to, what I wish to refer to as the ontological calling of, in some sense, animism¹. Animism reinforces the meaning of common signifiers such as: economy, justice, law, science, ecosystem, future. Of course animism is but one example of a plethora of other possible 'worlding of worlds', what I will refer to later as metanarratives.

¹Animism - the word comes from the Latin anima, meaning spirit, breath, life.

A reference - <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/nov/02/trees-have-rights-too-robert-macfarlane-on-the-new-laws-of-nature>

Invoking a certain 'animism'² assists in a rethinking of being-here-ness. And its articulation announced in a different register effects a renovation of the meaning of 'common' signifiers just mentioned. We would, for example, necessarily be dis-closing, opening to a different understanding of the notion of 'economy'. For, in ecosystems, micro and/or macro, 'economy' acknowledges *beyond calculation*³ the infinitely complex relationship(s) among and within all animate and inanimate things.

Yet, there remains an unconscious resistance to what might lightly be considered such naivety, to a seemingly always, already lure of calculation. It is understandable then that what is perseveratively sought in the 'now' is a calculative thinking characterized as an instrumental process ensuring iterability, a repetition of the present which is thought to be the essence of stability-over-time.

However, it is this instrumental thinking which has brought us to the brink of an ecological catastrophe. What we need recognize, indeed energetically resist, and this is ironic, is naively indwelling such a stayed world view.

Part 3

And where does this traject one's thinking otherwise? Here we are challenged by a difficult mode of thinking wherein the immanent is revitalized, no longer wholly beholding to the transcendent (certain concepts, theories, rationalities, etc.).

Let us follow a path circumventing the 'now' as it is presently conceived to be (epoch of modernity).

To do so we might think of, think 'in' a nouveau metanarrative⁴. A different overarching 'real' story-writ-large (i.e. perhaps, as mentioned above, animism⁵) thus effecting a circumscription which does not wholly deny but rather has the effect of inhibiting the pathological investment in the spectre of modernity's stability (spectre = imagining, believing that the finite can be instrumentally conditioned as infinite) as a form of 'living on'.

The belief in the stability (of a certain way of life - modernity) effects the founding of laws and of social institutions which lay down the law(s) so-to-speak of what constitutes a *privileged* form of thinking, *legitimated* living. Laws then gives the impression, impresses upon, press on all that is *immanent* as though it was 'originally' necessarily of the *general*. The 'general' here refers to, for example, (a) metaphysical concepts which prescribe, pre-scribe an atemporal 'reality' (supposedly) transcending time. In short, an impossibility.

However, consider this. If we are alert we must ask the question of 'justice' which, arguably, is in some measure a circumspection regarding the law ('law' here invoked in a general sense as that which *must* be). We become wary concerning law (i.e. legitimated sovereignty over place) sensing that the law over

² In brief, an intimate relationship among all living things before, beyond anthropocentrism. A profound sense of the omnipresence livingness itself.

³ Beyond calculation or 'the incalculable' precludes being arrested in, by instrumental thinking (i.e. scientific, rationalism) but necessarily, understandable motivates attending to a certain apprehension of the coming of the future-coming.

⁴ See Jean-François Lyotard - The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge

⁵ Practical example of animism: The [Lake Erie Ecosystem Bill of Rights](#) came before Toledo citizens in a referendum on 26 February; 61% voted for it, and Lake Erie became – symbolically, temporarily – a “legal person”. It joined other more-than-human entities accorded various versions of legal personhood, including the Ganges and Yamuna rivers in India (though this decision was later overturned by India's supreme court), the Whanganui River in New Zealand (designated by parliamentary declaration “an indivisible and living whole”), the Colombian Amazon, and all nature in Ecuador, which in 2008 famously enshrined the rights of “Pachamama” (“Mother Nature”) in its constitution (though the subsequent benefit of this enshrining for both indigenous Ecuadorians and nature is highly debatable).

extends its rule of the immanent⁶. We begin to inspect the sovereignty of the law(s) legitimating the presence of modernity. It enacts force - the crude effectation of a certain *generalized*, the radical claim to significations of 'fact', 'truth', 'universal'. The three, of course, inform the hegemonic metanarrative(s) of the modern epoch discursively rendered in ideologies, doctrines, moral codes... totalizing cultural schemas, etc.

Part 4

Given the calamity of modernity ought we not invoke, initiate an egression, a regression of sorts from the law-writ-large? Necessarily then we must ask of, must posit the importance of the place of the immanent, the origin of the 'original before-the-law' if-you-will. Interestingly, this the place out of which comes in the first place the possibility of 'imagining' the general, what was just referred to as the 'law'. Law here in the form of concepts, theories, models, principles, etc., ... that which is 'used', is privileged as a manner of 'knowing' (i.e. epoch of modernity).

The precise origin of the possibility of 'law' then shows itself to be the 'immanent', before the law. Here we must appreciate that the profoundly unique, to be so, is beyond, before the calculable, is of the incalculable. And if it is the immanent that, in a sense, gives life to, yet is incessantly incarcerated in the general (law), how then is the immanent able to survive (under) the law? That is, what constitutes justice for the immanent that gives itself unconditionally to the law of conditionality?

The question quivers before, in relation to 'old growth forests'...

We need ask the question, "where is the justice for the 'tree'? How might we rethink what it means to be in-relation to the 'tree', that singularity before its being conceptually coopted, conceptualized as a *tree* cognitively processed as ready-to-hand, used, managed as material for human desire(s).

Under the weight of such thinking all living beings, each immanent being, has place apart from its present cooption as a certain concept in modernity's metanarrative(s) (i.e. ideologies, doctrines, moral codes, etc.). And how might this inform one's thinking of, about that 'old' growth tree, forest... just over there, and there?

Part 5

All too briefly considered above, the 'work' of the committee has been located... there 'in' the interspace of the immanent and the general, the tensioned space of law/justice. It is an enigmatic relationship.

We must lean on this critical insight to understand, to appreciate that the law must give place, must be hypersensitive and open to the happening of the immanent. Immanent here understood as an immediateness, an intimate sensing of traces of the past being taken up in, taken over by a future-coming, a future-coming which will not, cannot tolerate the intransigence of (the) law (formulated solely by, in instrumental reasoning)... of a letting 'be'... euphemistically, of old growth forests.

⁶ 'Immanent' here signifying the instant of, singular incidence of 'old growth forest(s)'.

Is it not clear then that we can't let the law of territory, law of territoriality, can't let modernity rule. To reiterate for emphasis 'law'^{7,8} is a certain inscription of 'will to power', to impose its will over otherness, over what is necessarily always, already beyond law. 'Otherness', radical otherness is of a passive power always 'over' powering in the end, in the beginning again, a future-coming all of its own. In this sense it is an ineluctable fact that (the) law is unruly before a future-coming, is behind the times, an historical trace out of time specific to the future-coming. Shakespeare's wisdom echos here, "The time is out of joint."

This we understand now. Those who would wield law as 'will to power', who live by their own 'law', by way of the law, will experience its aporetic doublet, the coming of the other in its immanent character. In its passive omnipotent presence the immanent takes in the will to power-ing, receives it, and by doing so renders it impotent in the face of, faced with a future-coming. This is certainly disturbingly evident.

Interestingly, in this sense the future-coming will literally and practically become violent (in the most positive sense) since a future-coming, a future that never reveals itself (by definition), does not abide the 'law' that is intent on inhibiting its coming as an 'other' than the epoch of modernity.

Part 6

For all that, it is my sense that this committee has the potential to openly anticipate, be open to a renewed living with respect to a future-coming, of stepping out beyond the well worn, worn out trails, of the trailings of industrial debris.

Given the above, I wish also to thank the committee for hearing the plaintiff cry from a wanting human community seeking a deeper spirit in humanity sensitive to humanity's ecological inextricable insituatedness which always already gives place to being... 'human'.

As a metaphor, the German word 'holzwege' is sensitive to this... "paths that come to an abrupt stop where the wood is untrdden. ...Woodcutters and forest keepers know these paths.They know what it means to be on a *Holzwege*."

I wish to thank the committee for inspiring the question, for a breathing in of a certain Latin sensitivity, a sensitivity which informs the question of a living on, of not only an ecosystem under name here, but also by implication ecosystems-writ-large, or ecosystems-to-be, of a future-coming.

Perhaps, importantly, in their absence, though ever present presence, we might also give thanks to the indigenous people's sensitivity to life-living, a sensitivity which is re-informing our rather prosaic cold calculation of the 'reality' of things enacted by certain forms of discourse (scientific, instrumental, self-centred pragmatism).

Regards,

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⁷ Law - inscriptions of what is, (i.e. culture, ideology, theology, concepts, ideality, judiciary, discourse, disciplines of knowledge, etc.) and by implication what will not 'be', does not exist-as-such.

⁸ And this might also equate, in one sense to 'right', to what is right constitutive of a moral impressioning of the necessary action, claimed to be 'beyond question', this as disclosed in the metanarrative of instrumental reasoning, or other metanarratives for that matter. 'Right' comes to locate, becomes location of the privileged instruction of activity by a specific reasoning effecting the greatest force. Lyotard wickered this up into our attention from out of the unconscious in-living of the metanarrative.