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Stone Scissors Paper. A Trilogy of Papers

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Abstract

Stone

for the land we walk on

for the filtering and channelling

of the water we drink

Scissors

to re-draw maps

and cut up the law

to split our stories

re-present them in relief

to hack at the ground

and grind it into powder

Paper

for the accounts that are given

and the maps that tell truths

written over

again

and again

Keywords:

ecology, EcoSystemic Return, systemic thinking, community action, extractivism, limestone, agential cuts, systemic theory

Citation Link

This trilogy of papers includes:

- ✧ Rambling Reflections. Leah Salter
- ✧ The Water Table. Lisen Kebbe
- ✧ Moving Mountains. Gail Simon

This is a trilogy of papers about land and people and the ecology they create together. Leah lives on the coast in South Wales. Lisen lives on the island of Gotland in Sweden. Gail lives in Yorkshire in the north of England. What connects us and our writings is the land, its history, its place in industry and what we do and don't see. The cuts in the land reflect the cuts in our minds, unnegotiated edits in our stories, and disconnects in political discourses. This trilogy of papers documents some of these cuts and joins. We speak about the land we walk on and the stories told about it. We point to scars in the landscape and ask how they connect with those in the lungs and on the wrist. The landscape of the present holds clues about its past and its future. And the timescapes in the writings evoke a necessity to connect time and place, human and non-human colonising and liberatory methods and live with a maddening, flickering lenticularity (Pillow, 2019).

The cuts in logic or landscape that we draw attention to reflect separations in everyday life that makes people feel crazy, that there is not point in talking, in speaking truths. Language is losing value. What can we do in systemic practice to extend language into materiality? The cuts we make in these papers are agential, joining rather than separating, delineating and blurring.

We are not describing entities as if separate, like stone, scissors and paper but rather describing an ecology of ancient practical relations, relations of power and complementarity. We show how the physical cuts are an announcement of a power relation. Living physical structures are being physically attacked through the first stage of employing language to re-direct attention, to erase history, to build narratives which reinforce the neoliberal idea of personal agenda. The second stage is to physically dismantle parts of a landscape, parts which affect more life forms than just the immediate hole that is being dug. To imagine that non-consensual attacks upon the earth, upon its peoples and upon truth do not affect the individual, familial and communal mind, do not affect bodies of people, is not only a separation too far but supports colonial epistemologies which maintain imbalances of health and power. The individual human then remains the site for treatment of "their" ill health in the rapidly increasing mental health industry.

We need to move beyond the romantic question posed by Gregory Bateson steeped in a paradigm of a natural world:

> What pattern connects the crab to the lobster and the orchid to the primrose and all the four of them to me? And me to you? And all the six of us to the amoeba in one direction and the back-ward schizophrenic in another?
>
> (Gregory Bateson, Mind and Nature: A Necessary Unity, 1979, p. 8)

And treat this as an interchangeable question to invite new connections to fit the circumstances:

> How can we connect the one-way screen to the PlayStation and the microplastic in placentas with sex trafficking and all four of them to me? And the Black Lives Matter movement to the Xiaomi smartphone? And me to someone born on the same day as me in another less well-off country? And all eight of "us" to economic structures and those experiencing something called mental health problems?
>
> (Simon, The End of the Clinic, AFT-FoKCC-CMM Conference, 2021)

We offer these papers with a similar invitation: to read our stories and see what connections you make with the world around you.

Rambling Reflections

Leah Salter

In this first paper in the trilogy, I write from within the context of rambling/ walking along the coastline and in wooded areas in South Wales. I wrote differing pieces, condensed into this paper, over a period of months, with the intent to write whilst out/after walking or after meditation. Each subheading reflects themes that emerge from these moments in time and that connect me with my practice; and with the ecology of ideas that influence and intersect.

Threads

Early morning. I'm lying in bed, trying to return to a state of sleep. A bird lands on the window sill outside. I cannot hear her call but she lands heavily and the sound of her claws on the plastic suggest to me- wood pigeon. They are common in my locality. I briefly wonder why she has landed here though. It is unusual. They are usually in the nearby trees. The sound of plastic grates on me. It is unnatural. I wonder how she experiences it and why she is not in the trees.

In my restless resting my mind wanders and I try to still my thoughts by focusing on the sensation of my body lying heavily on the mattress. As I do this my body loses its edges. I no longer feel it as "my" body but a web that is spreading outwards in ever changing form, continuously in movement, edges constantly being redefined, thin threads all caught up with each other, complex but somehow ordered.

I am not old but current illness is changing my ideas of time and age, of what it means to be living and alive. Different, but related. I am reminded of Mel Chen's (2012) critical writing about animacy from within queer theory. They invite questions about whose bodies are "worthy of life" and whose are not, inviting fresh thinking about race, sex, gender, ability and disability, death and life, health and illness. I don't experience health and ill-health as a binary. There is always some part of each in the experience.

The threads keep on moving and in my mind's eye I see mountain peaks- sharp, craggy, alpine peaks, one after the other, after the other, like an image reflecting in an infinity mirror. Brutal, beautiful mountain peaks. I wonder if it is a metaphor for this phase of my life, brutal-beautiful. Illness is creating sharp focus in still moments but also invites reflections of decay, reminding me that what I think of as "my" life, is not a possession that I can cling onto, or a state on which I can depend. The mountain experiences the same decay, the same changes and uncertainties, but we have different timeframes. We are conceived and perceived differently. I am viewed as living, breathing, animate. The mountain is viewed as dead, still, static. My life could be seen as fleeting. The mountain as permanent. Our differences are highlighted, connection obscured.

Mountains

I hosted a workshop recently, inviting reflections through the lens of relationship with what could be thought of as inanimate features of nature- those of mountains and stones. I showed photographs

that held significant meaning for me, mountains I had climbed or gazed upon, sacred and ancient stones I had visited/meditated beside and places that have been important in my life. When people shared their experiences there were numerous intergenerational accounts of *co-inhabitation* within mountainous and rocky landscape (Simon and Salter, 2019). These reflections reminded me that landscape is never neutral. The shape, size, form of the land has multiple stories to tell, steeped in history, shaped by human and non-human activity. Some of the scars of human activity speak to love and reverence of the land but many more of the scars tell stories of exploitation of land and people. Outdated laws associated with land 'ownership' tell more stories still. Who or what has the right to roam, right to dwell, right to build, right to grow, right to protect, right to protest on etcetera? These scars and associated stories are linked to far more than geography and, though dated, are not assigned to history.

Geography

I worked for over a decade in the Rhymney valley of Wales, an area that was industrialised for iron steel and coal and wears the marks of those industries. It also wears the marks of its decline. The area looks, sounds and smells of industry but many of the families who live in the valley are without employment. Many experience inter-generational, multiple markers of deprivation, oppression and inequality.

Where I live currently, I can smell the fumes of the steelworks nearby and can trace the yellow plume on clear days. I know the closer you get, the thicker the smoke gets, the more "affordable" the houses are and the lower your expectations might be for your future and the future of your children. You might expect to earn less, and you might expect to live a shorter life. The nature reserve that nestles between my house and the steelworks helps me to feel less threatened by the pollution and aesthetics of the nearby industry, especially knowing that many species, such as the endangered Fen Orchid, are thriving in the sand dunes within the reserve. The nearby windfarm, not without controversy, rests on the local hills and also provides some additional hope for the future. Not without discomfort, linked to the privilege I experience.

The rain is now coming down hard, disrupting my plan to get out for a walk later in order to be in nature, to walk and take pauses outdoors, to feel part of the landscape. I feel the call to be outdoors keenly. I feel it in my bones.

Bones

I was at an archaeological excavation site last weekend. An unplanned visit. I was on a coastal walk and happened upon the site, in St David's, West Wales. The site was mostly being excavated by volunteers, one of whom told us that the site is of historic and cultural significance, an archaeological site known as St Patrick's chapel and burial site, situated within the sand dunes overlooking the beautiful Whitesands Bay. The chapel is believed to date from around the 11th century, but the burial site is believed to be 6th Century and, as it name suggests, is linked to the ministry of St Patrick and is thought to be where he set sail to Ireland in the 5th century.

Talking with the volunteer archaeologist was a touching experience. She told me about the women and children who were buried there- an above average amount for most burial sites. She movingly

shares how she has delicately uncovered bones belonging to small infants, some in the arms of their mothers. A very human story.

Alongside this she tells me how they have had permission to undertake this work as the site is at risk of being lost forever due to coastal erosion. The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales have been highlighting the problems of erosion on coastal sites that is "speeding up" due to climate change, destroying sites of significance for national heritage. They also highlight the loss of habitat and associated impact for wildlife and endangered species. Another kind of story. The hope for the excavations is that the stories that these sites hold, will not be lost.

Time

I think about the idea of time and how human activity in recent years has changed the course of naturally occurring processes, altering timeframes. I also reflect on my preoccupation with stories/ personal narratives.

In my work for the NHS in Wales, I have been planning a follow up event to a project I set up last year called "not to be forgotten stories". This project sought to hear from people whose stories about the pandemic might otherwise get lost, perhaps because their story was not seen as important enough or did not fit with the dominant narrative of the time. I reflect on how humanity and dignity can be eroded as readily as the soft rocks and sand dunes of St David's. I wonder if this too is being expedited by insensitive, brutal activity.

I wept as I heard on the news that three young black men, football players, playing for England during the time of the COVID 19 pandemic, have been targeted for racial abuse and hatred following missed penalties at the European Final, won by Italy (2021). There was a saddening inevitability about this. Another human story, and a national one, a story about a nation that has not faced its colonial "past" and is not facing its colonial present. Empty words from our leaders following the abuse sweep over the opportunity to turn and face the trouble (Haraway, 2016). Conversations, long overdue, get silenced again.

A new ethic

I have been working outdoors more than usual lately. Partly this is because I need to do things differently to help with energy levels and partly this is because I hope that shifting therapy practices outside of the therapy room, and shifting supervisory conversations from an online platform, can be transformative. I hope this can assist in re-positioning people I am in conversation with into a place where their dignity can be met more expansively, where their story can be honoured, not quashed or sanitised within a clinic setting. This is not just about individual wellbeing, as important as that is. This is political, purposefully disruptive, actively dissident. Practicing outdoors is about practicing outside of the parameters that constrain- not to practice outside of ethical boundaries but to reset them within a frame of relational ethics/responsibility (Larner, 2015; McNamee and Gergen, 2009; Shaw, 2011) where nature is within the relational frame (Santin, 2021).

In a consultation session this week, I walked through a field next to my home, walking respectfully around the planted maize and the poppies that spring up through the maize this time of year. I noticed that my questions were different in this context. I invited my conversational partner (walking in her

own space along the coast as we connected over telephone) to reflect on how her body felt moving around in nature, rather than being sat at a computer. We noticed that we both felt more reflective of our own stories, not constrained by stories from practice that we feel obliged to bring to consultation. This obligation can be vital to help us help others and keep people safe but can also leave us feeling overly scrutinised and constrained, as supervisors and supervisees, an experience akin to surveillance (Simon, 2010).

In this conversation, we talked about some personal challenges my colleague is facing, checking this out carefully to ensure we were both comfortable bringing this to the space we had co-constructed. As I navigated the maize, making sure not to damage any crops and also looking out for grass snakes and smaller wildlife, I became aware of the care I was taking in my movement as well as in my communication. I felt a sense of love and compassion towards my conversational partner and the environment I was moving about within. I could feel this flow though me and slow my movement-walking slowly, breathing lightly, talking tenderly. I felt more attuned than usual to the matters that matter for this person, right now, in this moment. I had an email the following day thanking me for facilitating a space that was experienced as healing and important. I am touched and encouraged.

Animacy

I experienced something else encouraging in my practice this week. I met a family of four in a local woodland area where the river Garw runs. I feel alive when I am here. I know how lucky I am to live and work in areas such as this.

I am feeling connected to the trees, the river and the ferns as we walk together, talking. I invite them to collect artefacts from nature to create a 'living museum' and then ask them to display their items together to share stories connected with their exhibits.

This family I am meeting with rarely leave the differing houses they live in. They are visibly shaky when I meet them at the car park. It has taken significant amounts of courage to meet me here, though they know me well. The eldest sibling stands by her younger sister, in this gathering, as she tries to talk for the first time. She places her arms around her shoulders and says, “it’s okay.” What ensues is a poignant conversation about what counts as living or dead. Leaves with holes in them are held in hand, branches that have fallen from the surrounding trees, empty horse chestnut shells, stones and slate all represent stories from their lives and their relationships.

The youngest member of the family, Emily, chooses a piece of wood. It looks more like driftwood than a branch. It is chunky but light in weight. Emily has not spoken before this, though we have been together for about thirty minutes already. She is clearly anxious, visibly shaking. When she looks at me I can see that tears are welling in her eyes. As she opens her mouth to talk, tears roll down her face. She just about manages to say “sorry”. Her sister, brother and mother encourage her to go on.A few minutes later, she starts again. “I chose this to represent my hopes for the future because it looks inanimate, but it isn’t. It is still living and has potential.”

Mel Chen says that “animacy is conceptually slippery, even to its experts”. It is a "craft of the senses; it endows our surroundings with life, death, and things in between". Chen asserts we need to keep thinking about the binary language of life or death in the current climate. They argue that “animacy is especially current—and carries with it a kind of charge—given that environmental threats (even those that are apparently invisible) such as polluted air, poisoned food, and harmful materials are constantly being figured within contemporary culture…” (Chen, 2012, p.55)

I am aware of that slipperyness and the significance of the debate on animacy in the times we live in, and I am uncertain how best to respond to this young woman. I don’t want to get into a philosophical debate about animacy right now but I also want her to understand that I see life in the wood to. This is not an innocent metaphor or a purely linguistic exploration. This is fundamental to the liminal space

we are constructing together in nature, somewhere we can stretch the boundaries that we are invited to live within. I tentatively offer a reflection that it is our individualised, constrained way of viewing life that encourages us to see the wood as dead, because we are not looking at it within its immediate context or within the wider web of life, of which it is a "vital" part. I tell her that I am certain that the wood is living. She nods and smiles as she holds my gaze. Her eyes tell me she is scared and seem to ask me if I might be able to help her to keep going in her story. I nod slowly as I hold her gaze, attempting to show that I understand what she is telling/asking me. She seems to stand a little taller and smiles widely at her mother who takes the cue to say, "well done". A new story emerges that speaks to future hopes and aspirations. She tells me, and her family, that she would like to be a teacher, to inspire children to grow to their full potential. Her voice is strong. Her feedback helps me go on.

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The Water Table

Lisen Kebbe

In this second paper in the trilogy on land and people, I write from within a living and changing landscape as a local resident on the small island of Gotland. I am a systemic organisational consultant and psychologist working on the island where I was born, where I grew up on the land of my family's farm. In this short paper, I tell some systemic stories – facts and narratives and politics – each of which might make some sense in its own context – but when put together you see a systemic story – a disaster movie actually – of an ecology under attack through the dominance of business motivated narrative over indigenous knowledge of the land and local history. So the plot is about what happened when a cement factory tried to renew its permit to extract limestone from Gotland and make cement for another twenty years. It is a tale of an extraordinary battle between narrative and materiality - at local, national and international levels.

The Bedrock

Gotland is a long thin island in the Baltic Sea. It's part of Sweden. It's fairly flat. What's it known for? Well, the capital, Visby, is a medieval city, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We have a medieval fair. The island hosts the annual politician's week in Almedalen. It has a beautiful coastline. The northern end is a small boat ride away to Faro where Ingmar Bergman worked. His house is there. The southern end has Gotland sheep with their grey-blue curly coats. As you travel around the island, you see woods and farmland, 93 medieval churches built with limestone, windmills, and lots of tourists in the summer. Farming and tourism are the main industries of Gotland along with limestone mining.

Limestone is the bedrock of Gotland. The stone originates from the Silurian period, around 430 million years ago. During this Silurian period there was a shallow sea where Gotland is now located and the climate was tropical. At the coastline there was a rich wildlife. Over time, animals died and fell to the bottom of the sea their remains created a reef. After some more millions of years the water covering the reef disappeared and the island of Gotland, built of these limestone reefs appeared. We often see the sea lilies, trilobites, octopuses and corals, among many other creatures and plants, fossilised in the bedrock.

The limestone bedrock is between 500 – 750 m deep. It is the kind of stone you make cement out of and Gotland has the best limestone for cement making - because it is "clean". The strata are only made up of limestone – very few layers of clay between them. This, and closeness to the sea for its easy shipping, is something highly prized. Limestone has also been the main building material for farmhouses, barns, and also the houses in the town of Visby which has a ring wall around from medieval times. So, the limestone bedrock and the use of it is an obvious, proud and integrated part of Gotlandic identity.

Now you have the story. The scene is set.

The Lime Kiln

There is a long tradition of using limestone for buildings on Gotland. It has been done for at least 1000 years from the time when the first medieval churches were built. I read somewhere that the Romans started it in England. Villages would have their own small quarry and a kiln where the limestone was heated, a tower of five to six meters high. People stacked the stone in it, lit the fire and heated the stone at 800-1100 degrees for three days and nights. Then, when they took out the burnt stones, they poured water over it so it exploded to be ground into powder. Then you have the lime to use as mortar. Cement.

But there is also a long history of export, not huge, but it was part of the humble local economy. The first written document is from 1460 where limestone, lime, wood and tar was shipped to Danzig in Germany. Earlier, Visby had been an important member of the Hansa union with a lively trade in the Baltic, Holland and England. But the lime production seems to have started later by the local people on the countryside. The production and business were growing during the centuries all over the island and out of this also grew some fairly rich businessmen that there hasn't been before, as there has never been any nobility on the island.

But at the latter part of the 19th century the smaller businesses disappeared and was replace by larger facilities. There was an increasing interest in the unique quality of Gotland limestone. The engineer, Lundberg who had studied the limestone said, "It is without doubt that the raw material is of particular interest for making Portland Cement, even better then in England. The stone can be fetched almost without any cost, and there is enough stone for many hundred years. There is a good site in Visby to build the factory on, the cost for building is small and the salaries are low." With these good predictions, three industrialists from the mainland of Sweden started "Visby Cementfabrik" in 1885.

So the modern, efficient production started and has developed since then. In 1919, the plant in Slite was built. Slite, on the north of the island, has the best stone. They built the factory on the harbour so the cement could be poured directly into the ship. Everything was set for big business. At that time there was ten different cement plants in Sweden. Today there are two and they are both owned by

the multinational Heidelberg Cement company, and one of them, the Slite factory, produces today 75% of all cement used in Sweden plus some export.

Earth, Fire, Air, Water

There has been much focus by local people and politicians on reducing the CO2 emissions on the island. The second worst polluter in the whole of Sweden is discharged by the plant in Slite. Only a steel plant in the north of Sweden puts out more pollution. Whatever else we local people can do here on Gotland to reduce carbon emissions is nothing compared to the pollution by this factory

As production gets bigger and bigger, the effects of it get worse and worse. The industry people feel the pressure. They start to talk about *green industries* such as steel which could work with zero pollution. They start to talk about zero pollution at the cement factory too. In fact, the factory made many changes to reduce its pollution but two main problems remain.

Firstly, when they heat this enormous kiln, they don't use a few pieces of wood like the farmers used to do in their small kilns – they use rubber tyres, hundreds and thousands of burning rubber tyres. They have as good cleaning filtering as they can but it's not just the fire that creates the pollution. And just to say that when they consider heating the stone with electricity, the energy needed is enormous and would take an extra cable from the mainland of Sweden which would cost billions and paid by the state/people. The second contributor in the process of making cement is the actual extraction of the limestone from the ground. Quarrying releases CO2 accounting for 2/3 of the release of the whole process. Then they prose that *this* problem will be solved by catching the CO2 and transporting it by boat to Norway where there are plans for storing CO2 deep beneath the sea. All big plans that are still at an experimental stage and will take at least ten more years to complete – no doubt, with new piecemeal problems to resolve.

The talk of producing "green cement" makes politicians very happy. It will put Sweden on the map, they say. We will be "the first in the world" to produce zero emission cement. This "green washing" has taken all the political parties by storm except the very small Feminist Party and the local Green

Party. Our politicians are set to let the multinational business from outside of Sweden, with cement plants in more than 50 countries around the world, do whatever they want.

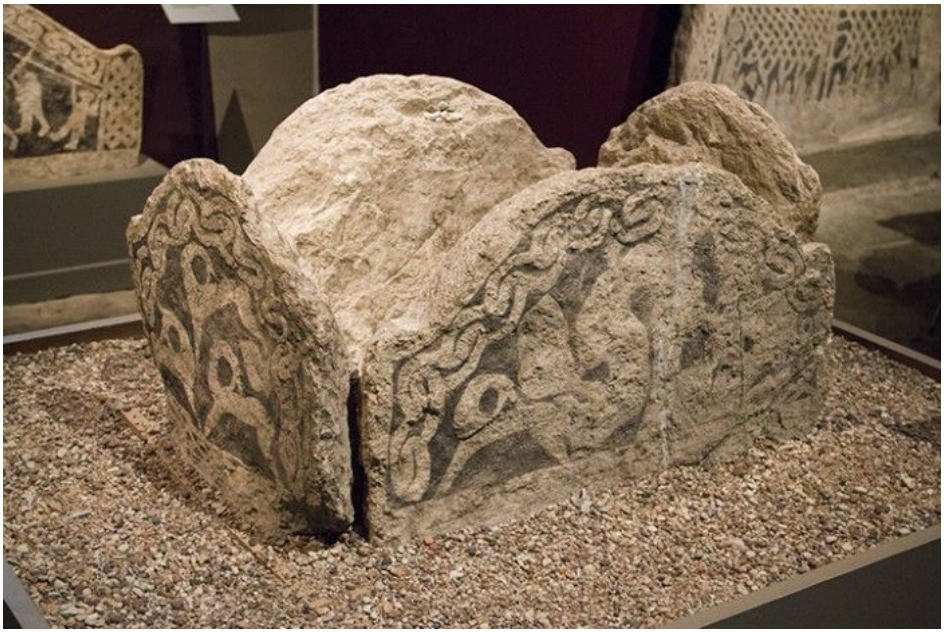
Secondly there is an even bigger problem that the business people and the politicians don't want to talk about/ The quarry affects the whole of the north of Gotland in other ways. Fundamental ways. Its natural infrastructure. It affects the water table. The water we drink and the ground water that keeps all of nature alive. No-one talks about that - that they would still need to take the stone out of the ground also with "green cement". This is already having terrible repercussions for the ground water. The rock is porous. Humans cannot predict which way water will go or track where it goes. It doesn't just go down - it goes sideways, it travels in many directions. No-one can see what it does to the water table when they just dig out these massive holes. But when they disturb the ground, it affects hidden systems, the water comes out where it shouldn't and it leaves areas of the island without water. The land gets dry, wells dry out, crops fail, industries cannot manage. Then, it gets even worse: the salt water from the sea gets into the rock and contaminates the remaining water for drinking and water for nature. It's a huge problem. In recent years, politicians always have said Water First! Protect Water! Conserve Water! But then this happened…

Realignments in the landscape: the grinding up of "truth" and law

The cement factory submitted an application to renew their licence to mine at Slite for another twenty years. The local green activists on Gotland challenged the renewal of the quarry's licence in the courts. Those defending the stone company said no-one can know for sure what affects the ground water, and it is impossible to predict if or how the water will be affected in twenty years' time. The Supreme Court in Sweden refused the renewal citing a lack of proof that the ground water would not be affected by continuous extraction. They didn't get the permit. It felt like a great victory for local activists and a huge relief. But there now there are appeals.

But then two unexpected things happened. Firstly, all politicians at national level – from across *all* the parties, *including the Greens,* started to defend the quarry's application. Businesses which use cement in Sweden - builders, infrastructure developers and the other industries - stood up as one person. "300,000-400 000 jobs will disappear! The whole economy of Sweden will decline!" "The Slite factory provides the whole country with cement these days."

Secondly, one local politician went further. He said, "It is a catastrophe for the whole country if the company doesn´t get its licence renewed. We cannot have the Supreme Court make pronouncements about the cement production that the whole nation depends on. *We have to change the law*." And all the parties from left to right agreed. They kept repeating time and again, "*We have to change the law"*. Only the local Green party on Gotland and the national Feminist party spoke out to support the decision of the supreme court. The national Green Party opposed the Supreme Court ruling too. They all backed the quarry. We couldn't believe what we were hearing. The ombudsman declared it was not correct to go against the supreme court, to go against democracy but they don't have any power to order what should happen. They can only reflect on the situation. We feel we are seeing the end of democracy.



Singing as activism

The threat to democracy prompted singer-songwriter, Vera Kebbe, one of the Gotland activists, to write and record a song in which she parodies the phrase, *"We have to change the law".* But guess what? The radio stations which normally play her songs refused to play this one. They were scared to go against the establishment although many reporters sympathised with her. The only places where these subjects are discussed is on Facebook and on the letters pages in the local paper. And once in a while, there is an article in the national papers by a professor in biology, or former green party leader and the like who speak up to challenge what is happening both to the ecology and our democracy.

Vera sings

all industries are panicky,
they never thought this could be.
And politicians getting frightened,
want to lend a hand
instead of finding another way
and they say:
Go flat out with the bulldozers
Wreck UN principle 7,
Changing laws are in session
Go flat out for industry and jobs
Well Gotland was nice
but its water we'll sacrifice.

https://fb.watch/9NDTXUtwsh

Studying local business ecology

The national politicians, in coalition with the national construction businesses, said they were concerned about the closure of the quarry resulting in enormous unemployment, the decline of businesses and the end of all construction projects in the country. That narrative is weak. Heidelberg Cement makes cement in more than 50 countries around the world. It could be imported. Then politicians say, "We have the cleanest methods here so if we import from China or Tunisia, the industry process won't be as clean. And it's a long distance away, transporting it will be bad for the environment". But there is a factory in Poland which is the most modern and sophisticated in terms of environmentally friendly production. And there are cement productions in all the Nordic countries according to Heidelberg Cement's website. And of course, there are other companies who also export cement. We have heard that the big construction companies on the mainland are already investigating where to order cement from, they are not sitting back waiting.

On Gotland there are 240 persons working at the plant. Beside those 240 workers there is around 400 entrepreneurs having their main income from the cement company and of course a closure would be a challenge for the island.

But how has the island coped in the recent past with industrial closures? The Ericson factory closed down making 1400 people redundant. More than a couple of thousand people lost work the from Military bases closing. Large dairy and sugar factories have closed down. Still *Gotland has the lowest amount of unemployment in Sweden today.* What saved Gotland 's social economy is all the small businesses who have taken in these people, plus some governmental inputs. *Gotland has a business ecology which so far seems to have coped with much larger major changes than the closure of this cement factory.* The history of changes in employment is very important. It's like a natural ecology in business, in the community. The unemployment is like the hole in the ground. Waters will run into it and fill it. There is a natural restorative response. Gotland's ecology is robust – until interfered with by outsiders. Then the theory of homeostasis fails. So, the unemployment is then not a reason to risk the ground water.

Fixing and tweaking as epistemological errors

The next strategy taken by politicians and the cement factory is to propose fixes. Fixes to individual problems. Cleaning the water for drinking, for example. The top four politicians on Gotland said that it is possible to clean the water in the quarries so it will be fine for drinking. But they don't realise (or choose not to think of) that this is not simply a human drinking water problem but what else would still be threatened. The groundwater is required life for everything: for nature, animals, everything that is alive, including human beings. The cement factory says a huge amount of the ground water pours into the big holes as they dig so then they pump it out into the sea. Now they say they can save that water and clean it. But we have water in the Baltic which isn't very salty, and that desalination is already happening in two places on Gotland. Making water drinkable isn't the big issue, it is the total ecology that is threatened.

So, then some of us discuss whether we even need this big amount of cement. On Gotland and all over Sweden, all the houses and roads are made using cement made into concrete. And cement is used in many processes in industries as well all over Sweden and the world. At the 2021 Venice Architectural Biennale, Wael Al Awar made a installation in the UAE pavilion which provided an alternative to

cement made of saline waste. They no longer talk about cement. Cement is finished. It's recognised as environmentally unfriendly. An architect friend in Berlin in said, "Cement is out. It's from the old world." So there are alternative ways of building and perhaps we don't need to build so much or not with lime.

Extracting limestone an example of the anthropocentric assumption that we can help ourselves to the things around us, the material lying in the ground. Just because humans can walk over it or mine it, doesn't mean it is ours for the taking. We humans need to get over ourselves and see how *we are part of an ecology in which people and land and rock and water are all interconnected*. But capitalism shatters that connection. The stone becomes a commodity and separated from its locality and destroys the local ecology. There are great earnings for some that have been doubled year by year – partly through incorporating all the smaller cement factories and then closing them down to centralise production.

It is obvious that this complex situation does something to our ability to reflect on our situation; capitalism take over our moral voice and becomes our highest context. This makes a lot of people say, "I do not know, I sympathize with both sides" and then put the very problematic questions out of their minds.

The narrative of zero emission cement takes all the politicians by storm. "This factory has been here for 100 years and we can see it still here in the 100 years to come", the CEO recently said at the 100 years anniversary. The groundwater on Gotland is struggling to compete.

The national economic interest in the cement production and the waving of the greenwashing flag makes all politicians short-sighted, not only the national but also the local ones. The groundwater is not visible in this equation. What happens to people when decisions are taking place really high above local peoples' heads?

What is becoming visible is the polished face of raw capitalism entangled with politics which would mobilise us to protests. Like Greta Thunberg and friends standing outside parliament. But not much happens. There is a feeling of alienation. "The questions are so complicated", say even people who usually have clear views and opinions.

Photo from The Guardian 11/08/19

We are in the middle of this right now. It's on the table for anyone who dares to watch. The question now is how we can find a voice that can carry and express our worries and show how mother earth suffers and take a stand to save our ecology. We need to free our minds to be able to reflect and get hold of our agency.

Moving Mountains

Gail Simon

I live in North Yorkshire where I often walk in the green and mustard hills. Aside from farming, the main industry is tourism and it requires the beauty of the landscape to be the thing visitors to the dales are most struck by. It is the thing I most enjoy too. This third paper of the trilogy is a mix of cuts and joins and wraparounds - storytelling, narrating landscape, stanza'd wonderings; some reflections on shifting landscapes and human disconnects; some theorising and some imagining the other. Come walk with me.

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When I cut

It stops

it all stops

breaking the skin

allows release

a flow

a truth unspoken

to be allowed

privately seen

silently heard

I remain mute

my parents are speechless

or at least

I can't hear

whatever they are saying

I see them mouth

Why Didn't You Say Something Was Wrong

But I am scared

to trust

anything

people say

So why listen?

I trust the dog

I trust the blood

it wakes me

I feel alive

I feel scared

of the danger

of my power

Scared of them seeing

my scars.

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I'm about halfway through my walk and pivot to take a track which will take me down to the valley floor. I stop to admire the view before enjoying the many roly poly slopes of this green lane. Before I carry on sinking lower into the valley and losing the sense of wider world, I pause to scan the skyline.

The drystone wall is already cutting off the lower part of the Wharfedale Valley so I balance on a stone and look over at the disappearing view. I scan right to left without a thought in my head just taking in

the levelling green hills opposite marked out by these same stone walls. The shadow of the clouds is messing with the uniformity of the colour and the playing with the rooftops of Grassington over the valley. I'm taking it all in, no thoughts in my head. Just there, in it.

And then something strikes me, something that's out of place, and I feel some activity stirring in my thinking self. What is that thing? It's a long horizontal scrape of mid grey, lines running down it from sky to wherever it disappeared under the trees. Oh, another to its left, that's darker and bigger.

At first sight, I read them both as "scars", escarpments, naturally occurring cuts of exposed stone in the landscape. Dramatic, unexpected falling away of skyline, often worn by manoeuvres of the ice age or persistence of wind. There are lots of interesting and geological variations in Yorkshire. And I know that five miles further on is Malham Cove, an impressive cliff under the limestone pavement so common in the dales. I am smiling as I look towards it. In my mind's eye, I see the rare orchids and lichens. But as my eye follows the line around the top of these scars and register the shape, I realise I am looking at marks that belie human intervention. These are quarries, and these are hills in the process of being taken away. From this unique position of height and distance where there are no roads, I can see over the treetops and witness the slicing, the sharp drop which breaks the contour of a previous skyline. I am busy with what I am witnessing and what I don't know and am not meant to know.

I pan out my navigational eyes now mapping the distance from those scars to the railway line further down the valley. Too far away for me to see but I trace the line in my mind's eye. And I see and breathe in memory of the dust and rage of hurtling trucks too massive for the narrow windy lanes between hill-being-deconstructed and the quarry railway station.

I have turned to carry on my walk. Up the undulating hill now on a tarmac road, I see the same undulations as the green lane I have just walked down. Oh, this was once a green lane, I say to the dog. They tarmacked it. He is sniffing the verges. The verges are where it's all happening. You won't be able to walk here when they build the bypass over this, I tell him.

On my way back, I drive past the final halt on that rail line. Between the sentinel trees, I see the train wagons are loaded up with white and grey stone. Like trolleys loaded with bodies headed for the morgue, I think.

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Do we know - do I know - or care about the sources of these tarmac surfaces or our houses?

A skirt of trees does the trick brilliantly in curtaining our conscious selves from seeing connections.

The more I look around me in my travels, the more I realise how trees are planted these days

to hide industry.

You can only see what's really going on from the sky.

The birds know more than we do.

I wonder what I should do now that these drones have shown me the bird's eye view.

I stopped eating meat and fish when it was no longer possible for me to not see the relation between the life and death of animals with food on my plate.

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I wonder if perhaps this removal of our solid shapes and natural environment is okay.

Others more qualified than me will have assessed this.

They are the experts.

But there will have been local outcry, campaigns to prevent this.

It is not then just a quarry but a scar on all our consciences or bodies which have been taught to want more.

How can we live in such disconnected consciousnesses?

How do we make these cuts?

How can we not?

I wonder if we embrace our inner mountain - like Braidotti talks about embracing her inner cockroach in an attempt to consciously halt the theoretical separation of human from non-human and challenge the narrative of human superiority (Braidotti, 2009) then what do I-it-we feel?

And what is our agency, separately and collectively?

How will I allow myself to be moved by what I can see, what I can share with others? Is telling enough? Or can it become an end in itself?

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"That's the mountain train," I nod towards the other side of the valley. "Well, I call it that."

My friends from London look up and see a goods train in the distance dipping behind some trees heading towards Skipton.

"The trains running from left to right are empty," I continue, thinking I sound a little crazy.

There's a pause.

I guess this is a bizarre conversation. Should I not say things like this to visitors?

But the Yorkshire Dales are not just greenery and skyline and this is my world.

Well, our world.

"Why?" one of them asks.

"When they run right to left, they are bringing mountain to the cities.

Hillsides deconstructed.

Stone."

My voice sounds matter of fact. That's even crazier.

The visitors nod. I can see they are processing that.

"They're getting more frequent.

There used to be just one or two a day. Now there are a few each hour.

Increase in demand for building materials."

I realise I am spoiling the view. But they have come to visit me, not just the countryside.

I realise as I write this that the limestone isn't being used as stone. It has the same destiny that the people on Gotland are fighting. Cement. It is not passé – demand continues. My-our beautiful, ancient, wild flowered limestone hills are being dismantled and crushed and their ashes exported from a naturally occurring skyline to build a city skyline. Visualising the fine powder in its bags, I am in bits. I feel I am facing the reality of a funeral when you know that all that will be left is memories and ashes. What did I think? That they were somehow just relocating it and re-assembling it? I have not been emotionally engaged as much as I thought I was. I feel like my whole skin is crying and I feel confused.

Here we are in a contemporary world of complex systems urgently in need of change, borrowing the metaphor of "moving mountains" to signify the apparent impossibility of making life saving, life improving global and local problems. Yet we humans can literally move mountains - using quite primitive methods: explosives, people, trucks, chutes and trains.

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Understanding to challenge ontological and epistemological questions and their premises

While I was listening to Lisen Kebbe as she recounted the reactive and strategic narrative building between and within Gotland and the wider political-capitalist systems, I found myself becoming interested in the types of arguments in play, the discursive practices being employed. Simple kinds of questions challenge a segment of a context: they intend to separate the part from the whole, to move into a framework of lineal causality. Problems are *things* that need simple answers that relate just to the *thing.* This reminded me of the important shift that systemic theory and practice embraced in moving from first to second order epistemology. We are not separate from the systems we inhabit. We are participants and observers, affecting and affected, constantly in movement, repositioning and being repositioned. And we need to go a paradigm shift further, bring on an EcoSystemic Return. We need to understand social as including animal, vegetable and mineral (Simon & Salter, 2019).

For example, by separating out the “excess” ground water or airborne cement dust from the context of disruption that produced it, we are invited into a modernist space of separability, of first order knowing. The question of “What do we do about the problem?” is first order ontology.

Different types of questions have a place in our quest for understanding. They have different responsibilities and different functions. The types of questions are not interchangeable. And they each imply and embody moral positioning. In this era of proliferating fake news practice and the use of social constructionist theory without the social justice agenda, we all need to develop incisive questioning, transparency and inclusion of multi-contextual layers, of diverse and conflicting interests.

First order ontological questions:

1. What is it?
2. How come it got there?
3. Who is responsible?
4. What can be done to get it back or take it away?

First order epistemological questions:

1. How can we track where the water came from?
2. How can we find out what kind of water it is?
3. How shall we explore solutions?
4. How will we decide who is responsible?

Second order epistemological questions:

1. How will the experiments we set up influence the kind of data we then find?
2. What difference will who we ask about the water flow, make to the answers?
3. Who is the "we" who will be discussing this question and what are the influences on that "we" that might influence their answers?
4. Who is the "we" that is invited to the design and implementation conversations, with what power, and how will that "we" extend or limit the concept of "problem" and "solution"?

Third order onto-epistemological questions:

1. How are contexts of influence affecting what we can or cannot do, see and learn?
2. How is what we are we doing affecting what we are learning?
3. How is our learning affecting what we understand as knowledge?
4. How is my salary affecting what I can notice and what I then feel I can do?

This merges ontology and epistemology but is still potentially within a reflexive frame – meaning going back on itself. The knowing and knowledge practices could still be within colonising or pathologising bubbles. Knowledge isn't separate from the context of its production so just studying the *what* and *how* is in itself not enough as a strategy for systemic change. "We" often don't know what else there is to know until we step outside of familiar ways of thinking and doing.

Fourth order ethico-onto-epistemological questions (Barad, 2007)

1. What are we doing together that is cha(lle)nging my/our first, second and third order thinking?
2. How is the flow of the water communicating the multiples changes in the landscape it experiences over time? And how are we hearing this?
3. How is my-our learning-doing-becoming changing as we work together to listen to what the old ecology is saying to the new ecology?
4. What happens when I act with ethical coherence to extend the range of what we can do, see and learn despite restricting contexts of influence?

The difference in these last questions is not simply their content. It is the diffractive flow between learning, knowing, doing and becoming. All activities, all positions are in motion, mutually influencing as we go on with each other. These are questions for travellers, or, as van Hennik puts it, systemic nomads (2021).

The "*what is it?"* or "*what can we do?" or* "*how much of a problem is there?"* kind of questions are solution focused questions. They imply a hope that basic answers will lead to knowledge about what to do. For example, the water is running everywhere in the house because it comes from a pipe which burst after being frozen in very cold weather. The solutions are to turn off the mains, get the pipe fixed and insulate it better to avoid this happening again in future freezing weather.

In this burst pipe example, it is relatively okay to assume the problem is contained. You could possibly find such a method of problem solving within a self-contained factory. But you cannot employ simple thinking more suited to a domestic burst pipe problem solving in more complex settings. The danger is imposing on a more complex interface between industry and the natural earth.

> The crucial point is agential separability. It matters whether or not we are "looking" inside the phenomenon […] or viewing that particular phenomenon from the "outside"
>
> (Barad, 2007, p. 347)

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Part of our human practice of valuation
involves a "normal" binocular way of looking at time
which makes things bigger in size
closer to us.

Being the ones holding the binoculars
we assume this is the correct view.

What happens when we turn the binoculars

around
so we set human experience
against the longer backdrop of mountain time?
Not the mountain time zone of north America
but the time frames in which mountains live.
That's something much longer than humans
have the capacity to imagine
or understand
because we only live for up to 100 years.
Mountains live for millions of years.

Interesting to reflect that mountains
and humans
can end life,
kill each other
very quickly.
But when mountains kill people,
it's likely that they don't intend
to destroy life.
Well, some might hear a mountain god
angered to action.
But humans
kill our mountains
with intent.
Except it isn't called killing.
It's called quarrying.

The killing acts of quarrying are justified
by a contemporary narrative of demand.
Sometimes by the narrative that this is
an age old practice.
Perhaps this is true.
Just not on this scale.
Not with this intensity.
Not without respect for the ecology.

And when ecologists evidence that there is
no need for those developments,
the reasons for killing our sister mountains
shift.
If we don't kill the mountains,
if we don't kill the exquisite ancient land on which we walk,
then we are apparently killing people
because there will be more unemployment
and therefore hunger
and more homelessness.

Then ecologists have to switch and play a language game.
Because the case for mountain life,
natural life
is not enough,
not worthy of being left in peace.
We don't see mountains
as part of human life.
They only exist for humans
As a means to a human end.

Ashes cannot talk. We must.
It's our choice.

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