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A Place Partly Known
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A few weeks ago I was reading that a Syrian doctor, Mohammed K Hamza, had determined a new language for describing the neurological condition of refugees from Syria, particularly for children. He called it: Human Devastation Syndrome.

Hamza noted that the trauma and devastation that the children experienced in their early years had gone even past what soldiers experienced or saw during their time in war. He determined that any existing medical language was insufficient for describing the state of these children. At present, it still feels insufficient.

instance
time: the meetings and international discussions held in the years following world war two, during atomic testing.

many of these meetings focus on discerning specific language for what exactly is happening, both in tests and their effects on the larger world stage.

now, as then, language and meanings have been lacking, or at least slow to recognize the situation.

I have been wondering to a remedy for painting.

Many would have it believed as dead, or unable to say anything new. For starters, they are not the same thing. But, it does not hurt to imagine a thing as dead, for then you may offer it a contrary to the life it lived. For then we may understand it better.

Taking painting as unable to say anything, we must take its architecture and cornerstone into greater significance. Dissect its forms scientifically, organize into types and parts, and recombine these notated parts into a form that then defy fact.

instance
time: 1125, peter abelard finishes
Sic et Non, an essay of 158 accepted truths,
provides each truth with the contrary: 'or not?'

published during time spent at st. denis,
a few years before gothic architecture manifest
at same location, under abbot suger (sugar?)

bernard de clairvaux calls abelard as heretic
bernard: church truths left open-ended equivalent to heresy
abelard: language of truths without contrary
minded as insufficient for understanding God.

When we look at such pacific washes of color, covering a total surface, the gentility of present-day abstraction may welcome us. It is an old friend by now, and so we surmise to understand its parlor tricks, smiling fondly, resting easily at its hearth.

But lets pay mind to the hewn, ebbd edges of the paper and those on the floor, rousing at feet. These outward areas, these zones of defilement, allow for an eerie ecology to occur within those amicable

histories we hold dearly. They are simple movements, but diligent and striking through—like a playful game where your opponent already knows your moves and chuckles, friendly enough, at your attempts to outwit. You cannot explain what is occurring, and more, you disbelieve.

It is all assumed as playful, but mindfulness and diligence are the antonyms to insouciance.

I experience these paintings in a way that constantly disarms me. I always believe that what I am seeing is historical, abstract painting—things to soothe me. Or not?

When I see lines disappear and shift in hue, or blurs shimmer and oscillate down sides, or colors and lines just appear, as if by chance, like the shorn paper rippling along the sides, I am called into belief that there is little mistake or chance here. Instead there is a diligent and preternatural spirit that knows each page of the playbook, and like the best strategist seduces you with the faith in which you are sure—assured of the outcome—but as you comfort yourself in the center, the sides roll in around you. The belief in your condition is undone.

Alan Longino