The Laboratory of Intelligence Culture.

Occupy the Mind / Tel Aviv / 10/ 2017

<u>Building a relevant Horizon for Literacy of Mind</u>

Timing

Our initial question:

> What to do with the Mind in the 21st Century?

The working assumption that is embedded in it is the radical importance of timing within the construction of the question. Timing has for us multiple grounds, we do not just ask what to do with the mind, pointing by that to an a-temporal direction, but we add to this timeless course of questioning the very now of a person. What do (You, Me, Us) do with the mind now? The second source of timing for the question is the now in terms of the 21-century, the junction of histories that is rushing at us in a growing speed and impact.

> "There are new gods growing in America, clinging to growing knots of belief: gods of credit card and freeway, of Internet and telephone, of radio and hospital and television, gods of plastic and of beeper and of neon. Proud gods, fat and foolish creatures, puffed up with their own newness and importance. "They are aware of us, they fear us, and they hate us," said Odin. "You are fooling yourselves if you believe otherwise."
> — **Neil Gaiman**, **American Gods**

The 21st century for the pleasure of narrative can be encoded as a battle between Gods. A story about a conflict which basically takes place in the arena we will call now our 'soul', between the Old Gods and the New Gods, between Anubis to Facebook.

Anubis, within the Egyptian Mythology is the god who ushered souls into the afterlife. He attended the weighing scale for the "weighing of the heart," meant to determine whether a soul would be allowed to enter the realm of the dead. The heart of the dead was weighed against Ma'at (or "truth"), represented as an ostrich feather, at the presence of Anubis. This dictated the fate of souls.

In most cultures we will find variation on this theme, where the consequences of one's actions throughout one's lifetime determine an afterlife kind of 'judgment'. This was, and still is, a state-of-the-art reflective-technology that shapes human behavior and endorses cooperative affiliation, while drawing a line of coherency between the cosmos, nature, collective and the person. Beyond that it creates as if the first 'cloud' that archives memories (through the Omni-Eye of the gods as a manifestation of the reflective nature of the Mind) situating the human within a dynamic of: observing and being observed. Though, once, those memories could be consulted only in the intimacy of one's exposure in front of the gods.

The new gods of the story stand for Technology, Media and the global World and the way they are acquiring the pedestal of Deities – they are looked up for salvation (i.e. AI, Life extension, identity replacement), they are feared for damnation (i.e. public shaming, exclusion), they are believed in without doubt (i.e. TV, Apocalypse syndrome, fake news), they are more and more the new omni-observing eye (i.e. digital eye, public surveillance, facebook, Instagram). They are slowly but surely replacing the old gods, and adding another all-encompassing layer to the Omni-Eye, but now, it is made of time rather than eternality.

The digital reflective sphere observes our actions and archives them in the cloud, but instead of weighing the heart they sell it well packaged to the highest bidders with their opaque multiple agendas.

We are not here primarily to put on the scale these reflective technologies; they are different deals with ebbs and flows. We wish, however, to emphasize the conflict between new and the old gods, and the different mindsets they implant in our reflective spaces, in order to mirror the internal discourse of us humans, and raise it from a whispering mumble to a loud and clear speach - to provoke a challenge and begin to claw at articulating a Literacy of Mind.

Navigation in Uncertainty

The second question we are putting within the Lab-Table is:

What is the Fundamental of existence?

or

What is the primitive of existence?

Through this question, we wish to point to the state, situation and mind ecology with which we aim to climb this impossible mountain of mapping Literacy of Mind.

We wish our point of departure to be colored with not knowing, to dress our naked state with the first code of Navigation in Uncertainty. To move in between – rather than within – the archives of knowledge and wisdom, between the maps and the habits of acquiring information. We wish to attend the place where

reflectivity meets the dark cosmos.

Just before we have a clear sense, just before we have an all-encompassing perspective, just before we know our 'gods' or from where we came from and to where we are heading…

We wish to navigate the medium and by that to modify the internal discourse, but for this we need two corresponding operations. The first 'act' is to be performed in front of Uncertainty (trust) and the second 'act' is to be performed in front of Navigation (set a horizon).

Trust
Facing Uncertainty calls for a counterpart, a state that undress uncertainty from its disallowing effects and introduces metaphorically speaking a 'heart' and a way to empower the internal discourse: a belief hanged in the void, a belief in the capacity of 'It' to compute the moment. 'It', stands as something that does include the 'I' in a system greater than oneself. A belief hanged in the void that brings together a cosmos, nature, collective and individual into a cohesive, alive force. (Think snow...)

Horizon
The second act to be performed is to point a horizon and calibrate a relevant set of coordinates for navigation, a frame to the event of navigation so that relevant resources, capacities and capabilities could be gathered in order to facilitate the process in question and allow the internal discourse around navigation to become meaningful.