

Theorizing, Journeying, Dwelling

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There appears to exist a persistent and deep interrelationship between the themes of intellectual, theoretical and spiritual effort and those of traveling, exploration and sight-seeing. The very language of intellectual effort constantly refers us to the road. Thus we are said to make *progress* in our science, to *advance* to, to *arrive*, or to be *on the way* to new insights, to work *towards* a new understanding, to *reach* new conclusions, or to hope for a *breakthrough*, all the while *keeping up* with the work of others, hoping not to *fall behind*. Western religious life often evokes the images of a road, albeit a difficult road, to be traversed as preparation for an eternal destination. The ideas of pilgrimage and crusade constantly reoccur in our religious sensibility. A deeper understanding of the journey in its many manifestations-as heroic quest, as religious pilgrimage, as diplomatic or commercial venture, as effort at conquest and annexation, as adventure, or as tourism-has bearing on a deeper understanding of our intellectual life. At the same time, a deeper probing of the ideals of the *bios theoretikos*, of the intellectual and contemplative life, will promote a closer understanding of the voyage, the path, and the dwelling.

An inquiry into the earliest usages of the words *theorist* and *theory* presents us with a wealth of suggestions. Probably the earliest use of the word *theoros* strongly evoked the components *theo* and *oros* (*theo-oros*) to read approximately, "he who regards and observes (the will of) God." It appears that the concept of "theorizing" originally emerged out of a context of a serving and observing presence to the divine. The Theognis of the sixth century B.C. makes mention of a "theoretician" (*aner-theoros*) whose function it is to visit the Delphian oracle as an official representative of his city. This "theoretician" must be absolutely incorruptible, according to the poem, so that he may guard the work of the Pythia without distortion on his way back to the city. This first appearance of the word *theoros* in our literature immediately brings us within the sphere of objectivity. This first somewhat idealized description of a theoretician, as a recipient of the divine message and as a faithful transmitter of that message back to the people, comes to us already surrounded and interpenetrated with the spirit of truth and faithfulness. The foremost task of this first theoretician was to question and to transmit faithfully the response. But in order to hear the voice of God he had to venture out, to risk the perils of the road and-return to his point of departure. From the very beginning truth was a search. The life of the spirit required the road.

Approaching the fifth century B.C. the meaning of the *theoros* shifts or expands slightly. Pindar speaks of a *theorion*, a place where the theorists compete in the games. Koller shows in an unmistakable way that these early theorists are not mere spectators but, rather, actual participants in the religious celebrations.² At this stage their function might be best defined as that of official participating delegates in the festivities attending a religious celebration in another city. The theorist remains a delegate, someone chosen

by his people to represent them. He retains his religious function and he continues to be a traveler. He is both a participant and an observer, or rather his participation serves his observation and his observation is the measure of his participation. Neither the word *theorist* nor any of its close derivatives is ever used by the ancient Greeks to refer to participation in a religious festivity in the home town. From the beginning the theorist must journey beyond the boundaries of his own city. From the beginning the theorist must move beyond known territory into the new. Thus, when the Lacedaemonians are refused access to the temple at Olympia because of their quarrel with the Eleians they finally return home to sacrifice. But this celebration at home is pointedly referred to as *thusia* not *theoria*.³

Kerenyi notices the same difference in usage between *theates*, the ordinary word for spectator, and the word *theoros*, which refers to a more solemn and greater spectacle at a distant place or city to which one must travel to participate. He notes that the daughters of Oceanus, who come as onlookers from a distance to view the suffering of Prometheus, are called *theoroi*, whereas a spectator viewing a religious celebration in his home town is referred to by the ordinary designation *theates*.⁴ The Greek idea of a *theoria* emphatically includes the idea of a journey. Our word pilgrimage contains a similar fusion of the ideas of religious worship and travel.

In the later evolution of *theoria* it is precisely this accent on traveling which becomes emphasized, while the formal religious content gradually erodes. Herodotus, describing Solon's travels, refers to his *theoriain* terms of a "wishing to see the world", as a mission inspired by the passion for seeing and knowing.⁵ The delight in the religious festival has become generalized to become a delight in seeing a new landscape, different peoples,

curious customs and practices. Using the concept in a similar manner Thucydides tells how Nicias could not sway the Athenians from their resolve to sail for Sicily, in part because of "the strong taste for travel" in many who were present. *Theoria* in this context refers simply to the experience of travel, to the excitement of a venture and adventure. Gradually *theoria* comes to refer to the experience and knowledge one acquires while traveling. As *theoria* becomes more and more associated with a mundane adventure, the qualities of the *theorist* are no longer those of someone skilled in religious observance but rather of someone rich in mundane observations. The theorist becomes a *sophos*, someone clever, skilled, knowledgeable about the world, acquainted with a variety of people, customs, and languages. Herodotus' description of Solon's journey, of his *theoria*, became the prototype for the study-tour, which even today remains in vogue.

In Plato's *Laws* we find frequent references to the *theoria* and the *theoroi*, precisely at points where the text turns to consider the forms of exchange and relationships between the ideal republic and the rest of the world. When in earlier times these words emerged in a religious context, in considerations pertaining to the relationships between the sacred and the profane, they now emerge in thought concerning the relationships between nations. Theology has become foreign policy. It is true that in *Laws* Plato makes reference to *theoroi* who should be sent to Apollo at Pytho, to Zeus at Olympus, and to Nemea and the Isthmus to take part in the sacrifices and the games, but the overall intent appears to be more political than religious.

These theoroi will gain for the State a high reputation in the sacred congresses of peace, and confer on it a glorious repute that will rival that of its warriors; and these young men, when they return home, will teach the

youth that the political institutions of other countries are inferior to their own.⁷

The Laws also mention a second category of *theoroi* who are described as "citizens desiring to inspect the doings (*pragmata*) of the outside world in a leisurely way." Such a travel experience, if rightly acquired, would lead to a greater perfection and fuller civilization of the enterprising citizens and of the young people they might instruct upon their return. The *theoria* has become "a voyage of enquiry by land and by sea." In an interesting aside Plato notes that in every part of the world, and living under many different conditions, there always can be found a few great men who are divinely inspired and of superhuman quality. ⁹ To visit such men Plato considered a sound reason for venturing out on a *theoria*. Theorizing in essence remains a voyage to a worthy sight, to an inspiring spectacle; it comes full circle when the, traveler relates his adventures upon his return.

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Within the changing conceptions of *theoria* and *theoros* thus far considered, certain elements appear to remain stable. First of all, the element of festive excitement, ranging from a pleasurable sense of adventure to awe, remains part of the conceptual complex. As Kerényi has pointed out, this festive excitement is a characteristic aspect of Greek religious sensibility.¹⁰ We also noted that the many forms of *theorein*, including the *theorein* of pure seeing, all emerged within the context of Greek religious observance. Interestingly, the history of the Latin *observatio* in many ways parallels the development

of the Greek *theorein*. Both words at one time referred to a conscientious careful watchfulness, to an obedient tending and caring of sacred objects, places, or prescriptions. Even today we speak in a similar way about "observing the Sabbath" or about "observing the law." Seeing clearly and doing the right thing at one time formed an indivisible unity; *to observe* and *to theorize* both meant to see clearly and to act in the right manner. In the subsequent history of Greek cultural life there occurred a progressively deepening split between seeing and doing, being and becoming, thought and practice, and ultimately between thought and life. The history of Greek thought in part can be understood as an attempt to heal through reflective effort this primordial split. In this historical process *theoria* becomes more and more isolated as a pure viewing while other cultural forms such as tragedy and the rapidly developing visual arts, as well as a variety of religious cults, assume and cultivate the spaces left vacant by an earlier fuller *theorein*. Yet, the quality of conscientious watchfulness, of close scrutiny, remains attached to theoretical effort through all its subsequent transformations up to the present day.

Constant also remains the aspect of journeying. The first theorists who are drawn towards the sacred, towards the powerful and fascinating upsurge of the real at the center and near the edge of our world, must turn their backs upon the world of ordinary routine preoccupations. The sacred, in origin, is that which has been set apart. 11 Whatever serves the sacred, be it a time, a place, a person, an object, is always characterized by its having been set apart from the world of ordinary preoccupations.

The first theorists are people capable of accepting the primordial separations and distinctions introduced by the sacred into the profane; they are willing to live in a world

of fundamental differences and accept the *askesis* of being placed "outside", of being "set apart." They place themselves outside the circle of daily preoccupations and entanglements in order to see the world in a different way and to be changed thereby. This effecting of a separation from the comforting routines and familiar faces of everyday reality is made concrete and acquires a distinct form in the journey. The early theorist journeys from the realm of the mundane to the festive and awesome realm of the divine, where he seeks knowledge and change. Leaving behind the world of ordinary forgetfulness the journey effects a separation which renders available in a new way the self, the world, the divine.

The turning toward and returning after the witnessing participation in the upsurge of the real remains important issues in the evolution of the concepts here under discussion. The theorist turns away from the familiar and prepares to address that which is *other*, that which is emergent, unpredictable, enchanting and awe inspiring. But in due time he returns to embed his experience into that of the mainstream of "ordinary" life. The *anertheoros*, the theoretician of the Theognis, returns with the message from the oracle he has visited. The festival delegates of which Thucydides speaks return to their home town after their participation in the religious festivities. Even the worldly travelers of Plato's *Laws* return, after an absence of no more than ten years in foreign lands, to instruct the young.

The theorist must eventually return to the familiar faces, words and customs of the home country, the native town, the trusted places whence he began his journey. We find faint and at times misleading echoes of this theme of the "return of the theorist" in the

Western empirical and pragmatic traditions. Even today the thinker or scientist is constantly enjoined to return to concrete familiar circumstances, to the "plain facts," to "actual conditions," to the "life-world," to the plight of social problems, to what is practical and down to earth. The ivory tower scientist, the armchair philosopher, in essence is the theorist who chooses not to return.

The earliest wise men and philosophers of classical antiquity, although they differ on a great number of issues, do agree in certain of their basic attitudes and characteristics. It is where these early thinkers agree that we can see the close relationship between journeying and thinking.

First we should consider the persisting ideal of simplicity and clarity. Neither the great thinker nor the great traveler can afford to be loaded down by an unnecessary clutter. Thinking and journeying thrive on a few useful and incorruptible propositions and possessions. Thinking and journeying start with a divestiture, with a ridding oneself of excess baggage. Closely linked with the ideal of simplicity and clarity is the ambition to hold oneself aloof from one's surroundings, to guard oneself against a too ready and uncritical absorption of dominant values. The first divestiture by thought and by travel is of the comfort of being at one with one's surroundings, of sharing completely the beliefs and ambitions of one's friends and neighbors. Thinking and journeying bring us estrangement. Thales, whose reputation reaches us indirectly through many legends and folk tales, appears to have spurned riches even though he once demonstrated that he was clearly capable of amassing a fortune. He was quite obviously *disinterested* in the quest for fame and money which totally absorbed his neighbors. Of the same Thales it is told

that he lost his way to the market place in his home town and that he fell in a ditch while studying the sky. In numerous stories of this kind the earliest Greek thinkers are portrayed as benevolent strangers who, despite their capacity for keen observations, and their obvious intelligence, never seem to understand what everyone else appears to know. They remain different from everyone else. This difference shows not only in their divergent beliefs and ambitions, but also in their attitude towards work. Neither the ancient thinker nor the traveler becomes completely absorbed in the workaday world. This point is made clear in a legend told of Pythagoras when he visited the king of Phlius. When the king asked him about his trade or profession, Pythagoras answered that he had none except philosophy. When the king did not understand him, the sage gave the following explanation: The people who attend the Olympic games can be divided into three categories. First, there are those who come for honor; they seek to gain the wreath in contests. Others come to sell goods and services to the crowds. But a few come with no other desire than to be present and to observe. It is to the latter category that the philosopher belongs. Like the great traveler, he seeks no reward beyond his own presence to the sights. He struggles past obstacles in order to attain the vision. To see and understand suffices to fulfill all his ambitions and reward all his efforts.

Finally, we should mention the ancient ideal of *autarchy*, or self sufficiency, which enjoyed universal esteem among the ancient *sophos*. This self-sufficiency, or *autarkeia*, refers us first of all to the sphere of defense (*arkos*), to standing one's ground and standing one's man, to a readiness to push back. It also refers us to the sphere of dependability, to the quality of being sufficient to a situation (*arkeo*), of being reliable,

enduring, steady, and resourceful, and of being sure (*arkios*).

The Journey in the Platonic Dialogues

The theme of the journey constantly reappears in the *Dialogues* of Plato. Nearly all the dialogues open with some reference to the journey of the participants. "Whence came you Menexenus! Are you from Agorar' begins one dialogue. "Welcome Ion. And whence came you now to pay a visit? From your home in Ephesusr' starts another. The opening lines of the *Symposium* refer to a voyage from Phalerum to Athens, those in *Euthyphro* to a walk from the Lyceum to the Royal Porch. The *Republic* refers to a journey to the Piraeus; *Phaedrus* begins on a country path outside Athens. The Platonic discussions share at least this one characteristic with the older *theoria*, namely that the participants must go out of their way, that they are to undertake a journey.

Some of the opening passages immediately recall the older theoretic journey and thereby strengthen the impression that the Platonic discourses bear the imprint of the older tradition. *Parmenides* begins by telling us how Zeno and Parmenides had come to Athens for the great festival in honor of Athena. In the first few opening lines of both the *Symposium* and the *Republic* there is mention of a public religious celebration. We meet here with a train of thought leading from a certain disappointment in the large religious gatherings to the positive appreciation of a more intimate and quieter pursuit of philosophy. The philosophical discussions reported in the *Dialogues* appear from a certain perspective to succeed and replace the religious celebrations. The participants in the discussions become the new theorists, a small band of select men journeying together to witness the upsurge of the real.

The first lines of the *Republic* give us Socrates on his way to the Piraeus with his pupil Glaucon to pay his devotions to the Goddess and to observe the inauguration of the festival. Socrates reports: "I thought the procession of the citizens fine, but it was no better than the show made by the marching of the Thracian contingent." Somewhat disappointed in the large religious celebration, the sage repairs to the house of Polemarchus for a more satisfying philosophical discussion. The *Symposium* refers in its opening lines to a similar sequence of events. Socrates shows his disappointment in the current religious festivities but is happy to attend the private celebrations at Agathon's. He reports: "I kept away from the public celebrations yesterday because I was afraid there'd be a crush but I promised I'd go out this evening. And I've got myself spruced up like this because I don't want to disgrace such a distinguished host as Agathon." This initial reference to a religious celebration is the exception rather than the rule, however. Most frequently the dialogues start out simply with the mention of a chance encounter on the road between friends. This serves the purposes of identifying the first speakers, of providing some kind of background event, and at times of introducing the main topic of conversation.

The endings of the dialogues reflect the same tendency. Often the conversations are broken off in what appears to be an arbitrary manner. In *Phaedrus* the conversation ends with the words: "Let us be going now that it has become less oppressively hot." The discussion in *Lysis* comes to an abrupt end when the attendants of Menexenus and Lysis appear suddenly on the scene to call the boys home. The youths have moved in thought so far beyond the ordinary realities of their daily lives that their attendants now appear to them as "beings of another world" who are slightly drunk and speak a poor Greek.

Many of the dialogues end by pointing to tasks yet to be accomplished, to virtues to be realized, and to future meetings to come. Most numerous are the endings containing some short recapitulation of what went on before, to which is added an injunction to live a more aware and upright life in the future. "Let us follow the guidance of the argument," ends the admonishment in *Gorgias*, ". . . and attempt to live and die in the pursuit of righteousness." At the end of *Crito* Socrates reminds himself and his pupil ". . . to give up the course inspired by expediency and instead to follow the road pointed out by God."

The Platonic dialogues either simply break off at a convenient stopping point or, most generally, continue to point farther along into the distance and the future and towards the divine. There are only two clear instances in which there is some genuine reference to a *return* at the end of a dialogue. The *Symposium* ends in a touching manner, with Agathon and Aristophanes falling off to sleep at daybreak amidst the rest of the company, while Socrates, still fully awake, gets up to go to the Lyceum for his bath, from where he moves on "to spend the rest of the day as usual." Socrates took seriously his position as "a sort of gadfly given to the state by God." It is undoubtedly this function to which he returns after the exciting journey to the house of Agathon. He is a man of wakefulness and vision, always seeming to follow yet going beyond anyone else. When others have fallen off to sleep he moves on to his favorite haunts in the city, ready to awaken others, forever willing to begin his quest anew, enticing others into a journey to their limits. The Tenth Book of the *Republic* ends in a similar manner, with the return of the hero, Er, the son of Armenius. After being slain in a fierce battle, together with many of his comrades, mysteriously he remains unaffected by decay. On the twelfth day after his death, already

placed on a funeral pyre, miraculously he returns to life and eventually tells his countrymen what he has seen in the other world. The myth of Er envisions life as an unending cycle of births and deaths, as a constant journey in which little remains steady. Only a select few, by virtue of their "adamantine faith in truth and right," can withstand the confusion brought about by desire for wealth or temptation by evil. Such men will keep their composure in the "plane of forgetfulness" and use measure when required to drink from "the river of Unmindfulness" whose water no vessel can hold.

Like Socrates, Er returns alone to the city of his birth, leaving his slumbering friends behind, bringing the message of the beyond to his people, who are caught in what is merely actual and self-evident. The two greatest of Plato's dialogues, the *Symposium* and the *Republic*, also bear the clearest imprint of the theoretic journey of the past. Both dialogues speak of a journey to a sanctuary at the beginning and of a return to the people at the end.

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At this point we might briefly summarize the similarities and differences between the ancient *theoroi* and their descendants, the aspiring young philosophers of Plato's *Dialogue*. Those descendants emphatically share with their ancestors the theoretic yearning for new sights, for what tomorrow will bring, for what will manifest itself beyond the next hill. The progressive, inquisitive and also sacred aspects of the theoretic journey have survived to Plato's time. However, those who undertake the journey no longer are the established representatives of a community. The new theorists are mostly

adolescents in the process of intellectual and emotional emancipation from their childhood environments. The world of Socrates evolves entirely around youth and philosophy. 12 These two preoccupations influence each other mutually. The Athenian youth within Socrates' sphere of influence certainly changed in response to his teaching. But Socrates' teaching also became deeply influenced by those whom it addressed. We should remind ourselves at this point that adolescence is a future oriented stage in life, in which the dominant impulse is to move beyond the sphere of parental influence and home town into a larger world. The Socratic dialogues reflect this profound future-orientation of youth with its contempt for the settled life and its urge to move away from the parental community.

Socrates facilitates this emancipation; he possesses the gift of assisting at birth. By means of his maieutic *techne* he brings out into the open what at first is only virtual. He makes visible what originally was hidden. He draws out into a new life. Within this conception, however, the beginning of the theoretic journey assumes the form of exodus rather than departure. The young theorists do not depart from their communities or cities; they leave them behind. The parental home, the neighborhood, the home town begins to function as an overfull womb from which new life bursts forth. But if the beginning of the journey be birth, then the return to one's origins becomes incest. To conceive of the beginning of the theoretic journey as birth means to conceive of the rest of the journey as continual transcendence and to lay the ground-work for a philosophy forever preoccupied with the beyond. Such a preoccupation in turn lays down part of the foundation for a later civilization of highways and skyways, of continual progress and expansion. It lays down the pattern for a life of going on and on without ever looking back.

Already in the Platonic dialogues we find the loss of a rhythm of coming and going, of soaring up to heaven and coming down to earth. The theoretic journey of the dialogues is already tending to become a-historic, more linear, and more uniform, more persistently high-minded and elevated, more unending, and, as we shall see in a close analysis of the myth of the cave, also progressively more ascetic.

Slowly, theorizing and the theoretic life come to find their point of origin in an absolute departure, beyond the possibility of a return. Philosophy becomes allied to dying. The journey which originally was undertaken in the service of a community, in full obedience to its life and purposes, now acquires more and more the aspect of an individual search. With the progressive individualization of the theoretic journey, the beginnings of thought come to resemble more and more a death struggle.

The original festive quality of leave-taking and the sustaining hope of return gradually make place for ascetic practices and the destruction of illusions. Something dour and forbidding comes to be associated with thought. Such thought, wholly in the grip of journeying and beyond the sphere of dwelling, eventually turns to monologue. It becomes an indulgence masked by a dour appearance. What had started as a festive journey to a splendid and awe-inspiring sight threatens to become extinguished in an ascetic obsession with departure.

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Plato's Allegory of the Cave

In the Seventh Book of the *Republic* Plato gives us his clearest statement concerning the life of the intellect or spirit as a journey from darkness into light, from

the enslavement of illusions towards the freedom of truth and reality. The journey is a grim one indeed; it could be experienced as tolerable only by force of its abysmal beginnings:

Behold! human beings living in an underground den, which has a mouth open towards the light and reaching all along the den; here they have been from their childhood, and have their legs and necks chained so that they cannot move, and can only see before them, being prevented by the chains from turning round their heads. Above and behind them a fire is blazing at a distance, and between the fire and the prisoners there is a raised way; and you will see, if you look, a low wall built along the way, like the screen which marionette players have in front of them, over which they show the
puppets. 13

The beginning of the journey towards enlightenment-towards the light is one of total passivity. The chained prisoners, prevented from turning their backs, perceive in front of them upon the wall constructed for that purpose the mere shadows of "vessels, statues, and figures of animals mad~ of wood and stone and various materials." 14 The prisoner thus has visual access only to a totally derivative world, to shadows of images of real beings. If he were to be unchained and allowed to look towards the fire behind him, the prisoner would experience a sharp pain and the glare would for a while distract him so that he would be unable to see and therefore unwilling to accept the new perspective. The next step in the journey "compels the prisoner to look straight at the light" after which he is reluctantly dragged up a steep and rugged ascent and held fast until finally

he is forced to look up into the sky and view the sun. He will be unable to see anything around him for a long time." 15

Striking is the absence of initiative in this enchained, manhandled, reluctant pupil-theorist. The young voyager appears to fight progress every step of the way, or at least appears indifferent to it. He is released from his chains without his request, he is made to see sights that are painful to his eyes, he is dragged up a steep incline and blinded by the sun. The forced steep ascent towards the light thoroughly alienates the voyager from his origins. The activities of those left behind in the cave now appear utterly unappealing. If placed in his old position among his fellow-prisoners of days gone by, he would be "a man returning from divine contemplation to the petty miseries of man."16 He would at first be unable to make out anything at all and would become an object of derision. Nor would he be able to defend himself. If he were to try to liberate others from their chains and to lead them upward into the light he might find his efforts badly appreciated and be put to death as an offender against the community. The natural tendency in this voyage of discovery towards the light is to continue on indefinitely. It is only with the greatest difficulty, so it appears, that Plato manages to round off this proposed formative journey so that it more nearly fits the ancient pattern of the journey of the *theoroi*.

Then, I said, the business of us who are the founders of the State will be to compel the best minds to attain that knowledge which we have already shown to be the greatest of all—they must continue to ascend until they arrive at the good; but when they have ascended and seen enough we must not allow them to do as they do now. . . . I mean that

they remain in the upper world: but this must not be allowed; they must be made to descend again among the prisoners in the den, and partake of their labors and honors, whether they are worth having or not. 17

The journey of enlightenment seems a strange one indeed, beginning and ending as it does in a prison, with a short time out in between for a painful moment of staring at the sun. If we are to approach the journey as primordially a dialectic unfolding of origin and destiny we cannot be persuaded to accept the prisoner's uphill struggle as a true theoretic journey, as unfolding movement. The darkness at the depth of the cave and the radiance at the height of the sky are mere counter-images, blind to a world in between, connecting two sides of a dark tunnel, offering us echoes which repeat but do not answer and therefore remain mute. The journey "starts" with the prisoner fettered in chains; it "proceeds" toward his "liberation" and ends with his "return" to the bottom of the cage. Yet somehow nothing really appears to have happened beyond an ambitious educator's mistreatment of one of his pupils. The entire journey towards the light appears empty of content, a mere abstraction, even a parlor-trick. The "contemplation of essences," "the view of highest region of being," turns out to be a bore, a mere negative of greed and lust and "preoccupation with the petty miseries of man." Some clever hand has changed a minus into a plus and wants thereby to convince us that we have traveled around the world.

To find our bearings in this strange tale of enlightenment we must remember the festive farewells to the small band of well-loved theorists on their way out of the city to see the world, to hear the gods, to meet their fellow men in contest and display. What has

happened to the glorious spectacles at Olympia, at Delphi, and Eleusis, now reduced to a painful forced staring at the noonday sun? What has happened to the exciting return of the chosen men to their city, men admired and feasted and eagerly listened to, now reduced to the status of stumbling blinded exiles who mingle among suspicious and murderous fellow-prisoners? Strange *paideia*, strange journey! Yet to understand better this strange journey we must attempt to draw close to precisely what at first repels us most. This is a story full of pain, filled with absences, with violence and blindness. It appears preoccupied with death, with a world of numbness and forgetfulness that, despite protestations, cannot be saved by the hot impassive light of a noonday sun. The lack of vitality and the strangeness of the story appear to derive from an internal contradiction. What is presented as a completed journey strikes us by its lack of true events and by its driving sameness of mood and purpose. Although the journey formally moves from a beginning to an end, internally it remains fixated on a single aspect, on departure. The story of the reluctant student is in fact the story of a reluctant departure; it never moves beyond the point of sadness over leaving. It never leaves the sphere of depression and violence.

Ascesis and Departure

Much of the death-orientation and abysmal resignation of the myth of the cave reappears in other dialogues and reverberates in the thought of subsequent philosophers. In the *Gorgias*, quoting Euripides, Socrates refers to the body as a tomb in which the soul is enshrined.¹⁸ This same image reoccurs in *Phaedrus*: "We are enshrined in that living tomb which we carry about, now that we are imprisoned in the body as an oyster in a

shell." 19 Following the same train of thought Socrates tells Simmias in *Phaedo* that "true philosophers make dying their profession and to them of all men death is the least alarming. If they are thoroughly dissatisfied with the body, and long to have the souls independent of it they would be neither frightened nor distressed by death." Socrates argues that a true philosopher "would be glad to set out for the place where there is a prospect of attaining the object of his life-long desire-which is wisdom-and of escaping from an unwelcome association."²⁰ Thus life becomes the death of the soul and death the escape into a higher, truer life.

The image of the soul in unwelcome association with the body achieves' its most savage form in the early Aristotle's *Protrepticus*, where the imprisonment of the soul in the body is portrayed as an unnatural state full of inexpressible suffering. Aristotle likens the union of body and soul to the torture inflicted by Etruscan pirates on their captives "whom they would tie face to face to corpses and leave them to perish slowly, thus constraining life and putrefaction into an unnatural union." 21 We find echoes of that sentiment later in Marcus Aurelius, who asks himself: "What am I " and answers with a quotation from Epictetus: "I am a poor soul, burdened with a corpse."

The desire for purity, for freedom, a concern for what is essential, and the fear of entrapment, imprisonment, stagnation, and attachment accompany all ascetic movements. *Ascesis* is muscular, forever ready to struggle, to overcome resistance, forever prepared to fight for freedom, to resist temptation, to reduce dependency. The ascetic impulse might be understood as an attempt to find one's bearings in the vertigo which accompanies the first steps away from a secure base toward an awe-inspiring new world. *Ascesis* brings some order to an otherwise chaotic separation. *Ascesis* simplifies

the turmoil of leaving.

The journey starts in the home town, in the parental home, in the fullness of paradise, in the warmth and self-evidence of the womb. The first steps of the journey effect a break in what had appeared to be an insoluble bond between child and parent, between child and neighborhood or city. These first steps arouse a vertigo within which, for a while, nothing is visible, neither the past nor the future. This is the moment when the body cannot be trusted, when it might on its own accord turn around and go back. Whatever is seen or imagined at this point is to be distrusted. A vivid image, a strong emotion threatens to kill the resolution to go forth into the world, to experience more, to question, to reach one's destiny. *Ascesis* is the practice which makes it possible to live through the vertigo of departure; its violence, which is its exercise of denial, blackens the faces of those left behind, erases the gentle contours of the maternal breast, stifles the demand of the body for the familiar bed, the comforting embraces, the taste of home-cooked food, the sound of the regional language. It is only somewhat further up the road that the past can be allowed some measure of presence as nostalgic longing. At that time the gentle faces and familiar sights appear, although still framed in pain. It is when the *ascesis* diminishes its original vigilance that it becomes possible for the past to show its face in nostalgia. Eventually, if the journey proceeds and the journeyer becomes of his own strength to accomplish his mission, nostalgia recedes and makes place for a more positive appreciation of the past. Now it appears no longer touched by pain and denial but rather emerges in a flash of recognition, in a sudden spasm of happy awareness. The first few steps in the new direction are the hardest.

Within these first few movements of turning one's back and of walking away there is contained all the most intensive pain of separation. Here there is a turning from what is known and visible toward what is unknown and cannot be seen. This first turning and moving away requires the spare, muscular, hard, trained, continent body, capable of quick decisive action in opposition to myriad forces. It is in such turning away that a new freedom is won. The ascetic hostility to the flesh only rarely extends to all modalities of embodiment. Most generally it addresses itself specifically to the embodiments of eating, drinking, copulating, and sleeping. All these "pleasures of the body" involve a blurring of distinctions between self and other, between self and world. Pleasure is a form of intertwining with what surrounds; it constitutes a living of and a living through a delightful environment. Pleasure opposes change and it regrets passing. Asceticism separates; it demands change, it seeks doorways and thresholds. It seeks the detachment needed for the exercise of a new initiative, for the freedom of coming and going. In this manner it prepares the ground for a radical questioning of all that which is merely taken for granted in the mode of enjoyment. *Ascesis* is the practice in numbness and death which makes possible the first steps away from what one loves so that it may reappear in a new way. The body emerges as a prison and the soul as its prisoner at the horrible moment of ambivalence and duality on the threshold of departure. To part is to die a little! But not to depart at all may mean that one dies altogether and rots in an unexamined life that never takes distance from itself. Here the Platonic *melete thanatou*, the practice of death, becomes more fully understandable. Plato's thought

addresses itself to young men on the verge of leaving home and on the verge of examining what they left behind. Asceticism concerns itself with the first decisive step in the direction of wisdom and maturity. It serves all people at periods of great upheaval and change. Asceticism is a practice in turning away from the sphere of dwelling; it constitutes the first embodiment and practice of change.

The Janus Face of Departure

The ascetic turning announces a radical discontinuity in life; it allows the past to die and the future to emerge. *Ascesis* is the knife that cuts the umbilical cord, it is the plow that makes the furrow, it is the fasting in the darkness of the longest night and the fearful waiting for the return of the sun. Asceticism is fervently expectant, it desperately hopes for a new beginning. It also appears to be fiercely rejecting of the past and intolerant of the present. This very rejection and intolerance makes the ascetic phase emerge as distinct and creates the illusion of a *pure* beginning. It would then appear that the great creative principle would be denial. Sartre's ontology of *Being and Nothingness* falls precisely into the error provoked by this appearance. But upon close inspection everything about the journey, including its first ascetic phase, refers back to the sphere of dwelling. The journey is born out of a complex interaction of nearness and distance, intimacy and strangeness, abundance and constraint. Journeying grows out of dwelling as dwelling is founded in journeying. The road and the hearth, journey and dwelling, mutually imply each other. Neither can maintain its structural integrity without the other. The journey cut off from the sphere of dwelling becomes aimless wandering; it deteriorates into

mere distraction, even chaos or fugue. The journey requires a place of origin as the very background against which the figures of a new world can emerge. The home town, the fatherland, the neighborhood, the parental home form together an organ of vision. To be without origin, to be homeless, is to be blind. On the other hand, the sphere of dwelling cannot maintain its vitality and viability without the renewal made possible by the path. A community without *outlook* atrophies becomes decadent and incestuous. Incest is primarily this refusal of the path; it therefore is refusal of the future and a suicidal attempt to live entirely in the past. The sphere of dwelling, insofar as it is not moribund, is interpenetrated with journeying.

There can, therefore, be no absolute point of departure. The austerity of leaving grows out of the fullness of remaining. The very denial and abstinence near the threshold addresses and evokes in its own way the positivity and fullness which it leaves behind. When Gilgamesh prepares to leave the city for his great journey of exploration, he begins by consolidating his support. He visits the elders of the town, he prays at the temple of Egannah, and receives his mother's blessing and instruction. He does not proceed until he has drawn the entire town around himself and has felt its support and goodwill. In a similar manner, Homer would not embark upon his mission of recalling the great deeds of the past without first making sure of his support through addressing the gods. Hesiod counsels us not to cross the threshold of a river without first "looking at their lovely waves and praying to them."²²

The beginning of a new enterprise requires a thoughtful remembrance of whatever supports that enterprise. Here the first step forward is also a step backward. The traveler can leave behind only that which he has truly faced. Whatever is ignored will come to

haunt him as unfinished business and complicate his progress. The traveler faces the ground and the past because it must support him. He must enter into a heightened presence with whatever and whomever he is to leave behind so that he may receive full backing. The first movement of the journey, prior to the ascetic phase of departure, is one of generous and full mutual availability, a loving and intense presence which consolidates. If the ascetic movement near the threshold is to bear fruit in the form of a full journey, it must bear witness, in its own manner, to the generosity of origins, to the latent abundance from which we emerge and to which we must return.

The prisoner of Plato's cave cannot truly advance because he lives nowhere. He emerges from a void. Unsupported by a neighborhood, a village, a parental home, and therefore out of touch with the generosity of the earth, unfavored by the gods, uninstructed by benevolent elders, in the service of nobody, his journey is doomed to become a non-event, an empty abstraction. Released from his chains, he will be capable of nothing except nihilistic wandering.

Ascetic turning or self-denial are by themselves powerless to initiate a journey, to bring about change. The ritual of the obsessive will not free him for new thought; his strenuous rituals near the doorsteps will not really make it possible for him to cross over. The self-denials of the schizophrenic will not emancipate and the self-accusations of the depressive will not clear the slate. The narrowness of the road must speak of the depth and the abundance of the earth and of the roundness of dwelling if it is to open up new vistas. Asceticism by itself is powerless to lead us anywhere, to make us see anything.

Journeying and Dwelling

Journeying is birth in life; it starts in suffering and struggle. Journeying is the acceptance of separation so that there can be consciousness, so that the primordial oneness of undifferentiated enjoyment can be succeeded by dialogue, by a radical fruitful separation. All paths bear the imprint of the birth canal, of the struggle and pain it enforces, of the freedom it promises. Journeying requires that we leave behind the treasures of the heart, the luxury of being *surrounded* by the sounds and sights of the dwelling-place; it takes us away from the cushions of familiarity and exposes us to the stones of danger, to hard tests of endurance, to the inclemency of the weather, the treachery of barbarians, the embarrassment of unknown languages, laws, and customs. The journey breaks us loose from the self-evident, the habitual, the familiar, the reoccurring.

The round world of dwelling offers a cyclical time, the reoccurring times of seasons, of the cycles of birth and death, of planting and harvesting, of meeting and meeting again, of doing and doing over again. It offers a time of succession of crops, duties, generations, forever appearing and reappearing. It offers a place where fragile object and creature can be tended and cared for through constant, gentle reoccurring contacts. Journeying forces this round generative world of rhythmic reoccurrence into the narrow world of the path. The path offers the progressive time of unique and unrepeatabe events, of singular occurrence of strange peoples and places to be seen once and possibly never again. The path gives rise to monuments, mile-stones, and *herms*, to souvenirs, post cards, snapshots, tall tales, and diaries. The path is access to the strange, colorful, concentrated world of adventures, brought to order by the monotonous procession of inches and miles and the

irrepressible ticking away of the minutes and the hours. To follow the path is to submit to the ordering stride, to the calculations of the compass, to the discipline of counting and recounting, to the intensification of memory as a linear series of events.

Journeying breaks open the circle of the sun and the seasons and turns it into a linear pattern of succession in which the end no longer seems to touch the beginning and in which the temporal world shrinks to a before and after, to a backward and forward. Here the beginning is no longer felt to lie in the middle but instead appears placed behind one's back. The future makes its appearance straight ahead, making possible *confrontation*. The road lies at the origin of all pitched battles ever fought. But this same road also allows the searcher to go straight to the heart of the matter; it offers an escape from the embroidery and, often, evasiveness of the domestic sphere of dwelling. The road makes possible spears and projectiles and straight uncluttered thinking. Mathematics in all its aspects bears the imprint of the road.

Journeying requires the ability to remove oneself from entanglements and to slip past snares and roadblocks. The one who journeys must regularly come up with new solutions and break with old ones. The sphere of dwelling does not allow such ruptures or sudden shifts; it weaves together disparate elements into a single cloth. The dweller weaves and embroiders and takes his time shifting from one pattern to another.

Heidegger, in his profound meditation on the fundamental character of dwelling, speaks of it as essentially *a sparing and preserving*. 23

Dwelling is foremost an obedience to what is about to emerge. It is primordially an active, participant waiting near the source. Dwelling seeks to tend that which is about to

emerge; it assists at birth, it cultivates. Within the world of dwelling whispers grow into strong articulate speech. Small seeds multiply into the abundance of a harvest. Young people meet, and their first shy love play grows into an enduring, fruitful relationship. Whatever is barely audible, hardly visible, all that which still lacks form and strength is brought to its full manifestation in the sphere of dwelling. The very temporality of dwelling is this tending, this constant curbing of a straight and undisturbed path of events into the curves of daily rounds. The roundness of the sphere of dwelling is itself already responsiveness. All tending is a curving and bending in responsiveness. This curving and bending creates the very time and spaces in which fragile beings can grow. This round rhythmic movement of sparing and preserving takes place within the awareness of a center. Dwelling means to live close to the center. It means to live close to where life emerges and eventually submerges; it means to remain close to the earth as soil, as foundation, and as ground. Dwelling is awareness of depth. Everything within the sphere of dwelling shows itself as *having emerged* and as *having to submerge* eventually. Within the sphere of journeying there is a corresponding awareness of a passing. Every sight and experience is here touched with an awareness that it must be left behind: To move from the sphere of dwelling to that of journeying means to shift from an emphasis on *ground* to an emphasis on *background*. Unlike "ground," "background" cannot be a burial place. Neither is it endowed with fertility, nor does it require labor and cultivation. Background ushers in a more purely horizontal world; it frees the wanderer from his original preoccupation with the ground and therefore from a reverence and a practice which would complicate his progress. The path demythologizes. The shift in emphasis from "ground" to "background" means a shift from mythology to

history. The path is the mother of history; it stills the depth and creates for the first time a true succession of events. It appears that the great intellectual acquisitions of the modern western world grow out of a wandering. If we are to understand ourselves better, possibly we should not direct all our attention to the mind or even to character, but rather should rediscover the mysteries of our feet. Sophocles' Oedipus teaches us as much. This is not to suggest, however, that history can be the result of mere footsteps. Only a wandering in the loyal service of an origin produces a history. Journeying constitutes a reorientation to the polis, to the ground and to the origin; it never constitutes an absolute separation.

The transition from the time of dwelling to the time of journeying can be understood as the transition from a round to an oval. In the extreme case this oval comes to resemble a straight line. Yet journeying must always maintain a circular character. When the oval collapses into a straight line, when this transition has been fully accomplished, then the journey loses its original rhythm and becomes fugue. At that point the journey ceases to have an overall structure which binds events into coherence. Each event comes to speak only of itself, without reference to a beginning and an end. Each event falls back upon itself and loses the quality of referring to succeeding and preceding events. The purely linear journey becomes an obsessive succession of empty events which refuse to address each other. The journey then loses its physiognomy. The very power of events to speak of each other and thereby to form a whole is dependent on a place of origin. Meaning grows out of a loyalty to origins. All journeying and every detail of an itinerary must refer to the sphere of dwelling. A journey cut off from its source degenerates into eternal departure.

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The interdependent spheres of journeying and dwelling each gives rise to its own mode of thought. These modes must of necessity dialogue one with the other if the place of dwelling is to be maintained and if the path is to remain clear. The manner of thinking appropriate to dwelling grows out of a traditional *practice*. Thought emerges here from the depth and the height; it emerges slowly before us through the twists and turns of an endless tale. This mythic telling requires both activity and obedience; it remains close to the practices associated with tending and cultivating; it requires a full emotional, intellectual, work- and cult-oriented bodily participation. From it emerges a thought suffused with the rhythms of the heart, of the hands and feet. Such thought grows out of dancing and working, eating, copulating, defecating, dying, and giving birth. It bears constant witness to the ground and the sky, the gods and other mortals. The voice of the storyteller or the singer rises and falls. His hands gesture, he shouts and cries. He sings of what emerges from the depth and comes to full manifestation through observant practice. Within the sphere of dwelling thought emerges in response to an observant tending of the past, which is the ground. Within the sphere of dwelling thinking is a coaxing of the depth. Thought gently labors towards the manifestation of the real. Thought remains entirely maieutic.

The sphere of journeying requires abstinence from the start. Thought begins here with a denial, with a distance. We also should remind ourselves that journeying approaches a world already constituted. There is here no need for the closeness and

intimacy of careful tending and coaxing. The road gives us a world that already exists in its vigor when we make our first approach. The road confronts us with a world that emerges before our glances as already radically independent. The sphere of journeying everywhere speaks of distance and separation.

The path itself calls the traveler back from a full participation in the wider, rounder world. On both sides of the path the world is transformed into scenery; it receives the glance but does not ask for hands or feet. Similarly the traveler is not asked to participate fully in the life of towns or villages he visits. The one who journeys does not work, he is not supposed to interfere in the local political process, he remains aloof from local disputes. He owns no land; he can claim no family rights. Thought as *theorizing*, as moving outside the sphere of dwelling, becomes "objective", it acquires a more and more purely visual character; it becomes dominated by *observations*.

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The Faces of the Theoretic Journey

The primordial theoretic journey moves toward the end of the world and to its center, towards the place of manifestation of the real which is the place of change and renewal. From there it returns home, thereby establishing a path between the distant and the proximate, between the gods and men. The journey requires the closure of a farewell and the welcome of a return if it is to reach the end of the world or its center. A man can complete a fruitful journey only if he can start out from a solid base within the fullness and generosity of those who love him. Without origin the journey falls

apart and becomes chaotic wandering. The journey is structured from its origin; every step sends its echoes home. Journeying is a multidimensional dialogue between the wanderer and his city, between gods and men, between what lies behind and what awaits in the future. The whole world participates and journeys in the journey. All going away speaks of a returning, return answers arrival, origin informs destiny, and destiny addresses origin. Beginning and end are the two hands of journeying. The "going forth" of the journey speaks of the "having remained" of those who inhabit the dwelling place; the exposure of the road speaks of the protective intimacy of dwelling. The freedom of seeing and displaying at the height of the journey contains the remembrance of the anguish and narrowness of parting. Delight in the spectacles along the way and in the temple is already interpenetrated with the forethought of telling about it later. The journey which comes to a full circle is of one piece. Yet, looking from within the journey, certain distinctive phases come into view, which, although thoroughly interrelated with all the other phases, nevertheless appear held together by distinctive themes. The phase of the narrowness of anguish and the vertigo of nausea is dominated by absence and numbness as well as by pain and oppressive presence. The leave-taking has not yet matured into a "going forth" and the traveler is caught in a nomad's land between not-here and not-there. The journey remains compressed between absolutes, between plus and minus, between the abstractions of total acceptance and total rejection. Here longing turns to disgust and the presence of loved ones can be experienced as a vile temptation.

The beginning of the journey requires cooperation between those who leave and those who remain behind. The rites of passage described and analyzed in van

Genep's seminal book provide numerous examples of the ritualization of departure. 24 The task of separation is clearly regarded as a total communal responsibility. The more reluctant and one-sided forms of departure also assume the more ascetic aspect. The most agonized forms of departure are monological in nature. Leaving becomes here a secret stealing away in the night. Or it assumes the form of banishment or punishment by death. But such forms of departure become frozen in time and cannot heal. Such leaving does not open a new future but instead gives access to a shady realm of venging spirits, of neurotic frozen repetition, of being haunted and immobilized. At the other end of the continuum departure assumes the form of the highest mutuality, in which the pain of separation is assumed equally by all in the service of a higher good. Such completely mutual separations tend towards the festive rather than towards the ascetic. The departures of the earliest theorists appear to have been thoroughly festive occasions. We may assume that this festive character became lost when the philosophic quest assumed more and more the form of an individual enterprise.

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After passing from the abundance of dwelling through the narrowness of the gateway, the journey assumes a new form. The emotionality of departure makes place for a more matter-of-fact attitude. The travelers must set a pace, must settle into a routine. They must ration their supplies of food and drink and keep their eyes on the road ahead. We might speak here of a phase of *steady progress*. The travelers must counteract the pull of the friends and relatives who remain behind. They must be

careful not to be drawn backward. At this stage thoughts and feelings must not roam too freely. Not much is said during this time. Everybody must be careful, conserving, contained, disciplined. A pace is set so that the available energies are neither squandered nor under-used. The main concern is for steady progress based on sound judgment and on reliable companions and instruments.

At this stage the traveler shows affection for his reliable companions, his horse or his car, his compass and his weapon. The sun and the stars become themselves trusted companions to be counted on to help guide the journey. The earth is stable, the body emerges as reliable, what is left behind can be trusted. The traveler need not look back nor question the road. He can concentrate his efforts completely on *making progress*. There is here neither questioning of foundations nor exploration of new dimensions of the self or other. This world of containment and measurement is both vigilant and trusting; it is vigilant on the basis of trust. The glances of the travelers are directed outward towards the tasks at hand, not inward or toward each other. The intersubjectivity of the stage of steady progress is one of shoulder to shoulder rather than face to face. To draw unwarranted attention towards oneself or even to show too much interest in the other is at this stage experienced as betrayal. The travelers, their horses and wagons, their instruments and provisions, form one indivisible unity directing all its attention and effort to the surrounding world and the immediate tasks ahead.

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The theorists seek to come into the presence of a god at a distant shrine. They hope to achieve this presence in part as a direct result of effort, discipline, faithful progress. The journey as steady progress presents that aspect. But the journey also offers the aspect of an expressive *coming forward*. This third aspect achieves particular visibility following the pain of departure and the strict discipline and containment of the phase of steady progress. It reaches its height when the traveler comes into view of the object of his journey, namely the shrine of the deity. However, the entire journey can be approached as a struggle out of concealment into the full visibility of a radiant and divine world. The journey of the theorists, which leads to the place of unconcealment and manifestation, is itself a first step out of hiding. The journey breaks the traveler loose from a comfortable self-evident world and exposes him to opportunities and dangers requiring the full use and display of his resources. Traveling unveils the landscape, discloses the past while it opens to view the distance. But this unveiling in turn demands a "coming forth" of the traveler. The traveler must step forward out of a protective multitude, relinquish the reserves and cushions of the round world of dwelling. He must lose the fat around his belly and take distance from what is self-evident. He must become an individual, naked and simplified, in order to come into the presence of simple and naked truths. He himself must come forth and be visible if he is to see the clear appearance of the gods and attend to the full simplicity of a beginning. The journey renders visible, it removes the self and others from their hiding places. The journey makes available whatever was hidden in the distance, what was self-evident in the past and latent in the person. Whatever is hidden underneath the cloaks of custom,

titles, wealth, impressive manners, pompous language, comes into view as the journey wears on. The journey constitutes a "coming forth," a revealing of that which is of ultimate importance about the person, the past, the landscape, the gods. This expressive "coming forth" continues in the nude athletic contests in honor of the deity. It also manifests itself through the heart and flower of language as it is heard in the tragedies at the festival of Dionysus, or in the persistent clear sound of the lyre at the Greek panegyrics. The festive display of agility, of resourcefulness, of the strength and beauty of body and character, of moving eloquence and passion, all are continuous with and complete the labor of the theoretic journey.

The journey not only *discloses* and brings into view what remains hidden in profane repetitive existence, it also must be viewed as an "*asking to see.*" Journeying is a coming forth, a disclosing which is an asking to see. The journey as an expressive struggle to reach the place of manifestation, and as individuating movement out of a protective enclosure, is itself a petition for the gods to make their presence known. Show and manifestation are a festive initiative towards the other which constitutes the beginning of a dialogue. "Coming forth" is a calling for the world, for the other, for the gods. True expressiveness asks for the manifestation of the other. Goethe is reputed to have said that the ancient Greeks were born to see and appointed to view. Thales and Anaxagoras are reported to have said that man is born to contemplate the heavens. ²⁵ These statements do not contain the whole truth, however. The Greeks were born to see but also destined to be seen. ²⁶ They expected to see on the very basis of their own visibility. Journeying is an emerging into visibility which gives access to a visible world. The athletic contests at the height of the journey can be seen as the final

surrender of all reserve, as a great and absolute effort to achieve the visibility which will evoke a seeing. The capacity to see refers to the courage to stand in the light of the glance of the other with no means of defense but that of one's own coming forward, of a coming-out-of-hiding into expressiveness. The world emerges in response to our emerging. Plants, trees, rocks, people or gods become visible in the aura of our own visibility.

Expressiveness is a self-manifestation which gives access to the world. The decline of the theoretic journey is associated precisely with the invisibility of the theorist. Theorizing slowly degenerates into a seeing which offers nothing to view. The ideal figure of theoretical effort becomes the "unseen seer." The theorist becomes the great invisible, hidden in his towers of learning, protected by esoteric jargon, covered by white coats, and sheltered by elitist pretensions. The frank open glance of the viewer who is visible slowly degenerates into a squint directed through peepholes. The highpoint of the primordial theoretic journey makes clear that the most fundamental asking is an offering, that the most profound desire to see is manifested in availability, and that the clearest invitation to be is openness.

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The first *askese* concerns the turning from the polis in the direction of the distant shrine. The second *askese* concerns the turning away from the shrine towards the city. In both cases the ascetic turning does not constitute an absolute break but rather involves a losing of the past in such a manner as to regain it anew. The polis was constantly present

in its absence during the first stage of the journey. The theoretic journey in fact constitutes a manner of presenting the polis to the deity. The second *askese*, during which the traveler leaves behind him the sacred ground in order to return to the city, performs a similar function. The homeward journey presents the sacred place and the deity to the city. The entire journey connects the human and the divine realms. In both cases the traveler cannot turn around except on the basis of an experienced fullness and of a sense of ripeness and completion. The turning is the fruit of a true mutual presence. This turning is the mutual creation of the polis, the deity and the traveler. The journey back from the shrine to the polis speaks of the goodwill of the gods, the receptivity of the waiting community, the courage and the faithfulness of the theorist.

This last phase of the journey demands the faithful transmission of the message of the oracle back to the city; it requires the theorist to prepare for his audience, to recollect the major aspect of his journey, to bring order and relevance to a chaotic mass of events. The journey back to the polis is a labor of making visible and understandable, of mediating between the event and its audience. Homecoming constitutes the great reflective and hermeneutic task without which theoretical effort remains incomplete. At this stage of the journey the theorist places himself between the fullness of the events and the vivifying presence of an eager audience. If he positions himself in the right manner between these two forceful poles, he will be able to speak clearly and come to understand fully. In view of the city and backed by the great upsurge of the real, the theorist comes to experience his journey in a new way. From this position and within this perspective, the great interpretive labor can run its course.

The homeward journey constitutes the great confluence of events and of meanings.

It brings together into one clarifying situation the polis, the messenger, the gods. It unifies past, present, and future; it speaks of the height and the depth, the distant and the proximate. The entire world comes together in the homeward journey.

Epilogue

To theorize, to see truly, to act in the right manner (*ob-servare*), turns out to be a multifaceted holistic movement in which each aspect must be interpenetrated with all others. Theoretical effort first of all must be capable of overcoming powerful comfortable traditions, it must be *critical* and ready to engage in a creative destruction of the past. Theoretical effort must include the ascetic dimension. Yet to remain within the critical ascetic sphere dooms to sterility all spiritual effort, or limits its creativity to mere exchanges of opposites. Within the exchange of opposites nothing truly new can show its face.

Theoretical effort must also pass through a phase of diligence and persistence, a phase of faithful effort and of steady progress. Here there is no place to ask the basic questions concerning the whereto and wherefrom. All attention is focused on *how* to accomplish a task, *how* to make progress. The past, the future, the depth and the height all are relegated to a background. Most scientific work comfortably fits within these parameters. All intellectual or artistic training or preparation necessarily must pass through this phase.

A third facet of theoretical effort concerns the world of festive initiative, of

coming forth, which is the apotheosis of seeing and showing. All the great inspired works of literature, of the arts, of religious revelation, works at the summit of scientific pursuit, belong here. In this world of festive initiative man sees by means of showing while he finds the courage to show forth through seeing. In this ecstatic realm of epiphany and *parousia* man, world, and the gods achieve their closest approximation and their fullest visibility. The theorist must soon turn, however, and begin his homeward journey. As soon as he turns, to leave behind the epiphany and to face the region where he started his journey, the theorist has begun the great hermeneutic task of mediating between the sacred and the profane, between the "here and now" and the depth, the height and the distance. Homecoming is an hermeneutic task. Interpretation is itself a homecoming from the awesome and appealing distance.

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