

THE MYTH OF MELLON

The Myth of Mellon is a tale about getting to the future by way of a shortcut through chronological time. I read the story in a book I found in a most peculiar way.

For many years, I dreamed frequently about the summer cottage where I had lived as a child. A classic holiday town on the west coast, still sparsely populated. Back then, there were only a few houses on the sand dunes, red log cabins or straw-thatched brick houses so typical of the time, but each with their own unmistakable distinctiveness. The house was made of rough wood, but with a view over both the shore as well as the hinterland. Its interior was constructed from a cardboard-like veneer of the type since prohibited by fire regulations. It had no basement and a flat, tar paper roof.

In my dreams, I returned to search for an unspecified something. Naturally, I knew the contents of the few drawers in the house, and its spare construction did not allow for any hidden spaces. Yet I continued to search. Observing my searching as logical scenarios, it seems that:

Sometimes I searched for something that, although I didn't know what it was, had to be immensely valuable. Something I felt had to be there. At other times, I searched for something I had no reason to believe was there, but which I was nonetheless compelled to look for.

Against all odds, I found a book in the bottom of a cupboard one night. Neither old nor new, it was timeless. In it, I read a memoir of a person describing how to return to the land of Mellon. The person who dares to believe this story must conclude that he is the only person ever to have made the journey.

THE TRAVELER'S TALE

No person reaches Mellon without going through their memories. Somewhere within their memory lies an experience that will prove to be the entry into Mellon. This does not mean that the journey has been made before, either dreaming or awake.

Nothing could be more wrong than searching for an entry in the traditional sense. There are neither doors, gates, hidden passages, nor cracks. It is both simpler and more obvious. Since your memory is wholly your own, there is only one entry that fits this exact memory. Only one sign, one entry. So you have to learn how to search first – you can only try.

I tried for many years. One morning, I walked down a steep hill to a narrow pier where an old ferry took any passenger who signaled for departure.

I sat down and tried to repeat this stroll from hilltop to firch. Behind closed eyelids I stopped at the small berth and raised the signal. As I slowly became submerged in the

atmosphere of this memory, I entered the experience so completely, that I was no longer present anywhere else.

As I waited for the ferry, I noticed a lively bustle behind me. Many others came from behind me as if they had seen the ferry approach from afar. Together we boarded and weighed the ferry down to the waterline, yet to our surprise, the vessel steered with agility into the ocean. The shoreline soon disappeared behind us, a gale created a high swell and before us, an insurmountable darkness loomed. As we penetrated the darkness, winter arrived. Before long, the ferry was struggling with ice floats, and before long, it got stuck.

Even though the ferry was stuck, we still moved forward. The ice itself must have been set into motion. The darkness gave way to an unending terrain, otherworldly clear to our sight. We continued like this for what seemed like years. No day or night could be discerned, just a radiant sky above us and a frozen continent carrying us forward.

One day, a strange bird flew above us. As more birds joined it, the ice began to melt.

New land appeared on the horizon. As we approached, we could see the contours of land, and sensed its saturated wealth of color and smell. Summer had arrived again.

At last, the old ferry arrived at a berth built of materials we had never seen before. The city beyond it was equally foreign to us. The hinterlands of the city had stronger colors than even regions where lemons bloom, and its many bowers opened up blissful, quenching closeness. We were struck by the beauty of the inhabitants, their race and color seemingly a mix of every ethnicity known – or perhaps a completely new ethnicity. Their overwhelming kindness and infectious joy made us almost uneasy.

We realized quickly that the climate was unequalled, perfectly temperate. Nights were cool, with clear starry skies and warm afternoons under a tender sun, the glow of which was as if shone through muslin.

As the days passed, we saw that no clouds ever dotted the sky and the flora bloomed abundantly even though no rain fell. Or rather, that an area to the north was perpetually misty, and the inhabitants went there whenever they wanted to experience rain.

We discovered that the rooms in the houses changed temperature to constantly match our needs. If we started getting cold, they heated up. When we started perspiring they cooled us down. We realized that the rooms could read our minds, but we never found any heating sources.

It was called Logotopia. Unfortunately, I can only describe this strange land in fragments, since these pages are finite in number, and my memory is failing me. Instead, I shall convey what made the most lasting impressions on me.

The inhabitants always addressed themselves as “we” as in “we remember”, “we would like to eat” – but never “our name is X”. The proper name was only allowed as a greeting and recognition of Otherness. It was never used as the right to exclude. People never introduced themselves by name, and everyone seemed to know each other. Living creatures weren’t put into taxonomies, no distinction was drawn between human and animal, and even the smallest of creatures was awarded the respect of addressing it by its own name. Fish, fowl and animals seemed not to have been a part of their diet for ages, but the selection of edible leaves was abundant.

The motives of others were never mentioned, and people refused to attribute negative psychological traits (like selfish, stingy, ambitious, or lustful) to themselves or others, as we so often do when apportioning blame. Only descriptions of a moral and ethical nature were given.

In general, not much was spoken. Gestures and facial expressions had evolved to an extraordinarily sophisticated level. Language was located in the face, in the eyes and in the hands. The body was language, much more so than the voice. It made for an oddly silent public life. This was heightened by an apparently total lack of transportation. How do I express this? Every person was their immediate presence. Nobody was alone, but neither really with anyone. We inferred that people must have a gift for visualization that we couldn’t comprehend. A child could sit alone on a chair at its parent’s home and yet at the same time be in a school class surrounded by other children. Parents went to work in the same way. All organizations were virtual – but mediated by nothing other than the individual consciousness.

We discovered that people’s voices resonated inside their own and others’ heads, but not in the space between them. This must have been due to a cognitive technology so radical we could never understand it. Maybe this was what made the silence necessary. They appeared to give each other an immense amount of attention – the degree of which I have never seen before. We sensed their intense presence of mind towards each other, and when they directed it at us we felt us strangely uplifted, deeply, almost terrifyingly joyfully, touched.

We discovered that Logotopia had no police, military, courts or prisons. This can just be comprehended, but neither were there doctors, hospitals nor even graveyards. We had to accept that there was no old age, no deteriorating of the body, no sickness and no death. Equally startling was that everything was free. Cause and effect is hard to ascertain, but apparently no one had any interest in material possessions, and no desire to distinguish themselves from each other. They did not appear to be particularly concerned with themselves.

Perhaps due to the absence of death, greed, and material technology other than small scale production of food, there were no scientific institutions. People seemed to be in a purely mental relationship with nature, one I never quite grasped. Did they talk with the crops?

We who had travelled together on that ferry met less and less. After some time, our encounters stopped. To ensure myself some sort of connection to the old world, I sometimes visited the ferry at the berth. It lay there, waiting. Soothing me. One afternoon it was missing, and never came back.

I began to venture out into the countryside, and it dawned on me that Logotopia was an island. An island where people lived in love, having discovered the secrets of the soul and set it free amongst themselves. But I, who was not truly a part of this community, who did not know the secret, felt foreign and alien. I could not feel worried or fearful with them, as all they did was care and nurture. But having them reading my thoughts, looking right through me, feeling my feelings as I felt them and opening the doors to my sense of self – I have to admit, it made me desperate. So I went out of the city, into the countryside where it was completely unpopulated.

One day, I went further out than usual and came to vegetation more familiar to me than anything I had seen in a long time. A seemingly never-ending forest of pine and crippled oaks – perhaps the kind of oaks where only the tops are visible, because the roots once became covered with sand. I wandered through this forest, drawing my path through the pines, the lowest branches of which were often high enough to allow me to pass underneath without crouching.

After many hours of meandering, I exited the tangled woods, appearing at its fringes in a terrain of fledgling saplings, heather and wild grasses. Maneuvering amongst brambles and buckthorn, I was startled to find a gravel path as I remembered them from my childhood. It led to a sandy area dotted with dunes. As I walked the path through the heather, the dunes rose around me and the place became more and more familiar to me. At first I thought my sight was deceiving me. Old, red wooden cabins, thatched with straw, banners flowing in the wind, the hotel and a lone automobile. When the road drew its oh so familiar bend through the little hamlet and its only two stores, a bakery and a grocery store, I saw the summer cabin precisely where it had always been.

I took the steps up the worn staircase, opened the door and started searching ...