

# Odysseus as Traveler: A Categorical Study<sup>1</sup>

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Some lists or categories refer to existence, some to experience, and some to both. Which kind of a list a philosophy will give depends upon its ultimate presuppositions. One will not list categories of existence unless one supposes that existence is available to be inventoried. Aristotle thought so; he listed categories of existence. Kant, on the other hand, restricted himself to categories of experience, since he supposed that only experience was available. For a thinker like Peirce, for whom existence and experience are equally available, the categories are both categories of existence and categories of experience. So, speaking very generally, realism, idealism, and pragmatism each has its peculiar way of handling categories.

I have suggested that a realist's list of categories of existence is an inventory. One fundamental difference between such a list and an idealist's list of categories of experience is that the latter is not an inventory at all. The very project of making an inventory is alien to the ultimate presuppositions of such a philosophy. For experience, unlike existence, does not, according to the idealist, lend itself to inventories. To be sure, there are various sorts of experience — scientific, moral, sexual, aesthetic — but these sorts are not categories in the way in which the sorts of existence — quality, quantity, relation, disposition — are categories. What is categorical in experience, if not its sorts, is the ground of its possibility. Categories are thus homonymous — the word "category" applies to two distinct concepts. And it is easy to see why it has come about that one name should be used for two concepts. If you believe, as Aristotle did, that existence is directly available to the mind, then the first project you must undertake is that of inventorying what is available. If, on the other hand, you believe that existence is not directly available, then your first project is to explain how anything at all over and above Humean ideas and impressions can be directly available. What is it that could forestall the plunge into absolute skepticism? We attempt to stipulate the conditions under which experience is possible. The common idea underlying the two concepts both called "categories" is thus that of the first project we must undertake. Clearly it was the first for both Aristotle and Kant.

A thinker committed to categories of experience in general may also undertake to list categories of various kinds of experience. Just as the categories of experience are conditions under which experience as a whole is possible, so the categories of a particular kind of experience are conditions under which that particular kind of experience is possible. Kant, in stipulating the conditions under which moral experience and aesthetic experience are possible, was in effect listing the categories of moral experience and of aesthetic experience. But the observation I have just made collides with an overwhelming terminological tradition according to which it would be improper to speak of Kant's categories of moral or aesthetic experience. But travel is an experience that Kant did not write about, at least philosophically; thus we can speak of categories of travel without terminological interference of this sort.

The categories of travel will be conditions of possibility of the experience of travel. But they are not simply conditions; they are grounds. For travel is subject to conditions irrelevant to a categorical analysis. The experience of travel, for example, presupposes consciousness. One does not travel in one's sleep, except insofar as dreams are a mode of consciousness. But consciousness is not a category of travel, or indeed of anything else. If we thought that consciousness were a category of experience, we would be supposing that consciousness was a ground of the possibility of experience. It is, of course, a necessary condition. But a ground is a peculiar sort of necessary condition. It is a condition constitutive of that of which it is a condition. Thus I would say that Kantian Substance or Causality, for example, is a ground and hence a category of experience because it not only makes experience possible; it enters into its constitution. But consciousness as such, as a wholly diaphanous condition of experience, wholly lacking a nature of its own, could not be constitutive of experience.

A wholly nonspecific condition of travel could not enter into the constitution of travel, but a minimally specific condition could. I am thinking, for example, of motion, which is of

course necessary to travel. Motion is constitutive of travel in the following way. It is not only motion under certain conditions that constitutes travel proper, but any spatial translation of a human being would qualify as travel if we permit travel to be improper or degenerate. Thus I would say that the experiences of the Man Without a Country, who was simply carried about on a ship, exercising no control over his destination, are travel experiences only in a degenerate way. Travel is neither wholly constrained nor wholly aimless motion.

I shall want to use the term "Categories of Travel" to refer only to conditions that must be present for travel proper to occur, even though in their absence a degenerate form of travel can occur. Thus, movement is not a category of travel, even though it is a necessary condition for it and enters into its constitution. For when it is present, travel proper need not occur, but when it is absent no form of travel, even a degenerate one can occur. In general, I would say that if X is a type of experience, then a category of X is (1) a necessary condition for X; (2) constitutive of X; and (3) such that a degenerate form of X can occur even in the absence of the category.

My aims are modest. I have no table of categories to offer. Nor shall I attempt to deduce my categories. My method is empirical; it is based upon my own experience. On this basis, I will present a list of categories of travel that seem to satisfy the stipulations above. I do not know how to show that this list is complete. Perhaps it is not, and my audience will wish to add to it. I do not know that the list of categories I want now to present is not quite the same as the one that appeared in an earlier work of mine on this topic.<sup>2</sup>

That earlier work was based on my own travels. This one arises from a reading of Homer's *Odyssey*. Now I do not want to suggest that I think different travels would be governed by different sets of categories. The categories of travel, if there are any at all, must be universal; they must apply to all travels. The fact that I have elicited from Homer categories somewhat different from those that came to my attention when I reread my own travel journals simply means that my work is unfinished. A synthesis is needed — a synthesis not just of two travels, but of all travels. To accomplish such a synthesis would perhaps be to produce the transcendental deduction that I cannot offer yet.

In order to develop the list of categories of travel that seem most obvious to one reading the *Odyssey*, I want to make the point that during his long trip from Troy to Ithaca Odysseus is not always a traveler. Indeed, this point is settled within the first two lines of the poem where Odysseus is characterized as a man who has wandered much; the Greek word here, which is cousin to the root of "planet," the name given to the wandering stars, can only be translated as "wandered." Wandering is not traveling; it is only a degenerate form of traveling. It is the movement of one who has surrendered control of his movement, either voluntarily, as in the case of the aimless nomad, or involuntarily, as that of one being driven or carted around. Odysseus is not aimless, but during much of his trip he is not in control. The four central books in which his trip is mainly described are traditionally known as "The Great Wanderings."

It is easy to illustrate the wanderings of Odysseus. A man clinging to a ship's timber and carried by the waves for nine days before being cast up on an island is scarcely traveling. But there is another way, too, in which the role of a traveler sometimes does not fit Odysseus, even though he is not wandering either. Sometimes he is too much in control. Consider his first two ports of call once he has left Troy. The first is Ismarus, on the Thracian mainland. Odysseus arrives here at the mercy of the wind; but once he has landed he sacks the city, killing the men and taking the women as slaves and much property as booty. He is as much a traveler as the tourist sacking the holy citadel of Paris, brutish in intentions and behavior, carrying off as booty salt and pepper shakers shaped like the Eiffel Tower.<sup>3</sup>

Odysseus next puts in at the Land of the Lotus-Eaters. Landing, he sends three men to reconnoiter. These men succumb to the amnesiac temptations of the lotus-flower. When they fail to return, Odysseus himself goes to fetch them. Dragging them back to the ships against their will he ties them under the rowing benches and makes a hasty departure from the country. It is remarkable that, although in the whole of the *Odyssey*, with more than 12,000 lines, there are only twenty-two lines about the Lotus-Eaters, the story is perfectly familiar to most people who know anything at all about the epic. Posterity has not had to be warned

twice about the dangers of visiting a foreign country. Amnesia is not the only fate the tourist may be frantic to avoid. He knows all too well about dysentery as well, and the Wimpy's or MacDonald's in Mexico City may simply be his self-ordained place under the rower's bench. In fact he may recoil from any contact at all with the country or its people, and beat a hasty retreat as possible.

I do not mean to suggest that Odysseus was being unnecessarily skittish. In his case, the danger was real, as of course is also the danger of dysentery among the lettuce-eaters in many countries. My point is only that Odysseus and the tourist share a syndrome that renders travel impossible, although even those exhibiting the syndrome can perform a degenerate kind of travel.

We see that travel proper is impossible when the moving person exercises either too much control or too little over his movement. He must, then exercise some control, but also be submissive to some extent to the exigencies of his situation. I have just enumerated two of the categories of travel. For convenience I will call them **Control** and **Suffering**.

The third episode of the *Odyssey* illustrates the interplay of Control and Suffering, and makes manifest other categories as well. Odysseus and his men are on an idyllic uninhabited island from which they can see, across the water, the land of the Cyclopes. But they are under no compulsion to go there. Odysseus chooses to go. He wants to go and find out about these men, who they are, whether they are friends or strangers, and their mind is god-fearing. So Odysseus is acting out of curiosity.<sup>4</sup> **Curiosity** is a third category of travel. Curiosity has received a bad name at the hands of Heidegger, but what Heidegger had in mind was clearly idle curiosity. The best illustration of idle curiosity and its dangers given us in the *Odyssey* is the temptation to listen to the Sirens. The Sirens are publishers of the Mycenaean Edition of the *International Herald Tribune*; they know "everything that the Argives and Trojans suffered in Troy"; indeed they know "everything that happens all over the fruitful earth" (12.189-91). Surely they would also supply the latest stock-market quotations if asked. I admit that the modern reader of the Paris edition does not suffer the instant calamity inflicted by the sirens, but he is certainly, for the moment, deflected from his travels.

There is also such a thing as healthy curiosity. One can put the distinction in Heideggerian terms, thus avoiding the charge that in making it one has merely begged the question. Idle curiosity is the voyeurism of the They — the wish to see without being implicated. But healthy curiosity is an aspect of a person's quest for authenticity. It is a seeing that implicates him. It leads him to an enhanced appreciation of possibility. To understand what is possible for others is to deepen one's understanding of what is possible for oneself.

The curiosity of the traveler opens him to the possibilities both of an alien culture and of an alien nature. He learns what man is capable of, and thus what *he* is capable of. He also learns the range of forms in which the earth can appear to us. There are intimations in the *Odyssey* of natural wonders almost beyond imagination. In the land of the Laestrygonians, for example, "the courses of night and day are close together" (10.86), and in the harbor there is a "white calm" (10.94). Scholars wonder whether Homer was not here describing the Scandinavian fjords, with their remarkably long summer days and their winter ice.<sup>5</sup> A Mediterranean sailor might not have suspected the possibility of either of these conditions.

In the land of the Cyclopes, however, it is primarily a cultural question that absorbs Odysseus' attention. He is interested in the attitudes of the Cyclopes not only toward custom and religion but also in particular toward strangers. Urged by his men to filch a few cheeses and depart quickly from the cave of Polyphemus, Odysseus refuses to go; he wants to see the Cyclops and find out whether the Cyclops would give him the gifts traditionally bestowed upon a stranger.<sup>6</sup> This desire has often been ascribed to acquisitiveness on Odysseus' part. And there is no doubt that Odysseus does want to take salt and pepper shakers back to Ithaca. But in this particular case I wonder whether we might not also attribute the desire to Odysseus' curiosity. He wants to test the Cyclops — to see what might happen. The use of the optative mood in the verb translated "he would give" reinforces the impression that we are witnessing an experiment. This mood of the verb expresses not facts but possibilities.

I do not mean, however, to equate curiosity with experimental psychology. Odysseus is not proposing to manipulate Polyphemus and simply observe his reactions. He is prepared

not merely to observe but to enter into active participation in a relationship, in the role, for example, of the receiver of a gift. In undertaken such a role, one must be willing to take what comes. It is only through the active reception of whatever the moment may bring that the traveler, in his curiosity, opens himself to new possibilities.

Of course, what Odysseus let himself in for on this particular occasion was, as he tells us, a sight that "was not to be lovely" (9.230). When Polyphemus returns to the cave he begins devouring the men. His guest-gift to Odysseus consists of the promise to eat him last. But clearly it is here the intentions of Odysseus that qualify him as a traveler. Such intentions are never guaranteed to succeed. Travel itself is not guaranteed to succeed.

Odysseus does, of course, extricate himself and his un-eaten men from this situation precisely by manipulating Polyphemus, by playing a bad philosophical joke on him. In his colossal stupidity, Polyphemus cannot distinguish "nobody" as a name from "nobody" as a pronoun, and thus has nobody to blame after Odysseus has blinded him in his sleep and the other Cyclopes are demanding to know who has injured him. This manipulation illustrates the category of Control. But it is by no means absolute control; for Odysseus has a very narrow and harrowing escape.

The Polyphemus episode illustrates several other categories of travel too. One of these is **Accumulation**. To explain this category in a somewhat paradoxical way, let me say that one cannot be traveling until one has traveled. Travel must be funded with memories of travel. You are not traveling when you are just starting out. Your trip must have a certain duration, a duration encompassed by memory.

The category of Accumulation is illustrated by Odysseus' account of the black wine in 9.196-211. This is a heady liquor that seems, as Homer describes it, actually to be a product of distillation — perhaps some sort of blackberry brandy. Odysseus, preparing to visit the cave of Polyphemus, has the hunch that the wine will come in handy, and so takes a goatskin bottle of it with him. But he interrupts his narrative to tell us where the wine came from. During his sacking of Ismarus, he had offered protection to a priest of Apollo, who had in gratitude given him the wine. Here Odysseus is weaving a travel memory into the fabric of his travel. Nor is this by any means an isolated reflection. Throughout the *Odyssey*, Odysseus and his companions (as long as he has any) are constantly thinking of their past adventures. The verb *μυμνήσκω* that is used in the poem for "to remember" semantically approaches "to be mindful of"; the travel memories of a traveler enter into all his thoughts and perceptions.

Accumulation helps to explain a further category of travel, namely, **Home**. For the traveler must be at home in his travels; and one is at home only where a memorial deposit has accumulated. Of course Odysseus' ultimate home is Ithaca, which he lovingly recalls in addressing King Alcinous at the beginning of his account of his Great Wanderings. But he is also at home away from home; his nostalgia is seldom so great that it prevents him from taking a stance in the place where he is. I do not mean to suggest that Odysseus' home is his swift black ship. It would be more accurate to identify it with the world. The world supports him as a person's home supports him. On one occasion at least, the world does not support Odysseus; I shall discuss this occasion when I come to the category of **Saturation**. Nor do I wish to suggest that Home and Accumulation are identical. One could have Accumulation without achieving Home, as when one's memories are not supportive. When Odysseus' men reach Circe's island, they weep because they remember the Cyclopes and the Laistrogones, the cannibalism of both of which has taken its toll of them (10.198-203). Such memories are certainly not supportive. A prison is perhaps the starkest example of a locus of Accumulation which is not home.

The nostalgia of the homeless person is an example of the *telos* that can interfere with and even destroy travel. Odysseus' trip is occasionally saturated by *telos*; leaving the island of Aeolus, Odysseus himself holds the sheet for nine days in order to assure a speedy return to Ithaca. He has now entirely put aside the role of a traveler. It is not, of course, only the urge to get home that can serve as a destructive *telos*. Business in a foreign land can easily transform travel into an errand. The man on an errand is as blind to the possibilities of travel as is the one who has given himself over to nostalgia.

The world is seldom wholly supportive. Perhaps the closest Odysseus comes to finding such support is the gift he receives from King Aeolus. Aeolus has confined all the winds except that from the West in a bag carried aboard the ship, and Odysseus is being driven by the West Wind straight to Ithaca. Here is a combination of *telos* with nearly complete control. But the control is not absolutely complete; Suffering comes into play as, when in sight of the shores of his beloved fatherland, Odysseus falls asleep. His companions thereupon open the bago of winds, and Odysseus' situation is completely reversed. He is now totally out of control, being driven back to the Aeolian Island. His sudden helplessness completely demoralizes him. He is no longer at home. Odysseus considers whether to throw himself over the side of the ship or to "endure it in silence and still be among the living" (10.52). He covers his face and hides in the hold of the ship. He is undergoing what I call "Saturation." His situation is too much for him.

Saturation can arise from a catastrophe so violent that it rips away the traveler's sense of being at home in his travels. But it can also arise in nonviolent ways. Accumulation, I pointed out, requires that a trip be of a certain minimum duration. Saturation, on the other hand, arises from the exceeding of a certain maximum duration. For there may well come a time when any trip ceases to be a travel, simply because it has been too long. One's eyes are glazed by sight-seeing; one's bones are weary from constant motion. The feeling of being at home has vanished. Of course one can recover, as Odysseus does when his ships have made their inglorious return to the kingdom of Aeolus. But recovery is not guaranteed.

I regard Saturation as a category of travel because it is a constant possibility for the traveler; his trip is precarious, and could at any moment be threatened or shattered by accident or surfeit. Perhaps it was because Odysseus saw the essential precariousness of his role as a traveler that he refused Calypso's offer of immortality (5.209). Saturation is always something of a little death.

I want to compare Saturation and Suffering in order to show that both categories are needed. Suffering is relative to lack of control. The sufferer is still traveling, still attempting to increase his control. The challenge is exhilarating. Suffering is necessary because absolute control would transform a travel into an errand. Saturation, on the other hand, is absolute lack of control. The saturated one has lost his travel and his home; he is mere flotsam on the world. Saturation is necessary as a constant possibility of the breakdown of travel.

Odysseus' suffering is illustrated by his nine days of clinging to the ship's plank; his saturation by his prostration in the hold of his ship. Surely he is in less physical danger in the latter episode than in the former. The difference is one of location in the world.

Saturation and Accumulation bear an inverse relation to one another. Accumulation is the acquisition of a home, and Saturation is the loss of it. Furthermore, when Saturation comes about not as the result of a catastrophe, it is likely to result from an overextension of the cumulative process. Too much memory — too much dust on the feet or pain from difficult rowing — gluts the perceptual field and causes the eye to glaze over. But of course no one can say in advance how much "too much" will be; the answer to that question depends upon the physical constitution of the traveler. It may seem strange that in a list of categories, the others of which seem to be called for by logical or dialectical considerations, we have one called for by physiology. But to say this is to misrepresent the position of Saturation in categorical space. It is called for in the analysis as a limit below which alone travel is possible. In this respect, Saturation resembles another category much emphasized in recent times, namely, death. As a horizon, death defines an authentic life. For a life can be authentic only when its precariousness is borne in mind. Just as movement without consciousness or precariousness would not be travel, so a life lived without consciousness of the possibility of death would at best be a life at the level of idle curiosity. At the same time, death, like Saturation, is physiological. The main difference between the two is that Saturation is sometimes reversible.

I want to turn to some other categories of travel: **Reflection, Solitude**, and the **Personal**. Reflection is a generic term of the account one must be able to give of one's trip if it is to count as travel. In our day, such an account may take the form of a travel journal or of letters home, of a sketchbook or a set of photographs or slides. None of these products are

within the power of Odysseus to produce, he being an illiterate without means of making or taking pictures. His reflection takes the form of his own oral account, especially that in Books 9 through 12. It is important to understand that every leg of Odysseus' travels from Troy to Phaiacia — i.e., all of the Great Wanderings — is described by Odysseus himself, if not in Books 9 through 12 then elsewhere in the *Odyssey*. And within his narrative there are episodes in which he is telling parts of his tale. It is obvious that Odysseus himself attaches great importance to reflection in this form. At the banquet of Alcinous, for example, he refuses to repeat the story of Calypso since he feels he has told it perfectly the first time when alone with Alcinous and his wife (12.453-54). It is as if he thinks the event itself could be devalued by a careless narration of it.

Why indeed *is* reflection essential to the traveler? It sustains his self-consciousness, distinguishing him from the dazed wanderer who could give no account of where he had been. Reflection is necessary if the traveler is to be at home, for he cannot be at home if he does not know where he is. One of the greatest shocks Odysseus and his men face is the realization shortly after they have landed on Circe's island that they do not know East from West (10.190-92). I do not mean that reflection alone could serve as an instrument of navigation; the reflective traveler can still be lost. Indeed he knows he is lost only if he is reflective. But reflection is just that concern with one's itinerary in which one cares where one is and what is happening.

Someone may wish at this point to remind me that it may be difficult to distinguish reflections from pseudo-reflections. The latter are illustrated by Odysseus' lying tales. As Homer says, "He knew not to say many false things that were similar to true things" (19.203). For example he tells a yarn about an adventure in Egypt that ended in his being sold into slavery (14.199-359). Now it is true that with such stories Odysseus does bamboozle his hearers. But the point of reflection is not to gain anyone's credence. It is rather to bring into focus for the traveler himself his own travel experiences. If there were in fact no such experiences, then nothing would be brought into focus; the reflection would be vacuous.

Of course travel stories themselves, including the *Odyssey*, can be regarded as nonveridical reflections, perhaps in the third person rather than the first. What happens, I think, is that reflection itself, in its very role as a category of travel, becomes the object of attention. The travel story serves to remind us of the essential role of travel in human life.

Reflection bears an obvious relationship to Accumulation, but it is not the same. For Reflection and Accumulation are, for one thing, differently related to Home. Home is constituted of memories that accumulate. But we can be at home in these memories without knowing that we have a home. That knowledge stems from an act ofthetic consciousness, not just a flow of memories. Travel, as opposed to wandering, is a deliberate undertaking, and we deliberate only insofar as we could later give a reflective account of our decisions.

**Solitude** is what distinguishes travel from migration. While Odysseus is a traveler, it is clear that, except in rare moments, his men are no more than migrants returning from Troy. It is Odysseus who is making the journey, except when the recalcitrant Eurylochus defies his orders (10.429-38). The companions of Odysseus simply lack the control necessary if their trip is to qualify for travel. That they themselves acknowledge that it is Odysseus alone who is doing the traveling is suggested by their speech prodding him at the end of a year's sojourn with Circe:

Now you must be mindful of your native country, if indeed it is fated that you are to be saved and are to return to your well-built home and into your native land. (10.472-74)

It is clear that the companions suppose that their own itinerary depends upon that of Odysseus.

Of course, two or more people can travel together, deliberately sharing an itinerary which in different ways satisfies the travel purposes of each. And certainly a group of men on the same ship from Troy to Ithaca might all be traveling. My point is only that each must make the trip for himself, reflecting on it in his own way, acting on the basis of his own

curiosity, subject to his own physiology of saturation. In *Moby Dick* this sort of thing does happen, but on the swift black ship of Odysseus there seems to be only one traveler.

The point I am trying to make when I treat Solitude as a category of travel is almost a tautology. For travel is by its own nature no more shareable than is the ego. Indeed, travel and the ego have much in common. Both vanish in the absence of Reflection; both flourish in circumstances in which neither absolute Control nor absolute Suffering is guaranteed. The *Odyssey* has sometimes been treated as the story of a man in quest of himself.

I turn to the final category I want to propose, namely, that of the **Personal**. A traveler needs a guide. If he finds himself in truly strange circumstances, he will not even be able to grasp how strange they are if he is limited to his own interpretive resources. He can at most guess what the strange structures are that he sees, or what the weird rituals are intended to bring about. He needs to have these things explained to him. I think, for example, that if I had visited Pashupatinath Temple in Kathmandu without a guide, I would have missed most of what there was about this shrine that made it truly alien and unique.

Guides provide advice as well as information. They tell us, for example, how to respect the customs of the alien places of worship we enter. Homeric guides, who are usually gods, ordinarily give more advice than information, because it is advice in the face of strange dangers that is primarily needed. Thus in Book 10 of the *Odyssey*, Odysseus receives advice from two guides. The first is from Hermes, who greets him by saying (10.281-82), "Where are you going, you unhappy wretch, alone through the hilltops, ignorant of the lay of the land?" Hermes proceeds to inform him of the fate of his men at the hands of Circe and advise him on how to deal with her. The second is from the goddess Circe herself, with whom Odysseus has by now come to terms. She breaks the news to him that he must sail to Hades, and in response to his request for a guide, describes in great detail the geography of the place and the character of the inhabitants. She also gives him essential advice on what sacrifices he must make and how to deal with the shades of the dead (10.488-540). It is true that we think of a guide as accompanying the person he is guiding, as Virgil accompanied Dante through Hell. But there is no reason why the guidance cannot be supplied in advance, provided the one to whom it is supplied can keep it in mind as he proceeds. Indeed, this is precisely the kind of advice we are obtaining when we "read up" on a place in advance of visiting it. The only trouble is that Baedeker, being a book rather than a person, is unacquainted with the peculiar ignorance and blindness on our part that need to be dealt with.

I do not mean to suggest, however, that in the Hades episode all the guidance is given beforehand. The "musty house of Hades" is surely the prototype of the world's great musty museums, like the Natural History Museum in Vienna. It is the Museum of the Dead. As Odysseus passes from exhibit to exhibit, it is the very souls on exhibit who guide him, lecturing him on their origins and destinies as the visitor to a contemporary art museum is lectured on the paintings he sees, through the agency of the audio equipment he has rented and carries with him. In addition, Odysseus has a personal guide during part of his visit to Hades — namely, Teiresias, the blind Theban priest, who explains the behavior of all the other shades (11.146-49).

But there are travel episodes in the *Odyssey* in which the category of the Personal is at best implicit. No god materializes to guide Odysseus to the cave of Polyphemus. Perhaps we can say that it is Polyphemus himself who, once he appears, is the guide; he personally introduces Odysseus to his own life-style as a dairyman and cannibal. To be mishandled by our guide is not necessarily to be deprived of our travel experience. The con man who fleeces us of our cash in a strange city may still be a bridge to the alien. In any event, it is clear that Odysseus had, at some point, received information about the Cyclopes that he did not learn himself. For he tells us, for example, that each Cyclops "makes the law for his own wives and children, and cares nothing about others" (9.114-15). Yet the only Cyclops he actually visits is a bachelor.

Control, Suffering, Curiosity, Accumulation, Home, Saturation, Reflection, Solitude, the Personal — these are the categories of travel I find most clearly illustrated by the *Odyssey*. By way of summary, let me review the ways in which these concepts pass the tests of

categoriality — in particular how in the absence of each one an at most degenerate form of travel is possible.

Let us consider the degenerate travels of the moving person in whose experience the various categories are not operative. The one without Control is a wanderer. If his lack of control is not his fault, then he is simply a prisoner of circumstances, natural or human. But perhaps he simply does not choose to exercise control. Then he is bumming around rather than traveling.

When Suffering is absent, the one making the trip is doing an errand. The only difference between this errand and a trip down the hall to see his boss is that, in order to get to New Delhi or wherever, he has to make arrangements with a travel agent. He might as well never have left home.

The tourist without Curiosity might also never have left home. He is rendered uncomfortable by whatever he sees about him that is strange. His trip is, or is tantamount to, a continuous cruise; by day he is protected by the fellow passengers who surround him; at night, even ashore, he returns to his own bunk in his “floating hotel.”

The one without Accumulation has never really been anywhere at all — he not only *might as well have* stayed home, but *did* stay home. I once met a lady who had been around the world on the *Queen Elizabeth*, but could not remember at what ports they had put in. I am sure she did at least enjoy the food on the ship. To be on the move but all the while to have stayed home is degenerate travel in that it is the *null* travel.

The homeless wanderer might also be found aboard the *Queen Elizabeth*, and he too might be unable to enumerate the ports. But unlike the one who had never left home, he finds no support anywhere. Like Odysseus in his moment of Saturation, he can only cover his head and weep. He is lost. But being lost is surely a degenerate form of travel.

Yet when Saturation is not a possibility for a person on a trip, that trip too is a degenerate travel. It is the travel of the Flying Dutchman, condemned to perform a movement which, because external, loses the immediacy of the genuine experience of travel.

The unreflective passenger shares much with the one lacking Curiosity or Accumulation. Indeed, Reflection seems closely associated with these other two categories. It is difficult to reflect upon what one does not remember, and there is little temptation to reflect upon what one is not curious about. Yet it does not seem possible to participate in both Curiosity and Accumulation without being especially reflective. Many are the sailors full of bizarre experiences which they are unable to articulate. I do not think that one would want to say that these men are fully travelers. A traveler should be able to give us some account of his trip.

When someone makes journeys that are not his own, he is a member of a tour or perhaps of a trek, but he is not a traveler. I have already said, however, that physical membership in a group need not destroy one’s Solitude. One can enjoy one’s own Curiosity, Reflection, and Accumulation, exercise one’s own Control, suffer, be at home, face Saturation, in the company of others. But there are clearly dangers in joining a group. Perhaps the greatest is that the standardized narration of the tour guide may replace one’s own Reflection.

But the voyager with no guide at all will probably end up not knowing where he has been. And what he has seen will all seem pretty much the same to him. The differentiation and articulation of travel experience requires the intervention of the Personal. As I have already pointed out, this intervention can occur prior to the experience, in the form of a briefing. When we focus our attention on travels purely through nature, taking in no cultural monuments, we see that it is primarily in the form of such prior briefings that the Personal plays its part. A solitary walker through the woods does not need to be personally introduced to whatever he sees. But if no one had ever taught him to look for the difference between birches and beeches, he might not notice the difference; the trees might seem just to be trees and the rocks rocks. People on errands through the woods, such as hunters, are often surprisingly ignorant of the region they are attempting to penetrate. They would benefit from an appearance by Hermes to accuse them of wandering through the hilltops not knowing the lay of the land.



The list of categories of travel that I have produced is of course to some extent dependent on the particular travel experience from which I gleaned it. Different kinds of travel experience are also possible. One can travel, for example, through relatively unvarying surroundings; e.g., Antarctica, or the Sahara Desert, or outer space. Under such circumstances there may be less for Curiosity to get a purchase on. And the role of Reflection, in the form of a log or of frequent radio reports to Ground Control, will be greatly expanded. Control will have to be more unvarying if the traveler is to avoid getting lost or crashing in flames into the Earth's atmosphere; Suffering will take the form of a constant battle with cold or heat or weightlessness. It seems quite likely, too, that categories I have not yet thought of would emerge from such experiences.

Again, when travel takes one to regions of objective information — to cathedrals that can be measured, described, and accounted for historically, or, for that matter, to museums such as Hades — there appears a new threat to travel experience, namely, expertise. Expertise is overkill in answering the questions produced by Curiosity. The fact that curiosity can be suffocated by facts points to the need for a categorical term to designate unsuffocated curiosity. Elsewhere I have called this the category of **Naïveté**, but it does not seem to be much needed in a study of the *Odyssey*.

And yet, as I insisted earlier, it is not that different travels are governed by different sets of categories. All the categories, whatever they are, are operative in every travel, but some not quite so visibly as the others.

<sup>1</sup> This essay was originally published in *Categories: A Colloquium*, ed. Henry W. Johnstone, Jr. (University Park PA: Department of Philosophy, The Pennsylvania State University, 1978), pp. 103-120. The volume is a record of papers presented during 1977-78 as a part of a Colloquium on Categories.

<sup>2</sup> "The Categories of Travel" in *Essays in Humanity and Technology*, edited by David Lovekin and Donald Phillip Verene (Dixon, Illinois: Sauk Valley College, 1978), pp. 141-166.

<sup>3</sup> I have borrowed this image from David Lovekin. See "Degenerate Travel" in *Essays in Humanity and Technology*, p. 186.

<sup>4</sup> *Odyssey*, 9.174-76, my translation. Henceforth *Odyssey* references will be given in parentheses.

<sup>5</sup> See W. B. Stanford, *The Odyssey of Homer*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (London: Macmillan, 1959), p. 368.

<sup>6</sup> ... καὶ εἴ μοι ξείνια δοίη (9.229).