



The Only True Voyage, by James P. Carse

A garden is a place where growth is found. It has its own source of change. One does not bring change to a garden, but comes to a garden prepared for change, and therefore prepared to change. It is possible to deal with growth only out of growth. True parents do not see to it that their children grow in a particular way, according to a preferred pattern or scripted stages, but they see to it that they grow with their children. The character of one's parenting, if it is genuinely dramatic, must be constantly altered from within as the children change from within. So, too, with teaching, or working with, or loving each other.

It is in the garden that we discover what travel truly is. We do not journey to a garden but by way of it.

Genuine travel has no destination. Travelers do not go somewhere, but constantly discover that they are somewhere else. Since gardening is a way not of subduing the indifference of nature but of raising one's own spontaneity to respond to the disregarding vagaries and unpredictabilities of nature. We do not look on nature as a sequence of changing scenes but look on ourselves as persons in passage.

Nature does not change; it has no inside or outside. It is therefore not possible to travel through it. All travel is therefore change within the traveler, and it is for that reason that travelers are always somewhere else. To travel is to grow.

Genuine travelers travel not to overcome distance but to discover distance. It is not distance that makes travel necessary, but travel that makes distance possible. Distance is not determined by the measurable length between objects, but by the actual difference between them. The motels around the airports in Chicago and Atlanta are so little different from the motels around the airports of Tokyo and Frankfurt that all the essential distances dissolve in likeness. What is truly separated is distinct; it is unlike. "The only true voyage would be not to travel through a hundred different lands with the same pair of eyes, but to see the same land through a hundred different pairs of eyes." (Proust)

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So, too, with those who look everywhere for difference, who see the earth as source, who celebrate the genius in others, who are not prepared against but for surprise. "I have traveled far in Concord." (Thoreau)

-- James P. Carse, from "Finite and Infinite Games"

Published at www.awakin.org on Jun 29, 2009