

The Imaginary Present

Dear Aletheia, Epoché writes.

I hope this finds you submerged in the life you pursue wandering, where the Theory of the Derivé most certainly flourishes, which I also hold in the highest regard. Its warped surface. However, as you must be aware, there is some urgency to my communication, as I would never break cover without extraordinary reasons, but, alas, here I am. Let me be clear: a new translation has been located. And the theater we will inevitably find there. I know I shouldn't convey too much, but I must, please forgive me, communicate what I think are the precise coordinates. I am hoping I will be by your side to investigate. But I am undecided if you will remember me. I still question the role I played in your social morphology and the later role I played in the first navigational charts of the sentient continents. Now, for the center jewel: I have obtained the *iEpiphany*. It will be transmitting shortly.

Helicoidally yours, Epoché

Blueshifts

It begins slowly with a civilization. A blue sail. The picture she makes is an observatory from space. The same degree of curvature at every location, it is a language that is a dwelling.

She uses the colors for their charges. Out of the particular. She gathers and unites the picture. Which acts like a mirror. The picture traces her speech. Which is really the mouth of a voyage and a massive net sifting blue waters. At the end of the world the ship empties its contents. Nothing remains of my castle in the air. Believing as we do, in the explorer you seem to be. Aletheia recites the story she has heard a thousand times. Its astrosience frees her.

Waking, she feels her dreaming body emerge as if being pushed from underground. She stretches. The room gets louder, more prominent. Quickly she uploads. Feels for the patterned lock. The pattern is like a library. The library is like a town. The town is like a drift. The drift is like a cloud. The cloud is like an eye. The eye is like a hook. The hook is like a rare wing. The wing is like her rapid heart, its cellular automata patterning for clues. It used to be difficult, but, with time, she grew stronger, more perceptive.

Aletheia checks the transmission for authenticity. It's brighter than she expected. Denser, like a star.

According to some interpretations, the *iEpiphany* is a treatise for disinformation. But it's something else that secures our place in the war, which we don't quite see, our place. The war appears as though it's in a bubble somewhere floating up and down along rivers, to the side, upside down over mountains that don't look like mountains, over cities that don't look like cities, over families that don't look like families. And the bubble is suspended at times, stops. When we look into the bubble through its transparent film, our vision becomes a curtain. Between the war and myself. And situated inside a different bubble, one that is self-created, like all the others, I believe that no one really dies, no one really dies.

I don't, Aletheia thinks. Except that when I die, I am made into a dwelling that is a language. Aletheia's cities are not cities, her mountains are not mountains, the river running through the foreground is not a river but an artery into her heart.

And the bubble is detectable only by how everything outside of it behaves.

At the beginning of the day when the waves are calm and the water recedes, when the sun lights the beach house in her memory that is her home, the bubble, like all bubbles, dissolves, releasing its ephemera into the blue sea to be sifted by massive nets for signs of treasure.

Fast Forward

Epoché is used to thinking only in the present moment so that when he sees someone leave a room, he thinks that they are no longer experiencing the room. Since everyone operates the present under different circumstances, transitions are especially challenging.

For those born in the present, others enter and leave our immediate experience while we remain. But Epoché has not always been of the present. He has experienced time in the past, even if it was an illusion. His future is sometimes angular. Distributed in folds. An origami releasing in the mind.

Ubiquitously, he considers time through the capsule of his skin.

Soon I will see Aletheia, he thinks. We will sabotage the medium is the message. The very condition of our survival.