

## FOREWORD

I sit down to write an introduction to Antero's book, "Towards an Archeology of the Soul", but where do I begin from? The pressures of my life are overwhelming. Yet facing this task, I sense a demand for my full attention. What is my aim here? Who am I right now?

I stop and collect myself. Breathe. My posture becomes straighter. My rhythm slows down. There is a stillness. I am aware, in this moment, of subtle movements of energy within and without my being. My idea of myself gives way to something infinitely greater. The quality of this experience is equal to, if not surpassing, the effort to write. I have a sensation of presence and, at the same time, I am writing. A wish arises in me to be of service to something higher. I straddle two worlds now; two directions. One is oriented inwardly and one, outwardly. This is the place from which I can begin. This is the place I will return to.

Antero uses the term, No-Form. Call it what you will, the words do not matter, this a book of action, a book of experience. From No-Form Antero begins. To No-Form he returns. No-Form guides his search; it emboldens him, and substantiates his experience. There are precious few who have devoted themselves to an exploration of life in art; fewer, still who have approached their quest with balance and integrity. We honor those who have come before us, and must give special recognition to Jerzy Grotowski, one of my own teachers, who originated the term, "Parathearical", two and a half decades ago. We must also honor those who continue in this lineage and take on the task of transmission. Transmission is what "Archeology of the Soul" is all about.

If he could, Antero would transmit directly to you, energetically, through sweat and tears, through breath and muscle. As it is, he does exactly that in his workshops, performances, and labs, but here, he dares to put a teaching into words. Words. How is this possible? The work documented here is largely non-verbal. People write about their experiences here years after the fact and words often fail them. How can a flame be put into words?

This is an act of folly. It is fraught with impossibilities. It is doomed to failure. Firstly, the teaching Antero presents is forever changing, evolving. It is organic. Secondly, it is his uniquely specific path, created by him, for himself. Lastly, unless one already has an inkling of what a living ritual can be, reading this text is mere voyeurism.

However, there are exceptions. There always are exceptions. If one resonates to the ideas and experiences presented here, one may begin a journey of one's own. One may have even already begun such a journey and find in this book a verification, a confirmation of efforts and struggles that, until now, have been nameless. One may be inspired to look for others who share a similar vision of art, or concern for self. One may seek out a real teacher.

A "Teacher". Another word. Certainly this describes Antero, but we must qualify the term. For me, a teacher, in the most efficacious example, is one who imparts knowledge

while engaged in a continuing personal search for knowledge. This definition would not apply to most who call themselves “teachers”. It would apply to Antero Alli.

Antero, in describing one of his lab experiences, says that he prefers the “mountain metaphor”. He continues, “...here was this group on the way up to their own existential peak, to discover the edge of whatever they are living for...” If I may continue with the analogy, I could say that Antero is more aptly a sherpa, a mountain guide. He has traversed many paths on the mountain. He has created some of his own paths. He has explored routes that he later discarded and ones that he now knows well enough to travel along with eyes closed. He has hiked with others in his care. In fact, he has found that his own journey is greatly assisted by climbing with fellow alpinists. His expertise and sense of responsibility makes him a well-trusted guide. In leading, he sees that his own progress is dependant on each person’s ascension in line. The entire expedition is tethered together and, as one steps up, the next takes his place. Antero has climbed higher than most. He has glimpsed the summit. He knows the direction and his aim is true.

In a way, we who commit to a life in search, are all fellow climbers. At the base of the mountain we pitch camp in different locales and climates. We may not even know of each other’s existence. But as we ascend, our experiences become more and more synonymous. And as we approach the summit, very little separates us from each other. At this point in the journey it becomes increasingly vital that we pay careful attention to the one who precedes us, and to the one who follows directly behind.

As Antero is fond of saying, “Read that last sentence again.”

Now, return to No-Form.

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