

*Foreword*

-Andrew Bingham

In general, *Modern Horizons'* long-form dialogues are designed as a vesperal avenue for sitting down one-on-one with people who have dedicated their life to some particular area of work and discussing their personal provenance, vocational experiences, loved ideas, and sense of the future. David Goa and I have found ourselves in weekly or bi-weekly conversation for something like 20 years now; these recorded dialogues are only slightly more 'deliberate' than usual — less in subject-matter than in making sure they were conducted in person, in his study or kitchen, with plenty of red wine and pipe tobacco at hand. Here and there one finds many occasions to appreciate not only David's lack of intellectual and spiritual fear, but also his eagerness — often full-throated — and joy — always well-tempered — when face-to-face with expressions and registers of meaning elemental to personal and communal life; in each case, David eschews the temptation of refuge in safely-established spiritual positions.

Precedents for this kind of work — such as may be — are found in works like Mircea Eliade's *Ordeal by Labyrinth*, Emmanuel Levinas' *Ethics and Infinity*, and Hans-Georg Gadamer in conversation. Taking to heart their respective grapplings with notions of understanding and of predication, one seeks to draw near, together with another person, to things felt to be essential. This is a matter not only of ideas, but more importantly of how one is with ideas. Ideas palpable to the moment are gathered into presence through time, and thus relate to the textures, rhythms, and foci of memory. Here one may apprehend memory as an intimately-honed form of tradition, which David reminds us is less of the blood than of the living soil. Hence his preference for metaphors of tilling rather than of mining — one turns anew rather than retrieves for gain. The metaphor indicates something significant: the inevitably grounded nature of the integral relationships from which one thinks.

Occasionally here on the prairies on a warm evening or fresh morning I am arrested by a scent in the air which transports part of me back to my favourite days and nights in Kingston; often in conversation with David there is a scent in the air through which the whole of one's spirit is permeated with the vital ethos of our tradition.