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**Abstract**

**Walking the royal road of the unconscious**

It is commonly said that our best ideas come to us as if out of the blue when we are involved in banal activities such as taking a shower, doing household chores, or out for a walk. Philosophers are often hardened walkers, and they are for good reason for many profess the need to walk to think and to think well.

“Never trust a thought that occurs to you indoors”, warns Nietzsche, for “all truly great thoughts are conceived by walking” Kierkegaard concurs, for it was probably on the streets of Copenhagen that he came to realise, “I have walked myself into my best thoughts”. While Kant is famously purported to have walked the same route in Kōnigsberg (now Kalingrad) at the same time every day to order his ideas and tame his more compulsive thoughts, Jean-Jacque Rousseau, who would walk up to twenty miles a day on the outskirts of Paris, went as far as to claim “My mind only works with my legs […] When I stop walking, I cease to think.”

The earliest therapy sessions given by Freud involved him taking his patients out for a walk-- taking advantage, perhaps, of the merits of the ‘walking cure’ as much as the ‘talking cure’. “To go for a walk”, Jung writes, “is both a search and a succession of changes” for a good walk incites transformation for the individual and groups alike.

There are now many walks you can take in the footsteps of celebrated philosophers who have their pathways named after them. One such pathway lies on the outskirts of Kyoto, known simply as the ‘Philosopher’s Path’, is where Nishida Kitaro would take his daily walk to experience and conceptualise what he came to refer to as ‘pure experience’. But, importantly, as Nishida claimed, *every* person has a ‘philosopher’s walk’—it is simply the path each of us frequent in our daily lives.

This paper speculates on the relationship of walking to thinking and raises questions as to whether the nature of our walking style influences the quality of our thinking and whether the places where we walk shape the contents of our ideas. It does so with allusion to a variety of thinkers, but with special attention given to Freud as he walks along the *Ringstrasse* in Vienna and to Nietzsche walking in Florence and Turin.

References:

Jung (1944) CW12: par. 101

Kierkegaard (1847) Letter to Henriette: 150.

Nietzsche (1888) *Ecce Homo*, ‘Why I am so clever: §1; (1889) *Twilight of the Idols*: §34.

Rousseau (1782) *Confessions*

Further reading:

Huskinson, L (2018) *Architecture and the Mimetic Self*, Routledge: London and New York.