

# The Case of Travel

Italienische Reise (trans. Italian Journey) is the travelogue that saw Goethe's journey through Italy. The idea of travel as an active metaphor: the outer journey exists insofar as to evoke an inner one. As he writes, "to discover myself in the objects I see". Painters, writers, and other intellectuals aside, Goethe even falls in love with a local woman: Faustina. An affair to discover himself in her, a citizen that breathes the spirit of Rome.

At the moment, I too am traveling. As a result, conceived insights on what it means to travel like Goethe, as active metaphor. A spirit of emulation is at play, even claiming a Faustina of my own briefly. To develop the interpretation of travel, and to formalize it: that is our aim. However, then, to contrast the new with the existent becomes necessary.

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*Travel-(as norm)* - We have accepted the idea of Travel as reward. Vacation, we call it; the outcome after months of strenuous work. Invisible hands of capitalism have done its due, extending the idea to completion. A non-alcoholic invades bars to listen.

A bearded man, near his thirties, for whom two-weeks constitute the overarching "fun" that justifies the last six months of work. Criticism of the individual becomes unwarranted, for there is a clear lack of choice. In most cases, one has to work a fulltime job to ensure sustenance, let alone comfortability. Exceptions do apply - wealth, luck and the anomalies.

Such travel contains the implicit assumption of happiness in it, an increased emphasis even. After all, it is one way of acquiring happiness. The capitalist true world: a well-paying job that allows for comforts open to the upper middle class, including the ease of travel. This never-ending progress to the true world has glimpses of the ideal sprinkled throughout, that of vacation.

To have fun, to enjoy - not to experience, not to become. Itinerary glimmers through the blue screen, its construction simplistic: an internet search, "what to

at X” and its variants? East Asian bars playing hip hop, temples decorated as to accent its perceived exoticness. A self-inflicting optimization of capitalism, one that tailors the experience to the tourists; an immediately relatable, comfortable, different X, one that matches the image of X in the tourist mind. Not of place X, but of the place X that is catered to the foreign crowd. In the (invisible) permeable medium of happiness, even capitalism has to bow.

A return to work is dreaded. Grueling hours, tedious paperwork, however one adjusts. Intoxicating oneself, a desensitization from pain, the narcotic of Hope helps. The next vacation, next holiday, the next weekend. Death at the hand of the borrowed happiness of tomorrow.

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*Travel-(as proxy)* - Then, what is travel? As Goethe intended, the active metaphor? What helps foster new internal phenomena? In the sense of travel, that is to be maximized along certain dimensions.

1. Difference of a place: measure as the increased chance of being exposed to difference at said place. Naturally, difference relative to the individual.
2. Lack of structure (maximal): relative to constraints of basic safety, for example insurance, as death is the end of any action.

Unstructured external phenomenon of difference and the reaction: potentially new internal phenomena.

Now, the time for certain ontological commitments. Consider the self as the totality of desires that originate from the body. Then, self-knowledge becomes the knowledge of desire and on their pursuit, the pair of external-internal phenomena that emerge. Finally, their use for self-creation. For difference, and only difference, allows potential for creativity: the purest ontological form of differential action.

Note that the probability of self-creation is maximized in the lack of structure. A fixed itinerary, as procured from the self-optimized directories of capital, will provide experiences that are the same; ones the individual thinks it wants, often ones that it enjoys. In the process, a complete disregard for difference.

In fact, there are strains of travel-(as proxy) in popular culture. However, the dismissal of the itinerary still prevails inside the realm of happiness. Once again, the aim is to formalize the idea for increased clarity.

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Is the idea that allows for self-creation limited to travel? Of course not. However, this is the case of travel, and an interpretation of it. The only interpretation that allows for self-creation.

*Each traveler should know what he has to see, and what properly belongs to him, on a journey.*

- *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*

## References

Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Italienische Reise*. 1816.

Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Roman Elegies*. 1795.

- writes about Faustina

## Remarks

- the anomalies
  - a combination of genius and unavoidable circumstantial luck that overpower capitalism
  - An example would be the basketball player LeBron James, who catapulted himself from near-poverty due to being the greatest basketball talent ever.
  - Note that genius itself is no guarantee for such an event. Genius, as recognized by capital.