



The World in a Selfie: An Inquiry into the Tourist Age

Marco d'Eramo

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The World in a Selfie is a creative, philosophical study of travel. It considers hundreds of years of why and how people go places, and what it all says about our desires, our blind spots, and how we interact with what's foreign to us. This beautiful English translation updates the 2017 Italian edition of the book to reflect the coronavirus pandemic's impact on travel. It's perfect for thoughtful travelers stuck with passports that are burning a hole in their pockets.

Marco d'Eramo looks at the history of tourism, the world tour, the pilgrim, the flaneur. We're taken from the Chinese town and heritage site of Lijiang to the sensory overload of Las Vegas. The book discusses snobbery throughout, where the enlightened traveler sees "sightseeing" as an occupation for "the plebian masses," and says UNESCO sites inadvertently freeze places into an artificial bubble, with sites stuck impossibly in time.

Diverse and fascinating sources, historical literature, theory, and contemporary data are artfully brought together to form this intellectually demanding, but also playful, work. Take, for example, the book's brief but marvelous point-of-view shift to that of an alien "earthologist" who observes the unique beach holiday migratory habits of this planet's "dominant animal species," human beings. (Extraterrestrials return in a couple of later, more abstract chapters that explore the concepts of the alien and the other.)

Fun and challenging, Marc d'Eramo's *The World in a Selfie* mixes the flavors of Mark Twain, Karl Marx, and theme parks to result in a real and welcome trip elsewhere.

MEREDITH GRAHL COUNTS (January / February 2021)

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