

Not all trips are going to be life-changing, and that's okay

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We have seen one too many movies about travelling, and it has always made us hope for a life-changing trip of our own. After all, who wouldn't like to experience what the trio of *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara* had experienced, or find a new lease on life the way Liz from *Eat, Pray, Love* had done? Travel, in that way, signifies hope for change, healing, and rejuvenation.

Isn't that why trips seem almost indispensable after a rough semester? Or when work is being too hard on us? Or even when we find ourselves gradually numbing to all the discordance around us?

We hope that going outside of our comfort zones, with people we like, will change things for us. It will remind us of things that actually matter, like nature, friendship, spirituality, and everything in between. However, things don't pan out the way we hope sometimes. Sometimes, the trips we hope will revitalise our deadened spirits end up being kind of mediocre.

This creates a predicament. Did we not put all our existential burdens on the shoulders of this one trip to fix? If we just come out of it feeling just as wilted as before, what was even the point of it all?

That is where the problem lies. We con-



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sider vacations to be extraordinary, where reality is suspended for the time being. It is a blank state in our life's trajectory where we could be at peace, where our problems wash away amongst nature.

Trips, just like any human activity, depend on several prerequisites to succeed. It is not something that will always deliver the best results whenever we want

it. Travelling is unpredictable. Sometimes, the quality of the trip does not depend on the journey or the desired destination, it is dependent upon everything else: bad weather, disagreeable people, sudden injuries, and a myriad of other factors. Not to mention our overflowing expectations, inspired by our harrowing need for reprieve and adventure, which realistically

have very little chance of being fulfilled, can create issues as well.

Then again, are mediocre trips really that undesirable?

If we try to look at travelling from a truly utilitarian point of view, perhaps travel that does not actively make our life richer is nonsensical. However, travelling can just be an act in and of itself that we don't assign so much meaning to. It can consist of simply packing our bags and setting out. Not because it will bring us peace, or that it will heal us from our emotional wounds, or even that it will bring us closer to our travel companions. After all, trips don't fix our life. We do it ourselves. The best it can do is give us an opportunity for a fresher outlook, untainted by everything else in our life.

Not to refute Francis Whitman, who desperately wanted to have a spiritual journey with his brothers at the start of *The Darjeeling Limited*, but journeys cannot inherently be spiritual or any other meanings we assign to it. It is all circumstantial, and we can rarely ever force it. All we can do is enjoy it when and if it happens.

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Why videogames from the 2000s feel more fun

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Some of my fondest childhood memories consist of coming home from school and spending the afternoon playing games on my PlayStation (PS) 2. From fighting it out on *WWE Smackdown vs Raw* or the *Dragon Ball Z: Budokai* games, to watching my older brother and cousin play *Resident Evil 4*, I felt like there was something magical about experiencing videogames in the 2000s. Call me nostalgic if you will, but modern gaming fails to have that same profound effect on me as the games from that era.

In the 2000s, videogames were more experimental, with consoles like the PS2 and PS3 having a larger library of games compared to newer generations. This is not to imply that more is objectively better, considering how the increasing costs of game development affect how many games are being made.

However, it is not farfetched to assume that the lack of variety is likely due to the gaming industry undergoing a case of "marketing myopia", wherein the product's profitability is prioritised over the customers' experience. When you look at companies like Rockstar Games, who released several *Grand Theft Auto (GTA)* titles in the PS2 era, but re-released *GTA V* across the next three different console generations, it becomes clear that mon-

etisation seems more important to game developers than player experience.

Nowadays, many unfinished games are released, with updates and additional content added later on. But in the past, you would get a complete game from the beginning, instead of waiting for chunks to be released over time. Another feature that makes 2000s games more appealing to me is that they were produced in a period which moved past the graphical and technical limitations of the 1990s, before the commercialisation of videogames in the 2010s. Games were made with more care, and with fewer filters. We can also look back on how movie/TV show tie-in games were a big thing back then, and while they were not all great, we did get certain gems like *Spider-Man 2* and *Return of The King*.

Split-screen co-op games were more commonplace back then, but have lessened with the advent of online gaming. Online games may be fun, but the experience of playing an online game compared to a couch co-op game feels like talking to a friend over the phone instead of actually hanging out with them.

Maybe it's the nostalgia talking, as I do not play videogames as much as I did in my childhood or teenage years. Whenever I do find the time to play something, I feel more inclined to play older games



than newer ones. But I believe that if you also grew up during the 2000s and early 2010s era of videogames, you might share the same sentiments. It would not be fair to say that games are objectively less fun now, as newer technologies have allowed games to be grander in scale allowing us to experience fantastic games like *Red*

Dead Redemption 2 and *The Witcher 3*. But looking at the state of the gaming industry overall, it seems videogames lack the same fun factor they once had.

Sabil spends most of his time trying to stay as hopeful as possible. You can contact him at sabilsadat616@gmail.com