



Fig.116 Sequence of backpackers met from all over the world. Finishing my doctorate in Sweden I rented out my apartment there so as to finance the making of my ark in Italy. As a result I got to live in a dormitory and met many travelers with their many life-stories to share. Unable to travel outside of Europe I was then able to get in touch with people from all corners of the world, a possibility that the later lockdowns and travel restrictions between countries have very much hindered. After being used for over two decades to hang out with international people especially during my studies I had to readjust to a more nationalistic lifestyle.

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In the later years of the project the world became far less open than I had experienced in the first years. New conflicts and pandemics got my life limited to Europe alone. For a time then I lived with my partner in the Netherlands while building the ark hosting my project in Italy and staying in Swedish hostels to finish my doctorate studies. It was mostly in these hostels that I got to meet many new people from all over the world. If I no longer traveled intercontinentally, I anyway got to meet many backpackers such as two lovely sisters from Alaska, a Bulgarian chess champion and many other interesting characters. Becoming a bit too old for that kind of backpacking lifestyle I anyway was able to refresh my view of the world and break the prejudice one have of people at first sight.

With the evolving of the project not only did I get old myself but generally humanity became far more conservative. It is true that the digital medium opened up many possibilities; my project in many ways was born with it. The feeling was that it just was easier to book a ticket and get a visa on-line and just fly out wherever one wished. Similarly it felt very easy to just apply to study or work abroad. Making use of these powerful new medium interconnecting countries and in a way bypassing all their old fashioned borders the feeling was that the planet was getting a very spontaneous environment; naturally one could have just kept on migrating like a real nomad back in the days. I was really caught in this historical moment of openness but soon also experienced that this very openness began to close. It was as if the sea had temporarily frozen and there was a possibility to cross it but suddenly it all began to melt again and the wading became very hazardous.

With governments beginning to turn more nationalistic and with the old and artificial borders being re-established I certainly did not feel trapped. I did experience the world and I have it very clearly mapped out in my head. In a second phase I also got to meet more and more people from different parts of the world and increased my knowledge of it. Lastly I began to carefully and incessantly read memoirs from all over the world so as to retain a vivid and open mentality, beyond the narrow notions that the official history can provide but always establishing a great empathy for real people of whatever local culture. In this respect I began to dislike those people who just don't live their reality but are all boasted up to become more and more official, to become part of the very bureaucratic and administrative system that so much blocks the spontaneity of life. I take pity for those who just simply have no other options but to be clerks but something boils within me in confronting those who have a drive to become bigger and bigger authorities and stick more and more poles in the wheel of life.

In reality then I do not feel a sort of victim but my greatest compassion goes for the new offspring who has to grow up in a very conformist society. Even if there are elements of libertinism I do recognize that these elements are only there as sedatives so as to make life within a very caged environment more tolerable. The youth of today are likely to experience a far more limited freedom than my generation. They are going to be bound by loans, having to comply with tedious administrative jobs to pay them off and

with little of no idea on how to become even partly self-sufficient and aim for autonomy. Coming back to my photographing of people, I can say that the way society is evolving makes it impossible for me to meet people, to even have a conversation with them so much their brains have been channeled and sculpted and restricted by a general and institutionalized kind of conformism. The level here is much worse than under a regime of the past. I can hear my grandparents telling me that yes in their youth they had to attend the fascist Saturday parading like dark clowns in a militaresque fashion but then life in the village went on as usual, with all its spontaneity, hunting frogs and shooting at birds with the sling and fetching the bee hives from the trees.

What folks do not realize is that the regime fostered in the past decades has completely truncated the spontaneity of life. We are imprisoned not in cells but in actual procedures, in what the more acute and less academic philosophers have allied empty rituals. Life moves on its purposelessness even though we find it very purposeful because we are serving and fulfilling tasks that have been designed for us from above. Yet these tasks are not our natural destiny, they are just the procedures generated by a giant computer administrating us without any value whatsoever but in a most pragmatic manner. Even if a value is introduced as a parameter to this computer it also becomes pragmatic and loses its value like all this fuss for representation and who should become the new authority and detain power is proving.

All I am suggesting here and all the meaning I can convey through my work as a person who cut himself completely from this system of regimentation and its intrinsic death of life, is to regiment oneself according to his or her nature and by so doing reacquire his or her character beyond all the strict an authority tailored persona. In other words, especially the young generation ought to be able to pull out from the *commedia dell'arte* that has been scripted and it is constantly being scripted for them. They ought to pull out from the characters that were defined from them, no matter how much these characters seem to give the illusion of breaking with an authoritarian and patriarchal and racist past. These characters in fact will either subjugate those who impersonate them or get him or her to subjugate others, creating more injustice, above all the injustice of killing life and spontaneity on earth, a spontaneity that not only guarantees the evolution of humanity but also its well being of it and of it with our planet and the universe at large.