



As the mood takes you

Description

Studio Libeskind designed the Westside shopping and Leisure Centre in Bern, Switzerland. It opened in 2008. I've not been there yet. It's difficult to comment with any authority on a building, monument, landscape, or place without going there. Everyone knows that travel is part of the architectural experience, and architectural connoisseurs of all tastes and aptitudes have to be mobile.

Of course, just about everywhere has a website, and you can visit that. The Westside shopping mall has a swimming pool and water park (Bernaqua). The [website](#) claims, "Our wide range of water activities offers something special for everyone. Live it up or just take it easy, **as the mood takes you**." Do a web search for "as the mood takes you." It's a common idiom on tourist web sites.



You have to travel to places to experience architecture, and to pick up on the mood of the place. The experience of travel also involves moods. People get carried along by moods. Moods take you places. A mood also describes the traveller's condition on the journey. We inquire of one another "how are you going?" You might reply "I'm going well." French and German retain the travel idiom in the vernacular response more obviously: *À ça va, geht's gut* (it goes, it goes well).

Many mood words have their travel correlates. Another term for *happiness* is *travelling well*. *Anger* is a *rocky road*. Being *curious* involves lots of stops or distractions. *Determined* is *overcoming obstacles*. *Anticipation and suspense*: not knowing what's around the corner.

Melancholia

Of all the moods, melancholy has the strongest connection with travel, at least in romantic literature. Walter Benjamin highlights "the melancholic's inclination for long journeys" (149), particularly on the sea. He indicates Albrecht Durer's allegorical illustration entitled [Melancholia](#), with the pensive and forlorn angel in the foreground, backed by the sea extending to the horizon, implying long journeys.

I'm researching mood and mobility, so all this serves to strengthen the bond between those two terms. Mobility involves various technologies, not least those electronic devices we carry around, and that aid, enhance or impede mobility: eg smartphones. Thanks to digital maps, GPS, and of course communicating directions by phone: "We are round the back. Go through the wooden gate." They also remind us of distance, and separation. Does Skype or Facetime make you feel any closer?

This is another way that digital devices function as [mood devices](#). They take you to places, and those places have an impact on mood, as does getting there. In fact the terms used to describe *mood* and *journey* can be interchanged. We are sojourners after all.



References

- Benjamin, Walter. 2003. *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*. Trans. G. Steiner, and J. Osborne. London: Verso
- Snodgrass, Adrian. 2006. Random thoughts on the way. In A. Snodgrass, and R. Coyne (eds.), *Interpretation in Architecture: Design as a Way of Thinking*: 243-254. London: Routledge.
- Snodgrass, Adrian. 2001. Random thoughts on the way: The architecture of excursion and return. *Architectural Theory Review*, (6) 1, 1-15.

Notes

- Adrian Snodgrass has written about "the way," tao, etc. See references above.
- Also see [Chasing the line](#), [Travel guidelines](#), [Walking the line](#), [Melancholy and media](#), [Heidegger and vertigo](#), and [The melancholy medium](#).

Category

1. Travel

Tags

1. happiness
2. mobility
3. mood
4. smartphones

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