The Gnostic Tourist: Gambling, Fly-Fishing, and the Seduction of the Middle Class

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Abstract
Borrowing techniques from creative non-fiction, this article explores the parallels between gambling and fly-fishing in late modern capitalism. It introduces the concept of gnostic tourism and argues that some forms of contemporary leisure create moments of singularity in which the actor comes to feel as though he or she has penetrated to the heart of a deep secret. This, in turn, creates an affective state that fuels serial consumption. Implications are explored in relation to the potential for a more critical form of political consciousness.

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Modern fly-fishing is so different from what Walton practiced in the seventeenth century that the similarities perhaps begin and end with the fish. Whereas we have a cornucopia of expertly tied artificial flies, floating nylon line, and evolved casting techniques, Walton didn’t even have a reel—he just used a stick with hair tied to the end. But a few years later, while I was on a river in Idaho at dusk and found myself in the middle of a tremendous caddis-fly hatch, an answer occurred to me. Caddis flies, like many aquatic insects, pupate in little husks attached to rocks in rivers. In Walton’s esteem for all the odd particularity of the fish and its environs, he seems to be attempting to merge two worlds that exist only in opposition to each other—the terrestrial and the aquatic.

Learn The Fly Fishing Basics and How to Fly Fish! You are here: Home / Basics / Fly Lines 101. Fly Lines 101. The bulk of the weight is pretty much centered in the middle of the line. This will then taper back to the original starting diameter to allow you to attach your leader. The beginning taper on the end of the fly line will mirror the ending taper. When fishing a full sinking fly line, the entire line sinks under the water…even the extra line at your feet. As you retrieve the line and go to make a cast, you have considerable surface tension as you try to pull that line that is sunk in the water out and into the air. The floating lines do not have this problem as the surface tension is greatly decreased with the line floating on top of the water.