

# Chapter 3 - Contrasted Travelling

Chapter 3 - Contrasted Travelling contrasts the meaningful and immersive travel experiences of the past with the superficial nature of modern travel. Fifty years ago, a trip abroad was a rare, significant event that required careful planning and preparation. Travelers would seek advice from experts, read extensively, and even make wills before embarking on their journey. Upon reaching their destinations, they would write long letters home, sharing the details of their adventures with friends and family, often keeping journals that chronicled their travels for posterity. These detailed accounts serve as a nostalgic reminder of a time when travel was not just about reaching a destination, but about immersing oneself in the journey and forming lasting connections along the way. One such account describes a memorable voyage across the Atlantic on an American clipper, where passengers forged lifelong friendships despite the cramped quarters of the ship. This experience reflects the genuine curiosity and eagerness to learn that characterized travel in the past.

The chapter mourns the loss of this intimate and personal approach to travel, highlighting how it has been replaced by a more rushed and transactional form of tourism in the modern age. Today, journeys are often marked by a checklist mentality—visiting landmarks and crossing off items on a to-do list, with little attention paid to the deeper cultural and personal connections that once made travel so enriching. The thrill of discovery and the joy of learning about new places and people have been overshadowed by a desire for social validation, with travelers more focused on showcasing their experiences on social media than truly engaging with the cultures they encounter. Modern advancements in transportation, which have made travel faster and more comfortable, ironically contribute to a diminishing sense of wonder. The ease of travel has made it less of an adventure and more of a routine, transforming what was once a transformative experience into a mere checklist of

sights and activities. This shift has stripped international travel of its soul and purpose, reducing it to a commodified form of entertainment or social currency.

The chapter emphasizes that, despite the conveniences offered by modern travel, there has been a significant loss of the deeper value that travel once held. Previously, the slow and deliberate pace of a journey allowed for more profound engagement with the local culture and a true sense of immersion. Travelers would take the time to absorb not just the sights but the people, the food, the language, and the history of a place. These experiences were transformative, enriching both the mind and the soul. Today, however, the allure of foreign destinations has been diluted by the speed and convenience of modern travel, which often focuses on reaching destinations as quickly as possible, without giving travelers the time or space to connect meaningfully with their surroundings. The sense of awe and wonder that once accompanied discovering new lands has been replaced by the pressures of fitting in as many sights as possible during a short vacation, leading to a shallower, more disjointed experience.

In reflecting on the evolution of travel, the author urges a return to the mindset of earlier travelers, who approached each journey as an opportunity to grow, learn, and make lasting memories. The chapter suggests that the essence of travel lies not in the speed with which we move from one place to another, but in the depth of the experiences we have along the way. It calls for a shift in the way we approach travel, encouraging individuals to slow down and take the time to engage meaningfully with the cultures and people they encounter. Travel, the author argues, should be about more than just sightseeing—it should be about personal transformation, cultural exchange, and genuine connection. Only by returning to the soul of travel can we rediscover its true power and potential, creating experiences that not only broaden our horizons but also enrich our lives on a deeper level.

This critique of modern travel highlights a broader societal shift away from depth and meaning towards convenience and surface-level engagement. Research on travel psychology supports this view, showing that meaningful travel experiences—those that involve learning, cultural immersion, and personal growth—lead to greater long-term

happiness and fulfillment. On the other hand, superficial travel, driven by the desire for social media validation or checking off a list of landmarks, often leaves travelers feeling empty and unsatisfied. The chapter's reflection encourages readers to reconsider how they approach travel, advocating for a return to the immersive, enriching experiences that once defined exploration. Through deeper engagement and a slower, more thoughtful approach, travel can once again become a tool for personal growth and cultural understanding, rather than a mere pastime or status symbol.

