

Travelling by Public Transport

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Were it not for the existence of public transport, humans would not be able to circulate around cities from one place to another like they do. This is an indicator that public transport is certainly one of the best inventions of all time, as it provides citizens with the opportunity to live in a more comfortable and independent way. Nonetheless, there are many factors that alter the main characteristics of public transport; namely, comfort and convenience, and turn it into an alternative exotic dimension, in which humans lose their daily identity and an interesting community is formed inside long coaches.

A slew of assorted citizens travel through one destination to another like in a crystal dome. The only proof of real life is the fraction of glass built in the walls which allows air and light in, showing life outside as something distant and inaccessible. The windows are the mediators between life inside and the bustle of the city that rushes past before our eyes. Accompanying the roaring city, the coach itself results overwhelming as the senses collapse in an array of sounds. The whistle of the wind leaking through the windows, the creative yell of a salesman and the squeaking wheels create a never-heard-of orchestra. Oddly as it may be, it is inevitable not to familiarise yourself with these sounds after a short period of time, until they become non-existent as little by little the body adapts itself to the overpowering environment.

Once the senses recover from the initial shock, the eyes roam over the fellow passengers, analysing each and every move. When the trip is short this action becomes vague, as it is certain that in a few minutes the trip will be finally over and those faces will remain as forever strangers. Nonetheless, to those who do not run with the same luck, lengthy trips are taken more than once a week, and inspecting companions becomes a hidden talent. Whilst doing this, one easily becomes aware of how intriguing we humans are, how each mannerism is deeply individual, how divergent yet at the same time similar we can be. Most have ordinary complexions with nothing that makes them stand out, while some have a distinctive feature that makes them recognizable without a doubt: unkempt eyebrows, ginger curly hair or a conspicuous tattoo. However, hiding behind deep sighs and surreptitious glares, there is a common trait all travellers put into practise: patience. A few show their discomfort by wearing a constant frown, the rest are able to disguise it by a fake beam. Many times, there is a sensation that one is not around humans, instead in a peculiar environment. Instead, surrounded by peculiar creatures, and becoming acquainted with them.

These creatures seem to act in an unconventional behaviour. Daily manners such as politeness and basic rules of generosity are left behind and most people become exasperated irritated beings. It seems as if a sort of disease wanders about in public transport, choosing some victims and infecting them with hatred. Needless to say, some are immune and choose to spend their expedition entertaining themselves with personal hobbies. Either to romanticise the trip or to

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become abstracted from the tumult of the coach. Reading, knitting, and watching funny videos are some of the favourite ways of drawing one's attention away from this chaos. Out of tiredness some cannot help but take a short discontinuous nap.

When crossing the automatic doors of any means of public transport one enters a peculiar new world, which poses its own challenges. An alien society is compressed in a lengthy coach where it is inevitable not to take a glimpse of the unfamiliar features and actions of these fellow creatures. Yet, we seem to share some traits, as patience is the common sensation that everyone who travels by public transport must put into practice. It becomes the key to cope with the uneasiness that might arise, and it is thanks to patience that we simply contort our lips into a deceitful smile showing that we have not yet lost our civility and basic human manners – which is not the case of all our fellow travellers. Even though –most– seem to have forgotten the meaning of politeness and civilised interaction, the best coping mechanism –as I see it– is to romanticise this daily odyssey until dealing with it becomes a habit. Were it not for the uncanny exchanges that take place in these coaches, the essence of the trip would be lost.