Jason Yoon

Professor Julien Heather

ENG 101 - 001

Linear Version : Travel - The Special Meaning For You

Because I wrote about my family relationship for my first auto-ethnography, I tried to dedicate this time to write about the meanings of and the messages that are carried with travel. I was always willing to write about this topic, because I really and honestly love travel so much.

Travel can have a different meaning for each person. Especially, travels that I had in my life gave "bonds" to people, such as bond to family. I did not realize the importance of travel until I came as study abroad in the states. I firstly thought that travel was just the "process of learning new culture and environment." It's true; I think we learn new perspectives from different cultures and environments. However, I finally realized that it was not the only purpose that travel can embrace. Travel can have uncountable meanings for people. It can be bonds to people who are traveling with. It can be learning new environment. It can be an way to accomplish self-culture or self-discipline. Otherwise, it can be the way to make new friends in many other countries around the world. There are so many reasons or purposes besides these examples. Therefore, I was really curious that what other people tries to accomplish or get some elements from the travel they went throughout their lifetime.

I think travel is great for various reasons. I know that traveling is good because people can "learn and experience" at least the culture or environment of certain country. However, as I mentioned, there are numerous reasons to travel, which means that there are no one definition that is for sure. This is why beauty of travel is very great, and it mesmerized me to research more about people' viewpoints on travel.

Especially, the travel gave the "family bond" or "family connection" for me. There are so many other definitions of travel for many other people such as self-discipline or knowing new people from different region in the world. However, after the time of divorce, my dad tried to dedicate time with me, and the form of dedicating the time with me was traveling around Southeast Asia. Here are stories that I shared with my dad.

After the time of divorce in 2003, my dad always planned bi-monthly trips to Southeast Asia. Between the year of 2003 and 2007, I could go Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, Philippines, Taiwan, and Brunei. At the time of travel, because I was so young to realize, I could not know why my dad tried to plan the trip and tried to spend the time with me. I thought it was banal, and I also thought most of my friends' families were traveling with them as well. Seeing monuments and sacred places with my dad throughout trips that I went was, I firstly thought, boring for me. It was so hot that I could not resist, and I was so angry at that time that my dad tried to push me into so many places to watch. I, initially, was so mad at my dad because I did not know the purpose of the trip, and I did not think that these trips were important to me.

On the other hand, at the time of studying in Philadelphia and missing my dad so much, I finally realized the meaning of trips with my dad. Of course, my dad tried to show me new cultures and environment, so that I can be more mature and more knowledgeable compared to many other friends that I have. However, it was not the most important reason that my dad tried to travel with me. The most important reason is very simple; he just wanted to have the time with me. My dad, who worked and still works from early morning to evening, did not have a sufficient time to spend with me. He was always busy his work, and I could not talk him very much at very first time of divorce because I did not have the opportunity to talk with my dad. However, when I began to talk with my dad throughout trips that I went with my dad, I later realized that it was the happiest time that I had throughout my life. Without any school works or other works that I have, I did not have to think anything besides just trip and my family. I could talk more and more with my dad, and I finally had the time to realize that my dad is "so lovely and nice dad." This is the reason why trips with my dad is the one of the happiest experiences I had with my dad.

Many others, as I mentioned, could think that the trips can be just a learning process of new cultures or a way of self-discipline. However, I always say that my trips with my dad were all about family bond. I could not forget even one moment in the trip right now. Even though the divorce with my mom made me sad, the trip with my dad made my life so much happier, and I will pledge to do this to my sons and daughters when I become a father of one family.

With good memories I had with my dad, boarding passes are one of the most important artifacts in my life. The boarding passes, which can be just a "boarding pass" for many other people, are really special for me. There are few reasons that I really want to keep my boarding passes.

First reason is that I can remember the places that I went with my dad. Because there are so many places that I went, I can even forget about where I went with my dad. Remembering all of the trips that I went with my dad will be really hard process, and sometimes I forgot the importance of the trip that I went with my dad. On the other hand, when I just look at the boarding passes I collected throughout my life, I am feeling so happy to realize the moment that I not only traveled many places in my childhood but also had much time with my dad, and my family. I really do not want to forget about each moment that I had with my dad, and keeping boarding passes makes me to recall about the time I had with my dad.

The other reason is that I really want to keep my boarding pass is that I really want to show my boarding passes to my sons and daughters, so that I can say that my dad or "your grandfather" was one of the best fathers in the world. Also, when I see the boarding passes, I can think or even pledge that I will be the father like my dad, who really tries to dedicate his time through travel. When I try to be good, truly, and lovely father, I will always look at the boarding passes, so that I will remind my dad's dedication and time-spending toward me.

Someone can think that I am too overreacting with my travel and with my boarding passes. However, for me, because travel is one of the most important elements in our family, I really want to keep my boarding passes throughout my life. They can be just small papers, but they are such precious treasures that I have and will keep forever in my life.

Keeping my boarding passes, and thinking the trip as a family bond, I really wanted to know what others think about the concept of the trip. There were several interesting answers that I got from three interviewers. Let’s check out what people said in their interviews. So, What is the travel for them?

First, I interviewed Hyun Q Choi, who is one of my best friends in Emory, and one who also lives Dobbs Hall with me. Hyun Q is one of the interesting friends that I know. He went and lived in Palau for several years, went to Philippines often, and he also lives in the United States right now. He is the one I know that who traveled often throughout his life. Therefore, I can get so many things out of his interview. Here are some parts that was interesting for me.

“For me, travel was “family-bonding.” I want your definition as well. What is definition of travel for you?”

“I think travel is an adventure. I am feeling like I am being an archeologist in Indiana Jones, who always travels to nowhere and always want to adventure something.”

“It’s interesting. Also, do you like to travel? why?”

“I really love to travel. When I come back home after I went to the trip, there is some memories that I can think and enjoy about. This is the reason why I really love travel because there are some things that I can recall and think.”

Hyun Q emphasized the idea that he can “think and remember” about things after he went to trip. Throughout the interview, he really missed the trip he went with his family, especially the one he went to Philippines with his family. He mentioned that he really loves to have an adventure, and the travel can be the only option that he can have an adventure, as he thought. However, it was an irony to say that Hyun Q was scary to go outside of Korea with his friends because he thought he is much safer with his family, even though he really want to go foreign countries with his friends in the future. It was interesting to see the guy who really wants an adventure and still really worries about going outside of Korea with his friends.

Secondly, I interviewed Donggun Kim, who is also one of the best friends that I have in Emory as well. He is one of the few guys that travels a lot too. His interview was quite short, but there are some big elements that I could carry. Here are some crucial parts that I picked out from the interview with Donggun.

“ What’s the definition of travel for you? As you know, my definition of the travel is a family-bonding.”

“I think that travel is one of the greatest subjects that enables me to experience unique things that I cannot experience in my daily life. It makes some memories that are really special. This is the reason why travel is, I think, subject that makes unique experience for me.”

“Do you like to go on trip with friend or with family?”

“I really love to go on the trip with friend. When I am with friend, I can talk more and have a more fun with friend. Also, I can strengthen friendship with my friends as well. Growing frienship during the trip makes me so happy.”

Donggun seemed really happy when he talked about the trip that he went with friends. He seemed like he loved the moment he had a trip with friends. He also repeated the word “experience;” he valued that experience in the trip is the most significant element in terms of travel. When there was someone who valued the tightening process of love among the family members, there was another one who valued increased and more powerful friendship and unique experience that cannot happen in daily life.

Lastly, I interviewed Michael Kim, who is my roommate in Emory University. Michael did not travel as many as other people whom I interviewed. However, someone who lived in various countries will be a good option, and I thought Michael, who lived in Vancouver, Seoul, and Kuala Lumpur, can be a suitable person that I can interview. There were some captivating answers that I got from his interview. Here are some parts that I want to share.

“What is your term for the travel? Is there any reason? For example, I said travel is family-bonding because traveling with dad made me to know more about my dad.”

“I think I have different answers from many others. I really want to meet new people in other countries, and this is the one that travel can satisfy. When I traveled, there were some people in the place where I went. They introduced me to their friends, and I really enjoyed the time I met with new people.”

“This is so interesting. So, do you prefer go with your friends then?”

“I don’t prefer whom I am going with because there will be some people I will meet anyway.”

Michael also mentions that meeting new people throughout the travel enables not only to have friends who are different from him, but also to know many people’ perspectives around the world. Michael seems to love to meet new people so much, and he seems that travel can satisfy with his meet.

After the interviews I took, I was really interesting to hear different sides on the meaning of travel from all three interviewees. There was one who went to trips because he wanted to have adventures and learn new things during the travel. There was one who went to trips because he wanted to talk and have more time with his friends. There was one who went to trips because he hoped to talk and make more foreign friends. Those three purposes and meanings of travel are all different from mine. I firstly thought that all people will have similar reasons to travel. However, I finally realized that each person will give their unique definition and meaning of the travel.

Some people can think that I am too overreacting; they can think that “family-bonding” process during the trip cannot happen. However, we are all unique; we are all different, so we have all different definitions for the travel or even backgrounds. And this is the reason why I always think the travel as tightnening of connection and bond with my dad.