

Why Modern Man Doesn't Feel at Home

The average American moves about 12 times in his life, changes jobs every 4.6 years, and commutes about 15 miles to work each way. In addition, the areas in which most of us live change dramatically and rapidly due to urbanization and development.

According to philosopher Roger Scruton, this hyper-mobility is causing modern man to feel displaced:

"[I]f we are now living in conditions of hyper-mobility, in which no one is settled deeply enough or for long enough to enjoy the sense of home, then it is not surprising that we are also living in a condition of intense nostalgia. We are constantly seeking for the place of rest, the refuge from change and stress and fleetingness, the condition in which we will be 'restored to ourselves.' Some seek this place in the past, believing that we must return to a simpler and more tranquil way of doing things. Others seek it in the future, believing that the stress of competition and mobility is something to be 'overcome.' Few if any find the place of refuge in the present."

The longing for home and rest is one of the most human of desires. It's no accident that the return home represents the happy conclusion of many stories, and in numerous religions "rest" is a description of the afterlife.

Yet, many of us do not frequently experience "home" and "rest" in our hyper-mobile modern society.

As Scruton points out, in lieu of a *real and lasting* experience of home and rest, many people tend to seek it in a *vision* of the past or the future – in nostalgia or utopianism.

Do you think Scruton's analysis accurately captures the feelings of many today? Do we in fact lack the experience of home and rest more than the people in the past? If so, is this lack ultimately harmful to us?