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The Emerald Handbook of International Dark Tourism

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BOOK CHAPTER

Chapter 5: Redefining Travel: Sustainable Tourism, Experiential Travel, and Dark Tourism

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Abstract

Tourism is a crucial driver of global economic growth, job creation, and cultural exchange. Recent shifts in the industry, influenced by climate change, economic uncertainties, technological advancements, and evolving consumer preferences, have led to a paradigm shift toward sustainable, experiential, and dark travel. This paper explores these emerging trends and their implications for the future of tourism. Sustainable tourism practices, such as ecotourism and community-based tourism, are gaining traction as they help preserve natural and cultural resources while supporting local economies. Experiential travel, which emphasizes immersive and meaningful engagements with local cultures, history, and nature, is increasingly preferred by modern travelers seeking unique and transformative experiences. Dark tourism, involving visits to sites associated with death and disaster, offers profound and often educational experiences, though it raises ethical considerations about the commercialization of tragedy. The integration of digital technologies, including big