WILLIAMS, CAROL, ed. TRAVEL CULTURE: ESSAYS ON WHAT MAKES US GO. Westport, CT: PRAEGER, 1998.

White Knee Socks Versus Photojournalist Vests: Distinguishing Between Travelers and Tourists

MARIELLE RISSE

> There is an infallible test for detecting a tourist in any metropolis in the world—simply look for a man standing in front of a cutlery or luggage shop with his mouth ajar, gazing vacantly in at the manicure sets, razor strops, and collar boxes and jingling the change in his pockets.
>
> —S. J. Perelman

THE FIRST TRAVEL books I read were Gerald Durrell's descriptions of his animal-collecting trips to South America and Africa; I went through them settled in a deep, comfortable chair or stretched out on a towel at the beach. Once I began reading travel books as a scholarly pursuit, I had to read sitting up straight at a desk so that I had a pencil ready to make notes in the margin. I knew as I read that I might need to come back, find this passage again, and quote this sentence; so I jotted comments to help me remember. "Fact" scrawled across the bottom of a page reminded me that the author was making a point about distinguishing fact and fiction in travel books. "DD" stood for "double-decker," an author discussing reading travel books while traveling. "T vs. t" in the borders marked the place where the issue of travelers and tourists was discussed; not "t/t" or "t & t" or even "tt." I didn't realize that this might be important until I started to write this essay. The "vs." signifies how the distinction is presented: no sliding scale or variety of options; either you are in or you are out.

People who dispense definitions of "tourists" reflect the worst qualities of country club denizens deciding on new members. There is a pervasive feeling that the definers have passed the Rubicon themselves and refuse to remain in the same company of those who may have merely crossed the Amazon, Mississippi, or Nile. A perfect expression of this snobbery is found at the end of Eric Newby's *A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush* (1958). Newby and Hugh Carless are returning to Panjshir

after a grueling, three-week climb through the mountains of Nuristan, a small, seldom visited province of Afghanistan. Sick with dysentery, emaciated, and exhausted, they meet up with Wilfred Thesiger, most famous for exploring the Empty Quarter and Iraqi marshes. Thesiger feeds the two men dinner, then, watching them begin to blow up their air mattresses in preparation for sleeping, remarks, "God, you must be a couple of pansies"(248).[1]

Differentiating between travelers and all lower life forms based on (usually arbitrary) levels of physical toughness is one of the five most popular means to solidify the boundary between travelers and tourists. The other four are how much the person knows about the country visited, how much money the person has, where the person is traveling, and when the person is traveling. Each of these five deciding factors shows up throughout travel narratives and writing about travel narratives, most notably in Paul Fussell's *Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars* (1980). Yet despite the wide range of attempts to divide travelers from tourists, a division between the two groups is difficult, if not impossible, to maintain.

Thesiger's insult to Newby and Carless implies that "real" men (and "real" travelers) do not need cushions or comforts while traveling. "Real" travelers stoically endure unpleasant experiences. Lawrence Durrell, in a London Sunday *Times* article (1959), affirms this attitude more explicitly:

> Let the tourist be cushioned against misadventure; but your true traveler will not feel that he has had his money's worth unless he brings back a few scars like that hole in his trousers which comes from striking Italian matches towards instead of away from oneself. No, the mishaps and disappointments only lend relief to the splendors of the voyage. (qtd. in Durrell, *Spirit of Place* 426)

Mark Cocker in *Loneliness and Time: The Story of British Travel Writing* (1992) states that "travellers thrive on the alien, the unexpected, even the uncomfortable and challenging" (2). Fussell justifies this position by discussing the word's history: "travel is work. Etymologically a traveler is one who suffers *travail*, a word deriving in its turn from Latin *tripalium*, a torture instrument consisting of three stakes designed to rack the body" (39).[2] In *Representing Reality: Readings in Literary Nonfiction* (1989) John Warnock, less gruesomely, makes the same claim:

> [T]he traveler on the "package tour" runs the risk of sacrificing the essence of the experience of travel. The word *travel* has the same root as *travail*, and it implies something other than the experience of consumer satisfaction. It implies effort and risk, and not just physical effort and risk. Travel is action, not passive motion. (3)

The issue then becomes how to define "misadventure," "suffer," and "action." Beryl Markham and Michael Crichton both have elephant adventures in Africa. In the early 1930s, Markham and Baron Blixen come within ten feet of being "crushed like mangos" by a bull elephant that they have been tracking through four miles of rough bush in East Africa (Markham 216). In 1975, when Crichton and his girlfriend visit a wild-game farm in Kenya, he wakes up one night to find an elephant munching grass "just ten feet" from his tent (complete with shower) (Crichton 160). Although the elephant does nothing more troublesome than chew loudly, Crichton titles his chapter "An Elephant Attacks" and fills the encounter with as much suspense as if he had been chased by velociraptors.

Who suffered? Does an elephant with the midnight munchies count as a "misadventure"? Crawling on all fours through an African thicket probably counts as "action," but does unzipping your tent flap and peering out with a flashlight? Yet Crichton's book is called *Travels*; the preface and back cover and all the pages in between discuss "travels."

In *I Should Have Stayed Home* (Rapoport and Castanera) "51 top travel writers, novelists, and journalists tell of their greatest travel disasters," including army ants in Guatemala, washing machines in Paris that won't stop washing, and buses without air conditioning in the Sinai. Helen Gurley Brown, editor of *Cosmopolitan*, waits "in a hundred-mile-long line" for plane tickets in Madras, only to make the horrified discovery she has coach tickets and must get back in line for first class (198). And this after her husband's shaving cream can exploded in his suitcase and they spent three hours cleaning off his hairbrush, pajamas, card case, and so on. (197–98). Stan Sesser suffers because the Nepalese relieve themselves at a scenic overlook of Mount Everest; Barbara Kingsolver is temporarily denied entrance to the Rainbow Room in New York City.

There are so many ways to encounter unpleasantness while traveling that the first argument (those who suffer are travelers) falls apart. People en route whose dinner is overdone, mattress springs sag, plane departs late, and so on, may claim the appellation "traveler" for themselves.

The second attempt to create a distinction is that travelers know the language of the visited country; tourists don't. Fussell states that "[o]ne who has hotel reservations and speaks no French is a tourist" (41). Michel Eyquem de Montaigne is caught in a cruel paradox on this issue. He argues that the traveler knows and attempts to adapt himself to the mores of the country, which Montaigne does assiduously. His secretary reports that "Monsieur de Montaigne, to essay completely the diversity of manners and customs, let himself be served everywhere in the mode of the country, no matter what difficulty this caused him" (20). Montaigne wrote his journal in Italian "for the last six months of his stay in Italy [although] fluent as he was, he could not express himself fully and personally in that language" and was "annoyed to find so great a number of Frenchmen here [in Rome] that he met almost no one in the street who did not greet him in his own language" (xxxi, 72). On the other hand, Gay Davenport, writing the Foreword to the 1983 edition of Montaigne's *Travel Journal*, blandly declares that Montaigne "is, in a surprising modern sense, a tourist, with a tourist's interest in the amenities of the table and the bedroom" (viii).

Alastair Reid takes the opposite route from the one taken by Fussell:

> To alight in a country without knowing a word of the language is a worthwhile lesson. One is reduced, whatever identity or distinction one has achieved elsewhere, to the level of a near-idiot, trying to conjure up a bed in sign language. Instead of eavesdropping drowsily, one is forced to look at the eyes, the gestures, the intent behind the words. One is forced back to a watchful silence. (11)

I would add an additional rejoinder to Fussell. There is a great deal of latitude within the simple phrase "speaks no French." I had studied the language for six years and was still unable to comprehend how to place a phone call in Corsica when I visited the island. Further, one can speak the same language and still have difficulties communicating. I've lived in North Dakota for four years but I still manage to confuse and amuse my students by saying "y'all," "bubbler," and "pop."

The third attempt to create a tourist/traveler dichotomy is the most insidious because it cloaks itself in smug platitudes of concern that people should "see the real place," but is revealed to be simple class prejudice. When Robin Hanbury-Tenison writes that "everyone should travel, and not as a tourist," he's privileging travel without recognizing what privileges must usually be in place in order to travel (17). In 1957, he graduated from Oxford and drove from France to Ceylon [Sri Lanka] in a Willis jeep with Johnny Clements. The journey "was not a race against the clock. . . . Instead we were free to wander at our will, go and see whatever took our fancy" (18). In the description of this journey, as with his later trips crossing South America horizontally and vertically, in the Kalahari Desert, through west Africa and around Indonesia, he mentions the joys of being able to travel freely, without mentioning the monetary considerations that made such trips possible. From the picture of his sumptuous family estate in Ireland to the descriptions of his farm in Cornwall, one may infer he had the financial resources and corresponding leisure to "wander at will."

This careful separating of travelers and tourists by respective wealth is most often stated in terms of "time": travelers can linger, while tourists are on a schedule. Alastair Reid states in a similar manner, "tourists have a home to go to, and a date of departure" (9). In 1877 Amelia Edwards, bemused to discover that a French boat has headed down the Nile before her English vessel, nicely sets out the hierarchy:

> [I]t was a consolation to know that the Frenchmen were going only to Assuan. Such is the *esprit du Nil.* The people in dahabeeyahs despise Cook's tourists; those who are bound for the Second Cataract look down with lofty compassion upon those whose ambition extends only to the First; and travellers who engage their boat by the month hold their heads a trifle higher than those who contract for the trip. We, who were going as far as we liked and for as long as we liked, could afford to be magnanimous. (36)

In *The Sophisticated Traveler: Great Tours and Detours* (1985), A. M. Rosenthal and Arthur Gelb make a direct appeal to financial snobbery. This collection of essays from the *New York Times* includes the details of where the restaurant is (in the best part of town), how much the meal costs (a lot), and where to rent a plane (private), and so on, which one would expect in a tourist guide, but Rosenthal and Gelb scrupulously avoid the word "tourist." They take care to ground the book in the tradition of the Grand Tour, in which "time was of no account and neither was money" (xi). It is acceptable, if not fashionable, to be "on tour"; it is not so to be a tourist. As Ian Ousby explains, "actors, musicians, and lecturers make tours, and soldiers perform tours of duty, but we do not call them 'tourists' when they do so, since the word implies a leisure activity, incompatible with work or even seriousness of purpose" (18).

John Keats provides an echoing response: "candor compels me to say that the culture they [American travelers] enjoy on five dollars a day is *not* the culture of Europe; it is the universal culture of poverty with a foreign accent" (7). There are many respected travelers who would disagree. Laurie Lee left England for Spain in 1934 with nothing but a small knapsack and his violin; William Least Heat-Moon set out in his van across America with $428. Eric Hansen drifted through Southeast Asia in the early 1970s on a series of jobs such as "smuggling Chinese erasers from Tibet to North India" (ix).

Authors of travel books themselves are often very careful to let readers know they are in the company of a bona fide traveler. Aldous Huxley writes in the beginning of *Along the Road* (1925) that "[t]he fact is that very few travellers really like travelling. If they go to the trouble and expense of travelling, it is not so much from curiosity, for fun or because they like to see things beautiful and strange, as out of a kind of snobbery" (9–10). The reader senses instantly that Huxley is one of the "very few" but his admission takes a few pages. First comes another setup: "Your genuine traveller . . . is so much interested in real things that he does not find it necessary to believe in fables. He is insatiably curious, he loves what is unfamiliar for the sake of its unfamiliarity, he takes pleasure in every manifestation of beauty" (16). Then, at last, comes the confession which puts him squarely into the coveted ranks of the "genuine": "With me, travelling is frankly a vice. The temptation to indulge in it is one which I find almost as hard to resist as the temptation to read promiscuously, omnivorously and without purpose" (19–20).

Gabriel García Márquez at first seems to rise above tourist bashing, but quickly states that although he may sometimes act as a tourist because of time constraints, he is truly a traveler.

> I don't know where the shame of being a tourist comes from. I've heard many friends in full touristic swing say that they don't want to mix with other tourists, not realizing that even though they don't mix with them, they are just as much tourists as the others. When I visit a place and haven't enough time to get to know it more than superficially, I unashamedly assume my role as tourist. I like to join the lightning tours in which the guides explain everything you see out of the window—"On your right and left, ladies and gentlemen . . . "—one of the reasons being that then I know once and for all everything I needn't bother to see when I go out later on my own. (*Best of Granta* 3)

Jan Morris's article "Sick of the Tourist Roller-Coaster" is an excellent example of the linguistic and logical knots one can get tied up in when trying to forge the distinction "traveler" for oneself.

> I spend half my life traveling, and mass tourism pursues me wherever I go. *Pursues* you, you may object? Are you not a tourist too? Well, yes. Every traveller is a tourist of sorts, and as a writer about places I can justly be accused of encouraging tourism myself. But in really wishing, like most of us, that the opportunities of travel could be limited to a congenial few, I may be selfish. But I am not hypocritical. It is the volume of tourism, not tourism itself, that is making it a curse rather than a benefit to mankind. (21)

Yes, in fact, she is being hypocritical. By making her life-work the depiction of foreign places, Morris "encourages" tourism, only now to state that she wishes to limit the number of people who may travel. She, as one of the "congenial few," a shockingly self-serving designation, will not have *her* travel restricted.

As Dean MacCannell points out:

> The error of the anti-tourists is they tend to be one-sided and in bad faith. They point out the tawdry side of tourism and the ways it can spoil the human community, while hiding from themselves the essentially touristic nature of their own cultural expeditions to the "true" sights; their own favorite flower market in southern France, for example, or their favorite room in the National Gallery. . . . Anti-tourists are against these other tourists spoiling their own touristic enjoyments which they conceive in moralistic terms as a "right" to have a highly personalized and unimpeded access to culture and the modern social reality. (164)

MacCannell puts "true" in quotation marks because he rejects the premise that there is a difference between what the traveler sees and what the tourist sees. This is the fourth attempt at distinguishing between travelers and tourists. The argument has run as follows: travelers experience real hardships, know the language of the country they are visiting, and have enough money to take their time. Now we hear that travelers only go to "true" places. Tourists, by implication, go to "false" places. But who then decides what is "true" or not?

Fussell, with an arrogance similar to Morris's, relegates locations visited by tourists to a place outside of reality: "Costa del Sol is a pseudo-place . . . [t]he Algarve, in southern Portugal, is a prime pseudo-place . . . Switzerland has always been a pseudo-place" (43). MacCannell uses Goffman's structure of *front* and *back* to argue that there is no hierarchy of "authentic" experiences.

I agree with this viewpoint. I will not jump on the "authenticity" bandwagon, succinctly put as "you didn't see Rome if you didn't see the Tiber at sunrise, eat gelato at Piazzo Novana. . . . " Either you have been to Rome or not. Rome is big; it contains multiples. My father tells a story of when he and I first visited Rome; green Michelin guidebook in hand, we ventured up the steps on Capitoline Hill which lead to Michelangelo's Capitol Square. Ever desiring to improve my eleventh-grade appreciation of history, he read: "at the bottom of the steps on the left you will see a cage with a wolf symbolizing the legend of Rome's founding, as you reach the top of the stairs you observe the ancient equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius, a favorite of Michelangelo, and then the majestic Capitol Square unfolds with its three signature buildings." We looked with care—no wolf (the cage had not been used in years), no statue (it was off-site being restored), and the buildings were wrapped in scaffolding and green burlap (being restored on-site). Did this mean we had not "seen" Capitol Square?

The last argument put forth by various writers is that the time period in which people are traveling determines whether they are travelers or tourists. Toward the beginning of his book, Fussell presents the argument for the "when the person is traveling" distinction by sketching the historical constraints governing travelers and tourists:

> Before tourism there was travel, and before travel there was exploration. Each is roughly assignable to its own age in modern history: exploration belongs to the Renaissance, travel to the bourgeois age, tourism to our own proletarian moment. But there are obvious overlaps. What we recognize as tourism in its contemporary form was making inroads on travel as early as the mid-nineteenth century, when Thomas Cook got the bright idea of shipping sightseeing groups to the Continent, and though the Renaissance is over, there are still a few explorers. (38)

According to Fussell, then, the dominant option available to people alive now is tourism, as exemplified by Thomas Cook. Cook's travel company officially started on July 5, 1841, when Cook arranged for a train excursion for 570 people from Leicester to Loughborough and back. By 1877 the company had grown so much that when Amelia Edwards, whom we met above, arrives in Sakkarah, Cook's travelers are not simply familiar visitors; they are an economic force. Edwards writes: "[C]oncluding that Cook's party had arrived, every man, boy, and donkey in Bedreshayn and the neighboring village of Mitrahineh had turned out in hot haste and rushed down to the river; so that by the time breakfast was over there were steeds enough in readiness for all the English in Cairo" (47).

Yet Evelyn Waugh's introduction to his collection of travel pieces, *When the Going Was Good*, argues directly against the viewpoint that only tourism is currently possible: "There is no room for tourists in a world of 'displaced persons' " (9). Fussell posits tourism as the standard at the same historical moment Waugh takes away the option.

Lionel Casson further complicates Fussell's idea that tourism is a recent phenomenon by demonstrating in *Travel in the Ancient World* (1974) that there are clear signs of tourism in Egypt starting from circa 1500 B.C., in the form of organized groups of scribes visiting temples to collect souvenirs. Maxine Feifer in *Tourism in History: From Imperial Rome to the Present* states:

> Graffiti on the pyramid bases date back to the thirteenth century B.C.: in 1261 B.C. Ptah-Ewe wrote that he "came to contemplate the shadow of the Pyramids," [and] in 1244 it was scratched into stone that "Hadnakhte, scribe of the treasury, came to make an excursion and amuse himself on the west of Memphis." By the second century A.D. the paws of the Sphinx and the pyramid bases were densely covered with messages. (23)

The first tourist, according to Feifer, is Herodotus, because "he went everywhere, just to gratify his curiosity" (8). Robert Byron calls Alexander the Great a "tourist" at Cyrus's grave (169).

Thus the historical argument put forth by Fussell falls short. To say that "tourism [belongs] to our own proletarian moment" is to ignore a vast history (38). If one defines tourism as a single person or group of people visiting a new (to him/her/them) site for the purpose of contemplation, amusement, or the purchase of objects, the phenomenon has existed for almost twenty-five centuries and continues today.

If tourism, then, continues today and if it is not distinguishable from travel by a person's physical capabilities, linguistic knowledge, money, or location, is there any difference between travelers and tourists? Venturing into the thicket of definitions, I offer this: travelers make all the logistical decisions about their trip; tourists don't. A traveler, thus, is the active creator of the journey. Travelers may not necessarily want to be at that particular rat-infested hotel, but they recognize that the journey itself makes the bad parts, if there are any, worthwhile. This covers Redmond O'Hanlon in Borneo, Wilfred Thesiger in the Empty Quarter, Annie Taylor in Tibet, Lewis Gannett in America, without stooping to distinctions based on ruggedness, linguistics, class, location, or time period. Tourists, as I use the term without negative implications, follow someone else's agenda; they go, see, and learn as the tour guide, in the form of a person or book, sees fit. There is no need to get lost socially, physically, or linguistically as they have a structure in place to do the interpreting, arranging, or decoding for them. After years of traveling around the Mediterranean on his own, Lawrence Durrell decided to join a bus tour of Sicily, which became the basis for *Sicilian Carousel* (1977). He is a tourist, unabashedly following the orders of the guide, and if nothing else, this lovely book, full of mystical reminiscences and beautifully worked descriptions of Syracuse, Messina, and Palermo, should silence all lofty sneers about bus tours.

I believe W. Scott Olsen has the best idea. He writes in "A Tourist's Petition" that he hopes

> that someday we will all be Tourists. I do not mean to say that every one of us will in some fashion need to visit the places on our personal maps still labeled *terra incognita*, camera straps slung over our necks. Rather, it is my hope that we will recognize that coming home after a day at work is, in its essence, the same thing as walking a wilderness road for the first time. When I go home this evening, the light will have changed. . . . Tourism, in the good sense I want it to mean, does not begin with the first outbound plane ticket, or the second. Each day creates a new *terra incognita* out of the whole universe, each morning a new and unexplored venue for the Tourist. To be a Tourist in the way I mean is to learn a new way of seeing freshness, a way to value even the smallest and most perfunctory actions of our days. (73, 74)

Substituting "traveler" for "tourist" in the above passage would not change the meaning; the two terms are interchangeable, as I hope they soon will be in general usage.

NOTES

1. Newby offers a subtle, but delicious, rejoinder. The only picture of the "Great Explorer" in Newby's book has Thesiger lying in bed looking petulant, with blankets tucked in around him.

2. Turning to etymologies for support is a risky business. Maxine Feifer, in *Tourism in History*, claims that " 'tour' derives from 'tower' "; that "the trip is circular" and the traveler "ends up back where he started" (2). Ernest Weekly's *Etymological Dictionary of Modern English* (1967) lists:

> tour. F. (OF *tour*), from *tourner*, to turn (q.v.). In 17 cent. Esp. of the *grand tour*, through France, Germany, Switzerland and Italy, as conclusion of gentleman's education. Hence *tourist* (c. 1800). F. *tour* has also sense of feat, trick, etc., as in *tour de force*.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Best of Granta Travel. London: Viking, 1992.
Bryson, Bill. *The Lost Continent: Travels in Small Town America.* 1989. New York: HarperCollins, 1990.
——. *Neither Here nor There.* New York: Avon Books, 1992.
Byron, Robert. *The Road to Oxiana.* 1937. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.
Casson, Lionel. *Travel in the Ancient World.* Toronto: Hakkert, 1974.
Cocker, Mark. *Loneliness and Time: The Story of British Travel Writing.* New York: Pantheon Books, 1992.
Crichton, Michael. *Travels.* New York: Ballantine Books, 1988.
Durrell, Lawrence. *Sicilian Carousel.* 1976. New York: Viking Press, 1977.
——. *Spirit of Place: Letters and Essays on Travel.* New Haven: Leete's Island Books, 1969.
Edwards, Amelia. *A Thousand Miles up the Nile.* 1877. London: George Routeledge, 1891.
Feifer, Maxine. *Tourism in History: From Imperial Rome to the Present.* Briarcliff, NY: Stein and Day, 1986.
Fussell, Paul. *Abroad: British Literary Traveling between the Wars.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1980.
Hanbury-Tenison, Robin. *Worlds Apart: An Explorer's Life.* Boston: Little, Brown, 1984.
Hansen, Eric. *Motoring with Mohammed: Journeys to Yemen and the Red Sea.* 1991. New York: Vintage Departures, 1992.
Heat-Moon, William Least. *Blue Highways: A Journey into America.* 1982. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1991.
Huxley, Aldous. *Along the Road: Notes and Essays of a Tourist.* New York: George H. Doran, 1925.

Keats, John. *See Europe Next Time You Go There.* Boston: Little, Brown, 1968.
Lee, Laurie. *As I Walked Out One Midsummer Morning.* 1969. New York: Penguin, 1971.
MacCannell, Dean. *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class.* New York: Schocken Books, 1976.
Maghut, Muhammad al-. "Tourist." Trans. May Jayyusi and John Heath-Stubbs. *The Bedford Introduction to Literature.* Ed. Michael Meyer. Boston: Bedford Books, 1990. 883–884.
Markham, Beryl. *West with the Night.* 1942. New York: North Point Press, 1993.
Meyer, Michael. *The Bedford Introduction to Literature.* Boston: Bedford Books, 1990.
Montaigne, Michel. *Montaigne's Travel Journal.* Trans. Donald Frame. San Francisco: North Point Press, 1983.
Morris, Jan. "Sick of the Tourist Roller-Coaster." *The Independent* 9 Dec. 1987: 21.
Newby, Eric. *A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush.* 1958. London: Picador, 1974.
Olsen, W. Scott. "A Tourist's Petition." *North Dakota Quarterly* Winter 1996: 67–75.
Ousby, Ian. *The Englishman's England: Taste, Travel and the Rise of Tourism.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
Perelman, S. J. "*But I Wouldn't Want to Live There!*" Eds. Michael Cader and Lisa Cader. Philadelphia: Running Press, 1993.
Rapoport, Roger, and Marguerita Castanera, eds. *I Should Have Stayed Home: The Worst Trips of Great Writers.* Berkeley: Book Passage Press, 1994.
Reid, Alastair. *Whereabouts: Notes on Being a Foreigner.* San Francisco: North Point Press, 1987.
Rosenthal, A. M., and Arthur Gelb. *The Sophisticated Traveler: Great Tours and Detours.* New York: Villard, 1985.
Warnock, John. *Representing Reality: Readings in Literary Nonfiction.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989.
Waugh, Evelyn. *When the Going Was Good.* 1934. Boston: Little, Brown, 1984.
Weekly, Ernest. *An Etymological Dictionary of Modern English.* Vol. 2. 1921. New York: Dover, 1967.

~

Childhood and Travel Literature

DAVID ESPEY

CHILDREN ARE conspicuously absent from travel literature. Literary travel is an adult activity, and travel writers are solitary figures. If they have children, they rarely take them along for the trip. In popular culture, the subject of travel with children yields farces like Chevy Chase's *Family Vacation* movies—not really about travel, but rather a low form of tourism.

Real travel, as travel writers continually remind us, is no vacation. They constantly defend themselves against the accusation that travel and travel writing, since they traffic in the world of leisure and holidays, are not serious. "Travel is work," Paul Fussell argues in his essay "The Stationary Tourist." "Etymologically a traveler is one who suffers *travail*" (235).

Children would render impossible the work of serious travel writers like Jonathan Raban, the late Bruce Chatwin, or Paul Theroux. Picture Raban going down the Mississippi in his fragile boat with child in tow, or Chatwin in the wilds of Patagonia or the Australian outback. They could not function as writing travelers without complete freedom and solitude. In *The Happy Isles of Oceania* (1992), Theroux recounts how the family-minded Pacific Islanders call to him, "Where is your wife?" when they see him alone in his one-man kayak.

Most wives of travel writers are at home with the children. Perhaps that is one reason why there are fewer women travel writers than men. Mary Morris, who has written travel books about Mexico and a trans-Siberian rail journey, postponed marriage and childbearing and escaped the fate of her mother. In an essay entitled "Women and Journeys: Inner and Outer," Morris describes how her mother "used to buy globes and maps and plan dream journeys she'd never take while her 'real life' was ensconced in the PTA, the Girl Scouts, suburban lawn parties, and barbecues" (26).

Children are part of that very world of home from which the travel writer must escape—the world of domestic obligation, the routine, the family, and the familiar.