Travelling writing, writing travelling: the text as journey, the journey as text

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PART TWO

TRAVELLING WRITING
2.1

THE JOURNEY AS TEXT

'A man sets himself the task of portraying the world. Through the years he peoples a space with images of provinces, kingdoms, mountains, bays, ships, islands, fishes, rooms, instruments, stars, horses and people. Shortly before his death, he discovers that patient labyrinth of lines traces the image of his face.'

Jorge Luis Borges

'The world is a book; he who stays at home reads only one page.'

Augustine
The road as text (the metaphor as metaphor)

'Your gaze scans the streets as if they were written pages: the city says everything you must think, makes you repeat her discourse, and while you believe you are visiting [the city of] Tamara you are only recording the names with which she defines herself and all her parts.'

Italo Calvino
Invisible Cities

In this chapter I intend to examine the main image/s of this paper, 'the journey as text' and 'the text as journey,' and some of the implications of those ideas. I stress that it is not possible to neatly separate the notions of 'journey as text' (the road as code) and 'text as journey' (the code as road). The Rorschach mirroring of one in the other generates problems in reading. As 'logothetes' (creators of the world through language), we soon hit a loop: which synecdoche precedes which metonym, 'the word' (as book/text) or 'life' (as road/journey)?

Travelling and writing are both processes. Travelling is done upon a surface, the path over which is often called a 'road', whether any such identifiable marking or structure exists or not. The condition of travelling is often referred to as being 'on the road'. The process of writing too implies a surface, upon which marks are made - signs which thereafter may be read. This written/read surface may be called 'a text.' If the surface to which we refer is a road, then the traveller upon it might be likened to a writer/reader of the road-as-text. Therefore we are not dealing one-dimensionally with terms (the road as a road, the text as a text, and the traveller as a writer of travel writings), but also with the flux of metaphor: of the road as a set of signs to be read, written over (like pentimenti) and transcribed from the text of the road to the page of the text; and with writings on/about the world (as a site or in a book) as texts to be travelled. (And, all this occurring within what Barthes calls 'the Utopia of language.')
'What therefore is truth?' asked Neitzsche (in the essay *On truth and lie in an extra-moral sense*) and then went on to answer his own 'Dorothy Dixer': 'A mobile army of metaphors, metonymies, anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which become poetically and rhetorically intensified, metamorphosed, adorned, and after long usage, seem to be a nation, fixed, canonic and binding ...' My use of the idea of 'the road as text' as used here is not a binding one, a figure of 'truth,' but simply a foregrounded figure of speech and thought (over which, no doubt, that 'mobile army of metaphors, metonymies, anthropomorphisms' swarms). It is something by which (as Pythagoras said) 'Limit gives form to the limitless.'

Literalism, it has been said, is idolatory. In speaking metaphorically of 'the road as text,' I am wary that the phrase may sounds like an attempt to join in the Famous Utterance Stakes an analogue such as Lacan's 'the unconscious is structured like a language'. I am sceptical of the reductionist (or nomothetic) impulse to view all systems of communication as directly analogous to linguistic structures, and, by extension, the ensemble of signs within those systems as being like (if not the same as) written texts. The idea of the 'road as text' as used here is a ludic, slightly poetic gambit and does not claim respectability from linguistics or other modelling systems. Consequently, and without offering further explanation, I then permit myself some slippage in terminology, from 'the road as text' to 'the journey as text'.

The notion of 'the road as text' is hardly new. The Greek word *logos* illuminatingly brings together in a single concept two 'inward rational principles,' that of the verbal text and of the natural universe. Significantly, *logos* also combines these meanings with a further meaning: 'the Law.' (Harland, '87:146) In Judeo-Christian religious terminology 'the Law' is frequently synonymous with both 'the Way' and 'the Word', while in Islam, '... II-Rah, "The Way" was first used as a technical term for "road" or "migration path" - before being adopted by Sufi mystics to denote "the Way to God."' (Chatwin, '87:200) (The Greek word *nomos* means both 'the law' and 'territorial division', and from it we get *nomas*, 'roaming' - like cattle - and 'nomad'.) The metonymic linkage between 'way' and 'law' is
also found in the Central Australian languages where '... tjurma djugurba' means "the footprints of the Ancestor" and "the Way of the Law". (loc cit) Thus: the word as the way - or, the text as the road.

Anthropologist Edmund Carpenter, in Oh, What a Blow that Phantom Gave Me, writes that, 'It was commonplace in Scholasticism that God created two books: the world and the sacred Scriptures. Life was thought to follow the format of the book and the book became the organizing principle for all experience. Consequently, the book encouraged a habit of thought that divided experience into specialized units and organized these serially and causally' (76:43) (Which lends a new slant to the collective identification of Jews, Christians and Moslems as 'The People of the Book'.) Life, as the most ancient of all metaphors insists, is a journey. (And, as travel writer Johnathan Raban notes, '... the travel book, in its deceptive simulation of the journey's fits and starts, rehearses life's own fragmentation.' [87:254]) In his study of British literary travelling between the wars, Abroad, Paul Fussell proposes that '... the root metaphor of human imaginative experience [is] the figure of time rendered as space'; and moreover that, if life is a journey, '... then literary accounts of journeys take us very deeply into the center of instinctive imaginative life.' (80:210) Like no other kind of writing, says Fussell, '... travel books exercise and exploit the fundamental intellectual and emotional figure of thought, by which the past is conceived as back and the future as forward.' (loc cit) In short, the road of time is rendered as the space of text. In his own epitaph, Robert Louis Stevenson employed this figure of his life as a journey (that of the hunter or sailor), with death as its rewarding destination:

'... Glad did I live and gladly die,
and laid me down with a will.
This be the verse you grave for me:
Here he lies where he longed to be,
Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.'

Travel accounts, as Fussell notes, manipulate this 'essential trope' (the alliance between temporal and spatial) which we use in
order to orient ourselves in time, by invoking the dimension of space: 'That is, travel books make more or less conscious an activity usually unconscious ... Works we recognise as somehow "classical" derive much of their status and authority from their open exploitation of this metaphor.' (ibid:211) This striving for 'essential' metaphors of existence is probably as old as literature itself: 'When I was a young man,' says Borges, 'I was always hunting for new metaphors. Then I found out that good metaphors are always the same. I mean you compare time to a road, death to sleeping, life to dreaming, and those are the great metaphors in literature because they correspond to something essential.' (in Fussell, loc cit)

'However, if the world is a book, each book is the world and this innocent tautology has terrifying consequences,' writes Maurice Blanchot in The Siren's Song. Perhaps he should have said 'if each book is a world ...' - not the complete picture - for then comes the vertiginous catch of metaphor in which, as Blanchot continues, '... there is nothing on which to rely. The world and the book eternally and infinitely mirror their own reflected images. This endless ability to reflect, this boundless, scintillating multiplication ... is now all we shall find at the dizzy end of our quest for understanding. Then, if the book is a replica of the world we must assume that the world is not merely the outcome of creativity but equally that of the powerful ability to fake, feign and mislead from which all works of fiction necessarily derive - the more so when this ability is more carefully concealed. Fictions and Artefacts will thus be the frankest title an author can give to his works.' ('82:223)

This dilemma - what is solid, what is air? - is as old as metaphor. After all, it was a Taoist view to regard the reality of imagination and dreams as no less real than what is usually called, by contrast, "reality"." The philosopher Chaung Chou (4th/3rd century B.C.) dreamt he was a butterfly, but when he awoke stated that he did not know whether he had dreamt he was a butterfly, or whether he was now a butterfly dreaming he was Chuang Chou. (in Cooper,'74:36) Fictional accounts are indeed literary 'artefacts', as Blanchot suggests - as are 'factual' accounts. However, I am not prepared to relegate all 'factual' travel narratives to the status of 'falsehoods' on the strength of Blanchot's dubious metaphoric
syllogism which says that 'if the world is a book, each book is the world', and thus that world (like the books within it) must be faked, feigned and misleading.

**A metaphor towards meaning**

'Days and months are travellers of eternity. So are the years that pass by. Drifting life away on a boat or meeting age leading a horse by the mouth, each day is journey and the journey itself home.'

Matsuo Basho  
*Narrow Road to the Deep North*

'Literature and travel are anciently, inevitably tangled. Journeys suggest stories, stories take the form of journeys - odysseys, exoduses, pilgrims' and rakes' progresses.'

Johnathan Raban  
*For Love and Money*

Basho and Raban make it clear that during the process of writing, writers may consciously or unconsciously enter engage such symbolic notions as 'the journey/road of life as story/text'. The journey then assumes (at least) three dimensions: the events of the journey, what the narrator choses to make of them and the resultant text. 'A novel is a mirror carried along a roadway.' said Stendahl, suggesting an easy one-way conduit of referent-to-sign signification. However, the boundaries and precedence between the road and the text have often blurred, with signifier, signified and referent taking precedence over each other at different times.

In his essay *Eternal Maps and Temporal Voyages*, William C. Spengemann outlines the changing privileging, within the travel narrative, of meaning over description: 'Once an impersonal affirmation of beliefs which the traveller shared with his audience, and then a statement of conclusions drawn from his own personal
experience, travel-writing became a way for the traveller to extract meaning from his experiences, not just for the edification of his readers, but for his own understanding of the world and the self created by his travels.' (74:3) At this point travel writing arrived at '... the threshold of Romanticism, the point where the act of composition becomes even more important than the travel it reports' and in terms of the creation of truth, the 'writing is no less an experience than travel.' (loc cit) Spengemann then observes that for the Romantics, travel writing '... ceased to be part of conclusions which the traveller formulates prior to the act of writing, or even an analysis of prior experiences for their possible meaning, and became a mode of travel in its own right.' (ibid:4) The text as journey, no less. At which point one is again stuck by the realisation of the omnivorous intertextuality of what Roland Barthes described as '... the impossibility of living outside the infinite text - whether the text be Proust or the daily newspaper or the television screen: the book creates the meaning, the meaning creates life.'

The recurrent notion (as expressed in narrative) of existence as a journey towards meaning enjoys an unflagging longevity. In the 20th century, the journey proper replaced the romantic interior journey or flight of creativity as the stuff of literature which was both popular and serious. The travel writers of the '30s bridged and combined their interior and external excursions, turning them, as one critic noted, '... into interior journeys and parables of their times, making landscape and incident - the factual materials of reportage - do the work of symbol and myth - the materials of fable.' (Samuel Hynes, in Fussell, '80:215) And, as the journey was '... the most insistent of 'thirties metaphors, ... one might say that the travel books simply act out, in the real world, the basic trope of the generation.' (Fussell, loc cit)

Acting out this trope, notes Fussell, is the essential act of both travelling and writing about it. (loc cit) He makes much of this point: that successful modern travel books effect a '... triumphant mediation between two different dimensions': individual physical things, and universal significance. The travel book '... authenticates itself by the sanction of actualities' - trains, food, hotels, bizarre customs, odd people, etc. - while simultaneously reaching in the
opposite direction, '... most often to the generic convention that the travelling must be represented as something more than travelling, that it shall assume a meaning either metaphysical, psychological, artistic, religious, or political, but always ethical. A travel book is like a poem in giving universal significance to a local texture.' ('80:214)

In theory ...

'The Japanese are so coarse that they don't know what to call things except by their real names.'

19th century French traveller

In recent theory, humanist notions of 'the meaning of life,' or essentialist notions that there is any a priori, un-constructed 'meaning' at all, have been rendered unfashionable. Such ideas as 'life as a journey towards meaning,' with its ontological or teleological implication of a transcendental signifier, have been reduced to simple paroles, utterances among the general field of all others in the langue at large. We must now strip the metaphors of 'life-as-xxx' or 'the road-as-xxx' of previous metaphysical significances and discuss them in terms of linguistic devices. (Ironically, while the door of one form of transcendental significance has closed, that of another, a transcendent linguistic significance - 'xxx-as-text', and 'text-as-all' - remains defiantly ajar.)

In the contemporary context, 'Culture' (and all who sail within her) is seen as '... the constant and complex process by which meanings are made and shared'. (Fiske et al,'87:x) The 'texts' through which this process works extend far beyond the printed page to include deliberately constructed artefacts such as buildings, townscapes and, dare I add, roads. The road may be seen by some semioticians as, literally, a text. The idea also goes deeper. In Superstructuralism. Richard Harland glosses Jacques Derrida's general theory of Writing, which '... argues that the unconscious
mind underlies the conscious mind, and that the unconscious mind exists in the form of Writing. This is Writing as "arche-writing", a fundamental script or hieroglyphics written upon the matter of the brain.' (87:142) With Derrida, '... language constitutes the human world and the human world constitutes the whole world ... Derrida has expanded his theory of language into a philosophy of the world as language. Only now, of course, language and world are to be conceived in terms of Writing rather than in terms of "langue". When Derrida displaces objective things and subjective ideas from their traditional priority, it is Writing that he puts ahead of them.' (ibid:140) Thus, it might now be said that the road is both metaphorically a text and - along with the road, the journey and everything else - non-metaphorically a part of the infinite text of 'arche-writing'.

The journey (the world) as text

'I had never seen a city which was so literally legible. It stretched all around my feet, an enormous code in three dimensions. If I half-closed my eyes I almost thought that I could read it ... You could look at the walls ... and see that they coalesce into a single, simple statement: that the world is infinitely complex, illegible, fraught with paradox, that it offers endless temptations to the gnostic to decode it, and that over the whole mad whirligig of contradictory meanings rides the endless looping signature of Allah.'

Johnathan Raban
Arabia

The Derridaen idea of the precedence of Writing is a philosophical path down which this paper cannot progress further. Alongside it is another, more tangible idea which concerns writing in a different sense, the naming of those aspects and features which appear on the text of the journey. Of the early exploration and description of Australia, Paul Carter, in his book The Road to Botany Bay notes that, '... the cultural place where spatial history begins [is]
... in the act of naming. For by the act of place-naming, space is transformed symbolically into a place, that is, a space with a history. And, by the same token, the namer inscribes his passage permanently on the world, making a metaphorical word-place which others may one day inhabit ...' ('87:xxiv) In a reflection reminiscent of Fussell's proposition that 'the root metaphor of human imaginative experience [is] the figure of time rendered as space', Carter takes the generality of 'space' and focusses it to the specific 'track' of the naming-writing explorer: '... in travel writing, the object is neither geographical nor geological. It is rather, to constitute space as a track. The life of this space resides in succession, in the demonstration that its parts link up, looking forward and backwards along the orientation of the journey.' (ibid:76) The track almost becomes a graphic (or orthographic) entity: literally a 'tract', written and spatial, textual and terrestrial. Here, '... the journal is not primarily a description of the country, but a symbolic representation of track-making.' (ibid:173) This is the journal as journey (and vice versa); and the convergence is not only etymological. At this point the conflations of that which is named (the journey, the tract) with that which names it (the journal, the tract) becomes very acute, which Carter resolves firstly by noting that, 'For Aborigines, to travel a country is to tell it, to represent it to oneself,' and then, 'Here the idea of spatial history is a tautology. Travelling and story-telling are inseparable from each other.' (ibid:346)

We inhabit a world which has been mapped by stories. If the 'world', or at least a journey upon part of it, may be considered as a synecdochial 'text,' the inscription of that text takes place at different levels - and times. Carter's observations about first-time 'naming rights' by colonial explorers are appropriate to that enterprise, the transformation of 'nameless' space into named, imperial place-text - that is, into land contextualized as a map. However, most travellers (i.e., those who follow well after the primary explorers) do not 'nominate' the world in such a functional sense as their pioneer predecessors. Instead, theirs is a discretionary naming of ephemera, incident, abstracts and trivia. Johnathan Raban's reading/writing of an Arabian city as 'an enormous code in three dimensions,' while a convenient metaphoric
example of 'world as text' is also representative of the travel writer's naming options. His response is discretionary and not predetermined by the object's function: there is no imperative for him to 'name' (in order to claim) or even to mention that particular view. It is worth noting that much travel writing is 'travel writing-up' and that the text emerges in retrospect. The journey narrative is a text shaped in hindsight, similar to the way in which written history is, as George Steiner says, 'a language-net thrown backwards.'

By contrast to this 'retromorphous' processing, the journey itself, at least as long as it is actually taking place is, according to Raban, '... the exact opposite of a story. It is a shapeless, unsifted, endlessly shifting accumulation of experience.' (87:246) Travelling is a plotless (though not necessarily planless), disordered and chaotic affair, whereas '... writing insists on connection, order, plot, signification. It may take a year or more to see that there was any point to the thing at all, and more years still to make it yield an articulate story. Memory, not the notebook, holds the key.' (ibid:247) So, the world/journey/road as a narrative text is always a deferred version of a prior text. When it does emerge, it is frequently coy about its own delayed gestation: 'There is a convention of guileless immediacy about literary travel books, a long established pretence that the travelling and the writing are part and parcel of each other.' (loc cit)

The specific activities of travelling and writing may or may not not be part and parcel of each other, but we return to the idea that life and writing are. In her essay Panorama, Meagan Morris identifies what she sees as a reiterated 19th century aesthetic cliche which is now so widely dispersed in that it functions automatically: '... the theory that writing "captures" life - and so must be in some sense separate from, and perhaps inimical to, that life.' (88b:176) She views the cliche as functioning in certain Australian travel texts not '... only to disavow the effects that journalism produces in the real that it reports (the descriptive alibi), but also to ensure that writing can be guaranteed a perpetual, impossible quest - for the perfect description, the full story, the 'living' characters of history.'
In this sense, she levels the additional accusation that "Copy" re-motivates travel.' (loc cit)

The text as journey

I have proposed that writing this paper, 'covering the ground' of its subject matter, might be likened to travelling its text as a journey. In a different sense the idea of 'text as a journey' can be understood to mean that most (if not all) journeys are preceded by a foreknowledge of at least some aspects of the terrain, culture, etc. to be encountered. Not necessarily Baudrillard's 'precession of the simulacrum,' but an anticipation and preconditioning which determines to an extent both the shape of the journey and the experiencing of the destination. I wish to discuss briefly this idea in reference to one recurrent literary-topographic trope, 'the desert.' The comments could apply equally to 'mountains', 'Marrakesh' or 'up the Limpopo.'

"The desert" is always a pre-existing pile of texts and documents, fantasies, legends, jokes and other people's memories, a vast imaginary hinterland [of] which most coastal dwellers like to dream ...' writes Meaghan Morris in The Pirate's Fiancee ('88a:140) It is already 'con-text-ualised.' As with most destinations, desert descriptions are never innocent of cultural reference. Consequently, '... the myth of the inland precedes any deliberate act of seeing it with one's own eyes. In this, no doubt, it is like any other tourist attraction; the myth motivates and structures the visitor's vision of the land. (ibid:142) In this sense then the text is the journey (and vice versa). That is, texts (in general) may so precondition the traveller's expectations that, no matter how diligent the intention to 'penetrate' all that has been said beforehand of a destination, escape from the web of prior signification is impossible. ('The "unclouded", "innocent" eye has become a lie.' said Walter Benjamin ['78:19]) The travel writer's textual burden is doubly amplified (beyond the freight of past texts) by his/her self-conscious role; a place must be experienced as text-to-be. For him, a double barrelled myth of pristineness is to be activated - the fresh eye driving the fresh pen.
There may also be, according to Morris, a negative motion at work here. The 'myth' (in her terms, of the desert, but equally applicably, of the mountain, lake or city) '... attracts quests, produces the travel patterns of voyagers in search of special realities, evidence, or some new vision. But the enduring seductiveness of the myth resides in the reversibility of its meanings. The inland is also repulsive; an image of a natural dreariness, dullness, desolation and monotony which slowly encroaches upon settlements, and spreads its emptiness by contagion to culture.' ('88a:146) Either way, it seems that the over-writing of anything fresh on this pre-cribed surface (redolent of an 'it is written' fatalism) is, according to Morris's stance, gloomily foreclosed: 'The wanderer, artist, tourist who goes there repeats the great itineraries of the predecessors, follows the broken lines on the map of a trip which has already been made.' (ibid:149)

It is only in William C. Spengemann's meditation on travel texts that I can find a way out of this semiotic box canyon. He writes that in Pound's 59th Canto, the poet says that '... reality - of which his poem is a part, not a reflection - must be apprehended "not as land looks on a map/But as seaboard seen by men sailing."' Both the world and the poem are to be experienced in time, as a traveller views the landscape which unfolds before him as he moves across it. 'Reality does not precede experience, either in the external world or in the mind ... It consists in the endless dialogue between the mind and the objects of experience, actual or imagined.' ('74:1) That is (in my Romantic interpretation), Spengemann (and Pound) are suggesting that one ought not to travel and ought not to write as though the text of the world was a pre-ordained inshala'Allah, nor to assume an ingenuous exemption from the traces of the infinite world of text, but to permit the infinite variety of permutations of those recombinant textual traces (the palimpsest of change) to suggest, read and write the world into being, afresh. Not so much 'life imitates art', but 'life initiates art.'
The writer as written

'A sedentary life is the real sin ... Only those thoughts that come when you are walking have any value.'  Neitzsche

'I am afoot with my vision ...'  Walt Whitman, *Song of Myself*

'... for me travel is a literary experiment that the writer conducts on himself.'  Johnathan Raban ('89:3)

'The Moving Finger writes and having writ moves on ...'  Fitzgerald's *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*

'The plot (of Raban's *Old Glory*) ... written by the current of the river itself.'  Percy G. Adams ('83:283)

'All I have to do is to lay back in the reverie of motion, ... a mobile tape-head humming down the endless magnetic strip of Highway One, simultaneously in "Record" and "Replay," feeling the ten-thousand images of the journey inscribe themselves somewhere within me, singing me on and on.'  Jack Ho ('87:11)

'A Sufi manual, the *Kashf-al-Mahjub*, says that, towards the end of his journey, the dervish becomes the Way not the wayfarer, that is, a place over which something is passing, not a traveller following his own free will.'  Bruce Chatwin ('87:179)
2.2.

TRAVEL WRITING: ASPECTS

'After we learn "to be" and "to have" in a new language, we learn "to go".'

Mary B. Campbell

The Witness and the Other World

'Since "reality" does not exist in itself, we create it - with the result that each society and each age has different versions of what 'reality' might be. This makes the tourist experience a voyage through many different "dreamlands". Most of the sights we see as we pass through Europe in our hundreds of thousands are relics of previous declarations of reality - discarded "dreamlands".'

Donald Horne

The Great Museum
Genre and general

Travellers of all kinds generate travel narratives of all kinds, which are read by all kinds of travellers and non-travellers. Thus, I will go to some length to sketch the producers and consumers of this literature, so that the emphasis is not only upon the text as an artefact or product but as something located in the interstices of travelling, writing and reading. But first, a pressing task is to consider a definition of travel writing. It has been written that travel writing/literature/narrative is, variously:

- 'a genre that invites transgression of narrative modes ... the work here sits easily between fiction and fact, between the story and the travelogue, between dramatisation and diary entry.' (Rosemary Creswell, Home and Away, '87.ix)

- '[not] a genre, but rather ... a metaphor or archetypal pattern, whose appeal and ultimate claim to artistic stature is its ancient and universal theme of the journey of life.' (Martin Day, in Shatton, Travel Writing Victorian and Modern, '82:151)

- 'a genre composed of other genres, as well as one that importantly contributed to the genesis of the modern novel and the renaissance of autobiography.' (Mary B. Campbell, The Witness and the Other World, '88:6)

- 'not so much ... a genre, but as a kind of phenomenological ground on which we can explore the relations of social man (which, it makes us see, is a tautology) with the world.' (Ruth Blair, (in"In Transit" - Travel Narrative as a Habit of Mind ... '86:260)

- 'fundamentally ... about encounters with that which is outside the self, and [since] all such encounters are mediated, the distinction between "real" and "imaginary" voyages becomes of little account ...' (Ruth Blair, ibid:26)

- 'a kind of first-person narrative, or at least a second-person narrative (as in the travel guide).' (Mary B. Campbell, ibid:5)

- 'not "specialised autobiography" any more than ... it is "geography".' (Percy G. Adams, Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel, '83:162)
If, as Ruth Blair argues, 'travel is a multi-valent idea' ('86:260), it is hardly surprising that the literature which it generates refuses to present a stable entity for generic categorisation. Janis P. Stout (in The Journey Narrative in American Literature: Patterns and Departures) writes, 'The simple journey or road narrative is one of the most ancient of storytelling forms.' ('83:13) Marjorie Hope Kalter, in Metaphorical Quest: modern European quest novels and their tradition notes that the journey motif recurs in the history of world literature, dating back to The Epic of Gilgamesh, the Old Testament and Homer's Odyssey. Scholes and Kellogg point out (in The Nature of Narrative) that the traveller's tale or lie is a 'persistent oral form in all cultures'. ('66:73) However, as Billy T. Tracy notes, 'Although travel books have a tradition older than that of the novel, criticism has not yet developed a methodology for analysing travel literature and so has tended to disregard it. Part of the difficulty has been the hybrid nature of the genre.' ('83:2)

A number of commentators have noted the generic minestrone of travel writing. Employing the metaphor of a different service industry, Jonathan Raban (in For Love and Money) describes travel writing as '... a notoriously raffish open house where very different genres are likely to end up in the same bed.' In accommodating the private diary, essay, short story and prose poem, as well as 'rough note and polished table talk,' it freely mixes narrative and discursive writing. ('87:253) Raban continues: 'It is the supreme improvisatory form: one can play it by ear; it will happily accommodate all sorts and conditions of writing. At its occasional best it works like a constellation, with autobiography, essays, stories, reportage mingling together in a single controlled blaze. More often it has the casual freedom of the scrapbook, into which any old thing can be pasted at will ... ' (ibid:281) To this list, Paul Fussell (in Abroad) adds the complex, adjacent forms of war memoir, comic novel, quest romance, picaresque romance and pastoral romance. ('80:206) Within particular periods in its evolution, travel literature reveals differing emphases in function. For example, Fussell offers the interesting (but unsubstantiated) proposition that between-the-wars British travel books even served as '... a subtle instrument of ethics, replacing such former vehicles as sermons and essays.' (ibid:204)
By definition

Ruth Blair observes that, 'Beyond the quest, travel narratives seem to be uncharted waters in literary studies, lapping around the edges of other genres.' ('86:260). Further than such generalisms, travel literature appears to defy the search for essential attributes, and attempts at definition soon collapses into discussion of general characteristics.

The majority of comment clusters around the duality, and subsequent interaction, between writer and the referential world. 'Successful travel writing mediates between two poles: the individual physical things it describes, on the one hand, and the larger theme that it is about, on the other.' says Paul Fussell (in Garfinkle,'88:9). Ruth Blair replaces the abstraction of Fussell's 'the larger theme' with the more basic idea of 'the individual,' the writer him/herself, although she then widens the notion of the writer (as 'individual perceiver') to encompass his frame of social reference as well. She writes, '... primarily, voyage narratives are about the transactions between the individual and what lies outside him or herself; they are, therefore, by extension, about society and its other. They are, as Northrop Frye describes the utopia, "an effort at social imagination". Hence, though there is necessarily an individual perceiver, the emphasis of the narrative does not fall on the individual in and for him or herself. When one encounters something outside one's usual frame of reference, one encounters it through the frame, as a social being.' ('86:262) (It should be noted that as a social being, the writer of travel narratives must deal much more with the 'real' than with the Utopian.) For Blair, the role of the individual perceiver in a travel narrative is tied to a 'preoccupation with encounters,' (loc cit) and to write about travel '... is not simply to mirror physical displacement but to engage in a particular kind of dialogue with the world.' (ibid:274) Caroline B. Brettell (in Introduction: Travel Literature, Ethnography, and Ethnohistory) focusses upon this engagement between writer and subject: '... travel accounts are fundamentally about situations of contact and it is perhaps the point of intersection between observer and those observed which should receive the most attention.' ('86b:133) Brettell stresses that travel accounts are quite different
from ethnographies, which, she says, '... self consciously attempt to describe with reference to the native point of view and attempt to eliminate (new experimental ethnographies excepted) any notion of contact.' (loc cit)

Definition of travel literature by theme is equally problematic. Rosemary Creswell in her introduction to a collection of recent Australian travel writing (Home and Away) writes that '... it is not easy to classify the themes of this [travel] writing, although some emerge with a certain clarity - perhaps the most obvious of which is sexual adventure. Exotic places seem to provide the setting, and perhaps the opportunity through cultural freedom or dislocation, for exotic sexual and emotional experience.' ('87.ix) The travel writers in her collection are seen as 'cartographers of the hearts and the mind and the spirit.' (ibid.x) Definition by now has opened out to include a very wide range of material and approaches, which establishes travel literature a fertile site for investigations of all sorts. As Ruth Blair evaluates travel literature, '... because of the way it deals with encounters, it becomes a significant site upon which to ponder some fundamental questions of social man.' ('86:261) (By contrast, Billy T. Tracy's de-valuation, that travel books '... in most instances were written for money and not out of psychological necessity,' ('83:2) seems both elitist and imperceptive - and in any case, is not sustained by evidence offered to that end.)

Terminology

'The literature of travel is gigantic; it has a thousand forms and faces,' says Percy G. Adams ('83:281). Combining elements of autobiography, reportage, comedy and simple story-telling - and much more - it is not, as we have seen, a simple, definable genre. (Nor for that matter is 'the novel', which also is not easily defined.) 'Geneticists like Tallmadge will call it a 'genre' and yet, as Swift and Fielding did, make it a category of "history"," writes Adams, (ibid:279) who then retorts, correctly, that travel writing is '... not a branch of history any more than it is of geography.' (ibid:280)

In the Australian context, Margriet Bonnin (in A Study of Australian Descriptive Travel Writing, 1929-1945) says that '... the
genre ... has been described at various times as landscape writing, travel writing, descriptive writing, frontier writing, and several combinations of these labels. I have chosen to call the class of writing "descriptive and travel" because I believe it best covers the diverse styles and methods employed by the writers.' (80:2) The term 'descriptive and travel' is an omnibus term, appropriate in the context of Bonnin's Australian literature thesis, but the term, like the vehicle itself, is unwieldy.

Some commentators, Fussell notes, use the term travelogues. 'Others, more literary, render that term travel logs, apparently thinking of literal, responsible daily diaries, like ships' logs ... Even [E. M.] Forster is uncertain what to call these things. In 1941 he calls them travelogues, in 1949 travel books.' (80:202-3) British author Osbert Sitwell considered the essayistic element in the travel book and coined another term, 'discursion', and thereafter used it in his titles Discursions on Travel, Art and Life (1925) and Winters of Content and Other Discursions on Mediterranean Art and Travel (1950). 'Discursions is a word of my own minting, coined from discourse and discursive, and designed to epitomize the manner in which a traveller formulates his loose impressions ...' (in Fussell, '80:204)

One term frequently used in literary criticism and almost nowhere else (at least in the English language) is récit de voyage. Favoured as a specialist term as it may be, it runs into the familiar 'leakage' of category and characteristics. In a process of definition by elimination or negation, Adams (In Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel) says the récit de voyage is:

'... not just an exploration report like that of Columbus or John Smith or James Cook.' (83:281)

'... not a complete record of a journey but, as with any type of art, often carefully selective when the writer considers what to record or comment on.' (loc cit)

'... [not] a literary genre with a fixed definition any more than the novel is; it is not even sui generis since it includes so many
types both by form and by content. For, like other forms just as amorphous, it evolves and will continue to evolve. (ibid:282)

Nor, says Adams, is the récit de voyage

- just a first-person journal or diary. Much of it is in third person.

- just in prose. There are many poetic travel accounts, from Horace ... to Basho to Bachaumont and beyond, and travel literature is often beautifully illustrated.

- necessarily a story with a simple, uncontrived plot, as Defoe's Tour evidences.

- just a set of notes jotted down each day or whenever the traveller has time ... but far, far more often the account has been reworked, changed in translation, polished, edited often with collaboration. In fact, nearly every récit de voyage published in the author's lifetime is not a pristine journal or set of notes, a fact that for the twentieth century is perhaps even more true.

- just an objective report, a description, of places and people seen, of inns visited, food eaten; much more often it is a subjective interpretation "observations" is a favourite term of scenes and of political, religious and social events or situations. (ibid:280)

So far, in this chapter we have encountered the following terms:

landscape writing
travel writing
descriptive writing,
frontier writing
descriptive and travel writing
travelogue
travel log
travel book
récit de voyage
discursion.
To these may be added:
travel narrative
travel account
travel story
travel literature
(... if not more)

I find Sitwell's term 'discursion' to be inventively appropriate for such a freely mutating, 'excursive' form as the account of a journey; unfortunately, as a neologism which failed to achieve acceptance into common parlance, its usage would function as more of a distraction to the reader than a un-problematic term like ... récit de voyage? My preference is, obviously, the simple term 'travel writing', which I have generally employed throughout this paper, and which at times I substitute with travel literature, travel narrative and travel account. My favouring of these does not imply the obsolescence of the others; there is a specificity to such terms as landscape writing, descriptive writing and frontier writing which does not make them as broadly applicable. The interchangeable usage of my preferred terms is, I hope, an appropriate application of each, however, it is not an assertion that the terms are synonymous.

Variations on the theme

Percy G. Adams says that travel literature, like many other forms of literature, has varied over time because of political, religious, economic, and other social and human factors, and also like them, includes '... countless subtypes that continually approach each other, separate, join, overlap, and consistently defy neat classification.' (83:38) If we begin (as with the novel and poetry) to divide travel literature into categories, classification by content is convenient, and provides, at one extreme, '... the guidebooks that even before Christ were necessary and popular and that include city plans, lists of antiquities and noted buildings, itineraries for pilgrims ...' (Adams, Travel Literature through the Ages ['88:xvii]) Thereafter follow the categories of journey by land, water, and so on.
Travel literature can also be classified by form, of which Adams notes, there are perhaps three forms which are most prolific. One of these three has always been the letter, whether informal or formal; a second form popular through the centuries has been the diary, or journal; and a third is the simple narrative. (ibid:xxi) 'By no means always written in the first person, it [the simple narrative] customarily gives dates and names of places, normally leaps and lingers while moving inexorably forward with the journey, and often includes an essay on the nature or advantages of travel.' (ibid:xxii) Finally, notes Adams, the literature of travel can be found in a number of atypical, even surprising, forms. It may occur wholly or partly in the dialogue form, or as part of an autobiography or biography, and was written even in the form of poems, or in prose that contains some poems. (ibid:xxiii)

After perusing the 'Travel' shelves in a bookstore, it is easy to form the impression that modern travel writing consists principally of first person narratives, which either recount extraordinary journeys or extraordinarily recount slightly more ordinary journeys. The 'genre' (for want of a better term) has been dominated in the 20th century by these modes. Into the former category, of the extraordinary (often exploratory) journey, fall works such as Heinrich Harrer's *Seven Years in Tibet* (1953), Robyn Davidson's *Tracks* (1980), Thor Heyerdahl's *The Kon-Tiki Expedition* (1950), Eric Newby's *A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush* (1972), Dervla Murphy's *Full Tilt* (1965), Nicholas Danziger's *Danziger's Journey* (1987) and Wilfred Thesiger's *Arabian Sands* (1959), to name a very few. Among those 'slightly more ordinary' (though never commonplace) journeys rendered with far more than ordinary flair would be numbered Robert Byron's *Road to Oxiana* (1937), Evelyn Waugh's *When the Going Was Good* (1946) and Bruce Chatwin's *In Patagonia* (1977) - again, to name but a few. The compilation of this small list already indicates the inadequacy of the principal categories, for there is a significant swag of books which falls between these two evaluative (and subjective) stools - or which rises above them. Those which might be said to encompass both extraordinary journeys and extraordinary literary flair would include, for starters, T. E. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (1935), Peter Matthiessen's *The Snow Leopard* (1979), Redmond
O'Hanlon's *Into the Heart of Borneo* (1984) and, at a pinch (of something) even that drugged individualist Hunter S. Thompson's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (1972).

The list making and the justification of categories could occupy much time and energy; the point however, of the above exercise is to provide a quick, impressionistic search to see what *alternatives* to the first person account spring easily to mind. In terms of recent travel literature, at this moment I can think of no third person account of outstanding note. Only expedition accounts (such as Lincoln Hall's *White Limbo* [1985] and Harold Fletcher's *Antarctic Days with Mawson* [1984]) come to mind as a combination of first and third person reporting - but not as 'classics.'

The guidebook is a genre of travel writing which encompasses a range of styles, from the taxonomy and data base approach of the Michelin guides, to the data, essay and pictorial mixture of the APA Insight Guides. In its own right, the guidebook does not interest us in this paper, other than to note that at times it has been the site of more than its humble title might suggest, in the sense of both the quality of its writing, and in its capacity for self-reflexivity. James Michael Buzard (in *Forster's Trespasses: Tourism and Cultural Politics*) notes that 'The inevitable mark of the tourist, the guidebook had, by [E. M.] Forster's time, already come to stigmatize its bearer, in contrast to all that was indigenous, authentic, and spontaneous.' ('88:155). Forster himself wrote a highly respected guidebook, *Alexandria: A History and a Guide* (1961), and said 'I have always respected guide books particularly the early Baedekers and Murrays.' (in Buzard,'88:155) Forster was, according to Buzard, fascinated with the extensive power of the guidebooks in determining the kinds of experiences tourists will have at literally every step (ibid:157): 'Through tourism, Forster learned early and well that the approach to "the real" in culture or history always proceeds through some "prior textualization," and that the urge for a reform that will sweep away all previous texts - an urge he felt quite acutely - finds utterance in only another text.' (ibid:158) The journey as *texts*.
Forster managed to shift attention from '... the outward fetish of tourist satire - the guidebook - to a view of tourism from within.' (ibid:159) According to Buzard, 'Forster established tourism as '... a system of meaning with its own definitions, validations, and prohibitions. His art illustrates what Althusser called "an internal distantiation from the very ideology from which [it] emerged"; shaped by the discourse of tourism, his art also provides a critical view of the conditions and strictures of the discourse's ideological boundaries.' (loc cit) The establishment of such a self-reflexive position (within a genre which is often ranked, as literature, alongside the telephone directory) is reason to not dismiss guidebooks out of hand. Notwithstanding Forster's own position re the text, he did not romanticise a liberation of his fellow traveller-readers. He acknowledged that, personal intellectual manoeuvres notwithstanding, one remains 'a tourist like every other tourist.' (in Buzard,'88:177)

Similarities

Having discussed briefly several of the hybrid forms by which travel writing is commonly classified (and having omitted others, such as anthropological writing), we must now consider the possibility of the erasure (at one level) of the distinctions between those forms. It is crucially important, asserts ethnographer Susan Noakes (in The Rhetoric of Travel: The French Romantic Myth of Naples), to recognize the rhetorical nature of all travel narrative. She correctly identifies that not only is it '... impossible to identify securely the boundary between ethnographic texts and literature about travel,' but also that '... all such texts, as linguistic artifacts, are from the point of view of rhetorical analysis essentially the same.' ('86:142) One needs, she says, to examine all travel writings - fiction and non-fiction - not simply for the information they contain, but for the topoi on which they are based (loc cit): 'It is ... much safer to consider all works of travel literature, whether presently designated as fiction or non-fiction, as works of travel rhetoric ...' (loc cit) In short, Noakes sees travel literature as a '...
primarily rhetorical genre which historically masks itself as primarily mimetic.' (ibid:139)

The fiction of fact

The relationship between travel writing's mimetic and acknowledged fictive aspects is not simple. Both Charles Batten (in *Pleasurable Instruction*) and William Spengemann (in *The Adventurous Muse*) have demonstrated in their studies of travel literature that the equation between fact and travel writing is complex. In the opinion of Suzanne Schriber (in *Edith Wharton and Travel Writing as Self-Discovery*), '... the difference between fact and fiction in this most eclectic of genres would be difficult to fix if there were a reason to attempt it.' (87:260) This ducks the difficult task of separating fact from fiction, if it were even possible, and allows the whole body of writing to remain as simply 'rhetorical.' Nevertheless, the relationship between these two kinds of travel narration cannot be set aside entirely.

The principal burden of *fingere*, the Latin root of the word 'fiction' is the sense of 'something made or fashioned.' (Clifford,86:6) Geertz says it may be asserted that, semantically, travel accounts are all fictions - in the sense that they are 'something made,' 'something fashioned' (the original meaning of *fictio*) - but not that they are false, unfactual, or merely 'as if' thought experiments. ('73:15) In fact, the word 'fiction,' as commonly used in recent textual theory has lost it connotation of falsehood, and of something merely opposed to truth. (Fussell repeats Wright Morris's remark that ultimately, *anything* processed by memory is fiction. ['80:176]) In literature, says Jonathan Raban, the distinction between 'realistic fiction and the imaginative recreation of a real journey through life has been maintained with pedantic assiduity. The novel, however autobiographical, is writing; the book of travel, however patterned, plotted, symbolized, is just writing-up.' (87:258) (It is, he adds, '... a damnable and silly piece of class discrimination.\textemdash ) For Raban, much of a travel account's 'factual' material (bills, menus, ticket-stubs, names and addresses, dates and destinations, etc.) is there to authenticate what is really

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fiction, while its wildest (apparent) fictions have the status of possible facts.' (ibid:253-4) Also ducking the fact/fiction dualism, Raban pleads for travel books be judged principally as pieces of imaginative writing. (ibid:259)

It is not my intention to further pursue this debate, in which a 'rhetorical' and/or 'imaginative' fence is proposed between the erstwhile oppositions of 'fact' and 'fiction'. Reverting to earth (that is, to books and terrain), one would not expect, even in the 18th century, to follow the clearly fictional travels of 'Candide', in the same way that one might well retrace Paul Theroux's tracks from The Great Railway Bazaar. The distinction which may be made is that the 'truth' of fiction is very different to the 'truth' of non-fiction: Voltaire's sustained fabulations are different to Theroux's intermittent interpolations.

The condition, or tradition, of a blurred line between veracity and fictive imagination in travel narratives is not a recent one. Marilyn Butler (in reviewing Adams' Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel) writes that Adams wishes to show that 17th and 18th century readers were '... right to find travel literature as exciting and imaginative as the novel, which in any case at that time was often a travel memoir only a little more fictionalized.' (Butler,'84:689) Adams is of the opinion that 'Before definitions of what makes a novel came in during the nineteenth century, arbitrarily excluding the récit de voyage, both these prose genres looked alike as examples of a very ancient artistic kind - the adventures of a hero going on a journey.' (loc cit) Adams opts for the firm conclusion that '... prose fiction and the travel account have evolved together, are heavily indebted to each other, and are often similar in both content and technique.' (loc cit) Elsewhere, Adams identifies three major narrative devices common to the travel account and the early novel: '... the third person omniscient observer, the first-person narrator of memoirs or journals, and the letter writer...' (Adams,'83:178) Iris Murdoch points out that the novel habitually deals in the realm of the contingent rather than the necessary - which, Raban ripostes, is even more true of the travel book. (Raban,'87:281) For Adams, the most obvious tie between travel literature and the novel is the 'Romance' journey
structure ('83:151); and, as they sometimes did with Challe, Sterne and Smollett in the 18th century, the travel book and the novel again become one form with 20th century writers such as Naipaul and Raban. (ibid:284) (And, I add, with the later works of Bruce Chatwin and Charles Nicholl.) After surveying this array of commentary, I can accept that there may not much to be gained from attempting to fix the difference here between fact and fiction. In saying this, I am not relegating travel writing, particularly the kind of account which asserts in good faith the attempted veracity of its account, to a grey zone of 'faction' or worse, of falsehood.

During the 1980s, the British literary magazine *Granta* highlighted new travel writing, dedicating three issues wholly to the topic. Editor Bill Buford wrote, with promotional flourish, in the introduction to *Granta 10: Travel Writing* (1984), that the stories in that issue '... are all informed by the sheer glee of story-telling, a narrative eloquence that situates them, with wonderful ambiguity, somewhere between fiction and fact.' (His enthusiasm can be seen as simply part of the job of selling more *Grantas.*) He goes on to offer several observations on the 'fact-fiction' dichotomy of travel writing (and to attempt yet another 'definition' of the non-genre): 'There is of course nothing new in this kind of ambiguity, although travel writing seems to be its purest expression ... But if there is a revival in travel writing, this ambiguity - this generic androgeny - is partly responsible for it. Travel writing is the beggar of literary forms: it borrows from the memoir, reportage and, most important, the novel. It is, however pre-eminently a narrative told in the first person, authenticated by lived experience. It satisfies a need. A need for a fiction answerable somehow, to the world. Or perhaps I've got it wrong. Perhaps it's a need for a world answerable to our fictions.' ('84:7) Because there is a blurring between the edges of 'fact' and 'fiction', this is no reason to say there is no distinction between the two. It is plain that there are narratives 'authenticated by lived experience,' as well as narratives generated by imagination. Like any good yin-yang, there will also be found elements of the opposite polarity within each.

Ruth Blair (in her study of works by Hermann Melville and Michel Butor) offers a way out of the 'fact' versus 'fiction' swamp,
proposing that '... the distinction between "reality" and "text" is one we can much more usefully make. Neither Melville nor Butor would deny it, both declaring boldly the textuality of their work, yet by no means denying the temporally determined world of reality.' ('86:272)

**Deep structures**

Scanning for deep structure/s to the familiar travel narrative, we come (not surprisingly) upon recurrent images of movement - to, from, and in return; ideas of struggle for freedom - physical, psychological and spiritual; and suggestions of rebirth, deliverance, or of awareness or knowledge found in a new locale. The journey is rendered as being one towards a reward, an empowering, be it abstract or concrete. This is one possible reading of the deep structure, and is a reiteration of the venerable motif of the vision or power quest ('One travels East towards wisdom, and West to fortune', etc.). It is familiar as the three-stage plot conventional to the adventure story which may be summarised as, 'Crusoe finds himself cut off from society, undergoes a period of growth in a fresh environment and finally returns home.' (Knox-Shaw,'87:32) However, the latter may be more a simple plot distillation rather than a deep structure revealed.

A different analysis involves the figures of space and time. At a broad level, in the travel text there is a structure encompassing reader, writer and text: the *reader* as a subject negotiating a codified (*text*) representation of other places, times and of an experiencing, representing subject, the *writer*. Both the 'travelled space' and the 'travelled time' of the writer are objectively separate from those of the reader. However, the emphasis is not shared equally between time and place. While the voyage has a beginning and an end (as pre-eminently demonstrated by the classic quest narrative), as Johnathan Raban has noted, '... the literary journey is more likely to be about *time* than place.' (my emphasis) ('87:258) Other writers have focussed upon the idea of time as place or space, or even as psychological space. As Janis P. Stout writes: 'The effectiveness of the journey as symbolic action largely derives from
the facility with which space can become an analogue for time. It is this interchangeability of the two dimensions, spatial and temporal, that is the basic capacity allowing transformation of simple journey narrative into symbolic action. The journey can readily be used as a metaphor for the passage of time or for penetration into different levels of consciousness.' (my emphasis) ('83:14) For Stout, the 'inward voyage' is an archetypal form in which movement through the physical world is an analogue for the process of introspective journeying. (loc cit)

As I noted in the previous chapter, Paul Fussell has described this figure of time rendered as space as 'the root metaphor of human imaginative experience.' ('80:210) To him it is a '... fundamental intellectual and emotional figure of thought, by which the past is conceived as back and the future as forward.' (loc cit) Focussing upon this spatial analogue and the linearity of a journey account, Paul Carter (as also noted in the previous chapter) proposed that in travel writing, the object is neither geographical nor geological, but rather, 'to constitute space as a track. The life of this space resides in succession, in the demonstration that its parts link up, looking forward and backwards along the orientation of the journey.' ('87:76) In summary, perhaps we may then say that travel accounts, when stripped of their mythic quest resonances (in the sense of the hero's journey in search of a boon) and seen fundamentally as representations of movement, reveal a deep structure in which the abstracts of both time and inner (or psychological) space may be rendered as a linear, spatial analogue, which in its linearity reflects or parallels the structure and conventions of written narrative. The time-as-space so rendered by the writer allows the reader at a later point to reinscribe himself in that space-as-time.

**Travel reading**

'It may, I think, be justly observed that few books disappoint their readers more than the narrations of travellers.'

Dr. Johnson
Finally, in traversing the vast surfaces of travel writing, we must acknowledge its audience, that vicarious traveller whom we call the 'travel reader.' Percy Adams concurs with Michael Butor's assertion that, just as 'travel is writing, reading is travel.' (in Adams,'83:282) For, as Butor points out, the eyes of the reader 'travel' the lines of print and the reader is 'guided' by the writer as his imagination 'escapes' his own world. 'Thus in reading, of all books, a travel book, the reader becomes doubly a traveller, moving from beginning to end of the book while touring along with the literary traveller.' (ibid:211)

In a wider literary sense, Mikhail Bakhtin has expounded this position, writing that, '... the "artistic" in its total integrity is not located in the artifact and is not located in the separately considered psyches of creator and contemplator; it encompasses all three of these factors.' ('84:202) Such a view of meaning construction may be contentious, but finds some support among different commentators. In this vein, Fussell proposes that the ideal travel book invites the reader to undertake three tours simultaneously: '... abroad, into the author's brain, and into his own.' ('80:204) Terry Lovell (in Pictures of Reality) has described similarly the messages relayed within a communication circuit: 'Cultural products are articulated structures of feeling and sensibility which derive from collective, shared experience as well as from individual desires and pleasures. The pleasure of the text stems at least in part from collective utopias, social wish fulfilment and social aspirations ...' ('80:61) However, the work of writer and reader does not reside in mere reiteration of events and names. An active re-inscription (a creation and re-creation) of meaning occurs with every encounter between the trinity of writer-reader-referential world: '... language, like travelling, gives space its meaning,' says Paul Carter. 'It does not report the world: it names it. ('87:175) This statement may hold true for explorers and pioneers; for later travellers (we-who-follow), the proposition must be made less absolute: language not only reports the world: it also names it, and re-names it.

Paul Theroux acknowledges the travel writer's role as the reader's surrogate experiencer of these utopias, wishes and
aspirations. To the question, 'Is there some sense in which, when you take these epic journeys of yours, you're removing the responsibility from your readers of taking them?' Theroux answers, 'Yes, there is a sense in which a travel book is travelling for the reader, doing the trip for them. But a travel book also has to give information.' (in Geise, '89:27) The traveller as surrogate, and the reader as vicarious traveller, form a complementary role set. Within this configuration, as Fussell notes, the travel book may be addressed to those who do not plan to follow the traveller, but who '... require the exotic or comic anomalies, wonders, and scandals of the literary form romance which their own place or time cannot entirely supply.' ('80:203) In this sub-species of memoir, autobiographical narrative arises from the speaker's encounter with distant or unfamiliar data, and the narrative claims its validity by a constant reference to actuality. Through this device, the writer '... exhibits himself as physically more free than the reader, and thus every such book, even when it depicts its speaker trapped in Boa Vista, is an implicit celebration of freedom.' (loc cit) Mary B. Campbell suggests that this '... thrillingly internal aspect of travel is perhaps the ultimate source of the _astronemie_ that lures us to its texts.' ('88:263) In high relief in such situations is the opposition established between writer and reader, which may be symbolically represented as a 'Garden-River', 'Domestic-Adventure' or 'Static-Dynamic' duality. (Adams, '83:150) In the realm of the novel, Marjorie Kalter inserts the reader equally clearly within the quest structure, and not simply as a passive reader-vicarious hero. Her remarks may also be applicable to the reader of travel narratives. Like the quest hero, we readers are, she says, '... in transit between polarities that are increasingly equivocal; spatial and temporal resonances of past, present, and future. We embark upon our own infinite metaphorical quests for the elusive castle of reality.' ('76:306)

Billy T. Tracy outlines an over-simplified typology of readers of travel books: '... those whose familiarity with a foreign area makes them want to find out other responses to it; those who are planning a trip and seek aid in narrowing the choices; those who are fascinated by exotic places but ... cannot go themselves; and those who begin with an interest in an author himself and want to read
everything he wrote.' (83:10) Bridging the first (‘familiarity with a foreign area’) and the third (‘fascinated by exotic places but cannot go’) categories is another one which may be termed the 'nostalgia and loss' reader, in whose stead '... the travel writer seeks the world we have lost - the lost valleys of the imagination.' (Cockburn, 86:23) For Levi-Strauss, this readership’s '... mad passion for travel books and their deceptiveness' is explained in terms of these books creating '... the illusion of something which no longer exists but still should exist.' (76:43)

During the 1970s it was argued simplistically that travel writing was a soon-to-be-moribund literary form, in part because the 20th century had developed so many audio-visual means of communicating travels that vicarious travellers would turn from books to screens. Another nail to this coffin stated that, as we all travel so much now, we do not need the accounts of travel by others. History has supported neither diagnosis, nor their prognosis. On the contrary, Adams suggests there is a self-reinforcing dynamic between travel reading and travel writing: '... as readers also travel more, the more they want to travel; and since they still cannot go everywhere, they may want to read books inspired by places they have not seen.' (83:282-3) On this matter, the last word might go to 18th century author John Harris: 'If so much Pleasure result from the Perusal of Voyages and Travels, there must be still a greater in Travelling itself.'
2.3

TRAVEL WRITING: AN INCOMPLETE HISTORY

'... the history of travel, exploration, and discovery is mainly an achievement of men of action and unlearned people - not of scholars ...'

Mary B. Campbell
The Witness and the Other World

'We ... are deeply anchored in the process of storytelling. Fictions are the means by which we think about our lives; we can alter them, question them, modify them, but we cannot do away with them. ... We are all readers of fictions, we are all creators of fictions; we all participate in the everchanging process of fiction-making and those processes themselves form the richness of our lives.'

Marianne Hirsch
Beyond the Single Vision
A brief overview

Adams (in *Travel Literature through the Ages*) writes that travel literature '... is as old and as perennially popular as any other kind of literature' - although it has not always been so journalistic, carefully planned and well written as today. ('88:xv) Herodotus (5th century BC) has often been called the first travel writer. It has been noted that early Greek travellers such as Herodotus '... were the receivers and carriers of current literary, aesthetic, and cultural ideas: they travelled with these and saw ... accordingly.' (D. Constantine in Brettell,'86b:129) In doing so, they were acting out the fundamental dialogue and dialectic of journeying, the experiencing (and, if writers, the documenting) of an interstitial condition: being at the point of impact between the known and the to-be-known. 'Travel,' as Mary B. Campbell has noted (in *The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing, 400-1600*), 'consists largely in the collision between inherited and experienced knowledge.' ('88:165)

Marilyn Butler (in *Voyages in Meta-land*) sketches a very brief chronology of some early travelling writers of note: 'The scholarly Buddhist, Hsuan-Tsang, left his home in China in AD 629, and kept a journal of his sixteen years' wanderings among the libraries of Himalayan monasteries. Roman soldiers stationed in Egypt sent letters home to mother; Crusaders reported back from the Holy Land. Traders like Marco Polo and missionaries like Carpini and Ordoric described the wonders of the great Khan empire in India and China. Meanwhile the Arabian traveller Ibn Battuta (ca 1304-54) was exploring his own country, Asia Minor, the East Coast of Africa, and Spain. All this before European sailors opened up the New World.' ('84:689) At a closer focus, and within European writing, the earliest extant work devoted entirely to the account of a journey beyond the borders of Europe is the *Peregrinatio ad terram sanctam* of Egeria. (M. Campbell,'88:15) Egeria (or Aetheria, or Saint Sylvia) is the author of the first known personal narrative of travel produced by the Christian, European, Western world. Supposed to have lived in Spain (or Italy, or France) during the fourth (or fifth, or sixth) century, Egeria's account of her pilgrimage to the Holy Land differs significantly from the accounts of the
earlier historians, geographers or navigators such as Herodotus, Ctesias or Pliny. Journeying for them (says Mary Campbell), was principally a method of research, of data gathering; consequently, the self of the writer, while acknowledged, was not a subject to be emphasised. ('88:15) Egeria's letter (probably to the religious community to which she belonged) represents for the first time a ... metaphysic in which private experience is valued and self-consciousness imperative.' (ibid:20)

Pilgrimage was the most characteristic form of exotic travel during the early Middle Ages (just as commercial exploration was during the Renaissance) and it produced travel writing characteristic of both its expansion of the European experience and its reaffirmation of the Christian world view. (ibid:7) The Crusades '... represented a flow of not only money and goods, but also words.' (Noakes,86:139) William Spengemann (in Eternal Maps and Temporal Voyages) observes that the Medieval world was, in effect, a map: '... a timeless arrangement of geographical details, viewed the way God might be supposed to see it, from a fixed point high in the sky.' ('74:2) According to Spengemann, for Medieval travellers, '... every feature of the world signified some revealed, immutable truth'; they could '... discover nothing that might alter its prescribed shape and meaning.' (loc cit) They were the '... agents of authorized belief, and they reported their travels principally to reaffirm what their readers already knew about the world from sources far more reliable that the necessarily limited experiences of travellers. Almost never is the traveller himself an important figure in these narratives, for the veracity of his statements was determined entirely by their conformity to existing knowledge ...' (loc cit) Consequently, as long as travellers believed that this known world was the total world, '... travel had no value beyond the illustrative support it lent to revealed truth.' (loc cit) In accordance with the religious model of life as a journey towards salvation or perdition, Augustine and Dante viewed their lives the way Medieval travellers viewed their journeys, '... as moral exempla or allegories of the eternal design revealed in Scripture.' (ibid:5) For these autobiographers, says Spengemann, '... travel signified, in its very best light, the necessary but painful quest of the fallen soul for
eternal rest, and at worst, unregenerate man's vain ambitions for power, knowledge or worldly happiness.' (loc cit)

With the Age of Exploration, an iconoclastic development in both the European world view and its literature - of travel and otherwise - was heralded. (Today we might call it a paradigm shift.) Once it became apparent, continues Spengemann, '... that unmapped lands lay beyond the known world, lands unaccounted for in doctrine, the experience of travellers replaced collective belief as the principal source of information about the world.' (ibid:2) Thereafter, he says elsewhere, the development of modern literature '... cannot be explained apart from the writings of the New World discoverers, explorers, and settlers.' ('77:1)

Travel writing, as much as any other form of literature, reflected that shift in the European world view and its metaphysics, the parallel or concentric expansions of the known world, as well as in the knower and in the very act of knowing. In The Adventurous Muse: The Poetics of American Fiction, 1789-1900, Spengemann says of the linked ontology of the physical world and the epistemology of the world-viewer: 'At the beginning of the sixteenth century, travel-writing and literature stood together upon a fixed European ground and watched the world horizon expand about them. By the nineteenth century, both literature and American travel-writing had taken up a position upon the moving horizon, from which the world appeared not simply to grow but continually to change its essential form and meaning.' ('77:1) With Columbus's discovery of the Americas, voyagers wrote accounts of their discoveries, not to affirm concurrence with the beliefs of readers at home, but to impose upon them a vision of the world, based upon this experience of the New World. For Spengemann, 'As the sole authority for the existence of hitherto unknown lands, and the person responsible for their discovery, the traveller became the prime subject of his narrative, which described a new man and a new world emerging in his concert from the process of exploration.' ('74:2-3) Travel writing became explicitly autobiographical when the discovery of America '... made the traveller's personal experiences the cause and adequate symbol both of his own character and of the world he inhabited.' ('74:4) Columbus said 'The
farther one goes, the more one learns.' The Medieval world had 'had its being in God's unchanging mind,' writes Spengemann, but the one which Columbus discovered '... was centered squarely in the explorer's changing awareness of it.' ('74:3)

As early as the 16th century, travel accounts emerged as a popular literary form, and it was conventional for them to consist of a combination of '... first-person narration, recounting one's trip, and description of the flora and fauna of regions passed through and the manners and customs of the inhabitants.' says Mary Louise Pratt, *Fieldwork in Common Places.* ('86:33) These two discourses - the narrative and the descriptive - were quite clearly distinguished in travel books, with narrative predominating over description.' (loc cit) Pratt also notes that, 'In its various guises the narration-description duality has remained remarkably stable in travel writing right down to the present, as has the conventional ordering - narration first, description second; or narration superordinate, description subordinate. [ibid:35] As early as the 17th century, it is claimed, a kind of '... self conscious craft emerged among travellers who recorded their observations.' (K. George, in Brettell, '86b:132) They viewed themselves as contributing to a specific literary genre and as a result felt '... a certain pride in workmanship, and ... a sense of responsibility to the standards of their task to be the eyewitness of a fact and to tell the truth about it.' (loc. cit.)

To summarise this account of the evolution of travel writing up to this point: it had progressed from an impersonal affirmation of beliefs shared by the traveller with his like-minded brethren-readers, to '... a way for the traveller to extract meaning from his experiences, not just for the edification of his readers, but for his own understanding of the world and the self created by his travels.' (Spengemann,'74:3) This development brought travel writing to the threshold of Romanticism, and of course, to the fictional travel account: to the point where the '... act of composition becomes even more important than the travel it reports.' (loc. cit.) (Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and *Kubla Khan* are two obvious examples.) In this situation, proposes Spengemann, all experiences become equally significant, for all participated equally in the creation of truth: here, 'Writing is no less an experience than travel.'
Romantic poets in particular contended that the poem was simultaneously a mode of travel, conveying its author into '... undiscovered regions of being and knowledge, and a report of his travels, [was] at once an event in his life and a record of that event.' (ibid:6)

Poetry aside, prose travel literature was so plentiful and popular, says Marilyn Butler that sometimes in the 18th century it was thought to be outdoing its rival, the novel. (84:689) Up until the early 18th century, the classical model, in fiction, of the traveller as adventurer had been (and still may be) Homer's Odysseus, of whom Paul Zweig (in The Adventurer) has written, 'To be Odysseus, he must court trouble.' (74:25) He is a being epically in the mode of 'becoming,' not of arriving, and who in a concatenation of crises, is plagued or aided by the gods, but in the Christian sense remains God-less. He is an outcast, doomed rather than booned to travel: '... the Odyssey is about going home, not being at home.' (ibid:28) The traveller, then, is the one who is always departing, and arriving - but elsewhere, never home. At home, he is no longer the traveller.

With the great popularity of Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe (1719) the concept of adventure (at least within fiction) was 'democratized,' says Zweig, tamed into a socialized and socializing activity. 'The adventurer-hero is no longer an extravagant, half-human character; he is no stranger among men. On the contrary, he has become the well-known, familiar citizen engaged in enlarging his interests. ... Robinson Crusoe does what we all do, in the mode of solitude. With a journalist's acumen, Defoe understood the as yet unspoken needs of his audience, the class of newly literate shopkeepers and small businessmen ...' (84:106) This democratization of adventure, according to Zweig, had been anticipated in the popular literature of the time, which carried a message that '... all men are born into adventure; it is the "natural" tendency of their souls. Only a proper experience of God's wisdom will save the individual from the delusions of his erratic temperament. To be "saved" is to shed the adventurer in one's soul.' (ibid:111) This, argues Zweig, is the innovation of Robinson Crusoe: its hero is neither an Odysseus, 'skilled in all ways of contending,'
nor a Beowulf, dragon-slaughterer, nor a Hercules or a Gawain, but a character who 'resembles a homely piece of hardware,' an earthenware pot, and whose 'signature' is fear. (ibid:115) Nature itself, as the Enlightenment understood it, was governed by a cosmic version of common sense: 'In this world, to be reasonable, unimaginative, and obedient was merely to be realistic,' (ibid:128) and this was the lesson which Crusoe had to learn. The 'epic' meaning arose from the struggle to humanize the inhuman. It was that, '.... at the ends of the earth, the right lessons to teach, and to learn, are the lessons of home.' (loc.cit.)

If the literature - or at least, its message - was hardly a spur to travel, by contrast, social conditions were - particularly in England in the late 18th century and increasingly so in the 19th century. England was the first country to undergo mass industrialization and urbanization. The tedium of industrial work made 'vacations' necessary (especially for those who could not afford them), and the unwholesomeness of the 'green and scepter'd isle's' begrimed cities '... made any place abroad, by flagrant contrast appear almost mystically salubrious, especially in an age of rampant tuberculosis.' (Fussell,'80:38) Contributing to the rise of interest in tourism and travel literature in the 19th century was the bourgeois vogue of romantic primitivism: 'From James "Ossian" Macpherson in the late 18th century to D. H. Lawrence in early 20th, intellectuals and others discovered special virtue in primitive peoples and places.' (loc cit)

From this time onwards, with the expansion of European colonialism and empiricism, travel literature was involved in the development of many new kinds of writing. 'If it is implicated in the origins of anthropology,' writes Mary Campbell, '... it is also implicated in the origins of the modern novel, the renewal of heroic romance, and the foundations of scientific geography.' ('88:166)

**Romanticism**

Like much art of subsequent periods, travel writing has mobilised the mythology of 19th century Romanticism, as well as
struggled to throw off its clichés. More than traces of Romanticism are still evident in the attitudes of late 20th century traveller-writers, especially in relation to 'the quest' aspect of a journey and its account, but also in other matters - such as the appropriation of the term 'nomadism' to describe a mode of writing undertaken within a sedentary Western intellectual culture.

Not all 18th or early 19th century voyagers were Romantics (just as not all Romantics were travellers in that period alone); in fact, Alan Frost (in Captain James Cook and the Early Romantic Imagination) suggests that the 18th century voyager was in a sense, an official tourist, insofar as he remained essentially unchanged by the experiences of his voyage. (Frost's model for this observation was James Cook, and perhaps he is not the best model, for Cook clearly underwent much personal change while still adhering to his official role.) William Bligh perhaps better exemplified this capacity to be official witness to (and thereafter, harbinger of) enormous change in societal models, and hence in the European worldview, while remaining resolutely aloof in the imperial crows nest of his own sense of European manifest destiny. (Significantly, the crews of Cook and Bligh's ships - and as epitomised by the Bounty mutineers - were less firmly bound than their officers by class and role strictures, and were more profoundly changed by the contact experiences of the voyage.)

In the arts of the period, and in Romantic poetry in particular, the motif of the voyage functions as a profound psychological pattern. Alan Frost interprets the emblematic Romantic voyage as one in which, physically, '... the protagonist sails into an unknown world and reaches a paradisel island. Imaginatively, it is a progress from inherited and conventional views of reality to the perception of new and very different reality.' ('72:102) In this sense, the residual of Romanticism in subsequent travel writing can still be apprehended, although not necessarily as the impassioned flinging of oneself into an heroic journey, or the fabulous 'escape to exotica' conventions of a White Rajah Brooke, T. E. Lawrence, Paul Gauguin or Isabelle Eberhardt - or negatively, in fiction, of Conrad's (or Coppola's) Kurtz figure. Rather, as Spengemann explains, Romanticism is '... only accidentally a congeries of conventional
subjects and attitudes. It is essentially an acceptance of change - of movement, time, and process - as an ineluctable dimension of reality, and hence the ground upon which reality must be apprehended.' (77:2)

Because of the pervasive topos of the Romantic discourse, it is necessary to consider it in an earlier and almost quintessential manifestation, in a voyage account by Théophile Gautier. Jacqueline Berben has discussed Voyage en Espagne, the poet's récit de voyage of his 1840 tour of Spain, in the article The Romantic Traveller as Questing Hero: Théophile Gautier's Voyage en Espagne. She regards the poet as having turned his narrator '... into an experimental subject, creating a persona who manifestly represents the author himself and thus combines the functions of author and character, "self" and "other", poet and hero. Consequently, the narration ... not only focuses upon the Romantics' yearning for escape, craving for the exotic, and fascination with the Gothic ...' (83:367) This journey then takes place on two different levels: '... one is a physical tour from Paris to Andalusia and back while the other is a psychological or spiritual venture into the unknown in quest of the poet's laurel - peace and immortality.' (loc cit) In doing so, Gautier was developing upon what Berben perceives as an already established tradition of 'overlapping' of epic and voyage themes, in which there is a '... blurring [of] the distinction between genuine travels and the imaginary voyage,' as in the Odyssey, the Aeneid, Dante's Divine Comedy and Voltaire's Candide: 'With the appearance of Laurence Sterne's Sentimental Journey and the confessional manner, the perspective in travel writing shifted toward the voyager himself, preparing the way for Chateaubriand's "quête du moi," or "pursuit of the self ...".' (ibid:368) Consequently, by the dawn of France's 'Golden Age' of travel literature (around 1830) epic, novel, memoirs, and the voyage domain had interpenetrated: 'Gautier's contribution was to codify the journey of initiation as artistic, ontological experience within the conventions of the récit de voyage.' (loc cit)

Gautier takes on the mantle of the heroic quester (in search this time of aesthetic intensity, insight and transcendent experience) and immediately '... broaches the epic tradition in dealing with the ritual question necessary to every quest myth. The introductory
scene is none other than the conventional call to adventure.' (ibid:370) Berben calls this '... complying with the primary rite of passage: the hero's separation from his home circle.' This severing of ties initiates a phase of '... progressive "alienation" of the hero from his surroundings as he journeys from his familiar homeland to the hostile universe of the underworld.' (loc cit) Gautier thus carries the Romantic concept of the hero to the literary plane '... with the new view of the Poet as doer, maker, perpetrator of deeds, at odds with Christian thought which denied heroic status to humanity.' (ibid:375) In this account, Gautier anticipates the 20th century fiction model which has been called the 'double quest narrative,' one which involves a journey towards both 'inner' and 'outer' destinations. (Which will be discussed in more detail later in Part Three, section five.) In doing so, he makes a statement about adventure and the adventurer, which Berben summarises as: '... thanks to the eternity of the netherworld, marvellous feats can still be performed there; and since deeds define the hero, even modern man can ascribe to heroic status.' (ibid:372)

Today, we are inheritors of a literary tradition, which, commencing with quest epics and progressing through the Romantic model (of voyaging as an aesthetic or spiritual undertaking), has opened out to democratise the venture into the acceptance of change (as 'the ground upon which reality must be apprehended'), in the possibility of Everyman as hero, and in the double quest narrative. With the 20th century and the proliferation of forms - and destinations - associated with travel writing, it is necessary now to split the discussion into several streams, concerning major developments in American and British travel writing.

American travel writing

'What is the meaning of this voyage to New York? What kind of sordid business are you on now? I mean, man, whither goest thou? Whither goest thou, America, in thy shiny car in the night?'

Jack Kerouac
On the Road
In the preface to The Journey Narrative in American Literature: Patterns and Departures, Janis P. Stout writes that American literature is characterized by, even obsessed with journeys, and from its beginnings has been characterized '... to a remarkable and peculiar degree, by narratives and images of journeys. It has been a literature of movement ...' ('83:3) As such it has been the inheritor of '... the patterns of road narrative already familiar in world literature and mythology - the quest, the migration, the homecoming, the wandering ...' (ibid:12) American history, she notes, begins with voyages of exploration, escape and home founding (ibid:30) Romantic literary traditions, such as the quest journey had a strong influence on American literature. Stout uses the example of the poetry of Walt Whitman, in which journeying is affirmed as an end in itself, and becomes the best correlative for the self: 'By making his a "perpetual journey" [Whitman] makes it conterminous with life.' (ibid:18) She writes that, 'His tone has none of the misgivings that gather around the narratives of rootless wandering in our own day. Instead, he rejoices in the endlessness of the road, hence his own continuing state of motion.' (loc cit) Journeying for Whitman, then, is '... apparently a precondition for imparting the mystical world of Truth. Indeed, it may itself, as process, be the Truth' (ibid:19), and the road is '... the most significant feature of the outer world - representing as it does endless process ...' (loc cit) The journey for Whitman means '... ongoing life, possibility, the interaction of subject and object, communion. But finally the journey is confirmed solely because it is journey.' (ibid:20)

Here, Whitman was developing upon the Romantic quest tradition, the chief defining quality of which, according to Stout, is its great emphasis on the theme of self-realisation or self-discovery: '... its goal is primarily, rather than secondarily, a "psychological search for identity".' (ibid:89) Parallel to this development of '... the shifting of emphasis from the spatial surface toward thematic concerns in the Romantic quest is the tendency for emphasis to be shifted away from the goal of the quest toward the process of questing itself.' (ibid:91) This tendency has been increasingly emphasised in subsequent journey literature, both factual and fictional.
In *Edith Wharton and Travel Writing as Self-Discovery*, Suzanne Schriber considers Wharton, a turn-of-the-century American writer who followed Whitman in a similar literary tradition (late Romanticism), although in a different genre, the popular travel account. She notes that 19th century American travellers from Cooper and Stowe to James had '... religiously published accounts for their travels, making it essential for their successors ... to satisfy the genre expectations of readers.' (87:260) Like any travel writer who must follow in the tracks - geographical, cultural and literary - of predecessors, Wharton was confronted with the question of travelling the familiar with the obligation to depict the novel. 'At a time when the horizon of the unknown in Europe was rapidly receding,' writes Schriber, '... she attempts to avoid banality by concentrating on relatively obscure places.' (ibid:261)

Wharton's significance to modern 'mass' travel writing was in her shift of focus, away from familiar Grand Tour destinations to 'relatively obscure places,' happenings and reflections on the way. In doing so, she had the Romantic tradition to draw upon, in particular, its concern with the self as subject in its parallel, testing spiritual quest, which in the final analysis, may be life itself. Schriber writes: 'Obstacles, adventure, trials, the quest for the Grail - the character who narrates Wharton's travels enlists all of these as metaphors associated with the ultimate pilgrimage, life itself. "Every wanderer through the world has these pious pilgrimages to perform".' (ibid:264) (Wharton rather sententiously declared this in *A Motor-Flight Through France* of 1908). Her metaphors, Schriber says, '... turn the discovery and assimilation of Europe into a religious imperative. The adventure is a "call," an invitation to the development and exercise of her God-given talents in order to be perfect, fulfilled, redeemed.' (loc. cit.)

In Wharton's work, as with much travel writing, we are not far from autobiography. Schriber notes that Wharton, having set out first on actual journeys and later on the imaginative reconstructions of them, then recognized in the narrative version of herself '... a woman who had undertaken a spiritual quest and had found her most authentic self.' (ibid:265) This is the quest narrative come, via
the Medieval religious metaphors of pilgrimage, spiritual vocation and salvation, to fruition. However, in Wharton's case both the hero and her boon are significantly 'modern,' in the sense of representing secular knowledge and what social theorist Pierre Bourdieu terms 'cultural capital.' According to Schriber, '... the narrator who journeys through Wharton's travel books is an enormously learned pilgrim who displays a formidable knowledge of political, literary, and art history.' (loc cit) For her, a place such as Milan replaces the Saviour: 'The art, architecture, and history of Europe, in other words, offer salvation, a promise of life to the avatar of Wharton created in her travel narrative.' (ibid:264) The quest then has progressed from its earlier Romantic phase of the self as a somehow pure, essential flame, flaring inwardly, to the self as an educated (if not bourgeois) seeker, travelling along a curriculum-like path of redemption through high art and culture, located, significantly, in the American 'Other' of Europe. Whitman's autochthonous, New World epiphany is left far behind.

As much as writers of any genre, travel writers often enjoy a skyrocket career, the light of which soon enough dims from the coruscating to the crepuscular. (Who today reads Edith Wharton, or Peter Pinney? Who, tomorrow, will read P. J. O'Rourke?) One such American travel writer was adventurer Richard Halliburton, who during the 1920s and 1930's published six best-sellers (The Royal Road to Romance, The Glorious Adventure, New Worlds to Conquer, The Flying Carpet, Seven League Boots, and The Book of Marvels), which chronicled his escapades, such as re-enacting Hannibal's crossing of the Alps on an elephant, following the route of Cortez across Mexico on foot, swimming the Hellespont, the Nile, the Sea of Galilee and the length of the Panama Canal, plunging into a Mayan cénote pool - and finally disappearing without trace in 1939, along with his colourful junk the Sea Dragon, while en route from Hong Kong to the San Francisco World Fair. Halliburton is remembered far more for the colour of his life than for that of his prose. That is, more for the travelling than for the writing, although the the latter was the vehicle which promoted and enabled the former. It may be that in this curve of literary fame's mortality, exotic subject matter and a charismatic author is not enough to sustain a readership beyond the era of the publication and the personality. What is also
required is writing which expands beyond the evanescent, so that
the particularities of an account may imply by induction some
larger, ongoing significance, pattern or pleasure for readers in times
beyond those of the text.

American writers are fortunate in having the road - as apt a
formal device in this century as the river was for Twain in The
Adventures of Huckleberry Finn - to employ as both structure and
metaphor. (Cockburn,'86:31) Kerouac's On the Road and Clancy
Sigal's Going Away are both '... significant missions of inquiry,'
according to Alexander Cockburn who writes, provocatively and
contentiously, (in an article on contemporary travel writing cutely
titled Bwana Vistas) that '... the best American travel writing is ...
[usually] engaged upon a mission of national inquiry. It's not that
Americans are innocents abroad or at home. It's just that they
never quite know who they are or where they are at; therefore
much of their travel writing is a strenuous effort to find out.
('86:29-31) This effort is of course not confined to travel writing,
which does not exist in a literary isolation, but instead reflects,
refracts and in some cases anticipates movements in the kindred
sphere of fiction.

For the American travel narrative a paradigm shift was
presaged by the publication in 1957 of Jack Kerouc's novel On the
Road. Kerouac's autobiographical, episodic 'road epic' is replete with
classic quest functions such as initial lack, the call to adventure, the
hero's departure, tests, helpers and a transcendental goal - personal
liberation. However, it also subverts the classic model in being
fragmented, in having an emotionally crippled quester who is never
healed, and finally, in not delivering the plenitude of reward with a
literary closure of hero and boon united. Sal Paradise, the ironically-
named protagonist, is a Beat, and he infects (or infects) a non-
heroic persona and agenda into the quest framework. Here, the
dragon of America is hardly worth fighting, for its treasure of
dishwashers, disinfectant and domestic obligation is a false reward,
and even the bride (at least in the Beat's form of sexism) is just
another suburban shackle. Barbara Ehrenreich writes, in The Hearts
of Men: American dreams and the flight from commitment, that in
the Beat '... the two strands of male protest - one directed against
the white collar work world and the other against the suburbanized family life that work was supposed to support - come together into the first all-out critique of American consumer culture.' ('83:52) The hero is not even capable of cutting through the dross and false idolatory in any lasting manner. The closure of Sal Paradise's quest is not one of plenitude, but of renewed or sustained loss: '... and nobody, nobody knows what's going to happen to anybody beside the forlorn rags of growing old, I think of Dean Moriarty, I even think of Old Dean Moriarty the father we never found, I think of Dean Moriarty.' ('84:300)

Janis P. Stout encapsulates the position of the Kerouac/Paradise traveller in '... a disheartened and disheartening social atmosphere, a society of anomie, uncertainty, and scepticism,' where the questing hero may find '... not only that he cannot reach transcendently noble goals but also that he cannot formulate goals at all or that he loses sight of those he has formulated. When this occurs, the quest ... becomes absorbed into the pattern, or nonpattern, of the journey of wandering, the journey of the lost hero.' ('83:101) The lost hero is a recurrent figure in American post-War fiction (from Holden Caulfield in Salinger's Catcher in the Rye, Tyrone Slothrop in Pynchon's Gravity's Rainbow, and Gnossos Papadopoulos in Richard Fariña's Been Down so Long it Looks Like Up to Me, to the Ambrose Bierce figure in Mexican Carlos Fuentes' The Old Gringo, and many, many more). His dream has been shattered, his quest is now a stumble. It is also a late-modernist stumble which has been consciously constructed that way for an audience aware of the by-now too familiar quest pattern in journey literature. 'The recurrence of fragmentary quest motifs,' writes Stout, '... may also indicate our post-Freudian, post-Jungian awareness of the buried mysteries of the psyche. Today's writer expects his audience to have some familiarity with mythic and psychological iconography and therefore feels free to manipulate this iconography and its typical structures of incident in a kind of shorthand that does not require full narrative development.' (ibid:100)

In the sphere of recent non-fictional American travel writing there has been a discernable shift from the Romantic quest topoi
(and its subversion), although not an abandonment of it. The railway odysseys of novelist Paul Theroux (The Great Railway Bazaar, The Old Patagonia Express and Riding the Iron Rooster) have returned the focus of journey narrative to the external world, while maintaining the tradition of a 'bivalent' weighting. What might be described as the encounter between an engaging mind and an equally engaging world, rather than a journey of principally self-engagement, has in Theroux's work, followed such extreme contemporary travel 'faction' as, one hand Carlos Casteneda's series of Romantic (shamanic/onotological/ethnomethodological') quests and, on the other, the picaresque (and pickled) frenzy of Hunter Thompson's Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas. Works such as Peter Matthiessen's The Snow Leopard and The Tree Where Man Was Born and William Least Heat Moon's Blue Highways have maintained a strong eco-spiritual stamp to their quests, both as journey and account. Columnist P. J. O'Rourke's 1988 collection Holidays in Hell brings travel writing almost in a full circle, to the point where the Reagan-era author was again a political tourist, assertive in his opinions and cultural 'sophistication,' on no quest other than for anomalous anecdote and the reinforcement of his (and his readers') own world view. Like the pre-Romantic explorers, he is unencumbered by the expectation of personal change - but unlike them, cynical of all that has been wrought in the wake of those who have preceded him to this or that 'been-there-done-that' destination.

**British travel writing**

Travel writing, notes Marilyn Butler, is an important literary genre, which continues in the English language in the work of V. S. Naipaul, Jonathan Raban, Bruce Chatwin and Paul Theroux. ('84:689) To this list I would add 1980s writers Peregrine Hodson (Under a Sickle Moon), Charles Nicoll (The Fruit Palace, Borderlines), Ted Simon (Jupiter's Travels), Redmond O'Hanlon (Into the Heart of Borneo) and Benedict Allen (The Hunt for the Wild Gugu), as well as various books by Gavin Young and Eric Newby. From the above very casual list, which includes a London-based American and a
Trinidadian, it is clear that, especially among travel writers (perhaps the most trans-national or even 'a-national' of authors) working in the esperanto of English, nationality is increasingly irrelevant. Thus, the distinctions today between 'American' and 'British' travel writing may be of less interest than how they have jointly contributed to the general evolution of this form of writing. We have considered in the previous section some aspects of American journey literature. The gap between the early 20th century writing of Edith Wharton and the late 1950s publication of Kerouac's On the Road saw important work in the area penned principally by British authors, particularly between the wars. So, it is to them that an overview of English language travel writing must turn briefly.

Paul Fussell (in Abroad) reiterates that '... the figure of the open road had ... been a staple of romanticism at least since Whitman,' (80:57) and that it was adopted enthusiastically by between-war writers. For British authors of this period, writes Joanne Shattock, the journey was the most insistent of '30s metaphors: '... a journey over the frontier, out of the familiar and secure into the unknown, a frightening experience which has to be taken if one was to reach the new life. The travel books, in [Samuel] Hynes' words, "simply act out in the real world the basic trope of the generation".' (82:152) Among the writers who invested in and expanded the this motif and form during the period were Norman Douglas, Evelyn Waugh, Robert Byron, Graham Greene and D. H. Lawrence. Phillip Dodd (in The Views of Travellers) states that recent criticism has consolidated the claim that travel books by these and other authors can '... claim to be the most important literary form of the 1930s.' (82:128)

Among these, for Paul Fussell, Robert Byron's The Road to Oxiana (1937) is the Ulysses or The Waste Land of modern travel books - an assertion which he argues on the grounds that the book's method is the same as theirs: '... as if obsessed with frontiers and fragmentations, it juxtaposes into a sort of collage the widest variety of rhetorical materials: news clippings, public signs and notices, letters, bureaucratic documents like fiches, diary entries, learned dissertations in art history, essays on current politics, and,
most winningly, at least 20 comic dialogues.' ('80:108) Byron, in Fussell's assessment, had '... mastered the secret of the travel book. He had now learned to make essayistic points seem to emerge empirically from material data intimately experienced.' (ibid:96) This 'secret' combined a display of learning (à la Wharton) and eclectic virtuosity with a strong sense of quest (for the aesthetic) and the picaresque. The combination is still gainfully employed by the likes of Theroux, Raban and Young.

Byron and his peers were the last generation of literary travellers (until, perhaps, P. J. O'Rourke) to be able to display '... a supreme confidence that one knows what is "normal" and can gauge an anomaly by its distance from the socially expected.' (ibid:170) (The deployment of anomaly to emphasize, by implication, the objective existence of a norm was a device of its time, but not one which could be sustained - at least to that particular end - in the normless and self-doubting relativism of the 1950s and later.) However, the 'boundary setting' and comic deployment of anomaly is not peculiar to travel writing of that period; indeed it is one of the basic devices of travel reflection: whether it establishes the author's 'supreme confidence,' or is used to show himself as being along way out of his depth abroad (as in the case of Nicoll in The Fruit Palace), is a discretionary position. The Road to Oxiana is by no means merely an anachronistic expression of doughty British superiority. Raban sees it as a writing truly of its era and '... a brilliantly wrought expression of a thoroughly modernist sensibility, a portrait of an accidental man adrift between frontiers.' ('87:254) The travel writer, in works like this, may be seen as authentically representing the leading edge of literary developments of his time, at least as well as the novelist, to whom such laurels normally are accorded.

Against a background of accelerating developments in all areas of society, Evelyn Waugh wrote that 'The writer's only service to the disintegrated society of today is to create little independent systems of order of his own.' (in Fussell,'80:171) Since at least the 1930s, Western travel writers have not been able to occupy any particular high ground simply by virtue of their own 'superior' culture. They have had to travel in the wilderness of all-things-being-relative, to seek meaning in anomie, anomaly, randomness, and to discover
(perhaps) wisdom (if any) by the light of Chuang Tzu's 'torch of chaos and doubt.' Fussell humourously depicts this passing of eras, from the certain norms of Waugh's prime to the normless uncertainty of the 'disintegrated society of today.' He writes, '... in 1963, with England, the former homogeneous Anglo-Saxon citadel, sadly changed, the empire lost and the streets swarming with wogs and people calling cakes gateaux and shops boutiques, [Waugh] solaced himself by re-reading the unmistakably British travel books of Robert Byron and recalling the pleasure of his own travels between the wars. "It was fun thirty-five years ago", he writes in his diary, "to travel far and in great discomfort to meet people whose entire conception of life and manner of expression was alien. Now one has only to leave one's gates".' (ibid:171)

This domestication of the exotic, in tandem with the exponential expansion of post-War tourism, seemed to render travel writing temporarily otiose during the '60s and '70s. Even the sedentary life was witness to great change - and if that wasn't enough, one could now travel, without too much danger or debt, to Kabul, Kashmir or Ushuaia, instead of doing so vicariously through the eyes and taste of Waugh and Co.

In the 1980s British travel writing has enjoyed a renaissance (as we have noted already), and one of its more successful volumes has been Redmond O'Hanlon's account of a jungle journey with poet James Fenton, titled Into the Heart of Borneo. Alexander Cockburn clearly doesn't find O'Hanlon's self-reflexive irony to his taste. He notes that the English have always been keen on travel (and the resulting travel book) as a rite de passage, with the lower classes running away to sea and the upper ones going on the Grand Tour or its equivalent. However, he objects, with O'Hanlon it is somehow all reduced to farce: 'This arch prose is the last self-regarding whimper of the once heroic rhythms of exploration.' ('86:29) Cockburn's general observation may be of more value than his particular criticism of O'Hanlon. He notes that, in the '80s, '... to the extent that it confronts the outside world at all - for most such writing in this century is an advertisement for the self - travel prose has a nostalgic tone, and this again is entirely appropriate to the Age of Reagan.' ('86:23)
My own opinion is that the 'bivalent' (perhaps 'bifocal' is a better term) approach of contemporary travel writers such as Chatwin, disproves this general criticism. Their works 'confront the outside world' quite vigorously, and function only incidentally (if at all) as 'an advertisement for the self'. Moreover, that these inner/outer excursions may take place in far-flung realms like China, Colombia or Alice Springs does not mean per se that they are 'nostalgic' in tone or intention. Their 'confrontations with the self' are often played out in the field of 'time rendered as space,' so that the apparent 'nostalgic' element of the setting is more likely to involve the writer attempting to come to terms with the temporal variables of a site and situation - and to deal with his/her own psychological responses to them - than it is to involve the ossification or fetishising of the place. By way of example, Chatwin among the Aborigines is there in an attempt to understand what may be common (in terms of nomadic travelling and storytelling) to both his hosts and to his own European culture (albeit in an attenuated manner). He is not in this place in order to simply 'nostalgise' its temporal Otherness or that of its people. It is 'an advertisement for the self' only as much as any first person account by a professional writer at work in his own métier is.

Travel writing today

The frequently noted revival of the travel account, which has continued throughout the 1980s, has seen novelists such as Paul Theroux, Salman Rushdie and V. S. Naipaul bring their skills as observers and creators (or re-creators) of dialogue and scene to the task of the travel account. Whether we call their form of storytelling 'fiction,' or 'rhetorical writing,' or finally, just 'text,' it may be useful to understand their appeal by substituting in Marianne Hirsch's proposition in the epigraph of this chapter ('we are all creators of fictions ...'), the term 'stories' for 'fictions.' Thus, it might be said that we are all creators of stories, and that we all participate in the everchanging process of story-making and those processes themselves form the richness of our lives.
Bill Buford noted in a 1984 *Granta* editorial that World War II marked the end of the great age of travel: '... the world that emerged after it - a monoculture of mass consumerism, package-holidays and the extraordinary imperialism of the American hamburger - left little room for the sensibility characteristic of so many of the writers of the twenties and thirties. The books of Robert Bryon, say, or Waugh, Auden and Priestley are virtually Edwardian in temperament.' ('84:5) This supposed demise of the 'great age' smacks of 'traveller's nostalgia,' as well as of the 'Death Of ... ' syndrome (which we have noted previously in reference to the 'greatly exaggerated' reports attaching to the expiration of M. Twain and of 'The Author'.) Buford attempts an explanation of the new popularity of travel writing, and comes up with the only partly convincing observation that, 'Certainly the most obvious attraction of travel writing is in what it represents: escape. And this itch for escape, this need to keep moving, is evident not only in the writing collected ... here but also in the lives of the authors themselves.' (ibid:6) He continues: 'In a time of unemployment and economic restraint, it is of course tempting to see a relationship between the escape these authors offer and our own plight. Their tales of the exotic could be seen to bear the same value as that of books and film, say, during the depression: they provide arm-chair emancipation.' (ibid:7) For Buford, the most influential travel writer of that moment, Bruce Chatwin, had shown (in *In Patagonia*) that the best travel writing is not only about escape, the exotic or even travel, but, borrowing from history, fact and the imagination, about something else entirely, a literary gestalt of all these, and more.

In summary then, of some of the contrasts between the travel writing of the '30s and that of the '80s, there seem to be some background socio-economic similarities as well as a constant, deeply-anchored involvement in story-telling, but many foreground stylistic differences. One of these differences is addressing the past - although not as earlier writers were able, in order only to discover it ('One travelled,' said Fussell 'to discover the past.') - but in order to also preserve it, such as is done in Tim Severin's re-enactment journey-accounts, *Crusade: by Horse to Jerusalem*, *The Ulysses Voyage* and *The Brendan Voyage*, or in Jan Morris's reflections on Oxford or Venice. Other writings (Nicholl's *Borderlines*, Chatwin's
The Songlines) being part reportage and part fiction, as well as *al fresco* sociological meditation, are able express both personal and social concerns, and to do so in a stylistic freedom that we rarely encounter in other forms of writing. Less laudably, contemporary travel writing's interest in the past can fall into nostalgia or a patronising irony (of which Cockburn accuses of O'Hanlon), but this is more frequently encountered in magazine feature articles than in books.

What must not be overlooked is that perennial body of popular first-person 'achievement' accounts - in addition to Tracks, Kay Cotte's First Lady, David Lewis's Ice Bird and Sorrell Wilby's Tibet come to mind in the Australian context - which may be remembered more for dramatic content than literary style. Guidebooks aside, these are the commercial heart of contemporary travel writing, and while very different in style, content and intent to the works of say, Jan Morris, are travel writing with the emphasis upon the travel and (with the exception of Tracks) less upon the writing. Again, one must note the breadth of the writings included in this category.

In its own protean way, and with the postmodern tendency to blur the generic distinctions between types of writing, travel accounts (or their close relatives) may now be found catalogued under fiction, theory, philosophy and sociology. Italo Calvino's novel *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller* ...., Jean Baudrillard's mobile cultural critique *American* , Roland Barthes semiological commentary *l'Empire de Signes* and Pico Iyer's itinerant media sociology in *Video Night in Kathmandu* are but a few examples of the latitude to be found.

A significant mutation is evident in the works of two British writers, Chatwin's *The Songlines* and Charles Nicholl's *Borderlines*, which both combine novel-like structure in tandem with quasi-fictional (if not wholly so) characters, in order to dramatically elucidate the author's representations of place and culture thorough personality and incident. (In the case of *The Songlines*, there is also a massive analect which progressively accretes to a theory-narrative of its own, in parallel with the first-person narrative.)
Neither totally fiction nor non-fiction, these works in some ways resemble 'docu-drama' films - with the important distinction that the latter purport to re-create actual events and characters, and not to invent them. In a time when other narrative forms, such as documentary films have become important avenues of travelogue, it is not surprising to see literature respond to film's easy manipulation of narrative, sequence, drama and character (think of Alby Mangels' *World Safari* trilogy, or weekly examples on *The World Around Us*) by also blurring previous generic distinctions in order to say something which the author may think more important than preserving the probity of a fact-fiction dichotomy. 'The point of inventing a character like Arkady,' says Bruce Chatwin of one of the characters in *The Songlines*, 'is that I was able to take a load off my back as an observer [of Aboriginal matters] by turning it into a dialogue with Arkady.' (in Ignatief, '87:21)

One point to be noted here is that travel works such as *The Songlines* do not signal their aspect of quasi-fact, quasi-fiction (or, to use a phrase once coined or forged but not much circulated for this condition, 'faction'). Stated bluntly, they do not own up to their 'fictioneering,' and are catalogued as 'Travel,' not 'Fiction.' To those readers familiar to some extent with recent theoretical debates which have 'de-problematised' the boundaries between fiction, fact and indeed theory, this is not of great concern. To a lay readership however, which attributes a quasi-anthropological status to traveller's reports, the fabrication of events or characters, once revealed - usually after the fact of reading and believing - is often regarded as disingenuous, a betrayal of faith as bad as finding deliberate misinformation in a reference book.

Finally, a footnote not to be ignored in the late '80s is the conspicuous re-issuing of travel 'classics' of earlier decades and centuries. As Sydney bookseller Nicholas Pounder says, 'Travel writing today is the art of reprinting.'
2.4

TRAVELLING

'All man's troubles stem from a single cause, his inability to sit quietly in a room.'

Pascal

'Whatever greatness may exhaust itself upon, this much is certain: it loses its home. Hence, there follows the hexagram of THE WANDERER.'

Lü, 'The Wanderer'

Hexagram 56, I Ching
On travelling in general

'If a traveller covered half the distance to his destination each day, he would never arrive.'

Zeno's Paradox

The following three chapters concern the triple springs of travel literature - travelling, travellers and travel writers. The first activity is undertaken in numerous modes, all of which may provide the opportunity for the writing of a journey narrative. Travellers as a group consist of many sub-groups, most of whom contribute at some time to the general body of travel literature. Travel writers seem to elude meaningful definition, other than by tautology. The expanse of the topics covered in these chapters is wide, arbitrary in its selection and without claim to comprehensiveness. We may commence with the conclusion reached, that the travelling writer occupies no stable set of characteristics. S/he may from time to time function as aesthete, anthropologist, amanuensis to change, secretary to imperialism, autobiographer, historian, shaman or sham. With no mono-valent aspect, this is akin to the model of Human (as familiar to contemporary theorists as to Gurdjieff) as a complex of multiple egos and contending desires.

Reflections upon travelling encompass a range of regrets, deprecations and enthusiasms. In a meta-comment upon a certain kind of travel commentary, Clive James (in *Flying Visits*) notes that: 'To complain that modern travel has become a cliché is a cliché in itself. It is also an especially conceited brand of romanticism, by which you image yourself in the curled shoes and flowing robes of Sir Richard Burton or T. E. Lawrence. Such adventures were already beyond recapture when they were first heard about, since new ground can be broken only once.' (84:1) Roland Barthes (in *Mythologies*) reclaims travel from this distinctly bourgeois cliché, as well as from the equally bourgeois disdain for other travellers (but never for oneself) as *tourists*. He writes that, '... travel has become (or become again) a method of approach based on human realities rather than "culture": once again (as in the eighteenth century,
perhaps) it is everyday life which is the main object of travel, and it is social geography, town-planning, sociology, economics which outline the framework of the actual questions asked today even by the merest layman.' ('73:76)

The sense of defiled innocence which represents most travel today as tourism - and all that tourism as a contagion - is a prevalent theme, embedded in which is a general nostalgia. The latter manifests as a specific lament for other times and ways generally no longer accessible - or able to be purchased. Some travellers, such as Wilfred Thesiger, British explorer of the Empty Quarter of the Arabian peninsula in the 1940s, who have been able to cross successfully, albeit temporarily the bridge from the This-Present-Here to the Other-Past-There, turn their backs resolutely upon their own culture and era. In Visions of a Nomad he writes: 'All I took with me was my rifle, field glasses, compass and camera, a few books and some medicine. St. John Philby, who himself crossed the Empty Quarter in 1932, told me that he always carried a radio with him on his desert journeys in order to listen to the test matches, but I wanted no such intrusion from the outside world.' (Philby seems to have stood firmly, with his burnous and broadcasts from Lords, in the middle of that temporal-spatial-cultural bridge.) Other traveller-writers, notably Claude Levi-Strauss (in Tristes Tropiques), believe that any notional 'pure land' (such as the Empty Quarter) is now out of reach: 'Journeys, those magic caskets full of dreamlike promises, will never again yield up their treasures un tarnished. A proliferating and overexcited civilization has broken the silence of the seas once and for all. The perfumes of the tropics and the pristine freshness of human beings have been corrupted by a busyness with dubious implications, which mortifies our desires and dooms us to acquire only contaminated memories.' ('76:43) While Levi-Strauss itemises in this often quoted passage the mythic objects of his loss - promises, dreams, treasures, perfumes, desires - such a Romantic lament (for the lost purity of voyage or voyager) is not an utterance peculiar to the 20th century. Paul Fussell notes that one Frederic Harrison complained that 'We go abroad, but we travel no longer' - but he did so in 1887. ('80:41)
This deeply etched nostalgia for places to be 'other' than what they are is not an aberration of certain voyagers or their commentaries, but something which Dean MacCannell (in The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class) perceives as a feature of the progress of modernity (and modernization) which '... depends on [progress's] very sense of instability and inauthenticity. For moderns, reality and authenticity are thought to be elsewhere: in other historical periods and other cultures, in purer, simpler lifestyles. In other words, the concern of moderns for "naturalness," their nostalgia and their search for authenticity are not merely casual and somewhat decadent, though harmless, attachments to the souvenirs of destroyed cultures and dead epochs. They are also components of the conquering spirit of modernity - the grounds of its unifying consciousness.' (76:7) This thesis - of modernity's ever looking backwards over its shoulder at an older, folksier order by which it can validate, contrarily, its own inauthenticity - goes some distance towards explaining the perennial appeal of 'back to the tribal' publications, amongst which the 'Brit goes Bedouin' sub-genre is a standard, to wit, Lawrence's The Seven Pillars of Wisdom, Thesiger's Arabian Sands and The Marsh Arabs, Geoffrey Moorehouse's The Fearful Void, and a series of earlier, important books by British 'Arabists' Alexander Kinglake, Richard Burton, C. M. Doughty, Gertrude Bell and St. John Philby.

Tourism was preceded by travel, and travel by exploration, although all now occur concurrently. According to critic Paul Fussell, 'Each is roughly assignable to its own age in modern history: exploration belongs to the Renaissance, travel to the bourgeois age, tourism to our proletarian moment.' (80:38-39) As educated, urban-dwelling, modern (or 'post-modern') individuals, we are aware of history and its phases, of our separation from the activities (exploration, travel) of those ages, and of our own apparent nostalgia for those moments. Travel - or more correctly for most of us, tourism - today must support this agenda of desire.

Travel, according to 19th Century wayfarer Astolphe de Custine, is a way of visiting other centuries. However, if Levi-Strauss and MacCannell are correct, modernity both stimulates the appetite for and denies the gratification of this impulse (rather like
drinking's relationship to lechery - as viewed by Shakespeare - '... it provokes the desire, but it takes away the performance ...'). Yearn as we seem bound to, other eras are no longer re-visitable. These conditions notwithstanding, what remains to us - or some of us - is, I propose, the residual impulse to journey, regardless. (As Ihab Hassan says, 'Travelling is an ontological activity.' [90b]) Endless speculations may be mounted on the source and expressions of this impulse. Bruce Chatwin approached the subject in The Songlines with an elaborate reflection on the primal imprinting of walking, songmaking and nomadism as genetically etched activities (indeed, imperatives) encoded into us since the caves and plains of Africa. In an interview, Chatwin too observed that' the word 'travel' is the same as the French travail: 'It means hard work, penance and finally a journey. There was an idea, particularly in the Middle Ages, that by going on pilgrimage, as Muslim pilgrims do, you were reinstating the original condition of man. The act of walking through a wilderness was thought to bring you back to God.' (in Ignatieff, '87:20) Perhaps the modern journey to elsewhere, through whatever 'wilderness' - Tokyo or Borneo? - is an echo of that impulse to work upon oneself, to journey out of the fixed time of the familiar and into the Intangible Other - to reinstate oneself to another (original?) time (or self?) by removing to another place.

It is worth emphasising that travel is a form of work, physical intellectual and spiritual - as also may be travel writing. Several writers have reminded us that travel, as travail, '... is toil and sorrow,' and Paul Fussell said that, once '... travel was conceived to be like study, and its fruits were considered to be the adornment of the mind and the formation of the judgement.' (‘80:39) Jack Ho extends the observation: 'Being a traveller ... seems to the non-traveller like a life without work. In fact, although it may be a life without employment, travelling is unrelenting work of its own kind. To document that life on the road is both the overtime of the job and its salary.' (‘87:3)
Why travel?

'It is better to travel hopefully than to arrive.'
R. L. Stevenson

'Why do people travel?' asks British traveller-writer Eric Newby (in A Traveller's Life) before offering a flippant, though pertinent set of answers: 'To escape their creditors. To find a warmer or cooler clime. To sell Coca-Cola to the Chinese. To find out what is over the seas, over the hills and far away, round the corner...' (82:10) Continuing in a more serious vein, Newby speculates: 'Partly, undoubtedly, for amusement and sheer curiosity and partly, as Evelyn Waugh wrote "... to satisfy the longing, romantic, reasonless, which lies deep in the hearts of most Englishmen, to shun the celebrated spectacles of the tourist and, without any concern with science or politics or commerce, simply to set their feet where few civilized feet have trod".' (ibid:10) (The statement holds appeal, if not water, even if we jettison Waugh's specific reference to 'Englishmen'.) Newby/Waugh displays here those recurrent tropes of travelling, the twin manifestations of nostalgic 'otherness': to shun the familiar and to embrace the unknown. Newby is unequivocal in acknowledging the motivation for his particular form of remote area travel (to the Hindu Kush, down the Ganges, etc.): 'I felt ... that the time was not far off when there would be no place on earth accessible to ordinary human beings in which they would be able to feel themselves alone under the sky without hearing the noise of machines.' (ibid:301)

It would be a disservice to Newby and others if I were to relegate their travel to no more than a nostalgic desire to recuperate Romantic, bucolic, Luddite or neo-imperialist fanatsies. The healing power of retreat and quest, for the traveller (and, should he be a writer, for his readers) cannot be discounted. The retreat into the symbolic wilderness equates to the shamanic journey, which is often performed in service of the larger society as well as that of the individual shaman. The return with whatever fruits the journey may have borne - information, poetry, epiphany, example, reassurance, etc. - still has its social function,
disseminated as these messages nowadays may be through print or video, and as ambivalent as their benefits may thereafter be for the site or culture of the journey's occurrence.

There is a simple, romantic and persistent notion of 'I travel not to go anywhere, but to go.' (Robert Louis Stevenson, Travels with a Donkey, 1879). Charles Baudelaire in the poem Le Voyage elaborated on this same sentiment:

'But the true travellers are who those who leave a port
Just to be leaving; hearts light as balloons, they cry
"Come on! There's a ship sailing! Hurry!
Time's getting short!"
And pack a bag and board her, - and
could not tell you why.'

For some travellers and writers, such declarations suffice, and for them the desire to travel ought not to bear too much scrutiny - nor will it provide further, fruitful revelations. Their explanations may be as bald as Raban's: 'This voyaging is a compulsion that I still can't quite explain.' ('89:3) Or as elaborate (but no more illuminating) as critic Percy G. Adams' literary contextualisation: 'The lure of the unknown and the fascination of travel make up the Ulysses Factor, but they are also the Ishmael theme as expressed in the first pages of Moby Dick: "I am tormented with an everlasting itch for things remote ... to sail forbidden seas, and land on barbarous coasts".' ('83:152)

In her essay on Levi-Strauss, The Anthropologist as Hero, Susan Sontag attempts a more thoroughgoing discussion of the urge (compulsion/desire), at least among 'moderns,' to be elsewhere (and, one might add, 'elsewhen'). She writes: 'Most serious thought in our time struggles with the feeling of homelessness. The felt unreliability of human experience brought about by the inhuman acceleration of historical change has led every sensitive modern mind to the recording of some kind of nausea, of intellectual vertigo. And the only way to cure this spiritual nausea seems to be, at least initially, to exacerbate it. Modern thought is pledged to a kind of applied Hegelianism: seeking its Self in its Other. Europe seeks itself in the exotic - in Asia, in the Middle East, among pre-
literate peoples, in a mythic America; ... The "other" is experienced as a harsh purification of "self". ('79:69-70)

There is much in Sontag's comment which impinges upon matters - exotica, the Other - to be discussed later in this paper. The theme which she emphasises, of homelessness or estrangement has been taken up by other writers, in particular Jonathan Raban, who (in attempting to explain 'this compulsion' that he earlier on the same page couldn't 'quite explain') elaborates that, 'It is, I suppose, for that sense of estrangement that I travel.' ('89:3) This condition of estrangement or homelessness (or as the painter Francis Bacon put it, 'the unhomely') is very similar, Raban suggests, to Sigmund Freud's term unheimlich, or, as it is translated in Freud's essay on the subject, 'the uncanny'. Raban quotes Freud: 'The better orientated in his environment a person is, the less readily will he get the impression of something uncanny in regard to the objects and events in it'. (loc cit) Raban firstly notes the obvious, that 'To travel is not to be at home', and then the less obvious, that to travel is deliberately '... to orientate oneself badly in one's environment and thereby to open oneself to the odd and the uncanny. The famous sharp eye of the traveller ... is the result of a fundamental maladjustment between the traveller and the world he passes through.' (loc cit) Events and phenomena then become 'uncanny because they are unhomelike' (loc cit); but this is no mere quirk of the road 'condition' - it is, in Raban's belief, at the heart of the impulse to travel: 'Travel is ... a search for unhomeliness ...' (loc cit) In a posthumous essay on Bruce Chatwin, American writer David Plante imputes this characteristic to his late friend. He also takes the idea one step further by suggesting that there is a 'pay-off' to the condition of being 'on the road, homeless' which seems simultaneously to involve processes hermeneutic and heuristic: 'I think that Bruce was an English innocent, one of a long line of English innocents longing for strange experiences, with the hope that the strangeness, like a secret disclosed, might contain a revelation.' ('91:100)

Finally, Egyptian-American author and scholar Ihab Hussan has made a number of valuable observations on travel. He noted (in his lecture The Cross-cultural in travel writing [3/8/1990]) that,
fundamentally, '... travel has an ontological aspect, an affirmation of existence or being,' and that it represents the 'essential marginality of human existence,' out of which the traveller fashions a way of living. He then extends the figure of travelling as 'a way of of living' to travelling as the spring of living: in literature, he notes, the cosmogonic journey (as found in creation myths, such as the story of the Rainbow Serpent) is 'one of the most essential mythic forms.'

Travel writing is the aesthetic dimension of travel: '... the journey is worked up in language; the imaginative construction of a shaped activity.' (Hassan,'90b) Travel and travel writing are ways of negotiating difference and the self and other: '... transgressing from one habitat to another, from one ecology to another, one order of discourse to another, from one area of power relations to another - thus travel is not simply entertainment but an emblem of the world in which we live.' From this, I extend Hassan's ideas, so that a journey account may be, in a different and highly individualised sense of the term, the 'creation myth' of each person, who in travelling and writing, affirms their existence or being and the 'essential marginality' of that existence, out of which they fashion ways and meanings of living.
'A traveller! By my faith you have great reason to be sad; I fear you have sold your own lands to see other men's; then, to have seen much and have nothing, is to have rich eyes and poor hands.'

William Shakespeare
As You Like It

'A traveler. I love his title. A traveler is to be reverenced as such. His profession is the best symbol of our life. Going from - toward; it is the history of every one of us.'

Henry David Thoreau

"'Traveller" will be understood specifically as "living person, moving from birth to death".'

Siegfried Sassoon
Types of travellers

'... the profession of the traveller - merchant, pirate, missionary, pilgrim, soldier, doctor, cartographer, researcher-for-a-travel-book.'

Mary B. Campbell
The Witness and the Other World

There may be no end to the making of travel books, and, by extension, there may be no end to the types of travellers and readers who labour at these books. The following discussion does not attempt sociological profiles of travelling types, but a broad view of the kinds of travellers who frequently write travel literature of various sub-genres. Paul Fussell 'nut-shells' a wry typology of three principal groups who make journeys: the explorer, the traveller and the tourist: '... the explorer seeks the undiscovered, the traveller that which has been discovered by the mind working in history, the tourist that which has been discovered by entrepreneurship and prepared for him by the arts of mass publicity. The genuine traveller is, or used to be, in the middle between the two extremes. If the explorer moves toward the risks of the formless and the unknown, the tourist moves toward the security of pure cliché. It is between these two poles that the traveller mediates, retaining all he can of the excitement of the unpredictable attaching to exploration, and fusing that with the pleasure of "knowing where one is" belonging to tourism.' ('80:39)

The spectrum of noted travellers (and their travels) ranges from the Arab Ibn Buttuta, born at Tangier in 1304, perhaps the greatest traveller of all time '... who, in the course of his life, was estimated to have covered seventy-five thousand miles not counting detours' (Newby,'82:9) to Rene Magritte who noted towards the end of his life that the journey he most enjoyed was the one around his own room. Australian writer Kate Jennings has said that distinction between types of travellers is not the point: 'Surely it is all a state of mind, the spirit with which a journey is undertaken.' She maintains that '... travel can be edifying, arduous, a celebration of life or a running away from it. The reason for a
journey can be spiritual, intellectual, or of-this-world.' (in Cresswell,'87:vii) This collapsing of all journeying into one plane may be egalitarian, but useful and real differences are also obscured in the process. As Fussell notes, 'If exploration promised adventures, travel was travel because it held out high hopes of misadventures.' ('80:40) Tourists generally aspire to neither, and are insured against both. As we shall soon see, there is a plethora of journey-makers who frequently do not fit comfortably into the above general categories. Some of these are listed alphabetically, below.

**The adventurer**

'Live as though the day were here.'

Nietzsche

'Sound, sound the clarion, fill the fife,
Throughout the sensual world proclaim
One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name.'

Thomas Osbert Mordaunt

The adventurer might seem to be the prototype and idealised form of the traveller, if not the liberated human being: a self-actualizing spirit, spontaneous, competent in both nature and culture, uncowedered by risk, triumphant over opposition and self-doubt, who represents the capacity to manifest his will on the physical and personal stage. In addition, he subsumes many of the characteristics (independence, intelligence, fluidity) which are associated (either in fact or fantasy, and to greater or lesser degree) with other types of travellers, from anthropologists and explorers to tourists. However, as the cover notes of Paul Zweig's *The Adventurer: The Fate of Adventure in the Western World* proclaims, the adventurer, this once 'glorious figure in Western culture ... has today tumbled into disrepute - his exploits explained away.
psychologically, his morals somehow suspect.' In discussing the adventurer, it is inevitable that we must also discuss in passing the record (usually written, by the adventurer) of his adventures, for their re-telling is the principal source of information about both event and protagonist.

It is by now axiomatic to writing about travelling (that is, about going to other places) that mention must be made of the recurrent idea of the Other. (In Part Three of the paper, a chapter addresses this subject.) In travel and its literature it is customary to recognise a movement by the traveller from the familiar and mundane towards an alternative - an Other - place or condition, which is often represented as an object of desire. For the adventurer, however, a negative Otherness is frequently present already, in that which must be left behind: 'Adventurers (explorers, freebooters, men-at-arms) ... travelled not so much to get to any particular place, but because it was only in some place far away that they knew they could triumph .... What they knew they could not overcome, and where they were known they could not conquer.' (Rosenthal and Gelb,'86:11) The oblivion of anonymity, the death-in-life, of being no more than 'part of the scenery' (or furniture) in one's own society is, for some, its own spur. The movement is away from. Here, the familiar (the mundane, the extinction of individuality) is rendered as a reversed polarity, becoming a negative Other, a site and condition of aversion rather than desire.

Paul Zweig identifies this dynamic as symbolically present in the Odyssey: '[Odysseus] will struggle from trouble to trouble, adventure to adventure, for that is the only defence he knows against the oblivion of No Name. His arrival on Ithaca repeats the drama of the Cyclops' cave: he starts again as No Man, an anonymous beggar; only gradually, as the trouble unfolds, does he become Odysseus. ('74:25) This theme of the construction of an identity grounded in difference - of geography, exertion, reputation, achievement - from the domestic norm is reiterated by other writers. We have noted Sir Thomas Osbert Mordaunt's couplet (which Australian combat cameraman, the late Neil Davis inscribed as the epigraph to each of his notebooks, and from which was
derived the title of his biography by Tim Bowden, *One Crowded Hour*:

'One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name.'

Robert Louis Stevenson in *Virginibus Puerisque* declared that there was '... but one conclusion possible: that a man should stop his ears against the paralysing terror, and run the race that is set before him with a single mind.' (in Katz,87:43) The 'paralyzing terror' may be read as the fear to leave the fold, to swap the daily-lived, symbolic death of 'an age without a name' ('hanging on in quiet desperation is the English way,' sang Pink Floyd) for the risk of actual death through living fully, albeit perhaps briefly.

The orientation towards an existence grounded in sensation and positive, fruitful action, and away from a life unsung and unremarked in its 'quiet desperation' is fertile ground for Romantic *machismo*, particularly in literature. Hemingway's injunction, in both life and literature, was: 'Seek out the heroic'. His character Jake Barnes says in *The Sun Also Rises*, 'Nobody ever lived their life all the way up except bullfighters.' (Upon which point, a later adventurer, around-the-world motorcyclist and author of *Jupiter's Travels*, Ted Simon reflected in Brazil: 'I could just imagine Hemingway and his macho friends here, fucking up the place with their manly pursuits and exotic cocktails."

Friedrich Nietzsche paid considerable attention to the notion of adventure and to the autonomous individual. For him, there was only the present - stripped of past, future, community or culture - in which man was alone and charged with the responsibility of living every present as if it were to be his eternity. In this is the importance of the myth of 'eternal recurrence,' as taught by Zarathustra. (White,'73:310) Adventure then becomes the mode of relationship of individuals to each other, with '... the strongest, the "great men", casting their dice against death. In the epic struggle of "great men", seeking to humanize the inhuman, the highest level of the struggle occurs when men contend with death, refusing to acknowledge the modern world's humiliating conception of "natural death", an externally imposed, impersonal limit to the accomplishments of the will.' (Zweig,'74:217-8)
Nietzsche's two most controversial ideas - the will to power, and the eternal return (or recurrence) - address the morality of adventure. The former conceptualizes his lifelong belief in struggle as the central human event, while recurrence, for him, is attuned to adventure and to the 'courage which attacks.' (ibid:221) The 'eternal return' describes the adventurer's cosmology and his experience of 'plenitude in repetition.' According to Zweig, Nietzsche's injunction to 'live dangerously' aims at recreating the antique unity between the philosopher and the adventurer, which was embodied in the Homeric poems by the figure of Odysseus. (ibid:191) His philosophy '... restores the adventurer to the place he had occupied in traditional cultures: no longer an outcast or a criminal, but, like Odysseus or Gilgamesh, a source of values, expressing the essentially human adventure of man engaged in the economy of struggle which is the world.' (ibid:219)

I will quote at length Zweig's paraphrasing of the qualities of Nietzsche's higher man - our adventurer. He must '... surmount his dependence upon the consolations of morality, ... recast himself as an adventurer, ... a seafarer avid for unknown spaces. Recurrence has always been a crucial theme for the adventurer, from Odysseus who organised his identity by returning into "trouble" over and over again, to Don Quixote wandering from episode to episode ... The adventurer, like Nietzsche's higher man is attuned to the "moment" in the fullness of casting the dice, ... his life too is an agony, rising to peaks of action, subsiding in a little death, and then rising again. Repetition, not progression, is the sign of his identity; the "moment", not time, is the medium of his nature. The adventurer has no biography, because he is over and over again the child of his acts, a creature of beginnings.' (ibid:221) (All of which is stirring stuff, when viewed from the plane of the Medicare card, Macintosh prices, credentialism and which brand of domestic water filter to choose) It is a very 'Western' notion of personal liberation through action/adventure. Adventure, of course, frequently occurs without the freighting of cosmological significances alluded to in Nietzsche's thought. Equally, enlightenment can be experienced at other than moments of adventure's 'peak experiences.' In the introduction to Rene Daumal's tale of symbolic adventuring, *Mount Analogue*, Roger Shattuck writes: 'The Westerner tends by tradition to think of
grasping the meaning of life through certain crucial experiences: death, grief, danger, passionate love, sudden success, catastrophe.' (74:21) He then goes on to assert that in other philosophical traditions, notably Eastern, '... the reality and meaning of the world can come to us at every moment without our having to rely wholly on extreme situations to wrench us into awareness. Action, as has been pointed out many times, is for Westerners both stimulant and drug.' (ibid:22)

Contemporary commentary upon the adventurer covers several other perspectives. The adventurous spirit has been defined (by University of Wisconsin psychologist Frank Farley) as the 'Type T personality,' one which needs '... to challenge, to push back frontiers, to go beyond the rules, to go beyond what is known.' (in Mills,'89:58) The term, 'Type T personality,' is descriptive rather than explanatory of the adventurer. For Zweig, the adventurer's fascination with risk is explained, in part, as '... a way of contending with death; a will to make of death an adversary.' Every risk successfully taken is a triumph over death, in Nietzsche's phrase, a 'self-overcoming.' (74:217-8) Going further towards 'explaining away psychologically' the adventurer, or at least his impulse towards adventure, literary critic Frazer Ward glosses Leo Bersani's argument (as expressed in The Freudian Body) that '... cultural formations ... may follow from a sublimation which is not resistant to, but coextensive with sexuality. This is sexuality very broadly abstracted as the field of making and unmaking of the self. Here, [says Bersani] "satisfaction is inherent in the painful need to find satisfaction": one seeks to repeat the activity which causes tension. ... We desire what nearly shatters us, and the shattering experience is, it would seem, without any specific content".' (Ward,'89:4) The encounter with risk (the almost 'shattering experience') associated with extremes of adventure, with its possibility of death, is seen here as an Eros-Thanatos tension with an inherent propensity towards repetition (the 'eternal return'?). The mountain climber is the preeminent model of the adventurer who performs ('conquers') and then seems impelled to repeat this cycle of tension-discharge afresh with the conquest of a new summit. The sexuality of such an engagement may seem sublimated, to the point of being merely metaphoric; however, the suggested 'sexualization' of adventure in
general is neither new nor confined solely to such obviously 'climactic' activities as climbing, rap-diving, bungy jumping, white-water rafting, etc. Of the visually creative or expressive aspect of adventurous journeying to remote and dangerous regions, Hart Cohen comments that, 'When this detached eye [of the cameraman or artist] meets the repeated danger of death (cannibals, headhunters), the exotic is rendered erotic ...' ('88b:38) (I will consider at greater length the Erotic as a discourse within travel writing, in Part Three, Writing Travelling.)

A reflection on the broader role of the creative adventurer (i.e., as writer) is offered by Susan Sontag, who sees this as one of the professions '... made to bear witness to [the] vertiginous modern attraction to the alien. Conrad in his fiction, and T. E. Lawrence, Saint-Exupery, Montherlandt, among others in their lives as well as their writing, created the métier of the adventurer as a spiritual vocation.' (my emphasis) ('79:70) Sontag here is writing principally about Claude Levi-Strauss, proposing that he had 'invented' the profession of anthropologist as a '... total occupation ... involving a spiritual commitment like that of the creative artist or the adventurer ...' (loc cit) Ironically, Levi-Strauss himself has written dismissively of other contemporary adventurers, slightly comparing their quests to those initiatory ordeals and power quests he had witnessed in the Brazilian jungles: '... such adventures ... neither involve new scientific discoveries, nor make any new contribution to poetry and literature, since the accounts are, for the most part, appallingly feeble. ... As in the native example ... a young man who lives outside his social group for a few weeks or months, so as to expose himself ... to an extreme situation, comes back endowed with a power which finds expression in the writing of newspaper articles and bestsellers and in lecturing to packed halls.' ('76:47-8)

Levi-Strauss probably would have little patience for the specific contemporary journeys encompassed by the general 'structuralist' overview offered by Zweig, that '... the theme of the journey as test and ordeal is universal in romance and mythology' ('74:24) and 'adventure [is] the principle of a symbolic fable.' (ibid:191) Nor does he value the sort of literature generated by such
travels. By contrast, Zweig can acknowledge (to borrow from Sontag) the adventurer as a literary vocation. He sees the idealised adventurer as '... a great storyteller too, because stories are his bond to the human world. Only they are able to vanquish the distance which his character secretes around him. He enthralls his audience, while remaining separate from them, expressed but also hidden by the tale he tells. (ibid:33) Ultimately, according to Zweig, 'The story will be Odysseus's essential wealth.' (loc cit) In fact, the story (as a potential text) seems to frame the journey, existing initially as world-as-text, then, post-journey, as story-text: 'The world extends before him like a fabulous text. Only his ability to "read" it is in doubt.' (ibid:24) Or, I add, his ability to re-tell it.

In the evolution of European literature, the adventurer's reputation has had its share of ups and downs. Paul Zweig has traced these, finding in the fiction of Defoe and Cervantes, for the first time, a new attitude toward adventure, '... amounting in fact to a new subject matter: the fall of the adventurer.' (ibid:106) With the Enlightenment, the heroics of the adventurer were seen to produce 'hardship, disorder, and death, but no essential knowledge.' The scientist and the philosophe, by tuning their mind to nature's patterns, says Zweig, could obtain knowledge; but, '... when he returned from his journey, the adventurer had only self-indulgent "tall tales" to tell, while the geographer brought back maps, the explorer information, the merchant riches.' (ibid:126) In the 18th Century, after Rousseau and the early Romantics, the conventional attitude was that strong emotion contained a power of revelation, to the extent that '... emotion itself could become an adventure - perhaps the only one left in a world which science had "explained" away.' Zweig notes that De Quincey, Baudelaire and Rimbaud pursued '... the experience of inward adventure, preparing the way for the twentieth century's proliferation of drug epics.' (ibid:202) The latter 'trip' accounts range from Tom Wolfe's (third person) report of the Kesey-Cassidy-Merry Pranksters' caravan in The Electric Kool Aid Acid Test, and Carlos Castenada's various (first person) books, to the Leary, Metzner and Alpert reworking of the Tibetan Bardo Thödol, or Book of the Dead, as an analogus spiritual guidebook to the 'ego-death' psychedelic journey.
Zweig goes on to trace the path of adventure literature into the
20th Century, where he sees that for writers like Conrad, T. E.
Lawrence and Malraux, '... adventure is no longer a form of travel
literature, but of autobiography. The mysteries into which the
adventurer advances at the risk of his life will no longer take the
form of a shamanistic bestiary in an objectively magical world; they
will flow out of his inward madness, they will explode his personal
psychology into a new perception transforming geography into
revelation, like T. E. Lawrence in the Arabian Desert, political
warfare into mystical confrontation, like Malraux in Man's Fate.'
(ibid:114) Matthiessen's pilgrimage to Dolpo in The Snow Leopard
and Tobias Schneebaum's dubious account of his Amazonian
adventures in Keep the River on Your Right continue this tradition
of travelling within, at least initially, a traditional discipline
(respectively, zoology and anthropology) towards a wider
revelation. To a lesser extent, Davidson's Tracks also travels this
two-lane way of a 'high road' (in this case, autobiography) and a
'low road' (physical adventure) towards liberation.

In the 1920s and 1930s there was a proliferation of popular
travel writing, particularly British, but this could not be described
as principally adventure literature. It was concerned with the
travelling eye (and other organs) and was inter alia aesthetic and
autobiographical in its approach - more of which later. Adventures,
of course, have continued, though not all could follow the ideal,
almost ritual progression from event to rattling good text. (British
mountaineers Mallory and Irvine, for instance, may have reached
the summit of Everest in 1924 - almost 30 years before Tenzing and
Hillary - *and* without oxygen, almost 60 years before Meissner -
however, they failed to return, and thus to produce the book of the
event.) The later 20th Century has seen a shattering of literary
genres, along with a shrinking of the wild places of the world, so
that the adventure account these days, other than for deliberate
(often professional) geographic expeditioners like Wilfred Thesiger,
Ted Simon, Robyn Davidson, Reinhold Meissner, Sir Ranulf Fiennes,
Tim Severin or Thor Heyerdahl (who epitomises the 20th Century
scientist-adventurer) is often an episode subsumed into, or
stumbled upon during a different sort of journey. Peregrine Hodson,
for instance, travelling with the Afghan *mujahiddin*, set out to write
political journalism and ended up with *Under a Sickle Moon*, a mixture of epic journey, survival account, poetic and personal reflection, and politics. Journalist Charles Nicholl ventured among the Colombian cocaine underworld to write the kind of 'in-depth exposé' only possible after two weeks of research, and instead produced in *The Fruit Palace*, an almost novelistic, edge-of-seat tale of too-close encounters of the worst kind, cultural commentary and investigative journalism. There are many others which might be mentioned in this list. The point is that the adventure story may be buried, but it is not dead. Importantly, in these instances, it is in the quality of the *story* and its telling, as much as - if not more than - the adventure itself, that these events thereafter survive, or sink from trace.

**The anthropologist**

'A few hundred years hence, in this same place, another traveller, as despairing as myself, will mourn the disappearance of what I might have seen, but failed to see. I am subject to a double infirmity: all that I perceive offends me, and I constantly reproach myself for not seeing as much as I should."

*Claude Levi-Strauss*  
*Tristes Tropiques*

A thoroughly modern version of the adventurer-as-writer is the anthropologist/ethnographer. He is, typically, a 'professional hero,' an intellectual, an institutionally-sanctioned short-term voyager into terrains of geographical and cultural Otherness. He might be Michael Harner (*The Way of the Shaman*) among the Jivaro Indians of the Peruvian Amazon, Wade Davis (*The Serpent and the Rainbow*) among the *voudun* of Haiti, or Carlos Castenda (*The Teachings of Don Juan, etc.*) in the Sonoma Desert. Or Indiana Jones (even though the latter is an 'archaeologist.') It is of little importance to the popular image that during his career the anthropologist may spend comparatively little time in the 'exotic'
realm of field work, and a great deal in the boxy confines of the language laboratory and lecture halls.

There is nowadays a clear distinction between the modes of academic (ethnographic) and popular (adventure/travel narrative) writing which may be undertaken by an anthropologist at different times (such as by Levi-Strauss in, respectively, *The Raw and the Cooked* and *Tristes Tropiques*). Prior to the recognition of the specialised role known as 'anthropologist' (and its sub-disciplines of ethnographer, ethnobotanist, ethnohistorian, etc.), travellers and explorers often supplied the source material for early anthropological studies. Carolyn B. Brettell (in *Introduction: Travel Literature, Ethnography, and Ethnohistory*) writes that 'Although the majority of travellers in the past clearly did not view themselves as professional ethnographers, modern ethnohistorians and historical anthropologists have frequently used their accounts as a source of ethnographic data, and histories of the anthropological discipline often include discussions of such notable travellers as Herodotus and Marco Polo.' (86b:127)

I noted earlier that Susan Sontag proposed that Claude Levi-Strauss had 'invented' the profession of anthropologist as a 'total occupation ... involving a spiritual commitment like that of the creative artist or the adventurer ...' (79:70) As the title of her essay proclaims, we now have the figure of 'the anthropologist as hero' - the epitome of which, at the time of Sontag's writing (1963) was Levi-Strauss. Brettell observes: 'Although Levi-Strauss distinctly expressed his "loathing" of both travel and travellers, he left us with a record of his voyages, thereby couching his observations and interpretations within a particular literary genre.' (86b:128) He has been joined by other anthropologists writing within that genre, which, lacking a convenient label, may be described as containing elements of 'ethno-adventure' and 'anthro-memoir.' The shift of emphasis (from academic genre to popular) can be identified as one which privileges narrative over description (reversing the usual weighting in ethnographic writing), and thus, the 'hero's' adventure-memoir set over the 'anthro-ethno' setting.
Anthropologists in their role as ethnographers are, by definition, writers - although their academic publications would rarely, if ever, achieve the sort of circulation and popularity (not to mention peer opprobrium, as in the case of writers like Wade Davis and Castenada) of those reworked field notes which become populist adventure or travel narratives, such as The Serpent and the Rainbow or A Separate Reality. However, Brettell finds similarities between ethnographies and travel accounts, describing them as 'not unhappy bedfellows.' She notes that all human accounts are 'mixtures of observation, interpretation and convention,' ('86b:135) while Dean MacCannell points to the fact that the differences between tourists and social scientists (such as anthropologists), at least at the outset, may not be so great: '... they share a curiosity about primitive peoples, poor peoples and ethnic and other minorities.' ('76:5) Focussing upon these similarities and differences between ethnographers and travellers, Brettell observes that, 'In general, both attempt to transport a reader through their writing to another place and to convey a knowledge of the other, yet we are to take the ethnographer's report more seriously (i.e. on authority) because his knowledge is presumably informed by science and based on neutrality. The use of a third person literary device instead of the first person "I was there" is meant to evince this authority.' ('86b:129-130)

The explorer

If the anthropologist may be seen as a professional adventurer in the realm of other cultures, the explorer may occupy that position in relation to other geographies. In the terminology of contemporary semiotic theory ('semiotese'), Australian writer Ross Gibson defines exploration as '... going out into the geographic unknown in order to render it readable: to understand the world of space ready to become systematized, the configuration of space, and the conclusion that there is an ever-expanding universe of possibility in the world.' (lecture On Australian Landscape, 19/8/88)
On a less abstract level, Levi-Strauss (in *Tristes Tropiques*) speaks of exploration in terms of going to '... the frontiers of average, ordered living, to the breaking point of bodily strength and to the extremes of physical and moral suffering. In this unstable border area, there is a danger of slipping beyond the pale and never coming back, as well as a possibility of drawing from the vast ocean of unexploited forces surrounding organized society a personal supply of power, thanks to which he who has risked all can hope to modify an otherwise unchangeable social order.' (76:46-7) Levi-Strauss does not specify what this modification of the social order might be, or how the explorer effects it. This description of the idealised adventurer seems in stark contrast to Levi-Strauss's remarks in his immediately following pages (as quoted above) about the puerility of contemporary adventurers.

His attitudes towards the explorer are ambivalent, as we shall see. In this he is not alone; the appraisal and criticism of the explorer is made by various writers and on numerous grounds - personal ethics, domestic politics and imperialism, to name a few. For Hart Cohen, the explorer is in the advance guard of imperialism: 'In the register of the European imaginary, invasion and domination are codified as exploration and discover.' (88b:35) By contrast, Barbara Maria Stafford, in her study *Voyage into Substance: Art, Science, Nature and the Illustrated Travel Account, 1760-1840* takes a more benign view of the explorer and his activities, although one which does not close off the subject of imperialism. She writes that the 18th Century explorer does not '... fit the image of the mercenary seeker after fortune, leading an unstable, disorderly, and peripheral existence devoted to self-fulfillment and narcissistic individuality. The travelling naturalist or the scientific explorer was first and foremost a man in search of knowledge. He was distinct from other voyagers because he also worked "in the service of an organised vision of what might be found", seeking "to relate it to what is known". Unlike the wanderer, then, the explorer saw himself both as perceiving and as contributing to a sum of knowledge assessed beforehand.' (84:381) Within the general pantheon of adventurers, the explorer is both a romantic and socially-acceptable figure, being more 'participant' and less 'observer' than the traditional anthropologist and less self-
interested than the adventurer. And yet, he shares aspects of both. As Stafford says: 'Engagement in the active life and willingness to enter experience bodily, to face constant risk, and to endure solitude and silence are capacities shared both by Casanova and Cook.' (loc cit)

Levi-Strauss is characteristically critical of the role of the 20th Century explorer, noting that his '..."quest for power" enjoys a renewed vogue in contemporary French society, in the unsophisticated form of the relationship between the public and its explorers.' ('76:47) The writings of explorers and adventurers seem to incur particularly dyspeptic comment from him: '... this kind of narrative enjoys a vogue which I, for my part, find incomprehensible. Amazonia, Tibet and Africa fill the bookshops in the form of travelogues, accounts of expeditions and collections of photographs, in all of which the desire to impress is so dominant as to make it impossible for the reader to assess the value of the evidence put before him. ... Nowadays, being an explorer is a trade, which consists not, as one might think, in discovering hitherto unknown facts after years of study, but in covering a great many miles and assembling lantern slides or motion pictures, preferably in colour, so as to fill a hall with an audience for several days in succession. For this audience, platitudes and commonplaces seem to have been miraculously transmuted into revelations by the sole fact that their author, instead of doing his plagiarizing at home, has supposedly sanctified it by covering some twenty thousand miles.' (ibid:14) Such arch dismissals of other, perhaps amateur and non-academic accounts, must be tolerated, even in its intolerance, from the author of Tristes Tropiques, a 'travel record/memoir' (for want of a better term) which Sontag describes as, 'a masterpiece,' 'rigorous, subtle, and bold' and 'one of the great books of our century.' ('79:71)

Levi-Strauss penned Tristes Tropiques in 1955. Exploration, since (and long before) then has been an attenuated profession. ('Exploration belongs to the Renaissance' wrote Paul Fussell.) There are simply fewer and fewer 'new' places left on earth. The explorer's task these days is not so much to go to fresh places, but to go to places freshly. The exploration becomes one of discovering
new aspects and perspectives to the 'old,' to reappraise former approaches and to reassess their appropriateness. The communication of these discoveries, or re-discoveries, or recoveries - usually through writing - then becomes of equal, if not greater importance than the primary experience, the journey. Ross Gibson, speaking in what we might call 'the age of post-exploration,' offers the comment that '... as a society begins to know territory, it starts to develop more internalized understandings of its region as well, so it starts to develop a whole body of knowledge, a whole system of rendition which is not necessarily to do with objectivity, which is more to do with one's subjective understanding of the territory, as for example the Aborigines do ... It's not necessarily a mystical sort of thing, it's actually a quite practical process of learning the characteristics of a region ... There's a way of rendering landscape which is to do with the knowledge one has internalized about a region ... And that is a very different way of understanding territory to the one which says "Here we are on the edge of a territory which is new, alien and hostile to us, and the best thing we can do is to move into it and exploit it before it exploits us."' (88) That 'body of knowledge' and 'system of rendition' has traditionally taken form in folklore and in oral and written literature. Today it is also expressed in documentary and other cinema, video and radio forms, and increasingly in an anthropological practice which continues to redefine its own 'proper' methodology and perspectives.

The nomad

"'Useless to ask a wandering man
advice on the construction of a house.
The work will never come to completion."
After reading this text, from the Chinese Book of Odes, I realised the absurdity of trying to write a book on nomads.'

Bruce Chatwin

The Songlines
It is said that there are no races of nomads, only people who practice nomadism. Writers of various ilks recently have been drawn to nomads and the attempt to '-ologize' them. A conventional Shorter OED definition of 'nomad' reads: 'roaming about, esp. for pasture ... one of a race or tribe who moves from place to place to find pasture; hence, one who lives a wandering life.' Mention is made in this paper of nomads, not because they are strongly associated with the authorship of travel literature (though much has been written about them, in e.g., Roland and Sabrina Michaud's *Caravans to Tartary*, and the works of British Arabists, Doughty, Philby, Lawrence and Theisger), but because contemporary theory has found some relevance in the process of nomadism to the process of reading and writing 'the land as text.' At the simplest level of meaning, 'nomad' comes from Greek *nemo*, 'I pasture,' or *nomos*, 'a pasture.' Bruce Chatwin describes a nomad as '... a capitalist par excellence, a hoarder of cattle, obsessed by the freedom to move in order to increase his stock.' (*Walking the world into being*, A B C Radio, 7/9/89) Chatwin's concern with this subject, as expressed in *The Songlines*, is that deep in man's psyche is an adjustment to a nomadic life that characterized human existence for many eons and which has now been left behind. From these behavioural speculations, it is a significant and elevated leap to the idea of 'nomadism' as appropriated and refined by modern theorists and thereafter applied metaphorically (and perhaps romantically) to concepts of writing.

In contrast to Chatwin's behaviour-focussed discussion, French theorists, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (in *Nomadology: The War Machine*), distill 'the nomad' to a sort of abstracted principle, a *process* of structure-in-motion, far removed from any dung and dust group of Kuchis, Rashid, Tuareg or Walpiri. Their theorising of nomadism as a mode of being or ambulant process is performed in a theory dialect so arcane that it defies paraphrasing or glossing. To (perhaps) do justice to their ideas I include below several passages *in toto*.

'The life of the nomad is the intermezzo. Even the elements of his dwelling are conceived in terms of the trajectory that is forever mobilizing them. The nomad is not at all the same as the migrant;
for the migrant goes principally from one point to another, even if the second point is uncertain, unforseen or not well localized. But the nomad only goes from point to point as a consequence and as a factual necessity: in principle, points for him are relays along a trajectory. (’86:50)

'... sedentary space is striated, by walls, enclosures and roads between enclosures, while nomad space is smooth, marked only by "traits" that are effaced and displaced with the trajectory ... The nomad distributes himself in a smooth space, he occupies, inhabits, holds that space; that is his territorial principle. It is therefore false to define the nomad by movement. Toynbee is profoundly right to suggest that the nomad is on the contrary he who does not move. Whereas the migrant leaves behind a milieu that has become amorphous or hostile, the nomad is one who does not depart, does not want to depart, who clings to the smooth space left by the receding forest, where the steppe or the desert advance, and who invents nomadism as a response to this challenge.' (ibid:51) 'If the nomad can be called the Deterritorialized par excellence, it is precisely because there is no reterritorialization afterwards as with the migrant, or upon something else as with the sedentary (the sedentary's relation with the earth is mediatized by something else, a property regime, a State apparatus ...)’ (ibid:52)

Cleary, there are no flies on these nomads. The most tangible information here about the nomad is presented by way of his (their? its?) contrast to the ways of 'the migrant' and 'the sedentary.' For all the opacity of expression, the principal ideas seem fairly simple, concerning nomadic movement as a relay along a trajectory within a limited and limiting territory, which nevertheless remains 'un-reterritorialized,' as it were. The main body of this work by Deleuze and Guattari concerns matters of war and conflict, theorised from this base (nomadology), further explication of which is beyond both the scope of this study and the comprehension of its author.

From nomads to so-called 'nomadology': anthropologist-theorist Stephen Muecke (in Reading the Country: Introduction to Nomadology) expands more accessibly upon the term 'nomadology,'
which he says, is not 'a general theory, a summary of observations.' He offers the following broad explication of nomadology:

- 'It aims to describe practices, ways of living, while avoiding the pretence of describing a whole people.' (‘84:15)

- it is '... the study of nomadism (nomadism being more than just a way of life of a people) and ... a philosophy which has been developed in recent years by scholars looking for ways to contest the Graeco-Roman philosophical traditions which have grown up with advanced Western capitalism and continue to be its support.' (ibid:217)

- it is '... a way of looking which is specific (to a place like Roebuck Plains), a way of representing things (in discontinuous fragments, stopping and starting) ... an aesthetic/political stance ... constantly in flight from ideas or practices associated with the singular, the original, the uniform, the central authority, the hierarchy ... without ... ascribing to any form of anarchy.' (ibid:15)

- 'It is descriptive, but also analytical and creative. While it might talk about things people do in their travels, it can also be about abstract journeys taking place while one is sitting down: trips in intensity which involve working with a kind of avidity to keep words and images on the move ... Nomadic writing writes itself; its authority comes from the territory covered, not the person temporarily in charge of the pen.' (loc cit)

The assertion that this form of writing 'writes itself' and that its its author-ity 'comes from the territory covered, not the person ... in charge of the pen,' is more an elegant intellectual assertion than in any sense demonstrated.

The tourist

'The negative associations of the word "tourist" are primarily carried by the suffix "-ist", which rhymes with
"pissed" and conventionally signifies some sort of fanatic (as in "Marxist", "economist" or "theorist").

Bob Hodge

_The Atlantis Project: Necrophilia and Touristic Truth_

'Tourist' is a loaded term: everyone is one ('we are all tourists now,' writes Fussell), and no one wants to be called one. Dean MacCannell asserts that '... "the tourist" is one of the best models available for modern-man-in general.' (76:1) And yet the simultaneous embracing and deploring of tourism and tourists puts one in mind of what Oscar Wilde might have said: the 20th-Century dislike of tourism is the rage of Caliban seeing his own face in a glass; the 20th-Century dislike of staying at home is the rage of Caliban not seeing his own face in a glass. (The 'glass' which captures the reflection today would no doubt be the window of a Jumbo jet.) The matter is complex, and has been covered in some depth of sociological analysis by MacCannell (in _The Tourist_), and in terms of tourism and European museum culture by Donald Horne in _The Great Museum_. The reason for inclusion here of a fairly lengthy discussion of the tourist is threefold. Firstly, most travel writers today must occupy for at least part of the time in their travels the role of tourist; as such, their activities and reception at those times may differ little from those of 'non-writing' tourists. To some degree, then, their perceptions and experiences share ground with those of the common or garden tourist. Secondly, tourists, as travellers to particular destinations, are probably the most avid consumers of travel writing pertaining to those destinations, not to mention of travel literature in general. Thirdly, and not least, tourists as a class, are probably the most avid generators of travel writing. In the sense of the 'amateur' travel writer, the tourist may be the last great exponent of travel diary, letter and postcard writing (not to mention simple, unmediated handwriting), in the tradition of the personal _récit de voyage_ or the accumulating epistolary account of a journey.

The word 'tourist' itself was coined by Stendhal in the early nineteenth century. (Feifer,'85:2) According to _Travel and Tourism_
Data, the basic definition of an international tourist is '... any person who travels to a country other than that in which he has his usual residence, the main purpose of whose visit is other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the country visited, and who is staying for a period of one year or less.' (Bar-On,'89:11) The fundamental concept of domestic tourism is described in the same source as: '... temporary (short-term) movements of people, out of their usual environment of work and everyday life, on a round trip, back to their home, involving novelty (or at least some change from routine), usually discretionary.' (ibid:19)

Maxine Feifer (in Going Places) joins the commentary, firstly reiterating that although tourism is one of the largest growth industries in the modern industrial world [if not the world's biggest industry], nobody wants to be called a tourist. 'Traveller,' she notes, 'is the preferred appellation, connoting independence, savoir-faire. A traveller may be a loner or an explorer, but a tourist is following a programme. He's using one culture's set of instructions for sampling the delights of another culture. To be a traveller is, in the broad sense, an occupation; but the tourist is on holiday from his normal life. He wants to be taken out of himself, to get at the exotically foreign (thus the history of the tourist is a history of exotica, too). But, as the word "tour" derives from "tower," the trip is circular: he ends up back where he started.' (85:2) Valene L. Smith in Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism adds to the definitions by calling a tourist, '... a temporarily leisured person who voluntarily visits a place away from home for the purpose of experiencing a change.' But, as Paul Fussell notes, that pretty well defines a traveller too. 'What distinguishes the tourist is the motives, few of which are ever openly revealed: to raise social status at home and to allay social anxiety; to realise fantasies or erotic freedom; and most important, to derive secret pleasure from posing momentarily as a member of a social class superior to one's own, to play the role of a "shopper" and spender whose life becomes significant and exciting only when one is exercising power by choosing what to buy. ... The fact that the tourist is best defined as a fantasist equipped temporarily with unaccustomed power is better known to the tourist and the client of anthropology.' (80:42)
There's nothing necessarily wrong with being a tourist, according to Chatwin. For him '... a tourist is somebody who happens to be more interested in the rest of the world than he is in his own little puddle.' (in Ignatieff, '87:35) As an exponent of leisure and mobility, the tourist seems distinctly modern, but ours is not the first society to have produced tourists. Feifer writes that she was surprised to learn that Mont St Michel has been mobbed with tourists and choked with souvenir and 'fast food' stands for nearly a thousand years, and that '... the tourists have been complaining about each other all that time.' ('85:2) In China and Japan, '... there were tourists well back into antiquity, who went especially to visit scenes of natural beauty, sometimes travelling hundreds of miles to stand before a waterfall or a cherry tree, whereas nature tourism did not appear in the West until the nineteenth century.' ('85:3)

We are now in the advanced phase of 'the age of tourism.' Its rudimentary phase began over a century ago, in England, with industrialization and urbanization - and the middle-class desire to escape the effects thereof. Contributing to the rise of tourism in the 19th century was the bourgeois vogue of romantic primitivism, which continued into the 20th Century with D. H. Lawrence and other intellectuals and writers discovering special virtue in primitive peoples and places. (Fussell, '80:37) Tourism has been an essential part of capitalist culture, and the desire to 'escape' to other times and climes is an expression of a cultural dissatisfaction that the tourist industry has always exploited. In the context of describing the exploitation of national parks by American consumers, in 1966 Edward Abbey coined the term 'industrial tourism.' The industries which nascent Western tourism sought to escape have transformed into tourism's own pursuing shadow, the industry of tourism.

Dean MacCannell draws a wry parallel between two classes of traveller: 'Tourists are criticized for having a superficial view of the things that interest them - and so are social scientists. Tourists are purveyors of modern values the world over - and so are social scientists. And modern tourists share with social scientists their curiosity about primitive peoples, poor peoples and ethnic and other minorities.' ('76:5) And, it must be added, so do travel writers.
Travel writing, as much as the aircraft industry, hotel chains, backpacker lodges, visits to St Peter's and Patpong, and all the other inextricably symbiotic productions of modernity, contribute to the promise of 'authentic' escape from the inescapable productions of modernity's inauthenticity. At about this point arises the 'anti-tourist's' grasp at a conceptual 'circuit breaker,' his insistence that he is really a traveller instead of a tourist. Such a gesture in itself is both a symptom and a cause of tourist angst, defined as 'a gnawing suspicion that after all ... you are still a tourist like every other tourist.' (Fussell '80:49) Tourist angst is distinctly a class signal, says Fussell. (He adds that '... the working class finds nothing shameful about tourism. It is the middle class that has read and heard just enough to sense that being a tourist is somehow offensive and scorned by an imagined upper class which it hopes to emulate and, if possible, be mistaken for.' ['80:49]) Tourism's self-repulsion (if that is not too strong a term) has been expressed in a spectrum of humours, from Clive James' quip, 'That has been the real story of mass jet travel: the world opening up to people who have no qualifications for exploring it except the price of a ticket,' ('84:1) to Jean Baudrillard's sniff, 'Nothing is further from pure travelling than tourism or holiday travel.' ('88b:9)

Travel writers are not exempt from the circuitous calculus which runs:

\[
\text{escape desired} = \text{location} + \text{writing} = \text{promotion} = \text{crowds} = \text{escape denied}
\]

One of this century's most eminent travel writers, British author Jan Morris says of tourism, 'It corrupts everything it touches.' She feels (says interviewer Adele Horin) '... that tourism is threatening the well-being of the world. A country afflicted by tourism cannot be true to itself but must stage a pantomime of its ethnicity.' (Horin,'88:36) Ironically, Morris's reflective, researched and well-honed prose has contributed to the inclusion on many a tourist's itinerary of those destinations, from Panama and Oxford to Hong Kong and Cairo, about which she has so perceptively written.
It is too easy to simply decry tourism and its oxymoronic manifestations. What is more useful is to consider some of the other, less obvious social functions which it may perform. Leisure, of which tourism is an important component, is displacing work from the centre of modern social arrangements, as work had previously displaced, or at least dislocated, traditional rituals associated with the family and church. In Tourism: The Sacred Journey, Nelson Graburn expresses the opinion that vacations involving travel, i.e. tourism, '... are the modern equivalent for secular societies to the annual and lifelong sequences of festivals for more traditional, God-fearing societies.' ('78:21) For Westerners, who value individualism and self-reliance, tourism is an ideal model of life because it is '... sacred in the sense of being exciting, renewing, and inherently self-fulfilling.' (ibid:23) In a more complex reading, Dean MacCannell reinforces this 'sacred in the secular' interpretation of tourism, drawing the conclusion that '... tourist attractions are an unplanned typology of structure that provides direct access to the modern consciousness or "world view" ... tourist attractions are precisely analogous to the religious symbolism of primitive peoples.' (my emphasis) (ibid:2) In this sense, it is gives pause for thought that the travel writer then, in some etiolated and secular manner, may function as a 'priest' or guide to these 'religious' attractions. (The travel writer as tour chaplain?) The writer primes the traveller for these sights long before they are visited (one thinks of all that is consumed about Abu Simbel, or the Valley of the Kings, Chartres or Macchu Picchu), and, shaping an interpretation of them for his readership, leads them towards and through an experience which is structured, and open, and ritual, and individual - it is simultaneously primitive and modern.

Pilgrimage, as the search for sacred experience, is both a symbolic and actual journey. From the shamanic vision quest onwards, self-discovery through a complex, arduous search for an Absolute Other is a basic theme of our civilization, notes Fussell. ('Absolute Other' is used here by Fussell to indicate a transcendent condition, although not that of death, which is how I use the term elsewhere in this paper.) He reflects at some at length on this theme of the sacred quest and its enormous literature: 'Odysseus, Aeneas, The Diaspora, Chaucer, Christopher Columbus, Pilgrim's Progress,
Gulliver, Jules Verne, Western ethnography, Mao's Long March. This theme does not just thread its way throughout literature and our history. It grows and develops, arriving at a kind of final flowering in modernity. What begins as the proper activity of a hero (Alexander the Great) develops into the goal of a socially organised group (the Crusaders), into the mark of status of an entire social class (the Grand Tour of the British "gentleman"), eventually becoming universal experience (the tourist)." (80:5) While this is indeed a striking pedigree for the everyday mutt tourist, it reminds us of an occluded dimension, a deeper possible structure to the apparently banal peregrinations of the tribes of Thomas Cook and Co.

For MacCannell, the deep structure of modernity (within which is contained tourism) is a totalizing idea, '... a modern mentality that sets modern society in opposition both to its own past and to those societies of the present that are pre-modern or un(der) developed.' (76:7) Herein lies the tension and the frisson of fascination between the two, which is frequently the grist for travel writing's mill. No other major social structural distinction, he asserts, has received such massive reinforcement as the ideological separation of the modern from the non-modern world. (loc cit) However, this 'separation' of First World from Third World, North from South, Developed Countries from Lesser Developed Countries has never been as neutral, as balanced as the euphemised terminology which feigns parity between its poles. The 'non-modern' may be temporarily separated, but it is never exempt from the advance of the empire of the modern. In this colonization-via-modernization, work relations, history and nature are detached from their traditional roots and transformed for tourism's consumption into cultural productions and experiences - in short, into spectacles. Meanwhile, 'back at the ranch,' the same process is operating on 'everyday life' in modern Western society, '... making a "production" and a fetish of urban public streetlife, rural village life and traditional domestic relations.' (ibid:91)

Enter the travel writer, Janus-faced with diligent intent to capture impressions of someone else's fading world and perhaps also his own inner - possibly also fading - universe. Literary
pilgrimage is performed, and in the best tradition of '... the final victory of modernity over other sociocultural arrangements' we are left with not the '... disappearance of the non-modern world, but its artificial preservation and reconstruction in modern society.' (ibid:7-8) Enter then the travelogue as epitaph, the exotic as fetish ... cultural necrophilia amid the necropolises of cultures ... (but perhaps this is too harsh ...)

Women travellers

Despite the customary use of the male third-person pronoun in this study when referring to 'traveller' or 'travel writer,' many women have worked outstandingly in these spheres. (The journeys and writings of two Australians, Dora Birtles and Robyn Davidson will discussed in detail in Part Four.) Needless to say, women are represented all the above categories of travellers. It is beyond the scope of this paper to consider in detail the achievements of women travel writers - for my interest is travel writing in general - although it would be a rich sphere for a study in its own right. We have already noted the achievement of Egeria (Aetheria/Saint Sylvia) whose *Peregrinatio ad terram sanctam* of around the fifth century is the earliest known work devoted entirely to the account of travel beyond Europe. Her work represents for the first time the 'metaphysic' in which the traveller's private experience is valued 'and self-consciousness imperative.' Moreover, by this document Europe started to see itself as 'the West' in contrast to a defineable Orient.

Several anthologies of women's travel writing have recently been published, notably *Tiger Lillies: women adventurers in the South Pacific* by Shirley Fenton Huie, *A Girdle Around the Earth* by Maria Aitken and *Wayward Women* by Jane Robinson. Australian travel journalist Susan Kurosawa, in reviewing Aitken, notes that notable women travellers have often journeyed in specific roles. As missionaries, huntresses, governesses, memsahibs and even masqueraders, 'Frivolity was never on the itinerary of these adventuresses. They were curious, unconventional and often brave women, full of fight and hellbent on shucking the constraints of a
claustrophobic, male-dominated society.' ('89:35) Lesley Blanch, in *The Wilder Shores of Love*, studied four 19th century European women who undertook outstanding journeys (not necessarily expeditions) into the Arab world: Isabel Arundell Burton (the wife of Sir Richard 'Burton of Arabia'), Jane Digby (Lady Ellenborough), Aimée Dubucq de Rivery, cousin of the Empress Josephine, and the eccentric Frenchwoman Isabelle Eberhardt.

The latter is the only one who undertook with much note a written description of her journeys. She died young, at 29, in North Africa, but was survived by a diary which is regarded as of literary interest. Rana Kabbani, in her introduction to *The Passionate Nomad: the Diary of Isabelle Eberhardt*, describes her as '... one who saw North Africa through a haze of literary clichés. Isabelle, like countless other Europeans, had come to the Orient on the flying-carpet of Orientalism; her notions of the place had been determined by her early readings of the works of Gautier, Baudelaire and Loti.' ('87:x) In this she was not alone. Insofar as every record of a prior journey read determines to some degree the experience of those who journey, and write, thereafter (especially in the same region), a similar critique can be made, to varying degrees, of almost all travel writers. Of equal pertinence is Kabbani's observation on how the displaced or wandering person's consciousness tells us almost as much about the effects of general cross-cultural contact (and conflict) as it does about the individual herself: 'Both she [Eberhardt] and Rimbaud represented existential breakdown; they were a metaphor for depicting the moral collapse of the European in the East.' (ibid:viii) Like many European and American artistic wanderers who followed her to North Africa (such as William Burroughs, Jack Kerouac, Paul and Sally Bowles and Brian Jones), Isabelle also represented a *type*, a consciousness, somehow representative of her own cultural background and era: 'Like Rimbaud, whose life and inner conflicts seem to parallel her own, Isabelle suffered from a profound sense of *depaysement*. "I have given up the hope of ever having a corner on the earth to call my own; a home, a family, peace or prosperity." she wrote in her journal ...' (loc cit)
The spiritual and/or literary inheritors, male and female, of this sort of depaysement (or 'unheimlich-ness') have continued to dot the more tolerant and less expensive spots of the exotic (preferably tropical) world. Evelyn Waugh termed such post-War Anglo expatriates in Taxco, Mexico, '... the last survivors of the international Bohemianism of the '20's - the army of semi-intellectual good-timers who once overran Europe ... providing material for unnumbered light novels.' (in Davis, '86:21) They re-emerged as the 'Beats' of Tangier in the '50s and '60s. (And continued on as the 'heads' of the '70s Asian and South American 'Dope Trails,' who abandoned literary pretence altogether in order to immerse themselves without distraction in experience, raw, cooked or stoned: 'The poets down here don't write nothin' at all/They just stand back and let it all be ...') However, as the Beats' writing generally is more concerned with fiction set amid the exotic (as exemplified by Paul Bowles' The Sheltering Sky) rather than 'factual' journeys occurring there (and the fiction/fact distinction is not always clear-cut, as we have considered), they do not concern this study.

In many spheres of action, the notorious, the audacious and the self-publicising tend to survive in the public awareness. It is no less so in travelling and travel literature - although to this list of adjectives we might also add the unfortunate. Judy Mills, in an article on women travellers of note, entitled Great Explorations, mentions one of the latter, a 'lady traveller' from 'the swooning and corseted Victorian era,' the elegant Dutch heiress Alexine Tinne, who in 1862, at age 22, began using her family fortune for her own expeditions into uncharted North Africa, with her mother in tow. Mills records that 'Just before her thirtieth birthday, the swashbuckling beauty left Tripoli in search of then-fabled Timbuktu, only to be skewered on a robber's sword en route.' ('89:59) Of equal audacity, but greater success - and longevity - was Frenchwoman Alexandra David-Neel (1868-1969) who walked as a beggar-pilgrim from China to Tibet, then through the Himalayas to India in 1924. Born French, and convent raised in Belgium, '... she withered at home, forever depressed. Exploration proved a magic elixir. "Adventure is my only reason for living," she once said.' (in Mills, ibid:59) Although married for 37 years, David-Neel spent
most of her married life exploring Central Asia minus husband. No mere thrill-seeker, she became a noted Tibetologist and a Tantric initiate, and her journeys and observations in this region are ranked in significance along with those of Sir Auriel Stein, Sven Hedin, Guiseppe Tucci and Heinrich Harrer. Her most famous exploit came in mid-life when she disguised herself as a beggar-pilgrim and endured blizzards, bandits and hunger in order to reach Lhasa, the forbidden capital of Tibet.

The travellers whom we tend to remember most, not because they were necessarily notorious, audacious or unfortunate, are those who might be called self-publicising. Although this is a somewhat prejudicial term, it is an inevitable one when considering those travellers who are writers (no matter how apparently self-effacing the accounts may be), simply because their publications function to project both their identities and journeys into public attention. In the 20th Century the female adventurer-writer of most note is probably Englishwoman Dame Freya Stark, whose excursions into that European Other, the Islamic East, have been well documented in a series of volumes with appropriately romantic (and marketable) titles, such as The Valley of the Assassins, The Southern Gates of Arabia, Winter in Arabia, Perseus in the Wind, Baghdad Sketches, Beyond Euphrates, Coast of Incense and Dust in the Lion's Paw. (While noting her as a great traveller, Paul Fussell omitted Stark from his study of British literary travelling between the wars, stating that, for a travel writer to be truly successful, he (in this case she) had to be at least as interested in the writing as in the travelling, and in his opinion, Stark was not.)

There are other women travellers and writers, such as American anthropologist Margaret Mead, whose occupation was not that of travel writer, but whose professional achievements were established by writings generated within a series of journeys. Another woman traveller (of very similar name) is artist Margaret Mee (born England, 1909), who in 15 journeys since 1956 into the Amazon has painted what is regarded as the world's finest collection of the region's botanical art. She is believed to have travelled in the Amazon region more than any other European woman.
Numerous further instances could be cited of women who have undertaken significant adventures and explorations, and of women who have turned such journeys into literature. The titles and dates of the following few examples (all reprints from the Virago Travellers series) speak for themselves: *Perigrinations of a Pariah* [1838], Flora Tristan; *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan* [1880], Isabella Bird; *The Desert and the Sown* [1907], Gertrude Bell; *High Albania* [1909], Edith Durham; *The Gobi Desert* [1942], Mildred Cable. Of Isabella Bird, Clare Spencer writes: 'After years of rugged travel, she set off in 1889 on a tour of the mission fields of the world, a journey which took her to India and Tibet and through the mountains of Turkey and Persia on horseback. In her seventies she camped in Morocco, climbing on her horse with the aid of a ladder to ride 30 miles a day. When she died in London, it was found that her bags were already packed for another trip to China. It was this doughty lady who is reported as telling a friend, apropos her wish to go to New Guinea, 'I'm married now and it is hardly the sort of place you could take a man'. ' (86:19) Another 19th century British 'petticoat pilgrim' (to use Ms Spencer's term) was Mary Kingsley, who '... released from the strait-jacket of a Victorian home by the death of her parents, went to West Africa to collect zoological specimens and to study Fetish among the Fans and other cannibalistic tribes.' (loc. cit.) Kingsley published the account of her findings and numerous adventures in *Travels in West Africa*.

Australian Sorrell Wilby's solo trek across central Tibet (as recounted in her *Tibet: A Woman's Lone Trek Across a Mysterious Land*) is a more recent female adventurer. (As well as trekking 1,800 miles across Tibet, Wilby has also cycled ten thousand miles through Japan, Korea, Thailand, and China, climbed Mt. Fuji with her bicycle, cycled along the Great Wall and accompanied the 1988 Australian Mt. Everest Expedition.) The bicycle-riding Irishwoman Dervla Murphy (*Full Tilt* and other titles) is another, as is solo round-the-world flyer Gaby Kennard (*Solo Woman*), and solo round-the-world sailor Kay Cottee (*First Lady*).

Of interest would be a future examination of in what ways women's travel accounts differ from those typically generated by men. Obvious possibilities for speculation would be in the expanded
opportunities which women traveller-writers would have to mix, and to mix differently, with other women and their families (and thus to write from that perspective), and perhaps the privileging - in some accounts - of cultural immersion/empathy and personal contact over a fixation on external projects and the 'conquest' of goals. 'Humility,' writes Evelyn Juers, 'women travel writers have found, is often far more suitable for a successful journey, than the so-called Ulysses factor of men's travel writing.' ('90:49)

Another difference would be in terms of the erotic discourse in travel accounts. The erotic, especially in the context of the racially 'exotic' (See Chapter Three), is consistently alluded to in the reports of Western male writers, but seemingly less so in those of women writers. Both Robyn Davidson and Dora Birtles address sexuality on their journeys, each with the degree of frankness appropriate to their respective eras, though neither does so with the emphasis or perspective which might be found in some male works, and neither is referring to 'racially exotic' partners, but to their own European travelling companions. (Paul Theroux in his railway odysseys elides, perhaps disingenuously, any reference to his own sexual activities, but some years later in a thinly veiled autobiography, My Secret History - which Ihab Hassan calls 'a novel of great bad faith' ('90b) - reveals that, in fact, his journeys had featured almost as many couplings, so to speak, as the Orient Express. Perhaps his diaries would reveal the full story: 'I never travel without my diary.' said Wilde. 'One should always have something sensational to read in the train. ')

Other travellers

Beyond the above selection of types of travellers there is probably a vast list, from salesmen to spies. Scholars, sailors, traders, diplomats, migrants and military types - all have in their times generated travel literature of different kinds. There are those involuntary travellers, exiles, whom Joseph Conrad described as 'uprooted' beings in an 'unnatural' state of existence, and others, without specific category, of whom Baudelaire wrote (in The Voyage)
'People who think their country shameful, who despise
Its politics, are here; and men who hate their home;
Astrologers, who read the stars in women's eyes
Til nearly drowned, stand by the rail and watch the foam.'

The traveller who, on one hand, may be the most privileged of
his or her kind, and who, by contrast, often experiences the most
attenuated and alienated form of local contact is the expatriate, in
his guise as diplomat, consultant or 'foreign expert' - each in its own
way a modern equivalent of the remittance man. In a short story
entitled Last Morning in Al Hamra, British writer Hilary Mantel
draws the distinction: 'Real travellers are vulnerable creatures, at
once attracted and repelled by the cultures they move amongst, but
expatriates are hard to reach, hard to impress, they carry about
with them the plastic bubble of their own culture and nothing
touches them until it has been filtered through the protective
membrane of prejudice, the life-support system that forms their
invisible excess baggage when they move on, from one contract to
the next, to another country and another set of complaints.' (86:38)
From such travellers the most frequent form of writing to emerge is
the report. Barely travel, and hardly 'literature', such matters are
beyond the further interest of this paper.
TRAVEL WRITERS

'Travel writer: a professional person who doesn't have to be somewhere on Monday morning.'

Anon.

'The lasting author of travels - neither historian nor novelist - is, then, a roving, literate journalist who seeks to combine several disciplines, among which are anthropology, sociology, psychology, and of course, history and geography.

Percy G. Adams
Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel

'There is no end to the making of definitions of travel writers and their works. It can only be said with absolute accuracy that a lot of it is about.'

Elizabeth Riddell
The soul in the supermarket
The brief analecta, above, of definitions of the travel writer hints at the frustrations of definition. The amateur travel writer is whoever wishes to be one: a writing traveller writing travelling - both activities are democratic, as is their combination. Even at the plane of 'literature,' to speak of 'literary travelling,' says Paul Fussell, 'is almost a tautology, so intimately are literature and travel implicated with each other.' ('80:212)

As well as the axiomatic activities of travelling and writing, what else does the author of such publications do? I think that the published travel writer, as the traveller who returns to tell, acts as a kind of vicarious shaman to his own readers. The idea comes from Paul Zweig's reading of the Odyssey, in which he finds an interesting analogy to the shamanistic dream-voyage: 'The shaman interprets his trance experience as a journey to the spirit world. His skill lies in his ability to enter the magic countries, and then return. Ordinary people are victimized by the perils of the invisible world as Odysseus' crew is victimized. Only the shaman knows how to go, and then come home.' ('74:29) The travel writer 'comes home' - though not necessarily to his own - symbolically and literally in the form of his own journey narrative. In this process (the domestication of the exotic - and the exoticising of the domestic), the travel writer grapples with 'the Self seeking the Other' as a project or process of self-discovery, self-purifying, self-dissolving, before returning (at least to print). The reportage of this engagement, simultaneously on two frontiers - the inner and the outer - to a 'home audience' is the microcosm of discovery, confrontation and conquest in the general sense.

The travel book reminds us (as readers at home), says Jonathan Raban, of our 'solitude and our oddity,' of the strangeness of other people and of '... the unheimlich quality of the world in which we are supposed to feel at home.' The writing travellers - Theroux, Chatwin, Thubron and the rest (including Raban himself) - 'offer themselves up as a type of estranged modern hero, willing to travail stylishly on our behalf and, like Ulysses, return to report that after all Abroad is Abroad and Home is Home. ('89:3) They tells us something about the world we suspected all along: '... that it is alien, unreliable, full of mystery and perilously undersupplied with safe
harbours.' (loc cit) The travel writer's power lies in encountering and (presumably) surviving the anxiety-ridden tests which the heimlich reader does not, except at a remove. Vital to this enhanced function and nature, as ascribed by Raban to the itinerant scribe, is the movement towards home, no matter in how circuitous or drawn-out a manner, or that this homecoming is achieved in no more immediate a sense than the delivery of a manuscript to a publisher - and ultimately, of a book to a reader. The magic traveller may risk madness, incarceration and disappearance, but, as publication proves, he has overcome all these tests. He returns as his own text: 'As he wanders through the perils of the magic countries, Odysseus preserve his human shape, his name, by homegoing.' (Zweig '74:28) - although, as mentioned earlier, not by being at home. (Peter Pinney, who was absent from Australia from around 1946 to 1963 firstly established, then 'preserved his human shape' by 'homecoming' in the form of Road in the Wilderness, Dust on My Shoes, Who Wanders Alone, Anywhere But Here, Ride the Volcano, The Lawless and the Lotus.)

Levi-Strauss has made comment which might be borrowed in support of this thesis, of the travel writer as surrogate hero/shaman (however, at the same time Levi-Strauss denies any particular value or substance to whatever it is that the traveller-writer brings home): '... our modern Marco Polos now bring back the moral spices of which our society feels an increasing need as it is conscious of sinking further into boredom, but that this time they take the form of photographs, books and traveller's tales.' ('76:44) He lugubriously posits the spectre of an unspecified but Edenic era in which travel accounts once enjoyed, somehow, a more 'genuine form' than those of today. His words ring of the nostalgia which is by now a characteristic trope of some forms of travel writing and commentary: '... however honest the narrator may be, he cannot - since this is no longer possible - supply them [travel accounts] in a genuine form. For us to be willing to accept them, memories have to be sorted and sifted; through a degree of manipulation which, in the most sincere writers, takes place below the level of consciousness, actual experience is replaced by stereotypes.' (loc cit) It must be noted that the accusation (of sifting, manipulation and stereotyping) is no less relevant to the writing of fiction, journalism or even
history than it is to the shaping of travel narrative. Meanwhile, the
tonight of 'a genuine form' suggests an unmediated passage from
refferent and a mythically pure writer, through a transparent
signifier, to the reader.

Acknowledging at least one contradiction within his own
stance, Levi-Strauss admits, 'I hate travelling and explorers. Yet
here I am proposing to tell the story of my expeditions,' (ibid:14)
and then subscribes to the old regret (which is commonly parodied
- at least in Australia - as, 'You should have been here yesterday ...')
He writes, '... I can understand the mad passion for travel books and
their deceptiveness. They create the illusion of something which no
longer exists but still should exist ...' (ibid:43) For all his intellectual
achievement, and for the validity of the observation that large areas
of nature and culture are irrevocably altered, this literary/geo-
cultural nostalgia resembles what Clive James has parodied in
certain other forms of travel writing. James writes, 'There is a bad
kind of travel writer who complains that the airport he leaves from
herds him like a sheep, that the airliner he travels on feeds and
lulls him like a veal calf, and that the airport he arrives at herds
him like a sheep all over again, with the additional insult of
somehow concealing all the allegedly exotic wonders that would
have been revealed to him had he been allowed to make landfall by
sampan or on the back of a camel.' (84:1)

During this century there has been much emphasis on writers
who travel, as opposed to travellers who write. Evelyn Waugh, D. H.
Lawrence, E. M. Forster, Lawrence Durrell, Graham Greene, Paul
Theroux, V. S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie and Tom Keneally are but a
few who have transited from fiction to travel and back. (Bruce
Chatwin went in the other direction, from travel - In Patagonia - to
novels - The Viceroy of Ouidah, On the Black Hill and Utz.) They
were preceded by literati who wrote travel also, whom Billy T.
Tracy (in D.H. Lawrence and the Literature of Travel) characterises
as 'the esthetes.' He includes among them John Ruskin, Henry James,
Norman Douglas and Aldous Huxley, as travelling writers who '...
prefer more civilized areas, since their enthusiasms include art and
history, as well as landscape.' (83:3) (He might also have
mentioned, from an earlier period, Mary Shelley, author of
Frankenstein, whose principal literary output was as a travel
writer.) In passing, Tracy notes the flow of travel's imperial
dynamic, from the facts of guns, crosses and goods to the equally
dominating abstractions of ideas and values: 'Whereas adventurers are
succeeded by missionaries and traders, esthetes are followed by
cultivated tourists.' (loc cit)

Persisting gamely in the attempt to find some essential
characteristic of the travel writer - but achieving no more than a
description of what might equally resemble a tour guide, a parish
priest or a theatre usher - Tracy almost quaintly suggests that, 'The
travel writer ought to be companionable but not necessarily easy-
going. A list of pre-eminent travel writers, which would have to
include Smollett, Borrow, Samuel Butler, and Hilaire Belloc, reveals
that almost all belong in the class of energetic eccentrics.' (ibid:11)
More pertinently, he isolates the autobiographical - or at least 'self-
as-source' - function as an important one: '[D. H.] Lawrence often
found his own character to be his choicest material. Wherever
Lawrence went, he remained passionate and partial.' (loc cit) Travel
writers, conjectures Tracy, '... have always flaunted their prejudices,
fearing above all else that they should sink into being impersonal
reporters.' (ibid:13) Whether it is through the fear of being merely
'impersonal reporters' or any number of more complex
explanations, Ihab Hassan believes the result to be that '... some of
the best writing we have nowadays ... comes not from poets or fiction
writers but from travelogue writers.' (1990b)

There is no essence to being an écrivain-voyageur - other
than the tautologies of 'travelling' and 'writing' - only functions. One
of these, in the 'esthetic' tradition of the self as source of an original,
informed and refined reponse to the world, which has persisted
over time, and provides one of the chief appeals of travel literature,
is the providing of an 'unofficial' version of the world, or being an
'unauthorised authority,' as it were. The travel writer is thus seen
as ascending to being a self-consciously personal reporter. Several
observations proceed from this apparent primacy of the first
person, and subsequently, of the travel writer as a personality 'in
his own write' (as John Lennon so aptly put it).
One such observation, fairly whimsical, is borrowed from Roland Barthes' vignette (in Mythologies), *The Writer on Holiday*. Although Barthes is addressing the subject of the *novelist* on vacation, it is not a broad leap to the common perception of the travel writer ('travel' equating here in the common view with 'holiday,' never 'work') as a person (and often, personality) whose profession is that of 'tourist.' Barthes writes, '... the ideal of our writers "on holiday" [is] to add to mere leisure the prestige of a vocation which nothing can stop or degrade.' (73:29) (my emphasis) Every travel writer, no matter how jet-lagged and dead-lined, contends in general conversation with the notion of his (non-) occupation as an envied, mythic ideal in leisure. Barthes comments with ironic tone that, '... the function of the man of letters [read 'travel writer'] is to human labour rather as ambrosia is to bread: a miraculous, eternal substance, which condescends to take a social form so that its prestigious difference is better grasped.' (ibid:30) Any protestation that the occupation of travel writing is *work* is met, of course, (and coarsely) by murmurs of 'Suffer!' - for the occupation fits Barthes' rhetorical template: 'The worldly, the domestic, the wild: is this not the very tripartition of social desire?'

Next, the privileging of the first person in travel writing must be queried on two counts, firstly, that not all travel writing *is* done in the first person; and secondly, that the voice of that first person is polyvalent. Percy G. Adams notes that an examination of the role of the narrator reveals that he or she need not write in the first person, and '... that a travel account is not "specialised autobiography" any more than, when classified by content, it is "geography".' (83:162) Although less common these days - in part, because of the 'emphasis on writers who travel' (as noted above) - a great mass of travel literature, according to Adams, is biographical (loc cit): 'The travel biography, the third-person account, is often by a participant, a companion, or an observer, but it can also be the work of an editor or a historian close to or far from the facts.' (ibid:163) Among the Australian works to be discussed later in this paper is Harold Fletcher's *Antarctic Days with Mawson*, which records the activities of an expedition, with emphasis on the collective, the team, and with far less stress on the personality of its author. In this sense, it combines first and third person writing.
Even when travel writing is executed predominantly in the first person voice, there is no longer an assumption that this is a singular, unmodifiable, 'true' voice, the only one available to the author. In fact, it may well be no more than a specific persona adopted by the protean author, which may vary from publication to publication, or even within the one work. John Thieme (in *Authorial Voice in V.S. Naipaul's The Middle Passage*) argues that, since the beginning of the 1960s, '... there has been widespread recognition that the voice which speaks to us in a work of fiction is not that of the writer himself - Fielding or Austen or Tolstoy - but rather that of an "implied author", a persona which the writer assumes, consciously or unconsciously.' ('82:139) This 'assumption' of an authorial persona is not confined to fictive writing, but may also be found in supposedly 'objective' genres, such as biography or journalism, and certainly in travel writing. Just as the novelist dons a particular costume and acts a particular part in each of his fictions, so the writer who sets out to give an account of his travels inevitably has to invest himself with his own particular version of the role of the traveller, among the most popular being those of guide, social commentator, tourist and explorer.' (loc cit) By way of example, Thieme has identified several personae in the travel works of Naipaul: '... he has written as Victorian traveller, enfeebled explorer, novelistic observer, cultural analyst and lastly, as purveyor of second-hand information. His inability to adopt a unitary persona has proved both a strength and a weakness.' (ibid:149) It needs to be said that these are no more than multiple facets of the author, whereas a fictional character (e.g. Mr. Biswas) created by the same author cannot be argued as simply to be so.

Whether the text is written in the first or third person, and whatever persona is adopted within the use of the former, we return, at some point, to the problematic term 'author' (that spectre who of late has been theoretically doomed, semiotically annulled and avoided), in this case, as the travel writer. H. Porter Abbott in *Diary Fiction: Writing as Action* attempts to lay this ghost by asserting that, 'Whatever we are referring to when we speak of the author - an open-ended system of changes, a pressure on the language - we are referring to nothing so enduring and itself as the text. The
author follows the character offstage, and it is the text, if anything, that becomes the reality.' (84:156)