



FORUM

University of Edinburgh
Postgraduate Journal of Culture and the Arts
Issue 25 | Autumn 2017

Title	Perspective in Australia's Outback: Travel and Truth
Author	Mary Giles
Publication	FORUM: University of Edinburgh Postgraduate Journal of Culture & the Arts
Issue Number	25
Issue Date	Autumn 2017
Publication Date	18/12/2017
Editors	Vicki Madden and Maria Elena Torres-Quevedo

FORUM claims non-exclusive rights to reproduce this article electronically (in full or in part) and to publish this work in any such media current or later developed. The author retains all rights, including the right to be identified as the author wherever and whenever this article is published, and the right to use all or part of the article and abstracts, with or without revision or modification in compilations or other publications. Any latter publication shall recognise FORUM as the original publisher.

Perspective in Australia's Outback: Travel and Truth

Mary Giles

Carleton University

This paper explores the blurred genre of travel writing and the obligation placed on the traveller to provide an authentic, truthful tale. Using their own perspectives and cultural biases to describe the Australian Outback, the three discussed travel writers cross the line between non-fiction novel and fictional memoir.

There is a fine line between the genres of travel writing, non-fiction novels, and fictional memoir. In this article, I discuss works that blur the lines of these genres and the degree to which travel writers have an obligation to provide truthful narratives about the places and people they encounter. The three texts I explore were written shortly after *Orientalism* (1978), Edward Said's seminal discourse on western (or Euro-American) relations with "the other", which significantly influenced contemporary understandings of colonialism and empire. Although *Orientalism* does not discuss Australia directly, Said does examine travel writing, demonstrating how that travel writers (the subject) attempt to assert control over the indigenous people of colonised countries (the object). Whilst travel writing as a genre is pre-colonial (Clark 7), and contemporary global travel writing is not a direct extension of colonialism, this article works on the premise that it is difficult for western travel writers, when exploring the colonies and cultures of indigenous peoples, to separate themselves from an ingrained, albeit contemporary, colonial and imperialistic perspective.

The Australian Outback has drawn many travel writers from distant countries to search for ancient knowledge and truth. The first recorded European contact with Australia was in the *Endeavour* journals of April 1770 by British explorer Captain James Cook. On first sighting humans on land, he comments with personal observation: "They appear'd to be of a very dark or black Colour but whether this was the real colour of their skins or the C[l]othes they might have on I know not" (Beaglehole 301). Several days later Cook perceptively discerns, "all they seem'd to want was for us to be gone" (Beaglehole 306). Cook strays further from observation towards personal perspective in August 1770, when he writes that the indigenous people "may appear to some to be the most wretched people upon Earth, but in reality they are far more happier than we Europeans" (Beaglehole 399).

Since then travel writers have attempted to capture the essence of Australia through writing about Aboriginal peoples. This article will discuss and compare three texts first published between 1980 and 1990 that depict Aboriginal cultures, cross generic boundaries, and raise questions about authenticity and truth in travel writing. The Australian traveller Robyn Davidson, in her memoir *Tracks*, does not attempt political correctness or comment on cultural appropriation. Marlo Morgan, an American, goes beyond observation and fact in her book *Mutant Message Down Under*; she proclaims complete truth, but her narrative is filled with clichés and questionable tropes, strongly suggesting it may in fact be fiction. British writer Bruce Chatwin claims that *The Songlines* is a novel,

part-fiction and part-truth, but his research, as evident in the text, problematises this description of genre. Chatwin, Morgan, and Davidson use their own viewpoints, as well as ingrained societal and cultural biases, to describe the landscape, inhabitants, and culture of the Australian Outback.

Escaping the societal expectations of her urban Australian culture, Robyn Davidson travelled, with only four camels and a dog, for nine months across the Australian Outback in 1977. She claims that her experience was not at first intended to be recorded, except in her personal diary and letters to family and friends. However, she later writes for *National Geographic* to finance the trek and then writes her non-fiction memoir *Tracks* (1980). Davidson affirms that a desire to speak honestly about life led her to recount her travels in a style of personal journalism, giving her writing “verve, confidence and a passion for truth” (397). She writes, “A writer’s task is to look at the world from an independent viewpoint and to tell the truth as you see it” (400). Davidson embarked upon the journey through the desert to escape stagnancy and cultural expectations, but she also uses her desire to understand more about Aboriginal ways of life as an excuse for her trip:

I had read a good deal about Aborigines and that was another reason for my wanting to travel in the desert – a way of getting to know them directly and simply. I had also... been sick of carrying around the self-indulgent negativity which was so much the malaise of my generation, my sex and my class. (68)

Davidson does not view herself as a colonizer; her education and what she’s read of Aboriginal peoples gives her the confidence to think she can know them directly. But, at the same time, she feels a sense of guilt and is able to acknowledge the truth of her privileged lifestyle. Davidson writes, “I had met a group of young white people involved with Aboriginal rights. Like me, they had brought with them the idealism and indignant morality of their various good educations” (75). Even though she sees herself as an ally (at least intellectually), Davidson becomes a “whitefella tourist on the outside looking in” (231), observing Aboriginal cultures through an ingrained colonial lens. Davidson presents her passing thoughts and observations in a journalistic style, which appears to add an authentic impression to the work. She has prepared for the trip with “four water drums, a large hessian sack containing oranges, lemons, potatoes, garlic, onions, coconuts and pumpkins.... space ropes, straps, hobbles, halters, sheepskins, etc” (171). The details Davidson infuses into her travel writing gives it verisimilitude, what Hagen Schulz-Forberg calls “truth effect” (14). To present her work as credible, she describes struggles between ideals and reality (see 87, 102, 149) and human experiences – thirst, “waves of thrumming heat” (46), “knock-kneed exhaustion” (184), and loneliness – providing a more engaging story for her readers.

Davidson attempts to describe the Aboriginal people she meets in Alice Springs and in the nearby settlement without her own cultural analysis, but she still oversimplifies the situation: “Many were alcoholics, so whatever money they got went straight into a flagon of cheap wine. Children and women suffered the most, from malnutrition, violence and disease” (81). In her attempts to convey her truth by sharing her feelings and observations without reservation, Davidson still marginalizes the people she meets. She states her own observations about the children in the Areyonga settlement as if they are universal facts: “Aboriginal kids were different. They never whined, or demanded. They were

direct and filled with *joie de vivre* and so loving and giving with one another that they melted me immediately.... The camels had a very special attitude to them” (192). Davidson also writes about travelling with “Mr. Eddie”, a Pitjantjatjara elder, who guides her through sacred land in which women are culturally forbidden to travel alone. She describes “the little man” (245) throughout their journey and believes “quality radiated from him” (250). They mostly communicate through “charades” (250) but, despite linguistic and cultural barriers, Eddie teaches her many Aboriginal customs (see 274, 276, 292). Davidson writes, “Eddie seemed to grow in stature with every step. He was a dingo-dreaming man, and his links with the special places we passed gave him a kind of energy, a joy, a belonging” (271). Despite her desire to portray her perceived ideal version of an ancient, nomadic culture, Davidson also sees the harsh reality of their current circumstances. In Said’s view, truth as “representation is eo ipso implicated, intertwined, embedded, interwoven with a great many other things besides the ‘truth,’ which is itself a representation” (272). Davidson’s representation of the people she meets cannot be separated from her education or culture, or Australia’s colonial history, three examples of Said’s “many other things” interwoven with truth and, as such, implicated in her writing. She writes:

I was caught between two versions of the truth. I liked station people and knew that they did not consider themselves racist. When they look at the sordid camps around town, they see only the violence and dirt and the incomprehensible lack of protestant work ethic. While they usually have a patronizing respect for the older Aboriginal people, they are unable to see beyond the immediate and beyond their own values [...] (373)

As a western author, Davidson also understands the modern-day perspectives of the white Australians she meets at stations, even if they are discriminatory. The station people do not see the role they play (currently or historically) in the situation in Wiluna (373). Davidson claims that “no white person can fully enter Aboriginal reality” (256) and, having witnessed political biases on both sides, she will be “eternally wary of the blindness of ideological certainty” (401). This suggests that nobody can entirely comprehend something as complex as a culture or its belief systems; the problem with attempting to represent the truth of another culture is that “truth” is blurred by human processes such as translation, writing, and interpretation.

Although the trip begins as a personal journey for Davidson, it is quickly romanticized and captured by a wide public who are drawn to the idea of a lone woman travelling in the desert. The focus shifts for Davidson from a private expedition to one eagerly observed by an audience through newspaper and magazine articles. She writes, “I did not perceive at that time that I was allowing myself to get more involved with writing about the trip than the trip itself... I was beginning to see it as a story for other people, with a beginning and an ending” (217). The awareness that others are waiting to read about her journey inevitably changes the recording of direct truth into a more polished, readable story in the form of a novel. The descriptions come to have a resonance of “truth,” as expected by the reader, rather than the more objective “truth” she observes. It is, then, difficult to

escape the “imagined reader accompanying the writer” (Schulz-Forberg 30) on her travels as she anticipates the reading of her own text.

Davidson comments on the role memory plays in travel writing. She attempts, at the time, to write honestly about her experience. Yet in the postscript of an edition of *Tracks* published thirty years later, Davidson writes:

[A]s I try to sort out fact from fiction, try to remember how I felt at that particular time, or during that particular incident, try to relive those memories that have been buried so deep, and distorted so ruthlessly, there is one clear fact that emerges from the quagmire.... I knew even then that, instead of remembering the truth of it, I would lapse into a useless nostalgia. (393-394)

For Davidson, memories of events, emotions, and landscapes are fleeting even if she attempts to capture her adventures as accurately as possible. She writes *Tracks* shortly after the trek and believes it is a candid portrayal of her experience. Yet, years later, she can hardly remember the younger version of herself and cannot grasp those memories. While Davidson writes about what she sees and who she meets on her travels through the desert, the ease with which these details are forgotten would suggest that the book is really about her inner journey, her experience, and changing identity. Her transient experience of self-discovery also allows her to return to her prior life of privilege after she reaches her destination. Davidson chooses the journey to search for her own truth, but those who have no choice are left behind with their collective truth – the ruins of colonisation. The Aboriginal people she describes become, in a sense, like the landscape or “imagined geographies” (Said 54) that she travels through and that surround her, only “versions of a previously known thing” (Said 58) rather than the subject of her work.

Marlo Morgan uses extensive geographical and cultural imagination in the story of her 1985 journey in the Australian Outback “written after the fact and inspired by actual experience” (xiii). *Mutant Message Down Under* was written for her own research, to share her knowledge with others, and to build her professional reputation (3). First self-published as non-fiction in 1990, the text documents Morgan’s travels with an undiscovered Aboriginal tribe, “the Real People,” for four months in an undisclosed part of the desert. Unlike Davidson, Morgan is not permitted to bring anything into the interior; her clothes and belongings are burned in a sacred ceremonial fire when she arrives (7). Morgan affirms that this tribe needs nothing; they are never without food as “the universe responds to their mind-talk” (52). The animals sacrifice themselves to the tribe: “It is up to the plants and animals to make their own arrangements about who will be chosen” (53). Morgan begins by framing herself as “the observer” (134) but throughout the text she injects her own cultural ideals of non-violence (82), sociology (see 130, 152-153, 159), spirituality (see 75, 80, 94), natural healing (see 62, 79, 90-93), and a freedom of unnecessary possessions (67, 78). Schulz-Forberg states that “travel writers insert themselves into a discourse” (30), but Morgan goes further, inserting herself into the culture, as well as the system of knowledge, a “forgery of identity” (11). Relating to identity within travel writing, Terry Goldie notes that “[p]sychological critics have often viewed such fictional adventuring expeditions as mythic representations of a quest for identity.... The adventure represents a search for a positive

definition of country and an encounter with an element of the indigenous” (33). *Mutant Message Down Under* becomes about Morgan’s utopic vision of the world; objective facts do not stop her from proclaiming her own discovered “truths.” Morgan roots her idyllic identity with the Aboriginal peoples who she claims are “treated much the same way as we Americans treated *our* (italics mine) native people” (35).

Morgan, like Davidson, romanticizes the tribe, albeit on a greater scale by “disregarding, essentialising, denuding the humanity of another culture” (Said 108). Morgan writes that the tribe comprises “wonderful, pure, innocent, loving people” (58) who have “mysterious virgin minds” (94). According to Morgan, the Real People do not need much water to survive; they believe westerners are addicted to it and when the tribe does need water, they just “put long hollow reeds into the earth, suck on the end, and create a mini fountain” (53). She treats the tribe as almost magical: “Their sense of hearing, sight, and smell seem to be on superhuman levels” (54). Aboriginal trackers, according to Morgan, are able to tell the make of vehicle, its speed “and even the number of passengers” (54) just by looking at the vehicle’s tracks. One of the tribe members purposely breaks his leg so that Morgan can witness the healing of the bone, protruding “through the milk chocolate-colored skin” (62), back to full health. He sacrifices his health to help teach the western traveller a lesson about his tribe’s mystical healing and, in documenting the event in her text, it would seem that Morgan “renders its mysteries plain for and to the West” (Said 21). Her representation of the tribe’s spiritual healing is a reflection of her own desire for New Age mysticism to become widely adopted in western culture.

In 1995, *Mutant Message Down Under* was published again, but this time as fiction. Morgan writes in the preface to the HarperCollins edition: “It is sold as a novel to protect the small tribe of Aborigines from legal involvement. I have deleted details to honor friends who do not wish to be identified and to secure the secret location of *our* sacred site” (xiii, italics added). Morgan’s assertion that her decision is principally based on legality serves to insinuate that the story itself is true. Morgan even writes that she visited the tribe in 1994, after the initial publication, and “received their blessing and approval” (xv). Yet there are multiple signs that the validity of her claim to “truth” in her account is highly questionable at best. She was forced to admit (although quietly and reluctantly) to a group of elders that the text was fictional (*The Weekend Australian* n.p.), but she continued to promote the book as truth. Morgan claims she is the “mutant messenger” (148) of the tribe, charged with the task of telling their story and explaining their self-determined extinction. The elder tells her that the tribe has chosen celibacy in order to end their “pure human race” (147), leaving her the task of caring for “Mother Earth” (148). Although she claims she does “not speak for the Australian Aborigines,” she does insist that she speaks for “one small Outback nation referred to as the Wild People or the Ancient Ones” (xiv). Morgan’s insistence that the text is true has certainly added to the book’s appeal for readers; speaking for the Real People created a huge following for the author. As her first book, *Mutant Message Down Under* has “made her a millionairess” and been publicised through several book tours, despite the fact that “by any stretch of the imagination, Morgan’s story is a fantastic one” (*Independent* n.p.).

Morgan writes that she is invited as a guest "expert" to help Aboriginal people start their own businesses, but she ends up on a Walkabout, "a forced march into the unknown" (17), through the Outback with the Real People. The narrative takes on the form of what Goldie describes as fictional "lost-tribe novels" (33) in which the white narrator leaves civilization and enters the interior of Australia to find a hidden paradise. There are a few literary clues throughout the book, however, to hint that Morgan's version of events is falsified. In the preface, Morgan tells readers they can save the trip to the public library, as she includes all the relevant historical information in the book. She says she can even save them a trip to Australia as "the modern-day Aboriginal condition can be seen in any U.S. city" (xiii). She also gives readers another clue through the ironic name given to the tribe – the Real People. The tribe, Morgan writes, are able to use telepathy, because unlike her, "above all, they never tell a lie, not a small fabrication, not a partial truth, nor any gross unreal statement. No lies at all, so that they have nothing to hide" (63). Near the end of her journey, the narrative tells the reader that a huge storm hits the tribe and she loses all the souvenirs of her experience (170). As Morgan leaves the desert, a great wind comes "out of nowhere. Like a giant eraser my footprints were wiped from the sand. It seemed to clean the slate of my existence in the Outback" (179). With this erasure, it is as if Morgan had never been there at all. These moments within *Mutant Message Down Under* lack verisimilitude and cast suspicion on the validity of Morgan's writing as readers scrutinize her work. The initial burning of her possessions, the lack of a notebook to keep records, and the elimination of her very footprints in the sand are a convenient way to explain the lack of evidence to support her account.

Also trying to escape the accountability implicit in claims of truth, Bruce Chatwin, a British travel writer and journalist, actually spent several weeks in Australia to research nomadic life in 1983 and 1984, but he labels his work fiction. While it seems Morgan's tale is false, but she claims truth, Chatwin's tale seems to be factual, but he asserts it is only part-truth. He writes about this experience, told by a fictionalized narrator, "a Pom by the name of Bruce" (4), in *The Songlines* (1987). The novel is based on his research into Aboriginal song and the connection of singing to the Australian landscape (the dreaming or *churinga* tracks) in which "legendary totemic beings had wandered over the continent in the Dreamtime, singing out the name of everything that crossed their path" (2). Chatwin argues that all humans are genetically predisposed to wandering (see 164, 191). He feels his own wanderlust keenly, using his research to search for historical, anthropological, and biological justifications for it. The first section of the novel is about Chatwin's experience in Alice Springs, the Cullen settlement, and Popanji. The second section is taken from Chatwin's numerous journals and notebooks (unlike Morgan, who had no "notebook handy" (xiii)). It is filled with musings, stories, and quotations from famous writers, philosophers, and anthropologists, recorded over years of travel and research. These preconceived ideas and knowledge impede Chatwin's ability to write objectively about his current research. Tim Youngs writes that "the way we imagine places is not simply a private, individual affair and our responses to them when we visit them are not independent but are mediated by the culturally constructed representations we have previously encountered" (2). Chatwin combines details from his extensive travels, former research, and pre-formed philosophies about nomads, "the crankhandle of history" (19), with his limited understanding of the dreaming tracks, in an attempt to

prove the arguments of his research. Chatwin admits that it is impossible for him to come close to understanding the “heart of the matter” (12); however, his insistence on the form as a novel – classified as fiction, although based on actual research – becomes a way to protect himself from the criticism of anthropologists and cultural historians. *The Songlines* escapes typical genre classification; it does not fit comfortably into the designations of pure fiction, travel writing, autobiography, or reflective memoir, though it touches on all of these. Thomas Smith argues, “the conventional autobiography scattered throughout the book offers reasons for his self-elected membership in the tribe of nomads from a modern, psychologized perspective on individual human development” (92). By refusing to name or fully specify the true genre of *The Songlines*, Chatwin also casts off some responsibility for providing an accurate account.

Chatwin, like Morgan and Davidson, points out the disparity between his ideal of a peaceful, ancient nomadic “people who trod lightly over the earth” (11) and the reality of tribal territorial strife (see 13, 21, 161) and alcoholism (see 3, 22, 41, 103). He looks for answers from an Australian of Russian ancestry, but is interrupted by an Aboriginal girl who hates “to hear white men discussing their ‘business’” (4). When an Aboriginal activist says his people “had never ceded one square inch of territory... never signed a treaty” and that Europeans should return to their own countries, Bruce replies, “What about the Lebanese?” (31). He also faces the harsh reality of white Australian views of the British when he is asked, “And what makes you think you can show up from Merrie Old England and clean up on sacred knowledge?” (33). His endeavour to find human universality in the *Songlines* takes over from a more factual attempt to understand the deeply complicated Aboriginal dreaming tracks, which Smith sees as problematic:

Chatwin blurs differences among cultures in his zeal to find nomadism the common element among them. His efforts to find nonaggressive nomadism everywhere cast a net of Western categories – anthropological and paleontological – over all those who would understand their own culture on their own terms. His theory makes Australian Aboriginal culture a vestige of a universal prehistoric culture morally superior not only to contemporary westernized civilizations, but also to non-nomadic civilizations throughout history. (100)

Chatwin attempts to bridge cultural beliefs from around the world to connect the *Songlines* with his own cultural understanding. He associates nomadic life with Biblical wanderings, or in the form of western classical literature and music. Chatwin visualizes “the *Songlines* as a spaghetti of *Iliads* and *Odysseys*” (13) and believes “a featureless stretch of gravel was the musical equivalent of Beethoven’s *Open III*” (14). Although Chatwin’s intentions seem pure and he is genuinely interested in researching the *Songlines*, his approach still leaves an imperialistic imprint. Douglas Ivison writes about the practice of travel writing as “inextricably intertwined with the creation and maintenance of European imperialism. Travel and its by-product travel writing were both enabled by and essential to ... the project of imperial expansionism” (200). Chatwin injects his own world cultural theory into Aboriginal belief systems and believes “the whole of Classical mythology might represent the relics of a gigantic ‘song-map’.... interpreted in terms of totemic geography” (117). Merging Greek and Roman sacred sites with those of Aboriginal Australia does not fuse as seamlessly as Chatwin would like to

believe. He takes bits and pieces from various cultures in attempt to substantiate his vision and yet writing about partial “truths” only distorts his individual revelation further.

The Songlines is full of the anthropological, philosophical, and cultural details of Chatwin’s travels, but these are grand in scope and nature. The fictionalized “Bruce” (whose surname is also Chatwin) believes he is destined to become a travel writer by his early experiences of British wartime’s “fantastic homelessness” (5) and the genetic inheritance and family influence of “horizon-struck wanderers” (6). In previous generations, his “surname had once been ‘Chettewynde’, which meant ‘the winding path’ in Anglo-Saxon” and he writes “poetry, my own name and the road were, all three, mysteriously connected” (9). *The Songlines*, although written as an exploration of the dreaming tracks, is in fact a novel about Chatwin himself—his childhood, his past research, education, and beliefs. The first section presents a narrative filled with dialogue and anecdotes. The second section conveys an intense feeling of the importance of preservation, of an acute need to capture the truth of one’s life in print. Before his notebook section, Chatwin writes: “I had a presentiment that the ‘travelling’ phase of my life might be passing [...] I should set down on paper a résumé of the ideas, quotations, and encounters which had amused me and obsessed me” (107). Chatwin’s text then takes on the tone of a detached researcher and philosopher, delivering personal truths and what he presents as universal truths, but intermingled with the narrative of the first section. As Said demonstrates, travel writers cannot be completely objective (if such a thing exists); their attempt to remain “objective” is clouded by previously formed cultural representations, as well as their own experiences and prejudices. Said argues that “every domain is linked to every other one, and that nothing that goes on in our world has ever been isolated and pure of any outside influences” (xxiii). Chatwin does not only communicate his own truths, but attempts to convey the truths of other cultures and peoples. There is a continued struggle, as Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan have observed in other examples of travel writing, between “the writers’ compulsion to report the world they see and their often repressed desire to make the world conform to their preconception of it” (10). If travel writers continue to explore different cultures to find truth and meaning for their own lives, then it must be without falsely portraying the cultures of others or classifying their writing as fiction to escape criticism.

Chatwin, Morgan, and Davidson pursue the notion that possessions weigh humans down—physically, psychologically, and spiritually. The innate barrenness of the Outback provides a setting for the writers to explore the idea of stripping away all that is extraneous. Cook wrote that the indigenous peoples of New Holland (now Australia) were provided everything they need by nature and “being wholly [sic] unacquainted not only with the superfluous but the necessary Conveniencies so much sought after in Europe, they are happy in not knowing the use of them” (Beaglehole 399). Each of the three western travel writers claim hold to the Outback in different ways: Davidson as an Australian-born, independent desert traveller; Chatwin as a visitor and scholar; and Morgan as a self-proclaimed insider (143), an indoctrinated “Aborigine” with a tribal name, “Traveling Tongue” (xv). Although each book could be classified as travel writing, all three blur the lines and take on the forms and tropes of different genres. Chatwin writes as an outsider, trying to gain inside knowledge, which he cannot achieve. Morgan is also an outsider, but fabricates sacred “knowledge” in order to represent

herself as an insider. Davidson could be considered an insider as she is Australian, but in most ways she is an outsider with limited exposure to the Outback or the Aboriginal peoples. These texts exemplify the difficulty for contemporary travel writers to capture the essence of an experience when translation is lost between subjective perception and objective observations, and the telling of those experiences in story form. They can be taken as evidence of the impossibility, according to Said, for travel writers to “study other cultures and peoples from a libertarian, or a nonrepressive and nonmanipulative perspective” (Said 24). Edwards and Graulund argue that Said’s work has been taken too far by critics and that there are “alternative representations of travel” that “challenge the Eurocentric understandings of the genre” (2). Although non-Euro-American travel writers may not be influenced in their writing by colonial and imperialistic influences, it still “lingers on in ideas, stories and texts” (Edwards and Graulund 8), and Euro-American travellers in particular have difficulty in removing themselves entirely from the effects of colonial history in their writing.

Indeed, the expectations and definition of contemporary travel writing as a genre need to be reanalysed. For travel writing to be carried out ethically, certain epistemic and testimonial perspectives are crucial. Self-proclaimed “expert” knowledge and detailed insight into other cultures and alleged universal “truths” contribute to the exoticisation of these cultures. A more personal perspective and identity from a contemporary, “postcolonial” voice, as well as more appreciation of the writer’s role as visitor and spectator, “keenly aware of the environment, human rights, and libertarian impulses that bind us together in this tiny planet” (Said xxx), is crucial to the decolonization of travel writing. Holland and Huggan’s modern “countertravelers” will continue to “resist the tendency to indulge in exoticism” and distinguish between “national and cultural identities” (Edward and Graulund 3). Travel texts are more about the traveller and their fleeting view of another place, and less about the destination itself or its inhabitants. As Steve Clark points out: “The traveller *qua* traveller is a textual figment, synonymous with the duration of the tale, the voice of the dead” (18). The search for knowledge, understanding, and a smaller version of a grander truth causes global travel writers to continue to investigate other cultures and societies amidst the hazy, desert mirage of the genre.

Works Cited

- Beaglehole, J.C., editor. *The Journals of Captain James Cook: The Voyage of the Endeavour (1768-1771)*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1968. Print.
- Chatwin, Bruce. *The Songlines*. New York: Penguin Books, 1988. Print.
- Clark, Steve, editor. *Travel Writing & Empire: Postcolonial Theory in Transit*. London: Zed Books Ltd., 1999. Print.
- Davidson, Robyn. *Tracks*. London: Bloomsbury, 2012. Print.
- Edwards, Justin D., and Rune Graulund, editors. *Postcolonial Travel Writing: Critical Explorations*. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. Print.
- Goldie, Terry. *Fear and Temptation: The Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Literatures*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989. Print.
- Holland, Patrick, and Graham Huggan. *Tourists and Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998. Print.
- Iverson, Douglas. "Travel Writing at the End of Empire: A Pom Named Bruce and the Mad White Giant." *English Studies in Canada* 29.3-4 (2003): 200-219. Web. 30 July 2017
- Milliken, Robert. "Truth goes walkabout in outback? Aborigines outraged as US author makes a million with 'New Age fantasy' of lost tribe in the bush." *Independent*. 11 December 1994. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/truth-goes-walkabout-in-outback-aborigines-outraged-as-us-author-makes-a-million-with-new-age-1389189.html> 3 December 2017.
- Morgan, Marlo. *Mutant Message Down Under*. New York: HarperCollins, 1995. Print.
- Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, Random House. 1978. Print
- Schulz-Forberg, Hagen, editor. *Unravelling Civilization: European Travel and Travel Writing*. Brussels: P.I.E. – Peter Lang, 2005. Print.
- Smith, Thomas R. "Blurring Distinctions: Autobiography and Identity in Bruce Chatwin's *The Songlines*." *Bucknell Review* 47:2 (2004): 90-103. Web. 2 August 2017.
- The Weekend Australian. "Mutant Author Says She's Sorry." *The Weekend Australian*, 27-28 January, 1996. Cited in Jens Korff. "Marlo Morgan – Mutant Message Down Under: Timeline". *Creative Spirits*. 8 November 2015. <https://www.creativespirits.info/resources/books/fiction-novels/marlo-morgan-mutant-message-down-under-timeline#ixzz4xIPxUli6>. 30 October 2017.
- Youngs, Tim. *Travel Writing in the Nineteenth Century: Filling the Blank Spaces*. New York: Anthem Press. 2006. Print.

Author Biography

Mary Giles is a master's student in English Literature at Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada. Her primary research interest is postmodern and contemporary Canadian literature published by small presses and magazines, and the role of arts for social change in giving a voice to emerging writers.