Introduction

Recognising that the beginning of a new millennium can also signal a broadening interest in looking at our world in new ways, the editors of *Journeys* present this new journal dedicated to the interdisciplinary study of travel and travel writing. To say that travelling, touring or simple wandering are among the most widespread of human activities is only to claim the obvious: this has been the case since the beginnings of our species, even if it has only been during the last century or so that the true economic and social import of travel – within cities, from hills to plains, between continents – has become clearly understood and delineated.

What all this travel means or has meant to those who do it and think about it, or have done so over the ages, is the starting point of *Journeys*, the point, one might say, where this journal begins its own journey. It took settling down, and giving up their nomadic life in roving bands, before humans could begin to really think, speak and eventually write about what their travelling signified to them. But ever since then, since the earliest civilizations and the formative experiences of Gilgamesh, Moses, Odysseus, Rama, Lao Tzu and a host of other wandering gods and heroes, accounts of journeys and the exploration of other places and peoples have caught the imagination of hearers and readers. We thus inherit a canon of travel writing with a pedigree at least as ancient as any other form of human knowledge; one that has, in consequence, found its place in virtually every modern intellectual discipline and cultural endeavour, whether scientific, literary or spiritual. We might well say that travel studies represents the original and, indeed, the archetypal interdisciplinary field, contributing to and drawing freely on the geographical and biological sciences, as well as on history, philosophy and all of the social sciences as they were created. Travel has likewise

Introduction

inspired countless literary, artistic and religious masterpieces. It is this common thread, that so plainly ties together all these disciplines, that will weave throughout the coming numbers of *Journeys*.

Here we also hope to provide a forum for our evolving understanding of the acts of travel, since what humans make of them, how they manipulate and experience the opportunities, symbols and rituals of travel, is continually developing: an intensely attractive arena for scholarly enquiry yet often maddeningly hard to predict. Thirty years ago, for example, many social and cultural commentators were prophesying that wandering, free-wheeling youth – hippies, in other words – were about to revolutionise the whole concept of travel for pleasure, making it less commercialised and more direct and intimate: spiritual, even. Superficial package tourism, it was claimed, was about to go the way of the grand tourism of past centuries; greater understanding between cultures and a most gentle impact between societies would be the inevitable results. Not even a generation had passed, however, before complaints began to flood in from Baja to Bali (and not a few universities) that, if a few thousand nomads may have flourished within the cracks of host societies during the Seventies, the several million pleasure-seeking youths who followed on their trail, in mobbing what had once been the alternative tourist circuit, were no longer so welcomed as the emissaries of a new transculturalism. Youth culture, for those who had to experience and deal with it, turned out in the end to be just like any other mass culture that has come from the post-industrial world. With all their insouciance and innocence, the wandering children of the First World were just the latest and, if possible, an even more destructive (and certainly less profitable) mutation of the old exploitative tourist plague, West and North upon the East and South.

The places and the situations where travel takes on meaning are continually assuming new, often surprising forms. There is, for example, a bookshop in London, just a few steps off the Portobello Road, a modest, independent shop devoted (appropriately enough) to travel literature. It is also a bookshop where, recently, tourists from around the world regularly walk in the door and demonstratively heft up the first volume of travel literature – guide book, personal narrative, possibly some day even a copy of *Journeys* – that comes to hand. They do this not to read, much less buy the book: they are not entering the bookshop as customers but

rather to have their photograph taken, book in hand, by fellow tourists. This unassuming shop has become something of a tourist attraction in its own right not because of what it sells, or even what it is, but because a good many people have come to treat this as the site of the encounter between the diffident travel bookseller and the glamorous Hollywood star (played by Hugh Grant and Julia Roberts) in the film *Notting Hill*.

In this minor angle of the Portobello Road district – whose street-life, fruit and vegetable stalls, antique stores and pubs have been regularly visited and photographed by foreigners for years – an ad hoc little tourist shrine has thus emerged. It is a site of filmic significance centred on travel books, which act as props for validating the presence of the visitors in a real bookshop which is both a simulacrum and a representation of the location in which the two star-lovers met. The books themselves remain unread, while silently offering the star-crossed tourist the potential experiences of a whole world of other places, other peoples and other journeys.

Ultimately, a publication like *Journeys* can only serve to make it clear that people travel, and always have travelled, for vastly different reasons and in a variety of ways – for pleasure, leisure, work; in search of spirituality or enlightenments; because they have been driven from their homes; to explore, to conquer and to govern. In the pursuit of these goals, we may say they have traveled as tourists, but just as likely as pilgrims, explorers, refugees, migrant workers, pilots, guides, academics, bearers, seafarers, drivers, journalists, invaders, missionaries, as agents of governments or (of course) as travel writers. The richness of possibility that so many aims and so many goals present is the intellectual lode in which this publication will seek to mine: to offer the reader some sense of how broad this scope can be, we have assembled for our first number what we hope is an indication of the range that will typify the articles to be found in *Journeys* over the years to come. Here Joan-Pau Rubiés considers travel writing as a genre in early modern Europe, Jill Steward examines tourist practices and their representations from the early period of modern tourism, Da Zheng analyzes the literary production of a Chinese writer and artist traveling in America, Andrew Russell embarks on a tour with a research assistant in order to understand something of the experience of migration, Norman Buchignani offers a methodological approach for the study of travel accounts, and finally Dean MacCannell

Introduction

foregrounds the modern city as a space for tourist encounters and experiences.

Among future numbers we have planned, some will approach travel through specific topics. Under rubrics such as ‘pilgrimage,’ ‘exile,’ ‘dreams,’ we hope to approach travel as both movement through and across the physical world and as a journey of the imagination. In both thematic and general volumes the remit of this new journal aims to include all ranges of analysis, interpretation and reflection: from historical narrative to critical theory, from textual analysis to investigation of the uses to which travel experiences and accounts have been put and the ways in which they have shaped other opinions, processes and perspectives. *Journeys* will continue to treat the images and practices of ‘travel’ as metaphors for the production of the cultural experience and knowledge about ‘real’ places – whether past, present or future; imaginary or imagined; communities, ‘homes’ or diasporas; and peoples: real, mythical or fantastical. With our first number, of what begins as a biannual publication, we invite the reader to join us in this particular journey.

Robert Davis
Maria Pia Di Bella
John Eade
Garry Marvin