Over the past century, narratives of travel changed in response to modernist and postmodernist literary innovation, world wars, the demise of European empires, and the effect of new technologies and media on travel experience. Yet existing critical studies have not examined fully how the genre changes, or theorized why. This study investigates the evolution of Anglophone travel narrative from the 1920s to the present, addressing the work of canonical authors such as T. E. Lawrence, W. H. Auden, and Rebecca West; best sellers by Peter Fleming and H. V. Morton; and texts by Colin Thubron, Andrew X. Pham, Rosemary Mahoney, and others. It argues that the genre's most important transformation lies in its reinvention as a means of narrating the subjective experience of violence, cultural upheaval, and transience. It will interest scholars and students of travel writing, modernism and postmodernism, English and American literature, and the history and sociology of travel.

Stacy Burton is an associate professor of English at the University of Nevada, Reno. Her work on modernist fiction, travel narrative, and literary theory has appeared in Modern Language Quarterly, Modern Philology, Comparative Literature, Genre, and elsewhere.
TRAVEL NARRATIVE
AND THE ENDS OF MODERNITY

STACY BURTON

University of Nevada
## Contents

*List of Illustrations*  
*Acknowledgments*  

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction: Critical Paradigms and Problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Privilege – and Problem – of Narrative Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Modernist and Postmodernist Travels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Nostalgia and the Spectacle of Modernity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Perpetual Wartime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The Allure of Authenticity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Notes*  
*Selected Bibliography*  
*Index*
Illustrations

1 Photo of Peter Fleming, from Fleming’s *News from Tartary* page 48
2 “War Zone” photos, from Auden and Isherwood’s *Journey to a War* 70
3 “The Innocent” and “The Guilty,” from Auden and Isherwood’s *Journey to a War* 75
4 “A Literary Method” (Kennington), from Lawrence’s *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* 100
5 Photo of Ella Maillart refilling her Leica, from Maillart’s *Forbidden Journey* 106
6 Photo of the death of Alexander Karageorgevitch, from West’s *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* 135
7 Dust jacket of the American edition of Spender’s *European Witness* 141
8 “Moderate Pressure,” panels from Sacco’s *Palestine* 158
9 Photo of the British War Cemetery in Jerusalem, from Morton’s *In the Steps of the Master* 181
10 Photo of Andrew X. Pham, from Pham’s *Catfish and Mandala* 186
This book took more time than one might have hoped, but in the end it is better for it. I am grateful to family, friends, colleagues, and institutions for considerable support along the way. The University of Nevada, Reno, provided sabbatical leave. The Department of English provided research assistance; the College of Liberal Arts Scholarly and Creative Activities Grant Program covered permission fees for quotations and images. The department, the college, and the Office of the Vice President for Research supported presentations at academic conferences. Colleagues in the United States, the United Kingdom, and France responded: particular thanks to the International Society for the Study of Narrative, the Modernist Studies Association, and Borders and Crossings/Seuils et Traverses for their cultures of engaged discussion. The Huntington Library offered time and space for research that was funded through a Huntington/Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association fellowship. The British Library and the Library of Congress are remarkable public institutions; conducting research at each has been a pleasure.

Early on, Kathy Okerlund Nelson and Robert Nelson let me stay for weeks, and Francesca Sawaya asked good questions. Annual conversations with Pat Okker helped with the long view. Jen Hill read initial chapters rigorously and identified what was wrong: thank you. Scott Casper listened – and read the penultimate manuscript. Elizabeth Raymond and Dennis Dworkin each did much to ensure that this project moved forward. Heather Hardy supported this book at every turn.

My thanks to Ray Ryan and the two anonymous readers at Cambridge University Press for their careful engagement with my work. My thanks as well to Louis Gulino and the team at Newgen Knowledge Works for following through on details.

Words do not suffice to thank friends and family for the invaluable ordinary sustenance that makes life pleasurable and immersion in work possible. To the Burtons – Jack, Rosemary, Lisa, Steve, Sally, and
Acknowledgments

company – thank you for being the most wonderful of families, year in and year out. What fine fortune it is to adventure through life together. To friends who have shared dinners, dramas, laughter, and travel over the years, many thanks: Kathy and Ron Ray, Lorie Winder Stromberg and Tom Stromberg; Dennis Dworkin and Amelia Currier, Scott Casper, Elizabeth Raymond and Jim Pagliarini, Martha Hildreth and Bruce Blackadar; Kathy Okerlund Nelson and Robert Nelson, Chris Bramwell; Francesca Sawaya; Jane Hafen; Lyn and Jack Hawkins; Judith Whitenack, Miriella Melara, and Susan Baker; Victoria Follette; Kathy and Phil Boardman, Ann Ronald and Lois Snedden, Jen Hill and Larry Cantera, Jane Detweiler and Beverly Lassiter, and Heather and Don Hardy. Here is to travel in peacetime – and to finding oneself home.

The following list of credits for permission to reproduce previously published work constitutes a continuation of the copyright page.

“Thinking,” by Eric Kennington, R.A., by permission of the family of the artist. Image by permission of the Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin.


Photos from *Journey to a War*, © The Estate of W. H. Auden. Reprinted by permission of Curtis Brown, Ltd.

Text and line drawing from *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, by T. E. Lawrence, © 1926, 1935 by Doubleday, a division of Random House, Inc. Used by permission of Doubleday, a division of Random House, Inc. Any third-party use of this material, outside of this publication, is prohibited. Interested parties must apply directly to Random House, Inc., for permission.


Text from *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, by Rebecca West, © 1940, 1941; renewed © 1968, 1969 by Rebecca West. Used by permission of Viking Penguin, a division of Penguin Group (USA), Inc.

Text from *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, by Rebecca West. Reprinted by permission of SLL/Sterling Lord Literistic, Inc. © The Estate of Rebecca West.

Acknowledgments


Panels from *Palestine*, by Joe Sacco. Reprinted by permission of Fantagraphics Books.

Excerpt from “Alley-World” from *Catfish and Mandala: A Two-Wheeled Voyage through the Landscape and Memory of Vietnam* by Andrew X. Pham. © 1999 by Andrew X. Pham. Reprinted by permission of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, LLC.

Photograph of Andrew X. Pham. Reprinted by permission of Timothy Archibald.


Excerpt from *The Rings of Saturn* by W. G. Sebald. © 1995 W. G. Sebald, used by permission of The Wylie Agency LLC.

Brief portions of this manuscript appeared in quite different form in the following:
