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## BOOK REVIEW

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Norman, Alex (ed.) 2013. *Journeys and Destinations: Studies in Travel, Identity and Meaning*. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. xiv + 298pp. £49.99. ISBN: 978-1-4438-4753-7 (hbk).

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**Keywords:** religious founder-leaders; spirituality; pilgrimage; spiritual tourism; travel.

The thirteen contributions in this book stem from a conference on “Philosophies of Travel” sponsored by the Sydney Society of Literature and Aesthetics in 2011. In his introduction the editor Alex Norman celebrates that “the various fields of the academy have, in recent decades, contributed a wealth of scholarship on all matters pertaining to travel” (pp. ix–x). Also made explicit is Norman’s desire to draw the study of travel more generally into the remit of the social sciences (p. ix). Travel is indeed central to identity and economy in the present era and there are many data from the traditional social sciences and humanities that can bear upon more commercial, as well as cultural, issues in tourism and hospitality studies. In reflecting on the remit of the collection, Norman is keen to avoid confinement by terms such as “pilgrimage”. Rejecting the now rather clichéd sacred–profane dichotomy, he explains his interest in how the “religious and non-religious intermingle, overlap and coincide, especially on the road” (p. xi)—though most of the studies in this volume still have implicit, if not always overt, religious dimensions. The breadth of this remit is mirrored in the geographical as well as methodological range of the collection.

In our modern, increasingly secularized, society religious tourism has nonetheless recently achieved a scale sufficient to inspire deliberative planning and investment. Three contributors (Carole Cusack, Robert Saunders, Morandir Armson) focus on the recent enthusiasm for “trails”. In a thoughtful contribution, which has a personal component reflecting on her own experience (pp. 15–17), Cusack walks the “St Cuthbert Trail” in Northumbria. She observes how the connection of the trail to the saint and the medieval context is a tenuous one at times, but that we might seek the authenticity of the experience as much in the self-transformative act of walking the trail as in the “genuine fakes” of some of its historic stations. In a wider reflection on materialism of the cult of saints she also considers the subtle, but significant economic impact of the creation of such trails. In another strong contribution, Saunders explores the experience of the Kokoda Trail trek, which has become a vehicle through which many Australians engage with fraught aspects of their nation’s memory and their own family histories. His methodology involves extensive interviews, with a particular interest in understanding the extent of the transformative quality of the experience of walking the trail. In contrast to the more-established Gallipoli

pilgrimage, Saunders finds the emphasis here more on re-enactment and personal challenge rather than performative ritual. Armson's study reflects on the informal trails followed by contemporary pagans between what are already notable archaeological sites in Britain. His study notes the extent to which the "trail" can be seen as a virtual product, sustained by websites that are used by pilgrims to construct personal itineraries. In many ways he finds that the final product is less the validation of regular trails than a "locative actualization" of experience—even a "pagan cathedral" in which one can experience the numinous in an identified space.

Location of sacred spaces is also Sarah K. Balstrup's theme in a study that references work on Apache sacred places and "goddess pilgrimages" while making some important theoretical points. Two contributors (Johanna J. M. Petsche and Alex Norman) reflect on orientalist travel by Europeans to the Far East in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Petsche compares the diverse figures of G. I. Gurdijeff, Helena Blavatsky and L. Ron Hubbard. Inclined to be sceptical of some of their claims of experiences in their travels, Petsche focuses on the extent to which the narratives were nonetheless essential to their projection of authority to western audiences (an interesting control here could be a reflection on some "guru" figures with eastern interests—Thoreau perhaps?—who did *not* claim actual travels to the east). Norman, in a very informative discussion, uses a reflection on Madame Blavatsky and India to consider the longer history of western engagement with India. He concludes that the modern resort to the East as a source of spirituality is a process with a direct connection to these earlier orientalist travellers. He observes, nonetheless, that with modern communications the experience is increasingly becoming more normative, and of much shorter in duration, than in the past.

In other studies, Joanna Kujawa writes on how medieval women were empowered by pilgrimage; a striking feature of her study is the extent to which modern literature of heritage-tourism populates the references of a study in a field where past work focused mostly on philosophical questions. Renée Kohler-Ryan looks in great detail at modern travel to medieval cathedral labyrinths. An interesting aspect of this study is the effort made to contextualize the new spirituality of these monuments in their role in the wider architecture of the medieval cathedral. Glenys Eddy writes on a retreat to Nepal, Lisa Worthington on Muslim women and travel, Ping Wang on early Chinese exilic writing, Simon Theobald on Jewish pilgrimage, and Zoe Alderton on Maori pilgrimage to the afterlife as represented in the works of a New Zealand artist.

The editor, Alex Norman, does not seek to present this collection as a concerted approach in terms of methodology or content. The volume nonetheless succeeds in being one that a scholar of pilgrimage or tourism will want to source as a collection, not simply as individual chapters, partly because its very range allows for productive, innovative, reflections on methodology and data collection.