



Moving Lives: Twentieth-Century Women's Travel Writing

Sidonie Smith

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Women's Studies/Literary Theory

An engaging look at women writing on the go-and what they tell us about female identity.

As technological advances increased the ease, speed, and reach of transportation, more and more women took to the air, to the road and the rail, and headed for points elsewhere. As they mastered new modes of mobility and then narrated their journeys, these women travelers left cultural ideas of femininity as sedentary, subordinate, and constrained in the dust. In *Moving Lives* Sidonie Smith explores how women's travel and travel writing in the twentieth century were shaped by particular modes of mobility, asking how the form of travel affected the kind of narrative written.

Alexandra David-Neel journeying on foot across the Himalayas; Robyn Davidson on her camel in the outback of Australia; Amelia Earhart, Anne Morrow Lindbergh, and Beryl Markham climbing into the cockpit of their airplanes; Mary Morris riding a train from Beijing to Berlin; Irma Kurtz taking a Greyhound into the bellies of American cities and towns-of these and other women, Smith asks: What do they make of their travels? How do they enact the dynamics of and contradictions in the drift of identity? Are they defined by the experience-or do they define the meaning of a particular mode of transport in new and different ways, and in doing so, disentangle travel from its masculine logic?

Unique in its focus on the relationship of women in motion, technologies of motion, and autobiographical practices, *Moving Lives* will interest readers across a broad spectrum of disciplines, as well as those who are simply intrigued by travel narratives.

Sidonie Smith is director of women's studies and professor of English at the University of Michigan. Her books include *Subjectivity, Identity, and the Body: Women's Autobiographical Practices in the Twentieth Century* (1993) and, as coeditor, *Getting a Life: Everyday Uses of Autobiography* (Minnesota, 1996).

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