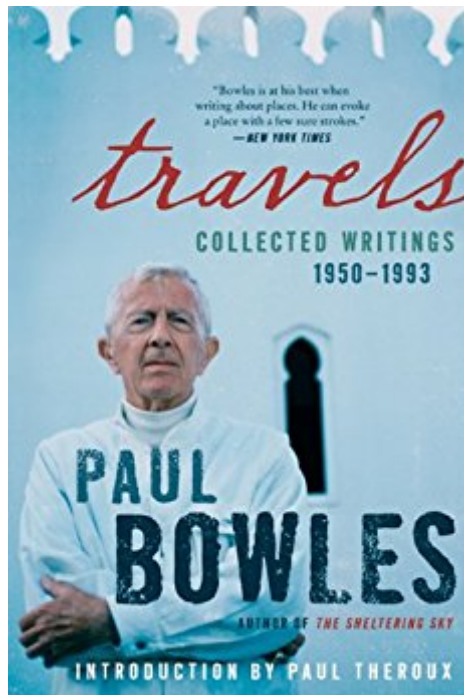




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Travels: Collected Writings, 1950-1993



Synopsis

Paul Bowles is at his best when writing about places. He can evoke a place with a few sure strokes. "New York Times" His work is art. At his best, Bowles has no peer. "Time" *Travels* is a thrilling anthology of the travel writings of Paul Bowles, author of the era-defining post-war novel *The Sheltering Sky*. The acclaimed essays in *Travel* "never before collected in a single volume" span more than sixty years and range from Bowles' early days in Paris to his time spent in Ceylon, Thailand, Kenya, and his expatriate life in Morocco. Insightful, exciting, and evocative, featuring original photographs throughout, *Travels* is a stunning collection of rarely seen shorter works "a showcase of the literary artistry of one of the truly great American writers of the twentieth century."

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Customer Reviews

I can say that Paul Bowles is one of my favorite writers and now having read *Travels: Collected Writings 1950-1993* (2010), I have finished reading all of his available writings. This collection is mostly made up of pieces that were collected earlier in, *Their Heads Are Green* and *Their Hands*

Are Blue (1963). I think if there were that many pieces in a collection by another writer I might have not bothered with the collection or skipped those pieces. But I decided to re-read them and savor the familiarity and evocative scenes described Bowles who has a gift of bringing the atmosphere of a place to life, for example the Sahara Desert in "Baptism of Solitude," as well as the people that populate those specific places, like in "Mustapha and his Friends." There are two excellent pieces about his travels into countryside and mountains of Morocco to record the traditional music there that is some of his best writing in "The Route to Tassemit" and "The Rif, to Music." In those pieces, in particular, he brings Morocco and the inhabitants to life. But he awakened an interest for me in his in his part-time home in Ceylon, that is the subject of "Fishtraps and Private Business." I plan to make a pilgrimage to his private island on my visit there next month. The book is arranged chronologically by editor Mark Ellingham and contains mostly travel pieces but also travel-oriented journals, introductions to photographic books, and even a glossary of kif terms for a 1960s books on cannabis. It includes an introduction by one of my favorite travel writers Paul Theroux as well. I suspect some of the material may have been cannibalized for Bowles' autobiography, *Without Stopping*, which I also recently read. The earliest pieces are from Bowles early days as a teenager in France-among the 30 uncollected writings spread throughout the book. There were a number of pieces from the now defunct *Holiday* magazine that were among my favorites as well: "How to Live on a Part-Time Island" (another piece that inspired me to visit Ceylon), "Madeira" (on the isolated Portuguese island), "Window on the Past" (about Spain), as well as several pieces on Morocco and cities in Morocco. I was impressed with pieces about travel in Istanbul ("A Man Must Not Be Very Moslem"), India ("Notes Mailed at Nagercoil), the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya ("Letter from Kenya") as well as a piece about the civil war in neighboring Algeria ("Sad for U.S., Sad for Algeria"). I think the following quote from "Windows on the Past" sums up Bowles' perspective on travel writing: If I am faced with the decision of choosing between visiting a circus and a cathedral, a cafe and a public monument, or a fiesta and a museum, I'm afraid I shall normally take the circus, the cafe, and the fiesta, trusting to luck that I shall manage to see the other s later. I supposed I'm not what today is called culture-minded. Perhaps that is because the culture of a land at any given moment is the people who live in it and the lives they lead in it, not the possessions they have inherited from those who came before. They may or may not profit by their legacy. If they do, so much the better for them; but whether they do or do not, their culture is represented by them and not by their history. I feel a sort of kinship with Bowles and hope to see as much as he has seen. I can't help but note that he did it so much earlier than others and had to struggle and suffer in order to do so. Bowles was not a fan of progress and I suspect most travel today would have been too tame for his

type of adventure lust-very much a trailblazer and original thinker.

Wonderful to have his many travel essays gathered from various sources and arranged chronologically. That unique blend of romance and reality that distinguishes Bowles from so many other travel writers is still refreshing after all these years. He was the last of a generation, and this collection allows us to follow him back over the course of an amazing life.

A riveting writer in the Beat era. He writes of travel adventures from Sri Lanka to Kenya to Morocco. Inspired me to view the nineties film from his novel set in Morocco, *The Sheltering Sky*.

If you have ever yearned to read another great Paul Bowles book but knew it was not to be, than I recommend you go on a travel with him to the most exotic parts of our world. Through the eyes and sensibilities of Mr. Bowles I felt the stirrings of danger in Morocco, Ceylon and even So. America. As an American Paul Bowles traveled extensively to learn about himself and put it on the page for us all to experience. Please don't miss this one.

Very interesting collection of travel stories . A must if you are interested in Paris before 1940. The Morocco stories are a window into an era that has died. I found this collection to be very valuable .

When we think of Paul Bowles, we often think of a quirky man living an unconventional bohemian lifestyle in Tangier - someone who embodies the very word, "decadent". These travel essays show us another side of Bowles - that of a sensitive and highly observant master of the essay. The prose style of the writings are nothing short of brilliant. Bowles is clear, detailed, organized, poetic and entertaining. Of particular interest to me is Bowles roundabout take on neo-colonialism and the Third World after World War Two. Bowles' clear sympathies lie with the underdog and the downtrodden - like the Berbers of North Africa or the nomads in the Sahara, and show Bowles to be light years ahead of the developments of today's Arab Spring. In addition, Bowles take on the new and old colonizers: the French, the Spanish, the British, and the newly arrived Americans - runs from amused to slyly skeptical and at times, openly horrified by the bad behavior of these countries. Even the city Arabs of Morocco as opposed to the mountain Berbers do not evade Bowles' sharp eye. Note that Bowles writes of a period of profound transition (the 50s to the 70s) in North Africa. During this period of time, the U.S. went from World War Two hero and savior to co-conspirator and neo-colonizer. Why? Why, for example, were the French using an American Air Base in the early

60s in Morocco to conduct bombing missions over Algeria? This was at a time the U.S. was supposedly neutral with regard to the conflict in Algeria. In fact, I remember as a child in Kenitra, the U.S. Navy denying the existence of the bombing missions, but on a daily basis, I could see the French bombers take off from the U.S./French airbase from my nearby house. Did the U.S. help to destroy a fledgling democracy when we should have been supporting it? And where has our approach gotten us today? Are we still feeling the results of our ill advised policies? Today's diplomats and historians would do well to revisit this era in North Africa and explore why American Foreign policy appeared to have lost its bearings and jumped the rails. To begin this reexamination, I would highly recommend reading "Travels: Collected Writings" as a highly illuminating start.

Through his writings Paul shows us the hidden corners of the soul. Traveling around with him I can see his irony, sarcasm, and witty up above the world.

Have always loved Bowels writing - so this collection of vignettes, impressions and meetings with unusual people at a time when the globe was a lot larger is entertaining reading. This book has lead me to investigate his music about which I know nothing.

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