



All Abroad: A Memoir of Travel and Obsession

Geoffrey Weill

University of Wisconsin Press (January 2021)

Hardcover \$28.95 (240pp)

978-0-299-33080-4

Marveling over the act of voyaging, Geoffrey Weill's *All Abroad* is a quintessential travel text. Recalling time tables and hotels, iconic poster designs, and the New York office of the Thomas Cook travel group, the book records Weill's lifelong passion with style.

Born in 1949 in London, Weill was mesmerized by his parents' and grand aunts' stories about their trips. He also absorbed his Jewish family's war memories and felt that his upbringing was "laced with claustrophobic insecurity, regimentation, blame, and torment." Wanderlust became a source of escape. His nonlinear chapters trace the romance of traveling, positing that it's the idea of being abroad, not necessarily the destination, that is beguiling. This approach is original: tourism takes a backseat to sumptuous appreciation of travel-related minutiae.

Whether he's recalling the Metropole at Brighton or guests at his family's flat, Weill's memories are observant, idiosyncratic, and vicarious about bygone glamour. The result is a cogent, delightful slice of social history that threads his British family's ties to each other with midcentury habits and images. Passion for theater, objects, and gastronomy are laced throughout.

A visit to Paris stands out as Weill shares curious thoughts about the city's differences from his home, while watching *My Fair Lady* and absorbing *National Geographic* advertisements are shown to have shaped his ideas about the "artful creation of an image." His travels make use of idealistic currencies, and accounts of them are mined for accuracy with the idea that travel is not only about fulfilling people's dreams, but can reflect ugly realities, from encountering antisemitism to witnessing the aftermath of cultural strife.

The travel memoir *All Abroad* spans decades and continents, recalling longing for new experiences, a career in the industry, and fascinating stops along the way.

KAREN RIGBY (January / February 2021)

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