

Travels in the Americas: Notes and Impressions of a New World

Albert Camus

Alice Kaplan, Editor

Ryan Bloom, Translator

The University of Chicago Press (Apr 5, 2023)

Softcover \$22.50 (144pp)

978-0-226-69495-5

Travels in the Americas is Albert Camus's lively, intimate travel record, covering his encounters abroad as well as his inner world with Gallic flair.

An astute observer of people and places and an avid participant in the life around him despite his bouts of illness, Camus crossed the Atlantic in March of 1946, even as his native France was celebrating its liberation from Nazi occupation. His goal was a three-month tour of the US and Canadian East Coasts. He planned lectures and meetings with members of the publishing world and literary society. A second crossing, in July of 1949, took Camus to Brazil, Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay, this time as an international literary celebrity and unwilling representative of the fashionable European existentialist movement.

In 1946, Camus was showing signs of what he suspected was more serious than just recurring bouts of the flu. He nevertheless worked to be a polite guest, making the appropriate appearances and enduring long hours and sleepless nights arranged by hosts who were eager to show him the glories of their countries. Exhausted and depressed, his piercing melancholy became most clear in Brazil, where, seeing the homes of the wealthy standing almost shoulder-to-shoulder with the cardboard and tin shanty towns of the poor, Camus wrote, "Never have luxury and misery seemed to me so insolently thrown together." Yet his literary sketches also include dry, often sarcastic humor: of the cuisine in the Brazilian state of Bahia, he writes "We eat dishes spicy enough to cause miracles in paralytics."

With its ample photographs, rich introduction, and smooth-flowing, conversational translation, *Travels in the Americas* is an engaging travel account that reintroduces Albert Camus as both a man and an existentialist icon moving through North and South America in the postwar years.

KRISTINE MORRIS (March / April 2023)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.