

TRAVELING GENIUS

The Writing Life of Jan Morris

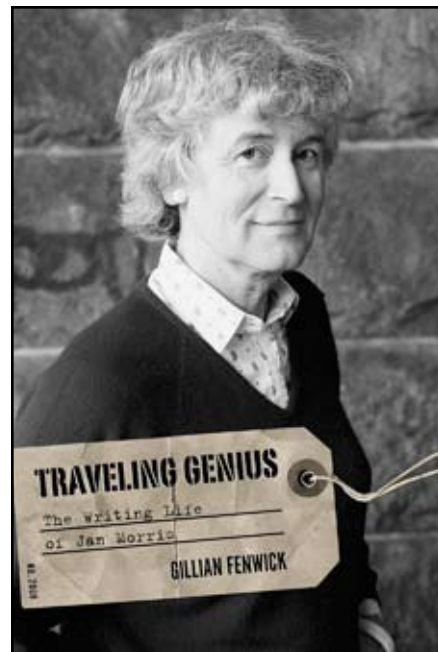
Gillian Fenwick

Traveling Genius surveys the half century of work by British writer Jan Morris, including more than fifty books and thousands of essays and reviews, from 1950s America via Oxford, Venice, Trieste, Sydney, and Hong Kong to her home in Wales. Internationally known as a travel writer, she has also distinguished herself across many other genres by writing history, autobiographies and biographies, and literary fiction and essays.

Existing accounts of Morris's work are largely confined to reviews and magazine essays, and often concentrate on James Morris's sex change and transformation into Jan Morris. This is of course significant to the writing, and some critics detect a change of tone and style afterward, but a detailed analysis of how her writing works has not yet been undertaken. In *Traveling Genius*, Gillian Fenwick fills that gap in the scholarship with the first study to explore the depths of Morris's complete body of work, utilizing close readings and archival research.

Fenwick maintains that Morris's abilities as historian, biographer, novelist, journalist, essayist, and reviewer all come to bear in the travel writing that has defined and distinguished her international career. In her unique profiles of cities and nations, Morris has the ability to capture the spirit of a place and its culture without mere descriptions of tourist sites and activities, as illustrated in her best-selling works on Venice, Oxford, and Spain. Her historical volumes—and the groundbreaking *Pax Britannica* trilogy in particular—show her abilities to write for a popular audience while influencing the work and opinions of academics.

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Gillian Fenwick is an associate professor of English at the University of Toronto, and a Fellow of Trinity College. She is the author of books on Leslie Stephen, George Orwell, Tim Parks, and the *British Dictionary of National Biography*.

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