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GUEST EDITORIAL

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Travelling without a Compass

Heather Pringle, Canada



When non-fiction writers begin their books, they often have little idea where their research will take them, or whom they will meet along the way. Soon after I started research on my book, *The Master Plan*, in August 2001, I traveled with a colleague to the small town of College Park in Maryland. The American government operates a major archive there, which keeps microfilms of many of the German documents captured at the end of the Second World War. Each day, my colleague Charlotte and I, would spend long hours peering at the microfilms of Nazi documents, and each evening, to stretch our legs, we strolled through the streets of College Park, looking for some new restaurant to try. College Park seemed like a very typical small American college town,

with its local hangouts and pizzerias and boisterous football team. A few weeks later, however, after 9/11, I was stunned to learn that some of the terrorists who had flown planes into the World Trade Center towers had used College Park as their base. Perhaps Charlotte and I had passed them on the street as we emerged from the archives each evening, unaware that we were brushing shoulders with a new kind of terrorist. I am haunted by that thought.

Every book represents a journey undertaken by a writer - a journey that crosses new and unfamilar terrain, a journey that is conducted without maps and often without any form of compass, a journey that begins with high hope and expectation and often ends with exhaustion! Readers are the passengers we gladly take with us. In this issue of the Internet Journal of Book Reviews, you will find many intriguing excursions. Sit back and enjoy the ride!

-Heather Pringle
Canada

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