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Another side of Paradise

by [Anthony Daniels](#)

On the questionable legacy of Jack Kerouac and "On the Road."

Not long ago, I tried to have a suit made of gray flannel, but was told that, being a thick and heavy cloth, flannel was no longer in demand. Buildings are so well-heated these days, said the tailor, that flannel is uncomfortable to wear in them. Here was an indisputable consequence of global warming.

My attitude to gray flannel has changed over the years. Since my first school uniform was of that material, I associated it for a long time with immaturity and a position of subordination to others. Then, as a young doctor, I came under the spell of a most distinguished man, one of the Queen's physicians, who was learned, suave, and wore the most beautifully tailored gray flannel suit. If I couldn't be learned or suave, I could at least have a suit like his.

I am not alone in ascribing symbolic significance to gray flannel. Sloan Wilson made it the central trope of his novel *The Man in the Gray Flannel ...*

Anthony Daniels's most recent book is *In Praise of Prejudice* (Encounter Books). Hewas born in 1949. After qualifying as a doctor, he worked in what was then Rhodesia, followed by South Africa, before returning for three years training as a psychiatrist in London's East End. Three and a half years in the Gilbert Islands were interspersed with some South American wandering, and then between 1984 and 1986 he worked in Tanzania. His first book, *Coups and Cocaine*, was followed by *Fool or Physician*, subtitled 'the memoirs of a sceptical doctor.' *Zanzibar to Timbuktu*, his trek across Africa by public transport was published to great acclaim in 1988, and was a runner-up in the Thomas Cook Travel Book Award.

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