

WRITING SPANISH JOURNEYS TO MEXICO:

NARRATION, INVENTION AND REVERBERATION FROM THE TWENTIETH INTO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

by

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the changing significance of travel between Spain and Mexico at the end of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first through a discussion of the historiographical and discursive context for Spain-Mexico encounters and the analysis of travel narratives about Mexico by Spanish writers. The transatlantic space is presented as a theatre of power and a crucible for the effects of globality on cultural change. To suggest the historical framework for Spanish-Mexican encounters, I analyse some key elements of the changing idea of America in Europe since the first contacts between voyaging Spaniards and indigenous Mesoamericans and its consequences for European world-views. The material context of contemporary encounters arises not only from historical relationships but also from the evolving nature of travel, and Spain-Mexico travel in particular, including industrial-scale tourism and the connections between travel and globalisation. The tensions and issues arising out of the historical associations of the work of representing otherness as well as the changing context for travel and its narration today are investigated through examples of contemporary Spanish travel writing about Mexico by writers like Francisco Solano, Eduardo Jordá, Alfonso Armada, and Alfredo Semprún. The textual analysis is framed by two fundamental concepts. Firstly, Spain is discussed as a place of origin for the contemporary traveller given the problematic history of travel writing and its complicity with colonialism and the implications of the European gaze under post-imperial globality. First-person narrations and the varying demonstrations of reflexivity about the intervention of the traveller, and of the writer, in discourses about place suggest some of the instabilities of travelling subjects and the problems of boundedness and nationally-defined belonging. Secondly, the specific characteristics of millennial Mexico as a site for travel are explored in the context of place-image in the global imaginary, subalternity and representation, and the changing communication of ideas and experiences given global acceleration and transformed networks of international mobility.

DECLARATION

This thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Macquarie University. The research presented in this thesis is my original work and it has not been submitted for a higher degree in any other institution. In addition, I certify that to the best of my knowledge all information sources and literature used and assistance received have been acknowledged in the thesis.

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INTRODUCTION

When we write our experiences, the words take on a life of their own, separate to the actions they describe; just as travel supposes an interaction with places and an intervention in physical space, the writing of travel interacts and intervenes in the space of discourses about place. My research project is an investigation of the contemporary transatlantic space between Spain and Mexico in the context of travel and travel writing. In particular, I look at the idea of Mexico in Spain and the changing meaning of mobility and possibilities for Spanish-Mexican encounter in comparison to travel and travel narrative in the past. I examine the work of contemporary Spanish travel writers narrating their travels to Mexico, and discuss these texts through their engagement with the heritage of colonialism, with Spain and Mexico's own specific histories and associated manifestations of power and inequality, and their current places in the world.¹ This includes the trauma and memory of violence, as well as wider dynamics of how power interacts with the popular imaginary and ideas about place.² Some of the writers I am interested in actively engage with the politics of these questions, whereas others take a more descriptive approach, and in the course of this investigation I discuss the implications of their demonstrated thematic interests and stylistic choices for their narratives' ability to represent the encounter with the other and the author's own sense of identity. The particular corpus of travel writing I analyse is travel narratives by Spaniards about Mexico published around the turn of the millennium. This period is of interest because it has seen the rise of an affluent travelling middle class in democratic Spain. It was also marked by a number of changes in the relations between Spain and Latin America, as well as changes in historical discourses in Spain that have emerged as the country grapples with its passage from an ideologically charged and traumatic

¹ When I use the word Spanish in this work, unless there is a specific reference to language, I intend it to signify Spanish national origin. Pitman, among others, has also wrestled with this problem of terminology. In the article 'Mexican Travel Writing: The Legacy of Foreign Travel Writers in Mexico, or Why Mexicans Say They Don't Write Travel Books' (2007) she discusses the way 'Mexican' is assumed to refer to destination rather than authorship. This assumption is given as an example of the extent to which a 'colonialist mentality' still underpins discussions of travel writing.

² In using 'imaginary' here I am following Mignolo's (2000: 23) interpretation of it as a term describing a collectively constructed sociocultural perception of the world.

twentieth century into an uncertain twenty-first. I argue that the changing relationship of Spanish travellers with Spain as a point of origin, the evolving image of Mexico in Spain, and the unstable relationship with historical narrative in contemporary Spain in particular as well as some of the instabilities wrought by colonial and post-colonial globality more generally can be profitably explored through contemporary travel writing as one locus of transatlantic exchange.

Research Context

One of the fundamental challenges of my own work—and the field of travel writing studies in general—lies in delineating the object of enquiry via the justification of a workable definition of what travel narratives are, and what they are not, at least for the purposes of investigation. This definition must necessarily encompass what kinds of texts fall within the boundaries of the present enquiry and the reasons for those boundaries. However, it is important not to impose arbitrary limitations that artificially homogenise a genre noted—and of interest—for its diversity. As Gifra Adroher (2006: 159) writes, ‘the heterogeneity that travel literature and its critical practice so conspicuously display certainly indicates ... that this is a complex field of study in a constant state of transition.’ This heterogeneity, as Gifra Adroher also suggests, makes the selection of critical tools and the determination of interdisciplinary dynamics difficult. Before engaging in more detail with the nature of my own project and its critical and methodological framework, it is useful to discuss some of the complexities of the field as a whole—or, as the case may be as a shifting intersection of piecemeal conversations that is impossible to formulate into a whole. Rubiés (2000: 6) describes travel literature as a “‘genre of genres’”, since a variety of kinds of literature defined by a variety of purposes and conventions share travel as their essential condition of production’. One of the problems this creates is in limiting the area of study, since, as Lindsay (2009: 11) suggests, the corpus is slippery and definitions elusive. Peñate Rivero (2004: 19) accepts Todorov’s proposition of the genre as existing along a spectrum between texts emphasising the

subject, and hence the autobiographical character of the narrative, and those focusing on the object observed, and hence assuming the descriptive authority of scientific discourse; many texts, of course, being neither wholly one thing nor the other, ambiguity which is quite important in analysing their discursive functions.

In the analysis of how travel and travel writing intersect with different discourses around place and mobility, this project draws on two major strands of relevant research: work dealing either explicitly or by implication with historical and contemporary cultures of exchange between Europe and Latin America, and that from the fields of travel and tourism studies. My approach is informed more specifically by travel writing studies, which among other things interrogates the history of travel writing and its implication in or resistance to imperialism as well as its subsequent failures and successes as a postcolonial genre. The Spanish and Latin American context incorporates some particular features which necessarily shift this research somewhat away from the approaches that have evolved for investigating British texts and British imperialism and post-imperialism, which could arguably be considered the most-developed English-language area of this relatively youthful field. As I discuss in Chapter One, conceptions of the travel writing genre in Spanish emerged through a different literary tradition, in the modern era building on the style of the *crónica* and with precursors in medieval pilgrimage and epistolary traditions. Furthermore, its connection to colonialism obviously evolved much earlier, and therefore must be considered in light of the particular processes of colonisation and independence in Latin America between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, rather than principally in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as is more relevant to anglo- and francophone literature. Critical work on travel writing to do with Spain and Latin America tends to be a dialogue between the tradition of travel writing *about* Spain, which is a substantial area of study that has been nourished further by the emergence of travel writing as a major field of enquiry in the United Kingdom; the tradition of travel writing *by* Spaniards, which links to the tradition of travel writing *about* Latin America; and the emerging English-language research area of travel writing *by* Latin Americans.

As this summary would suggest, both the idea of travel writing as a distinctive research topic and its contemporary codification as a popular literature have been particularly successful in British (and transatlantic English-language research). The concept of the genre developed through this tradition posits as its origin both classical epics that are adopted by all Western European literatures such as the *Odyssey* and the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, but also more specifically British pieces such as John de Mandeville's *Marvels*. Sillem (1998: 23) suggests that the centrality of this work supposes travel writing as a fundamentally inventive, unique genre detached from the pragmatic concerns that are the foundations of the continental travel narrative emerging from pilgrimage or trade, as in the case of Marco Polo's *Il Milione*. This, according to Sillem, combined with the British essay form and variations in the novel, diary, memoir and report, serve to situate British travel writing within a locally specific tradition of para-literary writing. As Sillem (24) goes on to note, Germany offers a contrasting example because it had neither the upper class writer of leisure nor was it engaged in colonialist expansion in that period, with non-fiction and intellectual literature focusing more on philosophy than on anything resembling ethnography, amateur or otherwise. Despite these variations, many of the methods of inquiry and indeed the basic questions applied to the study of travel writing in other traditions offer valuable models for the Spanish-language genre, as long as the specific characteristics of such narratives and the styles upon which they draw are also taken into account. These characteristics and Spanish narrative and travel traditions are explored in the first chapter.

The many different narratives have some intrinsic points of interest in common despite their different cultures of production, since, among other things, travel writing offers one display of historical consciousness and ethics of encounter that is somewhat accessible to outside reading. It is quite common for narratives of encounter with place to engage with traces of historical events, the discernible presence of the past, such as imperial sites and architecture, or, to take an example from my own area of study, the evidence of post-Civil War migration via visible reference to early twentieth

century Spanish culture. How different writers deal with these traces speaks to their different possible accommodations with historical memory and cultural identity, and specifically here with the significance of Latin America for Spain today and their different understandings or enactments of historical discourse.

This engagement with history is one of my primary interests in investigating contemporary Spanish writing about Mexico. The historical imagination as it is inscribed in travel writing and encounters with peoples and places speaks to the connections between, for example, past acts of violence, acts of transcendence and discursive interventions in ideas of place and difference. Such an emphasis of necessity requires an explanation of the ways in which travel writers are also engaging in dialogue with the written and other traditions of representation of place. As Peñate Rivero (2004: 17) reminds us, ‘los viajeros viajan con los ojos puestos en los libros que han leído, esperando su confirmación en la experiencia o incluso adaptando ésta a sus lecturas previas.’³ And it is not only books which create expectations and fantasies of place, but all the structures and referential processes that enter our imaginations before we physically present ourselves somewhere. Within this cathedral of expectation, I am particularly concerned with the sense of history and its renegotiation through intertextuality as well as through encounter.

Travel writing has been a decidedly self-referential genre—travel writers have long engaged in exchanges with previous travel narratives as a fundamental element of their relationship to place. It is also a reflection of changes in the way different cultures understand mobility, and the evolving concept of the journey within the transatlantic dynamic is one of the most interesting shifts which can be traced through travel writing. Virilio (2005) proposes an understanding of all present day journeys as repetitions of past voyages, a condition which serves to compound the recursiveness of travel writing. New texts engage with traditions, whether through active comment or determined

³ ‘Travellers travel with their eyes on the books they have read, anticipating the confirmation of these through their experiences, or even adapting their experiences to their previous reading.’ [All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.]

silence—or even through ignorance, since writers contribute to an ongoing conversation about their subject whether they will it or not. This idea of repetition and the exhaustion of newness leads into ideas explored in Chapter Four, such as the interplay between knowledge and experience in contemporary travel writing. The global elite experience a glut of information. The genre of travel writing functions as one historical record of the European subject's experience of acceleration and information surfeit, while simultaneously offering a window into what Musgrove (1999: 33) describes as 'the formations of western subjectivities out of the encounter with imagined others'.

In investigating the meaning of and the meanings created by mobility, this research contributes to the efforts within transnational cultural studies to interpret texts in the context of contemporary global forces, not only as literature. The travel narratives I discuss, therefore, are not expressions of Spanish culture as a categorisable, unified entity, but rather are sites for understanding the ethics of encounter within the evolving Spanish-Mexican cross-cultural dynamic. Their analysis offers different perspectives on the contemporary functions within the travel narratives in definitions of home, self, difference, distance, and the meaning of mobility. My research therefore incorporates elements of historiography, literary theory, and an ethnographic approach to texts as socially determined objects. I have used an approach that is both comparative and contextualised, in order to locate connections as well as divisions between diverse narratives of place as evolving forms of an individualised practice of representation and between the possible evolutions of these narratives in different moments.

Travel narratives are historically dynamic texts through which it is possible to explore the significance of the representation of the Latin American places of otherness in the definition and experience of Spain (and Europe) as home. Individual texts are one possible site for investigating the constitution of a sense of place, through literary precursors and intertext, through encounter, and ultimately through narration. The specific relationship between imperial and post-imperial Europe and the so-called New World presents many of the

complexities of the influence of economic and cultural factors on representation of place. This is a significant area of research as the global travel industry continues to grow, representing a substantial percentage of world trade, and ideas of places are increasingly scrutinised and remodelled as commodities.⁴ Leisure travel is coming to be a defining experience for global elites with voluntary versus involuntary mobility one characteristic that highlights their systematic privilege. Various modes of narrative representation of place and intercultural encounter have become dominant sources of knowledge of other cultures for the consumers of difference who drive the tourism industry. Stories showing variable ways travellers conceive of themselves and what they believe and say about others can be seen as part of a long tradition of literary writing. In addition, however, although the publication of travel accounts into books remains the exceptional rather than common travel experience, professional storytelling nevertheless offers insights into the specific practices and paradoxes of travel today.

Clearly, the comparison of texts from one cultural tradition, in a single language, and about specific places cannot provide unqualified universal insights, but must consider the context of production and reception of the travel accounts. This contextualised comparison creates a more meaningful process for understanding the kinds of insights it *can* provide. These are, above all, insights into how the author's senses of their origin and destination—their where-am-I-going-and-whence-have-I-come—clarify the terms of the travel narrative and how that narrative represents variant relationships to that culture through the representation of the other. Spain has been a limit point for Europe ever since the idea of Europe began to emerge. It has been located both at the limits of empire and been a source of European imperial expansion itself. While the process of identifying the familiar in opposition to the foreign or other is perhaps universal, in European encounters with colonial and postcolonial others we can see the significance of this process in terms of European identity. Travel writing by definition is immersed in the struggle over representation. The genre has a problematic

⁴ Six percent in 2003 according to the World Tourism Organization.

historical relationship with Eurocentrism and the idea of the exotic. This relationship is particularly interesting in Spain, which was an important destination in early modern European travel writing and remains to this day a frequent object of the exoticising gaze of the travel writer. However, as the first modern post-imperial nation, Spain also provides an example of the trajectory of travel writing from a colonial form to a product of the global information economy. The relationship between European identity and the construction of otherness has been extensively analysed and theorised in recent decades, probably most famously in Said's *Orientalism* (1978). Said's conception of the way Western European (largely British and French) notions of the Orient were used to define European culture has been massively influential in postcolonial studies. Critiques of Said highlight the perils of Said's combination of discursive analysis with humanist perspectives and through the medium of a single specified tradition. Most relevant for this study are critiques like Mignolo's (2000), which picks up on the silences in theories of Orientalism as a principle of European self-conception with regards to sixteenth century westwards expansionism and the narratives of territoriality and difference that it supposed. Said's work is nevertheless important, and not only for its evident influence in subsequent research, but also through its analysis of the processes of European cultural identity formation and significant historic inequalities influencing European knowledge. Neumann's *Uses of the Other* (1998) is but one example of the ongoing discussion of how different threads of thought on self and other continue to influence the use of the East as other for European identity in the present day; in Neumann's case in the context of politics and international relations, with particular emphasis on the creation of ideas of Europe now. Other debates around European subjectivity have analysed European othering discourses with different emphases, such as Fabian's *Time and the Other* (1983) which traces the development of the particular European conception of time and of history and how these concepts have been and continue to be used in a variety of discourses to distance the other temporally as well as spatially, thus definitively removing them from the sphere of contemporary existence. This temporal distancing has been a particularly significant trope in the representation of Mexico. Such investigations of the ways of European culture

and its conceptual underpinnings provide a useful tool for thinking about how European travellers portray difference, be it in support of or in tension with these diverse regimes of othering.

Dealing specifically with travel and empire, there are a quantity of excellent histories of European travel and the emergence of different types of travel writing. Among these, Campbell's *The Witness and the Other World* (1988) and Stagl's *A History of Curiosity* (1995) provide vital context in understanding changes in travel practices in Europe from the Middle Ages through to the eighteenth century—the period corresponding to Spain's imperial expansion in the Americas—including the relationships between mobility, representation and European cosmologies and knowledge systems. Buzard's *The Beaten Track* (1993) continues with the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with a specific eye to the role travel and literature in those times played in the emergence of notions of authenticity and the accessibility of cultural experiences through travel. Korte's *English Travel Writing from Pilgrimages to Postcolonial Explorations* (2000) traces the progression of the genre in English writing to the present day and describes important trends and tendencies in travel writing, such as shifts between objectivity and subjective experience, transcultural hybridity, and the importance of postcolonial critique in understanding the significance of travel writing. Pratt's *Imperial Eyes* (1992) and Spurr's *The Rhetoric of Empire* (1993) both focus specifically on discourses of imperialism in travel writing. Pratt's oft-cited formulation incorporates a sense of the mutual determinations of representation and otherness, not all of which have their origins in Europe:

While the imperial metropolis tends to understand itself as determining the periphery (in the emanating glow of the civilizing mission or the cash flow of development), it habitually blinds itself to the ways in which the periphery determines the metropolis - beginning, perhaps, with the latter's obsessive need to present and re-present its peripheries and its others continually to itself. (Pratt 1992: 6)

Pratt has been particularly influential for subsequent thinking in the field, especially with regards to Latin America; however, despite the above

multidirectionality, the relevance of *Imperial Eyes* is fundamentally to the study of European thought and the evolution of Eurocentric discourses, rather than to the study of Latin America *per se*. As Lindsay (2009: 9) has raised, even with the revised edition's incorporation of Latin American fictional writing, *Imperial Eyes* does not really address Latin American perspectives about Latin America on the same terms as it does European perspectives. In their argument for greater historical empiricism in travel writing studies, Guelke and Guelke (2004) have also critiqued what they describe as Pratt's insufficient focus on the physicality and context of the encounters to which she makes reference, including further historical detail about the role and activities of Latin Americans. In fact, the majority of the works thus far cited are primarily relevant to the present investigation for the way they consider the narration of encounter as a source for the exploration of European culture and power, and their internal contradictions as well as their enduring consequences for the entire world.

As mentioned, many studies written in English on the subject of travel writing have looked at Spain as a destination for travellers, discussing travel writing from early modern Europe onwards, particularly anglophone travellers, and also some domestic travel writing within Spain. These works tie in to the wider study of travel writing in English, which is based on definitions of the prevalent trends in travel writing as a genre as it emerged through imperial projects subsequent to the Spanish Empire. The earlier Spanish imperial project, however, had its own specific conditions which would have a huge impact on the cultural significance as well as economic importance of American colonies for Spain over the following centuries. I will discuss these conditions in Chapter One, but at this juncture I will limit myself to commenting briefly on significant examples of literature which address issues specific to the Latin American encounter rather than the broader histories of European empires and travel narratives. The historical circumstances of European and Latin American encounter have been exhaustively explored, and there is a substantial body of theory on the implications of the representation of the encounter with the other.

Todorov's contentious *The Conquest of America* (1984) posits that the result of the Spanish Conquest was determined through signs, identifying improvisatory, individualistic elements of European culture and the European notion of linear time as key determinants of victory over Aztec rigidity, ritual, and prophetic circular time. While Todorov's assessment of the Aztec Empire is problematic, failing to give much weight to the major gaps in and radical difference of Aztec histories of the events, it is an important interpolation in the interpretation of this encounter, which has most often been analysed in terms of the material rather than symbolic advantages held by the Spaniards. Counterbalancing these Eurocentric interpretive frameworks, Latin American theorists and philosophers have explored the constitutive effects of the Conquest and colonisation for Americans themselves. Octavio Paz, to give just one influential example, underscores the material consequences of these transnational encounters for Latin Americans, and for Mexicans specifically. Cantu (2006) devoted her entire doctoral study to reimagining travel writing from a Mexican centre through the work of Paz and what she interprets as his claims to a Mexican universalism and subversion of the othering tactics of existing discourses of travel. Although Paz has been critiqued (for example in Bartra (1992)) for a certain essentialism and hyper-conflation of Mexicanness and historical trauma that almost positions the latter as a necessary evil, others (for example García Canclini (1995)) defend the elements of Paz's thought that offer insights into the global enmeshment of cultures while also suggesting resistances to and ruptures of the effects of globalisation.

The consequences of the first encounters at the start of Spanish colonialism (as well of course as the invasions, government interventions and so on that followed), are everywhere, including through contemporary tourist and travel practices. Theorists of Latin American subalternity have engaged with the textures of postcolonialism—and even the appropriateness of the term itself—as applied to Latin America. Mignolo (2000: 102), drawing on Klor de Alva, notes the problems of talking about 'colonialism' to describe Spanish America, given the divergence between the *mestizo* societies there and their European models as opposed to the imposition of a government class over a large population of different race which colonialism is often used to describe.

Mignolo further argues, however, that given both are the product of European expansionism, and their critique is against the effects of Eurocentric power, it is more dangerous to decouple the American process from the later colonialisms than not.

As well as critical and theoretical commentaries on the impact of the meeting of Europe and America on European and Latin American identities, it is important to consider the material impact of travel on destination cultures. There are many case studies on site tourism development and the impact of tourism in Latin America and specifically Mexico, particularly in terms of sustainability and local culture.⁵ Although these forms of social, economic and ethnographic research are different in both objective and approach to my own, they provide a useful reminder that the places and peoples that figure here as destinations and encountered others are the everyday environments and subjects of their own stories. This is a vital component in avoiding the perpetuation of place as an object of consumption entirely available to the definitions of the European traveller.

When considering the material aspects of mobility, it is important to note the ways in which the nature of travel narratives has changed profoundly with our transformed experience of distance, the commodification of leisure, and the mediation of technology in communicating these narratives as the effects of globalisation reshape the possibilities for encounter.⁶ How has the globalisation of information and marketing of culture combined with the sense that the world is now known or available? How have those factors affected travel narratives and the representation of cultures and place? Within such contemporary information economies, how do depictions of place mediate the traveller's experience and how does this mediation affect subsequent revisions and representations of the same sites? Although within

⁵ See, for example, a selection of the following relatively recent studies among the many in existence, (in no particular order): Goertzen (2010), Benítez (2005), Burtner (2004), Papanicolau (2009), Leon (2004), Moody (2005), Swanson (2005), Wilson (2008), Everitt et al. (2008), and Hellier-Tinoco (2010).

⁶ With the term 'globalisation' I am referring to the creation of a single world system as a product of global imperialism and its ongoing consequences and influence in every aspect of local experience following its detachment from imperialism as a system of government.

the scope of the present study I am not looking in detail at particular technological changes or the virtualisation of place as such, these questions remain fundamentally significant in my discussion of how encounters can today be performed and their manifold consequences.

Approaches to travel are replete, appropriately enough, with trans-disciplinary methods and preoccupations drawn from anthropology, historiography, literary studies, and the politics of postcolonialism. Differing interrelations of the value of these approaches are put forward in attempts to deal with the challenges that the study of travel writing presents. Huggan (2001: 1-2), for instance, proposes postcolonialism as critical practice rather than as a defining theory which must be tempered with historical specificity. Similarly, concepts of the importance of mobility to all of these areas of study draw on the language and imagery of travel literature, and thus encounter difficulties in deconstructing it from an imagined outside position. As Youngs (2004) reminds us, language itself migrates and contaminates, and can too easily be removed from its referents and reestablished as empty metaphor; metaphor which, moreover, can actively obscure the presence of the things—trauma, inequality, displacement and so forth—to which the language employed originally referred. The processes of representation and abstraction in academic discourse, with its potential to gloss over or set at a distance embodied experiences of suffering and joy, can echo the abstraction and self-absorption of the travelling subject and the concomitant tendency to treat that which is seen as belonging to her or him by virtue of witnessing, and to then reinforce that possession through narrative. Language is contagious, and to adequately understand the ethics of cross-cultural encounter and its representation in travel writing, it is first (and continually) necessary to interrogate the ethics of my own writing practices. Even the over-determination of the boundaries of genre for the purposes of limiting the “object” of study (a problematic description of the dynamics of research in itself) suggests the heritage of the hierarchical classifications of knowledge, a problem which Lindsay picks up on in *Contemporary Travel Writing of Latin America* (2009: 105).

Much has been written on the subject of changing travel practices and experiences of place in the context of broader social change. Many of these studies approach contemporary travel from the perspective of an anthropology of place and travel, including influential works by MacCannell (1976; 1992), Smith (1989), Chambers (1999), and Clifford (1997). *Hosts and Guests*, edited by Smith, was a significant early text in tourism studies with case studies examining the impact of tourism on sites and communities, the role of leisure and imperialism, historical context, new modes of tourism, and tourism in non-Western societies. Later works by MacCannell and others such as Urry (1990) are significant for their contributions to tracing the rise of industrial-scale tourism, its use in definitions of travel *versus* tourist behaviours, and its significance for the traveller's idea of self and representation of place and experience. Chambers surveys historic, economic, social, environmental and cultural dimensions of tourism in anthropological research, and discusses the impact of globalisation and the significance of "hosts" and "visitors". Clifford was one of the major figures in the 1980s *Writing Culture* critiques of ethnographic practices. Through this critical engagement and in subsequent work, Clifford has consistently turned to travel and the travel narrative as a means of exploring power and representation, the politics of location, divergent identities, and moving histories. Since the 1980s, ethnographic critiques and theories have had to confront the forces at work in both the encounter and in the production of knowledge through the problematic act of writing about or representing cultures and turning experience into story. Clifford and Marcus (1986) and other contributors to this rethinking of ethnography critiqued various aspects of the ethnographic project, including the authority of the researcher, the exclusion of "objects" of study—human beings—from the process of their representation, the use of an ahistorical present in description, and the elision of the researcher's motives, position and beliefs in the assumption of an objective academic narrative. These theories have since been revised in terms of a broader social preoccupation with globalisation, shifting the emphasis from textual negotiations of representation to a dual process where the politics of the cultural encounter are as important as the mode of representation. Overall, the research methods advocated incorporate a critical practice that deals with

time, place, and social institutions *together*, and underlines the necessity of situating cultural studies beside, with and against other forms of knowledge, rather than as a singular authoritative narrative. This contextualisation and analysis of the relationship between author and representation is useful in my own research both for framing textual analysis and for interrogating my position as a researcher in relation to my work. However, the emphasis within new ethnography on interactivity and participation methodologies has limitations for a study which is primarily historical and textual.

As experiences of place and encounter are transformed through textual representations structured through narrative, for my analysis of travel stories as texts I draw in my thinking on theorists such as de Certeau (1984) who emphasise meaning-making as a process which is never static. It emerges instead from what de Certeau's describes as strategies of production and tactics of consumption. While audience practices and theories of audience interpretation are less relevant when applied to the kinds of documentary sources I include in my principal corpus—since it becomes very difficult to investigate the consumption practices of the original audiences—nuanced conceptualisations of meaning production nevertheless serve as a useful framework for avoiding a top-down theory of culture, wherein power is unidirectional. To avoid elevating the researcher-text relationship and speculative commentary about consumption of individual texts, I locate texts as elements of and contributions to broader discourses. This situates features of texts, producers and consumers within larger-scale social mechanisms, and historicises and contextualises single instances of representation as elements towards reinforcement or revision of various socially constituted ideas of place and otherness. Combining the insights of diverse disciplines generates a multilayered analysis of travel narratives that explores their operations at the intersection of phenomenological, geographical, historical, textual and political forces. This is important because such narratives are generated out of lived encounters under specific conditions but also engage with long-running traditions of representation of other cultures, and play their part in determining future possibilities both for the encounter and for its story.

Methodologically, this project draws on traditions from cultural studies, which imply a concept of culture manifested through actions and interventions, rather than as something abstracted from human behaviour. This supposes, following Gray (2003: 14) looking not at the text as literary object but as part of a larger social text the production of which depends on discourses of power and strategies of resistance. In my direct discussion of examples of travel writing, I apply techniques of narrative analysis which, rather than focusing on the internal logic and aesthetic characteristics of the texts, highlight points of concordance and dissonance with broader tropes surrounding the places mentioned and modes of mobility deployed. Saukko (2003: 6) notes the inseparability of cultural production from systemic effects of power, such as economic inequalities. In this framework, the validity of conclusions is predicated on making explicit the linkages between the narrower subject being investigated and its social and historical context.

I have attempted to allow for the multiplication of themes that emerge from the text-culture-power nexus, rather than pre-determining categories of analysis. On this basis, for example, genre and resistant genre-slippages in my corpus, and interrogating the usefulness of concepts of Spanishness and Mexicanness as determining boundaries have thus become part of project. For my textual analysis in particular as well as for the application of categories of social and cultural analysis herein therefore I have endeavoured to indicate the interconnectedness of discourses of place but throughout to avoid overly generalised interpretation—to mark also difference and elements of resistance to existing narratives of place. Logically, my conclusions and the language that shapes them themselves constitute a cultural manifestation. A functional reflexivity, as I suggest below, questioning the foundations of my research and my analytical approaches is a fundamental secondary manoeuvre to render more visible the ideological underpinnings of my own work and its productions of meaning. My own experience and practices of theorising around and through culture are an act of articulation of researcher with research, and the ways in which this process inflect the textual production within the current project are further explored in the Coda to the current work.

Given this linkage between text and discourse, and writing and power, the value of considering individual narratives becomes more evident. Each contemporary travel encounter and each recounting of it is an intervention in a continuous process of defining and redefining places in the popular imagination. Textual analysis, therefore, can tease out some of the possible answers to the questions Fürsich and Kavoori framed as the essential ones for thinking about contemporary travel writing (in their own research travel journalism more specifically):

At the level of textual analysis, one can ask what are the dominant modes of representation in western travel writing? What is the range of these frames and what are the discursive categories that they draw on? Who benefits from such frames and who does not? Do certain kinds of tourism present different modes of representation or is a cultural homology evident in their representation? What are the changes that take place in travel representations with changing geo-political interests of western nation-states? Can travel journalism be seen as an ongoing expression of cultural transgression and reinvention that reflects the current inequalities between the First and Third Worlds? (Fürsich & Kavoori 2001: 161)

The interdisciplinarity supposed by bringing together questions of communications, historiography, sociopolitical change and the nature of power and transgression inevitably creates problems of method, as I have already indicated. It is not sufficient to look only at the texts themselves; they must emerge as objects embedded in their culture of production and be understood through their operation in relation to existing discourses. The study of travel writing has developed primarily through postcolonial studies and the interrogation of texts that were attached to both the imperialist and rationalist/scientific discourses of modernity. By its nature the analysis of such discourse destabilises the position of the writer-researcher herself and requires a degree of reflexivity that may not be so integral to the disciplinary practices of other research traditions which otherwise suggest themselves for the study of travel writing. However, these other research practices can also suggest methods of inquiry which assist in defining the parameters for talking

about what the texts in question are. Di Leonardo (2006: 205) proposes that ‘mixed methodologies, providing varying optics on the same phenomenon, act as a check on and a test of the validity of particular interpretations.’ Returning once again to the importance of context, even the nature of texts and the social meaning of truth in writing changes over time. Di Leonardo (209) cites some notable examples of the rise of particular styles of thought alongside particular social forces which together influence popular concepts of what a text might be, such as the case of Margaret Mead and its link to the commercialisation and consumption of cultural difference and the importance of “selling” one’s story. In Chapter One I explore in more detail the process of historical change around truth value and narrative through the revisioning of Spanish-Mexican encounter from their origins. Once this fluidity of genre and textual function is accepted as a framework for considering their role within discourses, reading becomes a process of *contextualised* interpretation, not straight semiotics, thus creating a more multi-dimensioned analysis.

Di Leonardo uses Frederic Jameson’s “turning structure” concept, which supposes ideological exchanges enacted through constant convulsive rearticulations, to understand the possibilities of cultural studies. Di Leonardo (218) concludes that ‘cultural studies is fundamentally *about* investigating the making of meanings, and we cannot understand such cultural processes in the absence of accounting of their particular historical political-economical contexts’ [original emphasis]. That said, therefore, scholarly work itself cannot escape these conditions of meaning-making, and so the historical political-economical context of the scholar herself should be as transparent as possible. Alasuutari (2006: 238) expresses the same exigency in slightly different terms:

We can only analyze how certain appealing discourses and related subject positions are constructed, and what consequences it all has to relations of power and politics. And, if not simultaneously, the next day we must be ready to scrutinize our own starting points in that analysis: what were the premises on which the argument was built and what was therefore left unnoticed?

Reflexivity, however, is not a complete solution for accounting for the scholar's own role in the production and reproduction of discourses. In the context of travel writing studies in particular, Lindsay (2009: 113) echoes Butler's critique of the 'shoring up of first-person narrative at the expense of third and second person ways of thinking about violence and loss that may help us better understand our own complicity and participation as global actors'—something closer to what Mignolo, following Khatibi, describes as 'an other thinking'. Lindsay was discussing the problem of defining travel writing through the traveller, which can result in the reinforcement of possession or control on the part of the narrating subject, but the same problem applies should the academic metatext also devolve to the subjectivity of the writer to the exclusion of other factors. As Lindsay (2009: 15) concludes in regards to her own approach to travel writing, 'There is no single discipline which provides the explanation/theory for this material—some texts suggest expansion into different areas depending on what kind of textual practice and which conditions of physical encounter are evoked.'

Having suggested the foundations for a mixed interpretive method, I will further explore how my own work fits within the context of existing research on travel writing in particular and travel and mobility studies more generally, and the different approaches which these have taken. Bruner's *Culture on Tour* (2005) offers a shift of focus onto travel experiences, and how the meaning of places is not static but variant, multiple, and contested, and must be explored through the material and sensual aspect of lived experiences of place, an insight which is important for examining the contingency of representations of place within travel narratives and critiquing their tendency to essentialise and freeze in time what is seen or encountered. Other relevant work approaches travel from various historical, geographical and cultural perspectives. Some writings, such as Victor Segalen's, or more recently Baudrillard's *America* (1998), express their critiques of place, travel and modernity through a travel narrative of their own. Scott's *Semiotics of Travel* (2004) discusses these French narratives of 'exoticism' as evidence of the way semiotics affect how we read and decode experience. Such analyses of the changing meaning of travel and tourism are useful for framing

questions about the effects of globalisation and current understandings of transit and mobility; however, to approach the textual narration of Mexico by Spaniards it is necessary to investigate more specifically Spain and Mexico's unique relationship in the history of travel.

In considering Spain as a point of origin, there is relatively little work in English. It focuses mostly on European, North African and Western Asian destinations. Kamen (2003: 504-5) goes so far as to suggest that Spain actually failed to develop a travel literature of the scope seen in other imperial centres at all, which he attributes to a kind of fundamental incuriosity about cultural difference as well as a lack of linguistic and intercultural skills and subsequent blindness to the potential benefits of cultural exchange. The lack of a long scholarly tradition looking at Spaniards themselves as travel writers does not entirely mean they were not so, however. Bowker's 2009 study on the transnational imaginary between Spain and Latin America in the early twentieth century is just one example of the kind of work being done which links twentieth century Spanish travel writers and their sociopolitical context to longer traditions within Spanish letters. Often, however, works looking at travellers from Spain focus specifically on colonial travel and colonial writing, which may be more usefully situated within a literature of migration and exile. Furthermore, in Spanish there are many more investigations of Spaniards as not only travellers but also writers of accounts of their journeys, though as with English-language scholarship the primary focus is the nineteenth century or early twentieth at the latest, as in the work of Litvak (1987) or Roussel-Zuazu (2005). Lindsay (2009: 5) agrees with others that there is still a limited amount of work on the twentieth century in any language, since much research has focused on colonial and nineteenth century narratives as a focus point for critiques of imperialism. Addressing the Americas as a destination there is a great deal of existing research around the colonial corpus, which is the deep background for my own investigation and the changing meaning of which I discuss in Chapter One. Narratives of the Conquest and of colonisation are the ur-texts of Spanish-Mexican encounter, so as background for the meaning of Mexico for contemporary Spanish travellers I consider an example of these kinds of stories as a site of struggle

over the meaning of history. From there, in Chapter Two I explore some of the factors influencing Mexico's place in the modern travel economy and the evolution of the ideas of Mexico internationally in more recent periods. Works in Spanish on travel and travel writing also tend to have more of a transatlantic focus, between Europe (not just Spain but also Germany or France) and both North and South America. They often contain more slippage between categorisations of travel and migration as well as between the non-fiction chronicle as such and the voyage as an *idea* in literature more generally. As with the genre of travel writing itself, the discursive practices of travel writing studies in the Spanish-speaking world take on somewhat different emphases.

The difference of emphasis can be seen in collections like *El viaje en la literatura hispanoamericana* (Mattalía et al. 2008), which brings together essays that specifically engage with tourism, with travel memoir, with the major periods of migration between Europe and Latin America (in both directions) and *also* with fiction that deals conceptually with travel, such as that by Borges or Vargas Llosa.⁷ The idea of voyaging is the thematic unifier, rather than the material reality of travel. Another example of some of the trends in Spanish-language scholarship is Monteleone's *El relato de viaje* (1998), in which he marks the non-linear nature of the composition of a narrative, and echoes that with the non-linearity of its critical framing. Both work towards a metonymic suggestion of the whole rather than a categorical summation. The select proceedings edited by Peñate Rivero (2004) as *Relato de viaje y literaturas hispánicas* show more thematic cohesion, however the tendency to incorporate the poetics of travel narrative, its sociohistorical dynamics, and fictive and literary imaginings of the voyage in a single field of study remains rather different to common discursive practices in the English-language scholarship on the subject. Furthermore, in studying Spain-Mexico contact in particular, features specific to this relationship become important, including exile studies as well as the debates around philosophies of pan-Hispanism and pan-Hispanic solidarity, the problematics of which concepts in

⁷ As in Joaquín Marco's essay on Vargas Llosa's *Travesuras de la niña mala* or Marcin Kazmierczak's on Borges and the image of the 'sur'.

the transatlantic space I discuss in Chapter Two. In some cases, these concerns wholly subsume analyses primarily through the encounter analysed by way of cultural practices such as travel writing or through the concept of culture at all, which has been so popular in the anglophone scholarship and which is hedged about with problems.⁸

Among the most recent and most specifically relevant studies in English is Lindsay's *Contemporary Travel Writing of Latin America*, to which I have already referred. Lindsay's topic is Latin American writers themselves narrating Latin America, a study which highlights the quandaries of travel and representation in the late twentieth century given the reformulations wrought by postcolonialism, shifting concepts of centres and peripheries, and the eternal expansion of the tourism economy. Lindsay's work is a reminder that a purely literary approach is inadequate to any meaningful consideration of travel and travel writing as one area of study of Latin America, rather than study of texts as a hermetic intellectual exercise. However, it is also tricky to think about texts in the context of regions and national borders, creating divisions based on origin that can artificially reinforce dichotomous conceptions about culture and difference. In *Contemporary Travel Writing of Latin America* Lindsay endeavours to avoid inscribing Latin American writers as antithetical to European or U.S. writers; the whole business of looking at travel writing is to do with the disruptive politics of encounter and the passages between the production of myths of cultural unity and the uncertainties and transgressions of transcultural spaces. For this reason, to reiterate, in this study I attempt to trace the dynamics of mobility and the conception of the transatlantic space between Spain and Mexico from the Spanish direction and the limitations that tends to create in structures of historical thinking and discursive conceptions of place, rather than attempting to study Spanish productions of experiences in Mexican space as a way into understanding contemporary Mexico as such. Pitman's *Mexican Travel Writing* (2008) also offers direct insights for structuring and framing my own

⁸ See Lawson's *Culture and Context in World Politics* (2006), a comprehensive exploration of the abuse of the word 'culture' and its potential reinforcement of artificial difference at the expense of understanding systemic inequalities and political power.

research, given she emphasises the particularity of travel writing to each local situation, and in the case of her own research outlines some key aspects of travel in contemporary Mexico to which I will make further reference in Chapter Two. Nevertheless, Pitman also works to identify some broader possible commonalities in travel writing in a world with industrialised tourism and further outlines the problems and decreasing relevance of ascribing particular trends only to writers' national origins. The extent to which national categorisations are still useful is in their usage in discourses of place and their contribution to the texture of travel writing as part of a continuous process of representation, naming and defining.

Contemporary sources by definition have not played a significant role in the formation of historical narratives about Spanish-American encounters. However, just as colonial texts speak to diverse currents in the way European Spaniards thought and defined themselves while the world changed around them, so too do the accounts of Spanish authors today. Both offer insights into the adjustments undergone in coming to know the world and how that knowledge is communicated. Again, different kinds of texts from all periods are loosely grouped under the heading of travel narrative, but contemporary texts offer their own blurring of genre, intent and effect different from that at work in past eras, for example through differentiations between modes of distribution. Though these texts may seem more ephemeral than their colonial counterparts, part of this distinction comes from the privileging of the historical texts in an individuals and events view of history. I also argue that their positioning as a form of entertainment, that the very appearance of transience, is reflective of some of the values associated with contemporary travel itself as a practice of personal development and its absorption into lifestyle and leisure. This is a positioning which some works, despite their perceived market niche, are nevertheless able to disrupt. Single-author print texts form the basis for the core of my original research but are contextualised against other areas of contemporaneous production of images of place and the intellectual and stylistic traditions with which they engage. Contemporary texts do not constitute a relatively closed corpus as is the case with historical sources, but all travel writing displays multifunctionality and resistance to

genre: through its uses in historical, political and literary as well as travel discourses, and contemporary texts especially through their active challenges to the travel writing genre, a genre popularly imagined as such only relatively recently and one with notoriously nebulous borders as I have already discussed. Within my analyses of texts I address the separation and lack thereof between travel accounts and other forms of first person and non-fiction writing.

A selection of contemporary Spanish travel narratives will therefore be discussed as situated cultural products which witness, narrate and recreate encounters; encounters between individuals, between origin cultures and destination cultures, between traveller and place, and between travellers and their own expectations and sense of self. Though they are one site for rethinking our understanding of the complex processes of encounter, texts are not unmediated sources of knowledge about either places or even the encounters they purport to describe. Rather, they are processes of transformation and recounting, as we come to know the encounter only through its narration. The moment is already always narrativised, first in memory, then oral recountings, then formalised accounts where the story becomes part of the ongoing discourse surrounding both teller and place. Furthermore, contemporary travel and encounter occurs within the framework of pre-trip stories and heavily mediated knowledge of places, and therefore travel accounts draw on and redefine experiences from before, during and after the trip and intervene in existing discourses. The texts with which I am concerned represent visions of otherness and of self within the particular Spanish-Mexican dynamic, and the possible effects of mobility on the historical imagination.

Structure

The first two chapters serve to introduce and frame Spanish-Mexican encounter in the context of the idea of America generally and Mexico specifically in Europe, and in the context of the representation of history and

cultural identity within travel narrative. Chapter One is a historiographic analysis of the changes to the discursive fields governing contact between Spain and North and Meso-America, and the importance of postcolonialism and Spain's legacy of imperialism for understanding the conditions of contact between Spain and Mexico. In Chapter Two, this is tied to the function of contemporary Spain as a point of origin and incorporates a discussion of post-Franco reconceptualisations of history and the destabilisation of historical narratives, which has been quite profound in Spain and which cannot but have some effect on the conceptualisations of Spanishness as well as the outward gaze, especially since debates about historical justice in Spain have not been unconnected to reformulations of trauma, memory and restitution in Latin American post-dictatorships. Chapter Two also discusses the production of ideas of Mexico through travel and the function of country "brands" or destination image in the context of global media and tourism and their local effects. The second half of the thesis, in Chapters Three and Four, is an opening back out to possible futures, as it were—the conditions that today transform the genre and the particular responses to those conditions within the work of some Spanish writers who have diverse methods of engagement with the ethics of encounter. My analysis of contemporary texts is therefore organised thematically, taking into consideration in Chapter Three the role of the historical imagination in post-dictatorship Spain and in a postcolonial transatlantic, and in Chapter Four globalised communications and new politics of mobility. Shifting conceptions of cultural belonging under globalisation and both Europeanisation and pan-Hispanic movements, for example, create an altered context for Spanish-Mexican encounter. So too the shift in communications media and distribution of content, which has the potential to change the way stories are told and to whom.

More specifically, Chapter One frames Spanish travel writing about Mexico via a discussion of the tradition of travel writing as a genre, the particular context of travel writing in contemporary Spain, and the connections between travel writing and Spain's imperial and post-imperial histories. The first important theme for understanding a travelling Spanish subject in Mexico is the reimagining of the Conquest of America and the instability and cultural

determination of historical narratives more generally. I therefore start my story with the historiography of the Conquest, because that is an origin story for Spaniards travelling in America, and it offers a very useful point of departure for how European histories of violence have shaped more than just Europe. My principal example is Bernal Díaz del Castillo's *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España* [*Conquest of New Spain*], which I interpret as a discursive intervention in debates over justice and the righteousness of the conquistadors. The main thesis of Chapter One, however, is that texts are not static and that their meanings, and the conceptualisation of the participant-narrator, are transformed by changing popular interpretations of subjective experience, agency, and power. In this chapter I therefore discuss stories of the Conquest as both a response to the literary traditions of European travel writing and European ideas of the other and as the commencement of new forms in these traditions as they begin to trace the idea of America for Europe.

In Chapter Two, I explore Spain as a point of origin in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries following the post-dictatorship remaking of history. This is significant because it is changing the discourses about historical understanding in Spain right now, and linking Spanish histories and experiences to broader international debates about culpability, memory and national identity. Spain's crisis of history today, in dealing with its recent past, as well as its historical crisis, when dealing with the loss of Empire, are crucial to understanding the significance of historical imagination in Spanish society. The second important theme of Chapter Two is why Mexico as a destination provides some interesting conditions when considering the heritage of violence, otherness, appropriation, and travel writing as a problematic semi-colonial tradition. Taking this in conjunction with the specific dynamics of Spanish-Mexican encounter is particularly fruitful, because Mesoamerica was one of Spain's early and most important sites of conquest and Imperial expansion in the so-called New World, and therefore has the potential to trigger certain kinds of historical reflection and allusions in writers travelling there. Furthermore, Mexico has been absorbed into the economic flows of globalisation and the global tourism industry in quite

interesting ways, partly as a result of its proximity to the U.S. and Central and South America and its accessibility for marine trade. For the same reason, Mexico is debatably now more significant than Spain in determining the profile and role of Spanish as a language, at least in its projection outside the Spanish-speaking world, due to its ongoing experience of migration and transmigration and its large population. This contest over language and its relationship to cultural identity is one of the many ways in which traditional concepts of centre-periphery are inadequate to understanding power and cross-cultural exchange. Along with language, present day Spain and peninsular Spanish culture suppose numerous tensions with Latin America over, for example, the meaning of historical narratives and their role in the formation and contestation of cultural identities.

Chapters Three and Four contain analyses of pertinent works of contemporary Spanish travel writing about Mexico, which form the core of original research in this study. The texts selected were written by Spaniards in the post-Franco era on the subject of travels in Mexico, incorporating the writer's personal experience of the process of negotiating their own relationship to their environment. These contemporary texts are selected from commercially published travel writing in book and print media formats, although reference is made to the changing context for popular travel genres across different media. This corpus allows the exploration of themes including the changing flows of information and ideas of place in globalised communications and their particular shape in democratic Spain with its expanding middle class in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

To respond to the central question of the diverse modes in which narrations of encounter reflect the contingency and instability of the historical imagination and the way this process is enacted in the space between Spain and Mexico in particular, I look first at travel narratives that explore the interrelationship between past experience and the traveller's frame of reference for dealing with the strange and the new. This occurs both through the memories that travellers bring to bear, and the personal experiences that shape their pre-conceptions both of themselves as a travelling subject and of their destination,

including those enacted through reading, through literature, and through the development of an intertextual field of reference prior to departure. In Chapter Three I also consider the way this reflexivity about narration relates to the development of different kinds of historical awareness and historical consciousness, and whether it supposes a reflexivity also about the actual role of the traveller in place.

In Chapter Four, my discussion of Alfonso Armada's *El rumor de la frontera* or *The Hum of the Border* allows me to engage with the role of the Mexican-U.S. border in contemporary imaginary in a more textured way than is possible in the general overview of discourses of Mexicanness in Chapter Two. Looking at this particularly fraught geography in the context of contemporary travel writing also creates a space for exploring the tensions in the differentiated experiences of mobility globally and the intersection of mobility and power. The representability of trauma and suffering also comes into play here. The history of travel writing has a fraught relationship with the idea of the exotic in opposition to European civilisation, and this relationship is quite interesting in Spanish letters as Spain has traditionally been an object of this exoticising gaze. Exploring danger is one way contemporary travel writers distinguish their narrative from the overload of possible sources, few of which have the capacity of appearing to reveal someplace *new*. Novelty is key. In analysing Alfredo Semprún's *Viajes desaconsejables* or *Imprudent journeys* I am interested in the connections between the European subject's access to information and the way the imagined death of distance affects the travellers encounter with difference and narration of the other. How do contemporary travellers illustrate encounters with places that their readers already believe they know? In a past era of European travel, discovery was the object and the capacity of the traveller to report objective reality was not in doubt. Postcolonial critiques have destabilised the authority of the narrator to define the other, however the consumption of places may still be facilitated through figures acting as cross-cultural intermediaries, including journalists-*cum*-travel writers like Semprún.

In Chapters Three and Four supplementary examples are sourced from the work of Javier Reverte and from Maruja Torres' *Amor América*. Including the former allows a closer focus on the nature of professionalisation in travel writing and the taking of the world entire as a destination concept, such that the journey is definitely structured around the traveller himself and the personal adventure. The book by Torres on the other hand takes on America as a continent, and therefore engages more with place-concept and the writing of travel narrative as a descriptive project. Despite references to Maruja Torres and to the photography of Corina Arranz in Armada's *El rumor de la frontera*, within the present study I have not addressed any full-length works by women, but that should not be taken as an indication that there is not in fact significant production of contemporary travel writing by Spanish women writers. This ranges from adventure travel by writers like Inés de Suárez to the politicised solidarity writing seen in books like *Volcanes dormidos* by Rosa Regàs and Pedro Molina Temboury or *Un viaje solidario* by Herminia Esteban. Because I have restricted my focus here to Mexico, the travel narratives by these writers fall outside the scope of the investigation.

In the selection of these examples of contemporary Spanish travel writing I have also chosen to exclude certain kinds of texts, including memoirs, strictly research-oriented or informative non-fiction texts, and exile and migration stories. In general, these texts take as their goal the relation of something other than the voyage and the return as such. Peñate Rivero (2004: 24) offers a reminder that the intention or imagined character of the traveller is not the only thing that defines a text. In this study I do not refer in detail to the intent of the travellers, except where it circumscribes the journey in some way, choosing instead to focus on how the texts themselves relate to discourses around place. The emphasis is thus on how the interpretive schema and imagery employed within the text suggest both a concept of and role for the traveller and a conceptualisation of the nature or characteristics of the places visited—in this case, Mexico. By privileging the recounting of processes of adaptation to and reinterpretation of the conditions of encounter, I am also excluding purely conceptual and historical explorations of the transmission of ideas between Spain and Mexico such as that in Maestre's *Viaje a los inferos*

americanos (2003), even though they may be loosely framed by the writer's movements between the two countries. I am also here dealing only with narratives published in book form, principally because this permits the more effective discussion of this travel writing in the context of the genre as it has evolved historically, which also allows me to apply the existing theories practices of the field of travel writing studies with its predominant focus on earlier periods in the history of travel. I can thus bring the questions there current to bear on a particular dynamic in contemporary travel writing rather than attempting to develop a methodology for bringing together in one study radically different types of texts, although the diveristy of texts and media of image production offers fertile ground for future research, as I will discuss in the Conclusion.

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CONCLUSION

The shifts in the nature of travel and the meaning of travel writing between Spain and Mexico, framed by the history of discourses of Mexicanness and transatlantic mobility in Europe, establish the limits for performances of travel and travel writing for Spaniards in Mexico around the turn of the millennium. My project here has been to explore the evolution of ideas of Mexico and Spanish-Mexican encounters and locate specific examples of travel narrative as interventions within these discourses. To accomplish this I have argued for the cross-cultural transatlantic space as historically constituted, and approached contemporary travel narratives as performances within that space from two different directions—Europe as a point of origin, and Mexico as a destination concept and as a site for mobility and representation.

Engaging with the theme of travel necessarily foregrounds the continued significance of physical location and the specificity of place despite what at times seem like the totalising effects of global communications and macro-cultural forces. Travel, as a form of mobility, carries very different meanings in different spaces and times. Travel as leisure—especially international travel—is largely the province of privileged elites, while such transnational trajectories have a totally different significance in the context of conquest, migration, exile and other forms of permanent or coercive mobilities. Place, time and movement produce radically differentiated experiences. These differentiations do not correspond cleanly with nationally bounded communities, but are more individually contingent and potentially transnational than might be permitted with the application of traditional ideas of coherent cultural belonging. I have employed Spain and Mexico as grouping terms throughout; nevertheless, I have also endeavoured to suggest the limits of the national as a concept for thinking about place, both in terms of a sense of origin and a perception or concept of destination.

Alongside the differentiation in the experience of place and mobility, this project has emphasised the interconnectedness of mobility, representation and power both historically and in the present day. Travel and tourism, from origins in trade and religion and associations with European expansionism and imperial projects, have emerged in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as industrial-scale practices which are still closely implicated in the function of global capital. In my textual analysis I have discussed the way contemporary travel writers reflect to different degrees on the nature of their own activity and on the production of Mexican spaces as objects of tourist consumption, thus rendering this production more or less transparent within the space of their representation of Mexico. This reflexivity may also extend to the way travel narratives engage with existing images of place, whether they have arisen from deliberate management through destination marketing, as is the case with the recent reinscriptions of the alternative figurations of Mexico as coastal paradise or as distinctive exotic culture discussed in Chapter Two; or through the unintended effects on place image brought about by social rupture, natural disaster, criminality, and so on. In that sense, my project here has been to investigate the constitution of an individually variegated sense of place that responds to the popular imaginary, draws on literary precursors and intertextual reference, is performed through encounter, and that is ultimately expressed and thus rendered accessible through narration. The narration of experience brings that sense of place into a space of legible contact and contagion with the history of encounter as a site for the enactment of ideas of self, cultural identity, and otherness.

In terms of the historical significance of the encounter between Europe and America, the focus here has not been on the significant material consequences for both continents so much as the way the idea of America in general and Mexico in particular has been coopted into particular discourses of Europeaness, Mexicanness and colonial and postcolonial commonalities and differences. It is difficult to argue with the significance and of the Conquest and the sixteenth century Spanish-Mexican contacts as foundational events for the creation of transatlantic space as a sphere of action and conceptual geography. What I have argued here however, is that as an origin

story for Spanish-Mexican travel the *narrations* of the Conquest are also an excellent example of the way texts are dynamic and discourses tie into concepts of authority and responsibility. Their meanings shift; the actors are reimagined and the weight of events revised, all in response to evolving ideas about power, justice and social participation. This particular dynamic discourse is the beginning of the long history of the appropriation of different ideas of America as a site for European agency and European self-conceptualisation, as well as Latin American resistance to that appropriation and self-definition and determination. It is a first case for arguing the socially determined variation in the ethics of encounter, which inflect not only the performance of the encounter but also its narration, interpretation, and reinterpretation.

For this to be meaningful in the context of contemporary Spanish-Mexican encounters, however, it was necessary to explore not only the changing use of historical narratives in response to broad socio-historical developments, but also to speak more practically to questions of the significance of Latin America in Spain after American independence and through Spain's own processes of national redefinition and internal change. What kind of place did Mexico become in the Spanish imaginary following Mexican independence, the Mexican Revolution, and Spain's Civil War and subsequent Mexican diaspora? And in Spain's post-Franco rethinking of history and social justice, what space has the rest of the Spanish-speaking world, with its own twentieth century traumas and violence, begun to occupy? These are some of the larger questions that I have been responding to here in some small way via the discussion of the material and conceptual conditions for contemporary Spanish-Mexican encounter and the examination of particular examples of the narration of that encounter.

Independence, along with the severance of direct political action in Mexico, meant the severance of the obvious link between narratives of Mexico and political utility. Other kinds of connections between travel narratives and political utility and power therefore come forward. Alongside the specifics of Spanish-Mexican ties, such as pan-Hispanism (and its inverse of Latin-chic in

which the Spanish-speaking world is acted upon rather than actor, though such tropes may be coopted for economic gain) and the fraternity of the exchange of exiles, the changing conditions for travel in each country have also revised the political subtext of travel narratives. Both nations have, in the late twentieth century, undergone major changes in their relationship to tourism and simultaneously experienced an upheaval in the experience of mobility more generally via emigrations, immigrations and transmigrations. Some of these changes have disrupted old concepts of global centres and peripheries, underscoring the emergence of multiple modalities of allegiance, diverse transnational networks, and multidirectional flows of power. Others, however, including the consumption of place and reproduction of exoticist tropes serve rather to reenact imperialist discourses. What I argue is that the two functions are not mutually exclusive within the space of a single transatlantic encounter and narrative. The internal contradictions created between these different performances of space and power may have a dialogic, productive effect in terms of the discursive function of the text as a whole.

In that the second function, the reinscription of imperialist thought structures, persists despite the end of imperialism as a formal global system, it is impossible to think about the relationship between Spain and Latin America without considering past frameworks of religious and political power and the history of Spanish imperialism. Even contemporary texts inevitably respond in some way to the lingering influences of those imperial structures, which are not separable from current day questions of mobility, power and exploitation. Through into the twentieth century, the dominance of nationalist interpretations of Spain's imperial history acted against the generation of significant new narratives and influenced the intellectual climate in Spain generally. However, in the latter half of the twentieth century in many places, and in Spain during the post-dictatorship in particular, travel as a practice has been further disconnected from explicit nationalist projects. During this period, the concept of travel as an activity of personal development available to all those who can afford it has become more and more important as the establishment of an industry of mass tourism

for its own sake substituted for an outward impetus that in the past may have been attached more to existing economic or spiritual purposes. The ascendance of the pleasure destination and the journey of self-discovery more widely reproduced a model for the experience of difference and the disruption of routine as an opportunity for reflecting on and reinventing the self.

In such a conceptualisation of voluntary travel, the interrelationship between past experience and expectation and the traveller's frame of reference for dealing with the strange and the new becomes more important. The idiosyncratic intertext and the urgencies and silences of memory contribute to the creation of a historical and geospatial consciousness. What is more debatable—and variable from case to case—is the extent to which that historical and geospatial consciousness constitutes a meaningful engagement with the textures of place and the historical, political, economic and natural forces that bring them into being. Dickens and Fontana (2002: 393), drawing on Jameson, suggest that the dynamics of culture today, rather than a 'genuine sense of historical time', generate only layers of pastiche; a sense of the past that is mere random eclecticism. This proposition is useful for thinking about the use of the past as a mode of appropriation, and certainly within the context of the production of places as objects of consumption, but less so for analysing how historical consciousness influences the narration of encounter and its discursive and material consequences. Travel stories, as a form of self-narration, have classically been about the evocation of a coherent subject in the world. In some of the examples of travel writing discussed in this thesis, however, we see instead the inability of the travelling subject to marshal a wholly adequate interpretive schema (with its capacity to produce totalising—if false—narratives) for present experience while drawing only on memory, expectation and past experience. Jordá's explicit recognition of the disconnection between his own imagination and expectation about Mexico, founded as it is more on personal memory and literature, and his material encounter with place acts against the reliability of his own narrative as a representation of Mexico and speaks rather to the incommensurability of description and reality, as well as the impossibility of arresting places in time and hence the inevitable failures of static characterisations. Solano,

meanwhile, with his preoccupation with the inheritance of history and its penetration into the present, and his acknowledgement of his own process of narrativisation, recognises that what appears and what is said may alternatively rise up from and conceal histories of violence.

These disjunctions support the interpretation that there are elements of contemporary globality and its flow of information that act against people's ability to 'unify the past, present, and future of their own biographical experience' (Dickens & Fontana 2002: 393). The vacillation between reliance on existing knowledges and beliefs about places and the acknowledgement of their limits in the traveller's ability to interpret experience is something that complicates the dynamics of representation in contemporary travel narrative. Clearly, writers' own cultures affect their perception of and ability to describe the complexities of their subjects. What varies much more is the level of transparency within the text about the writer's concept of the role of narration and the responsibilities implicit in the act of writing places.

As noted in Chapter Four, the predominantly external focus of Armada and Semprún—on politics, violence and social change—reinforces the authority of the narrator, and reduces the sense of the instability of subject displayed in narratives in Chapter Three, where the traveller's sense of self was seen to be evolving and their voice and the shape of their recounted experiences transparently subject to the artifice of narrative construction. What the narratives discussed in Chapter Four offer, however, is an indication of the testimonial possibilities of a more externally oriented engagement with place. These texts perhaps better reflect the nature of mobility in a world ever more compressed, with millions of involuntarily displaced people, hundreds of millions of migrants responding to global-level disruptions that shift patterns of migration, post-terror security paranoia, and a jump in the virtualisation of place and communication.

To some extent, even the intertextual reference and evocation of memory in the travel narratives here discussed also support this sense of instability, at least inasmuch as the space of memory and interpretive framework of

expectation they create are manifestly insufficient to the task of coming to terms with the moveable present. While the intertextuality, exploration of the space of expectation, and personal memory in dialogue with historical and geospatial consciousness speak to the instability of the travelling subject, the narration of trauma, violence and unrest speaks more to the instability of place. However, as some of the examples in this thesis suggest, the two modes can intersect at times, more effectively evoking the contingency of encounter.

I highlighted the problem of conflating danger with novelty as a romantic trope in contemporary travel writing, but encounters with trauma and instability can have other effects instead—or even at the same time. Perhaps in the discussion of border zones and in the Spanish travel writers' treatment of actual passage and confrontation with others' experiences of place this contingency is most evident. Armada's evocation of some of the variable—and historically unstable—ways of being in, thinking about and passing through the border was not wholly free of romance, but also suggested the significant differentiation in the experience of place. Semprún evoked both tourist landscapes and insurgent landscapes, and though he unrepentantly promotes the former over the latter without much consideration for the internal traumas and transformative consequences of industrial tourism itself, the nature of his travel, with its original journalistic imperative, foregrounds the presence of local actors and the non-static character of place. Even Solano, in his references to indigenous people and to the different cultures and civilisations in Mexico hazards some recognition of the way the tourist productions of archaeological sites, in narratives of history for museums and the like has produced a space of simulation around cultural and ethnic identity that individuals find themselves inhabiting and performing. This is to argue that the experience of mobility, which is, as I have reiterated, a differentiated one according to privilege and other factors, may nevertheless destabilise the very factors which determine that differentiation, or at the very least destabilise the pre-existing framework which the traveller-writer brings to the interpretation of the meaning of movement and place.

Just as each moment of a journey is a crossroads, so too are the choices taken in its narration. The crossroads marks a decision between two paths. Travel writing in particular, with its exoticising conventions and tropes of otherness—specifically in this case Mexican otherness (or, occasionally, sameness)—have the potential to recreate or reinforce a Eurocentric cartography and history. Indeed, in its very nature travel narrative is inevitably at least in dialogue with a compromised history of power and oppression, if not directly recreating it. However, such accounts can have other functions at the same time, demonstrating horizontal rather than national and hierarchical affiliations. In the fluctuation between reflexivity or self-exploration and the component of testimony contemporary travel narratives may simultaneously encompass multiple functions—even some that seem contradictory. The presence of neo-colonial elements and unmediated manifestations of privilege may be present even while other features of the encounter also suggest aspects of global inequality and social justice.

While sequencing and telling remain important parts of the narration of experience, some contemporary narratives also privilege the process of accumulation, of fragmentary and overtly unreliable telling, such that the narration of subjective experience may be represented in partial, and indeed contradictory, moments of revelation and in images, and be moulded around fundamentally contingent identities. Given the nature of representation of place under globalised communications and information excess, narratives of experience contend with what is within the text, its explicit subject, but also what is outside—competing versions of same object of representation, be it place, event, or people. This is another area in which the function of contemporary travel narratives is different from the possible uses of historical narratives. Historical texts undergo a degree of solidification around the identity of their authors and the actors they describe; the basis for interpretation of them changes, as I have discussed, but what has come down through European written history offers only a couple of paths of access to the encounters of the Conquistadors with the Aztecs, for example. Contemporary texts on the other hand contend with the fluidity and

contradictions that occur as broader understandings of their subject matter change around them.

Pure contingency and the sheer accretion of images plastered into the consciousness carries another kind of danger, however, different to the reification of historical myths. Augé (1999) warns that with the dissolution of reference accumulation can replace meaning. Where reference is hyper-individualised and detached from a collective sense of history, the material elements of encounter and the presence of realities beyond the interpretive framework of the author becomes abstracted, almost fictive. Within that acceleration of image all the problems of conceiving place as a pure object of consumption, of conflating difference with novelty—that is, its value for individual stimulation—overwhelm any possibility of encounter with place and with difference as a space for humanising the effects of global power and reconceiving place in terms of its specificity and textural, lived uniqueness.

There is a great deal of scope for further research into the representation of transatlantic encounter between Spain and Mexico. In this study I have made passing reference to film, novels and other forms of print media, all of which suppose different modes of representation which might suggest new interpretations of possible interventions in the transatlantic discursive space. To take one example, magazine articles are a very different kind of artefact to the book—authors generally have a different role in decision making, the presentation of the text, the appropriateness of self-insertion and so on given the stylistic constraints that may come from outside. Certainly they will often have less control over the nature and shape of the trip itself. Along with memoir, all such other kinds of texts create potential for a more inclusive analysis of the texture of transatlantic mobility. Print publishing itself, the source of the texts studied here, is an industry in the throes of major change, and it is interesting to consider the communicative disparity between currently privileged users of information and those who have been less so. There are signs that in poorer countries people are leapfrogging technologies that were fundamental to the development of a media and communications infrastructure among the richer; such as fixed location addresses, phones,

news media and so on, and jumping straight to more mobile communications structures in which anonymity and flexibility are inbuilt. Given these emerging architectures of communication, it would be valuable to investigate new forms of communicating travel experience. Some themes that persist in different forms throughout this project, such as existing perceptions of place and the worthiness of recounting experience in terms of audience that will consume the narrative, naturally lend themselves to a discussion of globalisation and the changing nature of communications and media for communicating ideas of place. New media allow immediate revisions of the travel experience for an audience that is usually still situated in the “home” culture. Furthermore, the loss of distance has been accompanied by increasingly intimate and portable communication technologies which also permit an uninterrupted relationship with home for the traveller. This constant, multi-directional flow between home and the traveller intervenes in both the experience of the strange and its representation.

The relatively traditional travel book, to which I have restricted myself here, and the travel diary in particular, is a potentially disappearing genre, and in its postcolonial form fundamentally a product of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Travel narration will evolve in both style and medium to reflect the flows of information and the flows of people now in the twenty-first. Young travellers now have come of age in the twenty-first century. It is reasonable to expect changes in the way they communicate their experiences, and also significant changes in their demonstrated historical and geospatial consciousness based on changes in the situation of both Spain and Mexico and the space in between in the new millennium. I have referred to some aspects of these changes in this study, but how they inflect new forms of narrative and communication is a valuable direction for further research. Before embarking on an investigation of such radically different kinds of texts and practices of representation, however, most immediately interesting would be to expand this project by investigating narratives by Mexicans taking the same journey in the other direction. How the mid-globalisation and postcolonial dynamics read when reversed would further distinguish elements

of historically differentiated consciousness *versus* instances of horizontality and transnational commonalities.

Within the confines of what has been achievable in the present study, I have made some suggestions about different possible dynamics of encounter and representation in response to both existing discourses of place and conditions of mobility in contemporary transatlantic space between Spain and Mexico. I do not, however, intend to convey the impression that the particular case studies here have a widely generalisable value. Their value is in their particularity and the way they suggest not the whole nature of Spain to Mexico travel narration but rather what they suggest about the shape of those discourses and collective ideas that new narratives about Mexico by Spaniards are intervening in or responding to. Throughout this investigation I have drawn together the historical role of the genre of travel writing, the effects of globality, and the way the discourses around the transatlantic space inflect actual encounters between Spain and Mexico. Narratives of encounter in this formulation become possible sites for understanding the tensions in different concepts of transatlantic mobility and in experiences of place.

CODA: Engaged in the Act

In writing a book one is engaged in the act of travelling.

(Butor 1992: 15)

Programs of study or research projects are said to be carried out at a particular institution; implying they are conducted with its resources and within its confines. The process of discovery and the communication through writing thus seem spatially bounded and associated with a bricks and mortar built environment. Of course, the exploration of ideas is not an activity always easily carried out only in sitting or standing at a desk, or gazing at a screen. Nor is the concept of the academic environment and the meaning of working at a university necessarily so straightforward. By commencing with the tracing of some of the physical spaces away from my desk in which the preceding ideas came to life and took on their final shape, I hope to evoke some of the substrata of my thinking—and my writing—about movement and experience. The body of the text, by virtue of its formal argumentation and its *post hoc* structure obscures the peculiar process of reflection through which ideas come up in the slippages between the different spheres of everyday life and everyday action.

I commenced this research with a hangover from travel in Mexico, after an email received in Oaxaca started me on the journey home and eventually into higher degree research. The setting compounded my preoccupation with thoughts brewing since I had lived and studied in Spain some years before, when I had been struck by the disparity between historical narratives presented at my university there to those more prevalent at home. In my courses in Spain, Europe remained the inescapable geographical, political and cultural heart of all stories. In the context of colonial history, the European historical narrative told of points of embarkation, not arrival. Simultaneously, I was pondering a series of unsettling encounters I had in Mexico on the occasions I had found myself in spaces servicing resort and package tourism. In the context of commercial transactions and hospitality,

my companion and I had experienced an accelerated intimacy and aggressive friendliness quite dissimilar to what we had encountered in locales with less international tourism. I surmised there was some kind of dual response to the need to sell Mexico to travellers who like to go home and exclaim, “The people were so friendly!” and the need to cater to the U.S. standard of service culture with its intense focus on the desires of the consumer. Both privilege exaggerated welcoming warmth over hostility—or even neutral disengagement.

Returning to Australia and reentering academic life I was removed from such situations and my complicity was easier to forget. Even venturing outside the faculty was, as often as not, to work in the library, surrounded by the distilled traditions of predominately European thought practices and writing. Even in such rarefied places, however, dissonances creep in. On sunnier days I read books about Mexico lying on a bed of leaves on the lawns beside the library. We are both imported breeds, me and these deciduous trees, equally ill-equipped for baking days at thirty-five degrees centigrade. Those temperatures seem more appropriate to the subject of the books I am reading than to the fantasy of a cool space of interpretive contemplation and analytical distance. This ivory tower is more like a mudbrick oven, and it is impossible to leave one’s body behind.

Or in teaching young undergraduates, who would share their travel ambitions and semester after semester reproduce the same language to describe their ideas of place (with, of course, those occasional rewarding exceptions). At one stage I picked up some work translating *narcocorridos* as a side job, just as I myself was beginning to write about the border. It was the area of study for young cultural studies scholar whose skills did not extend to such subculturally specific and unstable lingo, but whose interests nevertheless include the consumption of *narco* romance. It was a lesson in the peculiar dynamics of linguistic competence for anthropologists, cultural ethnographers and the like who come from English-speaking backgrounds, while those from other backgrounds are effectively required to develop some competence in English.

Outside the grounds of the university (itself jammed in the suburbs between Sydney's wealthy north and turbulent, multicultural west), I wrote sections of Chapter One sitting in a Portuguese café in Australia. Portuguese Australia was created very late in the waves of Portuguese emigration over the last five centuries. The suburb of Petersham is one of the tiny Portuguese enclaves in Australia, itself a late product of colonialism with continuing waves of migrants and refugees, each generation bringing a new language and a new people, each of which must somehow adapt to and be adapted by this antipodean appendage of global anglophone culture. Writing is assisted by the omnipresent coffee, the history of which is its own lesson in imperial mobility, global capitalism, appropriation and adaptation, accompanied by a *pastel de nata* or *de Belém*, renamed in Australia the 'Portuguese tart'. Later, having moved further west, I would go instead to Caffè Marco, in the heart of a suburb recently identified to have Sydney's highest levels of ethnic and religious intolerance (Johnston 2011). This is despite or perhaps because of the fact that for decades Strathfield has been among the city's most ethnically diverse suburbs, with a significant though not quite yet majority Asian population. All of the waves of migrants reserve the right to assert their own privilege and sense of belonging at the expense of those that follow.

Some reading and note-taking I carried out on trains and buses. So many of the routinised aspects of our lives are defined by movement and by immobility. In response to those everyday mobilities, travel becomes an escape from commuting time. Leisure travel is seductive; it is a marker of privilege and a symbol of freedom, and can express the desire to be stationary—to escape the cycle of incremental accumulations in urban commuting. The travel writer María Unceta Satrústegui (2005: 196) describes this desire in contemporary travel as the will towards 'La huida de la rutina y de los escenarios habituales'.¹⁵⁵ One section I wrote on a train just as a new order of urban transport (a metro) was announced for my home city, which was supposed to take us all subterranean, to free the air. Other sections I wrote after the cancellation of this fantasy because my state's credit rating—its client

¹⁵⁵ 'The flight from routine and from the usual environments'

relationship with global finance—was more important than its people’s ability to move. (This public transport failure finally contributed, along with other factors, to bringing down a government that had been in power for sixteen years, showing how important access to mobility is to the life of a city.)

One section I even drafted sitting in the Motor Registry waiting to renew my driver’s license and reinforce my access to an especially privileged mode of mobility. Even within my own city, there is a great and relatively rare advantage in being able to drive motor vehicles but not having to rely on them for either my day to day movements or my income. Money—or just credit—can get me access to that added individual control offered by a car at any time, while forgoing having to concern myself with the ownership of the actual weighty physical thing. This is the lightness of the wealthy global citizen; the potential to forgo *things* because all places and all knowledge seem already to be accessible. New no-luggage tech nomads (and lifestyle minimalists who take their ‘nothing’ on the road with them), the gradual disappearance of printed travel guides, changes in modes of acquisition of information and in the instantaneousness of communications are developments all around us and, although they are not the focus of inquiry here because I have been more preoccupied with the whence than the where to, with how contemporary travel writing relates to both the history of the genre itself and the histories of the places travelled, they offer fascinating directions for future research.

My movements over the past years also brought me into contact with other people and their differing points of view on travel. Outside the academic community these might be encountered anywhere, like the Sydney Writers Festival 2008, where the (hugely popular) session on travel writing made me think about the way narrating travel can also require writers to travel, quite literally, to their audiences. They become mobile authorities on places to which they were only visitors, and sometimes only visited in their imagination.

Even going to the tennis (the Australian Open, marked by the nationalism of supporters who gather there in comparison to the more neutral spectatorship in many other tennis tournaments) could trigger thoughts that seemed to come

back to the subject of my investigation. Tennis is a global sport, but one in which wealth (for early training, equipment and so on) tells much more than in, for example, football, and one which transforms its elite into truly homeless (incredibly wealthy) nomads for most of the year.

More predictably, my research project was also in motion when I attended conferences where my individual preoccupations were crystallised by the necessity of brevity and the interests of particular audiences, helping to cast ideas into a new light. Among these was the peculiar instance of having to go to the far south to encounter people from Europe on the occasion of a conference on Spain organised at the University of Auckland, New Zealand in 2010.

Other aspects of university life created their own possibilities for travel, such as travelling to Mexico to oversee the in-country study of a small group of undergraduate students. Such programs are part of the growing industry of education and service learning tourism. Education travel products are often packaged for U.S. students—a process evident in many countries but particularly marked in Mexico—but are increasingly being advertised to other markets. Right at the time of my visit and in the months since, this tourism niche in Mexico has become rather wobbly. My university is not the only one wrestling with administrative decisions about the safety of sending students to Mexico given its recent signs of destabilisation and increasing violence. I found myself sitting in on security briefings on the safety of travel in Mexico just weeks before submitting my thesis.

Travel flows and infrastructure can be slow to change, however, occasionally generating images that create a wild dissonance, like the news stories coming out in January 2010 about the cruise ships pulling into private beaches of Haiti in the weeks following the disastrous earthquake. When my final editing of the section on the work of Alfredo Semprún and the representation of instability, trauma and newsworthiness was completed, Japan was still convulsing with the aftershocks of its catastrophic 2011 earthquake/tsunami/nuclear meltdown

while the world turned to watch the devastation, and tourism to the country, for obvious reasons, collapsed completely.

Conference and other institutionally-supported travel gave me the experience of return to first Spain and later Mexico for the first time in some years during the course of writing, such that my project effectively began and ended in Mexico. This circling back to the beginning felt like it gave my thinking a shape that somehow corresponded to the geographies about which I was writing. But after that feeling comes the realisation that with such thoughts I am engaging in the very same retrospective imposition of narrative structure to make sense of my experience that I explore as a feature of travel writing in the body of this thesis. Metaphors are contagious, and neither in this study nor anywhere else in the investigation of travel writing is it truly possible to stand outside the problematics of mobility and representation about which we who study it claim to speak.

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