

Anglo-Saxon Women Explorers in Spain: Approaching the Postcolonial Periphery

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Resumen

A partir del análisis de algunos relatos de viaje escritos por viajeras anglosajonas que visitaron España y Andalucía en el siglo XIX, en este trabajo se muestra cómo el discurso femenino modifica el discurso colonial imperante en la literatura de viajes más conocida, es decir, aquella escrita por autores varones. Estas autoras, que presento como sujetos coloniales periféricos, desafían algunos presupuestos del discurso colonial, aun formando parte de él, en varias direcciones: principalmente, cuestionando el sistema colonial y el progreso industrial mediante la comparación de sus países de origen con sus lugares de destino y, por otro lado, intentando subvertir la imagen estereotipada de Andalucía y de España que los “padres fundadores” de este género literario, Washington Irving o Richard Ford entre otros, construyeron en sus textos. El interés por interactuar con la población local y la voluntad por superar los tópicos anteriores, junto con su evidente condición de representantes de la metrópoli, sitúa la obra de estas mujeres en los márgenes del discurso colonial.

“All frontiers, including the frontiers of nations, at the same time as they are barriers are also places of communication and exchange” (Madan Sarup, 99).

“Our souvenirs of Córdoba are a mixture of *mezquitas* and *mosquitos*” (Julia Bryne, 317).

“Every story is a travel story” (Michel de Certeau, 3).

The topic of the image of Spain and the construction of a national identity have been widely discussed in the last decades of cultural, anthropological, and literary criticism, using the very numerous travel narratives written by male authors in the last centuries. However, there has been very little interest in studying the same processes which also took place in accounts written by women. This neglect is more surprising if we consider the vast amount of travelogues written by women in the 19th-century in their journeys around the Iberian Peninsula. Moreover, these trips and their written outcomes show a different light on the subjectivity of Spaniards of the time as opposed to the sometimes stereotypical nature of the images presented by some male authors.

The current study is part of a broader project, in which I am currently working, which analyzes the particular manner these women re-present the image of Spain. The writings of almost all of these women writers remain unpublished in its Spanish translation and have received little attention by critics if compared to their male counterparts, perhaps due to the difficulties in locating the original texts and identifying the authors. Most of the critics have analysed the texts from a rather traditional point of view, documenting sites and providing detailed data on aspects such as monuments, customs, and historical characters. However, very little has been done to offer a thorough reading from a postcolonial perspective which can include cultural and anthropological considerations.¹

¹ Among the scarce publications of Anglo-saxon women writers in Spain, Blasina Cantizano Márquez has analyzed some of the texts offering not only a general view from the British travel narrative perspective but also studying how local women have been portrayed by foreign female writers. Blanca Krauel

What is interesting about the texts is that their sometime alternative views of the social and cultural realities of Spain serve to contrast and question stereotypical approaches of the male romantic travellers. That is, that their texts approach what I have called the postcolonial periphery, both as a geographical and as a discursive space. Without their perspective, the picture of Spain as a whole remains only a partial one. To analyze these texts under a postcolonial lens will allow us also to problematize notions such as “picturesque” and “exotic”, when applied to the locals and the landscapes. The theoretical frame used to approach the texts considers Edward Said and Hommi Bhabha, and also contributions by Dorothy Middleton and Lila Marz in their insightful postcolonial approach with a gender agenda.

In most of my recent discussions of women writers on travel, I have focused mainly on issues of travel genre and identity politics. In the present essay, I shall consider the role of these women in portraying Spain and the Spaniards in the light of Postcolonial theory. The methodology for reading these women texts will consider notions of gender but my intention is not to be dependent on essentialism to explain them. I will eventually refer most of the time to the text chosen and also to the women who wrote from a peculiar position located in the postcolonial periphery.

Limitations of this study

It is difficult to analyze such a diverse body of texts. Not only thematically, but chronologically and in terms of historical circumstances, these authors are very diverse. Moreover, their narrative form is so varied that it becomes difficult to conclude with a shared aim. The texts range from opinionated reportages to engaging dramatic narratives, and from dialogued

Heredia laid the foundations for the field with *Viajeros británicos en Andalucía, de Christopher Hervey a Richard Ford (1760-1845)*, but based her interpretations primarily on male writers. Antonia López Burgos has written extensively on bandits and on the experiences of British travellers in the province of Granada.

travelogues to novel-like fictions of travel. Some of these texts are first person diaries, others are supposedly objective travel guides, while the rest are novelistic accounts written in the third person singular.

One of the premises of my analysis is that I am reading these texts as a Spaniard of the 21st century, having lived abroad half of my life, and even if I do bear in mind the social and historical conditions in which they were written, the geopolitics may reside as much in the text itself as in the reading process. Another limitation that I have in my analysis deals with one important argument always put forward when examining travel narratives and the frictions between the metropolis and the colonies. These stories tell us more about the society they come from than the reality they are trying to describe. As Tim Youngs has put it: “Given the fact that travel writing is more reflective of the society journeyed from than of the country apparently written about” (119) it is important, first of all, that women’s narratives are viewed under these premises.

Acknowledging gender questionings

I do also acknowledge the general debate about essentialisms and “counteressentialisms”. For example, Caren Kaplan and Grewal Inderpal have proposed a transnational feminism beyond the reductionistic binaries of center/periphery, First World/Third World, western/non-western in their “Introduction” to *Scattered Hegemonies*. Even if Kaplan has questioned this binary, her transnational feminism, which examines the relationship of gender to scattered hegemonies, is still at work in the case of the travel narratives I am analyzing in this paper. Bearing that in mind, I will also try to address other axis of difference such as the class difference between these women, their places of origin (Britain, the US, etc.) and aspects of their sexuality.

Various authors are included in my analysis: among them Emmeline Stuart Wortley, Katharine Lee Bates, Virginia Woolf, and Mathila Betham Eduards. The first one, Stuart Wortley, is a British writer born in 1806 in an aristocratic family, acquainted to the Royal family, including

Queen Victoria herself, and Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli. Besides Spain, her other trips include Cuba, Peru, Constantinople, Morocco and most of the US. Death was the only thing which stopped her from travelling: in her trip in the Holy Land, she died of a heat stroke. After visiting Spain in 1851 she wrote *The Sweet South*, in two large volumes, covering all aspects of Spanish history and culture. In the first page the curious inscription “For private circulation only” (1856: 1) can be read, acknowledging the fact that it was a publication by a female author who did not deserve more than a symbolic and limited edition.

The second one is Katharine Lee Bates, an American writer who visited Spain in 1899, and is widely known in the US as the creator of the lyrics for the patriotic hymn “America, the beautiful”. She is considered a pioneer feminist and is currently recognized as a lesbian writer. Her book *Spanish Highways and Byways* recounts a challenging tour only a few months after the end of the Spanish American War of 1898. Her narrative avoids essentialism and the picturesque, trying to focus on social injustices and education, and showing a deep interest in Southern rhythms of life.

The third writer, and the only one widely known, is Virginia Woolf, who is also the most contemporary one. Born in 1882, Woolf was a significant figure in London literary society and a member of the Bloomsbury Group. Most of her works are widely available but my analysis is based on her letters, personal diary, and the articles she published in *The Guardian* after her two trips to Spain, in 1905 and 1923. Her gatherings from that country pay tribute to what I have called the “founding fathers” of Spain’s current image, George Borrow and Richard Ford, but go into a much deeper exploration of Spanish people and her interpretations of concepts such as travelling, the foreign otherness, and authority.

A recursive obsession: Modernity vs. authenticity of the autochthonous

In many occasions, these writers describe Spain, and other countries they visited during the same trip, as “antiquated”, and insist on the lack of “modernity”. It is important to point out that

when things are described as not “working” well (e.g. transportation, clocks and other types of machinery, lodging or other commodities of their contemporary world) in these new found lands, it is a clear sign of the importance given to materialism, and to the system of mass production and consumption by their societies back home. They find it almost impossible to escape from the discourse of “national modernity” within their “high” status of their social class.

Mathilda Betham-Edwards, for example, comments on this paradox. The beauty and originality of local habits, the mantilla, is partially threaten by the new manufactured clothes coming from the metropolis: “It is very strange to see the beautiful Spanish *señoritas* wearing dresses made out of cheap cotton manufactured in Manchester, top up with beautiful mantillas and Spanish fans” (123). In the same line, Julia Byrne comments on this “conflictive” modernity in her text *Cosas de España. Illustrative of the Spaniards as they are*: “There we see modern Sevillian life, but how different from modern life elsewhere!” (331). Another interesting example on the use of the concept of modernity is by Susan Hale: “Nowadays, Spanish trains are too modern to be picturesque” (270).

Spaniards seem to reject modernity by rejecting commerce, business, and marketing, as seen in July Byrne: “Spaniards are definitely not oriented towards business” (268). These and various other writers regret the fact that Spaniards are losing their original ancestral customs and are adopting the imported fashions from places such as Paris or London. This peculiar form of valuing modernity and questioning it at the same time, of embracing its advantages and contesting its effects in peripheral nations is what interests me. However attached to their commodities back home, these women still criticise the devastating consequences of progress and development of their societies. Their only possible comfort is to look back at the past of Spain, to evoke it in various forms, and to take refuge in it.

According to Caren Kaplan, the longing for a past untouched by modernity and for old customs

which are “now” disappearing is a narrative device used by these writers in the form of nostalgia. Kaplan argues that the use of nostalgia would be a form to get rid of their guilt feelings as they find they are somehow participating in the colonial enterprise. This bittersweet longing for things, and situations of the past could be read as a way of trying to distance themselves from the relentless modernity that their societies are imposing in these peripheral nations.

Spain, the “other” Orientalism

Francis Barker argues that Western theory has been transformed and reconfigured as a result with its encounter with ‘non-western cultures’, in the light of Edward Said, Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak (1). Here I have to advocate for a redefinition of East and West when dealing with the 19th-century. The fixed lines and frontiers when defining “European” at that time might become blurry when considering the case of Spain. This nation was, during that period, an example of an identity in the margin, indeed closer to the Middle East in development, social customs and aesthetics than to the European central metropolis such as Paris or London.

A simple East/West bipolar opposition is not sufficient since the situation at the time was far more complex than that. That is to say, that even if Spain was obviously not the East by its geographical location, the country was a partly oriental/orientalized from the narrative discourse which had already been fabricated since the end of the 18th-century.

The fact that Spain has not been influenced in the same degree as the rest of the countries in Europe by the traditional patterns of “Europeanness” may be partially responsible by the appreciation that Spain is semi oriental, or at least, “different” (15). Traditionally, those identity markers have been: the Roman Empire, Christianity, the Enlightenment, and industrialization. Obviously the first two are well embedded within Spanish culture, but not so intensely the last two factors, as some authors would point out.

In Said's binary opposition of the West and the Rest, Spain could be included in the "Rest" at the same time that it is also part of the West. It is indeed both, the strict frontier between these two realms is not that bipolar and strict nowadays but something understood as more hybrid and fluid than before. Spain is the West but only partially, it is a pseudo periphery and its own center at the same time.²

Through these female narratives, I explore issues around cultural encounters that can move beyond traditional conceptions of the "West and the rest", since the case of Spain is clearly the West but seen and portrayed sometimes in "the rest", or at least, in the margin, in the hyphen of nations. That can be proved by the amount of times these texts use words such as "oriental", "exotic", "Arab", "the East", etc. Also, by the amount of times Spain is compared to Egypt, Morocco, India, etc. Moreover, it is interesting to see also how in the binding of these old books I am currently finding at the British Library, the chapters on Spain are located or including near their other trips to Persia, Egypt, India, and the rest of "exotic" lands.

Therefore, women would be writing from the postcolonial periphery since Spain is a place "in between", a location in the hyphen. They are also somehow intertwined with the periphery since both women and the colonial subjects are looked upon and have certain difficulties when they tried to write. However, in my analysis I also consider the fact that these writers do come from the US or the UK, that is, from an Imperial location, and necessarily will be under the shell of the colonial discourse. Even if at times they try to escape from it, they still write under the patrons of imperial politics.

Counterstereotypes: Resisting Imperial discourse

² In using the term postcolonial, I do acknowledge that there is a clear difference between the case of Spain as compared to historical colonies such as Mexico or India, but that the Imperial approach of travel narratives might be using similar narrative strategies to approach the visited reality. Even if the post-colonial condition of today is obviously different, Spain was partly present in the processes of power relations and the subjugation, and the utilization of history in the construction of a national identity for the US or for Britain.

After reading a few of these texts, I could argue that these women writers do navigate between two waters: one which constructs its narrative stories grounded in those societies whose subjectivity has been constituted in part by the subordinating power of European colonialism, and a second one in which a series of discursive practices involving resistance to colonialism and their subjectificatory legacy is also present.

In that sense, some of these texts do question the dominant ideology of the “founding fathers”, as I like to call writers such as Richard Ford, Washington Irving or George Borrow. In my hypothesis in this paper I propose a reading of these texts as they chose not to fall into the recurrent stereotypes and clichés used and abused in the texts written by male authors. Emmeline Stuart Wortley, Katharine Lee Bates, and Virginia Woolf sometimes tease notions such as empiricism, rationalism, objectivism, and the same notion of travel.

Matilda Betham-Edwards, in her book *Through Spain to the Sahara*, questions the stereotypical view of Spanish inns and lodgings as antiquated and horrible, shared by most travellers. As a group of women travelling by themselves, she affirms that most of the places they stayed were high standard. She reflects on notions such as hospitality, patience and communication to understand and to get close to Spanish reality (110). One example is her rewriting of previous criticisms on Spanish Lodgings. For example, the hostel they stayed in Toledo has been put down by all previous travellers as a place not even suitable for “animals”. Mathilda contradicts that view and finds it an incredible experience of family and community values.

At the end of her stay, she mentions how incomprehensible it is for her to read Ford’s and Borrow’s criticism of the Spaniards, their habits and local lodging, among other things. When staying at Castillejo, she says that even in the worst weather of winter, the place was nicely warmed up by a big fireplace, and tidy and clean as the best hotel in London. Finally, the British traveller advice not to ever sleep in Córdoba because of its horrible inns is totally contradicted

by her description of a wonderful experience in a delightful family little local inn (119-121).

In addition, she tries to approach Spain and the Spaniards by learning the language. She spends months practicing with local teachers, trying to catch phrases and expressions in the street, and reviewing all types of grammar books and dictionaries. At the end, she managed to communicate with everyone at a very reasonable level, from what she tells us, in her attempt to have a closer and deeper approach and understanding of Spanish women problems.

Besides challenging old clichés and stereotypes, Mathilda Bethan-Edwards, among others, also discards the notion of “objectivity” and “realism” at a textual level. She does so by recognizing all their texts are constructions. By doing so, she would be undermining some principles of the predominant notions of modernity, progress and Enlightenment.³ An interesting quote from her book reads: “What is more real than fiction after all?” (117).

For Mathilda, fiction is the most real thing possible. She also shows herself aware of how travel narratives construct reality. She questions the Maniquean division between reality and fiction. She refers it when she mentions *El Quijote* in her guide to Spain, precisely considering Cervante’s work as an example of a travel book: “Never let Don Quixote be out of our reader’s saddle-bags, it is the best Hand Book to La Mancha, moral and geographical; there is nothing in it imaginary except the hero’s monomania” (117).

Louise Chadler Moulton also questions the clichés about Spain previously established by other writers. Classical stereotypes about Spaniards, such as violence, laziness or cruelty, partly inherited from the Black Legend, are put into question and contested one by one by Moulton. For example, the cliché of the Spanish *bandoleros* assaulting foreigners in every other corner of

³ The same discourse of advancement and progress is also visible in British painting of the 19th-century. Progress, movement and evolution are the symbolic motto of key works such as JMW Turner’s Fighting Temeraire (1839), and Rain, Steam and Speed—The Great Western Railway (1844).

the peninsula. Before her departure from the US, the writer had been informed about the existence of these bandits and crooks. She had even read about them and their deeds, in most works by previous writers. Even after these severe risks, Louise decides to travel to Spain to run this kind of adventures. However, when she returns to America she comments on all types of misfortunes but no luck with the bandits. She laments the fact that they were not lucky enough to be assaulted by a group of *bandoleros* so that she could have made a good story to impress her readers.

In colonial enterprises, men are always perceived as the only protagonists of the story. For example, Anne McClintock comments: “It has generally gone unremarked that the national bourgeoisies and kleptocracies that stepped into the shoes of ‘post-colonial’ ‘progress’ and industrial ‘modernization’ have been overwhelmingly and violently male” (260).⁴ Even if the great majority of travelers and colonizers were men, critics sometimes forget the role of women in this process. In the process of colonialism dominated by man, as described by McClintock in her chapter, women were also present. Some of them participated, but at the same time, managed to question this colonial process. When describing women in the colonial enterprise, McClintock forgets to mention those who confronted the system from the inside.

A Gesture of Anticolonialism

In the ample body of travel genre theory, many critics have articulated geopolitical discourses about 19th-century women writers. Some of them argue that British imperialism pervades over their works. On the contrary, others point out that these writers attack the discourses of imperialism and manage to break its internal coherence, even if in certain occasions they are forced to reinforce this same discourse. A third stand can be pointed out in other authors who just bet for deconstructing all previously known models. For example, they question both of

⁴ Street demonstrates that popular fiction in nineteenth-century Britain drew upon and in turn reinforced anthropological writing rooted in concepts of ‘progress’, ‘primitivism’ and the contradictory tropes of noble and ignoble ‘savage’ (The Savage in Literature).

these geopolitical readings. The magnetic pull of binary analysis implicit in the category of western imperialism results in over reliance on models of center/periphery and subject/object which often deny agency to multiple others in a rush to condemn the center.

In her book *Mappings: Feminism and the Cultural Geographies of Encounter* Susan Stanford Friedman offers us some very interesting questions about geopolitical readings on Virginia Woolf. Her intention is to broaden the geopolitical reading of Woolf beyond international reception and questions of western empire. For that purpose, she invokes the transnational methodologies of Kaplan, Appadurai, and Spivak along with Clifford's call for an ethnography of travel. She points out how these approaches are always attentive to questions of power, which can serve us to remove these texts from the realm of the purely domestic or the purely British, or American, to show how the global is always embedded in the local. Stanford adapts Clifford in particular (*Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*), in order to shift her emphasis from reading Woolf's texts as ethnographies of dwelling (deconstructions of family plots, revisionings of domesticity) to seeing them as ethnographies of traveling. Thus, borrowing Clifford's theory of ethnography for a discussion of literary narratives, she posts these interesting questions which can serve me to guide my analysis:

1. Where and why do the tropes of travel and movement appear?
2. In what way is home always already implicated in the regional, national, and global nexus of power relations?
3. What is the dialectic between stasis and movement in these texts, and how does this process inscribe the geopolitical?
4. In what way might the sites of home and travel be inflected by gender, class, sexuality, race, national origin, and so forth?

To answer the first question regarding the symbolic use of the idea of "travel", I could quote Mathilda Betham-Edwards. "Today, everyone travels, and those who do not do it, read the

travel experiences of others” (123-124). Mathilda, and most of the female writers I have read are obsessed with the ideas of travel and displacement. This recurrent obsession is seen by many feminist critics as a form of escaping from the domestic realm to which these women were condemned at the time.

Besides the symbolic use of the concept of “travel”, another common trope in various women travelogues is the reference to “war”. Parodic anecdotes about the Spanish American War serve to dismantle masculinist heroism and self-importance. That happens in Katharine Lee Bates recount of the bloody Spanish American War, the failure of Spanish politicians and military, and the bloody result of more than 80.000 casualties. Lee Bates’s trip to Spain occurred in 1899, only one year after the end of the war. The author brings up parodic episodes which serve to mock the typical severe masculine discourse of war. She recounts how Spaniards would stone one sculpture of Christopher Columbus, blaming him responsible for the war itself: “if Columbus had not discovered America, we would not have been defeated by the Americans”, they said.

According to Susan Standord, “Patriarchal folly at home is both a cause and a reflection of militarist and nationalist folly abroad” (125). The geopolitical battles among nations (exacerbated by the stupidity and incompetence of their leaders) are both a cause and a reflection of gender politics at home. Lee Bates was indeed an advocate for women’s rights back home and for a non violent society.

Lee Bates representation of the domestic carries within an invocation of the international and geopolitical so that her notion of intimacy in the privacy of the family circle has a transnational valence (125). For Clifford: “the local is never purely local, but always belongs to a regional/national/global nexus”.

Not comparing to back home

Their recounts of habits, problems, and sufferings of women and marginalities of Spain were enough by themselves. These descriptions were self-contained, these women writers did not feel obliged to comparing them with Britain. They limited themselves to studying the localities rather than comparing them to their “home” equivalent, which is what most male writers were obsessed with doing. By refusing that comparative approach, these women writers were able to break the geocentrism of previous travel discourses. By observing and portraying the Spaniards of the 19th-century they were able to scatter hegemonies in complex ways. They were able to change the categories in which we think through difference and managed the question the geopolitical axis and its cultural formation of identities.

Encountering “the other”

These intercultural encounters happened since people from different cultures met and interacted. They were able to make some form of connection across difference, whether that interaction was positive or negative, willed or forced, or led to embracing or rejection. Even if the distribution of power between the visitor and the local is different, and there was some inequality in power relations and the hierarchical encounters were overdetermined by anthropological differences (135).

Their accounts of multiple human encounters assume agency at work on both sides of the anthropological gaze, a refusal of objectification as it has happened in other encounters. For example, the description of the *brasero*. The fact that one of these women writers includes eight pages from Mesonero Romanos about the description of the *brasero* as a home/family practice, which she admires.

Their interactions arise out of a “dialogic” movement, to use Bakhtin’s term, between sameness and difference in the ethnographic encounter. Travel enables the viewer to engage with the other in a liminal space, both at material and psychological levels. The encounter of these two sides of marginality, the woman who is a traveler, and the traveler who is a woman, and the Spanish

subject, involves a further movement back and forth between alterity and mimesis. What moves the travel narration is not the travel or movement itself but the movement of the metropolitan subject into the culture and psyche of the colonized. The propelling force of narration is not the geographical displacement typical of travel narratives but the movement of back and forth of the movement of the intercultural encounter (143).

Charles Moulton remembers her stay in Spain as one of the most pleasant experiences of her life. Her satisfaction for having met people of all kinds and having made real friends makes her hesitate to go back to the US. She does not even want to leave Spain to go to Italy. She farewells her Spanish friends in tears:

Why, even should one go to Italy who might stay in Spain? Why did we ever leave Sevilla? And, above all, why should one come home to the East winds, when the oranges are ripening in sunny Seville, and the roses are waiting to be gathered?" (46).
 "We said good-bye with wet eyes..." (47).

The bond between them grows and becomes now the engine of the narration, not the geographical movement, not a novelistic plot, but the relationship between the analyzer and the "analyzee". It is not the temporal movement, or the geographical traveling what moves the story but desire itself (the desire to know the other and to break the boundaries of colonial distance). The process of metamorphosis in the metropolitan subject is remarkable and leads us to think that the real contact occurs more in these cases than in male travelogues.

All these female writers are indebted to a centuries-long western tradition of travel writing shaped by cultural narratives of self/other. That is visible in the multiple citations of male writers who have preceded them. I have counted hundreds of these citations to the "founding fathers" of Spanish travel narratives, such as Washington Irving, Richard Ford and Prosper Mérimée.

Yet, sometimes they write texts that resist the economy of the “savage”. The narratives of Chandler Moulton and Lee Bates disrupt the tendency towards specular representations of exoticized or objectified others. Lee Bates does so by experimenting with multiple voices and Chandler Moulton by representing the Spaniards as heterogeneous and critiquing previous judgments by his male predecessors. In spite of these attempts, neither can fully escape complicity in the specular systems they employ in the context of unequal power relations. Virginia Woolf, for example, retains a contradictory undercurrent of orientalism and rationalist discourse, which of course, they, as writers of their time and their cultural background, cannot escape.

In these intercultural exchanges, there are moments of bigotry, victimization, rage, and misrecognition. On the contrary, in the case of Stuart Wortley the borders between her and the Spanish people were permeable and a clear physical and psychological contact, even more when they made the effort of learning the language. After all these contacts and interchanges, the differences mingled, blended, and new ways of adaptation and imitation gave way to mutual understanding (156). Ephemeral as it was but existed, and since it was so intense it made them even return to Spain in consecutive trips, long lasting epistolary relationships, and cultural dialogues and reflections in their writings back in the metropolis. At this point, I think, and hope, I am avoiding the all-too-easy idealization of hybridity as an utopian panacea of coexistence (such as the “convivencia” term so inaccurately used among historians, and mostly politicians, to refer to the Medieval times of al-Andalus).

Some other writers such as Lee Bates and Stuart Wortley, do make an effort also to question the existence of the Spanish identity by bringing all its regional and local variants. It is a clear questioning to the real core of essentialism. To break stereotypes on Spaniards and the monolithic view of Spain as a whole, Lee Bates insists on the heterogeneity of the country, and brings up all diverse groups, Catalonia, Andalusia, Castille, etc. There are different kinds of

Spaniards, different types of Catalans are not the same as Andalusians, different kinds of Madrileños, all different enough to call into question the viability of the familiar cliché of the identity of the exotic other.

Root to Route

What I would like to explore here is the narrative poetics of geopolitical identity as the symbiosis between roots and routes in the texts of these Anglosaxon women travelers. Paul Gilroy and Susan Stanford Freedman have used this play on words: “roots and routes” to illustrate this interesting crossing path: from leaving their homes to meeting new people. This leads to an encounter mediated through other particularities based on gender, sexuality, class, and religion. The author tries to recover her roots, a rewitnessing of past stories at home but at the same time compromises herself with the route taking in Spain and the people who she has met and become other with. Root to Route, borders and borderlands. Both the persistence of traditional ideas brought from back home based in the belief in difference and the inevitability of change and cultural blending (176).

Conclusion

To conclude, I do sustain that these various women who arrived in Spain from different English speaking countries, opened the field of travel narratives to women since they approached Spain and the Spaniards from the periphery, in this double manner, as foreigners and as women. Postcolonial perspectives emerge from these colonial testimonies on Spain and the discourses of “minorities” within the geopolitical divisions of East and West. Women travelers such as Bates, Stewart Wortley or Chandler Moulton can serve to change our vision and to revisit certain common places and narrations about Spain. Dominant representations (the ones by male authors) are incorporated, resisted and reinvented in the texts by these women.

Women and their writings have not been considered to have played a role in the colonial process but in reality, their participation and interaction in the phenomenon is something that should be

studied in detail. To exclude women of colonial processes would be to simplify reality, even if they adopted conflictive rhetorical positions when participating in colonial narratives, as we can see in the analysis of these texts. In *Eyes: Studies in Travel Writing and Transculturation*, Pratt comments on 18th-century European travel writing and the way Enlightenment natural history produced a “Eurocentered form of global consciousness” (1992: 119). At the end of the century, the older survival travel literature was displaced by scientific and sentimental travel writing as can be clearly appreciated in the texts of Stuart Wortley and Bates.

As a conclusion, we can argue that these texts by Chandler Moulton and Katharine Lee Bates, among others, stand in the margins of colonial discourse. They are located between the imperial views of male writers and their portraits of the colonies and the problematic position of women trying to enter the world of writing, reserved until the moment to the male sphere.

Finally, I would like to underline that analyzing their pages, the testimonies from the postcolonial periphery, one can discover both traces of the imperial gaze and, at the same time, some kind of resistance to writing within the limits of colonial discourse. Personal narratives are an important part of anthropological writing, one which incorporates the observer in the writing and allows anthropologists to become aware of the context of their own positions as observers. These women presented a particular vision of Spain which allowed them to be seen writing inside and outside of the discursive traditions which preceded them. On one side they embraced the looks of distance and disdain of their male counterparts, but at the same time, they tried to resist the rhetorics of a colonial discourse which made them also, as women, second class citizens within the limits of the periphery.

These female writers proved us with a vast textual and visual body for analysis, a complex and polymorphous group of representations of Spain, a series and cross-representations over time and space. The body is very diverse and large, but I hope that after my stay here at Queen Mary, I can come up with a new approach and some contributions to the field of travel studies and the

topic of the image of Spain as constructed by Anglo-saxon writers.

The production of local and foreign identities encompasses a dialectic of sameness and difference and the multifarious forms of hybridity presented in these pages. This conjectural comparativism also calls into question the adequacy of categories like “us the visitors vs. the natives” as separate compartments, which elide the differences produced by spatial location (178). Geopolitical comparativism requires a form of spatial practice, a kind of geographical thinking that addresses the meanings of location and itinerary in the production of cultural identities. Geopolitical thinking is attuned to questions of borders and their transgression. Stories about these borders and borderlands narrate the dynamic doubleness of all thresholds (178). Frontiers are just a modern construction, movement, as the one that all these crazy adventures did, is just a prove that roots lead to routes and routes, that is “traveling“, lead to better understanding of the other and also oneself.

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