

Dimensions of the Intercultural Within Travel Literature: British Images of Spain

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HOME THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD

*O To be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England - now!*

Robert Browning, 1812-1889

1. Introduction

Travel writers have traditionally provided readers from all over the world with significant contributions of varying significance. Apart from the very literary merit of the works in this genre, we should point out the historic value of so many travel books which set up in the past as the only available source of information about the new lands that were being discovered and conquered by the Europeans. While early Travel Literature nurtured on those voyages of discovery undertaken by leading seafarers in their adventurous quests, modern travel writers take up the challenge of redescribing places, capturing their personal impressions and responses to landscapes and customs. Hence, recently, Travel Literature has acquired a new spirit and has gained in popularity and production, which, in turn, has drawn greater attention from literary critics (Galván, 1994:32). In this type of texts the travellers - and, consequently, the readers - situate themselves in the fascinating context

of intercultural exchanges opening up in our contemporary society. As Henríquez (1995:33) notes, in their works travel writers today “try to re-shape the cultural exchange between the two races and traditions.” In this perspective, travel books become useful sources for examining inter-cultural relations and reactions for studying the various motivations, experiences and images that particular territories or communities may evoke in different travellers. In the following pages, we will try to establish implications and connecting threads among the ideas expressed by several writers who visited various Spanish-speaking areas at different times at the end of the XIXth and throughout the XXth centuries. They were all concerned with mainland Spain and the Canarian archipelago, and gave detailed accounts of what had happened to them during those journeys. What their perceptions of Spanish culture are, what they have in common, and how they are conditioned by their very cultural backgrounds is the subject of this essay.

To complete this prolegomenon, let us outline the steps we will be following in the present study. In the first part we approach the term *culture* and put forward the feasibility of Travel Literature as a framework worthy of attention in intercultural analysis. The second section reviews the way the romantic myths of Spain have historically been shaped and how they have been present or absent in the literary tradition. Finally, to enter the subject proper, we examine the process of interculturalization through references to the specific topics and images that the Spanish culture has traditionally aroused, as historically evidenced in several travel books published by British authors at different times in the last two centuries.

2. Approaching culture within Travel Literature

When exploring the nuances of the term ‘culture’ one might get overwhelmed by the enormous diversity and complexity of scope it embraces. Among many other issues, cultural studies have always been concerned with the critical examination and restructuration of the relationship between dominant and subordinated cultures. Until the end of the XVIIIth century, the terms “culture” and “civilisation” were practically interchangeable, and only the subsequent “attack on *civilisation* as superficial, on all things artificial as distinct from those in a natural state” (Steedman, 1992:615) contributed in due time to their conveying rather opposing ideas.

For social scientists and anthropologists culture represents the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behaviour. It may

be viewed either in terms of its components, which include the language, ideas, beliefs, customs, taboos, codes, works of art, rituals and ceremonies of a community, or in terms of the institutional structure and functions of a society, that is, its social organization, its economic and educational systems, religion, custom and law. Recognized as a fundamental component of every individual's life, culture has been compared to "a set of lenses through which people view the world," as long as "it affects how we perceive the world and how we interact with it" (Subhash, 1995:163). In fact, in the light of recent research, the notion of culture emerges as "the bottom line, the real historical reality." In other words, culture is the "primordial reality in which all historical actors have their being, do their thing, share discourses, worldviews, languages." This definition establishes a certain connection of subjectivity to the idea of culture, which brings about the question of the connectedness of everything, as posed by Steedman (1992:615-617), who made reference to "a principle of arbitrary connectedness, by which it is assumed that any one aspect of a society is related to any other."

Simplifying the issue a great deal, it is easy to deduce that there is also a culture of everyday life, a culture which is "imbricated into its immediate historical and social setting." Therefore, the idea of culture we are facing is "inescapably material, (...) concrete, contextualized, and lived" (Fiske, 1992:154-55). Much more could indeed be said about culture; yet, despite its trend to take up new forms of analysis, there is something very important which is being retained in cultural studies today, and it is precisely the view of culture as a field of concrete practices which embody and perform differences. Obviously, cultural practices go unnoticed by the people who live within a particular cultural framework. As Symons (1995:175) explains,

We experience the world as objective fact, as solid, massive obdurate reality. In our normal daily routine we take this social world for granted, not questioning nor even noticing the institutional arrangements around us. The reality of everyday life presents itself to the human consciousness as the paramount reality. It appears to us as objectified and "real." (...) As individuals go about their daily life, getting on with the practical task of living and working, they take the world for granted. The institutional ordering of society - that is, the web of social relationships, the systems of signs and symbols, social organization and social structure - appear to us as normal, self-evident and unproblematic. There is no need to doubt, clarify, explain nor justify this reality.

It is only when the others' behaviour is seen from the perspective of outsiders that the remarkable features of that particular culture are identified. That is precisely what travel writers do when they indefatigably take themselves "all over the world in search of new and ever-varied foreign experience" (Foster, 1990:vii). This naturally involves the authors' encountering with other cultures and their clarifying, explaining, justifying those new realities. In this respect, we share Mills's (1991:86) view that

in fact, travel writing is an 'implicit quest for anomaly,' as if the travel writer were searching for something as strange to describe. And yet, (...) this is only because in describing the anomaly the writer is affirming the societal norms of England (...). One of the striking features in all the descriptions of other countries is that objects are presented only in terms of their *difference* to objects in Britain. And this difference is portrayed as 'strange.'

This quotation sums up the thematic pattern which will shape our analysis of the intercultural within the general schemes provided by Travel Literature. Essentially, travel writers need to make use of certain narrative procedures that result in the final product, the text. However, beyond the scope of the literary perspective, their works largely encompass the inescapable dimension of an intercultural contact. As a result, a conscious reading of every travel book is bound to reveal the writer's stance, that is, his/her relationship with the place and the people he/she writes about.

In most cases, in those intercultural encounters one inevitably tends to adopt an ethnocentric approach, and assess the others' merits and faults by contrasting them with those of our own. Capacity for understanding and appreciation of the other when comparing cultures is, though, a vital attribute in travel writers. However, as Mills (1991:89) remarks, "far from being 'objective' descriptions of the way the nation is, these descriptions are largely determined by the sociohistorical context within which they are written." After all, the writers' attitudes, beliefs, values and ideas are greatly influenced by the culture in which they live in or travel. Following this line of thought, we agree with Phillip Dodd (1982:127) when he makes the point that "comparison of the Travel writing of different periods about the same place suggests that an individual's stance (...) can be as much determined by cultural factors as by personal preference." Admittedly, "the meaning of mobility and travel

changes diachronically, yet these are affiliations generic and temperamental, that link travel texts from different periods” (Lawrence, 1994:239).

For this reason, we have resorted to various texts in which the reader is presented not only with the detailed accounts of individual journeys to Spain at different times, but also with some illuminating instances of cultural stereotyping processes. Obviously, in the works we will be dealing with here, the geographical areas visited by the authors are not always the same (Andalusia, Castile, Catalonia, Galicia, or the Canary Islands - a Spanish archipelago), nor are the writers’ motivations, but in all cases, the Spanish culture and language¹, in their various manifestations, is the focus of their attention. Likewise, the British nationality of all the authors proves to be another common noticeable feature to be taken into account, as already stated.

3. Spain in the British Travel Writing Tradition

Due to several well-known factors in their historic development, the British have a long tradition as travellers; in fact, the British have been widely acknowledged as the travellers *par excellence*. The importance of travelling for educational purposes in Britain dates back to the XVIIth century when, as a rule, the upper classes sent their children to Europe (mostly to France, Italy, Germany...) to complete their education, study the Arts and widen their minds. The so-called *Grand Tour* became then a compulsory stage in the life of every young aristocrat, who, thereby had a “three or four-year opportunity to learn other languages, become less provincial, and return home with the broadened horizon needed for his preordained role as leader of a fixed and stratified society” (Gregory, 1991:86). Each schoolboy travelled in the company of a personal servant and a tutor who provided him with guidance and protection during this long journey. As Pickles (1991:8) explains, at that time the Romantic poets, Byron, Shelley, Keats and Browning

discovered the joys of the Mediterranean and wrote widely of Italy and Greece, which similarly attracted American writers and artists, such as

¹ Although the relation between culture and language has not been properly defined (Weinreich, 1979:5), both fields are so closely intertwined that one aspect of culture contact and a facet of cultural diffusion and acculturation is the adoption of foreign words, that is, the adoption of specific items which are culturally representative of the “other” community. Interestingly enough, this is reflected in all the books we analyse here, as will be seen later on.

Mark Twain and Henry James. The result was that in Victorian times a European Tour became as fashionable for Americans as for the British.

Travelling became really fashionable in the XVIIIth century, in the sense that, for the very first time, it had no other purpose than travelling itself. In the illustrated travellers' interest for learning, for increasing their knowledge of the world, there was an attempt to grasp the common patterns of human nature. It is the XIXth century, though, the period that witnessed a real flourishing of travel books, which mostly detailed the experiences of colonial men exploring the heart of the empire. In addition, accounts of a *Grand Tour* of Europe also had "tradition, cachet and ready marketability by the end of the nineteenth century," as Burton (1996:132) suggests. The writers' focus of attention lay then in a series of contrasts, in the searching for new ways of life and vivid local colour, as the spirit of romanticism highlighted the cultural differences in a plural universe.

British visitors in Spain did not really abound until the last decades of the XVIIIth century. In fact, before the Independence War (1808-1814) - or as the English call it, "The Peninsular War" - little was heard of Spain, which was virtually unknown to the Europeans. Because of its geographical situation, - it was not in the way to any of the countries which attracted travellers - Spain found itself marginalised at the far end of Europe. Therefore it was not included, at least initially, in the paths of *The Grand Tour* (Gómez Mendoza et al., 1988:116). Calvo Serraller (1981:22) quotes Fisher, who in 1801 said that whereas countries such as Switzerland, Italy, France, England, or The Netherlands had been visited by many travellers during the XVIIth century, the idea of going on a journey to Spain at that time was regarded as preposterous. Cultural conditions and political decadence added to this sense of isolation and to its relegation to the fringes of Europe. Set apart from the European spirit of the Enlightenment, Spain was a thoroughly backward place in both social and political terms.

Oddly, however, it is the emergence of Romanticism, with its exaltation of the primitive and the remote in time and space, what elicits interest and attraction for Spain. The first surge of French Romantics, led by the conservative Chateaubriand, had set the fashion of pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Accordingly, Spain was referred to as the passage to the East by his liberal counterpart, Victor Hugo, when he wrote: "L'Espagne est à demi africaine, L'Afrique est à demi asiatique" (Calvo Serraller, 1981). Moreover, as Muñoz Rojas (1981:13) recognizes, "Difficile que un país de

tan peculiar situación en Europa, de tan distinta geografía, con un sol diferente, de montañas prohibitivas y ríos escasos, no apareciera a los extraños con una imagen peculiar. Y de lo peculiar a lo romántico va un paso.”

British interest for Spain was increased not only by the close relationship both countries had established during the War of Independence, but also by the arrival in London of a considerable number of Spanish immigrants. The British were actually the first to stop following the typical routes of the *Grand Tour*, and from 1770 onwards they started to visit the Peninsula, attracted as they were by the exotic, the picturesque (Raquejo, 1990:15) and the radiance of its nature. In addition to the fascination for Spanish landscape, Spain's romantic myth is enhanced by other complex factors related to its genuine cultural traditions: its combination of Moorish, Jewish and later Catholic influences symbolises the mixed cultural heritage of Spain. In fact, with its profile of orientalism, primitivism and medievalism, Spain came to be known as the romantic country *par excellence*. In short, the absolute indifference for Spain which had prevailed throughout the foregoing centuries sharply contrasted with the trend of “hispanophily” that was felt during the first decades of the XIXth century in a large part of the globe (Calvo Serraller, 1995:15). Indeed, as noted by Gifra Adroher (1996:306), “Spain has never been a *terra incognita* for Americans, since books imported from Europe had already introduced popular notions of this country in the United States during the colonial and early national periods.”

This enormous interest in Spain² runs parallel with an increasing number of publications as reflected in the bibliographies collected by Foulché-Delbosc and Alberich³. In those travel books they conveyed their experiences and feelings, while they propagated a romantic image of Spain. It was partly due to their active presence during the Spanish War of Independence that many foreigners, mostly British, wrote accounts on Spain. As Calvo Serraller (1995:22) points out, it is remarkable that some of the titles of those works include the word “picturesque,” a term which

² The greater appeal of Spain provoked the creation of a *Chair of Spanish* at the University of London in 1838 (Navas Ruiz, 1981:115).

³ The studies made by Gómez Mendoza et al. (1988:31-32) assert that Foulché-Delbosc refers to 599 different accounts of journeys in Spain written by French, British, German, and even American travellers. A large part of those 599 works (namely, 318) dealt with Andalusia. On the other hand, Alberich reckons a total number of 124 works on Spain published by English travellers between 1800 and 1850.

clearly indicates their romantic orientation! The accounts made by Borrow, Dumas, Ford, Gautier, and American authors like Irving, Mackenzie, Noah, Ticknor⁴ and many others contributed to the shaping of this romantic view of Spain, whose typical traits - *los toros, el flamenco, las castañuelas, la raza gitana, los bandoleros*, and more specifically, the Andalusian region - will become universally known. It is from this nineteenth-century time onwards that this romantic image will remain and prevail as representative of Spain and the Spanish culture.⁵

4. Conventional matters in English-Spanish intercultural encounters

Now that we have laid out the essentials of this study, let us return briefly to our remarks above concerning the shaping of the romantic view of Spain. Let us then look at the ways in which these specific cultural elements weave together and contribute to the maintenance and spreading of this bequeathed image.

A conscious reading of some of the many travel books focusing on Spain is bound to reveal the wide range of facets intertwined in that romantic myth of Spanish culture. As previously stated, the Andalusian region, with all its characteristic features, flamenco music and dancing, bullfighting, gypsies, etc. is one fundamental cultural component. Andalusia conjures up the images of *flamenco* for which Spain is universally known, as noted by Laurie Lee⁶ in his second visit to the country:

⁴ Among them we can mention, *Voyage Pittoresque et Historique de l'Espagne*, published by Alexandre de la Borde in 1820; *Voyage pittoresque en Espagne, en Portugal et sur la côte d'Afrique, de Tanger à Tétouan*, written by Baron Taylor (1827); *The Picturesque Antiquities of Spain*, published by Nathaniel A. Wells in 1846, and *L'Espagne pittoresque*, by Cuendías y Fereal.

⁵ George Borrow, *The Bible in Spain* (1843), and *The Zincoli Or An Account of the Gipsies in Spain* (1841). A. Dumas, *Impressions de voyage. De Paris à Cadix* (1847-48), 5 vols. Richard Ford, *Hand-book for Travellers in Spain, and Readers at Home* (1845), and also *Gatherings from Spain* (1846). Théophile Gautier, *Voyage en Espagne Tra [sic] los Montes* (1843), translated into English as *Wanderings in Spain* (1853). Washington Irving, *Tales of the Alhambra* (1832). Alexander S. Mackenzie, *A Year in Spain, by a Young American* (1829), and *Spain Revisited* (1836). M. Mordecai Noah, *Travels in England, France, Spain, and the Barbary States in the Years 1813-14 and 15* (1819). George Ticknor, *History of Spanish Literature* (1849), and also *Life, Letters and Journal* (1876). For further references see the bibliography included in Ian Robertson (1988).

⁶ Two travel books were written by this author, Laurie Lee, who made two journeys to Spain at different times in his life: *A Rose for Winter*, and *As I Walked out One Midsummer Morning*, published in 1955 and 1969, respectively. Interestingly enough, the latter actually reports his first visit to the country, where he was trapped by the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936. Our quotations here have been taken from the 1971 editions of both works.

This form of the flamenco, the most dramatic and exhausting, has fused both song and dance into an erotic perfection such as I believe exists nowhere else in the world. Only the moral embargoes of Spanish society, coupled with its natural paganism, could produce such a volcanic yet exquisitely controlled sexuality as this. The man is all voice; the woman all pride and hunger. While his song climbs into ecstasies of improvisation she coils in toils and sobs and throbs around him. And always there is the invisible guitar, whipping them delicately from the dark, feeding their secret fevers (Lee, 1971a:119).

It is conceivably through the gypsy - a special caste which Laurie Lee labels as "indolent, insolent, rapacious and admired" - that the Spanish flamenco tradition has been preserved. As Lee (1971a:77) explains, "they have annexed for themselves the folklore of the country, which they exploit with a brilliant and swashbuckling technique."

Among the most significant topics we also find the controversial issue of Spanish bullfighting, "a thing of summer, of heat, dust and sharpest sun and shadow" (Lee, 1971a:43). The fatal lure of bullfighting is subtly described by Hopkins (1992:335) in his vivid and detailed survey of Spanish history, geography and art, when he wrote, "Whether the bullfight is an abomination that should be abandoned, I am by no means certain. Whenever I am away from Spain, I think so; when I return I begin to doubt again."

The stage for the matador's ritual is decorated with the presence of young girls in white laced mantillas. Rather than mere spectators, they are seen as "symbols, the virgins of the feast, flower-soft among the blood, providing that contrast of youth and death so beloved by every Spaniard" (Lee, 1971a:45). However, Norman Lewis (1985:4) brings into view other aspects of the life of Spanish women: they control all the domestic matters, and largely the financial ones. Likewise, Hopkins (1992:83-84) comments on the fact that "women, even though the number taking jobs is growing, still remain hidden in the home in Seville as in southern Spain in general - to an extraordinary degree compared to northern Europe." He puts this spirit of seclusion down to "a clear survival from Moorish days." Hopkins's reference to women echoes what other British travellers in Spanish lands such as Olivia Stone (1887), Harold Lee (1887), Charles Edwardes (1888) or Frances Latimer (1888), remarked long ago:

You shall behold dark-eyed senoras and señoritas by the score, some lolling lazily at their balconies, shading their mantilla-draped heads from the sun by means of their fans; others half concealed behind the wooden

jalousies of their windows, hiding themselves at will from the too curious gaze of the passer by, but nevertheless keeping the *grille* sufficiently open to enable them to take accurate stock of all that goes on. For in the art of “quizzing” the Spanish ladies in Canary, as in the Peninsula itself, are adepts, and the peculiar formation of the windows lends itself admirably to its practice (Harold Lee, 1887: 17-18).

Commonly, a Spanish lady is, it must be confessed, a little dull. It is the defect of her education, and national customs. (...) circumstances have kept the Spanish lady a stranger to that mundane spirituality which, when genuine, is certainly engaging in a high degree. (...) Nevertheless, she aspires to be witty and *spirituelle*, when she is before the public gaze. And hence the jarring spectacle of winsome faces, powdered profusely, distorted in the vain effort to be what they are not, and casting glances which would be the leers of a wanton if they were not those of a Spaniard (Charles Edwardes, 1888:344).

While Spanish ladies are deservedly called handsome, their charms fade all too quickly; they live much indoors, and take too little exercise to retain symmetry or the fresh bloom of health after the spring of youth has passed. If they could but break through their old restraints and, freely mixing with the opposite sex, get a little more enjoyment out of life and take a more active part in its pursuits, there would seem no reason why they should not be beautiful, if not for ever, at least for the greater part of their days, particularly in these islands, where the soft climate is conducive to good looks. That they need not be so speedily despoiled of their beauty is exemplified by Mrs. Edwards, who, Spanish lady though she be, is in all likelihood a little emancipated by her marriage to an Englishman (Frances Latimer, 1888:213-214).

What emerges alongside this vision of women is the image of the peculiar character of Spanish people. After exploring every corner of the country, Hopkins (1992:367) highlights the following features as very useful concepts when thinking about Spanishness: “Individualism and conformism, hospitality and honour; the sanctity of the state in the person of its head.” Similarly, in discussing Spanish attributes, he brings in the question of the Moorish inheritance, which inevitably looms large as Spaniards seem to have adopted some of the social behaviour of the Moors. According to Hopkins (1992:365-366), the relevance of the former Moorish presence is still evidenced by “the continued celebration of the battles of the Moors and the Christians.” These holiday displays are but a symbol of pure extremism, “a characteristic endlessly observable in Spaniards, with or without the Moors.”

In fact, general remarks concerning various distinctive features of the Spanish character have almost always abounded. Thus, by the end of the

XIXth century, Harold Lee (1889:17) explained that “indolence is here nature’s first law (...). It is higher up in the social scale that the national indolence asserts itself;” whereas Olivia Stone (1887:93-94) wrote: “The people (...) do not move rapidly. Life is taken easily. They are deliberate in their actions, in fact far too much so if gauged by our northern standards.” Likewise, she portrayed Spaniards as “great talkers. If they did more and said less, there would be more chance for the speedy advancement.” (Stone, 1887:173). Similarly, in her attempt to describe the life of the English in the Canaries, Frances Latimer (1888:135) points out how “mañana, tomorrow, has become an appreciated joke among our country men. It takes but a short time to discover that it is more acceptable to the Spanish mind to put off for tomorrow rather than do today.” In fact, one of the most shocking features of the behaviour of Spaniards is their usual reputation for unpunctuality. Thus, in her chronicle of the six pleasant months she spent in the “delightful climate of the Canary Islands,” Margaret D’Este (1909:223) observed:

Patience is too daily and hourly a necessity when dealing with Spaniards to have any claim left to being a virtue but I do not know if, with any amount of practice we should ever get reconciled to absolute unpunctuality.

Throughout the accounts studied, the Spanish character is sometimes imaged as rather idle. This is what Norman Lewis (1985:172) perceives in his efforts to understand the Spanish mentality and the standards of behaviour of the people he encounters, when he comments:

This was Spain as I knew it and had come to terms with it, just as I had grown to know and appreciate Sebastian, who typified in so many ways the country of his birth; this thin man with a bold but melancholic eye and a head full of poetic fancies, this passive but successful resister of despots, living on little more than air, and with no demands upon the future other than that it should show some slight improvement on the present.

In a sense, Laurie Lee (1971a:16) also corroborates this idea in his description of some of the commonest characters who are usually loitering the Spanish streets:

the dark veiled women hurrying home from the priest; the Civil Guard whom nobody greets; gold-skinned sailors and strutting carters; goat-faced ruffians down from the hills; and old men with the hollow eyes of hermits, their skin stretched thin on chill ascetic bones. Then come the merry,

dirtygrained beggar children, aping the professional whine but giggling helplessly behind it; and the cripples crawling on hands and knees; the curious idiots waltzing and singing in long tattered cloaks; and the ghostly blind with their lottery tickets, stalking obliviously through the crowds, calling their numbers like mystic incantations, their white eyes fixed on the empty sky.

This cluster of types seems to be still “preserved by the paradoxes of poverty, illiteracy, bad roads and the great silences of the mountains and the sea” (Lee, 1971a:21). The inferior economic situation and backwardness of some areas in Spain are seen as the result of centuries of misrule. As Hopkins (1992:88-89) explains, actions taken at the times of Isabel and Fernando, the Catholic Kings, still give a particular shape to modern Spain, “a shape which provides it with much of its *national* character and by the same token underlies some of the most harrowing problems the country has to face in the twentieth century.”

Hanbury-Tenison (1991:112) also refers to the problem of underdeveloped rural areas when he writes that “it is not easy to get closer to the Middle Ages than in remote rural Spain, where custom dies hard and there is great satisfaction and security to be derived from observing tradition and watching over domestic animals.” In the same way, Laurie Lee draws attention to this fact with a similar depiction of life conditions in a remote village in the Zamoran wheat-plain, which strike us alike:

I was getting used to this pattern of Spanish life, which could have been that of England two centuries earlier. (...) At the end of the day, the doors and windows admitted all the creatures of the family: father, son, daughter, cousin, the donkey, the pig, the hen, even the harvest mouse and the nesting swallow, bedded together at the fall of darkness (Lee, 1971b:62).

Scenes and references to the remaining manifestations of that long-standing backwardness are not uncommon in the works studied. Thus, when Laurie Lee (1971a:11) travels in 1950 from Gibraltar to Algeciras, he boards a ferry that “flew the Spanish flag, had paddle-wheels, and was old, black-funnelled and squat as a duck. It was the type one might have seen, a hundred years ago.” Other negative matters such as poverty and dirt seem to be closely linked to this general perception of the backward state of the country. In fact, most of the criticism expressed by Hanbury-Tenison (1991:97) in his ecological defense of tomorrow’s world goes against pollution and the people’s unpleasant and careless habit of dropping litter:

Worst of all was the litter which appeared whenever we neared 'civilization.' Each village seemed to have a shallow scrape in the ground about a kilometre outside it, to which the people toiled with their rubbish. (...) The landscape fluttered and glinted in the sunlight as wind and sun caught the detritus of our society - tins, aluminium foil, foam rubber, expanded polystyrene, rubbish which would not disappear but would, we felt, continue to grow and spread until the whole of Spain was covered by it.

A further point of criticism has to do with the usual loud-sounding noise which characterizes Spanish society, since as Lee emphasizes: "Most Spanish towns are lapped with noise, with wagons and motor-horns, donkeys and tinkers, and the ceaseless clamour of café conversations" (Lee, 1971a:25). Such a comment is by no means wholly negative, however. To the contrary, what Lee (1971a:113) again so effectively reminds us are some aspects of the peculiar social life that brightens up Spanish bars, where

a glass of wine and a plate of shrimps cost only twopence; where it takes an hour to spend a shilling; where a bootblack has only to see you to press drinks upon you; and where processions of strangers are forever offering you glasses of *coñac* with proud gestures of courtly friendship. Any attempt to return the favour is discouraged by a shocked shaking of the head. You are a traveller, they say; it is our privilege to make you welcome. In the face of such formal hospitality there is nothing to be done but to drink and talk of bulls, answer questions about one's country, and discuss politics by vague allusions.

Thus, in the heat of the summer in Madrid, as in other Spanish cities, this same author notices the habit of going to taverns, "in whose traditional shade the men, at least, spent a half of their waking time" (Lee, 1971b:98). His most lasting impression was that of "the unhurried dignity and noblesse with which the Spaniard handled his drink, (...) one of the natural privileges of living, rather than the temporary suicide it so often is for others" (Lee, 1971b:99). In addition, Laurie Lee's comments also bring into view Spanish taste for drinking and eating, something that Hanbury-Tenison (1991:76) also referred to when he wrote: "Now I saw that as well as finding a farmer inside every Spaniard one scratched, there would as likely as not be a winemaker as well." Despite the occasional inelegant dining on "*sopa de fideos*, the Spanish national dish of noodle soup" (Hanbury-Tenison, 1991:125), the country's reputation for good food and wine is shared by the two authors.

(...) this sea-food, after all, was some of the best in the world, land-locked Madrid's particular miracle freshly gathered that morning from the faraway shores (...). It was a way of life evolved like a honey-comb and buried away from the burning sky; and perhaps no other city at that time had so successfully come to terms with this particular priority of pleasure (Lee, 1971b:98-99).

Many of the pilgrims, he said, came from far away across Europe and hoped, on their way to Santiago to seek treatment from St. Anthony for bad digestions and upset stomachs. At home they ate lousy bread and drank filthy wine, so it was hardly surprising that they should suffer as they did. By the time they had crossed the Pyrenees and begun to eat good Spanish food they were already on the way to recovery and to the Saint's reputation as a healer was proved again and again (Hanbury-Tenison, 1991:82-83).

This last quotation brings in one of the most representative and surviving totems of Spain, and one which does not escape the attention of any traveller: that of the differences in religious faith and activities. In actual fact, these conflicting points have been a major area of dispute to which the works by Charles Barker (1917), Laurie Lee (1971a, 1971b), Hanbury-Tenison (1991), or Bettina Selby (1994) refer to. They all express their surprise, if not their shock, at the markedly divergent creeds and attitudes, and at how they strongly influence the way people live. In this respect, Barker comments on how the Holy Week is celebrated "in an impressive manner unknown in England." And he continues:

Returning from supper in the evening of Easter Sunday, I was rather surprised to see so many people, ladies appearing to be in the majority, making their way to a performance at the theatre - only last week they were streaming to the churches and processions; and lo, how quickly the tide has turned in another direction. Is this not one of the practical mysteries of Roman Catholicism? (Barker, 1917:58)

This puzzling behaviour has parallels with that portrayed by Hanbury-Tenison (1991:39) decades later:

A service was in progress as we made our way back through the cathedral and quite a crowd had gathered. While the priest and his acolytes officiated before the altar with incense and bells, the congregation chatted and moved around, so that I was struck once again by the paradoxical contrast between the relaxed atmosphere of the Catholic mass and the supposedly lower, less traditional and therefore, one would have expected less formal services of Protestantism.

Surprising as though it may seem, Selby (1994:87) sees a possible connection between the cruelty of bullfighting and the patterns of Catholic imagery, when she makes the following reflection:

Another revelation came when we were walking along a straight narrow pavement (...). It was part of the route where the bulls are run through the town on their way to the bull-ring (...). It seemed strange to hear the proceedings extolled from the victims' side rather than the matadors', but perhaps it said something about the Spanish character. To judge by the gory effigies of tortured saints and the severely realistic crucifixions in the churches we had just visited, Spanish Christianity places a special emphasis on suffering.

On the whole, it is noticeable that the travel books we have chosen here are very different in range, scope, interest and sensibility, and yet all of them share the views of Spanish culture that we have just outlined. Interestingly enough, there is another common feature to be observed in all of them: the relatively frequent occurrence of Spanish vocabulary, which mostly appears without translation. This is only natural since, apart from being "at the centre of literary and cultural studies" (Milner, 1996:34), language is recognized as "an integral part of the culture of a group, and the very means by which a society creates and expresses its distinctiveness. (...) Not only a symbol of the culture, language is also a symbol of society and nation," as Symons (1995:176-78) states. Indeed, in the works we have mentioned above part of that Spanish vocabulary is simply inevitable since there is no other way of making reference to certain cultural elements which do not have a suitable equivalent in English. This is the case of words such as *corrida*, *jandango*, *flamenco*, *matador*, *saeta*, *sevillana*, *siesta*, *paso*, etc. However, the choice of words like *alcalde*, *calamares*, *camino*, *campesino*, *conquistador*, *seria*, *fiesta*, *finca*, *huerta*, *monte*, *patio*, *peregrino*, *plaza*, *pueblo*, etc.⁷ cannot be explained with this theory since they all have a corresponding word in English, that is, they are not culture-specific.

Broadly speaking, the incorporation of Spanish words and expressions into the English discourse may be explained in several ways. Firstly, as an indicator of the authors' awareness of those cultural differences. Secondly, it has been regarded as a simple way of making the readers share the author's reverence for the Spanish language. A case in point

⁷ Respectively, and depending on the context, these words could be translated as *Major*, *squid*, *road*, *peasant*, *conqueror*, *fair*, *holiday*, *estate*, *orchard*, *forest*, *yard*, *pilgrim*, *square*, *village*.

can be seen in the travel book by Reverend Charles Barker (1917:11), who brings his attention to the language and remarks: "How grand the Spanish language sounds from a pulpit!" It is also possible to interpret it as an attempt at authenticity; in fact, the literary representation of other languages is not new: it dates back to the early days of English literature, when writers switched from English to French and Latin for decorative or comic purposes, or simply in order to show linguistic virtuosity, as Traugott and Pratt (1980:376) explain. In their words:

On the whole, writers before the nineteenth century had a kind of "poetic licence" to overlook the reality of language differences, and to more or less pretend that the whole world spoke English. Literary values and conventions changed, however, and with the advent of realism in the nineteenth century, an interest in linguistic realism also began to appear.(...) This does not mean that writers began actually to use other languages extensively alongside English. (...) Literature itself imposes limits on linguistic realism, in the sense that the more languages one uses in a work, the more one limits the audience that will have access to the work (Traugott and Pratt, 1980:376-377).

These same authors have also noted that switching from one language to another can be used to express attitudes, and this is precisely our contention here and elsewhere,* that is to say, that the use of Spanish forms serves mainly an attitudinal purpose. The implication of this statement is that as the traveller becomes conversant with the language and customs, and gains intimacy with the inhabitants of the country, he tends to react favourably to all of them, which may lead to the adoption of a number of foreign terms. To sum up this point, it seems that the deeper the travellers involve themselves in the social affairs of the Spanish communities they visit, the more Spanish terms they use in their writing.

5. Conclusion

Several conclusions can be drawn from what has been said so far. As presented previously, Travel Literature seems both to emerge from, and to become a means to express an intercultural contact. By and large, the accounts examined are pervaded with numerous and recurrently reiterated features that conform the stereotype which defines Spanishness. Elements such as bullfighting, flamenco, gypsies, women's behaviour, people's character, religious practices, together with references to the

*For further treatment of this question see González Cruz-González de la Rosa, 1996.

customs, way of life, and to the vocabulary of the language, tend to be used by the travellers to highlight the cultural identity of Spain. Although we are quite aware of the fact that they may have struck each writer in a different manner, we find it noteworthy that almost the same features and events are noticed. In Frances Laumer's words (1888:135) "the situations, the facts, remain the same; the mode of dilating on them varies with their chroniclers."

In sum, the evidence in the British travel books studied here takes us back to Dodd's and Lawrence's remarks cited earlier in this paper about the connections between travel texts from different periods. It seems that the observations on Spain made by modern travellers are linked to those found in earlier works in the same tradition. Besides, Mills's idea about the presentation of items in terms of their difference to objects in Britain is also corroborated in the light of the preceding analysis. It can certainly be said that in their discourse about Spain, British travel writers approach the new realities through the bias of their own cultural background. All in all, the British have insistently reproduced the myths which have contributed to perpetuate the romantic image of Spain and the hackneyed phrase: "*Spain is different*." Yet, Barker's (1917:2) words wittily strike a balance, and might stand for a conciliatory position: "This charming country, all too little appreciated by others. Spain! with all your faults, I love you."

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