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On the death of travel writing: An autoethnographic inquiry

Abstract:

This essay embraces both a critical and creative writing approach to explore the question that has recently loomed over the genre of travel writing: Is travel writing dead? In support for the life of the genre, this essay imagines an amplified definition of travel writing, especially under a global context of movement and migrancy. Additionally, this essay uses an autoethnographic approach (a fusion of the critical and creative) to connect the author's travel writing identity and family history of migrancy to larger historic, cultural, political, and social meanings. It, therefore, leans on the definition of autoethnography provided by Carolyn Ellis, a leading qualitative researcher who says, autoethnography, is a form of 'research, writing, story, and method that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social, and political (Ellis 2004: xix). Furthermore, this essay explores what it means to engage in travel writing, while working toward a global understanding through stories of travel, movement, and migrancy. Leaning on the expertise of travel writers like Pico Iyer, Rana Dasgupta, Lindsey Hilsum, Morwari Zafar, Jamaica Kincaid, and a variety of theorists like Gloria Anzaldúa, Mary Baine Campbell, Andrew Miller, Peter Hulme, Joan Pau Rubiés, and others, this essay ultimately claims that many writers are expanding their definition of travel writing by considering the genre as complex, amplified, ever-shifting, and always in motion.

Biographical note:

Caleb Gonzalez is a PhD candidate in Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy at The Ohio State University. With a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Nonfiction from Colorado State University, his work has appeared in travel magazines and literary journals such as *Eclectica*, *Wanderlust-Journal*, and *InTravel* Magazine. He is also interested in several topics that include translingual indigenous literacies, collaborative authorship approaches in digital writing contexts, writing cross-culturally, and autoethnographic inquiry within a writing studies context. More broadly, his work spans across a few areas of study including writing studies, creative nonfiction, comic studies, and writing pedagogy. He hopes to continue his travels and increase his understanding of multilingualism and cross-cultural literacies within the field of writing studies.

Keywords: travel writing – movement – migrancy – autoethnography – globalisation

Introduction

Every time I read the newest edition of *The Best American Travel Writing* anthology, I notice its corpse-like appearance. This happened one day in a coffee shop as I opened the anthology eager to read the essays that were selected from 2016. Reading the preface by series editor Jason Wilson, I choked on my hot chocolate audibly enough to make a line of desperate coffee-consumers concerned. I read, according to Wilson, that travel writing may be on the verge of death (Wilson 2017). I put the anthology down and swatted the annoying fly that was buzzing around with my bare hand. I opened up my laptop and did some research. In 2017, *Granta* Literary Magazine bravely dedicated one of its issues (issue 138: journeys) to the question that many travel writers seem to be hearing on every corner: is travel writing dead?

This question deserves an autoethnographic exploration, since what's at stake is a kind of personal writing that can facilitate not only stories of trips and journeys, but ones of movement and migration – if we can expand our definition of travel, that is. In her book *The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Novel about Autoethnography (Ethnographic Alternatives)*, Carolyn Ellis defines autoethnography as a form of 'research, writing, story, and method that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social, and political (Ellis 2004: xix). It might be important, then, to examine the multiple forms that travel writing can undertake as a way of situating oneself and one's own journeys in relation to others and to the larger contexts that surround a variety of individuals. In her article *Travel Writing and its Theory*, Mary Baine Campbell calls for alternative ways of theorising travel writing in a context of globalisation. Campbell explains that 'much is left to be done in the realm of engaged criticism and theory. Recent attention to globalisation, diaspora, 'nomadism', and cyberspace is showing us the need for new and powerful theoretical work to replace, rather than simply supplement, the polemics and models produced by an academic collectivity concerned mostly with locatable cultures, bounded nations, and the imperial past' (Campbell 2002: 262).

Campbell's observation seems to demonstrate, in part, how travel writing can broaden its definition for stories that may not be classified as a traditional travel essay (one with a set point of departure, a set of experiences, and a return home), but one that is multi-layered and in conversation with a diversity of contexts related to travel, movement, and migrancy. This might include a travel essay that explores the concept of 'home' in an age of globalisation – when a traveller can be in Tokyo one day and in Melbourne the next. An age where an office worker can read the news of Singapore on their mobile phone, a place they might consider 'home,' while sitting in a metro station on their way to work in New York City. This might also include an essay that examines both the internal and external aftermath of travel: a culture shock in reverse.

Travel writing through autoethnography

In my case, I write about my travels, sometimes autoethnographically, to further understand the aftershock of movement. I often write to observe the impacts of travel after venturing out in comfort and discomfort for a period of time. Arthur Bochner discusses the genre of autoethnography stating that, 'the investigator would always be implicated in the product.

So why not observe the observer, focus on turning our observation back on ourselves? And why not write more directly, from the source of your own experience? Narratively. Poetically. Evocatively' (Bochner cited in Ellis & Bochner 2000: 747). Through this approach, I sometimes find that I can make sense of the internal urgencies I feel after visiting family and friends in Latin America, for example. I find that after arriving in the United States, I always seem to experience reverse culture shock, which can feel like a thousand bumble bees buzzing around my ears for thirty days straight. To me, it means re-encountering the US as if I'd experienced it for the very first time. Everything seems out of place because I return having adopted another perspective and another routine, which makes me question everything.

Furthermore, I often find myself confused and wondering why things are the way they are after coming back. For example, I'll never forget the time I ordered a small popcorn at a United States movie theatre after recently returning from Spain. Without even thinking about it and without meaning offense, the words rolled right out of my mouth, 'Is this really a small? Is it for a small family?' Through autoethnographic writing, I observe the observer (myself) re-orienting and contextualising his own understanding of movie theatre popcorn sizes (Bochner cited in Ellis & Bochner 2000: 747). I come to understand that what I once thought of as universal is in fact, cultural and even location-based – as many things are in the world.

Or when I saw my car in Colorado for the first time after weeks of getting around by subways, trains, and buses in Buenos Aires. I could feel an eerie sense of being out of touch with the natural movement of my environment. I remember thinking I'd rather just walk to the nearest bus stop with my empty green grocery bag. This way of going to the store made the most sense to me. My roommate called me crazy for not using my car, but I was nostalgic for the community feeling that *transporte público* brought to my life in the Argentinean capital, not to mention that I also lost ten pounds. I did this by simply taking *subtes*, *trenes*, and *colectivos*, while still eating heaps of *empanadas* and *asado argentino*. I never minded, not even once, squeezing into a *subte* during the city's evening rush hour packed with sweaty foreheads and a gentleman playing 'Stand by Me' on his *guitarra criolla*. I have at least learned that sitting in front of the *obelisco*, I envision what my life would be like if I were to ever live there for a length of time. For me, travel means that I can find my home in multiple places – a quest that can shake up my understanding of 'home' and what it might mean for me, the individual travel writer, a writer who often sees himself in motion.

I also write about my travels, in part, because it allows me to explore what migration and movement means to me. In this sense, Andrew Miller's essay 'Personalising Ethnography: On Memory, Evidence, and Subjectivity The Writing and Learning Journey' discusses an autoethnographic approach that supports writers in a variety of self-inquiries. Miller explains that 'writing is, and becomes, a form of knowing and discovery, a method of inquiry (of personal-cultural-writing autoethnography) that enables the inquirer to learn (more) about the self and the research topic' (Richardson & St Pierre 2005: 959; Sebranek et al 2001: 1, 143). It is also a form of travel and migration of touring and drifting and navigating from here to there. 'It means to conceive of dwelling as a mobile habitat' (Chambers 1995: 4), of moving from the personal to the political (Jones 2005), from the local to the global, in order to unearth clues about my various selves and the worlds I inhabit (Miller 2008; Chambers

1995; Richardson & St Pierre 2005). This means that in my exploration, I can use autoethnographic inquiry to build on my own understanding of where I go, what makes me go, what I'm experiencing, who I am (and who I'm not), and what I might learn in the process. I can also reflect on what it means to arrive, what it means to depart, and what it means to move back and forth between landscapes. Through travel and movement, I can embrace the *choque* of self that Gloria Anzaldúa writes about: the cultural collision or the meeting of two inner worlds (Anzaldúa 2012). I am reminded that there is such a thing as being more than one thing and being from more than one place. I can appreciate my own dual identity and the value of speaking more than one language. And I can reclaim my identity within a culture that has often privileged monolingualism and one way of being.

After having been asked why I travel, I often wonder if another valid question is not just *why* the writer travels, but *when* the writer travels and under what political and social circumstances. Editor Jason Wilson addresses this exact point by saying, 'What's important to remember about travel writing is that it's not just about where one goes, or who makes the trip, or how they travel, or why. It's also about *when* that journey takes place' (Wilson 2017: xi). Whenever I travel these days, I've grown accustomed to my close friends wanting to discuss the latest *política* of President Trump. I'm also asked why the United States has such a thing as mass shootings. I'm asked about a city like Charlottesville, Virginia (a place where white supremacists and neo-nazis held hate rallies under the umbrella of U.S. nationalism) or what it means when a United States *futbolista afroamericano* takes a knee during the national anthem. And I can't say I always have the answers. My friends often find that I, too, am asking the same questions, while searching for answers that go deeper than the facts and news of the day – answers that can provide a greater understanding for the human impulses that dwell within.

I *do* know that I've made more friends traveling in 2018 than I ever did in 2015. Part of this, I think, is because we're just trying to make sense of ourselves in a world where the only things, we can be sure of these days are the beef *empanadas* we eat on Sunday afternoons in a cold, but not so cold, Buenos Aires, for example. We can, at least, ask questions together and know that we're not alone in doing so. What does it mean to be educated these days? Why do I feel like an ant in a world full of skyscrapers? Is it worth having children? Why is my *café con leche* so foamy? Why do the mosquitos seem meaner in 2018?

Travel, movement, and migrancy

And while travel may not be the same thing as immigration, movement at the very least is a component of the immigrant experience. This calls for an amplified definition of travel writing, as some theorists have hinted at before. Or the writing of travel, movement, and migrancy, as I like to call it, one that can include a wider range of stories bound by mobility. Iain Chambers describes the distinction between travel and migrancy, as they stand by themselves, without overlap and amplification. He states:

> for to travel implies movement between fixed positions, a site of departure, a point of arrival, the knowledge of an itinerary. It also intimates an eventual return, a potential homecoming. Migrancy, on the contrary, involves a movement in which neither the points of departure nor those of arrival are immutable or certain. It calls

> for a dwelling in language, in histories, in identities that are constantly subject to mutation. Always in transit, the promise of a homecoming – completing the story, domesticating the detour – becomes an impossibility. (Chambers 1994: 5)

As Chambers implies, there are clear distinctions between travel and migrancy that might reveal why travel writing has sometimes remained ethnographic in nature. Recently, the genre has also included a personal narrative approach, one with concrete places of departure, arrival, and the discovery of self. On the other hand, stories of migrancy – often situated within memoir – have relayed a different narrative of movement, one of ambiguity and sometimes one of fragmentation.

However, this doesn't mean there isn't room to observe potential connections between the writing of travel, movement, and migrancy. In the attempt for a more expansive and inclusive definition of travel writing, it might just be that a potential trait shared between travel, movement, and migrancy is the concept of a 'stranger' who engages in various forms of movement. Chambers also writes:

> That stranger, as the ghost that shadows every discourse, is the disturbing interrogation, the estrangement, that potentially exists within us all. It is a presence that persists, that cannot be effaced, that draws me out of myself towards another. It is the insistence of the other face that charges my obligation to that "strangeness that cannot be suppressed, which means that it is my obligation that cannot be effaced". As 'the symptom that renders our "selves" problematic, perhaps impossible, the stranger commences with the emergence of the awareness of my difference and concludes when we all recognise ourselves as strangers. (Chambers, 1994: 6)

The notion of identity through the 'stranger' in transit is inevitably tied to us all. As we experience landscapes – whether abroad or at home – we are strangers to each other, bound by movement and identity, at the very least – one that is contextual and situated within a wide and diverse spectrum. Upon exploring the potential shared traits between the writing of travel, movement, and migrancy, the attention on cross-cultural understanding, through stories that include a wide range of experiences, can possibly be included in the travel writing praxis.

For example, as I read Gustavo Arellano's essay 'The Syrian Baker Who's Bringing the Middle East's Most Famous Ice Cream to California' (2018), I can see a clear depiction of Maher Nakhal's ice cream shop, a place that reminds us about what it means to traverse borders through migrancy, while sharing a piece of a person's home with the communities of their second home (Arellano 2018). We can also be reminded that through movement, some of us gain more than one home in unexpected ways. Travel writing – and the writing movement, and migrancy – reminds us of this. It also teaches us that while travel might be, for some, an opportunity for relaxation, travel for others is an unanticipated necessity. For these individuals, travel (as seen through the lens of movement) might mean a chance at survival or the chance to make a decent living. A chance to breathe again.

Family history of movement and migrancy

I think about my father, born in Mexico, who travels almost every day along Colorado's Interstate-25 transporting cars from city to city. What might his travel essay tell us? Or my grandfather, Leopoldo, whose father died when he was a young boy around the time of the Mexican revolution. As a ten-year-old child in the 1930s, he had no choice but to find work to help his mother out. Taking his donkey, he traversed towns selling coal to the people of Nayarit. He was disparaged by almost all his cousins because the coal often left him dirty. Many were ashamed of being related to him. When he met my grandmother Guillermina in the 1940s (during World War 2), he decided to travel to the United States to obtain a higher income for his family. He had no other option. In an age of urban city development where agricultural labor was abandoned, he was one of the few allowed into the country under the Bracero Program started by Franklin D Roosevelt. My grandmother traveled to the border city of Juárez to stay with a friend. She couldn't enter, quite yet, with her husband (García y Griego 2003). Under the program, families were often separated at the border through the restriction of only the migrant workers being allowed in (García y Griego 2003). While living in tight quarters with a female friend, my grandmother worked and raised six children – all of them infants, including my father. She waited for my grandfather to get their paperwork through. They eventually settled in a little town in west Texas called *Earth*, of all places (imagine always having to tell people where you live). I often wonder what their travel essays (or essays of travel, movement, and migrancy) might tell us.

Travel writing, refugeeism, and journeys of migrancy

Currently, much of this writing is already being shared in several places. Travel writer Lindsey Hilsum says:

> The accounts of such journeys – the dangers of the desert followed by the perils of the sea – are included not in anthologies of travel writing, but police and immigration authority reports. They tell of torture, rape, despair and a determination to keep going that defies the understanding of the comfortable. (Hilsum 2017: 58)

Travel writer Rana Dasgupta says:

> Refugees – this roving one percent of our species – generate a lot of text. Travel literature, written on cracked phones and sent via intermittent Wi-Fi – and in these stuttering chronicles, the world is not a sentimental object of contemplation. This is a literature of checkpoints and fences, and the improvised gaps through which desperate people pass. It is a literature of essential tools and documents and leaving one's soul behind. (Dasgupta 2017: 158-59)

I wonder then how creative nonfiction might include these stories, or actively seek them out even. I wonder if it can be through a more amplified understanding of what travel writing is and what it can include (stories of movement and migrancy, for example). These individuals are the true heroes of travel writing. Their stories represent boldness in the face of danger and courage amid fear. Their stories also speak of what it means to grab adversity by its neck and fight with everything to survive.

Ethnographic and colonial origins of travel writing

Fortunately, the landscape of travel writing is slowly shifting away from its colonial form, the one that speaks of the privileged individual from the western country setting out to examine the "other" by documenting it ethnographically in a travelogue. In his essay 'Travel Writing and Ethnography', Joan Pau Rubiés examines the western ethnographic origins of the genre by explaining that 'the description of peoples, their nature, customs, religion, forms of government, and language, is so embedded in the travel writing produced in Europe after the sixteenth century that one assumes ethnography to be essential to the genre' (Rubiés 2002: 242). Rubiés implies that travel writing carries a history of describing people and cultures within set landscapes and points of contact in ethnographic ways that are one-sided and problematic. Mary Baine Campbell discusses the structures of power, knowledge, and identity that have been observed by literary critics of travel writing. Campbell says 'as a kind of writing, 'travel writing' provokes certain kinds of literary questions and formulations. Most interesting here are works of literary criticism that find themselves directly facing issues of power, knowledge, and identity as a consequence of the very nature of the formal matters raised' (Campbell 2002: 263). Like Rubiés, Campbell observes the ethnographic emphasis (the act of describing the "other" as apart from the observer). It never occurred to early western travel writers who lived and participated in the age of colonialism that an ethnographic approach to travel writing was a direct reflection of a larger problematic approach to exploration and constructing notions of 'otherness'. Rubiés discusses this very notion by saying 'the problem of the nature of ethnographic knowledge, so important for modern anthropology, did not often seem crucial to its earlier European practitioners, who simply went ahead with descriptions of varying levels of quality and originality' (Rubiés 2002: 243). Fortunately, the genre of travel writing continues to expand by including a wide range of writing approaches, while some works of early travel, as situated within a western ethnographic colonialist lens, have held a presence within the literary canon.

The postcolonial turn within travel writing

For example, *The Log of Christopher Columbus' First Voyage to America in the Year 1492* is readily available to a readership on Amazon. Readers, however, can count on scholars like Frantz Fanon, Gayatri Spivak, Leela Gandhi, Homi Bhaba, Edward Said, and travel writers like Jamaica Kincaid, to confront the seeds of colonialism with healthy doses of reflection and critical inquiry that might be long overdue. In the *Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, Peter Hulme discusses a postcolonial turn within travel writing by observing the last significant genre shift going back to the late 1970s (advanced by postcolonial and feminist theory) and associated with works like Bruce Chatwin's *In Patagonia* (1977) and Edward Said's *Orientalism*, a work usually seen as the 'beginning text for postcolonial studies' (1978) (Hulme & Youngs 2002: 8). Observing some of the essays that have been written since the 1970s, Hulme's observation might be on point.

In her essay 'On Seeing England for the First Time', Kincaid writes about her first time traveling to England, having grown up in Antigua, a colonized Caribbean nation. As a way of emphasising a kind of colonialism embedded within the crevices of her childhood before traveling to England, Kincaid describes a can of cocoa and a box of oats on her breakfast table that say, 'made in England' (Kincaid 1992: 365). She goes on to describe 'a box of shoes, pairs of socks, a gray linen cloth, cotton undergarments, and satin hair ribbons,' all

with the same origins 'made in England' (Kincaid 1992: 365). Kincaid's mentioning of the 'made in England' origin of her personal belongings, and even the food she consumes, reflects a subtle, yet deep, projection of colonisation that has shaped her awareness of the world. Thus, Kincaid uses travel writing and, in some ways, autoethnographic inquiry to situate her experience within a larger history of colonisation on the island of Antigua. The reader, then, might understand what's at stake right before Kincaid travels to England to explore her own situatedness within this larger and complicated context.

Autoethnography as counter-narrative

Moreover, autoethnographic emphasis on the self in relation to larger cultural, political, and social understandings reflects a change in travel writing (and one that isn't exclusive). In her essay 'Arts of the Contact Zone', Mary Louise Pratt presents autoethnographic inquiry as a counter-response to the colonialist presence that has often loomed large over ethnographic writing (Pratt 1991: 35). She presents Guamon Pomas's *New Chronicle* as possibly one of the first autoethnographic works – one that positions its inquiry in response to a deeply-rooted history of ethnographic representation. Pratt states:

> Guaman Pomas's *New Chronicle* is an instance of what I have proposed to call an autoethnographic text, by which I mean a text in which people undertake to describe themselves in ways that engage with representations others have made of them. Thus, if ethnographic texts are those in which European metropolitan subjects represent to themselves their others (usually their conquered others), autoethnographic texts are representations that the so defined others construct in response to or in dialogue with those texts. (Pratt 1991: 35)

Therefore, an autoethnographic approach, as Kincaid's travel essay often alludes to, can provide a travel writer with a kind of literary agency, in light of a historic ethnographic inquiry that was once deeply intertwined with travel writing.

Carolyn Ellis and Arthur Bochner refer to ethnographic inquiry as a textual detachment that removes the 'I' while invoking the 'other' (Ellis & Bochner 2000). Additionally, as Kincaid's travel essay shows, it provides the writer the opportunity to resist the problematic nature of examining 'the other' as apart from the self. In essence, autoethnographic writing can also imply a basic lesson in humility. Before looking at others, I might want to examine my own positionality and situatedness first.

Writing and reading on journeys

In this sense, we're starting to see a multiplicity of first-person narratives that are reflective and that go beyond a depiction of what was seen, which further proves that the genre is ever-shifting and far from dead. Thanks to the mobility of our laptops and telephone gadgets, we can Google our way through the streets of Bogotá and travel about the beaches of Costa Rica any time we want. What is the purpose of travel writing then? It provides a voice and a deep connection to the human experience of mobility, which is something that Google Apps can't do (not yet at least). Travel writer Morwari Zafar says, 'writing and reading on journeys is about touching your own soul to someone else's, an act of cathartic acknowledgment that,

simply, they exist. In that process, we come to know ourselves and in sharing it, we come to be understood' (Zafar 2017). Zafar provides another potential connection between travel, movement, and migrancy: the experience of a journey. I wonder then if one of the most significant moves we can make right now is read or write a first-person travel narrative – one that seeks to engage with the larger cultural, social, and political conditions that are inevitably connected to us.

Travel essays toward cross-cultural understanding

The latest works I've read have used a first-person travel narrative to connect us with the individuals on the page, even as they position their travel essays within a variety of cultural, social, and political understandings. And as we acknowledge such narratives, we might not only connect with the narrators and their stories, but with ourselves *through* their stories (Zafar 2017). In her essay 'The Strangeness of Being a Latina Who Loves Hiking', published by *Vox*, Amanda Machado discovers her love for the outdoors and the various differences related to hiking upon visiting Ecuador, where her family is from. Machado examines the cultural and social barriers, related to race, gender, and class that exist in the United States between outdoor recreation and Latinx communities (Machado 2017). After a hike and upon arriving at her aunt's house in Ecuador, Machado says:

> I didn't need my aunt to say what I already knew; as a Latina woman, showing up like this was at best surprising, and at worst inappropriate. Since I was young, I was told a lady always looked *bien arreglada*. That meant ironed blouses, *maquillaje*, and polished shoes. And yet there I was, standing at my aunt's door in dirty clothes. (Machado 2017)

Through travel writing, Machado ponders her gendered identity, as it relates to the outdoors and clashing cultural norms, but she also reflects on identity, history, culture, tradition, race, and class. She goes on to say, 'I realized during that trip that if anything, my love for the mountains makes me more connected to my culture, rather than detached from it (Machado 2017) As a reader from the Latinx community, I'm reminded that outdoor recreation hasn't always been for dominant cultures, especially as Machado states in her essay 'minorities often feel excluded from the outdoor community – but that's starting to change' (Machado 2017). After reading her travel essay, the Rocky Mountains of Colorado seem larger to me than I once thought. I feel motivated to go for a hike and slowly reclaim my place within nature. Machado's connections to nature are significant because they help a diverse readership think about the intricacies of travel and movement, quite possibly, as they relate their own backgrounds. Readers can gain a larger understanding for what connects them to a landscape and even what has held them back from freely moving within such spaces.

And as I read Shahnaz Habib's essay 'India's Wild Heart' published by *AFAR* magazine, I think about the rich storytelling traditions within my own family and the implications of colonialism as they relate to who I am and where I'm from. Habib travels to the forests of Kerala for the first time after having grown up in the urban city of Kochi nearby and now living in Brooklyn, New York. Recalling the stories her grandmother would tell her about the forests, she learns to re-adopt the language of nature as part of her literacy (Habib 2018). In her travel essay, she says:

> until the British colonial rulers systematically razed forests to plant tea, teak, coffee, and spices, Kerala was mostly wilderness. I had heard of this Kerala in the stories my grandmother told us during power outages, stories about proud elephant herds that roamed up and down mountains, about rivers with water so clear they were like flowing mirrors, about tribal people who knew of life-saving herbs that grew deep in the woods – stories she had learned from *her* grandmother. (Habib 2018: 60)

Through travel writing, Habib highlights a sense of memory, heritage, and landscape as they relate to her identity and her familiarity with her grandmother's storytelling traditions.

Traveling back to the forests of Kerala as an adult, she seeks to connect nature with her own linguistic heritage by saying:

> I looked back at that impenetrable green mask of the forest where we had stayed. This too was home: the part of Kerala that was never tamed. I knew then that learning the language of the forest would be much more than a weeklong project – it is in fact a lifetime's work. I was far from reading her stories. But the forest had shown me her alphabet and murmured her syllables. And in my head, they felt – almost – like a mother tongue. (Habib 2018: 64)

Habib's contribution to travel writing is significant because it not only reflects a keen emphasis on postcolonialism (Hulme & Youngs 2002: 9), but it shows the diversity of stories that can arise from a kind of travel writing that is expansive in its definition and approach to writing. As a reader, I can connect to a postcolonial emphasis within my own travels. I can appreciate and reflect on the storytelling traditions within my own family.

Is travel writing *really* dead?

In this sense, the concept that travel writing is 'dead' might need to be re-considered. Travel writer Pico Iyer explains that 'travel writing … can no more die than curiosity or humanity or the strangeness of the world can die' (Iyer 2017: 153). Through these words, Iyer reminds us that we are curious and strange human beings who engage in the act of movement every single day. The need to document our journeys is vital for a profound yet simple understanding of what makes us human.

Moreover, one could argue that the 'death' of travel writing only means change, which tells us that travel writing is only doing what it knows how to do best: travel. Hulme and Youngs confirm this very notion by stating that 'travel writing is best considered as a broad and ever-shifting genre, with a complex history which has yet to be properly studied' (Hulme & Youngs 2002: 10). Therefore, it's not a coincidence that the sub-genre is always expanding and moving through various forms: travel memoir, travel narrative, travel graphic narrative, travel autoethnography, to name a few. It might just be that only some have recently understood its roaming identity for a kind of writing that has died off or disseminated into the literary archives.

On the contrary, I wonder if the term 'travel writing' has only expanded to include terms that implicate stories of movement and migrancy, or even a list of terms that would resonate with our current global context: writing on the move, writing across borders, the writing of movement, the writing of migrancy. Whatever the case might be, travel writing will continue

because as long as we are and as long as we move, we will always find a way to share our stories of transit. We will always find a way to document our experiences.

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