

German Travel Writing on Spain after 1945

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Bernd Schacht

1. Introduction

Over the centuries, Spain has attracted various groups of visitors from German-speaking countries: Pilgrims, heading for Santiago de Compostela to worship at the supposed tomb of St. James the Apostle; merchants and traders, exploring business opportunities in marketplaces across the peninsula; scholars, fascinated by its people's traditional way of life and the many remnants of ancient civilizations; soldiers and mercenaries, having their share in all sorts of conflicts fought on Spanish soil; romantically inspired artists and writers, eager to see the fabled Alhambra Palace and other sites of Andalusia's Moorish heritage; and finally, the modern tourists of our day, including the more sophisticated travelers seeking art and history, as well as the masses of sunbathers flocking to the Mediterranean beach resorts.¹⁾

Some travelers have left records of their often adventurous journeys, ranging from relatively brief accounts in the form of letters, diaries and reports to extensive descriptions of the country and its people. These texts produced by visitors from different historical periods have received considerable scholarly interest over the years. Particularly the accounts of medieval pilgrims, nineteenth century Romantic travelers and combatants of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) have turned out to be popular topics and are well covered by a multitude of studies.

There are, however, surprisingly few studies on German²⁾ travel accounts written after

1) For a recent overview of the subject see Bernd Schacht (2014), "Early German Travelers in Spain: A Historical Overview from Medieval Times to the Nineteenth Century." In: *CAHE Journal of Higher Education*, vol. 9, pp. 29-40.

2) For the sake of style, I prefer to use the term "German" rather than "German-speaking". Adding to that, "German" should be primarily understood as "West German" referring principally to people from the Federal

1945.³⁾ The following paper will first provide an introduction to previous research and then discuss possible explanations why postwar travel literature on Spain has been largely ignored by the academic world.

2. On Previous Research

The first attempt to give an overview of these texts was made by Dietrich Briesemeister in two articles published in 1984⁴⁾ and 1988⁵⁾. Investigating the way postwar Germany's printed media informed the public about Spain, he also provides a brief commentary on travel literature.⁶⁾ According to him, travel writers of the 1950s and 1960s generally give extremely unrealistic, idealized descriptions of the country, portraying it in a naïve and stereotyped manner as a romantic world full of magic⁷⁾, ignoring or glossing over ordinary

Republic of Germany (FRG) before reunification, but it may also refer to Swiss and Austrian travelers. Germans who hailed from behind the "Iron Curtain" are not included here as they were citizens of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and were essentially cut off from Western European tourism destinations such as the Iberian Peninsula — with rare exceptions for a few privileged "travel cadres" ("Reisekader").

3) By this I mean only accounts of travels made after 1945. This paper does not delve into the great number of Spanish Civil War veterans' recollections that were published from the 1950s onwards.

4) Dietrich Briesemeister (1984), "Die spanische Landeskunde in Deutschland nach 1945." In: Carlos Segoviano and José M. Navarro (eds.), *Spanien und Lateinamerika. Beiträge zur Sprache, Literatur, Kultur*. Deutscher Spanischlehrer Verband, Stuttgart, vol. I, pp. 64-100.

5) Dietrich Briesemeister (1988), "Spanien in der deutschen Essayistik und Zeitungsberichterstattung der Jahre 1945 bis 1968." In: *Hispanorama*, vol. 50, pp. 83-90.

6) The contents of his travel writing overviews are more or less the same in both articles. It is noticeable, however, that the author references many publications, yet hardly ever quotes from them; instead, he seems to judge their contents merely by their titles. I have gathered all the texts he mentions and others as well. With all due respect to Briesemeister's many achievements in the field of Hispanic studies, it is doubtful whether he had actually even been aware of some of the books mentioned in his two articles. He lists, for example, several titles under the category of light fiction, including Hans Eberhard Friedrich's *Spanische Suite* (1955) and Robert Haerdter's *Spanisches Capriccio* (1957), which are not works of fiction at all, but are accounts of true travels. Adding to that, Anton Dieterich's *Könige, Künstler, Toreros* (1958) is by no means a travel book — as categorized by Briesemeister — but simply a short collection of historical and contemporary anecdotes. Additionally, it would take a good deal of ignorance to mention *Heidnisches Spanien* (1958) in the same breath with supposedly naïve, cliché-ridden German titles. *Heidnisches Spanien* is, in fact, a translation of noted African-American author Richard Wright's (1908-1960) *Pagan Spain* (1957) — a powerful and blistering criticism of the oppressive Franco regime.

7) The distorted depiction of Spain as a dream- and wonderland could be best described as a form of effusive

people's hardships under the Franco regime. Only toward the end of the 1960s does Briesemeister see a turning point, when travel writers begin to have a more critical and rational perception and become increasingly aware of Spain's social, political and religious conflicts.⁸⁾

Briesemeister was followed by Birgit Aschmann's study of postwar Germany's images of Spain (2000), which includes a brief description of travel literature.⁹⁾ But her overview is solely based on her predecessor's articles, echoing the view that travel writers turned a blind eye on the harsh realities of misery and repression and conveyed an "incredibly shallow" picture of the country founded on a "mixture of folklore and exoticism, mysterious and literary elements such as the indispensable trio Don Quijote, Don Juan and Carmen".¹⁰⁾

Interestingly enough, the first exclusive contribution to the topic was made not by a German but a Spanish scholar. Isabel Gutiérrez Koester's brief survey of postwar tourism and German travel writing on Spain (2009)¹¹⁾ is more endeavoring than her predecessors' attempts because it not only tries to cover the whole second half of the twentieth century, but also deals with the amazing literary phenomenon of 2006, when TV entertainer Hape

Orientalism, following Edward Said's critique of Westerners' perceptions and inaccurate cultural representations of the East. What Said has said of "the sheer egoistic powers of the European consciousness" and its "Romantic restructuring of the Orient" can be seen in particular with writers' treatment of Andalusia and its Islamic past; it was, like the Orient, "almost a European invention [...], a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences". Cf. Edward W. Said (2003), *Orientalism*. 25th Anniversary Edition. With a New Preface by the Author. Vintage Books, New York, pp. 1, 158. Refer also to note 39 of this paper.

8) In 2007 Briesemeister published an article on Germans' images of Spain over the centuries that contains another, but much briefer overview of travel writing after 1945 for which he reuses material from his earlier papers written in the 1980s. Cf. Dietrich Briesemeister (2007), "Spanienbilder im Wechselrahmen." In: Harald Siebenmorgen (ed.), *Viva España! Von der Alhambra bis zum Ballermann: Deutsche Reisen nach Spanien. Ausstellung des Badischen Landesmuseums im Museum beim Markt vom 26. Mai bis zum 28. Oktober 2007*. Badisches Landesmuseum, Karlsruhe, pp. 17-26.

9) Birgit Aschmann (2000), "Stolz wie ein Spanier: Genese und Gestalt des deutschen Spanienbildes in der Nachkriegszeit." In: Birgit Aschmann and Michael Salewski (eds.), *Das Bild "des Anderen". Politische Wahrnehmung im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*. Franz Steiner, Stuttgart, pp. 90-108.

10) Ibid., p. 106. This and all other translations, unless otherwise noted, are the author's.

11) Isabel Gutiérrez Koester (2009), "Vom Pilger zum Touristen: Deutsche Reisende in Spanien ab 1950." In: *Estudios Filológicos Alemanes*, vol. 18, pp. 113-123.

Kerkeling's best-selling account of his pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela¹²⁾ triggered a new run on the medieval pilgrim route in northern Spain.

In general, however, Gutiérrez Koester also does not paint a favorable picture of travel books written after 1945. Yet unlike Briesemeister and Aschmann, she is not criticizing them for being out of touch with reality; instead, she laments the lack of literary ambitiousness and more elevated texts in the tradition of the Romantic travel writers¹³⁾. While other countries continue to attract well-known, important literary figures, Spain has failed to do likewise, perhaps putting off prospective candidates.¹⁴⁾ Gutiérrez Koester attributes this to the excesses of mass tourism, especially the country's notorious reputation as a playground for hardcore German partygoers with a penchant for sangria drinking contests.¹⁵⁾ Naturally, such an environment would be hardly inspiring for sensitive aesthetes

12) Hape Kerkeling (2006), *Ich bin dann mal weg. Meine Reise auf dem Jakobsweg*. Piper, Munich.

13) The Romantic discovery of Spain in the nineteenth century was a phenomenon on a European scale as the destination was equally popular with German, English and French writers. Among the German visitors were such illustrious figures like Victor Aimé Huber (1800-1869), Joseph von Auffenberg (1798-1857) and Ida Hahn-Hahn (1805-1880), to name only a few.

14) One of the very few exceptions is Wolfgang Koeppen (1906-1996), a well-known German novelist of the postwar period. His collected travel essays on Spain (*Ein Fetzen von der Stierhaut [A Shred from the Bull's Hide]*), the Netherlands, the Soviet Union, London and Rome were published in 1958 as *Nach Rußland und anderswohin. Empfindsame Reisen* by Henry Goverts, Stuttgart. For analyses of his travel literature see Almut Todorow (1987), "Publizistische Reiseprosa als Kunstform: Wolfgang Koeppen." In: Eckhart Oehlenschläger (ed.), *Wolfgang Koeppen*. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt, pp. 158-195, and David Basker (1995), "Ein Bundesbürger geht auf Reisen. Wolfgang Koeppens Reiseliteratur." In: Anne Fuchs and Theo Harden (eds.), *Reisen im Diskurs. Modelle der literarischen Fremderfahrung von den Pilgerberichten bis zur Postmoderne*. C. Winter, Heidelberg, pp. 587-601. — Another prominent exception is Max Frisch (1911-1991). The Swiss writer visited Spain as early as 1950 and published his highly critical, diary-like *Spanien — Im ersten Eindruck [Spain. A First Impression]* a year later in the magazine *Atlantis*. The text is included in Suhrkamp's edition of the writer's collected works: Max Frisch (1976), "Spanien — Im ersten Eindruck." In: Hans Mayer (ed.), *Gesammelte Werke in zeitlicher Folge*. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt, vol. 3 [1949-1956], pp. 179-195. For a brief discussion of Frisch's *First Impression* see Reinhold Münster (2011), "Schauplatz politischer Utopien. Deutsche Spanienreisende vom Beginn des Faschismus bis zur Restauration der Adenauerzeit." In: Berta Raposo Fernández and Isabel Gutiérrez Koester (eds.), *Bis an den Rand Europas: Spanien in deutschen Reiseberichten vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*. Vervuert, Frankfurt, pp. 341-344.

15) "It may have been because of this somewhat decadent image that Spain had to lose its cultural aura of former days and is, as a more and more 'Germanized' country, not any longer an interest awakening destination for literary discoveries". Cf. Gutiérrez Koester, "Vom Pilger zum Touristen", p. 122.

and intellectuals in the pursuit of personal development and self-realization.

In her subsequent article (2010)¹⁶ — this time less concerned with the issue of text quality — she introduces us to the phenomenon of “residence tourism” and its accompanying literary output. Since the 1990s, many long-term and permanent German residents of Spain have been producing a wide variety of texts on their adopted country, ranging from general introductions to Spanish culture and books of travel tips to reports of their personal experiences as expatriates and “survival” guides for emigrants to be. Because of their insider status and capability to understand the perspectives of natives and foreigners alike, these self-proclaimed experts usually believe themselves to be exceptionally competent in providing their fellow countrymen with sound, unbiased knowledge about Spain and the Spaniards’ mentality. As Gutiérrez Koester demonstrates, a good many of them actually succeed in conveying an objective, contrastive picture that would most likely remain unknown to a short-term visitor on a pleasure trip.

In her latest overview of German travel writing on Spain (2011)¹⁷, Gutiérrez Koester reused her above-mentioned articles and added a brief analysis of a few selected titles from the 1950s to the 1980s.¹⁸ She points out that Spain was initially regarded as an exotic and “unknown special destination”¹⁹ at the edge of Europe, from which travel accounts of the first postwar decade were relatively rare. But from the 1960s onwards, simultaneously with the emerging tourist boom and the beginning mass exodus of German vacationers to Spanish sea resorts, the amount of travel literature greatly increased.

On the one hand, Gutiérrez Koester describes travel books from the 1960s as “littered

16) Isabel Gutiérrez Koester (2010), “Die neuen Abenteurer: Deutscher Residenztourismus in Spanien.” In: *Estudios Filológicos Alemanes*, vol. 20, pp. 401-413. This article also includes a short introduction to Spain-related works of light fiction. The so-called “Island Novels”, named after their principal settings, the Balearic and the Canary Islands, produced in great numbers by German authors, are, for the most part, thrillers or love stories.

17) Isabel Gutiérrez Koester (2011), “Die neuen Reisenden. Deutsche in Spanien ab 1950.” In: Raposo Fernández and Gutiérrez Koester, *Bis an den Rand Europas*, pp. 347-397.

18) She briefly discusses the contents of the following books: *Ewiges Spanien am Rande Europas* (Carl Nahrstedt, 1950), *Kampfstiere und Madonnen* (Wilhelm Lukas Kristl, 1954), *Ein Fetzen von der Stierhaut* (Wolfgang Koepfen, 1958, refer to note 14 of this paper), *An Spaniens Fell zerren Dämonen* (Hans Joachim Sell, 1968), *Mein spanisches Brevier* (Fritz Rudolf Fries, 1979), and *Der Macho und der Kampfhahn* (Hans-Jürgen Heise and Annemarie Zornack, 1987).

19) Gutiérrez Koester, “Die neuen Reisenden”, p. 349.

with stereotypes”, conveying an image of Spain as a “still mysterious, enticing and adventurous country”.²⁰⁾ On the other hand, she appreciates their authors’ efforts to understand other cultures, though the perception is often hampered by prejudices. Compared to Briesemeister and Aschmann, however, she is more cautious and restrained in her general assessment of the subject, being well aware of its complex and often contradictory nature that makes any legitimate, well-founded generalization extremely difficult.

Clearly, our knowledge of postwar travel writing on Spain leaves much to be desired. The existing overviews, though informative and useful as a first orientation, are on the whole less than satisfactory because they stand on unstable ground, owing to the lack of any significant preliminary work. They usually mention a great number of books and provide, in some cases, brief analyses of a few selected titles, but that can hardly compensate for the absence of thorough and substantial studies. In addition, there are questions about the reliability of some data; I found evidence that in several instances the scholars were obviously unfamiliar with texts they refer to in articles, even though they unmistakably give the impression that they actually knew them.²¹⁾

3. An Academically Irrelevant Subject?

Why has our subject received so little interest over the years? Traditionally, travel accounts from earlier historical periods have been very attractive objects to research for historians and literary specialists alike. The historian has been using them as primary sources to investigate a particular region, place, event or social class mentioned and described by the texts, whereas the literary specialist has been focusing on the traveler’s perception patterns, his images and stereotypes of the country and its people.²²⁾ In stark contrast to that, accounts

20) Ibid., p. 361. However, just as in Briesemeister’s case (see note 6 of this paper), it is doubtful whether Gutiérrez Koester ever read some of the titles mentioned in her article. Kurt and Jeanne Stern’s *Unbändiges Spanien [Unbridled Spain]* (1964), for example, is by no means a West German travel account conveying an image of Spain as “still mysterious, enticing and adventurous country” (loc cit) but an East German publisher’s volume of disturbing and depressing photos from the Spanish Civil War and the early years of the Franco era. It depicts history from a communist-propagandistic perspective. The book was published in the GDR by Verlag der Nation, Berlin.

21) For details, refer to notes 6 and 20 of this paper.

22) In addition, historical travel accounts are acknowledged by anthropologists as ethnographic sources of considerable value. The records of foreign visitors to Spain often provide detailed descriptions of local customs

of journeys to Spain made after 1945 have failed to arouse the interest in *both* disciplines.

The historian's lack of interest is easily explained. While a researcher of medieval or early modern history will be grateful for any record left by a foreign visitor when other sources are rare or don't even exist, a scholar working on the Franco era (1939-1975) naturally has a vast amount of archival documents and other types of materials at his disposal, so he can afford to treat modern travel accounts as seemingly less important sources.²³⁾

To understand the literary specialist's neglect, first we have to recall Gutiérrez Koester's characterization of postwar travel books on Spain as predominantly inferior and artistically unambitious texts, mostly produced by lesser known and literary unimportant writers. This is not so much an individual assessment, but rather expression of the prevailing normative trend in literary studies that dominates the research on travel writing in general. Its fundamental approach is to draw a line between highly aesthetic and elevated works of literature on the one side, and artistically unsophisticated, purely factual and prosaic texts on the other; and only the first, high-quality category is deemed to be worthy of serious scholarly attention.²⁴⁾

and costumes as well as people's occupations and the division of labor within a particular community. The Spanish anthropologist Luis Díaz Viana points out that — although they seldom stayed more than a few days in one place — some of these travelers were very perceptive observers and were more like ethnographers writing in an impressionist manner. Cf. Luis Díaz Viana (1991), "Antropología y literatura: diversas formas de escritura etnográfica sobre España." In: María Cátedra (ed.), *Los españoles vistos por los antropólogos*. Júcar, Madrid, pp. 150, 154-155.

23) That does not imply that the modern historian's research conditions wouldn't leave anything to be desired. On the contrary, "a basic problem of access has bedeviled research into the dictatorship's last decade or so. A 30-year rule governs general access to the Spanish archives, but in the case of a document that relates to an individual's 'privacy' this can be withheld for 25 years following the latter's death (or, if this is unknown, for 50 years from the date of the document), thereby limiting greatly the scope of research on the 1960s and 1970s. Furthermore, much archival material has simply been destroyed in order to avoid the incrimination of individuals and organizations alike". Nigel Townson (ed.) (2010), *Spain Transformed. The Late Franco Dictatorship, 1959-75*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York and Hampshire, p. 9.

24) In practice, however, this self-imposed task of having always to distinguish truly literary texts from those that are not presents some difficulties. Even Joseph Strelka, one of the normative school's strictest representatives with some extreme views on aesthetics as decisive criterion for determining literary quality, had to admit that "the boundaries here certainly don't run in thickly drawn lines precisely between a black and a white extreme, they are rather naturally fluid as nearly everywhere in the field of literary studies [...]". Joseph

This selection is based on the commonly held view that it is not the subject but the form that determines what “good” literature is, and what isn’t. Consequently, “even a non-fictional travel account with the most interesting subject matter [...] or of the highest standards with regard to information cannot be included in the genre of literary travel accounts, if it lacks the various elements of stylistic forming [...]”.²⁵⁾

4. Travel Literature and Mass Tourism

But aside from the issue of text quality, there is another, perhaps more important reason why postwar travel accounts on Spain have been largely ignored by the academic mainstream, and that is to be found in the general disregard for travel literature from the age of mass tourism.

Scholars typically have a strong preference for texts from earlier periods, notably the eighteenth and nineteenth century, when travelers in the pursuit of knowledge, adventures and discoveries still had to traverse foreign lands “at a snail’s pace”, either by carriage or atop a horse, mule or donkey, or simply on foot, passing successively through towns and villages with their cultural and linguistic peculiarities.

The modern tourist, on the other hand, is experiencing space and time no longer as gradually unfolding and sequential; a dense network of highways, railroads and air routes makes it possible to reach almost any place in the developed world with unprecedented speed and efficiency. As a negative consequence, the traveler of our day finds himself separated from his immediate, natural surroundings while on the move; landscapes are no longer perceived “as tangible entities but as fleeting ‘sights’; [...] space and time are to be conquered, not felt or experienced; and the process of travel itself is now diminished by the hegemony of the tourist destination”.²⁶⁾

Not only have the transportation modes changed. Travel, once closely associated with education, personal development and the social requirements for members of the upper strata, is nowadays widely equated with vacationing and “getting away from it all” — reduced to pure enjoyment void of any higher purpose. Intellectuals have described travel in the age of mass tourism as “superficial material compensation for deeper existential crises,

Strelka (1985), “Der literarische Reisebericht.” In: Klaus Weissenberger (ed.), *Prosakunst ohne Erzählen. Die Gattungen der nicht-fiktionalen Kunstprosa*. Max Niemeyer, Tübingen, p. 177.

25) *Ibid.*, p. 170.

26) Rudy Koshar (2000), *German Travel Cultures*. Berg, Oxford and New York, p. 3.

turning potential citizens into passive consumers, who are nothing more than ‘giant bacteria, called tourists’.²⁷⁾ These “giant bacteria”, so the critique goes, are no longer heading for truly individual destinations. They simply complete a more or less tightly organized sightseeing program by visiting a prescribed set of “must-see” attractions, taking the obligatory souvenir snapshots and sending out picture postcards to prove that they, too, “have been there”.²⁸⁾

However, highly sophisticated transportation modes and the de-individualizing practices of mass tourism are not the only reasons why it has become virtually impossible to experience truly “authentic” traveling as we know it from the past.²⁹⁾ Part of the blame could also be assigned to modern media (in particular tourist guidebooks, television and Internet), which provide countless visual images and every conceivable kind of information on every corner of the world; it seems as if all is known and there nothing left to be discovered or explored for the first time. Moreover, critics lament that the modern means of communication have forced the leveling of regional and cultural differences by removing geographic and psychological barriers. This, in turn, has increased the similarity between cultures and has rendered traveling to faraway places obsolete — an oft-heard argument in academic and intellectual circles.³⁰⁾

27) Ibid., p. 4. The term “giant bacteria” (“Riesenbakterien”) was originally coined by the German travel writer Gerhard Nebel (1903-1974) who wrote in 1950: “The occidental tourism is one of the great nihilistic movements, one of the great western diseases, [...] swarms of these giant bacteria, called travelers, coat all sorts of substance with the same shimmering Thomas-Cook-slime, that in the end one finds oneself unable to tell the difference between Cairo and Honolulu or Taormina and Colombo”. Cf. Gerhard Nebel (1950), *Unter Partisanen und Kreuzfahrern*. Ernst Klett, Stuttgart, p. 25.

28) Herbert Jost (1989), “Selbst-Verwirklichung und Seelensuche. Zur Bedeutung des Reiseberichts im Zeitalter des Massentourismus.” In: Peter J. Brenner (ed.), *Der Reisebericht. Die Entwicklung einer Gattung in der deutschen Literatur*. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt, p. 493.

29) Already in the 1950s Lévi-Strauss declared “the end of travel” when he lamented in his ethnographic travel account *Tristes tropiques* that “voyages, coffrets magiques aux promesses rêveuses, vous ne livrez plus vos trésors intacts. Une civilisation proliférante et surexcitée trouble à jamais le silence des mers. Les parfums des tropiques et la fraîcheur des êtres sont viciés par une fermentation aux relents suspects, qui mortifie nos désirs et nous voue à cueillir des souvenirs à demicorrompus. [...] Je voudrais avoir vécu au temps des vrais voyages, quand s’offrait dans toute sa splendeur un spectacle non encore gâché, contaminé et maudit”. Claude Lévi-Strauss (1955), *Tristes tropiques*. Plon, Paris, pp. 27, 32.

30) Ulla Biernat (2004), “*Ich bin nicht der erste Fremde hier*”. *Zur deutschsprachigen Reiseliteratur nach 1945*. Königshausen & Neumann, Würzburg, p. 9. The Austrian artist and author André Heller has even

It should come as no surprise, therefore, that the same attitude that devalues travel in the age of mass tourism as practically meaningless also manifests itself in the condescending treatment of literary products relating to the modern travel experience. Because “authentic” travel has become something impossible, the argument goes, it seems to be self-evident that there is also no need for travel accounts anymore, a genre that has “neither a right to exist nor a chance to survive”³¹⁾; it is simply supposed to be “dead”.

Thankfully, there are a few scholars who have courageously opposed the mainstream’s extreme view on tourism and modern travel writing. Annette Deeken, for example, has taken issue with those who argue that mass tourism put an end to the travel account. Referring to the genre’s enormous productivity over the last hundred and fifty years, she concludes that it has gotten a boost, and continues to flourish, precisely because of mass tourism.³²⁾ Only in the age of mass tourism, she argues, is any kind of information readily available through various media channels, which in turn makes the pursuit of pure information exceedingly simple, and enables modern travel prose “to fully concentrate on purely literary tasks [...] to develop its art to mold one’s experiences in linguistic and stylistic ways.”³³⁾

Deeken’s view is supported by the findings of Ulla Biernat’s study of German travel literature after 1945. This study, analyzing records of journeys to the USA, the Soviet Union, Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America (Spain is only marginally mentioned), draws attention to the often overlooked fact that many well-known writers have produced at least one travel book over the last fifty years, underlining the genre’s vitality.³⁴⁾ But a good deal of these works have been stubbornly ignored by literary specialists, to say nothing of the complete dismissal of a colossal amount of texts written by lesser known authors and ordinary tourists.

Considering that even the travel writing of important postwar era literary figures has

suggested the creation of a “replica territory” that would be more than enough to serve the needs of uncultured tourist hordes, a mixture of “Disneyland, Cistercian monastery and Club Méditerranée, Vatican and Kremlin, McDonald’s and Gault Millau”. Quoted in Albrecht Steinecke (2010), *Populäre Irrtümer über Reisen und Tourismus*. Oldenbourg, Munich, p. 2.

31) Biernat, “*Ich bin nicht der erste Fremde hier*”, p. 17.

32) Annette Deeken (1994), “Angesehen, ungeschrieben? Vom Ende der Reiseliteratur im Zeitalter des Reisens.” In: *Deutschunterricht*, vol. 47, p. 493.

33) *Ibid.*, p. 498.

34) Biernat, “*Ich bin nicht der erste Fremde hier*”, p. 18.

failed to arouse the interest of the academic mainstream, it is no wonder indeed that few have researched accounts of Spanish journeys, which are mostly written by literary “nobodies”.

5. Outlook

Truly, we are facing an enormous discrepancy between literary production and scholarly reception. Spain after World War II was politically and economically isolated because of its collaboration with Nazi Germany and fascist Italy. Nevertheless, it began to draw the interest of foreign tourists around 1949/50. Throughout the following decade, the country’s sunny beaches and “dirt-cheap” prices continued to attract a steadily growing number of French, British, American, Scandinavian and West German³⁵⁾ visitors, a process that culminated with the tourist boom of the 1960s; it turned the peninsula, as Franco’s propaganda triumphantly put it, into the “world’s foremost tourist power”³⁶⁾.

The unprecedented mass migration³⁷⁾ of *turistas*, “the first foreign occupation since the Napoleonic Wars”³⁸⁾, was also accompanied by an impressive output of travel literature. A flood of publications on things Spanish appeared on Western European shelves: tourist guidebooks and travel accounts; language textbooks and travel dictionaries; gastronomical

35) Obtaining historically accurate numbers of West German tourists visiting Spain in the 1950s seems to be somewhat problematic, as the data given by researchers tend to vary greatly. As illustrated by the fact that according to Pack ca. 89,000 West Germans entered the country in 1955, while Niehus and Lehmann put the total number for the same year at approximately 114,000 and 140,000 visitors respectively. Cf. Sasha D. Pack (2006), *Tourism and Dictatorship. Europe’s Peaceful Invasion of Franco’s Spain*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York and Hampshire, p. 51; Gerlinde Freia Niehus (1989), *Außenpolitik im Wandel. Die Außenpolitik Spaniens von der Diktatur Francos zur parlamentarischen Demokratie*. Vervuert, Frankfurt, vol. 2, p. 533; Walter Lehmann (2006), *Die Bundesrepublik und Franco-Spanien in den 50er Jahren. NS-Vergangenheit als Bürde?* Oldenbourg, Munich, p. 113.

36) Sasha D. Pack (2010), “Tourism and Political Change in Franco’s Spain.” In: Townson, *Spain Transformed*, p. 55. There are several excellent studies of the history of mass tourism in Spain. See, for example, Jorge Vila Fradera (1997), *La gran aventura del turismo español*. Editur, Barcelona; Ana Moreno Garrido (2007), *Historia del turismo en España en el siglo XX*. Síntesis, Madrid, and Pack, *Tourism and Dictatorship*.

37) According to the data given by Moreno Garrido, Spain received nearly 4,2 million foreign visitors in 1959. By 1969, the total number of foreign arrivals had jumped to over 21,6 million, and in 1972 the 30 million barrier was broken. Cf. Moreno Garrido, *Historia del turismo en España en el siglo XX*, p. 240.

38) Juan Goytisolo (1966), *Exámen de Conciencia. Spanische Gewissenserforschung*. Langewiesche-Brandt, Ebenhausen, p. 84.

guides and cookery books; romantic novels and other sorts of light fiction; accessible introductions to Spanish culture and history; and even special conversation guides on “love language”.

Particularly travel accounts, records of journeys already taken and digested, were highly popular in those days. The number of titles published in German alone is immense. Since no efforts have been made so far to catalog and organize this vast material into a bibliography, it is understandable why prospective researchers may be deterred from picking up these texts. The problem is that the sheer amount and confusing variety of travel books make any well-grounded selection of texts difficult. It seems as if they resist any attempt to grasp the genre as a conceptual whole, an obstacle that even had the potential to multiply if we were to include shorter pieces of travel writing from magazines and newspapers, as well as unpublished sources, such as private letters and travel diaries.

Nevertheless, if we ever want to make progress and improve our knowledge of travel writing on Spain after 1945, we must begin somewhere. What we need most urgently are some thorough and substantial studies of travel accounts from the 1950s and 1960s that could serve as a model to encourage further investigations in the future. But given the absence of any significant preliminary scholarship, the lack of bibliographical aid and the wide range of possible approaches to examine the subject, a truly representative selection of titles will be challenging.

Previous researchers’ unfavorable characterization of the texts gives the impression that most travel writers were hopelessly out of touch with reality and portrayed the country in an extremely naïve, idealized and stereotyped way. Briesemeister, Aschmann and Gutiérrez Koester are so far right that a good part of postwar travel writing is actually made up of quite fantastical descriptions of Spain as a dreamy wonderland. This was neither new nor unique; the Romantic effusion has always shown a strong presence in German travel literature ever since the peninsula — in particular Andalusia with its Moorish heritage — became in vogue in the 1830s.³⁹⁾

39) “Andalusia connected Europe directly with the East; it *was* the East; indeed, the implication was that, just by crossing the Pyrenees, you could enter an oriental land. The clichéd vivid colors and heightened sensations of the Orient were to be found in a land which had for centuries been largely ignored by the European aristocracy. [...] The poverty and backwardness which had formerly caused the country to be ignored were seen, in the Romantic era, as assets: in the new vision, Spain was an oriental and exotic location. [...] Like the ‘real’ Orient, it could be seen as having had a pre-eminent status in the past, as carrying a baggage of historical

Problematic is the scholars' claim that the contents of travel accounts from the first two postwar decades were dominated by this tendency alone, therewith ignoring the existence of another, no less important current that has left its own mark on the genre. Already throughout the 1950s, we find several examples of highly realistic travel writing that offer penetrating insights into Spain's political, economic and social conditions. These often brutally plain and blunt records were written by perceptive observers like Peter Schmid⁴⁰⁾, "an expert journalist with a nose for the significant and essential"⁴¹⁾, whose *Spanische Impressionen* (1952) have been even compared to the works of Gerald Brenan.⁴²⁾

No matter which of the two currents a prospective scholar will be drawn to, and what kind of text he may choose to investigate, he will inevitably have to face challenges because he will be moving into a field off the beaten track.⁴³⁾ At least he can get around the tiresome

greatness, and could be viewed as a place where ancient, natural values were preserved, values superior to the supposedly artificial ones of more advanced (i.e. more urban and more industrialized) European societies". Cf. Bill Richardson (2001), *Spanish Studies. An Introduction*. Arnold, London, p. 38. — For the Romantic discovery of Spain in the nineteenth century see Anja Gebauer (2000), *Spanien. Reiseland deutscher Maler 1830-1870*. Imhof, Petersberg; Margarete Meggle-Freund (2007), "Das romantische Spanienbild und die Entdeckung Spaniens als Reiseland der Deutschen im 19. Jahrhundert." In: *Siebenmorgen, Viva España!*, pp. 53-63, and Ingrid García-Wistädt (2011), "Krieg und Romantik. Vom spanischen Unabhängigkeitskrieg bis zur deutschen Märzrevolution." In: Raposo Fernández and Gutiérrez Koester, *Bis an den Rand Europas*, pp. 167-225.

40) Swiss-born Peter Schmid (1916-?) was successively a teacher, soldier, theatre critic and literary editor before he found his vocation as a journalist and travel writer. He worked exclusively for German publishers and in the 1950s produced a highly acclaimed series of books on Spain (*Spanische Impressionen*, 1952, published by Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, Stuttgart), Latin America, South East Asia, China and Japan.

41) From a book review originally published in *The Times Literary Supplement*, here quoted from the dust jacket of Peter Schmid (1957), *Beggars on Golden Stools. A Journey Through Latin America*. Translated from the German by Mervyn Savill. Readers Union Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, being a translation of Peter Schmid (1953), *Nachbarn des Himmels. Reise durch Lateinamerika*. Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, Stuttgart.

42) In the words of a German reviewer not known by name. Cf. "Peter Schmid: *Spanische Impressionen*." In: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 01.11.1952 (Literary Supplement, p. 5). Gerald Brenan (1894-1987), Britain's most eminent Hispanist, is especially known for his classic study of the origins of the Spanish Civil War, *The Spanish Labyrinth*, published in 1943.

43) As many travel accounts on Spain were produced by lesser known or forgotten writers who often have "vanished" without a trace, a prospective researcher may encounter difficulties finding even minimal biographical information on some of these authors. To complicate matters, a good deal of travel literature was produced by smaller, now defunct publishers whose files (including the company's correspondence with its

issue of literary quality — especially when dealing with factual and prosaic texts — if he is smart enough to follow the pragmatic approach offered by Peter J. Brenner who defined travel accounts simply as “linguistic description of authentic journeys. That doesn’t say anything about aesthetic qualities or ambitions since the genre brings together the most extreme opposites in this respect”.⁴⁴⁾

In this way, by fully embracing the genre’s stylistic variety, we rid ourselves from the dictate to automatically treat less refined literary texts as an inferior category. After all, none other than Goethe had once pointed out the great value of factual and scholarly travel accounts as sources of knowledge when he admitted in the *Italian Journey* that “they certainly pursued external goals more painstakingly than I, who had my mind only on inner ones”.⁴⁵⁾

authors) have often been lost. But even in the lucky case where records are preserved, researchers may still face the problem of limited access. I experienced this myself from time to time at the German Literature Archive in Marbach when materials I attempted to locate were part of a collection that had not yet been cataloged or digitalized.

44) Peter J. Brenner (1989), “Einleitung.” In: Brenner, *Der Reisebericht*, p. 9.

45) Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1989), *Italian Journey*. Edited by Thomas P. Saine and Jeffrey L. Sammons. Translated by Robert R. Heitner. Suhrkamp, New York, p. 274; cf. Julius Wähle (ed.) (1904), *Goethes Werke*. Herausgegeben im Auftrage der Großherzogin Sophie von Sachsen. Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, Weimar, vol. 31: p. 279. Goethe was here in particular referring to the prosaic and circumlocutory descriptions of Italy and Sicily written by the German scholars Johann Heinrich Bartels (1761-1850) and Friedrich Christian Münter (1761-1830).