

***Travel Writing and the pluralising of history. A case study from New Australia, Paraguay.***

A PhD in Communication (via creative portfolio)

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## Abstract

The academic discipline of history writing is currently experiencing an era of rethinking (Jenkins 2003, Ankersmit 2009, Partner 2009). The call to broaden the scope of academic history stems, in part, from the discipline's past reluctance to endorse a wider range of contributions, in spite of the continually-felt pertinence of post-structuralist and 'post post-modernist' critiques (Jenkins 2009). As a strategy for considering possible ways forward for history writing, we can observe the rethinking of ethnography which has occurred over the last forty years in response to a not-dissimilar dilemma. A new generation of ethnographers has successfully established a place for the contribution of more creative expressions within the discipline (Pratt 1992). One of the modes for this rethinking and refashioning of ethnography has come from travel writing, which uses subjective, immersive and narrative-based techniques (for examples of its uptake among ethnographers see Taussig 1986, Fichte 1996, Jackson 2012). The aim of this thesis is to test the counter-intuitive hypothesis that travel writing, conducted at the level of the scholarly PhD, might contribute to a renovated practice of history writing as well.

Travel writing and history writing might seem discrete; but, in fact, many travel books, from guide books through to book-length, first person accounts, feature extensive treatments of the past as part and parcel of their descriptive project (e.g. Marshall 2000, Kremmer 2002, Dalrymple 2009). What is more, travel writing as history writing presents a unique perspective on history to the reader, offering an embedded and local point of view as an alternative to the grand narratives and their perspectives on the same history. In this it comes tantalisingly close to recent, celebrated attempts to write history 'from below' (Ginzburg 1980 and Darnton 1984). Furthermore, scholarly work is innately experiential. As Grafton has recently argued (1997), history writing requires two stories – the written history, on the one hand, and the footnotes or research, which detail for the reader how the writer arrived there, on the other (see, for a similar argument as to the importance of the historian's proof of their right to know, Berkhofer 1997). I will argue that the best contemporary travel writing implicitly shores up its stories with a not-dissimilar appeal to the author's experientially-based truth claims. My thesis attempts to think through how such features can be brought to the fore. In the process it constructs a set of suggestions for how we might judge the sort of creative, non-fiction travel writing that comes closest to making a genuine contribution to knowledge, both in my chosen field of travel-based history writing, and more generally.

My PhD portfolio also includes an example of such work, in the form of a book-length narrative of my travels to discover what was left of the New Australian Colony in Paraguay. New Australia was founded in 1893 by a group of utopian socialists fleeing labour unrest around Queensland in the pre-Federation years. One of the colony's early citizens was the poet Mary Gilmore, who now features on the Australian ten-dollar note. Within a decade the colony had lost its rigid structure and many departed for Australia and elsewhere, though some remained, leading to the 2,000 descendants who still live as Australian-Paraguayans today. I spent six months in Paraguay engaged in field-work so as to produce a book that would work within the received genres of contemporary travel writing, but also stand as ethnohistory in its own right. The resulting manuscript was published as *Ticket to Paradise: A Journey to Find the Australian Colony in Paraguay Among Nazis, Mennonites and Japanese Beekeepers* (ABC Books: 2012). A revised version appears as the creative component of the thesis.

## Preface

I ask the Wood clan what they think of the decision of their grandfather 116 years ago, which stopped their family from growing up in Maroochydore or Palm Beach, and instead diverted them to a life in the South American grasslands.

Roddie nods. 'I spoke to Dad about what they did and their decision to leave. We always agreed that they should've done something in their own country first. Australia is a big place ... they had a lot of land to choose from, rather than travelling 15,000 kilometres in a boat to a different world.' I ask if he is ever angry at the choice they made for him and he shakes his head.

'I'm very proud of them. They made a decision without thinking of the consequences.'

I cite this anecdote from the 'New Australia' colony in the Paraguayan jungle for it suggests something of the potential relationship between travel writing and the writing of history. While not all forms of travel writing need to be historical, the travel writer has the ability to conduct a form of investigation which is largely unobtainable to the regular historian— due to the immersed and subjective perspective of the traveller's genre. It is this perspective that I will focus on within this thesis. I will suggest that the possibility of an academic rendering of travel writing providing a new contribution to the historiographical corpus lies here.

I came to this doctorate in the course of my travels. I was writing about what remained of the New Australian colony set up by socialist utopians in 1893. I am a travel writer (I write feature articles and stories for publication in first person where an exploration of place is a central concern), with ten years publishing experience for *ABC Books*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *Australian Geographic*, *Rough Guides* and *Meanjin*. This work has led me across six continents to write travel narratives from 500 to 80,000 words long. It was in the course of researching my own family archive for stories of my ancestors that I discovered my great-great-great grandfather, William Peat, was the foreman on the ship *The Royal Tar* that sailed the New Australians to South America. I wanted to find out what was left of their utopia after more than 100 years and to hear the stories of the Australian- Paraguayan descendants who still lived there. My creative work in this dissertation is a travel writing narrative focused on just that with an additional

exegetical reflection and reference list at the end of each chapter to demonstrate the clear double-story (the evidence of my research within the text) of my creative work.

The question of history comes in at this point. For this travel writing project involved a great deal of investigation in the archives of libraries and of relevant history texts. After initially reading the previous works on the colony, *A Peculiar People* (1967) by Gavin Souter, *A Paraguayan Experiment* (1984) by Michael Wilding and *Paradise Misland* (1997) by Anne Whitehead, I examined the archival material in the National, Mitchell and University of Sydney libraries in Australia and the National Library in Paraguay to understand the conditions in Australia and Paraguay in the 1890s leading up to the descendants' departure. I also studied the relevant Mestizo, Guarani and recent Paraguayan histories. This historical research was a necessary preliminary to give my immersion a sense of authenticity that might inform the way I told the story of the descendants.

I was also engaged in a form of ethnographic investigation. For, as a travel writing project, writing *Ticket to Paradise* necessarily involved being in the field as a sort of participant observer talking to people like Roddie Wood above. I had to establish contacts and Guarani interpreters to help with my acceptance into the communities and I found that it was necessary to utilise my Spanish language skills to speak to the majority of contacts for the duration of my stay alongside using notes and recorders.

But most pertinently, I started to realise that the investigation I was carrying out as a travel writer was allowing me to treat the topic in ways that were absent in the previous accounts. I started to learn information not in the texts I had read before arrival because of my six months immersion and my extended contact with the descendants. The immersion allowed for a more open dialogue with the inhabitants and it established me as a trustworthy narrator for readers. The community had the time to also hear my stories and see me each day in the street, which confirmed my place in their lives. From my research and perspective I noticed that I wasn't just writing travel, I was capturing the history of the descendants of New Australia in a way that I had not seen before— which included recording oral accounts from Guarani Indians facing a hybrid existence as their modern values and their traditions collide. It seemed to me that I was performing a more patient

and intimate written consideration of these descendants and how the ‘history’ of their ancestors was now shaping their lives in comparison to the three previous works mentioned above. I learned that none of the other authors, who had written as journalists, historians and novelists, had immersed themselves in the one spot for longer than a few weeks at a time, as a travel writer often does. This presented a unique opportunity for me to explore New Australia and its continuing history in a valuable way.

Furthermore, I realised that what I was doing, far from being trivial genre work, might not only relate to major trends in the discipline, but also speak to current questions about how to pluralise the telling of history. As the history discipline faces a re-evaluation (Jenkins 2009) it has begun to consider other forms of representation. As we will see within the thesis, travel writing has found a place in the rethinking of ethnography over the past forty years and my hope in this dissertation is that it can be established that certain forms of travel writing that use research methods to establish their rigour and truthfulness in ways not dissimilar to scholarship, can act as valuable forms of historical investigation and even contribute to the re-imagining of the discipline into the future.

So I devised the thesis that travel writing might have a serious place within the history discipline. I realise this is probably a counter-intuitive position. Even aside from the question of history writing, travel writing is often maligned as a cheaper form of non-fiction narrative exploration; As Jonathan Raban says in the *New Granta Book of Travel*, “Travel narratives are a loose and mongrel form, generally better liked by readers than they are admired by critics” (2011, p.vii). While this is true for some works of travel writing, it certainly does not define the genre. On the contrary, it could well be possible to consider travel writing, which has a historically strong position within numerous disciplines, as a potentially legitimate form of historical research within academia. In short, I believe this is an area warranting further investigation.

## **Chapter 1: Intersections Between Ethnography and Travel Writing**

Within chapter 1, I will be focusing on the rethinking of ethnography over the last forty years and specifically how this has established a place for the contribution of more creative expressions within the discipline. One of these creative expressions is travel writing, which has many of the same immersive qualities as ethnography, while also adopting an openly subjective and narrative-based approach to represent the ‘other’ within studies of people and culture. I want to explore how the creative contributions of travel writing have found a place in ethnographic scholarship, with the ethno-travel accounts of Michael Taussig and Michael Jackson offering particularly cogent examples of this fusion.

### **1.1 An Introduction to Travel Writing**

Before I explore the history of travel writing it is important to present a broad definition of travel writing. Peter Hulme says in the *Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*:

The parameters of travel are almost impossible to set. Xavier de Maistre wrote about a voyage around his bedroom, and there is no minimum length of stay laid down in the travel writers’ handbook (2002, p.97).

A type of immersion in a foreign culture is at the centre of most travel writing where the appreciation of languages, customs and beliefs allows a more balanced and critical writing experience. Casey Blanton says that travel writing is a “vehicle whose main purpose is to introduce us to the other” (1997, p.xi) and the exploration of this ‘other’ allows us to appreciate the potential plurality of travel writing. Travel writing in the English language (which is the focus of this study) involves a foregrounding of the narrator (Blanton 1997), and, “a combination of factual information and vividly rendered descriptive details and anecdotes, characters and dialogue. Such stories transport the reader and convey a rich sense of the author’s experience of the place” (2005, p.65) as noted by *Lonely Planet*

editor Don George. There is an obvious similarity between the travel writer and the anthropologist as Holland and Huggan write in *Travellers with Typewriters* where “both traveller and anthropologist are strangers who deliver the exotic to an audience unlikely to follow them” (2000, p.52). Mary Baine Campbell reinforces this co-existence when she says in the *Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* that travel writing has a ‘plurality’ that allows it to have relevance to both popular readers and academics across disciplines.

My interest in travel writing and its academic potential comes from my own position in the field. As stated above, I am a travel writer with ten years experience publishing in Australian and international newspapers, magazines, guides and books. The majority of my work has been as a travel journalist for the *Sydney Morning Herald*. This has invariably involved writing stories of 1000-2000 words drawn from a limited amount of time on the ground.

From my own work I began to appreciate that immersed travel writing can offer a valuable perspective for other fields to utilise. I realised this most pertinently when I travelled to South America in 2009 to write for the *Sydney Morning Herald’s* ‘Traveller’ section. I had one month to write features on snowboarding in Argentina, travelling in the Misiones district in Argentina, a round-up of Buenos Aires, a piece exploring Robinson Crusoe Island in Chile and a week set aside to travel to Paraguay for my own interest. While writing these short travel pieces I am bound by the strict parameters of weekly journalism output and I often focus on the present rather than the past out of necessity. During my week in Paraguay I wrote a 1500 word article for the *Sydney Morning Herald* on the New Australian colony (Stubbs, Ben. "Australian Echoes in Paraguayan Paradise." *Sydney Morning Herald* Nov 1. 2009). My story on Paraguay contained elements of ethnography (I was the participant observer) and a subjective interpretation of place as I reflected on what remained of New Australia from what I saw during my one night in the colony. As a result of this article ABC Books suggested I go back and immerse myself in the culture so as to write a more patient travel book. My subsequent six months in the country revealed that the further my immersion went, the more I learned about the continuing story of the New Australians and the more I could give my work a strong research base. This incorporated an ethnographic interpretation of my subjects, an

awareness of my own role in the narrative (as writer and narrator) and most importantly a unique and much more in depth understanding of the continuing history of the descendants.

In addition to my travel writing I have worked for the past ten years as a tutor and lecturer in various writing units at the University of Canberra and from this fusion with my writing I began to understand that longer forms of travel writing can not only appeal to a popular readership but also benefit a specific academic audience. Book-length travel writing is situated broadly in the field of literary journalism (Ricketson 2010) and the forms share many of the same immersive, investigative and narrative qualities. These complementary genres also share the need to conduct extensive research beyond that of a daily journalist (or weekend travel writer) using “saturation reporting” to borrow the term coined by literary journalist Tom Wolfe in 1970. Ricketson says this involves:

Long periods of time observing, interviewing and simply being around those they are writing about in the belief this will yield rich below-the-surface material usually unavailable to journalists bound by daily deadlines (2010, p.38).

While there have been comparative studies on the importance of this rigor within New Journalism (Hamill 1965), literary journalism (Sims 1984), literary non-fiction (Weber 1998) and book-length journalism (Ricketson 2010), travel writing, while no less influential, has escaped much of the close academic inspection of these forms.

I discovered that within academia travel writing had already shown a close relationship with not only journalism studies but also the rethinking of ethnography. The exploration of travel writing’s usefulness within ethnography and other academic disciplines has important implications for my thesis and will be explored below.

To examine travel writing’s place in ethnography I will first need to chart the histories of both travel writing and ethnography. This will allow me to observe their intersections and in particular their current confluence in a style of ethnography which extends the traditional reach of the discipline. The purpose of the examination of the relationship between travel writing and ethnography in this chapter is to act as precursor for an analysis of scholarly history writing, which is currently undergoing something like the questioning of representation that earlier effected ethnography. I want to also set up

the possibility that it also might find use from the creative and investigative qualities of travel writing.

## **1.2 A Short History of Western Travel Writing**

To understand where travel writing sits in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, it is necessary to understand something of its history, albeit from a predominantly Western perspective. In what follows I will draw from Tim Youngs' comprehensive account of the history of travel writing in his book, *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing* (2013), to offer a brief chronological history of the genre, with reference in passing to the works of Casey Blanton (1997), Mary Baine Campbell (1988), Jas Elsner and Joan Pau Rubies (1999) and Ian Littlewood (2001), Carl Thompson (2011) and Ian Manly (2014).

Of travel writing's broader history Thompson suggests, "Indeed, if we expand our definition of the genre to include tales of travel passed on by word of mouth, it doubtless extends into prehistory" (2011, p.34). Thompson also draws comparison here with the 'songlines' of the Australian Aborigines as examples of early travel writing (2011, p.35). The first recognised work of written travel writing though is said to be Herodotus' *History of the Persian Wars* from 440 B.C.E. which chronicled his travels, encounters and observations in foreign lands. He is said to be the classical world's first recognised tourist (Thompson 2011, Youngs 2013). Interestingly, Herodotus' writing is also seen as the very first work of ethnography and simultaneously, the very first work of historical research as is suggested by the title of his work (Elsner and Rubies 1999).

In what follows I will focus selectively on moments in the development of the form most pertinent to my thesis. Manifold shifts occurred in the representation of travel writing over the years from Herodotus to the early Middle Ages, but from my perspective the next moment of great relevance comes with Marco Polo, whose 13<sup>th</sup> Century account

of his travels created an image of Asia for the European mind (Elsner and Rubies 1999), despite its level of ‘truthfulness’ raising significant doubts. Polo often wrote of his distaste for idolaters, dark-skinned people and Muslims (Youngs 2013); even so, his work has been seen as the “clearest late medieval manifestation of the move towards empiricism” (2013, p.25). Youngs also notes of Polo’s style that his use of “popular vernacular descriptive language” became a lasting (if clichéd) stylistic imprint on travel writing.

James Clifford says in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* that the travel writer’s inventiveness, language skills and local knowledge often allow them to access information which others, on more cursory excursions, cannot. Sir Walter Raleigh’s *The Discoverie of the Large, Rich, and Beautiful Empire of Guiana* (1596) can be characterised as what Clifford calls, “fully narrative, fully inhabited by its narrator, self-conscious about the problem of presenting difference in terms that neither inadvertently domesticate nor entirely alienate” (1988, p.5). Raleigh questioned the sources of previous accounts (namely Mandeville, whose *Travels* which circulated after 1356 was a highly influential travel book of the Middle Ages) and he made a clear admission to rely on his own experiences within the narrative and to not write of what he didn’t see with his own eyes. Raleigh gives an example of the Ewaipanoma people (cited in Youngs 2013, p.35). Before his own travels he had heard they had eyes on their shoulders and mouths on their breasts and, while this would have been a memorable anecdote, he confirmed what was myth and what was reality with his own eyes.

One can see in Raleigh a trend away from the myopia of earlier practices. For instance, explorers, sailors and those on religious pilgrimages used the Bible as a guidebook to “redefine the actual places and landmarks they found on the terrain in relation to their dominant mythology” (1999, p.16), according to Elsner and Rubies in *Voyages and Visions: Towards a Cultural History of Travel*. On the contrary, the emergent focus on subjective experience allowed travel writing to access a sort of truth unavailable to other forms.

A further theme characterising the European travel writing corpus has been its tendency to focus upon ‘otherness’ from a subjectively personalised perspective. The first

noted example of this was Athenian Xenophon's *Anabasis* from 401-399 B.C.E. which covered his journey with Greek mercenaries into the Persian hinterland. His account, in the third person, was an important document on the movement from familiar cultural territory into the 'other'. During the emergence of the modern era, travel writing's search for the 'other' was concentrated on colonial perspectives and a dominant European point of view. An influential collection of travel works in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century looking at 'otherness' was Richard Hakluyt's *Principall Navigations* from 1589 which was designed "to demonstrate the achievements of Protestant England" (2013, p.31) and established connections between travel, commerce and colonial expansion which would feature strongly from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Thompson also cites Ramusio's *Voyages and Travels* and Samuel Purchas's *Purchas And His Pilgrims* from 1625 as being equally influential (2011, p.41). The European focus on the 'discovery' of the 'other' led to an obvious skewing of the predominant narratives of the time, with few perspectives from those on the shore, compared to those aboard the approaching ships.

It was not until much later that European travel writing expanded to include the first female perspectives according to Thompson (2011). This was seen with travel accounts notably from Elizabeth Justice and her *Voyage to Russia* (1739), Dorothy Wordsworth's capturing of the picturesque in 1768 and Mary Wollstonecraft with her writings on Sweden, Denmark and Norway in 1796.

The 18<sup>th</sup> Century saw the rise of the modern novel and plots structured around the travels of their heroes. Despite their different origins *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver's Travels* introduced readers to the themes and journeys of the travelling narrator. Within this era the romantic notion of travel writing – needing a sense of crisis and a hero to overcome travails – emerged. Later in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century romantic self-fashioning saw influence from Byron and Wordsworth. This diversity also saw the emergence of the "Grand Tour" of extended travel for cultural education and status. Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and *The Prelude* gave rise to the romanticism of the wanderer immersing himself in the culture and politics of the place he travelled to. This notion of looking inside oneself would have a large influence on travel writing, and serve further to embed the subjective point of view as innate to the form. Travel writing was no longer

just about the physical journey; it could also prompt an inner journey and growth towards the traveller becoming a more enlightened person (Littlewood 2001).

Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century the style of much travel writing also shifted. The objectivity and rigour of the anthropologist was preferred to that of the “mere traveller” (Campbell 1988) when writing about the ‘other’ in imperial settings and the field separated from travel writing. The traveller’s role in ‘armchair’ ethnography, that of the second hand account of an untrained observer, may have contributed to this (Eriksen 1997), though Youngs notes the strength of travel writing before this split: it combined, “ethnographic, geographical and other scientific information with personal travel narrative, written with sufficient clarity for the understanding of a general audience” (2013, p.56).

Yet the rise of and splitting off of an academic variant did not stop the development of the genre. There were numerous forms of ‘traveller’ that contributed to the diverse sub-genres of travel writing appearing: missionary travel and writing, the re-emergence of the heroic voyages of those discovering new empire outposts and emigration writing from those travelling to the colonies. The disdain for the tourist over the traveller emerged during this same time with the notion of the traveller respecting difference while the tourist brought about change to diminish it.

The focus on style became a more central aspect of modernist travel writing, though this also highlighted the deep narcissism of such a position. The acceptance of the subjective point of view of the traveller as writer led to a style more memoir than manual as seen with Graham Greene’s *The Lawless Roads*, D.H. Lawrence’s *Mornings in Mexico* and W.H. Auden and Louis MacNeice’s *Letters from Iceland*. Robert Byron’s *The Road to Oxiana* was (and still is) seen by many as the greatest modernist travel writing of the period, “a portrait of an accidental man adrift between frontiers” (Youngs 2013, p.74) with a “dazzling, collage-like effect” (2011, p.58) on the reader according to Thompson. This seemingly stream-of-consciousness travel journals and recollections that make up the book were a carefully crafted form of artifice that took Byron three years to manufacture (2011). His self-deprecating and critical form was balanced by thorough knowledge and research on art, culture and architecture throughout. This modernist approach also led to

the gradual lessening of the authorial authority as modernists questioned and allowed for multiple truths and points of view within a text.

On the other hand, modern travel writing has often presented the narrator as restless and in exile from reality (Blanton 1997). Paul Theroux introduced a stylistic focus on the loneliness of travel and the journey of discovery by a lone narrator in the 1970s. His acerbic and opinionated persona also brought a new mainstream popularity to the genre.

Despite the popularity of the modern form, there is potential for travel writing to assume a more serious position once again. As Tim Youngs says: “Volume does not impede quality”. Travel writing has moved from its early links with ethnography and eventual splitting with the discipline towards a more narcissistic practice which embraces subjectivity and immersion, though rather than “being in decline, as several commentators and practitioners have claimed, the future of travel writing – this often exasperating, often exhilarating, ‘fluid and adaptable genre’ – is assured” (2013, p.189). Travel writing is more popular than ever. It is also more inventive and successful than ever according to Thompson (2011). From the British Thomas Cook Award to the regular Granta travel publications and the yearly *Best American Travel Writing* anthology it is a genre that has wide appeal to readers and publishers. From this point we can examine whether travel writing might once more emerge – as in Herodotus – as a plural genre which can contribute meaningfully not only to ethnography but also to history writing.

### **1.3 A Brief Excursion Into Anthropology**

In order to establish the links between ethnography and travel writing it is first necessary to distinguish between the discipline of anthropology and the practice of ethnography. Anthropology proper, the study of humans in the past and present, which “tries to account for the social and cultural variation in the world” (Eriksen 1997, p.1), begins as a broad practice of reflection by philosophers, cast up by accounts of the colonial experience in

the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Ethnography as distinct from anthropology is a branch of the discipline specifically focused on the “close up study of a particular social and cultural environment” (1997, p.4). Ethnography, as we have seen in 1.1 from Herodotus, is the practice of writing about the ‘other’ and this is where we find the initial intersection with the travel writing genre and can confirm its relevance as a branch worthy of further examination.

My interest is in how the enduring validity of anthropology was problematised and how this led to changes in its use in specific ethnographical practice. My strategy from this point will be to give a brief history of anthropology, and then, from sections 1.3 until 1.7 to slow down my analysis to focus on a slice of time roughly from 1975 until the present. This structure will allow me to highlight the relevant historical focus on ethnography while also exploring the era of the rethinking of the discipline in more depth in order to show the previous intersections with travel writing and the place travel writing has now within the new writing in ethnography. I will cite three key histories of anthropology and ethnography to guide my initial exploration: *Small Places, Large Issues* (1997) by Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Expressions of Ethnography* (2003) by Robin Patric Clair and *A New History of Anthropology* (2008) edited by Henrika Kuklick.

Anthropology as a discipline can trace its roots back to the European scholarly interest in cultural variation and human nature following the Renaissance. The emergence of a scientific method during the Age of Enlightenment between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries was important for the recognition of and movement towards a practice centred on scientific and rational thinking which provided a framework for study. Key Enlightenment thinkers included David Hume, John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau who all made important contributions to the beginnings of a systematic and comparative study of culture (1997, p.10). These philosophers and scholars lacked significant experience in the field and with the emergence of foreign voyages and the “systematic exploration of Oceania it stimulated a self-conscious search for a scientific method of analysing non-European politics and societies”(2008, Introduction, p.4) according to Harry Liebersohn in his essay on the beginnings of anthropology in *A New History of Anthropology*.

Intensive scientific explorations within the Enlightenment Era had a significant impact on European anthropology and signalled a move away from the recognition of the 'on the ground' experiences of the traveller within anthropology. The voyages of William Dampier to the Caribbean and Australia and later Captain James Cook to the Pacific set precedents for 19<sup>th</sup> Century exploration, fieldwork and rigorous scientific, evidence-gathering missions. Enlightenment anthropologists looked for universal forms when studying cultures in the non-European world. They were guided by their preconceptions of the rigidity of culture and the inferiority of the 'other' they discovered on their travels rather than being open to what they might discover if they immersed themselves in these foreign cultures.

However, these scientific studies inadvertently discovered that there was great diversity and complexity in other cultures. By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, anthropologists argued for the recognition of the diversity of foreign cultures within their discipline (2008, Chapter: Anthropology between Enlightenment and Romanticism, p.2). It was from this broadening of the discipline that the Romantic Era of anthropology eventuated.

In other countries the scope of anthropology was extended further. Within France anthropological practice in the Romantic era further examined the representation of the 'other'. Baron de Montesquieu made an early fictional account of "Europe seen through the eyes of non-Europeans" in 1755 (1997, p.10), Rousseau challenged the social representation of the 'savage' and Denis Diderot edited a French encyclopaedia of the customs and beliefs of other cultures (1997). Within German anthropology Johann Gottlieb Herder challenged the idea that there was a "single, universal, global civilisation" (1997, p.11) in a manner that I see being reminiscent of Cultural Relativism (the view that no culture is superior to another) later.

The further exploration of the 'New World' led to rampant imperialism and colonialism within the discipline. The Victorian Era of anthropology in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century centred on the belief that European societies were the product of a developmental chain which began with the 'savages' they studied (1995, p.11) according to Eriksen. The European aim was to civilise these 'savages'.

During this era in the United States, the first theories of cultural variation emerged centering on evolutionist models of variation and change such as those from Lewis Henry Morgan and Henry Maine (1997, p.11). Contrasts were identified between societies, through differences in features such as community, society, kinship and myth, and while the simplicity of these distinctions would be heavily criticised later, this led to the eventual professionalisation of the discipline in the United States and the two broad schools of anthropology there.

Within Americanist anthropology in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries there were differing points of view on the importance of science and culture within the discipline with the emergence of Cultural Relativism and scientific racism. At one end of the spectrum, Franz Boas studied Eskimos and Kwakiutl Indians in the 1890s and promoted the idea of anthropology being a professional science through the combination of social, cultural, physical and linguistic anthropology (Kuklick, 2008). Boas' theory of Cultural Relativism, challenging the idea that civilisations are absolute, also addressed social inequality and class hierarchy within anthropology and criticised the proliferation of scientific racism within the discipline. At the other end of the anthropological spectrum was the scientific racism of various methods intended to measure the inferiority of the 'savage'. Eugenics, the belief in and practice of improving the quality of the human population, was encouraged by practitioners such as Francis Galton who utilised historiometry, the study of human progress; Charles Davenport, who tried to prove racial degradation caused by inter-mixing and Samuel Morton who used craniometry, the measuring of skulls, to determine whether God had created the human races separately (Wade 2011). This form of anthropology was largely discredited between the 1920s and World War II.

A still controversial, yet less inflammatory, style of ethnography which emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century was armchair ethnography. This was based on second hand data gathered from untrained observers such as ships captains, missionaries and explorers, "who generated theories using all manner of evidence" (2008, Chapter: Anthropology Emergent, p.2). This was a superficial and impressionistic interpretation of other cultures in which the ethnographer preferred quantity over quality of data. This could be identified

as the discipline's furthest movement away from the previous relationship with travel writing and the immersed traveller with expert local knowledge and it contributed to a move in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century calling for more rigorous fieldwork.

The fieldwork of anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski marked an influential turn within the discipline as the importance of immersed study was recognised. Malinowski highlighted the importance of fieldwork within anthropology in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century with his work in the Pacific Islands and Australia. While on a research trip Malinowski was intending to do fieldwork in the Trobriand Islands near Australia. This was during World War 1 however, and because he was of Polish descent he was prevented from returning to Europe as a possible informer. As a result of his inability to leave the region Malinowski immersed himself in the cultures he was studying for a much longer period:

I have spent over 8 months in one village in the Trobriands and this proved to me, how even a poor observer like myself can get a certain amount of reliable information, if he puts himself into the proper conditions for observation

– Bronislaw Malinowski (letter to A.C. Haddon, May 1916)

Malinowski subsequently suggested that ethnographic studies contain participant observation, the ethnographer should have an understanding of the local vernacular and they should engage in the everyday life of their subjects (1997, p.15). Malinowski was certainly not the first to practise methodological fieldwork, though he was the first to recognise its importance in scholarly ethnography (2008, Chapter: The Past is a Foreign Country, p.3).

After World War II the discipline diversified to include a wider variety of influences. The emergence of political anthropology, gender studies, ritual anthropology and psychological anthropology saw the bases of the discipline multiply (1997) as formal colonialism ended. There were anthropological movements in structuralism, symbolism and cognitive anthropology, though within this now sprawling discipline there were the enduring questions of its continuing validity.

Within the 20<sup>th</sup> Century as structuralism, post-structuralism and postmodernism became increasingly influential the discipline faced serious questioning of its continuing

academic relevance which would contribute to its eventual crisis of representation. This questioning came from many of the schools within anthropology, though there are five critics I have identified as being particularly influential: Michel Leiris, Stanley Diamond, Talal Asad, Edward Said and Johannes Fabian. First was that of Michel Leiris, a key figure in 20<sup>th</sup> Century French Literature. In the 1930s Leiris broke from the traditional scientific and objective writing style of ethnography by incorporating a slower and more autobiographical style into his work. John Culbert says in *Paralyses: Literature, Travel, and Ethnography in French Modernity*, Leiris' critique was, "the first of its kind and it anticipates issues that have shaped anthropological debates in recent years" (2011, p.59). Leiris' account of his excursion to Africa in *L'Afrique Fantome* (1934) is the most renowned example of this new style. Leiris saw ethnography's concentration on primitive cultures as perpetuating the myth of objectivity without acknowledging the position of the dominating cultures assessing them (Culbert 2011). This ethnography dwelled on the "frustrations and lures of the exotic, indulging and critiquing his traveling motives, and persistently slowing his journeys to the point of paralysis" (2011, p.61). The subjectivity of Leiris' ethnographic style was important for travel writing's eventual re-incorporation into the discipline— demonstrating the possibility of travel writing and ethnography moving closer once again.

Further to Leiris' challenges of the authority of ethnography were the works of four key scholars who highlighted the need to re-think the discipline. Stanley Diamond's examination of the 'primitive' in anthropology in his 1974 book, *In Search of the Primitive: A Critique of Civilization*, compares representations of our own civilisation to those of the 'primitive'; Diamond observes the supposed superiority of the 'civilised' perspectives in ethnography and he challenges the discipline to reconcile these views. His criticism preceded the more thorough and convincing challenges to ethnographic authority from two scholars who focused on the representation of the 'other' in the Middle East. Talal Asad, a Saudi Arabian born Oxford scholar, criticised the portrayal of the East from a Western perspective. While his contemporary, Edward Said, would have a more lasting influence on the rethinking of the discipline, Asad's studies into Western empirical hegemony, the dynamics of power relationships and the complacency of Western scholarship on the East would be key contributors to the eventual rethinking of

ethnographers. Edward Said's 1978 work *Orientalism* expanded the criticism of the representation of the 'other' and stressed the need to re-evaluate the "learned" judgements of ethnography (1978). I will explore this text in much greater depth in 1.3.

Complementary to the works on 'Oriental' representation is that of Dutch anthropologist Johannes Fabian. Within *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (1983), Fabian explores autobiographical objectivity and the representation of the 'savage' and the 'other' in ethnography with particular reference to time. Fabian cites the "wickedness" (1983, p.xi) of those previous perspectives which sought to represent the 'savage' a certain way while also highlighting the contradictions of the discipline and its need to re-evaluate:

On the one hand we dogmatically insist that anthropology rests on ethnographic research involving personal, prolonged interaction with the Other. But then we pronounce upon the knowledge gained from such research a discourse which construes the Other in terms of distance, spatial and temporal (1983, p.xi).

Fabian called the representation of the 'other' a "conjuring trick" and pressed for further rethinking of the discipline.

We will now slow down the analysis of ethnography in 1.3 to analyse the rethinking of the discipline with further concentration on Edward Said and a closer inspection of specific works beginning in the 1980s which looked at how a rethinking of ethnography could embrace creativity and a plurality of forms.

Recent writings on ethnography have identified the potential to discuss the languages of resistance and emancipation within ethnography to extend its reach. Clair gives hope for the future of the form when she says, "it may be somewhat premature to pronounce a requiem for ethnography, as alternative forms of writing culture continue to surface" (2003, p.3). Post-colonial ethnographers now face the reality that alternative forms are required to express the past, present and future of ethnography, "From James Joyce to George Lamme, the artist's voice may be the most freeing from the academically based paradoxes" (2003, p.19), and this suggests possibilities for the future of ethnography as a malleable form. Clair challenges the future of ethnography asking that,

“we seek out aesthetic ways of being and give up restraints intended to limit ethnography; and instead, recognize and relish its complexities, subtleties, and ironies” (2003, p.20). It is from this position that we can also observe the move within ethnography back towards the strengths of travel writing as a valuable contributor to the discipline.

#### **1.4 Said and the Rethinking of Ethnography**

This thesis is not about ethnography— this inclusion is to show what is possible within this discipline and as such I won’t be giving a comprehensive account of the rethinking of ethnography— I will focus on three contemporary figures who have availed themselves of travel writing within ethnography to demonstrate their interconnectedness. There is an existing scholarly discussion on travel writing and ethnography. The key works I will look at are: Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978), James Clifford’s *The Predicament of Culture* (1988), his and the various other authors’ contributions to *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (1986), Michael Taussig’s *Shamanism, Colonialism and the Wildman* (1986), Mary Louise Pratt’s *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992), and the various works of New Zealand ethnographer Michael Jackson.

Ethnography lost much of its automatic academic acceptance in the wake of the questioning of the validity of anthropological perspectives of the ‘other’ as already mentioned. This challenge came from various scholars, including Michel Leiris (1934), Talal Asad (1978), Johannes Fabian (1983) and later Tim Ingold (1996), but it is the critique of Edward Said in his seminal 1978 work, *Orientalism*, which we will focus on here.

Said’s general thesis challenges the legitimacy of ethnography on the East from a Western perspective. *Orientalism* is broken into three distinct chapters. Chapter one is ‘The Scope of Orientalism’ which begins with a broad analysis of the reach of the representation of the ‘other’ within ethnography, the crisis of this representation and broader suggestions for the future. Chapter two is ‘Orientalist Structure and Restructures’

and it looks at Orientalism in scholarship, the redrawing of frontiers and the presence of 'Oriental' representation in colonialism. Said's final chapter is 'Orientalism Now' which observes the vision for Orientalism and through a 1994 update of the preface Said also creates a space for new expressions into the future of ethnography.

Said's major criticism is the ease with which the Western idea of the 'Orient' has been perpetuated in scholarship. He criticises the portrayal of the "mystical", tantalising and irrational Orient as misleading. *Orientalism* explores the history of the idea of 'Orientalism', from colonial expansion through to the modern applications in American universities and broader popular culture. Said says: "The Orient, in short, existed as a set of values attached, not to its modern realities, but to a series of valorized contacts it had with a distant European past" (1978, p.85). A simple example of this is the categorising of the 'Arab' as cruel and violent and Muslims as distinctly non-European and possible terrorists. James Clifford, who continued Said's questioning of ethnography's authority in *The Predicament of Culture* (1988), says:

*Orientalism* is at once a serious exercise in textual criticism and, most fundamentally, a series of important and tentative epistemological reflections on general styles and procedures of cultural discourse (1988, p.257).

Within *Orientalism* Said furthers the criticism of the discipline begun by those scholars mentioned above, when he claims that ethnography is corrupted and has become "a function of learned judgement" (1978, p.67) relying on the authority of past accounts rather than criticising and observing situations for their uniqueness.

Said's criticism is fierce and it has been the most influential on those who also call for a re-evaluation of ethnography. An under-acknowledged aspect of Said's criticism however is the possibility he raises for new interpretations to restore the balance of ethnographical representation.

Said's criticism of ethnography opened up the possibility for more imaginative representations in the discipline's move forward. While not offering direct solutions for the practice of 'Orientalism' in his criticism, Said has a brief section within the preface and again in the conclusion where he calls for a more concerted study "into the dynamic between scholarship and imaginative writing" (1978, p.24), when representing the 'other'.

This is not generally the focus of critiques of Said's attack in *Orientalism* and this under-explored aspect of Said's analysis presents possibilities for creative forms to begin to represent the 'other' in new and more enduring ways. Said himself notes that the notion of the Orient, and as a corollary the 'other', was qualified further by the "sizeable body of literature produced by novelists, poets, translators and gifted travellers" (1978, p.40). Said admits that there is a need to study "contemporary alternatives" in order to find new ways of writing about the 'other'. Said says that there is a need to ask how one can study other cultures and peoples from a libertarian, or a non-repressive and non-manipulative, perspective. Said says in *Orientalism* "There are tasks left embarrassingly incomplete in this study," (1978, p.24) and this sets up the possibility of more creative writing, including travel writing becoming an important part of the writing of ethnography:

We need to concentrate on the slow working together of cultures that overlap, borrow from each other, and live together in far more interesting ways than any abridged or inauthentic mode of understanding can allow (1978, p.xxix).

While this would seem to be only a brief comment within Said's overall thesis and criticism, it is key to the identification of more creative ways of representing the 'other' and the eventual identification of travel writing as one of these possibilities.

An example of the sort of imaginative interpretation of ethnography from an alternative perspective comes from Eric Wolf. He uses an immersed and 'insiders' interpretation with *Europe and the People Without History* (1982) as he tells of the great 'discoveries' of European civilisation from the perspective of the 'discovered' peoples. This alternative view is also seen in Marshall Sahlins' *Islands of History* (1985) where the oral histories of the Polynesians are compared to the written histories of the 'outsiders' showing that they "are all cultural interpretations of the same events" (1997, p.259). Reviewing these texts Thomas Hylland Eriksen suggests that a range of perspectives leads to a more balanced representation.

The prompting from various scholars for new contributions within ethnography gives us scope to explore the usefulness of other forms, notably travel writing. I will suggest through this thesis that the open subjectivity of travel writing is more prone to truthfulness as a "contemporary alternative" to the previous restrictive practices of

ethnography as Said suggests. From this position it is necessary to further our understanding of the plurality of travel writing within academia. Through an investigation of the subjective, creative and immersive intersections that exist between travel writing and ethnography, I will now explore how travel writing can attain a sense of acceptance as a version of the authentic that Said hoped might be possible.

The criticisms from Said and others paved the way for more creative contributions within ethnography. This presents an opportunity to examine how it might also work in history. My intended move now within this thesis is to examine the intersections between travel writing and the new forms of creative ethnography in order to establish how history writing, which is currently undergoing its own crisis of representation, might also find use from the creative and investigative qualities of travel writing in order to expand its plurality and dialogue with other disciplines.

Within chapter 1 I have explored the history of ethnography leading to the re-imagining of the discipline and how this has prompted calls for more creative and subjective expressions. As we have discussed, one of these creative expressions could be travel writing. To explore travel writing's usefulness to ethnography I have briefly and selectively charted the histories of both travel writing and ethnography. This has allowed me to suggest some previous intersections between the forms. I will now look to developments post-Said, focusing on how the rethinking of ethnography has been embraced by various practitioners who have broadened the perspective of the field and allowed it to acknowledge a plurality of forms. I will briefly look at James Clifford's work which cites the widening of ethnography to include subjective and creative forms. I will then look at the ethno-travel writing of Michael Taussig before presenting a more thorough examination of New Zealand ethnographer Michael Jackson's writing, which I believe most successfully offers a re-imagining of ethnography that endorses travel writing.

In James Clifford's *The Predicament of Culture* (1988) he looks at the ethnographic translation from experience to text which "involves an unquestioned claim to appear as the purveyor of truth in the text" (1988, p.25). Clifford says that in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century there was no guarantee of the ethnographer's authority as the best interpreter of

the ‘other’ “as opposed to the traveller,” (1988, p.26) who often had longer time in the field, better language skills and more useful contacts. Clifford continues his confirmation of the emergence of the anthropologist- ethnographer in *The Predicament of Culture*, embodied by Malinowski “squatting by the campfire; looking, listening, and questioning; recording and interpreting Trobriand life” (1988, p.28). This literary focus provides a clear argument for the specific authority of the practitioner. According to Clifford this has also allowed a reincorporation of the ‘traveller’ in Malinowski’s image to take a place at the campfire once again. It is their knowledge, language and contacts which demonstrates their contribution to the plurality of the form. We look at Clifford’s summary of the role of the participant-observer centred around experience:

A sharp image, or narrative, made its appearance- that of an outsider entering a culture, undergoing a kind of initiation leading to a “rapport” (minimally acceptance and empathy, but usually implying something akin to friendship). Out of this experience emerged, in unspecified ways, a representational text written by the participant-observer (1988, p.35).

Within this new image of ethnography Clifford suggests an implicit trust in the author of the work. This prompting has paved the way for greater acceptance of creative and poetic interpretations of culture (1988, p.38). Clifford leaves us with the possibility of endorsing the expansion of travel writing academic usefulness, “With the expansion of literary and ethnographic consciousness, new possibilities for reading (and thus for writing) cultural descriptions are emerging” (1988, p.53). Clifford’s endorsement also acts as an important introduction to those practitioners who have taken up his challenge in the way they write ethnography. We will see examples of this below.

### **1.5 Michael Taussig: Challenging the Boundaries of Ethnography**

As ethnographers began to embrace and explore the fallibilities of the discipline this led to new and experimental ethnographic accounts. Michael Taussig is a writer of imaginative, cross-genre ethnography who pushes the boundaries of the discipline. With the experimental forms of writers such as Taussig it has become possible to see how travel

writing can contribute to the new renderings of the form. A controversial piece embodying this ethnographic re-imagining, Michael Taussig's work *Shamanism, Colonialism and the Wild Man* (1986) observes how trying to be objective can mask the representation of the 'other'. Taussig analyses previous colonial perspectives by using his own personal travelogue and a rethinking of the representation of the rubber boom in 19<sup>th</sup> Century in Peru to extending the reach of traditional ethnography. Within *Shamanism, Colonialism and the Wild Man* Taussig firstly describes the previous 'objective' ethnographical accounts from within the Putomayo before prefacing his own ethnohistory of the region in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century with a critique of the limitations of the objective account in ethnography. Taussig proposes a form of the discipline which is much more 'in the moment' and relies on personal experience to help the reader understand the terror, paranoia and inconsistency of previous accounts of the Putomayo rubber plantations.

Taussig's work on the 'histrionics' of colonial encounters establishes the importance of embracing interpretations beyond the supposed objective accounts of the past. Examples of the representation of the Putomayo (and the questionable ethnography from the field) from Walter Hardenburg in his reports to the British Consul and Roger Casement, an American explorer sent to investigate the persecution of the native Peruvians, demonstrate how the notion of truth within a supposed 'true' text can be clouded even when the writer is attempting to be objective. Hardenburg and Casement used local newspapers, hyperbole, rumour and unconfirmed sources to create wildly different 'objective' accounts while relying on minimal actual observation of their experiences in the Putomayo. Casement says of one massacre:

One day Sanchez killed twenty-five men– he shot some, others he cut their heads off– and some he hanged slowly with a chain around their necks till their tongues came out, and they died like that (1986, p.46).

Hardenburg employs a more poetic style when recounting an 'objective' report on the Putomayo,

Armed with machetes, the Indians penetrate the depths of the forest, gashing frightfully every rubber tree they can find, frequently cutting them so much and so deep, in their frantic efforts to extract the last drop of milk, that vast numbers of trees die annually (1986, p.180).

Hardenburg later admitted to his employers that much of this was taken from two local

newspapers. As Taussig says of Hardenburg, “his information consisted generally of an incident as related by another person” (1986, p.74) and it ends up being nothing more than the colonial montage of “Indian-ness” within the Putomayo. Even Hardenburg admits, “of actual crimes being committed I did not see anything, practically” (1986, p.74). The representations of Hardenburg and Casement were not discounted until much later though largely because of their lack of persuasion. As we will examine later, it is the persuasive ability of the writer which convinces us of their right to say something. The Hardenburg account and by extension the orthodox objective style keeps the reader and object in their place, whereas Taussig’s style prompts our critical engagement with this past and this ethnography.

The acceptance of the ‘objective’ style in the ethnography of the past is seen as the major issue in these accounts according to Taussig. He highlights the “contrived manner in which objectivity is created, and its profound dependence on the magic of style to make this trick of truth work” (1986, p.37). The real issue raised here is in the claim that it is presenting the one truth. Taussig suggests that a more honest assessment is his own ethnohistory, which is subjective and presents the possibility of multiple truths.

Taussig allows us to get a closer and more intimate version of the Putomayo in his own ethnohistorical account of the region. On the one hand he gives us vivid writing and on the other he immerses himself into an experience we cannot fully understand and he doesn’t attempt to solve these problems for us. For instance, after the colonial encounters of Casement and Hardenburg Taussig’s narrative is full of his ‘trips’ and it impossible to get an overall theory of Peru and the Putomayo from this. It is presented as discrete moments and the reader has to make their own theory. While this is not completely persuasive, it is a good example of his rethinking of the discipline. Taussig travels to the Peruvian Amazon and distorts his ethno travelling account– while producing a more intimate and personal account through subjective experience than the case studies of Hardenburg and Casement that he features as a prelude to his own observations. It is when Taussig participates, thus demonstrating a widening perspective in his narratives, that the power of the closer, subjective rendering of ethnography is demonstrated. His final chapter on the shaman Chu Chu and his daughter Marlene is full of vivid descriptions that

place the reader in the piece. There are moments of beautiful clarity and striking characters:

Don Chu Chu arrived from a neighbouring village. Unlike Marlene, who was a rather dark mulatta, he was fair-skinned and an odd character indeed. He had lost half a forearm to a machete blow and walked in a funny, jerky way, a bulk of cantankerous asymmetry hauling itself along the hot streets like a lopsided caterpillar, squeezing himself through the innumerable bags of plants and medicines and keys secreted about his person (1986, p.469).

Demonstrating his further challenge to ethnography Taussig highlights the importance of considering diverse and alternative perspectives. Within his 1992 work *The Nervous System* Taussig suggests we rethink the representation of past ethnographies such as those in his previous examples of the Putomayo. Taussig's solution is to turn our gaze away from the 'other' of representation "and onto ourselves" in a reflexive practice reminiscent of Clifford's claim of ethnographic self fashioning (1986) and Michael Jackson's more contemporary work in *Excursions* (2007) which is analysed in section 1.7. Taussig ponders the idea given to him from an "Indian" shaman that Machu Picchu was built by the Spanish using "Indians" as slave labour – this raises a conflict between the European understanding of Machu Picchu compared to the Indians' perspective of it as a monument to slavery and racism. Taussig's example provides an opportunity to consider more than one truth. His solution is to repurpose ethnography and the continuation of this more creative and subjective view within the discipline is seen in Michael Jackson's self-reflexive ethnography *Road Markings* (2012) on his journey through New Zealand, his former home.

### **1.6 Michael Jackson: The New Ethnographer**

The new ethnographic writing of contemporary anthropologist Michael Jackson is the clearest embracement of the creative, subjective and immersed perspective of travel writing within scholarly ethnography. With the re-imagining of ethnography there has been a shift in style, embracing creativity and subjectivism, which demonstrates how

travel writing has a place in the discipline's development. Michael Jackson's style immediately sets him apart with his 2007 work *Excursions*, and he acknowledges as much in his preface, "I like to think of the intellectual life as a series of conversations involving different voices and idioms" (2007, p.x). Jackson's willingness to accept different ways of looking at the world is captured in his opening:

I imagine myself on a long road. Behind me, the road disappears into darkness, and I think of those who travelled this way before me – precursors and pathfinders. Looking ahead, I am aware that the new day will dawn on others who will walk stretches of this road that I will not live to see (2007, p.x).

Within *Excursions* Jackson highlights the influence of Walter Benjamin (the philosopher and theorist) as the point of departure for ethnography's ability to think poetically (2007, p. xii). He expands on this to confirm that it does not mean "writing in a highly condensed, allusive manner one associates with poetry" (2007, p.xii) but to explore the space that exists between the objective and subjective and the openness of the personal perspective within ethnography. From this point Jackson presents eleven discrete essays exploring the various aspects of ethnography which highlight the diversity and poetry he has encountered on his own excursions into foreign places.

While Jackson's interpretation of ethnography has challenged the discipline, this has also broadened its appeal. In a review in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Julie Scott notes that *Excursions* "challenges notions of what is 'legitimate' anthropology" though this is undoubtedly a positive reflection as she finds similarities with WG Sebald's 1998 work *The Rings of Saturn* which combined travel, philosophy and history in a first person journey. Scott acknowledges Jackson's voice in the re-imagining of the genre:

*Excursions* may cross genres, venturing into the poetic and the literary, but, in my view this makes it all the more powerful as a work of anthropology – beautifully and compellingly written, absorbing reading, it fulfils its promise of opening up anthropology to the rich possibilities of 'epiphany' and 'event', and suggesting new ways of thinking about phenomena, 'even though these may entail no causal explanation or certain knowledge' (2009, p.879).

In his review within the *American Ethnologist* journal in 2009, Michael Carrithers continues this endorsement of the plurality of Jackson's writing, "Travel writing, yes, but

travel writing reaching for universality. Anthropology, yes, but anthropology reaching for universality” (2009, p.408). Carrithers also notes that the key words attached to *Excursions* are, “Anthropology, travel writing and philosophy” and this gives an indication of a new style within ethnography.

Within *Excursions* Jackson argues that plurality, creativity and immersion can create a more compelling ethnography. Jackson says that, “meaning emerges not from isolated contemplation of the world but from active engagement” (2007, p.xi). Jackson submerges himself in a mix of historical texts, ethnographies and personal experiences to create a hybrid narrative journey for the reader. It also suggests that the “active engagement” of immersion gives the writer a more personal connection with the material and the reader. As an endorsement of seeing the world poetically, Jackson says there is a need, “to continually see the world afresh or from another vantage point” (2007, p. xii) with alternative forms of expression. Jackson equates a poetic viewing of the world as an ebbing and flowing ocean of ideas and influences in order to, “place every domain of experience on the same footing” (2007, p.xiii). He also notes that all experiences, ideas, words and imaginings are part of a broader image that we experience, so there should be no privileged point of view expressing this. Jackson equates the new ethnography to that of a traditional vintner, and he strives for “good field work, a convivial environment, and a sense of craft and ancestry” (2007, p.xvi) to create a compelling narrative for the reader.

Jackson’s writing highlights the importance of the “excursion” as a key aspect within new ethnography in order to guide the reader. Jackson classifies an excursion in this case as a journey of deep thought and reflection evoked when travelling. Within his chapter “Storytelling Events, Violence, and the Appearance of the Past” he looks at historical writing and how history becomes myth and the present shapes the ‘telling’ of this history. He also maintains the importance of the historian’s acceptance of subjectivity and the “interplay between what has been and what is in the making” (2007, p.81). Jackson then takes us on an excursion to Sierra Leone in 1970 for an ‘excursion’ with three narrators to highlight the importance of this style within his ethno-travel writing. The three tribal storytellers are described relating separate narratives to the crowd, though they are continually interacting and questioning one another, while also participating with

the crowd and performing anecdotes together. This is an example of the “complementary” nature of telling a story from more than one point of view and creating a polyphony of voices so as to give a perspective more value to the reader and the inherent elements of history within it. This suggests what history writing could also be learning from the re-thinking of ethnography. Through the fusion of history and the observation of the poetic in narrative, Jackson’s philosophical excursion creates a new image of ethnography that travel writers can also hope to learn from when recounting history.

Further exploration of the importance of the personal and subjective approach to new ethnography is seen in Jackson’s travel ethnography *Road Markings: An Anthropologist in the Antipodes* (2012). Jackson explores New Zealand on an existential journey to discover the significance of the history of place and his own personal history through what remains in the present, “I was going back to the place from which I started out” (2012, Chapter: First Things First, p.1). Jackson takes us through the idea of remembered history and how our individual stories are interwoven with social and historical occurrences, “Memory, like a good storyteller, is an artful liar” (2012, Chapter: First Things First, p.2) and this makes it near impossible to delineate whose history we are attaching to the memory, while also creating space for the persuasion of the writer within the text to guide and convince us of its overall trustworthiness. With this problem in mind, Jackson returns to his “first spinning place” to trace the outward movement of history, autobiography and ethnography in one narrative.

Jackson begins his chapter on memoir much the same way Malinowski or Mead would have done with an arrival scene, though Jackson’s modern take is from the window of a plane arriving in his homeland before he rents a car to explore the South Island and the footsteps of his past. Even as Jackson writes about the frailty of memory with his own ‘excursion’, he recalls anecdotes from his ex-wife when she was fourteen years old and in a Christchurch hospital, complete with dialogue. This displays the ability of the narrator to manipulate events it is unlikely he knows with such vivid detail. Jackson is not trying to mislead the reader; he is using it to illustrate his point that:

Memories are like rainclouds. Just as a mountain range is needed for clouds to fall as rain, so the mind needs a familiar landscape, a piece of

music, the smell of fennel, the taste of a petit Madeleine, if its hidden depths are to be revealed (2012, Chapter: Braided Rivers, p.7).

Jackson follows a river and wonders at the same time whether “A life can be followed like a river” if we try to capture it within the confines of a narrative. Jackson continues to travel the South Island and through his explorations of place, vernacular and gypsy-ism he centres on the inverted idea, “That one’s life’s journey is sometimes towards rather than away from one’s true home” (2012, Chapter; No Direction Home, p.7). This gives his journey, as a piece of ethnography centred on the self and an alternative form of travel writing, a new sphere to explore for the reader.

With Jackson’s 2012 work *Between One and One Other* he explores the perspective of “turning inward to one’s self” as part of new ethnographic writing. Jackson writes of interactions with his students and how he suggests they rethink their preconceptions of place, fieldwork and method and to trust the personal nature of their interactions while writing ethnography. With his “Writing Workshop” chapter Jackson explores this inward turn within his own writing on an excursion to Ireland. He openly questions his ability to interpret the world around him: “The flowering gorse had a coconut scent. Or was it better described as biscuity?” (2012, p.60) This might be a cleverly constructed narrative device, though the excursion works well to demonstrate the frailty of the self as a creator of narratives. `

Jackson further demonstrates the looseness of the re-imagining of ethnography within his excursion to Ireland. A student asks for help searching for a framework to help guide her own ethnographic study. Demonstrating the looseness and plurality Jackson observes within the discipline, he tells her to focus on a concrete event or anecdote within the idea to begin a more organic understanding of the event:

Gradually, I said, an interpretation of this event will dawn on you and connections will be revealed with other episodes that at first sight seemed unrelated. In this way your thesis will emerge like a seedling from the black loam of empirical particulars (2012, p.64).

Jackson finishes the ‘lesson’ with a thought on this plurality allowing anthropology to coexist with other forms and other disciplines: “Surely forging a bond with others is more valuable than possessing knowledge of them?” (2012, p.66). This final point is one that is

particularly relevant to my own thesis and how I have envisaged the ability of travel writing to coexist in an academic environment.

Mary Baine Campbell and her work on travel writing theory brought about the use of the term ‘plurality’ (1988) with regards to travel writing. Campbell examines where travel writing has a legitimate space within ethnography and how it can possibly extend to other academic disciplines. With the various excursions and challenges of traditional ethnography we have seen from Jackson how it is possible to observe ethnography and travel writing co-existing in a convincing way. From this position we can now explore how this plurality within travel writing can also extend to the rethinking of academic history.

Within James Clifford’s conclusion to *Writing Culture* he asserts that history as an academically exclusive discipline is now experiencing decline just as ethnography once was. Clifford remarks that if history writing is to maintain relevance it needs to undergo a rethinking as ethnography has done. Clifford prompts us to see the discipline as one “that invites imaginative reconstruction” (1986, p.119) making way for new ways of imagining the scholarly construction of history through travel writing.

From this point my thesis can now demonstrate the plurality of travel writing not only within ethnography but also within history writing. I have demonstrated where ethnography has already succeeded in allowing aspects of travel writing to become part of the academic discussion when looking at the representation of the ‘other’. This prompts us now to look at how and why serious, investigative travel writing could possibly become a scholarly contributor to history. We now need to re-establish travel writing as a form worthy of consideration within chapter two.

## Chapter 2: The Rethinking of History

We have observed how ethnography has faced a rethinking. We can also see how the discipline has demonstrated an ability to accept creative contributions as academically valuable and so has been able to develop. Now that history writing faces its own period of rethinking, it prompts the question of whether travel writing can contribute in a similar way. Few, if any scholars are making this argument yet, and it presents a possibility for the usefulness of this thesis. The rethinking of history has begun within other genres, notably film, though there is room to expand this plurality to other forms of creative expression, one of which is travel writing.

It could be said that some travel writing, through its dynamic and embedded nature, is already contributing to history writing. This gives us an initial platform on which to argue for its inclusion in academia. Not all travel writing would be suitable for this; indeed much travel writing still falls into the category of the popular and contemporary rather than historical and scholarly. However, there is an emerging style of travel writing that immerses the reader in subjective experience while being based on exhaustive historical research, such as Christopher Kremmer's *The Carpet Wars* (2003). Kremmer takes us into the modern conflict zones of Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan to demonstrate the complex tribal and cultural histories which have contributed to their 21<sup>st</sup> Century realities. Kremmer presents a form of travel writing as history by splicing the researched histories of the places he experiences with his own perspective. As a journalist, Kremmer spent ten years in the regions; he talks to merchants, drinks tea with carpet sellers, travels the Iraqi desert with taxi drivers and finds stories that demonstrate how layered and evocative these anecdotes and personal histories can be when presented as first person travel narratives. We glean from Kremmer's writing that this is a dynamic history. This style of immersed travel writing is what I aim at in the creative work of this dissertation. I will return to these case studies in greater depth in chapter three.

## 2.1 Recent Shifts in Academic History Writing

To understand how certain scholars see history writing as having arrived at a point of re-figuring and to understand how that re-figuring can involve more creative and narrative forms, it is important to understand the two broad views of history: first that it is part of a naturally evolving discipline and second that it is a fading relic of classical studies. I will use historian Georg Iggers' recent, influential account of the evolution of the discipline, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge* (2005), along with various supplementary sources, to enable a better appreciation of the current fracture this thesis is examining. My focus will be on only a select part of academic history. I do not pretend to survey the entire discipline, but rather those historians and historiographers, such as Hayden White, Keith Jenkins and Frank Ankersmit, who promote the gradual opening up of the history discipline. I choose these historians, not those with a pessimistic view such as Keith Windschuttle, who sees history as a discipline that should be left alone (see his 1996 work *The Killing of History*). As with Jenkins and Ankersmit, mine is an optimistic view of the possibilities within history writing.

There are three key elements to the 'scientific' approach of history according to Iggers. Firstly, historians accept that history deals with real people and events. Secondly, the historian's job is to decipher the meanings of the 'actors' of history in order to create a coherent story. Lastly, historians follow a "diachronical concept of time" (2005, p.5). This structure held well into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and it led to the evolution of the discipline influenced by scholars such as German Positivist historian, Leopold von Ranke. Iggers says, "historians shared the optimism of the professionalized sciences generally that methodologically controlled research makes objective knowledge possible" (2005, p.1). The discovery of 'truth' in this scientific way led to the belief that it was possible to understand, as Ranke said, "history as it had actually occurred". The 20<sup>th</sup> Century saw the development of the discipline into a social science-based form of professional and scholarly writing.

As history aligned more closely with the social sciences it also broadened its base of influences. History shifted away from the “Rankean paradigm”, which focused overwhelmingly on the Great Men of the past as the protagonists of history (e.g. Thomas Carlyle’s *Heroes, Hero-worship and the Heroic in History* 1841), towards the inclusion of perspectives of the broader population. A further change in history writing was seen after World War II through the post-colonial understanding that non-Western peoples also had legitimate interpretations of histories (e.g. Wolf’s *Europe and the People Without History*). From this point of view “the destructive qualities of the civilizing process increasingly moved into the centre of awareness” (2005, p.6). The acceptance of the plurality of histories beyond simply a ‘scientific’ rendering, allowed for alternative perspectives. Other developments during this period included the recognition of the importance of oral history and also the ‘from below’ history of Robert Darnton and Carlo Ginzburg—a form of cultural history which allowed the subjective and immersed perspectives of history to gain traction. We will analyse the relevant works of Darnton and Ginzburg further below. In addition to this, subaltern studies emerged, through the work of theorists such as Eric Stokes, Edward Said and Dipesh Chakrabarty, highlighting the importance of subordinated perspectives which also debunk the notion of the nation state as the controlling historical power. Subaltern studies has had a lasting influence on the intersections between history, anthropology and the representation of the ‘other’. This complexity and difficulty in representing an ‘other’ is also one of the main difficulties and considerations within travel writing as it has progressed from the colonial representations of the past.

As the perspectives of history broadened, the narratological practices of the discipline, its implicit literary form, came into sharper focus. Roland Barthes in the 1960s and Hayden White notably with his 1973 work *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* stressed the plot making choices inherent in history writing. White’s theory as to the presence of tropes, those being thematic structures within the narrative of all historical works was a significant contribution to this focus on the literary quality of history. Yet the value of White’s narrativisation of history did not become fully appreciated until the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, where it has re-emerged with enduring relevance for the new possibilities within history.

The latest chapter in the history of history writing since 2002 has seen a more reflexive practice where a group of historiographers have called for a re-evaluation of the discipline. Keith Jenkins, a notable contemporary British historiographer, has championed White's narrative ideas in history as a way for the discipline to maintain relevance. He has identified the need for history writing to re-think and expand its mode of representation in *Rethinking History*. In his foreword for Jenkins *Rethinking History*, British historian Alun Munslow points out that the pervading view now is that, "history is first and foremost a literary narrative *about* the past, a literary composition of the data into a narrative where the historian creates *a meaning for* the past" (2002, p.x). Jenkins suggests we re-think any ideas we might have had that history can be the same as the past. Jenkins insists that we:

re-think that which we call a historical fact so that we understand that it is only a description of things that happened and which, therefore cannot have an intrinsic meaning (2002, p.x).

Jenkins says that the logic of history writing in this era of rethinking is not of discovery, but one of construction. The idea of construction here refers to the narrative structure used to give the history meaning for the reader: "there is no privileged or 'right' route to the past" (2002, p.1). Iggers highlights in the conclusion to his 2009 essay on the search for post post-modern examples in the journal *History and Theory* that many recent histories have moved from a post-modern stance and the possible "end" of history writing as we know it, to a more experiential form. Iggers says, "finding a 'new theory of history' in the face of a changing world and a changed intellectual outlook" (2009, p.128) is the current challenge for the discipline.

It could be said that this new theory of history is "post post-modern history" (Ankersmit 2009). This is a form that utilises creative expression and narrative within the telling of history, while also offering the potential for a diverse range of perspectives. Within the collections, *Re-figuring History: New Thoughts on an Old Discipline*, *Rethinking History* by Keith Jenkins and *Re-figuring Hayden White*, edited by Frank Ankersmit, Ewa Domanska and Hans Kellner, history writing's need to open its aperture to a diversity of perspectives to maintain its relevance as a scholarly discipline is highlighted. They have suggested a post post-modern theory of history as a way forward

for the discipline. Post post-modern history, as I have stated, involves an acceptance of narrative and of creative interpretation. Jenkins raises the possibility of a form of history writing which can allow the discipline to thrive in the same way new ethnography has done. “There is no ‘hidden’ or ‘true’ story to be found” (2003, p.xi) Alun Munslow says in his preface to Jenkin’s *Rethinking History*, and this realisation should prompt a rethinking of the discipline’s capabilities. Munslow hopes that in the future multiple points of view may be accepted that still conform to the rigours of a serious academic discipline. Munslow also hopes that Jenkins’ rethinking of history can awaken the historical profession from its “empirical sleepwalking” (2003, p.xiv) and acknowledge other ways of viewing the past. Munslow says, “still too many in the history profession continue to slumber” (2003, p.xiv) and this is why there is a need for radical texts to awaken it.

By illuminating firstly narrative (and the historian’s awareness of self within this narrative) and secondly creativity we can hopefully see that there is great potential for plurality within history. This shaking of the disciplinary foundations can now lead to some interesting possibilities for creative practitioners, including travel writers. Jenkins asks for an openness with history that provokes “radical readings and rereadings, writings and rewritings of the past” (2003, p.3). This raises the hope that not only narrative, but also creative interpretations, can aid the future survival and revival of History as a discipline.

I will now consider in more depth some of the arguments from key historiographers within this period of rethinking. In order to accept creativity within the rethinking of history, Jenkins cites Ankersmit’s idea of substitution: “a historical presentation is essentially a substitute—a *thing*—which stands in as an object in its own right in place of an actual or an absent object” (2003, p.54). He says that a photo of a palm tree is a substitute for an actual palm tree and a model of a car is also a substitute for an object. This suggests that a creative interpretation, whether it is film, poetry or travel writing can be substitutions for the same past as a conventionally constructed history. Jenkins contextualises the plausibility of artistic interpretations when he says that it is often expected that words or texts be ‘true’, though there is not the same expectation of a

painting. He asks us to imagine the different interpretations of “Gainsborough, Turner, Picasso, Warhol, Hockney—all painting the same people against the same, scenic backdrop” (2003, p.55). We expect five very different points of view and stylistic interpretations. He then asks us to imagine asking five historians writing a history (he suggests the French Revolution of 1789) and asks why there is resistance to accepting these same differences in style and point of view within history. Jenkins finishes by saying that our attitude towards new history writing should be “refractive”; our view (from where we sit in time, culture, profession etc) will always give the past a sense of dislocation and he says we should embrace this. This will hopefully allow an understanding that a diversity of narratives presented to a reader can provide more complex and creative, and ultimately illuminating versions of history.

By understanding how other forms have combined creativity and history we can hopefully understand where travel writing can also find a place within this gap. Travel writing is not the first, or only, creative genre that has endeavoured to represent a new form of history. Robert Rosenstone says in his 2006 book *History on Film/ Film on History* that despite (or possibly because of) the popularity of history captured in film, professional historians look at these creative interpretations with caution. Rosenstone highlights the lack of control the historian has over the telling of history in film as a major reason why they have such an uneasy relationship, “They (film makers) fictionalize, trivialize, and romanticize important people, events, and movements. They falsify History” (2006, p.1). Rosenstone points out, though, that because of people’s ability to now engage with texts across technological platforms, it is necessary to evaluate different styles of historical understanding to further the reach of history.

Rosenstone observes two styles of history in film to explain the differing creative interpretations within the genre. The first style of representation looks to create a new image of history by looking at the creator and the story through the same lens and Rosenstone asks why this form cannot also be useful for other creative writings of history, “They, too, could be analyzed as reflections of the concerns of the era in which they were written”(2006, p.2). An example of this might be the 1981 film *Gallipoli* by Peter Weir, the film about the Australian experience leading up to the Battle of the Nek. This not only

examines the issues of World War 1 and the Australian soldiers, it reflects them through the style of a well-known director who implores us to question how much of this ideology remains in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This style foregrounds the actions of the person making the representation. This could also draw strong comparisons with the travel writing form and the writer who uses research material, subjective interpretation and immersion to create a narrative for the reader that is intentionally directed.

Rosenstone highlights another form of historical representation which is essentially the transference of the contents of a historical book into plot. It is a less reflective and less stylised approach. We could draw on numerous examples here, though an interesting one is the 1993 film *Alive* about the Uruguayan rugby team stranded in the Andes. This draws on the book by Piers Paul Reid constructed from interviews and research material. It is a good example of a popular, yet thoroughly researched, book on a specific event capturing a broader audience through film. Following these examples, Rosenstone says that it is now time for history to push the boundaries of representation, “it is time to create a new frame, one which includes the larger realm of past and present.” (2006, p.3).

Rosenstone argues that film, “emotionalizes, personalizes, and dramatizes history” (2006, p.6) and that this should not be seen as a restrictive practice, but rather an idea that can broaden history. It is true that film can dramatise history. But this is where I believe the diversity of history is important. If someone gains their first understanding of Roman history through watching the HBO series *Rome*, this is not necessarily a bad thing. If this ‘creative’ history then prompts a reading of additional histories (and even travel writings) so that the viewer gains a broader understanding of a specific era, then it has enriched their historical understanding through multiple platforms. If a film is ‘inspired by events’ or ‘based on real events’, it is not necessarily a threat, as some historians would see it, but can also be a further contribution to the mosaic of a particular history– while also moving history along from its “empirical sleepwalking”. It is my broad aim with this thesis that travel writing might also be considered part of the mosaic of academic history.

Another form of new history writing demonstrating the widening aperture of the discipline is ethnohistory, which is an ethnography focused on a particular subject and the

specific history this immersion might reveal. Ethnohistory uses ethnographic and historical data to inform the manuscript, while also relying on the specific language and cultural skills of the practitioner to deliver the narrative. Scholars such as Greg Dening and Neil L. Whitehead have demonstrated how this can be a creative and academically rigorous form of historical understanding. In his 2004 ethnohistory *Beach Crossings*, set in the Marquesas Islands, Dening combines anecdotes from archival diaries and journals, his own experiences on the ground and previous scholarly histories to create a hybrid historical narrative experience for the reader. Dening uses the diaries and accounts of various outsiders and sailors, such as Edward Robarts in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, as the devices for showing the changing history and culture of the islands:

All writers hope that they have not intruded too long on their readers' time. These further twenty years of an 'enterprizing and unfortunate life' of a small and ordinary man on the beaches of empire have something to say. Let me say it in six episodes (2004, p.332).

What is interesting about Dening's style is not only that the narrator is clearly manipulating the flow of the narrative and the selection of material but he is expanding the reader's knowledge and experience. He is also, and I will try to do this later in my creative work, trying to convince the reader that he has the right to speak because of the rigour of his research. Ethnohistory is a creative and scholarly form which has successfully found acceptance in academia. Travel writing can fill a similar gap to that which ethnohistory is also doing as a serious academic contributor. In order to accept this possibility travel writing needs to address various academic ideals to suggest to the reader how and why it can fill this space within the new renderings of history writing. We will explore these aspects further here.

## **2.2 Travel Writing and Post Post-Modern History**

The analysis of history has shown that within this era of re-imagining there is potential for complementary forms of narrative and creative expression to contribute to the re-

validation of the discipline. Alongside film and ethnohistory, travel writing is a creative, literary form that can make a case for inclusion in new history writing. As demonstrated in the short history of travel writing in chapter 1, the form has performed important social and cultural functions in the past where explorers and travellers would share their understanding of the world and that of the 'other' with their home cultures. While travel writing was once seen as an important contributor to anthropology, exploration, literature and even history, the recent popularisation of the genre has pushed it further away from academic respectability. This is not to say that popularity necessarily renders a piece of travel writing as ineffective, though because of the popularity of travel writing in the last thirty years there have been a wealth of titles released which often focus on 'easy' reading as opposed to more rigorous offerings and this has buried the more serious forms of travel writing within the sheer volume of the genre. I have stated previously that travel writing certainly does not need ethnography or history to exist as a genre. Travel writing can, though, when utilising various narrative and academic principles, demonstrate a propensity to contribute a new and valuable form of history writing that can extend the reach of the discipline and the credibility of travel writing at the same time. I will examine how and why it can make a serious contribution to the plurality of academic history in the following section.

### **2.3 Subjectivism**

There are a variety of considerations which can help demonstrate the academic potential of travel writing, the first of which is subjectivism. Subjectivism is a style that freely admits to the place of the constructor within the work while also affecting the reader's engagement with the narrative. As stated earlier, scholars have now come to accept the narrative nature of history, which can be subjective, against the notion of a singular 'truth' which clouded accounts of the past and the claim of objectivity. The key here is the conduct of the writer representing this truthfulness. Frank Ankersmit examines the subjective nature of history in his 2001 book *Historical Representation*. Ankersmit says

by accepting that there are different notions of ‘truth’ we can observe the validity of subjectivism in history writing, “a political history of France in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century does not contradict, but complements, an economic history of France in that same period” (2001, p.78). Ankersmit continues, “What is objective truth to one historian may well be a mere value judgment in the eyes of another historian” (2001, p.80). He says there are three variants to be taken into consideration with the writing of history:

First, it presents us with a *representation* of the past; second, this representation will consist of *true statements* embodying its cognitive pretensions; and third, though this may take different forms and may be more prominent in some cases than in others, *ethical rules and values* will codetermine the historian’s account of the past (2001, p.95).

This provides clear suggestions for the writing of a particular history. The elements of representation, truth and adherence to certain ethical rules offer different points of intersection for all writers of history, whether they are traditional historians, filmmakers or travel writers.

The importance of truth learned through experience was highlighted at the 2012 ANU History department lecture series, when historian Michael McKernan recounted a trip to Gallipoli. McKernan had written numerous academic papers over the years on the drama of the landing at Anzac Cove after poring through the various histories and accounts available, despite never having visited himself. Yet, it wasn’t until he walked the beach himself and saw it from the air that he realised how small and claustrophobic it was. What he had previously visualised was much grander because of what he had read, and this meant that every piece on Gallipoli he would write from then on would have a sense of realism because of his subjective experience enriching the piece. Here the historian is acting as a travel writer, something he doesn’t have to do, and it is revealing how much richer his account is because of this subjective excursion.

Within subjectivism it is important to consider the relationship between internal and external within travel writing. Much of travel writing’s subjectivity comes from the relationship between the external journey and the internal realisations of the traveller (Youngs 2013). Travel writing which features a prominent internal narrative– see Colin Thubron’s *In Siberia* (1999) or Paul Theroux’s *The Last Train to Zona Verde* (2013) for

recent examples of this– is quite obviously more open to the subjective interpretations of the writer and this gives the writer more leeway within the exploration. Travel writing which focuses on the external journey– see Christopher Kremmer’s *Carpet Wars* (2003) and my own *Ticket to Paradise* (2012) as pertinent examples of this style–feature investigation and research more prominently within the text and is subsequently more concerned with truth-telling and with the expectations of the reader, while still containing personal and subjective interpretations.

Looking further into these subjectivist intersections demonstrates clear cross overs with the writing of both history and travel writing. If we use the case study of New Australia, which is being used in this thesis, we can compare my own creative work with the previous accounts of New Australia. They comprise: the original journals of the descendants, Gavin Souter’s *A Peculiar People* (1967), Michael Wilding’s *A Paraguayan Experiment* (1982) and Anne Whitehead’s *A Peculiar People* (1997). I have drawn on and expanded on the previous texts by using the subjective travel writing form to allow both academics and regular readers to understand the continuing New Australia story from my own researched and immersed perspective. Ankersmit confirms the benefits of extending the representations of a history:

An implication is that the more representations we have, the more successfully they can be compared to each other and the better we will be equipped to assess their relative merits. If we were to possess only *one* representation of part of the past, we would be completely helpless to judge its scope (2001, p.96).

Ankersmit raises the notion that academic respect for the creative is what is really needed here in order to truly broaden the re-imaging of history:

And, thus, instead of fearing subjectivity as the historian’s mortal sin, we should welcome subjectivity as an indispensable contribution both to our knowledge of the past *and* to contemporary and future politics (2001, p.100).

## **2.4 Truthful Representation**

The acceptance of the truthful representation of a work by the reader is crucial to the rethinking of history writing. It is important to analyse how this possibility can influence history writing and travel writing. Robert Berkhofer looks at history writing and truthful representation in *Beyond the Great History: History as Text and Discourse* (1997), particularly in the chapter 'Historical Representations and Truthfulness'. Berkhofer looks at the narrative and structural differences between a text we would consider a 'true history' and another that would be regarded as fiction:

Of the traditional dichotomies said to characterize normal historical practice, none seems more vital to the truthfulness (and the true worth) of history than the distinction between fictive invention and factuality in historical practice (1997, p.66).

Berkhofer refers to the unease that exists between the forms of historical representation and the notion of truth. Berkhofer notes that the 'self-definition' of historians and their histories has been the accepted mode of past histories. However, if we are to embrace the rethinking of historical representation through narrative and the genres that extend conventional history writing:

Not all the principles of cultural or discursive historical realism need be assumed an illusion, but the textualisation of that realism is achieved mainly through mimetic illusion. The problem is not whether reality exists— let us admit it does— but rather the difficulty of knowing how a representation goes about its construction according to whose theoretical problematic (1997, p.66).

If all forms of historical writing are, in fact, forms of the mimetic, the issue is how we classify the truthfulness around this representation. Berkhofer states: "No work of history conveys only literal truth through factuality, and few novels, even science fiction ones, depict only pure fantasy" (1997, p.67). Berkhofer says that historians claim the accuracy of their subjects and a fidelity to the past in their writing because each person and action included in history must have documentary evidence and they do not create motivations or allude to acts without this evidence. Because of the selection and ordering of material it could be said that this is also a form of subjective history and it suggests that any narrative expression that adheres to a conduct of truthfulness can make claims of validity in the academic corpus. We can observe here that it is possible to believe in the 'truth' of a work if it adheres to this conduct. This also suggests that the truth of a work is dependent on the

conduct of a subject much more than the qualities in an object. As an example of untruthful history, later confirmed as fiction, Berkhofer points to Simon Schama, the popular British historian and author of *Dead Certainties: Unwarranted Speculations* (1991), and his breaking of the historian's first commandment, "Thou shalt not create documents and their evidence" (1997, p.68) as Schama did at one point in his novelisation of America in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Schama intermingled fact and fiction with his account of the battle of Quebec from 1759 and the murder of a Harvard professor in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century in order to experiment with the form and to also provide a more relatable narrative for the reader— as he is also credited with doing in *Citizens* (1989) on the French Revolution.

An important aspect of the non-fiction claim to truth is in the intention of the writer. This is raised in the *Text* journal by David Carlin and Francesca Rendle-Short in their article analysing what classifies a piece of writing as non-fiction where they highlight the importance of the aim of the writer within a work:

A writer must choose where she stands: 'between the necessary picking and choosing, editing, highlighting, arranging, and subjectively describing that goes into the "creation" of creative nonfiction and *knowingly inventing*' (Moore 2012, italics added) (2013, p.3).

Indeed, an understanding of the 'truth' claim of a non-fiction work, specifically an historical work in this case, is needed in order to acknowledge how complementary creative forms might contribute to a new history writing. Accepting narrative history over narrative fiction as Berkhofer has argued does not arise from the claims of factuality within the history, but the overall interpretive structures which lead readers to believe in the reality of the world represented— the "picking and choosing" as opposed to "*knowingly inventing*" as Carlin and Rendle-Short say. Berkhofer postulates that, "the distinction must rest ultimately on the larger context given the story in each case and on the readers' expectation about the truth claims of that context" (1997, p.69). The constructor of a written history, whether done as screen writing, ethnohistory or travel writing, often makes an implicit commitment to the reader to consider all appropriate sources to offer the most informed perspective available. When this is not done the conduct of the writer can be questioned and their persuasiveness does not convince the reader that they have the right to comment on a particular history. Berkhofer says that "historians in narrative

histories deploy the elements of their story just as novelists do” (1997, p.69) though it is in the expectation of truth from the reader within a history and the writer’s commitment uphold this through the persuasive use of research and immersion—making their journey visible (see Grafton 1997) which gives the reader confidence.

The foregrounding of a plurality of possible ‘truths’ in history has forced the discipline to re-examine its boundaries. Berkhofer notes of the historians opposed to the plurality of history that in their opinion “a plurality of possible (hi)stories in theory as well as in practice certainly questions, if not eliminates, the legitimating authority of the discipline” (1997, p.73). By establishing the truth claims of complementary works as history in the rethinking of the discipline it gives greater possibility to other story-telling modes, rather than relying on the one ‘true’ account as the only form of expression as academic history has tended towards in the past. Berkhofer suggests that history writing could also be open to a more plural approach, “aesthetic, stylistic, or other criteria might constitute the proper bases for determining the truthfulness of a history” (1997, p.73).

If we are to accept travel writing as one of these complementary forms of new history, it is important to acknowledge the subjective nature and ‘truthfulness’ of certain histories, as well as travel writing, that adhere to the expectations of the reader and the discipline. Tim Youngs says in *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing*, “Indeed, the public enthusiasm for travel writing may be a reason for the slowness of academics to give it the attention they bestow on other literary forms or historical documents” (2013, p.7). Though now that we can identify the plurality of history and the place for truth and subjective expression, it shows that travel writing can begin to be considered in the same context as history writing. As Youngs says, “the compact between author and readers places a responsibility on travel writers not to breach the trust invested in them” (2013, p.8). The analysis of subjective representation and the acceptance of ‘truth’ within a non-fiction work demonstrate the similarities of the parameters between acceptable history writing and travel writing. As Berkhofer says, any sort of history is a textual construction and this paves the way for travel writing being a key genre in the rethinking of historical expression.

## 2.5 'From Below' History

The 'from below' writing of history demonstrates an alternative form of writing history that travel writing might also find useful. In addition to subjectivism and truth within new history writing it is important to consider the perspective of the work. This style of history writing looks to broaden the perspective of the discipline by using an on-the-ground and immersed point of view to provide an alternative interpretation of the past. This has been successfully used in history by scholars Robert Darnton and Carlo Ginzburg, in *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller* (1980) and *The Great Cat Massacre: And Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (1984) respectively, to demonstrate an anecdotal form of history through their representations of France and Italy in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries.

Ginzburg's *The Cheese and the Worms* comments on the differences between 'high' and 'low' perspectives within history. It is the story of Menocchio, a miller in 16<sup>th</sup> Century Italy who questions the ruling classes and the religions behind them. Menocchio reads widely, unlike many of his peers, and as he also interprets the stories of the peasant class he becomes critical of the conflicts between religion and progress. He voices these opinions to his colleagues and neighbours in the town of Friuli, though they better understand the consequences of making these thoughts public and he is isolated as a result of his position. Menocchio's rumblings do not sit well with the church. After two trials he is convicted and eventually burned at the stake for his heretical opposition to the dogma of the time. Using available archival material (and subjective interpretation), Ginzburg's anecdotal account examines witchcraft, ritual and sexuality as Menocchio sees them and the more conventional histories of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century alongside the personal beliefs of the miller:

I have said that, in my opinion, all was chaos, that is, earth, air, water, and fire were mixed together; and out of that bulk mass formed— just as cheese is made out of milk— and worms appeared in it, and these were the angels (1980, p.6).

Ginzburg says in the introduction, “ *The Cheese and the Worms* is intended to be story as well as a piece of historical writing” (1980, p.xii) so we might understand one 'from

below' perspective from this era in a more open narrative form, "to extend the historic concept of "individual" in the direction of the lower classes is a worthwhile objective" (1980, p.xx). This perspective is valuable because it presents a historical point of view away from the 'Great Men' of history and the conflicts that arose because of them. This presents a micro view of history showing a focused and seemingly 'inconsequential' perspective on this era. An important consideration with Ginzburg's work is that he not only offers the perspective of one man (reinforced by archival material), but he also shows us the way to appreciate the perspective of an individual through anecdote and interaction with the 'other' in a way that a macro history would not.

Darnton's micro-history, *The Great Cat Massacre*, continues the 'from below' perspective seen in Ginzburg's work, offering an alternative point of view, of a social conflict, from a working class protagonist. Darnton looks at the history of printing and urban relationships in 18<sup>th</sup> Century France. He contextualises this through an anecdote of a group of print labourers who slaughter their bosses' cats in protest at their work conditions. Darnton's point of view is as if he is in 1730s Paris seeing, smelling and hearing the events and his vernacular draws the reader close, "The funniest thing that ever happened in the printing shop of Jacques Vincent, according to a worker who witnessed it, was a riotous massacre of cats" (1984, p.75). The anecdotal nature of the text engages the reader, providing an accessible entry point; Darnton explores the historical significance of place and the habits and beliefs of individual characters from this specific example, so as to give a greater understanding of the broader reach of history. Darnton shows us the working conditions of urban France, the employer-worker relationships and the superstitions of working class people away from what would 'normally' constitute a history. Darnton writes that his 'from below' perspective better allows an understanding of social and cultural relationships in the era because it is presenting a micro-perspective, "You can see where to grasp a foreign system of meaning in order to unravel it" (1984, p.78). This can be compared to travel writing's ability to get closer to a foreign culture or practice as a way of uncovering more significant meaning through experience, research and analysis by providing "meaningful shape to the raw stuff of experience" (1984, p.78) as Darnton says. Although the subjects and the time periods (and indeed the techniques) are far removed from each other, Darnton notes that the "subjective character of the

writing does not vitiate its collective frame of reference,” (1984, p.100). This suggests a possible comparison to travel writing, as a subjective medium that might also engage with a collective form of reference.

Comparing the ‘from below’ style of these historians with the embedded and personal perspective of travel writers demonstrates that both practitioners write in a very different way to more standard historians and this suggests it can lead to a different, but no less valid, sort of history being told. We can observe the usefulness of the ‘from below’ perspective in the writing of historian E.H. Carr when he says, “history is movement and movement implies comparison,” (1961, p.83). Michael Oakshott supports this notion in *Experience and its Modes*, when he says the past that a historian studies is not a dead past, but a past which in some sense is still living in the present. For that reason history is more than just “what the evidence obliges us to believe” (1933, p.111–2). This idea of a living past was also raised by R.G. Collingwood and is useful as a way of extending the ‘from below’ histories to complementary genres. It could even be said that the works of Darnton and Ginzburg are a strange sort of ‘travel writing’ presenting engaging and alternative historical accounts from very specific and immersed positions. That is to say, both historians write as if from the perspective of visiting foreigners, rather than omniscient seers, or distanced producers of objective truths.

The idea of ‘from below’ writing in scholarship can allow travel writing to enhance its reputation to become a more considered and serious form within new history. The immersed and ground level position that is integral to travel writing, as briefly touched upon earlier discussing Christopher Kremmer’s *Carpet Wars*, could quite confidently be considered as a form of ‘from below’ writing. Mary Louise Pratt in *Travel and Transculturation* notes that travel writing does not have the respect it once had and suggests more serious examples, like Kremmer’s, are needed. She observes that many modern travel writers only look “from the balconies of hotels in big third world cities,” (1992, p.212) providing a weak comparison to their predecessors (such as Richard Burton) who would embrace a sort of ‘from below’ form of travel writing. Indeed, historians Curthoys and Docker in *Is History Fiction* comment that past facts come alive when they are unified with an interest in the present life.

The ‘from below’ approach when applied to travel writing demonstrates its effectiveness as a form which can extend the reach of history. In my own case, a travel writer’s anecdotal interest in the locally bizarre and incongruous opened my eyes to revealing phenomena. While living in the New Australia community I noted that the Guarani would never talk to me about tomorrow. What I saw as initial indifference came from a more complex Guarani cultural practice of not worrying about what the future will bring (they don’t even have a word for tomorrow). They live in the moment and much of their vitality comes from this immediacy. Anne Whitehead’s perspective in *Paradise Mislaid* presented exhaustive history around the New Australians, though her lack of time ‘from below’ failed to capture these types of anecdotes within the New Australia story. As a further example of the usefulness of the ‘from below’ perspective, when the first murder occurred within the New Australia community during my stay I witnessed how the Australian- Paraguayans dealt with it. The New Australians became secretive about their lives, and it was only after months living as a neighbour in the community that they revealed to me the fragility they still feel as Australian- Paraguayans and consequently allowed me to publish documents such as family diaries and photos from numerous clans that had never been given public exposure. This would not have been possible if I simply arrived for the day and had a prearranged set of questions. My time on the ground looking at the New Australia community ‘from below’ allowed me to peel back further layers of understanding beyond the cursory details previously obtained— a case in point here is the difference between Gavin Souter’s two weeks in Paraguay in *A Peculiar People* compared to my six months in the country. By spending time in the community I understood what history is to them, their uneasy sense of belonging and the vulnerability they still feel in Paraguay as descendants of ‘failed’ Utopians. I was able to capture this continuing and anecdotal narrative through ‘from below’ travel writing, while also using the relevant archival material to enrich this perspective to the point where my work can now be considered part of their recognised history (as published by ABC Books), for future generations to engage with. This immersion was for a period of six months and it should be noted that there is no end to how far this immersion could continue— and what effect this might have on the narrative— if I was to stay for more than a year or visit numerous times. This is not to say that all travel writing is necessarily ‘from below’ and from an immersed perspective. Less serious travel books (such as those ‘Grail Quests’ involving

travelling around Ireland in a bathtub or some such device) do not write from a ‘from below’ perspective. When entertainment and irreverence is preferred to immersion and research it does not mean that the travel book is necessarily bad, though it is only able to comment on things such as the history of place in a more cursory way (thus perpetuating a more superficial historical stereotype as presented in Lonely Planet guides).

## 2.6 *Metahistory* and Narrative Tropes

A further intersection between travel writing and academic history writing concerns the importance of narrative and construction. This idea stems from Hayden White’s *Metahistory: Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, where, in the 1970s, narrative was identified as being part of the inherent plotting of history. White noted that history writing contains:

A deep structural content which is generally poetic, and specifically linguistic, in nature, and which serves as the precritically accepted paradigm of what distinctively ‘historical’ explanation should be (1973, p.ix).

White’s view is that each different writing of history, each narrative, can be minutely categorised into his predetermined framework of tropes. White’s theories were largely disliked by historians at the time who saw them as a provocative classification and attack on their scholarly discipline. Despite this, *Metahistory*’s influence has been enduring, so much so that there has been a move towards its re-emergence within “post post-modernism” (2009), the term coined by Ankersmit to suggest the future narrative and creative interpretations of history writing.

*Re-Figuring Hayden White* edited by Ankersmit, Domanska and Kellner was released in 2009 and it looks at the reapplication of White’s theories from *Metahistory*. As Frank Ankersmit says, Hayden White looked to the historians and their post-modern accounts of the 1970s and saw how they were focused on the components of the text, the individual descriptions, rather than looking at their text as a narrative whole in itself.

White sought the guidance of literary theorists to discover how we should “read, analyze, interpret, and understand literary texts” (2009, Part Two: Narrative, p.1). From this White gave historians and writers new “technical implements” with which to interpret history writing and it led to the discovery of a new intellectual universe (2009, Part Two: Narrative, p.3). As Ankersmit now confirms, “Having beginnings, middles, and endings is the most basic feature of all (historical) narrative” (2009, Part Two: Narrative, p.5). Ankersmit adds, “This makes all Historical writing essentially ‘enthymemic’, in the sense that its claim to present us with the Truth about the past is always based on one or more tacit assumptions the reader is asked to add to the text himself” (2009, Part Two: Narrative, p.7). Acknowledging the previously raised notion of there being more than one truth in history, and that the reader’s relationship with the type of text is a part of this presents an opportunity for the analysis of White’s narrative tropes and their usefulness to complementary forms of history.

Nancy Partner notes in her essay on post post-modernism within *Re-Figuring Hayden White* that scholars are now utilising White’s tropes in other forms of history. Partner says that the “world outside academia seems to be recognizing ideas that White first and best laid out for inspection” (2009, Chapter Four: Narrative Persistence, p.21) beyond the previous assumption of historians that his structures were developed to offend those who saw little more than the “fictional amorality” of his work. Partner recognises within post post-modernism a place where the importance of White’s theory of tropes in the rethinking of history can be appreciated, and hopefully expanded upon. Of this broadening usefulness of White’s tropes and the inherent narrative of history, Partner says, “Individuals and small groups can connect their own personal stories to these narratives and the collective story draws emotional energy from its deep anchorage in collective memory” (2009, Chapter Four: Narrative Persistence, p.27). The importance of narrative in history has become apparent in projects such as the Scholar’s Initiative, where 260 historians worked together to re-examine the Kosovo- Serb conflict and the differing stories and points of view to form a “single, multi-faceted narrative comprehensible to all” (2009, Chapter Four: Narrative Persistence, p.31). Partner cites a fascinating example, the *Learning Each Others’ Historical Narrative* textbook given to students in Israel and Palestine. On the left is the Israeli narrative and on the right of the page is the Palestinian.

The centre is left blank for students to fill in themselves. Could we look at the relationship between travel writing and history writing in the same way as two columns on the same page? “Crucial and expanding areas of the post-postmodern world have circled back to where Hayden White first drew our attention,” (2009, Chapter Four: Narrative Persistence, p.50) says Partner and from this point of view scholars are more equipped to also address the criticisms of White’s work which have lingered.

While White’s narrative claims have now found strong scholarly support, there are still vocal criticisms of the legitimacy of narrative tropes within history. Phillip A Roth asks in the journal *History and Theory* if “tropes and the rest provide any *epistemic* rationale for differing representations of historical events found in histories?” (2013, p.131). What, it may well be asked, did (or could) any theory that draws its categories from a stock provided by literary criticism contribute to explicating problems about the warranting of claims about knowledge, explanation, or causation in this field? Roth cites historian Robert Doran who claims that a reliance on tropes does not help with the notion of guidelines for the history writer or their responsibilities to the reader. I argue that White’s metahistorical framework is the very thing which allows the persuasive relationship with the reader to have more influence in the text. The framework guides the reader while also making clear the acknowledgment that the reader is part of the construction of history. It is the reader’s interpretation which defines the ‘success’ of the history as they are guided through the framework. The use of tropes to further direct the reader within the framework also acknowledges the visibility of the ‘lens’ through which the reader interprets the text.

White utilises tropes to give meaning to the flow of a historical narrative. He says the writer “makes his story by including some events and excluding others, by stressing some and subordinating others” (1973, p.6) and it is when these events are encoded, “the reader has been provided with a story; the chronicle of events has been transformed into a completed diachronic (chronological) process” (1973, p.6). White’s tropes can be extended to understand how travel writing also finds meaning through the structuring and subordinating of events within a narrative.

White’s history tropes are classified as romance, satire, comedy and tragedy.

White says that “historical situations are not inherently tragic, comic, or romantic” but only become this when the historian matches “a specific plot structure with the set of historical events that he wishes to endow with a meaning of a particular kind’ (1978, p. 85). White suggests that the emplotment of these should be strict, “a given historian is forced to emplot the whole set of stories making up his narrative in one comprehensive or *archetypal* story form” (1973, p.8). This means that a particular history should only draw from one trope to maintain narrative consistency. The romantic trope is where the narrative is played out as a drama of self-identification, whether this is the protagonist or the narrator’s quest, and it is often seen as a “Grail legend” (1973, p.9) or resurrection style of story. The satirical trope has the ironic view that people are captive in their world and whatever actions they take they will still be restricted by the same cultural and social barriers. The comedic trope looks for harmony between the natural and social phenomena and it is the pursuit of this within a narrative (striving for an equilibrium) which classifies the comedy framework. Finally, the tragedy trope is identified by the ‘hero’ who learns to work within the limitations of their world. As Matthew Ricketson says in the journal *Text*:

White’s argument, developed over several works, has been influential in undermining belief in a naïve historical realism and in drawing attention to the extent to which historians construct plots and meanings for the events and people they write about (2010, p.13).

Ricketson also notes that White’s theories can be extended to journalism (2010). From this platform a case can be made for the inclusion of the travel writing form (as a mode of writing history and a form of book-length journalism) that utilises the tropes concurrently as overlapping ideas to create a subjective and engaging narrative history. Rather than blindly endorsing the neatness of the structure that White attributes to the plotting of history writing, we can observe how his tropes have a looser, yet still critical relevance to the travel writing form existing as part of new history writing.

Travel writing as history can utilise the narrative tropes of White, yet it is more effective if they are applied in a looser fashion. While White suggested that his tropes must be adhered to strictly within history writing, it is possible to view travel writing as history through various tropes at the same time. To illustrate this in practice I will cite my creative work within this dissertation. Within my creative work the narrative is initially

romantic as I trace the New Australia story on my own “Grail legend” and subsequently discover the epic journey of the original Utopians and learn of the realities of the lives of their children and grandchildren still living in the colonies in Paraguay, for example, in Queenslander homes bearing Australian flags. The romantic trope within my travel writing work overlaps with the tragic nature of my observations of the descendants stranded in the Paraguayan jungle as a result of the decisions of their ancestors. They hope for a way out of the ‘prison’ that their ancestors delivered them into, though as an outside observer there was little I could do to change this and I could see that they would be stuck within a failed utopia in a developing country after I departed. While White’s tropes are useful, because I can identify romantic and tragic elements within my travel history, it became obvious that the tropes are useful to travel writing generally, though only if used in an overlapping and more nuanced fashion. Eliminating one for the other would only allow me to present one side of the diverse New Australian story and it would restrict the perspective into a preordained (and possibly false) narrative. This also demonstrates the value of multiplying accounts. Within my creative work I am demonstrating multiple tropes and intersecting stories within the one text.

From observing White’s tropes in history writing there is an opportunity to expand these classifications to observe their usefulness within travel writing. White says his emplotment exists so that on one level we can understand what happened (through the selection and insertion of causally linked events) and on another level so we can understand why it happened in that fashion. Perhaps a useful addition here is the theory of Peter Hulme when he identifies the overlapping tropes within travel writing that have emerged over the last 25 years of study, “the comic, the analytical, the wilderness, the spiritual and experimental” (2002, p.43). These tropes could be seen as a sub-genre of White’s classifications, more appropriate to travel writing because of their ability to articulate the inner and outer journey of the author and the realisation that travel writing can, “use the genre to explore inner jungles” (2002, p.124). As Mary Louise Pratt says in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, “I try to use the study of tropes as much to disunify as to unify what one might call a rhetoric of travel writing.” (1992, p.12) This notion of disunification is inherently useful for the travel writing account of history. By questioning White’s tropes we can see their usefulness to travel writing. White and his

tropes demonstrate the instability of academic texts. Both academic and popular texts exist on a narrative and structural level and popular writing is far less distinct from academic writing on some levels than we think. I have demonstrated that history and travel writing are indeed doing different things, but nonetheless they are both still telling stories of history for the reader.

## 2.7 The Contract

Travel writer William Dalrymple coined the idea of the ‘contract of truthfulness’ in the *Studies in Travel Writing* journal interview with Tim Youngs in 2005. A contract of truthfulness is important in all works of non-fiction, including history and travel writing, as it allows the intention of the work to be clear and for the writer to persuade the reader to trust the presentation of events within the narrative in a more convincing way. The idea of a contract with the reader is an important consideration, though as we will see in the case study of Bruce Chatwin later, there is a spectrum of possibilities on what this contract can be, and Chatwin chooses the lesser version. This doesn’t mean that the contract with readers in less serious examples of travel writing (see the case study with Pico Iyer in chapter three) is obsolete, though this is not what I am aiming for within this thesis. The contract can be a valuable contribution to non-fiction forms that seek academic credibility. Helen Garner says in her book, *True Stories: Selected Non-Fiction*:

A reader of non-fiction counts on you to remain faithful to the same ‘real’ world that both reader and writer physically inhabit. As a non-fiction writer you have, as well, an implicit contract with your material and with the people you are writing about: you have to figure out an honourable balance between tact and honesty (1996, p.8)

While Garner herself faced controversy over her representation of the truth in *The First Stone* (1995) she later addressed this inconsistency and the value of the non-fiction contract holds nonetheless (Ricketson 2010).

Philippe Lejeune, a leading European life-writing critic, explores the ‘truth’ of non-fiction writing in *Le Pacte Autobiographique* (1975), namely on biography, autobiography and the novel, extending the idea of a contract with the reader. Lejeune’s motivation for exploring the contract within non-fiction forms stems from a curiosity into the relationship between the author and the reader.

The importance of a contract between reader and author is highlighted when we make a comparison to works that do not uphold the relationship. As Lejeune says, “the exceptions and breaches of trust serve only to emphasize the general credence accorded this type of social contract” (1975, p.11). Lejeune examines the similarities between autobiography and the autobiographical novel— many of the narrative elements are identical, though it is this pact of truthfulness that the author enters into with the reader that is important for both. The line between truth and fiction “should not be a guessing game” (1975, p.12) Lejeune asserts, and the non-fiction “intention to honor his/ her *signature*” (1975, p.14) on the work of non-fiction is one of the attributes which allows the reader to endorse the truthfulness of the work. Within travel writing and history the reader comes to the text with certain expectations. As we will see in the case studies, the strength of the contract with Chatwin’s work is vastly different from that of Kremmer’s and the reader’s engagement is influenced accordingly. As Lejeune says, the contract helps to establish the attitude of the reader (1975, p.14). This is a crucial point when we observe the non-fiction representation within travel writing. This type of contract allows us to invest ourselves (as readers) into the author’s journey and to believe it as truthful. While Lejeune is drawing the comparison between the non-fiction forms of biography, autobiography and fiction, we can also equate this to academic travel writing and the claim, “to provide information about a ‘reality’ exterior to the text,” (1975, p.23) as an oath from the author to the reader across genres.

As an example of the failure of the academic writer’s contract with the reader we can point to Michael Taussig’s *The Magic of the State* (1997). Taussig admits in his preface to combining fiction and fact for narrative and dramatic effect in this work— a surrealist ethnography on Latin America, power, European fetishism and a fantastical mountain where “Blacks and Indians” pass into the bodies of the living. Taussig sees this

as a performance, with his aim being “the evocation of a fictive nation-state in place of real ones so as to better grasp the elusive nature of stately being” (1997, Preface). Yet, the combination of fact (from his own travel and ethnographic excursions) and fiction without a clearly identifiable line between the two erodes any hope of there being a contract with the reader. As such, the experience of the reader is muddled and unsatisfying. Take the excerpt from the chapter “The Spirit Queen” as an example:

She smiled and took up where she’d left off. The edge of the cliffs lit up for an instant where long ago the sea had been, leaving those stark rock faces. And still I can see her there become so much stronger than he ever was alive. You don’t see flags like that anymore, carnivalesque and once upon a time fancy free like up north with symbols such as pine trees, beavers, anchors and rattle snakes (1997, p.7).

The line between fact, fiction and hallucination is impossible to discern. Aside from settling for a much lesser version of the contract with the reader, this also provokes the reader to question the contract in previous works from the same author. As we have observed above, there are different types of contract for readers to engage with, yet the failure of this can render a work ineffective. We will also observe this less serious contract later in the thesis within the popular travel writing of Bruce Chatwin’s in *In Patagonia*. His disregard for truth within the narrative leaves the reader unsteady and it erodes the effectiveness of his later travel writing works while also further highlighting the importance of a strong contract of truthfulness when writing history within travel writing.

## **2.8 The Double Story**

The accountability of the travel writer, as an extension of the contract analysed above, can be further endorsed within new history writing by the use of research and footnotes to create a clear double story for the reader.

Journalism scholar Matthew Ricketson says in his thesis on book-length

journalism (2010) that there is a relative scarcity in scholarly and professional literature on the ethics of book-length journalism (2010, p.100) and this is just as scarce within travel writing. The travel writer and book-length journalist are distinct, though as many of their aims, methods and skills are very similar. Ricketson highlights why the methods of the writer and the relationship with the reader is so important:

Trust between practitioners and readers is critical but what is needed is not blind trust but what I term an informed trust that practitioners can inculcate through their narrative voice in the body of the work or in the paratext through elements such as endnotes, notes to the reader and bibliographies (2010, p.100).

The trust that is formed with the reader is a crucial consideration for travel writing. As Ricketson says, a large part of the ethical process of journalism (and travel writing) is in the research phase. He says that central to the success of a work is the reader's ability to appreciate the research. If the travel writer, as with the journalist, has made significant factual errors, then the reader is less likely to trust the continuing perspective:

The practitioner is the starting point and through-line for examining ethical issues in book-length journalism, as they generally initiate the idea for their book projects and along the way develop relationships with, and need to consider, the people they are writing about (the subjects of their books) and the people they are writing for (their readers). These two groups of people are important elements of the project but they only become part of it through their involvement with the practitioner, or what the practitioner produces (2010, p.100).

The trust forged through the research is also expressed as the double story and this is discussed in Anthony Grafton's *The Footnote*. He examines its importance within history, "Like the high whine of the dentist's drill, the low rumble of the footnote on the historian's page reassures" (1997, p.5). It is not merely sufficient to recount and regurgitate the fruits of months or years of archival work, it must be done in such a way that the reader can participate and understand the history (and its perspective) through narrative. Grafton says that history is a literary pursuit which can be enhanced through a clearly identifiable double story. Academic history writing is often preferred over other representations of history because it makes an appeal to evidence to distinguish it from other more popular forms. Within *The Footnote* Grafton gives a sophisticated theory of this rigorous method used within academic history— he makes it clear that the double story

that arises within academic history, firstly of the actual history and secondly of the accompanying footnotes which detail how the writer arrived at these points are both narratives within the text.

Grafton suggests that the reliability of the double story within history writing is about how the writer persuades the reader to believe in the rigour of their method. This double story also allows the reader to check for themselves within the references. The writer is therefore accountable for what they write. This provides an example of how a serious contract with the reader can be appreciated across genres within history, as it can demonstrate to the reader how the writer constructed the narrative. Grafton says that “no two anthropologists will describe the same description of a transaction in identical categories” (1997, p.15) and it is through this double story that the reader is able to understand how the writer arrived at their particular interpretation (whether it is history, anthropology or travel writing). “In practice, moreover, every annotator rearranges materials to prove a point, interprets them in an individual way, and omits those that do not meet a necessarily personal standard of relevance” (1997, p.16). Grafton suggests that it is the truth achieved through the conduct of the subject, shown within a history as the ‘proofs’ of the validity of the work, which opens up the possibility that travel writing can also utilise this double story within history writing.

There are examples of travel writing using footnotes (as in Kremmer’s *The Carpet Wars*), however there are more subtle ways of presenting this double story that demonstrate the travel writer is not just telling a story, but that they have earned the right to because of their investigation. In a way every piece of travel writing offers its narrator as the viewer of the world presented in the text. The difference is in the story of where the writer is coming from. As Grafton has said, the reader can interpret the footnotes of a work to observe the writer and how they arrived at the story they are telling. Every non-fiction work has a double story—the truth of the world the writer presents as narrative and the story of where they’re coming from in a research sense. Some travel writers are not interested in telling the reader how they arrived at their particular narrative. Tim Cahill’s humorous and irreverent adventure stories are an example of this. There is nothing wrong with this style of travel writing, though this form does not demonstrate the same research

and rigour that might allow travel writing to resonate in the academic community.

The notion of other genres providing alternative perspectives of history is not a concept that has only recently come to light. As Grafton remarks, it seems only reasonable to “debate for signs of new methods in the documentation, as well as the composition, of history” (1997, p.97). This confirms that the work of previous academic history where “scholars have already cut paths into the sources, down which the student can travel with some ease” (1997, p.97), now give travel writers the chance to create a new space for history writing that continues and enhances the work done before. Double writing within travel writing can allow the reader to view the journey of the writer in obtaining sources, while still presenting it from an immersed and stylistic perspective. Grafton says that in the last 200 years, “most histories, except those written to inform and entertain the larger public of non-specialists, and a few designed to irritate the small community of specialists have taken some version of the standard double form,” (1997, p.24) and ultimately they are the outward signs of a history’s integrity. If we look at Grafton’s own footnote usage we begin to see that it provides two stories of the same history, the written history and also how the writer got there, open for all to see, rather than pandering to a reader. Travel writing that genuinely contributes to knowledge allows a continuation of this; using source materials and immersion in a valid and rigorous way while still acknowledging that the reader’s experience is crucial as we will see in the case studies of Kremmer and Dalrymple. As Grafton says, there needs to be more questioning why we can’t improve the way history is written: “Historians picked up their techniques, then as now, in smash-and-grab raids on the glittering shop-windows of the other disciplines, and continued to employ these long after they had forgotten the theoretical reasons for doing so” (1997, p.230). This again gives us scope to examine the gap within historical writing and how travel writing can now make a case for inclusion when combined within this double story of research and narrative.

The growing literary and academic credibility of many travel writers, such as William Dalrymple and Christopher Kremmer, also suggests that this genre can be taken seriously as a new contributor to history. This is also highlighted by the fictocritical work of academic and travel writer Stephen Mueke in *No Roads* (1997). Mueke successfully

juxtaposes white and aboriginal perspectives of place and experience within the same text to address the presentation of the 'other' and to also provide a much more thorough and interwoven academic text. Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* also considers important historical transitions which have altered the way people look at the world and how the writers of history capture their world at a given moment, "[s]uch shifts in writing, if they are historically profound, affect more than one genre" (2002, p.4). It could be argued that there is an emerging 'golden era' for travel writing on the horizon as a recognised form of history writing in this post post-modern era. If we look at the case studies of Kremmer, Dalrymple and Marshall they are enlightening us to the trans-genre appeal of travel writing and its plurality as a form of academic history writing, ethnography and popular non-fiction in one.

## **2.9 Travel writing as History: Issues and the Move Forward**

Within this chapter I have observed the intersections that exist between travel writing and history writing and how these can suggest a way for travel writing to contribute to the rethinking of history. I have demonstrated how the history discipline has arrived at a point of rethinking and how scholars such as Jenkins, Ankersmit and Partner see an endorsement of narrative and creativity as the way forward for history. This move has been called 'post post-modernism' and it suggests further intersections with travel writing as a contributor to this new history. The intersections of subjectivism and truth within history demonstrate the importance of the contract with the reader and the conduct of the writer as they construct the work. This construction can also draw on the tropes suggested by White's *Metahistory*, though in a much looser form to allow the creativity and narrative strengths of travel writing to broaden the appeal of the work within this post post-modernist move. As a final intersection between travel writing and history we have observed the importance of the double story as explored by Grafton in *The Footnote* and how this explanation also suggests the importance of the persuasiveness of the subject when writing history. These elements combine to demonstrate the various points at which

travel writing, as a serious, subjective and creative form can contribute to knowledge as a new rendering of history writing.

A problem with this new interpretation I have already encountered in my own travel writing within this thesis is that the notions of past and future have little importance in the Guarani- Paraguayan culture which was part of the interpretation within my creative work. This provided many challenges with the gathering of information for my own work. This notion of historical thinking not being necessary thinking (Levi-Strauss, 1966) is an issue I encountered while living in New Australia.

The archives and histories I had read suggested that the Guarani (who are the predominant indigenous community in Paraguay and feature in my creative work) had a proud and complex history which I would be able to explore within my own narrative. The Guarani had migrated across South America, resisting outside religion and becoming one of the most prominent indigenous communities in South America, demonstrated by the recognition of the Guarani language as the official language of Paraguay and their respected status within the country. As I embedded myself in Paraguayan communities of which the Guarani were sometimes part of though, I noticed that some descendants had forgotten the exploits of their ancestors as the hardships of the past and the perceived difficulties of their future blurred the distinction between these experiences. I encountered descendants who had no recollection of their families, or their grandparents' motives for arriving and they displayed no apparent desire to understand more of their family histories after three generations living in Paraguay. This confirmed how different the travel writer's perspective on the ground can be to that of the historian who relies only on accounts of the past to represent a culture without seeing it for themselves over an extended period.

The Guarani disconnection from my view of the importance of history is similar to a problem encountered by Chakrabarty in his *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (2000). He investigates the problem of trying to write the history of a country like India, where the connection between culture and writer and subject is complex. The historian who recounts a history using the bird's eye view of all the other written and oral histories to find their own interpretation misses the experiential practice that travel writing has allowed me here. This project presented me with a unique

opportunity to dwell in one location, inside the actual colonies, for an extended period to get under the skin of the Australian utopian experience by talking, living and interacting with the descendants as a neighbour rather than just a journalist and an observer. Despite this, my notion of historicising is impossible to avoid completely and even unconsciously I bring my own Western values and narrative ideas to the project. Chakrabarty (2000) and Curthoys and Docker (2006) note that this is a significant issue for the Western historian writing on an outside place, though my travel writing form and the ‘on the ground’ approach of my field work allow as close to an insider’s perspective within narrative form as is possible, while still having the distance within the text to acknowledge the gap in understanding as an outside observer.

From the analysis of the problems encountered when looking at travel writing as history in this fashion it tempts us to observe what it might be to think non-historically within a work of history. By adopting a stance that is at once historically aware, though also utilises a more immersed and immediate point of view which can contextualise the events, documents and interactions within a broader narrative, we can find a place for travel writing as history writing in the rethinking of the discipline. This also strongly suggests that the travel writer can get much closer to this than a traditional historian can and it is an idea we will explore in the next chapter’s case studies.

## Chapter 3: Case Studies: Travel Writing and History

### 3.1 Legitimate Examples of Travel Writing as History

To examine the field of travel writing and its intersections with historical writing further I will present a series of case studies which display how some travel writing already does succeed in doing what I've set up within chapter two, utilising the sort of scholarly contract we have analysed, alongside examples of how some travel writing does indeed still present narratives where history is treated as entertainment and the conduct of the writer is less serious.

#### 3.1.2 Andrew Marshall

Andrew Marshall's *The Trouser People* (2002) is an account of the author's exploration of Burma before the recent political changes that saw the release of Aung San Suu Kyi. Marshall's journey also traces the apparent move towards a more visible and inclusive political process that has broken from the colonial structures of the past. Marshall uses the 'footsteps' trope to allow him to retrace the journey of Scottish explorer and colonial administrator, Sir George Scott, who amongst other things introduced the game of soccer to Burma.

This framework uncovers the clandestine British rule of Burma of the colonial era, where violence and disregard for local people was common. This is placed in the narrative alongside the modern problems and dangers of the country as seen through the eyes of the author. Marshall notes in his introduction that the narrative is pieced together from seven different journeys and that names have been changed within the text to protect those made vulnerable by the exploration. Marshall uses a travel writing trope similar to my own; he

juxtaposes his own journey into Burma with that of Scott's exploration into the far eastern hills of Burma. Marshall interweaves his own narrative with discrete chapters constructed from Scott's diaries and official records so as to better capture Scott's voice. His aim is to trace Scott's path into some of the most obscure locations in Burma to allow the reader to understand what has happened in Burma in the past and how this history has shaped its current image. Much of this echoes the 'romantic' trope of a "Grail quest" from Hayden White. As Marshall tours certain significant locations he transitions into a quote from Scott to give us a better appreciation of the historical significance:

They opened fire on us at about 700 yards, bullets about. Yelled defiance at us. Fled at first shell. One friendly killed. I saved a village full of them. Afterwards got the Colonel to give the dead man's wife Rp 100. Camp dined off my stores again (2002, p.83).

This pragmatic account of Scott's is juxtaposed against the lighter view of Marshall's to allow the reader to more subtly see the changes in both the country and the traveller a century later:

I was awoken before dawn by the high moan of sticky-rice sellers, carried with haunting clarity through the damp air. Then began the morning chorus of Burmese truckers hawking and gobbing at the wash area downstairs. It was an awesome performance. A decade before, while interviewing people in post-revolutionary Eastern Europe, I had come to suspect there was a connection between spitting and dictatorship (2002, p.87).

Marshall's view is 'from below', it uses clear subjectivism spliced with archival research in the text and the creativity within the narrative are clear. While this gives us a contemporary interpretation of the historical era around British occupation in Burma from an individual's perspective (Scott's), Marshall also demonstrates the historical problems that still endure in post-colonial Burma:

The horror stories I heard in Taunggyi were disturbing enough. They also contained disquieting echoes from another age. Driving out villagers at gunpoint, torching homes, stealing precious livestock: all these tactics were vigorously employed by the British during the pacification of Upper Burma (2002, p. 175).

This suggests that many of the inherent historical problems from the occupation era were still present in modern Burma. This sort of perspective would be impossible to appreciate without the comparison of Scott's ruthless and oblivious point of view, "We simply wiped

out the village and shot everyone we saw” (2002, p.175), against Marshall’s troubled revisiting as he talks to local tribesmen, students and soldiers to gain a perspective on what is really going on behind the curtain of the far eastern hills of the country.

As stated above, the exploration within *The Trouser People* adheres loosely to the romantic structure of White’s emplotment of history. Marshall clearly has cautious admiration for the bravery of Scott and conversely also for the Burmese people who have endured so much death and destruction at the hands of the British and now their own generals. The ending of Marshall’s exploration is open and unfinished, reflecting his view of the country in its current state (as of 2002), yet it is also hopeful as shown in his final exchange with Philip the Buddhist monk who has guided him through much of the country. Phillip says, “ ‘Nothing lasts. Everything is – what is the English word? – impermanent. We are born, we suffer, we grow old, we die. This is our destiny. Nobody can escape it’ ” (2002, p.291). Marshall hints that the historical cycle of Burma is not finished and his book is just one part of the mosaic. Marshall’s travel writing offers the reader an understanding of Burma’s history, colonial rule, recent military past and a window through modern anecdotes into what could be possible for the future. To demonstrate the research process Marshall has a lengthy index and the reference list is three pages long with relevant material. This gives us an appreciation of how travel writing can demonstrate its plurality and its ability to show another style of persuasive history writing.

### **3.1.3 Christopher Kremmer**

Christopher Kremmer’s, *The Carpet Wars*, published in 2002 and focuses on his 10 years as a foreign correspondent to give his travel writing as history writing a sense of patience and authenticity. His measured ‘from below’ perspective displays the form at its best while still coming clearly from the outside. This narrative is anecdotal in nature comprising his various encounters in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan. As with many subjective and creative non-fiction accounts, the best place to commence our review is

from the opening pages— this is where many travel writers will endeavour to use the form and their voice to grab the reader and draw them into the exploration on a micro and macro level.

Kremmer uses the rug seller, Tariq Ahmed, whom he meets initially in Kabul, to immerse us into the world of the people who live and work in conflict zones and he uses the images of the rugs to draw out the histories of the factions involved. Kremmer makes his conduct clear from the outset stating that, “I present Muslim society here as I found it; it is a personal portrait of a different world in which many of my friends and interlocutors made or sold rugs” (2002, p.xi). Kremmer also makes it clear that he has compressed situations and relocated sequences for narrative understanding, though these are minor alterations and he does not fictionalise or invent within the writing. This doesn’t seem to affect the level of truthfulness within the narrative alerting the reader to the fact that non-fiction writing is not exactly a neat procession where events happen promptly and in sequence. It serves to make Kremmer seem more trustworthy because of this initial admission and the fact that it stays true to its initial premise of exploring the Middle East. As a writer I see this admission of conduct as a reason to trust the author. He hasn’t invented scenarios or characters, though to allow the narrative to have the desired impact, to make sense and to flow chronologically there has been necessary restructuring.

Kremmer’s first encounter is in the rug bazaar of Kabul, where he browses the store and sips tea with the proprietor (hopeful of his own ‘from below’ gossip about the President he is about to meet for an official interview). He notices a prayer rug from the Baluchi region. Tariq gives Kremmer an introduction to the nomads, which then allows the author to explain to the reader the history of the Baluchi people right up to their current state. Kremmer weaves this history in between the interactions with Tariq as they talk about modern Afghanistan and barter for a rug at the same time culminating in the purchase of the rug and the establishment of a friendship, which allows us to understand the culture in more depth as the narrative continues: “Rolled up rugs lined the walls, insular and secret. But knowing them well, Tariq was more interested in unravelling me” (2002, p.3).

This combining of narrative anecdote and history is used throughout the travel

book, most effectively in the Baghdad chapter which allows the reader to enter a country at war. Kremmer uses the anecdote of him arriving (too late) for the 1998 Desert Fox bombing of Iraq by the US Forces. As the US end their campaign Kremmer arrives to relative peace and he decides on this as the angle for his reportage. As Kremmer travels into Baghdad in a taxi he equates ancient Iraq to the US of today, a country of firsts. Kremmer guides us through a stepped history of the country and its former status as the centre of Islam taking us from 5,000 BC when agriculture began in Mesopotamia through the rule of Haroun al-Rashid in the 9<sup>th</sup> Century, the Mongol rule of the city in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, the subsequent Ottoman period and the eventual discovery of oil in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century that has led to much of the current conflict. This thematic emergence of oil through Kremmer's relating of the history of Baghdad brings us into the 'now' of the narrative as Kremmer and his driver search (unsuccessfully) for petrol to get them into the city before his deadline and into the modern Baghdad of the foreign correspondent and the news stories that he relates to the outside world for ABC News. Kremmer's travel writing is infused with anecdote and history, as with Marshall's account of Burma, though he also adds footnotes to the emerging narrative to add more authenticity to the historical claims that get us to the 'now' period within the narrative.

#### **3.1.4 William Dalrymple**

William Dalrymple is one of the preeminent 'scholarly' travel writers publishing today. He started as a travel writer in the 1980s and has since created a style that combines travel and historical writing that is rare, if not unique. His thorough and immersed style demonstrates the effective use of a double story while also showing the further positive influences travel writing can have on the acceptance of the form in an academic forum. Within Dalrymple's history of religion in India, *Nine Lives* (2009), he seeks to understand the impact of religion on modern India, though he chooses to twist the narrative convention of foregrounding the narrator/ author by focusing on the stories of his nine subjects:

Each life is intended to act as a keyhole into the way that each specific religious vocation has been caught and transformed in the vortex of India's metamorphosis during this rapid period of transition, while revealing the extraordinary persistence of faith and ritual in a fast-changing landscape. (2009, p.13)

This excerpt highlights Dalrymple's aim, while also making us, the readers, very clear on his role as the narrator. It is his contract with the reader and the admission of subjectivism which makes us persuaded by the truth of his point of view and the measured historical travel writing therein. To detail Dalrymple's investment in the story further he tells the reader how he arrived in India as a young correspondent and he now still lives in India on a farm outside New Delhi with his family— demonstrating his closeness to the reader (through the contract of truthfulness) and demonstrating his own immersion of years in the 'place' of the narrative. Dalrymple makes it very clear where his story parameters lie (he's not going to cover the enduring Muslim- Hindu tension) and he also makes it clear that he used eight different interpreters throughout the narrative and has, as much as possible, tried to put himself— as the observer and recorder — in the background of the anecdotes so as to not dilute the perspective he is aiming for with the narrative. We can find a clear similarity here with the admissions from Kremmer on compression above—this honesty makes the presence of the writer more evident and we trust the narrator as a result.

In the chapter 'A Nun's Tale' Dalrymple introduces us to a Jain nun, Mataji, while she is on a pilgrimage in Karnataka in Southern India. Dalrymple places this alongside the history of the place he is visiting to give the encounter more historical significance:

For more than 2,000 years, this Karnatakan town has been sacred to the Jains. It was here, in the third century BC, that the first Emperor of India, Chandragupta Maurrya, embraced the Jain religion and died through a self-imposed fast to the death, the emperor's chosen atonement for the killings for which he had been responsible in his life of conquest. Twelve hundred years later, in AD 981, a Jain general commissioned the largest monolithic statue in India, sixty feet high, on the top of the larger of the two hills, Vindhyagiri. (2009, Chapter: A Nun's Tale, p.2)

Dalrymple weaves the history of the Jain religion into his own first person narrative as he climbs this pilgrimage mountain to meet the barefoot and bald nun. Dalrymple also uses anecdotes and description to give colour and energy to the learning of facts, keeping the discovery and the reader's experience central as we are introduced to character and

history:

She smiled: ‘You have to understand that for us death is full of excitement. You embrace *sallekhana* not out of despair with your old life, but to gain and attain something new. It’s just as exciting as visiting a new landscape or a new country: we feel excited at a new life, full of possibilities’ (2009, Chapter: A Nun’s Tale, p.14).

Here we see Mataji explaining the custom of voluntary starvation (something her friend attempted, in order to die according to her Jain beliefs). Dalrymple’s inability to understand how it is not considered a form of suicide allows Mataji to explain the history and the complexity of the religion to the reader at the same time without the construction feeling forced. Dalrymple also uses humour to engage the characters and to humanise the religion for the reader– explaining in one anecdote the Jains who never wash, which leaves them looking as if they are wearing “closely fitting suits of black armour”. We also get an example in practice here of many of the theories discussed in the re-imagining of ethnography and history. Dalrymple embodies Ankersmit’s endorsement of subjectivity by presenting this through his own eyes and measuring the information with his own prejudices and queries. This gives us a more valuable and sincere insight into the histories of the ‘alternative’ religions of India than other travel writing or history texts written from a Western perspective. The way Dalrymple balances fact, anecdote and the juxtaposition of character and author interpretation within the piece demonstrates the power that scholarly travel writing can have as a plural form embodying the various intersections with scholarly writing we have analysed in chapter two.

### **3.2 Questionable Examples of Travel Writing as History**

At the other end of the travel writing spectrum there are numerous examples of the form treating history as a distraction from the narrative and embodying principles that have kept the assertion that travel writing is, “the poor cousin of literary genres” (2012, p.x) according to Jonathan Raban. This is not to say that they are necessarily ‘bad’, though the conduct of the writer is much shallower than the examples we have just examined. As

stated earlier, travel writing does not need to be historical, though when it does write historically within the narrative it can have serious implications for the interpretation of the text and the level of reader engagement. The below examples demonstrate why travel writing still struggles for legitimacy and credibility as a form of not just history writing, but non-fiction writing in general.

### 3.2.1 Pico Iyer

Pico Iyer's *Video Night in Kathmandu* (1988) looks at the emerging western influence in previously closed and traditional societies. Iyer is of Indian heritage and grew up in the United Kingdom and the United States, he is, "at home in both East and West" and his travel writing takes up the challenge put forth within *Orientalism* using narrative representation 'from below' to extend the representation of the 'other'.

Iyer takes seven months to travel between Bali, Japan, China, the Philippines and India amongst other destinations using the initial motif of the arrival of the *Rambo* film in the east as his way of viewing their changing histories and the emergence of modernity within traditional society. Iyer's book is a series of discrete chapters in each location which latch onto one specific cultural oddity to highlight the intersections between the east and the west. It is this observation that guides Iyer and gives the narrative a sense of focus as he travels through countries as an educated tourist looking for the evidence of change. Iyer says, "[t]exts read us as much as we do them, and in the different ways that different cultures responded to forces from the west, I hoped to see something of their different characters and priorities" (1988, p.14). This is also the way Iyer uses emplotment to give the stories within his exploration shape as we note the different articulations of western influence between traditional Nepalese monks and Filipino prostitutes– the thematic linking gives the narrative an identifiable shape (though not the emplotment neatness of White) as Iyer's subjectivist approach draws us into his way of seeing the east.

Iyer is a respected travel writer and a thorough practitioner, though what makes the history questionable within Iyer's work in this book (certainly not all Iyer's travel writing) is the focus on the popular and quirky above serious historical details. This is not to say that Iyer's exploration of the east from a western perspective is bad or misleading, though it is more of a cursory "History of the Present", where contemporary perspective is applied to historical understanding only briefly. As we will see, Iyer's observations are enjoyable and light, though they lack the sort of depth and obvious double story we have seen in the work of Kremmer and Dalrymple to really engage us through the investigative quality of the work. Iyer says as much when he admits as to how he went about collecting the material for the book:

I let myself be led by circumstance. Serendipity was my tour guide, assisted by Caprice. Instead of seeking out information, I let it find me. I did not bend my plans to look for examples of the Western presence, or to bolster any argument. (1988, p.33)

Despite the admission from Iyer, this does not lessen the perspective— it adds weight to the strength of the 'now' we view within the text. We see Iyer going to see *Rambo* in a Yogyakarta cinema and this creates a powerful comparison to the cultural performances of the traditional Ramayana that are ignored within the city except by visiting tourists— locals prefer the action of John Rambo's heroic adventure as a Vietnam war veteran against the classical text that is a part of the fabric of their Indonesian historic and cultural consciousness. Iyer addresses the reader directly (another demonstration of the forging of a contract of trust with the intended audience) on why his travel writing perspective is authentic, yet different, "I, however, have tried to take a slightly different tack; rather than showing how one personality acts in different places, I have sought to show how different places act on one personality" (1988, p.36). This intentional shaping demonstrates the 'plurality' that Mary Baine Campbell hopes for with travel writing, though without the level of investigation we are hoping for in this thesis. Pico Iyer's work forges a different sort of contract with the reader. This is not to say that it is worth less, though the reader arrives at a travel book such as this expecting much less in terms of the double story that is presented and the subsequent academic and historical value.

As the main case study of how travel writing can demonstrate this engagement

without necessarily showing a rigorous double story we look specifically at Iyer's chapter: 'China– The Door Swings Both Ways' that explores the tourist experience in recently opened China (remember that this was written in 1988). The paranoia of 'New' China is such that Iyer equates the experiences to a series of awkward blind dates as he strives to find an independent view of the country. Even though Iyer is well read and his grasp of China's history is obvious, the first person narration as he tries to buy a train ticket to Beijing at the Canton Station shows how confused and confusing the adaptation is:

I walked through the length of corridors and around a balcony and through the garden, back around the hall, into waiting rooms and out of them, back up the sweeping staircase and down again. Everywhere it was the same: no English, no help, no good. (1988, p.126)

Iyer takes us through the hangover of the Cultural Revolution with his experiences and his interactions with locals who show him the frailties and inconsistencies of the new era being created a day at a time; the older generation look to their heritage while their children are looking to the USA for guidance. His subjects embrace capitalism and talk of the influence of Hemingway, Esso and Sissy Spacek films as their frames of reference. Thus the world's largest country had started putting Mao's celebrated maxim– "Make the past serve the present, make the foreign serve China" – to radical new use (1988, p.137).

This strange courtship shows a unique perspective on the 'in between' historical era as China is struggling between two distinct existences. As we read this now in 2014 and see that China has very much embraced the road of capitalism it is valuable as a subjective and 'from below' form of travel writing that allows us to appreciate a snapshot of the time though the historical treatment is subordinated for the quirks and character details in the present. Iyer goes further with this clever rendering as he spends time with an elderly couple whom were in Beijing (or Peking) when the Cultural Revolution was at its strongest and, "the Old China hung in the air like incense" (1988, p.143) to give us a perspective on the fracture of the changes from old to new though he fails to really capture the details of the Cultural Revolution in a historical sense so as to give his observations more weight.

Through Iyer's account of change in Asia we get a traveller's understanding of

these societies, which demonstrates a ‘from below’ perspective, though the type of contract forged with the reader is of the lesser value to previous examples we have seen because of its less evident double story. Everywhere he goes it seems to be versions of the same anecdote of ‘difference’: he could write this about anywhere (outside Asia) and the impact would be the same.

### 3.2.2 Bruce Chatwin

Bruce Chatwin’s 1977 work, *In Patagonia*, is an influential travel narrative which prompted creative non-fiction writers and readers to seriously observe the plurality of the form for the first time in many years. Chatwin’s exploration of the pampas and desolate mountain towns of southern Argentina and Chile uses an engaging literary voice that draws the reader in, complemented by an irreverent and immediate style. This is seen beautifully with his opening paragraph, which establishes the quest within the narrative:

In my grandmother’s dining-room there was a glass-fronted cabinet and in the cabinet a piece of skin. It was a small piece only, but thick and leathery, with strands of coarse, reddish hair. It was stuck to a card with a rusty pin. On the card was some writing in faded black ink, but I was too young then to read.

“What’s that?”

“A piece of brontosaurus.” (1977, p.1)

Chatwin entices the reader to follow him to discover the place where the skin was taken *In Patagonia*. The skin ends up being from a mammoth and it is gradually forgotten within the narrative, though Chatwin uses this as a device to engage us. This is a fascinating example of a less persuasive form of travel writing, where the conduct of the writer ultimately influences how the reader can engage with this as non-fiction and investigation. Chatwin feels free to embellish and enhance the encounters from his narrative for effect as Peter Hulme notes in the *Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*:

Chatwin remains a more obviously social writer, largely dependent on the anecdotes he can collect, from the eccentric characters he meets– or perhaps one

should say from the people he meets whom his writing turns into eccentric characters. (2002, p.92)

Chatwin's *In Patagonia* is possibly the most influential piece of travel writing from the last 40 years, frequently re-printed and the continuing influence and controversy it still courts after nearly 40 years. Though, it is precisely because of this influence due to his colourful anecdotes, interesting diversions and clever extending of history, that the contract entered into is one of entertainment and is narcissistic, rather than one of investigative and historical competence and visibility. While it is undoubtedly a fine piece of literature, Chatwin ignores the conventions of truth which Kremmer and Dalrymple use to guide their investigations. On the one hand Chatwin is cleverly deconstructing the expectation of truth within non-fiction by presenting historical constructs and quirky characters as he sees fit. On the other hand Chatwin is doing with truth what Taussig did in the *Magic of the State* and this not only sets a bad example for the role of anecdote in travel writing, but the narrative also goes nowhere because of the murky nature of truth within the text. Chatwin problematises the 'self' as the traveller with *In Patagonia*. He is cynical of the idea of travel as investigation. His writing is undoubtedly beautiful as literature, though it sets up this style for imitation and further cheapening of the travel writing form not about the 'other' or the 'self', but about finding quirky anecdotes.

Implicitly what Chatwin is doing is cheapening the relationship with the reader for entertainment purposes. Chatwin is undermining the ambitions the form can have. While he might be a visionary in some respects, his style moves the genre furthest away from a possible academic rendering towards a much more narcissistic enterprise. Within my creative work I've rigorously pursued the truth as best I can find out. The fact that Chatwin does not engage with the terms 'non-fiction' or 'travel writing' is not helpful as *In Patagonia* is presented as his true experience and one that the reader believes, at least initially, until one either travels to the regions (see Sandra Allen's account *In Patagonia* in Patagonia in the *Paris Review* May 2013) and uncovers Chatwin's extending of the truth or reads competing histories or travel writing accounts which have markedly different versions. Chatwin finds morsels of history in Patagonia (of French royalty, Welsh colonists and the story of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid in Trelew) that are fascinating and illuminating, though because they are surrounded by anecdotes that are

questionable and don't adhere to a notion of truthfulness that the reader can confirm with the text, the overall impact is lost— to both scholarly readers of the history and popular readers of the travel narrative.

Scholars have analysed the lasting effects of Chatwin's experiment on scholarship. Nicholas Travers' thesis for the University of British Columbia in 2002 looked at the reasons behind Chatwin's embellishment and what specific techniques were used within the text, concluding that Chatwin's writing in *In Patagonia* was that of "an artist fictionalizing his experience to better express its complex truth" (2002, p.ii) and this examines how Chatwin manipulates the form and the reader for his own purposes. It could be said that many travel writers do this, as we see with Kremmer's admission of compressing situations and time periods, though as Travers says of Chatwin's *In Patagonia* and *The Songlines*, he finds excess and exaggeration irresistible and his writing demonstrates the artistic pleasure of going too far by producing art or narrative at others' expense. It is this excess and exaggeration which render the contract much less effective than those we have observed above. Chatwin's belief that non-fiction was not a binding contract and that his imagination served to act as a positive, revitalising force further displays his contempt for the 'contract' of the non-fiction writer to the reader and as such any truth claims on anecdote or indeed history are too easily dismissed. Travers identifies a technique of:

Blurring the lines between his own and others' voices, Chatwin introduces another mediating layer. He frequently reads Patagonia through other authors' representations, but individualizes his readings to such an extent that no authentic voice appears discernable. (2002, p.14)

This viewpoint might seem overly pessimistic, though when we consider the impact that Chatwin's narrative has had on popular readings of Patagonia and of travel writing in general, Travers' thesis alerts us to how misleading a travel narrative that doesn't adhere to a rigorous code can be.

From these examples we can see how good travel writing can embody certain suggestions from academic writing that can appeal to both scholarly and popular readers. These examples utilise the structures of White, Ankersmit and Baine Campbell and even take up the challenge put forward by Said in popular non-fiction. However on the counter

side of this we can see from Chatwin and Iyer (these popular and provocative examples are chosen because of their visibility) that the travel writing form is still fighting against a tendency to use the contract of truthfulness in a less serious way in preference for the aesthetic appeal of the narrative. This is also why my creative component will hopefully demonstrate the best aspects of the examples above— those of creativity, subjectivism, employed shape and a clear double story where the narrative appeal and the extensive research are evident to both academic and popular readers.

### **3.2.3 Conclusion**

Just as it has been previously established that history is a literary pursuit focused on narrative (White 1978), my hope with this thesis is that I have presented a narrative of how the plurality of certain types of investigative travel writing can now find a valuable place in the rethinking of the history discipline. I have looked at the history of travel writing, anthropology and history to demonstrate their previous intersections. The broader aim with this strategy is to show that they are complementary forms which have an ability to co-exist academically through travel writing.

Within this thesis I have looked at the rethinking of ethnography to demonstrate how legitimate ethno-travel accounts are now accepted within the discipline. From the criticisms of scholars such as Leiris, Asad, Said and Fabian I have shown how ethnography has moved to become a more creative and reflexive discipline. This has culminated in the contemporary ethno-travel accounts of Michael Taussig and Michael Jackson who use creative, memoir-like techniques to foreground the travel of the narrator into other cultures. These works also demonstrate travel writing's success as a plural form within academia.

From this point I have explored the recent shifts within history writing and the questions of enduring validity it is now facing. We can learn from the similar rethinking in ethnography that accepting creativity and a plurality of expressions, including travel writing, is a legitimate move forward.

I have then explored travel writing as investigation in further depth to demonstrate the intersections that exist between serious travel writing and scholarship while also suggesting that travel writing can become part of academic history writing. These intersections include the endorsement of subjectivism (Ankersmit 2009), where the conduct of the author, their own history and attributes are acknowledged and serve to further classify the work as a snapshot of a particular moment in history for a deliberate audience. A further intersection is a clear and rigorous contract of truthfulness with the reader as established by William Dalrymple (2005) drawing on the autobiographical theories of Lejeune. A contract allows the relationship between author and reader to have a necessary element of trust and engagement with the work and this is something that the immersed and rigorous travel writer adds to the field.

Further to these intersections, within chapter two I have shown how travel writing finds use in Hayden White's emplotments of history through a loose shaping of the material to create a dynamic whole. The next attribute of travel writing as history writing I have identified involves the 'from below' immersion style of anecdotal history writing from Darnton and Ginzburg as seen in their accounts of Italy and France from the point of view of the peasants and working class citizens to gain a broader perspective of place and the reality of the narrative perspective from within. Further to this I have analysed the importance of the double story of the historian as seen with Grafton's (1997) exploration of the footnote in history. This also presents an important intersection with the immersed and serious travel writer who demonstrates the research and the narrative of their travel writing as history within the one work.

These intersections provide a necessary set up to appreciate the plurality of serious travel writing as demonstrated in the various case studies in chapter three. The examples from Kremmer, Dalrymple and Marshall show how this serious travel writing is already being done which not only utilises the intersections explored in chapter two but also makes a strong case for its inclusion in the discipline as a valuable contributor to the plurality of academic history into the future.

We can now appreciate how travel writing can become an important part of academic history and, when done well, how it can present a perspective that until now has

not been considered in a serious fashion. These considerations also set up my creative work as the main case study for analysis. As Peter Hulme says, “there can be no doubt that the range and ethos of the genre is growing in exciting and vital ways” (2002, p.10). This combined exegesis and creative work is one of the new contributions to the growth of the travel writing genre and the hopeful beginning of the understanding of the contribution of travel writing to history writing scholarship.

## Chapter 4: The Creative Work

### 4.1 Context

The source material for the historical research component of my creative work consists of the archive material held in three Australian libraries. The Mitchell Library in Sydney contains original writing from Dame Mary Gilmore and the microfilm diaries of original colonists. The 'rare books and special collections' section of the University of Sydney Library has six boxes of original material and the National Library in Canberra contains letters, diary entries, newsletters and raw material. The problem with this archive material is that it contains no meaningful contribution after the 1950s. After reading the material available on New Australia and in the process of writing up my own account I realised that my 'on the ground' approach was markedly different from anything done before on New Australia. From May until November 2010 I conducted extensive in-country fieldwork to learn the story of New Australia and Cosme in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. I lived in Paraguay and rented a house in New Australia and the descendants confirmed that I was the first Australian to go back and live in the colony for more than 100 years. This approach offers my work a unique perspective on the New Australian story. Where the previous accounts are necessarily pointed in terms of their journalistic inquiry (Souter 1965 and Whitehead 1997), I was able to live beside the Murray, McCreen, Casey and Smith families for months to discover histories that were only available once I blended into the scenery. I was in the settlement for the duration of a murder investigation, the first in New Australia's history, I lived with the Wood family in Cosme during their final family reunion and I was subjected to the frustration and anger of the Oliva family who only approached me after three months living as their neighbour. This revealed much about the past lives of the descendants and their submerged family histories. These stories don't appear in previous works (indeed whole families such as the Caseys and Murrays have been left out of the other works) and they provide an example of where this on the ground approach provides a new perspective on the represented history of New Australia

and its descendants.

To complement my work on New Australia and Cosme I also visited the German colonies of New Germany, Independencia and San Bernardino, La Colmena of the Japanese arrivals and Filadelfia of the Mennonites to gain first hand experience of the settler reality in Paraguay and to give my account of the New Australians a sense of context. I was also given two diaries from descendant families (the Murrays and the Birks) when I sought out their families in Paraguay. These diaries had never been seen by a visiting writer before and allowed a more significant understanding of their histories.

A further aspect of the creative work worth brief acknowledgement is the role of translation within this project. Some of the conversations and interactions in Paraguay occurred in Spanish (which I am fluent in) and I translated these into English to maintain flow, consistency and context for the reader throughout. I have not made further reference to the significance of translation or the important work of Michael Cronin on translation and identity (2006) or that of Loredana Polezzi on translating travel (2001) within this text as I believe it is not part of my focus on the pluralising of history. I believe it is also sufficiently addressed through my acknowledgement of subjectivism (Ankersmit 2001) and truthfulness (Berkhofer 1997) within the construction of the work as these principles also apply to the integrity of the translated content.

My creative work is comprised of the research I conducted in Paraguay and in the Australian archives as a reworked and appropriate creative document for this study. I have written a 70,000 word travel writing narrative which uses my time in New Australia in Paraguay as the subject of the exploration. A version of this creative work was published as *Ticket to Paradise* by ABC Books in 2012. This was 80,000 words long and contained a separate focus as it was not intended to be complemented with an exegesis for regular readers. I have edited the creative work within this exegesis for brevity, purpose and overall length and it is different to the book version published. I have also included an exegetical reflection at the end of each chapter to demonstrate the double-story of my work and how the various elements of my travel writing intersect with history writing. There is also a reference list for each chapter to further allow the reader to observe my research within the narrative.

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