VOICES IN TRANSIT: A CRITICAL STUDY OF INDIAN TRAVEL WRITING

THESIS

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by

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Certified Copy.
All suggested changes have been incorporated

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CERTIFICATE

As required under the University Ordinance, OB-9.9(viii), I hereby certify that the thesis entitled, ***Voices in Transit: A Critical Study of Indian Travel Writing***, submitted by Ms. Sangeeta Naik for the Award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English has been completed under my guidance. The thesis is the record of the research work conducted by the candidate during the period of her study and has not previously formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship or other similar titles to her by this or any other University .

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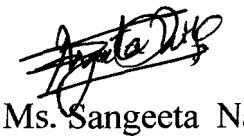
DECLARATION

As required under the University Ordinance, OB-9.9(v), I hereby declare that the thesis entitled, ***Voices in Transit A Critical Study of Indian Travel Writing***, is the outcome of my own research undertaken under the guidance of Dr. (Mrs.) K. J. Budkuley, Associate Professor, Department of English, Goa University. All the sources used in the course of this work have been duly acknowledged in the thesis. This work has not previously formed the basis of any award of Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship or other similar titles to me, by this or any other University.



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Date: *Ms. Sangeeta Naik*

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Travel writing: an introduction

Travel has been integral to human life even in its nomadic state. After humans had settled down to a calmer existence they travelled far and wide. Of and on, this adventurous human activity has been recorded. In fact, as Theroux remarks in *The Tao of Travel*, the travel narrative is the 'oldest in the world, the story the wanderer tells to the folk gathered around the fire after his return from a journey" (Preface, 2011, viii). These travel tales that may range from being full of wonder, delight, awe, are very often instructional and entertaining. At times, some of them may be even farcical. However, the best end in sheer pleasure at the amazing travelling experience and the admiration for the human involved in travel.

Often some of the tales remain verbally untold, but many more get told in writings, which though professedly objective, tend to become creative, since the urge to imaginatively present human experience of travel is the impulse behind such kind of 'created' writing. Budkuley in an article, 'Interplay of Motive and Motif' in Marathi Travel Writing', perceptively observes in this regard:

> Stasis, monotony and isolation are in all likelihood the three angst creating conditions that human psyche has always abhorred and striven to counter by way of adventure, change and creativity. This can be the possible explanation for the timeless urge for travel as well as for travel writing displayed by humanity. In fact, it can be argued that, in these twin exploits the innermost craving of mankind for novelty, mobility and communication is fulfilled. (Unpublished Article, Dec. 2002, n.p)

It is thus that travel writing, fulfils the innermost craving of mankind. Interestingly, in recent times, it has also become the focus of critical and literary inquiry. The travel voices speak a language conditioned by their socio-cultural milieu. While the western travel-voice has been substantially studied, especially after the 1980s, the same cannot be said of Indian travel writing. As such, the present study has undertaken the task of exploring this dynamic body of literary work in the Indian context, with available theoretic and critical inputs.

1.2 A case for the study of Indian Travel writing:

Being considered as a sub-genre of literary prose, until recently, travel writing, had been a marginalized domain in literary discourse. This had been the case, in spite of the sheer quantum, the distinctive nature and focus of travel-related work, as also its antiquity, reaching back by centuries, at times millennia. For instance, referring to travel narratives in the Biblical tradition, Hulme and Youngs point out to the Exodus in the Bible, and in the classical tradition, to travel related saga of the epic hero Odysseus immortalized by Homer in *Odyssey*(2002, 2). In the travel tradition in India, for instance, the

triumphs and travails in the course of journeys undertaken by the semi-divine protagonists of the ancient epics *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* are only too well known to be discussed. Thus, although travel writing has had such rich antecedents, it was hardly accorded, the critical recognition enjoyed by conventional literary genres like poetry, drama, novel and other prose writing like the essay or the short story.

One of the primary reasons for this neglect is the fact that travel literature has been conglomerated into the miscellaneous mass of writing that includes anything ranging from maps, tourist guide-books to photo essays, manuals and journals pertaining even remotely to travel. Literary travel writing thus has not been separated or disengaged from the bulk of its popular non-literary counterpart. However, the recent upsurge of interest in the so-called marginal literature traditionally branded as 'sub literary genres', mainly due to the development of theoretical approaches like Formalism, Deconstruction, Discourse analysis, New historicism and most tellingly Postcolonial discourse has also kindled interest in travel writing, as a distinct literary form/genre. (Campbell, 2002, 261-264).

Thanks to the publication of *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (2002), which extensively analyses travel writing in English between 1500 to the late twentieth century and of other more inclusive studies devoted to the contemporary period in western travel writing such as Alison Russell's *Crossing Boundaries: Postmodern Travel Literature* (2000) and Holland and Huggan's jointly edited critical volume, *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical*

Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing (1998), travel writing as a genre has come to stay. These studies reveal the orientation of research on travel writing as a genre taking place in the west i.e. mainly U.S.A and Western Europe.

In addition to these works, the iconic and seminal text of Mary Louise Pratt, namely, *Imperial Eyes: Travel writing and Transculturation* that appeared as early as 1992 must be mentioned. In Pratt's tome, European travel writing from 1750 to 1980 has been scrutinized from a cross-cultural perspective. In turn, this has helped lay the ground for a postcolonial reading of the travel genre. Thus, travel writing in the west has now become a potential domain for multiple critical explorations. This has considerably erased the stereotypical image of travel writing as popular consumerist fare. In fine, this emergent critical canon has helped build the notion of travel writing as a compelling literary genre deserving critical attention as well as theoretic analysis and interpretation.

As against this, Indian critical writing about travel has little to show by way of generic analysis and theoretic inputs. Although travel writing in India has generated critical interest and it has been explored in recent times in works such as Simonti Sen's *Travels to Europe: Self and Other in Bengali Travel Narratives 1870-1910* (2005), and Inderpal Grewal's *Home and Harem: Nation, Gender, Empire and the Cultures of Travel* (1996), their concern has been with the contextual, mainly socio-cultural, rather than with a generic or literary-critical enquiry. Moreover, these works confine themselves to a

specific historical period that is, nineteenth century India, which has seen an upsurge of travel books especially to England.

With the exception of Vasant Sawant's Marathi work, *Pravas Varnan: Ek Vangamay Prakar* (1987) based on his Ph.D. thesis and Surendra Mathur's *Yatra Sahitya Ka Udbhav Aur Vikas* (1962), a broad perspectival, cross-literary, generic study of Indian travel writing befitting the Indian multilingual scenario in the languages, known to this researcher, such as Marathi, Konkani and Hindi seems not to have been undertaken till date. This offers tremendous scope for a multi-pronged research in this relatively unexplored area.

Considering the apparent shortfall of critical work into this challenging literary domain, an investigation into the historical context as well as generic visage of travel writing as a literary genre in the Indian context, was felt to be necessary. Moreover, since travel writing has willy-nilly camouflaged itself across the borders of various sub-generic identities, being written in forms like diaries, letters, even fictive narratives and essays, among others, it is on the periphery of multiple genres. It is also concerned, literally and metaphorically, with crossing of physical/spiritual boundaries and venturing into unfamiliar domain/locales. This complexity of the travel genre and the multifaceted nature of Indian travel writing, thus offered a significant area for undertaking research.

1.3. Indian Travel Writing – A historical overview:

Indian culture has been seen to be closely linked to travel. As is the case with some other cultures of the world, travel has been essential to its existence,

growth and sustenance. Thus, travel has been also a part of the ancient Indian literary tradition. Surendra Mathur, for instance identifies three ages of travel tradition in Indian literature. As categorized by Mathur, the travel tradition in Indian literature falls into: the Vedic age (1500BC to 1200BC), the Pre-historic Age (1200 BC to 600BC), and the Historic Age (600BC to1200AD). With the help of available works of these periods, he traces the chronological as well as the evolutionary path of travel tradition in India.

Mathur also reveals how during these ages Indian travellers visited various parts of the world with varied objectives such as, political, trade-related, religious and educational. He elucidates how with the development in modes of travel more and more places came to be explored (as cited by Sawant, 1987, 10-11).

However, although India has had a long tradition of travel, writing about travel, according to Sawant, is relatively of recent origin. This view is partially right, since travel writing as an independent genre had not emerged till the modern period in India though there were instances of travel related writing in epics and poetry. For instance, Dr Gopalkrishna and Jois point out that in the ancient Indian literature viz *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and *Bhagwata*, "there are instances of heroes visiting holy places, sacred rivers, venerable hermitages and the authors of these works have given their vivid description"(*Tanjavur to Vijayarajagiridurga,* 1997, *Introduction*, xv-xvi). Similarly, they also observe how many a work in Indian languages, such as the Sanskrit mega poem *Meghdoot* by Kalidasa (c400) "narrates [his] visits to rivers, hills, mountains

and valleys" (ibid, xvi). They also note the *sthalapuranas* in the important temples of South India which were descriptions of the holy places visited by the Tamil saints of yore (ibid, xviii). However, all these travel accounts were subsumed under the broader generic frameworks of either epics or saint poetry.

Simonti Sen has observed that the traveller has not been a very popular figure in the *Hindu /shastric* tradition. She points out that one of the words for travel *bhraman* –a derivative of the Sanskrit root word *bhram* means to make a mistake or to err. In this sense *bhraman*, according to Sen, means aimless wandering. She cites the example of an episode in the epic *Mahabharata*, where on being asked by Yaksha as to who is truly happy, Yuddhisthira the eldest of Pandavas, cites among other things the one who "stireth not from home" as being the happiest, to depict this negative notion of travel, wherein travel had been undertaken as a punishment or banishment. Though Sen clarifies that in the context of pilgrimage, travel is encouraged and given a high status; she concludes that traditional travel as an autonomous practice was never encouraged (2005, 2-3). This may partially explain why the genre remained subsumed in pilgrimage narratives or epics in the ancient Indian literature.

The travels appended by compulsory abode as a hermit which is referred to as *Vanvas* (stay in a forest for a certain period, generally as a requirement rather than as a voluntary abode) was also an aspect highlighted in the two epics Ramayana and Mahabharata through the episode of Ram, Laxman, Sita in *Ramayana*, and the Pandavas (once with mother Kunti and later with common

wife Draupadi) in *Mahabharata*. The aspect of *Vanvas* that connotes a negative notion of travel as suffering is very similar to that implied in western works like *The Epic of Gilgamesh or Odyssey*. Leed, for instance, in his in depth analysis of western travel writing in, *The Mind of the Traveler: from Gilgamesh to Global Tourism*, points out that the journey in these two western ancient works was:

> [A]n explication of fate or necessity, as a revelation of those forces that sustain and shape, alter and govern human destinies. The travels narrated in the *Odyssey* and *The Epic of Gilgamesh* are god-decreed and thus not wholly voluntary nor pleasurable (1991, 7).

Although the notion of travel in the two western and Indian epics is similar, unlike its western counterparts, which have been called as *travel* epics (Emphasis added, Leed, 6), the Indian works are primarily epics and not *travel epics*, since travels form only a part of the larger narratives. In ancient Indian literature, travel writing was thus embedded in genres like epics and poetry.

In early medieval Indian literature too, travel formed a part of the major genre of poetry, particularly of Bhakti poetry. The Bhakti lyric, as Sisir Kumar Das points out in *A History of Indian Literature (500-1399): From the Courtly to the Popular* (2005), was a new form of literature, a product of the Bhakti Movement that began in the 6th century in Tamil Nadu and developed in various Indian languages through the medieval ages. Further, he points out that, there were two groups: one the worshippers of the deity Siva called the *Shaivites* and the other, the worshippers of the deity Vishnu and his incarnation Krishna called the *Vaishnavites*.

According to Das, the saints who belonged to the above sects would travel from one temple to another praising God followed by the devotees. He observes further, that this articulation was not the calm recitation reminiscent of the ancient Bhakti tradition in India; it was frenzy-an ecstasy, an outpouring of love for God. Through various examples of literary works belonging to this period Das shows that in the Bhakti lyrics, music and folk practices were used and a sacred geography was created. Thus, he argues, that a new genre of poetry which preached the religion of compassion and love and crossed across various social and cultural boundaries came into being. (Das, 27-35).

Though the Bhakti movement as perceived by Das, was a result of "an expression of a strong hatred against the Buddhists and the Jains" (ibid, 28), it also spelt a desire to change the rigidity that had set into the traditional Hindu religion making it intolerant and exclusionist. These Bhakti lyrics were thus not only structurally different in their usage of folk practices, but also thematically revolutionary in endorsing and propagating the religion of universal love and compassion. These poems could be called *travel lyrics* since they were composed on the move and were necessitated by the travelling experiences of the saints.

Critics like Das, have also identified forms of the travel book in the compositions of the later proponents of the Bhakti tradition especially in Marathi literature. Namdev (1270-1350), a disciple of Jnaneshwar alias Jnanadev, for instance, wrote an account of his pilgrimage to north India titled *Thirtavaliche Abhanga*. Das calls this text a proto form of a travelogue (Ibid,

205). The *Lilacharitra* (1276), written by Mhaimbhat who belongs to the *Nath Sampradaya* preceding Jnaneshwar, has also been called as a travel autobiography (*Encyclopaedia of Indian Literature*; 4376). There was thus a rich tradition of travel-related writing in ancient as well as early medieval Indian literature until almost the fourteenth century, albeit subsumed in the larger generic forms like the epic and poetry.

However, the spirit of adventure which is a characteristic of western travel writing is absent in Indian travel writing. In all likelihood, with the various invasions in the later medieval period, India recoiled inwards and was not able to deal with the spate of invasions that suddenly followed. Karsondas Mulji a Gujarati native, social reformer and an avid endorser of travel in the mid nineteenth century points out in his book, *England Ma Pravas*(1886), how the Muslim invasions must have curbed the desire for travel in India and led to a phobia of foreign travel among the Hindus (the native religion of the medieval period). He further asserts that if travel was not mingled with religion then perhaps the Hindus would not have travelled at all. (As qtd in Sawant, 1987, 4). Thus, travel during late medieval period, in the Indian context, was largely, if not entirely, religious. Hence, the earliest accounts of travel in Indian languages were in the form of pilgrimage narratives.

To a large extent, the Muslim invasions and later the early European colonial control generated a sense of fear and led to lesser travel abroad. There was a strict social censure linked to travel abroad referred to as the *sindubhandhi* (restrictions put on travel beyond and across the Sindhu river,

during the medieval age) and slowly travel came to mean being exposed to the harmful influences of foreign people and their ways of living. Thereby, travel was associated with the notion of potential defilement and by late medieval period came to be confined exclusively to the obligatory religious pilgrimage.

A significant point of departure from this trend was marked with the advent of modernity during the colonial period, when "travel received recognition as a supremely important secular practice" (Sen, 3). Now, there was a gradual curiosity and so a desire among the Indians to travel abroad, especially to England (the land of the *White Sahib*). In fact, the history of Indian travel writing in English begins with this endeavour. The first travel book in English by an Indian was *Travels* (1794) written by Dean Mahomed an immigrant working for the British army. It presents a view of India to the colonizer with an attempt to create 'brand India'. As such, Dean Mahomed was one of the first immigrants to realize the benefit of asserting the native identity for survival and recognition in the West.

Subsequently, it was only in the nineteenth century when journeys to foreign countries were undertaken on a large scale. Such a desire for travel is seen articulated in the narratives of this period. Karsondas Mulji recorded his visit to Europe (which to the Indian imagination was England) in Gujarati. Likewise, Trailokyanath Mukharji a Bengali employed with the British government in India wrote a travel book in English on his visit to London in 1886 titled *A Visit to Europe* (1889). Another well-known Bengali, Romesh Chandra Dutt, a highly acclaimed litterateur, political economist historian and a

civil service officer in British bureaucracy wrote a travel book in English *Three Years in Europe* (1890).

Travel and travel writing in India in the nineteenth century was thus largely determined by the colonial enterprise, a westward journey which was liberating, and strengthened the bond of the self to its traditional Indian ethos. (This point is discussed at length in Chapter Three under the heading, 'the emergence: modern versus traditional travelling self'). It was during this period, as Bhaskar Mukhopadhayaya points out, that the *modern travelogue* in Bengali emerged. He opines that this was mainly due to the influx of modern genres like the novel, biography, autobiography and diary that placed the self as the narrative focus. He also traces a certain *colonization of experience* for the rise of the *modern travelogue* in Bengal during this period (2002, 298). Other critics like Sisir Kumar Das in *Indian Ode to the West Wind: Studies in Literary Encounter* also point towards a similar colonial influence (2001, 186).

In the ancient as well as medieval Indian literature, then, travel genre was at the periphery. In ancient languages like Sanskrit and Tamil too, critics have pointed out that it was not an autonomous genre. In ancient Tamil literature though the basic elements of travel book were present, the modern travel book like the other modern Indian genres "owes itself to western influence in the country" (*Encyclopedia of Indian Literature*, 4383) In the case of Sanskrit, K. Krisnamoorthy points out that, "we do not have anything like a separate literary genre of travelogue in classical Sanskrit. It comes into view only after the advent of modern education in the nineteenth century" (ibid,

4381). A similar opinion is expressed with regard to modern Indian languages like Marathi (ibid, 4376) and Bengali too. ('Ode to West Wind', Das, 186)

It can be argued that though travel writing, as an independent genre like the epic or the poetry, is absent in Indian literature, it nevertheless presented itself as a sub genre ensconced in larger frameworks like the epic and poetry. Thus, it can be maintained that the evolution of the travel genre was slow. Initially, it was engulfed by other major genres and could assert itself as an independent narrative only as late as the nineteenth century. Though the role of western education cannot be denied in helping shape the genre, especially at the hands of the elite educated Indian, there were a host of other factors like the rise of nationalistic spirit, the journalistic demands of the day, change in patronage from the local princes to the British imperial power that led to the emergence of travel writing as an independent genre during the nineteenth century. This aspect will be subsequently taken up for detailed discussion and analysis in Chapter Three which is based on late nineteenth century Indian travel books. Presently a word needs to be said about the focus, the objectives, the scope, the methodology and the hypothetical bearings of the study.

1.4. Focus of the present study:

The present study focuses on Indian Travel writing and aims at investigating into the general belief or misconception that there is little or no proper writing pertaining to travel in India. Indian travel writing, though relatively a nascent genre, has become increasingly multi-faceted over the years, and offers wide scope for study and analysis. The study aspires to be a

modest attempt at tracing the trajectory of the developing generic visage of travel writing and critically tapping what has been termed henceforth as 'Voices in Transit' to arrive at duly substantiated finding . In view of this, the present study has been called, *Voices in Transit: A Critical Study of Indian Travel Writing.*

In the subsequent discussion, the objective of the study, its scope, proposed hypothesis, methodology employed, a brief overview of texts selected, the scheme of chapterisation, the delimitation of scope, and the usage of the specific terms (*Indian* and *Indian voices*) in the title is sought to be clarified.

1.5. Objective of the study:

The main objective of the study *Voices in Transit: A Critical Study of Indian Travel Writing*, is to investigate travel writing as a distinct literary genre in Indian literature. This study of the Indian literary articulation in transit has been gleaned from different epochs of history-a history that has been wrought with the intervention of invasions, but also restructured with the drive and struggle for freedom. As a result, this study retraces the historical trajectory of an India gradually evolving from the erstwhile imperial domain into the culturally pluralistic republic of today. Thus it aims at mainly investigating this additional dimension of transition in the Indian experience through the *Voices in Transit: A Critical Study of Indian Travel Writing.*

Although the study examines various travel books under the broad rubric of 'Indian travel narratives', it cannot be presumed that they constitute a

homogeneous monolith of writing with a clear formal identity. In fact, these travel writings are defined and enriched by their very heterogeneity. It was, therefore, necessary to examine the multifarious formal dimension of such writing and establish its generic identity. The present study has also undertaken this endeavour.

1.6. The scope of the study:

For the sake of convenience and emphasis, this study has focused on selected works of Indian travel writing dating roughly from 1857 to 2004, the period which coincides with the dawn of modernity in Indian literature. Although, the study encompasses a wide ranging period, for the purpose of this study texts have been selected depending on their relevance, availability and potential for research. For instance, a single text from the eighteenth century, namely Dean Mahomed's *Travels* (1794), is selected- the criteria for selection being the pioneering role of the book in introducing the theme of native consciousness in the emergent travel book, and also because he is the first of the Diasporic voices of Indian travel writers in English. In like manner two texts namely Godse Bhatji's *Mazha Pravas* (1907) and Meera Kosambi's English translation of Pandita Ramambai's original work *United Stateteschi Lokasthithi ani Pravasavritta* (1889) translated as *Returning the American Gaze: The People's of the United States* (2003), have been selected because they are quite perceptibly representative of the age and depict a pattern of trends in the emergent travel writing of their time.

The rest of the texts by various writers are from the twentieth century. They have been selected not only on the basis of geographical space, but also on the relevance of the work to the emergence of the concept of India as a nation, as well as to the diasporic notion of Indianness. Hence, writers who are Indians per se and writers of Indian origin who describe themselves as immigrants/globetrotter have been considered.

Texts that are originally available in English, Marathi, and Konkani have been selected for study. Some of these texts have been available in translation. This includes writings by Pandita Ramabai (translated from the original Marathi to English), Rabindranath Tagore and Swami Vivekananda (translated from Bengali to English) and Kakasaheb Kalelkar (translated from Gujarati to Marathi).

The study aims at critically analysing the chronologically emerging patterns and trends seen in the travel books, belonging to the period under consideration. This investigation has been broadly issue-based and it has adopted a comparative approach to the study of relevant texts. Moreover, insights from contemporary literary theory have been duly incorporated in this study, wherever it was felt to be necessary, so as to make it more relevant to the contemporary reader.

1.7. Hypotheses of the study:

In the light of the above mentioned objectives and scope, following hypotheses have been formulated for investigation and verification:

1) That with the emergence of modernity there has been a palpable thematic transition taking place in the Indian travel genre during the colonial era and it has continued to date with identifiable manifestations.

2) That this thematic transition was a fallout of the socio-political and cultural changes then occurring in India. As such there would be common thematic features reflecting the *zeitgeist* of the age.

3) That there was simultaneously a generic evolution taking place in Indian travel writing during the period under discussion.

4) That there could be distinct approaches to travel and travel writing in the native and diasporic travel accounts, especially with regard to the traveller's affiliation to the notion of 'home'.

To verify the above hypotheses, travel books belonging to the above-mentioned period have been selected. With the help of these texts an extensive study has been conducted in the relevant domain and chapters have been formulated.

1.8. Methodology adopted:

1. Selection of representative texts as tools for analysis to study the pattern of Indian travel writing.
2. Use of multilingual texts as primary sources. Original texts from Indian languages like Marathi and Konkani and translated texts from Bengali in addition to texts in English have been used. Since a language has a specific cultural context, it was imperative to tap this aspect in the case of a pluralistic, multilingual and culturally vibrant

country like India .

3. Reading primary texts for analysing the nature of the genre, in the Indian context;
4. Investigation with the help of relevant contemporary theoretic inputs specifically from the post colonial discourse have been found to be useful;
5. Use of travel texts in other languages like Gujarati and Hindi that are vital to travel-related thought as secondary texts.
6. Extensive use of critical material across languages known to the researcher.
7. Providing faithful translation of non-English critical material cited.
8. Use of libraries, websites, the internet and other data analysing sources.

1.9. The usage of terms in the title:

1.9.1. 'Indian writing'

The use of the term *Indian* in the title of the study needs clarification. Hudson in his book *An Introduction to the Study of Literature*, points out that a national literature:

> Is not a miscellaneous collection of books which happen to have been written in the same tongue or within a certain geographical area. It is a progressive revelation, age by age, of such nation's mind and character. An individual writer may greatly vary from the national type [...]. But his genius will still partake of the characteristic spirit of his race, and in any number of representative writer's at any given time, that spirit will be felt as a well

> defined quality pervading them all [...]. The history of any nation's literature, then is the record of the unfolding of that nation's genius and character under one of its most important forms of expression. (1961, 32 and 33).

This view has been taken into account and extended to the present study in identifying and focusing on Indian travel writing.

Hudson also elaborates another relevant aspect of categorization of national literature in eras as the time or period factor:

> A nation's life has its moods of exultation and depression; it's epochs now of strong faith and strenuous idealism ,[...]and while the manner of expression will vary greatly with the individuality of each writer, the dominant spirit of the hour,[...]will directly or indirectly reveal itself in his work[...]Thus when we speak of periods of literature[...]we have in mind something far more important than the establishment of such chronological divisions [...]Such phrases really refer to differential characteristics–to those distinctive qualities of theme, treatment, manner, spirit, tone, by which the literature of each period as a whole is marked [...]which are more or less pronounced in all the writers of that period, and by virtue of which these writers, despite their individual differences stand together as a group in contrast with the groups formed by the writers of other periods (35).

Indian literature in the same vein has both, a national character and spirit that is distinctively Indian, and a temporal or periodic character that distinguishes the writers of a particular period from those of another. The term *Indian* thus encompasses the literature of the nation as having a common mind and character unique to a nation and the periodic categorization as those differential characteristics that mark one national epoch from the other.

The term *Indian writing* is used in the sense, referred by Das and Dev in

Comparative Indian literature: Theory and Practice, as "a complex of literary relations" and further as 'not only an inquiry into this unity' but also "a study into their diversity which enables one to understand the nature of literary facts" (1988, 95). The usage of the term Indian writing would thus take into consideration common national characteristics as well as concerns, and, the diverse elements that define its literary nature and expression. Taking this definition of Indian writing into consideration the study has chosen texts from various Indian languages known to the researcher.

1.9.2. 'Travel writing':

The term *Travel writing* would be used in the following senses:

1) As being literary-The *Merriam Webster's Encyclopaedia of Literature* defines *literary* as "of, relating to, or having the characteristics of literature" (685) and the word *literature* as "writings in prose or verse; especially writings having excellence of form or expression and presenting ideas of permanent or universal interest" (686). So the term *literary* in totality would mean writings that have the quality of excellence and presents ideas of universal and permanent interest. Travel writing that are 'literary' in this sense have been considered for study. This aspect has been further elucidated in Chapter Two where the literary and the popular travel writing have been discussed and differentiated.

2) As being verbal and not pictorial or illustrated. The term *Travelogue*, is therefore, not used in this study since it is defined as "film or illustrated lecture about travel" (*Oxford Dictionary* and *Thesaurus* henceforth abbreviated

as *OED*, 821). There are few other terms in usage for the genre of travel writing such as, *travel narrative, travel literature* and *travel writing*. The word 'narrative' means "ordered account of connected events" (OED, 496). To call the travel genre as an 'ordered account' would be to limit its usage to chronicles, history and report. Literary travel writing would naturally be excluded if the term *narrative* is used. In critical discourse the term narrative means "[A] telling of some true or fictitious event or connected sequence of events, recounted by a narrator to a narratee [...]. A narrative will consist of a set of events (the story) recounted in the process of narration (or discourse) in which the events are selected and arranged in a particular order (the plot)" (*Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*; henceforth abbreviated as *ODLT*, 219). This critical sense of the term, which presumes the presence of narrator who tells a *story*, cannot be applied to all types of travel writings especially those that deal with factual socio–political issues like V.S. Naipaul's travel books based on India. Although there are travel works which narrate *stories* (imagined events) the use of the term narrative then, would exclude fact based travel works that do no have a story to narrate. The phrase *travel book*, on the other hand, is found to be more appropriate to describe the concept since it is a broad term which includes any "written or printed work with pages bound along one side" (OED, 76) and also excludes any pictorial or illustrated work. Where the phrase *travel book* would be used in the singular, the phrases *travel literature* and *travel writings* are used as plural terms.

1.9.3. The usage of 'Voices':

The usage of the term *voices* in the title also needs clarification. This term is not used in the sense of the authorial voice prevalent in literary theory where the term *voice* is used to indicate the all-pervading presence of the author, who organizes and controls the text (See Abrams, 2000,219 and *ODLT*, 353-354). The usage of the term *voices* in this sense would be appropriate for conventional literary genres like a novel, drama or poem which have fictional characterization, theme and narrative structure.

Travel writing, as would be elucidated in Chapter Two, defies any neat categorization and is professedly a non-fictional work. Though its inherent voice(s) are of the respective writers, there is no underlying implication that there is a distinct controlling authority whose presence is felt throughout the text. On the other hand these voices are visualised as experimental, innovative, distinct and pioneering borrowing from the attributes implied in Salman Rushdie's 'Introduction' to the *Vintage Book of Indian Writing* (1997). When making the case for Indian writing in English, he describes the Indian *voice* specifically as having these four attributes. Firstly, indicating, 'distinctiveness', when he refers to the achievement of Indian writing in English as having found: "literary voices as distinctively Indian" (xiii). Secondly, indicating 'ambition' 'verve' and as a kind of writing back, when referring to the western publishers excitement over this new body of writing: "western publishers and critics have been growing gradually more and more excited by the voices emerging from India [...] British writers are often chastised by their reviewers

for their lack of Indian style, ambition and verve. It feels as if the east is imposing itself on the West" (xiv). Thirdly, as 'confident' 'indispensable': "these writers are ensuring that India, or rather Indian voice [...] will henceforth be confident, indispensable participants in that literary conversation" (xv). And lastly, indicating 'innovation' 'fresh perspective', when he mentions the new generation of Indian writers in English, the Indian writer Kiran Desai as: "the newest of all these voices" (xxii). The phrase *Indian voices* has been used within this study specifically in these senses as being an authentic articulation that is distinct, ambitious, confident, indispensable, innovative, vital and a kind of 'writing back'.

1.10. The list of texts selected with the intended abbreviation to be used within parenthesis in the study:

1. Dean Mahomed's *Travels of Dean Mahomet- an 18th century Journey through India*. Edited by Michael Fisher (*Travels*; 1794).
2. Pandita Ramambai's *Returning the American Gaze: The People's of The United States* (2003).Translated by Meera Kosambi from the original Marathi *United Stateteschi Lokasthithi ani Pravasavritta* (1889) to English (*USLP/RAG*; 1889).
3. Vishnu Bhatt Godse Varsaikar's *Mazha Pravas* written in 1883, published and transliterated from the original Modi to modern Marathi by Chintaman Vaidya for the first time in 1907. The referred work is edited by Datta Vaman Potdar published in 1966 (*MP*; 1907).

4. Swami Vivekananda's *Memoirs of European Travel.* Translated from the original Bengali *Parivrajaka* to English, by Advaita Ashram translator (*PV/MET*; 1901).
5. Rabindranath Tagore's *The Diary of a Westward Voyage*. Translated from the original Bengali *Paschim Yatrir Diary*, to English by Indu Dutt (*PYD/DWV*; 1925).
6. Kakasaheb Kalelkar's *Jevanleela*. Translated from Gujarati to Marathi by Naresh Mantri. (1958)
7. P.L. Deshpande's *Purvrang* (Marathi Original ; 1963).
8. R.K Narayan's *My Dateless Diary* (English Original; *MDD*, 1964).
9. Ravindra Kelekar's *Himalayant* (Konkani Original; 1976).
10. Vikram Seth's *From Heaven Lake* (English Original; *FHL*,1983).
11. Amitav Ghosh's *In an Antique Land* (English Original;*IAAL*,1992).
12. Datta Naik's *Kalighat te Karunaghat* (Konkani Original;*KTK*,1995).
13. Meena Prabhu's *Dakshinrang* (Marathi Original ; 1999).
14. Pico Iyer's *Sun after Dark-Flights into the Foreign* (English Original; *SAD*, 2004).

Translation of source material from Indian languages into English has been done by Dr. K.J.Budkuley, unless otherwise indicated.

1.11. Delimitation:

1. Although, this is a study of Indian travel writing only sample texts from languages known to this researcher have been selected for study. Not regional languages per-se rather regional ethos has been

sought to be represented, wherever possible, through the availability of text in the original or in English translation.

2. The study of the primary texts was chiefly limited to content and to formal features of the work rather than to the analysis of language, since this would entail studies of native idiom and regional language-specific usage that lie beyond the scope of this study.
3. The study has not considered the author's biography except in cases where the context was felt to be necessary to understand the nature of their travel writing, or the evolution of the genre of travel writing.
4. Some texts which are well-known Indian travel books like Rahul Sankrityayan's travel books in Hindi, S.K. Pottekkattu's in Malayalam and V.K. Gokak's in Kannada were not selected as primary texts. Works of Pottekkatt and Gokak had to be left out due to the researcher's lack of knowledge of these languages, since these books were not available or accessible in translation. Rahul Sankrityayan's travel books have been used but as secondary texts, representing the *zeitgeist* of the period between colonial renaissant India and post independent India.

V.S. Naipaul stands as an anomaly among these writers. Unlike the others, Naipaul is widely considered to be a non Indian writer by various critics of Indian writing in English. M. K.Naik for instance excludes him from the pantheon of Indian writing in English calling

him a west –Indian writer since he is "so much of an insider while dealing with Caribbean life and character" (*A History of Indian English Litearture*, 1982. On the other hand, while acknowledging his Indian ancestry, Panwar calls him a 'western writer' since he has lived in England and 'has been writing mainly with the western reader in mind" (2004, 186). Likewise Pallavi Rastogi shows how he constructs an 'English self 'in his writing. Particularly noteworthy is her observation that in his travel book, based on his *third* visit to India titled *India: A Million Mutinies Now* (1990), he "gazes at India through the eyes of the Westerner" (274). Since this is a study of the 'Indian voice', Naipaul who presents a western perspective was excluded from this study.

5) This study is introductory, and makes no claim to be comprehensive. The questions and issues in the study are introduced and essayed, rather than deliberated and resolved.

1.12. Layout of the chapters:

The study has been divided into the following chapters:

Chapter One: Introduction

In this introductory chapter, the critical inclination of western literary thought on travel writing has been elucidated. To put the study in perspective, a brief overview of travel writing in the period prior to 1857 i.e. the ancient and medieval period is provided. It has been found that that the travel genre in the ancient and medieval period was subsumed within the major literary genres

like the epic and poetry. With the advent of colonization and subsequent socio-political changes taking place in the Indian society, travel as a genre emerged, on the literary horizon.

This Chapter also states the objective and the hypotheses of the present study. Further, it spells out the scope of the study, marks out its delimitation and briefly discusses the methodology adopted for investigation.

The use of certain terms in the title of this thesis has also been explained in this chapter. It lists the primary texts selected for study. Finally, it elucidates the layout of the chapters with a brief discussion of the focus of the Chapter and its contribution in testing the hypotheses. This Chapter ends with a brief conclusion that highlights the general relevance of this study.

Chapter Two; Travel Writing: A Generic Introduction.

This Chapter is primarily designed to explicate and clarify the nature of travel writing as a literary genre. Since one of the hypotheses of the study is to analyse the generic evolution, a generic introduction to this literary form was found necessary.

This Chapter begins by explaining the contemporary usage of the term 'genre' in the light of critical discourse. It has been deduced that travel writing is a contemporary genre that is liminal, fluid and one that adopts various literary forms. Notwithstanding this, it has been seen as having distinct literary features the central among which is the imaginative element that makes it a literary genre. The fact that the writer creates a story out of the travelling material, it has been argued, makes the travel book a constituent of a literary

genre. As such, the literary nature of the travel book is sought to be established in the course of this Chapter. The three main features of the travel genre have been identified as the *travelling self,* the *locale* and the *journey.*

Chapter Three; The Emergent Voice of Indian Travel Writing:

This Chapter primarily deals with the hypothesis regarding the thematic transition of travel writing during the period undertaken for this study. As such this Chapter covers Indian travel writing of the period after 1857 till the 1920s. Notwithstanding this, Dean Mahomed's *Travels* (1794) has also been an integral part of this discussion. It has been argued in this Chapter that Indian Travel writing emerged independently in the nineteenth century, and later evolved gradually as a potent literary medium to 'voice' the nation. The factors that were responsible for its independent emergence have been accordingly discussed.

Terming this early travel voice as the emergent voice of Indian travel writing, this Chapter undertakes to divide it for convenience into two strands- each representing the *elite voice* and the *common man's voice* respectively. These two categories will be elucidated in Chapter three at the appropriate stage. Two travel books have been short listed as the representatives of this *elite* voice; namely, Pandita Ramabai's *USLP/RAG* (1889) and Swami Vivekananda's *PV/MET* (1901).The *elite* voice it has been argued was primarily of the social reformers. It was the prominent voice that spoke for the nation during this crucial period in the history of modern India.

These reformist travellers to the west (Europe and America), compared these progressive countries to their own country and made a plea for a transformation and reconstitution of their own societies. Since 'nation' became the motif of their books, this Chapter discusses the concept of the nation. These *elite* travel writers adopted different approaches to voice their vision for the nation. In the course of this Chapter, the usage of these approaches has been elucidated through the respective textual references and discussions. A transition in the thematic motif of this *elite* travel book from the nation to the self has been traced in this chapter with the help of Rabindranath Tagore's *PYD/DWV* (1925).

On the other hand, this Chapter also notes that there was a *common man's* voice emerging with this *elite* voice. Two texts have been identified in this Chapter as the representatives of this voice. Of these, Dean Mohamed's *Travels* has been seen as the earliest voice and the precursor of travel writing in India and Godse Bhatji's *MP* (1907) as holding its own against the dominant presence of *elite* travel writing that emerged in the late and early twentieth century.

Chapter Four; The Generic Blossoming of Indian Travel Writing:

This Chapter traces the blossoming of Indian travel writing. It traces how there was a further growth in Indian travel writing from the 1930s to the 1960s. Since Rahul Sankrityayan's oeuvre defines Indian travel writing of this period by its sheer bulk, variety and vision, this Chapter begins with a brief discussion of his contribution to Indian travel writing of this period.

In the first section of this Chapter the nation motif and romantic self, are seen to be continuing in their presence in Kakasaheb Kalelkar's travel book *Jeevanleela* (1958). A distinct literariness seen in this book is duly underscored in this Chapter.

The thematic motif in *Jeevanleela* shifts from self to real life issues that had begun to confront the sensibilities of individuals of the new born nation. Ravindra Kelekar's *Himalayant* (1976) has been discussed as a representative text that shows a transition from the romantic patriotic nation theme to a realistic concern about one's identity in the post independence age. With the help of this travel text, it has been possible to argue in this chapter, how the issue of identity gradually became the dominant theme of the travel book of this era.

Subsequent texts written in the 1960s like P. L.Deshpande's *Purvrang* (1963) and R.K Narayan' s *MDD*(1964) have been also discussed in this Chapter. They are mainly analysed as dealing with the post-colonial theme of identity consciousness where issues like cultural aping are discussed.

Since generically the travel book evolves steadily in the 1960s, and writers are seen to discuss the nature of their travel books in the prefaces and forewords to their books, this Chapter duly analyses literary qualities that contribute towards its growth like setting, dialogue and characterization that blossomed in Deshpande's and Narayan's travel books.

Chapter Five; Contemporary Voice of Indian Travel writing:

This Chapter traces the contemporary (post 1980s) voice of Indian travel

writing. Five representative travel books have been selected for study here. They are Vikram Seth's *FHL* (1983), Amitav Ghosh's *IAAL* (1992) (English), Datta Naik's *KTK* (1995), Meena Prabhu's *Dakshinrang* (1999) and Pico Iyer's *SAD* (2004).

Unlike the early post independence traveller's identity conscious voice, this contemporary voice is assertive and confident. The issue of a national, parochial or any confining identity has taken a backseat now. The post-colonial 'self' has been transformed into a cosmopolitan one as a consequence of the globalised world that the *travelling self* happens to inhabit and trot. Although, a concern, even pride for the nation still remains present in the travel books of this age, the authorial horizon has noticeably widened to include the entire world in its purview.

Meena Prabhu's text has been discussed as a link text that shows a transition from the post colonial theme of identity to the cosmopolitan outlook of the global Indian, in the contemporary age. By comparing this text to P.L.Deshpande's *Purvrang*, it has been possible to argue how a continuum of travel genre of the 60s is noticeable in this book.

Since the primary focus of this Chapter has been to test the hypothesis regarding the difference between native and diasporic travel books, terms such as the 'diaspora' and 'diasporic travel writing', the 'native' and 'native travel writing' are defined. In the context of the travel genre, it has been possible to identify the concept of 'home' as the distinguishing characteristic between the two groups. Since 'home' for the diasporic writer, is problematised, whether

there was any difference between their respective affiliations to 'home' has been taken up as a point of discussion.

Generic evolution of travel writing observed in the contemporary travel books has also been discussed in this Chapter. A trend towards experimentation has been observed in the contemporary travel books where the travel genre becomes a formidable literary experiment in form and technique. In a way the travel genre now justifies its description as a liminal genre in more than one sense of the term.

Chapter Six: General Conclusion

The concluding Chapter primarily re-examines the viability of the hypotheses. It begins by presenting the findings of each chapter. It also restates and establishes the generic identity of travel writing. It goes over the conclusion of each chapter to see if collaterally the texts could be seen as Indian 'Voices of Transit'.

1.13. A note on selection of texts and chapterization:

Though the texts are divided chronologically, these divisions are not all exclusive and Indian travel writing should not be seen in terms of these rigid categories. The period and their thematic import is only a convenient temporal framework. Moreover, the authorial sensibility is shaped by the socio- political temperament of an era and its impact cannot be wished away with the passage of time. A pertinent example of this is Ravindra Kelekar's travel book *Himalayant*. Although, the text was published in the 1970s, it represents the thematic import of the nationalistic and patriotic fervour characteristic of the

early twenties and thirties. Kelekar's home state, Goa, a part of India, was not liberated at the time of writing this book, unlike the rest of the country. Hence, the theme of identity consciousness though present, is not distinct as in the travel books of the 1960s by R. K. Narayan and P.L.Deshpande. The main theme is patriotism and commitment to nation building in the line of Kalelkar or Vivekananda's text. This is evidence of the fact that political freedom is essential for the authorial sensibility to feel free of political compulsions to move to concerns of identity consciousness.

The chronological aspect of this study gives us a sense of generic continuity, while experimentation unfolds new modes towards growth; the socio-political temperament that moulds the authorial sensibility shapes the genre. The texts had been selected not only because they were seen as representative of the period, but for the relevance they hold to the central arguments and basic hypothesis of this thesis. Hence, though the texts have been clubbed within a period-related temporal grouping, the individual thematic focus of the texts, and their distinct formative features, have been of primary concern to this study.

1.14. Conclusion:

The study thus, intends to examine the perspective of the Indian travel writer on both the west as well as the east. This articulation, as the thesis would unravel, is significant since it covers a reasonably wide array of locales scattered across the globe, a wide ranging period, and a broad spectrum of language cultures. In addition, Travel writing as a genre uses a variety of

narrative forms and modes such as the epistolary, diary, memoir and the autobiography. It is due to this flexible nature that it can be hypothetically considered as a liminal genre. Because of this multifarious identity its potential value as a multidimensional discourse is vital.

CHAPTER TWO

TRAVEL WRITING –A GENERIC INTRODUCTION

2.1. The travel book: Introduction

The travel book by its very nature is a genre that literally launches itself off from the point of departure of the travel. Literally speaking it takes off from the point of departure, but figuratively speaking it also reaches beyond the point of arrival and passage, to emphasize the universal nature of human experience. As such the point of departure is the beginning of the travel book, it instigates, triggers the mind of the traveller to seek answers in hindsight, to explore the unknown in the light of the known facts and facets, and thereby to understand in new light what might be already known.

No doubt the travel book is an outcome of a journey which is its most important constituent. But to call a travel book only a journey- narrative would do injustice to a form that is so dynamic, innovative and flexible. It is this 'liminality' that makes a travel book, a 'contemporary genre' worthy of exploration.

2.2. Contemporary notion of the term Genre:

In western literary discourse, the conventional view of the term 'genre' has been a *closed* mode of literary expression. A literary genre has been defined as "a recognizable and established category of written work employing such common conventions as will prevent the readers from mistaking it from

another kind" (*ODLT*, 140). However this rigid conception of the term literary genre has been challenged by contemporary generic theorists like Dimock, Frow and Owen who look upon the notion of genre as an open, accommodating, unconfineble and polyformic concept.

In an issue of *PMLA*, (October2007) dedicated to Genre Studies, these scholars endorse the fluid and flexible nature inherent to a literary genre. Frow uses the term 'generic framework' to refer to the multiplicity of a literary genre, and argues that 'any text may be read through more than one generic framework" (*PMLA*, 1633). Likewise, Owen using the phrase 'Genres in motion', attempts to show how during the course of history, genres have changed (Ibid, 1389-1393). In a like vein, Dimock uses the expression 'generic wateriness' to indicate the fluid, open, non-rigid nature of a literary genre. He compares the 'genre' to a computer database, which unlike a printed text does away with the 'illusion of containment', since it can be changed/updated by users (ibid, 1378). Likewise, he points out that literary genres are fluid, by perceptively observing that:

> Genres have solid names, ontologized names. What these names designate, though, is not taxonomic classes of equal solidity but fields at once emerging and ephemeral, defined over and over again by new entries that are still being produced (Ibid,1379).

This contemporary notion of the term 'genre' as ephemeral, open to new entries and fluid applies aptly to the travel genre. The travel book could be thus seen as a contemporary genre, flexible and open to changes.

2.2.1. Travel book as a 'contemporary fluid' genre:

A travel book can function like a *database*, a fluid medium which allows /accepts variety of literary styles and forms. In fact, this literary genre is defined by its heterogeneity with its multifarious nature straddling across categories of various literary forms –the memoir, diary, epistolary and autobiography. It may appear as an autobiography and an epistolary work simultaneously, when the author's account of the developing self is described in a letter form in the context of his travels. This is seen in the case of Dean Mohamed's pioneering travel book aptly titled *Travels* (1794). Similarly, a diary format where a day –to- day account of events in the author's life is described, along with his journey as seen in the Latin American author Ernesto 'Che' Guevara's *The Motorcycle Diaries: Notes on a Latin American Journey*(2003). A travel book may also assume the form of a 'memoir' where places and events in the author's life are emphasized, as are the travel- related experiences, as seen in Swami Vivekanada's *Memoirs of European Travel* (1901).

Such multifarious characteristics have made travel writing one of the most enduring as also one of the most elusive of genres. It has survived as a genre by enduring mutation and by adjusting to changes in its visage as per the perception of the writer and the requirement of the circumstances. The use of various forms has made the form elusive, often making it difficult for the reader to recognize the presence of a typical genre within the writing. Thus many a travel book, is often categorized as an autobiography, a memoir or a

diary. Yet, there are defining characteristics to travel writing that provide it with a distinct form and identity as a literary genre. In other words, though fluid and flexible, it is driven by certain literary practices and forms and conventions on the basis of which it can be identified. In this context, Heather Dubrow's observation in her book *Genre* (1982) is highly relevant. She uses the phrase *generic contract* to refer to the understanding between the writers and the reader regarding the recognition of a work as belonging to a particular genre:

> [...] the way genre establishes a relationship between author and reader might fruitfully be labelled as generic contract. Through such signals as the title, the meter and the incorporation of familiar topoi into his opening lines, the poet sets up a contract with us. He in effect agrees that he will follow at least some of the patterns and conventions we associate with the genre or genres in which he is writing, and we in turn agree that we will pay close attention to certain aspects of his work while realizing that others, because of the nature of the genres, are likely to be far less important (31).

A genre then has certain recognizable features, patterns and conventions that are agreed to by the writer and the reader, and the travel genre is no exception. For instance, irrespective of the multiplicity of generic forms that operates within a travel book, its fundamental emphasis on travel as its subject matter, its focus on the traveller's self and a weaving of the travel-space within the work cannot be missed. However, depending upon the authorial objective, thematic preoccupation and visionary proclivity the allied generic forms of subjective narration ala diary, memoir, and auto-narratives may or may not overshadow the basic travel narrative. It is this presence or absence of

overshadowing by other literary generic identities that make travel writing appear liminal and / or vague in terms of its generic identity to a casual or an untrained reader.

Hence, considering the amount of uncertainty and ambiguity surrounding this literary genre and its features, it is essential to explicate its generic identity. As such the following discussion will explore the features that will help in identifying travel writing as a literary genre. The travel genre has also been labelled as non- literary, since it primarily deals with fact or at least non-fiction. This myth regarding the lack of literariness in non-fictional genres like the travel genre needs to be dispelled. Hence the literary nature of the travel book needs to be explored before discussing the features that make it identifiable.

2.3. The literary nature of the travel book:

Though Travel literature may be categorized as non-fiction, it is essentially literary. Like any fictional literary work, travel books are distinctly literary, in that they offer avenues for analysis into their form and content, and invite attention to the narrative voice and its semantics, foreground the relation between the narrator and his/ her environment. Again, travel writing, like any literary genre has its own structural specifics and dynamics, its distinct linguistic focus and appeal, its unique stylistic component for analysis. Moreover, while a travel book may be captivating because of its skill of narration and verbal felicity, it may also be poly-semantic and even permit an artistic play of fiction, myth and fantasy without losing its authenticity as an

otherwise factual narrative.

A distinction, similar to the one made by conservative critics between the so called canonized literature and the so-called pulp literature, is often made between mainstream travel writing and its popular counterpart, comprising tourist brochures, illustrated travel journals and the like. Here it is important to define literature. Hudson, in his well known work, *An Introduction to the Study of literature*, defines it as:

> [A] vital record of what men have seen in life, what they have experienced of it [...] what they have thought and felt about those aspects [...]which have the most immediate and enduring interest for all of us. It is thus fundamentally an expression of life through the medium of language (1961, 10).

This applies to travel–related literature too. Thus, like other mainstream, canonized literature, travel *literature* is a depiction of an account that has a deep and lasting human significance. It is different from popular travel related information in that it is not only a visit of the site but also an insight into it. As Robyn Davidson points out it has 'a power to connect us with the essential' (2001, 3).

The theme, then, of a literary travel book is profound, so also is its motive. In a literary travel book, there is a traveller who is not interested in the mundane and the routine. The *travelling self* is a seeker on a quest perhaps for satisfaction of the curiosity about people and places, or, to seek the higher ideal of travel for travel's sake. Unlike this self, the *self* in a popular travel book who could be called a *tourist* seeks entertainment, perhaps good food or diversion from the routine. Holland and Huggan distinguish the two as:

> Travelers unlike tourists are non exploitative visitors, motivated not by the lazy desire for instant entertainment but by the hard won battle to satisfy their insatiable curiosity about countries and people (2).

The *literary traveller* often chooses difficult routes or challenging destinations, and deliberately breaks away from guided tours to explore the locale single-handedly. There is an innate desire in such travellers to satisfy a thirst for travel –this thirst assumes the dimension of a mission which will only be satiated by undertaking adventurous journeys or voyages. They bring out the universal and enduring human values during the course of the narration of this experience. This literary traveller frequently tries to set himself apart from the regular *tourist*. In Seth's *From Heaven Lake (FHL*,1983) for instance the *travelling self* breaks away from guided tours meant for tourists, seeking an "unfettered manner of travelling" (18).

Thus, a literary travel book has both a profound theme and an admirable motive. It seeks to inform the ignorant and to invite the knowing to a shared perception of its travel experience. Moreover, it is the imaginative, interesting and primarily creative aspects of literary travel writing that sets it apart from mundane, routinely informative, mill of the rung tourist-oriented material. As such this creative dimension of a travel book deserves attention.

2.3.1. The role of creativity:

As maintained above, most significantly, a literary travel book hinges on the creative. It is the art of *creating* a distinct *locale* that makes a travel book literary. If life and its significance is the characteristic theme of a *literary* travel book, then it is the recreation of the *locale* that gives it an imaginative

slant and literary appeal. In a literary travel book there is, as Blanton points out, in *Travel Writing: The Self and the World* , "a mediating consciousness that monitors the journey, judges, thinks, confesses, and even grows" (1995,4), a distinct *travelling self*, who interprets his /her contact with the locale. To put it more precisely, the *travelling self* "creates" the locale for the reader by adding something of his own personality as opposed to, for instance, a travel brochure that provides factual information on the place. It is this 'recreation' of the locale that is central to literary travel writing. The writer will create a setting, characterization, conversation /dialogue and build up a thematic motif to a literary travel book. Hence visits to the same place are often found to be narrated in different creative modes by distinct writers. A point in case is the verbal recreation of La Paz (in Bolivia) in Meena Prabhu's *Dakhshinrang* (1999) and in Pico Iyer's *Sun After Dark* (*SAD,* (2004).

The interaction of the *travelling self* with the locale gives a flow to a travel book. This flow will have a 'beginning' (which usually begins with the preparation of the journey), a 'middle' where the action intensifies (here, description of incidents and contact with the locale are provided), and an 'end' (which usually is the end of the physical journey and where the thematic focus and the visionary motif of the travel book is highlighted).

These three components may not necessarily be narrated in this order and as a travel book becomes creatively more complex; innovations such as those seen in Amitav Ghosh's *In an Antique Land* (*IAAL,* 1992) become imminent. In *IAAL*, fiction, history, myth and personal encounters interact to

create a complex literary travel book based on facts. (The literariness of this book will be discussed at a later stage in Chapter Five where the contemporary modern travel book will be analysed as achieving "literary" maturity). The depth of the literary quality of a travel book depends on how the writer has used the above elements. Paul Fussell, one of the foremost commentators on the travel genre while analyzing the travel book points out in *Abroad: British Literary Traveling between the Wars*, to two qualities that determine the literariness of a travel book:

> A travel book is like a poem in giving universal significance to a local texture. The gross physicality of a travel book's texture should not lead us to patronize it, for the constant recourse to the locatable is its convention. Within that convention [...] there is ample room for the activities of the "fictionalizing" imagination. And an active, organic, [...], creative mediation between fact and fiction is exactly the activity of the mind exhibited in the travel book (214, 1980).

As such the ability to sustain interest along with its capacity for universal significance and ability for fictionalization are the main characteristics of a literary travel book. With this perspective, it would useful to investigate the *literariness* of the Indian travel book as it emerged, blossomed and matured. The subsequent chapters i.e. Chapter Three, Chapter Four and Chapter Five will discuss the emergence, the budding and the flowering of *literariness* in the generic maturation of Indian travel writing respectively. This inevitably calls for a discussion of the creativity of the writer and the mellowness of his interpretive calibre that contribute to the

degree of significance and the quality of fictionalization (including its relevance, level and suitability to the theme) of the travel book.

2.3.2. Creativity and interpretation:

The presence of creativity also implies that there is an *interpretation* of the re-created locale in the context of the writing by the *travelling self.* This interpretation often depends on the socio-cultural milieu of the *travelling self,* since it is likely that the perception of the *travelling self* is influenced, if not pre-conditioned, by the socio-cultural environment he is born into. Siegel and Wulf insightfully discuss this putatively 'pre-conditioned' view of the writer in an article, 'Travel as Spectacle: The Illusion of Knowledge'. Hence their observation has been used as the analytical frame for the ensuing discussion. In their view as the travellers watch a 'spectacle' they are weighed down by their own 'cultural baggage', which remains often obscured and unconscious. As a result the travellers:

> "read" visited cultures *not in their own terms*, but rather in our *old, familiar ones. Vision, though, is always culturally mediated.* We learn, literally, how and what to see [....]. [T]he vast number of unconsciously learned and assimilated beliefs, values, and norms that makes up cultural patterns, the "mental programming" of any culture, remain veiled (Emphasis added: 2002, 109-110).

Siegel and Wulf further point out that, the amount of information available via the modern means of communication like the internet, conditions this travelling self (Ibid,117-118),and as a consequence, they conclude, the recollection of the journey that forms the stuff of travel literature is at best partial:

> Just as the initial perception of travel is partial at best, the journey's recollection, i.e., the 'stuff' of travel literature, becomes distorted by the degree our cultural lens blinds us to the journey initially, the amount of time we can spend within a culture, our imperfect memory of the journey itself, and the changes that will occur once our memories have been exposed to the shaping forces of narrative (ibid., 119-120).

The travelling self's vision is thus conditioned - how he/she views the site visited depends on the cultural baggage he or she carries.

The fact that the traveller 'watches' automatically puts him in a privileged position, that is it ordains the power on the traveller to interpret the visited culture. This is collectively referred to by Mary Louise Pratt as the 'visualist ideology' in *Imperial Eyes: Travel writing and Transculturation* (1992; 204-205). In the words of Pramod Nayar, 'the tourist is the watcher who scans the landscape. The scanning confers a nearly panoptical power upon the watcher .S/he watches, controls, the passive viewed landscape' (2003, 114).

This aspect of whether the Indian *travelling self* 'controls' the locale and therefore occupies the dominant position of the 'watcher' overlooking the passive landscape has been taken up for discussion in Chapter Five where the postcolonial nature of the travel book is analysed. However, it suffices here to say that there is in western travel writing a distinctive dominant position occupied by the travelling self. In the following chapters,namely, Chapter Two, Chapter Three, Chapter Four and Chapter Five, the position and the stance of the Indian *travelling self* will be directly/indirectly revealed through the nature of their discourse regarding the *locale* in their respective travel books.

2.4. Various features of Travel writing-

Vasant Sawant in his book *Pravas Varnan: Ek Vangamay Prakar* (*Travel Writing: A Literary Genre*; 1987) identifies the distinctive features of a literary travel book. In his study of the genre, he analyses the three important constituents of travel writing. He identifies them as *the traveller*, *the locale*, and *the journey*. The generic identity of travel writing becomes discernible only on an examination of these three basic elements.

Sawant points out how the traveller may assume different personae wherein there is a conflict between the writer, the traveller and the individual. These different personae blend in travel writing to emerge as a distinct voice in the travel narrative. In the present discussion, and in subsequent chapters, the term *travelling self* will be used as a descriptive term for this distinctive travelling voice. The nature and constitution of the travelling self has, therefore, to be explained since this constituent determines the nature of the travel book and is also the most important constituent element of travel writing.

2.4. 1. Constitution of the 'travelling self':

The *travelling self* is a distinctive combination of the writer, the traveller and the individual. Here, the usage of these three terms in the context of travel writing needs some clarification. The *writer* is that aspect of the *travelling self* who is constantly aware or conscious of his experiences being open to the reader, of the fact that his work is open for criticism and is simultaneously, open to a market. The *individual* comprises the personality, the mental makeup that includes the cultural context, ideological positions and idiosyncrasies of

the person. The *traveller* is the distinctive aspect of that individual who is free from the rigmarole of every day existence and whose mind is prone to novelty of experiences, open to change and sensitive to his surroundings. As a result of such a three tiered persona dwelling within a travel writer, there occurs a clash of interest and conflict of prioritizing the authorial self over the *travelling self, locale and journey,* or vice-versa.

2.4.2. The 'travelling self' versus the 'autobiographical self'

It must be noted that the *travelling self* of a travel book is different from that of an *autobiographical self* of an autobiography. Although travel writing as a genre is often compared to the autobiography, in that it is also a first person account albeit of one's developing self, there is a fundamental difference between the two selves. This difference can be traced to the conception of the travelling self. Unlike the *autobiographical self,* the *travelling self* is intricately linked to the journey and the place he visits. Hence, the self revealed through travel writing is different from that uncovered in an autobiography. The travelling self is free from the pressures and the impact of everyday existence unlike in an autobiography. As said earlier, after all, the *individual in transit* is the confluence of the writer, the traveller and the individual. Although, most travel books invariably project a first person account of the *travelling self,* it is the development of the persona in transit a unique combination of the writer, the individual and the traveller. Holland and Huggan helpfully point out in this connection that:

> [U]nlike most autobiographies –at least those seen from a traditional

> perspective –travel narratives are less concerned with recuperating, or reinventing, a single self than with following the trajectory of a series of selves in transit(1998,14).

The *travelling self* is thus to be seen as distinct from the autobiographical self. This travelling self –a combination of the writer, the traveller and the individual is often in conflict with his other constitutive roles. Depending upon the circumstances (as also the narrative calibre and authorial motive) the writer, the traveller or the individual emerge at the centre of the narration and gain prominence. A literary travel book displays a balance or even a congruence of the three, even as the travelling self manifests his/herself through these personae at various points in the narration, rendering a unique flavour of a unified authorial perspective to the travel book. Since such a perspective is impossible to emerge, unless in tandem with the *locale* and the *journey,* these constituents of travel writing are discussed below in sequence, beginning with the *locale*.

2.4. 3. The constitution of the *locale*

The term *locale* has extensive implications. It comprises not just the physical place (destination of travel) but rather includes the geography, the history, the culture, the people, and the distinctive elements that make up its collective texture (Sawant,34). When there is an engagement between the two constituents (*the travelling self* and the *locale*) a comparative perspective is bound to develop. This process of comparison, involves an interaction of the travelling self's sensibility shaped by his/her cultural context, ideological

positioning including religious and political perceptions with that of the 'other', represented by the *locale*. This leads to dramatic tension in travel writing which may be resolved or may remain unresolved at the end of the travel book, depending upon the travel writer's conceptual, perceptual and creative capacity.

2.4.4. Home and abroad-the travelling self and the locale:

Interestingly, this comparison takes place with 'home' as a reference point. One of the central precepts of travel writing is the dramatization of what is 'home' and what constitutes 'abroad'. Home has often been identified with the notion of safety, security, a familiar and known place where there is supposedly, tranquility and peace. 'Abroad' on the other hand, is a space which is often linked to the unknown and unfamiliar. It is, consequently, linked with insecurity, risk, strangeness, the possibility of encountering the unfamiliar, and is viewed as being an object of scrutiny. These twin notions almost always impact not only the view of the *travelling self* of his locale but vice-versa. This aspect of 'home'/'abroad' opposition is imaginatively articulated by Vikram Seth in his travel book *FHL* where he discuses the status of a foreigner in China:

> The status of a 'foreign friend' or 'foreign guest' in China is an interesting if unnatural one. Officialdom treats the foreigner as one would a valuable panda given to fits of mischief. On no account must any harm come to the animal. On the other hand, it must be closely watched at all times so that it does not see too much, do too much on its own, or influence the behaviour of the local inhabitants [...]

> As for the Chinese people there is general sense of friendliness and a curiosity towards the individual foreigner [...]One is often conscious of a minute examination of one's dress and behaviour ...the impression is that one is considered not merely foreign, but in some sense weird[...]contact between Chinese and foreigners is permeated by the feeling that one's foreignness is the crucial element of one's character (1983, 9-10).

The native perception of the *travelling self* within the *locale* as *foreign* naturally brings to the mind of the writer the security and shelter of his 'native' home. The *travelling self* tries to maintain his link with the familiar by constant references to home by comparing the locale with one's own space of security. 'Home' for him becomes a reference point that helps him make sense of the chaos of unfamiliarity around him. Often familiar events, incidents pertaining to one's culture and identity are evoked to adjust to the unfamiliar-the *foreign*. As such, while on a journey abroad, the writer tries to negotiate his/her identity (linked to one's nationality) vis-à-vis those encountered abroad. R.K.Narayan, in his travel book titled *My Dateless Diary* (*MDD,* 1964), exhibits this negotiation of identity. Narayan initially fumbles at the self-service system at a cafeteria in New York, much to his own discomfiture and to the discomfort of others. But later on mastering the technique to a comfort- level, he purposefully alludes to the distinctness of the taste and texture of delicacy of the coffee at home in South India thus:

> Coming from a civilization used to this pace of life, I felt unequal to the speed of a Broadway Cafeteria. If you hesitated with the tray in hand, you blocked the passage of others and made them silently fret. I fumbled and obstructed only for a day. Today I was as good as my neighbour [...] when I approached

> coffee and was asked, 'Black or White?' 'Neither', I said haughtily. The server looked up rather puzzled. 'What do you mean?' he asked. 'I want it neither black nor white, but brown which ought to be the colour of honest coffee-that's how we make it in south India where devotees of perfection in coffee assemble from all over the world'[...]such leisurely talk is deliberate [...] I wanted to apply a deliberate counter action to Broadway's innate rush, just to study the effect (*MDD*, 1964, 11-12).

This deliberate effort to 'study the effect' is an attempt at countering one's lack of confidence and security in an alien milieu with the sense of comfort and security associated with one's 'home' vis-à-vis the 'other' associated with 'abroad'. This binary opposition between 'home' and 'abroad' is one of the important planks sustaining the conflict of the travelling self vis-à-vis the *locale*, until it is either recognized and resolved by compromise, control, surrender or is left undiagnosed and unresolved by the travel writer.

When there is such an engagement between 'home' and 'abroad', 'self' and the 'other', the travelling self is inevitably led towards self-introspection. Norman Douglas puts across this point rather lucidly:

> The reader of a good travel book is entitled not only to an exterior voyage, to description of journey and so forth, but to an interior sentimental or temperamental voyage which takes place side by side with the outer one...the ideal book of this kind offers us indeed, a triple opportunity of exploration – abroad, into the author's brain and into our own (qtd in Fussell 'Norton book of Travel', 1987, 15).

But for such an opportunity to materialize, the language of the travel book has to be engaging and imaginative. This brings into discussion the

language aspect of travel writing.

2.4.5. The Language of the *locale* and the *travelling self*:

Often the language of the locale has an important insinuation in the formation of the *travelling self.* The self in transit encounters a foreign language and culture and has to rely on gestures and signs to communicate. This disability often becomes a blessing in disguise for *the travelling self* whereby the individual's faculties are sensitized and s/he begins to see the site with awakened senses and attains the insightfulness necessary to a perceptive *travelling self.* Michael Cronin points out this interesting aspect of the role of language in the transformation of the individual into the *travelling self*:

> The traveller is desensitized by the habitual use of language, so that the removal to another place and culture and language is tantamount to a rebirth, a second childhood of sensory wakefulness. Whereas a traveller's place of birth can be primarily a locus of history, story, anecdote, verbalized project, in another place there are no longer the familiar coordinate systems of native language. So the traveller begins to look at the buildings above ground level, pays attention to the smells in the market, tastes the food on his/her plate, notices the fire hydrants. This is not to say that these experiences are denied to a person in their own language and place of birth but that the communicative resourcefulness demanded of the traveller in situations of total linguistic incomprehension makes a scrupulous attention to the multi-sensory detail of the everyday life world much more likely (2000,70).

The fact, that the *travelling self* when caught amidst an alien language is made a more perceptive individual, is duly acknowledged by Pico Iyer. This transformation in the *travelling self* is captured by him in his travel book *SAD,*

in a chapter aptly titled 'Nightwalking', wherein though he seems to be merely discussing the modern mode of travel and jet lag, he is in fact discussing the effect of an alien setting including language on the travelling self:

> I left this morning it's as if I have switched into another language-a parallel plane-and none of the feelings that were so real to me this morning can carry through to it. It's not that I don't want to hear them ; it's that they seem to belong now to a person I no longer am [...]was it always like this, I wonder, when people were just boarding carriages for London ? [...], it is of course, and it is nothing but the nighttime *dissolution of self*, the release from normal boundaries that flight induces [...] *I don't want to betray the life I left behind* six hours ago, but I have changed my money on arrival [...] I could take a drug of sorts to reverse the effects of the drug of displacement, but I am *not sure if it could return me to the person I was* when I got on the plane. All it could do perhaps is induce me to forget that he is someone different. (Emphasis added, 2004, 167).

This transformation of the *travelling self* into a different 'person' is necessitated not just by the language of the *locale* but more importantly by the *Journey* which is a significant constituent of a travel book and so calls for separate discussion.

2.4.6. The significance of the Journey:

The above quote from Pico Iyer points to another important component of travel writing, that is, the significance of *journey* in a travel book. This *journey* includes the path (the route) and the mode of conveyance (walking, by road transport, trains and flights). The mode of conveyance and the path chosen have a significant role to play in the formation of the travel text. Susan Basnett

in her essay 'Empire, Travel Writing, and British Studies', sees the metaphoric implication of the journey that represents the passage thorough life which is firmly established, according to her, across literatures of the world. Journey, she points out, was originally linked in various ancient literatures to the quest theme wherein the wandering knight ventured on an eternal quest to the forest (2003, 2-3). She thus, highlights the metaphoric nature of the journey, representing the journey of life itself.

Theorists like Alison Russell on the other hand, emphasize the physical journey where post modern travellers select perilous journeys or choose the most circuitous routes or unusual modes of transportation to "recapture the kinds of experience that modern tourism has eliminated"(2000, 9). This selection of "unconventional modes of travel offer the rewards of discovery or the satisfaction of physical exertion" according to Russell (ibid, 10).

As Wilfred Thesiger exclaims in his travel book, *Arabian Sands*, "it is not the goal but the way there that matters, and the harder the way the more worthwhile the journey" (qtd in Fraser, 1991, xxii). The choice of a perilous journey is linked to the innate desire to fathom the unfamiliar and unknown, which induces fear. Overcoming this fear and surviving the worst can boost one's self esteem like nothing else. Keath Fraser in 'Introduction' to the anthology *Worst Journeys: The Picador Book of Travel* (1991) amply draws out this adventurous characteristic feature of the *journey* in the following words:

> Survival is all. In the finest travel writing the storyteller resolves his fears through the catharsis of the narrative. Without fear, travel has no meaning;

> the writer is without a secret" (xix) [...]a writer's worst journey is also his best. It contains the seed of a vivid story in which he is a welcome survivor (xx).

It can thus be deduced that, the fruits of undertaking a perilous journey are redemptive and also make an interesting read. Martha Gellhorn has pointed out that one of the reasons behind choosing dangerous routes is to capture the interest of the reader "the only aspect of our travels that is guaranteed to hold an audience is disaster" (qtd in Fraser, xv). Whether opting to face disaster or take risk by choosing a perilous journey, is intended to meet the innate desire of the thrill of adventure, or whether it is undertaken to capture the reader's interest or still further, whether it is for both those motives would be an interesting point of conjecture.

The mode of conveyance is also an important facet of the journey. It affects the *travelling self* and determines the way the narrative is structured. Pico Iyer has already made a mention of how jet travel affects the *travelling self* and how it can bring about a transformation in this *self*. Travel writers have constantly pointed out to the pleasures of walking and maintained that it is one of the best ways to absorb the site. Bill Aitken in his travel book *Footloose in the Himalaya* (2003) considers walking as the most suitable means of exploring the site:

> To walk is probably the best way to soak in the full beauty of the Himalaya because it leaves you open to the unexpected and the elemental. Whether striding, strolling, or slogging, the effort of legs and lungs working in

> harmony release a three-pointed joy where body and soul are at one with their surroundings (3).

Likewise, Paul Theroux in *The Tao of Travel* (2011) extols the inspirational potential of train travel:

> No mode of transportation inspires more detailed observation than the railway train. There is no literature of air travel, not much of one for bus journeys, and cruise ships inspire social observation but little else. The train is effective because anyone who cares to can write (as well as sleep and eat) on a train. The soothing and unstressful trip leaves deep impressions of the passing scene, and of the train itself. Every airplane trip is the same; every railway journey is different. The rail traveller is often companionable, talkative, even somewhat liberated. Perhaps that's because he or she can walk around. This person, this mood, is what psychologist call "untethered"- such strangers are the best talkers, the best listeners (26).

Aitken and Theroux suggests how the conveyance selected by the author has a significant bearing on the *travelling self*, as well as on the way the *locale* (*surroundings*) is perceived by the *travelling self*. The journey is thus an important aspect of the genre–it considerably helps in shaping the thematic focus of the narrative.

2.4.7. Travel writing- a confluence of the three

In fine, it can be maintained that the interplay of the three constituents of travel writing, namely,–the *travelling self, the journey and the locale*, and the comparative vistas that they open up provide a dramatic tension of rising and falling action and thereby also contribute to its generic identity. These important constituents being unique to travel writing make it a distinct genre,

albeit fluid and inclusive of other generic presence. Thus, while travel writing can be multi-generic; sometimes assuming the form of an autobiography, diary, a memoir and so on, the three defining features of this genre the *travelling self, the journey and the locale* are integral to it. It can be thus argued that although travel writing may seem superficially to be a hybrid genre, it has certain identifiable features that determine its individual generic identity even within the complexity of multi-generic appearances.

2.5. The travel book: a genre in perpetual transition

This genre uses experimental modes of narration and exhibits fluidity inherent to it as contemporary generic theorists have pointed out to any 'generic framework'. It is also prone to change as per the circumstances prevailing during a particular period or at a particular venture of travel. Frow's remarks in the general context of literary genre holds good for the travel genre too:

> Genres, it follows, are neither self identical nor self-contained. Each genre's form is relative to those of all other genres in the same synchronic system and changes as that system evolves. (op.cit.1629).

Travel writing is a part of the larger system of literary genres. The way we perceive travel writing too will change as the system of classification changes. Like its core subject, it is a genre on the move. It can be symbolically described as a genre in transit. However considering the constant shifts and changes that occur in its generic visage, it can be best described also as a genre in perpetual transition.

CHAPTER THREE

THE EMERGENT VOICE OF INDIAN TRAVEL WRITING

3.1. Indian Travel Writing- emergence as an independent genre:

Travel writing in India as pointed out in Chapter One, had been initially subsumed within the genre of the epic in ancient literature and during the medieval ages, in narrative poetry in general. As such, its independent generic formulation had not yet taken place when ban on travel a la 'Sindubandhi' became a norm (See Chapter One). This was due to the fact that much ancient Indian literature was traditionally generated orally, in poetry form. Most of prose narratives too, were rendered in oral form as late as the Middle Ages and even later. Thus one finds narrations like the *Buranji* in Assamese language, the *Bakhar* in the Marathi language and similar oral prose renditions in other Indian languages as late as the late eighteenth century.

However in 1800, factors conducive to the emergence of prose evolved and within it the genre of travel as a written form also manifested among others. In this era, two significant developments took place: the establishment of the Serampore Mission Press (10 January, 1800); and, the establishment of the college of Fort William (4 April, 1800). These two developments led to the publication of journals which dealt with contemporary issues. These factors in turn led to the emergence of prose literature as a written form which included

essays, biographies, literary history and travel literature.(See Das, *History of India Literature(1800-1910): Western Impact: Indian Response* ,1991, 258-270).

In the 1830s a significant linguistic change took place which changed the literary scenario in India. In the mid-nineteenth century, with the introduction of English education following Macaulay's Minute of Education (1835), Persian which had been the language of the court came to be displaced by the English language. As a consequence of this two-fold shift, modern Indian literature in English slowly began to emerge. Much of this modern Indian literature was indeed in prose and its bulk was travel writing. This modern literary expression was probably a manifestation of what in Das's words, "entails Indian endeavours towards adjusting itself with a foreign civilization" (ibid, Das, 78).

Modernity as understood in this era was thus a response of adjusting to the west that used English education for its benefit. This engulfing wave of modernity which was the result of India's encounter with the west, via British rule and the educational system introduced by the rulers, soon found expression in literature. The native writers articulated most vociferously through the non–fictional prose works, even as the English educated Indian began to find his voice. Thus, along with other prose works, travel literature too was an instrument as well as an outcome of the process of modernization that the Indian *elite* writer experienced.

In the 1850s along with tactful dissemination of cultural hold and

linguistic control through the spread of education there was a formal enforcement of political control by the British Crown over its new-found empire in India. This political authority was institutionalized through the Queen's Proclamation of 1858, which was a direct fallout of the suppression of the Revolt of 1857 construed by the rulers as Mutiny. The attempt by the native Indians to resist British imperial subjection was also an expression of native national identity. Soon after this First War of Independence had failed, there appears to be a studied silence maintained by the Indian writer with regard to this event (ibid, Das 125). Likewise, travel works appearing during this period preferred to remain silent about this event. However, there was a dormant national consciousness growing beneath a façade of calm and apparent indifference. The same would be articulated in the late 19th century emergent voice of travel writers.

Though there were hardly any works regarding the revolution in the immediate aftermath, there was nevertheless intense literary activity. In fact, a literary renaissance took place where writers introduced various literary forms that included travel writing. Uma Shankar Joshi sees 1857 as "[T]he focal point of India Renaissance" where poetry, "throbbed with artistic vitality [...].New varieties of lyric like the ode, elegy, dramatic lyric, monologue and the sonnet were tried[...]Not only historical romance and novels mirroring contemporary society, but socio-philosophical and epic novels were written" (*Indian Literature: Personal Encounters*, 1988,5). Undoubtedly the mid nineteenth century was a period of literary blossoming.

In the 1880s this literary renaissance intensified and unlike the earlier period reacted to the social events with a new found zeal. Literature began to respond vociferously to the political turmoil and tensions of the time. Swami Vivekanada's speech at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, where he expounded the greatness of the Hindu tradition made him an idol especially for the young Indian, and writers created the image of the "patriotic ascetic" based on him.

This period also marks the formation the Indian National Congress in 1885 which was criticized by writers of literature for its alienation from the masses (See Das, 219-222). All these events in turn ushered in a liberal reformist zeal among the educated class that eventually seeped into literature.

There was thus a change in literary perspective at the fag end of the nineteenth century apparently inspired by English education and special reforms ushered in by the liberal reformist and institutionalized by the British rule. Ironically, towards the turn of the century, fed by the complex intellectual climate of its time, the freedom movement began to gain impetus as well, drawing inspiration from the War of Independence (1857).

Eventually combined with the introduction of English language, these political events led to the emergence of the discourse on nationalism. The travel book became one of the most preferred genres to articulate the *nation.* Reformists mostly belonging to the privileged class and who were generally western-educated travelled within their own country and abroad, and expressed their perspective on the nation and their views about their country through their

travel writing. This in turn helped mobilize travel writing towards an identifiable generic visage. The emergence of travel as an independent genre can thus be attributed to the socio-cultural and political changes that took place in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

3.1.1. The emergence: *Modern* versus the traditional *travelling* self

A point of interest at this stage is whether 'modernity' as defined by Das above, was instrumental in also creating the modern *travelling self* alienated from native culture. Critics of late nineteenth century Indian travel writing have contented that the travel book emerged as a consequence of a change in the newly English educated Indian mindset wherein a 'colonization of self' had taken place (Mukhopadhyaya, 2002, 295-296).

This colonized self, a product of English education "had internalized [...] histories and geographies written by Europeans" (ibid, 300). Mukhopadhyay and Sen have analysed how travel writings prior to colonial control, were written without a distinction being made between the 'self' and the 'other'. They point out that, the Indo-Persian travel writers like Itesammudin Sheikh Mirza and Abu Taleb who wrote prior to the colonial control, for instance, described their respective visits to England not as individuals, but where "the Other was seen as equal to the self" (Sen,52). Neither Itesammuddin nor Taleb presented the *travelling self* as an exclusive individual.

On the other hand, unlike these pre-colonial travellers, the colonial travellers "created an alienated self from the traditional ways of living, as well

as a liberated self experiencing a certain degree of freedom that enabled the modern self to forsake the older ways of living"(Sen, 2005,4).

The core of this argument is that the conservative communitarian 'self' of the late nineteenth century changed to a more progressive modern self as a consequence of western education; and that, this modern individual self which experienced alienation as well as freedom articulated itself in the travel book.

Interestingly, while this might be true in the case of those individuals who sought to imitate the west, this cannot be applied to all the nineteenth century travel writers. For instance the social reformer and established journalist, Behramji Malabari in his travel book, *The Indian Eye on English Life or Rambles of a Pilgrim Reformer* (*TIEEL*;1893), in spite of admiring the west for its progress, displays a bond with Indianess, when discussing the censure of foreign travel among Indian Hindus. Speaking as one among his countrymen, he observes rather judiciously:

> [A]s to the attitude of caste regarding foreign travel, one cannot deny that it is more or less hostile, and not without reason. Caste loves contentment–to let things alone. Foreign travel brings discontent, under the happiest of circumstances. The priestly law givers of India were shrewd enough to see the risk; in their day perhaps the evil outweighed the good. We are now living under totally different conditions. If the educated Hindu is sufficiently educated to conciliate the reasonable prejudices of his elders, he has little or nothing to lose from crossing the *Kálápani* ("Black Waters"), and certainly a great deal to gain (Quoted in Khair, 2005, 372).

In the above analysis, the writer links himself to his community without going to the other extreme of complete alienation and disowning of the native ethos. This shows that the educated *travelling self* did not disown or forsake the older ways of living as Sen argues. There was no doubt, an impact on the self due to western education that lead to the recognition of one's individuality. However, this impact did not alienate but, ironically, strengthened the bond of the self to its traditional ethos. This was certainly true at least in the case of the second generation 'educated' who were steeped in the native ambience. This is strongly evident in the west influenced 'self' articulated in Swami Vivekanada's *Memoirs of European travel* translated from the Bengali *Parivrajaka* (*PV/MET*; 1901). While western impact through its education, acted as a catalyst for self analysis, the travel book in the late nineteenth century also became a handy medium for self quest linked to community.

Thus, it can be argued that the political control and English/western education did not lead to the constitution of the denationalized modern 'self' per se, but rather to a bold and critical self prone to analysis where the issue of identity became important.

Notably, the nation was seen as the via media of analysing this identity. Initially, the *elite* articulated this theme of national identity and the nation emerged as a recurrent motif in travel-related writing from the mid to the late nineteenth century. However, with the intensification of political protest against the British rule in India and with the changing socio cultural situation in the early twentieth century, this motif of nation gradually yielded place to a

quest for *self.*

It would be, therefore, significant to see how this nation motif emerged and gradually developed as a critique of the west in the travel book of the nineteenth century.

3.2. Emergence of nation motif; from admiration to critique of the west:

Gradually, the west oriented travel articulation of the nation, moved from admiration over the west's superiority, to professing equality of the Indians with the British, and finally, to becoming a critique of the West. Initially progressive writers like Karsandas Mulji (1832-1871) utilized the genre for nationalistic objectives of reform. Unlike his predecessor, the Guajarati social reformer Mahipatram Rupram's *England Ni Musafari Nu Varnan* (1864), which sees England as a superior entity, Mulji's travel book *England Ma Pravas* (1866) is "more nuanced and less overwhelmed in tone" (Siganporia,6). Nonetheless, Mulji still sees England as a rational and progressive society that India should emulate.

If a critique of the west via the travel book by Indians emerged through Mulji's work, it became more pronounced with Malabari's *TIEEL,* based on his visit to England and with Pandita Ramabai's travel book on America titled *United Stateteschi Lokasthithi ani Pravasavritta* (1889;Henceforth *USLP/RAG*) where both critically analyze England. Malabari for instance though fascinated with England to a great extent, still blatantly criticizes the 'English' insistence on using correct English:

> Is it not curious that the average Englishman, who scorns to pick up foreign languages while travelling, insists upon foreigners speaking to him in

> English? [...] .Talking of "Babu English", I should like to know how many Englishmen speak Bengali half as well as Bengalis speak English (ibid. 372).

This kind of overt analysis of the pros and cons of British and their attitude are dispersed through the above mentioned travel books. However, both of them were dependent on the British for their reformist endeavours. Malabari was the editor of the *Indian Spectator* an important organ of the Anglo –Indian press and Ramabai's stay in England was sponsored by *CSMV* (Anglican Community of St. Mary the Virgin) which had its headquarters in Wantage, England. That may probably be why they stopped short of openly articulating the freedom of their country from the British. But, Vivekananda's *PV/MET* (1901) brooks no such niceties. It voices an assertive nationalistic fervour fuelled by the political movements for India's freedom.

Subsequently, in Tagore's travel writings of the 1920s, there was a shift from the nation to the 'self', as the *travelling self* began to reveal the national psyche which slowly entered a self exploratory mode. The late nineteenth century was thus the age of thematic transition for the recently emerged travel genre.

It was also a phase where travel writing branched out from being a critique of the west to a narrative mode meant for mass consumption. As such there came to be two strands to the emergent travel book –the 'elite' travel book that voiced the nation and the 'common man's' travel book that voiced the concerns of the ordinary individual. These two strands of the emergent travel book are explained below.

3.3. The 'elite' and the 'common man's' travel voice:

The nation motif in the travel book was articulated by what is termed as the *elite* travel writers. The term *elite* is used in the sense of "a group of persons who by virtue of position or education exercise much power or influence" (Merriam Webster Dictionary, CD ROM). Jayati Gupta defines these *elite* travelling individuals as:

> An *elite* group of Western-educated Indians did travel to Europe, to England in particular, to gather experience in the empirical sciences, to study law, to learn about the working of social or political institutions. These persons invariably interacted closely with European peoples and nations and observed with interest a different culture, life and customs. When they returned to their own countries, some of them wrote accounts in their mother-tongues describing the occident to those stay-at-homes who were reticent or inhibited, indigent or unadventurous, even too superstitious to break religious taboos in order to venture abroad.(e-journal, "London", Para 2).

In the emergent travel writing of the late nineteenth century there was a dichotomy between this *'elite'* and common brands of writing. The former writing was of educated and privileged individuals who articulated the nation represented by writers like Pandita Ramabai, Swami Vivekananda and Rabindranath Tagore, and the latter was by the *ordinary folk,* "characterized by a lack of privilege or special status" (Merriam Webster,Dictonary, CD Rom online).

This common voice catered to the little educated vernacular readership. Godse Bhatji, Ramabai's contemporary, belongs to this group. In spite of writing of the First war of Independence a crucial event in India's freedom

struggle, Godse Bhatji's perspective is neither visionary nor nationalist. On the contrary he is interested in narrating the amusement and awe inspired by the event. However, both these voices constitute the emergent travel writing of their times.

As such the first section will analyse the nation motif as articulated in the emergent *elite* travel book and the second section will analyse the themes of the common man's travel book.

3.3.1. Dean Mohamed's *Travels* –an exception:

A travel book though not belonging to this period, Dean Mahomed's *Travels* (1794) needs to be included here, because of the contribution of this tome to the emergent Indian travel writing. It unwittingly pioneers the native cultural assertion which would a century later be transmuted as a nationalist voice and it also pioneers the common man's voice. Thus it is an exception to the dichotomy of the elite and the common man's voice. Although not elitist, it is a voice that contributes significantly to this emergent 'national' voice since it accosts almost a century earlier the theme of the nation that was to form the thrust of late nineteenth century travel writing. At the same time his is also the voice of the common man in being confined to concerns of one's financial security and social standing, who does not think beyond personal concerns.

Since the theme of the nation via the travel book as well as the common man's voice was introduced in this first book in English by an Indian who travelled to Ireland in the late 18th century and wrote about his early years in India in his book *Travels,* it would be befitting to begin a discussion of the

nation motif seen as a native consciousness emerging in this book. However, prior to this, it would be useful to be acquainted with the context in the sense of 'relevant circumstances' (OED, 156) that necessitated this nascent consciousness.

3.4. The context of Dean Mahomed's *Travels*:

Dean Mahomed's *Travels,* mentions that his ancestors had served the Mughal Court, and that his father, brother and he himself chose to serve the British Bengal army of the East India Company (EIC). *Travels* also depicts his fascination for the life of the British officers and the urge to be part of the British army. Today, this might appear a 'denationalized' aspiration. However, during the time of Dean Mahomed, irrespective of their religious affiliations; the masses served the EIC for social and economic elevation. This was a trend that continued until the late nineteenth century when Indians worked as civil servants for the British Government.

Dean Mahomed's generation was among the first who found a career in the British army attractive. His family had served the Nawabs of Bengal, till Bengal was taken over by the company. Thus it was natural for individuals like Dean Mohamed to shift their allegiance to the British for an administrative and military career. He was one of the vast majorities of Indian natives who indirectly helped foster British rule in India. Hence Dean Mahomed's perspective as a member of the British army that aided in this process of British expansion is valuable (see Michael Fisher, 1996, 4).

Again, during Mahomed's time, since India was not an integral political

entity nor was it conceived as such, his apparent lack of allegiance to his land cannot be held against him. It should also be borne in mind that the British rule had not yet penetrated India's cultural fabric. As such there was no direct and widespread animosity between the native Indians and the British rulers since the British did not interfere with the native culture.

For many Indians like Mohamed, it was then, a shift in political allegiance where the master had changed from a Muslim ruler to a British ruler. However, in his keen awareness of the native exploitation by the Bengal British Army, we see a nascent native identity emerging. This theme was to blossom as national consciousness in the travel writings of late nineteenth century. It is within the context of such 'native identity consciousness' that Dean Mahomed's *Travels* could be located.

3.4.1. *Travels*-the precursor of Native Identity consciousness:

Dean Mahomed's voice could be seen as the earliest voice of native, if not national consciousness. However, since *Travels* is written by a non-resident Indian, it has certain vantage point of narration as compared to writings by resident travel writers: it speaks of first hand experience yet from the objectivity available to a distant observer. Significantly it is written for a European audience to acquaint them about India. Fisher argues that this exercise of narrating India was to some extent to elevate his social position by constructing an identity in a foreign land (237). Perhaps, it is due to this reason that he selectively constructs his native cultural identity revealing precious little personal details or matters related to personality. Thus the entire travel book is

premised on construction of a 'native' Indian identity. Details about his family and personal details for instance, can be barely gleaned through the first two letters, dealing with his departure from home against his mother's wish to seek a career in the Bengal Army. Identity then is preferentially constructed by Mohamed, through its external manifestations which comprise the cultural and political domains of his country. Thus the description of the elephant, the depiction of scenery at Benares, Delhi and Allahabad, social habits like chewing of betel nut, religious rituals and customs of the Muslim and Hindu communities with regard to naming ceremony (described as baptism), marriage ceremony and funeral rites all find a place in *Travels*.

At the same time he also links himself to his resident land–Ireland. Throughout the travel book, he speaks as one of 'them'- the Irish. Home for him is Ireland which he identifies with, as is seen for instance when he compares the Indian palanquin to what he calls as "*our* sedan chairs are carried" (27).The use of *our*, indicates his identification with the Irish. Through comparisons and contrast with the European ethos we see the unfolding of this identity which is a hybrid one. Culturally he links himself to his native as well as his host land and politically he identifies with the British Army that he served.

In terms of military strength and skilful political manoeuvres he presents the Europeans as far advanced over their Indian counterparts. For instance, he lauds the army's courage in thwarting the *savage Pahareas* (a local hilly tribe) attempts at plundering the British soldiers and describes this counterattack in

high literary English (letter IX, 35). He identifies himself with this army and takes pleasure in its conquests. The pronouns *we* and *our* are used consistently to establish this identification with the army.

This identification with the foreign army was perhaps due to the compulsions that he was placed under. He was dependent on both the British as well as the Irish (which was his home) for sustenance. What is noteworthy is that in spite of all these circumstances he displays the courage not only to speak for his native land in *Travels* but also places it at a superior position albeit covertly. He makes this amply clear at the onset of *Travels* where he feels inclined "to describe the manners of my countrymen, who, I am proud to think, have still *more* of the innocence of our ancestors, than some of the boasting philosophers of Europe"(Emphasis added,15), and in later letters, uses phrases like "purity of manners of natives "(29), and makes observations like the dancing girls of India as "having nothing of that gross impudence which characterizes the European prostitutes" (50). Later in narrating the incident of the death of a Lieutenant in the British army who ridiculed a sacred tomb, Dean Mohamed's voice assertively warns against such profanity:

> Here is an awful lesson to those who through narrow judgment and confined speculation are too apt to profane the piety of their fellow creatures, merely for a difference in their modes of worship (Letter VII, 32).

Such kind of subtle cultural assertions indicate the emergence of a voice that speaks for one's native community.

Moreover, as the book progresses and as Dean Mohamed's contact with the native Indians, as part of the Bengal British army becomes confrontational,

the native consciousness becomes overtly expressed. In an earlier letter that comes much before this contact, though he had expressed his displeasure of the British handling of the famine in India, the tone was still not harsh:

> Little did the treasures of their country avail them on this occasion: a small portion of rice timely administered to their wants, would have been of more real importance than their mines of gold and diamonds (22).

It becomes vituperative and critical of the British administration, as he comes directly in contact with the natives. This is distinctly reflected in his sympathetic comment over the tragic fate of the able ruler of Benaras Raja Chayt Singh in spite of his being an ally of the British (99). That this sympathy with the native gradually turns into disillusionment with the colonial power is palpable in the next letter where he laments the tragic waste caused by war in a poem inserted at the end of letter XXXIV (100). Possibly this could be one of the reasons for his resignation from the army as *subedar,* though he professedly stated that he had resigned to accompany his patron and friend Baker to Ireland (letter XXXV).

Thus, it can be argued that in *Travels*, there is a visible, albeit subdued transition from the politically unenlightened to a culturally aware native self. As such, *Travels,* becomes the voice of the ordinary Indian native who found it increasingly difficult to serve or to identify with the British army and eventually tried to register his disaffection through the assertion of his native cultural identity. This voice forms the proto - type of the future travel book of the late nineteenth century infused with nationalism.

As such, the Indian travel book emerged out of the heady mix of the

cultural and political. From proclaiming cultural identity to asserting political probity of colonial manoeuvres, a gradual emergence of native awareness can be traced. This becomes transmuted into national consciousnesses- a motif that would dominate the late nineteenth century elite travel writing, a characteristic of the Indian renaissance.

However prior to discussing the nation motif articulated in the *elite* travel book of the late nineteenth century, it is essential to dwell on the concept of the nation which underwent a change during this crucial period of India's struggle against British rule.

3.5. Nation: the Indian context

The term Nation as OED, defines it is "a large group of people sharing the same culture, language or history and inhabiting a particular state or area". This concept of a nation as a politically, historically and linguistically united entity with clear demarcated borders was never really present in the Indian context. With a long history of relentless invasions from various quarters the geographical as well as political boundaries of what had been nominally India were constantly reorganized. In its wake this had led to an absence of a politically united nation in the above mentioned sense. In turn such a situation made it relatively easy for foreign invaders from the various parts of the world to gain control of India. When the British came to India, initially, as the East India Company, India had been divided into several princely states, constantly in conflict with each another.

As a result of this state of affairs, what could be appropriately described

as the Indian landmass was in reality never integrated into a 'nation'. However the feeling of belonging to the same territory/tradition certainly seems to have existed in the Indian psyche and its reflection can be seen in the prevalent notion of the *Bharatvarsha*. The concept of India as a nation in the sense of being a politically unified entity captured the imagination of the Indians only in mid-nineteenth century when the British were formalizing and institutionalizing their control over the length and breadth of the Indian Territory.

The outbreak of the Revolt of 1857 shows how the rebellious Indian native sought to unite India on political terms to counter what was perceived as the burgeoning British colonial control. This was at once a nationalistic attempt, in the sense of having a "belief in political independence for a particular country" (OED, 598); and it was also a belief in the cultural and social distinctiveness of India as a country.

However, a nation exists only if the members feel that they belong to the same underlying tradition. As Anuradha Roy in *Nationalism as Poetic Discourse in Nineteenth century Bengal* points out a nation is:

> a community which even while covering an extensive territory is supposed to be very closely knit. Living inside it must foster a sense of solidarity and belongingness [...].A man can go to the extent of laying down his life for his nation. Such intensity of the nationalist sentiment becomes possible from the fact that it centers not only around a society but more importantly around a community, the members of which are supposed to be kin-folk (2003, 5)

This kinship, a common bond among the Indians had to be forged. By

then, the Aryan past of India was very much in prominence. In fact, it was sought by some agents of the nationalistic integration as the natural basis for such a bonding. Roy echoes this search for a national identity and the need felt by the Indian to find a common bond which she conjectures was historically located in late nineteenth century India:

> [...] new Indian nation was physically and nominally the same as the old India or *Bharatvarsha.* But ideationally it was totally different. The traditional concept of India or *Bharatvarsha* standing for a loose cultural bonding failed to appeal to nationalists. A nation is not a geographical space, but a community of people [...] It must be based on some strong internal principle traceable in history. (ibid, 5-6)

This binding principle was provided, according to Roy, by the glorious Hindu past and the ethnic concept of the Aryan. It was the Hindu traditional past, the ideology that bound the geographical space of India together and created a sense of belonging through the realization of having been a part of a single community. In the emergent travel book of the late nineteenth century, the 'nation' as a motif, was sought to be asserted through the hearkening of this common Aryan Hindu past sans its negativities, which is termed as the *rejuvenist* approach, as seen in Vivekananda's *PV/MET (*1901)

At the same time there was an articulation that voiced a change from this past and sought to reformulate the nation, what could be called as *reformist.* In both the cases the nation and its liberation from political and religious shackles was envisaged.

The tern *nation,* thus is used in the above sense of being a space where

the people feel they belong to a single community. Nationalism, if defined with regard to the above sense of the nation could be seen as attempts made by Indians to assert their political, social and cultural independence. The travel book of the late nineteenth century articulated these attempts of narrating the 'nation'.

3.6. Approaches to 'nation' motif in the emergent elite travel book:

There were two approaches, through which nation as motif was manifested in the travel book of the late 19th century, which are termed as *reformist* and *rejuvenist*. The two travel books under study namely, Pandita Ramabai's *USLP/RAG*, and Swami Vivekanada's *PV/MET* in that order adopt these approaches to articulate the nation. In the context of their travel books, *reformist* approach is defined in the sense of a transformation of the country from the morass of superstition, illiteracy and poverty with which it had come to be identified. This approach typically attacks conservative practices which are detrimental to development of the nation. *Rejuvenist* approach is defined as a commitment to the reawakening of the invaluable timeless values and tradition of the country. This approach typically undertakes to awaken the readers to the glorious Indian past and celebrate its cultural ethos; often the indigenous religious distinctiveness is emphasized and sought to be revived.

In *PV/MET*, for instance, Vivekananda uses the *rejuvenist* approach. He recalls and establishes the traditional Hindu ethos as necessary for national growth. However, at the same time he finds India lacking in the self–assuredness that comes through rootedness. Towards that end, he does not

hesitate to use the reformist approach by pinpointing the flaws in Indian society by recommending how they can be overcome.

On the other hand, Ramabai in *USLP/RAG* strictly uses the reformist approach sans any attempt at rejuvenation in that she relegates her Hindu cultural past after being at the receiving end of its discriminations and conservatism. Therefore her orientation in *USLP/RAG,* the travel book based on her visit to America, is towards social reformism and anti- revivalism.

Since Ramabai's was the earliest of these voices of the nation motif via the travel book, it would be relevant to begin the discussion of nation motif as voiced in *USLP/RAG* where she uses the reformist approach.

However, to understand the reformist voice of nationalism in *USLP/RAG,* it is crucial to be acquainted with the context from where this reformist approach sans revivalism emanated.

3.6. 1. The context of Ramabai's *USLP/RAG:*

Ramabai's life could be traced on a trajectory of travel. During her infancy, her family lived in exile as a consequence of excommunication by the Hindu community due to her father's decision of educating his wife in Sanskrit. She was born in exile in the mountain abode of Gangamal. Later due to personal tragedies and in order to earn a livelihood, along with her brother she travelled across India as a *puranika* –reciting and elucidating verses from the Puranas, the Hindu scriptures, to earn a living. Due to the fame she gained in India by her knowledge of the Sanskrit scriptures she was given the title *Pandita*, and acclaimed with the sobriquet 'Saraswati'- godess of learning. She

travelled abroad to England in 1883 and later on to the United States in 1886.

She refused to be bogged down by the orthodox Hindu doctrinal principles which she severely criticized in her seminal feminist text *Stree Dharma Neeti.* In Frykenberg's words she "castigated Brahmin men for the way they had long treated their women" (13). Burton argues that there was a restless desire for spiritual satisfaction in Ramabai and this was due to "the pattern of pilgrimage that characterized much of her life" ('At the Heart of Empire', 76-77). Meera Kosambi also argues that Ramabai's life of unceasing pilgrimage enabled her to produce some of the astutely gendered critiques of nationalist reform and the British imperial civilizing mission in the nineteenth century. Her "migratory consciousness enabled her to better withstand the stresses of modernity and encounters with the West; an ability to draw eclectically upon diverse cultural, religious and ideological influences seems to have saved her from a fractured identity" (Introduction, 38 USLP). Needless to say, her early travelling experiences and the suffering she underwent and witnessed created this anti-revivalist in and pro-woman reformism in her.

Her constant conflicts within the Hindu community in India as well as with the orthodox Christian mission in England made her a doubly-marginalized individual. Inderpal Grewal has pointed out this double marginalization of Ramabai's subject position in unequivocal terms:

> Ramabai was not a European traveler or tourist taking peeks, [...] but a daughter in a family expelled by Brahmin orthodoxy. In addition there was Ramabai's growing skepticism about Hinduism that came from the family's poverty, ostracism, hunger and deprivation that could not be contained within

> the positions constructed either by more normative notions of pilgrimage within Hindu society or by European travel" (187).

Thus, this emergent voice of nationalism was a unique one, that neither fitted into the Hindu Indian tradition of travel nor European travel of liberty and independence. The travel book *USLP/RAG* becomes a social reformist voice of a woman, who chose to speak against her society. Reformism for her meant changing her own society with regard to its social and cultural ethos in the light of an acceptable paradigm. She envisioned a kind of revamping of India on the American model and made *USLP/RAG*, written for a native Marathi audience a vehicle for the articulation of this reformist nationalism.

3.6.2. The Reformist-Nationalist approach in Pandita Ramabai's *USLP/RAG*:

In the preceding discussion, it is revealed how Ramabai's travels as part of her pilgrimage in India developed sensitivity in her about the condition of women in her native land. It was this earlier experience that made her an ardent supporter of women reform and it was through this channel of discourse and reformism that she got involved in the nationalistic debate. Moreover, she travelled and wrote at a time when colonial control was the strongest and the most intolerant. The nationalism in her travel book is, therefore, channelized through the kind of social reform which the British rulers apparently endorsed.

In this sense, Ramabai's *USLP/RAG* is a latently nationalist text, in that she does not directly attack the British rule but uses the discourse of social reform and the example of American society as an instrument for mediating

and channelizing her nationalist concerns. In the preface, she candidly confesses that the purpose of writing a book on America is to "increase in some measure the diligence and desire to serve our mother India, which currently prevail in the hearts of my dear countrymen and women" (54). As such, Ramabai's astute analysis of America as a nation can be considered as a subtle nationalistic project of women friendly social reform.

The entire travel book is structured on this premise. Right from tracing the plight of the so-called Red Indians and to identifying as ignorance the reason for their subjugation (72), to analysing the social condition of America and education of women in America, her attempt is at re-forming the nation.

However being a British subject and more significantly a beneficiary of British patronage in that her trip to England was sponsored by *CSMV,* her nationalism is covertly expressed as social reform. After all, social reformism was the safest way to articulate her nationalistic objectives given her ambivalent position vis-à-vis native society and colonial England. In this approach, she employs two distinct techniques: allusion to the *domain of home*; and *reversal of gaze* albeit refracted through the lens of the American nation. It should be interesting to analyse how this is done.

3.6.2.1. The domain of home in *USLP/RAG*:

In majority of late nineteenth century westward travel writing, nationalism is exhibited through the domestic sphere of home (Mukhopadhyaya, 305). In *USLP/RAG*, Ramabai seems to do this by alluding to America and implying India. She devotes an entire chapter to domestic conditions of

America, where she describes the close–knit family structure, respect for women, the importance given to the education of women, the close relationship between the parents and children and the domestic scheduling of breakfast and meal time (105-109 *USLP/ RAG).*

In describing these elements of American society she obviously had the domestic set up of late 19th century India in mind. Her foregrounding of these aspects of American life was intended to advocate reform in the domestic sphere of home by holding it up for comparison with the former as a paradigm of reform. More importantly, the description of home was purportedly directed against the patriarchal social structure of her time. This larger nationalist project of promoting reform in the domestic sphere in India in *USLP/RAG,* sought to question the conventional notion of home centered on segregation, marginalization and secondary status to women.

3.6.2. 2. The Reverse gaze of the writer: America as the touchstone

The reversal of gaze had been used as a mode of articulating the nation by the late nineteenth century Indian travellers abroad (see Burton, 'Making a Spectacle of Empire', 143). This implies a shift or reversal of 'gaze' where instead of the colonizer looking at the colonized; it is the other way round. In this context, Ramabai's could be said to be a reverse gaze in that she analyses a western society from an Indian point of view. Interestingly, this gaze is not directed on Britain per se. She deftly makes use of the United States of America to indirectly critique and judge Britain's capability for colonial rule. This is clearly visible in her using American system as a backdrop to critically

evaluate Britain. For instance in *USLP/RAG*, her references to the American success in overthrowing the British(75), her constant allusions to the British system as a hierarchical class-based structure detrimental to the growth of any nation(Chapter 3,76-94), speak for themselves.

Ironically this travel book which shifted focus from the colonizer to the colonized, was labelled as anti-nationalist since Indian nationalism then was heavily tilted towards patriarchy especially in Maharashtra her native state (See Kosambi, Introduction, 7). No doubt, her brand of nationalism was reformist especially vis-à-vis the lot of native women. Yet her decision to embrace Christianity created a hiatus between her reformist zeal and the conservative Hindu reader whom she intended to convince (Introduction, Kosambi, 41-42). Thus the travel book, *USLP/RAG* represents a voice in transit which in its day largely went unheard, ironically not because the author was a woman but because it was a voice that consciously spoke against the patriarchal reform which formed the crux of mainstream nationalism. Nonetheless, this kind of contestation of nationalism has given the emergent travel writing of India its initial verve and distinct literary identity.

3.6.2.3. The complexity of nationalist approach in *USLP/RAG*:

Ramabai's use of nation motif in *USLP/RAG* is complex, though it is directed towards women friendly social reform, very astutely she uses not Britain,the colonizer- country but another western nation, America, as a model for her country. Interestingly, this latter nation had overthrown the British colonial yokel. This articulation is not only a reversal of gaze but can also be

seen as a reversal of voice; it is an articulation that is a counter- voice to the prevalent patriarchal nationalistic ideology.

This voice in transit to America can be seen against another westward traveller's voice belonging to mainstream nationalism, that speaks in defence of the essentially 'traditional India' that Ramabai chose to repudiate for its conservatism.

The transit towards Europe is captured in the form of a diary articulated by one of the most influential voices in India's nationalism Swami Vivekanada, in his Bengali travel book titled *Memoirs of European Travel* (*PV/MET*/1901).

3.6.3. The context of Vivekananda's *PV/MET:*

Like Ramabai, though Vivekananda was also part of the travel for nation's sake via the travel book, unlike her he was convinced of the need to revive the best in the Indian tradition. His travel book like Ramabai's *USLP/RAG* was firmly rooted in his early experiences as a *sanyasi* traveller, a Wandering Monk;(See Swami Nikhilananda's *Swami Vivekananda: A Biography*, 1964, 81-109).Yet unlike her, his early exposure to the Hindu religion attracted rather than repelled him. It is, therefore, essential to be informed about the context from which this Hindu *rejuvenist* strand of nationalism emanated.

Vivekanada's childhood was unlike Ramabai's in many ways. Born into a family of comforts, he consciously chose the ascetic way of life, through his innate love for religion and the inborn ascetic streak in him (ibid, 12-13). In his youth he studied at the Presidency college of Calcutta where he was exposed to

western education (Ibid, 20).

The most crucial period of his formative life was his association with Sri Ramakrishna, who helped clear his doubts about religion, and with whom he had various intellectual arguments. Finally, all this stirred up his innate spiritual yearning (ibid, 26-41).

His spiritual quest was realized whereby he finally chose the austere life of a *wandering monk*. It was during these wanderings across India, from the Himalayas to Kanyakumari, that he saw the pitiable condition of the Indian masses and the plight of the caste-ridden society. It was here that he decided to "devote his learning his spiritual experiences to the service of God in Man" (ibid, 111). The path that he chose for this purpose was through the West.

Like Ramabai, Vivekananda too had led a wandering life, but this had a positive rather than negative effect on his view of Hindu tradition. More importantly, the two differed in their view of the Hindu religion and the role that Hindu religion would play in national reformation.

He remained a Hindu wishing to rid the religion from its orthodoxies and irrational manifestations. Ramabai, on the other hand, went outward and chose to embrace Christianity as a means of emancipating her country from social ills. These contrasting positions reflect the relative difference in perspectives as seen in their travel books. While in *USLP/RAG* there is the reformist approach, in *PV/MET* there is a *rejuvenist* approach through which the nation motif is articulated.

3.6.4. The 'Rejuvenist-Nationalist approach' in Vivekananda's *PV/MET:*

Various literary works across genres in the late nineteenth century in India show that Indian literature especially at the turn of the nineteenth century was inclined towards revivalism. This manifested in literary works as a desire to revert to a pre-colonial past. As Das points out the novelists of this period for instance "tried to reconstruct the history of the region with a definite purpose to vindicate the glory of the people of that area" ('A History', 1800-1910', 201). One major negative feature of this kind of *revivalism*, was that it tended to ignore the contemporary native realties and presented an utopian if not a falsified picture of India's glorious past. The genre of the historical novel that had emerged as a part of this trend of nationalism has ample examples of such utopian gloss.

Though, Vivekananda's *PV/MET* hearkens back to ancient Hindu tradition in India; he is not blind to the negative side of contemporary India like the late nineteenth century revivalist. His ambitious endeavour to rejuvenate Hinduism is not a euphoric sentimentalism associated with one's natal religion. He is also acutely aware of its flaws. After discussing at length the place of the Ganges in the Hindu Indian tradition (3-4), and expressing his own elation at drinking the water which he acknowledges provides a link to his land amidst the "intense activity of the west" (5), he resorts to humour on this very ritual, when he speaks about the restless desire of mother Ganga to move out of that vessel used for its storage. Though, initially, he participates in the ritual of carrying the water of the Ganges, a ritual which was considered to be essential

for any Indian travelling abroad; his mild humour on the Ganges and after-comment, regarding the duping of the devout, reveals a revivalism but one that is alert to its negative effects:

> Anyhow, getting up late from bed at night, I found that Mother evidently could not bear staying in that awkward vessel and was trying to force her passage out of it. I thought it most dangerous, for if Mother chose to re-enact here those previous scenes of her life, such as piercing the Himalayas [...] then it would be a terrible affair. I offered many prayers to the mother and said to her in various supplicatory phrases:
>
> Mother do wait a little [...] But all my supplications were in vain. Then I hit upon a plan and said to her, "Mother look at those turbaned servants [...]; they are Mohammedans, and those you find moving about sweeping and cleaning the rooms [...] are real scavengers [...] I will call them and ask them to touch you! Even if that is not sufficient to quiet you, I will just send you to your father's home; you see that room there, you will get back to your primitive condition in the Himalayas, when all your restlessness will be silenced and you shall remain frozen into a block of ice". That silenced her. So it is everywhere, not only in the case of gods, but among men also –whenever they get a devotee, they take an undue advantage over him. (6)

This kind of humour which is mild but nevertheless makes a valid point (humour with a purpose) is indicative of his far-from revivalist approach. So is also his vehement attack of the caste system and his denigration of the upper classes as 'Mummies' and skeletons of the past and the lower classes- the fishermen, cobblers and sweepers as the true heirs of the new India. (30-32). This strongly shows a modernist perspective, unlike those of the revivalist

Indian writers of the late nineteenth century who harped on tradition ignoring its flaws. Hence the term *rejuvenist* to this modernist approach would be appropriate.

3.6.4.1. 'Rejuvenist' approach and Renaissance:

Vivekananda also spoke of a renaissance to come. The awakening, he exhorts, would emanate from the middle classes. His is the voice of enlightenment urging the average Indian to embark on a path of self –reliance. However, he sees the west as having no significant role to play in this scheme of events. In recalling the incident of the shabby treatment meted out to him at saloons in America and restaurants on account of his dress where people refuse to share a table with him, he is very perceptive.

His sarcastic comment that "America began to look agreeable to me, somewhat like my own caste –ridden country" (24) is noteworthy especially seen in comparison to Ramabai, who in spite of being aware of such racial discriminations and prejudices against non-Americans in America, endorses it as a model for her country (117-118).

The nation motif and the contrasting approaches that were used to reveal it are seen in the two travel books: one is Ramabai's that endorses reformism sans any rejuvenation; and, the other is Vivekananda's that endorses a modernist rejuvenation.

Ramabai's position of anti-rejuvenism reveals the state of the woman intellectual in her who found it difficult to blend Hinduism, under which she faced severe social restraints and emotional trauma, with reform. A travel book

written, by a Bengali Lady, Krishnabhabini Das based on her voyage to England titled *England-e-Banga Mahila* (A Bengali Woman in England; 1885), written at the same time as Ramabai's *USLP/RAG* calls for useful comparison.

Though relatively much less educated as compared to Ramabai and like Ramabai being excommunicated by her community on account of her decision to travel abroad with her husband, she also finds herself in a similar predicament vis-à-vis the native tradition versus the west. Interestingly, while she is appreciative of the freedom west accords to women in her travel book, *England-e-Banga Mahila*, she does not present it as a model for her country perhaps because she feels "that it is the geography and topography, climate and natural environment that determine racial difference. Given the same opportunities, two races of people would invariably have two disparate growth charts because the essential human resources are so different" (e-journal, as qtd in Gupta Jayati, 'London', section II, para9).

Thus, in view of the above arguments, it can be deduced that the nation motif was articulated by elite travel writers, albeit using divergent approaches. However, due to their common concern for the nation, that underscores these approaches, they converge in the readerly perspective and become an integrated voice of the emergent travel writing of India.

3.7. The 1920's self-oriented travel book:

At the turn of the century political conditions in India underwent a sea change. This was the era of radical resistance to the British rule in India. The appearance of Mahatma Gandhi on the scene made a substantial difference to

the tone and tenor of the Freedom struggle in India. By the 1920s there were mass protests in the form of Non Co-operation Movement (1921) against the British rule. In addition to this, there was wide societal awakening through public meetings and discourses where urgent public concerns against British rule were voiced by Indians vehemently. Through these resistance modes, one of the foremost reasonable voices to emerge on the political front, was that of Mahatma Gandhi and on the cultural front it was that of Rabindranath Tagore.

However the efficacy of Tagore's voice of cultural conciliation reached its nadir in 1919, when he returned the British Knighthood in protest of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre in Amristar.

It transpires from such responses that Non-Cooperation was becoming a potent vehicle of resistance against British high-handedness and atrocities. In addition since non-cooperation implies that the individual had to exercise self restraint when provoked; it meant an assertion of popular 'self will' against British rule. Thus during the 1920s the 'self' came to the fore as a consequence of such modes of political resistance. Even as the man on the street spiritedly participated into these protest movements, the intellectuals including the creative writers were driven to reassess the self against the nation. Travel writing could be no exception to this overpowering trend. The national concerns in the travel book of the 1920s were thus no longer camouflaged through reformism nor did they require a rejuvenist agenda. The travel book book fine-tuned to its times became self–analytically nationalist. Now, nothing less than the freedom of the country was evoked, thereby forging of 'self' to

build the nation became a priority.

In addition, from 1917 to 1947 Gandhi as Das points out became the theme of literature and was celebrated as a Mahatma, a hero, a 'voice of welcome to a great leader" (*A History of Indian Literature (1911-1956):Struggle for Freedom: Triumph and Tragedy*, 1995,64-65). It was this valorisation of the individual and his capacity to lead the nation that underscored the importance of the self which became the theme of the travel book of this period.

As a result of all these socio political changes, the *nation* motif in the travel book came to be supplanted with an exploration of the *self.* A revolutionary romantic spirit was thus infused in the travel book where awareness and realization of an ideal 'self' was prioritized. This can be seen in the paradigmatic persona of Rabindranath Tagore as revealed through his travel writing, particularly in his travel work *PYD/DWV* that appeared in 1925 a period that was much distinct from the era that Ramabai and Vivekananda articulated their nationalist inclinations.

As such *PYD/DWV* can be used to provide valuable inputs on the motif of self explored in the 1920s travel book. However, before examining the transmutation of the nation to the self motif, as voiced in *PYD/DWV*, it is essential to clarify the usage of the term 'self' and 'selfhood'.

3.8. Self and selfhood: Definition

The term 'self' is used in this chapter as 'individuality, essence' (OED, 688), and the term selfhood as 'personal individuality' (OED, 689). The travel

book of the twenties projects a universal self, representative of all human beings. This self comprises an individual with idiosyncrasies; it desires and accepts the *other*, even while it wants seclusion. In Tagore's *PYD/DWV* various aspects of this *self* as an individual and as representative of the universal self are revealed. These aspects of *self* as individual, self in communion with the *other* and self as a romantic will be analysed in the next section. But before examining the thematic transition from nation to self in *PYD/DWV*, it would be useful to understand the context that conditioned this transmutation.

3.9. The context of Tagore's *PYD/DWV*:

Travel both in his country as well as abroad played a significant role in evolving Tagore's subjectivity. From 1878 to 1932 Tagore travelled widely across Europe and Asia. Interestingly, he also wrote his travel narratives from these significant destinations. As such it is possible to be acquainted with his multifaceted travelling persona by comparing the gradual growth apparent in his perspective and the maturation of his vision from one travel account to another.

According to Dutt and Robinson, Tagore travelled to various European countries initially writing "sparky ironic teenage" *Letters from an Exile in Europe* in Bengali (1878-1880) narrating the superficial details of England and its weather.

However, the adult Tagore according to them was "constitutionally incapable of writing about the surface of life in a foreign country" (96). From 1916 onwards a maturity in his travel writings is seen where on his visit to

Burma he consciously ignores the superficial details of the place and describes the feel of the locale in a Buddhist temple (ibid, 105).Of his later travel books of which the diary *PYD/DWV* is the vision of a man who, though somewhat disillusioned by the west, propagates a universal vision, speaking of nationalism that reaches beyond the confines of nationality to embrace humanity.

In fact, it is a multifaceted book it is universalist, humanist and at the same time it is romantic. This unique text representative of a universal humanist voice with a blend of romantic nationalism provided the direction that future travel writing was to take, in the pre- independence era, especially in the hands of Kakasaheb Kalelkar and his self- proclaimed disciple Ravindra Kelekar.

3.9. 1. Tagore's *PYD/DWV*; From the Nation to the Self:

A distinctive shift of motif from nation to self is discernible in Tagore's *PYD/DWV.* In Ramabai's *USLP/RAG,* the emphasis was on the nation, the entire work was structured to fulfil the premise of reforming the nation. Vivekananda also has the nation as the central motif around which his description of the voyage, western people, their characteristics, and, theological and historical issues revolve. In both these travel books, the 'self' is neither projected into prominence nor even presented. Ramabai's 'self' is never revealed, personal details can be barely deduced through the description of the *locale* that she prioritized. Similarly, Vivekanand's 'self' rarely comes to the fore. His concern is the nation -India and its future in the contemporary world.

However, through Tagore's diary, the'self' that had remained dormant emerges in the Indian travel book.

This point can be proved on comparing two of Tagore's travel books, one written in the earlier period i.e.1881, titled *Yorop Prabasir Patra* translated as *Letters from a Sojourner in Europe* (2008) and the other *PYD/DWV* written later in 1925. *Letters from a Sojourner in Europe* – a collection which he wrote during his stay in England at the age of 17, reflects his concern for the nation akin to that of his contemporaries, Ramabai and Vivekananda:

> Many people of this land will perhaps be able to draw a map of the afterlife, but do they have even the slightest inkling of what *India* is? It would leave them gaping with astonishment, were they to hear that *Indians* were not beef eaters-they are unable to imagine that any country could be in any way different from England. (Emphasis added, , 2008,40).

However, this nation-centred tone and content changes in the 1920's travel book *PYD/DWV* which begins with thoughts on the self, where the 'I' comes to the fore:

> *I* have been abroad many a time; at the time of departure *I* never found it too hard to pull out the anchor of *my* mind. This time it seems to be clinging to the land with undue force. From this it can be easily surmised that *I* must be last approaching old age. (Emphasis added, 3).

This emphasis on self is worth explicating since it became a motif in the travel book of the 1920s. More importantly, this transition seen in *PYD/DWV* gradually changed the orientation of the travel book and heralded into it a spirit of romanticism.

3.9.2. The Romantic self in *PYD/DWV*:

The term romanticism generally refers to a period in European literature and literary theory that emerged in the late nineteenth century in Germany and Britain and later on in France and elsewhere as the "Romantic movement".(294,*ODLT*).They emphasized "self expression, sincerity, spontaneity, originality replacing the decorous imitation of classical models favoured by 18th century neo-classicism" (294, ibid). The features of this romanticism were favouring innovation over traditionalism (177, 2000,Abrams), importance to external nature and natural scenery not for its own sake but as a stimulus for thinking or introspection or mediation (178, ibid) and the protagonist's identification with the poet.

These qualities of individuality, spontaneity, innovation, emphasis on nature are features that are neither specific to a nation nor time bound. The term *romantic*, then is used to refer to literary qualities wherein a literary work. emphasizes the *individual*, use external nature and scenery as a stimulus or catalyst and one in which there is spontaneity and imagination. In this sense the pensive and solitary *self* in Tagore's *PYD/DWV* could be called a romantic self, experiencing nostalgia and a sense of loss of the ideal. Nostalgia, is seen for instance when he speaks of the journey of his life–childhood, middle age as stages of aspirations and the sixties as the "horizon of setting sun". The romantic self in Tagore comes out most strongly, when he sees a barely clad young boy playing oblivious of his surroundings. This scene brings a recollection of himself as a child free from worldly responsibilities:

> My heart cried out just to play one last childish game in the world of the naked boys, the game of irresponsibility! Moreover, my gratitude rushed forth towards those who in my adolescence made me cry, made me laugh and plundered my songs from my throat to scatter them about. (57)

This cry of the romantic self may seem escapist, nostalgic yet it is rooted in reality. It is this real life experience that makes the romantic self dwell on the metaphysical, in the sense of a "philosophy dealing with the nature of existence, truth and knowledge" (OED, 470).

For instance, in *PYD/DWV* Tagore quotes the *Isha Upanishad* while discussing the concept of Truth and the Sun as revealing the face of that Truth (19). He also speaks of the nature of existence and explores the traveller's quest for the unknown:

> Perhaps I shall meet that ever-unknown who with the unknown garland round his neck is waiting somewhere under an unknown starry night.' Habit asserts itself, 'you must not think He exists, He is mirage. (81)

However, this romantic self, enamoured of the metaphysical aspects also dwells on questions concerning the entire human race, directed at the machines and on the speed that the machine culture has inculcated (69). The disturbance of the inner rhythm of life eventually becomes a critique of the colonial acquisition of India where he presents England's possession of India and its loss due to the material utilitarian objective of England:

> The eternal mystery that is in India slipped out of England's reach [...]She had no sensitive wonderment about India, what she had was plenty of contempt [...].The only reason for this is that England's need for India is entirely utilitarian(76)

The colonial critique then becomes an attack of materialism of the west, where Tagore discusses his visit to America as being suffocating and "imprisoned with this blind material hoardings and faced with colossal belching of the machine" (65).The romantic is a solitary figure who yearns for a liberated self and yet is concerned about humanity.

The romanticism of *PYD/DWV* is its own unique blend. It is western in its emphasis on individuality and spontaneity and has the Indian characteristics of nature–man synthesis. His notion of man as a free being is seen in the innumerable passages in *PYD/DWV* devoted to self-introspection (55) and nostalgia (75), and description of nature are distinct characteristics of western romantic writing. At the same time, in its philosophical tenor seen from the quotations of the Upanishads discussing the concept of Truth and Beauty, it is Indian (129).

What is noteworthy is that, Tagore juxtaposes the teachings of the Upanishads with those of Christian theology. This blend of the eastern and western Romanticism is unique where the eastern and western propensities merge and are not shown as contradictory. It also advocates a communion between the individual and the other, deals with metaphysical questions and problems concerning humanity in an entirely oriental (read Indian) vein.

In this sense, Tagore's *PYD/DWV* could be called as a pioneer of the Indian variant of romanticism in travel writing. By asserting the self, it also shows the transition from the nation to the self that took place in the emergent voice of Indian Travel writing.

3.10. The enlightened elite voice and the common man's voice:

Although Ramabai , Vivekanada and Tagore, are a part of the so- called *elite*, they are all devoted to India. They value the east-west encounter and are inspired–each in its own way –by it, they are also keen on preserving the essence of India as they see it and project it to the world. Travel genre which was nursed through these idealistic, forward -faring and progressive individuals has been gifted with salient masterpieces making them voices of enlighten-ment. These in turn have become the milestones of growth of the modern Indian travel writing.

However this Chapter will discuss the other strand of the Emergent voice of Indian Travel writing, namely, the *common man's* voice through two representative texts. One is Vishnubhat Godse Varsaikar's *Mazha Pravas* (*MP*) written in 1883 and published for the first time in 1907 that stands in stark contrast to the *elite* travel voice. The other is Dean Mahomed's *Travels* which as pointed out earlier, is also the common man's voice. As such the book would be seen along with *MP* as a common man's voice. This common man's voice of *Travels* and *MP* stands as a counterpoint to the *elite* enlightened travel writer's voice of the late nineteenth century. Before analysing their travel book it is essential to understand the context from which this *other* emergent voice of the common man arose. Since Dean Mahomed's context has already been explicated the following discussion will analyse the context of Godse's *MP*.

3.11. The context of Godse's *MP*:

Unlike Ramabai, Godse Bhatji was not an incessant traveler. *MP* narrates his maiden voyage from the western to the northern parts of India for earning money by attending the *Yagya* of a wealthy lady Bajyabhai Shinde.

Ramabai and Dean Mahomed had no fixed place or stable community to call a *home* on the basis of which their visit abroad could be seen. Godse Bhatji on the other hand had a *Home* from which his subjectivity could be located. Godse in the very first chapter of *MP* describes it as haven of comfort and security to which he intends to return after his journey.

The image of an ever-protective mother, an affectionate and intimate relationship among the siblings, the advice of his father and the emotional farewell accorded to him create together the picture of Godse's home in the minds of the readers. The subjectivity of Godse could be located with this concept of home as a reference point.

Again, the general attitude of Godse as well as his family members towards travel as suffering could be located within the prevalent Hindu concept of travel as punishment. Critics have pointed out that the traveller has not been a very popular figure in canonical tradition and that the Hindu tradition is biased in favour of sedentariness where travel in ancient literary works is seen a punishment (See Chapter One). Godse's subjectivity is located in this Hindu shastric tradition of travel as travail. This notion is clearly discernible in the section of *MP* wherein his brother Haripant draws an analogy of Godse's travel to Lord Rama's banishment from Ayodhya and calls travel as a sad event

which brings about separation (12). Thus, travel as suffering in the orthodox Brahminical view is reflected in *MP*. It can be deduced thereby, that Godse's subjectivity is firmly rooted in the Indian tradition of communitarian living which disapproved of travel.

However as a Brahmin, he was only a poor *Bikshuk (mendicant),* who eked a living by receiving fees for rituals performed and gifts/donations from patrons. He belonged to the periphery of the Brahmin caste which depended on the learned and wealthy mainstream Brahmins employed with the kings. In this sense Godse is a subaltern within the privileged Brahmin caste. Throughout *MP* we see a constant struggle of Godse for the basic necessities like food and shelter, which are largely dependent on providence or a chance meeting with a wealthy Brahmin relative.

As against this, although born poor and ostracized in early life, Ramabai was privileged in that she was well provided for and invited abroad due to fame she gained in later life in India. Godse can be located within the Hindu tradition of travel; however his subject position is that of a subaltern - an inconsequential poor mendicant.

3.12. The common man's voice: Godse's *MP* and Mahomed's *Travels*:

Travels and *MP*, voice the concerns of the common man who having no privilege or special status largely remain indifferent to political and social concerns of their time. Unlike the *elite* voice of Ramabai , Vivekanada and Tagore, who chose to speak against the prevalent foreign regime, the voice of Dean Mahomed and Godse Bhatji is bound within the confines of social and

economic stability and in this sense represents the common man.

The question of survival is foremost and hence in *Travels* Mahomed is seen in pursuit of financial security. His decisions to make a career in the Army and later accompany his patron Baker to colonial Ireland were part of this pursuit. Moreover, he never makes comments on his enslaved (sea Fisher, 224) position as a native Indian, though he culturally asserts his native identity. He is a common man who is not enlightened enough to see beyond *himself* and think about the larger good of society. Though he writes and lives among the Anglo-Irish *elite* the fact that he decided to write *Travels* ten years after he left India to narrate his position in the Indian cultural ethos establishes his unprivileged status in Ireland.

A similar ordinary voice reverberates a century later, in 1901, through the travel writings of Godse Bhatji-a writer of a totally different socio cultural milieu and time from that of Dean Mohamed. He is a Hindu Brahmin narrating a cataclysmic event in India's political history - the First War of Independence of 1857. He gets inadvertently embroiled in one of the most overwhelming events in India's struggle for freedom. In spite of narrating such a national event, his book does not deal with the motif of the nation as exhibited in his *elite* contemporaries like Ramabai. Godse is more fascinated with the adventures that befall him and is preoccupied with how they would affect his prospects of earning money, as any common man would be.

The point of view in *MP* is also that of a common man. The writer does not take sides either with the revolutionaries or with the Englishmen. In the

book, he consistently refers to the Indian revolutionaries as "black people" and the Britishers as "white people"-there is a equidistance maintained in both the cases as "those people" (*te lok* in Marathi). Although, he is native Indian, he has no political inclination towards the revolutionaries. He seems to have no idea at all about the role the revolution could play in the life of the people. For instance, on being suspected of being a revolutionary and taken to a police station for enquiry, he is happy that the Sahib (white officer) lets him off and provides a certificate of their being travellers and not revolutionaries (172-173). In this, he once again, represents the common man for whom this event was just another political issue outside the range of his understanding and concern. The various events narrated by Godse shows how the events of the revolution adversely affected the common populace. He describes how, as a result of the confrontation between the revolutionaries and the British troops, during the riots, the belongings of ordinary people were plundered and how they had to face hunger (103). In another instance, speaking of the war at Kanpur, after the defeat of the revolutionaries, Godse's comment reveals the common man's sentiment at this juncture:

> At that moment the commotion that took place among the people of that area cannot be described. Saying that 'Now Shrimant (His Grace) will go on an expedition, and the white men will come and kill our young and old and loot all our lives and belongings; and will also set fire to our houses. Now where shall we poor go?" All the people were terrified. And some people began to bury the household utensils; others started placing them in wells and ponds. All the residents came out on the streets and began to wail in terror without

making any arrangement for the safety of their women and children. At that moment that area appeared to be grief incarnate. (46).

It is such an expression of the general public sentiment that makes *MP* a true voice of a common man. Besides, as a conservative Brahmin, Godse Bhatji voices the fatalism of a traditional Hindu mind, reasoning that the plight of the kingdom of Jhansi was the consequence of the sins committed by its people (107). This is an echo of the conservative Hindu belief in the principle of atonement of sins through suffering.

Though this common man's voice is initially neutral in its attitude towards the revolutionaries, as the narrative progresses the authorial sympathies lean visibly towards them. The touching description of the sorry state of Rani Laxmibai (118) and the detailing of the atrocities committed by the British (101-103) reveal the increasing sympathetic inclination of the common man felt towards the war as the revolt progressed.

Significantly, this common man's voice in travel is that of the literary writer, who intends to amuse rather than educate. This aspect of what is called as *literary travel writing*, (see Chapter Two) of the late nineteenth century being relevant to this analysis deserves discussion.

3.12.1. Emerging literariness in the common man's voice:

The literary strand of travel writing significantly came through the common man. It emerged as a consequence of a change in readership necessitated by the printing press that created a 'literary readership' that sought amusement. Interestingly the travel book *MP* arose out of the tales Godse narrated to Chintaman Vaidya who felt that this eyewitness version of history

would be extremely useful for historians. It was with this purpose that the book was originally published.

> A similar kind of factual narrative has been written by a learned ascetic. I am placing it before the reader in this book, with the expectation that it will be useful to the future historian. (As published in Phatak edited text of *MP*, 1949, Preface, 2)

However within a few sentences this intention of publishing the book for historical research seems to have been relinquished, when he speaks about the literary benefit of the book:

> I feel that this text will be a good medium to get an idea of whether our physical, mental and religious condition has improved or deteriorated today. In fine, hoping that from the perspectives of history, of entertainment, and material interaction, this little work will be useful to the reader and win popularity, with this expectation I end this preface. (ibid, 3)

Vaidya, then, had envisaged the literary potential of the book. It is also worth noting that this book was published by Vaidya in 1907 since he felt that publication of the book after the death of the author Godse in 1906 would save the charge of sedition from the British government. Notably on completion of 50 years of the momentous event the book was published keeping the reader's sentiment in mind.

Significantly, this transliterated edition (Godse wrote in the Modi script in Marathi) is also heavily filled with Vaidya's interpolations in to the original text. Thus, it can be argued on the basis of the above facts, that though Vaidya's text is not similar to the original; this version significantly shows the tilt that the travel book took towards entertainment. Though, Godse agreed to

write and publish his book for monetary gain, Vaidya's intervention in making the book literary and suitable to common as well as educated taste (he included verses and *shlokas* from Sanskrit literature) establishes beyond doubt that in *MP* the literary strand of travel writing was emerging.

Unlike Godse's text which was firmly entrenched in the Indian literary tradition, Dean Mahomeds' *Travels* is located in the English literary tradition. He wrote for a western audience to elevate his social position by establishing himself as a writer of repute. Hence he adheres to the convention of using the epistolary form which was prevalent in the late eighteenth century English travel writing where travel genre was supposed to narrate 'facts'. (See 221-223 Fisher).

However, Mahomed is also part of Indian travel writing since he writes from a distinctly Indian point of view and as has been argued earlier, the book depicts a native consciousness. Moreover, it also dispels or deconstructs stereotypes about India. As Sudhir Kumar points out, this is achieved in *Travels* subtly by reinventing ancient India as "a producer of scientific and philosophic knowledge" (2005, 16). Hence, his work represents Indian travel writing that speaks from a distinctly Indian point of view and along with Godse's *MP* heralds the literary strand of Indian travel writing. In *MP* and *Travels* then, the emerging common voice that seeks to hold the reader's interest rather than the reader's attention is unmistakably noticeable.

It stands in contrast to the *enlightened* voice of writers such as Ramabai and Vivekanada, who sought primarily to edify and analyse rather than entertain.

Although Ramabai and Vivekananda include anecdotes and use humour, their primary objective is to draw the attention of the reader to serious themes linked to the nation, as argued in the earlier discussion. Partly due to these preoccupations, the literariness in these books may have taken a backseat.

No doubt there are certain interesting literary elements in their books too. Ramabai's *USLP/RAG* for instance, shows a distinct awareness of the audience through direct reference to them in her preface. She mentions in the preface that she intends the book to be a model for her own country. Hence her writing is determined with the sole aim of fulfilling this purpose. Though the work is primarily intended as a social informative document, we can see the literary writer in the lyrical description of the ocean (57), in her logical and meticulous reasoning of the subjugation of the Red Indians (71-72) and in the light moments she creates in the rather heavy text on American society.

Particularly noteworthy, is her discussion of the fashions of America in a light-hearted manner describing the bulging dress worn and high heeled shoes and use of bird feathers as headgears by women (110-113). The humour is often laced with sarcasm as is the case when she compares the friendly American policemen to the Indian (97) or when she discreetly refers to the colonizers as cannibals in the figurative sense (121).

Her simplistic explanations of complex political and social structures to the Indian audience show the working of the mind of the writer, like when she discusses the form of government in America (76-94). Yet its factual information, especially when she supplies statistics, impedes the smooth flow

of the literary description. Besides, these literary elements are not given the narrative emphasis that Dean Mahomed's *Travels* and Godse's *MP* provide. Hence, the voice of Mahomed and Godse's could be said to be a literary voice, and that of Ramabai and Vivekananda to be a nationalist one. It can thus be reiterated that *Travels* and *MP* heralds the literary emergence of Indian travel writing that speaks of the commoners and to the commoners. Since literariness emerged through this man's common voice it would be relevant to discuss briefly the literary features of *MP and Travels*.

3.12.2. The literary features of *MP:*

The text is a linear narrative; the events are narrated chronologically as they occur during the course of the journey. It is also designed as a convention bound literary travel book where the journey- the passage, is of central importance. The work gives the impression of being written on the move unlike Ramabai's which can be called a social document travel book where the *locale* is of central importance. There are the literary qualities of wonderment, comic anomalies and scandals which have been identified by Fussell as literary quail-ties of a travel book. In *MP* the literariness is seen in the scenic description of Satpuda (15), the narration of the events leading to the marriage of the king to Laxmibai (35-36), the characterization of Rani Laxmibai and her childhood influenced by men since she was brought up by her father which, as indicated by Godse, was responsible for the warrior like qualities in her (31), and later the scandals of a Brahmin priest who keeps a low caste mistress (68-72).

Humour is used in abundance as also narration of anecdotes that are amusing. For instance when confronted by the revolutionaries, Godse Bhatji narrates how he tactfully wriggled out of this precarious situation by pleading to the revolutionaries to spare him by arguing that helping people like him would earn them success in their endeavour (22-23). The event of facing hunger and famine, where he witnesses the death of his co traveller is also narrated vividly (138-139).

A noteworthy literary feature of *MP* is its narration of the journey itself, which otherwise gets merely a passing mention in the *elite* travel book. Ramabai in *USLP/RAG* briefly describes the sea voyage and the difficulty she encountered. On the other hand, in *MP* the journey is the backbone of the narration. The book narrates people and places in detail that Godse and his uncle meet enroute. Moreover, the news about the progress of the revolution and the exploits of the revolutionaries as narrated by the various people they meet are recounted (43). There is a literal dialogue on road taking place - a new occurrence that infuses a polyphonic potential into the Indian travel book, thereby enriching the evolving Indian travel genre.

Significantly, since the book was published by historians, it has been looked upon as a historical work. A subsequent edition, for instance, based on the *Modi* original was edited by the erudite Marathi historian, Datta Vaman Potdar that appeared in 1966. The lyrical passages, the dramatization is notably absent in Potdar's version which is the most authentic version of the original text (see Shaha,17). This Potdar edited text has been analysed by eminent

critics like Malshe as a first *literary* travel book in Marathi (See Shaha, 21). The doubts regarding the literary nature of the book have been finally laid to rest by the critic Gangadhar Gadgil who in the essay 'Sahityatle Bhimtadi Tatto' written in 1985 strongly vetoes in favour of the book's place in great literature:

> [H]istory takes shape from the lives of human beings. It is linked to the urges, faith of mankind, and their joys and sorrows, their struggle and life sequence. *Magna Carta* is not simply a charter. It is created out of the urge and endeavours of many an individual. When man is slaughtered, some woman is widowed. Some child is orphaned. Some person is trembling, panic stricken for the fear of his very survival, pleading to be spared. But when history gets written, most of the time this relationship of it with varied individuals of flesh and blood gets excluded. As a result, it becomes somewhat incomplete, dry and dispassionate. This travel narrative has done the invaluable task of dispelling this imperfection of history, at least in part. Likewise several details of contemporary life, which have escaped the glance of history, find a place in this work (Quoted in Shaha, 22).

This humanising of history in presenting the emotions, the tragedies, and the humane aspect of history, wherein there is a creative interface of fact and fiction, is what makes this *common man's* voice deviate from the factual *elite* travel book that chose to narrate facts about history. Thus *MP* becomes a precursor of the literary travel book that was to blossom in the 1960s and reach its full bloom in the contemporary period.

3.12.3. The literary features of *Travels*:

This text written in the epistolary form narrates Mohamed's journey

beginning with a Dedication, followed by letters which are arranged chronologically from his enlistment into the British Army as a young boy to his departure via Dhaka to colonial Ireland with Mr Baker his patron. Unlike Ramabai or Vivekanada, he tries to break the monotony of this factual historically located work so as to capture the reader's interest by strategically including sections which describe the customs of his country. For instance, after describing his journey along with the Bengal British Army from Patna to Calcutta, he shifts gear and describes the Mohammedan's rituals followed during circumcision, marriage and funeral (letter XI to letter XIV). Further, by explicitly stating in his own words the shifting of the subject "from gray to gay", he describes the dancing girls of India (letter XV). These are not abrupt inclusions. They come naturally as part of the narrative. For instance, the description of the Hindus of India comes strategically after his description of Benaras which he calls as a "repository of the religion and learning of the Brahmins" (letter XVII).

Although Vivekananda too is conscious of this need for literary relief, he does not seem to take it very seriously. For instance, he begins his diary addressing Swami Trigunatita, the editor of *Udbodan* and speaks of the characteristic Bengali lethargy in writing (1). A few pages after describing the Ganges, he admonishes himself for straying from the subject and promises that he would try to focus on his subject (6-7). However he soon drifts again from the subject discussing the history of the Ganges (10-14). Thus, although Vivekanada uses literary language especially in his description of the ship and

the Indian people, his travel book is heavily loaded with the 'nation motif' and his commitment towards it rather than literary considerations.

As, against this, *Travels* uses high English literary prose. There is an instance where he describes the episode of a violated female, the daughter of Maulana Hafiz Rahmat Khan as in a morality play / English romances (70). Noteworthy is his deft interspersion of classical quotations midway between his descriptions of the Indian way of life. For instance, when he describes the practice of *champing* (this term was used by Dean Mahomed in *Travels* which meant body massage) in the East he quotes Seneca to show the ancients acquaintance with the practice (Letter XXV). This strategic inclusion lends literary credibility to his work. Moreover, he also adheres to the veracity convention of the 18th century travel narrative. The 38 letters describe with factual clarity his journey from Patna to as far as Delhi, to the east to Dhaka and later his sailing to Madras. Unlike Godse's *MP*, Dean Mahomeds' *Travels* is a conscious literary work which could be truly called as the precursor of literary travel writing in the modern Indian travel genre. It further strengthens the point that generically it was in the common man's voice that *literariness had* begun to emerge.

3.13. Travel writing: Towards 1930s

From the beginning, and all through the nineteenth century, the shift in tone, tenor and form in the Indian travel writing can be effectively gauged. By the 1930s the romantic self initiated had become firmly entrenched in the travel works of Kakasaheb Kalelkar and Ravidra Kelekar. In the works of

writers like Ravindra Kelekar, a transmutation of sorts is seen. While he retains the nationalistic fervour of Kakasaheb Kalelkar, he becomes more involved with localized issues. The *common man's* strand of travel writing initiated by Godse and Mahomed would reach its fruition in P.L. Deshpande's and in R.K.Narayan's travel books of the 1960s. In the 1960s, the idealism of the creative writers is wearing off, where the traveller is face to face with disappointing reality and a disillusionment caused by loss of aspirations.

From hereon, travel writing takes a different turn until there occurs, a further transition in it during the contemporary age. These distinct voices will be examined in the following Chapter by identifying the trends and the direction that Indian travel writing had taken during the pre independence (1930s) to post independence (1960s) period.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE GENERIC BLOSSOMING OF INDIAN TRAVEL WRITING

4.1. The pre-independence travel book:

In Chapter Three, it has been argued, that the elite travel book emerged as a nationalist voice in being the expression of the patriotic aspirations of enlightened individuals. Initially, the nationalist voice was reformist in approach as seen in Ramabai's travel text. Gradually it focused on the rejuvenation of Indian tradition as witnessed in Vivekananda's travel book. By the 1920's a transition from the *nation* to the *self* was visible in the travel book, and, in Tagore in particular, a definite romantic streak was palpable. This erudite and enlightened voice of the Indian travel writer was further nurtured by the works of the Hindi mega scholar (*mahapandit)* Rahul Sankrityayan, whose works are the epitome of Indian travel writing. It is thus befitting to begin this discussion with this remarkable travelling persona. He was a veritable watershed between the colonial renaissant India and Independent postcolonial India with a significant period of Indian history as well as travel writing from 1920s to 1960s shaped by his persona. His voice thus reverberates the *zeitgeist* of this age.

4.2 Rahul Sankrityayan (1893-1963) :The eternal Traveller

Rahul Sanskrityayan's oeuvre defines Indian travel writing of this

period by its sheer bulk, variety and vision. From 1920 to 1960 he wrote 25 travel books on his visits across the world, including countries like Sri Lanka, Japan, Iran, Tibet, Russia, London and Germany. His entire life was spent as a traveller. His travelling life began in 1910 when as a young boy; he travelled across the pilgrim sites of India. His later travels especially to Russia influenced his thinking and on reading Karl Markz, Stalin and Lenin, he became a *communist*.

Notably, for Sankrityayan, both the theory and practice of travel was important, hence he not only wrote travel accounts of his visits, but also a travel treatise *Ghumakkad Shastra*(1948;henceforth *GS*). In this book he highlights the importance of travel for the young and significantly for women too. He also advices future travellers on the various requirements for travel. What is noteworthy is his encouragement and open endorsement of women travellers.

However, he traces the various hurdles including religious impediments placed on women by the Indian society. For instance, he prudently dwells on certain nature-ordained difficulties a women traveller is likely to encounter:

> [T]he major obstacles for a woman traveller are not the thousand of traps man has lain, but rather the ruthlessness of Nature has rendered her more helpless. However as I have said ,the helplessness necessitated by nature is not at all meant to imply that human beings should surrender before Nature. I cannot advice the young woman, who is willing to spend a traveller's life-time to give up the urge to see nor can I really expect that the weak woman shall be able to plant the banner of victory where [...]Vishwamitra and

> Parashar have had to give up. However the traveller-woman should understand that if a man becomes the cause for bringing a new being into the world, it does not cause him to be helpless. If he becomes a little more generous and kind, then he can make some arrangements and manage to continue his travel unhindered. But if a woman commits a mistake (of this nature) once, she will remain crippled. In this way in adapting the practice of travel –ritual, the woman will have to think far ahead of things and then step on to this path with great adventure. Once she has stepped ahead, then there should be no consideration of turning back. (52-53)

This kind of sensitivity and practical advice provided for women travellers appears to be unprecedented in the earlier Indian travel writing. Moreover, even in the *Emergent Voice* of the *elite* it was ironically often inclined towards disapproval of women travellers. An erudite liberal thinker like Tagore, wrote in *Paschim Yatrir Diary* (*PYD/DWV)* that the strength of the woman is in man's aspirations (30). Sankrityayan's universal liberal humanism brought an inclusive approach to travel writing that sought to rid Indian travel, and thereby, the travel genre from discriminating bonds of religion, gender, race and region. For instance, in *GS*, he devotes a special chapter to the nomadic tribes of India.

Sanskritayan's voice also enriched the travel genre by way of experimentation and introduction of various formal innovations such as travel history in his *Vismrit Yatri*(Forgotten Traveller: 1955) and travel-biography in *Ghumakkad Swami* (1958). In *Ghumakkad Swami* he presents a novel literary experiment, the life story of Harishanand a young swami, and the travel account related to it. He traces his journey from childhood, to his giving up

the life of the householder in search of yogis, and dwells on issues like his study of *yog*, his status as a travelling Vaidya, his service to the nation, opposition to Vedic orthodoxy, love of science, and finally, his settling down to the life of a householder.

In *GS*, Sanskritayan uses a Sanskrit phrase *atahto ghumakkad jigyasa* calling travel the ultimate religion that a man should follow and goes on to explain the reason for assigning the highest place to travel (7-12). In these and in his other books, he emerges as an eternal traveller who defies all classifications and ages. His travel books deal with the theme of the nation, patriotism and romanticism in his treatment of nature. It assumes a scholarly dimension in his incisive analysis of the societies he visits. Most significantly the travelling self comes forth as a *questor* perennially on the move. His travel writing provided a firm foundation to the Indian travel genre in India, making it multifaceted. Under his towering influence Indian travel writing of this period blossomed.

4.3. The nation and romanticist legacy:

In Chapter Three, it has been seen how the nation motif was subtly worked upon by writers like Ramabai and how with Vivekananda there came about a forthright espousal of the *nation* motif. By the 1920's though, there emerged the theme of the self in communion with the national ethos as seen in Tagore's *PYD/DWV*. Simultaneously, on the national firmament political and social movements against foreign rule intensified culminating in the Salt Satyagraha (1930) and Quit India Movement (1942).

Consequently the tone of overt nationalist sentiment seen in Vivekananda now metamorphosed into a boldly patriotic assertion of the nationalist self. Such patriotism as "devoted to or ready to defend his or her own country" (OED, 544), is strongly reflected in Kakasaheb Kalelkar's travel writings that appeared from 1920s to 1940s. The *travel for nation's sake* was vociferously emphasized as Kakasaheb urged fellow Indians to travel for national integration and in emulation of this voice *travel writing for nation's sake* also imbibed a heady lyrical quality.

Notwithstanding this, the romanticist trend of Tagore's travel book continued to thrive and blended easily with the theme of devotion to nation as mother, as seen in Kakasaheb and later in his disciple, Ravindra Kelekar. Thus, the strands of Nature and Nation interweave in the travel books of this era with themes like nature as mother, nature as friend, aesthetic depiction of nature, pantheism, nostalgia for the past all form a significant part of these travel narratives.

Since Kalelkar is among those writers in whom the socio-political context intricately connects to their travel and its narrative, it is necessary to understand the context of his travel writing.

4.3.1. Kakasaheb Kalelkar: The Patriot Speaks

V.K.Gokak, the Kannada literary scholar, travel writer and a contemporary of Kalelkar, has written a brief article on the influences of Kalelkar's life. It reveals the latter's contribution to the growth of Indian writing and would help in analysing the nationalist strand in his travel

book *Jeevanleela*.

Gokak calls Kakasaheb the "aesthetic apostle of the freedom struggle" (1989, 131). Initially he notes that Kakasaheb had revolutionary leanings, however on meeting Mahatma Gandhi in Shantiniketan he renounced the path of violence. According to Gokak, his visit to the Himalayas (Jamnotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath, and Badrinath) was undertaken in a state of mental conflict between renunciation and penance versus working for India's freedom, which was resolved on his return when he decided to participate in India's freedom struggle(132).

Kakasaheb's travels to the Himalayas fostered and perhaps strengthened his resolve to dedicate his life for the nation. His travel books were written to achieve this end. While the core theme of service to the country, was articulated in his Gujarati travel book *Himalayano Pravas* (Travel in the Himalayas, 1929) that book also marked the blossoming of a literary form in the travel genre. Distinct characteristics such as description, reflection, informativeness, poetic language and expression, theme of patriotism and use of humour combine in it to make it a noteworthy literary milestone.

However, his other travel book *Jeevaleela* (1957), a collection of 70 essays written from 1928 to 1957, is found to be more relevant to this discussion, since the essays written therein relate to the period under consideration in this chapter. This collection of essays would also be useful in highlighting the thematic motifs and literary features that had made their appearance in the travel book of this crucial phase of India's freedom struggle.

In *Jeevanleela*, the theme of the nation blossoms into a patriotic lyrical Ode to the Nation. Moreover, the nation motif blends with lived experience to unfold what the title, *Jeevaleela*, as the *play of life* suggests. In fine, this travel text, not only represents the burgeoning of the nation motif, but also exemplifies the creative treatment of the theme of life, and embodies the literary turn that India travel writing had taken.

4.3.2 *Jeevanleela* –Travel for Nation's Sake:

In the preface to *Jeevanleela*, Kalelkar announces the central motif of his book thus:

> I have written about how my description of India- travels are not merely a literary expression but a form of India-devotion, in the same way, the description of the Indian earth, her mountains and ranges, rivers, lakes, villages and cities, people who dwell in them and their achievement, the rustic birds and animals who survive with their patronage and the wild or forest birds and beasts who enjoy freedom by non–cooperation with them, in order to get introduced to all this is a delightful mode of India worship (Preface, xi).

This emotional introduction of the thematic motif of the book, almost equating nation with divinity, and travel with a form of its worship, heralds a spiritual, if not a sentimental approach that came to Indian travel writing in the heyday of India's freedom struggle. Unlike Ramabai and Vivekanada who refrained from sentimentalizing their love for the nation, Kalelkar unabashedly expresses his deep love for his country. This patriotic- nation motif is also rooted in India's Hindu cultural ethos. For instance, he speaks of the role of water in the ritual of the *panchsnan* that is carried out at the outset of Hindu

rituals to explain the importance of water in the Indian collective consciousness (13). Again he constantly reverts to the element, for description in his travel essays, to express the sheer happiness that he derived from a *darshan* of 'water' in the form of lakes, rivers in his country (15). For him, nation is the land of which water is the most important element which he links to the Indian Hindu cultural tradition. Patriotism then is expressed through the various sources of water in India, like the Lakes and the Rivers spontaneously, yet it is not unrestrained. A sharp critical assessment of the nature of human existence is also undertaken.

This critical sensibility introspects about the nature of human existence in the essay 'Dakshinechya Ttokas' (265). Often nation and life blend, as in the essay titled 'Krishna Sansmarane'. In this essay he recollects his visits to the Krishna River at different phases of his life. The first as a child eating salted peanuts, where he sees the river Krishna, as a mother who instantly recognizes him. In the second visit at Narsobachi *Wadi*, he crosses the Krishna river on a boat tasting delicious brinjals enroute. The next at Sangli, in Maharastra, where he gets entangled in muck. Later at Chinchali station, where he sees the river as a symbol of India's regional unity. During his college days when he visits his relatives and has the misfortune of immersing the ashes of his relatives and his father, with whom he played along the banks, and where he introspects about the illogical nature of life. Finally,in 1921 during India's Swaraj Movement, where he heralds the future freedom of India and calls for regional unity (3-7). The river thus becomes a metaphor not only for his life but also provides

valuable lessons about the truth of human existence in a metaphysical strain. In this essay, the motif of patriotism fuses with the theme of human existence. In *Jeevanleela* then, the nation motif is infused with literary splendour, it is romantic in being spontaneous as well as patriotic, yet it is also rooted in reality like Tagore's *PYD/DWV*. Thus the nation motif is treated extensively thereby significantly enriching the thematic verve of the travel genre.

This travel work is a fine example of a literary travel book, in the sense, discussed in Chapter Two. Since, *Jeevanleela* is based on the titular premise 'play of life', it is worthwhile analysing this literary feature of the book.

4.3.3. *Jeevanleela*- The literariness:

In Chapter Three, it has been elucidated that Godse Bhatji's *Mazha Pravas (MP)* heralded the emergence of a literary voice in travel writing with features like characterization, organization and story like narration of events. In *MP*, however only faint traces of literariness could be found. There was no conscious attempt made by the writer to make his work *literary*. In Kalelkar's *Jeevanleela,* there is the palpable attempt made by the writer to achieve literariness as would be evident in the following discussion. Moreover, in this work the writer has dealt extensively with the theme of life considered to be a core component of a work of literature.

In describing what he considers to be the 'essence of life', the travel book becomes introspection on life through this essence the medium of water. This entrenched theme emerges with literary vigour in an essay *Sarvbhom Ahoti*, where he compares the journey of life to tide, which have their highs and

lows (253). However, the literariness is not confined only to the thematic treatment but is also palpable in the importance assigned to technical literary features. In his 'preface' to *Jeevanleela*, Kakasaheb mentions that while selecting essays for this new book, from his earlier published work *Lokmata*, he purportedly chose one of the five basic elements of life i.e. 'water' which he felt would unite this new travel book :

> I thought that instead of including any random travel accounts, if the description of the various playful moods of the water deity at the ocean, at one confluence, and sea shore which match those of a river, waterfall and a lake would be incorporated, then the description of the play of one of the most delightful of the five basic elements will have been integrated and there will be a unity of sorts in this new book. (12)

He further justifies his inclusion of the essay 'Terdalche Mrigjal' (Mirage of Terdal), which though seemingly does not represent the water element, is shown by Kalelkar to be intricately linked to it (15). This importance given to coherence is a very literary consideration, a far cry from Ramabai's text *United Stateteschi Lokasthithi ani Pravasavritta (USLP/RAG),* which displays no such desire for a cohesive narrative. For instance, in *USLP/RAG,* in the chapter titled 'Domestic Conditions', though Ramabai begins by discussing the American household, she drifts into discussing racial discrimination and prejudice, personal characteristics of the American people, seasons and national holidays, which no way relate to the main subject of the chapter as indicated by its title (105-137). Similarly, Vivekananda's travel book though comparatively organized at times drifts from its main narrative focus.

For instance, he speaks of how he has strayed from the main subject. (6-7).

Kalelkar, like Tagore, aptly discusses literature and the difference between common writing and great writing. It was in the 1920s, that literariness came to be discussed in the travel book. Tagore, for instance discusses at length the nature of Diary writing (20-26), and later speaks about how '[T]he best writing is the writing that comes as it will' (*PYD/DWV*, 31). In addition, he discusses great literature as being free from ostentatiousness and superfluity (49). Likewise, Kalelkar also discusses the difference between common and great literature. The ancient Sanskrit tradition of description of rivers, he says, belong to the great works of literature steeped in devotion and displaying extraordinary literary grace. He compares such great literature to that of his time, where unlikely elements like elephant shed in a mountainous region or flowers in a desert or cold region, are presented and where description is drably mundane such as "stars are shining in the sky". Thereafter he calls upon the youth to undertake travel so as to write authentic and great literature. (16-17)

The essays in *Jeevanleela* often seem like semi-fictional narratives. Two essays 'Gokarnachi Yatra' (Travels to Gokarna) and 'Parshuram Kund' (Holy pond of Parshuram) are structured almost like short stories. In the essay 'Gokarnachi Yatra', for instance, he narrates the myth and the consequent religious significance accorded to the place in a humorous vein and later describes his childhood visit to Gokarna with his family (101-103).

His usage of contemporary analogies and apt figures of speech

underscore the literary turn taken by the travel book of the 1920's. In the essay, *Jog Falls* he compares the velocity of the water to the speed of the onward march of a revolutionary mob and later to the dance of Shiva (54). The titles of Kalelkar's essays are also creatively chosen to represent the central theme of the essays. For instance, the essay 'Chhappan Varshachi Bhook', (The Craving of 56 years), presents his desire to visit Devgad Island, in Karwar region of the Karnataka state, as the craving is finally satiated on visiting the island 56 years later. He expresses his contentment thus:

> The desire to witness the scene that I had nursed for fifty six years was finally fulfilled today! It was as though my eyes had seen all they had meant to see! The entire island is like a huge ship and the lighthouse is like its mast; [...]. It is true that this mast was not swinging like the real mast of the real vessel, but after a recent trip over a steam boat, our whirling heads were making up for this shortfall.(122).

There is also an essay titled 'Don Madrasi Bahini' (Two Madrasi Sisters) where he metaphorically refers to the two rivers, *Kuvam* and Adyar, in erstwhile Madras province as two sisters (216).

Kakasaheb Kalelkar's *Jeevanleela,* thus heralds the arrival of travel writing as a distinct literary genre. Literary features such as characterization, setting, thematic and structural coherence, the projection of a distinct *travelling self* and its identity which would increasingly become the characteristic of the 1960s travel book are already essayed in this travel book of the 1920s.

In fine, *Jeevaleela* is a significant milestone in the evolving travel genre in India. It is a nationalist text with a deep authorial commitment to the

motherland. It also implores fellow Indians to undertake travel and provides a direction to the future generations to make them devoted to their country through the medium of travel writing. In its careful focus on literary qualities and its thematic inclination towards human existence, which implies a self exploration, *Jeevanleela* is markedly a step ahead of its contemporary travel voice. Some of its characteristic aspects become more pronounced in the post independence travel writing in India.

4.4. The journey onwards from 1920s to 1960s;

The steady shift towards literary and technical finesse in the travel book occurred concomitantly with a thematic shift too. During this time, the Progressive Writer's Association (1936) was formed, which spearheaded a "movement that was linked to debates over decolonization and the nature of the post colonial nation–state that was to come into being" (Satchidanandan, 2008, 16). The spirit of this movement can be seen reflected in travel writers like Kakasaheb Kalelkar, where there is analysis of the nation. Gradually, this analysis of nation transforms into a self exploration, a self quest for identity which would be reflected in the travel writing of the 1960s.

In Tagore's *PYD/DWV*, there was a transition from the nation to the self, an introspective self that was inclined towards the metaphysical, questioning the nature of human existence. As noted in Chapter Three, this metaphysical theme was linked to the romantic and this quality made it an Indian variant of Romanticism.

In Kalelkar, the metaphysical theme assumes centre stage, where the

entire travel book is structured to discuss the questions, doubts and uncertainties of human existence. There are thus two transitions in the 1920's travel book: the subtle nation motif in the emergent voice of the late nineteenth century becomes confessedly patriotic; and, the introspective *self search* in *PYD/DWV* becomes a quest for identity. It is further accentuated by an identity consciousness in future travel writing of the 1960s.

4.5. The 1960s travel book:

The Indian struggle for freedom and the consequent independence from British in 1947 effected a sea change in the Indian psyche. The new-born nation which had to overcome the trauma of partition also had to grapple with a series of other daunting questions foremost among which was of building a national identity. No doubt, with the breakdown of the shackles of foreign rule the Indian was liberated politically but a psychological liberation of the Indian mind was yet to come. The partition had lent a lethal blow to her real or imagined integration as one country, one nation. Maimed physically, politically and emotionally the India that was the erstwhile sub continent had to deal with the new -found status of free India, and soon, of the Indian republic. Freedom had brought with it not only opportunity and privileges but also challenges and responsibilities. This was a testing time for the writer; the travel writer could not be an exception to this state of affairs.

A confrontation with such a momentous era provoked the mind of the writer, who found himself and many of his countrymen taking on the quest for identity. Meenakshi Mukherjee in her study of the Indian English novel titled

The Twice Born Fiction: Themes and Techniques of the Indian Novel in English (1971) points out how the post 1950's social reform novel that dealt with public issues plaguing the Indian society like dowry system and *sati* was replaced by the psychological novel that dealt with "the private agonies of the individual" (33). K Satchidanandan also notes how in modernist writing of the 1960s the "personal, subjective element dominated the objective, social element' (ibid, 17).This shift from the social and political to the individual was an inevitable by-product of the independent nation where the individual realized the presence of an identity that had been dormant for centuries. It is seen in travel writing as well.

This shift of focus can be gauged by juxtaposing two travel books, namely, Pandita Ramabai's *USLP/RAG* belonging to the pre-independence period and R.K Narayan's *My Dateless Diary* (1964,*MDD*) written in the 1960s. Both deal with America, however in Ramabai's discussion of America, the socio- political aspects of that nation are emphasized. Ramabai begins her narrative by briefly describing her voyage but quickly moves over to discussing the system of governance in America as a likely model to be emulated by India.

On the other hand, R.K. Narayan begins on a personal note describing his predicament at a New York cafeteria and his persistence on having the Indian brown coffee. His travel book proceeds in like manner interspersed with conversations and descriptions of various characters encountered en route. The former's emphasis is on socio-political issues i.e. the system of government and the latter's, the personal adjustment needed in a foreign land. The issue of

identity dormant in the erstwhile *Emergent travel book*, both of the elite and the popular variety, except in the case of Dean Mahomed's *Travels*, now asserts its presence.

In the travel book of the 1960s, questions as well as defence of one's Indian identity are explored. However, the source of reference is still the west. The literary voice of this period alludes to identity in terms of mannerisms, idiosyncrasies and ways of living typical of an Indian seen against the west. This post -independence travel book is more literary than its forerunner, and thematically, it explores identity as problematized in the wake of India's independence from foreign rule.

Such and other thematic as well as technical shifts from the travel writing of the past will be discussed in the light of Ravindra Kelekar's *Himalayant* (1976), P.L. Deshpande's *Purvrang* (1963) and R.K Narayan's *MDD* (1964).

Ravindra Kelekar's travel book in Konkani *Himalayant* (1976) can be seen as a link text continuing the national romantic idealistic spirit typical of the pre-independence travel book, but also representing the thematic transition to the real issue of identity which is a postcolonial theme typical of the writings of the post-independence age. P. L. Deshpande's *Purvrang* and R.K Narayan's *MDD* would be subsequently analysed as articulating the search and analysis of ones cultural identity as it emerged in the 1960s travel book.

4.6. Kelekar's *Himalayant* – a link text

The travel text *Himalayant* carries the legacy of the pre-independence

era. Actively involved in the Goan freedom struggle, Kelekar joined the Goa Liberation Movement in 1946, inspired by Dr. R. M. Lohia's firebrand nationalism. He was eventually influenced by Gandhian philosophy through his long and intimate association with Kakasaheb Kalelkar. Kelekar has acknowledged this legacy of Kalelkar, Vivekanada and Swami Ramthirth in *Himalayant* (50-51).

Though influenced by these individuals, Kelekar also expresses his individual urge, when he recollects his own personal desire to visit the Himalayas, long before he read Kakasaheb's book (51). Likewise, at the beginning of the book, he dwells on his 'personal' reason for visiting the Himalaya and observes how it is a pretext for 'self' fulfilment:

> As the train gained speed, my mind also picked up momentum. Realizing that 'my long pending desire of going to the Himalaya is being fulfilled after years of expectation', I was filled with excitement time and again.
>
> I asked myself: 'What is so enchanting about this travel?'
>
> It is said that an individual goes to the Himalaya when he begins to feel 'that everything worth doing is done, every experience worth having undergone and now the remaining days should be spent in divine devotion [...].Sometimes a person is tired of day to day living and says 'enough is enough [...] now lets go to the Himalayas' so saying he ventures forth. (3-4)

This personal desire indicates the emergence of a self which is similar to Tagore's exploration of the self. Yet it is different from Tagore's approach to self. Kelekar speaks about a 'complete self' an identity consciousness, identity understood as "being specified person or thing" (OED, 368) in the need to assert one's independent autonomous existence when he decides:

> To get rid of my rockiness, my indifference, to emanate the lustre of my consciousness all around, I must be able to rise above all influences imparted by upbringing and habits. Only then, will my life become meaningful in the true sense, it shall become fulfilled [...] (112).

This desire to be free from all influences and assert one's independent existence, and later, in finding one's *swadharm* (own duty), become a precursor and representative of the post independence quest for identity-consciousness where the self sought to define itself.

The temporal range of Kelekar's book also makes it a veritable link text. Kelekar undertook the journey to the Himalayas in 1956 wrote his travel book in 1967 and published it in 1976. The time period that lapsed between the 1950s to the 1970s was crucial, since it was the time of Goa's freedom struggle and the consequent liberation of Goa on 19th December 1961. So unlike the travellers from the other parts of the country, this travelling *self* from Goa was still under the foreign rule when he had visited the Himalayas. Thus, though chronologically, his book seems to belong to post- independence era, thematically it belongs to the writing of the earlier generation of pre-independence era (Goa being still under Portuguese rule). But then, he is also part of the post-independence era in being able to live in free India during this crucial period. In Kelekar's work, the nation theme as also the reflection on life and the literariness of the travel book of the 1920s is carried forward. At the same time his *Himalayant,* deals with 'real' questions confronting an individual in an independent nation which articulates itself as a search for national

identity. This quest in *Himalayant* also became the motif of the 1960s travel book manifesting itself as an analysis of one's cultural existence.

4.6.1. *Himalayant*-The awakening of national Identity:

Himalayant, describes the journey on foot covering four main sites of the Himalayas and is driven by the quest for what Kalelkar terms in the text as *rashtrik jinn* (national life). It is multifaceted, multilayered in its thematic reach.Through the erudite, observant, multifaceted perspective of the *travelling self* multiple quests woven within the larger framework of the quest for national identity is presented. As the *travelling self* moves deeper into the labyrinth of the Himalaya, the sublime facets of the quest are revealed. This is perhaps due to the wide range of meanings associated with the Himalaya in the Indian socio-cultural fabric. In India's spiritual tradition the Himalaya is an eternally present, potent entity. Visiting this sacred domain of the Himalaya is a fulfilment of a life's dream an ambition for the ordinary Indian. For the devout Hindus, it is an ultimate *thirthstan* (pilgrim–site) a visit to which is seen as purifying the individual of sins. Due to this multiple connotations regarding the Himalaya in the Indian mindset, the theme of national identity gets intricately connected to various other quests. Kelekar at the outset, places the *travelling self* in the religious pilgrimage tradition of India:

> The Goan may go and live anywhere in the world, he never forgets Goa. If nothing else he comes back to Goa at least before dying and wishes that his body should mingle with the dust of the Goan earth. Likewise he in whose veins the Aryan blood gushes feels about the Himalaya. He never forgets the Himalaya. Kakasaheb(Kalelkar) says: history may say anything, if the depth

> of *Sanskaras* /traditions (inculcated cultural value system) are taken into account, 'the Aryans must have been originally from the Himalaya. Else the infinite longing for the Himalaya cannot be explained.' Our feeling that 'we must see the Himalaya at least once in a lifetime must be a sort of 'himsickness'. Or else why would we feel that 'we could not make it for so long[...];now old age has come over us ,the body is a tremble ,the organs have given way, how can one stay at a stranger's abode at this juncture[...]?[...]Better to carry oneself home before dying [...]'. We have continued to labour under such sentiments from times immemorial preceding even the Mahabharata. Millenniums have gone by; year after year innumerable Indians have travelled to the Himalayas only because of such *Sanskara*. (50)

The thematic focus is on national identity linked to the socio religious heritage of India. However unlike the ordinary Hindu devout pilgrim, Kelekar questions the existence of god, he is in fact a self-questioning devotee of the intellect. He speaks of how:

> In spite of living in his created world, I do not experience his love. There is only one reason for this: his hand has not moved on my back [...] the experience of worthlessness that has engulfed me and the feeling of drabness that has become a part of my life is because of this lack in me. In spite of God being there for me he does not exist. I have not found God (112).

Such kind of questions shows the questioning nature of his mind. Yet at the same time this rationality succumbs to the beauty of the Himalayan scenery, wherein he bows and accepts God's bounty unquestioningly. During such humbling experiences, the aesthetic and the spiritual fuse to become pantheistic:

> The desire in me coveting to make this Beauty mine, completely melted away and the urge to offer myself at her feet rose in me. I became oblivious of the constraints of the 'educated' individual in me, and like the simple devout folk began to join my hands in devotion time and again to the Uma-Maheswara revealed to me (66).

In his realization of truth and beauty in nature, the haze of self doubt is cleared and a self awakening of a creative revolutionary is experienced. The narrative is left incomplete, mid sentence (200 miles of his journey not been narrated) yet, the journey reaches its fulfilment in the awakening of a creative nationalist revolutionary. The journey to the Himalaya, he acknowledges has made this awakening possible and he wishes that this place be utilised by youth for nation building. With this objective in mind, he beseeches the youth of the country to undertake travel to the Himalaya:

> Now new activity has to begin in the Himalaya. A new ashram/hermitage has to get going here. The constructive task of shaping a new life should immediately originate here. A novel kind of atmosphere has to emerge. Not the elderly, but rather the young should come and make their home here. (116).

Thus, in *Himalayant*, national awakening is envisaged. More importantly, it is the awakening of an independent national identity without any referential recourse to the west. The final few lines of the travel book that depict a confident, enthusiastic and optimistic travelling self walking towards his destination are an indicator of this awakening (116).

This theme of national awakening is realistic in its narration and analysis, unlike the idealistic patriotic zeal for the nation as devotion seen in

Kalelkar's *Jeevanleela*. This transition from idealized perception of the nation to a more realistic appraisal of one's nation is worth exploring.

4.6.2. *Himalayant* –From ideal to real:

Ravindra Kelekar takes a step forward towards projecting the post independent reality of the Indian situation. While retaining the romantic spirit of Kalelkar, for instance, in expressing his feelings towards nature, in his friendship with the pine trees who he feels accompany him on his journey (55-56), the love for nation, in seeing travel as a means of integrating the culturally diverse people of India (10-11) and in the introspection of human joys and sorrows (84), Kelekar's philosophical idealism also speaks of the dark reality of one's colonial state:

> Is Colonialism only political (in nature)? There is colonialism also on the cultural front. The political colonialism confines the body. The cultural colonialism destroys the spirit. (54)

And later of the need for the awakening of cultural identity:

> Our political selfhood has recently arisen. I believe that our cultural identity has to be awakened. I say so and also will work towards this end. (54)

This concern for a cultural awakening of identity is rooted in realism and dwells on the analysis of that identity which became transmuted to an identity-consciousness in the 1960s travel books particularly in *Purvrang* and *MDD*.

4.7. Identity consciousness in *Purvrang* and *MDD*:

In Tagore, Kalelkar and Kelekar the inner self was emphasized, a self oriented towards metaphysical issues. On the other hand, in the 1960s travel

book as would be evident in Deshpande's *Purvrang* and Narayan's *MDD*, the self ventures outwards, and sees itself in terms of the other. In their visits abroad Deshpande's to Asian countries depicted in *Purvrang*, and Narayan's to America in *MDD*, the quest for identity becomes cross cultural. Through a minute analysis and observation of the societies they visit, these two travel writers use a western cross cultural touch stone to analyze their own cultural ethos. It is British in P.L Deshpande and American in R .K Narayan. However, unlike the travel writers of the pre-independence era, the west is seen neither as a paradigm (Ramabai) nor as a desirable target for synthesis (Tagore). On the other hand, there is a conscious attempt to distance the west as the other and reject any mindless east -west synthesis

In *Purvrang* the *travelling self* is a creative writer, a playwright analysing the socio-cultural fabric of a *locale* that he realizes is similar to his. The metaphor of colour that he uses for the place reverberates in his colourful description of the plays at Jakarta theatre and he finds linkages for example, between the Ramayana as enacted in India and in Bali. (106-107). In *MDD* too, Narayan compares the cultures of India and America and explicitly states their difference in the preface.

However an identity consciousness lurks beneath this discussion and analysis of the locales they visit. Though Deshpande's *Purvrang* explores the socio cultural facet of the Asian countries he visits, he frequently refers to questions about identity. There is an inner, deeper analysis of one's identity that takes place underneath the façade of the humorous tone that Deshpande

adopts to present the socio cultural reality of the locale they visit. Throughout *Purvrang* issues linked to national identity, like patriotism (14) language (15) dress (15) as also personal elements of one's identity comes under scrutiny. This is seen in an episode in Singapore where he comments that "the Chinese who would write his name in Chinese language is yet to be born'' (165). Likewise in self deprecatory remarks like him being a "penniless traveller'' (90) or in downplaying his position as a writer, a consciousness of identity is discernible.

On the other hand, in *MDD*, the external quest is a purely material one, to meet the publishers of his book *The Financial Expert*. Nonetheless an inner quest of exploring ones identity by placing it against the west (America) does lurk beneath this material endeavour. In the first diary entry itself concerns over one's identity are revealed when he speaks of feeling "unequal to the speed of a Broadway Cafeteria" (11) in New York. Further he insists on having his coffee brown the south Indian way, and not black or white as it is in America(12) and later when he comments on the supremacy of the south Indian diet calling it the "peak in the evolution of culinary art" (41). As also an identity consciousness is discernible in his interaction with a steel magnate from America who strikes a conversation with him wrongly presuming him to be connected to the steel industry in India. (44-46). Thus there is distinct identity consciousness in *Purvrang* and *MDD* which is tactfully presented through the mode of distancing.

4.7.1. The 'distancing' P. L. Deshpande's *Purvrang* :

In P.L. Deshpande the quest for identity has a humorous strain–used to maximum effect in both *Apurvai* (1960); a humorous often sarcastic narrative about of his visit to England and *Purvrang*. Underlying this humour is the very serious exercise of *distancing* the west and asserting one's distinctive identity. Asserting one's distinctiveness is done by showing how the west is different. This is often referred to in post-colonial studies as the 'empire writing back' phenomenon in which "colonial cultures fight their way back" (Abrams, 2000, 237) and where *distinctive* cultural traits are presented. This is seen as the second phase of postcolonial criticism by Peter Barry where there was "celebration and exploration of diversity, hybridity, and difference become central" (2006, 197).

A predominant characteristic of this kind of writing is a presentation of one's virtues and cultural elements like language, dress, habits etc. The primary aim being to assert elements of one's native identity, as counter narratives against colonial narratives. P.L. Deshpande in *Purvrang*, expresses pleasure in discarding European cutlery and speaking in the native language to assert a distinctiveness of sorts (16). That he does this also in *Apurvai* a travel book on his visit to European countries amply proves the point. In *Apurvai* for instance when he steps on the London soil for the first time he contrasts the silence of the place to the conversation of the passengers on an ST bus in India (53).

Further this distancing is combined with integration with the east wherein the *travelling self* identifies with the Asian ethos. This is seen when he

compares the Indian food to the Chinese (168-170) and when he perceives the name Garuda Airways as Indian and later when he compares the biting of lips by the Indonesian airhostess to a similar mannerism of the girls in India (68), or when he comments on the Andheri-like (in Mumbai suburb) atmosphere in Indonesia (69)

In fact, throughout the travel book, Deshpande posits the east and the west as opposites. This is clearly evident in passages, where he describes a particular trait and immediately contrasts it with the western. For instance, when he sees the smile on the faces of the Indonesians, he quips as to how Indians have learnt to be serious from the English (86-87). Moreover, he also strategically presents the image of the orient as being corrupted by the occident. This strategy is used in a chapter on Bali where he describes the virgin innocent beauty of the place and its people and how the west has corrupted this idyllic setting. He describes an episode where an elderly American woman clicks photographs of bathing women and comments on how the developed countries have taught the concept of shame to the developing nations (113). In showing how the west has corrupted the east he foregrounds the need for asserting an independent identity well *distanced* from the western impact. The quest for identity can thus be seen intricately linked to the post-colonial exercise of asserting one's identity via differentia.

4.7.2. The 'distancing' in R.K. Narayan's *MDD*:

R., K. Narayan too adopts this strategy of presenting the east and the west as parallel . In the 'Foreword', he contrasts the material attitude of

America to the spiritual bent of mind in the Indian. The parallel that he sees as the basic difference between the two nations is put forth thus:

> America and India are profoundly different in attitude and philosophy, though it would be wonderful if they could complement each other's values. Indian philosophy stresses austerity and unencumbered, uncomplicated day to day living. America's emphasis, on the other hand, is on material acquisition and the limitless pursuit of prosperity. (Foreword, 7-8).

Later, in various conversations of the *travelling self* with the American natives, the difference in the American (western) and Indian (eastern) is highlighted. For instance, in a discussion with Greta Garbo where she inquires on meditation and the various problems confronting humanity, he is initially reluctant in providing an answer. However, later he explains to her the principles of the mantras. Her response to this shows the strategy of contrast at work, "it is all too advanced for me. You belong to a nation which is highly advanced in these matters. When and how can we reach your level of thinking and understanding" (175-176).

This unbridgeable spasm that is presented by Narayan as a contrast between East and West (ethos) is an attempt to assert one's identity sans any western influence. The quest for identity as seen in post- independence travel books like *Purvrang* and *MDD* is oriented away from the west–a reaction of individuals of a country that have been liberated from *western* colonialism. Any blending or synthesis being anathema to them, they desist from any mixing or hybridity of any kind.

Significantly throughout this travel book we see that the *travelling self* is

often reluctant to provide a solution to the problems that the Americans believe Indian culture especially spirituality, can solve (for instance his unease when a lady Mrs X seeks his help in providing a solution to her spiritual (psychic)problems after reading his novel *Grateful to Life and Death*(31) or his surprise when a publisher Mr A tells him that his *Financial Expert* provides answers to their theological problems (167). In this reluctance, on the part of the *travelling self,* to provide solutions to another culture's problems we can see a rejection of a hybrid identity. This is seen in both the travel books. A discussion of the issue of this rejection of a hybrid identity would be useful in analysing the theme of identity in the 1960s travel book.

4.7.3. Rejection of a hybrid identity:

Hybridity is a concept that has been a matter of debate in post colonial theory. There are two views regarding hybridity, positively it means coexistence of differences and negatively as a kind of condition where an identity is imposed on the individual and there is a sense of loss. However of late, the concept of the hybrid is increasingly been seen as a strength rather than a weakness where the colonial hybrid uses his *hybridity* to his advantage. Ania Loomba in *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (1998) for instance points out how Gandhi's notion of non-violence was forged by reading Emerson, Thoreau and Tolstoy (174).

Viewed in the earlier negative sense, especially in the aftermath of independence, hybridization occurs when "imperialistic importations are superimposed on indigenous traditions" (Abrams, 237). In this sense, it is a

kind of hegemony imposed by the colonial power on the colonized nations where the colonial hybrid becomes a *mimic man* who perennially remains subjugated to the culture they mimic.

The Indian travel book of the 1960s, it can be argued sees *hybridity* in this negative sense. Deshpande sees this subjugation of the Indian to the British culture when he comments on how the white sahib's hanging the cross in his house is considered forward and an Indian's keeping the picture of Lord Hanuman and Lord Ganesh is considered backward (178) as also when he is filled with fury on seeing Indian mothers expressing love, in English, for their English medium educated children(178).This negative perception of mimicking and hybridity is also seen when he watches with pity Indians especially Hindu men and women awkwardly dancing to western tunes and comments on how slavish Indians have become (42). There is thus a distinct rejection of hybridity of cultures in *Purvrang*.

R.K Narayan also is against creating a neither here nor there kind of personality. However, unlike in *Purvrang* his disapproval is expressed subtly. When, for instance, an American dressed in south Indian garb refuses to shake hands with him and prefers to join his hands in a *Namaste,* Narayan does not directly express his discontent, he comments on how it is rude to ignore a proffered hand:

> I don't know whether it's hypocrisy or ignorance, that makes them do such things. Where is the point in mimicking a piece of Oriental courtesy when you perpetrate occidental bad manners by ignoring a proffered hand? (94).

His rejection of hybridity is very much discernible when he presents the hybrid character of 'Govind' as a confused and lost individual (50).

More importantly, though there is rejection of blending of western and eastern cultures there is no criticism of the western culture. Both P.L. Deshpande and R K.Narayan are not critical of the western culture per se. What they are against is the aping of cultural elements that can cause harm to both the individuals of both the cultures. In doing so they project an autonomous identity of the travelling selves, making them powerful post- independence voices of the Indian ethos.

In the preceding discussion we have seen how distancing is used by certain authors to present one's identity. Another distinct feature of the 1960s travel book is that of adopting a collaborative approach, where there is concerted attempt made by the self as well as the locale to bridge their difference. This feature of collaboration which is an important plank of identity would be relevant to this discussion of the theme of identity consciousness in the 1960s travel book.

4.7.4. The collaborative approach and Identity:

In an article on R.K Narayan's narrative strategies in *MDD*, Vanikar and George point out that there is no abrogation or appropriation in Narayan's strategy and that "instead there is a cross cultural comparativist stance" (283). This stance, according to them, "is not relativist but [a]more flexible relational approach to people, customs and settings" (285). In addition they argue that "rather than divide the autobiographical subject from the cultural other, the

author's strategy lies in a collaborative approach" (286).

This Collaborative approach is posited in the proximity of the *travelling self* with the *locale*– a relationship which is accommodative and understanding. Both P.L. Deshpande's and R.K Narayan's travel books display this proximity to the people and the accommodation and understanding which this proximity has bred.

R.K Narayan, for instance, is cordially received by his American hosts. The relationship is accommodative and intimate too. The accommodative nature of this relationship is seen when Prof Shils cooks for the narrator when he invites him home and the narrator's guilt when he feels indirectly responsible for Mr Shils' child falling off the bed (73). The intimacy in the travelling self- locale relationship is seen when his host Mr Henry Hart's son Benny gets lost where initially the narrator quietly moves away from the scene when Henry and Virginia are arguing over Henry's leaving Benny unattended, and later when he spends two hours on a sunny day walking on the street looking for Benny (58).

P.L. Deshpande uses the Marathi words, *Apulki* (affection) to describe what he felt towards the locale and *jivalha* (great fellow feeling) to describe the love that he received from the people which enabled him to surpass many a hurdles. This strategy of collaboration and accommodation between the locale and the travelling self is used to express what P.L. Deshpande calls *manasa manasatil jivalha* (meaning inter-human warmth). It is in this expression of inter-human bonding, that the theme of identity consciousness reaches its

fruition wherein an awareness of the interlinked nature of identity is realised, though not completely fulfilled. This point will be discussed in the last section of this chapter, however it suffices here to say that in the travel book of the 1960s, the main theme was identity and in rejecting hybridity they spoke for an exclusive identity without blending of any kind cultural or otherwise. Thus from the 1920s to the 1960s there was a thematic transition from self introspection and self search to an identity consciousness linked to one's cultural ethos where there is realisation of inter-human connection. There was also a collaborative approach in which there was proximity between the travelling self and the locale. Along with this thematic transition there was also a literary blossoming in the 1960s travel book.

4.8. Literary blossoming in the 1960s travel book:

In the earlier part of this Chapter, it has been argued that in Kakasaheb Kalekar's travel book the literary voice evolved with a conscious inclusion of literary features. Yet his *Jeevanleela* comprised travel writing for nation's sake. Hence its tone is mainly nationalistic. Although in *Jeevanleela,* there are features such as literary expressions, mood of introspection, theme of nostalgia, usage of Sanskrit quotes etc, travel as a 'literary form' has not yet been envisaged. It was still just a narrative medium.

The scenario, however, changed in the 1950's with litterateurs taking up the travel genre. For instance Gangadhar Gadgil one of the prominent writers of the post- independence era who inter-alia wrote various travel books, articulates the challenges and the expectation of the travel genre in the 'preface' to

his travel book *Sata Samudra Palikade* (Beyond the Seven Seas, 1959):

> In the conventional mode, the travel writer is bound by the practice of chronologically narrating the experiences and the ideas that occur to him. Along with the description of the places, he is also required to furnish the information of the locale. All this information is linked to what the writer actually wants to say, merely by contextuality. The original experience is altogether different. There is not always an artistic consistency between experience and such information. Moreover along with the travel writer the readers also begins to feel that whatever experiences come one's way during travel, the thoughts, ideas that occur , all those must be recorded. However narrating all this may not always suit the constitution of travel writing. (qtd in Vartak, 23)

The above comment shows the gradual awareness of the readerly requirement and the authorial intent that need to blend in a travel book. Eventually such discussions must have heralded the generic growth of travel writing as a literary form. Creative writers like Gadgil sought artistic unity rather than chronological narration or overpowering themes (See 'Travelogue (Marathi)', *Encyclopedia of Indian Litearature*,4378,). Other creative writers like Deshpande in Marathi, Rahul Sankrityayan in Hindi ,V.K. Gokak and A.N.Moorthy Rao in Kannada and S.K. Potekkatt in Malayalm who wrote in the other literary genres like the short story , novel and drama chose the travel genre and helped enhance it's literary qualities.

Keenly aware of the predominantly auto-narrative tone and miscellaneous nature of data included in a travel book, R.K Narayan also raises pertinent generic queries in his 'Foreword' to *MDD*:

> I don't know how to classify the book. It is not a book of information on America; nor is it a study of American culture. It is mainly autobiographical, full of 'I' over a short period of time in relation to some moments, scenes and personalities. (7)

Such authorial discussions of the formal and technical aspects of travel books, shows the difficulty faced by writers in identifying the generic visage of their work as *travelogues.* This was primarily due to the fact that Indian travel book during the pre-independence era was overwhelmingly factual, analytical and non fictional. Writers of fiction like Gadgil and Narayan found it difficult to bond a form that prevalently dealt with facts, with the fictional literary elements that they intended to infuse in their travel books. Vartak, while discussing the creative nature of Gadgil's travel books, hints at a change in style and content where the travel book like a short story would include elements of creative writing (ibid,27-28). The word creative entails a certain *created* element which was hitherto not done explicitly in purely non-fictional travel books. The notion of *factuality*, that a travel book would describe only factual details (writer's experience), was gradually replaced by the notion of *creativity* which by its very definition entailed use of fiction to foreground facts, albeit in a more interesting and imaginative manner. Thus, the post 1960s travel book used fictional modes which led to the swift literary growth of the travel genre. It would be useful to analyse this literary growth.

4.8.1. The literary blossoming in *Purvrang* and *MDD*:

P.L. Deshpande's *Purvrang* can be described primarily as a literary travel book. Unlike the earlier Indian travel book, this book has a coherent

structure and thematic focus. The book is neatly divided into 10 parts each describing his visits to a separate Asian country. Though Deshpande does not give sub-titles to these parts; each of them describes his onward journey culminating in his visit to Japan. Moreover each place is described with its characteristic flavour giving the book a distinct thematic coherence as well as focus. For instance; he describes Singapore as a predominantly commercial hub with great ethnic diversity:

> Singapore is a city of multicultural residents. Trade is the religion of this city. The entire world's capacity and strategy for trade appear to have concentrated here. Money is the patron goddess in this realm. Push a coin (note) ahead and say 'Tvamer mata pita tvamer' (you're the mother incarnate, you're the father [...]). (48)

In like manner, he introduce Jakarta as near-Indian with its Garuda Airways and Andheri-like atmosphere; Bali as innocent and culturally rich with its traditional theatres and festivals; Bangkok as a blend of modernization in its state-of- art infrastructure and well conserved tradition reflected in its ancient Buddhist temples , Hong Kong as business - minded and having a culture of gambling and, Japan as having a linkage with his childhood memory of visiting his grandfather's Japanese employer .

Purvrang as the title aptly indicates is a description of the various shades or colours of the east. It is well structured and cogent. The descriptions are neatly built into paragraphs which narrate events in a logical sequence. For instance, in part 9 and 10 of Purvarang which describe Deshpandes's visit to Japan, he begins the narration with his first memory of Japan in a visit to his

grandfather's Japanese employer's house in Mumbai, followed by the flight journey, the behaviour of the custom officer, visit to scenic Nikko, and ends it with the description of his visit to a Shinto temple.

R.K.Narayan's *MDD* too has a similar structural cogency. The diary entries are dateless yet there is logical unity to the work. Unlike *Purvrang*, this book is a diary which narrates the author's personal impressions about the place he visits. However, it is similar in its thematic focus in that like Deshpande, Narayan also describes the cultural ambience of the place of his visit, America. The narration traces the circular journey of the traveller from New York, to the mid- west, Chicago, Los Angeles, Washington DC and back to New York. With the characteristic creativity of a novelist, he captures the places which he visits along with their essence. In fact, the pace of New York life, the friendliness of the west coast and such other places in America are some instances of Narayan's vivid but apt description. Particularly noteworthy is his perceptive tongue-in-cheek observation of regional vainglories of America and timely cautioning against the faux pas in airing these putative regional vanities thoughtlessly in a wrong milieu:

> There is a marked difference of view between North and South and between East and West as anywhere else in the world. To a Southerner the rest of the United States is an immature undeveloped country, [...]the New Englander is proud of his heritage of sober English qualities and the beauty of his landscape, the West Coast is an extremely proud country, their weather, mountains, roses, grapes, tomatoes are ever a source of continuous pride and they like to hear someone say [so] There is no great harm done in letting

> people cherish their prejudices and even sharing them yourself as long as you don't air your views in a family gathering where, as it often happens, New England and California or Mid West and Oklahoma may be united in matrimony, when polite conversation on prejudices will have to be carried on with circumspection.(38).

Such humour and bonhomie makes for greater readerly interest and captivating reading. As against the absence of any sub-titles for sections in *Purvrang* in *MDD* the diary entries are given a title indicating the core focus of the narration. For instance, there is an entry titled 'Super Guide' wherein the narrator expresses his exasperation at an 'efficient' guide who takes him across studios showing no actual exhibits but dummies and makes up for this with his smooth rehearsed speech (31-32). The other diary entries too are given apt titles. In fine, the entire travel diary is cogently arranged like Deshpande's *Purvrang* and makes for an equally entertaining, informative and thought-provoking reading. More importantly there is literary experimentation done where within a diary format a scene of a play that parodies advertisements is narrated (106-109). Thus it can be seen that generically the travel book assumes a distinct literary form by the 1960s.

4.9. Towards Cosmopolitanism:

From the above discussion, it would be seen that by the 1960s Indian travel writing attained a recognizably structured, pleasant and readable generic identity. There is also a greater self-confidence and rootedness in the travel writer to negotiate his identity in the context of the other. Consequently, travel writing of the 1960s became more inclusive and assimilative of the other-

though not fully of the west. This leaves it way ahead of the confining nationalism but a little short of cosmopolitanism. The term cosmopolitanism is used in the sense of "having worldwide rather than limited or provincial scope or bearing" (Merriam Webster's Dictionary, CD ROM). Thematically, this aspect can be seen in literary works in which the writers attempt to show interconnected identities of mankind. The realization of the interconnectedness of mankind as a theme is present in the 1960s travel book yet it has not been fully realized.

For instance in *Purvrang* P .L Deshpande constantly feels the entwined nature of human beings which he finally proclaims at the end of the travel book as being a religious journey with his co –travellers (278-279). Likewise R.K Narayan speaks about how "human beings get knit up in all fantastic unbelievable ways, complex and unexpected links like the wiring at the back of a radio panel (139). Yet in both the travel books this realization of interconnectedness is partial. There is a clear visualization of the west as a distinct entity from India which prevents the two travel books from being cosmopolitan in the true sense of the term. Thus both the writers seem to be bogged down sub consciously by the invisible shadow cast by their past colonial relationship with the west despite their best post-colonial cordiality and bonhomie with individuals.

In Narayan, the cosmopolitanism is hinted at and even mentioned but as an afterthought. This is so perhaps because he constantly finds himself at loggerheads with the American civilization, and its cultural traits which are so

distinct from his own that he can never find a link between the two. Interestingly P.L. Deshpande is inclusive of the east as one entity, yet he alienates the west.

Thus, in Narayan's *MDD,* though the relation between the *travelling self* and the *locale* is intimate at a personal level, at the cultural level a fissure still exists. This sort of cultural intimacy and universality is also absent in *Apurvai* another travel book by P.L Deshpande, based on his visit to European countries, where he presents Paris as a beautiful place but one that is enigmatic and does not speak to him freely (226). This further strengthens the conjecture that wholesome cosmopolitan integration is not yet seen in these travel books. Thus while the 1960s travel book projects universality at a personal level; at the cultural level a spasm of exclusionism still exists. This can be seen to be bridged by the diasporic travelling self of the late twentieth century, if their travel narratives are anything to go by.

Nevertheless, the 1960s was indeed a period of generic blossoming for Indian travel writing, where it became thematically profound and technically metamorphosed into a definite generic visage.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CONTEMPORARY VOICE OF INDIAN TRAVEL WRITING

5.1. The Contemporary Travel book: Introduction

Contemporary Indian travel writing represents the changing Indian mindset in the wake of globalization and liberalization. The term contemporary denotes "belonging to or occurring in the present" (OED, 188). It is used to facilitate a temporal categorization of Indian travel writing of recent times. Contemporary travel writing, as this Chapter would unravel, shows a distinct transition from the postcolonial perspective to a cosmopolitan one. In this era India became an assertive political entity with a recognized international presence, having no longer to define itself against the colonial power.

The travel writing of this period also characterizes this very assertion and dramatizes the emergence of the vibrant globalised individual more often those not deeply rooted in his native culture, who is no longer hesitant to give a free expression to his new found global identity. The postcolonial search for cultural identity of the post -independence travel book is supplanted seemingly by an emphatic and confident cosmopolitan voice. The travel writing of this period thus presents a global cosmopolitan *travelling self too* .

In addition to the Indian travel book coming of age, (See Naik and Narayan, 216) the genre itself has evolved to a degree nearly on par with the

other mainstream literary genres like the novel, poetry and drama. As a result, this burgeoning travel writing has constantly bolstered the multifarious tradition of Indian travel writing. Especially, the vast corpus of travel writing in Indian regional languages has become widely diversified and yet it is able to retain an identifiably composite visage as contemporary Indian travel writing. The strand of diasporic writing has also contributed substantially to the Indian travel book of the contemporary times.

A brief glance at the post -1980s travel writing in comparison with its forerunner of the 1960s in post independence India will make this amply clear. A case in point is Meena Prabhu's *Dakshinrang* (1999), the travel book of a diasporic Indian woman writer, who chose to write for a native audience in her native language. Meena Prabhu continues the legacy of the Indian travel book. Her travel text in Marathi titled *Dakshinrang* meaning 'Shades of the South' is based on her visit to South America and mainly addressed to a Marathi audience seems to be inspired by P.L Deshpande's *Purvrang* (Shades of the East). It would be, therefore, appropriate to discuss Meena Prabhu's *Dakshinrang*, as a 'link' text bridging the 1960s and 1980s travel book.

5.2. Meena Prabhu's *Dakshinrang*- A Link text

Dakshinrang's similarity to *Purvrang* is striking as well as fascinating. It provides evidence of the presence of a veritable tradition in the Indian travel book. As was argued in Chapter Four Kalelkar's legacy of travel premised on the motif of travel for nation's sake is continued by Kelekar who infused it with realism a theme that became the motif of the 1960s travel book. Meena

Prabhu's *Dakshinrang* happens to connect the trend and tone of the 1960s travel book to the contemporary travel book. In its title, structure and thematic plan, it appears to be visibly inspired by *Purvrang* a travel book of the 1960s. Yet its tone and authorial persona or the travelling self is very much in tune with the contemporary times. Hence it would be relevant to discuss the similarity and difference of this crucial travel book to that of its forerunner of the 1960s, so as to provide a linkage as well a point of departure from the travel book of the 1960s to that of the present times.

5.2.1. The 1960s Travel Book and *Dakhshinrang*- the linkage

Structurally there is la inkage between *Purvrang* and *Dakhshinrang*. The travel book begins like *Purvrang*, with the writer's preparation for travel. Her confrontation with the authorities to get the necessary documents and her experience of vaccinations are described much in the same vein as in *Purvrang*. An illustration of the confrontation with authorities and the woes of vaccination as humorously described in *Purvrang* will not be out of place here:

> The doctor who administered the small pox shot was a lady. There was a permanent crease drawn across her face. In our first meeting, she managed to drive us away, thankfully without holding us by the arms, with a curt 'Come tomorrow' in extremely rude English. Telling ourselves, that the ill omen of travel has let itself loose, we descended the steps and started walking towards another place to see if we could manage to get pricked for Cholera in the meantime [...]
>
> Henceforth for three consecutive births I would have no fear of small pox. (11-13)

Likewise Meena Prabhu's description of her experience at the doctor's office is not too widely off the cuff:

> Asking me as to which of the various countries I intended to visit, the lady doctor, who was inside, brought out a huge chart. After enlightening me about the various diseases, apart from Yellow fever and Malaria, that were lying there in ambush for me, the lady then began to recite the cost of the various vaccines. Had I taken all those shots, it is true that I would have become so healthy as to render all South American disease ineffectual, but then having exhausted all my funds I would have to sit twiddling my toes after having had to cancel my own plans of travel [...].After my approval for only yellow fever the lady's face began to pale [...]
>
> Unfortunately, she had to remain content with only 'yellow fever'. Now for the next 10 years it wouldn't dare come close to me (9)

Such similarity between these two texts is not restricted to the occasionally parallel details and structure; it also covers the light-hearted tone and a few nuggets of theme, albeit with some variance. In the 1960s travel book as argued in Chapter Four there was a search for cultural identity and a postcolonial concern with the need to assert one's identity. In Meena Prabhu's *Dakshinrang,* though postcolonial concerns are reflected, the approach is mellower and a more accommodative relationship between the east and the west is visualized. Both *Purvrang* and *Dakshinrang* speak on behalf of the marginalized locale in the sense of term used in Chapter Two –again a postcolonial concern for the subaltern neglected. Deshpande speaks of his chosen locale, the Asian countries, as marginalized by the Indians due to their awe for the European:

> The traveller on his way to England or U.S.A is in for a lot of free advice, besides, even today the golden halo that is stuck on to an 'England-returned ' does not get attached to a 'Jakarta-returned 'or a 'Tokyo-returned' label. There is a general belief that Asia is a backward continent. (14)

Unlike Deshpande, Prabhu does not assign Europe-centred mindset of the Indian as being the reason for marginalization of the locale. For instance, when the responsibility of planning her travel across South America fell entirely on her, Meena Prabhu acknowledges:

> [H]ow little travel writing was available about that region. No doubt South America was included in the World atlas, but unlike North America, it was not discussed at length. There was not a single page map of this continent which spreads from the Equator to Antarctica. (2)

Though she acknowledges that unlike its northern counterpart, the south is not 'mapped' into one, she doesn't assign any colonial reasons for it like Deshpande does when describing marginalized Asian countries. Moreover the west- bashing sarcasm seen in Deshpande's *Purvrang* (113) is absent in *Dakshinrang*. Prabhu, unlike Deshpande does not blame the west for intervening and 'corrupting' the east. Though she is aware of the discriminatory attitude of the westerners towards Indians, she does not explicitly name any country/continent as being solely responsible for this. For instance, when she has to procure visas *because* of her Indian passport to the various South American countries, she does not lay the onus on the west:

> The rules in existence have to be followed. But, anywhere one may apply, there is the dubious look of query 'So is this burdensome person likely to stay on permanently in our country'? This is extremely hurtful. One feels like

> giving a strong retort, 'hey our country is very nice. Why would we give it up for permanent residence here?'
>
> But when one considers the permanent 'self -parking' that our people have accomplished in various countries, under the pretext of a holiday or student visa, then their suspicion does not appear misplaced. (4)

The attention of the author is still focused on the marginalized, but the viewpoint has changed with the broadening of perspective. The viewpoint is balanced where an extreme colonial opposition is replaced with a moderate attitude towards the west.

Interestingly, unlike the 1960s travel book, where west-criticism was deftly coated in humour, in this contemporary travel book, west criticism is blatantly expressed. Prabhu for instance in *Dakshinrang* minces no words in pointing out the western neglect and elimination of eastern lands. In her visit to Patagonia she comments on how the land has been rendered non existent by the western /European world:

> This land, so remote from human settlement, was so unapproachable; it was almost not a part of this earth. Until the sixteenth century it was known only to the original natives. Later when it refused to be conquered, Europe denied its existence. (54).

This kind of candid matter of fact critique of the West is seen dispersed across the book.

As in the 1960s travel book, the difference between the west and east/ south is duly brought out. For instance after narrating the incident of the materialistic doctor at Washington who charges her for vaccinations, she candidly comments on the considerate doctor at Santiago:

> The doctor from Washington D.C. charging $ 80 even for a plain vaccination and this doctor here, barely able to speak my language, upholding professional ethics, easily conveyed the difference between North and South America. (41)

This materialistic attitude of the privileged west and the humane non-materialistic attitude of the south are seen in various other episodes. This distancing is similar to that of Deshpande's in *Purvrang*.

Further, also like Deshpande in *Purvrang* she also tries to view the apparently marginalized cultures of the south as a kind that belongs together. Thus as in *Purvrang* where Deshpande sees an affinity between South Asians and Indians she too finds affinity between the South Americans and the Indians. This is revealed in incidents in *Dakshinrang*, where people in South America express their love and curiosity about Indian culture. Particularly noteworthy is the episode of a Chilean lady who is possessive about a locket of Lord Krishna without being aware even of the name of the deity. The authorial comment on this affection for an unknown Indian deity is expressed thus:

> I was surprised deep within. This is a country that is almost entirely Christian. The Spanish conquerors had uprooted all the native religions from there, after the forced conversions of the sixteenth century. Even now the neighbouring religious fanatic is speaking with great fervour. In such an atmosphere, why was this lady moving around with a pendant of a god's idol of who she knew neither the name nor the story of origin. Although the same deity was a part of my own pantheon, why was she being so puritanical as not to allow me to touch it lest I defile it? On the one hand, was the imitation of modern America and the other this intimacy with ancient Indian culture. I

was eager to ask her some more questions about this, but the continual translation had tired Ashu (35-36).

Her wonder over the dual nature of South America as being contemporary as well as traditional is left open ended. She offers no comments on western modernity that has gripped South America. On the other hand in *Purvrang,* Deshpande vociferously criticizes the Japanese youngsters imitating western trend of partying and drug taking (213).Thus although Prabhu comments on the European hegemony over the south, it is not as vehemently critical as it is in Deshpande's book. The general tone of Prabhu's travel book is moderate unlike its predecessor of the 1960s which criticizes the aping of western culture. Prabhu expresses appreciation of and closeness to the salience of western culture. Moreover like *Purvrang, Dakshinrang* also ends on a note of proximity and affection that its author feels towards South America, where the unvisited lands beckon and accept her as one of them (295).

While this affection connects her authorial vision to that of the 1960s travel book, yet her voice is also of a diasporic Indian. It is the cosmopolitan voice that represents the contemporary information-bound society. This difference in approach that marks the contemporary travel book can be clearly seen by juxtaposing two episodes relating to a visit to a holy place, one each from *Purvrang* and *Dakshinrang* respectively. Deshpande narrates his visit to a Shinto temple in Japan vis-à-vis people, rather than the event or context in *Purvrang*:

> I touched the holy water to my lips and bowed before those unknown gods. The Japanese around me would be delighted to witness my faith. I am faithful

> by nature. The only difference is that I bow more before his faithful devotees than before the Lord himself. These Japanese faithful wandering across the temple of Nikko began to appear to me in the guise of the *varkaries* (the annual foot marching devotees) thronging to Pandharpur. Unfortunately our own home-spun *varkari* is a poor miserable and ailing lot. The Japanese crowd however is pleasant. With beautiful pleasing attires the Japanese people appear as though they have come to say 'Thank you God, for keeping us in such comfortable/happy state'. (195-196).

Likewise, in R.K.Narayan's *My Dateless Diary (MDD)* too the focus is on people rather then description of history and geography.

Contrastingly, though *Dakshinrang,* is also concerned about human beings they do not take centre-stage as in the 1960s travel book. For example a similar visit to a holy place in *Dakshinrang*, to a cathedral in Lima is narrated taking into consideration the history of the place:

> Both, the Franciscan and Dominican sects of Catholic religion wield great influence here. The following of the two saints St Francis and St Dominic appeared to be greater than of Christ himself or Virgin Mary even in church. The ritual was devoted to them. The hymns dedicated to them. Even vows are kept in their name (24).

This description that takes into consideration the unique nature of worship at the church is primarily informative, in tune with the contemporary Indian sensibility shaped by age of information-explosion and guided by the principle of 'knowledge is power'. The human-centric description that used to be a part of the 1960s travel book is now replaced with such an informative and systematically organized travel narrative.

This is also evident in Vikram Seth's *From Heaven Lake (FHL,* 1983*)* as well as in Amitav Ghosh's *In an Antique Land (*1992, *IAAL).* The former describes the wide expanse of China and Tibet in terms of its history and geography. In like manner, Ghosh in *IAAL* analyses Egyptian ethos by excavating its cultural past with his incisive and critical anthropological research, undertaken as a part of the author's Ph.D. work. Though both these books are hugely informative, scientifically, methodically organized and educative in content, they are also humanistic. But the primary emphasis of the authors is on the *locale*, its history, geography, anthropology and sociology. These informative travel books represent a shift from the postcolonial to the cosmopolitan and thereby reveal their literary and visionary maturity in tune with the times. These two aspects of thematic growth and literary maturation of the contemporary travel book deserve analysis.

5.3. The contemporary travel book and the diaspora:

A significant development in the eighties has been the emergence of the diasporic community which has exercised a strong influence on Indian writing, especially in English. In the last quarter of the twentieth century, the *travelling self* came to be perceived from two angles, the native and the diasporic. Indians had travelled abroad earlier but it was during this period that there was a steady flow of Indians travelling, and even settling abroad. These were not just the educated elite but also the masses. Hence it would be interesting to discuss the nature of this Indian *diasporic travelling self* and what themes have been analysed in such kind of Diasporic travel writing. However prior to embarking

on a discussion of the diasporic travel writing, it is relevant to clarify the usage of the terms *diaspora, diasporic literature and diasporic travel literature.*

5.3.1. Diaspora-definition

The term *diaspora* originally indicated the "dispersion of the Jews" (OED, 203) and "The dispersion of Jews among the Gentiles after the Babylonian Exile (586 BC), or the aggregate of Jews outside Palestine or present-day Israel (Encyclopaedia Britannica,CD ROM).The Merriam Webster's dictionary however gives two definitions of Diaspora one as "the settling of scattered colonies of Jews outside Palestine after the Babylonian exile" and the second an extended one as, "the movement, migration, or scattering of a people away from an established or ancestral homeland" (CD ROM). The term *diaspora* would be used in this extended sense.

5.3.2. The nature of the Indian diaspora:

The Indian diaspora has been divided by N Jayaram into pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial diaspora. The pre-colonial period according to Jayaram refers to the diaspora in the ancient times comprising of Buddhist *bhikkus*, Palas of Bengal and South Indian Cholas (19). The colonial period comprising the people who emigrated during European colonialism when India became "an extant reservoir of cheap, docile and dependable labour especially to work on plantations". During this period the indentured labour system was practiced based on a contract signed between the Indian labourer and the colonial government (Jayaram, 20). The *post colonial phase*, comprises the emigration of professionals who travelled to industrially advanced countries

like US, England and Canada. Compared to the colonial phase, this was a voluntary phase of transposition where Indians travelled to these countries for better prospects (Jayaram, 21-22).

In the context of contemporary travel writing, the travel writers Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh and Pico Iyer belong to the postcolonial phase of privileged diasporic writers of the late twentieth century, while Dean Mahomed (1794) belongs to non – privileged old colonial diasporic category of travel writers, though not strictly an indentured labourer.

5.3.3. Diasporic literature:

The term 'diaspora' has gained significance in literary and critical discourse in the wake of postcolonial studies. As such the term *diasporic literature* has emerged as an important area of study. This term has being defined by various critics. Mala Pandurang for instance, defines it as "a body of writing, which comes from a globally dispersed community that has a common ancestral homeland"(18). Shaleen Singh who analyses the term Diaspora in the article 'Diaspora Literature: A Testimony of Realism', defines it as a literature that "involves an idea of a homeland, a place from where the displacement occurs and narratives of harsh journeys undertaken on account of economic compulsions'. (Online source,"Diaspora Literature"). The term diasporic literature is also identified by Pandurang as having certain common characteristics like a collective identity or collective memory of their homeland, identification with fellow members, feeling of alienation due to separation from ancestral land and due to the exclusion from the host society,

relatedness to this ideal homeland, and a belief that the diasporic community should collectively be committed to the maintenance and restoration of their homeland (ibid, 18-19).

According to her these features could be manifest in diasporic writing by way of themes like loss of homeland, protests against racial discrimination, and the trauma of transposition in an alien context (19). Whether the contemporary Indian diasporic travel writing deals with these themes, especially the notion of home would be significant to this discussion. However a definition of Diasporic travel writing is necessary before the theme of home is analysed in it.

5.3.4. Diasporic Indian Travel Writing: definition

Based on the concept of diaspora and diasporic literature discussed above, the diasporic *Indian travel writing* could be defined as a body of writing which comes from a globally dispersed community that has a common ancestral homeland (India) and which duly has the three relevant components of the *travelling self, the locale* and the *journey* as its important constituents.

5.3.5. The 'diasporic, the 'native' travelling self'and the concept of home:

Contemporary travel writing then presents two perspectives that of the native *travelling self* and the diasporic *travelling self.* In the context of the travel genre, both these varieties of writing can be distinguished on the basis of how *home* is conceived by each of these travelling selves. For the diasporic *travelling self,* the notion of home is problematized, since the diasporic Indian has no stable community to call a home, whereas for the *native* Indian no such

problem arises. McLeod for instance in his discussion of 'home' for the disapora, shows how the migrant occupies a 'displaced position' (*Beginning Postcolonialism*, 208-216). As opposed to this problem of the displaced position of 'home' for the diaspora, for the *native* Indian no such problem arises. *Home* then is the distinguishing characteristic of the *native travelling self* from the *diasporic* one. Thus unlike the native *travelling self*, for the diasporic Indian there is no stable community of a home. As such it would be significant to discuss how this diasporic status of "homelessness" affects the travel genre.

5.3.6. Diasporic 'Travelling self' and the notion of 'Home':

For some travel writers, this status of 'homelessness' provides an advantage. Bikhu Parekh argues in favour of this privileged position of the diasporic writer by observing that "[F]ar from being homeless, he [...] has several homes and that is the only way he has increasingly come to feel at home in the world"(106).The multiplicity of homes does not necessarily lead to a sense of fragmentation and loss. Pandurang, in the context of discussing Seth's diasporic position, speaks for the majority of contemporary diasporic Indian travel writers in proclaiming that the migratory consciousness developed due to travels across various cultural barriers have made these writers sensitive towards different cultural ethos (22). Consequently these writers operate within an international framework and form a part of the global litterateur fraternity which reaches beyond national boundaries to embrace humanity as a whole.

Their stay abroad also provides them with a cultural telescope and these writers do not necessarily display any feeling of estrangement from their lands, rather they evolve into cosmopolitans.

However, although they are a part of the global culture, national affiliations are also present in their works. In this sense Seth and Ghosh could be called rooted cosmopolite(s), to borrow Ruth Morse's term. This aspect of Seth is analysed by Morse where she suggests that "there is, throughout Seth's work, nostalgia for a lost home, sometimes identified with his family, but sometimes associated with an ideal of rootedness"(307) Thus, the contemporary diasporic travel writers could be called as *diasporic cosmopolites,* who are dispersed from their homeland, consider the world as one moral community and thereby attain a cosmopolitan perspective.

In the light of above discussion, the contemporary *diasporic travelling* self can thus be seen as cosmopolitan in outlook and his/her 'homelessness' can be treated as an advantage rather than as a limitation.

The five diasporic travel writers chosen for the present study, namely, Dean Mahomed, Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh, Meena Prabhu and Pico Iyer are all part of the India Diaspora. Although Dean Mahomed belongs to the eighteenth century, he is very much a part of the Indian diasporic travel writing in that he travelled abroad at the age of 25 and lived abroad until his death. Since *Travels* describes his native country (homeland) to a foreign audience, this work would be extremely useful in analysing the notion of home. It would be also relevant to analyse the *rootedness* of the Indian diaspora in terms of

their affiliation to home to determine the nature of the Indian *diasporic* travel book.

5.3.7. Affiliation to home in the contemporary travel book:

In the case of the diasporic writers taken for study their affiliation to home differs. Prabhu's *Dakhshinrang,* for instance, can be seen as a cosmopolitan text that looks beyond national boundaries. It also addresses issues of cultural and native identity. Unlike the other diasporic travel texts, it is written in the author's native language, Marathi, and addresses a native audience. Significantly, this travel book reveals the themes of diasporic travel writing that were listed above. Although this travel book does not frequently make a mention of homeland as is the case with the 1960s travel book, it is the intensity and love for ones homeland that is striking in this book. This patriotic bonding of the writer with her home comes out at a point when she spontaneously sings the National Anthem on seeing the statues of Pandit Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore at Chile and speaks sentimentally about her love for her country (37). This unabashed love for one's country which is the characteristic of native travel writing is seen in this diasporic writer, perhaps because she writes for her own people in her mother tongue. On the other hand, diasporic writers like Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh and Pico Iyer, do not reveal this patriotic (sentimental) approach to their homeland. Although they acknowledge that they are Indians, India is not treated with sentimental outburst as in *Dakhshinrang.*

Interestingly, among the three diasporic travel writings in English, there are differences in the authorial perceptions of home. In Seth, for instance, there is a notable element of nostalgia: After tiresome hitchhiking across northern China and Tibet, as he reaches Nepal the restlessness and purposelessness of the journey he undertakes acquires urgency. He is caught with surprise when he finds himself being powerfully affected by the familiarity of Nepal with India especially in its use of colour (173) and now the thought of reaching home fills him with delight:

> For a person of fundamentally sedentary habits I have been wandering far too long [...] I marvel at those travellers who, out of curiosity or a sense of mission, wander through unfamiliar environments for years on end. It requires an attitude of mind more capable of contentment with the present than my own. My drive to arrive is too strong. At many points in the journey, impatience has displaced enjoyment. This tension is the true cause of my exhaustion. When I am back in Delhi I will not move for a month, just sit at home, talk with my family and friends, read, rewind, and sleep. (175)

Unlike Seth, Ghosh in *IAAL,* does not show this drive to arrive home. His book based on anthropological research is objective; home is located as a colonized land whose links with the Middle East has been severed due to the colonial intervention. However, at certain off- guard moments, his patriotism takes precedence over his otherwise critical and objective mind. When, for instance, provoked by the Imam who criticizes the Indian rituals and lack of western advancement in India, he defends his home vehemently:

> 'We have them too!' I shouted back to him. In my country we have all those things too; we have guns and tanks and bombs. And they are better than anything you have got in Egypt –we're a long way ahead of you' (235-236).

This kind of feeling for one's home is absent in Pico Iyer's *Sun After Dark* (*SAD*), who has professedly declared his global citizenship. Being a second generation Indian, for him India is only one of the many homes he has across the world. India as such is not privileged as the ideal homeland. This is seen in his book *SAD* where he describes his visit to India symbolically titled as a *Far off affair*. However, he seems to be more considerate towards this Indian *locale* as compared to the other places he visits. This preferential treatment that he accords to what he calls as his 'step-motherland', is directed towards the *mis-* usage of the English language in India:

> Anyone who is tempted to laugh at all this –as who would not be?-is well advised to recall that in reality the literature of English these days is ever more in the hands of those who may be regretting the inconvenience. They took the words that empire brought to them, and somehow kept them going [...], and even made them new. More deeply they infused the words with a hopefulness and sincerity that are elsewhere just a memory. (212-213).

Although he ridicules the usage of English language signs as 'ceaseless Indian anarchy', he is equally aware of its origin in the creative union of the British and the Indian. More importantly, the changes brought to the English language by the Indians are viewed positively by Iyer. In fact his defence of the use of English language by the Indians is almost in line with Dean Mahomed's defence of Indian culture in *Travels.*

In *Travels* which can be considered as the first diasporic voice in transit of the Indian, Dean Mohamed defends his native culture. Nayar, argues that Mohamed's *Travels* presents India as an aesthetic sublime that "conceals a colonial drive towards conquest, appropriation and domination" ('Narrating India', 2004: 291). Contrary to this Mohamed presents India not as a 'sublime' landscape that has to be tamed but as a place that is developed culturally and more importantly scientifically. This is seen, especially, where he emphasizes the scientific rather than the religious quality of Benares by noting that there is a "very fine observatory" (56, letter XVII) there. Particularly significant are his attempts at dispelling the prejudices about India, like the chewing of betel nut (letter XXVII,82-84) or the European misconception of the snake charmers of India as having the magic and the power of the devil(86,letter XXVIII).

The entire book is a defence and admiration of the Indian ethos. This diasporic voice significantly shows the strongest affiliation to *home.*

Thus it can be concluded that though the five diasporic travel writers perceive *home* differently, the affiliation is present in all the books. In a writer like Meena Prabhu who addressees a native audience and writes in a native language, the home affiliation is more intense as compared to the other writers. In a Diasporic immigrant like Dean Mahomed too, the affiliation is strong. Significantly, in *FHL,* Seth expresses his desire for his home in India as well as for the other places that have been his homes (35). In Seth, thus, the *rooted ness* is not necessarily to *home* in the sense of a domestic place, but to a place that provides security, and is equipped with friends and familiar sights. For,

instance for the *travelling* self in *FHL*, home is presently Beijing, where he returns after travelling across China calling it a minor homecoming (32). In Ghosh, the *rootedness* is seen as a defence of one's homeland. Though Pico Iyer is an example of a global citizen, his leanings towards his 'step-motherland' are evident. Thus it can be deduced, that in the contemporary Indian diasporic travel writing to a lesser or greater degree, the writers relate to India as their home though their perspective is cosmopolitan.

5.4. Travel genre and postcoloniality:

A major point of contention in critical debates about the travel genre is whether as a body of writing it can represent postcolonial concerns of the underprivileged and the neglected sections of the society. Critics have argued that inherent in the genre is an innate exploitation of the *locale*. They observe that travel writing as well as travel exists on the 'commodification' of the locale for its sustenance (Holland and Huggan, 62-63). Since travel writing depends on this commodification, according to one view, it cannot sympathize with the locale whose case it seeks to represent. Postcolonial writers like Iyer, Ghosh or Seth, they concede, have to combat a genre that is traditionally *imperial* and that seeks to 'commodify' the other. In this context Holland and Huggan point out how :

> Postcolonial travel writers, in this context, are necessarily embattled: they must struggle to match their political views with a genre that is in many ways antithetical to them –a genre that manufactures otherness even as it claims to demystify it. (*Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing*:65)

What Holland and Huggan suggest is that postcolonial writers are caught in a double bind in understanding to demystify the European manufacture of *otherness,* since by opting to write in a genre that generates otherness, they are participating in the process of objectifying the 'other', which is a colonial exercise antithetical to the postcolonial concern. They further provide examples of postcolonial writers like Iyer who though professedly speak for exotic locales like Bali ,Tibet and China liken them to "a giant video screen of consumable touristic Images"(63). Critics like Pratt have also pointed out how a seemingly innocuous activity like surveying the scene of the locale, by the travelling self, especially in the 1860s, was done in what she terms as "the Monarch of all I survey" attitude, where the relation of mastery between the seer and the seen was predicated ('Imperial Eyes',1992, ,201-208). This view that perceives travel writing as a genre that is "colonial' since it commodifies the locale and has the "Monarch of all I survey attitude" towards it, does not apply to the Indian contemporary travel writer. On the other hand, the contemporary Indian travel writer both diasporic and native are post colonial in their concern for the marginal.

Most importantly, they do not perceive the locale as the 'other'. They display a proximity to the *locale* (the people as well as with the environment) and are often insiders and confidantes. Ghosh, Seth, Naik, Iyer and Prabhu are constantly engaged in conversation and participate in the activities of the people building personal friendships enroute. The affection is mutual with the *locale* responding with equal zeal. In this connection one episode in *FHL* is

noteworthy, since it involves the act of clicking photographs, which can be seen as a an extension of Pratt's 'surveying the scene', albeit through a camera:

> I photographed one bright eyed old yakherd as he sat with his dogs [...]He gave me some advice in high pitched Tibetan. If only I knew some Tibetan how much more interesting the trip would be? As it is I can only understand Tibet through the filter of those Tibetans who speak Chinese, almost all of whom are under forty. How their elders view the rapid and irreversible changes that have occurred since 1959 is something I have no way of comprehending. (102).

There is total absence of "the monarch of all I survey" attitude here, and no relation of mastery between the seer and the seen. On the contrary, this episode, of trying and genuinely 'wanting' to *comprehend* is an exercise of reciprocity between the travelling self and the locale. The *travelling self* attempts to identify with and not objectify the subject of the narration. The same proximity is seen in Ghosh's *IAAL*, when for instance he is accepted by the Egyptians as a 'friend' though they constantly question him about his 'curious' religion and view him as different (47,125).

As such, while there is an inherent difference between the travelling self and the locale, neither any opposition between the *self* and the *other* nor any attempt to present the other as an alien object of display is seen in the contemporary Indian travel book. Through such attempts at *comprehension* the contemporary Indian travel writers are subverting the imperial genre of travel to accommodate the marginalized and helping deconstruct the image of the alien other created by the colonial mega discourse. These writers writing in the

so-called imperial genre notably exhibit a postcolonial approach. They are truly *writing back* and, as Iyer aptly points out, use "the great imperial genre of travel writing against the traditional forces of empire, turning the telescope in the other direction". (Iyer, 'Interview with Stammwitz'). In fact, in the contemporary travel book, the 1960s stance of anti-hybridity, is replaced with a more positive outlook towards hybridity, defined in the context of a global world.

5.4.1. The contemporary travel book: Postcoloniality revisited

In Chapter Four, it was argued that the 1960s travel book dealt with postcolonial themes. While the 1960s travel book, explored the cultural identity, it also spoke for the marginal. What is noteworthy is that unlike the travel writers of the 1960s, the contemporary travel writer does not see (or has not internalized) the relation between the colonizer and the colonized as that of opposition which made them reject any kind of mixing. They are aware of the new economic, political and social barriers that have emerged in the post globalization contemporary world. In this sense, they could still be considered 'post- colonial' if the term, as Abrams uses it, could be extended to a discourse of the marginal.

Interestingly, in an article on post colonial literature in *MFS,* Lopez and Marzec note that there is a new generation of writers like Ghosh, Kiran Desai and Arundhati Roy who:

> have produced fictions that challenge the easy binary thinking of colonizer versus colonized and examine the ways in which colonialism and its legacy

> have irrevocably transformed colonial subjects as well as their erstwhile masters [...]Pushing the boundaries of postcolonial to explore the exigencies of life under globalization and its aftermath (680, 2010).

A view similar to that quoted above is expressed by Pico Iyer, in an interview with Katti Stammwitz. He observes that:

> instead of colonizer looking at colony, we have, perhaps, global soul looking at global world: the world the traveler describes is as post-national and mixed up as the traveller himself [...] and (writers of Indian origin) are looking at the world as Indians trained in England, or raised overseas, or, in one way or another, bringing international eyes to the world we see (even if it is in India!)".

It is easy to see why it is not possible to entirely agree with either Iyer or Lopez and Marzec regarding the global composition of the Indian travelling self. The 'pushing of the boundaries' and the 'global soul' phenomenon though is a reality especially for the Diaspora; it is not palpable in the contemporary travel book. On the contrary, the global issues are analysed not through international eyes, but through colonially aware eyes that see the world in terms of hegemonic relations. For instance in *FHL*, the post colonial theme of marginalization and exploitation is explored. However, a change of heart seems to have come over the Indian travel writer from the 60s to the 80s. The tone of extreme opposition to imitation of colonial (western) culture seen in the 1960s travel book, has become considerably moderate even reconciliatory. This moderate post-colonialism is seen for instance in *FHL* in the *travelling self's* concern for the Tibetan or the Uighur in China who form the minority and also in his sensitive understanding of the linguistic gap between two generations of

Tibetans due to the Cultural Revolution. Both these concerns are for the suppressed and the downtrodden. As he empathizes with the pain and torture that Tibetans have underwent due to the Chinese subjugation of Tibet, through the personal tales of woe of young Tibetans like Norbu, his sympathy for and identification with these marginalized people burst out in scalding words:

> To say that the Tibetans are bitter about the destruction of their temples and monasteries gives no idea of the depth of their feelings [...]. It will not be forgotten, even though the people are now allowed to reconstruct the buildings up from the ruins. I decided not to go to Gandian. I am sufficiently saddened by Ramache, and have no wish to be further disturbed. (153).

Although the book ends on a positive note of building friendships across borders, it projects the harsh reality that the wounds of colonial outrage are yet to be healed and perhaps will never be.

This perspective of the colonial condition of hegemony and marginalization comes out markedly in Ghosh's *IAAL*, wherein he constantly reiterates the continuities of the past colonial excesses into the present. Robert Dixon in an article in *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* analyses this characteristic of Ghosh's writing as *dialogic*:

> It is precisely this sense of living in the midst of "antique" problems that makes Ghosh's cultural poetics more politically engaged [...]It is a poetics that at once attends to the circulation of symbolic capital in the past, and also to the succession of such systems –their dialogic or allegorical relation with contemporary cultural systems (19).

This New Historicist reading that sees history as contemporaneous also suggests, as Ghosh does, that the post colonial situation of marginalization of

the east still exists in the contemporary age. At the beginning, Ghosh points out how the Indo- Egyptian trade of accommodation and co-operation had been severed by the Portuguese colonial intervention. Towards the end as he traces the lives of the Indian slave Bomma and of his Master the Tunisian (Middle-eastern) Abraham Ben Yiju, he finds that this western intervention has done permanent damage. A suggestive piece of this damage inflicted by the western (colonizer) on the amicable relations among the eastern countries comes towards the end of the book. When, for instance, he goes to visit the tomb of Sidi Abu-Hasira a revered Jewish holy saint in Egypt, he is interrogated by the police officers over what is for them a curious visit of an Indian Hindu to a tomb:

> He was not trying to intimidate me; I could tell he was genuinely puzzled. He seemed so reasonable and intelligent, that for an instant I even thought of telling him the story of Bomma and Ben Yiju. But then it stuck me ,suddenly ,that there was nothing I could point to within this world that might give credence to my story-the remains of those small, indistinguishable, intertwined histories, Indian and Egyptian, Muslim and Jewish, Hindu and Muslim, had been partitioned long ago.(339).

This irreparable partitioning of the east by the western /colonization lies at the core of this book, as is the postcolonial concern for tracing the marginal voice of Bomma who is mentioned briefly in two letters to his master Ben Yiju written by Khalaf Ibn Ishaq in 1139 and 1148 respectively. The tracing of Bomma's history is interspersed with his field research in Egyptian villages of Lataifa, Nashawy and later in India at Mangalore. Here too his concern for the

marginal is vividly expressed in the sympathy that he shows for Egyptian youths like Nabeel and Ismael who give up their dreams of taking up government jobs to seek fortunes abroad in war torn Iraq. Despite seeing the prosperity that the villages had attained due to their youth working in Iraq, Ghosh sees through this mirage of riches for what it really is. During a telephonic conversation with Nabeel, working in Iraq, Ghosh senses the 'suffering' hidden in Nabeel's otherwise normal voice that grew "progressively more quiet" as Ghosh speaks about Nabeel's family in Egypt.(347)

This almost telepathic understanding of the Egyptian youth and their plight in Iraq and his concern for the marginal is where the post colonial theme comes out in a touchingly beautiful manner.

However, this irrevocability of circumstances is also a tacit acceptance of globalization, where westernization has come to stay. In *IAAL*, Ghosh notes how economic disparities have been dispelled, due to the migration, and western comforts have entered the rural fellaheen life:

> Even with those reminders, it was hard looking around now, to believe how things had once stood for Nabeel and his family –indeed for all of Nashawy. It was not just that the lanes looked different [...]something more important had changed as well; the relations between the different kinds of people in the village had been upturned and rearranged. Families who at that time had counted amongst the poorest of the community[...]were now the very people who had new houses, bank accounts, gadgetry[...,] it looked as though the village had been drawn on to the fringes of a revolution –except that this one happened in another country far away(321) .

This distant revolution ushered via migration and westernization as a 'way of life', comes out most vividly in the most recent of diasporic writers, Pico Iyer. Iyer in *SAD,* notes the blending of the colonizer with the colonized in the remnants of the monuments of the colonial regime in India:

> I am entirely Indian myself, by blood, though born in England, and yet I never saw the incongruous merging of those cultures in their prime, or even the protracted divorce that followed upon their falling apart. But even for me, and even fifty years after what is known as "Independence", a large part of the romance of India lies in the culverts and civil list houses, the cantonments and canteens [...]In their day they stood for occupation, even oppression. But now soothed by history's progress, and standing for a liaison that nether party sought, they speak for something more wistful, to do with the colonizer colonized.(206)

Thus, In Iyer the global self comes out most vividly and it is in this travel book that postcolonial sensitivity is overcome by a global sensibility.

However unlike its diasporic counterpart, native Indian travel writing engages primarily with a sense of the postcolonial. In *Kalighat te Karunaghat (KTK),* on a visit to Manali, author Datta Naik's concern for the local natives is revealing. Manali and other such hill stations, he concedes, are beautiful because of the original dweller, the native and their beautiful tiny dwellings that sprout on the scenic landscape (52). Further, this concern is not only for the local but also for the other elements of the *locale*. Naik also points out the neglect of Ladakh by mainstream India;

> From the Prime Minister of the Nation to the school going child, Indians are not bothered about the areas of their motherland that are to the North, North –

East, North West of their country. In fact the rulers of Delhi mounted on their throne in Delhi, feel that Bharat or India is merely the Rajpath that runs from the Rashtrapathi Bhavan to India gate. On the republic day, only the floats of states like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and West- Bengal are to go along the street. Assam has no place there. Manipur, Meghalaya and Nagaland , and along with them Ladakh also, have no place..

Yes! Ladakh is one of the stepchildren of India. (22)

Though far more accommodative than the authors of the 1960s, this contemporary native travel writer still sees the world in terms of barriers of the east and the west. For instance, the divided view of the east and the west pervades Naik's books as seen in the projection of The Alps and the Himalaya as representative of these two distinct civilizations (50)

A further endorsement of this view comes in a travel book written in English by a native Indian writer Pankaj Mishra, who describes in his book: *Butter Chicken in Ludhiana: Travels in Small Town India* (1995), the rise or "aggressiveness" of the *nouveau riche* middle class in small town post globalization India. Though he acknowledges the global aspect of life in the contemporary world, he is not convinced of its presence in the part of the world that he encounters during his travels. After overhearing the complaints of two Italian girls regarding Indians and their cheating, he turns defensive and comments on how the world is still not barrier free:

At the time I turned defensive and thought: well, travelling in India may have its hazards for woman tourists, but are they really more than those faced by tourists all over the world. Indeed it was possible that a brown-skinned Indian

tourist in Milan would have a sadder story to tell. Or an African tourist in Southern Louisiana.

But this much was clear even then: people talked of a new world, the Global village, and how the world has become a smaller place. But one didn't have to travel too far in it to realize it was still a very big place, and that the old barriers were still in place. (4)

Thus, in the native travel writer, themes related to the 'postcolonial conditions' of the locale are more pronounced and these writers see the world through a postcolonial perspective. Although Seth and Ghosh wish for an ideal global connect, the stark awareness of postcolonial marginality is palpable in their travel books. The contemporary travel book then remains largely post colonial in its thematic focus.

5.5. Generic maturity:

It was argued in Chapter Four that the 1960s travel book assumed a distinct literary form. Initially, there were problems of marrying fact with fiction, and the writer found it difficult to graft elements of basically fictional genres like the novel on to a predominantly non-fictional genre like travel writing. However, this difficulty seems to have been resolved in the 1980s with writers unabashedly applying fictional techniques to the travel book.

5.5.1. The novel like travel book:

Vikram Seth' travel book *FHL*, uses techniques employed for the novel. This book based on his visit to China as part of his research at Nanjing University opens with the following vivid prose passage:

> The flies have entered the bus, and their buzzing adds to the overwhelming sense of heat. We drive to the town first: a few two storey buildings of depressing concrete, housing government offices or large shops [...]. Small Street stalls, too, with their wares displayed on the pavement and vendors selling refreshments-glasses of bilious yellow and red liquids, looking increasingly attractive as our thirst builds. Donkey carts pulled by tired looking donkeys, pestered by flies and enervated by the dry, breezeless heat [...]. Even when they flick their tails, they do so listlessly. (1)

This creative depiction of the setting gives the reader a feel of the locale, a striking indicator of the growing literary merit of the travel genre. Earlier although Deshpande had dramatically described his experience at the travel office (19-21), characterization technique had still not emerged in *Purvrang*. For instance Deshpande speaks about the people he meets, not as *characters* to be introduced to the reader. Seth on the other hand, describes his truck driver Sui as though he is a character in a novel. He describes his first glimpse of him thus:

> The truck stands by the entrance to the yard. There are three people in the driving compartment, but they may be able to squeeze me in, [...]. Quzha introduces me to the driver Sui, about thirty five, an alert faced and vigorous chain smoker, compact in limb and confident in manner. He has a permanent job with the state-owned transport unit in Lhasa to which his truck belongs. Sui accompanied by his sulky nephew, the fifteen year old Xiao San ('Little Third', because he is the third son in the family). The other passenger, Gyanseng, is Tibetan. He is tall and thin, about twenty five, and has a permanently absent-minded smile pasted onto his face. Though he speaks Chinese very well when he wishes to, he is a man of very few words.(50-51)

This brief description of co-travelers is literary characterization at work. P.L. Deshpande's *Purvrang, describes* various people he meets en-route interms of their age, region, and religion as is the case of the description of Madam Chao:

> Through a similar coincidence I got to know Madam Chao in Jakarta. She is Chinese by birth, follows Buddhism, and is a citizen of Indonesia. She is around 60 years of age, yet her enthusiasm is boundless. There is a lot of love for India (78).

Likewise, Narayan in *My Dateless Diary* (*MDD)* describes people in terms of their attitudes and approach to things. Such is the case with the introduction of the horticulturalist Mr Joshi:

> I could also sympathize with him- he possessed so much spontaneous friendliness, although he was messy in arranging things. He tried to tie me to a lunch with his office colleagues [...].On the whole confused. I wish I had not put him to the strain of entertainment. (48)

Such, touch-and-go descriptions of individuals, lack the rounded insightful analysis that Seth provides of Sui and others in *FHL*. He keenly observes Sui and comments on his 'intuitive personality' and describes in detail his driving skills (73-74).

The description of Sui is interspersed with astute analysis by the writer. This method is also adopted for other people he meets, even if briefly. A point in case is his analysis of the bureaucrat Mr Ho at Lhasa where he discuses his visa problems with Ho at the Lhasa foreign affairs office (118). Such depiction of individuals as characters infuses a literary quality into what was earlier a drab fact- based narrative genre.

In addition to this, there are more conversations reported in the travel book of the 1980s, as compared to the 1960s travel book. With this the contemporary travel book is able to provide for greater dramatic element, and add to the breeziness of the account.

5.5.2. The lyrical :

Where Seth's *FHL* infuses a novel like quality to the travel book, Datta Naik ushers in a lyrical mode of narration into the travel book. Unlike his 1960s forerunner, the contemporary travel writer is no longer hesitant to explore the possibility of a poetic narration in a travel book so as to distinguish it from a mere tourist brochure and thereby making his travel book as good as a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (65). This poetic quality is seen especially in essays where Datta Naik describes the beauty of the place. For instance, he describes Switzerland and its natural beauty by quoting Kalidas's *Ritusamhaar* (42). Moreover, he uses literary devices like various figures of speech. Particularly striking is his use of personification. He personifies the places he visits by assigning human qualities to them. London is described as incredible, Holland as jocular, Switzerland as a young delicate boy and Paris as having vanity in one's beauty. A sense of place is *created* in the mind of the reader through this use of personifications, whereby the writer is able to convey to the reader the spirit of the locale. While striking a conversation with Kathmandu he refers to it as his friend who seems to reply in like manner:

> Listen friend listen to me. Now that you have come to Kathmandu, do not leave in just three days or four days. Stay on for eight to ten days. You may

> have come here as a guest but do not leave like one. As long as you stay here stay on like a family member. Forget your country, your dress, your thinking, passions –forget them all. Take off the glasses from your eyes. Clean up your foggy eyes. Why do you need to know my Gotra, and my race, my caste and religion? Why are you asking questions like, I am a Hindu or a Budhist, Easterner or Westerner. Look at me as I am.(28)

Such an intimate conversation that he strikes with the locale, makes *KTK* a creative travel experience. It assumes the form of an experiment that unravels the central theme of the book -cosmopolitanism.

5.5.3. The fact -fiction interface:

On the other hand, in tandem with its anthropological objective, *IAAL* is structured coherently like a scientific work. There are neat divisions of the narrative which comprise sections on his visit to and stay at the village of Lataifa, next his visit and stay at the village of Nashawy and lastly to Mangalore. The visits are part of his research methodology by which he manages to trace the 12th century Master-slave relation. Though this book is primarily anthropological, it uses creative techniques that make it a literary travel book.

Ghosh has asserted that he sees primarily no separation between his fiction and non- fiction where he says that "the techniques one brings to bear upon non-fiction, essentially come from my fiction [...] In the end it's about people's lives; it's about people's history ; it's about people's destinies . When I write non- fiction, I am really writing about characters and people, and when I am writing fiction, I am doing the same thing. So that shift is'nt as great as it

might appear to be (See Interview, *WLT,* 86). This fact –fiction interface is seen reflected in *IAAL.* He describes the people of the two villages as though they are characters from a novel. A point in case is his description of Sheikh Musa the upright fellaheen and his antithetical Abu Ali the petulant, greedy and obese landlord.

Ghosh also uses dramatic devices such as conversation and dialogue with great efficacy to bring out the emotional and dramatic effect of the situation. He does this when a water pump is brought to the village of Lataifa for the first time. Through dialogue exchanges with Mabrouk's father the owner of the pump, the excitement over the water pump among the villagers is brought out (70-74).

Notably like Seth, Ghosh too creatively builds the setting for the reader. When, for instance, he returns to Egypt after a gap of eight years, he describes his arrival thus:

> It was cold and wintry the day I left Cairo, with rain hanging down in thin sheets from a cloud-corded sky. By the time I reached Damanhour night had fallen and the streets were clogged with shoals of churned mud. I had wanted to get there in the afternoon, on one of the old Hungarian trains, where the seats had cushioned foot rests and the attendants served elaborate meals on the tray. I had imagined myself watching the familiar sights roll past my window while I ate my lunch, just as I used to all those years ago, when the railway's fried chicken had tasted richly of metropolitan excitement after weeks of village fare (109).

The combination of nostalgia and setting makes this primarily informative contemporary travel book interesting and readable, thereby enhancing its

literary quality.

5.5.4. The fantastic and imaginative:

With Pico Iyer, however, the travel book enters the realm of imagination and fantasy. In his book, the *travelling self* becomes multifaceted. The *travelling self* is at times self conscious, intimate, impersonal, erudite and introspective. The travel essays in *SAD* are divided into three major sections dealing with the themes indicated by the titles. His sensitive perception of the *locale* is reflected in one encounter where he is told that Duch, who was part of the regime which oversaw the execution of sixteen thousand countrymen, is acknowledged as a 'best worker" by a refugee official. His authorial observation here is piquantly noteworthy:

> Such black ironies are much too common, everywhere you turn in this bleeding, often broken country where every moral certainty was exiled long ago, and a visitor finds himself in a labyrinth of sorts, every path leading to a cul-de –sac. (58)

Besides, such authorial sensitivity, this book also includes elements of fantasy and imagination. The journey is described by Iyer in a surreal mode with the description of the plane rising high above the skies providing an aerial view of the place. (113). As is his dreamlike walk with a woman in Bali presented as an extension of the darkness that pervades the place (117). The *dreamlike* haunting quality that Iyer assigns to the place is a far cry from Deshpande's perception of Bali as an innocent virgin Jewel of Asia. Iyer describe his departure from Bali thus:

> It was time to leave the enchanted island, I decided. But before I did, I wanted something to remind me that I had been here, and all of this had really happened: proof, of a kind. The streets of Bali teem with masks, which hang from the fronts of stores, staring eyed with tongues protruding, as talismans of the islands night time ceremonies (*SAD*, 118-119).

P.L.Deshpande's warning regarding the despoiling of the beauty of Bali through comodification has come true in this contemporary travel book. Thus the journey to Asia portrayed in the Indian travel book seems to have come full circle here with the Indian travel book effectively articulating and unravelling the exploitation of the *locale*.

5.5.5. Travel Genre Theorized:

More significantly, in *SAD,* there is the discussion of the nature of travel, the *travelling self* and the *locale*. It is perhaps for the first time that travel is being theorized in a travel book: the travelling consciousness, the reasons for travelling, the physical (known) and the unknown aspects of the journey, the unique nature of air travel, the nature and the motive of writing a travel book are spelt out clearly in the introduction to the book titled aptly, 'The Place Across the Mountains'. A passage will illustrate this better:

> The beauty of any flight, after all, is that, as soon as we leave the ground, we leave a sense of who we are behind. The four walls that marked and enclosed our lives this morning grow smaller and still smaller, less and less distinct, till finally they disappear altogether in the grid of houses all around. We rise and rise through the clouds, into a blue stillness, and the very 'we' and 'I' that seemed so urgent when we awoke become as remote, as hard to take seriously, as that house far, far below, now invisible. (10)

This discussion of the effect of the *journey* on the *travelling self* with the locale as a pervading presence shows the complex ways in which the three constituent features of the travel book fuse to create a literary masterpiece.

Through these technically innovative contemporary travel books then, it can be said that the travel book in India has truly come of age and achieved literary merit. In addition, these contemporary Indian travel books could be called as part of a world *literature* in the sense used by Beecroft as "unhyphenated, as a coherent field of study; taking as its object not a *world – literary* system ..., but rather, and simply ,the literature –the verbal artistic production –of the world"(Emphasis added,54).

Moving confidently towards experimentation in form and breaking literary barriers they are as Kiteley observes in the context of Gosh's I*AAL*, not "simply attacking the boundaries, or trying to destroy the power structures inherent in genre boundaries. *They are* seeking a more honest and accurate way of telling and [...] create their own structure out of the material they are made of", (Emphasis added, Online source). The contemporary Indian travel genre has thus become a formidable literary experiment, in creating its own structure, in form and content. In a way, the travel genre now justifies its description as a liminal genre in more than one sense of the term- *literally,* by exploring various sites across borders; and *literarily* by venturing across the boundaries entering the realms of various literary forms and exploring a wide array of experience and their expression.

5.6. Achieving Cosmopolitanism:

It was argued in Chapter four, that the 1960s Indian travel book was culturally assertive and that it explicitly eschewed a bonding of the east and the west where hybridity of cultures was rejected. However a change in this outlook of anti hybridity is seen in the contemporary Indian travel book. Instead of seeing the hybrid as uncomfortable and confused with its hybridity, the contemporary travel book takes a positive view where the hybrid is seen as one who is comfortable with one's hybrid state. Khair notes the birth of such a kind of a cosmopolitan "solid state hybrid" who was a 'humane being' in post 1970s fiction ("A Cosmopolitan", 86).

Such a positive view of the relationship between the east and the west, where blending is seen as beneficial is noted by Gupta in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* in which he sees a 'possibility of fruitful intercultural communication' (*WLT*, 305). The thematic shift from cultural singularity which rejects hybridity to a cosmopolitan plurality which approves hybridity has led to a characteristic visionary shift in the contemporary travel book too.

In addition, in Chapter Four it was argued that in the 1960s travel book, wholesome cosmopolitan integration had not taken place. Thus while the 1960s travel book projected universality at a personal level, at the cultural level a spasm of exclusionism existed. However in contemporary travel writing this cultural disconnectedness is finally bridged. The contemporary travel writers sincerely wish as their travel texts prove, for a world without barriers. Vikram

Seth most distinctly expresses this fulfilment of true cosmopolitanism in a human to human connect that may eventually overcome narrow restrictive nationalism:

> But on a personal level to learn about another great culture is to enrich one's life, to understand one's own country better, to feel more at home in the world, and indirectly to add to that reservoir of Individual goodwill that may, generations from now, temper the cynical use of national power (178).

This cosmopolitanism to feel at 'home in the world' is present in contemporary native travel writers too. Datta Naik's *KTK*, is humanistic and cosmopolitan. In his visits to the various, particularly European countries, such an inclusionist cross cultural approach is seen. Though the contemporary writer realizes the presence of barriers of race and nationality, there is no criticism of aping the west as was seen in 1960s travel book. There is a distinct belief that India should 'learn' from European countries. When, for instance Datta Naik visits a well- kept cemetery in Germany, he comments on how Hindus in Goa have disregarded this aspect human life of maintaining a crematorium (40).

It can thus be argued that contemporary Indian travel writing both native as well as diasporic is cosmopolitan in its approach. However, there is a hiatus between the ideal cosmopolitan worlds these writes wish for and the actual barrier- ridden world they encounter. Although, they portray a world beyond colonialism, in the course of their travels they realize that the world is not yet barrier- free. It is this theme that comes time and again in the contemporary travel book.

More importantly, they go beyond the narrow confines of nationality as

well as coloniality, to project a cosmopolitan vision. Concerned about their Indianess, these writers also propagate a human connect. The contemporary Indian travel writers speak of humanism as the redeeming quality of mankind, which will quell the political, economical, and cultural barriers that have segregated and deterred mankind from bonding with each other.

Ultimately, in each travel book, be it Seth's on a visit to China and Tibet or Ghosh's to Egypt or Prabhu's to South America or Iyer's to what he calls the 'wounded countries' or Naik's to the countries across the world, there is an intellectual journey inlaid with human sensitivity taking place. This journey is from a culturally bound mindset to a religion based on compassion and love for mankind. In this, the contemporary Indian *travelling self* has managed to give a very good account of him/her self. He/she is a true cosmopolite who propagates love for all mankind sans cultural prejudices. The contemporary Indian travel book has indeed found the bond of unity and thus is a standing testament to this extraordinary effort.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

6.1. Introduction:

The study arose out of a curiosity for travel writing. When exploring the wide array of Indian travel writing, it was found to be an area of vast potential for research. It was, therefore, felt that the voice of the Indian traveller not just as a writer but as a voyager across multiple milieus and contexts deserved to be mapped and assessed. Hence this study veered into the additional dimension of investigating whether there is an independent genre of Indian travel writing. On a closer scrutiny however, it was seen that travel writing has had a formidable presence on the Indian literary firmament, but in the margins, of other mainstream literary genres of Indian writing.

For convenience, the skeletal basis of this work has been a chronologically oriented study of primary texts. The main objective of the study had been to analyse the travel genre in the Indian context and in turn examine various related avenues for research. This study was organized with an open minded approach to the development of travel writing in India so as to uncover the notion as well as the nature of travel writing.

It was observed that at critical junctures of India's evolution as a nation, travel writing also manifested change. As such a chapter outline to suit the examination and analyses of this process was adopted. Texts belonging to a particular phase of India's evolution as an independent nation were studied. This was done with a view to understanding whether the thematic focus alters and whether techniques evolve in relation to the transitional phases in the socio-political and intellectual shifts that occur in the cultural milieu of a nation in a flux. Thus each chapter discusses the structural, perspectival as well as thematic and technical shifts that have occurred in Indian travel writing, thereby helping shape the genre from mainly the late nineteenth century to 2004.

Though the genre of travel writing has being critically explored in western critical works, it still remained vague and ambiguous in its generic visage. The generic identity of travel writing needed to be formulated before embarking on a study of 'Indian' travel writing from the late nineteenth century onwards. Hence the present thesis had undertaken a generic exploration of travel writing.

6.2. The overview of Chapter Two:

Chapter Two, 'Travel Writing; Generic Introduction', of the present thesis has identified the constituents of the Genre. It has been argued in this chapter that the travel genre's emphasis on creative modes of narration, its engagement with lived experience tinged at times with fiction and its universal appeal makes it a truly literary genre.

6.2.1. Findings of Chapter Two:

In consonance with what has been analysed in Chapter Two that studied the generic identity the following has been found:

1) That the travel book is literary where creativity has an important role to play. This creativity also depends upon the interpretation of the locale by the travelling self.

2) That travel writing has constituents that help make it a distinct literary genre. These three fundamental features are the travelling self, the locale and the journey.

3) That this travelling self is different from an autobiographical self in an autobiography.

4) That there is an interaction between the travelling self and the locale leading to a dramatic tension in the travel book.

5) That this interaction leads to a comparison of 'Home' to 'abroad'. There is binary opposition between 'home' and 'abroad' in a travel book, and it becomes one of the important planks sustaining the conflict of the travelling self vis-à-vis the locale.

6) That the language of the locale has an important implication on the transformation of the travelling self

7) That the journey by affecting the travelling self as well as on the way the locale is perceived has a significant bearing on how the

travel book is structured.

8) That the travel genre is a confluence of the three constituent features and that these identifiable features determine its individual generic identity even within the complexity of multi-generic appearances.

9) And finally that it is a genre that is in perpetual transition.

Chapter Three to Five have extensively analysed Indian Travel Writing and formulated the thematic transition and technical shifts that have taken place in Indian travel writing with the help of suitable travel books belonging to the period under consideration.

6.3. The overview of Chapter Three:

The emergence of travel as a genre in India and as an independent literary form was the consequence of the urge felt by a few enlightened Indians of late nineteenth century to rejuvenate India.

Chapter Three titled, **'The Emergent Voice of Indian Travel Writing'**, has traced this very emergence of the travel genre in India. This chapter is divided into three clusters. The introductory section shows how travel writing emerged as an independent genre in the late nineteenth century. Secondly it sees two parallel flows of travel writing termed as the 'elite' and the 'common man's' voice. This elite voice is that of visionary intellectuals, such as Ramabai and Vivekananda, who inspired by their visits abroad sought to reformulate the ideas of selfhood, society and the nation.

Moreover they used the travel genre as a potent medium to respond to their national objective. Chapter Three has traced the historical trajectory of the genre and examines how it emerged as a medium for the diverse objectives of elite authors to express their distinct vision for the emergent nation.

This chapter reveals that initially, in the mid nineteenth century, there was considerable admiration for the west in the travel book. However, by the latter half of the century this admiration evolved into a perceptive critique of the west. It also discusses the 'travelling self' as being essentially Indian and not alienated from native ethos or modern in the sense of being westernised.

As such it is argued that although the orientation in the two travel books- Ramabai's *USLP/RAG* (1889) and Vivekananda's *PV/MET* (1901) is westward, their nationalistic inclinations are strongly visible, albeit, through different approaches. Ramabai is keen on the emancipation of India, open to an acknowledgement of India's limitations and in an endeavour to change it for the better, she seeks inspiration from abroad. This approach has been termed as the *reformist* approach as revealed in her travel book.

Interestingly, while Vivekananda's nationalist thinking combines his unconcealed idealism, deep commitment to his land and a vigilant pride in India, he too is not blind to the blemishes that mar and constrain the spirit of India. As a result, he adopts a *Rejuvenist* approach to the society and nation in his travel book.

It is notable that the aesthetic quality and ideological position of these two mainstream nationalist voices, which have been clubbed for convenience

and without bias under the rubric of an *elite voice*, is varied. However the common feature that operates in their writing is their intellectual engagement with the 'locale' they visit and the issues they encounter. Interestingly, this emergent elite voice which is also termed as a nationalist voice, spoke the language of rationality and social commitment before aspiring for moral or idealistic growth for India. As such it can be deduced that the earliest voice of Indian travel was the one that spoke the language of the intellect. Its concern was mainly with here and now, and it aspired towards a progressive India rooted in tradition but sans superstition, obsession with the indigenous and excessive self contentment.

Since the elite voice was a west oriented voice, travel seemed to these writers as a spontaneous and necessary venture beyond and outside India. Theirs is not a journey undertaken for personal objectives or dreams. It is more in tune with the ancient tradition of travel as a sacred duty. From the account of their travel, it becomes clear that travel for them was a means of fulfillment of an elevated goal. This explains why probably neither of them has deviated from their august objective to dwell on the notion and nature of travel per se.

However, Chapter Three has also traced the other strand of travel writing that emerged along with this *elite* voice, as emerging from the general public. This voice has been termed the common man's voice dwelling on the concern of the ordinary individual in transit. In this kind of travel writing, more mundane matters such as the difficulties encountered en-route; interesting episodes encountered during the travel are narrated with a literary simplicity

and vigour of spirit. Dean Mahomed's *Travels* (1794) and Godse's *MP* (1907) were seen as representative of this voice.

Their ideologically lack lustre travel renditions, represent the narration of the *travel for travel sake* strand, that emerged simultaneously with the writing focused on travel for nations sake strand in Indian travel writing.

The third cluster of this chapter, discusses the thematic transition to self that took place in the 1920s Indian travel writing. During this period Indian travel writing was coming out of the shadows of the British oriented travel book to establish its distinctly indigenous visage. The primary requisite for this independent assertion of nationhood was to establish and examine *selfhood* that constituted its vital part. The most significant characteristic of the travel book of this age (1920s to 1930s) is the thematic transition in the travel book from the 'nation' to the '*self*'. Chapter Three dwells on this aspect of the study, comparing two of Tagore's travel books titled *Yorop Prabasir Patra* (1881) translated as *Letters from a Sojourner in Europe* (2008) and the other *PYD/DWV* written in 1925. Through this comparison it has been proven how the theme of the nation in *Yorop Prabasir Patra* became a self exploration in *PYD/DWV* written in the 1920s.

Thus, based on extensive analysis presented in Chapter Three, which were supported by available critical perspectives on nineteenth century Indian travel writing, the following findings have been reached:

6.3.1. Findings of Chapter Three:

1. That travel writing emerged as an independent genre in the nineteenth century as a consequence of social, political and linguistic changes that took place in the century.

2. The emergent travelling self was not modern in the sense of being westernised and hence alienated from one's tradition rather this self was closely linked to its traditional Indian ethos.

3. The nation motif of the emergent travel genre, which was admiring of the west in the mid- ninetieth century became an effective critique of the west by the late nineteenth century.

4. That the emergent travel genre in India comprised the 'elite' and the 'common man's' voice.

5. Further, it was found that the nation became the motif of the travel book where the west was a reference point, particularly in the case of the elite travel voice.

6. There were distinct approaches used by the elite writers to formulate their vision for the nation. Two such approaches have been identified as the Reformist approach used by Pandita Ramabai in *USLP/RAG* and the Rejuvenist one used by Vivekanada in *PV/MET.*

7. Dean Mahomed though belonging to the late eighteenth century was found to be the precursor of the native consciousness that would be

reformulated as a nation motif in the late nineteenth century elite travel book.

8. That by the 1920s the nation motif came to be supplanted by the motif of the 'self' and that this self was a 'romantic' one.

9. Though the self was a 'romantic self', this self was not escapist but rooted in reality by dealing with the nature of human existence, and lastly,

10. That through the common man's voice literariness emerged.

6.4. The overview of Chapter Four

Chapter Four, **'The Generic Blossoming of Indian Travel Writing'**, discusses how the travel genre was further nurtured by the rich output of Rahul Sankrityayan's travel works that appeared from 1920s to 1960s. He has been seen as a veritable watershed between the colonial renaissant India and post colonial India. With his universal liberal humanism, he brought an inclusive approach to travel writing that sought to rid Indian travel, and thereby, the travel genre from the bondage of religion, gender, race and region.

This chapter has also built upon the discourse of self analyses and the nation motif that was seen in the travel book of the emergent period. Though Kalelkar's *Jeevanleela* (1958) expresses the patriotic spirit of the age with a firm and explicit assertion that travel should be undertaken for the benefit of the nation, it also highlights the self by exploring issues concerning human existence. Ravindra Kelekar's *Himalayant* (1976) is seen as a link text that has

the theme of idealist perception of the nation a characteristic of the 1920s travel book, as well as the real questions confronting an individual in an independent nation, questions especially pertaining to one's identity, a characteristic of the 1960s travel book. This point of nation–self thematic focus has also been taken into consideration in Chapter Four.

Further the discussion of *self* in the 1960s travel book is gradually transmuted into an avid identity consciousness. Having won freedom recently, from the British rule, the Indian mind was seen as setting on an exploration of its own cultural identity. Being exposed to a foreign culture through travels abroad a comparison leading to a critique of culture emerged in the travel book.

Superficially this exploration may look similar to that of the elite travel writers of the late 19th and early 20th century. However there was a marked difference between the two. In the emergent elite voice, there was no *defence* of one's culture, as against that in the 1960s travel book. Thus there was the attempt to retrace one's lost cultural identity and reinstate it to its deserved status.

Chapter Four thus explains how there came an identity consciousness in the 1960s post independence travel book by providing examples from two primary texts, P.L. Deshpande's *Purvarang* (1963) and R.K Narayan 's *MDD* (1964). It comments on the common use of humour in these books that was used deftly to raise queries and make pertinent observations about cultures and societies that these travel writers visited.

While exploring their own cultural identity by comparing the native culture and the visited 'foreign' culture, these travel writers reject any blending of eastern and western ethos. In chapter Four, the Asian culture is presented as unified as having similarities as 'one'; whereas the western culture is presented as distinct from the Indian. Although appreciative of the notable aspects of the western culture both the travel books *Purvrang* and *MDD* project the western culture as alien to the native Indian ethos. Through personal anecdotes that depict hybrid characters that 'ape' the west, as confused and lost, an exclusive identity sans any blending is projected. In Both Deshpande's and Narayan's travel books there is no criticism of the western culture per se. What they are against is the soulless mimicking of culture. In doing so, they underscore the need for a self -respecting identity, aware of its distinctiveness from the 'other' and respectful of this 'other' as well.

In addition to the above, in the 1960s travel book too there is critical discourse pertaining to the travel genre as a means of exploring one's cultural identity. However, unlike in case of the earlier *elite* travel book, now there was a critical discussion of the travel genre also included. This writerly preoccupation is clearly visible in the 'Prefaces' and 'Afterwords' that constitute a part of their travel books. Keeping this in mind a generic blossoming has been taken into account in Chapter Four with the help of the above travel books by Deshpande and Narayan.

Chapter four thus has the following findings to be reported:

6.4.1. The findings of Chapter Four:

1. A generic blossoming is seen in the 1960s travel book.

2. The use of nation motif and romanticist self that was initiated in the 1920s travel book of Tagore continues till the 1940s.

3. There is a shift in the thematic motif from the romantic self to the 'real' question of one's identity which manifests as an identity consciousness after India's independence.

4. This identity consciousness takes place with reference to the west.

5. Assertion of an exclusive identity is through distancing of the west as different. Hybridity in the sense of blending of the eastern and western cultural ethos was rejected.

6. Though the 1960s travel book becomes more inclusive and assimilative of the 'other', cosmopolitan integration is yet to be achieved.

6.5. Overview of Chapter Five:

Chapter Five, **The Contemporary Voice of Indian Travel Writing'** notes how with globalization in the post 1990s, the post colonial identity conscious self of the 1960s is replaced by the 'cosmopolitan' travelling self. Chapter Five unfolds the emergence of the cosmopolitan self as an outcome of the socio political changes in India and shows that the world that this self inhabits is still barrier ridden. As such, post colonial themes like stereotyping

of groups, new economic inequalities created by globalization are all explored in the contemporary travel book.

It also traces two groups of travel writers the native and the diasporic writers. The diasporic writing was defined as a body of writing which comes from a globally dispersed community that has a common ancestral homeland (India) and which has the three relevant components of the *travelling self, the locale* and the *journey* as its important constituents.(See chapter Five,136-137). The affiliation to home in the native and the diasporic travelling self was also discussed. It was deduced that in all five diasporic travelling selves, an affiliation to home was present.

Generically, the travel form was seen as matching the fast paced electronic world of information explosion. There is starkly distinct experimentation in formative styles and a complex web of information and analyses taking place via the travel book. The primary texts belonging to this contemporary age (from 1980s to 2004) from Seth's *FHL,* Ghosh's *IAAL,* Naik's *KTK*, Prabhu's *Dakshinrang* and Iyer's *SAD* use various literary styles, narrative techniques and modes of narration.

The fact-fiction demarcation that was a primary characteristic of the emergent travel genre now seems no longer relevant with writers like Ghosh mingling fact with fiction liberally. The form thus gets elevated to literary elegance in Iyer's *SAD.* Travel writing, thus matures into a distinct literary form, read also for sheer aesthetic pleasure.

Based on the arguments presented in Chapter Five the following findings

have been arrived at.

6.5.1. The Findings of chapter five:

1. A few characteristics of the 1960s travel books especially in Marathi are continued with regard to a few thematic and certain technical features. Possible influence of Deshpande on Prabhu cannot be overlooked.

2. In the contemporary travel book, two distinct voices of the Diaspora (residing abroad) and the native (residing in India) writers are identified .

3. A comparison of *native* and *diasporic* travel books reveals that the theme of affiliation to home is equally strong in both the works. However, the *diasporic travelling self* is more cosmopolitan when compared to the native travelling self.

4. There is the emergence of a 'cosmopolitan' self, yet the self continues to voice the post colonial concerns connected to one's nation. In fact, this 'travelling self' helps deconstruct the image of the alien other created by the colonial mega discourse.

5. A definite degree of generic maturation with regard to structure, technique, style and vision is clearly visible in the contemporary travel book.

6.6. Revisiting the hypothesis:

The findings reported earlier have supported the hypotheses that were spelt out in Chapter One. To see whether the hypothesis has been reinforced it is necessary to revisit them:

1. That with the emergence of modernity there has been a palpable thematic transition taking place in the Indian travel genre during the colonial era and it has continued to date with identifiable manifestations.

2. That this thematic transition was a fallout of the socio-political and cultural changes then occurring in India. As such there would be common thematic features reflecting the *zeitgeist* of the age.

3. That there was simultaneously a generic evolution taking place in the Indian travel writing during the period under discussion.

4. That there could be distinct approaches to travel and travel writing in the native and diasporic travel accounts, especially with regard to the traveller's affiliation to the notion of 'home'.

6.7. The conclusions:

Based on the findings presented in this Chapter, the above four suppositions have been reinforced. Thus the following conclusions have been arrived at:

1. There is indeed a thematic transition in Indian travel writing in the period undertaken for study. Through close scrutiny of travel books,

a thematic transition from the nation motif of 1890s, to that of a romantic self in the 1920s, to a distinct cultural identity consciousness in the 1960s, and finally to a palpable cosmopolitanism in the contemporary period, has been analysed and explicated.

2. Travel writings of specific periods have been found to display identifiably common features that represent the *zeitgeist* of the age. For instance in the Emergent voice the focus on nation was the common theme. Likewise in the post independence voice, the issue of identity and, in the contemporary age a sense and spirit of cosmopolitanism can be seen as the notable features of the Indian travel book.

3. It has been possible to identify and retrace the generic evolution in Indian travel writing from the late nineteenth century to the contemporary period. Generic evolution has been carefully analysed through Godse Bhatji's text in 1901 to Kakasaheb Kalelkar's in 1920s, P.L. Deshpande's and R.K.Narayan's in 1960s and finally in contemporary travel books post 1980s.

4. There is per se no marked difference starkly visible in the native and diasporic travel writing. Interestingly, 'affiliation to home' is equally strong in both varieties of travel writing. However diasporic travel writers are apparently dispassionately more cosmopolitan in

their world view than the native travel writers.

6.7. The Relevance of the study:

In fine, this chronologically oriented study has tried to show how Indian travel writing has indeed travelled a long way, literally and metaphorically: literally, by exploring a wide array of locales; and metaphorically, by taking the travelling self a step further - bridging the gap between the 'self' and the 'other'.

The Indian travel book thus speaks in unison for 'India' about its struggles and triumphs, strengths and flaws. Significantly, it also speaks of abroad and more importantly *for* it. It is tuned to its concerns, predilections and to the desires of its people and the cosmos that they constitute. It is this collective perspective which has been sought to be gleaned into this work. It is expected that the study, *Voices in Transit,* would be a useful critical contribution to Indian Travel Writing and the travel genre. It is also expected, that it would be a useful social analysis of the native self that has matured into a cosmopolitan self, at home in the contemporary global reality of his existence.

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