Introduction

The fall of the European empires in the twentieth century has not only witnessed a dramatic rise of the national literatures in the former colonies; it has also been a witness to the emergence of the new varieties of 'Englishes' or as Ashcroft-Griffiths-Tiffin call it, 'english'. This appearance of the local variants of the once imperial language also coincided with the literary debut of the writers from the former colonies fashioning their texts primarily out of their colonial/post-colonial experiences and observations like Achebe, Soyinka, Patrick White, Naipaul, Derek Walcott, George Lamming, Wilson Harris and a later Rushdie or Amitav Ghosh.

Travel writing, on the other hand, notwithstanding its popularity, has generally been regarded as a genre outside the mainstream of the serious literature in the last few centuries. But the recent expansion of interest in the genre not only coincides with the development of post-colonial studies, it also indicates a successful fusion of popular appeal and critical interest in its perusal. Consequently, we have the critics like James Clifford, Graham Huggan, Caren Kaplan or Richard Kerridge investigating the genre's various infamous aspects, such as the travel/writing's disavowal of social responsibility, its exhibition of a certain moral arrogance and sense of superiority, and its inclination to highlight the journeys of the elite travelers and exiles by marginalizing the underprivileged and faceless travelers. Moreover, the critics like Edward Said, Mary Louise Pratt, or Paul Smethurst have also pointed out the complicity of the genre with Western imperialism since the beginning of the global domination of the West to the post-colonial era. Besides, as the travel writing also includes in its mode the intricate concepts like the border, the observer, and the observed or the 'strange other', as well as an amalgamation of different genres, post-colonial studies have also become acutely conscious of its relation to both the actual travel narratives and to travel writings incorporated in other genres, like novel for example.

The novel, on the other hand, appears to be no less involved with an imperialistic world view when judged by a post-colonial critic like Said who feels that "the novel, as a cultural artefact of bourgeois society, and imperialism are unthinkable without each other." Said thus finds that the British novel not only "shaped the idea of England in such a way as to give it identity, presence, reusable articulation" but also

contributed towards England's relationship with its 'other'—the colonies (*Culture* 84-85). Thus, the esteemed treasure of the English novel—that V. S. Naipaul claims to have generated and nurtured his dream of becoming an English writer—under the post-colonial scrutiny appears to be as guilty of collusion with the British imperialism as the genre of travel writing is. Therefore, an analysis of the travel writing in the novels of Naipaul and Ghosh, both writers famous for their fiction and non-fiction like travelogues alike, offers an interesting scope to view not only the nature of travel writing in their novels but also the final outcome of the combination of these two 'imperialist' genres in the works of these two post-colonial writers.

The study thus not only attempts to probe the nature and extent of difference in novels by Naipaul and Ghosh on the issues of migration and exile, imperialism, decolonization and death of empire, it attempts to do so through the observations of the traveling protagonists/characters in these novelists. Thus, in a most significant way, this study also tries to ascertain the scope and relevance of the post-colonial travel writing and whether it has finally been successful in shrugging off the imperial globe of its shoulders. While each of the novels by Naipaul and Ghosh to be examined in this study offers a protagonist who qualifies as a genuine traveler, the various concerns that govern these novels are always found to be shaped by and exhibited by the experiences gathered by these characters as travelers. Thus, with all these traveling protagonists and other travelers/migrants in these novels, the essential queries that travel writing in the post-colonial scene has given rise to regarding its socio-political or cultural implications are addressed to a significant extent in this study. Besides, this study also hopes to indicate the scope and extent of travel writing in the post-colonial literary field as a genre that in defiance of every kind of circumscription has successfully established its adaptability and hybridity by seamlessly merging with other literary forms like novel.

However, even though Naipaul and Ghosh have been uniformly described as post-colonial writers in this dissertation, what we should also note here is that both these writers strongly oppose such a categorization. While Naipaul in his Nobel Lecture claimed, "I have no guiding political idea" (Naipaul "Nobel Lecture" 14); Ghosh says during an interview, "I don't see myself as political . . . I don't think it's particularly interesting to write about politics." Besides, Ghosh also refuses to be regarded as a post-colonial writer: "It completely misrepresents the focus of the work that I do. . . . What is postcolonial?" (Ghosh "Interview" 215). Thus it also needs to be examined

whether the analysis of the novels to be studied in here validates these writers' claim of being apolitical in their works or rather situates them in the post-colonial context.

Besides both these novelists' being regarded as post-colonial writers (a categorization they equally resist), and being of Indian origin though settled in West; these writers are also famous for their disregard for the generic boundaries in literature. Thus their travel writings and journalistic essays are often found to inform their novels to produce texts that are at times hard to define by the parameters of any particular literary genre. Regarding the relevance of Naipaul's non-fiction, especially his travel literature, that has shaped his fiction to such a great extent, Rob Nixon finds that it has established him "as a mandarin possessing a penetrating, analytical understanding of Third World societies" (5). Moreover, as Nixon notes, Naipaul's travel books have also brilliantly succeeded in "fashioning and sustaining an autobiographical persona who is accepted at face value as a permanent exile, a refugee, a homeless citizen of the world, and an extranational writer" (17). With Ghosh's travel writings being equally known to have penetrated his fiction, what the traveling characters in the fictions of both these writers therefore raise are "questions of representativeness: what image or incident from among random encounters" do they "elect to define the society visited, and how is that choice arrived at?" (Nixon 77).

Another concern that both these writers share is their awareness of alternative histories that have been suppressed or erased by the dominant social, political, economic, or religious forces and world view from time to time. While awarding the Nobel Prize to Naipaul, the Swedish Academy praised the writer "for having united perceptive narrative and incorruptible scrutiny in works that compel us to see the presence of suppressed histories" ("The Nobel Prize"). Ghosh also appears to be as persistent in his search for these lost accounts – as like Naipaul he too situates his characters in the context of these untold chronicles to build his narrative—while his quest for these lost histories also become a part of the creative process of his writing. Therefore, Ghosh remarks during an interview: "When an American writes a historical novel he or she can generally rely on the historians to have done the research. I didn't have this luxury available to me. I had to do much of the primary research while also telling a story" (Ghosh Interview 12). So it also remains to be seen whether the common concern for the lost histories in these writers also leads to a similar mode of research and employment of these accounts in their fictions. Thus,

this study also examines whether these novelists are equally successful at the reclamation of the suppressed histories and the restitution of the voice of the subaltern who had been pushed into the depth of oblivion along with her/his defeated histories by the conquering forces.

The eight novels —*A Bend in the River*, *The Enigma of Arrival*, *Half a Life* and *Magic Seeds* by Naipaul and *The Circle of Reason*, *In an Antique Land*, *The Glass Palace* and *The Hungry Tide* by Ghosh —to be studied in this dissertation are selected more because of their relevance to the central argument than their being representative works of these writers. However, the themes that shape these novels of Naipaul are also common in Ghosh that include, to name a few, the effect of imperialism upon the colonies and its people; decolonization and its impact on the colonizer and the colonized; the ambivalent relationship of these former colonies to modernity; the formation and reformation of identities in colonial and post-colonial societies; migration and exile in the pre-/post-/colonial days; and the manifestation of a dying empire that at times finds its continuation in the various neo-colonial practices and so on.

Nevertheless, the similarity between Naipaul and Ghosh appears to be limited only to this extent as their views on these issues not only appear different at times, they also appear contrasted. However, the fact that it is the colonial —mostly under British control— and post-colonial African and Asian countries that both these writers choose as the setting of the travel writing in their fiction, reminds one of Said's words in *Orientalism* on the extent of destruction caused by European imperialism: "Every continent was affected, none more so than Africa and Asia. The two greatest empires were the British and the French" (41). The attempted study thus gains yet another significance in its bringing together two writers each of whom has portrayed the countries most affected by imperialism and the most powerful of these imperialistic masters in these novels.

However, what remains to be seen is how these writers portray the effect of colonialism in these countries that are believed to be ravaged most by the empires. The task undoubtedly remains delicate as one has to negotiate between two equally precarious exercises as a post-colonial writer. One can thus reduce every aspect of the colonial/post-colonial societies to colonialism and imperialism thereby perpetuating the Manichean division of East and West that eventually privileges the colonizer. Or one can attempt a supposedly unbiased socio-political analysis of the historical event

of imperialism that may yet lead the readers and critics to find the echoes of a complicit colonial in that analysis. Another question that such a study thus also raises is "about the category of the post-colonial itself and whether one can ever completely remove the strains of complicity with the Empire/Centre that come with the profession of post-colonial writer" (Singh 57). Thus when the migrant/exile in Naipaul and Ghosh repeatedly reminds us to carry one's own world within oneself in this rapidly changing, hybrid universe; what is left for us to examine is to what extent this private world is a construct of the old imperial one.

As the study primarily examines the observations of the traveling protagonists in Naipaul and Ghosh on the colonial/post-colonial societies they travel to; the first section of chapter 1 of this dissertation presents a brief historical account of the genre of travel writing from around the sixteenth century to the beginning of the twenty-first century. While the second section situates the genre within the frame of post-colonialism to consider the way the genre of travel writing is received in the contemporary literary and critical fronts, the third section gives an introduction to Naipaul and Ghosh and their novels to be studied in this dissertation.

Chapter 2, following the last section of the first chapter, attempts a discussion of the travel writings of Naipaul and Ghosh in the context of various critical observations on their works, especially from post-colonial viewpoint. Chapter 3 focuses on the analysis of the concept of imperialism in Naipaul and Ghosh and the differences between them in this regard. Naipaul, for example, is found to portray the colonial masters with a note of admiration that suggests that owing to the technological and intellectual superiority of the Europeans, their rule was more edifying than detrimental to the colonized nations. Ghosh however chooses to demonstrate the ways in which imperialism successfully destroyed the traditional cultures and skills to plunder the colonies while hiding its monstrosity behind the mask of the assumed greatness of the European civilization.

However, as chapter 4 suggests, it is on the issue of the process of decolonization and its effect on the long-colonized societies that Naipaul and Ghosh seem to differ most. While the chaotic post-colonial society leaves Naipaul in a cynical and pessimistic mood; Ghosh on the other hand accepts the process of decolonization as historically inevitable because of the eventual awakening of the national consciousness among the colonized while admitting the violence and instability attached to the process. Similarly, while to Naipaul the appearance of the neo-colonial

forces in the decolonized society only establishes the basic inadequacy of the former colonies; to Ghosh it is a mere continuation of the imperial practices that the decolonized society resists just as much as it had resisted the former imperial masters.

The death of the empire and the decay of its relics, that form chapter 5, also display the difference between these writers. Thus while in Naipaul the decay and death of empire is usually tinged with an elegiac note fitting for the demise of a glorious era; Ghosh shares more space to portray the decay/destruction of the glory and achievement of those eras and lives that had undergone Western imperialism.

Chapter 6 explores these differences in these writers further as it shows how migration and exile that challenges the notions of 'home' and fixed positionality in the post-colonial world has resulted in presenting the diasporic subject as a representative protagonist rather than a marginalized exile in Ghosh's novels. Naipaul, on the other hand, though produces as rootless a protagonist in his novels as to be found in Ghosh, often leads the issue of migration and exile to a bitter disappointment in the migrating protagonist at being unable to find the idealized place he cherishes in his mind. Besides, while Ghosh expresses a sympathetic view on the issue of mass migration of the dispossessed people and economic migrants, Naipaul, however, presents mass exodus as definitely harmful for the recipient country.

Chapter 7 once again attempts a comparative study of these novelists in regard to their approaches to the genre of travel writing and the way they have hybridized the genre in their fiction. These chapters are followed by a concluding analysis of the comparative study of these two novelists in the previous chapters while this concluding review centers on the significant socio-political-cultural implications of the travel writings incorporated in the fictions by these two famous post-colonial writers. The conclusion might as well remind us of the apprehension and urgency in Said's observation that it would be as misleading to think that imperialism was only a socio-political event that excluded the cultural aspects of the societies of the colonizer and the colonized as to believe that any sole socio-political movement resulting in the event of decolonization can bring an end to the era of imperialism.

> the nineteenth-century contest over empire is still continuing today. Whether or not to look at the connections between cultural texts and imperialism is therefore to take a position *in fact taken* – either to study the connection in order to criticize it and think of the alternatives for it, or not to study it in order to let it stand, unexamined and, presumably, unchanged. (*Culture* 81)

Chapter I

Section I

The Genre of Travel Writing

Though the writers to be discussed in this dissertation have put their travel writings in the post-colonial context, travel writing itself has gone through a long historical evolution since its birth which could not be later than the birth of fiction itself. This long evolution not only added newer facets to the familiar form of travel writing, it has also changed and in some cases initiated a gradual refinement to the basic aspects of the genre. But what remains unchanged is that the genre is still "notoriously refractory to definition" (Holland and Huggan xi), playfully resisting the repeated attempts at its definitions by the critics of different places and times. However, from one of the earliest extant traveler's tale – composed in Egypt during the Twelfth Dynasty, almost a thousand years before the great *Odyssey* saw the light of the day— till the very recent one, travel writing has more or less retained the aspects of romance, indirection, dangers of travel, and the joy (or the danger or impossibility) of homecoming in its frame. Whether it is literal or symbolic, the motif of travel has always been popular with the biblical and classical traditions as to be seen in Exodus, the punishment of Cain, the Argonauts, the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid* etc. that still retain a body of reference and intertext for modern writers.

As in the case of the medieval travel writing like Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* (c.1387) in the domain of fictional literature or Henry Timberlake's *True and Strange Discourse of the Travels of Two English Pilgrims* (1603), it is primarily the theme of pilgrimage that dominates the field – a clear reflection of the religious sentiments and practices of the contemporary society. The popularity of these travel narratives, however, does not seem to enable the religious travels of the day to elude the touch of ambivalence that, on the other hand, cannot be found in the other concern related to religious travel at that time – crusades, described variously as "pilgrimage", "way", "journey", or "armed pilgrimage" etc. (Tyerman 9, 77). Even though the pilgrimage was the dominant mode of travel in the medieval world and even subsequently, in Christian dogma and culture it has always been linked with *curiositas* – curiosity about the world, related to the Original Sin and the Transgression and leading to the

fall of Man, and therefore a grave sin. Consequently, to accommodate the ambivalence towards the pilgrim's spiritual experience and his/her worldly curiosity, emerged the tales of allegorical and spiritual travels that could be undertaken by anyone and what could lead the pilgrim to everywhere. The tradition continued even in the later texts such as John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) or in Henry Vaughan's *Retreate* (1650) where the devout poet could unhesitatingly exclaim: "O how I long to travell back/ And tread again that ancient track!" (265)

However, the two medieval texts that gave another direction to travel writing from its traditional paradigm of pilgrimage and introduced the aspect of observed experience and curiosity towards other cultures and ways of life in the thirteenth century are Marco Polo's travel narrative (to China) and John Mandeville's *Travels*. These texts, in a way, helped the genre take its first step towards modernism—thematically and stylistically—even long before Christopher Columbus's first voyage to America revolutionized the field of travel writing.

Though Columbus initiated a new chapter in the history of mankind, and that too in more than one way, by his voyage to America in 1492, the English did not have a national hero like him until 1580, when Francis Drake returned from his three-year voyage around the world. Likewise it was not before 1589 when Richard Hakluyt published in English the first edition of his collection *Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffics, and Discoveries of the English Nation* to prove England's capability to have a travel narrative published exclusively by/on one of its explorers to its European rivals. As it happened, before this publication it was only the translations of foreign travelogues that dominated the English field, the earliest of these being Richard Eden's *The Decades of the New World* (1555), based on the voyages of Columbus and his successors. The popularity of Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* among the English reading public was reaffirmed once again when his legacy was forwarded to Samuel Purchas, another editor of travel narratives, who published his *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas his Pilgrimes* in 1625 in more than double the length of Hakluyt's final edition.

However, as the explorers gradually attained a certain heroic status in the national imagination of their countries with their newfound role as colonizers, the travel writing also started to foreground the 'superhuman' observer along with the 'subnormal' observed—a Triton among the minnows. Sir Francis Drake and Sir Walter Ralegh, who both gained their stardom and knighthood by their voyages, are

examples of this trend. Ralegh's *Discovery of the Large, Rich, and Beautiful Empire of Guiana* (1595), in both its pioneering attention to geographic and ethnographic detail and autobiographical strategies, successfully created a travel book that looked forward to the nineteenth century imperialistic travel narrative by the English scientist/explorer.

Though Ralegh's travel narrative, like most other contemporary travelogues, is full of colonial undertones, another as much popular book of the Renaissance England, the scientist Thomas Harriot's *A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (1588) seems to display this imperial mindset to a lesser degree as he attempts to present the Virginian natives in their own terms. Some other travel writers tried to follow Harriot on this ground, for example the explorer/scientist William Dampier, who tried to deliver a balance between a lively narrative and a scientific description of the lands he visited. The popularity of his *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697)—presenting unprecedented accounts of hydrography and meteorology—and *A Voyage to New Holland* (1703-9) is a sure proof of the success of this fusion.

Alongside the explorers, colonizers, and scientists, another kind of travel writers of the Elizabethan England also claimed to be the most authentic observer of the foreign land by their sheer professional engagement to it, namely the ambassadors. Paul Rycaut's account of the Ottoman Empire, for example, not only claimed its superiority over most other travel writers whose travels were limited to the superficial strata of the land visited, it also proved to be hugely popular (Sherman 27).

Besides these enthusiastic travelers should also be mentioned those forced travelers like captives and castaways who too found an eager English audience for their wondrous, or harrowing, or supremely patriotic —when describing foreign atrocities—travel narratives. Likewise in *Strange and Wonderful Things Happened to Richard Hasleton* (1595) we find Hasleton to resist both physical and religious violation in the hands of the Spanish Inquisitors with a superhuman courage and patriotism, while Job Hortop's *The Travails of an English Man* (1591) is full of wondrous monsters (Sherman 27).

However, if Columbus introduced the ambitious, self-congratulatory traveler to the genre, it was Thomas More who pointed it out that such a traveler might 'enlighten' himself about other cultures but would always remain ignorant about his own. His *Utopia* (1516) is a telling satire on the contemporary Europe's political and economic

scene in the guise of a serious travel book. Apart from a subsequent Swift in his *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), this strand of satire and comedy in the genre was aptly followed by the English writers, as for example Thomas Coryate whose naming of his travel book itself is an indication of what is to follow in the text: *Crudities: Hastily gobbled up in five Monethes travels in France, Savoy, Italy, Rhetia commonly called the Grisons country, Helvetia alias Switzerland, some parts of high Germany and the Netherlands: Newly digested in the hungry aire of Somerset, and now dispersed to the nourishment of the travelling Members of this Kingdome* (1611).

Travel writing successfully penetrated the domain of literature into the eighteenth century as the writers like Daniel Defoe, Joseph Addison, Henry Fielding, Tobias Smollett, Laurence Sterne and Samuel Johnson integrated travel writing with the composition of fictional literature though each of these writers, along with other prose authors like James Boswell and Mary Wollstonecraft, wrote some remarkable travel books too. The extent of the penetration of the travel motif into the field of imaginative literature is further indicated when we look at the various writings of philosophical contemplations that were delivered in the guise of imaginary travelogues, like Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas* (1759), or Oliver Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World* (1762).

While the field of literature displayed such a huge popularity of the motif of travel, the non-literary segment of the English travelers of the time also conferred a huge status and prestige to travel as can be seen in the much popular concept of the Grand Tour in the eighteenth century. This prominence accorded to the Grand Tour, in its turn, might have owed something to the consequential degree of acceptance that philosophical empiricism—as espoused by the likes of John Locke, Francis Bacon or Rousseau—had acquired by the end of the seventeenth century in the whole of Europe. John Locke, in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), claimed that all knowledge is produced from the "impressions" acquired through our five senses: thus putting forth a substantial possibility of travel as a valid source of knowledge. Francis Bacon also believed that scientific and philosophical revolutions of the seventeenth century owed a lot to travel, and yet more importantly, to the genre of travel writing that disseminated the new information necessary for this revolution across the continent. Jean-Jacques Rousseau too was urging the wise observers of the time to travel to the remotest parts of the world to further enrich the knowledge of human societies (Hulme and Youngs 4). Travel, thus becomes a dependable source of

knowledge in this period, and though it could be claimed that travels by anybody and to anywhere would serve the empirical purpose of travel, in actuality the dominant kind of travel in this period – the Grand Tour – becomes the perquisite of the young men of the English ruling classes. These young men were supposed to cover the most important destinations like Paris and Italy as a social ritual to prepare themselves to carry the responsibilities and the status attached to the aristocratic class they belonged to. They were thus expected to return home as mature adults and as a proof of having acquired an aesthetically 'correct' taste they were also to bring the fine works of art and antiquities from the continent. However, though the age abounds in travel narratives by the authors from the literary domain, the Grand Tour, may be because of its exclusive and aristocratic nature, did not yield much published travel narratives. All the relevant literature on the Grand Tour is either available in private manuscript correspondence, or in the form of arguments about the value of traveling. Thus Samuel Johnson proclaims in 1776 that since all "our religion, almost all our law, almost all our arts, almost all that sets us above the savages, has come to us from the shores of the Mediterranean . . . a man who has not been to Italy, is always conscious of an inferiority, from his not having seen what it is expected a man should see" (qtd. in Buzard 40). Likewise, we find Lord Chesterfield writing his letters of advice to his young son who was on a travel around the continent, or Francis Bacon putting forth some instructions for the young men intending to undertake the Grand Tour in his essay "Of Travel" (1625).

The Grand Tour, however, could not continue to enjoy its prestigious status for a long time as it, for many a relevant and comprehensible reasons, generated quite a criticism not only in the lands visited but also at home, as can be found in the representative words of Adam Smith in his *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) where he argued that the typical young man on a Grand Tour "commonly comes home more conceited, more unprincipled, more dissipated, and more incapable of any serious application . . . than he could well have become in so short a time had he lived at home" (qtd. in Buzard 42).

The Grand Tour never died out completely though that the separation of education and travels to specific 'educative' destinations was underway became visible when the element of picturesque—along with the trend of the Home Tour—was brought into traveling. The reason for the wane of the Grand Tour and the emergence of the Home Tour is actually the same – as the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars

(1790-1815) cut off England from the rest of the continental Europe, the English travelers now were forced to turn to the traveling destinations nearer to home. This loss of the preferred travel destinations was, however, reflected in more than one way as while it turned the English travelers towards their own country, it also popularized Gothic fiction as an imaginary substitute for travels to the continent. Thus we find the impossibility of traveling in person to the places like Italy being rendered into the apparent peril of travels to these very same places in the Gothic novels like Ann Radcliffe's *The Romance of the Forest* (1791), *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), *The Italian* (1797) and others. However, as regards the Home Tour, it was limited mainly to England, the Wales, the Scottish Highlands and in some cases to Ireland. Besides, when James Macpherson published his *Fragments of Ancient Poetry, Collected in the Highlands of Scotland* in 1760, it not only started a raging debate between fake and authentic, it also introduced Celticism to the English mind. The interest in Scottish culture, either in terms of actual travels or of travel writing, was no doubt also developed with the publication of such texts as Thomas Pennant's *A Tour in Scotland, 1769* (1771). However, as it appears, the elements of Celticism and Gothic were not the only ones to effectively oppose the neoclassical leanings in the Grand Tour, it was the Romantic Movement in England that finally gave rise to the third strand of the cultural and aesthetic attitudes — the picturesque — to give both actual travel and travel writing in England a different direction.

The picturesque, in a way, was introduced into the English cultural life by Reverend William Gilpin's *Observations on the River Wye, and Several Parts of South Wales, etc., Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty; made in the Summer of the Year 1770* (1782), where he explained the term 'picturesque' as a sensible method for increasing the enjoyment of travelers and suggested the English travelers to visit the country with a strict adherence to the rules of picturesque beauty (Buzard 44-46). This quest for picturesque beauty in the country was further accentuated by the popularizing of Celticism by the later writers like Walter Scott, who were very much conscious of the close relationship of fiction, tourism and power, but/and carried forth what writers like Pennant started — 'packaging' Scotland as a tourist venue for the English people. Scott's *The Lady of the Lake* (1810) for example, sent an immediate lot of tourists to the scenes depicted in the work. However, that the packaging of Scotland as a must-see place was successful was again proved by a rather bizarre turn

of events when the travelers rushed in even to see the misery in the famine-ravaged Scotland in the period of 1845-50 (Hooper 182).

Another place was immortalized by this aestheticized approach of the traveling mind when the Wye Valley tour by William Wordsworth and Dorothy Wordsworth led forth to the famous poem "Tintern Abbey" in 1798. But the English writer who most prominently established the connection between travel and culture in this period notwithstanding the dominant presence of picturesque in his traveling sensibilities was in fact Samuel Johnson who in his famous *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (1775) commented that "All travel has its advantages. If the passenger visits better countries, he may learn to improve his own, and if fortune carries him to worse, he may learn to enjoy it" (qtd. in Hooper 177). However, when the *quest* for picturesque gradually and inevitably began to turn into the *hunt* for picturesque by the massive hordes of tourists— and thereby indicated a shift in travel once again by heralding the age of mass tourism— this trend soon found its satirical response in the texts like William Combe and Thomas Rowlandson's 1809 poem-with-pictures *The Tour of Doctor Syntax in Search of the Picturesque*.

The age of the Grand Tour and the Home Tour was finally led into the age of mass tourism in the latter half of the nineteenth century in England thus indicating yet another diversification in the sphere of travel and travel literature. The technological and institutional developments like the application of steam power on trains and vessels, the spread of railways, and the introduction of the travel agent were undoubtedly responsible for freeing travel from the clutches of a privileged few and handing it over to the collective hands of a faceless mass. This mass tourism revolutionized travel literature as well and that too in many a ways. The observance of the generic distinction between the impersonal, objective guidebook and the highly individualized and impressionistic book of travel writing for example, was first established as a consequence of this very trend of mass tourism in the hands of the writers like Karl and Fritz Baedeker in Germany and John Murray III in England (Buzard 48), thus freeing travel literature from the dual responsibilities of presenting a personal account of the place visited and the objective, guidebook-like recommendations of routes, hotels and sites. It was thus the very first time when travel and travel writing could afford to aspire for the extreme individualistic routes/purposes it was leading itself to without any additional burden to carry.

The need to feel and write in such a distinctive mode arose also from the fact that the democratization of travel meant that the wonders of the various sites were now open to all and thus were to be exhausted in a short time. To see and to say something new in/of the site thus became increasingly difficult thereby initiating the highly impressionistic approach into the genre of travel writing to enable the traveler/travel writer to find and deliver some exclusive and unique revelations —impossible for any ordinary tourist to discover— about a site. Thus, the traveler's claim of distinction between himself/herself as a perceptive and informed traveler and any dilettante tourist was introduced to the scene that continues even today. Besides travel and travel writing now seemed to exist not on the modes of participation and emulation any more but on the careful efforts of self-differentiation. The writings on the nature of contemporary travel by the writers like William Hazlitt and Samuel Rogers or Lord Byron's four-canto travelogue poem *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1811-1817) testify to this role-distancing efforts of the travelers desiring not to lose his/her exclusivity in the crowd of mass tourists. As in the words of Childe Harold:

> in the crowd
> They could not deem me one of such: I stood
> Among them, but not of them, in a shroud
> Of thoughts which were not their thoughts . . . (qtd. in Buzard 50)

But that this effort at role-distancing itself was soon leading towards a new kind of conformity, the adherence to a new role, is clear by these words of the American William Wetmore Story in the 1860's: "Every Englishman abroad carries a Murray for information, and a Byron for sentiment, and finds out by them what he is to know and feel at every step" (qtd. in Buzard 50). Travel writing, on the other hand, was not too late to realize the importance of integrating into its form this desire of exclusivity in every person on a trip as a certain way to gain popularity among its audience and thus started to appeal to the anti-touristic impulses of the readers as much as it could.

At the same time when the slow transition in the genre of travel writing and in actual travel from the Grand Tour to the mass tourism was underway, thus connecting travel with tourism; another factor— related to the ever increasing British influence during the eighteenth century over the world —namely imperialism was also making its presence felt in the field of travel and travel writing. While at times imperialism was exercised with a direct administrative control over a region by England or other European powers, at the beginning it all started as an 'informal empire' or 'unofficial

imperialism' that was exercised through trade, diplomacy, missionary endeavor, and scientific explorations in the other non-European places by these imperial countries. Furthermore, rapidly growing European technological superiority over the non-European world ensured that all these modes of unofficial imperialism also came with a presumed intellectual superiority. This sense of intellectual pre-eminence in its turn entered the field of travel writing—written by a number of the representatives of unofficial or direct imperialism—that reflected the Europeans' belief that not only the terrain under their direct/indirect control, but the people living therein could be analyzed as well by them.

Though the British Empire was on a steady rise throughout the eighteenth century, it was with the naval victory at Trafalgar in 1805 that Britain finally emerged as a global power with the resultant expansion of the areas it dominated directly or indirectly like Canada, Australasia, the West Indian islands, India, the New World, China, and West Africa among others. Consequently, it now became a matter of national importance for the travelers and explorers to travel to these lands and report upon it—as to be seen in James Rennell's *Memoir of a Map of Hindoostan* (1788) or Henry Salt's *A Voyage to Abyssinia* (1814). Besides, a number of private organizations dedicated to this purpose and led by British aristocrats—like Bombay Geographical Society or the Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Inland Parts of Africa—that emerged during the time affiliated itself with the government. However, initially it was the travels of the representatives of the missionary societies—with their desire to spread the words of the Gospel through the 'unenlightened' world—that were felt to be dominating the field of travel literature in the eighteenth century though we can find a popular travel book like David Livingstone's *Missionary Travels* as late as in 1857. These travel books were mostly of a multi-volume collection nature, for example Thomas Ashley's edited four-volume *A Collection of Voyages and Travels* (1704-5) and A. and J. Churchill's edited volumes of *A New General Collection of Voyages and Travels* (1745-7).

But later it was the elements of scientific observation, objectivity and precision that came to dominate the subsequent travel writing following the association between these elements and the assumed intellectual superiority of the British mind over the non-European world that led them subscribe to the justification of their efforts to explore, analyze and interpret the subnormal inhabitants of the other world. May be it was the same preference for rational and impersonal writing over the imaginative one

that resulted in the rejection of the element of picturesque, as applied in domestic or mass tourism or the fusion of fact and fancy — as to be seen in the fictional travelogues like Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* — in the domain of travel writing by the end of eighteenth century in England. Rather, it was a display of authenticity and scientific observation that was encouraged from the travel book writers so that these narratives could be of use for other scholarly discourses like Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (1776)—it incorporated the travelers' information on India and China— or could lead to as revolutionary a theory like that of Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection that was, in fact, the result of Darwin's world tour recorded in a travel journal. However, the extent of the contemporary traveling scientist's confidence in his enlightening capability while classifying the geographical, biological and cultural features of a place under observation comes out clearly in the apparently humble, yet ironical words of a scientist-cum-writer like William Burchell who in his *Travels in the Interior of the Southern Africa* (1822-4) claims that his mind is free from prejudice and that his thesis on the primitive land is beyond any challenge (Bridges 57-58).

Alongside the strong presence of scientism in the travel narratives of the nineteenth century emerged The Royal Geographical Society— developed out of Ralegh Travellers' Club in 1830 to shortly absorb the African Association too— as the greatest promoter of travel for scientific explorations thus establishing an already existing chain of travel and the powers that be in the English society. With the promotion and sponsorship provided by The Royal Geographical Society for the traveler/ explorer/ scientist also appeared a practice expected of such an explorer to produce a popular travel book immediately after the journey such as to be seen in George S. Nares' *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea during 1875-6* (1878), *England and Russia in the East* (1875) by Henry C. Rawlinson, *The Lake Regions of Central Africa* (1863) by Richard F. Burton, *How I Found Livingstone* (1872) by Henry M. Stanley, or *The Heart of the Antarctic* (1909) by Ernest H. Shackleton. With the grand emergence of The Royal Geographical Society in the English society, the relationship of science, travel and the imperial expansion became even more inseparable as the scientist-travelers also started to show imperialistic traits in their texts as can be seen in Roderick Murchison's *The Geology of Russia in Europe* (1845).

In a broad overview, the destinations that attracted the attention of such a scientist-cum-traveler included the challenging places like the polar region that could help the traveler attain a heroic stature even if the journey was not a success and that led to such travel books as *Voyages of Discovery and Research in the Southern and Antarctic Regions* (1847); or those non-European places that maintained their political independence from Europe like the Turkish Empire, Siam, Japan and China—as described in Rutherford Alcock's *The Capital of the Tycoon* (1863). The Americas also proved to be another favourite destination of the scientist-traveler—as exemplified in Charles Darwin's *Geological Observations in South America* (1846); while the travels to the British settler colonies too has produced the books like J. McDouall Stuart's *Journals of Exploits in Australia 1858-1862* (1864). It was however the ever-'exotic' Africa that never failed to attract both the scientist and the explorer to 'conquer' its unyielding and 'mysterious' terrain as represented by John S. Speke's *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile* (1863). In the last instance especially a direct association between exploration-based travel writing and an emergence of 'unofficial empire' is well noted as almost all the travel writings on Africa of the day portray it as an endangered and powerless nation waiting for the magic touch of European benevolence. This, in its turn made the introduction of various private schemes to 'redeem' Africa on a humanitarian ground possible thus initiating the 'informal imperialism' in the continent (Bridges 65). The imperialistic attitudes thus were almost always thinly disguised by these traveler explorers as in the case of Henry M. Stanley's travel writings that depicted Africa as a helpless nation though his transition from a geographical explorer to land grabber and exploiter is very much visible in them while his *In Darkest Africa* (1890) finally and unreservedly presents his active role in acquiring land for imperial exploitation in Africa. Another such transition can also be seen in in *The Kilimanjaro Expedition* (1886), a book by Harry Johnston who after being sent by The Royal Geographical Society to examine the flora and fauna of Kilimanjaro in 1886 tried to annex the whole mountain; or in the portrayal of China in *The Land of the Dragon* (1889) by W. S. Percival (Bridges 65).

By the end of the century, however, the long and instructive travel narratives where the heroic explorer/scientist/missionary undertakes a perilous journey—described in a realistic way— was on the wane, in a way the great voyages of 'discovery' by white explorers were growing fewer. The reason behind this are quite a

many; the self-contradiction in these travels and travel narratives that was growing too visible to be ignored by the writers and the readers alike is one of these, though even the writers/readers who questioned the imperial presence of the English in other countries carried a deep ambivalence within themselves regarding the whole situation. Mary Kingsley, for example, though comes out as a better European traveller than the other white travel writers of her time in her espousal of the belief that the Africans have their own virtue through her popular travel books like *Travels in West Africa* (1897), she nonetheless believed in the African inferiority to the Whites. Likewise, though Isabella Bird, as in her *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan* (1880), did not fail to observe that the Japanese were better with the aboriginal people of the land—the Ainos—than the Americans were with the Red Indians, also found the Asian country in a dire need to be redeemed by the embrace of Christianity as it was too deeply sunk in immorality. Though another travel writer on Japan, Lafcadio Hearn, unlike Bird, finds a profundity, elegance, mystery and serenity in the Japan he travels to; he finds himself dismayed at the country's efforts at modernity that he believes will destroy its essence. Although Hearn's travel books—mostly on Japan—like *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan* (1894) thus created a land with his imagination for the European audience, they nonetheless helped to associate the forms of Japanese poetry like haiku with the modernist poetry in English (Carr 78).

Among the other critics of imperialism who associated imperialistic tendencies primarily with the 'regrettable' rise of the middle class practices and the decay of the aristocracy in the English society, is the aristocratic Wilfrid Scawen Blunt. He comes out as a staunch supporter of aristocracy and feudal system to nurture distrust for middle class both at home and at abroad while having a condescending regard for the peasantry. In his *Ideas about India* (1885) we find Blunt scornfully predicting of nothing except a barren land to be left by British colonialism in India. Although he seems to find Indian intellectuals and leaders to be perfectly capable of self-governance, we also find him pondering on how the relations between the British and the Indians have deteriorated in India since the civil service examinations enabled the Indian middle classes to become colonial servants (Carr 77). However, it was the most outright imperialistic book of the time—Stanley's *In Darkest Africa*—that not only served as one of the possible sources of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* later but also inspired one of the most scathing attacks on the British imperialism in the guise of a travel-poem—'The Modern Traveller' (1898). In this poem the poet, Hilaire

Belloc, most unambiguously criticizes the ruthless and inhuman face of imperialism though he too, like Blunt, associates British imperialism with vulgar middle class ideologues. The poem is all about a report published in *Daily Menace* by a returned colonial adventurer, who along with a mercenary (Sin) and a Captain (Blood) travelled to find if "there was by chance a native tribe / To cheat, cajole, corrupt, or bribe". But when the thoroughly ill-treated porters showed signs of unrest, "Blood understood the Native mind/ He said 'We must be firm but kind.' / A mutiny resulted." And the mutiny is finally put down when "We shot and hanged a few, and then / The rest became devoted men" (qtd. in Carr 71)

Eventually, when European imperialism expanded with powers like Germany and Italy showing interest in the colonies of England and consequently generated a substantial opposition in the form of 'rebellions' and 'risings' in the colonies, the travel writing of the period not only became much more assertive of the superiority of the Europeans over the non-Europeans to counter those oppositions but also started to reflect the prevalent mood of a stiff competition among the imperial powers. Travel writing in this period thus not only shows the blatant exclamations of naked imperialism but in its need to re-assert those claims of superiority it is thus also the first time that the victims of colonialism enter the discourse of such writing.

The period from 1880 to 1940, the golden period of the British Empire, then is manifestly reflected in the travel writing of the period with all its ambivalences and complexities. However, while in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the technological advance and scientific development helped to create a distinct national identity for the white Europeans and made their travels and travel writings appear to be devoted to the purpose of the growth of other societies, these encounters with other civilizations through these travels also resulted in the process of hybridization of cultures and a dissolution of the hitherto kept borderlines between the West and its others. Consequently, the travel narrative of the twentieth century is dominated by an ever increasing feeling of concern over the deteriorating essence and excellence of the Western civilization while it also reveals its attempts to find a possible substitution of this lost esteem for homeland in the places and cultures it chose to depict (Carr 73-75).

Another important shift that can be noticed in the travel writings of the twentieth century is the steadily increasing participation of the prominent novelists and poets in the transformation of the stylistic features of the genre. Any of the writers of fiction in

the earlier periods like Defoe can be taken as an example of the other kind here who though exploited the properties of travel writing in the novels like *Robinson Crusoe*, was careful not to introduce stylistic elements of fiction in the travel writings like *A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain* (1726) exemplifies. The status of the twentieth century travel writing is, however, entirely different with writers now appearing to be completely at ease with mixing the boundaries of fact (what conventional travel writing is supposed to depict) and fiction (what imaginative literature like novel is all about in the first case) along with all the stylistic devices exclusive to each and common to both.

That the genre of travel writing was undergoing some major changes was also clear with the novel acceptance among the readers and critics alike of the travel books like Charles Doughty's *Travels in Arabia Deserta* (1888) that gained something of a cult status among the modernists when it was republished in 1921 after its initial failure to catch the fancy of the readers when it appeared first. But it was with the publication of Belloc's actual travel account *The Path to Rome* (1902) that two of the important features that were to dominate the travel writing in the coming days were popularized to the greatest extent. The first of these features is, however, a very old one – a concern dating back to Lord Byron's Childe Harold's desire to stand out against a crowd of motley tourists. This concern reflects on how against the backdrop of tourism growing into an industry, most of the writers feel it necessary to be recognized not as just another tourist but as a traveler. Thus what led Belloc to remark in his *The Path to Rome* (1902) that the tourists were "common and worthless people, and sad into the bargain" (Carr 79) led Evelyn Waugh to go even further and mercilessly satirize the middle-class tourists in his *Labels: A Mediterranean Journey* (1930).

The second feature that comes out of Belloc's book is also a very pertinent problem faced by the travel writers in the post-Grand Tour situation where not only the travelers but the sites of travel have also been compromised by the consumerism of the travel industry and the writer now have to search for a destination to write about that has not yet been led to by a guide-book or a travel agent. Thus while in 1884 Henry James, in his *A Little Tour in France*, seems perfectly happy to visit and describe all the major tourist spots in the city, in 1905, Edith Wharton has to invent innovative ways to make her *Italian Backgrounds* a different tale. Thus came the most important transition in the genre of travel writing where the previous mode of writing

in a detailed, realistic way with an overtly didactic or moral purpose changed into something that is more impressionistic, where both the course of the travel and the writer's exclusive response to it is noted in a constantly evolving form.

Moreover, though the nineteenth century travel writing was often produced by the travels of the missionaries, explorers, scientists, or colonials like Livingstone, Darwin, or Burton; in the twentieth century the travel writings are often penned by the famous novelists or poets—as reflected in the famous words of Michel Butor, "they travel in order to write, they travel while writing, because for them, travel *is* writing" (qtd. in Carr 74). These writers also infused into the form of travel writing the elements of introspection, analysis and experimentation. Travel writing thus not only becomes more literary, it also becomes more unrestrained with a number of the related genres/forms being disengaged from its constitution – like the scientific/scholarly treatise or ethnography – that till then were intimately related to travel writing. Moreover, with the travel writings of such prominent and exemplary writers like Joseph Conrad, Rudyard Kipling, R. L. Stevenson, Jack London, and Somerset Maugham, travel writing too finally joined the other literary genres of the period in embracing the intricacies of the movement of modernism.

Besides, it received another thrust when the increasing dissent regarding the imperialistic practices of the British and the growing uncertainty about the stability, quintessence and values of the Western civilization that concerned so many writers of the period reached its climax with the horrors of the First World War. Along with the gloom of the inter-war period, thus, the travel writings of the writers like D. H. Lawrence, E. M. Forster, Graham Greene, and Evelyn Waugh also appear to represent the various modes of experimentations and some new attitudes to cultural engagements like the concept of cultural heterogeneity unlike the belief in a utopian cultural homogeneity upheld in the previous periods.

However, like the imaginative literature of the day, travel writing of the inter-war years also displays the emotion of a certain resigned detachment from the disappointing society both at home and abroad. As for example, the contemporary poetry of T. S. Eliot like *The Wasteland* (1922) mirrors a number of the themes such as the fragmentary, squalid city life; the loss of identity as an outcome of cultural hybridity; a pretentious and decaying civilization that cannot function as a retreat for the creative soul anymore; and the resultant vulnerability and fear; and the inevitable nostalgia for an earlier and lovelier world, that are common to both imaginative

literature and travel writing of the period. Orwell's travel books like *Down and Out in Paris* (1933) and *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937) for example, represent the travels to the dark underside of the human civilization in which the unprivileged section of the society appears to the traveler's eyes as a race apart. Graham Greene's *Journey Without Maps* (1936) too appears as a complex and gloomy travel narrative where the writer believes that he is to undertake a journey not only to a place in geography (Liberia), but also to a "land of words and images, witches and death, unhappiness" and "unexplained brutality" (Greene 8).

The disarray in the aftermath of the World Wars and the evolving experience of the West's contact with other cultures through imperialism only made it clear that Europe's 'other' is losing its otherness all too fast and also that the latter has already started to encroach upon the authenticity of the essential Western identity itself. Whether it is R. L. Stevenson's belief that he is depicting a dying race in his travelogue on the South Pacific—*In the South Seas* (1896), or Rod Edmond's assertion that "legible evidence of Western diseases on blemished native bodies haunted Western writing about the Pacific from the early moment of contact" (qtd. in Carr 81); the sentiment that the West has been destroying the world it travels to by its very own fascination with it is repeatedly echoed in other inter-war travel writers such as in Pierre Loti's lament over the loss of the exotic native and the wonderland in his mind (Tahiti), "if this land of dreams was to remain the same to me I ought never to have laid my finger on it" (qtd. in Edmond 151). But in spite of these melancholic realizations like that of Stevenson or the bitter warnings like that of Freya Stark who mocked those travel writers in quest of an exotic otherness (Carr 82), there still remained some travel writers like T. E. Lawrence, the author of such famous and controversial travel books such as *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (1926), who were always in search of the pure essence of the imaginary 'other' to situate it against their idea of a despicable modern hybridity and thus ironically proved yet again the absurdity of such a quest for the essential primitive in the modern, fragmented world.

The transition of the pre-war and inter-war travel writing to the postmodern collage in the following years, however, also covers the travel writers like Peter Fleming—the author of *Brazilian Adventure* (1933)—and Robert Byron who stand apart from the normative mode of travel literature in this era. Byron's travel writings like the famous *The Road to Oxiana* (1937), for example, are not only modernist, but they also portray him as the quintessential modernist traveller who is perceptive with

a sharp political understanding, is informed and resourceful; but most surprisingly as displaying a great sense of pleasure and satisfaction on his reaching the place where his passion leads him, unlike most other travel writers of the time (Carr 84).

The post-war Britain, however, managed quite quickly to leave the turbulence of the war behind and let the genre of travel writing resume its active engagement with the various experimentations as before. It was also the time when Claude Lévi-Strauss's famous autobiography-cum-travel book-cum-ethnographical thesis—*Tristes Tropiques* (1955) severed the long-standing ties between anthropology and travel writing with these famous words:

> I hate travelling and explorers. Yet here I am proposing to tell the story of my Expeditions . . . Adventure has no place in the anthropologist's profession; it is merely one of those unavoidable drawbacks, which detract from his effective work through the incidental loss of weeks or months . . . The fact that so much effort and expenditure has to be wasted on reaching the object of our studies bestows no value on that aspect of our profession, and should be seen rather as its negative side. (qtd. in Hulme 92)

While the travel books like *The Traveller's Tree* (1950) by Patrick Leigh Fermor brings back the flavor of the travel writing of the pre-war era, some of the traditional motifs in the travel writing, such as that of the nomadic life, also make a comeback with a renewed vigour in this period though they now carry the literary style and signature of the modern sensibilities. Thus Eric Newby's *A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush* (1958) notes the meeting of himself and Wilfred Thesiger who re-introduced the traditional motif of exploration in his books like *Arabian Sands* (1959) and *The Marsh Arabs* (1964), to juxtapose the unswerving and hardened travelers like Thesiger with the unwary and comfort-seeking amateur travelers like Newby and thus forwards the concept of bringing out many ingrained contradictions in the form/practice of travel literature.

The end of the Wars not only leads to the decisive shifts in the context of the travel writing, it also marks a change in the lives of the travel writers who now think of taking up travel writing as a stable profession while the involvement of the literary giants with the genre becomes even more prominent. V. S. Naipaul is one such writer who combines his brilliant literary style with his controversial social and political views to give travel writing of the twentieth century an altogether new voice. His travel books like *The Middle Passage* (1962), *An Area of Darkness* (1964), *Among the*

Believers: An Islamic Journey (1981) or *India: A Million Mutinies Now* (1990) that have never failed to give rise to serious controversies are serious reflections on the nature and effects of imperialism and the process of decolonization in the various post-colonial societies. Naipaul is also among many of his contemporary writers who have been actively engaged with the process of hybridization of the genre of travel writing as he introduces various allusive and literary meditations with elements of autobiography in both his actual travel writings and in those in his novels as *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987) or *A Way in the World* (1994) shows.

Naipaul not only led the genre of travel writing towards a new direction, he also influenced other emerging travel writers like Paul Theroux immensely to infuse new life into the genre. Paul Theroux, through his travel writings like *The Old Patagonian Express* (1979) created a new persona for the traveler—the one who could combine the toughness of the seasoned traveler with the erudition of a perceptive intellect. Theroux also reestablished the respectability of the mode of travels usually associated with the vacuity of the tourists like that by train as in his *The Great Railway Bazaar: By Train Through Asia* (1975) that was in its turn immediately emulated by other contemporary travel writers.

Apart from the ingenious travel writings by such authors as Naipaul and Theroux, another event that had a crucial role in rekindling the popular interest in the genre was the publication of the special issue on travel writing by the literary magazine Granta in 1984 that helped British travel writing enter the international arena in its scope. It also infused a cultural self-awareness into the genre while reconnecting it with investigative journalism and contemporary political issues while publishing the travel narratives by such writers as Salman Rushdie, James Fenton, Timothy Garton Ash and Hanif Kureishi.

However it was in 1977 that *In Patagonia*, a travel book by an unknown author Bruce Chatwin, was published that revolutionized the genre in many a way. The book, provisionally entitled *A Piece of Brontosaurus*, is usually credited with relieving the genre of the final traces of the nineteenth century format and style and eventually bringing the modern aesthetics to the genre. The narrative—a discontinuous chronology, based on the writer's search for a lost piece of mylodon skin, that is presented in a pithy and absorbing manner—is divided into ninety-seven short chapters narrating both an eccentric adventure and an eccentric group of people he

meets in the course of his quest for Patagonia that is not only the abode of the rare animal but also the reserve of his childhood dreams and nightmares:

> My interest in Patagonia survived the loss of the skin: for the Cold War woke in me a passion for geography. In the late 1940's the Cannibal of the Kremlin shadowed our lives: you could mistake his moustaches for teeth . . .Yet we hoped to survive the blast . . .We pored over atlases . . . and we fixed on Patagonia as the safest place on earth. I pictured a low timber house with a shingled roof, caulked against storms, with blazing log fires inside and the walls lined with the best books, somewhere to live when the rest of the world blew up. (Chatwin 3-4)

If it is a mylodon skin that proves to elude Chatwin in his cult narrative, it is the quest for a living animal —the rare Himalayan snow leopard—that forms the base of yet another milestone in the contemporary travel writing—Peter Matthiessen's *The Snow Leopard* (1978). *The Snow Leopard*, unlike Chatwin's self-effacing modernist narrative, is a completely personal book, a strongly confessional narrative in the guise of a memoir, where the physical travel doubles as and also intensifies an inner journey thus leading to a spiritual renewal that reintroduced spirituality and earnestness to travel writing. As in these words from *The Snow Leopard*, travel finally reaches its unprecedented destination here: "I feel great gratitude for being here, for *being*, rather, for there is no need to tie oneself to the snow mountains in order to feel free. I am not here to seek the 'crazy wisdom'; if I am, I shall never find it. I am here to be here, like these rocks and sky and snow, like this hail that is falling out of the sun" (110).

If Chatwin modernizes travel writing and Matthiessen personalizes it, then Robyn Davidson's *Tracks* (1980) is another book that too redefines it by freeing the genre from the gender and racial stereotypes that had been its inescapable feature for a long time. Travel narratives by the women travelers had no doubt left behind the strongly anti-feminist sentiment of a popular Mary Kingsley or Gertrude Bell of the eighteenth centuries as displayed in Rebecca West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* (1942), Delva Murphy's *Full Tilt: Dunkirk to Delhi* (1965) or in Jan Morris's *Venice* (1974), but it is in *Tracks* that the genre liberates itself from this limitation to a remarkable extent. In this book we find a very unlikely adventurer in Davidson for such a perilous journey of crossing 1,700 miles of a desert, who is called a lunatic and a would-be suicide by

her detractors, but who during the course of her journey across the deserts of western Australia eventually sheds the gender stereotype:

> By now I was utterly deprogrammed. I walked along naked usually, clothes being not only putrid but unnecessary. . . . I'm amazed at how quickly and absolutely this sense of the social custom fell away from me. And the absurdity of its absurdity has never really left me. I have slowly regained a sense of the niceties, but I think, I hope, that I will always see the obsession with social graces and female modesty for the perverted crippling insanity it really is.
>
> (211-212)

Besides these gender stereotypes, Davidson also questions the racial ones in this text:

> Aboriginal people who sicken . . . must go to a nankari for treatment. While it was impossible for me to leap outside the limitations imposed by my culture's description of what is possible, I have no doubt whatever that nankaris have an equal amount of success in healing the sick in a tribal situation as do Western doctors in curing detribalized people. The more enlightened white health-workers are now working hand in glove with nankaris. . . . (176-177)

The women travel writers of the following period have been carrying her convictions further as can be seen in Sara Wheeler's *Terra Incognita: Travels in Antarctica* (1996) that describes the difficult terrain not only in Antarctica but also in the various cultures she comes into contact with (including her own) as far as the issue of gender relations are concerned.

Though it is increasingly becoming difficult to set any parameters to the travel writings of the postmodern era—partly because of the occasional hard-to-define travel books like Umberto Eco's *Travels in Hyperreality* (1986) or Jean Baudrillard's *America* (1988)—there can still be discovered some common and traditional strands among these. The element of comedy, for example, has never taken its leave from the folds of this genre, and as it can be presumed, never will. Following into the footsteps of Thomas Coryate's *Crudities* of the seventeenth century are Bill Bryson's *Notes from a Small Island* (1995), Tony Hawk's *Round Ireland with a Fridge* (1998), and Tim Moore's *Continental Drifter* (2000).

Another feature that the genre of travel writing has been carrying with it since the very beginning is the practice of a socio-political reporting that finds an altogether new approach with the innovative methods of the modern writers like Norman Lewis who connect the interesting features of journalism with a traveling persona that is

robust, perceptive, socially and culturally aware and frank. Lewis's travel books like *Cuban Passage* (1982), *The Missionaries* (1988), *A Goddess in the Stones: Travels in India* (1991) and *An Empire of the East: Travels in Indonesia* (1993) in fact reintroduced the analytical aspect to the genre and have been followed by such travel books as Scott Malcolmson's *Tuturani: A Political Journey in the Pacific Islands* (1990), and Rebecca Solnit's *Savage Dreams: A Journey to the Landscape Wars of the American West* (1994) that bring out the serious socio-political awareness and urgency in the genre. The remarkable investigative reporting by Philip Gourevitch in his *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda* (1998) also resulted in a remarkable travel writing to serve as a serious socio-political treatise that understands the intricacies of the contemporary world politics while indicating Western complicity in the Rwandan genocide (Hulme 97-99).

This self-conscious engagement of the genre of travel writing with global modernity has also resulted in several new forms of travel/writing, for example "responsible" tourism like ecotourism, humanitarian tourism, spiritual tourism or "tourism of suffering" like disaster tourism/writing. Though eco-travel writing such as those by Matthiessen or Mark Hertsgaard's *Earth Odyssey* (1999) primarily belongs to the wider field of environmental writing, it is now widely considered to be an integral part of travel writing. Disaster writing on the other hand is part-therapeutic, part-voyeuristic memories of traumatic experiences of un/natural disasters as to be seen in Jon Krakauer's *Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mount Everest Disaster* (1997) or in *The Perfect Storm* (1997) by Sebastian Junger (Huggan 101-116).

Another element in travel writing that too has kept its stronghold is that of wilderness, though in the post-modern era it can specify both an ecological and indigenous wilderness. Though the Amazon and New Guniea are still popular with the modern explorers/travel writers as can be seen in Edward Marriott's *A Lost Tribe: A Search through the Jungles of Papua New Guinea* (1996); it is the places like Siberia, Alaska, and the poles that seem to attract the explorer-cum-travel writer most. The motif of an inner journey along with the physical journey undertaken—as popularized by Matthiessen—also makes a frequent comeback in the recent travel writings though this inner journey does not always lead to a conventional spiritual or religious awakening in these. Rob Nixon, for example, travels back both to his

childhood memories spent in South Africa and also to a cultural history of ostrich farming in his *Dreambirds: The Natural History of a Fantasy* (1999), while Amitav Ghosh simultaneously travels on a spatial and temporal extent while on a social anthropology project in Egypt to revisit a world lost due to imperialism in *In an Antique Land* (1993).

However, that the genre of travel writing is undergoing a constant process of transition and experimentation to strive for a more hybridized form is clear from some of the travel writings of recent time too. While Colin Thubron's *In Siberia* (1999), for example, combines Norman Lewis's journalistic style with Marriott's fascination for wilderness in its narration, Jonathan Raban's *Passage to Juneau: A Sea and its Meanings* (1999) combines the element of wilderness with the strand of Matthiessen's inner journey as his travel takes him along the path of memories of his recently expired father and also the loss of his family. Peter Robb's *Midnight in Sicily* (1996) though addresses the serious issues like the violent rule of Mafia in Sicily and the thousands of resulting murders; it also presents a rich cultural history of the place besides the personal reporting on the serious socio-political issues.

Midnight in Sicily represents another strand of the genre of travel writing in recent times — the footstep genre, where the later traveler tries to follow the routes and traces of an earlier traveler either to retrace the previous traveler who has not come back or to create a continuum to recreate the life and work of the earlier traveler in the light of the social, cultural, and political contexts—present or past. The most famous practitioner of this genre is Charles Nicholl whose *The Creature in the Map* (1995) is based on Sir Walter Ralegh's travels to South America and *Somebody Else: Arthur Rimbaud in Africa, 1880-1891* (1997) not only presents a substantial biography of the poet Rimbaud but also his observations on the present day Ethiopia he visits. Related to the same trait of combining spatial and temporal travels, though for different reasons, is the mode of reconciliatory travel writing that has been termed by Peter Bishop as "a wounded and wounding intercultural dialogue", that can "awaken or assuage a sense of guilt or shame, as well as to seek forgiveness, or to forgive" (194, 180) as can be seen in the reconciliatory travel narratives like *The Rock* (1994) by Barry Hill, *Craft for a Dry Lake* (2000) by Kim Mahood, or *Black Sheep* (2002) by Nicholas Jose (Clarke 167).

However, the genre of travel writing has never failed to renew itself — by embracing various new components like journalism; or at times by shedding some of

the old elements like ethnography; or by defying every kind of parameters as the very title of Xavier de Maistre's eighteenth century travel book hints at the nature of his travel in *A Nocturnal Expedition Round My Room* (1794); or even by subverting itself as in W. G. Sebald's *The Rings of Saturn* (1995). This once again proves the genre's flexibility in accommodating the changing social, cultural, and political contexts to redefine these further in its frame, as exemplified by Sebald to refer to a different kind of travel in the context of a custom in Holland where

> it was customary, in a home where there had been a death, to drape black mourning ribbons over all the mirrors and all canvasses depicting landscapes or people or fruits of the field, so that the soul, as it left the body, would not be distracted on its final journey, either by a reflection of itself or by a last glimpse of the land now being lost for ever. (296)

Section II

Post-Colonial Travel Writing

While in the twenty first century tourism has availed itself of the repute of being the world's largest industry, it has also attracted critical attention for its evolving roles in constructing and confirming the personal, cultural, and national identities of the tourist, and so has travel/writing. Although tourism was once repudiated by its more prestigious relation – travel/adventure/exploration, today all these are being brought on the same platform on the ground of sharing no essential difference as such. Even though travel/writing could safely distinguish itself from the practice of mass tourism in the previous period, now they seem intertwined in their sharing some common concerns. These concerns include the involvement of the capitalist tendencies, the economization of culture, the saturation of the 'exotic', or extending the borders by including the practices of disaster tourism/writing or ecotourism into their fold.

Thus the ever expanding culture of tourism—as the success stories of visual medias like National Geographic, the proliferation of travel vehicles, or the introduction of surrogate travel through the Internet exemplify—seems to share a relationship of mutual influence with the thriving practice of the production of travel books while at the same time they are also generating an academic interest in their form and practice. Now not only the critical studies on tourism/travel/travel writing like Dennis Porter's *Haunted Journeys* (1991), Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes* (1992), *Routes* (1997) by James Clifford, *Tourists with Typewriters* (2000) by Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan or Graham Huggan's *Extreme Pursuits* (2009) are growing, but the incorporation of the metaphorical implications of travel in the analysis of the various intellectual and cultural displacement as by Edward Said in "Traveling Theory" (1983) or by James Clifford in "Traveling Cultures" (1992) is also increasing.

As Paul Smethurst points out in his introduction to *Travel Writing, Form, and Empire* (2009), the genre of travel writing in its form and practice today associates itself primarily with five areas of contemporary theory as in the following way: *the idea of travel and travel as motif and metaphor* are now vital for poststructuralist

theories of displacement and mobility; *the politics of travel and the intermingling of knowledge and power in it* have become crucial to post-colonial and gender theory; *the culture of travel* now includes theories of globalization, postmodern geography etc.; *'writing travel'* has become relevant to poststructuralist theories of presence/absence and the decentered subject; and finally *the idea of theory itself is found traveling* by the likes of Said in their cross-cultural experiences as mobile, self-exiled intellectuals.

So, while post-colonialism and gender studies present the ideological critique of the western, imperialist, and androcentric world view in European travel writing; historical and cultural revisionism exposes the interrelation of the issues of knowledge and power in the genre; and discourse analysis as espoused by Foucault, Hayden White, and Said offer an appropriate methodology to review collective bodies of texts such as the corpus of European travel writing (Said *Orientalism* 3-4). Thus, the French post-structuralist theory redefines the metaphorical implications of the term 'nomad' as demonstrated in the numerous works of Gilles Deleuze and Paul Virilio while post-structuralism suggests a distinct connection and a sense of shared tradition between travel texts and such canonical texts of Western culture as *Exodus*, the *Odyssey*, the *Aeneid*, and other culture-founding Euro-Asian narratives of homeless wandering that always present civilization as the end and salvation of the nomadic life (Campbell 268). Anne McClintock, on the other hand, brought out the sexual aspects of travel imagery while Sara Mills' *Discourses of Difference* (1991) has put travel writing within the frame of feminism. Though women's travel writing, like its male counterpart, too has been accused of displaying the ubiquitous imperialist and ethnocentric nostalgia, it is the interrogation of the identity of the traveling subject and the process of its being constituted by the complex interactions of gender, race, and class that mark contemporary women's travel writing as a means of relieving itself of the patriarchal and imperial identitary norms.

If travel writing thus appears to perform as a medium of emancipation for women writers, in the contemporary scene the genre has also come up as a mode of 'queering' of a heterosexual culture as can be seen in the travel books by gays and lesbians who have turned to travel writing, drawing on models in part derived from earlier homoerotic fantasy, and also from current theories of queer performativity (Holland and Huggan 20-21). Even the concepts of psychoanalysis have been engaged with the genre as can be seen in Freud's observation that the travel impulse originates from the

limitations of the everyday life and/or the dissatisfaction with it although travel invariably tends to bear within its frame the potentialities for splitting, contradiction and loss of touch with the 'real' (Musgrove 39-44). Lacan too interestingly differentiates between the 'eye' and the 'gaze' in the context of the traveler and the travelee (Kerridge 168-174).

Nevertheless, with the arrival of the theory of post-colonialism on the scene the voices of the critics like Edward W. Said acquired an urgency and unique relevance as they simultaneously related English literature, including travel writing, to imperialism and called our attention to how the "novel and demystifying theoretical praxes like the new historicism and deconstruction and Marxism have avoided the major, . . . determining, political horizon of modern Western culture, namely imperialism" (*Culture* 70). It was primarily Said, who in his seminal work *Orientalism* (1978) pointed out how the West, in its heyday of imperialistic domination, in fact '*created*' the East — "the Orient, the Oriental, and his world" (40) — with a crucial help from writers of different literary genres and gradually universalized this fabricated image of the orient as the undeniable truth. As Said elaborates on how this relationship between travel writing and Orientalism began to prosper:

> The increasing influence of travel literature, imaginary utopias, moral voyages, and scientific reporting brought the Orient into sharper and more extended focus. If Orientalism is indebted principally to the fruitful Eastern discoveries of Anquetil and Jones during the latter third of the century, these must be seen in the wider context created by Cook and Bougainville, the voyages of Tournefort and Adanson, by the Président de Brosses's *Histoire des navigations aux terres australes*, by French traders in the Pacific, by Jesuit missionaries in China and the Americas, by William Dampier's explorations and reports, by innumerable speculations on giants, Patagonians, savages, natives, and monsters supposedly residing to the far east, west, south, and north of Europe. But all such widening horizons had Europe firmly in the privileged center, as main observer (or mainly observed, as in Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World*). For even as Europe moved itself outwards, its sense of cultural strength was fortified. From traveler's tales, and not only from great institutions like the various India companies, colonies were created and ethnocentric perspectives secured. (*Orientalism* 117)

Even when travel/writing has been considered to have implications beyond imperialistic norms, its involvement with the urge to possess could not be overlooked, as in Bill Ashcroft's words: "Long before the rush to build empires, a strange link between *discovery* and *knowing* characterized the urge for possession. This urge has, in turn, been actualized in acts of description – in writing . . ." (229). Thus once again the workings of knowledge and power are observed in the performance of the traveler and his 'acts of description' where he justifies his unique authority over the travelee to judge him and his culture as a rational outcome of his knowledgeable observation while travelling into that land. As Ashcroft adds:

> No matter how personal or eccentric the travel writing, travel began to be increasingly involved, from the rise of modernity itself, in an implicit debate about possession, a debate about who owns the world. This ownership is manifestly a written, or more exactly, a textual discourse, and as the writing creates the travel, so writing creates the utopia of a strange world made familiar. Even when this world occupies some symbolically fantastic space of otherness . . . the very operation of representation serves to bring it within the European universe. (230)

The unmistakable examples of this kind of 'representation' abound in the field of the travel writings of the previous centuries, especially, as Mary Louise Pratt has pointed out in *Imperial eyes*, during the time when European scientific explorations became synonymous with travel/writing (23). Thus we find the Swedish naturalist Carl Linné or Linnaeus, the originator of the label *homo sapiens*, dividing people into groups to describe them in as outrageous a fashion like 'Asiatics' to be "severe, haughty, covetous"; 'Africans' to be "crafty, indolent, negligent"; but 'Europeans' to be "gentle, acute, inventive" that Pratt finds to be an explicit attempt to "'naturalize' the myth of European superiority" (32). The critical studies on the field of travel writing from the post-colonial angle thus try to address the following queries, as presented by Pratt in *Imperial Eyes*:

> With what codes has travel and exploration writing produced "the rest of the world" for European readerships at particular points in Europe's expansionist process? How has it produced Europe's evolving conceptions of itself in relation to something it became possible to call "the rest of the world"? How do the signifying practices of travel writing encode and legitimate the aspirations of economic expansion and empire? At what points do they undermine those

> aspirations? What did writers on the receiving end of European intervention do with those European codifications of their reality? How did they claim, revise, reject and transcend them? How have Europe's subordinated others shaped Europeans' constructions of them and the places they inhabit? Or Europe's understanding of itself? (4)

So we find the celebrated figures in the field of travel/writing like Alexander von Humboldt—still considered as "the most creative explorer of his time" (Pratt 109) of the eighteenth century; Richard Burton—the British explorer in the nineteenth century— whom Pratt considers to be the best at "the monarch-of-all-I-survey scene" (197); Linnaeus—who single-handedly made natural history the sole subject and motivating factor behind travel/writing in the eighteenth century (Pratt 26); Vicomte de Chateaubriand—the scholarly French pilgrim and traveler whose travels/writings centered around the Orient—of the nineteenth century; T. E. Lawrence—the bestselling author of *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (1926)—who inspired a host of followers; and other writers of imaginative literature from as early as Chaucer to Joseph Conrad coming under the scrutiny of post-colonial studies as far as their engagement with the imperial worldview and Eurocentrism are expressed in their works. Likewise, the role of women in imperial context as traveler/writer is also being questioned and analyzed now as outlined by Paul Smethurst:

> Women travellers are ambivalent figures in the imperial context, both validating and invalidating the interpretative models of gender and empire where the two impinge on each other. On one hand, the presence of women in the masculinized colonial terrain implies support for the system that enables that presence but, on the other hand, if 'the domestic' is to be regarded as the normal sphere for women in both models, a woman's presence in the colony might imply either critique of an imperialist ideology that constrains women, or flight from womanhood itself, or both. (8)

However, as already noted, it is not only the issue of the 're-presentation' of the Orient by the West that comes under the post-colonial study in the context of travel writing, it is also about how the Orient reacted to this 're-presentation' by the Europe and how at times it exploited the imperialistic tools of the Europe itself to transcend these manufactured images of it produced by the West. It is in regard to this particular context that Pratt introduces in *Imperial Eyes* the terms like "the contact zone"—the space of imperial encounters—and "autoethnography" or

"autoethnographic expression" – that refers to the cases where the colonized represent themselves by appropriating the very terms of the colonizer and that Pratt believes to be a widespread phenomenon of the contact zone. Thus the letter written by Felipe Guaman Poma and addressed to King Philip III of Spain—a letter in rough Spanish from the conquered to the conqueror—though did not arouse much academic interest at first when it was discovered in 1908, is now considered to be a striking example of autoethnographic expression, or of 'transculturation'—a term borrowed from ethnography— where members of the subordinated group appropriate the materials transmitted to them by the dominant/metropolitan culture (Pratt 5-9). As some prominent examples of autoethnographic expressions in the context of travel writing we can name Jamaica Kincaid's *A Small Place* (1988) and Caryl Phillips's *The European Tribe* (1987)—both by writers born in the Caribbean but now living in the diaspora—that in the words of Holland and Huggan "interrogate both the history of the genre they are employing and the underlying attitudes—often downright xenophobic—that have led to its becoming over time a fertile ground for misconception and for the unobstructed play of Euro-American (mostly white middle class) fantasy" (21). Likewise, Salman Rushdie's *The Jaguar Smile* (1987)—based on his trip to Nicaragua—or the comic travel novel *Macunaíma* (1928) by Mário de Andrade, one of the pioneer experimentalists of Brazilian modernism; Amitav Ghosh's *In an Antique Land* (1992), Vikram Seth's *From Heaven Lake* (1983), Patrick Tierney's *Darkness in El Dorado* (2000)—an example of the anthropological travel writing that once produced as notorious works as Napoleon Chagnon's *Yanomamo: The Fierce People* (1968)—each of these serves as an example of the oppositional grain in travel writing in the post-colonial setting that has at times also earned them the title of countertravel writing.

Nevertheless, the limitations of the oppositional travel writing are also pointed out by some critics as for example in these words by Paul Smethurst, "It is sometimes difficult to tell the difference between revisionism that bases itself on a new politics of form (writing back), and mere stylistic innovation basing itself in western aesthetics rather than the lifeways of the postcolonial subject" (10). Charles Sugnet too brings into notice another ambivalent aspect, 'the residual imperialism', in these countertravel narratives. "Though the traveler no longer represents a literal imperial power and may specifically disclaim such complicity, he still arrogates to himself the

rights of representation, judgement and mobility that were effects of empire" (qtd. in Smethurst 10).

Consequently, Pratt invites attention to the "normative and authoritative viewpoint" in the West African travelogue *Which Tribe Do You Belong To?* (1972) by Italian novelist Alberto Moravia and another travel account—*The Old Patagonian Express* (1978) — by the celebrated travel writer Paul Theroux to suggest how they exemplify a "discourse of negation, domination, devaluation, and fear that remains in the late twentieth century a powerful ideological constituent of the west's consciousness of the people and places it strives to hold in subjugation" (215). Likewise, contemporary eco-travel writing too is accused of having been "failed to lay the ghosts of travel writing's imperial past" in its being primarily "anthropocentric" instead of being "bio-" or "ecocentric" (Huggan 54).

Furthermore, even those writers who were once considered to be the pioneering figures in the field of travel writing like Eric Newby or Peter Matthiessen in their reinvigorating the genre are now being reviewed for the display of imperialist nostalgia in their works. The legendary Bruce Chatwin, the writer of the cult travel book *In Patagonia* (1977), has also been found by Neil Ascherson to follow the infamous convention of "Europe's long, unfinished ballad of yearning for noble savages" (Holland and Huggan 236). Similarly, the form of pastoral travel writing also has come under the post-colonial review as the works of the likes of Peter Mayle, the writer of such hugely successful Provence books as *A Year in Provence* (1989); or V. S. Naipaul's *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987) are now perceived to be full of imperial nostalgia. The situation turns yet more complicated with the gradual transformation of imperialism into neo-colonialism in the global context that, in its turn, continues to shape travel writing like imperialism did in the earlier days. These may be considered as the reasons that have prompted Bill Ashcroft to wonder like many of his contemporary critics on the continuing relation between travel writing and the tendency to control:

> So deeply has travel writing been implicated in the power/knowledge equation throughout history that the most pressing questions presented to it are: how can this peculiar form of intimacy avoid the domination of knowing? How can travel writing avoid colonizing the space of its journey? How can it avoid the invidious power relationship existing in the binary of surveyor/surveyed.

recorder/recorded, representer/represented". This is the utopia sought by much contemporary travel writing: a familiar world made strange. (235)

Notwithstanding these yet to be resolved problems inherent in the form and expression of travel writing, what may come as the words of reassurance are provided by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin whose presumption that eventually the elements of ambivalence and hybridity in post-colonial theory/ practice may work to its advantage could as well be implied in the context of contemporary travel writing as "they provide a subtler and more nuanced view of colonial subjectivity and colonial relationships than the usual 'us' and 'them' distinctions" (206).

Although travel writing in the post-colonial world has become inseparable from the imperialistic world view it is accused of displaying, there are also a host of other critics who would like to differ on this aspect. Brian Musgrove, for example, believes that the prevailing trend of associating the genre of travel writing with the "grand narrative of imperialism" is nothing but a "monocular view, which itself seeks to explain the one-eyedness of eurocentric representations" (32). He, on the other hand, rather caustically comments on the inseparability of the genre and post-colonialism in the contemporary scene in the following way: "Travel writing was set to be claimed by either formalism or post-colonialism, and the claims of the post-colonial announced an institutional gravity that could never be matched by trivially 'literary' considerations" (33). With the help from psychoanalysis studies he further indicates the inconsistencies in the practice of a post-colonial reading of every travel book: "The travelling subject, wavering between two worlds, is by no means the self-assured colonist; rather, that subject is poised to split and unravel" (39). Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan too appear to tread carefully on the topic as they write, "It would be as foolish to claim of travel writing that it is uniformly imperialistic as it would be to defend travel writers as being harmless entertainers" (ix). However, Sachidananda Mohanty, in his introduction to *Travel Writing and the Empire* (2003), appears to sum up the matter in the following way:

> While it would be sweeping to push all travel literature under an all-purpose political or imperial design, the fact remains that it is during the consolidation of large empires in the nineteenth century that we see travel literature betraying a particular awareness of the ideological and political. That is how travel writing often became a site for the collision and contestation of power. Such

accounts could be variously read as a means of cultural domination and appropriation, and alternately as identity formation under colonial rule.

(xiv)

As it happens, the critical interest in the genre of travel writing has also been involved with the application of a lot of tropes and terms—some of these generated anew, some of these rejected later on various grounds, and some of which were borrowed from other fields. Thus we have Arnold van Gennep's demarcation between 'sacred zones'—which are already culturally claimed—and 'neutral zones'—which are still open for all, like deserts—leading to an intense debate among the post-colonial theorists on these terms' validity in the post-imperial situation (Musgrove 38). Related to these terms of crossing over are again the tropes of 'border' and 'liminality' that have proved to be engaged with some of the most crucial issues related to post-colonial travel/writing. As Homi K. Bhaba finds it and others like James Clifford too agree with him, borderline sites are where culture is located and thus borderline experience has the capability to produce powerful political discourses to challenge fixed and essentialist notions of identity, to subvert the binarisms (Thieme 32), and as Flores and Yudice put it, to project a "multicultural public sphere versus hegemonic pluralism)" (qtd. in Clifford 37). The 'liminal' or the threshold, on the other hand, is identified by Bhaba and others as the interstitial environment where cultural transformation can take place and meaning is produced; while Richard Kerridge believes that "excitement grows as thresholds approach. Liminality is a source of intensity" (174).

Looking at the travel experience in such a way, even the modernist tropes like those of identity, representation, destination, exile, the exotic, migration, and immigration have been found changing their implications in a way so as to mark, in the words of Caren Kaplan, "a place of mediation in modernity where issues of political conflict, commerce, labor, nationalist realignments, imperialist expansion, structures of gender and sexuality, and many other issues all become recoded" (28). Even the tropes of authenticity and nomadism are now of considerable deliberation in post-colonial theory as Ascherson alerts us to the tendency present in some travel writers to disregard history and context, thus to elide enforced migrancy with the "freedom" of the nomad (Holland and Huggan 236). Clifford too denounces the lament of the likes of Lévi-Strauss and Peter Matthiessen over the loss of "authenticity" that supposedly occurs as a result of the white man's incursion into the

aboriginal lands, as Clifford believes this concept of "authenticity" to be a "talisman of white perceptions of the 'native other'" (Holland and Huggan 237). Among all these we should also include the already mentioned terms introduced or borrowed from other fields by Mary Louise Pratt in *Imperial Eyes* like the "contact zone", "transculturation", "anti-conquest", and "autoethnography" or "autoethnographic expression".

We, therefore, have to agree with Musgrove to some extent when he claims that today "it is virtually impossible to consider travel writing outside the frame of post-colonialism" (32) even though the notes of skepticism regarding the future of travel writing as a literary or critically engaged genre also abound. Whether it is Debbie Lisle who thinks that the genre of travel writing has always been devoid of any critical insight and political self-reflexivity (Huggan 8); or Graham Huggan who believes that the genre "has reached the point where it generates little penetrating insight or genuine novelty" (24); they share as notable an assemblage of antecedent warnings against the genre dating back to as early as Plato, and accommodating as variegated voices as Gulliver in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Claude Lévi-Strauss in *Tristes Tropiques* (1955), Paul Fussell in *Abroad: British Literary Travelling between the Wars* (1980), or Evelyn Waugh in *When the Going Was Good* (1946).

In any case, what cannot be denied is that travel writing has always left itself open to various kinds of charges regarding its form and practice through the ages. In the post-colonial scene these include James Clifford's contention that to justly upgrade the status of servants, helpers or guides, the culturally marginalized or dependent companions of the supposedly independent bourgeois travelers and their like to that of travelers would require for travel writing to completely transform itself as a discourse and genre (33-34). Graham Huggan points out yet another set of irresolvable dilemmas faced by contemporary travel writing that includes. First of all, *the political dilemma*, as globalization has, to a large extent, fuelled the climate of suspicion to intensify the political enmities and instability worldwide to make travel a risky concern. Secondly *the cultural dilemma*, as in a world where all identities are hybrid and the concept of otherness is losing its implications very rapidly, travel/writing now has no 'exotic' to base itself on. Thirdly comes *the ontological concern*, because the very definition or concept of the traveler or the travel book is now seriously challenged by the global, hybrid world where virtual and real travel now co-exist. Finally, it is *the ethical dilemma* where the unevenly developed global culture and the

commodification of the traveled-to and exploitation of the labor force in the tourism industry may persuade the traveler to give up traveling altogether (14-15).

Moreover, as Holland and Huggan also add: "The late-capitalist process of hypercommodification involves the production of commodities that are commodifying in their turn—such as travel and the travel book. Many travel books, of course, are little more than advertising vehicles, commodifying their respective terrains" (198). We can very well assume that these are what had prompted Robyn Davidson, the celebrated author of such travel books as *Tracks*, to write: "I think perhaps the whole genre needs to close. . . . We all carry a lot of cultural prejudices, and I just don't feel comfortable with it" (qtd. in Holland and Huggan 201). The conflict between the idea and practice in contemporary travel/writing arising out of the various inconsistencies inherent in its form are further elaborated upon by Holland and Huggan:

> In a postcolonial era, "otherness" is a profitable business, even if the exotica it throws up might look very different in kind from those of earlier times and places. 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, and that is reliant even as it estranges on the most familiar of Western myths. (65)

Travel writing, on the other hand, has withstood these observations to move even further into the domain of "high" literature—for, as Sallie Tisdale finds, travel writing has acquired a Midas touch while "travel has burgeoned" within a global, media-driven economy and the genre has "become . . . a way of life, a way of seeing the world" (qtd. in Holland and Huggan 205). Furthermore, travel writing has also begun to formulate its protocols and to shape a canon for itself while marketing the travel books as both supplementary to and an alternative form of travel, as can be seen in the recent establishment of the "Picador Travel Classics" or in the introduction of the prestigious literary prizes like the Thomas Cook Award.

However, irrespective of the charges thrown at the post-colonial travel writing, the critics themselves have come forward to justify the need for its survival. Huggan, for example, does not believe that travel as a practice or a discourse lacks critical insight "or that its increasingly frenetic physical and imaginative activities are a sign of the lurking political inactivity that is likely to presage its own eventual decline. On the

contrary, travel writing is as politically engaged as ever, if considerably less likely to be politically correct" (10). Huggan rather believes that the nature of this engagement today is inescapably global, with the travel writing successfully disintegrating literary boundaries to hybridize the forms and also integrating the journey metaphor with other cultural forms to produce a meaningful site for debates about mobility, location and belonging both in the present context and times to come (10).

Yet again, that the genre of travel writing is indeed trying to extend its possibilities is further witnessed in the mode of reconciliation travel writing as it addresses the vacuum in the genre following the lack of travel writings by 'victims' or the less powerful. As Peter Bishop remarks, "A reconciliation frame therefore can force us to look for other modes of travel writing. For example, how far does one need to travel before it becomes a journey?" (194). Thus, whether in its attempt to address and free itself from the taint of imperialism or other ambivalences in its form/practice; or to look for yet more experimental modes of expression, travel writing has continuously proved that it is capable of not only renewing itself but also of accommodating theorization in its practice. That travel writing, for that matter, is yet to reach its limit and is not going to be outdated very soon—and that too because of exhaustion—is once again suggested, even if in a roundabout way, in John Phillips's words:

> It may yet be possible to imagine a post-colonial writing that acknowledges the ethical demand of the other's alterity, a writing that opens itself both to the home and to the other, the home as other, writing perhaps that anticipates the other's arrival without naming the other in advance, an other-travel-writing, writing of travel to come. (80)

Section III

Introducing V. S. Naipaul and Amitav Ghosh

Born in Trinidad in 1932, the descendant of indentured labourers shipped from India, Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul himself admits to be immensely shaped by his experiences of the material and cultural deprivations in his colonial birthplace. Naipaul, the second of seven children of parents in constant discord, had to move from house to house while being at the mercy of wealthy relatives; and had made up his mind by the time he was fourteen to leave the island that he found to reflect the chaos, poverty, conflicts and frictions that characterized his own family. A scholarship to England helped him escape Trinidad in 1950; and when he returned briefly to the island in 1956, he found it so stifling and full of racial and political conflict as to be discouraging for an ambitious would-be author and decided to permanently settle down in England to pursue his career as an English writer. Nevertheless, it is the very colonial homeland of his that is known to supply the background, character and at times storylines to him throughout his writing career that started with a series of gently satiric short novels set in Trinidad such as *The Mystic Masseur* (1957), *The Suffrage of Elvira* (1958), *Miguel Street* (1959), and later, in 1961, *A House for Mr Biswas* that is often regarded as his masterpiece.

In the same year Naipaul received a grant from the Trinidad government to travel to the Caribbean that produced his first non-fiction in the form of the travel book *The Middle Passage* (1962) where he describes the West Indies as to be full of racial conflicts and prejudices that in turn makes him dismiss the region's history as grotesquely hybrid and its existing culture as self-destructive. *The Middle Passage* introduced a shift in Naipaul's writing career as he began to travel extensively after 1960 using London as his permanent return base. His writing afterwards was divided between the autobiographical fiction and journalistic non-fiction that was produced by his travels around the world.

In 1964 Naipaul produced the first of his India trilogy—the outcome of the writer's exploration of his relationship with his ancestral homeland. *An Area of Darkness* (1964) presents Naipaul's discovery of an India that is just another decaying Third

World country full of incompetent and corrupt mimic men aping American/European civilization but refusing to let go of its irrational, narrow customs and world view. As he remarked sarcastically, "Indians will never cease to require the arbitration of a conqueror" (qtd. in French 220). Naipaul was so disappointed to encounter such a country instead of the one inherited from the memories of his family in Trinidad that he appeared to regret his travel to India: "It was a journey that ought not to have been made; it had broken my life in two" (*Area* 289).

While *The Mimic Men* (1967) is Naipaul's pessimistic account of the way decolonization leads a country towards anarchy and dissolution of the civilized society—a society brought into being by the European colonizers—in the name of snatching freedom from a beneficent ruler; *The Loss of El Dorado* (1969) is another of Naipaul's fusions of history with contemporary political analysis as the writer, in search of his personal roots, attempts a history of Trinidad. Naipaul's next work, the Booker Prize winning *In a Free State* (1971), reflects his worldwide travels and is a genre-binding work that mixes travelogue, autobiography and fiction. It shares its subject with Naipaul's next novel, *Guerrillas* (1975) that explores the paradox of freedom in a post-colonial country that is beset with inter-racial conflicts, mimicry of European civilization while claiming to reject it and the inability to form a valid national identity. *The Overcrowded Barracoon* (1972), a selection of his essays and journalism, also shares the same concerns. The second of Naipaul's India trilogy, *India: A Wounded Civilization* (1977) finds him criticizing the reactionary Brahminsim in India; supporting the imposition of a State of Emergency; attacking the peasant Communist movement by university students and intellectuals as foolish and hopeless; and praising the Shiva Sena who he thinks are attempting a national rejuvenation by invoking local pride and inducing community engagements.

Naipaul's social, political, and cultural observations as he travelled to the post-colonial East Africa and Zaire were first expressed in the essay entitled 'A New King for the Congo: Mobutu and the Nihilism of Africa' in 1975 and was later republished in the collection of essays *The Return of Eva Perón* (1980) along with 'Conrad's Darkness'. These observations eventually found their way into his famous novel *A Bend in the River* (1979).

A Bend in the River (*Bend*) presents the post-colonial madness and anarchy in an Africa born out of the collapse of the old imperial order through the eyes of Salim—the traveling protagonist from an East African Muslim Indian family. As Salim buys a

shop in the town at the bend of the river from the successful migrant businessman Nazruddin and journeys to the town at the centre of Africa from his coastal homeland, he observes the various effects of a violent and anarchic process of decolonization on the economic, civic, and administrative aspects of society as well as on the private lives in the post-colonial country that is represented by the unnamed town in the novel. Thus while Salim finds his servant Ali acquiring a new name, Metty, with a new confident identity; he also finds Ferdinand, the son of his loyal customer Zabeth who is a village businesswoman, to have an uneasy relationship with his European education at the lycée run by a Belgian priest, Father Huismans. However, the undercurrent of a primitive African violence, previously restrained by the colonial rule but now let loose by the event of decolonization, causes the brutal murder of Father Huismans; while the intermittent periods of peace – only deceptive to Salim – at the town also witness the making of the Domain. The President, also known as Big Man among the Africans, introduces the Domain as a university city and research centre with the promise to disseminate modern European knowledge among the young Africans to transform the primitive country into a modern nation.

The Domain introduces Salim to Raymond, a respected European scholar close to the President, and his beautiful young wife Yvette, and re-introduces him to Indar, his friend from the coastal homeland who had migrated to England, but now is sent back to Africa for a brief period as a lecturer in the Domain by an outfit that undertook modernizing Africa as its project. When the brief passionate affair between Yvette and Salim is cut short by his doubt about her loyalty; Salim leaves for London to visit Nazruddin and later becomes engaged with his daughter Kareisha. On his return to Africa Salim finds the country at boil again with the formerly prestigious youth guards, appointed by the President and later humiliatingly dismissed by him, forming a rebellious Liberation Army, the escalating general corruption; and a nationalization policy by the President to transfer the foreigners' businesses to the Africans. Salim thus becomes a manager in his own shop now run by Théotime, whose overall incompetence does not stop him from asking for every possible service from Salim, including an authority over his servant, Metty. Metty, enraged by this humiliation and to avenge Salim's inability to protect him from Théotime, betrays his master's small collection of illegally stored treasure that not only ends Salim's only hope to safely get out of Africa but also places him in jail. Ferdinand, now a government official,

helps Salim to get out of jail and escape Africa, as the novel ends with Ferdinand's grim vision of an Africa heading towards destruction.

Among the Believers (1981) records the pessimistic and cynical impressions of Naipaul's travels to several Islamic nations including Iran and Pakistan that he finds dangerously propagating a radical religious view of the world while being unrealistic in wanting the benefits of modernity but resisting the very Western civilization that generates these. *The Enigma of Arrival* (*Enigma*), published in 1987, is another work by Naipaul that defies the boundaries of genres to include autobiography, fiction and travel writing in its structure, a structure famous for its intricacies and a brilliant craftsmanship. The novel, written as a first-person narrative, does not have a conventional storyline and is divided into five chapters. The first chapter, "Jack's Garden" describes the life of the unnamed narrator, a Trinidadian Indian in his forties, at Waldenshaw—a manor and village near Salisbury, England—where he has rented a cottage for ten years. While the countryside helps him to experience a sense of a "second childhood" by introducing him to the literary England he had been carrying around in his mind since his schooldays; he also encounters a number of personages of Waldenshaw, mostly the employees of the manor, such as the Phillipses the caretakers, Pitton the gardener, Bray the driver, the dairyman and the farm workers, Jack the gardener and his father-in-law. The chapter ends with the death of Jack that makes the narrator aware of the decay around him.

The second chapter, "The Journey", presents the narrator's journey as a scholarship student to England from Trinidad; his return journeys to the West Indies and the Caribbean; and his travels to Central and South America, Asia, and Africa as a journalist and novelist. The chapter also presents the narrator's initial uneasy relationship with England; his struggle to unite the man (irrevocably bound with his colonial past) and the writer (grown upon the model of the English literature) in himself; and a symbolic story of the last travel of a deserted traveler that he planned to write when inspired by a painting by Giorgio de Chirico titled 'The Enigma of Arrival'.

The third chapter, "Ivy", once again presents the Waldenshaw manor, especially its landlord whom the narrator never meets, as the old man, suffering from an acedia, mostly remains confined in the manor house; and about whom the narrator feels varied emotions, some of them contradictory. While he cannot help but feel awe at the imperial legacy the landlord represents and also empathizes with him, the decline of

whose race as former imperial masters opened the doors of England to the people like the narrator; it also grieves him to witness the decay of the once formidable empire as represented by the crumbling down of the magnificent imperial edifices like the manor he is a tenant of.

"Rooks", the fourth chapter, concentrates on the theme of death and decay at a more physical level as with the suicide of his friend Alan; the sudden death of Mr Phillips; the religious conversion of Bray following his attraction for an eccentric woman; the termination of Pitton's job that signals an end to the beautifully tended manor garden; and the detection of the severe respiratory illness of the narrator. The final chapter, "The Ceremony of Farewell" once again tries to reunite the man and the writer as the death of the narrator's sister takes him back to Trinidad where he finds the changes in his family and the island leading him to a greater realization of the need to create his own world.

India: A Million Mutinies Now (1990) is the last of Naipaul's trilogy on India though the travel to his ancestral homeland this time finds him overcome his pessimism about India's inability to surmount centuries of religious and ethnic conflicts and rather holds out some hope for what he sees. *Beyond Belief* (1998) may be considered as a continuation of *Among the Believers* as it is based on Naipaul's revisit to the non-Arabic countries among the ones he had visited in the earlier book to reconfirm his analysis of the results and implications of the radical fundamentalism in the Islamic world.

Half a Life (*Half*), appeared in 2001, is another example of Naipaul's hybrid texts as it combines autobiography, travelogue, and fiction in its narrative. The novel is about Willie Chandran, whose desperation to flee his homeland of colonial shame and defeat—symbolized by his family of an escapist father who ruined his life by marrying a low-caste woman on a misguided zeal for social reform, a crude mother who remained a strange blend of modernity and backwardness in her whole life, and an ugly and unimpressive sister—lands him in England from India as a scholarship student. In England he makes acquaintances with Percy Cato—a Jamaican migrant—and June, his attractive black girlfriend with whom Willie has a short but humiliating affair; Roger who guides Willie on his book of stories that he had been writing since his childhood and his graceful fiancée Perdita towards whom Willie feels attracted; and Marcus, a West Indian migrant who dreams of opening a bank account in the Queen's bank in England and having perfectly white grandchildren to flaunt around.

However, once Willie's stay in London nears an end and his return to India becomes unavoidable; he meets Ana, a half-Portuguese estate owner from Africa who had fallen in love with Willie after reading his book of stories; and decides to marry her to settle down in Africa. However, after eighteen years of marriage and numerous experiences in a decolonizing Africa where Willie even had a passionate affair with the wife of an estate manager, Graça; he decides to leave Ana and flee the troubled land to go to his sister Sarojini, who after being married to a German was then residing in Berlin.

The Masque of Africa (2010), on the indigenous religions in several African nations, is Naipaul's last non-fiction till date. Even though Naipaul has often declared in recent times to have found the genre of novel to have exhausted its possibilities to such an extent as to near extinction; he wrote another novel, *Magic Seeds* (*Magic*) that was published in 2004. This once again takes up the wanderings of Willie Chandran, who, encouraged by his sister Sarojini—who in turn was guided by her German husband Wolf—comes back to India and joins an underground peasant movement led by a visionary called Kandapalli. Here he comes into contact with various people like Joseph, a crippled university lecturer; and the guerillas like Einstein, Ramachandra, and Bhoj Narayan.

However, very soon as Willie finds himself disillusioned by the absurdity of the movement that he finds to be a venting ground of the personal anguishes of the half-lives for the guerrillas, he surrenders to the police, and goes to jail. Later he is released from jail with the help of Sarojini, who too had come back to India with her own lofty missions but like Willie was disillusioned enough to decide to leave India for ever. With Sarojini going back to Berlin to her German husband, Willie too leaves for London. There he once again meets Roger, now a successful lawyer dissatisfied with the socialist reforms in England that he believes are taking the country to ruin, Perdita, continuing a fractured marriage with Roger in her own way and with whom Willie has an affair; and Peter the banker, the rich patron of Roger, who for Willie symbolizes an England that has forgotten its past glory and history. The novel ends on a pessimistic and sarcastic note when Roger and Willie goes to attend the marriage of Marcus's son and instead find themselves to witness a grotesque display of decadence and decay of the imperial England that once shone bright.

Naipaul, also an accomplished writer of numerous short stories, has won several honours and literary awards in his career as a writer, the most remarkable among

these are Somerset Maugham Award in 1959, the Booker Prize in 1971, a knighthood for services to literature in 1990, the first David Cohen British Literature Prize in recognition of a 'lifetime's achievement of a living British writer' in 1993, and finally the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2001.

Amitav Ghosh, though born in Calcutta (in 1956) grew up in East Pakistan (later Bangladesh), Sri Lanka, Iran and India with his family in constant move because of the professional demands of a diplomat father who had earlier served as a Lieutenant Colonel in Indian Army. A graduate in History and post-graduate in Sociology from Delhi University, he received a diploma in Arabic in 1979 from the Institut Bourguiba des Langues Vivantes, Tunisia. He received a DPhil in Social Anthropology from Oxford University in 1982 that had also sent him in 1980 to do his field work in Lataifa, Egypt. He has worked at various times as a journalist, as for The Indian Express; as visiting Professor at various universities such as the University of Virginia, the University of Pennsylvania, the American University in Cairo, Columbia University, and Harvard University; and as Distinguished Professor of Comparative Literature at Queens College of the City University of New York. He is a resident of both the countries of India and New York, dividing his time between these two.

As Ghosh recounts in 'Naipaul and Nobel'—his essay on Naipaul and the creative connection he feels with the literary master—he had chosen a life of a creative writer quite early in life in which Naipaul had a crucial role to play: "Through my formative years, in India, Naipaul summoned in me an intensity and absorption that no other writer could evoke. I read everything he wrote, with a close and often combative attention" (par. 4).

The first novel published by Ghosh is *The Circle of Reason* (*Reason*) in the year 1986, apparently a serio-comic tale of flight and pursuit centered upon the character of Nachiketa Bose, or Alu. The novel opens with the arrival of an orphaned Alu at Lalpukur at the age of eight to live with his uncle, Balaram, and aunt, Toru-debi. Balaram, an eccentric idealist whose blind belief in the apparent universality and humanitarian tenets of the Western science is reflected not only in his worshipping of the book, *The Life of Pasteur*, and his practice of phrenology; but also in the way he antagonizes the uncrowned village lord Bhudeb Roy by protesting against his corruption and high-handedness. As Bhudeb Roy manipulates the local police to label Balaram as a terrorist, the situation becomes worse because of Balaram's eccentricities that lead to a police raid in his house where everyone except Alu is

killed. Alu, who has by this time become a master weaver, taking his lessons from Shombhu—a migrant weaver and one of the last masters of an once rich but now quickly vanishing art of weaving—begins his journey across India trying to work at various cloth mills and taking refuge with various weavers' communities while Jyoti Das, the bird-watching Assistant Superintendent of Police, pursues Alu as a suspected terrorist. Eventually Alu flees India to go to al-Ghazira, an imaginary Middle Eastern country, with other economic migrants like Professor Samuel, Kulfi, Karthamma, Chunni, and Rakesh, to work as a construction worker with Jyoti following him there too. However, as the novel goes back in time to present the long-forgotten colonial history of al-Ghazira and connects the current economic exploitation of the migrants with the beginning of colonialism that changed the face of the country for ever; it also introduces a number of characters, some of them the last surviving witnesses of the country's resistance to European imperialism, like Jeevanbhai Patel, the formerly prosperous migrant trader whose failure in his anti-imperial attempts left him in degradation, the old Malik, the former ruler of the kingdom who was later deposed by the British; Hajj Fahmy, the respected patriarch of a migrant community of Egyptian weavers, and Zindi, a migrant Egyptian and the owner of a boarding house that takes in migrant workers.

When Alu miraculously escapes death even after being trapped inside the debris of the collapsed Star, a giant supermarket under construction, he acquires a saint-like status, and when he later calls for a need to cleanse the society of dirt—reminiscent of Pasteur's fight against germs—his enthralled followers interpret it as a call to impose a new policy of centralized control of money in the community. But soon the whole situation goes out of control in such a way as to result in some deaths, some deportations, and Alu's escape from al-Ghazira along with Zindi, Kulfi and Boss-Karthamma's child. With Jyoti still on their heel, the group reaches El Oued in Algeria, where they meet Dr Uma Verma from India and also confront Jyoti whose pursuit by then had ceased to remain professional and had rather become a personal quest. The novel ends with Kulfi's death; Uma's arranging for a cremation for her that is a mixture of tradition and modernity; Alu's offering Balaram's legacy—*The Life of Pasteur*—in her funeral pyre; Alu and Zindi deciding to go to India with Boss; and Jyoti's decision to surrender himself to his lifelong desire to follow the birds and to be a man on perpetual move.

The Shadow Lines (1988), Ghosh's second novel, questions the traditional notions of nations and borders to ponder on the possibility of an imaginative reconstruction of real places as the narrative focuses on the unnamed narrator's family in Calcutta and Dhaka and their connection with an English family in London. *In an Antique Land* (*Antique*), published in 1992, is primarily based on Ghosh's experiences in Egypt where he traveled to as a research student of Social Anthropology in the year 1980. The novel, like *Reason*, presents both a spatial travel and a temporal one in Ghosh's historical search for a medieval Egyptian merchant, Ben Yiju, and his Indian slave Bomma against the backdrop of a medieval, pre-colonial era of peaceful trade and rich cultural exchange among the non-western countries across the Indian Ocean. The quest for Bomma also leads Ghosh to the history of the violent disruption of the inter-continental trade on the Indian Ocean by the greed of a militaristic Europe and the plunder of the Cairo Geniza by the European scholars in the later years. While traveling in the modern Egypt, although Ghosh finds the post-colonial nation trying to become independent with genuine sincerity; he also becomes aware of the irreparable breach caused by imperialism between a nation's pre-colonial identity and its post-colonial self-actualization in the context of the countries like Egypt and India. The novelist attributes this awareness not only to his finding the traditional beliefs and practices to be erased by the cultural imperialism of a dominant West in the post-colonial Egypt, but also to a shocking incident involving an argument between him and the local Imam. The Argument leads him to his discovery that even an apparently decolonized intellectual like himself too bears the legacy of colonialism in himself like the rural Egyptians and that thus makes his dream of repairing the ties that existed in the pre-colonial era between countries like India and Egypt an impossible task. However, while a multitude of his Egyptian acquaintances—among whom Ghosh's Hindu customs and culture never failed to arouse an emotion of wonder, shock and disbelief—and his travels into various parts of India reintroduce these countries to him, Ghosh is also able to trace Bomma to a certain extent though only to find a new set of migrants like his Egyptian friend Nabeel being claimed by the anonymity of history, this time led by a neo-imperial current of global capitalism.

Ghosh's next novel, *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1996), is a science fiction thriller that brings together characters and incidents from various countries and times while *The Glass Palace* (*Palace*), published in 2000, is an epic saga that spans almost one hundred years and introduces a multitude of characters to connect India and Burma in

their common history of colonialism. The novel begins with the British invasion into Burma and the exile of the defeated Burmese Royalty to India to gradually unfold with the depictions of the transformation of Rajkumar—an Indian orphan accidentally present in Burma during the invasion—from a crewman into a rich timber merchant with Saya John, another rootless migrant businessman, as his mentor; the abject condition of the Burmese Royalty in India; Rajkumar's travel to India to find and marry Dolly—the Burmese royal servant accompanying the exiled Royalty—with whom he fell in love long back; the Anglicized Bengali District Collector Beni Prasad Dey and his free-spirited wife Uma; Uma's friendship with Dolly spanning a short time that ends with Dolly's departure for Burma with Rajkumar and Uma's leaving for Europe following her husband's death.

The second part of the novel involves the story of Rajkumar and Dolly's life in Burma with their children Neel and Dinu; Uma—who has come back to India as a prominent leader of the independence movement in India; Arjun—Uma's nephew who after becoming disillusioned with the British Indian Army joins the anti-British struggle; Manju, Arjun's sister who marries Neel; Saya John's son and daughter-in-law Matthew and Elsa who start a rubber plantation in Burma; and Uma's discovery of Rajkumar's illegitimate son Ilongo in Matthew's plantation, that to her is another shocking instance of the sexual exploitation of the hapless migrant labourer women in these colony-like plantations.

However, with the two World Wars coinciding with the decolonizing movements in India and Burma, the lives of all the characters take unpredictable and at times disastrous turns as Arjun and his batman Kishan Singh die fighting as soldiers of the Indian National Army; Neel dies following Japanese bombings over Rangoon; Alison—Matthew's daughter and Dinu's muse and lover—dies with Saya John in the hands of the approaching Japanese soldiers; and Manju commits suicide in the Long March from Burma to India while Rajkumar and Dolly finally bring Neel and Manju's daughter Jaya back to Uma in Calcutta. The final part of the novel follows the travels of Jaya to various parts in India and to Burma in search of her roots that finally lead her to Dinu—now living in Burma under an oppressive rule of neo-colonial Military leaders that had already claimed the lives of his wife Daw Thin Thin Aye, a prominent writer, and of various other friends who resisted the militaristic rule. While Jaya is appalled by what she sees in Burma, she also finds a new hope in Ilongo who has grown into a successful leader—in business and in politics—to change the

lives of the erstwhile economically exploited labourers in Malay; and in Aung San Suu Kyi who appears to be the best resistance to the military despots in the country because of her non-violence and efforts to change the implications of politics by her preventing it from penetrating every sphere of human life.

The Hungry Tide (2004) is set against the backdrop of the immense archipelago of islands in the Sundarbans, while the temporal travel undertaken by Ghosh this time is to present to the readers how a completely uninhabitable place like the Sundarbans, ruled by violent storms, tidal waves, predatory animals and fatal accidents and diseases, had been populated by Sir Daniel Hamilton in the colonial days following his vision of a place where a united humanity would not only defeat natural forces but also social evils like prejudices based on race, class, caste, gender or religion. *The Hungry Tide* (*Tide*) has a range of characters as varied as Piyali Roy, an Indian American cetologist traveling across the Sundarbans in search of the rare Irrawaddy dolphin; Kanai Dutt, a successful Bengali interpreter living at Delhi, traveling to Lusibari in the Sundarbans to be handed over the recently found diary of Nirmal; Nirmal, Kanai's communist uncle who died in mysterious circumstances; Nilima, Nirmal's wife and a prominent social worker in Lusibari; Fokir, an illiterate fisherman and Moyna, his ambitious wife, and Kusum, a free-spirited woman and Fokir's mother.

Though the novel starts with a disheartened Piya who finds her initial attempt to search for the Irrawaddy dolphins frustrated because of the greed and corruption of the local officials; she later finds the best possible guide in the mazelike backwaters in Fokir, and their mutual trust and admiration forms a bond between them in spite of all the barriers, including that of language, lying between them. At the same time, when Kanai goes through Nirmal's diary in Lusibari he finds Nirmal's startling eye-witness narration of events leading to the ill-famous Marichjhãpi incident—how the Bangladeshi settlers sent to a camp in central India marched back to what they found to resemble their homeland most, the Sundarbans; how the hapless refugees tried to settle in Marichjhãpi resisting the state government's determination to evict them for preserving the island for tigers; and how the resistance was finally crushed by the state authorities by a brutal assault on the settlers where many women were raped and murdered, men were killed and burned, with all the bodies thrown into water—Kusum being one of these. The next section of the novel concentrates on the experiences of Piya who leaves for another search for the dolphins with Fokir, and Kanai who

accompanies them. The travel into the backwaters this time opens up another vista of experience for Piya and Kanai as they are wonderstruck by the syncretic culture of the local legend of Bon Bibi; as Kanai is forced to shed his sardonic and cynical demeanour once he realizes his utter helplessness when face-to-face with the unrestrained presence of nature; and as Piya finds herself struggling, after she watches with horror the killing of a man-eating tiger by the islanders, between her notions of human responsibility in preserving the nature and the local belief in a struggle for existence that allows the people to kill other animals for self-preservation. The journey this time also leads to some fatal events as caught into a massive storm, Fokir dies to save Piyali while Kanai loses Nirmal's diary, the only record of Marichjhãpi incident, in the waves. Though Piya and Kanai leave the islands immediately afterwards, the novel ends with their coming back to the Sundarbans, Piya for having found there her home that she had always longed for and Kanai to rewrite Nirmal's diary from his memory.

Among Ghosh's non-fiction, most of which are a combination of travelogues, historical and political research and journalism, *Dancing in Cambodia, At Large in Burma* (1998) is a collection of three essays based on his historical and political observations on present day Cambodia and his three meetings with Aung San Suu Kyi. *Countdown* (1999) can be considered as his protest against the 1998 test of five nuclear devices at Pokhran by the Indian government that also provides a brief glimpse at the current relations between India and Pakistan. *The Imam and the Indian: Prose Pieces* (2002) is a collection of eighteen essays on a wide variety of subjects such as "Tibetan Dinner" that records the plight of the displaced or "The Ghosts of Mrs. Gandhi", an account of the riot following Indira Gandhi's assassination. *The Incendiary Circumstances: A Chronicle of the Turmoil of our Times* (2005) brings together some of the finest prose-pieces, the extraordinary firsthand accounts of catastrophic events in every part of the world, that were written by Ghosh in a thirty-year career in journalism. At present Ghosh is working on his Ibis trilogy—of which two are already published, the first being *Sea of Poppies* (2008) while the second one is *River of Smoke* (2011). These novels, in their epic scope, cover a partial account of the socio-political impact of the colonial period in India; of the international events that led to Anglo-Chinese opium war in 1838; and of a world history that is presented through the experiences of the representative protagonists in Ghosh—the people at the margins.

Ghosh, also a writer of numerous short stories, has been awarded with many literary honours and awards such as *Prix Medicis Etrangère* (in Paris for *The Circle of Reason*) and the Sahitya Akademi award in 1990, the Arthur C. Clarke award for Science Fiction in 1996, and the Pushcart Prize in 1999. In 2000, Ghosh withdrew from the race from the Commonwealth Writers' Prize after *The Glass Palace* was shortlisted for the award citing ideological difference with the categorization of Commonwealth Literature. His *Sea of Poppies*, published in 2008, was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize. He has also received Dan David Prize for his innovative interdisciplinary research across traditional bounds and prototypes in 2010, and the Canadian Blue Metropolis Grand Prix for Lifetime Achievement in 2011.