Chapter I

A Definitional Quandary:

Travel, Travelogue, Travel Writing, Writing Travel

This chapter looks at some keywords associated with travel such as travel, travelogue, travel writing, and writing travel to see how different scholars have engaged with these terms. The chapter will examine the problems inherent in the terms and will examine the possibilities of putting together a provisional definition for thesis.

1.1 Defining Travel

Oxford English Dictionary (henceforth, *OED*) defines 'travel' as "to go from one place to another over a long distance" (1384). *Roget's Thesaurus* defines it as 'journey'. It also lists, among others, words such as cruising, excursion, expedition, globe-trotting, movement, navigation, passage, sightseeing, tour, touring, voyage, wanderlust as synonyms of travel. Indeed all these words express movement from one place to another place. Also, entailed in all these words is the idea of movement over a long distance. Travel involves a physical act. It is the body of the traveller which undertakes the physical act. It works away from any wandering of the mind. This idea of travel will reject the fanciful and imaginary journeys undertaken by writers of novels or epics. Away from a virtual space conjured up by the imagination of a creative writer, 'travel' as defined above is 'this worldly'. Another dimension to this travel and its synonyms as well is a sense of risk or adventure. Whether it is cruising or excursion, or expedition, globe-trotting, or other synonyms, there is a sense of risk-taking. In other words, to undertake a travel is to put oneself in some sort of danger. The

sense of risk-taking or danger gives an aura of adventure to travel. *Online Etymology Dictionary* dates the verb form 'travel' to late fourteenth century from the root word "travailen" which is "to make a journey" and originally it meant "to toil, labor."[1] Deeptha Achar makes a connection between old and new meaning of travel and adventure:

> The interweaving of old and new meanings of travel and adventure—of advent and movement, of trouble and risk—led almost inexorably to an interlocking of the two concepts, because, after all, travel characterized by chance, risk, excitement *was* adventure. (2010a: 69; emphasis in the original)

Indeed, in the historical context, one can imagine that a sense of adventure owing to real and physical danger which implied any kind of movement over a long distance travel underlined the act of travel.

One of the synonyms of travel listed above is 'voyage'. Georges Van Den Abbeele in his book *Travel as Metaphor: From Montaigne to Rousseau,* refers to an *Encyclopedie* article of 1765, "Voyage," (in Van Den Abbeele vii) written by Chevalier de Jaucourt. This article gives three definitions of voyage. These three definitions interpret voyage in three ways: grammar, commerce and education. In the grammatical sense, it is defined as the "transport of a person from the place where one is to another place that is far enough away. One makes the voyage to Italy. One makes a voyage to Paris, It is necessary for everyone to make the great voyage once. Ahead of your departure time, go deposit into your tomb the provisions for your voyage" (in Van Den Abbeele vii). Van Den Abbeele reads this definition as an anthropological one, "…it refers to the movement of human beings, of "a person," from one place to another" where "…the agent of this transportation remains unclear: the person is transported" (xv). This definition swiftly moves from a physical, spatial, literal meaning to a

[1] *Online Etymology Dictionary*. <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?search=travel&searchmode=none&p=0&allowed_in_frame=0> 14 June 2014.

metaphorical one, that is, 'death'. In the above discussion around *OED* meanings of travel, we note the absence of any mental or metaphorical meaning of journey, but de Jaucourt emphasizes it. Van Den Abbeele observes, "Beneath the anthropological perspective that guides the grammatical definition of travel lurks a risk and an anxiety, the risk—both necessary and inevitable—…The anxiety is an economic one, that of not being prepared on time, of not having set aside the necessary "provisions"" (xvi). The second definition is commercial: "the coming and goings of a mercenary who transports furnishings wheat and other things" (xvi). Here a person is involved only as a transporter of 'things' from one place to another. This is a purely commercial activity, but the person or mercenary is still making a journey. The third definition is in the sense of education, "the great men of antiquity judged that there was no better school for life than that of voyages; a school where one learns about the diversity of so many other lives, where one incessantly finds some new lesson in that great book of the world; and where the change of air along with the exercise is of profit to the body and to the mind" (xvi). Apart from education that is intellectual gain, it also profits the health. As we can see, the 'travel' of *OED* moves from the merely physical to both physical and mental geography in de Jaucourt. Van Den Abbeele highlights the profit/loss motif of this triple definition, "If travel posits the risk and anxiety of death, it also signals the way to health, wealth, and wisdom. The three definitions of the voyage thus triangulate its object as a zone of potential loss or profit" (xvi). The profit/loss motif can also be linked to the 'risk-taking' aspect of travel. One takes risk in order to move from one point to another and finish the undertaken venture.

A look at history reveals that travel, whether religious or secular, has been an integral part of human society. People have travelled from one land to another since antiquity for

more reasons than one—pilgrimage, business, trade, territorial conquest, education, leisure etc.[2] Those who traveled have left accounts of their travel in the forms of autobiographies, memoirs, treatise, travelogues, stories, poems, drawings and other mediums. These accounts are important documents for understanding the structure of the society and the world-view of the traveller.

This seemingly innocuous activity of travel and accounts of travel entered the academia in late twentieth century and different perspectives of looking at the act of travel and the act of writing about travel emerged. These perspectives led to different theories of travel and writing about travel. Any bibliography of writing or theorizing travel will reveal the tremendous amount of attention 'travel' has got in the last fifty years. For example, Simonti Sen's *Travels to Europe: Self and Other in Bengali Travel Narratives 1870-1910* lists around 140 secondary books, Tabish Khair *et al*'s *Other Routes: 1500 Years of African and Asian Travel Writing* lists some 180 secondary books, and *Travel Writing and Empire: Postcolonial Theory in Transit* edited by Steve Clark lists more than 400 secondary books in the bibliography. Even a cursory glance at such lists of secondary material will tell us that 'travel' has been theorized in virtually all disciplines of humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. Literary studies, comparative studies, sociology, anthropology, economics, history, archaeology, ethnography, philosophy and many more disciplines have looked at travel and travel writing from their own disciplinary positions. It is easy to see that the *OED* meaning of the term 'travel' has its limitations, especially when travel has come to be looked at from different disciplinary perspectives in the academia. This diverse theoretical gaze on travel poses its own problem: how to define travel. Another problem is posed through the

[2] See Hasan 2009: xiv-xv.

questioning of travel in terms of binaries: whether travel is religious/secular, inward/outward, spatial/temporal, synchronic/diachronic, home/abroad, mundane/philosophical.

It is important to remember that the academic gaze was trained on travel in the late twentieth century. It is important to account for this academic gaze by looking at the larger developments in the academia in late twentieth century. We know that late twentieth century was the time of a radical change in academic Orientation. A world-wide change in the nature and content of the academic subjects was visible from the late 1960s. Two conspicuous moments in 1960s were Jacques Derrida's essay "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," delivered as a lecture in 1966 which heralded poststructuralism. The second event was the civil unrest movement in France in May 1968 which shook the capitalist structure of the country. The "May 1968" is important from the point of the view of the academia because in an unforeseen manner, students participated in massive numbers and questioned the entire socio-political and cultural-economic structure of the country.[3]

Another important landmark year was 1978 when Edward Said, Professor of Comparative Literature at Columbia University, published his book *Orientalism*. The publication of this book heralded another important school of theory—postcolonial theory. Postcolonial theory, based on Said's book, changed the way literature was read and taught in the academia. Postcolonial theory took as its task to analyze how colonialism was unleashed upon the colonized subjects as a discursive function and how cultural aspects as such education, language, and literature were used as tools for facilitating the establishment of colonialism. It led to a close reading of literary texts so see how those literary texts encoded within themselves two simultaneous discourses: political and aesthetic. This understanding

[3] Mary Baine Campbell traces the interest in travel writing as inevitable for the "reimagining of the world" after post-World War II resistance movements and liberation of the former colonies of Europe coupled with the "waves of immigration that followed" (261).

allowed the readers and teachers of literary texts to realize that texts were not autonomous embodiments of aesthetic pleasure; rather they were to be looked at as the active partners in the expansion of European colonialism. A literary text came to be seen as a political text. Said's book establishes how 'travel' came to be the central element in what he calls the epistemological constitution of the 'Orient'. Said works with three overlapping definitions of Orientalism. First, Orientalism is a discipline which involves anyone who teaches or writes about the Orient. A special feature of this discipline is that it straddles multiple disciplines. There is no one particular discipline. Rather it refers to an academic tradition in itself. The second definition is the general meaning of the term which is 'a style of thought' based on the permanent difference between the Orient and the occident. There is a sharp distinction here. What an Orient is can be defined as that which is not occident and vice-versa. The third and most powerful definition of Orientalism borrows the notion of 'discourse' from Michel Foucault. This definition shows how Orientalism was used as a discourse to establish and deploy the network of power in the colonized societies. Said argues that the West used the concept of Orientalism to define its own 'self' vis-à-vis the Oriental 'other'.

It is Said's thesis which showed how 'travel' was linked to colonial expansion throughout the history of European civilization. The European explorers set out to map the world from the fifteenth century onwards. It is explorations and voyages such as these which established colonialism in most parts of Asia, Africa and Latin America for more than five centuries. Said shows how such explorations and voyages carried both armies as well as scholars (in many cases missionaries too). Citing Vico's assertion that history is not a set of facts revealed to us by historians; rather history is a man-made object, Said extends this line of thinking further. According to Said, not only history but geography too is man-made and

that a nation is an imagined geography, an imagined map. This map has been imagined by generations of travellers, explorers, voyagers and scholars. In the wake of Said's thesis, de Jaucourt's triple definition of voyages betrays the pet project of European renaissance, "progress, the quest for knowledge, freedom as freedom to move, self-awareness as an Odyssean enterprise, salvation as a destination to be attained by following a prescribed pathway (typically straight and narrow)" (in Van Den Abeele 1992: xv). This, as with Said, squarely leads the idea of travel to European colonialism which began after the renaissance. Post-colonial theory has seized Said's focus on textual practices of colonialism to launch a counter-textual critique to colonialism. Pratt, referring to the dialectic approach to travel writing, observers:

> While the imperial metropolis tends to understand itself as determining the periphery (in the emanating glow of the civilizing mission or the cash flow of development, for example), it habitually blinds itself to the ways in which the periphery determines the metropolis—beginning, perhaps, with the latter's obsessive need to present and re-present its peripheries and its others continually to itself. Travel writing, among other institutions, is heavily organized in the service of that imperative. So, one might add, is much of European literary history. (6)

As I have argued in the introduction, James Clifford too attempts to link travel and theory in his essay "Notes on Theory and Travel." He divides those people who undertake travel into different categories: pilgrims, merchants, navigators, cartographers, explorers, tourists, travelers etc. Clifford refers to Paul Fussel who distinguishes between explorers, travelers and tourists (1). For Fussel, explorers are those who explore the 'undiscovered'. People like Francis Drake and Edmund Hillary are in this category. Traveller is one who finds out that 'which has been discovered by the mind working in history' and finally, tourists travel to those places that have been 'discovered by entrepreneurship and prepared

for him by arts of mass publicity'. Here, the traveller occupies 'middle of the road' position. Fussell explains it:

> If the explorer moves toward the risks of the formless and the unknown, the tourist moves toward the security of pure cliché. It is between these two poles that the traveler mediates, retaining all he can of the excitement of the unpredictable attaching to exploration, and fusing that with the pleasure of "knowing where one is" belonging to tourism. (in Clifford 178)

Clifford further elaborates that Fussell's distinction between explorer, traveler and tourist has an' assumed topography,' that is,

> The explorer "seeks" the undiscovered; he and the other voyagers "move toward" different experiences, discoveries. However formless or unknown the places an explorer visits… the explorer's point of departure is clear. Home is a stable place to tell one's story, show one's photos, get one's knighthood. In Fussell's topography, home and abroad are still clearly divided, self and other spatially distinct …. The Eurocentrism, let alone andro- and Anglocentrism, of Fussell's definitions is all too clear. The genuine, reflective traveler, "mediating" extremes, seeking what "has been discovered by the mind working in history," moves across a landscape where things are in place—home and abroad, us and them—where one can go "out" and "return" with a representable experience or a discovery of interest to a stable community of readers. "The mind working in history?" There is no need to ask whose mind, whose history . . . Fussell is right that these preconditions for the "genuine traveler" are no more. (178)

Clifford, thus, positions Fussell's account of travel and traveller right in the hegemonic European idea of travel and travel writing. Fussell does not feel the need to define whose mind and whose history underwrites the travel. The assumptions along hegemonic lines are clear. Among other things the above-quoted analysis, Clifford mentions 'stable community of readers'. The traveller not only travels but also records the travel so that it can be recounted to the community of readers. Travel, here incorporates writing about travel. This writing about travel can be for various reasons. One of those reasons could be that writing

about travel authenticates the act of travel, that is, it becomes evidence to the act of travel. This evidence could be produced to the community of readers and this community of readers, by their act of reading the account of travel, will in turn consolidate the truth of the travel undertaken. So, the print capitalism enters in the picture. We know that travellers have left accounts of their travel in diverse forms like travel book, travel journal, memoirs, diaries, pictures, maps, photographs, videos and films. It must be underlined that without the apparatus of print capitalism, such accounts would not have found a place in the consumer marketplace. These accounts and narratives also act as an 'anchoring ground' for the traveller. The traveller goes out of his/her 'home' and makes the journey. The journey is complete only when s/he comes back to the 'home'. The home provides a secure ground from where one's travel can be recounted to the audience at home and in the process also fashions a 'self' vis-à-vis the foreign 'other'.

The proliferation of such narratives gives rise to another more academic concern related to taxonomy. How are we to classify such narratives? How to account for such narratives is a challenge which has been taken up in the last four decades. The following section discusses various theories of travel.

1.2 Travel Writing, Travelogue and Writing Travel

Defining these three terms: travel writing, travelogue and writing travel has proved to be a difficult task. A simplistic understanding of these terms as writing about the travel which one has undertaken does not hold water any longer. The historical reality of European colonialism in much of the world and its umbilical relation to travel, exploration and travel narratives, as discussed above, has contributed to the problem of defining the field of travel

narratives. Similarly, the wide variety of challenges and responses to European colonialism in the erstwhile colonies has complicated the understanding of this genre. It is obvious that complexity involved in defining the term is due to the theoretical tools and frameworks such as Marxism, structuralism, poststructuralism, postcolonialism, and feminism which evolved from nineteenth century onwards in European and North American countries and has travelled into academia in South Asian and African countries.

In last two decades, scholars such as Tim Young and Jan Borm have started questioning whether all narratives of travel can be considered as 'travel writing'. If travel writing is a genre, then how to account for proliferation of nomenclatures? Tim Young notes that, "Travel writing feeds from and back into other forms of literature. To try to identify boundaries between various forms would be impossible and I would be deeply suspicious of any attempt at the task" (in Brom 13). Jan Brom, in his essay "Defining Travel: On the Travel Book, Travel Writing and Terminology" argues that travel writing is not a genre but "a collective term for a variety of texts both predominantly fictional and non-fictional whose main theme is travel" (13). He stresses the presence of *literary* in all such works. He rejects Theroux's distinction of travel writing from fiction as "recording what the eye sees and discovering what the imagination knows." Brom stresses "the element of fiction in recounting of conversation in the course of travel." Brom quotes Mary Louise Pratt who discusses the way editors and professional writers make significant changes in the manuscript of the travel writing in order to embellish it (Brom 15). David Lodge, in his book *Practice of Writing*, mentions the use of fictional devices such as scenic construction, present tense narration, prolepsis, iterative symbolism etc. in travel narratives (in Brom 16). Brom further invokes Jonathan Raban:

> As a literary form travel writing is a notoriously raffish open house where different literary genres are likely to end up in the same bed. It accommodates the private diary, the essay, the short story, the prose poem, the rough note and polished table talk with indiscriminate hospitality. It freely mixes narrative and discursive writing. (in Brom 16)

These discussions problematize the very idea of travel literature as a genre. I wish to build upon this discussion to argue that to consider travel writing or travelogue as a genre different from other genres, say literary studies, anthropology, ethnography, political writing, and sociological writing will not yield any result. It will rather be more fruitful to locate the trope of travel, following Said and Clifford, away from its conventional positioning in travel writing and travelogue to different sets of writing mainly political, economic, and social writings and acts to see how travel operates as a trope and a structuring device in such writings.

Roy Bridges attempts to define travel writing as "a discourse designed to describe and interpret for its readers a geographical area together with its natural attributes and its human society" (53). To this definition, Khair adds that travel writing "also entails defining, consciously or unconsciously, the writer's relationship to a geographical area, its natural attributes and its society and culture, and just as significantly the writer's relationship to his/her own culture" (4). These formulations of travel writing suggest the wide disciplinary spaces that encompasses. It traverses ethnography, anthropology, geography, natural sciences, sociology, philosophy along with science and technology (modes of travel). Noting this feature of travel writing, Steve Clark writes:

> The genre [travel writing] obviously overlaps with numerous other discourses of colonialism – bureaucratic instruction, demographic report, geographic mapping, military order, journalistic propaganda (Spurr [1993] acknowledges no distinction)- and the journey itself encodes inevitable ideological aspects: spiritual pilgrimage (Mandeville), mercantile prospectus (Hakluyt), mercenary

> campaign (Stedman), colonial expedition (Doughty). These do not however exhaust the potentialities of travel writing as a form: the self-reflexivity of the journey/quest motif; its intricate layering of temporalities; and its allegorical resonances with regard to the traveller's own culture. (3)

Kate Teltscher also underlines the connection between travel writing and production of knowledge about India:

> Travel Writing was was inevitably involved in the Victorian project to map, classify, and comprehend the Indian empire, both its present and past. Travel texts increasingly directed their attention to India's history and monuments. (193)

This understanding of travel writing owes its insight to Clifford's definition of travel as a "range of practices for situating the self in a space or spaces grown too large, a form both of exploration and discipline." The word 'exploration' in Clifford and wide disciplinary areas conveyed by Hulme and Youngs situates this understanding of travel writing squarely int European colonialism and European writings on travel. Inderpal Grewal in her book *Home and Harem: Nation, Gender, Empire and the Culture of Travel*, notes how rhetoric of travel is directly linked to education of young men in eighteenth century England and indicates the link of travel with class and gender formation in the eighteenth century England (1).

This location of travel writing within the larger logic of European colonialism raises questions about the travel writing emerging from other parts of the world. Studies from 1980s onwards grappled with this question. Postcolonial theory, in the wake of Said's *Orientalism*, looks at the question of travel writing vis-à-vis the process of colonization of the non-European world. European colonization not only ensured travel writing as a solely European enterprise but also worked towards the erasure of any evidence of travel writing by non-Europeans. Theorists have noted how the colonial enterprise ensured that travel writing remains the prerogative of Europe by systematically denying the trope of travel to colonized

subjects and by ensuring that even when a colonized subject writes about travel it will be in tune with the logic of European travel narratives. Thus, the genre remained sharply Eurocentric. Grewal notes that the notion of [European] travel allows no scope for any other kind of non-European travel like "migration, immigration, deportation, indenture and slavery" (2). Such travels (that do not fit in the European discourse) are erased out of existence. Khair points that the use of the word 'travel' in an Anglophone way is a site more of blindness than of sight (5). By using the term 'blindness' Khair refers to the erasure of travels of entire groups of people. To take the argument further, he says that "travel and travel writing were (and are) about the gaze of power. It is this that helps explain how the movements of some (non-European) peoples were effectively frozen under the narrative gaze, even when European travellers noted the presence of non-European travellers in the margins of their texts" (7).

The analysis of European hegemony of travel writing has been coupled with the analysis of sites of resistance by the colonized subjects. The close reading of texts, travel or otherwise, revealed diverse set of strategies employed by colonized subjects to counter the onslaught of European cultural projects. These readings into resistance have further sought to cast travel writing in a different light. Grewal explains how the proliferation of newer works in the field problematizes travel and travel writing "as a consolidation of stable unitary identities of nation, class, sexuality or gender, and suggest forms of Selfhood that evade such consolidation" (3). Clark also notes that against the strong model of travel writing and empire there are "less authoritarian model of transit" found in newer works. He points to works of authors who have casted travel and travel writing against the dominant European notion. Among such works, he counts Abu-Lughod's *Before European Hegemony: The World*

System AD 1250-1350 which deals with mobility within pre-European world systems; Marcus Rediker's *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant, Seamen, Pirates and the Anglo-American World* talks about the transnational movements against the gravitational pull of metropolitan centre; Caren Kaplan's *Question of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* reconstitutes the female politics of the local; and Avtar Brah's *Cartographies of Desire: Contesting Identities* looks at the phenomenology of diaspora and other forms of enforced migrancy (Clark 2-3).

Books on travel writing and its theories mention in great detail about what constitutes travel writing. But there is no clear definition or theorization of the word 'travelogue'. Most of the writers and theorists of travel writing have used the word 'travelogue' but have not said whether the travelogue is same as or different from travel writing. In many writings, there are sections with topics which include the word 'travelogue' but sections goes on to talk about travel writing. With such kinds of writers, one can feel that 'travelogue' is same as 'travel writing'. I wish to argue that although travelogue overlaps with travel writing in large parts, there is some difference between the two and this difference between the two is crucial to my understanding of the genre and how travel writing as well as travelogue came to be recognised as different genres in the historical sense.

According to *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*), the travelogue is "a film/movie, broadcast or piece of writing about travel" (1385). Online Oxford English Dictionary extends this definition as "a film, book or illustrated lecture about the place visited by or experiences of a traveller."[4] This is an important definition which has recurred in most of dictionaries of Cambridge, Merriam-Webster, and Longman. For me, this is an important definition in at least two ways. First, this definition broadens the field of travel writing from books and texts

[4] <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/travelogue?q=travelogue> 26 May 2013.

to other forms of expression, here the audio-visual medium is also accounted for. So, travelogue is produced also as a movie or documentary or illustration apart from only writing whereas travel writing is merely writing about travel. Second, this definition talks about the 'experience of a traveller'. There is an element of physical traversing of space by the traveller and experiencing the destination and then reflecting on the travel as well as the place travelled. This will mean that a travelogue can only be a first-hand account of the travel. I cannot read travelogues by various authors and then compose my own travelogue from those accounts whereas this is possible in the case of travel writing. This meaning of travelogue owes itself to American traveller Burton Holmes (1870-1958). Holmes put together the word 'travel' and '-logue' (as in monologue) and came up with the word travelogue.[5] Holmes was a well-known name on American travel lecture circuits and used slide shows for lectures. He later shifted to movie clips to showcase his travels. This explains the audio-visual extension to accounts to travel.

Notwithstanding the coining of the term 'travelogue' in early twentieth century, it can be used retrospectively for written narratives of travel which the writer has undertaken. What is important to note at this moment is that in different parts of the world, the rise in the phenomenon of 'travelogue' owes itself to the historical conditions of the place. For instance, Bhaskar Mukhopadhyay brings in the historical condition of experience as a reason for emergence of travelogues in colonial Bengal. He poses the question how and why travelogues by Bengali travellers made an appearance in 1870s and onwards. What accounts for little or virtually no account of self-conscious travelogues before that period needs to be looked at although people travelled to the metropole in earlier times too. He asks:

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[5] <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=travelogue> 26 May 2013.

> how, when, and if at all, narratives of travel written in non-Western languages become "travelogue," and raise the troubling issue of how colonialism ("referent") was implicated in it. The latter part of the nineteenth century was the period when modern genres like novel, autobiography, diary and travelogue were gradually emerging in Bengal. (294)

Mukhopadhyay cautions us not to confuse travelogue with travel writing. He locates travelogue in the "inscription of of the touristic experience of sightseeing" (295). He locates the rise of travelogue in the historical rise of 'tourist'—a 'modern self' possessing of 'structure of feeling' and implicated in 'autobiographical project' (295).

As pointed out above, notwithstanding its comparatively recent origin, the term travelogue has been used to denote a wide variety of travel writings where the author has undertaken the travel and spent some time in the place(s) of travel. Such travelogues then become the site where and author reflects on the places visited and also on the act of travel itself. The suffix '-logue' itself means a discourse of a certain kind. The monologue is a discourse of a kind which is different from dialogue, both have their own contours. Similarly, travelogue has come to signify a particular kind of discourse on travel which may be somewhat different from other forms of travel writing.

The concept of travel writing and travelogue can be understood through a discussion of a couple of texts to show how a text can occupy a tense position between the two categories of travel writing and travelogue. This section will discuss two texts, Dean Mahomet's *The Travels of Dean Mahomet, A Native of Patna in Bengal, Through Several Parts of India, while in the Service of The Honourable The East India Company, Written by Himself, In a Series of Letters to a Friend* which was published in 1793-94 and Richard Burton's *Falconry in the Valley of the Indus* which was published in 1851. The analysis of both the texts will be informed by the discussion on travel, travel writing and travelogue

which was discussed in the earlier sections of this chapter. There is a separation of more than half-a-century of years between the two texts. Both the texts are similar in the sense that they talk about India and that they are exercises in the fashioning of 'self'. Similarities, however, end here. Dean Mahomet was an Indian who took employment with East India Company's army and as a camp follower of a young Irish officer he ended up in Ireland in 1786. Richard Burton was a surveyor with the East India Company, but more than that he is famous as a geographer, translator, writer (of numerous books) and most of all an Orientalist and explorer.

1.3 Dean Mahomet: Travelogue and Writing 'Self'

Dean Mahomet holds the distinction of writing and publishing the first book ever in English language by an Indian. More importantly, this book is a travel narrative recounting his journey to different parts of India while being in the service of the East India Company. The narrative of his book is in epistolary form addressed to an unknown friend. The choice of epistolary narrative can be traced to the popularity of this form in eighteenth century England. The book came out in the Irish city of Cork where Dean Mahomet had settled during that period. The book deals with travel within India, but the very fact that it was meant for western audience in Ireland makes this narrative an interesting exercise in self-fashioning. This narrative can be problematized vis-à-vis the question of genre.

Dean Mahomet was born in 1759 in Patna to a probably middle class Muslim family. His father was a Subedar with the army of East India Company. This fact can be read as the choice being exercised by middle classes in India from mid-eighteenth century whether to serve with the Mughal administration or to join the emerging East India Company. It clearly

reflects the growing power and clout of the East India Company as an economic and increasingly political force. Michael Fisher notes that, "In this environment, Muslim families such as Dean Mahomet's had to make difficult and potentially dangerous choices about their future and their allegiances. Many chose service to the English" (1997: 4). Dean Mahomet's father lost his life in 1769 in a military operation. His elder brother got his father's position in the service leaving the eleven year old Dean Mahomet to fend for himself. Very soon, Dean Mahomet established contact with a teenage Anglo-Irish officer Godfrey Evan Baker from Cork. Dean Mahomet became a camp follower of Baker and remained with him throughout Baker's time in India and eventually went to Ireland along with Baker in 1784. Effectively, from 1769 they were together till 1787, the year Baker died in Cork. This association led Dean Mahomet to his extensive travels in India and his eventual travel and settling in Ireland and later on in England.

Dean Mahomet's employment with the army of the East India Company took him from Patna to Calcutta to Delhi to Dhaka and to Madras. He records all this meticulously in his travelogue. Along with Captain Baker, Dean Mahomet went to Bankeepur, Danapur, Phulwari, Karamnasa, Munger, Bhagalpur, Calcutta, Murshidabad, Bahrampur, Varanasi, Bilgram, Allahabad, Lucknow, Delhi, Gwalior, Buxar, Kanpur and Dacca. These places cover most of north India, more specifically the plains around the river Ganges. Although these expeditions were for military purposes, Dean Mahomet describes every possible thing which fascinated him in these places. He talks about the history and architecture of many cities and towns, discusses the political rule in many places and kinds of intervention which the East India Company made in those places. He talks a great deal about the customs, rituals, religion, and other social mores of the people. In many instances, these descriptions

are local and in other places Dean Mahomet gives a general picture of India. Very interestingly, he discusses the Hindu religion and its different castes and the life of the people in these four castes. What strikes one in such descriptions is the tone of the writing. Dean Mahomet is very clear in his writing about who are the readers of this travel narrative. It can safely be assumed that the unknown friend in the narrative refers to people in Ireland and perhaps Europe at large, thus requiring a detailed exploration. It is a curious situation. Dean Mahomet who is an outsider to the Irish society is playing the role of a willing insider of the 'other' and passing on the information about his native society. It is important to locate Dean Mahomet in this complex dialogic world of the 'self' and the 'other'. In doing so, it important to move away from the stark binary of self/other and look for the fuzziness of the identity as suggested by Fisher (1997: 7).

Now coming to the question of genre, it is important to look at the conceptualization of travel writing and travelogue once again. As discussed above, travel writing, as defined by Bridges and expanded on by Khair is a discourse about a geographical area with its natural attributes and human society. This discourse also figures out the relationship of the writer to the subjects of his narrative (4). Travelogue, on the other hand, is a film, book or illustrated lecture about the place visited or experienced by a traveller. Looking at the two terms, it is difficult to find much difference. The two terms overlap so much that it is difficult to differentiate them. But it may be pointed out that travelogue is an account which is given by the person who has undertaken the act of travel. This person makes the journey or voyage or exploration and then comes back to recount the narrative of the journey or voyage or exploration to the audience at home. We can mention the works of Munshi Itesamuddin, Mirza Abu Taleb Khan and Lutfullah Khan as travelogues. All three travelled to England and

Europe at large and came back and wrote their accounts which can be labelled as travelogues. Travelogue can be considered as different from travel writing in the sense that the writer of the travel writing may not have to undertake the physical act of travel. A writer may use written material or oral material about a place and produces an account of the travel, such an account may be considered as travel writing but not a travelogue as no element of personal experience is mentioned in the geographical area visited. So, an argument could be made that a travelogue, in its written form, is certainly a specimen of travel writing but travel writing may not necessarily be a travelogue. It is important to point out that the term 'travelogue' was coined in early twentieth century but to say that this precludes any kind of travel narrative before twentieth century as travelogue will be a fallacy because this definition has two new components, that of film and illustrated lecture whereas the third important component of writing goes back to antiquity. So, the term can be applied to travel narratives of pre as well as post 1900 CE provided that they fulfill the condition of the writer making the journey himself/herself. Dean Mahomet's account poses a challenge to categorization.

Dean Mahomet begins his narrative by invoking the eagerness on part of the reader to know the writer's life and travel in India and he is more than willing to supply the details of the exotic Orient:

> Since my arrival in this country, I find you have been very anxious to be made acquainted with the early part of my Life, and the History of my Travels: I shall be happy to gratify you; and must ingenuously confess, when I first came to Ireland, I found the face of everything about me so contrasted to those *striking scenes* in India, which we are wont to survey with a kind of sublime delight, that I felt some timid inclination, even in the consciousness of incapacity, to describe the manners of my countrymen, who, I am proud to think, have still more of the innocence of our ancestors, than some of the boasting philosophers of Europe. (36)

By contrasting the 'innocence of our ancestors' to those of 'boasting philosophers of Europe' Dean Mohamed sets the stage for the play of binary logic of eastern innocence vis-à-vis western knowledge. All that remains to be done is to fill in the details of '*striking scenes*' of Orient in the mental canvas of the European imagination. These '*striking scenes*' are nothing less than 'sublime delight' for the reader. In this first paragraph, the self is identified with 'my countrymen'; but later on in the narrative this identification is not developed in any way. This first letter is marked by its projection of India as the land of dreams and enchantment and its people as "peculiarly favoured by Providence in the possession of all that can cheer the mind and allure the eye" (36). This divine land is no less than the mythical Eden as celebrated by John Milton. 'Plenty', 'generous', 'beautifully diversified' are some of the words used to describe the landscape of the country. Dean Mahomet goes on to match the divinity of the land to the divinity of character of its inhabitants who are benevolent, full of good-will and devoid of 'every species of fraud or low cunning'. The restraint in manners and behaviour has been coopted as the preserve of the self which is different from the 'profligacy of manners too conspicuous in other parts of the world'. And very quickly women emerge in this narrative as the site where virtue has been encoded, "and our women, though not so accomplished as those of Europe, are still very engaging for many virtues that exalt the sex" (36). Women become the repository of culture and virtue in the society. As Indian women are more virtuous than European women, the logic extends itself to the superiority of Indian culture over the European one.

After this introduction to the 'exotic' land of India, Dean Mahomet takes the reader right into his childhood and talks about his father being in the service of the Company's army. Although he does not give many details about his father, he notes with pride to he was

a "gallant father" (37). Young Dean Mahomet was fascinated by the glamour of King's court but most of all, it was the manner and aura of British officers of the Company's army and other gentlemen that attracted him most and he waited at his door for them to pass by. The second letter details the desires of Dean Mahomet to enter the services of the East India Company's army

> Nothing could exceed my ambition of leading a soldier's life: the notion of carrying arms, and living in a camp, could not be easily removed: my fond mother's entreaties were of no avail: I grew anxious for the moment that would bring the military Officers by our door. Whenever I perceived their route, I instantly followed them. (38-39)

This fascination for the military officers found its culmination in meeting Godfrey Evan Baker who was at that moment just a teenage cadet. But eleven year old Dean Mahomet followed him everywhere till he caught his attention and was invited by Baker to live with him. Ecstatic Dean Mahomet accepted it readily and was in turn assured by Baker of "his [Baker's] future kindness" but this future kindness was conditioned upon the hope that Dean Mahomet would merit it. The condescending attitude of Baker was not registered by Dean Mahomet and he happily embarked on his military career as *aide-de-camp* of Baker. It is a pertinent question to ask why Dean Mahomet who traced his lineage from the family of rulers of Murshidabad was so desperate to accept such a lowly position. He mentions that his mother still had means to provide for him and herself and that she lived comfortably if not luxuriously. Is it solely because of a childish fascination with the army and Europeans? Does it point to shifting paradigms in the society of late eighteenth century north India? Dean Mahomet does not dwell on this at length. He was so determined that he refused the repeated advice and requests of his mother and elder brother. He describes the episode when his mother comes to the camp to beg Baker to send her son back but Dean Mahomet refuses to

go back. The "deep sense of gratitude to a sincere friend conquered my duty to an affectionate parent, and made me determine in favour of the former" (41). Some answer to this deep sense of camaraderie between Baker and Dean Mahomet can be found in this same scene where after his mother goes back, Dean Mahomet's sadness overcomes him. At that time, Baker and other officers try to give solace to him and arrange for different amusements to divert his mind. The fact that Dean Mahomet mentions this gesture indicates how he registers the concern the British showed towards him when he was in distress. Can it be said that this camaraderie was entirely possible during the early part of British colonialism in India where the company officials and Indians interacted with each other more freely and the colonial snobbery was not blatantly expressed? In any case, Dean Mahomet found himself perfectly at home in the company of his colleagues and bosses in the army.

After gaining an entry into the army, rest of the letters deal with details which Dean Mahomet registers and there are many of such details ranging from grand houses of officers, arrangements of the army camp, architecture, layout of cities and so on. Everything about the British is fine, stately, wonderful and marvellous. He describes each block in great detail and how it adds to the overall grandeur of the set-up. Not only Dean Mahomet himself, but many times even the "natives [who] flocked from all quarters, for many miles around, were delighted and astonished" (49). In letter III, while describing the effect of famine on the poor people, the idea of 'self' shiftes dramatically from being Indian to something other than Indian. India is now being described as "their country." He describes the condition of the poor people, "Little did the treasures of *their country* avail them on this occasion: a small portion of rice, timely administered to their wants, would have been of more real importance than *their* mines of gold and diamonds" (40-41; emphasis added). In another instance where

he describes palanquins as similar as sedan chairs in Ireland, he writes, "Every palankeen is attended by eight servants, four of whom, alternately, carry it, much in the same manner as *our sedan chairs* are carried in this country [Ireland]" (44; emphasis added). This shifting of 'self' can be linked to his feeling at home in the British company. Also, as a part of the army of the East India Company, he was constantly in strategic operations against Indian rulers and it can be an important reason that he believed himself to be different from rest of the people of the country. This detachment is evident in writing where he shows no sympathy to the Indian rulers against whom the East India Company launched military campaigns, defeating and humiliating them in the process. Rather he feels great satisfaction in procuring the appreciations of his British colleagues and officers. Another reason for this shifting can also be located in the time and space of the writing and publication of this narrative. Although, the travel described happened in 1770s and early part of 1780s, the narrative was written and published in 1793-4 in Ireland and by that time Dean Mahomet was already residing in Ireland for more than six years and considered himself more or less to be a part of the European society.

The decision to pen the narrative can be due to the rising popularity of the travel narratives in Europe. Any description of the 'Orient' was read with enthusiasm in the eighteenth century Europe as the continent was already on the verge of entering the high colonial period. The hunger for exploring, mapping, charting and classification (in natural science) already made major headways by the mid-eighteenth century Europe. It was the time when Europe—constantly marked by internal rivalries and strife—imagined itself as one unit and labelled rest of the planet the 'Other' of Europe. Pratt's reading of eighteenth century

Europe's "planetary consciousness" (15) provides us a clue to the problem of Europe's understanding of the 'self' vis-à-vis the 'other'.

Despite all its internal rivalries, nations of Europe came together in the eighteenth century at two key moments: one, was the publication of Carl Linnaeus' *The System of Nature* which came out in 1735 and two, in the same year, a grand scientific expedition was undertaken by the combined effort of European nations to settle the question regarding the exact shape of the earth. Pratt terms both these events as "deeply European events" (15). Both these were grand exercises undertaken to produce a knowledge system which would eventually be the base of a Eurocentric world system. Both these exercises, according to Pratt, led to a planetary consciousness of Europeans. Both these exercises produced a template which was to be repeated again and again in times to come. The shift from maritime exploration to interior exploration led to massive literature production about the new spaces discovered. These literatures in turn helped to whet the European appetite for explorations and production of new literature about new places and people. The rise of print capitalism helped in the process. Memoirs, diaries, travel journals, scientific treatises, and most importantly, the rise of English novel worked concomitantly with this massive interior exploration of African, Asian and American continents. The economic and social locus of Dean Mahomet's narrative can be placed in this historical process.

The exploration across the world by European travellers started the system of binaries which we are familiar with: self/other, culture/nature, civilized/savage, white/black, modern/primitive and so on. These binaries were repeated ad infinitum in all kinds of writing and later on became important tool in all scientific as well as human sciences. In Dean Mahomet, we can see the slow internalization of these binaries. He uses the word 'savage'

and ‘licentious barbarians’ to describe a group of villagers who entered their camp and stole many valuables whereas the European ‘we’ suffered the losses with ‘patience’—a virtue associated with high, noble character, thus signifying great civilization. This great civilization is constantly under threat from savages. Such attacks were repeated in other places also making the business of existence very precarious, “Two of our hotteewallies, supposed to be massacred by them before this expedition, were found in a miserable state from their unmerciful treatment: they were endeavouring to crawl to the camp, disabled, and almost bleeding afresh from their recent wounds” (49). He presents himself as confronting the same dangers that dogged his European comrades.

If at all Dean Mahomet felt disdain for behaviour of his countrymen, such feelings did not last long and he soon found solace in ancient Indian civilization which has always been a saving grace for humanity. Even a simple thing like clean wells for drinking water comes in for special praise in glowing terms:

> The former natives of this part of the world, whose purity of manners is still perpetuated by several tribes of their posterity, having foreseen the absolute necessity of such refreshment, and that in the region they inhabited, none could be more seasonable than founts of water for the use of succeeding generations, contrived those inexhaustible sources of relief in situations most frequented; and to prevent any thoughtless vagrant from polluting them, took care to inspire the people with a sacred piety in favour of their wells, and a religious dread of disturbing them. For this reason, they remain pure and undefiled, through every age, and are held in the most profound veneration. (45)

This same piety is shown in describing a hermitage where the army was given food and water. The sylvan atmosphere came in for praise on more than a few occasions. Dean Mahomet is a keen observer as well as a listener. He not only describes settings in details but also tells local stories of a place without looking down upon people and their narrative practices. While describing the Pirpahar monument in Mugher district, he recounts the

popular story of how a person was punished by divine injunction for destroying the piety of the place. No moral injunctions were passed nor were these stories questioned for their 'superstition' as we find in descriptions by the European travellers.

Whatever his intentions are, Dean Mahomet has described religious rituals and customs in an unbiased way. He describes different ceremonies of the Muslim community like birth, circumcision, marriage, and death in detail. Hinduism also receives the same treatment. He talks about the caste system. More than that he actually defends different rituals by locating their base in philosophy:

> However strange their doctrine may appear to Europeans, yet they are much to be commended for the exercise of the moral virtues they inculcate, namely, temperance, justice, and humanity. Amidst a variety of extravagant customs, strange ceremonies, and prejudices, we may discover the traces of sublime morality, deep philosophy, and refined policy; but when we attempt to trace the religious and civil institutions to their source, we find that it is lost in the maze of antiquity. The native Indians, or Hindoos, are men of strong natural genius, and are, by no means, unacquainted with literature and science, as the translation of the Ayeen Akberry [*Ain-i Akbari*] into English, has fully evinced. We may trace the origin of most of the sciences, in their ancient manuscripts. Even before the age of Pythagoras, the Greeks travelled to India for instruction: the trade carried on by them with the oldest commercial nations, in exchange for their cloth, is a proof of their great progress in the arts of industry. (68-69)

This kind of attitude towards the religious practices indicates an interesting mix of European knowledge system and Indian knowledge system in Dean Mahomet. He uses European categories of science, progress, civilization, savagery etc. but his representation also uses the categories Indian. This kind of representation is somewhat similar to what Pratt calls 'autoethnography' (7). Autoethnography, according to Pratt, refers to:

> instances in which colonized subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways that engage with the colonizer's own terms. If ethnographic texts are a means by which Europeans represent to themselves

> their (usually subjugated) others, autoethnographic texts are those the others construct in response to or in dialogue with those metropolitan representations. (7)

If not completely then, at least partially Dean Mahomet's narrative can be read in this autoethnographic manner. It is a narrative which has been produced after the subject has intermingled with the colonial society. Dean Mahomet's career started with the colonial masters and later on he ended his first phase of employment and moved to the metropole to carve out a place for himself. His eventual business forays in Ireland and England points to his growing confidence in himself and his place in the Irish and later on, in British society. This confidence is reflected in the narrative where although he looks at his account mostly through European categories, he develops a sense of his own Indian identity which allows him to do away with dominant European biases in matters of religion and customs of Indians.

Once again, coming back to the question of categorization of the narrative, it can be said that Dean Mahomet's account in the light of the above discussion makes any simple categorization very difficult. It may be argued that it is both travel writing as well as travelogue; but the argument gives rise to some more questions. Dean Mahomet's account certainly falls into the category of travel writing because it describes the geographical area of north Indian plain and he describes the natural attributes of the place along with the people. It also deals with the relationship of Dean Mahomet with the subject of his description. However much Dean Mahomet tries to give a neutral account of the place, he is inevitably drawn into the narrative. His shifting location of 'self' gives pace to the narrative and his shift in the 'self' is by no means linear or smooth. The 'self' moves along a confused trajectory. The self/other binary interchanges frequently as well as mingles with each other in a confused manner. The question which remains is whether this account qualifies for a travelogue. The answer could be both affirmative as well as negative. This narrative could be

considered as a travelogue because it recounts the journey undertaken by the writer. The narrative, primarily, is the experience of Dean Mahomet while he was in the employment of the army of the East India Company. But the characteristic of travelogue ends here. There are some problems with this narrative which questions the application of the term travelogue to it. For instance, this narrative has descriptions of places where Dean Mahomet never went physically like Surat and Bombay but still he describes both the places. This raises several questions on the idea of this narrative being a travelogue. Another question may be raised vis-à-vis the act of travel. What is the reason of the travel? Dean Mahomet is not a traveller in search of new land or new knowledge. He is a mere camp follower in the army. His travels are undertaken on the orders of the East India Company. He has no agency to move on his own. There is no evidence that during these journeys he ever thought of penning his experience. The decision to write the account happens much later, some seven years after the last journey he describes. These issues raise questions about the label of 'travelogue' for Dean Mahomet's account. The decision to write, I argue, owes more to his present condition in an alien society where he is trying to get a foothold, socially as well as economically. This puts the narrative in some undefined space between travel writing and travelogue where it is less of a travelogue and more of travel writing.

1.4 Richard Burton and Falconry as the Site of Travel Writing

Richard Burton published his *Falconry in the Valley of the Indus* in 1851. As the title suggests, the text is about the art and practice of falconry in Indus Valley. At the first glance, the text cannot be described as a travel text. It seems to be a treatise on falconry. In this, it is like a scientific treatise explaining to its reader the various types of falcons, their

characteristics and features, comparison between Indian and European birds of prey; but along with this description, the text is also a kind of treatise on sports/amusement prevalent in Sindh in the North Western Province of India during the middle of the nineteenth century. I would, however, argue that it is 'travel' which acts as a narrative device in the text. I would particularly use 'adventure' and 'exploration' aspects of travel while offering a reading of the text.

The element of excitement creeps in from the very beginning of the text when Burton addresses the readers in the preface and invites them to partake in the sport of falconry:

> Judge, therefore, gentle reader, how great was my joy when I found myself in a country where the noble sport flourishes in all its pristine glory. I shall never forget the profound satisfaction with which, after securing the services of an experienced Baloch, I succeeded in seeling a hawk for the first time. (x)

The joy and excitement is not only for the sport but more because of its survival in 'pristine glory'. Burton has travelled from Europe and reached India to discover the unchanged way of the sport in the remote corner of the Empire, that is, India. The comparison of sport and science of falconry of India and of Europe is inevitable and here, Burton discovers far better methods of the sport in Sindh than in Europe. Interestingly, the knowledge of falconry in Europe is not only first-hand viewing of sports but also, and more importantly, the knowledge of sport encoded in the texts on falconry. Burton mentions that John Sebright's 'little text' is a manual for students of the sport even in the present day. The knowledge which Burton offers comes from 'turning over the leaves of many books' and he finds this knowledge inferior to what he witnessed in the East, "the Oriental way of throwing up the smaller hawks … as far as I know, a new, and also a very efficient one" (xi). Burton's journey to the East has succeeded in discovering something new, he will be able to add the the corpus of knowledge for his European audience: "The European falconer will find …

some points which are perfectly new to him" (x). Burton, who is an army official with the East India Company and later an Assistant Surveyor, by writing this treatise assumes the aura of an 'explorer' who has discovered the knowledge unavailable to Europe.

The 'explorer' Burton is not satisfied by discovering and writing about the discovery; he intends to make the writing interesting and more accessible to his readers, "To obviate, if possible, the dryness of a regular treatise, I have attempted a narrative form, describing a visit paid some years ago to one Meer Ibrahim Khan, a scion of the House of Talpur, lately reigning in Scinde, and a falconer of distinguished fame" (x). The discovery is presented in a 'narrative' form to do away with the 'dryness of the treatise'. The visit to Meer Ibrahim Khan will not only result into a treatise but the narrative of the treatise will offer Burton a chance to comment upon the native's behaviour and custom. The natives in Burton's account conform to their Orientalist portrait as found in European depiction of them:

> Directly in front of us, so placed that they could enjoy a full view of our every movement, sat a semi-circle of the Ameer's retainers, smoking, conversing, and listening to the words of wisdom that fell from our lips, as gravely as a British jury empanneled on a matter of life and death. (2)

Here, Burton as a 'Sahib' is the centre of attraction and his every movement and every word is being observed by the natives. It is a setting for a spectacle. The spectators sitting in semi-circle are enjoying their time by smoking and conversing with each other and at the same time partaking in the spectacle of white man's words of wisdom. The setting also inspires "Oriental gravity … to fall into pensiveness, pensiveness into that terrible habit of moralizing in which Orientals love to indulge" (3). Where scientific and rational European observes and notes, the natives can only moralize. What is this moralizing, is revealed in the next paragraph:

> "Ah!" said the Ameer, "how happily might not one spend one's life under a tree like that," pointing to a peculiarly tall one,—"only, however, taking care to put mats round it by way of walls. How long one would last! How much one would eat!" (3)

This wish of the native Ameer is moralizing which Burton is so tired of. But a couple of paragraphs earlier, Burton himself was reflecting on the beauty of the scenery. So, contemplation on the part of a British author would be akin to romanticism in tune with the great European cultural tradition; but the same contemplation, coming from a native, is just a terrible habit.

Natives are terrible while cursing. Their cursing, once it starts, never stops. This is so different from Burton's Europeans. When a mishap occurs in falconry, "the quantity of cursing that accompanied these mishaps, instead of acting *more Europeo* as a sedative upon the cursers, exercised, as it usually does upon the Asiatic mind, all the proper function of a stimulant" (33).

The stereotypical views on the natives of Sindh are mentioned in passing, "Hawking being the sport which, after *thieving*, the Beloch most loves, a large cavalcade of friends and neighbours had assembled to enjoy the pleasures of the field" (22; emphasis added). Thieving is not a big deal and it does not merit attention; a mere mentioning will suffice. Otherwise scientific and rational Burton, who is out there to understand the customs of the natives, does not feel the need to interrogate whether this label is right or not. Where this notion of Balochs beings thieves come from and what is the historicity of such a label does not bother Burton. It is entirely possible that he may have picked up this stereotype either from his journey in India prior to his arrival in Sindh or he may have read that in papers or diaries of European officials. As readers we do not know the source of this label and we should not be bothered about it; Burton's mention of it is enough to give it credence. For Burton's contemporary

European readers, this description fits perfectly well with prevalent Oriental discourse in Europe where North West Frontier Province of India was a place of debauchery, theft and other moral depredations.[6]

The rough nature of native is juxtaposed to European sophistication by quoting the experience of the native himself. Ameer recounts how once an officer came to the village and and wanted to play the sport:

> Except the great things like ladles which you Sahibs wear on your heads. The other day I rode out hawking with an officer, who did me the honour of visiting my poor village. He came all in white, face and everything, just like a corpse. Saving your presence, he had no beard, and many an old woman (I am not offending you?) in my village has mustachios larger than his. I could not refuse him the use of my best Shahbaz, although it was evident that his fingers were more accustomed to a pen than to a hawk. (23)

The natives still notice whiteness of the European even though, here it used disparagingly, but nevertheless, it is crudeness on the part of the native to compare the whiteness of a European to that of a corpse that is emphasized here. Further crudeness is evident when Ameer plays upon the machismo of his own tribe to highlight the effeminacy of the European officer. Even the women in the village are more masculine than the officer. And finally, the European officer is more used to holding a pen than a hawk in his hand. Ameer goes on to explain how the officer failed to release the bird on time and thus injured her. This running down of European officers' skills at falconry fetch Ameer the adjective of 'garrulous' (24) by Burton. The day is saved for him when Ameer likens Burton's adeptness at the sport to that of a Baloch. Ameer exclaims that he must be a 'Moslem,' there is no other way of explaining his skills. This is a moment of victory for Burton who will later on thrive in his disguises as a

[6] For a detailed discussion on colonial construction of native peddlers in Northwestern Provinces, see Neeladri Bhattacharya (2006).

Muslim in order to gain insight into the native culture in India and Arabia. The European self is playing the game of deception by assuming the persona of the 'other' to understand the 'other'. Why this desire to understand the 'other' is so essential is never discussed, indeed, it is taken as self-evident.

Ameer also provides a context to Burton to emphasize the novel way of falconry in Europe. The native's 'countless questions' on the practice of falconry in Europe is the occasion to emphasize the 'refinement of our western falconer' (38) as against the coarseness of the Oriental practice. The 'pristine glory' (x) of the sport in the Orient means that it cannot be refined or made new. Refinement cannot go together with pristine glory. The Oriental practice is anachronistic and frozen in antiquity whereas the European practice has marched towards progress, enlightenment and refinement. Burton has to juxtapose the pristine childhood of the Orient with the adult European cognitive category of refinement. It is another matter that Burton's knowledge of 'refinement of our western falconers' comes more from the books he had read. Being a European, his utterance can make a claim to truth which a native has to accept without questioning.

Burton can also predict how the 'garrulous' native, Ameer Ibrahim will recount this interaction between Burton and himself. In a lighter vein, Burton imagines that five years down the line when another British traveller meets Ameer Ibrahim, he will exaggerate the feats of his falcons and use Burton's name as evidence. Burton's name is enough to make the event credible for the native and his British audience. Burton also imagines that all the Ameer's attendants will respond in affirmation and thus the natives will present to the British traveller 'extreme confusion of Fact and Fiction' (87). The 'extreme confusion of Fact and Fiction' is the epithet endowed upon the natives by Burton, who himself will go on to

produce a scientific, rational account of the event and will thus have a claim to truth which no native can challenge. Burton can also predict who can possibly disagree with him and on what grounds. He predicts the reaction of European critics of of his work. They will commend his work for bringing forward many important question through evidence but his work lacks 'well-established rules of moderation which no one can transgress with impunity' (91), As he has already predicted the possible criticism, Burton goes on to provide a counter. His response maps out the strategy he had adopted while commenting on the natives. But before that Burton charts out the difficulties which beset the writer on Indian subjects:

> During the few months I did duty with mine [corps], we were quartered at Gharra, a heap of bungalows surrounded by a wall of milk-bush; on a sandy flat, near a dirty village whose timorous inhabitants shunned us as walking pestilences. No amount of domicillary visitings would have found a single Scindian book in the place, except the accounts of the native shopkeepers; and, to the best of my rememberance, there was not a soul who could make himself intelligible in the common medium of Indian intercourse,—Hindostani. An ensign stationed in Dover Castle might write Ellis's Antiquities; a sous-lieutenant with his corps at Boulogne might compose the *Lengendaire de la Morinie*, but Gharra was sufficient to paralyse the readiest pen that ever coursed over foolscape paper. (91-2)

The desolation of the place and a hostile native population coupled with lack of interlocutors and most importantly lack of any book is the problem facing the writer. Burton complains that his readers back home in Britain and the critics never seem to realize this problem. The readers and critics are ignorant of hardships of the writer/explorer. Indeed, the explorer motive is never too far for the European writer in the colony. The exploration is even more worthwhile owning to its desolation where the explorer has to put up not only with the almost barren landscape but also with the hostility of the natives who consider him or other writers/explorers as 'walking pestilences'. Burton's Gharra is the archetype of Oriental landscape with its qualifiers of flat, sandy, dirty, and timorous and suspicious inhabitants.

More importantly, there is no book on the local history, geography, and culture to be found. Natives have no sense of history and do not know what it is to produce knowledge. The only source of information is the senseless chatter of the shopkeepers. How to work/write in such a situation? The comparison with Europe is inevitable where officers can compose works of great merit no matter where they are stationed. The very landscape is so fertile for intellectual labour. But here in the Orient, even the most creative writer is sure to falter, blame the landscape.

But it is not only the natives who are shorn of curiosity or the hunger for knowledge. Burton finds the officials of his own company equally impassive towards inquiry. So Burton has to position himself differently from both: natives as well as European officials. Burton looked for opportunities like a true adventurer and overcame barriers one by one. If there was no one to be found to act as an interlocutor, Burton mastered the vernacular dialect. The learning of the dialect is not merely a requirement but Burton takes it up as a purely learning activity also under '*invita Minerva'* (96). Where other officers were grumbling and 'complaining bitterly' about the 'barren desolation' of the area and living conditions, Burton learnt Marathi and soon got an appointment in Bombay. When he got a temporary assignment as an Assistant in the Survey, his explorer 'self' took over:

> I began to look with interest upon the desolation around me. The country was a new one, so was its population, so was their language. After reading all the works published upon the subject, I felt convinced that none but Mr. Crow and Capt. J. McMurdo had dipped beneath the superficies of things. (99)

By mentioning the hardships which beset any writer in India, Burton opens a field where he can locate himself and narrate the history, geography, culture, ethnology, and anthropology of the natives. This will be an exercise in knowledge production. This will be a new

knowledge not produced before as there is no book to be found. This knowledge does not owe anything to any previous knowledge production. This is novel and this novelty is the condition as well as the reward of the explorer: to produce something new. At the same time this knowledge is going to be unchallenged as it is an empirical knowledge. The explorer/writer has travelled to a place and explored it and produced a narrative of the exploration. The narrative is peopled with the natives and those natives can/may act as the evidence of truthfulness. The readers and critics sitting in England cannot challenge this narrative and in order to do that they have to travel to the Orient, an arduous exercise which they may not like to undertake. So, there is no counter to the truth claim of the explorer's narrative.

By elaborating the problems in the exploration, Burton opens up his strategy for collecting the facts and evidence. This emphasis on facts and evidence may be the point where a traveller/explorer moves into the zone of science. Now onwards, it is a scientific enquiry with an entire paraphernalia of eighteenth century Enlightenment science where fact and evidence is the base of knowledge production. There is no space for perception or experience. As for Burton, evidence will inevitably be oral accounts by the native. It is important to ensure that the native informant's accounts or answers are true. Burton is acutely aware of the fact that the account of the informant of an anthropologists or ethnographer may be influenced by the persona of the European inquirer. Burton puts some amount of blame for this problem on the European officers themselves who lead a "life so distinct from the black" (99) that they cannot see things clearly. Moreover, these officers just keep aloof from the native's social and cultural life. They never attend any "circumcision feast, a wedding feast, or a funeral" (99) and just spent their service which is more "term of

exile" (99) for them. Moreover, they are nowadays more interested in spending the time in companies of the ladies and have thrown all moral concerns (99). As a result, "The European official in India seldom, if ever sees anything in its real light, so dense is the veil which the fearfulness, the duplicity, the prejudice and the superstitions of the natives hang before his eyes" (99). Where the other European officials have failed in understanding the native society, the officer-cum-traveller-cum-explorer-cum-scientist is going to fill the gap by producing a scientific account of the native society. Where the other European officials confined themselves to their task of colonial administration, Burton moves from the realm of a political space of colonial official to an apolitical space of a scientist. In this space, he will not govern but will conduct experiment, collect data and produce a conclusion in the end. This experiment will produce knowledge about the Orient.

After identifying the European persona as a distraction in the scientific method and for a scientist, Burton hits upon an ingenious plan to overcome this distraction. If the European self is the problem then obliterate it, at least to an extent that the respondent (native) cannot see it or feel it. The strategy Burton uses is that of a disguise. He will put a mask with which he can interact freely with his native subjects unencumbered by his true self. The original self will dissolve into the newly acquired self. The new 'self' selected is that of a half Arab and half Iranian with a new name Mirza Abdullah of Bushire. Even the selection of a new 'self' is explained. Acquiring a 'self' which is at the same time both native as well as foreign, Burton will be able to confuse the natives of Sindh and thus will have a cover. This 'self' will explain his strange accent of the Sindhi dialect or Persian language to the Middle East Asia.

Acquiring of this new 'self' is fraught with its own dangers, but that is risk inherent in the job of an explorer or a scientist. Here, it acquires an aura of adventure. There are elements of chance and risk in it, that of the cover being blown off. But it is the risk which has been inherent in the European discourse of travel and exploration. Moreover, Burton the writer/explorer has always faced risks and taken chances. In fact, even in his official career he chose the 'rugged and torturous' path of studying the languages and plodding on. Now, equipped with his multi-lingual skills of Persian, Arabic, Sindhi, and rudimentary Punjabi, Burton, the scientist/anthropologist is ready to conduct the "systematic study of the Scindian people, their manners and their tongue" (99).

The new Burton with a new name of Mirza Abdullah the Bushiri now undertakes his journeys from one village to the next in search of 'knowledge' about the natives. In the process, he sometimes becomes a shopkeeper in one village or a Persian scholar in another. Creating multiple roles for himself, Mirza Abdullah collected 'much information'. Mirza Abdullah's success in his mission can be gauged from the fact that he could enter into any house announced. A house of the native is that unconquered territory for the European anthropologists which is guarded heavily by the natives. But Mirza Abdullah, with his "hair falling upon his shoulders, a long beard, face and hands, arms and feet, stained with a thin coat of hena [*sic*]" (100), could easily penetrate this citadel. Making acquaintances with all kinds of people, Mirza Abdullah collected facts. It is difficult to miss the element of adventure in the whole enterprise, "What scenes he saw! what [*sic*] adventures he went through! But who would believe, even if he ventured to detail them?" (103).

The modus operandi of Butler/Mirza Abdullah was that of inductive logic. Burton's belief that "The knowledge of one mind is that of a million" (104) made him to select one

specimen, that is, one native and study him thoroughly. Based on that one specimen, Burton mastered "its truly Oriental peculiarities, its regular irregularities of deduction, and its strange monotonous one-idea'dness" (104). By this inductive logic coupled with travelling far wide, Burton makes his grand pronouncement that the Eastern mind "is always in the extremes" (105). Eastern mind "ignores what is meant by "golden mean"" (105).

It is important to understand why Burton has to talk about his problems and methods while dealing with the native subject in a treatise which is supposed to describe a sport which has become obsolete in Europe but stills survives in the Orient in its 'pristine glory'. We will not make any headway if this treatise of falconry is read only in its superficial form. What I have tried to argue through the above analysis of the treatise is that it uses the trope of 'travel' along with its different variants like journey, adventure, explorations, and inquiry to write a 'self' in the Orient in truly European fashion during the high colonial period of eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This 'self' of the European traveller/explorer/scientist traces its lineage from the beginning of the European Renaissance but gained prominence post-industrial revolution in Europe when the scramble for colonies began in the true sense. This new 'self' of the Europeans is possible only in the Orient because the Orient is the unchartered territory waiting to be mapped and thus providing an opportunity to the traveller/explorer to be the monarch of the landscape. This monarchical self is expressed in producing knowledge about the Orient whose truth claim cannot be challenged. My point is that this expression of 'self' cuts across genres of European writing about the Orient in the high colonial period and travel becomes the chief device of narrating this 'self'.

I wish to argue that Burton's account of falconry does not fit into either neat or fuzzy distinction of travelogue or travel writing. We require a new category for such writings

which uses ‘travel’ as a trope, in writings which cannot be labelled as travelogue or travel writing, to write a ‘self’. I propose to use a new category of ‘writing travel’ to look at such narratives as that of Burton’s.

1.5 Formulating Writing Travel

The concept of ‘writing travel’ has been introduced consciously as a move away from the notion of ‘travel writing’ or ‘travelogue’ in the wake of recent studies. It is not a simple case of interchange of words. My idea of ‘writing travel’ is about the way the idea of travel prefigures writing which may not have anything to do with the physical act of travel or description of such acts of travel. It looks at how travel acts as a trope or structuring device in diverse kinds of writings not generally classified as travel writing or travelogue. ‘Writing travel’ resists any easy generic boundaries. Writing travel problematizes the questions of home/abroad, self/other, nature/culture and other binaries. It asks questions about the idea of genre and traces the historical moments and conditions which led to the rise of specific genres. It is pertinent to trace the changing definition of travel and travel writing through history linking these changes to social, political, cultural and economic conditions of the time. For instance, the rise of ‘travelogue’ as genre in 1870s in colonial Bengal, as described by Mukopadhyay points out the specific moment in history when conditions were ripe for the emergence of a particular genre. But in order to pose questions like this, we have to work with the idea of writing travel which operates away from generic boundaries of either travel writing or travelogue. Writing travel allows us to pose different and creative questions in order to engage more critically with the responses to the hegemony of all kinds.

'Writing travel' allow us to use diverse theories which have emerged in the last four decades to shift the gaze back towards the colonizers. It allows us to see how anti-colonial and nationalist subjectivities took shape at the same time when colonialism marked its most important victories in Asia, Africa and South America. Clifford asserts that:

> since Fanon at least, non-Western theorists have encroached regularly on the territories of Western theory, working oppositionally, with and against (both inside and outside) dominant terms and experiences. Since the sixties and seventies, diverse non-Western and feminist writers have challenged the status of traditional theory, particularly it aspiration to potent overview, its suppression of location and of its genealogical, story-telling functions. (179)

Clifford, here, is making a claim that the assumption of 'theory' as something which is done by the West has been brought into the radical contestation and in the wake of new developments post-1960s, 'theory' has traveled from centre to the margins of the empire and also the theorists have traveled from margins to the centre of the empire. Clifford marks 'travel' as a trope in the writings of Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud. It is difficult to imagine Marx's writing without his travel from Germany to Paris and finally to Manchester-London. Similarly, Freud's travels to Paris, Rome and Vienna need to be taken into account. It is for the purpose of this marking that one needs to work with 'writing travel'. It will allow us to see why and how the theoretical world of both Marx and Freud was limited to Europe and still occupies the position of hegemony. As a counter to this hegemonic discourse, one needs to use the proliferation of theories which we find in social sciences and humanities after 1960s. These theories take into account the travel of both theories as well as theorists. Said, in "Traveling Theory," has pointed out how theory travels from one time and space to another and gets changed in the process. Clifford points to the anti-colonial radicality of the new theories to their movements from one place to another. Not only the theories but

theorists too move. The travel of Derridean post-structuralism from France to the United States of America helped it to be seen in a new light. Similarly, we can look at the interesting trajectory of subaltern historiography in its back and forth movement from India to England and the United States of America. Ranajit Guha occupied a professorial position in England and later on in the United States of America. Dipesh Chakravorty moved from Australia to United States of America. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has worked all her life in the United States of America, but India remains the focus of much of her scholarship and this is made more engaging and immediate by her constant move between India and the United States of America. 'Writing travel' becomes an important tool to realize the importance of the movements of these theorists and their theories.

This idea of 'writing travel' finds its echo in Van Den Abbeele's *Travel as Metaphor: From Montaigne to Rousseau.* As discussed in the beginning of this chapter, Van Den Abbeele uses travel as a metaphor of narrative, movement, displacement and circulation of thought and meaning. Picking up the motif of voyage (one of the synonyms of travel), Van Den Abeele traces how this motif is inscribed in the writing of early modern French philosophers like Montaigne, Descartes, Montesquieu and Rousseau. He underscores the trope of travel in discourses on gender and culture along with how subjectivities are formed in terms of home, body, text and name. Apart from Van Den Abbeele, it is Said and Clifford who open up the category of 'travel' to be read as a trope in diverse kinds of writings. Following Van Den Abbeele, Said, and Clifford, this thesis will look at three major figures in modern colonial history of India, Syed Ahmad Khan, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar. The idea is to see how the trope of travel allows these figures to

fashion a national self in order to respond to the socio-cultural and political realities of their own time.