

## **An account of the genre, history and growth of Travel Narrative.**

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### **ABSTRACT-**

The journal is intended to study on the account of the genre, history and the growth of travel narrative. Travel writing as a literary genre is the encounter and observation of a traveller, where he records his straightforward report of individual impression of his travel transmitting the cultural values. History in itself is a sort of travel. As past is metaphorically a foreign country, historians travel to this alien land to explore and understand it. It does not mean physical journey of the historian to that land but it does imply engaging with different interests and varied perspectives of the past people. In that sense, historian is a voyager and a traveller. However, beyond that metaphor, history and travel writing are interconnected in many ways. Travel writing has traditionally been accepted as an important source of historiography. In a number of ways, travel accounts can be helpful to the historian. The travellers generally provide such information which the local writers ignore as being ordinary and commonplace. Some educated and refined travellers have at times been able to offer unusual insights into the political events and social customs of foreign lands. Travel accounts are important not simply because they are windows on distant places but they are also mirroring that reflect the values of the travellers and throw back light on their own societies. However, there are diverse issues concerned with the nexus between travel and history writing. The paper also studies the growth of travel narrative as travel writing typically records the experiences of travellers in some interesting places and circumstances. It will include vivid descriptions, illustrations, historical background, and possibly maps and diagrams. It is given an equal status with: romance, action adventure, fantasy, mystery, detective fiction, and the list might continue. Travel literature is as old as man's existence on this earth. The voyager tells stories about his experiences of the journey he had, to his fellow mates. His experiences are interwoven with details of the places he visited and the journey. He narrates them as first person. Each one of us is a traveller and we all travel in different scales and we all have a story to tell. The prose narration of travels includes discussion of works that some may regard as genres in their own right such as ethnographies, maritime narratives, memoirs, road and aviation literature, travel journalism and war reporting.

**Keywords-** Travel narrative, genre, history, travel accounts, voyage, fiction, narration, memoirs, ethnography, cultural difference.

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Travel writing is widely considered a hybrid genre, fusing factual reportage with fictional technique, on-the-spot observation with recollections in tranquility, scientific detail with poetic allusion, verbal description with visual illustration. Ethnography, geography, history, economics, aesthetics, and other disciplines inform travel writing and at times provide its keynote. Travel writing celebrates the differences in manners and customs around the world. It helps the reader to understand other people and places. And it helps readers plan their own trips and avoid costly mistakes while travelling. But, most of all, it lets readers travel to far-off destinations that they may never see. Travel literature' is the significantly generic descriptor that has succeeded the Modern Language Association Bibliography's pre-1980s 'travel, treatment of'. But as a tool it cannot complete a search for relevant critical and theoretical materials. Very early in the contemporary resurgence of interest in travel writing, relations with the analysis of ethnography, thus with the history and function (and future) of anthropology in the West, and with postcolonial theory generally, became vital and generative. The interest in travel writing – across a wide political spectrum – was part of the necessary reimagining of the world first occasioned by the post-World War Two resistance movements and wars of liberation in the former European colonies, as well as by the waves of immigration that followed. It is a vivid shock to walk into the room-sized stained glass globe of the world (1935) suspended in the Mother Church of the Christian Scientists in Boston. Not only because, with loud metaphorical resonance, you can hear the whispers of people on the far side of the glass world as if they were speaking in your own ear, but also because the various pieces, each a different

jeweled colour, belong to a world on the point of explosion. Much of the work of observing, interpreting, articulating the explosion of that world, as well as the historical development of the imperialized world that led to it, was done through recovery and analysis of people's writings about 'foreign' and especially 'exotic' places in which they had travelled and lived: as colonial masters, pilgrims, explorers, ambassadors, ambivalent wives, roving soldiers, ecstatic cross-dressers, conquistadores, missionaries, merchants, escaped slaves, idle students of the gentry and aristocracy, 'adventurers', and alienated modern artists.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Travelogue and Autobiography 1647-1656, Coastal Africa, the Red Sea, Persia, Mesopotamia, Coastal India, Srilanka, South-east Asia by Nils Mattson Kioping talks about the experience of the travel and the routes of the Voyage.

2. The Travel Writing Tribe: Journeys in search of a Genre by Jim Hannigan talks about the studies in travel writing.

3. Importance of Travel writing in Literature by Barna Bijaya Basumatary talks on travel writing as an indispensable part of English literature both in terms of its contribution to its richness as well as avenue for human's development.

4. Techniques and Elements used in Travel Literature with Reference To The Travelogues By the Indian Authors by T. Srivaishnavi, J. Thilagavathy and Dr. U.S. Aksharajovinda explains some effective elements that keep the travel literature engaging to the literature.

5. The Influence of Story telling approach in travel writings on readers empathy and travel intentions by Ali Ekber Akgun, Halit Keskin and Ebru Erodgan, investigates the relation between the components of storytelling, empathy and behavioural intentions.

### RESEARCH GAP-

Travel writings have not received sufficient critical attention and have not studied in depth. This paper will be the first to study the genre, history and the growth of travel writings.

### METHODOLOGY-

This study will undertake a close analysis and descriptive study and the study is based on secondary data.

### ANALYSIS

Travel writing as a literary genre is the encounter and observation of a traveller, where he records his straightforward report of individual impression of his travel transmitting the cultural values. What he sees he details it to the others. As Andrea Loselle remarks in 'Translations of the Orient' "Of all the genres, travel writing is the most chameleon-like because it can assume almost any number of styles from poetry to autobiography to a report destined for political and economic use". Travel writing holds its significance in the present scenario. Travelling is becoming fast and rapid growing field in today's era of science and technology. This non-fictional genre represents society and its documentation as observed by the writer or the narrator. Travel narratives contain a lot many descriptions of the adventures, exploration, conquest compiled in a non-fictional pattern by the travel writer. How is then travel writing a literary genre? Travel writing – a literary form is the amalgamation of different genres which may comprise of a plethora of literary writing – private diary, the essay, the short story, the prose poem, the sketches, pictorial presentations, talks and discussion at the dinner table or a tea-table. Travel writers use fictional technique of plot, characterization and dialogues to tell their stories. Over the centuries, travel literature has preoccupied literary critics and historians alike, and more than once these theorists have questioned the literary value of such an enterprise as a travelogue. The holy scriptures of all religions include epics which cover large expanses of time and space. Attempts have been made at including such important imaginary ancient epics – like Homer's *Odyssey* or the Mesopotamian Epic of Gilgamesh, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Thomas Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller*, or Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* – in the category of imaginary travel literature, while writers like Herman Melville (with his travelogues of the South Seas), Mark Twain (with his American travelogues), or Charles Doughty (with his surprising *Travels in Arabia Deserta*) are warmly regarded by readers and critics alike. In fact, all literatures, of all times, use journey as a metaphor. In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, mad Ophelia sings of her lover and resembles him to a pilgrim:

'How should I your true love know  
From another one?

By his cockle hat and staff

And his sandals shoon'

(*Hamlet*, Act IV, Scene V)

Early examples of travel literature include Pausanias' *Description of Greece* in the 2nd century CE, *Safarnama* (book of Travels) of Nasir Khusraw (1003-1077) the *Journey Through Wales* (1191)

and Description of Wales (1194) by Gerald of Wales, and the travel journals of IbnJubayr (1145–1214) and Ibn Battuta (1304–1377), both of whom recorded their travels across the known world in detail. The travel genre was a fairly common genre in medieval Arabic literature. Milione, The Travels of Marco Polo, describing Marco Polo's travels through Asia between 1271 and 1295 is a classic of travel literature. Travel literature became popular during the Song dynasty (960–1279) of medieval China. The genre was called 'travel record literature', and was often written in narrative, prose, essay and dairy style. Travel literature authors such as Chengda (1126-1193) and XuXiake (1587–1641) incorporated wealth of geographical and topographical information into their writing, while the 'daytrip essay' Record of Stone Bell Mountain by the noted poet and statesman Su Shi (1037–1101) presented a philosophical and moral argument as its central purpose. One of the earliest known records of taking pleasure in travel, of travelling for the sake of travel and writing about it, is Petrarch's (1304–1374) ascent of Mount Ventoux in 1336. He states that he went to the mountaintop for the pleasure of seeing the top of the famous height. His companions who stayed at the bottom he called *frigidaincuriositas* ("a cold lack of curiosity"). He then wrote about his climb, making allegorical comparisons between climbing the mountain and his own moral progress in life. MichaultTaillevent, a poet for the Duke of Burgundy, travelled through the Jura Mountains in 1430 and recorded his personal reflections, his horrified reaction to the sheer rock faces, and the terrifying thunderous cascades of mountain streams. Antoine de la Sale (c. 1388–c. 1462), author of *Petit Jehan de Saintre*, climbed to the crater of a volcano in the Lipari Islands in 1407, leaving us with his impressions. "Councils of mad youth" were his stated reasons for going. In the mid-15th century, Gilles le Bouvier, in his *Livre de la description des pays*, gave us his reason to travel and write: "Because many people of diverse nations and countries delight and take pleasure, as I have done in times past, in seeing the world and things therein, and also because many wish to know without going there, and others wish to see, go, and travel, I have begun this little book." By the 16th century accounts to travels to India and Persia had become common enough that they had been compiled into collections such as the *Novus Orbis* ("New World") by Simon Grynaeus, and collections by Ramusio and Richard Hakluyt. In 1589, Hakluyt (c. 1552–1616) published *Voyages*. 16th century travelers to Persia included the brothers Robert Shirley and Anthony Shirley, and for India Duarte Barbosa, Ralph Fitch, Ludovico di Varthema, Cesare Federici, and Jan Huyghen van Linschoten. In the 18th century, travel literature was commonly known as the book of travels, which mainly consisted of maritime diaries. In 18th-century Britain, almost every famous writer worked in the travel literature form.<sup>1</sup> Captain James Cook's diaries (1784) were the equivalent of today's best-sellers. Alexander von Humboldt's *Personal narrative of travels to the equinoctial regions of America, during the years 1799–1804*, originally published in French, was translated to multiple languages and influenced later naturalists, including Charles Darwin. Other later examples of travel literature include accounts of the Grand Tour. Aristocrats, clergy, and others with money and leisure time travelled Europe to learn about the art and architecture of its past. One tourism literature pioneer was Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–1894) with *An Inland Voyage* (1878), and *Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes* (1879), about his travels in the Cévennes (France), is among the first popular books to present hiking and camping as recreational activities, and tells of commissioning one of the first sleeping bags. Other notable writers of travel literature in the 19th century include the Russian Ivan Goncharov, who wrote about his experience of a tour around the world in *Frigate "Pallada"* (1858), and Lafcadio Hearn, who interpreted the culture of Japan with insight and sensitivity.

The 20th century's interwar period has been described as a heyday of travel literature when many established writers such as Graham Greene, Robert Byron, Rebecca West, Freya Stark, Peter Fleming and Evelyn Waugh were traveling and writing notable travel books.

In the late 20th century there was a surge in popularity of travel writing, particularly in the English-speaking world with writers such as Bruce Chatwin, Paul Theroux, Jonathan Raban, Colin Thubron, and others. While travel writing previously had mainly attracted interest by historians and biographers, critical studies of travel literature now also developed into an academic discipline in its own right.

In a way, all historical thinking and all historical writing deal with travel accounts. They do not necessarily involve the physical removal of historians' bodies to distant lands, but they require historians to engage with different interests and perspectives in the world of the past, which some scholars have likened to a foreign country. Even one's own society can seem foreign when a historian explores the changing political, social, economic, cultural, environmental, and technological conditions of earlier ages, not to mention different beliefs, values, and customs of times past. Yet travel accounts representing the observations and experiences of individuals who visited foreign lands constitute a special category of primary source for historians. Travel accounts can be valuable in several ways. They have often provided information about a foreign society that native inhabitants themselves did not supply, either because they did not have a means to do so, or because they did not see fit to record information that they did not recognize as particularly distinctive or interesting. Besides that, particularly talented or reflective travellers have sometimes been able to offer unusual insights into the societies they visited. Of course, travel accounts are not just windows on foreign societies but also mirrors that

throw light back on the values of their own authors, who, wittingly or not, have reflected the interests and concerns of their own societies when recording their observations and experiences in foreign lands. Journey is a metaphor widely used in all literatures. It is used as a literary device in scriptures, epics and widely read literary artifacts. Travel is used in satire as in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver Travels* or a means of conveying information in an interesting manner or Joseph Addison's creation of a *Citizen of the World*, are cases in point. There is a whole genre in English Fiction well received as the Picaresque Novel. Writers who produced travel accounts and travel-writing are from a variety of professions, temperaments, ages and climes. They have been adventurers, explorers, diplomats, scholars, missionaries, professionals like doctors and clergymen or just travel enthusiasts. Travel writings have linkages with History, Exploration and Adventure in its non-literary exposition and in its literary exposition with Autobiography and experience-related personality revelation. In both the categories, travel, movement, journey and peregrination are involved in different degrees. Travel literature meaning travel writing can be classified in several ways according to its linkage. The travelogue – meaning literary exposition of travel experience – may conveniently be classified again as (a) fantasy described or given as exposition of fact, (b) literature of recorded fact and (c) literature of artistic presentation of recorded impressions and feeling during travel. The examples that readily come up to our minds are R.L. Stevenson's *Treasure Island* of the 19th century of foreign travellers to India like Megasthenes's *Indica* (of ancient times) and (c) *Scindeor the Unhappy Valley* of Richard Burton of the 18th century.

Fantasy is a very popular literary genre and *Treasure Island* is still a great favourite with school children. The adventure and the suspense elements take the reader forward with ease as well as urgency to know what happens next. The place is imaginary but the adventures portrayed are fantastic. The introduction of characters, the conflict and the denouement are dramatized before the reader with élan. This novel has a high literary quality. Journalism and travel together yielded travel journalism, a special category wherein journalists travel and produce works with their intrinsic journalistic flair – from the point of a journalist. Sometimes as in Graham Greenes' *Lawless Roads* or his *Journey without Maps*, the writer's personality and the journalistic presentation of facts are brilliantly presented. These have high literary value again. Sometimes a tourist group consisting several individuals go on a long travel, fore example on a pilgrimage to KailashManasarovar, the most important destination for Hindu religious enthusiasts next only Kashi (Varanasi, (Banaras) or Rameshwaram.

Travel as a literary mode and an adjunct in literary writing is evidenced in literatures of almost all languages. Homer's *Odyssey* is an account of the travels of the hero Odysseus. Dante's *Divine Comedy* is an account of a travel through the different regions of hell. This device is used in our epics and *kavyas* (imaginative literary poetic compositions), in Sanskrit and other *Bhasha* literatures in our country. In the title *Ramayana yana* refers to journey or travel of Rama. Mahabharata describes Arjun's pilgrimages, again travels. In BhagavatpuranBalaramVidur takes to travels for self-purification. *Kavyas* too exploit travel motif as in Kalidasa's *Meghsandesh*. In Hindi Rahul Sankrityayan (1893-1963), the culture icon, wrote several travel books of great literary value. In Malayalam KeshavMenon's *Bilayativishesham* published in 1930 belongs to the same category. In Gujarati Kaka SahebKalelkar wrote *Jeevanleela*, considered a classic and widely translated. Autobiographies record experiences, impressions revealing feelings, relating to certain incidents in one's own life. Such a work may also contain travel experiences and travel-related information but these may either just be incidental or not of much importance. Not very long ago, it has been the trend to consider travel writing as peripheral to literary writing. Academics considered this writing as not very valuable to be considered literary. Owing to the emerging trends of travel experience among the different categories of travellers and tourists, travellers with religious considerations like acquiring merit (*teerthayatra*s) travels with journalistic motivation, travels for probing, understanding and reading histories with a new point of view, with personal, spiritual and philosophical motives and aspiration, travelogues came in the limelight

Over the ages, travel writing has exercised a strong appeal to readers. The adventures of explorers and travellers have often provided an imaginative refuge from daily constraints, and given readers the possibility of reaching distant, exotic places. Therefore, travel writing seems to open up a spatial and temporal gap between different sites, cultures and languages. As a consequence, readers are compelled to adopt ever different interpretative criteria. Travel writing itself defies any easy categorization. It cannot be easily subsumed under a single literary genre, and cannot be ascribed to a univocal ideological or scientific classification. It changes forms and languages according to the cultural context and to the world it describes the origins of travel writing coincide with the origins of fiction: the Bible and the classics (such as the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid*, to mention but a few) are full of the narrations of travellers, who tell their adventurous and exemplary stories<sup>1</sup>. Ulysses and Odysseus are considered the archetypes of modern travellers, since they are audacious, powerful and in constant search for knowledge. With the advent of Christianity, and particularly in the middle Ages, the idea of the journey was applied to life itself, which is considered as an itinerary full of perils and temptations towards Heaven. In a sense, pilgrimages virtually reproduced the spiritual journey of the Christian soul on earth.

Pilgrims undertook a long itinerary to Jerusalem, which symbolized the heavenly realm that Christians aimed at reaching in their afterlives as a reward. Jerusalem was at the centre of the world in the Ptolemaic chart; thus, the pilgrim's accounts can be considered the narration of their journeys to the heart of Christianity as well as to the centre of the earth

### III. CONCLUSION

For as long as Earth has had borders, people have striven to move beyond their limits, both personally and geographically, learning not only about themselves but also about the vast and unique cultures of this world. And all throughout this ever-growing chain of human adventure, people have been taking pen to paper, and recording their various tales of life on the road. The genre of Travel Writing has also undergone significant changes over the time. In the past, travel to distant places was mostly a unique experience available to a select few. Gradually, travel has become relatively accessible and cheaper to a much wider section of the public. Earlier, travel writings were more about the writer/ traveller venturing into the "unknown" and "undiscovered" lands, encountering dangers and experiencing exotic places. From Herodotus's *Histories*, to Zhang Qian and Ibn Battuta's narratives, travel writing in the ancient era has largely depended on reportage and on the ground enquiry to make sense of the places the writers visited. As the world continued to shrink, thanks to several scientific discoveries and revolutions in transportation, travel writing ceased to be primarily a source of information about faraway places. With almost no place waiting to be "explored", readers no longer looked for 'information' in the travel books but rather sought to establish a sort of connection with the writer whereby both share the same journey and experience the same essence in the shared space of narratives. As a result, travel writings tended to become more and more personal in nature. In the recent decades, media and technology have played a crucial role in shaping the nature of contemporary travel writings. In the era of social media where information is readily available, photos are shared instantly and videos are broadcasted and shared from all parts of the globe, travel writers are exploring ways to succeed and thrive in the changed environment. This has invariably resulted in the exploration of new media platforms. Travel writers can now publish their works online through websites, blogs or even social media accounts. Although the printed books still remain important medium, writers are no longer dependent on the print-publishers to reach out to their audiences. This has great implications; by dismantling the traditional writer-publisher-reader chain, the new process leads the writers to address those dimensions of the genre which were hitherto untouched or unexplored. Thus online platforms have brought in more variety, diversity and innovation in terms of both content and the technique of writing. With the advent and popularity of travel blogging, anyone can publish their travel experiences without the supervision or censorship of an editorial body. This has not only reduced the space between the writer and the reader but also led to the creation of a pool of online content of diverse themes, qualities and most significantly, divergent perspectives. 'Amateur blogging' has most certainly revolutionized the nature and market of travel writing thereby rendering the task of professional writers even more challenging. Several researches and surveys have shown that many professional writers now look for personal branding to solidify their credibility and to build a loyal 'fan-base' that help to sustain their appeal to the market. This 'branding' facilitates to develop a sort of power equation that distinguishes professional writers from the amateurs. Despite the changes and evolution in the genre discussed above, the essence of travel writing has remained the same and will perhaps stay that way in future as well. Soaking in the ambience, listening to people, relishing local foods, probing cultural nuances of a particular place and so on will always remain the common features of these narratives. From the ancient era, travel writing has also relied upon the most ancient art of storytelling. Stories, in any forms, have always appealed to human psyche and just recounting honest experience embedded in a form of story will always remain at the heart of travel writings.

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