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Discourse of Travel Writing

Abstract:

Travel writing is in existence from time immemorial and has always been useful in the study of literature, history, geography, culture, politics, anthropology and science and so on. But it was never studied with the seriousness that it deserved. It had been considered more like a popular literature and placed in the status of romance, detective fiction, children classics, adventure stories and fantasy and so on. Only in the twentieth century when it was analysed as a separate genre then the focus shifted to travel as its important metaphor. The real nature of the discourse of travel writing became an object of study. As such twentieth century also focused on discourse analysis and the techniques associated with it. The present article aims to analyse the discourse of travel writing in the light of recent approaches to the study of discourse. The article also aims to explore the different dimensions of the discourse in travel writing and how it places itself in the world of discourses.

Key Words: Discourse analysis, Identity formation, Interpersonal relation, Travel writing

1. Introduction

Travel writing is the most ancient form of literature that perhaps grew independently in almost all the places of the world. Travel creates an image of voyage, a journey from one place to another. An analysis of the source of the word – the *Travailen* (toilsome journey) of Middle English which again comes from the French word *Travaillier* (strenuous physical or mental activities) – reflects that travel is not just vacation but a serious activity. Historically it is significant as it records the picture of one world from the perspective of another. Geographically it is momentous as it opens up the window to see another part of the world not yet recognized. Keeping the seriousness of travel in view it is worthwhile to explore the significance of writings on travel. The nature of travel can be physical or psychological,

temporal or hallucinatory as reflected in the textual world. But at the same time it is contextual to ask whether travel writings are all about travel and its three dimensions like the homeland, the traveller and the foreign land, or they go beyond. Is the travel discourse as neutral and objective as it is supposed to be in case of any piece of travel writing? Clifford highlighting on the seriousness of travel writing notes down thus:

[W]hat would happen, I began to ask, if travel were untethered, seen as a complex and pervasive spectrum of human experiences? Practices of displacement might emerge as constitutive of cultural meanings rather than as their simple transfer or extension. (Clifford, 3)

Travel is not just movement or displacement but a transformation in human experiences. What could be the real purpose of describing about a foreign land and the experiences therein? On one hand, it could be the attainment of knowledge about a foreign society, people and land which may be culturally equal, superior or inferior to one's own. On the other hand, it can be reflexive, a discovery of one's own self or a transformation of one's own identity. Every travel ends up with resetting the boundaries of one's perception.

Culture has always been paramount in organizing our existence and identity. Our perception of the world is a result of the myths that surround us and the myths are the concepts which have been made and strongly rooted in our culture in the passage of time. The essence of any text can only be deciphered when one will come out of the cocoon of those myths which structures the textual world. Deconstruction and the recent approaches to discourse have enabled one to delve into the deeper meaning of a text and find the other aspects of the text that go unnoticed. This paper aims to explore whether travel writings functionally can be considered as discourse. Firstly, it will analyse whether travel writing allows discourse formation in the light of the modern theories of discourse. Secondly, it will try to find out whether travel writings reflect a single discourse or are multi-faceted. Thirdly, it will explore the nature of discourse and its relation to the society and social practices.

2. Recent Trends in the Study of Discourse

Recent approaches to discourse are based on the view that discourse is a social practice. Fowler in *Literature as Social Discourse*, while speaking of language analysis in literature, quite distinctly looks at literature as a social discourse defined and controlled by social institutions and which in turn control the same. The functional approach as discussed by Halliday in *Language as Social Semiotic: The Social Interpretation of Language and Meaning* assumes three functions of a text: ideational, inter-personal and textual. A text has

an ideational function as it represents aspects of the world, it has inter-personal function as it opens up social relation between the participants in the social events and it has textual function as it coherently and cohesively connects parts of the text and also connects the text to other social contexts. Fairclough's concept of discourse is much influenced by the functionalists when he establishes three functions of a discourse – Action, Representation and Identification – which run through the text. He defines genres as the ways of acting (Action), discourses as ways of representing (Representation) and styles as ways of being (Identification). Fairclough defines discourse thus:

I see discourses as ways of representing aspects of the world — the processes, relations and structures of the material world, the 'mental world' of thoughts, feelings, beliefs and so forth, and the social world. ... Different discourses are different perspectives on the world, and they are associated with the different relations people have to the world, which in turn depends on their positions in the world, their social and personal identities, and the social relationships in which they stand to other people. Discourses not only represent the world as it is (or rather is seen to be), they are also projective, imaginaries, representing possible worlds which are different from the actual world, and tied in to projects to change the world in particular directions. ... Discourses constitute part of the resources which people deploy in relating to one another — keeping separate from one another, cooperating, competing, dominating — and in seeking to change the ways in which they relate to one another. (Fairclough, 124)

Fairclough highlights on the fact that a discourse is only a specific reflection of a social event as the social event may give rise to different types of discourses reflecting different aspects of the same event. Discourses not only represent social practice they also transform it. According to Fairclough the three functions do not exist separately in a text rather they exist in a dialectical relation to each other. This brings Fairclough's concept very much closer to Foucault's concept of a system which exists on the three relations as stated in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews* – the relation to control over things (the axis of knowledge), the relation of action upon others (the axis of power) and the relation with oneself (the axis of ethics). Fairclough's discourse is similar to the axis of knowledge as knowledge brings Representation. Discourse is related to the axis of power because knowledge brings Action or a relation where one acts on others – dominantly, submissively or in equal terms. The discourse has its axis of ethics since discourse has its Identification or style which reflects the specific attributes or features.

A recent approach worth mentioning is in *Introducing Social Semiotics* by Theo van Leeuwen, who from the perspective of social semiotics points out four key dimensions of a

text – discourse, genre, style and modality. For Van Leeuwen discourses are socially distributed depending on their nature because they grow in the hands of different social groups and find their definite place. Where the nature of discourse depicts what is to be communicated, the genre depicts how it is to be communicated.

Analysis of a discourse becomes pertinent keeping in view the different aspects and its social effect. In the context of travel writings it assumes a serious activity as it presupposes the contact of two cultures, identity formation, expansion of semiosphere and many more. Further, if reader's perspective is introduced it becomes problematic as it leads to two dimensions – readers alien to the place and culture, and the readers native to the same. As the discourse of travel writing makes the world socially and culturally meaningful and has certain effect it needs to be investigated for its purpose and effect.

3. Representation in Travel Writing

The modern approach to any text is to look at it as a hybrid of discourses. Travel writing though foregrounds the act of travelling yet in course of description amalgamates many discourses and becomes multi-faceted. Even the earliest travel writings were exhibiting this nature. Jonathan Burgess puts it nicely thus:

Travel in antiquity involves many topics, such as transportation, trade, war, exploration, geography, ethnography, migration, colonization, and tourism. Ancient narrative about travel is multi-faceted as well. There was no coherent genre of ancient travel literature, though certain tropes and discourses are discernible. (Burgess, litency.com)

Travel writings represent different aspects of the world and are informative. Basing on the features of discourse the travel writing may be assumed to have ideational function because it reflects the aspects of social events – the desires and journeys of the people, the picture of a foreign land, its inhabitants and their culture and so on. Kaplan while trying to relate journalism with travel writing in modern society notes down thus:

Journalism desperately needs a return to terrain, to the kind of firsthand, solitary discovery of local knowledge best associated with old-fashioned travel writing. Travel writing is more important than ever as a means to reveal the vivid reality of places that get lost in the elevator music of 24-hour media reports. In and of itself, travel writing is a low-rent occupation, best suited for the Sunday supplements. But it is also a deft vehicle for filling the void in serious journalism: for example, by rescuing such subjects as art, history, geography, and statecraft from the jargon and obscurantism of academia, for the best travel books have always been about something else. Mary McCarthy's *The Stones of Florence*

(1959) and Robert Byron's *The Station* (1928) deal with the art of the Renaissance and the Byzantine empire respectively. Winston Churchill's *The River War* (1899) and T.E. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (1926) employ both the experience of travel and the study of geography to explore warfare and statecraft in late nineteenth-century Sudan in Churchill's case, and the techniques of guerrilla insurgency in Lawrence's. Owen Lattimore's *The Desert Road to Turkestan* (1929) is on one level about the organization of camel caravans, and on another about Russian and Chinese imperial ambitions. Freya Stark's *The Southern Gates of Arabia* (1936) is as good a depiction of Osama bin Laden's tribal homeland of eastern Yemen as any you'll find. (Kaplan, vagablogging.net)

Kaplan highlights on the fact that a text of travel writing reflects not only travel experiences but also other discourses simultaneously. As such the motifs of the travellers should be dominant in the features of travel writing since the text will focus on that aspect of travel for which it was undertaken. But the travel writings focus on several topics simultaneously even intertwining the fact and the fiction and thereby make the text a complex web of discourses. One can find that early travel narratives give account of exotic peoples, geographical land, and the cartographic details and so on. Early travels coexisted with legends and traditions and drew upon them. As stated by Lionel Casson in *Travel in the Ancient World*, the earliest travel report is about the journey of the Egyptian priest Wenamon from Thebes to Lebanon in 1130 BC and the purpose was religious in nature – to buy cedar wood for temple. Travel accounts dating from antiquity through the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance have scientific, educational, and literary value. Examples may include Herodotus' *History*, Strabo's comprehensive *Geography*, and Tacitus' *Germania*, as well as such narratives by medieval travelling merchants as Marco Polo's *The Travels* and A. Nikitin's *Journey Beyond the Three Seas*. The great epic *Illiad* by Homer itself reflects a journey undertaken for expansion of empire. Even the Odysseus in *Odyssey* of Homer looks as an archetype for the traveller who is curious and adventurous. But *Odyssey* is not only about journey but it also reflects on war and trade. Not only the Trojan War but also the maritime traders like Phoenicians are also mentioned in that epic. The earliest epics of India like *The Ramayan* and *The Mahabharata* is full of travel accounts. Ramchandra's fourteen years' exile in *The Ramayana* is full of his travel accounts and also offers a vivid picture of a distant land like Lanka. *The Mahabharata* narrates the travels of the Pandavas to distant lands like north-eastern and north-western parts of India and reflects the socio-cultural image of the lands.

The ethnographic and cultural details in travel writing have always attracted the readers' attention. The description of a foreign land and people creates an image of a strange

world which encourages people for future voyages. If overseas travel, discovery of new worlds and colonial expansion are the theme of travel writing than Thomas More's *Utopia* will always remain as a memorable work. The travel writings on Asia, Africa, Australia and America have brought the image of a new world for the Europeans and even accelerated mobility and displacement. As for example, Thomas Bowery in his *A Geographical Account of Countries Round the Bay of Bengal 1669 to 1679* describes India as a land of prosperity. Sir George Grey (1812-98) a British Colonial governor in his travelogue *Journals* gives descriptions of new landscapes, strangeness and the aborigines in Australia. Grey's travelogues are more like anthropological study. Naipaul's novels like *An Area of Darkness* provide vivid image of Indian society. It is obvious that travel writings of any era provide ample knowledge about the place the traveller belongs to and the place he travels into.

The text of travel writing on first instance leads to the anticipation of factual descriptions of a land. But if travel writing is all about travel then there are even travel writings where the real journey never took place or there are writings where travel occurred at a psychological level. But such writings are not devoid of discourses. Even the accounts of armchair travellers or travel writings based on fantasy have enlightened the readers about the world. The account of armchair travellers might be a second hand narrative yet is based on narratives already existing in the society, thereby legitimatizing the discourses already available. Travel writings based on fantasy may not look real, yet reflect the experiences of the world but from a different perspective and for a different purpose. *The Gulliver's Travel* by Jonthan Swift or *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe on first glimpse may look like a travel writing but the voyages to some unreal worlds raises the question of modality of the travel. An analysis from a different perspective reveals that it is less about the travel to new geographical lands and more about a travel to the nature of human being and many more.

The information about the world is derived from different discourses existing in the society and discourses about travel are no exception. Themes like quest of knowledge, entertainment, adventure, courage and curiosity have always been the underlying current in the voyage and its expression. Identification of different discourses available in a text of travel writings can reveal how a specific discourse is represented, and how the knowledge and ideologies are prefixed and managed in the structure of the text. Whatever be the intention of travel – enlightenment, military glory, mercantile advancement and scientific knowledge and so on – the wanderlust of travel writing from classical to the modern, from Herodotus to futuristic world, from external to internal space have only expanded the horizon of the world of travel writing. Discourse is informative and travel writings like any other

discourse are informative in nature. It is based on one's knowledge of the world whether factual or fictional. Travel writing represents the world from various perspectives and establishes itself in Foucault's axis of knowledge.

4. Power Hierarchy in Travel Writing

Travel creates a relation between the traveller and the alien in an extra-textual world and inside the textual world travel writing brings people from diverse land and culture together talking to each other, contemplating on their lives, contradicting on certain issues and ultimately ending up with some conclusions. Thus, travel writing manages interpersonal function or the Action. But any interpersonal function has a power hierarchy. And in travel writings it is often reflected socio-economically and culturally. In travel writing the social identity of the traveller and his motif of travel affect the travel writing a lot. The travel writers are mostly military officers, missionaries, explorers, scientists, pilgrims, and migrants. Accordingly their way of looking at the world become prominent in their writings with a little bit of fiction to make the text appealing. Whether travel writings are authentic and can be taken seriously is a concern for sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists and politicians. But there is no doubt that they have great impact on the culture. It provokes new concepts, new ways of seeing and being by bringing cultural contact of two alien lands. Such cultural contacts are often devastating as it ends up with magisterial view of the people in contact or a judgemental hierarchy. The travel writing in such a context is nothing but a response to the perception of 'Self' and the 'Other.' The representation of 'We' and the 'Other' may look neutral apparently but in depth they reflect a sense of superiority and inferiority. The discourses arising out of such social practices always project debatable issues. 'Inter-cultural Sensitivity' is a prominent issue in any travel writing since cross-cultural contact is not always friendly but often oppressive. The long standing debate of Occidentalism and Orientalism is a by product of such cultural contacts made by the travellers. Edward Said's *Orientalism* brought this contentious issue to the surface. He reveals a broad socio-political context for discourses about the orient ultimately proving that 'literature and culture' are not 'historically innocent.' Said shows how "knowledge" about the non-European was part of the process of maintaining power over them. He highlights the issues of racism, geographical imperialism and intellectual imperialism that often found space in the ways the West perceived and depicted the 'Others' of the East. Such reflections were always there in the travel writings of the western travellers which were later negated and at times accepted by writers of the 'Other' world. Any reader will realize after reading the travel writings that the

'Other' occurs in any travel text whether authored by a westerner or oriental. An excerpt from R. K. Narayan's *My Dateless Diary* describes New York thus:

Americans like to know how far they are being liked by others. They have a trembling anxiety lest they should be thought of badly. We Indians are more hardened, having been appreciated, understood, misunderstood, represented, misrepresented, rated, and over-rated from time immemorial both in factual account and fiction. (Narayan, 37)

While writing on the American culture Narayan highlights the identity formation of the Indians as a result of a process going on 'from time immemorial.' But the formation of 'Other' seems dependent on the realization of 'Self.' Generalisation of the 'Other' can be found even in the works of V. S. Naipaul on India or Salman Rushdie's description of travels in Nicaragua. Whereas the structure of Occidentalism and Orientalism remains same it is the perception of subjectivity that differs.

The travel writings become very sensitive literature when it comes to the formation of identity – another dimension of power hierarchy. The western travel writings have constructed the identities of the Orientals from their perspective. The identity of the 'other' has always been projected as inferior without religion or morals and even found place in the western literature. In *Robinson Crusoe* the orientalising of Friday by Defoe through the novel's protagonist amplifies the construction of oriental identity:

...At length he came close to me, and then he kneel'd down again, kiss'd the ground, and laid his head upon the ground, and taking me by the foot, set my foot upon his head; this it seems was in token of swearing to be my slave forever. (Defoe, 149).

Whereas Crusoe is represented as the Occidental hero who deserves respect from the object he has rescued, Friday under circumstances is forced to submit to Crusoe. This inter-relationship between the saviour and the saved speaks about self-ascribed Christian obligation well-rooted in European colonialism. The oriental identity in the eye of the westerners was not the result of a single text but was constructed through the projection of the discourse in a series of texts thereby legitimatizing the social practice. Discourses are not always accepted and extended but at times countered so as to give rise to a different discourse. This inferior identity given by the west was negated and countered through other travel writings. If Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902), Cary's *Mister Johnson* and Coetzee's *Foe* (1986) highlights the colonizer's point of view, Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1959) is one of the first books to represent the African image from an Afro-centric perspective. This novel is a response to counter the image created by Conrad and Cary. As a discourse on colonialism travel writings not only represent the

colonizer's point of view but also the view of the colonised. A text of travel writing can always be judged on the basis of the writer from whose perspective it is written – the traveller or the inhabitants of the other land. Whatever be the purpose of travel and aspect of writing, the cultural contact brings transformation of attitudes and beliefs and even the identities of the self. Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* is one of the best examples where cultural hybridity takes place as a result of colonial encounter. In contrast to the real colonial encounters here Gulliver does not want to impose his culture on the foreign land. Every new travel and new encounter reshaped his cultural identity till sense of his own culture's failing dawned on him and he accepted the culture of the Houyhnhnms.

Travel writing transforms social practice. Every travel manipulates the social values, attitudes, beliefs and also culture of the society of one's own or that of the other. Like other powerful discourses (literature, science, media) it organizes the people's perception. It opens up new ways of looking at oneself and the society of one's own and the other. Travel writing thus exists in the axis of power.

5. Identification of Discourse in Travel Writing

The discourse of travel writing has often been looked down upon as trash with a notion that it lacks the seriousness of literature. Can the writings on travel be considered as literature? "But what raises travel writing to literature," says William Zinsser, "is not what the writer brings to the place, but what the place draws out of the writer. It helps to be a little crazy" (Zinsser, 105-06). As such any piece of writing has literary aspects – it just not enlightens but also entertains. In this context it is worthwhile to ask what makes a travel literature different from other pieces of literature. Can a watertight compartment be made for travel literature? If travel literature is all about travel then all writings can be considered as travel literature since every piece of writing has some moment of travel or transition. It needs separate deliberation but the fact worth mentioning here is that travel writings could not attain the status of serious literature for a long time till it was found that travel writings have a lot more influence on the social practices.

The writers of travel writings are different from regular writers as they are interested in both travelling and writing. Travel writing is also different from regular writing as emphasis is given more on description of the places visited and less on the art of writing. And the art of writing focuses on the vivid descriptions of the places in such a way that the reader gets transported in imagination to the place that is being written about. The travel writing at

their best creates a desire in the reader to visit the places described. As travel writing had its relevance in the early age so also it is relevant in the modern society.

Analysing in the light of Fairclough's identification of style, travel writing has its specific style which varies from one time to another, from one place to another, from one writer to another, from one reader group to another and even for different reasons of travel. In travel writing the writer mostly adopt first person narrative. It is about the traveller and his gaze. And the gaze of the traveller always dominates the travel writing. However objective the traveller claims himself to be, all travel writings ends up with subjective interpretation of the context, a perception of the writer himself. It is not the image of the foreign land the traveller takes with himself to his homeland, rather his perception of the foreign land. In such a context the travel writing becomes a very serious discourse. When the first person narrative enhances the authenticity of the work simultaneously it also enhances the problem of creating an alien world with authenticity for the readers back at home. Highlighting on the relevance of tale-telling and travelling Trinh T. Minh-Ha notes down thus:

Journeying across generations and cultures, tale-telling excels in its powers of adaptation and germination; while with exile and migration, travelling expanded in time and space becomes dizzily complex in its repercussive effects. Both are subject to the hazards of displacement, interaction and translation. Both, however, have the potential to widen the horizon of one's imagination and to shift the frontiers of reality and fantasy, or of Here and There. Both contribute to questioning the limits set on what is known as 'common' and 'ordinary' in daily existence, offering thereby the possibility of an elsewhere-within-here, or -there. (Min-Ha, 10)

The art of narration is certainly an integral part of travel writing. And in form it enjoys too much of flexibility. It may assume any form starting from epic to novel, travelogue, diary and so on. In all writings as in Homer's *Odyssey* or Dante's *Divine Comedie* or Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* or Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* travel is the central metaphor. But it is also different from travel guides which focus on travel information about place, accommodation, restaurants, transportation and other relevant details for visitors and tourists. Travel writing doesn't have any selective approach like travel guides.

The travel writings not only highlight the discourses existing in the society but also induce social practices like travel. A book like *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* in the late Middle Ages not just described the medieval romances along with factual observation but also inspired Columbus to circumnavigate the globe by sailing west to find Cathay. On the other hand, the modern travel writings have encouraged tourism industry. Robert Louis

Stevenson with *An Inland Voyage* (1878) and *Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes* (1879) has encouraged tourism and his writings even boosted up a sub genre of travel literature which is popularly known as Tourism Literature. It is a well established fact that discourse of travel writing can legitimate social practices like travelling to foreign lands. On the other hand, it can also question the importance of travel and travel writing as a social practice. Thomas Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594) is a satirical attack on the very purpose of travel and travel writing.

The travel writing apart from being a representation of social practices is by itself a social practice. In all cultures and societies travel writings have been useful inspite of the element of fantasy that was often incorporated. They exist always somewhere in between fact and fantasy. In the hands of real travellers the writings look more like factual description and in the hands of armchair travellers or regular writers it look more like based on second hand narrative and thus imaginative. In its proximity to fact it has often served as an alternative history and even autobiography, an anthropological and geographical study, and in its proximity to fantasy it has pondered over human societies and human nature (as in Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, the journey of life (as in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*), a vision of futuristic world (as in Huxley's *Brave New World*), an image of ideal world (as in Thomas More's *Utopia*). Even travel writings may differ in hands of travellers from different regions. For one traveller the travelling may be a result of nationalism and for other a quest for identity. Alfred Bendixen exploring the mind of pre-civil war American travellers notes down thus:

...Today we often assume that the traveller goes abroad to learn something and to be transformed by the experience of travel, but the antebellum American was often suspicious of any transformative experience arising out of travel abroad or foreign influences. The goal of travel and of travel writing thus became a greater appreciation of one's own home and country. The antebellum American travel writer is generally more likely to lecture than to learn, more likely to preach the gospel of nationalism than to become a convert to foreign enthusiasms of any kind. These underlying biases shape what their travel books cover and what they exclude. (Bendixen, 104)

Whereas the pre-civil war American travellers travelled and wrote to establish their nationalism, the writings of the oriental writers reflect a quest for identity.

Travel writing is a form of lived practice and has materiality. It exists in the society as commodity produced to be consumed by a segment of reader group. In the hands of real

travellers the writings were mostly travelogues, diaries, journalistic writings and letters with a tint of fiction to raise the level of interest. In the hands of pseudo travellers it looked like writings full of fantasy focussing on different aspects of world – both internal and external. More often it existed in the society like a popular literature. In 18th century Britain travel literature was so popular that every writer worked on it. Captain James Cook's diaries (1784) were considered just like today's best sellers. Whereas European travel writers resorted to both fact and fantasy thereby creating a new discourse community the Arabic writers glorified the trading power of the Muslims and their culture and even expressed their perspective of the non-Muslim world. Ibn Khurdadbin wrote one of the first travel books in Arabic literature followed by Ibn Hawqal, Ibn Fadlan, al-Istakhri, al-Idrisi and the most famous Ibn Battutah. The writings were profuse with geography and history and less fantasy. Travel literature can even handle the theme of forward or backward time travel which is often termed as Time Travel. Such fantasy of future world and recreation of the past often demand readers' acclaim. The forward time travel in travel writing reflects the ever expanding boundaries of human knowledge and vision of the human civilisation whereas the backward time travel and recreation of the past enchants the reader. Time travel not only foregrounds the cultural contact but also the temporal contact of two different lands in the realm of fantasy. Even travel writings can focus on a travel of the mind under the influence of drugs popularly termed as Psychedelic Travel. But such fantastic and unreal tales have a lot to speak on the discourses of existing world. The discourse in travel writing assumes a different style that makes it different from other regular writings. Though experimentalism is rare in travel writings yet their range and ethos are growing in exciting and vital ways. Travel writings exist in the society by their specific distinction and thus can be placed in the axis of ethics.

6. Conclusion

Whatever be the definition of travel writing and whatever be the form of travel writing, travel is always the central metaphor in them. The discourse of travel leads to the formation of other discourses and consequently it becomes a serious discourse which requires visions and revisions. In the light of Foucaudian discourse the travel writings have the three axes – the axis of knowledge, the axis of power and the axis of ethics. The discourse provides information or knowledge about the world, the discourse brings in interpersonal relations both inside and outside of the text, the discourse assumes a distinctive style that makes it different from other discourses existing in the society. In the light of Fairclough's view of

discourse it is found that the discourse in travel writing has Action, Representation and Identification. In the light of Van Leeuwen it is also found that a single text of travel writing is a hybrid of discourses as it has preoccupied practitioners in the field of study like literature, geography, anthropology, science and history and so on. It is worth mentioning that discourses exist in the society as elaboration, addition or antithesis to other discourses in the society. Discourse of travel writing not only represents the social practices, it even legitimizes them and at times even alters them. Focussing on the serious discourses travel writings often deal with, it is well assumed that they cannot be discarded as trash and serious meditation on their nature and their effect is required. By no means can this analysis provide definitive conclusions to the study of discourses in travel texts but it will certainly help for critical analysis of the nature of discourse in travel writing.

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