I. Introduction to Ghosh's *In an Antique Land*

Amitav Ghosh, a post-colonial third world writer, in *In an Antique Land* by critiquing the western modernity advocates the need of the revival of pre-modern ethical and moral values, which are preserved and carried forth by alternative modernities in the present for the sake of humanity. Ghosh here, critiques the Western modernity on the ground of rationalism, individualism, exclusive nationalism, colonialism, and slavery exposing its exclusiveness and monolithic vision, and declares the need of alternative modernities that give space to antique or supposedly pre-modern values for moral and ethical co-existence, hospitality, communiterianism, decolonization, and inclusive nationalism among the people from different religious backgrounds and geographical locations.

In this regard, Ghosh's critique of westernity in *In an Antique Land* is obvious in its genric classification as well, that the book itself is formed beyond the modern generic boundary by blending many genres such as anthropology, travelogue, history, autobiography, fiction, as well as ethnography. Similarly, the book's title *In an Antique Land* itself clarifies Ghosh's journey towards twelfth century's Egyptian antique land- 'Masr', where the 'Synagogue of Ben Ezra'- a store house of the 'Geniza document' was situated; to dig out and bring forth the then ethical and moral values in the present. In this respect, the present research attempts to search for the pre-modern ethics of co- existence, cosmopolitan and hospitable values among the people from different races, castes and religious backgrounds and people from different geographical locations, by critiquing the western modernity in Amitav Ghosh's *In an Antique Land.*

In an Antique Land is a work of stupendous research, centered on the quest for genealogies, historical evidence, archival material, and empirical records. Yet it is

also a speculative, imaginative, and conjectural work, very much in the genre of the literary narrative which constructs and imagines a past world. Partly travel narrative, partly anthropology, partly historical account, and partly literary narrative, this work has been widely celebrated for its ability to straddle different disciplinary boundaries as well as its expansive geographical and historical span. *In an Antique Land*, a complex, hybrid, multi-generic text, it performatively critiques the 'categorical' nature of modern knowledge by transgressing its categories, just as it offers an imaginative rejoinder to Eurocentric narratives of history by recovering loss or silenced histories that disturb Eurocentric representations and undermine myths of progress.

The book is not recognizable as a novel, nor is it simply an historical investigation: it is a new genre which blends an anthropological record with travelogue, a diary and perhaps some imaginary sections. Two main narratives interwoven here are anthropology and history or present and past. The anthropological narrative is that of Ghosh's going to two villages in the Nile Delta in Egypt, the first time almost a year in 1980-81 to conduct field work related to his doctorial dissertation and then again briefly in 1988 and 1990. It is at this juncture, then, the historical narrative enters the frame. For in additional to being an ethnographical memoir, *In an Antique Land* is also the story of an Indian slave, Bomma and his master, Abhram Ben Yiju, a Jewish merchant active in Indian trade in the twelfth century. He is the man originally from Ifriqia who went as a trader on Mangalore on the Malabar Coast before 1132 AD and lived there nearly for two decades. He owned a female slave Ashu whom he married and had two children with her. Here, Ghosh, with-in this juncture of two narratives, travels from present to the past, and declares the need of revival of pre-modern ethical values by critiquing the Western modernity.

In an Antique Land suggests that such partioning of knowledge into separate domains is only one of a series of parallel ruptures that have divided the modern world: divisions of 'identity', of geography, of politics, of history. Ghosh's reconstruction of the lives of the Indian slave and his Jewish master, of the polyglot, cosmopolitan, hybrid world in which they lived and worked, offers a reflective contrast to the rigidities of the modern period. The book itself is the outcome of Ghosh’s own anthropological research for his doctorial dissertation; but Ghosh as a post-colonial third world writer critiques the western rationality and its definitive function of anthropology. He, then, engages himself with 'New Anthropology' that equally gives space for the non-westerner's voice.

Ghosh's own academic training was in anthropology, which was a discipline that emerged in a colonial milieu; and yet its authority rested on the subjective experience of fieldwork, and on the personal testimony of the ethnographer. Perhaps more than any other disciplines it has contributed a lot for the translation of the metaphysics of modernity into an ideological formation that justified colonialism and continued to justify Eurocentrism. It does this by writing cultural descriptions of other peoples and then organizing the distribution of human culture in space and time according to an ideological hierarchy which positions modern western society as the cultural norm. In other words, anthropology shores up the centrality of European culture by translating difference into distance.

Anthropology acts as History's other side, as a kind of epistemological 'Dustbin' which helps to hide up other cultures and their forms of knowledge through rhetoric of supersession. It thus helps modern knowledge universalize its self by evasing the marks of its encounter with other knowledge. Anthropology is thus one of the key props on which western scientific universalism rests, and to challenge the

metaphysics of modernity one must challenge anthropology and its protocols. *In an Antique Land* represents this effort at its most sustained and successful way. If the authority of ethnographic discourse simultaneously rests on participant observation and the erasure of the ethnographer's presence in its writing up, *In an Antique Land* both reinscribes the presence of the ethnographer and reverses his authority.

Ghosh, in his historical narrative, moves towards the twelfth century, a pre-modern era to dig out and bring forth the then ethical, moral, hospitable, and cosmopolitan humanitarian values up. The second central narrative of the text is at once historical, speculative, and literary in its attempt to imaginatively reconstruct the pre-colonial mercantile past of the Indian Ocean as a hospitable, and cosmopolitan world. This second narrative revolves around the stories of Abraham Ben Yiju, a Jewish merchant of North Africa who travelled between India and Middle East in the twelfth century, and his Indian slave, Bomma. Confronted with a divided present, Ghosh imaginatively retrieves these over-looked histories to remind us that hospitable areas and regions did exist at some point-- they are not just a Utopian ideal. Priya Kumar, who reads *In an Antique Land* as “a displaced intervention in the context of present-day Hindu-Muslim/ Indian- Pakistani conflicts”, explores his fascinating construction of the category of the “medieval”--in opposition to the usual derogatory connotations associated with the “dark” pre-Renaissance middle ages--as a flexible, porous, and accommodative culture- temporal space that is hospitable to everyone (71). She further opines that “Ghosh’s evocation of the pre-modern past directs us towards possibilities of multi-religious and multicultural coexistence in the present- specially by enabling us to think outside the frame of modernity and its identitarian territorial divisions” (71).

Amitav Ghosh is one of the most widely known Indians writing in English today. He was born in Calcutta in 1956 and studied in Delhi, Alexandria and the United Kingdom, where he received a PhD in social Anthropology from Oxford University in 1982. After leaving Delhi University, he has since held a number of academic posts in America and India, most notably at Columbia University, at City University New York (CUNY), where he is a distinguished Professor in comparative literature, and Harvard where he is currently a visiting professor. Amitav Ghosh has published six major works: *The Circle of Reason, The Shadow Lines, In an Antique Land, Dancing in Cambodia, The Calcutta Chromosome, The Glass Palace,* and most recently, *The Hungry Tide;* and with the publication of these popular works, his intellect occupies the worldly space today and is awarded with various prizes. In all his major works and his essays and journalism, Ghosh, as a postcolonial writer meditates upon a core set of issues but each time he does so from a new perspective: the troubled (and troubling) legacy of colonial knowledge and discourse on formerly colonized societies, peoples, and ideas; the ambivalent relationship to modernity of the so-called 'developing' or 'Third' world; the formation and reformation of identities in colonial and post-colonial societies; the question of agency for those previously seen the objects but not subjects of history; the recovery of lost or suppressed histories; and difference; and insistent critique of Eurocentrism in general.

Along with these themes and issues he raises, his works are well-decorated with his highly distinctive technical skills. His first novel, *The Circle of Reason* is both loosely plotted but also knitted tightly together by a series of motifs and recurring images, such that it is open-ended episode, linearity is cross-hatched with patterns that draw on its central metaphor of weaving, which is used as a metaphor for the process of storytelling; at the same time, the history of weaving is used as a

synecdoche for the nature of Reason, which is both liberating and oppressive, reasonable and unreasonable. The novel dramatizes the encounter of colonial and post-colonial knowledge demonstrating how the formation of colonial power/knowledge complexes is both reproduced and ironically subverted by its reception in colonized societies. Ghosh continued his direct engagement with colonialism in his next novel, *The Calcutta Chromosome,* which returns to some of the themes first broached by *The Circle of Reason* – Science, Reason, colonial power/knowledge – and expanded upon *In an Antique Land*. This is combined with the technical skills developed with to such good effect in *The Shadow Lines,* in which a tightly plotted narrative cuts back and forth in space and time, upon with almost dizzying velocity. Ghosh refuses to be hemmed in by generic constraints. *The Calcutta Chromosome* blends elements of the thriller, the detective novel, science fiction, ghost stories, gothic melodrama, and historiography to deliver a tongue-in-cheek pot-boiler that engages seriously with the intervention of scientific knowledges – this time in the form of colonial medicine – in a colonial society and its reception by the colonized. What is at stake in the novel is once again those Eurocentric self-representations about the diffusion of modernity, reason, progress and the civilizing mission enforced by colonialism.

Ghosh's next novel, *The Glass Palace*, the best seller to date, is weaved with a more straightforward linear narrative. Though the epic dimension of this grand historical romance means that, geographically speaking, its canvas is as vast as that of *In An Antique Land*. Ghosh's exploration of nationhood and diaspora, of relationship between individual and communities and that transgress and transcend the shadow lines of political borders are extended in this most humanist of his novels. Similarly, his last novel, *The Hungry Tide,* employs many of the narrative techniques of the

earlier novels, such as ' double-helix' pattern of alternative narrative strands, the use of flashback and memory, and the insertion of textual fragments that offer alternative avenues into a forgotten history.

Likewise, in all his novels, Ghosh exhibits an interest in the nature of language, textuality, and the discourse, and the ways in which human perception, comprehension, and experience is invariably shaped and, to varying degrees, determined by them. Ghosh's texts interrogate the commonly held belief that 'fiction' is equivalent to 'unreal' or untrue, a position that is common within postmodernism. Moreover, Ghosh's texts also represent the correlative view that identity is therefore 'unstable' and fluid, because what is made can be unmade, and often is – over time or in different contexts-- again, a central preoccupation of post-modern writers.

The attraction of Amitav Ghosh's work for many post-colonial thinkers is based on the obvious overlap in the objectives of postmodernism and postcolonialism, and particularly that philosophical variant of it known as post-structuralism, some vital intellectual and ideological resources that might help them dismantle the hegemony of European ideas that have survived formal political decolonization, and it is indeed useful to see Ghosh's work as a critical juncture between postmodern and postcolonial perspectives and objectives. In this regard, his work wrestles with the post-colonial predicament in ways that demonstrate a certain self-consciousness about the academic work that has developed in the later decades of the twentieth century under the rubrics of, 'critical theory', 'postmodernism' and 'postcolonialism'. Perhaps for this reason it was within academic circles that Ghosh's voice was first recognized as being the most prominent of all the post-Rushdie generation of Indian writers in English. The publication of *The Shadow Line* was a significant milestone in

this respect, coinciding as it did with the emergence of a critique of nationalism and national identity within what was then becoming established as 'postcolonialsm'.

Since the publication of this book, for the first time, in 1992, it has received much criticism, and many critics and readers have broadened its literary height. Reviewing *In an Antique Land*, John Thieme writes, "An apparently factual history in the guise of the traveler's tale it moves between two narratives" (23). Thieme further writes:

> The more extensive is ostensively a travel book, in which Ghosh person, engaged in anthropological research in Egypt, describes his experiences living in a fellaheen village. In the shorter narrative, a version of which has also been published in subaltern studies as "The Slaves of MS.H 6", the persona pursues a fugitive traces of the "slave" of a twelfth – century Jewish merchant-in Egypt, the Malabar coast of India, the U.K. and finally the U.S.- and in so doing pieces together a narrative of the life, not only of the subaltern slave, "Bomma", but also of his master, Abraham Ben Yuji.(24)

The text transgresses generic categories by drawing on the conventions of travel book, novel, ethnography and academic history in a subtly subversive way.

Similarly, Claire Chambers in “Anthropology as cultural Translation: Amitav Ghosh's *In an Antique Land”* states that In *an Antique Land* ,straddles the generic borderlines between fact, fiction, autobiography, history, anthropology, and travel book . He further writes:

> His discussion of anthropology suggests that its fieldwork methodology is based on concealed relation of dominance. The others specificity tends to be elided in ethnographic research, as

> generalizations about the community are made at the expense of place of the epistemically coercive discourse of history and anthropology, Ghosh offers a deliberately partial and dialogic narrative. He suggests that to provide a non coercive translation of alterity, the text should be multifaceted, imaginative, and open ended. (17)

What Claire Chambers poses here is the fieldwork methodology adapted by Ghosh while being in his field trip in the Egyptian villages that helps to shape *In an Antique Land*. In the book Ghosh grapples with the problem of representing the other. He rejects any single historical or anthropological account's claim to provide an authentic and complete version of the other.

Because of its insistence of dwelling on the pleasurable, nostalgic writing can transform even the most tragic situations into narratives of survival and determination. Referring to Ben Yiju toward the end of his life, at one point Ghosh writes, " The letter he wrote on this occasion was a long one, like the last, but his mood and his circumstances were greatly changed and the nostalgic exuberance that had seized him upon his written to Aden had now yielded true a resigned and broken-hearted melancholy"(313). In his account of Ben Yiju's life, Ghosh has himself created up to this point in the narrative a nostalgic vision. In this regard, Gaurav Desai opines the book as the best writing of nostalgia. He writes:

> Written as a "history in the guise of traveler’s tale", *In an Antique Land*, is at once a travelogue, a detective story, for romance with a lost world and an anthropologist attempt to write dialogic ethnography […] what makes in an Antique Land such a powerful text for our own times is its insistence on a nostalgic optimism even as it recognizes the encroachment of an inevitable melancholia. (125, 41)

Here, Desai views the book written in the nostalgic tone as Ghosh's romance with the lost world. For him, nostalgia is, in effect, a necessary for forgetting trauma and a celebration of recuerable memories oriented towards a desirable future.

Another critic, Gauri Viswanahan reads *In an Antique Land* as "Beyond Orientalism: Syncretism and the Politics of Knowledge". She writes:

> No matter how moving Ghosh's book might be, and no matter how appealing his humanist call for dissolving barriers between nations, peoples, and communities on the grounds that world civilizations were syncretic long before the divisions introduced by the territorial boundaries of nation-states the work cannot get beyond nostalgia to offer ways of dealing with what is, after all, an intractable political problem. (32)

Here, she critiques Ghosh's spousal of syncretism, which she suggests as a point of contraction in Ghosh's argument. She argues that Ghosh finds a model of syncretism in the history of the Indian Ocean trade and the hybrid identities it engendered that is no longer available in the present.

The multi-generic text *In an Antique Land* has been read and interpreted from various perspectives regarding its form and issues it raises. However, the approach of the present study is to search for the pre-modern antique values critiquing with western modernity: rationalism, individualism, nationalism, colonialism, slavery as well as Eurocentric monolithic vision; exposing with its blind spots and exclusiveness. So, to meet this objective alternative modernity sounds more appropriate in this context. It is because, Amitav Ghosh, post-colonial third world writer in *In an Antique Land*, advocates the needs of the revival of pre-modern ethical and moral values: communitarianism, decolonization, inclusive nationalism,

cosmopolitanism, hospitality as well as ethics of co-existence among different races, castes, people with different religious identity and from different geographical locations. Ghosh demands for alternative modernities that give space to antique or supposedly pre-modern values unlike western modernity.

The concept of alternative modernities is related to the efforts by postcolonical scholars including subaltern historians to disrupt the conventional grand-narratives of western scholars and to critique the impact of modernity in its discursive form as an element of domination and power. It is a critique of European models of aesthetic and existential response to contemporary social conditions. It highlights the situatedness of individual and group identities and multiple ways of responding to the global social condition. In this regard, Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar insists on the significance of alternative modernities: "To think in terms of alternative modernities is to admit that modernity is inescapable and to desist from speculations about the end of modernity [...]. Modernity is now everywhere" (1).

Since the birth place of modernity is European land, modernity traveled to the rest part of the world in its colonial form. The process of colonization paved the way for globalization which develops a new concept of global modernity. Global modernity helps to recognize the appearance of alternative or multiple modernities which not only exhibits the contradiction of modernity but also seeks to challenge it by conceding the possibility of culturally different way of being modern. Whereas modernity stands in opposition to tradition, alternative modernities seek to reform and bring the changes in the previous established norms and values. In this sense, it is the continuation of traditions with the consciousness of time; it valorizes the pre-modern ethical and moral values accepting the modern changes; so, is the combination of the past and the present, which helps to preserve the non-western cultures and civilization

leaving a space for the minority groups and the victims. Alternative modernities always speak of the marginal groups and the victims as Ziauddin Sardar states "Nanday's alternative is the alternative of the victims" (215).Thus, it is all inclusive, which seeks to bring the changes in people's all aspects of life not in the universal way but in their own way of locality in relation to their social, cultural, and religious practices, valorizing with the traditional- moral and ethical- norms and values; to harmony and co-existence among different races, ethnic, and religious groups from different geographical location.

The research is divided into four chapters: Introduction, Theoretical Tool, Textual Analysis and Conclusion. The general way to prove the application of the tool is given in introduction along with the some critics' view on the text as well as the writer's concern and issues he raises- with reference to his major texts. In the second chapter, general introduction of theoretical tool: modernity and its blind spot; alternative modernities, its basic tenants and the ethical dimension; and the opinions of different theorists are included. Here alternative modernities play the vital role to prove the hypothesis for critiquing westernity. In the third chapter, the application of the tool in the text is shown to be proved citing different statements from the text and comparing them with the tool to prove the hypothesis. In the concluding chapter, the basic finding of the research is mentioned in relation to above mentioned three chapters.

II. Alternative Modernities

Introduction to Western Modernity

Modernity refers to the break away from the traditional social, political, cultural or orthodoxical agendas. It always stands in opposition to tradition. Modernity, so, is the condition of being new and innovative which separates itself from the traditional norms, values, standards, belief systems and so on. It is the consciousness of time and space, and self and others that is shared by all human beings in the world. Since modernity can be realized when tradition has been destroyed and superseded, it is a radical threat to history and tradition, or past. Modernity can be felt in such an environment that promise us adventure, power, joys, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world. Modernity can be realized by cutting all the boundary of geography. In this sense it tries to unite all mankind. To be modern is to be part of the universe as Karl Marx says, “All that is solid melts into air" (qtd. in Berman 15).

Modernity, for Marshall Berman is "[t]he body of experience--experience of space and time, of the self and others, of life's possibilities and perils--that is shared by men and women all over the world today" (15). It is a tendency that shows how the people experience the change in different fields of life during the epochal period of history. Modernity is the universal phenomenon that transcends all the boundaries of geography and ethnicity, of class and nationality, of religion and ideology. In this sense, modernity is the reflection of the recent historical development:

> The maelstrom of modern life has been fed from many sources: great discoveries in the physical science, changing our images of universe and our place in it; the industrialization of production, which transforms scientific knowledge into technology; creates new

> environment and destroys old ones, speed of the whole tempo of life, generates new forms of corporate power and class struggle […]. (16)

These world-historical processes have nourished an amazing variety of visions and ideas that aim to make men and women the subjects and objects of modernization, to give them the power to change the world that is changing them, to make their way through the maelstrom and make it their own.

Berman goes back to the history of modernity by dividing it into three phases. In the first phase, which goes roughly from the start of the sixteenth century to the end of the eighteenth, people were just beginning to experience modern life, they hardly knew what has hit them. The second phase begins with the great revolutionary wave of the 1790s to the nineteenth century. With the French revolution and its reverberations, a modern public abruptly comes to life. This public shares the feeling of living in a revolutionary age, an age that generates explosive upheavals in every dimensions of personal, social and political life. In the twentieth century which is third and final phase for him, the process of modernization expands to take in virtually the whole world and the developing world culture of modernism achieves spectacular triumph in art and thought.

In the same line, Jurgen Habermas defines modernity as "the consciousness of time"(32). It has been used to mean transition of consciousness, defined by social change in terms of a set of historical processes, which demarcates the modern world from its historical predecessors. He further writes:

> The word "modern" was first employed in the late fifth century in order to distinguish the present, now officially Christian, from the pagan and Roman past. With a different content in each case, the expression 'modernity' repeatedly articulates the consciousness of an

> era that refers back to the past of classical antiquity precisely in order to comprehend itself as the result of a transition from the old to the new. This is not merely true for the Renaissance, with which the "modern age" begins *for us;* people also considered themselves as "modern" in the age of Charlemagne, in the twelfth century, and in the Enlightenment- in short, whenever the consciousness of a new era developed in Europe through a renewed relationship to classical antiquity. (282)

The term 'modern' appeared and reappeared exactly during those periods in Europe when the consciousness of a new epoch formed itself through a renewed relationship to the ancients. The concept of modernity brought democracy which is separated from church and state, the end of royal privileges, freedom of beliefs, opinions and associations.

Karl Marx, a German philosopher, is best regarded as the upholder of modernity. He challenges the Hegelian idea and asserts, "It is the matter that determines consciousness not the idea" (qtd. in Gaarder 397).Karl Max, as a purveyor of modernity, contributes a great deal to fill up the consciousness in the proletarians. Similarly, Freud, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard are, among others, the outstanding contributors for the emergence of modernity. Freud breaks the binary between savage and civilization, and asserts that all men are guided by the unconscious, which is repeated with sexual instincts. He further claims, "The *conscious* constitutes only a small part of the human mind. The conscious is like the tip of the iceberg above sea level" (qtd. in Gaarder 435).

Likewise, for the advancement of modernity, the credit goes to Nietzsche. He dismantles the blind faith; the western thought has brought up with it, on religion and

God. He stands as a modern figure when he declares 'the death of God'. Meanwhile, Kierkegaard emerges with a new vision of human existence. He undermines the concepts of objective knowledge and universal truth, but emphasizes on the multiple truths and subjective knowledge as the need of the day. According to Kierkegaard, "rather than searching for the Truth with capital T, it is more important to find the kind of truths that are meaningful to the individual's life. It is more important to find 'the truth for me' (qtd. in Garder 379). He, thus, sets the individual, or each and every man, up against the 'system'.

In the Western trend of thought, Enlightenment is taken as the seed of modernity. It is an intellectual movement in the eighteenth century Europe that celebrated human reason and scientific thought as the instrument of liberation from the superstition and ignorance inherited from the past. Reason is at the heart of the movement. Kant, the dominant figure of this movement, talks about private and public use of reason, and says only the proper use of free reasoning makes men enlightened. He argues, "The public use of one's reason must always be free, and it alone can bring about enlightenment among men" (Kant16). For him, enlightenment is a philosophical attitude of the self towards the present reality or modernity. Hence, Kant introduced the concept of "modernity" for the first time. Modernity, for Foucault, is a mode of relating to contemporary reality. To characterize this attitude of modernity he brings forth the idea of Baudelaire:

> Modernity is often characterized in terms of consciousness of the discontinuity of time: a break with tradition, a feeling of novelty of vertigo in the face of the passing movement. And this is indeed what Baudelaire seems to be saying when he defines modernity as "the ephemeral, the fleeting, and the contingent"[…] Modernity is the

> attitude that makes it possible to grasp the "heroic" aspect of the present moment. Modernity is not a phenomenon of sensitivity to the fleeting present; it is the will to heroize the present. (Foucault 110)

Foucault claims that modernity is not such a notion which can be stable; rather it is the consciousness of time, a break from the past. For him, it is an attitude to see the heroic as well as ironic aspect of the current time at the same time. For Baudelaire, the aesthetic experience of modernity fuses with the historical. In the fundamental experience of aesthetic modernity, the problem of self-grounding becomes acute, because here the horizon of temporal experience contrasts to the decentred subjectivity that splits away from the conventions of everyday life. A self-consuming actuality, which forfeits the extension of transitional period of a most recent period, becomes the reference point of modernity.

Max Weber, German sociologist and philosopher, takes the 'rationality' as western phenomenon for the base of western civilization with the modern empirical sciences, autonomous arts, and theories of morality and low grounded on principles, cultural spheres of value took shape which made possible learning processes in accord with the respective inner logics of theoretical, aesthetic, and moral and practical problems. Max Weber takes up the “problems of universal history as the question why outside Europe, the scientific, the artistic, the political, or the economic development […] did not enter upon that path of rationalization which is peculiar to the occident?” (qtd. in Habermas 1). Weber depicts not only the secularization of western culture, but also and especially of the development of modern societies from the view point of rationalization.

Habermas conceives modernity in a normative unified sense as an “unfinished project”, initiated by the Enlightenment, where the goal of this project is emancipation

(281). The project of modernity began in the of Enlightenment is unfinished yet owing to the attacks by what he calls the conservatives, impacts of societal modernization, and some inherent problems in cultural modernization itself. For him, the neoconservatives like Daniel Bell wrongly attribute to cultural modernity. All those pathological or dysfunctional syndromes, such as hedonism, narcissism, lack of social identity, withdrew from status and achievement competition that are in reality the product of successful capitalist modernization of economy and society. He says:

> Neo-conservatism displaces the burdensome and unwelcome consequences of a more or less successful capitalist modernization of the economy on to cultural modernity. It observes the connections between the processes of social modernization […] and fails to reveal the socio structural causes of transformed attitudes to work. Thus neo-conservatism can directly attribute what appear to be hedonism, a lack of social identification, an incapacity for obedience, narcissism, and the withdral from competition for status and achievement to a culture. (288)

He argues that the societal modernization is characterized by the growing autonomy of subsystems of purposive rational action steered by market economy and administrative state, whose unrestrained expansion leads to the colonization of life world. Cultural modernization, on the other hand, is characterized by the increasing of cultural value spheres. It embodies different rationality structures such as cognitive-instrumental, moral-practical and aesthetic-expressive.

The elitist splitting of expert cultures from everyday lifeworld, and the relentless erosion of tradition generate certain cultural pathologies which Habermas describes as “desolation” and “cultural impoverishment” (288). He further says:

> What the cultural spheres gain through specialized treatment and reflection does not automatically comes into the possession of everyday practice without more ado. For with cultural rationalization, the life world, once its traditional substance has been devalued, threatens rather to become impoverished. (290)

He asserts that the enlightenment project of basing authority on reason has gone wrong because the specialized discourse of economics, of bureaucratic administration, of technological knowledge, and of art has got divorced from the life world of everyday moral and practical decisions.

Blind spots in Western Modernity

Since modernity is a universal phenomenon that transcends all the boundaries of geography, ethnicity, religion and ideology. In this sense, modernity can be said to unite all mankind, but it is a paradoxical unity as Berman says “a unity of disunity: it pours us all into a maelstrom of struggle and contradiction, of ambiguity and anguish” (Berman1). People who find themselves in the midst of this maelstrom experience modernity as a radical threat to all their history and traditions, it has, in the course of five centuries (from16th century to 20th century) developed a rich history and plenitude of tradition of its own. As the modern public expands, it shatters into a multitude of fragments, speaking incommensurable private languages: the idea of modernity, conceived in numerous fragmentary ways, loses much of its vividness, resonance and depth, and loses its capacity to organize and give meaning to people's lives. As a result of all this, Berman comments, "we find ourselves today in the midst of a modern age that has lost touch with the roots of its own modernity" (3).

If we move towards the distinctive rhythms and timbers of nineteenth-century modernity, we find the highly developed, differentiated and dynamic new landscape

in which modern experience takes place. The critics of the nineteenth century all attack the modern landscape passionately, and strive to tear it down or explode it from within. We can get a feeling for the complexity and dialectical motion of nineteenth-century modernity, and for the unities that infuses its diversity, if we listen briefly to two of its most distinctive voices: Nietzsche and Marx.

Marx's writing is famous for its ending. But if we see him as a modernist, we will notice the dialectical motion that underlines and animates his thought, a motion that is open- ended, and against the current of his own concepts and desires. Thus, in the *Communist Manifesto* the revolutionary dynamism overthrows the modern bourgeois springs from that bourgeoisie's own deepest impulses and needs:

> All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudice and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air all that is holy is profaned, and men at last are forced to face […] the real conditions of their lives and their relations with their fellow men. (qtd. in Berman 21)

Thus, the dialectical motion of modernity turns ironically against its prime movers. But it may not stop turning there; after all, all modern movements are caught up in his ambience –including Marx's own.

If we move to Nietzsche, we will find very different premises and allegiances. For Nietzsche, as for Marx the currents of modern history were ironic and dialectical: thus Christian ideals of the soul's integrity and the will to truth had come to explode Christianity itself. Berman comments as:

> Nietzsche's own stance towards the perils of modernity is to embrace them all with joy, We moderns, we half-barbarians. We are in the

> midst of our bliss only when we are most in danger. The only stimulus that tickles us is the infinite, the immeasurable. (9)

The results were the traumatic events that Nietzsche called “the death of God” and “the advent of nihilism”. Modern mankind found itself in the midst of a great absence and emptiness of values and yet, at the same time, a remarkable abundance of possibilities. Yet Nietzsche is not willing to live in the midst of this danger forever.

What is distinctive and remarkable about the voice that Marx and Nietzsche share is its readiness to turn on itself, to question and negate all it has said, to transform itself into a great range of harmonic or dissonant voices, and to stretch itself beyond its capacities into an endlessly wider range, to express and grasp a world where “everything is pregnant with its contrary and all that is solid melts into air” (23). This voice resonates at once with self-delight and self-doubt. Berman further comments as:

> It is a voice that knows pain and dread, but believes in its power to come through. Grave danger is everywhere, and may strike at any moment, but not even the deepest wounds can stop the flow and overflow of its energy. (23)

It is ironic and contradictory, polyphonic and dialectical denouncing modern life in the name of values that modernity itself has created, hoping-often against hope-that the modernities of tomorrow and the day after tomorrow will heal the wounds that wreck the modern men and women of today.

The conventional theoretical model about the structure of modernity and its historical extension across the world is faulty that what we describe as modernity is a single, homogenous, process and can be traced to a single casual principle. In the case of Marx it is the rise of capitalist commodity production, for Weber, a more abstract

principle of rationalization of the world. Sudipta Kaviraj expresses the similar views as:

> It is widely believed that as modernity spreads from the modern concepts of economic and political power to other parts of the world, it tends to produce societies similar to those of the modern west. […] Modernity replicates western social form to other parts of the world; wherever it goes it produce a uniform 'modernity'. (137)

What Kaviraj poses here is the single, monolithic concept of modernity that seeks the similar kind of change in social formation to those of the modern west wherever it travels. Based on economical and political power modernity replicates the westernity in other part of the world, so it is exclusive.

When modernity comes into the non-Western world, it could not be free from such monolithic notion of westernity. It rather serves or is serving their superiority or hegemony being embedded with power politics. Orientalism is a Western invention which shows the difference between orient and occident in terms of epistemology and ontology. The occidents define themselves as what the orients are not. Edward Said writes; 'The relationship between occident and orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony" (5). He views orientalism as a corporate institution since eighteenth century for dealing with and dominating the orient. He further writes:

> The corporate institution for dealing with the orient-dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing view of it, describing it, by teaching it, setting it, ruling over it […]. [O]rientalism [is] a western style for dominating, restricting, and having authority over the orient. (3)

Thus, for Said, Orientalism, a Western invention of the orient and orientals becomes a means for dealing with and dominating the orient. It serves them to impose their superiority as they define it in relation with modernity. They use orientalism as a weapon, to justify their colonialism, which ultimately serves their ruling motive.

The Westerners are in power technically, academically and economically. Power creates some certain knowledge or truth, and that truth functions as a discourse in the network of power. As Foucault says, representation, power and truth are involved in discourse. They create certain discourses basing on their knowledge and power to rule over the orient. Orientalism is a discourse created by the West about the east. Said opine the same views as:

> Without examining orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage and even produce the orient politically, sociologically militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period. (3)

To understand the essence of orientalism, it should be examined as a discourse. Basing on the Foucauldian notion of discourse, Said clearly shows how the Westerners by using their power, create some certain effects of truth and represents the orient. Though, it is (mis)-representation, it becomes truth because of power, which is the base of colonialism and imperialism.

Like orientalism, modernity is a European invention, the product of their knowledge and power and alone let become a discourse. Modernity which exists and functions as a discourse within such power network, can-not be exception, rather tends to serve their colonial modernity. In this sense, it can be taken as another form

of colonialism, an imperialism that traveled and walked all over the world to serve Eurocentric monolithic world view. In this regard Dilip Goanker writes:

> Modernity has traveled from the West to the rest of the world not only in terms of cultural forms, social practices and institutional arrangements but also as a form of discourse that interrogates the present. (13)

Thus, for Goankar modernity as a discourse dispersed throughout the world with colonization, serving Western mentality to rule. As a discourse it too, a constructed truth, which cannot include the truths of other cultures geographical location and traditions such as morality, ethics, co-existence, hospitality and so on.

Modernity, a discourse which functions as a grand narrative, being embedded with such power politics, cannot include equally the other marginal voices i.e. blacks, females, backwarded people even in the west so it seems exclusive even in case of European land as well as the other parts of the world. Thus, the exclusion of westernity or western modernity leaves a space for alternative modernities or multiple modernities.

Alternative Modernities

It is no doubt the motherland of modernity is basically the European land. But the rest of the land received or is receiving modernity in two ways: directly (hegemony) and indirectly (influential). The process of colonization paved the way for globalization of the culture. Those colonized countries not only adopted or imitated the Western European culture fully but they also preserved their certain inherent communal quality in their local space. So, the notion about 'glocal culture' begins to be practised. Glocalization is the mixed stare of global and the local, Robertson writes:

> Capitalist modernity does involve an element of cultural homogenization for it increases the levels and amount of global co-ordination. However, mechanism of fragmentation, heteroginazation and hybridity are also at work. It is not a question of either homogenization or heterogenization, but rather of the ways in which both of these two tendencies have becomes features of life across much of the late-twentieth century world. (qtd. in Barker 27)

Robertson is of the view that heterogenization, homogenization and hybridity all are the mechanism to be glocalization of culture. Due to the globalization of culture and spontaneous attraction towards culture on the one hand and strong sentiments towards cultural nationalism on the other, we live always somewhere in the middle.

The idea of the local, specifically what is considered to be local, is produced within and by globalizing discourse. Globalization involves the dynamic movements of ethnic groups' technology, financial transaction, media images and ideological conflicts. European cultural modernity is evident through language, sport, architecture, music, food, painting, film, television and the general sense amongst the whites that European culture presents high culture. Never- the- less, the impact of external culture influences is more complex than the idea of simple cultural imperialism. Ideologically, not only non-Western cultures are influenced by the West rather West itself is under the influences of non-West in some or the other way. Barker views as:

> Globalization is not constituted by a monolithic one way flow from west-to-the-rest. This can be seen in the impact of non-western ideas and practices on west. For example: the global impact of world music; the influences of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and other world religions

> within the west; the commodification and sale of ethnic food and clothing. (161)

Thus, for Barker, globalization is a common place where the ideas from different cultures, traditions, religions and places get space to be practised.

Born with, and from the dialectical nation and blind spot of modernity, alternative modernities question against its singular form. There is no fixed and single modernity as Goankar says: "Modernity is not one, but many"(16). In this sense, modernity should be defined in terms of its alternative because there exist the alternative of each and every modernitiy. Gaonkar is one among a growing number of theorists and historians who are calling for a new discourse about modernity, one based on an acknowledgement of "multiple modernities," "early modernities", "polycentric modernities", or "conjectural modernities"(Firedman 435). They are not mosaics, each modernity is separate and isolated from all others, evolving autonomously and equally.

Arguments for multiple modernities are no less than arguments for globalization; state their case in terms of cultural differences that are aligned around spatialities that are themselves the products of modernization: nation's cultures, civilizations and ethnicities. Arif Dirlk further writes:

> In identifying 'multiplicity' with boundaries of nations, cultures, civilizations, and ethnicities, the idea of multiple modernities seeks to contain challenges to modernity by conceding the possibility of culturally different ways of being modern. While this is an improvement over an earlier Eurocentric modernization discourse […] are the products not just a past legacies but of modernity and cut across national or civilization boundary. (285)

The framing of modernities within the boundaries of refined cultural entities feeds on, and in turn legitimizes, the most conservative cultural claims on modernity. What an idea of multiple modernities ignores is that the question of modernity is subject to debate within the cultural, civilizational, national or ethnic it takes as its unit of analysis.

In this era of globalization, new concept of modernity emerges as 'global modernity'. It refers to the new form of modernity from the 1980s onwards. Arif Dirlik uses the concept of global modernity in order to understand the contemporary world. It also helps to recognize the appearance of alternative or multiple modernities that exhibit the contradiction of modernity. He views as:

> These difference, and the appearance of 'alternative' or 'multiple' modernities, it suggest, are expressions, and articulations, of the contradictions of modernity […] If we are to speak of alternative or multiple modernities, which presently valorize the persistence of traditions and 'civilization' legacies, we need to recognize that the very language of alternatives and multiplicity is enabled historically by the presupposition of a common modernity shaped by a globalizing capitalism. (275)

Whereas modernity stands in opposition to tradition, alternative or multiple modernities always valorizes the persistence of traditions and civilization legacies. Traditions are based on ethical, moral and religious values which are the most necessary things for modern men and women to follow are carried only by alternative modernities in this age of globalization.

Globalization, as it has focused upon the continuous integration of contradictory societies within it, draws in a considerable portion, the consciousness of

self and individuality. Now, every society and culture has started shifting their interest from the very homonizing concept of modernity and globalization to their own typical social, cultural and traditional pattern. Thus it has now led globalization towards global modernity. Dirlik writes:

> Important transformations in global relations over the past three decades call for a re-conceptualized modernity […] as global modernity. Re-conceptualizing modernity […] has been the goal of much scholarship during this same period, cutting across ideological and methodological divides. The effort to overcome Euro-centrism and to bring into modernity the voices, experiences, and cultural legacies of others. (276)

For Dirlik, this new idea of global modernity has the capacity to be plural, to incorporate multiple ideas and to give different and typical and genuine sense of identity to all social classes in this world. It has now become a local concept as it has left Euro-centrism.

Decolonization, after the Second World War and the fall of socialism opened the way to globalization which after all turned to be a forum for all. It focused on the expression in the fragmentation of the single modernity into multiple and alternative maternities. Such new context brought culture back into reaffirm the persistence of local subjectivities and local appropriation of capitalist modernity. Dirlik further writes:

> The decline and fall of socialism in the course of the 1980's opened the way to the globalization of capital. It also eliminated socialism as a crucial obstacle to cultural appropriations-and, therefore, the proliferation of modernities, which now find expression in the

> fragmentation of a single modernity into multiple and alternative modernities. (276)

Dirlik thinks that the very Euro-centric, monolithic modernity with its excessive focus on integration of world into a single frame opened the way to multiple modernities invalidating its own idea of single center. Thus, now, there is the idea of local and plural and multiple in use in this post-war, decolonized world.

Dirlik says modernity unlike the very Eurocentric concept as it was developed and used in eighteenth and nineteenth century western colonization period has now carried a global scope openly and it now speaks about the new idea of globalcentrism. He says, "[…] modernity all along has been global in scope, plural in form and direct, and hybrid not only across cultural boundaries but also in the relationship of modern to the traditional " (276).

The concept of alternative form of modernity is the sole concept that most of the communities at the present time are buttressing so as to make themselves adjust in new arrival of time or, say , in global context. Critics are of the view that such alternative modernity is of that type developed or developing from European modernity but being alternated from it to adjust in local or can be said situational.

'Cultural' and 'acultural' are two theories of modernity developed by Charles Taylor. Cultural theory is the theory of 'divergence', whereas an acultural theory is the theory of ‘convergence’. A purely acultural theory distorts and impoverishes our understanding of ourselves, both through miss-classification, and through too narrow a focus. But its effects on our understanding of other cultures are even more devastating:

> Exclusive reliance on an acultural theory unfits us for what is perhaps the most important task of social sciences in our day, understanding the

> full gamut of alternative modernities in the making in the different parts of the world. It locks us into an ethnocentric prison condemned to project our own forms on to everyone else and blissfully on awareness of what we are doing. (Charles Taylor 28)

Thus, an acultural theory imposes a false uniformity on the diverse and multiple encounters of non-western cultures with the allegedly culture-neutral forms and the process like science and technology, industrialization, secularization, bureaucratization, and so on--characteristics of societal modernization. The inexorable march of modernity will end up making all cultures look the same. In this bleak context, the need of the alternative modernities is the most to preserve the uniqueness of all cultures.

These two theories of modernity always stand in opposition. Goankar developed the concept of 'creative adaptation' basing on the dialectic of 'convergence' and divergence to explore the idea of alternative modernities. He views as:

> To think productively along the lines suggested by the idea of alternative modernities, we have to recognize and problematize the unavoidable dialectic of convergence and divergence […] .The attempt at creative adaptation that one finds in that fantastic saga is not so much an instance of institutional innovation, although there is plenty of that, but one of a people struggling to find their moral footing. (16)

Alternative modernities' perspective complicates this neat dichotomy by foregrounding that narrow but critical band of variations consisting of site-specific 'creative adaptation on the axis of convergence'. Here, as in every other site-based reading, we catch glimpses of a large conception of creative adaptation as an interminable process of questioning the present which is the altitude of modernity.

Unlike an acultural theory, a cultural theory holds that modernity always unfolds within a specific culture or civilizational context and that different starting point for the transition to modernity leads to different outcomes. A cultural theory directs one to examine how "the pull of sadness and the forces making for difference" interact in specific ways under the exigencies of history and politics to produce alternative modernities at different national and cultural sites (Goankar16). There is never atomistic and neutral self-understanding; there is only a constellation of ours which tends to throw up the myth of this self-understanding as part of its imaginary. This is of the essence of a cultural theory of modernity which serves to alternative modernities.

Since modernity is best understood as an attitude of questioning the present, the exploration of the alternative modernities begins with by asking, what is the status of the attitude today? Then, the attitudes of questioning the present are both pervasive and embattled: it is pervasive because modernity has gone global, and it is embattled because it forces seemingly irresolvable dilemmas (Goankar13). In fact, the very idea of alternative modernities has its origin in the present and sometimes violent questioning of the present precisely because the present announces itself as the modern at every national and cultural site today.

Goankar, by examining the career and dilemmas of modernity, and from a culture-specific and site-based reading of the relationship between the two strands of modernity--societal modernization and cultural modernity--develops the idea of alternative modernities as:

> The tale of the two modernities, however compelling it is for mapping the western experiences of modernity and its dilemmas cannot be extended, without important modifications; to cover other theaters of

> modernity […].The key elements in the narrative are present and active in a variety of combinations at different national and cultural sites. (14)

The obviously distinctive visions of societal modernization and cultural modernity stand in opposition while the former serves the bourgeois modernity with the development of the capitalism, the mode of production; the later are repelled by the middle-class ethos. So, the proper modification of these distinctive visions gives rise to alternative modernitinies. Goankar further writes, "To think in terms of alternative modernities is to recognize the need to modernization and cultural modernity" (1).

To think in terms of alternative modernities is to privilege a particular angle of interrogation (Gaonkar 14) .Some critics even think about the double negotiation between societal and cultural modernization. Gaonkar is also of the same view:

> The site of alternative modernities is also the site of double negotiations-- between societal modernization and cultural modernity and between hidden capacities for the production of the similarity and difference. Thus, alternative modernaties produce combinations and recombinations that are endlessly surprising […] everywhere, at every national/ cultural site, modernity is not one but many; modernity is not new but old and familiar, modernity is complete and necessarily so. (18)

Thus, the double relationship between convergence and divergence, with their counter intuitive dialectic between similarity and difference, makes the site of alternative modernities. In this regard, alternative modernity is the most valorized the unique features of every culture that are left by an acultural theory of modernity.

The global and local are now in constant play with concept of globalization resulting hybrid world culture. Every nation and society is now under some sort of

cultural transformation. Thus, now that very monolithic western concept of modernity carries the spirit of local with it, wherever it travels. In this regard, Sanjeev Upreti in his *Nepali Modernities and post- modernities* writes:

> Post-structural and post-colonial thinkers like R. Radhakrishna and Dipesh Chakrabarty are of the opinion that modernity should be thought of in local, rather than universal terms. Both tend to focus upon the geo-cultural context of modernity; context that are tied to specific locations. (232)

For Upreti, modernity is carrying the very spirit of local or of every cultural, social group. Thus, now modernity is a plural concept which is totally different concept than the Western concept of modernity.

Dipesh Chakrabarty speaks of the locality of modernity. Being an Indian, he valorizes the Indian traditions for an alternative way to modernity. Every tradition has its own identity and meaning which is based on different cultural practices. Wearing white *khadi* is an Indian tradition that Gandhi popularized in the 1920s. The whiteness of its colour symbolizes the ides of purity. Gandhi by wearing white *khadi* used to come to the public and devoted himself for the welfare to them. To elaborate its value Chakrabarty further writes:

> The white of *khadi* symbolizes the Hindu idea of purity, its coarseness and identification with both simplicity and poverty, to make sacrifice in the public / national interest *khadi* indicates the persons capacity to serve the country [….] that address desires for alternative construction of the public sphere, constructions that illustrate the heterogeneity of cultural practices that gives Indian modernity its sense of difference. (52, 55)

Wearing white *khadi* by replacing their foreign cloth all at once for one, like Gandhi shows one's love, passion, patriotism and devotion towards own tradition. Such kind of activity for the continuation of tradition addresses desires for alternative constructions that illustrated the multiplicity of cultural practices and Indianness.

When modernity always stands in opposition to traditions, alternative modernities seek to reform and bring the changes in past established norms and values basing on the cultural practices with the consciousness of time. Chakrabarty, on Bengali widow's operation, agrees with the view of Bangali reformers like Rammouhun Roy and Iswarchandra Vidyasagar. He further writes:

> Rammohun sought a solution to the problem of cruelty to widows by giving them the right to inherit property […] that, if widows were given the right of inheritance, people would treat them fairly; Vidyasagar by giving them the right to re marry […] that widow should be given a renewed. Claim on the male power of protection. (104,111)

Agreeing with these two reformists, Chakrabarty poses the improvement in traditions, preserving their essence that the very widowhood symbolizes one's devotion towards his/her late life partner. Rammohun and Vidysagar call for the property inheritance and remarriage that brings the change in widows' life style. It is indeed, the alternative modernity that gives new life to widows, hence brings forth uprising females' positions in the society.

Similarly, alternative modernities seek to harmony and co-existence among different races, ethnic and religious groups within and outside the country. There was no ethnic and religious consciousness among Indians before colonialism. The very structure of modern governmentality carries with it the seeds of competitive

construction of ethnicity the struggle to produce a sense of cultural unity against the British made mainstream Indian nationalism culturally Hinduism. The Muslim search for Pakistan emphasized Islam. The lower caste people's struggles for social justice produce anti-Brahmanism. Chakrabarty with memories of the partition recalls the early modern harmony between ethnic and religious groups. He writes:

> Muslim participates in the Hindu festivals and, thus, were narritively absorbed in to the image of the eternal Bengali folk. The boatmen and other Muslims treated Hindus with civility and are, hence, placed within the pleasures of the imagined communal life of the village. Even the market place is seen as an extension of this harmony. (133)

There was harmony between Hindu and Muslim before colonial period in India. Though, people involved in different religious practices, they developed the sense of brotherhood and behaved like that. They involved and enjoyed each others' religious activities and festivals. What Chakrabarty, longing for the pre-modern moral and ethical values that develop is the sense of humanity.

Similar is the view of Ashis Nandy for humanity that he speaks for victims. Nandy who categorically locates himself with the victims of history seeks to unite the victims and to increase the awareness of their victim hood. In this sense his thought and scholarship is “one long quest for alternatives to the dominant modes of everything” (Sardar 213). For him, an alternative that is genuinely an alternative cannot take the west as its reference. Nandy's alternative is located beyond the West/anti-West dichotomy in a totally different space. He further writes:

> It lies in an entirely new construction: a 'victims' construction of the West, a West which would make sense to the non-West in terms of the non-West's experience of suffering […] a battle between dehumanized

> self and the objectified enemy, the technologized bureaucrat and his reified victim […]. (qtd. in Sardar 215)

Thus, Nandy's alternative is the alternative of the victims, and whenever the oppressors make appearance in this alternative they are revealed to be distinguished victims. This constructions both of a victims alternative as well as of alternative west, turns out to be a strategy for survival.

Being agree with Nandy's alternative of the victims, Ziauddian sardar puts forward the non-western culture and civilization for the collective representation to all suffering everywhere-the suffering of the past as well as the present to release the bondage of suffering in the future. He opines that "[t]he the non-Western cultures have to do much more than simply resist the west: they have to transfer their cultures of resistance" (266). Regarding the resistance of the non-westerners he further says:

> Bound violence and pacifism, there is a third option: the dissenter as non player […] the oppressed, refusing to be the first class citizen in the world of oppression, is neither a player nor a counter- player: he or she plays another game all together, a game of building and alternative world where there is some hope of winning his or humanity. (230)

Here, Sardar calls for the transformation of non-western culture into cultures of resistance; and to discover their traditions-including new traditions of dissent. For him the third option for the dissenter as non -player is the best way to refuse to be participated in the world of oppression, and at the same time to develop an alternative world that helps one to preserve humanity. Thus, only the alternative world is the space for oppressed and victims to preserve and exercise their tradition, cultures with moral and ethical values.

Summing up, modernity is an inaugural moment instigating a conclusive break with tradition but it is also the problem in larger aspects; the decay of faith and the confusion of tongues: the loss of certitude in the high matters of religion and ethics. Scientific as well as aesthetic modernity traveled from Europe to the rest of the world especially through colonization. Colonization always tends to serve only the "Eurocentric exclusion which is evident in Western humanistic neglect of the Indian, Chinese, African and Japanese traditions"(Said 54).The process of colonization paved the way for globalization which involves the dynamic movements of ethnic groups, technology, financial transactions, media images and ideological conflicts. Thus, it develops a new concept of global modernity. Global modernity helps to recognize the appearance of alternative or multiple modernities which not only exhibit the contradiction of modernity but also seek to certain challenges to modernity by conceding the possibility of culturally different way of being modern. Alternative modernities thus seek, to reform and bring the changes in past established norms and values basing on the cultural practices, to harmony and co-existence among different races, ethnic and religious groups. So this research attempts to search pre modern values for the ethical co-existence among different races, castes and people with different identity in Amitav Ghosh's *In an Antique Land*.

III. Critique of Western Modernity in Amitav Ghosh's *In an Antique Land*

In an Antique Land is a landmark to advocate the necessity of the pre-modern, ethical and moral values which are put in shadow of Western Modernity. Amitav Ghosh, in the book, by the constant movements back and forth within the juncture of two narratives: anthropological and historical, or in the present and the past, critiques western modernity exposing with its blind spots and exclusiveness in relation to-rationalism, individualism, nationalism, colonialism, slavery, and its Eurocentric monolithic vision. In this respect, Ghosh begins his critique with westerner's definitive functions of anthropology, following the 'New Anthropology' which was developed in the1980s; he based his anthropological research on it and attempts to include equally the voice of participants that can be seen in the Egyptian villages-Lataifa and Nashawy. The passages set in Lataifa and Nashswy are staged as intersubjective encounters, as dialogues and confrontations with interlocutors who refuse to be merely observed and instead interrogate him (Ghosh) rather than the other way round. In a series of episodes that escalates into the narrator's furious altercation with Imma, his ethnographic authority is contested and diminished. In fact, in a reversal of the procedure by which the ethnographer takes it upon him/herself to translate difference into distance, it is they who distance Ghosh by translating his religious difference from them into an inexplicable and absolute otherness.

In an early episode, Ustaz Mustafa adopts the role of the knowing observer: "I have read all about India"(46), as a point of departure for the articulation of a series of stereotypes, "There is a lot of chilly in the food and when a man dies his wife is dragged away and burnt alive its cows you worship, isn't that so?'(47).Ghosh's encounters in Lataifa and Nasgwy are written up as a repetitive cycle which constantly gravitates around a set of core differences such as cremation, cow-worship,

and circumcision that serve to shore up the authority of Islam for the villagers in a reversal of the way that anthropology is used to shore up the authority of the west.

In another episode, Ghosh's authority is diminished by young Jabir who equates him with a child when he witnesses Ghosh's surprise at ducks mating, “I watched spellbound: I had had no conception that ducks have penises and vaginas” (43). Acquiescing in the ridicule by feigning ignorance of sex, he allows Jabir-at least temporarily-to position himself in a position of superiority: “But he doesn't know a thing” said Jabir, “Not religion, not politics, not sex, just like a child” (45). Samir Dayal has noted that this “‘ironic self-deflation of the observer’ may be an attempt to ground his writing of cultural difference in an ethical mode that respects the other, a respect he implicitly finds wanting in standard ethnography” (qtd. in Mondal 78). Ghosh's authority is only restored in Jabir's eyes by the “Indian machine” episode, which in the eyes of the fellah invests him with “delegated power of technology” (74). It is a reminder that Ghosh's formal experimentation is nevertheless merely temporary disturbance of the power relations that underscore the rules of anthropology.

This recuperation of the intersubjective dynamics of the 'fieldwork account' not only challenges the objectification of the other, but it also illuminiates just how much is lost when fieldwork is written up as ethnography. Moreover, the 'fieldwork account' also indicates how anthropology had its origins in travel writing. European travelogues during the colonial period cemented the denial of coevalness by reserving the dynamism of travel for the European observer, thereby rendering the observed as static peoples and cultures. In addition to reinscribing intersubjectivity into *In an Antique Land*, the text is also a travelogue in which Ghosh is not the only traveler. Indeed, it soon becomes clear that the villagers are far from static and sedentary:

> The area around Nashway had never been a rooted kind of place; at times it seemed to be possessed of all the busy restlessness of an airport's transit longue. Indeed, a long history of travel was recorded in the very names of the areas, families […] that legacy of transience had not ended with their ancestors either […] some men had passports to thick they opened out like ink blackened concertinas. (173, 74)

As James Clifford acknowledges that complicates the concept of a 'field' itself, never mind the field account. "The anthropologist can no longer see himself as a (worldly) traveler visiting (local) natives. [Ghosh's] "Ancient and settled" fieldsite opens into complex histories of dwelling and traveling, discrepant cosmopolitanisms"(qtd. in Mondel 79). Cosmopolitanism therefore rests not on the universalism of western knowledge but rather on the complex histories of dwelling and traveling that are the features of many other societies.

One significant aspect of Ghosh's engagement with the protocols of ethnography is worth comment. Johannes Fabin has suggested, “the method of participant-observation is based on an ideology of visualism, which believes that 'sight' is the 'noblest sense' and that knowledge is best upon, and validated by, observation” (qtd. in Mondal 81). "Visualism is thus one of the key features of the metaphysics of modernity" (Mondel 81). Ghosh offers a challenge to visualism in *In an Antique Land* and problematises the 'eye' of the observing 'I', there by undercutting the epistemological base of participant-observation. There is, in fact, an intriguing pun on 'sight' because Ghosh's visits to various 'sites' occasion failures of 'sight', "there is nothing now anywhere within sight of the Bander to lend credence to the great mansions and residence that Ibn Battuta and Duarte Barbosa spoke of" (234); or again, " Fustat can be smelt before it is seen"(38). Leela Gandhi has perceptively

noted that: "History, in Ghosh's understanding, is almost always pathologised as a chronic condition of poor or bad visibility"(qtd. in Mondal 81). Thus, Ghosh seeks "the barely discernible traces that ordinary people leave upon the world"(17); Nabeel "vanishe[s] into the anonymity of History"(296); and the metaphors of "trapdoors" and "foxholes"(16, 17). Undoing the dependence of 'insight' upon 'sight', Ghosh offers an opening into those cultural practices (pre-modern) which do not privilege the visual, and sometimes even see the 'eye' as the least perceptive and most deceptive of organs.

Ghosh wrestles with the colonial legacy and implications of anthropological knowledge. In fact, anthropology was instrumental in the articulation of modern humanism in the nineteenth century as the 'science of man’. However, it paradoxically also divided 'humankind' in the course of its establishment as a 'science', helped to define 'humanity' in ways that served colonial interest. It thus reaffirmed rather than challenged Eurocentric and racist prejudices and in so doing exposed the transcendental humanism of nineteenth-century Europe as a convenient myth which could be used as a vehicle for certain political ideas, such as the 'civilising mission', that gave ideological cover to inhuman colonial practice.

Europeans who define themselves as educated, rational, civilized and powerful people have started travelling the rest part of the world with their so-called civilizing mission which indeed is only a troop for them to control and impose their superiority over the nations and its people, to search valuable things and take away (them) to their own homeland. Masr, a historical place which, once was known as "the mother of the world", had kept the important and valuable Geniza documents safely from ancient time, could not be escaped from the colonizers’ gazed and falls herself under the British's control: "Masr had passed into the control of the British, and her position on

the route to India had become her curse, the proximate cause of her annexation" (62). Thus, why the Geniza document becomes the curse for Masr is only the cause of British imposition of power upon Masr to gain such valuable document: “The Egyptians were defeated in 1882, and in the aftermath of the war the British assumed direct control of the country's administration” (65).

In order to search for some other important materials and take control over the Synagogue of Ben Ezra, the store house of Geniza document, the Britishers began to rule over the country with their power: “[T]he British administration in Egypt was then presided over by Sir Evelyn Baring, later Lord Cormer”; then Cormer became successful to establish himself one of the powerful leaders, and “under Lord Cormer's supervision British officials were moved into key positions in every branch of the country's administration”(69). On the one hand, the Cormer becomes dominant to govern the country's administration and thus takes control over the Geniza document, and on the other, “the indigenous Jews of Cairo, those whose relationship with the Synagogue of Ben Ezra was most direct, were a small and impoverished minority within the community” (64). There is no way out for the innocent indigenous as well as for the custodians of Synagogue of Ben Ezra, to save the Geniza materials to escape from that forceful imposition of Britisher's power so that Schechter succeeded so easily in his mission to bring out the Geniza document from its storehouse because "the custodians of the Synagogue of Ben Ezra had no idea of the real value of the Geniza documents" (70).

The leaders of Ben Ezra could do nothing to save the document which was, after all, the last remaining asset left to them their ancestor and they were left no alternatives but acquiescence. Unlike the innocent indigeneous, the leaders and elites,

who directly influenced by the imperialism, fall upon its hegemony. That's why, they happened to serve their (Britishers) colonial mission:

> As for those leaders, the motives for their extra ordinary generosity are not hard to divine: like the elites of so many other groups in the colonized world, they evidently decided to seize the main chance at a time when the balance of power-the ships and the guns- lay overwhelmingly with England. (70)

Here, Ghosh by mentioning the leaders and elites' decision to leave the Geniza material from its storehouse – Synagogue of Ben Ezra, into the hands of Britishers indicates the effect of 'colonial hegemony' that helps only to rub out the valuable documents instead to protect it. In this way, the westerners took all the important documents from the Synagogue of Ben Ezra and left the Egyptians empty as Alkan Adler was put it "with the spoils of the Egyptians" (72).

The Geniza, which emerges as the perfect metaphor for its people and for the spirit of the times, for the documents collected in it come from the parts of the world from which Jews have migrated to Egypt. Eight hundred years later the same documents go through a mass exodus, not unlike that of the Egyptian Jews in the 1950s. The documents end up primarily in Cambridge but also in libraries of most European capitals. Their "original" home is Cairo only because they happened to remain there for a number of centuries, and even that is forgotten as the source of the documents (90).

Though the Britishers came to Egypt with their civilizing mission, it ultimately ruined the Egyptians. They compelled the Egyptians to lose their all valuable Geniza documents, which dispersed throughout the world but they did not get any notice of its dispersal. “By the First World War, the Geniza had finally been emptied of all its

documents. In its home country however, nobody took the slightest notice of its dispersal” (73). It was, in fact the essence of colonial practice which always worked with its ideology, and that never worked in favor of colonized people. Thus, the colonizers, only exploit the colonized people and their important and valuable materials in the name of civilizing mission. It was the same practice done by the Britishers with the Egyptians in their homeland-that the Britishers, who came to Egypt with their civilizing mission, eventually put their (the Egyptians’) existence in crisis which was directly associated with Geniza documents of Masr " [n]ow it was Masr, which had sustained the Gineza for almost a millennium, that was left with no trace of its riches: not a single scarp or shred of paper to remind her of that aspect of her past"(73). In this way, Ghosh critiques the western modernity which travels to the rest part of the world being embeded with colonialism which indeed is an inhuman practice.

Then, the European's inhuman colonial practice marches ahead towards "Indian Ocean trade" with the false notion of power; and there too, exploits the already existed cosmopolitan values of Indian Ocean trade in the time of Ben Yiju (236). The medieval world of trade between Egypt and India had been running smoothly and graciously but it was interrupted by the Portuguese and brought under the system of military dominance. Then all the Muslim traders were expelled from the city state of Calicut. Ghosh describes the changes in power over the sea and trade that result from the arrival and intervention of the Portuguese: “Within the Western historiographical record the unarmed character of the Indian Ocean trade is often represented as a lack, or failure, one that invited the intervention of Europe, with its increasing proficiency in war” (236). While in Mangalore, Ghosh finds that the medieval world of trade between Egypt and India was running smoothly but it was

interrupted after the arrival and control of the Portuguese. Ghosh writes the advent of Portuguese as a violent meditated encounter one which highlights the distinction between different modes of organization. After the arrival of Portuguese, “the remains of the civilization that had brought Ben Yiju to Mangalore where devoured by that unquenchable, demonic thoughts that has raged ever since” (237). Before this time India and Africa did very well with each other, living and trading peacefully, before the European colonizer intervened with violence.

In the constant movement in the novel back and forth between the medieval and modern world, the death of multi-ethnicity is mirrored in its very place of origin that is in Ben Yiju's life. And here, both the European colonizer and Islamic high culture are held responsible. With the Portuguese discovery of India and the flourishing trade routes, the "unarmed" nature of the region's trade with tacit rules of "bargaining and compromise" makes it an easy prey for the European (236). Ghosh depicts the European advent as:

> [A]ggression, pure and distilled, by unleashing violence on a scale unprecedented on those shores. As far as the Portuguese were concerned, they had declared of proprietor right over the Indian Ocean: since none of the people's who lived around it had thought to claim ownership of it before their arrival, they could not expect the right of free passage in it now. (236)

The author then views the demarcation of boundaries as a European colonial concept that invades a land founded upon co-existence and hospitality. And the obsession with the artificial notion of national boundaries and identity that divides people today is therefore a descendent of this. With the trade routes monopolized in this way, the

traders became exploited in ways that were alien to their lives before and it is at this point that Ben Yiju thinks about living India.

Western modernity, like in colonialism which ultimately serves the western rationality with its monopoly and exclusiveness, carries its ideology in nationalism too; that creates boundaries among nations, ethnic-cultures and religions; thus destroying our world. Modern demarcations of nationality have become artificial: “not only in the sense of being man made but also in being inadequate: if they unite one group along a certain criterion, they inevitably divide along another” (Hind Wassef 75). As Amitav Ghosh puts it in an interview, “Today nationalism, once conceived of as a form of freedom is really destroying our world. It's destroying the forms of ordinary life that many people know. The nation-state prevents the development of free exchange between people” (qtd. in Wassef 75). Thus, for Ghosh, national borders de-humanize communities because they negate the reality of human and political diversity which is present in any culture.

Cultural and religious practices as the parts of nationalism, also create the national boundaries with the sense of difference between self and other that leaves space for religious and communal conflicts. In Lataifa Ghosh engages in a discussion on religious customs and informs the inhabitations, to their utter perplexity, that his religion is Hinduism. Not knowing what it is, they attempt to introduce him to Islam, "Now that you are here among us you can understand and learn about Islam, and then you can make up your mind whether you want to stay within that religion of yours […] you will see then how much better Islam is than this 'Hinduki' of yours" (32, 34). Here, the villagers not only reject Ghosh's religion (Hinduism) but also claim their religion (Islam) as better to Hinduism and ask for him to follow it. In an another episode, during the month of Ramdan when Muslims fast, Ghosh wants to join them

in sympathy but was met with the protest: " No, you can't fast, you are not Muslim-only Muslims fast at Ramdan"(55).Then, it is only the religion that creates national boundary between Indians and Egyptians; which excludes the author (Hindu) from being a participant in fasting (Muslim). Here, Ghosh critiques nationalism which destroys the pre-modern ethical, moral, religious, and hospitable values. In Nashway, the second village Ghosh visits he is again struck by the sense of exclusion that the Egyptian makes such exclusive explanation about Hindu customs: “So, what about circumcision? (165), what about boys, are they not purified either?”(166), “what about you...?”(166), “why do you worship cows?” (192), and “They born their dead” (192). Again he is met with the intolerant, but not self-righteous, response that "[you] should try to civilize your people. You should tell them to stop praying to cows and burning their dead"(99). It becomes apparent that the boundaries in question are not national but more deeply religious and posing under the guise of national identity.

The national identity of Indians was developed as a composite body of several communities and their cultural and religious practice before 1920 as Gyan Pandey writes: “The nation of Indians was visualized as a composite body of several communities […] to make to the common nationality. India […] was conceived of as a collection of communities” (210). But because of the development of secular Indian nationalism from the 1920s onwards, the construction of the national identity by Indian nationalists developed along broadly communal lines, which geared communal violence up. Ghosh recalls those riots of two cities Dhaka and Calcutta, and reflects upon the explosive power of symbols, religious or national, in shaping identity:

> Cities going up in flames because of a cow found dead in a temple or a pig in a Mosque; of people killed for wearing a lungi or a dhoti, depending on where they find themselves; of women disembowelled

> for wearing veils or vermilion, of men dismembered for the state of their foreskins. (171)

Ghosh exposes the nation as a myth, but one that is built on symbols which such potent signifying powers that they have the ability to unite and divide people largely by de-humanizing them. Such activities of killing a cow in a temple and a pig in a Mosque are the destructive results of communal violence that happened due to the power politics of nationalism. Here, Ghosh critique such destructive notion of nationalism.

In *In an Antique Land* Amitav Ghosh's ambivalent analysis of the politics of identity in the post-colonial world traces contemporary dilemmas back to the decisive and disruptive impact of European colonialism. His critique of exclusive modern identities, including national identities, is thus intimately bound of with a critique of colonialism and its effects. It is colonial legacy that Imam calls the westerners as civilized people and their cultures and customs as the markers of civilization and progress. In comparison to the westerners, Imam claims Ghosh's cultures, customs and religious practices as backwarded and primitive that "[t]hey worship cows" and "[t]hey burn their dead"(192). He questions Ghosh, “Can't you see that it's a primitive and backward customs?”(192). For him such customs 'to worship cows' and ' to burn dead' are primitive only because the westerners do not practise these customs:

> You've even been to Europe; you've seen how advance they are. Now tell me: have you ever seen them burning their dead? […] They do not burn their dead in the west. They are not an ignorant people. They're advanced, they're educated, they have science, they have guns and tanks and bombs. (192, 93)

Thus, Imam's comment on Ghosh's religious practice as 'backwarded', in comparison to the westerners as 'advanced', clearly shows, how the westerners impose their hegemony upon the non-westerners by using power, even after colonialism to keep themselves in the position of superiority creating hierarchy.

Here, the final episode of disputes between Imam and Ghosh obviously is the cause of imperialism or colonial legacy, or hegemony that turns into an argument over whose culture is 'better', the scale of measurement being how advanced the warfare technology is of each country. Imam puts his technology better to Ghosh's and says, “Our guns and bombs are much better than theirs. Ours are second only to the west” (193). Being aggressive with this comparison of technological development between their nations Ghosh too, puts forward "[o]urs are much better […] you won't be able to match that even in a hundred years"(193). But later, Ghosh realizes the futility of their dispute “Imam and I: delegates from two superseded civilizations, vying with their other to establish a prior claim to the technology of modern violence” (193). It is the hegemonic power of western rationality and their superiority over others that both Imam and Ghosh, the representative agents of non-western people tend to follow the westerners' path : “We were both traveling, he and I: we were both traveling in the west”(193). Thus, Ghosh, critiques the western modernity and its hegemony that it always excludes the others’ (non-westerners’) existence of cultural practice and their civilization; with the realization of “the west meant only this- science and tanks and guns and bombs"(194).

The westerners, with their scientific and technological advancement, create the hierarchical boundary between themselves (west) and others (non-west) as rational / emotional, civilized / barbaric, advanced / backwarded and so on. They, then, place themselves in the top position of such hierarchical ladder and other at the bottom, in

the colonialism which was the fertile zone to exercise the western modernity in its another form-colonial practice, to dominate and rule over them. But, even after decolonization, due to the impact of colonial legacy and its hegemonization, the people from high class “the Badawy” who had directly get connected with Britishers, had started to impose their power and superiority upon the lower class people “the Jammal” in various ways that of westerners (175). Ahmed Effendi, the landowner from Baday “had been able to get away with anything he liked because he had had friends amongst the Pashas, powerful people who had connections with the British” (176). Because of their connection with Britishers the 'Badawy' behaved to the 'Jammal' in inhuman way:

> Ahmed Effemdi, the old ‘Omda, had always treated the Jammal as though they were his slaves,[…] had made them work without payment, in his house and on the fields,[…] had considered everything and everyone in the village his personal property. (157, 176)

Here, the behavior of Ahmed Effendi towards the working class people- the Jammal as his personal property, is more cruel and in-human than of a British colonial officer in the colonial period. Thus, it is no doubt, the colonial legacy that compels the Jammal to be double victimized: by the westerners as well as by the Baday.

Ahmed Effendi, the head of Baday from Nashway who had been brain washed by western modernity, as the representative agent like some other social Hippocrates from cities, involved himself in the imitation and follows the westerners way of freedom (modernity) to live a happy life. While doing so for his freedom in practising modernity he could not see with his corrupted mind and blind eyes the value of his own cultures, tradition and social norms which carries the ethical and moral values to preserve the humanity from human being; and he happens to fall his passionate eye

upon, the innocent females from the village only in response to his desire: “I want that woman in my house, for the night” (176, 177). Here, his hypocritical self identity shaped by westernity is clearly mirrored: he not only exploits the villagers’ labour without paying but also uses the female as a commodity and compels them to sell their body in the cost of money (modernity). So, the poor, voiceless victims- Jammal of Nashawy could do nothing alone to protect their traditional- moral and ethical values that were exploited by the powerful Badaway in the name of practising modernity; rather they are compelled to involve in such in-human activities for their survival: “That’s what happens; their families put them up to it. They take thirty pounds a month for owner of the house and that’s that, khalas- they leave their daughters there and the owners are free to do what they like with them”(180). It is, thus, the compulsion for the poor villagers to be victimized in one way or another only for survival.

On the other hand, people’s traditional ways of living get changed in the cities like Alexandria, Cairo and Damanhour, breaking with the social norms and values of life: the secret and fair relationship between man and woman could be seen open on television screen “[T]hey all fall in love –in Cairo and Alexandria and Damanhour. You can see it on T.V.” (179). When the secrecy of love made open to the public beyond its moral boundary, then, it losing its morality became artificial, and machinery so- hippocracy. The essence of true love with spirituality, which sustains lonely in the secret and fair relationship between husband and wife, get changed in the physicality and sexual relationship with many that of westerners, animal like copulation, which indeed paved the way for prostitution – as a business. The so called modernists who took prostitution as a modern business involve themselves opening with such business centres in the cities where people became ready to pay high

amount of money for their free play of modernity: "That’s right, there are houses in Alexandria where men pay five hundred pounds to spend a night with woman […] that includes food and other things- turkey, whiskey and things like that" (179). It is modernity that participates both female and male agents in prostitution, but the gap between the victims and hunter is vast, which is the point for Ghosh to critique the western modernity and its exclusiveness on the one hand and 'prostitution' itself on the other. Though it is a modern-business introduced and developed by westerners in the non-westerns culture (land), it is in itself an inhuman practice, that lost humanity and morality, where is no space for love, spirituality, emotion, and feeling. It is, thus, an inhuman practice, which made the female agents double victims: the owner used them as commodity objects to gain high profit, who bought them in a few of cost, made them slave, so their voice and freedoms are lost; the customers used them as matter of pleasure of their desire, here too, they became voiceless slaves and “let their bodies to be used, for just a few pounds” (179).

Finally, it is a strong point for Ghosh to critique the western rationality that modernity even after colonialism exercises the inhuman practice of slavery in different ways. Ahmed Effendi, while excersing the so-called modern business, prostitution, uses the female agents as his slave for the high profit and makes them double victims of modernity. He always turns his deaf-year for their suffering and freedom rather exploits them as much as he could by different means. He not only uses female agents as his slave but also makes the villagers his slaves and uses them only for his benefit. He exploited their labor without paying and behaved them in inhuman way; that’s why they became the victims of modern slavery. If we search some other victims of slavery, we will found the life story of an Indian slave Bomma, who lived a whole life not for himself but for his Egyptian master,Ben Yiju.s Bomma,

throughout his life, being an obedient slave keep himself busy only for the profit to his trade master that “he was responsible not only for delivering a quantity of merchandise, but also for bringing back a large shipment of goods for Ben Yiju and his household” (229). Bomma, being responsible with his work, kept himself always busy but in vein. Here, the slavery that was practised and is still being practised by the westerns in the various means that of modernity, is indeed, a cruel inhuman practice that compels the victims to live only for their owner but not for themselves. In this way, the book celebrates the dominant voices to critique the western modernity exposing with its blind spots and exclusiveness in relation to rationalism, individualism, nationalism and colonialism; which leave space for alternative modernities to valorize the pre-modern ethical and moral values for the sake of humanity.

Till the late twentieth century when Ghosh had written the book *In an Antique Land*, western modernity had reached its peak to govern the world with its ideological formation through various means of technological developments, which not only put the traditional-- moral and ethical-- values in its shadows but also put the other non-western civilization into crisis. In such destructive scenario of worldly development, Ghosh, with the declaration of alternative modernities for the need of the revival of ethics of co-existence, hospitality, commutarianism, decolonization and inclusive nationalism, moves towards the medieval antique land:" Masr, a name that is appropriate as well as ancient, a derivative of a root that means ‘to settle’ or ‘to civilize’"(18). Masr, though it is a small place, is known by several names, “sometimes it is spoken of as Old Cairo, Masr, al-Quadima or Masr al-‘Atiqa, sometimes as Mari Gargis, but most often as Fustat Masr, or simply Fustat” (20). Masr is a historical place, where the ‘Synagogue of Ben Ezra’ is situated. Synagogue

of Ben Ezra was indeed, the storehouse of the Geniza documents: "[F]or more than eight centuries papers continued to accumulate inside the Geniza" that kept such valuable documents safely from ancient time (40). It was the Geniza, where a lot of papers were found, years and years ago which held "the greatest single collection of medieval documents ever discovered" (42). Since the Geniza was a storehouse, "the members of the congregation would throw all the papers in their possession, including letters, bills, contracts, poems, marriage deeds, and so on" in it (72). Here, such valuable Geniza documents provides the historical evidences for Ghosh to learn much accuracy about the life of Egyptian trader Ben Yiju and his family, his Indian slave Bomma, and the other members of his business network from different geographical location in Mangalore, and in Indian ocean trade; their relationship- in relation to business, social, cultural, religious practice, as well as household activities; their trade culture and norms; and their civilization. Thus, basing his quest for these Ganiza materials, Ghosh explores the pre-modern ethics of co-existence, communitarianism, inclusive nationalism and moral values that exist among the different religious group and people from different geographical locations.

The book celebrates the flow of people and their cultural practices in the constant movement back and forth between the modern and the medieval world with their celebration of brotherhood, mutual co-operation, and co-existence among themselves. Writhing of Ghosh's work, Clifford Geertz praises it for its evocation of a:

> mobile, polyglot and virtually borderless region, *which no one owned and no one dominated*, Arabs, Jews, Iberians, Greeks, Indians, various sorts of Italians and Africans pursued trade and learning, private lives and public fortunes, bumping up against one and another […] but more

> or less getting along, or getting by, within broad and general rules for communication, propriety and the conduct of business. It was, we might say, a sort of multi-cultural bazaar. (qtd. in Priya Kumar 72)

Here, Geertz praises the book's evocation of the 'hospitable zone' among people from different religious group and from different locations, where they live freely within no boundary of religion, national identity, social and cultural practice like multicultural bazaar, which provides the equal space for all to exercise their own cultures and civilization with no sense of superiority and inferiority.

In this respect of 'multicultural bazaar', Ghosh provides the historical accuracy of his attempt to locate a cosmopolitan world in the mercantile past of the Indian ocean's trading cultures in which he posits this world as a counter to the rigid-national and religious- boundaries of modernity. Thus, he writes, "In matter of business, Ben Yiju's networks appear to have been wholly in different to many of those boundaries that are today thought to mark social, religious and geographical divisions" (228-29). Reflecting the current anthropological move away from a notion of discrete and bounded cultures, Ghosh creates and appealing picture of a porous and hospitable world marked by an ease of mobility between different cultures, religious traditions, and regions. His account of Qus, along the Nile used by travelers between Egypt and India, for instance, reveals in the abundant diversity of the place. Emphasis is placed on Ben Yiju's description of this "admirably cosmopolitan town" with many Yameni, Ethiopian, and Indian traders as "'a station for the traveler, a gathering place for Caravans, and a meeting-place for pilgrims'" (141). Similarly, Ghosh describes geographically distant Calicut as one of the most "cosmopolitan" places on the coast, frequented by regular visitors from "china, Sumatra, Ceylon, the Maldives, Yemen, and Fars (Iran)" (198). Like distant Calicut, Mangalore, one of the principle ports of

the Indian Ocean in Ben Yiju's time, due to its prosperity with cosmopolitan settlement of foreigners "remains perfectly true to its medieval heritage" (201).

Ghosh, the historian, is also drawn to Ben Yiju's mercantile congregation and the several centuries of travel history that took these Jewish-Egyptian traders across the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean. Ben Yiju belongs to a renounced community of Jewish merchants and traders originally form Ifriqua (in what is now Tunisia), who went on to live in Fustat, Egypt, and who traveled constantly across the Indian ocean; Ben Yiju himself lived in India for close to seventeen years as an expatriate until his eventual return to North Africa. The Indian Ocean trade, in Ben Yiju's time, had flourished and run smoothly with any control of ruling power:

> The Indian Ocean trade [were] was taken completely by surprise. In all the centuries in which it had flourished and grown, no state or king or ruling power had ever before tried to gain control of the Indian Ocean trade by force of arms. The territorial and dynastic ambitions that were pursued with such determination on land were generally not allowed to spill over into the sea. (236)

Here, Ghosh celebrates the unarmed character of the Indian Ocean trade that flourished and grew freely in Ben Yiju's time before the late fifteenth century. The free flow of traders in Indian Ocean trade, and their well-managing settlement around the area becomes the strong evident for Ghosh to elaborate the ethics of co-existence, communitarianism and inclusive nationalism existed in the pre-modern era. The book constantly bears witness to a "group of people whose travels and breadth of experience and education seem astonishing even today, on a planet thought to be newly- shrunken" (39).

Many forms of exchange and meeting between (and within) different linguistic and religious traditions in the Indian Ocean world also provide an example of a more hospitable and co-existent way of life that does not exist in postcolonial or western modernity. In this regard, the language used by Ben Yiju and his contemporaries is the hybrid Judaeo-Arabic, a colloquial dialect of medieval Arabic written in the Hebrew script. Similarly, although Ben Yiju and his friends were all observant Jews, Ghosh suggests that the everyday world of their religious life was one they shared with the Muslims of the area: "[W]hen they invoked the name of god in their writings it was usually as Allah, and more often than not their invocations were in Arabic forms, such as insha'allah and al-hamdul-illah. Distinct, though their faith was, it was still part of the religious world of the Middle East" (214). Significantly, this hospitable trafficking of idioms and ideas is represented is taking place not only between different religions and cultures but also within a tradition and is central to Ghosh's formulation of a cosmopolitan world. Thus, he consistently draws attention to "the beliefs and practices that have always formed the hidden and subversive counter image of the orthodox religions of the Middle East: the exorcism cults, the magical rites, the customs of visiting saints' graves and suchlike" (261). For educated and salaried Egyptians like Ustaz Sabry, these practices are not part of "the true practice of Islam"; they are mere superstitions (141). For Ghosh, on the other hand, they are ample testament to the immense diversity, heterogeneity, and permeability within and between different religions and cultures in the region. This fluidity of movement between different regions and religions that comprised the Indian Ocean mercantile civilization is central to Ghosh's invocation of it, as Priya Kumar puts it "as a model cosmopolitan world- of the kind that Derrida envisions"(76). She further

writes, “[I]t is a world that has not yet been clearly demarcated into territorial national states and one where no one claims ownership or mastery” (76).

Ghosh creates and admittedly idealizes portrait of a hospitable world in the medieval past and makes his appeal for a more hospitable world on the basis of his imaginative historical work, which ground his beliefs that cultures and religions were intertwined long before the territorial and identitarian divisions brought about by the onslaught of modernity. Through his imaginative construction of the more open and hospitable world in the Indian Ocean’s trading cultures, Ghosh, the literary-historian is able to gesture toward modes of coexistence that do not demand the absorption and assimilation of religious and cultural others. Ghosh’s account of regions, religions, and cultures as enmeshed and intertwined in a network of differences continues to be relevant to reimagining Hindu-Muslim divisions within Indian nation-state and the partitioned subcontinent at large. He enables us to see how the throny issue of Hindu-Muslin conflict in India has to be addressed on a sub continental scale and not merely as an ‘Indian’ dilemma. By means of its vision of a hospitable region that is not bound by the sovereign nation-state, as Priya Kumar writes, “ *In an Antique Land* allows us to think past the conceptual categories of modernity we take so much for granted”(83). Thus, Ghosh’s *In an Antique Land* imaginatively retrieves the medieval Indian Ocean world as a possible model of a cosmopolitan area that is not limited by the bounded territorial imaginary of the modern nation-state. The cosmopolitan visions of the book, as Priya Kumar views “make poignant and deeply felt poetic pleas for a truly open, hospitable-and hence just-world” (83).

In this regard, Ghosh’s evocation of an Egyptian trade master Ben Yiju’s ‘co-operative relationship’ with his Indian slave Bomma, undercuts the modern identity of slavery as an inhuman practice that “the medieval idea of slavery tends to confound

contemporary conception, both of servitude and of its mirrored counter-image, individual freedom"(212). Ghosh suggests that the medieval slavery is perhaps better explained not through the discourse of domination, subordination, or exploitation but rather through "its role as a spiritual metaphor" (213), which places it adjacent to the spiritual practices of the Sufis and the Vachanakara Saint-poets of South India. Among devotees of these cults, the worshipers become "slave, searching for their master with a passion that dissolved selfhood" (214). In this sense, by contrast to modern slavery, medieval slavery as represented by the saint-poets "was the paradoxical embodiment of perfect freedom; the image that represented the very notion of relationship, of human bonds as well as the possibility of their transcendence" (214). Here, Ghosh's description of medieval slavery for master-slave relations "would have a appeared, perhaps, not as demeaning bonds, but rather as links that were in some small way ennobling-human connections, pledges of commitment, in relationship that could just as well have been a matter of a mare exchange of coinage"(215). Thus, Ghosh, basing his quest for the Geniza documents explores Bomma's relationship with Ben Yiju that "he [Ben Yiju] took Bomma into his service as a business agent and helper soon after he had established himself as a trader in Mangalore" (212). In this sense, an Egyptian trade master Ben Yiju's friendly/mutual relationship with an Indian slave Bomma and their co-operative behavior with each-other as well as among the other members of their business network in the pre-modern era shows the then ethics of co-existence, hospitality, communitarianism, decolonization, and inclusive nationalism which are indeed, revived and valorized by non-Western alternative modernities in the present time.

Alternative modernities seek to valorize the previously established norms and values in the present with the consciousness of time. Here, Ghosh attempts to search

not only for the medieval bonds of human relation, in the Geniza documents, but also to valorize the non-western civilization that his etymological description about the slave's name as 'Bomma', shows that his origin lies in Indian region in the middle ages: " It was certainly strong to suggest that Goiten was right in assuming that the slave's origin lay in India […] that 'Bomma' had been a common name in that region in the Middle Ages"(204). The word 'Bomma' symbolizes the non-western Hindu civilization because "the name was derived from the Sanskrit word 'Brahma'" (204). In this sense, alternative modernities valorize the non-western cultures and civilization unlike western modernity. Imam Ibrahim, a resident of Nashaway has well knowledge about "folk remedies and herbal medicine" for the traditional way of treatment (155). He used to apply his "art of mixing and giving injections" to heal the wounds of the villagers and improved their health condition well (156).

Non-western cultures and civilizations are taken for granted to respect and behave other as their own family members. When Ghosh, an Indian citizen, stepped in Lataifa- an Egyptian village, in his first trip in1980 as an anthropologist with doctor Aly Issa- professor in the University of Alexandria, was welcomed warmly by the villagers. After that, he stayed in Abu-'Ali's house for his doctorial research, and was behaved like his [Abu-'Ali's] own son as he says:

> [Y]ou're lucky to staying here with us. We will cook for you, wash your clothes for you, and provide you with anything you need. You must ask for whatever you want wherever you want it. To us you are just like our sons-why we will even give you our own money if you like. (17)

Here, Ghosh, an Indian citizen receives the very homely environment, to stay with love and care even in the foreign land. Thus, he exposes the non-western culture and

civilization as a ‘fertile zone’ for the sake of humanity that the non-westerners always respect others heartly without any sense of prejudices and behave in a co-operative way by crossing the so called religious, national, as well as geographical boundary.

Like in Abu-‘Ali’s house, Ghosh’s stay in Shikha Musa’s house was spent with homely environment. They behaved Ghosh as their own family member but not as a foreigner (an Indian). Even eight years later in 1988, in his second visit to Latiafa, the truck driver’s unselfish co-operative help to him on the way to Shaikh Musa’s house at late night is the point here to exhibits non-western civilization of helpful and co-operative behavior. It was late night, Ghosh had suspected- whether they recognized him or not, but while he had been reached to them- welcomed heartly, as he put it “we brought our hands together with a great resounding slap and shook them hard, first one, and then both together […] but there were tears in his eyes now, as there in mind”(89). It was, indeed, not other than the true humanity or human practice of greetings that existed in non-western culture and civilization- that alternative modernaties seek to preserve and valorize it unlike western modernity. In the same manner, Ghosh was welcomed in Nashawy by the family members of Ustaz Sabry, an educated personality of Nashawy. Sabry’s mother behaved him as one of the members of her own family, “[y]ou must come to us whenever you want anything […]. You must consider yourself one of our family” (151). Ghosh was apparently happy even in a foreign land because of the good company and homely environment he spent with in the villages. It was his friend Nabel, who shared his feeling about Ghosh’s loneliness when he made tea for himself: “It must make you think all the people you left at home […] when you put that kettle on the stove with just enough water for yourself” (121). Then only Ghosh realized, "It was the first time that anyone in Lataifa or Nashawy had attempt an enterprise similar to mine- to enter my

imagination and look at my situation as it might appear to me"(121). Here, Ghosh's close intimacy with the villagers is mirrored clearly that Nabel is able to enter into Ghosh's imagination and knows his situation well.

It is alternative modernity which tends to continue traditional norms and values. In *In an Antique Land,* Ghosh presents some tradition of marriage within the same lineage and its continuation from past to the present, in different episodes. When Ben Yiju returned Aden in 1149, he refused to marry his daughter to his friend and fellow trades-man, Khalaf, because his origins were in Iraq unlike Ben Yiju's in Ifriquiya, "almost as though he were seeking to disown a part of his own past, he now decided that he could not let his daughter marry a 'foreigner'"(263). And he desired to reconnect "his bonds with his family in the accepted fashion of the Middle East, by marrying her to her cousin, his brother Yusuf's eldest son, Surur" (263). Not only in the past but also we can see the continuation of such traditions even in the present, which is equally practised by the Egyptians. In Lataifa, Abu-'Ali's family network which belongs to the same lineage can be taken as a perfect example of it, Ghosh put it as "a complete genealogy of Hamlet of Lataifa- all of whose inhabitants belonged ultimately to a single family called Latif"(37). Again in Nashawy, the episode of marriage where "Ali was going to marry Isma'il's sister, Fawzia- who was, of course, his first cousin" mirrors the continuation of such tradition still in the present (120).

Ghosh advocates for alternative modernites to include the voices of margin and victims. Alternative modernities, here, give space for the victims in the way as Ashis Nandy and Ziauddin Sardar speak of. Khamees' family, who were made the victims of the so-called landlord-the Badawy, and compelled to work hard in their land only for survive since long, now has been able to own the land they worked, from Badawy, and made it their own: "they had succeeded in expanding their family's

landholdings"(184). After few years, they even become debt free “and now they’re so well-to-do they’ve built a new brick-and-cement house on their own land, outside the village” (184). Likewise, Khamees’ sister, Busaina is also double victimized character in this point. She was, once exploited as a slave by Ahmed Effendi, the Badawy and later by her own husband that he mercilessly left her with two small children. At that miserable condition she had no option more than begging for a shelter in her parents’ house, but now, time has changed and she has been able to stand on her own. “with her- savings she had bought a little two-room house in the centre of Nashawy […] she made her two son study late into the night, and they were both doing quite exceptionally well at school” (184). Similarly, Khamees’s young brother ‘Eid desired a girl to marry- whom he had lost his heart but his desire was confined within his imagination only because to belong to Badawy and for this he was badly insulted. But after his stays for some three or four years in Saudi Arabia “[h]e had come home with a colour television set, a fridge, a washing- machine, and many other things of that kind […] he had also saved a lot of money” (185). Here, ‘Eid, once the victim of poverty, improves his economic status well and now “[h]e’s marrying a Badawy girl” of his desire (185).

Ghosh’s attempt to search space for the margins and the victims also places the history of Geniza materials: “The evidence lies –in the earliest documents that can be dated to Ben Yiju’s stay in India” (185). Being based on the evidence of earlier document, Ghosh tells us about the freedom of a victim of Indian slavery that “in Mangalore, Ben Yiju publicly granted freedom to a slave girl by the name of Ashu” (186). Ben Yiju, the Egyptian trader in India not only freed the slave but also he “had married Ashu” and had two children with from her (187). Due to his sympathy with her, “Ben Yiju chose[s], despite the obvious alternative, to marry a woman born

outside his faith" (188). Here, Ghosh shows the space for victims which existed in pre-modern era, and that is the area of alternative modernities to protect it and bring forth even in the present. Similarly, Ghosh's description of the congregation that Ben Yiju joined in Masr, also shows his attempt to leave a space for the minorities, who were left unmarked in the history, and here, he at least, attempts to write about them as "the member of this community were not born to privilege and entitlement; they were neither aristocrats nor solders nor professional scholastics […] Most of them were small traders running small family business" (39).

When modernity always stands in opposition to tradition, alternative modernities seek to reform and bring the changes in such traditions with the continuation of it covering the spirit of the time. Old Imam, an inhabitant of Nashawy still continues his profession of 'barbaring' since long, as the tradition of his lineage but in old fashioned, so he "had never had much of a taste for barbaring" (145). Yasir, Imam's son, of forties or so, a pleasant, cheerful-looking person "had learnt to cut hair and do everything else that went with the hereditary trade of his linage" and unlike his father, "had thought himself to take a good deal of satisfaction in his craft" (145, 46). Thus, he chose to follow his hereditical trade as the continuation of tradition but with reformation that he took "a little room with a couple of chairs, a wooden desk on which he kept his scissors and razors, a mirror hanging on one of the mud walls, and a few pictures for decoration, including a poster from a cinema theatre in Damanhour, of Raj Kapoor in *Sangam*" (146). Similarly, Shahata Bassiuni's 'Caf'e' is another example of the continuation of tradition with reformation that "everyone had said it was a good idea to begin with" (146). Thus, Shahata Bassiuni to improve her business well as per the demand of time, " went ahead and set up a few iron tables and chairs,

bought some narguilahs for those who wanted to smoke, and laid out a couple of chess and backgammon sets" (146).

Alternative modernities seek to bring the changes in people's life style not in the universal way but in their own way of locality in relation to their religious, cultural, and social practices, valorizing the traditional (moral and ethical) norms and values. In this respect, many of the Egyptians have been able to change their way of life up to Ghosh's final visit in 1988. People like Marbruk, 'Eid, Nabeel, Islma'il, and many others who went 'outside' the country had been able to send money, to buy the modern equipments—T.V. set, refrigerator, washing-machine and so on in their house. In the same manner, the other people like Khamees, Yasir, Busaina, Shahata Bassiuni, Zughloul, Jahbir and many others who had been working in their own country also did their best to improve their life status in their own way. When, Ghosh has visited Shaikh Musa in Lataifa, who had described Ghosh about the changing environment of the villagers as "many people had iced water sent out to them in the field while they working, and some families froze the meat they sacrificed at 'Eid so that it lasted for weeks on end" (241). Ghosh, now being in the Lataifa, realizes the changes as "[t]he mud-walled rooms I so well remembered were gone and in their place stood the unfinished shell of a large new bungalow"(264). Likewise, he has found the samekind of change in Nashawy too: "[T]here were many houses being built now, in Lataifa and Nashawy, with the money that people were receiving from 'outside'" (258). Then, he turns his sight towards the villagers who have been working in their own homeland, to see their change: "Khamees, now a prosperous landowner with two healthy children"; "Busaina, who had recently bought a house with her own earnings, in the centre of the village"; "Amm Taha, whose business had now expanded into a minor industry and made him a man of considerable wealth" and

so on (276). In this way, people who were ‘outside’ as well as within the country and their families had improved their status in their own way: “Families who at that time had counted amongst the poorest in the community- Khamees’s, ‘Amm Taha’s, Nabeel’s- were now the very people who had new houses, bank accounts, gadgetry” (267).

To sum up, Ghosh demands for alternative modernities to valorize pre-modern ethical and moral values as well as non-western cultures and civilizations by critiquing the western modernist rationality exposing its exclusiveness, individualism, and monolithic vision. While doing so, Ghosh mixes up the many genres within a single book and wrestles with the colonial legacy and implication of anthropological knowledge exposing westerner's interference upon the Geniza materal of Masr; the effects of colonial legacy-- Ahmed Effendie's inhuman practice upon the villagers. Similarly, he exposes cosmopolitanism and hospitable values existed in Indian Ocean world in Ben Yiju's time, and the values which of non-western cultures and civilization through his own experience he got while being in the Egyptian villages for his dissertation. In the book he provides a suitable space for marginal groups and victims exposing the changing way of life of all the villagers in their own way of social, cultural, and religious practices.

IV. Conclusion

The multigeneric text *In an Antique Land* by Ghosh advocates the need of alternative modernities which include pre-modern ethical and moral values, by critiquing hegemonic Western modernity. In doing so, Ghosh combines many genres within a single text by blurring the modern generic boundary. In this book, he melds travelogue, ethnography, anthropology, fiction, history as well as twelfth century, detective story of Indian slave Bomma and his own experiences of twentieth century Ghosh's melding of these genres within a single text in a fragmentary and imaginative way challenges the boundaries and borders of disciplines of traditional writing. Though the book itself is the outcome of Ghosh's anthropological research and travelogue, his engagement with the New Anthropology disrupts the Westerners' traditional model of anthropology- an ideological formation that justifies colonialism and continues to justify Eurocentrism.

Western modernity, which travelled into the non-Western land in its colonial form, caused only destruction of native cultures. The Britishers' arrival into the Egyptian land with their so-called civilizing mission compelled the Egyptians to lose all the valuable Geniza documents from their own homeland and eventually put their existence into crisis which was already associated with the Geniza documents. Likewise, the European's involvement in the Indian Ocean trade exploits the already existed cosmopolitan values of Indian Ocean trade in the time of Ben Yijuj with their false notion of power and rationality. The ideological formation of rationality in nationalism also creates boundaries among nations, ethnic-cultures and religions with the sense of difference between self and other that has been mirrored with Ghosh's exclusion in Ramdan-to be participated in fasting; in the Egyptian's exclusive

explanation about Hindu custom--worshipping cows, burning dead and so on; as well as Ghosh's memory of communal violence of the two cities, Dhaka and Calcutta.

Ghosh's critique of exclusive national identity is intimately bound up with a critique of colonialism and its effects that Imam's comments upon Ghosh's religious practice as 'backwards' in comparison with the westerner's as 'advanced' is not other than the westerner's imposition of hegemony upon the non-westerners. Ghosh shows the colonial legacy more dangerous and exploitive than colonial practice itself. Ahmed Effendi, guided by the colonial legacy, not only made the villagers his slaves and used them only for his personal benefit without paying, but also exploits the non-western cultures and civilization compelling the female agents to be participated in the so called modern business-prostitution. That is why the villagers had been made the victims of modern slavery. In this way, Ghosh critiques Western modernity which has affinity with rationalism, individualism, nationalism, colonialism, slavery, as well as Eurocentricism, exposing with its blind-spots and exclusiveness to advocates the needs of the revival of pre-modern antique values.

Ghosh, meditating upon the twelfth century Geniza documents of Mars, explores and valorizes the pre-modern ethical and moral values in the contemporary time. With the historical accuracy he learned from such valuable Geniza documents about the life of Ben Yiju, his Indian slave Bomma and the other members of his business network and their relationship in relation to business, social, cultural, and religious practice with their trade cultures and civilization, Ghosh tells us about the cosmopolitan worlds in the mercantile past of Indian ocean's trading cultures where people from different races, castes with different religious identities and from different geographical location exist together. Moreover, Ghosh's evocation of an Egyptian trade master Ben Yiju's ‘co-operative mutual relationship’ with his Indian

slave Bomma shows the medieval bond of human relation under cutting the notion of modern slavery. Thus, the free flow of traders in Indian Ocean trade, and their cosmopolitan settlement around the area shows the communitarianism, decolonization, inclusive nationalism, ethics of co-existence and hospitality which existed in Indian Ocean world before European attacks. Likewise, Ghosh's call for alternative modernaties in *In an Antique Land* valorizes non-Western cultures and civilization leaving the suitable space for the marginal groups and victims by critiquing exclusive Western modernity.

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