

## Chapter I

### ***The Journal as a Colonial Discourse: an Introduction***

This study attempts to situate *The Journal of Christopher Columbus* within the paradigm of colonial discourse through the postcolonial concepts of Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Homi K Bhaba etc, and argues for the extension of the postcolonial theory to include the period when this text was written. The study argues that the postcolonial theory that emerged in North-Atlantic universities in the late 1970s with the critical works of scholars like Said, Spivak and Bhaba has overlooked the texts of European explorers that started colonialism proper in the Americas. The postcolonial theory has hitherto laid its focus only on unfolding the European colonialism mainly British and French origins and their persistent cultural effects in Asia and Africa. In so doing, it has neglected the vast geography of the Americas where the European imperialism was initiated along with the landing of Christopher Columbus in the year 1492. Thus, the present study attempts to extend the postcolonial theory to the pre-colonial contact period focusing on the events of around 1492s that constitute the Age of American Discovery and the inauguration of the European colonialism in the Americas.

For the present purpose, this study borrows insights from the critics such as Robert Stam and Ella Shohat, Enrique Dussel, Asselin Charles, Peter Hulme, etc as they are relevant to the topic of concern. These critics have criticized the North-Atlantic universities based postcolonial theory for its lack of attention to the texts written in 1492 and afterwards about the Americas. For them, these texts were instrumental in establishing European colonialism in the Americas by shaping the European mindset

towards colonizing the American land. Thus, they emphasize on the incorporation of these texts in the corpus of postcolonial studies.

Robert Stam and Ella Shohat, in their article “Whence and Whither Postcolonial Theory?” call for the in-depth study of the postcolonial theory. They argue that the postcolonial theory has multiple genealogies in relation to times and locations. Though the genealogies that they have traced have equal importance in the study of postcolonialism, one is more relevant for my present purpose, and that is related to the events of 1492. They emphasize that the study of postcolonialism needs to revisit the events of 1492s such as the conquest of the 'new' world, the expulsion of the Moors and the Inquisition. If so, the prevalent history of the colonial or postcolonial discourse can have a different shape. Or, to put it in another way, the postcolonial theory would not have been limited mainly to the study of the effects of colonialism in Asia and Africa. They note, “any in-depth study of coloniality/postcoloniality must go at least as far back as . . . 1492 [events that] suggest that the history could be narrated differently in terms of both colonial and Orientalist discourse” (373). In fact, rereading of the texts relating to the events of the 1492 can reveal how the European imperialism began in America. Thus the present study rereads *The Journal of Christopher Columbus* for the same purpose.

The arguments of the Latin American postcolonial critics such as Walter Mignolo, Anibal Quijano, and Enrique Dussel are also worthy to mention here. These critics, according to Salvatore, have argued that the North-Atlantic postcolonial theory has overlooked the large body of texts written before and during colonial period in the Americas. Salvatore mentions their claim as: “North-Atlantic postcolonial theory and criticism has dodged the consideration of a large corpus of literature and textualities

generated by a prior and distinctive colonial enterprise: 16th-century Spanish and Portuguese colonialism” (336). This makes it clear that the presently privileged North-Atlantic universities based postcolonial theory has been unable to include the postcolonial issues of Latin Americas in its study.

The ideas of critics like Asselin Charles and Peter Hulme are also useful here. Charles regards that the writings of Columbus as the first colonial discourse. The images, attitudes and beliefs that these writings carried made a link to colonialism. He writes “The writings of Columbus's were the first examples of modern Western colonialist discourse as interpretation of the historical encounter between Europeans and non-European peoples. In . . . [them] we find the images, attitudes, and beliefs associated with colonialism” (138). Peter Hulme too finds Columbus's writings to be a very important colonial document. He writes, “Columbus's journal, or *diario de a bordo*, remains the most important early colonial document” (68). In fact, as these critics point out, Columbus's writings worked as an active impetus to the Europeans colonial mission in the Americas.

Although these critics have argued for the extension of colonial and postcolonial discourse analysis to the Discovery Age, they have not focused much on the texts of that age. They have rather made a historical survey of representative texts since that age by taking a few examples. For example, Peter Hulme analyses the term “cannibal” in relation to the Caribbean people. In *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492 – 1797*, he has provided a history associated with the European encounters with the Americans beginning with the encounter of Columbus in 1492 and ending with the deportation of the Black Caribs from St Vincent in 1797. He has divided

the book in six chapters. Out of them, two chapters deal with the term 'cannibal'. He points out the Europeans have wrongly used the term 'cannibal' as synonymous to 'anthropophagy' to refer to the Caribbean peoples. He writes the two words have quite opposite histories: “But the histories of the two words are very different”(15). He narrates how the European discourses have portrayed the Caribbean native as 'cannibals' meaning man-eating 'savages' since Columbus first used the term 'Carib'. He argues that the Europeans have been misusing this term as a trope in their narratives to misrepresent the natives for their control.

Similarly, Asselin Charles defines 'colonial discourse' and presents a history of it since the time of human creation. He writes, “colonial discourse is as old as the existence of culturally and linguistically diverse human communities” (135). He stresses, though, colonialist discourse is an antique phenomenon, its modern avatar starts from the “Middle Ages” when Western texts “stressed the opposition between Christendom and Islam, Christ and Mohammed, Christians and Sarracans” (136). With this dichotomous or Manichean world view, (Manichean world view, originally associated to the dualistic theology, refers “to the binary structure of the imperial ideology” in the postcolonial studies, after JanMohammad popularized it [Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 134]), the West expressed its linguistic and ideological superiority over the rest of the world. Charles stresses that the Western discourses were primarily religious but had imperatives of economics as well. He argues Columbus carried these two religious and economic imperatives in his enterprise of exploration. Hence, his writings are examples of colonial discourse: “such was the discursive legacy and ideological baggage Christopher Columbus would bring with him to the America” (137).

But Charles too, like Hulme, has not dealt with Columbus's writings in detail. He has just taken a few examples from the letters of Columbus to the Spanish monarchs to justify his writing as colonial discourse. This study thus has focused on *The Journal of Christopher Columbus* and analyzed it as a colonial discourse.

Christopher Columbus, born in a weavers' family in Italy in 1451, wrote a diary incorporating the proceedings of explorations in his first voyage to the Indies that took place from 3rd October of 1492 to 4th March of 1493. This man, rejected by the Italian, Portuguese and English monarchs, finally got funding from the Spanish monarchs, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, and set out on his first voyage across the Atlantic for his exploration in 1492 with three ships. He spent almost half a year there observing the new lands, its people and availability of gold. His voyage was not easy. He had to face various hardships like adverse weather conditions, sea tides, loss of directions, mutinies of the crew, lack of food and water, damage of the ship, communication with the natives and sometimes attack from them, and many more. But, with perseverance, he moved ahead on his voyage. He felt no exhaustion to record his observations. He maintained the diary daily in the mornings and evenings. The diary is popularly known as *The Journal of Christopher Columbus* or, in short, as *The Journal*. He started it after he left Palos and concluded after he returned there. He recorded it as a proof of his proceedings of explorations to submit to his funding monarchs. It is said that he made two records every day. One was the exact one meant to submit to the monarchs. The other was an exaggerated one especially in matters of travelled distance. He recorded shorter distances than the actual ones so as to encourage the crew members to move further ahead.

Unfortunately, the original journal written by his own hand and submitted to the monarchs was lost after the death of the queen, Isabella. The journal that we find in the present form has come down either through the hand written copy of Bartolome de Las Casas or through that of Fernando Columbus. La Casas was the Dominican friar and historian who traveled to the New World with Columbus in his second voyage. He served as a friar in the Caribbean for many years so he knew both Columbus and the Caribbean world well. He wrote a history of Columbus. Fernando was Columbus's son who wrote his biography. *The Journal* used in this study is the version of Las Casas translated by Clements R Markham, who was once the chairperson of the Hakluyt Society.

*The Journal* presents Columbus's observations in the Indies. It records the distance covered, direction of the voyage, wind direction, sea conditions, natural objects, food products, availability of gold, encounters with the natives and their life styles etc. Besides the physical portrayal, it also portrays his mental picture. It expresses his aims, his loyalty to the monarchs, his religious feeling, his enduring perseverance, his tactics to treat the locals and his skills in explorations. Moreover, it works as a significant document that changed the history of the mankind as Clements R Markham notes: “the most important document in the whole range of the history of geographical discovery, because it is a record of the enterprise which changed the whole face, not only of that history, but of the history of mankind”(viii). Similarly, William Least Heat Moon praises it as a grand document that contributed in European renaissance and modernism. He writes, “*The Journal* is one of the last grand documents of the Middle Ages and the first of a renaissance the Western Hemisphere would help generate in Europe” (12). In fact, *The Journal* played a significant role in the history of the European explorations. It

facilitated the subsequent explorers to make similar explorations into the American land mass, which they did and were successful as well. Their explorations helped to connect Europe to America. This connection brought significant changes both in Europe and America. Thus, it is taken as a milestone in the transformation of human history.

*The Journal* has been praised by the Europeans as immensely valuable. They believe that it helped to bring modernism and renaissance. But a different perspective has recently popped up to look into it. Especially after the 1990s, the Native Americans and revisionist historians have started to judge it as a colonial document. They have found colonial agency in it. They believe that it helped to establish European colonization there. For example, Peter Hulme regards Columbus's *Journal* as “the most important early colonial document” (68). Asselin Charles too takes Columbus's writings as “the first examples of modern Western colonialist discourse” (138). Jonathan Hart too has the same opinion: “Columbus’ text is unstable and is the originary text of an enduring exploration and colonization of the western Atlantic (4). Similarly, William H Sherman considers that Columbus's texts “set the terms for the meeting of European and American in the writings of explorers, colonizers, merchants, missionaries, and emigrants in the coming centuries” (229). In fact, as these critics have pointed out, Columbus's writings can be interpreted as the initiating documents of Europeans colonization in the Americas.

The revisionist thinkers have altered the image of Christopher Columbus from the hero to villain. About this, Karl A Butzer states: “While one group celebrates the Columbian voyage and the creation of a new Euro-American world, the other laments the depopulation and deculturation of the America” (345). It suggests, the Europeans and their settler progenies appreciate him as the founder of the New World and enjoy in his achievements whereas the non-West label him as the man of genocide, and lament at the

loss of their land and culture. Wendy R Childs too talks about the shift of Columbus's image as: "In 1892, with the pioneering westward movement in America and European colonialism at their respective heights, Columbus was hailed as a hero. Post-colonial guilt and environmental concern ensure that studies in the early 1990s strike a very different tone" (754). Howard Zinn views the hero image of Christopher as a European ideological construct to hide his villainous activities. He writes, "To emphasize the heroism of Columbus and his successors as navigators and discoverers, and to de-emphasize their genocide, is not a technical necessity but an ideological choice" (10). Similarly, quoting from *the Columbia Encyclopedia*, Shuman et al write that the voyages of Columbus came to "symbolize the more brutal aspects of European colonization and represent the beginning of the destruction of Native American people and culture" (3). Actually, these revisionists have judged Columbus as the villain of the Native Americans because they understand him as an agent of the European colonization that has either decimated or dehumanized and demonized them. They insist that the modern history of colonialism begins with his intrusion (the so called discovery) in the Americas that caused the dislocation and dispossession of the natives of their cultures, civilizations, religions and homes, let alone lives. The revisionists see the continuation of that colonialism till today. They raise a question to the postcolonial theorists about the condition of the Native Americans whether it is colonial (as they are still silenced and subjugated to the white settlers, and many of them confined to the reserves) or postcolonial (as they are living in the nations independent of European nations).

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that Columbus and his writings contain colonial issues. *The Journal* can thus be considered as an instrument for



European colonization. It helped the Europeans shape their attitude for mercantile achievement from the Americas, expand their Christian religion and establish their authority there. In another word, it helped the Europeans shape their colonial attitude and establish their authority upon the Americas, which possessed vast pristine wilderness, precious materials and unusual savages that they had long been searching for as the providential 'New Land' for Christians. I have analyzed *The Journal* as a colonial discourse in the fourth chapter.

The present research delimits to the analysis of Columbus's *Journal* and explores postcolonial issues like: what was the expectation or imagination of the Europeans about the Oriental land and inhabitants there? What were their motifs and attitudes towards them? How did they represent the natives and their cultures? How did they behave with them? How the natives responded etc. Standing on the arguments of Stam and Shohat who argue that the postcolonial theory neglects the pre-colonial texts, the research brings the key concepts of the postcolonial theory like Orientalism or colonial discourse, mimicry, identity, hybridity, subaltern, stereotypes, othering, silencing, exploitation, dispossession, etc, into play so as to analysis the text, and finally asks for the remapping of the postcolonial theory based on the analysis.

The thesis is divided in five chapters. The first chapter deals with the introduction of *The Journal* as a colonial discourse. The second chapter presents the genealogies of the postcolonial theory along with the introduction of key concepts of major postcolonial theorists. The third chapter analyzes the historical contexts along with the “Capitulations” (a contract made between Columbus and the monarchs regarding the voyage of Columbus) as the motivating factors for the exploration to Columbus. The fourth chapter

analyzes *The Journal* in detail as a colonial discourse through the postcolonial perspective. It presents how that text misrepresents the natives of the new Indies. Finally, the fifth chapter wraps up my argument with the conclusion that *The Journal* is a pure colonial text, which has created the binary oppositions between the Europeans and the natives in which the natives are treated as junior human beings. But unfortunately, the North Atlantic based postcolonial theory has not analyzed it as such. So, I have concluded with an urge that the postcolonial theory needs to incorporate *The Journal* and other texts written during the pre-colonial contact period, known also as the American Discovery Age, into its corpus of study.

## **Chapter II**

### **Colonial Discourse and the Postcolonial Theory**

The postcolonial theory is commonly taken to have emerged in the North-Atlantic universities in the late 1970s through the critical writings of the theorists like Edward Said, Homi K Bhaba, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak etc. These critics, who are themselves from former colonized countries and migrants to metropolis, studied how the discourse of the European colonial power represented the peoples, their cultures and societies of the former colonies. They analyzed the material and psychological effects on the colonized people. Their study and analysis of the colonial discourse took a broader shape to be known as postcolonialism or the postcolonial theory.

The postcolonial theory analyses how the colonizer West imagines and mis/represents the Orient pushing it towards a false identity, and how the Orient resists in response. It works as a theoretical tool to analyze political, cultural, textual, historical effects of European colonization on the non-European societies and their resistance for independence from colonial and neocolonial grip. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin define post-colonialism as “concerned to examine the process and effects of, and reactions to European colonialism from the sixteenth century up to and including the neo-colonialism of the present day” (188). In the same vein, Elleke Boehmer writes, “postcolonialism addresses itself to the historical, political, cultural, and textual ramifications of the colonial encounter between the West and the non-West, dating from the sixteenth century to the present day” (qtd. in Waugh 340). In fact, the postcolonial theory is a methodological tool that analyzes political, linguistic and cultural effects of,

and reaction to, European colonialism since the sixteenth century and of the neo-colonialism of the United States upon the world societies in the present day.

The term 'postcolonial' (in its hyphenated form as post-colonial) was first used in the field of literary criticism by Gayatri Spivak in her book *The Post-Colonial Critic*, a collection of interviews and recollections published in 1990. But, it was originally used by the historians after the Second World War to denote the post-independence period. It simply referred to the evacuation of official political authority of European colonizing nations from the Asian and African ones. It thus had a historical association. But, the literary critics are not limited to its historical association. Instead, they look upon its intellectual association that relates to the question of agency and identity of ex-colonial subjects.

The term 'postcolonial' has been a much contested term among critics regarding its prefix 'post' and spelling with or without hyphen. Generally, the 'post' means 'after'. Thus 'post' in 'postcolonial' means 'after colonialism'. Historians use the post-colonial to designate the period after the post-independence period that is often associated with 1947, the year India got independence. Thus, the hyphenated term 'post-colonial' is associated with historical period and means 'after colonialism'. But the unhyphenated term 'postcolonialism' goes beyond the historical association to ideological one. Cultural and literary critics use this term to denote cultural, political and economic effects of colonialism since its beginning. About the different spellings of the term, McLeod writes “The hyphenated term 'post-colonial' seems more appropriate to denote a particular *historical period* or *epoch* as 'after colonialism', 'after independence' . . . [and] postcolonialism . . . about historically situated forms of representation, reading practices

and values which range across both the past and present” (5). McLeod prefers using the unhyphenated postcolonialism as it carries broader issues. Critics such as Ania Loomba, Leela Gandhi, Robert J. C. Young etc too use the unhyphenated 'postcolonialism'. But many critics such as Gayatri Spivak, Stuart Hall, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin use the hyphenated term 'post-colonialism' in both historical and ideological senses. In the present study, without participating in this debate, which is not my concern, I simply use the unhyphenated postcolonialism.

The postcolonial theory is an umbrella term for different disciplines like history, political science, literature, anthropology etc, hence a highly debated theory as well. It borrows concepts, or/and is benefitted from, diverse political as well as intellectual practices such as anticolonial and nationalist struggles, women and black rights movements, deconstruction and poststructuralism, commonwealth literature, etc. Boehmer makes it clear that postcolonialism includes, “politics of nationalist, internationalist, and anti-colonial struggle . . . as well as anti-establishment post-structuralist critical practices, but also, crucially, modes of knowledge and concepts of social justice developed outside the West” (qtd. in Waugh 342). This suggests that the postcolonial theory has multiple genealogies and is influenced by them all in one or the other way. It is thus an amalgamation of diverse practices.

Political practices are greatly influential to the postcolonial theory in that both share the same objectives. Both express resistance against the dominating authority for their independence. Both seek liberated identity. For example, political and intellectual activists and thinkers such as Mahatma Gandhi in India, Franz Fanon in Algeria, Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana etc radicalized the anticolonial and nationalist feelings against the

colonial rules. They understood how the colonial rule maintained the Manichaean view of the West as the so-called rational and superior 'self' and the non-West as its irrational and barbaric 'other'. They understood how this view affected the colonized people materially and psychologically. They thus saw the need to resist and break such a view. In this connection, Boemher writes: “ In such a situation in which the so-called rational, superior colonial self had been represented in contradistinction to the barbarism and irrationality indicated by everything that was not-self, or *other*, these writers and theorists argued that it was necessary to repudiate the binary system wholesale” (qtd. in Waugh 344).

Actually, these political thinkers practically championed the anticolonial resistance and helped bring independence of their nations. And, their concepts and theories subsequently became very influential for the postcolonial thinkers.

Like the nationalist and anticolonial struggles, struggles of women (broadly feminism) and blacks, from the 1960s, for their rights helped to champion the resistance from the margin. They became aware that they had to struggle to achieve equality, justice, freedom and identity. Hence, the women raised their voices against the dominant authority i.e. patriarchy, and the blacks against the dominant whites. In this sense, these struggles too remained influential to the postcolonial thinkers who too strived from the margin to dismantle the Western view of its so-called superior authority, and find their identity.

The influence of commonwealth literature is also important in the emergence of the postcolonial theory. Literary critics employed the term 'commonwealth literature' “from the 1950s to describe the literatures in English” by the writers of countries “with a history of colonialism” (McLeod 10). Commonwealth literature was intended to identify

the national or local contexts of the postcolonial nations represented by the commonwealth writers. Their writings would be in the English language but remain apolitical. Writers like VS Naipaul, Wole Soyinka, R K Narayan, Kamau Brathwarte, Chinuwa Achebe etc contributed in that commonwealth literature. Their writings helped to secure a space in the academic courses of the West under separate section as 'area studies'. But, it was no surprise that these writers, having a long history of European domination, did not hesitate to express national contexts, effects of colonial rules, and voices of resistance. They represented the self of the colonized people. They exposed the cruel behavior of enslavement and exploitation done by the Europeans. Critics of these writers initially sought the timeless and universal themes of the British literary canon. They did not look for the contexts and affairs of the commonwealth nations. They judged their writings to be 'good writing' by comparing with the British literature. In this connection, McLeod comments: "Commonwealth literature, then, was really the sub-set of canonical English literature, evaluated in terms derived from the conventional study that stressed the values of timelessness and universality" (14). Of course, commonwealth literature was seen to be enhancing the English canon as its sub-set.

But, later, critics started to focus on the hitherto neglected issues of national affairs and contexts underlying in the texts of the commonwealth writers. They emphasized on "historical, geographical and cultural specifics" (McLeod 15) implicated in the texts. They disavowed the English liberalist approach and adapted more critical approach through which they explored underlying colonial exploitation and domination. Further these critics, who were mostly influenced by deconstructionist and poststructuralist thinkers, attempted to elaborate "the connections between written

discourses and Europe's domination over the rest of the world” (Innes 5). They started to see connection between language and power. Consequently, this critical approach came out to be the 'colonial discourse analysis', which subsequently contributed massively in the emergence of the postcolonial theory.

The publication of *Orientalism* in 1978 by Edward Said brought colonial discourse into light and showed how this discourse of Europe represented the non-European world through political, military, scientific and imaginative writings. Colonial discourse theorists understand the colonial discourses as ideological and linguistic constructs of the Western power. Such discourses, as McLeod argues, are “*representations and modes of perceptions* [that] are used as fundamental weapons of colonial power to keep colonized peoples subservient to colonial rule” (17). Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin define the colonial discourse as “the system by which the dominant groups in society constitute the field of truth by imposing specific knowledges, disciplines and values upon dominated groups” (42). Similarly, Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman define colonial discourse as: “the variety of textual forms in which the West produced and codified knowledge about non-metropolitan areas and cultures, especially those under colonial control” (5). Indeed, colonial discourse is a system through which the West creates a false truth. This false truth being that the Europeans imagine themselves as rational and superior 'self' and the non-West as irrational, barbaric 'other'. The barbaric 'other' is devoid of civilization, religion, language and government. Hence, as rational beings, the Europeans pretend that they have the responsibility to rule and civilize them. Postcolonial theorists analyze such colonial discourses and seek to re-establish the identity of the colonized peoples.



Four thinkers of colonial discourse analysis are commonly associated with the development of the postcolonial theory. They are Franz Fanon, Edward Said, Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. They analyze how the colonial discourses influence the subject formation of the colonized peoples. They theorize how the colonial discourses construct the ideology of otherness. Fanon elaborates the psychological damage of the colonized by such colonial discourses whereas Said shows the misrepresentation of the colonized by the colonizers for control. Bhabha and Spivak too elaborate how the colonial discourses influence the subjectivity of the colonizers. Besides, they also attempt to find the areas of resistance in such discourses. Bhabha claims to have them in the ambivalence and ambiguities of such discourses. But Spivak does not, rather she stresses that such discourses silence the voice of the dominated.

Franz Fanon, of African descent born in the French former slave colony of Martinique in 1925, is prominent in the development of the postcolonial in that his ideas have helped significantly in the interpretation of the subject formation and anticolonial resistance. He shows how the colonial discourses damage the psychology of the colonized peoples and how they should reclaim their identity through his books *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*.

*Black Skin, White Masks* outlines a theory of the colonial subject formation. It shows how the colonial discourses force the colonized peoples to internalize the colonial gaze, which sees, defines and stereotypes them as inferior. It stresses that the colonial discourse formulates racial identities in the asymmetric power relationships of the colonized as inferior and colonizers as superior. Consequently, this relationship leads the colonized black to cover his skin with white mask to gain white identity. But ultimately

the black realizes that he is not white rather a split subject emptied of identity. His psychology is damaged. Then, he starts to reconstruct his identity through the performance of local culture, which ultimately becomes instrumental in anticolonial resistance.

*The Wretched of the Earth* deals with the psychology of both colonizers and the colonized. It shows how the colonizers create a Manichean view to justify their regime. That is, they view the colonized as their opposite in stereotypical terms such as uncivilized, barbaric, irrational, childlike, feminine, uneducated, superstitious and devoid of history, religion etc. Whereas they define themselves as masculine, moral, clean, educated, civilized, rational and having history of law and order. In the book, Fanon also discusses how such Manichean view can be broken and colonial regime uprooted. For this, he radicalizes particularly the peasants for national liberation struggles since he thinks, “peasants alone are revolutionary” (47). He even urges them to be violent against the colonizers so as to destroy mental colonization. He is suspicious of the middle class bourgeoisies/national compradors who are likely to be “the Western bourgeoisie's business agent” (122) in the post-dependence period. So, Fanon calls for the national consciousness against that.

Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) is widely deemed as the foundational text in postcolonial studies. In this book, he makes a sharp critique of the Western perceptions and representations of the Orient or the non-West in. He argues that the West constructs imaginary stereotypes of the Orient and the Orientals through a network of colonial discourses such as novels and poetry, travel accounts and historiography, political documents and anthropology etc. These discourses embody the motif of colonization and

sense of West's superiority. He argues that the West looks upon the Orient in 'us-them' binary which intrinsically leads 'them' into the 'other'. He talks about various writers as Alighieri Dante, Robert Burton, William Jones, Francois Rene Chateaubriand, Ernest Renan, Antoine Isaac Silvestre de Sacy etc and labels them all as orientalists. But he highlights the post-Enlightenment period as the starting point of Orientalism. He writes:

Taking the late eighteenth century as . . . starting point, Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient . . . as a Western style for dominating, structuring, and having an authority over the Orient. . . . 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, scientificall, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightment period. (3)

The passage traces that the Orientalism is just the West's corporate institutional product for the representation and management of the Orient in every way to impose and maintain the West's authority over the East. Said highlights the post-Enlightenment as the starting point of Orientalism. This point attracts me here. He has given no attention to the pre-colonial texts of European explorers of the 15th and 16th centuries, which I argue, are Orientalist discourses. They have truly replicated the presumptions and attitudes of the West about the Americas and its people. For example, *The Journal of Christopher Columbus* takes the native people as void of religion and faith waiting for conversion into Christians. For example, Columbus writes in *The Journal*: “ they might learn our language . . . be the mouthpieces of the Christians and adopt our customs . . . these people

are without any religion . . . “ (51). This leads me to agree with Stam and Shohat that “. . . Said's highlighting of post-Enlightenment Orientalism could be narrated differently, in terms of the twinned beginnings of both colonial and Orientalist discourse” (373) and interests me to read the pre-colonial texts to dig out the underlying Orientalist constructs there.

Like Fanon and Said, Homi Bhabha too deals with the subjectivity formation of the colonized by the colonial discourses in his book *The Location of Culture*, but unlike them, he sees resistance in such discourses.

Bhabha discusses that the colonizers wish to create the subjectivity of the colonized in terms of stereotypes of otherness on the basis of racial origins. In “The Other Question: Stereotypes, Discrimination and the Discourse Colonialism”, he writes: “The objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction” (101). But he argues that the colonizers cannot meet the expectation through their discourses because they are ambivalent and ambiguous. They are unable to form the subjectivities of themselves and the colonized as intended. He argues that though the colonizers create stereotypes of the orientals to be static but they can never be so. He writes: “the stereotype, which is its [of colonial discourse] major discursive strategy . . . can never really, in discourse, be proved. It is this process of *ambivalence*, central to the stereotype, that this chapter explores as it constructs a theory of colonial discourse. For it is the force of ambivalence that gives the colonial stereotype its currency” (94-95). For him, stereotypes are always ambivalent and thus resistant.

In the same book, Bhabha also employs other concepts like hybridity, mimicry, mockery, in-betweenness, Third Space etc to the creation of new cultural, linguistic or political spaces which function for resistance to colonialism through crisscrossing of languages, cultures, and racial identities. The colonizers wish hybridization with the so-called mission of civilizing the 'savages' or 'others' to first appropriate them and later extinguish their existence. They thus encourage those 'savages' 'others' to mimic their culture, language, religion, manner etc. But mimicry does not happen as intended. Rather, it turns into mockery or parody that threatens the colonizers in their certainty of dominance. It becomes ambivalent and ambiguous. This ambivalent hybridity transforms into an instrument of resistance for the colonized subjects. While mimicking, beyond the intentions of individual agents, the socio-historical, political, economic or linguistic contexts create liminality or the in-between space or Third Space where the original meaning is challenged with ambivalence. He puts this as “. . . in this contradictory and ambivalent space of enunciation . . . hierarchical claims to the inherent originality or 'purity' of cultures are untenable . . .” (55). Hence, he confirms that there is no purity of culture, albeit primordial one.

In the present study, I have explored only how *The Journal*, as an originary colonial discourse, has stereotyped the natives as others, and also how it has attracted the natives to mimic European customs and cultures, without seeking hybridity and ambivalence in it. It is so because Bhabha's hybridity and ambivalence concerns more to the colonial and postcolonial conditions than to the pre-colonial one.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is another prominent figure of the postcolonial theory mainly her idea of subaltern subject, agency, strategic essentialism etc. She views that the

colonial discourses silence the subaltern subjects. In “Can the Subaltern Speak?” she foregrounds the idea that the subaltern voice is silenced in the dominant discourses like that of the First World even if it means to give a voice. She argues that even if the subaltern speaks but the voice is deliberately not heard. It becomes only a medium for the dominant discourse as Leela Gandhi too puts, “the subaltern is simply the medium through which competing discourses represent their claims” (90). In the present study, I discuss how the pre-colonial text of Columbus represented the natives as subaltern, kept them subjugated either by enslavement or dispossession or dislocation or marginalization, and kept them silent ever.

To sum up, in the present study, I have borrowed the above mentioned theorists' concepts such as stereotypes, mimicry, misrepresentation, subjectivity formation, otherness etc to analyze *The Journal of Christopher Columbus* and come up with the conclusion that this text falls under the category of colonial discourse. So, I have argued that the postcolonial theory needs to remap and extend its area of study to the contact period of the American Discovery as well.

## Chapter III

### Historical Contexts and “Capitulations”: Motivation for the Exploration

In postcolonial reading, understanding context is important in deciphering meaning of a text. Social, political, religious and economic contexts of the time greatly influence in the construction of a text. A text carries contextual ideologies of the time. In this sense, to interpret Christopher Columbus's texts, I think it better to understand the historical contexts of his time. For the understanding of the historical contexts, I have mainly based on two sources—one, *Columbus: His Enterprise* by Hans Koning and another, “Capitulations,” the contract between Columbus and the monarchs regarding his voyage.

By the fifteenth century, or the time of Columbus, as Hans Koning describes in his book, there was a great change in European world view: “improvements in European Ship-building and sailing technologies, and better compasses, made the sea voyages less hazardous . . . the Europeans' view of the world changed. People became less content with life as a closed circle, as a pilgrimage under the eyes of the Church to heaven or to purgatory or to hell” (13). Europeans had already progressed in the field of technologies including printing, artillery, cartography, navigation, ship building and so on.

Achievement in maritime technologies had made their explorations easier towards the far-fetched lands. The idea of the Renaissance that began from Italy slowly had started to spread to other European nations. It had enabled people to concentrate on their individual achievement instead of confining themselves to the Church and its authorities. Printing presses had provided adequate travel writings, maps, books etc.

Along with the advancement in technologies, as Koning further goes on describing, European nations were competing for their superiority over the others. They wanted to demonstrate their power to others in matter of technology, politics, economy as well as religion. They wanted to be the lead nation to launch the final crusade to regain Jerusalem from the hands of the Muslims. But, the success of all these depended on economic achievements. Money was the only matter that could assist in the fulfillment of their wish. And acquisition of money was possible only through successful trade. Thus, the sovereigns and the merchants wanted to expand their trade to new markets. All of them wanted to extend their trade to the East, because it was supposed to have immense possibility there. They had heard and read about the East through the writings of earlier travelers like Sir John Mandeville and Marco Polo. These writings had fascinated them of better prospectus for trade there. They wished to accumulate Eastern materials like silk, gold, silver, spices etc. But, unfortunately, the overland route that the earlier travelers had used to the East was blocked at Constantinople by Turkey after it had taken hold of it in 1453. Hence, they had to search for the new routes.

Italy was content with the existing trade trend through the Mediterranean route as it was making enough money from the trade with the Muslims. But nations like Portugal, Spain, England etc were desperately searching for the alternative routes that were mainly sea routes. Prince Henry the Navigator of Portugal had already sent ships south to explore the route to India round Africa. In 1487, the Portuguese explorer Bartholomeu Diaz had reached to the eastern coast of Africa, which he named Cape of Good Hope. The Portuguese were able to establish trading posts at the outer coasts of Africa. They were



making money from there. In 1497, another Portuguese explorer Vasco de Gama used the same route and reached to India.

While Portugal was taking hold of the southern route, Spain was still in its internal conflict. By the time of the marriage of Isabella, queen of Castile and Ferdinand, king of Aragon in 1479, Spain was divided into several kingdoms that often had battles with each other. Their marriage unified these kingdoms and both started to rule together as 'Catholic Monarchs' (this title was conferred on them by the Pope in 1494). They were able to control Canary Islands of the Atlantic. They, jointly as a couple, could rule the entire nation in alliance with the Church. After marriage, they exercised the Spanish Inquisition. It was intended to keep orthodoxy in Catholicism and to convert the Muslims and the Jews into Catholicism. But, Granada was still in the control of the Moorish Empire. The Moors had been ruling there for about eight hundred years. Only in the year 1492, these Catholic Monarchs were successful to knock down those Moors. And in the same year, they were able to expel the Jews out of the country as well. This was a glorious moment for them. This success established them as powerful Christian sovereigns, and enhanced their self-esteem. It gave them hope of the retrieval of the Holy Land in Israel from the hand of Muslim infidels. From their war experience, they believed they could conquer the infidels. But for this, they needed enough gold. The conflict had left the nation in economic crisis. Wool trade was the only profitable trade of Spain but it was limited to a few handful merchants of the Mesta. So, the sovereigns had to find a new route to trade to the East. So, as Koning further writes: "The 'Catholic Monarchs' felt they had a role to play in the world that could neither be financed by their

miserable peasants nor by the Mesta alone. The stage was set for Columbus” (10), the Spanish monarchs approved Columbus for that purpose.

Happy Columbus got ready to set out on the exploration to fulfill the Spanish mission in the very year 1492. It was a pleasant moment for him because he had been waiting for such opportunity for long. As an Italian citizen, he had approached his monarch for it but to no avail. He requested to the Portuguese monarch. Again he failed. He attempted in England but in vain. Lastly, he was accepted by the Spanish monarchs, which was also in the third attempt. He achieved this success through the support of Luis de Santangel and Juan Perez. Santangel was the Spanish treasurer and Perez was a Franciscan friar who had link to the queen. Columbus had left his son under the care of Perez at La Rabida.

Personally, Columbus had developed the ambition of exploration through various books related to religion, travel, astrology and astronomy. Travel books such as by Sir John Mandeville and Marco Polo had aroused enthusiasm in him towards China and the East. From these books, he hoped that he would visit China, Japan, India and other islands. He would have audience with the Mongol Emperor and learn about the availability of gold and other materials, dispositions of people and possibility of conversion. Then he would move to Japan, India and other islands where he would be able to locate markets for trade. He would also locate mines of gold in the unknown lands and take control of them. Then he would convert the heathens and pagans of those lands into Christianity.

Similarly, Columbus was greatly impressed by the Florentine philosopher Paolo Toscanelli to take up the western route. Toscanelli, based on Polo's description, had made

a map of the western sea route to Asia. Regarding astronomy and cosmography, Columbus had gathered enough knowledge through books like *Imago Mundi* by Pierre d'Ailly. He was confident physically as well that he could travel long distances because he had already traveled throughout the Mediterranean, from West Africa to England and Iceland.

Such confident and enthusiastic Columbus got the official mandate from the Spanish sovereigns in April 1492 via the “Articles of Capitulations” (also “Capitulations” in short). He signed on this agreement paper with the sovereigns and made necessary preparations for the voyage. This paper clearly defined his legal rights and obligations. Columbus was bound to follow it. Thus, this official historical document is very crucial in understanding the mindset of Columbus and of the Spanish as well.

The “Capitulations” starts with the invocation: “In the name of the Holy Trinity and Eternal Unity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost” (179), and describes the wonders and works of God and man's need of reverence to Him. Then it defines king as the representative of God to implement His tasks on earth: “the King is established upon earth in the place of God to render justice and give to everyone his right, and on this account they called him the heart and soul of the people” (180). Then only it describes the tasks, rewards and rights of Columbus. It describes his tasks as: “Inasmuch as you, Christopher Columbus, are going by our commands to discover and conquer, with some of our vessels and our subjects, certain islands and mainland in the ocean” (181). Here two words are very interesting to note—one 'discover' and another 'conquer'. The Christian monarchs, who have commissioned Columbus to explore new routes to the East

for trade, have also commanded him to discover and conquer the land where he reaches. Obviously, this is indicative of colonial motive intertwined with the economic one.

The Christian monarchs are optimistic that Columbus will be successful in their mission. Thus, they encourage him with the assurance of the reward of the noble title of Admiral, Viceroy and Governor of the discovered lands that he requested for. The “Capitulations” describes: “as it is hoped, with the assistance of God, that some of the aforesaid islands and mainland in the said ocean will be discovered and conquered through your labor and industry; . . . you should be rewarded . . . , be our Admiral, Viceroy and Governor of them” (182). The further description, “likewise your children and successors in the said office and charge, may entitle and call themselves, Don, Admiral, Viceroy and Governor of them” (182) affirms that the title has been conferred on Columbus and his future generations forever.

Along with the endowment of this noble rank, the “Capitulations” endorses him the right and authority to govern over the new lands and its people. Like other noble men of the same rank in Spain, he can now fully exercise his power and authority. He can decide law cases, punish and chastise delinquents, take taxes from the people and so on. The “Capitulations” spells his authority and power as:

We . . . make a grant to you of the said offices of Admiral, Viceroy and Governor, by right of inheritance forever; and we give you possession of them, and of every one of them, with the power and authority to use and exercise them, and to take the fees and salaries annexed and belonging to them, and every one of them according as has been said. (183)

It is obvious that Columbus has been sent on the exploration with absolute authority of taking possession of new lands and governing there.

Fascinated by such context, Columbus leaves Granada on the 12 May of 1492. Having made necessary preparations in Palos and the Canary Islands for some months, he then sails out. On the way, he remembers his responsibility towards the monarchs. He then thinks of writing a diary so as to convince the Monarchs later when he returns to Spain. he mentions this in the prologue of *The Journal* as: “As part of my duty I thought it well to write an account of all the voyage very punctually, noting from day to day all that I should do and see, and that should happen, as will be seen further on” (17). In this sense, it can be argued that *The Journal* is a straight response to the “Capitulations.” Or to say differently, it is a portrayal of the Spanish mindset of the time.

The “Capitulations” misses out the religious motive. But, Columbus mentions it in the prologue of *The Journal*. Entitling the prologue itself in the name of Christ as: “In the Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ”, Columbus begins his writing by addressing his monarchs as “Oh most Christian” (15), then moves to describe his religious mission. He writes as:

Your Highnesses, as Catholic Christians and Princes who love the holy Christian faith, and the propagation of it, and who are enemies to the sect of Mahoma and to all idolatries and heresies, resolved to send me, Cristobal Colon, to the said parts of India to see the said princes, and the cities and lands, and their disposition, with a view that they might be converted to our holy faith. (15)

Columbus repeats this religious mission in *The Journal* later as: “[we] would have found the mine, and spices in such quantities that the sovereigns would, in three years, be able to undertake and fit out an expedition to go and conquer the Holy Sepulcher” (139). He mentions this when he establishes a colony in Hispaniola and is optimistic of finding more gold in future.

Critics of Columbus have also found the contemporary Spanish motives imbued in his discourse of exploration. For example, Abbas Hamdini finds the religious motive as: “Discovery of new lands had no meaning for Columbus except as a stepping stone toward the Christians” (45). Carole Delaney too views the religious motive of Columbus as: “Columbus wanted to launch a new Crusade to take back the Holy Land from the infidels (the Muslims)” (261). Similarly, Roger A. Johnson has the same view. He notes, “description of the New World and its discovery is the expansion of Christendom, including the anticipated conquest of Jerusalem and world-wide conversion of non-European peoples” (17). But, Roger also observes the economic motive of Columbus as: “Columbus's obsession with gold and other forms of wealth led him to adopt policies and actions destructive of island populations: for example, their enslavement” (19). Here, he indicates that this economic motive led to imperialistic policy of Columbus.

A J Parry also points out economic motive in Columbus. He argues that the Europeans explorers like Columbus were seeking new markets along with unknown lands: “Europeans were not generally seeking unknown lands, but were simply trying to link known markets by sea . . . so Columbus was trying to link the known Atlantic to the known east” (qtd. in Childs 756). Like Johnson, Denis Judd links the economic motive to imperialism. He notes, “no one can doubt that the desire for profitable trade, plunder the

enrichment was the primary force that led to the establishment of the imperial structure” (qtd. in McLeod 18). Both Johnson and Judd are right to state that the economic motive played a significant role in establishing imperialism. Saying that, it would be a mistake to deny the role of religious motive. Both economic and religious motives actively go hand in hand to contribute in Spanish imperialism in the Americas.

From the above discussion, it is clear that Columbus was heavily guided by the motives of contemporary Spain. Robert Park sums up the motives in three words “gospel, glory and gold” (424). But I would like to add one more word, and it is 'govern'. Of course, exploration for the Spanish was for finding gold, spread Christianity, show their glorious achievements in technologies and civilization to the world, and govern the uncivilized parts of the world.

In the present study, I have explored the role played by these motives in *The Journal of Christopher Columbus*. My conclusion is that their presence in the text has shaped it into a colonial discourse. They have become the root cause of dichotomies between the West and East, civilized and savage, master and slave and so on. After all, they have been instrumental in leading to the establishment of Spanish colony in the Americas.

## Chapter IV: Postcolonial Reading of *The Journal*

### Glory and Stereotyping

In the first chapter, I introduced *The Journal of Christopher Columbus* as a colonial discourse. In the third, I discussed the historical contexts and the “Capitulations” as guiding motives for Columbus. I wrapped up the third chapter with four words—glory, gold, god and govern—as the pervasive motives. In the present chapter, I analyze how these motives are reflected in *The Journal* and how they have helped the Europeans to shape their colonial attitude for mercantile achievement, religious expansion and establishing their authority over the Americas. My reading being based on postcolonial perspective, I discuss how *The Journal* begins stereotyping of otherness, exploitation, domination, enslavement, dis/possession etc in the process of colonization in the Americas.

I argue that *The Journal* is a colonial discourse on the basis of the concepts propounded by Franz Fanon, Homi K Bhabha, Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. These thinkers argue that the colonial discourse establishes the Manichaeic world view or the binary oppositions between the West and the Orient through various stereotypes such as us and them, Christians and infidels, civilized and savage, masculine and feminine, moral and immoral, rational and barbaric, lawful and lawless, familiar and exotic, parent and child etc. They claim that these stereotypes help to formulate the western ideologies of domination, discrimination and power, which leads to the formation of the subjectivity of the colonized in terms of difference or otherness. For example, Bhabha writes: “The construction of the colonial subject in discourse, and the exercise of the colonial power through discourse, demands an articulation of forms of



difference” (96). In fact, the colonial discourse creates a binary opposition of the West and the non-West, in which the West has always an upper hand, which assists in the marginalization and domination of the non-West.

*The Journal* which came out at the backdrop of the Spanish glorious victory or reconquista of Granada in 1492 contains such Manichean world view via which it categorizes the Spanish as superior, civilized, rational and masculine creatures of God whereas the Native Americans as their opposite or 'the other'. In this sense, it is a colonial discourse. Here follows the analysis of *The Journal* as a colonial discourse.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, European nations had felt glory of their achievements in science and technology, education and civilization, warfare and lifestyle etc by the time of Columbus's exploration. Spain, the host nation of Columbus, was ambitious of becoming leading Christian nation. After the marriage in 1479, the king Ferdinand and queen Isabella had united several kingdoms, issued Inquisition, defeated the Moors from Granada and expelled the Jews out of the nation. All these factors assisted to validate their glory. But that glory was not the end for them. They hoped to extend their glory to other nations of Europe and outside as well. They still had troubles with the French for the possession of the kingdom of Naples. They had to defeat them so as to establish themselves as solid Christian monarchs. Then, they would have time to think of the exodus to the retrieval of the Holy Land in Israel. Unfortunately they lacked money. They desperately needed it. So, they had commissioned Columbus in search of gold towards the East via the western route.

With that mandate, Columbus commenced his exploration and recorded his experiences in *The Journal* as per the mandate. Hence, it reflects the Spanish motives.

Columbus, in the very beginning of *The Journal*, sings the glory of Spanish monarchs as “O most Christian, and very high, very excellent, and puissant Princes, King and Queen of the Spains and of the islands of the Sea, our Lords, in this present year of 1492, after your Highnesses had given an end to the war with the Moors who reigned in Europe “ (15). He admires their victory over the Moors and appreciates them as the truest and most excellent and puissant Christians.

Columbus establishes the asymmetric colonial relationship between the Europeans and the Native Americans in the year 1492 by landing in America. This year opens up the perpetuating inflict upon the natives. Clause Neumann mentions this fact as: “First contact in 1492 has been identified as the symbolic starting signal for the colonial relationship: in 1492 the European bug that from then on afflicted non-European peoples in general and Native Americans in particular was passed on” (116). The year 1492 has become the historical landmark, when Europe establishes a binary relation between itself and the others.

As an Orientalist or colonial discourse, *The Journal* dichotomizes the West and the East through various stereotypes. It characterizes the West as civilized, rational, bold, god-chosen, whereas the Native Americans as savages, cannibals, timid, immoral, deficient of knowledge, child like etc.

From the very beginning, *The Journal* sets the binary opposition between the Christians and other religious sects such as the Muslims. It characterizes all the non-Christian sects as idolatrous or heretic and enemies of Christians. It regards the Orientals including the great Kublai Khan himself to be devoid of religion. It describes that the request of Khan was denied by the Holy Father in that all the Orientals were believers of

idolatry who had been punished with eternal sin or perdition. Columbus puts this fact in the following words:

acting on the information that I had given to your Highnesses touching the lands of India, and respecting a Prince who is called Gran Can, which means in our language King of Kings, how he and his ancestors had sent to Rome many times to ask for learned men of our holy faith to teach him, and how the Holy Father had never complied, insomuch that many people believing in idolatries were lost by receiving doctrine of perdition. (16)

Then, he relates his mission of going to the Orient. He states that the Catholic Monarchs have deputed him in the exploration of the Orient so as to examine the conditionality and disposition of the people for conversion. He writes: “Your Highnesses . . . resolved to send me, Cristobal Colon, to the said parts of India to see the said princes, and the cities and lands, and their disposition, with a view that they might be converted to our holy faith” (15).

It is clear that Columbus is preoccupied with the view that the Orient is the land of gold and other precious jewels and materials. And its inhabitants are sinful because they lack religion. So they need conversion for redemption. Here, Columbus does not imagine at all about the existence of the natives' religion. He is guided by the Orientalist perspective that there is only one religion and it is Christianity. The natives have their own religions and cultures but he ignores them. About this, Irene S Vernon puts her view as: “Prior to contact, native people had their own cultural and religious systems that sustained their physical and spiritual well-being for centuries” (76). Vernon accuses the European colonizers for the dislocation. She writes, “However, with the arrival of

European colonizers came the suppression and prohibition of traditional Native religious practices. In an attempt to 'civilize' the Indians the colonizers sought to undermine traditional ways of worship" (76). Actually, it is reasonable to think that the natives have their religions and cultures, but Columbus's preoccupied mind denies their presence. His deep-rooted faith in Christianity makes him think rashly that there is no other religion except Christianity. He assumes all the other religious people as heathens. His assumption is associated to the millennium hope of Christianity which believes in inscribing the Christianity in all the pagans and infidels of the world.

From the very first landing in the Indies, Columbus begins to put the Europeans and the natives in the binary. His European gaze establishes the Europeans as the superior civilized beings and the natives as inferior uncivilized ones. That is why, at the first encounter with them, he assumes them to be very poor race in everything: "It appeared to me a race of people very poor in everything" (37-38). It is interesting to note that such European gaze provides him such authentic agency to see the natives poor in everything. By using the phrase 'poor in everything' he completely denies the presence of the native religion, civilization, manner and all. This is how he establishes an unequal relationship between the natives and the Europeans—Europeans knowing everything, having everything, capable of doing everything etc whereas the natives poor in everything. In other words, it establishes the relationship of superiority and inferiority.

This asymmetric relationship defines Europeans as dominant and natives as their subordinate. Clause Neumann describes this fact as: "The landfall in Guanahani set in train a process that led to the worldwide separation of humankind into dominant and subordinate, to the underdevelopment of one part of the world and the development of the

other” (116). Actually, the first landfall in the Indies in 1492 becomes the starting point of subjugating the natives.

At the very first contact with the native inhabitants, Columbus gazes at them via European eye. As a result, the inhabitants become the heathen savages. He finds them “naked people” (37). He does not analyze the conditionality of their nakedness. He does not speculate at all why they are living so. He does not guess that by living so they may be happy because of close contact to nature. He straightforwardly assumes that they are in primitive condition. They do not have any clothes to wear. They have no experience to produce them. They have no knowledge about the benefits of them. Moreover, they do not have sense of morality. They do not know they have to hide their genitals. They are immoral and exotic creatures. They lack culture of wearing clothes and hence are not Christians or civilized beings. The Christians believe that man started to use clothes after the fall as a sign of cultural progress. Not to use clothes is to be cultureless and savage. This way, Columbus just designates their position as the primitive savages without civilization and culture.

Immediately after Columbus lands and encounters the natives, he assumes that they have no religion. He writes “they appeared to me to have no religion” (38). Then, believing himself to be a true follower of Christianity, he takes it his responsibility to redeem these degenerate savages. He believes that God has given him responsibility to redeem the infidels and pagans. For this, he has to work for their conversion. He has to teach them Christian lessons. Thus he plans to convert the natives into Christianity. He describes his first encounter with them as: “[we] saw naked people . . . we might form great friendship, for I knew that they were a people who could be more easily freed and

converted to our holy faith by love than by Force”(37). He observes the possibility of winning the heart of the natives and converting them by winning their psychology. He is optimistic in redeeming them from their sinfulness. He hopes to fulfill the European faith of inscribing the Christianity all over the world. Later, he expresses his confidence that the natives are sure to be converted if any devoted Christian tries: “I hold, most serene Princes, that if devout religious persons were here, knowing the language, they would all turn Christians” (71). He appeals to the monarchs to assign some capable Christians for this purpose. He again finds the hints of conversion in the natives because they repeat what he says and make the sign of the cross. He writes: “At any prayer that we say, they repeat, and make the sign of the cross” (73). This adds to his confidence.

The intention of Columbus to convert the natives into Christianity and uplift their condition from savagery to civilization may be judged as a humanitarian task by some critics. But I think it is more hegemonic than humanitarian. Columbus may have thought in a humanitarian way but it can be contested with some questions such as: why does he think that Christianity is the only remedy to modify their life conditions? Why does he associate nakedness to lack of happiness? Why does he not think that their religion may have allowed them to live naked? Further, if religion is for happy life, why does he not think the natives are happy? The answers of all these questions can be summed up into a single sentence as: because Columbus's preoccupied western attitude makes him view the natives as savages and devoid of religion.

Columbus not only negates the religion but also the language of the natives. He writes: “. . . for they appeared to me to have no religion. God willing, when I make my departure I will bring half a dozen back to their majesties so that they can learn to speak”

(38). He hears their language as meaningless utterances, which can only be meaningful if they learn to speak in the European language. To our surprise, what is that authority that allows him to assume the now unspeaking natives to be speaking after brought to Europe! In fact, it is the Europe's Orientalist perspective that authenticates him. This perspective does not see the existence of any language (words) except that of Jesus. Hence, Columbus affirms that the natives have no words, no language—so, they need European teaching. This is the process, in Spivak's term, of silencing the subalterns.

The Spanish, boosted up by the victory of the Canary Islands and the Granada were so assertive that they labeled themselves as god-elect or the heavenly creatures and the people of the Indies as cursed ones. They regarded themselves as militarily bold, strong and trained, physically heavenly, and culturally civilized and capable of civilizing the cursed others. Columbus presents this fact as: “They maintained that the Spaniards came from heaven, and that the Sovereigns of Castille must be in heaven, and not in this world . . . they should be taught to go about clothed and to adopt our custom” (115). In fact, it is the self-representation of Columbus to take the Spanish as heavenly creatures for he could not communicate with the natives. If he does not know their language, how can he understand them? This is only his imagination. This imaginary sense of superiority makes him think it is his responsibility to civilize the natives by teaching their customs and manners like wearing clothes. This is his Orientalist perspective in Saidian term.

Columbus portrays the natives' condition in their primitiveness regarding the development of technology as well. He describes them as completely ignorant of the European technology. He says they do not know what a sword is. They have only insignificant kinds of arms like wands or sticks made of soft materials like cane. He

notes: “They do not bear arms, and do not know them, for I showed them a sword, they took it by the edge and cut themselves out of ignorance. They have no iron, their darts being wands without iron” (38). Columbus takes advantage of their ignorance by letting them take the sword by the edge to cut themselves to bleed. He must have wanted to show his superiority over them. If not, he must have shown them how to hold it. By exposing his superior weapons, he hopes of frightening them, which will enable him to control and subjugate them for his advantage. He expresses his idea of subjugation in these words: “They have no arms, and are without warlike instincts; they all go naked, and are so timid that a thousand would not stand before three of our men. So that they are good to be ordered about, to work and sow, and do all that may be necessary, and to build towns” 115). He thinks they are good enough to work for him. He can employ them in agriculture and in building towns. He can exploit them as slave labourers. This incites the impulse of slavery in Columbus.

Columbus stereotypes the natives also as very cowardice and fearful. He writes that these people are “timid, they go naked, as I have said, without arms and without law” (69); “so timid that a hundred would fly before one Spaniard” (73); “The Admiral assures the Sovereigns that ten thousand of these men would run from ten, so cowardly and timid are they. No arms are carried by them, excepts wands” (95). In the letter to Santangel, he writes that the people are so cowardice that they run away even leaving their sons behind: “they are timid to a surprising degree . . . the people have come out in countless numbers, but, as soon as they saw our men approach, would flee with such precipitation that a father would not even stop to protect his son” (6). This timidity creates the binary that the



Europeans are strong whereas the natives timid. This further adds to the assumption of the Europeans as strong and fearless, and the Americans as timid and weak.

Columbus presents the natives in the primitive state regarding to their judgment of things as well. He says they are deficient in intelligence. They are poor in judging the value of things. For him, they cannot judge which is more valuable than the other. They are simply quite excited to receive any things from him. He writes, “[We] gave to some of them red caps, and glass beads to put round their necks, and many other things of little value, which gave them great pleasure, and made them so much our friends that it was a marvel to see” (37). He finds them willing to offer their gold for little insignificant European thing such as hawk's bells, glass beads etc. He notes “Some of them had pieces of gold fastened in their noses, which they willingly gave for a hawk's bell and glass beads” (56). He records that any things he has with him are of great interest for them. They are willing to exchange everything. He describes it as: “They afterwards came to the ship's boats where we were, swimming and bringing us parrots, cotton threads in skeins, darts, and many other things. In fine, they took all, and gave what they had with good will. It appeared to me to be a race of people very poor in everything” (37-38). By their willingness for exchange or for getting Spanish things in that way, Columbus thinks they are poor in intelligence.

In the letter to Santangel, Columbus even tags the natives as foolish: “They took even bits of the broken hoops of the wine barrels and gave, like fools, all they had” (7). He interprets they cannot judge the value of things in European standard. But, it is also Spanish perspective to interpret that way. It does not necessarily mean that not to exchange in the European standard is to be poor and foolish. The things he values much

may be of little value for the Indians because they may have them in abundance. They may not in need of them. Rather, the point may be that they may have been curious to possess new things because curiosity to possess new things is quite natural for human beings. So, it can be argued that Columbus is just turning his eye on the Indian things which will be highly valuable in Europe. He is just focused on possessing valuable jewels like gold. He writes, "I was attentive, and took trouble to ascertain if there was gold. I saw that some of them had a small piece fastened in a hole they have in the nose . . . and by signs I was able to make out that to the south, or going from the island to the south, there was a king who had great cups full, and who possessed a great quantity" (40). This is evident of his greed of having jewels from these Indians whom he regards as deficient in intelligence.

His greed in accumulating the Indian jewels is exposed in his letter to Santangel as well. He tries to win the psyche of the natives for this purpose. Seemingly, he forbids his men to take anything from them free of cost, but actually they exchange for minor things. He writes in the letter, "I thought it was wrong and forbad it. I gave away a thousand good and pretty things which I had brought with me in order to win their affection . . . and that they might aid us by giving us things of which we stand in need, but which they possess in abundance" (8). Clearly, the needed thing for him is gold and he gives thousands of good but 'pretty' things for its acquisition.

Along with leveling natives to savages, Columbus, time and again, idealizes the native people in terms such as well built, handsome, generous, fair and attractive. He presents them to be below the age of thirty and have charming faces, straight hair like that of the horse, broad forehead, wide eyes like that of the Canarians etc. He writes:

All I saw were youths, no more than thirty years of age. They are well built, with very handsome bodies, very good countenances. . . . Their hair is not curly, but loose and coarse, like horse hair. In all the forehead is broad, more so than in any other people I have hitherto seen. Their eyes are very beautiful and not small, and themselves far from black, but the colour of the Canarians. (38)

This may be a real description. But it invites some questions: why does he imagine all the people are under the age of thirty? Are they really below thirty? Are they all equally well built, with handsome bodies and faces or is he romanticizing them? Why is he attracted at their 'not curly' or straight hair and 'eyes . . . far from black' or blue eyes like that of the Canarians?

In my view, this is an idealized description. All of them may be below thirty, may have curly hair and black eyes, no doubt. But they cannot be equally well built, with equal handsome bodies and good countenances. They have not come there after a selection for this purpose. So, there must be at least some differences in their build. Columbus must have drawn this portrayal because he must have been overwhelmed by the feeling that it is easy to control and convert these attractive people into his religion. He has already noticed them as naked and timid. He has not seen any aggression in their faces. He has also assumed them to be devoid of religion and language. He has judged them to be capable of learning. In another word, he has seen them as noble savages. In such a condition, he describes them completely attractive and well built youths, even though they may not be so in reality. He expects these energetic youths will be easily

guided by the matured adult like him. After all, with this attitude, he establishes paternalistic relationship with them—he himself as the parent and the natives as children.

Columbus might be attracted by the youths having 'not curly hair' and 'eyes . . . far from black, but the colour of the Canarians' because Spain had already got victory over the Canarians and many of them were enslaved. Columbus must have thought of enslaving these attractive guys as well in the way Spain had already enslaved the Canarians.

Columbus might have described the youths in an idealized way so as to attract the Spanish towards having relationship with these youths. But the relationship will not be of that of friends but of master and slave. The Spanish will be fascinated to have these handsome people as their slaves. The notion of slavery may be underpinned here, which he soon proves with the expression: “I believed . . . [they] should be good servants and intelligent, for I observed that they quickly took in what was said to them” (38). He further adds that he will begin the transportation of slaves to Europe to honor his funders: “I, our Lord being pleased, will take hence, at the time of my departure, six natives for your Highnesses” (38). He assumes the task of subjugating the native is easy: “They would make fine servants. . . . With fifty men we could subjugate them all and make them do whatever we want” (41). This is how Columbus opens up the door to the slavery of the Indians.

Columbus fetishizes the native women. He writes, “They go as naked as when their mothers bore them, and so do the women” (39). Here he emphasizes on 'women' separating it from the neutral pronoun 'they'. The neutral pronoun 'they' is enough to refer to both sexes. But he separates and focuses 'women' so as to fetishize the native women

for European sexual lust. He arouses the sexual lust again: “Here they found that the married women wore clouts of cotton, but not the young girls, except a few who were over eighteen years of age” (50). It is questionable how he distinguished women between married and unmarried. But here the interesting point is that he characterizes all the nude girls as unmarried and below eighteen. Does it not mean that he is lustful in the appearance of these young girls? Naturally, a man is attracted more to a young girl than to an aged woman. Further, he mentions that there was an island full of women only: “The Admiral also heard of an island further east, in which there were only women” (151). Columbus takes America itself as feminine. In his third voyage, he writes to the Sovereigns that the newly found land was the shape of a woman’s nipple: “I have been led to hold this concerning the world . . . it is placed something like a woman’s nipple” (qtd in Todorov 16). So, descriptions like these seem to arouse sexual attraction for the readers, who, as Columbus targeted, were Europeans.

Interestingly, Columbus's *Journal* stereotypes the natives into two types of savages—one fierce savages and another noble savages. The fierce savages are aggressive, violent and terrifying. They are man-eaters. They are cannibals. They represent the Carib tribe. The noble savages are very docile, attractive, generous, well built and as fair as the white Europeans. They represent the Arawak tribe. Peter Hulme points out that these two types of savages have been articulated in European discourses after Columbus first used these terms in his *Journal*. He writes: “the two names, Carib and Arawak, mark an *internal* division within European perception of the native Caribbean, a division variously articulated in all European accounts, from Columbus's first jottings in his log-book to the historical and anthropological works written today”

(46). Actually, after Columbus's portrayal of these savages in his *Journal*, they have influenced the works of various thinkers and writers such as Shakespeare, Voltaire, Montaigne, Locke, Rousseau, Thomas More and many more. Besides, as Robert Stam and Ella Shohat claim, “[they] were central to the Renaissance and the Enlightenment periods” (376), they were also the producers of the European Renaissance and Enlightenment.

But, still more interestingly, Columbus does not record his direct encounter with the cannibals in *The Journal* —he presents only the encounter with the noble savages. He presents his speculation only about the cannibals on the basis of the reports he receives from the natives. They report him that there are gold mines in the island of those man-eaters, which is called Bohio. But he refuses to believe them. Instead, he lightly assumes that they are the people of the emperor Great Khan of Cipango, who captivate the other islanders, for which the natives believe as eaten by them. He writes, “They report that the Canibas had only one eye and dogs' faces. The Admiral thought they lied, and was inclined to believe that it was people from the dominions of the Gran Can who took them into captivity” (87). Columbus may be denying these people with one eye and dogs' faces as real because he wants to hide the fact that there are such beast-like creatures who could be obstacles to the European explorers. Even if they are there, he is sure to defeat them. He consoles the locals that he will fight the cannibals on their behalf. He assures them that he will use his guns to shoot off the Caribs. As a signal, he even fires off once, which astonishes the local king. He writes this as: “The Admiral said, by signs, that the Sovereigns of Castille would order the Caribs to be destroyed, and that all should be taken with their heads tied together. He ordered a lombard and a hand-gun to be fired off,

and seeing the effect caused by its force and what the shots penetrated, the king was astonished” (137). With this, he establishes a paternalistic relationship with them.

Further, it may be possible that Columbus refuses the presence of the man-eating cannibals because of his preoccupation with the myth of noble savages. As the Christians believe: “People who inhabit the lands near to the Terrestrial Paradise . . . to be peaceful, well formed and noble” (West 523), Columbus must have taken these people to be noble. Further, he must have concluded them to be noble from their appearance and behavior, which he finds as: “these people are without any religion, not idolaters, but very gentle, not knowing what is evil, nor the sins of murder and theft, being without arms . . . . They, however, believe and know that there is a God in heaven, and say that we have come from heaven. At any prayer that we say, they repeat, and make the sign of the cross” (73). Besides, he takes them as noble savages because they are very generous and are even to give their hearts to others. This he writes in the letter to Santangel as: “They never refuse anything that they possess when it is asked of them; on the contrary, they offer it themselves, and they exhibit so much kindness that they would even give their hearts” (7). By this, Columbus becomes hopeful in converting these noble savages into Christianity. He urges to the monarchs to commence the conversion process. He writes, “Thus your Highnesses should resolve to make them Christians, for I believe that, if the work was begun, in a little time a multitude of nations would be converted to our faith, with the acquisition of great lordships, peoples, and riches for Spain” (73). Then it is easy to spread the gospel of God everywhere and regain the Garden of Eden.

Interestingly, at almost every new encounter, Columbus's *Journal* portrays the noble savages more attractive (more noble like the Europeans themselves) than the

earlier. For example, at his first encounter, he finds them just naked like a child though in well built physique: “naked as when their mothers bore them, and so do the women . . . [all] well built, with very handsome bodies, and very good countenances” (38). In the second, he finds them naked again but slightly more attractive as they have broader forehead: “In all, the forehead is broad, more so than in any other people I have hitherto seen” (39). He also describes that their eyes attractive, which he compares with the Canarians: “Their eyes are very beautiful and not small, and themselves far from black, but the colour of the Canarians” (39). In the third, he notices people as “better disposed” (47) than the earlier islanders he came into contact with. This observation takes place till the end of the voyage. For more examples, he portrays the new islanders as: “there is no better nor gentler people in the world” (131), and as” a loving people, . . . I assure your Highnesses that there is no better land nor people. They love their neighbours as themselves, and their speech is the sweetest and gentlest in the world, and always with a smile . . . they have very good customs among themselves. The king is a man of remarkable presence” (135). It is clear from the examples that the latter islanders are always comparatively better than the previous ones.

Columbus records in *The Journal* how he teaches the natives to dress. By doing this, he induces them to mimic and appropriate European culture, in Bhabha's sense. For example, when his men capture a woman in Hispaniola, he asks her to be dressed: “The Admiral caused her to be dressed” (108). Later, he also gives a shirt and globes to the chief of Hispaniola who gladly accepts and puts on. Columbus describes the situation as:

The Lord had on a shirt and a pair of gloves, given to him by the Admiral, and he was more delighted with the gloves than with anything else. In his



manner of eating, both as regards the high-bred air and the peculiar cleanliness he clearly showed his nobility. After he had eaten, he remained some time at table, and they brought him certain herbs, with which he rubbed his hands. (137)

The citation makes it very clear that Columbus induces the local naked chief with the things produced in his civilized country. He attempts to win the psychology of the king to follow the European culture and look like the Europeans. It is the process, which Fanon would term as desire of the non-white people for the “white mask”. Consequently, the chief gets attracted to follow Columbus, wears his products, exclaims incomparable delight, and looks peculiarly noble in his manner. But the chief is unaware of having his culture dislocated.

Columbus's task of giving and asking the natives to dress is very interesting as it seems to underpin the Orientalist motive. On the one hand, it may illustrate Columbus's civilizing mission that his presence there is bringing positive changes in the manner of the people. He wishes to prove to the funding monarchs that he is having success in changing the conditions of the savages. And on the other, by labeling the chief and his folks noble savages, he may be trying to gratify the prevailing European wish of regaining Garden of Eden, where there were the uncorrupt humans before the Fall.

Undoubtedly, one of the missions of Columbus's exploration was to find the mythical garden surrounded by such noble savages. For this, he had set to reach to the Far East, which was supposed to have that garden. He had made a plan to first go to Cipango about which, from Marco Polo, he had known that it was full of precious things with pristine nature and friendly people. Getting enough jewels and other useful things from

there, he would proceed further east to reach to the garden. But ironically, he reaches to Hispaniola and mistakenly assumes that he reached to Cipango. Finding enough gold and other jewels from the natives there, he equates Hispaniola to the mythical garden. He describes Edenic features of Hispaniola as: “This land is cool, and the best that words can describe. It is very high . . . diversified with plains and valleys. In all Castille, there is no land that can be compared with this for beauty and fertility” (113). He terms it better than Spain of the Old World.

Columbus may have presented those people as more attractive and land more beautiful than the previous ones in intension of raising more enthusiasm among the Europeans that they are near to the mythic garden. By doing so, he may be trying to prove that he is about to find the garden and the New World where there will be only Catholic Christians and Jesus will come to rule. As he is seriously obsessed with the feeling that he is the messenger of God, he might have thought it his responsibility to find the mythical garden and teach the savages with the Gospels of God. Pauline Moffitt Watts writes about this obsession as: “his given name of Christopher signified his divinely ordained mission to carry Christianity across the westward ocean to what he presumed were the pagans of the Orient” (15). So, as a messenger of God, he will help to redeem all these not “freed” natives “having no religion” (37) from their sins by converting them into Christians.

And for the conversion of the natives, he repeatedly urges the monarchs to take necessary action. He writes, “I trust in our Lord that your Highnesses will resolve upon this with much diligence, to bring so many nations within the Church, and to convert them” (72). He further invokes them: “as you have destroyed those who would not

confess the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And after your days; all of us being mortal, may your kingdom remain in peace, and free from heresy and evil, and may you be well received before the eternal creator” (72). Again, he reminds the monarchs: “Your Highnesses ought not to consent that any stranger should trade her, or put his foot in the country, except Catholic Christians, for this was the beginning and end of the undertaking namely, the increase and glory of the Christian religion, and that none should come to these parts who was not a good Christian” (91). Columbus wants the conversion of these native people by the Christians as soon as possible. Otherwise, it may be possible for the Muslims or the Jews to undertake that task.

This way, Columbus misrepresented the native islanders of the Indies and began Spanish civilizing mission there in the year 1492. In fact, his landing in the Indies in that 1492 became a catalyst event. It introduced colonialism in the name of discovery and self-defined modernity of Europe to impose its authority upon the savage beings of the Americas as Latin American postcolonial critic Enrique Dussel puts in these words: “1492 is the date of the 'birth' of modernity . . . of Europe . . . to pose itself against an other, when, in other words, Europe could constitute itself as a unified ego exploring, conquering, colonizing an alterity that gave back its image of itself” (66). Truly, Columbus established a binary relation between itself and the others since 1492. He constructed European identity as 'civilized' by means of stereotyping the Natives Americans as the 'savage other.' By this construction of savage other, as David Harding observes, Columbus painted “a non-threatening picture of natives to potential colonists” (38), which gradually displaced the real picture/identity of the natives' civilization and

culture. As a consequence, in the present, the native activists call him a villain, and are struggling to regain their identity.

### **Gold, Holy Temple and Exploitation**

In the previous section, I discussed how Columbus's *Journal* stereotypes the Native Americans and how that stereotypes work to subjugate the natives. In this section, I discuss how the gold and god motives, which are intrinsically associated to the colonial wish for mercantile achievement and religious expansionism, are implicated in *The Journal* and how they affect in the exploitation of the Native Americans.

Apparently, Columbus's prime motive was to find out the route to the East for commercial purpose. As other routes were closed to the Spanish, he had to take a different route to reach to the city of Kublai Khan and other important cities of the East for trade purpose. He thought he would reach there and study the feasibility of trading materials like gold, spices, silk etc. Various sources like experiences of earlier travelers, classical and religious sources, and development of new technologies had encouraged him that it was a good prospect of trade in the East. Besides, the new maritime trade routes that promoted commercial link to Africa and the Atlantic islands added to his enthusiasm. About this, Childs writes as: "Europe already had a wealth of information about the east from classical sources and later travelers . . . [like] Marco Polo, John de Mandeville etc. . . . Their experiences continued to encourage the European desire to trade directly with the east . . . these provided the setting for Columbus's early career" (755). In such a context, Columbus was committed to explore the East in quest of gold.

Columbus received sponsorship for exploration from the Spanish monarchs. Along with the license, they encouraged him with an offer of the one tenth of the profits

that he would make on his exploration. He would also be offered the administrative and noble titles. Further, his descendents would be benefitted from these rewards. In *The Journal*, Columbus writes about the rewards as: “your Highnesses . . . ennobled me, so that henceforward I should be called Don, and should be Chief Admiral of the Ocean Sea, perpetual Viceroy and Governor of all the islands and continents that . . . I might discover and gain, . . . and that my eldest son should succeed, and so on from generation to generation”(17). Obviously, this was the commercial attraction for Columbus to commence his exploration. The profits he would gain would benefit himself, his descendents and the whole nation.

This commercial motive was inseparably linked to the religious one. In his times, it was believed that the economic prosperity was essential for the theological salvation. The Christians believed that they had to launch a crusade to retrieve the land of Jerusalem from the hands of the Muslim infidels and teach the Christian gospels to all the pagans of the world so as to prepare for the second coming of Christ. For this, gold was the first requirement. Otherwise, they could not collect weapons to fight the infidels on the one hand. And on the other, they would not be able to construct the golden Holy Temple. Explorers like Columbus wanted to collect gold to initiate the crusade. Roger A Johnson elaborates this as, “the conversion of all peoples to Christianity and the re-conquest of Jerusalem are necessary preconditions for the “Second Coming” when Christ will return before the “End of Days.” Columbus felt strongly the imminence of this event; he also came to feel that he had a providential role to play in the drama” (22). Similarly, Pauline Moffitt Watts also points out the same idea. He writes that Columbus “came to believe that he was predestined to fulfill a number of prophecies in preparation for the coming of

the Antichrist and the end of the world. According to his calculations, these events were not far off” (74). This indicates, Columbus wanted to collect a lot of gold for his nation so that she could prepare the background for the coming of Christ.

Columbus believed, as his name 'Christopherens' (which means 'Christ-bearer') itself suggests, that he was predestined to serve for the second coming of Christ. In his documents, he always signed under this name. About this, Watts notes, “This second self-image is epitomized in the signature that Columbus adopted: Christoferens. It is an awkward latinization of his given name and means “Christ-bearer” (74). Columbus strongly believed that it was his responsibility towards God to make preparations for His second coming in the earth.

To perform his responsibility, Columbus wanted to find the routes to the East. If so, he would be able to extend trade opportunity so that a lot of gold would be accumulated for the purpose of regaining Jerusalem and making the Holy Temple there. Also, he would be able to civilize the savages with the teachings of Christianity and convert them into Christianity. About this, Roger A Johnson writes:

He believed God had assigned to him the unfinished business of salvation history. . . . The first of these tasks was the discovery of a sea route to the Indies necessary for the proclamation of the Gospel and conversion of the heathen there. The second was the acquisition of sufficient gold from the Indies to fund a Final Crusade for the liberation of Jerusalem. (21)

Of course, Columbus was obsessed with the acquisition of gold for both material and spiritual fulfillments. He was convinced that the acquisition of gold would fulfill his personal as well as national desire. After he acquired it, he and his descendents would

enjoy the material property immediately. Also, his funding nation, Spain, would be able to use the gold to fight the Muslims to regain Jerusalem and make the Holy Temple there. During that time, there was a competition among the European monarchs to be the leader of the crusade to fight the infidels in Jerusalem. But, after the success in Granada, the Spanish monarchs were at the top list of expectation. Even the Pope was hopeful of them. After all, Columbus thought he would attain spiritual satisfaction after he sincerely served to God for His second coming.

Columbus believed, through various earlier sources like religious books, classical works, travel writings, medieval maps etc, that the mythic land of gold was in the Indies. In his days, it was a common belief that the lost mines of Biblical King Solomon were on the edge of Asia across Cathay of Mughal king of China. Delno C West writes about their location as: “Medieval maps frequently showed . . . the gold and silver islands, . . . travelers such as Polo and Mandeville confirmed the existence of such places on the edge of Asia. The greatest prize of all, however, was Ophir, . . . the lost gold mines of King Solomon” (533). Being influenced from such sources, Columbus set out in search of those sites of gold mines. He became deeply obsessed with acquiring gold from there.

With this obsession of getting wealth, Columbus sets out on his voyage. So, this obsession pushes Columbus to take hold of the very first island he visits so that he can plunder mines of gold if any. Then he sets eyes on the people to see if they are wearing golden things or jewels, but does not find any, and so makes a comment: “It appears to me to be a race of people very poor in everything” (37-38). But soon, on the second island, he glimpses golden things worn by the natives. He writes, “I was attentive, and took trouble to ascertain if there was gold. I saw that some of them had a small piece

fastened in a hole they have in the nose, and by signs I was able to make out that to the south, or going from the island to the south, there was a king who had great cups full, and who possessed a great quantity” (39). The sentence 'I was attentive, and took trouble to ascertain if there was gold' reflects how obsessed he is for gold. His core aim of the voyage is to seek for gold. In the third island too, he sets his eyes for gold which he finds: “Here also found the gold they were fastened to their noses” (40). Wherever he reaches, he at once anxiously seeks for the golden jewels worn by the people.

The quest for the gold continues throughout his voyage. He exploits the natives physically for his benefits. He captures some Indians forcefully so as to teach them his language and exploit them as interpreters: “the seven that I caused to be taken, to bring home and learn our language and return” (41). He captures more people: “Five came on board and I ordered them to be detained” (75) for this purpose. He captures women as well: “I afterwards sent to a house on the western side of the river, and seized seven women, old and young, and children. I did this because the men would behave better in Spain if they had women of their own land . . . besides the women would teach our people their language” (75). These captives will be mediating between the natives and the outsiders for trade or exchange of goods and information. Also, these interpreters will lead the crew of Columbus to the newer islands for exploitation of more and more valuable materials.

Columbus exploits the natives while possessing gold with an unequal exchange system. He exchanges with his cheaper things from the docile natives. He obtains things such as cotton, gold etc for little insignificant things such as broken crockery, hawk's bells, bits of glass, pieces of earthenware etc. He mentions this as “They brought darts



and skeins of cotton to barter, which they exchanged with the sailors for bits of glass, broken crockery, and pieces of earthenware. Some of them had pieces of gold fastened in their noses, which they willingly gave for a hawk's bell and glass beads" (56). He mentions the unequal exchange again as: "All that was possessed by these people they gave at a very low price, and a great bundle of cotton was exchanged for the point of a needle or other trifle" (71). Here, it can be argued that Columbus is right to exchange things in this way because the natives are willing to do so. But in fact he is guilty because he already knows that the natives are giving their things in low price and receiving very trifle things from him. Further, sometimes, he takes things from them without exchange: "Admiral wanted to have some parrots . . . and [the Indians] gave them as many as they wanted, without asking anything for them" (109). It is obvious that Columbus understands the nature of the natives and thus begins economic exploitation in the Americas with this kind of unequal exchange system.

Along with the unequal exchange system, Columbus attracts the natives to admire and desire for European things. He begins to teach them to mimic the European culture so that they would readily offer their goods for no price. For example, he offers clothes to a woman and asks her to be dressed: "The Admiral caused her to be dressed, and gave her glass beads, hawks' bells, and brass ornaments; then he sent her back to the shore very courteously, according to his custom" (108).

Sometimes, he offers them the things that he himself is using. For example, he gives his amber beads and some other things to the Cacique in Hispaniola: "I saw that he was very pleased with some drapery I had over my bed, so I gave it him, with some very good amber beads I wore on my neck, some coloured shoes, and a bottle of orange-

flower water” (118). But in return, he expects a big thing like the whole island:

“However, I knew that they said that, if I wanted anything, the whole island was at my disposal” (118). Again, he gives his own shirt and gloves to the king and finds him pleased to receive: “The Lord had on a shirt and a pair of gloves, given to him by the Admiral, and he was more delighted with the gloves than with anything else” (136). It is evident that Columbus wants to encourage the natives to desire for European things and appropriate its culture, which subsequently leads to the European cultural hegemony.

In Hispaniola, Columbus becomes successful to find enough gold by taking advantages from the natives’ timidity. After he comes to know that the people there are greatly terrorized by the Caniba people of the surrounding island, he tactfully shows his friendly behavior with them. He tries to convince them that they are not bad people. He fires off his gun as a sign of warning so as to console the king and the people that the Spanish will finish off their enemy Canibas. Feeling the support of protection from Columbus, the chief offers him a lot of gold. Columbus describes this situation as:

The chief, who knew nothing about arms, as they neither have them nor use them, thought this a wonderful thing. He, however, began to talk of those of Caniba, whom they call Caribs. They come to capture the natives, . . . The Admiral said, by signs, that the Sovereigns of Castille would order the Caribs to be destroyed, and that all should be taken with their heads tied together. He ordered a lombard and a hand-gun to be fired off, and seeing the effect caused by its force and what the shots penetrated, the king was astonished. When his people heard the explosion, they all fell on the ground. They brought the Admiral a large mask, which had pieces of

gold for the eyes and ears and in other parts, and this they gave, with other trinkets of gold that the same king had put on the head and round the neck of the Admiral, and of other Christians, to whom they also gave many pieces. (137)

After this, Columbus becomes very pleased. He thinks his aim of travel is going to be fulfilled. His ship gets shipwrecked but he takes it as a positive sign from God because now he can establish a colony in that island. He will leave 39 people behind who will be exploring more surrounding islands for gold. He writes that he “received much pleasure and consolation from these things, which tempered the anxiety and sorrow he felt at the loss of the ship. He knew our Lord had caused the ship to stop here, that a settlement might be formed, . . . in truth, the disaster was really a piece of good fortune” (137). This is how the European exploitation and formation of Columbian Colony begins in the island.

Columbus's quest for the gold is not only for his personal sake but also for the sake of the country that he has got sponsorship from. So, it carries the Spanish political ideology as well which aims at becoming the first power of the Old World. Delno C West writes about this as “Columbus's call for a crusade was personal, practical, and visionary. It was rooted in contemporary Spanish political ideology, historical geographical lore, and medieval apocalypticism” (536). After acquiring a lot of gold and establishing a colony for more in Hispaniola, Columbus believes that he has set up the background to act out the crusading responsibility. He urges Spain to take up the action to regain Jerusalem and make the Holy Temple with the gold he has collected. This is in fact a political urge. Columbus believes Spain is now capacitated with a great deal of wealth to

fight against the Muslim infidels that have occupied Jerusalem. Thus, he writes about his achievements urging to the Spanish monarchs, whom he had made promise at the time of getting fund: “I urged Your Highnesses to spend all the profits of this, my enterprise, on the conquest of Jerusalem. And, Your Highnesses laughed and said that it would please you and that even without this [profit] you had that desire” (139). He urges the monarchs to allocate all the profits for the religious crusade and regaining the holy place.

But, Columbus's obsession for gold and other jewels can be judged to be leading to the exploitation and destruction of the natives from the Native American perspective. Roger A. Johnson finds the negative effects of Columbus's obsession in these words: “Columbus's obsession with gold and other forms of wealth led him to adopt policies and actions destructive of island populations: for example, their enslavement” (19). In fact, Columbus begins the Spanish imperial policy in the Americas with his obsessed mind with gold and other valuable materials.

### **Naming, Dispossession and Governing**

In the previous two sections, I discussed how the three motives—glory, gold and god—function in *The Journal* and make it a colonial discourse. In this section, I discuss how the fourth motive of governing works in this text for the same purpose.

According to the contracts or capitulations made between Columbus and the monarchs, Columbus was mandated to take hold of the newly found island and govern there as a governor: “some of the aforesaid islands and mainland in the said ocean will be discovered and conquered through your labor and industry; . . . you should be rewarded . . . Governor of them” (182). Empowered by this mandate, Columbus immediately waves and anchors the Spanish banners in the new found islands and asks the notary to record it as a sign of taking possession of them and assumes he has the right to govern there.

Besides physical possession of land, Columbus's motive of 'govern' is greatly reflected through naming and the use of language. He not only asks the notary to officially record the process of possession but also gives Spanish names and replaces the existing Indian names. He uses the familiar names/words from his language for geographical territories, the inhabitants and goods to replace the existing ones. He creates a linguistic discourse of discovery, which ultimately leads to the Spanish governance or colonialism in the Indies. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin put this fact in these words: “Colonization itself is often consequent on a voyage of 'discovery', a bringing into being of 'undiscovered' lands. The process of discovery is reinforced by the construction of maps, . . . naming or, in almost all cases, renaming spaces in a symbolic and literal act of mastery and control” (31-32). In fact, Columbus creates the discourse of discovery through which Spain subsequently establishes its knowledge and power in the Indies, in Foucault's terms.

Presuming the natives as devoid of language, religion and civilization, Columbus lays the foundations for linguistic colonialism from the very first landfall. He replaces the native name of Guanahani island with the European name San Salvador. He anchors and waves the Spanish banner of the green cross in the land as a sign of taking possession. He asks his notary to legitimize it in words. He also asks all the crew to be the witness of his victory, which he has promised to the monarchs and written in the contract before going on the voyage. He narrates the process as:

The Admiral took the royal standard, and the captains went with two banners of the green cross, which the Admiral took in all the ships as a sign, with an F and a Y and a crown over each letter, one on one side of

the cross and the other on the other . . . [he] said that they should bear faithful testimony that he, in presence of all, had taken, as he now took, possession of the said island for the King and for the Queen, his Lords making the declarations that are required, as is more largely set forth in the testimonies which were then made in writing. (37)

In this process of taking possession, Columbus is aware of the Spanish laws that were based on the Roman tradition. These laws allow him to mark his presence with royal flags and writings as the indication of taking hold of it. He waves the banners having F and Y signs with green crosses of Christianity. These signs refer to the two monarchs of Spain, Ferdinand and Isabella. The words of Patricia Seed make it clear as:

For Columbus, it was the ritual landing of the royal banner and twin flags, together with the language of his well-witnessed solemn declarations, that established the right of the crown of Castile to this territory, later known as the New World. Columbus's first step was to mark his presence on the land—the customary first element in the Roman tradition of taking possession. (21)

Actually, it is that ritualistic sense of the right that inspires Columbus to name and record the new territory to mark as the sign of possession. That enables him to reject completely the presence of the natives' names, rights and all. That is why, immediately after he sees the natives, he regards them as devoid of civilization, culture and religion. He writes, "they are naked people . . . they have no religion" (37). He at once thinks of using these humble people as "good servants", and to convert them into "Christians"

(37). It is the European gaze that allows him to characterize the native people that way even if he has not made any interaction with them either linguistically or with gestures.

Empowered by the European attitude, he controls not only the land but also the people. He commits to teach them language so that they can work for the fulfillment of the Spanish aim. He captures some people to teach Spanish in view that they will work as interpreters throughout his voyage and back in Spain. He notes: "I, our Lord being pleased, will take hence, at the time of my departure, six natives for your Highnesses, that they learn to speak" (38). He assumes they will work, in the short term, as guides and interpreters for further exploration and trade. In the long term, they will be instrumental in teaching Spanish language, culture and religion to other natives. After the capture, the natives are completely subjugated and silenced. Though, they have the knowledge of the names or identity of the locality and its people, they cannot resist while the new identity is being imposed. Their presence is ignored and identity dislocated by the colonizers—they have to appropriate the names or identity given by the colonizers who have scientifically equipped. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin write about this as: ". . . by the act of mapping since the indigenous people have no voice or even presence that can be heard in the new discourse of scientific measurement and written texts that cartography implies" (33). Actually, the discourse of cartography or map making silences the voice of the natives. They have to accept the linguistic signs drawn in the maps.

Columbus constantly carries the process of naming of territories and taking their possessions. He records the names in his log, which becomes the authentic roadmap for the future explorers. By naming them, he sets up the Spanish authority over those territories, which, after he returns to Spain, is legalized by the monarchs and the Pope.

Patricia Seed notes about it: “Immediately after Columbus's return to Spain, the monarchs sought formal legal authorization for their title from the pope” (22), which they get immediately. Seed further notes, “*Inter Caetera* [papal bull] of Pope Alexander VI in 1493 gave Spain the exclusive right to present the Gospel to the natives of the New World and guaranteed Spain's right to rule the land in order to secure the right to preach” (37). Obviously, it is Columbus's initiation of possessing the islands and its people through his writing that establishes the colonial governance in the Americas.

By naming, Columbus claims of discovering the American lands, but in fact, he causes the dispossession of their previous identity. Stephen Greenblatt states his view about the loss of identity through naming as: “Such a christening entails the cancellation of the native name—the erasure of the alien, perhaps demonic, identity—and hence a kind of making new” (83). In this sense, actually Columbus has been displacing or dislocating the earlier identity of the natives by replacing with that of discovery. Patricia Seed also finds the displacement or the erasure of identity by naming as: “The practice of naming geographical features in effect converts them from their former status to a new European one: the external body of the land remains the same, but its essence is redefined by a new name” (199). Here, Seed asserts that the practice of the Europeans' naming of geographical features has altered the essence of the land. By essence, she means the historical and cultural significance attached to the land.

Columbus never misses to name the new land or port he finds. He gives more than sixty names. For the first island he names San Salvador; for the second, “Santa Maria de la Concepcion” (42) for Rum Cay; for the third “Ferdinanda” (45) for long island, for the fourth “Isabella” (51) for Saomete and so on. The process continues till his return back to



Spain. To take a few more examples, he names “Juana” (99) for Cuba, “Espanola or Hispaniola” (105) for Aity (modern day Haity). He names harbors as well like: “At dawn we were four leagues from the harbor, which I have called Puerto de Santa Maria. We sighted a beautiful head land . . . which I called Cabo del Estrella; . . . About forty-three miles Cabo del Elefante, and about twenty-two miles East-South-East another which I have called Cabo de Cinquin” (99). He summarizes about his naming activity in his letter to Santangel as:

To the first island that I found I gave the name of San Salvador, in remembrance of His High Majesty, who hath marvellously brought all these things to pass, the Indians call it Guanaham. To the second island I gave the name of Santa-Maria de Concepcion; the third I called Fernandina; the fourth, Isabella; the fifth, Juana; and so to each one I gave a new name. (2)

Naming becomes a special tool of control for the Spanish. And the thing of interest is that all these names either replicate the Spanish names or Christian ones.

With preoccupied European colonizing mindset, Columbus begins the naming process as for granted. He does not think at all that the lands and people have their indigenous names in their own languages. Immediately after he makes first landfall, he anchors the banners rejecting the authentic presence of the natives and names the island with European name. Finding the natives helpless and docile, he proceeds more ambitiously ahead to name and take hold of newer islands. He aims at possessing all the surrounding islands like the first one. He expresses his desire as “My desire was not to pass any island without taking possession”(43). He keeps to his wish throughout the

voyage. He knows his desire can be attained without much effort if he employs the native humble people as interpreters. He thus plans to deploy interpreters as instrument for his conquest over the Americas. So, on the first encounter, he kidnaps six of them in order to teach them Spanish and impose Christianity from San Salvador: “I . . . will take . . . six natives for your Highnesses, that they may learn to speak” and “be easily Christians” (38). He captures the natives for linguistic contact as Greenblatt comments: “From the very first day in 1492, the principal means chosen by the Europeans to establish linguistic contact was kidnapping” (106). These captives support him satisfactorily, except one who escapes. They play the role of sincere mediators between him and the islanders. At times, they motivate the unwilling natives to interact with them. With their support, he gets information not only of the directions of the islands and the availability of gold and other jewels there but of the people and their cultures. But he never values their culture. He does not follow their cultures. By their support, here and there, he exchanges his cheap things with the natives' valuable ones. Ultimately, he gets satisfied because he gets successful in acquiring a lot of gold and jewels which he will import to Spain.

Undoubtedly, the captured Indians serve well as interpreters, which attract the other explorers for capturing more natives. It becomes like a routine for them to teach the natives into their language and use them as the compradors to spread European language, religion and culture. Columbus uses the local guides to gather all types of information—geographic, cultural, commercial and so on—so that he can take every advantage possible. This way he employs them as servants and assistants for further subjugation of other natives. He causes them to appropriate his language and culture and makes them instrumental in dispossessing of their own.

For control, Columbus behaves as a tactful colonizer with the people when needed. He adopts different strategies in forwarding the colonial mission of winning the heart, the wealth and the land of the natives. He often behaves politely with them but at times he becomes ruthless too. It all depends on how the natives are interacting with him. If he can possess something from them or exchange their valuable things with his cheap ones easily, he is friendly but otherwise he uses force. For example, he states, “I quarreled with these people because they would not exchange or give what was required; as I wished to see what and whose this money was; and they replied that they were not accustomed to barter” (51). He even gets ready to murder them with the developed technology of Europe. At Samana island, when the natives set attacks on his men, he commanded to stab them: “the Spaniards attacked the Indians, and gave one a stab with a knife in the buttocks, wounding another in the breast with an arrow” (161).

The naming of “America” itself is a European invention as argued by Edmundo O’Gorman “America not discovered but invented” (47). It is not the indigenous term of the native tribes. After the encroachment of the Europeans, it was coined for their benefits. Amerigo Vespucci has been credited to the invention of the term “America” and Columbus to the “discovery”.

Other terms such as the “Indians”, “Americans” “New World” “Ameriandians” etc too are European invention. Before the European intrusion, the indigenous people of various tribes had their distinct names for themselves and their localities. They had their own cultures. They were not real Indians because they were not from the real India of the East. Also, they were not from the same clans or tribes or races to be identified homogenously as 'Indians'. They were heterogeneous tribes. Nor their land was the new

land that came into existence suddenly. All these terms “America”, “Americans”, “New World”, “Indians or Ameriandians” etc were invented by the Europeans for the purpose of initiating, justifying and perpetuating their colonial mission.

Thus, in recent years, the Native Americans despise the discourse of discovery. They take it as a colonial strategy. So, they prefer “invention” or “invasion” instead of “discovery”. About this, Jose Rabasa writes: “Indian leaders have preferred the term *invasion* over *discovery*, which clearly reduces the indigenous people of the Americas to objects whose reality depends on the European gaze” (19). Rabasa observes the term discovery containing the European gaze that functions in the reification of the indigenous people of the Americas. This way, the term “discovery” is greatly questioned. It has invited various questions like: Did the European really discover the lost America? If so, when and how long were the Americas lost? Why did the Europeans attempt to discover?

In fact, America was not discovered because its geographic entity was always present there with its people living on their own style. It was not lost somewhere in the cosmos to be discovered. It was rather invented by the Europeans in order to use it as a template to inscribe their imagination that categorizes them as the civilized humans and the native others as lost in wilderness. It was invented to prove that the Europeans discovered these savage natives from the wild islands on the vast ocean and brought them into civilization by teaching them culture, religion, civilization and technologies. But actually, the natives were not brought to civilization rather to domination. It basically satisfied the colonial longing of the Europeans.

So, the discourse of discovery is a prime example of European colonial discourse. It misrepresents the people of the Americas and dispossesses or dislocates them from

their real identity in their own land by refashioning them in European style. It functions as a mark that traces the emergence of the European identity and erases that of the Americans. In this respect, *The Journal* associated to the discourse of discovery, has thus set the framework of colonial discourse about the Indians and the empire. Asselin Charles has rightly explained this fact in the following words:

Columbus carried with him certain schemes of representation of the world, a mindset, a certain way of understanding both physical and human realities. . . . The world found by Columbus would be forced into the emerging paradigm in a discourse that was partly religious and partly economic, incorporating into its lexicon the myths, obsessions, dreams, and nightmares of Europe. (137)

Charles points out that Columbus brought with him Europeans nightmares, dreams, myths etc into the new found world and represented it accordingly. Hence, the discourse of his discovery suits to the mindset that he carried with him into the newly found world.

To sum up, naming and use of the linguistic discourse played a significant role for the Spanish colonizers in conquering the Americas, in refashioning the natives in their culture, in establishing their authority and in justifying their conquest to other Europeans.

## **Chapter V: Conclusion**

### **Columbus Misrepresents the Americas in *The Journal***

Christopher Columbus penetrated the islands of the Indies in the year 1492 (which is commonly known as the year of American discovery in the European and white historiography) and opened up the route to the mainland Americas. This penetration introduced immediate changes in the history of Europe and America, and gradually influenced the whole world. It contributed in bringing a transition from the Middle Age to the Modern Age in the history of mankind. This study attempted to analyze the effect of the penetration through *The Journal of Christopher Columbus* that is associated to the very year 1492. The study has finally come to the conclusion that Columbus has misrepresented the Americas and the natives in this text. He has put the Europeans and the natives in binary oppositions in which the Europeans have been mis/represented themselves as senior, rational, civilized, educated, masculine, god-chosen etc whereas the natives as junior, savage, feminine, cowardice, immoral etc. By such misrepresentation, Columbus commences European colonization by opening up the door for mercantile plunder, religious expansion and political authority in the Americas. Hence, his text is an originary colonial text. Finding this text as colonial discourse, the study also attempted to situate pre-colonial texts like this into the corpus of the postcolonial theory.

Christopher Columbus, an Italian born traveler, set out to the exploration of the Indies on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October, 1492 after acquiring sponsorship from the Spanish monarchs—king Ferdinand and queen Isabella. His main aims were to find out the western route to the East for trade purpose, and to conquer and control the newly found islands. He had read and heard a lot about the East from various sources like Marco Polo,

John Mandeville, religious and classical books etc, and hence, was interested and committed as well to reach to the East like China, Japan and India. There, he would first visit Chinese emperor Kublai Khan, then move still further to Japan and India. He would study the feasibility of gold, of conquering islands and converting the heathens living in those islands.

He made necessary preparation in the Canary Islands and then set out on his adventurous westward voyage on the sea. The day after he left the Canary Islands, Columbus started to record his observations and experiences in a diary, which later came out in the form of *The Journal of Christopher Columbus* (*The Journal* in short form). The journal was meant to be a proof to his sponsors—the Spanish monarchs. He intended to convince them through this document that he was carrying out his activities as per the contracts made with them. Also, he intended to expose them about his achievements so that he would receive everything mentioned in the contracts. He had made contracts with them before he had set out. According to the contracts, known as “Capitulations”, he would get one tenth of the profits he would make on his exploration, and also he would be rewarded with noble titles like the Admiral, Viceroy and Governor of the new found islands. So, he maintained the diary so as to convince those monarchs.

But, this very personal document turned out to be a world changing one. It caused to change the history of the human beings. It contributed in bringing modernity and renaissance in Europe. It also worked as an originary colonial discourse to initiate European colonialism in the Americas through misrepresentation. It misrepresented the Europeans and the Americans as per the benefits of the Europeans. It created binary oppositions between the Europeans and the Americans in which the Europeans were

mis/represented as rational, civilized, masculine, educated, god-chosen etc whereas the Americans as irrational savages, cannibals, feminine, immoral etc.

*The Journal* became a colonial document because it functioned as per the European motives of the time. During the time of Columbus, Europeans were mainly obsessed with four motives—glory, god, gold and govern. They felt glory at the achievements in science, technology, astronomy, astrology, artillery, printing, etc. Through these achievements, they were slowly turning away from the Church and concentrating on their own efforts for success. They were competing with each other for greater success and glory.

The other motive of gold was very crucial for them because it was not only needed to achieve material success but also for spiritual one. Materially, gold was essential for the purpose of travel, or for more progress in science and technology or for war. Spiritually, it was needed to succeed in the final crusade against the infidels and reconstruct the golden Holy Temple in Jerusalem. The victory in the first crusade of 1095-98 had inspired them for another decisive crusade. The host nation of Columbus, Spain, was yet more inspired than the other European nations by the victory against the Moors in Granada. The gold motive was inseparably linked to the God motive.

But all these three motives were attainable only when the fourth motive—the motive of govern—was at work. The Europeans deeply wished to take possession of the more and more lands and to establish their rule there so that they could exploit more and more useful materials such as gold from those lands.

*The Journal of Christopher Columbus* has been implicated with these four motives. In the very opening paragraph, it valorizes the glory of the Spanish monarchs as



the most powerful and truest Christians in the sense that they have defeated the Moors and expelled the Jews. It details how Columbus went from one island to another in quest of gold and how he found enough of it in Hispaniola and planned to find more in future. It also exposes that Columbus intended to use this gold in the construction of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, for which he urged the monarchs to take necessary steps.

Implicated with all these motives, *The Journal of Christopher Columbus* consequently initiates the European colonialism in the Americas. At the very first landing, Columbus takes the possession of the land by waving and anchoring the Spanish banners to the land. He defies the local name of it and renames it as San Salvador. Then, he asks his notary to record this event as a testimony to show to the monarchs. This is the ritualistic tradition that Columbus follows. Wherever he lands, he takes possession of it, renames with the European names and asks the notary for the record. He also captures some people for the purpose of his guides and interpreters. He exploits the natives by trading in an unequal exchange system. He gives broken glasses, beads and other trivial things for gold. He tries to attract them to admire and demand Europeans things. Sometimes, he tactfully gives some useful things as well and teaches them how to use so that the natives will appropriate and mimic his customs and cultures. He attempts to win the psychology of the natives for this purpose. And towards the end of his voyage, he establishes a first colony, and begins the Spanish colonization in the Americas.

The preoccupied mind of Columbus with the glory of Europe makes him stereotype that all the non-Europeans are either idolatrous or savages. Thus, at his very first encounter with the natives, known as Arawak tribe, he finds them without clothes, religion, law, language and technology. He finds them as noble savages qualified for

converting into Christians as they look docile, gentle, fair, timid and willing to learn etc. But he does not take them as his equal human beings because he thinks that they can be good servants.

Later, Columbus misrepresents the Carib people as cannibals. In Hispaniola, the locals inform him about the Carib people of the surrounding island, who have often troubled and terrorized them with their aggressive attacks. By their gestures, Columbus wrongly understands the Caribs to be man-eating cannibal tribe. He thus tries to console the naïve savages to protect from the hands of those cannibals by fighting and finishing them off. For this, he fires his gun as a signal as well. Unfortunately, after Columbus, the very word cannibal became an ethnocentric trope for the European colonizers. They mis/used it to justify their presence there in the pretention of protecting the naïve people from the Caribs. But sadly, both types of the natives got victimized by the colonizers in the long run.

To conclude, *The Journal of Christopher Columbus* misrepresents the Native Americans and the Europeans both through false stereotypes that facilitate in the European colonization there. It benefits the colonizers by enthusing them to penetrate deeper in the American land and exploit its people and resources for their mercantile benefit, religious expansion and political control. It initiates marginalization, dehumanization, demonization, decimation, deculturation and depopulation of the natives by the Europeans. In this sense, it is truly an originary colonial discourse. Thus, the postcolonial theory that studies the misrepresentation of the non-west people by the Europeans through the colonial discourse needs to remap and extend its study to the contact period around 1492, when such texts were written.

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