

Chapter I: Introduction

Amitav Ghosh's *In An Antique Land*

Amitav Ghosh's *In An Antique Land* (1992) has been noted for its quick and lively defiance of generic classification. Written as a "history in the guise of a traveler's tale" (*Representations* 125), the novel is at once a travelogue, a detective story, a romance with lost world and an anthropologist's attempt to write a dialogic ethnographic. The anthropological narrative is that of Ghosh's going to two villages in the Nile Delta in Egypt, the first time for almost a year in 1980-81 to conduct field work related to his doctoral dissertation, and briefly again in 1988 and 1990. These later visits are arguably those of a writer less invested in the formal profession of academic anthropology and more those of someone seeking to reconnect with a community of friends left behind. The book splits into two adjacent narratives. The first, the autobiographical account of Ghosh's anthropological historical 'fieldtrip' in Egypt, and the second, his discovery of the 'Bomma' the Indian and lifetime companion of a Jewish merchant, Abraham Ben Yiju who arrived in India around 1130 AD via Egypt and Aden.

In addition to being an ethnographic memoir, *In An Antique Land* is also the story of Abraham Ben Yiju, a Jewish merchant, active in the Indian trade in the twelfth century. As far as the business interests are concerned of Ben Yiju, he is known to have had a factory in the area that worked with bronze goods, and we also know that he had owned an Indian slave Bomma and married a woman slave named Ashu probably came from the Hindu Nair community by converting her into Islamic. The reconstruction of the story of Ben Yiju is based mainly on documents found in Egyptian Synagogue. As Ghosh attempts to create Bomma's tale he also interweaves his own into it. In so doing he explores the connections and ruptures between two worlds – the medieval and the

contemporary. By mingling twelfth century unknown Hindu slave's incidents and his own twentieth century ethnographical experiences in this book he distorts traditional version of writing.

Amitav Ghosh's *In An Antique Land* is an anthropological fieldwork. It is records of twelfth century Hindu slave and Jewish merchant whose records were discovered in nineteenth century behind an ancient Cairo Synagogue. The letter from Khalaf Ibn Ishaq to Ben Yiju describes that Bomma is Ben Yiju's trade agent. The Tunisian Jewish merchant resettled in Aden then spent two decades on India's Malabar Coast. While remaining in India Ben Yiju made Bomma his slave and took him in his own country. Thus, since that time Bomma remained really very elusive and finally a pretty speculative figure

Ghosh articulates the strained relationship between Egypt and India which although very different countries share the history of colonial violence and desire of modernization. Ghosh's reconstruction of Bomma's life and time intercut by accounts of his search for textual evidence which takes to him to archives (collections) in England, North Africa and United States and of his fieldwork in Egypt 1980-81, 1988-89 and 1990 just before the outbreak of Gulf-war. From his visits of different countries and different Egyptian fellaheen villages, Ghosh collects many experiences and proofs to show the changes all around him in the ten years time span. Ghosh also describes the changes that money earned outside has produced in Lataifa in the year in 1981 to 1990. He finds that his friend Nabeel's house once made of mud-walled rooms is now a large new bungalow and containing all the trappings of modernity – a television set, washing machine, and a tape recorder. Ghosh finds this dramatic change in the modern technology but the life of people is not comfortable. To earn more money and completion of modernization of his house he remained in Iraq. When the Gulf War

started, nobody heard and saw him; Nabeel had vanished into the anonymity of history (296).

Ghosh observes the postcolonial world which surrounds him in which he is implicated through the shared experience of colonization. Covering the encounters between Indian and Egyptian at different 800 years time span, he melds many genres, he poses many of the questions that have come to be associated with the postcolonial writing. According to Padmini Mongia the contributions made by postcolonial writers have challenged traditional literary forms as well. The conjunction with many techniques and features which describe postcolonial writing, formal innovation can become an important tool for subverting received knowledge. Melding of many genres within a single work allows the formal limits of each to confound and challenge the others. The result-an amalgamated text- offers a distinct form of travel writing that might best be called post colonial (78).

Ben Yiju and Bomma's story is set in the twelfth century, in a world of a flourishing trade on the Indian Ocean between Masr (Egypt) and Mangalore in South western Indian. Although Bomma only exists as a shadowy presence in a few letters to and from his master, the Tunisian, Abraham Ben Yiju. As Ghosh attempts to create Bomma's tale, he interweaves his own into it. At the same time Ghosh reveals his findings about the relatively unimportant (a historical) Hindu slave, link between two processes: the learning of one trade (fiction writing) while practicing another; and the subversive search for an anonymous unremarkable historical figure. By breaking down barriers between genres, he is not simply attacking the boundaries, or trying to destroy the power structures inherent in genre boundaries. He is seeking a more honest and accurate way of telling.

The story of second Indian (Ghosh), Ghosh is presented at several different chronological moments; the time of his fieldwork in 1980, his return to Egypt in 1988, and finally the Gulf-war in 1991. Ghosh relates the difference between the medieval and his own eight hundred years later the intertwining, Ghosh's travels across physical space and chronological time. *In An Antique Land* is coming and going home and abroad blends into each other. In 1980 Ghosh is away from home in Egypt, by 1988 he is at home there and his Egyptian friends are abroad in Iraq. As the war between Iraq and Iran intensified in the late 1980's many men had left Egypt go 'outside'. He also describes the changes caused by money.

Dipesh Chakrabarty says, the books like *In An Antique Land* goes some distance towards taking on such a task. The book offers us alternate histories and does so, in part, by challenging not only the boundaries of travel writing. In deed, Ghosh's travels across geographical space and chronological time offer a counterpoint to his travels across the borders and boundaries of disciplines. He thereby poses a postcolonial challenge to the already slippery categories of travel writing, anthropology and history. Ghosh poses a radical question about western knowledge that has emerged to the discourse of anthropology. By presenting his multidisciplinary research in a fragmentary and imaginative way, he challenges the claims to definitiveness of academic discourses. He indicates that knowledge of the other can only ever be partial, subjective and historically conditional. Grand narratives are rejected in favor of "rich confusions" (*Antique* 288).

The ethnographer translates oral accounts into a written text. The ethnographer records hours of dialogue, with members of studied community and then has to select what he/she considers to be relevant for "writing up." *In An Antique Land* grapples with related questions surrounding the role of ethnographer as translator. Ghosh frequently

discusses the process of translating words or concepts into another language. As an ethnographic participant observer in the Egyptian villages of Lataifa and Nashawy, he is annoyed by the impossibility of translating certain concepts into Arabic. Ghosh is unable to answer the question of Jabir about his own country's attitude towards circumcisions due to Arabic's linguistic nuances. Like all ethnographers, Ghosh has to negotiate each agreement the tricky task of translating oral evidence given by native informants into a written text. Early ethnographies tended to rewrite local accounts of culture from a narrative distance, so informants were perceived as a somewhat homogenized "they" who were observed and understood by the detached ethnographer. Anthropology defines itself by its fieldwork methodology. Just as the historian points out the archives analyzing documentary evidence as the historical discipline, so the anthropologist views time spent in the field as integral to any serious attempt to write about another culture.

Recently ethnographers have begun experimenting with dialogue as a more different way of representing oral evidence, so that the other is given a space to reply, argue and to question. Ghosh follows the newer dialogic mode of ethnographic textualization. He chooses to include uncomfortable or even humiliating conversations. The inclusion of the Imam's dissenting voice questioning Ghosh's ability to explain Egyptian culture when he does not even write in Arabic condemning India's death rites and religious beliefs as primitive and backward, subverts traditional ethnographic assumptions that indigenous people are illiterate and primitive. Talal Asad has been instrumental in pointing out a comparison between ethnography and the act of translation. In the essay "The Concept of Cultural Translation in British Social Anthropology", he argues that the metaphor of translation is often employed by social anthropologists to elucidate their role. He says that the role of translator and

ethnographer is to find out the actual subject matter and be conscious about the problems of describing to others. In translation period, the people whom the ethnographer is asking something to write about them but they can reply in humiliating manner which problematizes the translator.

In this way, Ghosh provides and subverts the traditional ethnographic trope of confining personal commentary to prefaces or afterwards. He chooses to omit the conventional arrival scene and his description of the Egyptian village begin with the narrator already settled, somewhat unhappy, at the house of Abu Ali. Whereas many classic ethnographies begin with an introduction describing the sense of strangeness felt by the ethnographer on arrival at the field site, and then banish personal observation from the main body of the text. Ghosh makes no mention of his arrival, though his feelings of alienation and the curiosity his presence provokes are emphasize throughout. Ghosh too sandwiches his text between a 'prologue' and 'epilogue' but it is worth noting that these are more novelistic terms than the scholarly preface, immediately indicating the text's imaginative purchase on anthropology. Ghosh offers a deliberately partial and dialogic narrative. About the book *In An Antique Land* James Clifford in his book *Route: Travel and Translating in the Late Twentieth Century* says the story delivers a sharp critique of classic quest –exoticism, anthropological orientalist for pure traditions and discrete cultural differences. Indeed Ghosh's text reveals the impossibility of finding any pure traditions or discrete differences (2).

As a parallel to the story of his research, Ghosh relates anecdotes and musings about his life in poor Egyptian village where he improves his colloquial Arabic necessary for deciphering old scripts and generally gets a better understanding of what Middle East is all about. Ghosh also provides a very readable history of the study of history, how the documents and information related to these periods were discovered.

He has been very successful in holding the reader's attention. The collection included letters from a Jewish trader who owned an Indian slave a fact both intriguing and unsettling. *In An Antique Land*, Ghosh's fascinating study which blends a historical detective story with his own experiences as a young Indian graduate student in the small Egyptian village of Lataifa, outside of the city of Alexandria.

Thus, Ghosh grapples with the problem of representing the other. He rejects any single historical or anthropological account's claim to provide an authentic and complete version of the other. His discussion of anthropology suggests that its fieldwork methodology is based on concealed relation of dominants. In place of the epistemically coercive discourse of history and anthropology, Ghosh offers a deliberately partial and dialogic narrative. He suggests that to provide a non-coercive translation of alertly, the text must be multi-faceted, imaginative and open ended.

The research is divided into four chapters: Introduction, Theoretical Tool, Textual Analysis and Conclusion. The general way to prove the application of the tool is given in introduction along with the some critic's view on the text. In the second chapter, the general introduction of the theoretical tool, New Historicism and the opinions of different theorists are included. In the third chapter, the application of the tool in the text is shown to be proved citing different statements from the text and comparing them with the tool to prove the hypothesis. In the concluding chapter, the basic finding of the research is mentioned in relation to above mentioned three chapters.

Chapter II: Theoretical Modality

New Historicism

New Historicism is a method based on parallel reading of literary and non-literary texts. It sees the literary text not as a unique phenomenon but as a kind of discourse situated within a complex of cultural discourses which both shape it and also shaped by it. It refuses to 'privilege' the literary text, it envisages and practices a mode of study in which literary and non-literary texts are given equal weight. This equal weighting is found in the definition of New Historicism offered by the American critic Luis Montrose. He defines it as a combined interest in 'the textuality of history, the historicity of the text'.

New Historicism emerged as an influential movement in the 1970s and 1980s largely in reaction to the lingering effects of New Criticism and it's a historical approach with Stephen Greenblatt's early studies in Renaissance culture. So, New Historicism is the dominant theoretical force in literary studies today. New Historicism is used as an 'umbrella' term to include members of both grouping-one belong to cultural poetics including the founder, Stephen Greenblatt is from North American project which under 'Cultural Materialism' trajectory includes the British neo-Marxist critics Raymond Williams and the other a number of British scholars Jonathan Dollimore, Alan Sinfield, Catherine Belsey etc.

During the 1980s, the dominance of deconstruction in the United States was challenged by new theory and practice of literary history. Many post-structuralists are skeptical about attempts to recover historical 'truth', the new historicists believe that Foucault's work opens the way to the new and non-oriented form of historicist study of texts. Understanding, appreciating and evaluating the literary works, in a critical way, helps to strengthen one's critical knowledge as well as enlarge other skills. Criticism in

terms of literature is an art of making judgments, i.e. estimating the qualities of literary works. It is a kind of writing on writing or a work on work. New Historicism began and developed along with the development in art and literature and it primarily examines the excellencies and deficiencies of literary works. New Historicists and their critics acknowledge the importance of literary text, but they also analyze the text with an eye of history. There is an inseparable relationship between literature and history. There is no primary and secondary characteristic between history and literature because literature is to be embedded within the history. The historical criticism being practiced in the 1980s however was not the same as the historical criticism of the 1930s and 1950s. For this M. H. Abrams in a book *A Glossary and Literary Terms* writes:

New Historicism, since the early 1980s has been the accepted name for a mode of literary study that its proponents oppose to the formalism they attribute both to the New Criticism and to the critical deconstruction that followed it. In place of dealing with the text in isolation from its historical context new historicists attend primarily to the historical and cultural conditions of its production, and also of its later critical interpretations and evaluation. (248)

New Historicism also rejects the notion of historical progress or teleology, and breaks away from the literary historiography based on the study of genres and figures. In the same way, the culture in which New Historicism situated literary texts is regarded as a textual construct. It differs from old or traditional historicism in several ways. It argues that "man" is construct of social and historical circumstances and not an autonomous agent of historical change. There is nothing essential about the actions of human beings; there is no such thing as "human nature". New Historicism refused to accept any kind of

unity or homogeneity to history or culture, viewing both as harboring network of contradictory, competing and unreconciled forces and interests.

New Historicism has also been concerned to portray itself as politicized criticism. Again borrowing some ideas from Foucault, new historicists argue that homogeneous depiction of an era or of its way of thinking incorrectly invalidate the truly disparate and often contentious activities taking place in that age. New Historicists refuse the idea of "Elizabethan world view" or "Victorian frame of mind", and have often tried to show instead how structures of power ultimately reabsorb opposition and dissent, thus giving the appearance of homogeneous or totalized society.

The new historicists argue that reliable interpretations are, for a number of reasons, difficult to produce. The first and important reason for this difficulty, new historicists believe, is the impossibility of objective analysis. Like all human beings, historians live in particular time and place, and their views of both past and present events are influenced in innumerable conscious and unconscious ways of their own culture.

Traditional history is based on belief held in the past many Anglo-European historians that so called "primitive" culture of native people are less evolved than, and therefore inferior to, the so-called "civilized" Anglo-European cultures. Another reason for the difficulty in producing reliable interpretation of the history is its complexity. For New Historicists, history cannot be understood simply as a linear progression of events.

Adopting this idea Lois Tyson in *Critical Theory Today* writes:

New historicists consider both primary and secondary sources of historical information forms of narrative. Both tell some kind of history, and therefore those stories can be analyzed using the tools of literary criticism. Indeed, we might say that in bringing to the fore ground the suppressed historical narratives of marginalized groups – such as women

people of color, the poor the working class, gay men and lesbians, prisoners, the inhabitants of mental institution and so on – new historicism has deconstructed the white, male, Anglo-European [. . .].

(284)

From the above statement it is clear that new historicism gives chance to multinarratives and also deconstructs the traditional notion of writing history. It refuses the idea of 'Elizabethan world view' or 'Victorian frame of mind.' Here the focus on the historical narratives of marginalized people have been such an important feature of new historicism that some theories have asked how new historicists can accept narratives form oppressed and marginalized peoples than they have accepted narratives form patriarchal Anglo-Americans power structure. The answer is that plurality of voices, including the equal representation of historical narratives form all groups ensure master narratives. Therefore, new historicism tries to promote the development of and gain attention for the histories of marginalized peoples.

For New Historicists, history cannot be understood simply as a linear progression of events. While events certainly have causes, new-historicists argue that those causes are usually multiple, complex and difficult to analyze. New Historicists erased the line dividing historical and literary materials; showing not only that the production of one of William Shakespeare's historical plays was both a political act and historical events. Instead of dealing history as a set of objective, fixed and stable thing, new historicists deal the text with a diversity of dissonant voice. M. H. Abrams again emphasizes:

History is not homogeneous and stable pattern of facts and events which can be used as the "background" to explain the literature of an era or which literature can be said simply to reflect or . . . determine the

particularities of a literary text. In contrast to be literary text is said by new historicists to be "embedded" in its context as an interactive component within the network of institutions, beliefs and cultural- power relations, practices and products that in their ensemble, constitute what we call history. (250)

From these lines we can say that our objectivity is shaped by the culture in which we were born. Our individual identity is not merely a product of our own individual will and desire. Foucault argues that 'ruptures' means not complete absolute change but a redistribution of the prior episteme, a reconfiguration of its elements. New Historicists argue that the importance of literary texts can be analyzed with an eye to history. Nothing is inseparable from history. There is an inseparable relationship between literature and history. They opine that we cannot know texts separate from their historical context. Texts therefore become the production of certain historical operations. Historical forces shape literary text and literary text reflects the historical forces. This helps to show how literary text and history are interrelated.

Foucault takes a historian to be 'embedded' in the social practices that a historian cannot escape the 'situatedness' of his time. From this view it is clear that history is written from the perspective of historian. The position of a historian occupies in society determines the history he writes. The ways he 'goes inside' the forms of power structures and social practices determine his description of history. He opines that historians pretend to grind the 'past' taking it as something that is resting for the axe to strike and break it. Foucault concentrates how various discourses govern a certain era but in a contradictory way where a discourse does not come to correspond with others. The definition of an age 'civilization' may not be in harmony with its practice and similarly philosophy of a certain age may not correspond with the reality of the time.

Foucault's confrontation with the traditional concept of history and his apparent neutrality in describing the deep-rooted techniques of power in historical movement is describing him as the 'historian of otherwise'. For this idea Alece McHoul and Wendy Grace in *A Foucault Primer: Discourse Power and the Subject* write:

Foucault is no historical determinist [. . .]. What are we how is not what we must necessarily be by virtue of any iron laws of history. History is as fragile as it seems, in retrospect to be fixed. But for Foucault, history is never simply in retrospect, never simply 'the past', it is also the medium in which life today is conducted. (viii)

From the above depiction of Foucault as 'no historical determinist' he becomes more difficult in his analysis of history. Foucault, at the same time, takes a person at present to be affected by 'the past' and denies that we are what 'iron laws' of history make us. It is his strategy to attack the humanistic tendency of seeking the 'culmination' of history

Foucault developed a theory of discourse in relation to power structure operating in a society. Power does not emanate only from the top of the political and socio-economic structure. According to Foucault, whose ideas have strongly influenced the development of new historicism, power circulates in all directions and to all social levels, at all times. And the vehicle by which power circulates is a never ending proliferation of exchange. He concentrates on the fundamental shifts occurring between epochs. He offers no period generalization but traces the overlapping series of discontinuous fields. Thus, history is this disconnected range of discursive practices. Each practice is a set of rules and procedures governing, writing and thinking in a particular field. For Foucault, power is never monolithic and power relations always imply multiple sites not only of power but also of resistance.

The Foucauldian notion of power that views a text as verbal formations in the form of ideological products or cultural constructs of certain historical era assists the concept of historization of the text. The text, to Foucault, never represents or reflects pre-existing entities and orders of historical situation, rather it speaks of the power structures, oppositions and hierarchies which are after all the products and propagators of power. In Foucault's view, a text speaks of 'history' but not as it is described by traditional Marxist and historicists. The text within itself buries the 'situatedness' of institutions, social practices including their workings amidst the power relations and hierarchies. Foucault takes historian to be embedded in the social practices. So, a text becomes 'a historian of otherwise' in that it presents a historical situation not as a background but as something with which it can have constant interaction. From this point, it is clear that history is also written from the perspective of the historian. Foucault's idea of counter-history gives primacy to the ideas of individual and subjectivity. Again, Alece McHoul and Wendy Grace in *A Foucault Primer: Discourse Power and the Subject* write: "Foucault thought of the human subject itself as an effect of to some extent subjection. 'Subjection' refers to particular, historically located disciplinary processes and concepts which enable us to consider ourselves as individual subjects and which constrain us from thinking otherwise" (3).

All historical analysis is unavoidably subjective. Historian must therefore reveal the ways in which they know they have been positioned by their own cultural experience, to interpret history. The position a historian occupies in society determines the history he/she writes. The way he/she goes inside the forms of power structures and social practices determines his description of history. Supporting Foucault's notion of history in terms of power, Hazard Adams in a book *Critical Theory since Plato* says, "Foucault's influence in literary theory has been strong among revisionist literary

historians known as "new historicists" who study the circulation of power through society and the literary text that are part of it" (1133).

For new historicists, there is no such thing as a presentation of facts, there is only interpretation. New historicists believe in the impossibility of objective analysis. It saw literary text not as a unique phenomenon but as a kind of discourse situated within the complex cultural discourses which both shape it and are also shaped by it. In the similar way, our subjectivity or selfhood is shaped by and shapes the culture into which we were born. For most new historicists, our individual identity is not merely of product of society. Neither it merely a product of our own individual will nor desire.

Foucault develops a theory of discourse in relation to the power structures operating in a society. He views that discourses are rooted in social institutions and that social and political power operates through discourse. According to Foucault, where ideas have strongly influenced in the development of the new historicism, power circulates in a direction, to and from all social levels, at all time. And the vehicle by which power circulates is a never ending proliferation of exchange. A discourse is a social language created by particular cultural conditions at particular time and place and it expresses a particular way of understanding human experience. The words 'discourse' and 'ideology' are roughly the same, and the two terms are often use interchangeable.

For this clarification Lois Tyson again writes:

From a new historicists perspective no discourse, by itself, can adequately explain the complex cultural dynamics of social power. For there is no monolithic (Single, unified, universal) spirit of an age, and there is no adequate totalizing explanation of history . . . This is one reason why new historicists believe that the relationship between individual identity and society is mutually constitutive: on the whole,

human beings are never merely the victims of an oppressive society, for they can find various ways to oppose authority in their personal and public lives. (281-82)

New historicists take a historical text as a discourse. Discourses, according to Foucault, are social constructs by means of which ruling class people's power maintained their control over other. A discourse is a social language created by particular cultural conditions at a particular time and place, and it expresses a particular way of understanding human experience. Discourses are produced and shaped within the social, religious, economical or materialistic base of cultural aspects. This is, in short, every discourse in form knowledge, is structurally shaped in a given society to the particular moment. New historicists therefore prove history as represented; projected or recorded in a written documents, such as legal, medical, penal documents, travel writings, anecdotes, an anthropological narrative, literary text and so on. Because the events and attitudes of the past get their being only as writing. Therefore, new historicists pay their attention so powerfully and minutely on written documents of each and every short with parallel readings of literary and non-literary texts. Adopting this view, Alece McHowl and Wendy Grace in *A Foucault Primer: Discourse, Power and the Subject* write:

According to new position, in any given historical period we can write, speak or think about a given social object or practice (madness, for example) only in certain specific ways and not others. A discourse would then be whatever constraints-but also enables-writing, speaking and thinking within such specific historical limits. And we deliberately speak of 'a discourse' in the singular: for even though Foucault very frequently uses the mass noun 'discourse' he is typically keen to point out that this is

something of a theoretician's shorthand, a way of signaling some common and general properties of discourses. (31)

Foucault rejects idealist and humanist mode of writing which traces a continuous evolution of thoughts in term of tradition or the conscious production of subject.

Against this approach, Foucault employs the term archaeology to differentiated his historical approach to attempting to identify the condition of possibility of knowledge, the determining the rules of formations of discursive rationality that operate beneath the level of intension or thematic content. He offers his arguments supporting his break with archaeology. He expands and supports the scope of genealogy. Genealogy for him is a Nietzschean effort to undermine all absolute grounds and to demonstrate the origins of things only in relation to and in context to other things. So, genealogy unlike archaeology which seeks to uncover the layers of civilization by positing in them the stability of systems of thought that stay long for an era and come to a sudden end turns towards the problem of power and practice. Genealogical approach is a critical one which analyses the incidents and gives a detailed analysis of history in general. In genealogical history individual suffering and emotions are analyzed. Unlike the traditional one genealogical history is the history of oppressed people- not of the rulers but about ruled. Genealogical history attacks the supposed coherence of the history.

According to Foucault, a historian has a three fold task. First, while confronting the 'one' reality, a historian should in favor of the use of history as a 'parody'. Second he should be against a singular continuist human identity. And thirdly, the 'investigations' should direct against truth. So, genealogy, unlike archaeology which seeks to uncover the layers of civilization by positing them in the stability of systems of thought that stay long for an era and come to sudden end, turns towards the problems of power and practice.

To understand the Foucauldian discourse of subjectivity, it is necessary to know the relationship between discourse, resistance and ideology. The term “discourse” in its general seems a unit of meaning that is coherent succession of utterances. It further refers to the use of the language in a particular way or rather a special type of language. It is a “practice” through which the world makes the sense is a loose structure of inter connected assumptions that make knowledge possible.

Foucault attributes this term “discourse” to power, a term that has proved much discussion because he may be said to have used it rather loosely. It clearly has much in common with Althusser's ideology and Gramsci's 'hegemony' because of rules by consent. Discourse is a way of classifying and ordering. Foucault maintains those specific discourses such as medicine and law serve specific interests, and that power and control of the human subject and exercised in discourse. Here language operates in the interest of the institutions of society to construct people in certain ways. It is not always power, however, but also resistance to power that is embedded in such discourse. As soon as there is power relation there is possibility of resistance.

Discourse deals with interrelationship on Foucault's opinion, for him by discourse talks about the interrelationship between truth and power. In his essay, 'Truth and Power', Foucault remarks, "How power diffuses itself in systems of authority and how effects of truths are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false. Truth, then, is itself a product of relations of power and of the systems in which it flows, and of the systems change" (1134). Here, Foucault seems to state that truth is the product of relations of power and as the system changes the truth also changes. Foucault further says that representation becomes truth as it is made by those who are in power and as it is made by those who are in power. Truth is expressed in terms of binary oppositions. Truth has direct link with power if power changes truth

also changes. For Foucault, 'truth' is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation, and operation of statement.

Truth is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produces and sustains it. When power changes truth also change.

Foucault's main interest lies in techniques which produce truth rather than power and its manifestation. To him, power is nothing more and nothing less than the multiplicity of force relations within the social body. He further says that there is equality in terms of power distributions. It is not hierarchical flowing from top to bottom and is not used vertically to dominate the other. Power, for him, is not just the ruthless domination of the weak by the stronger. This idea is similar with the idea of Nietzsche who says that power is not to be "had" of all. In *History of Sexuality* (Vol. I), Foucault writes about the nature of power:

Power is everywhere, not because it embraces everything but because it comes from everywhere [. . .] power comes from below, that is, there is no binary and all. Encompassing opposition between ruler and ruled at the root of power relations, and serving as a general matrix-no such duality extending from the top down and reaching on more and more limited groups to the very depths of the social body. (93-94)

From this above extract, it becomes clear that Foucault's main project is to turn the negative conception of power upside down. In doing this, he supports more to Nietzsche than to know more. On the other hand, Foucault sees power as a complex of forces that produces what happens in the society. For him, many different forms of power exist in our society like legal, administrative, economic, and military and so forth. For Foucault where is power, there is resistance and resistance is inseparable from power and Foucault defines it as the component of the power relations. In fact, Foucault does not

mean to say that power is evil in itself. His concept of power is related to productivity. This productive power limits an individual and subjects him to certain conditions. This subjection of an individual is viable with the help of “techniques” of truth and knowledge. But the subject can resist his position and identity that one set for him by the ideological framework of the discourse.

The 'subject' is always placed in a net like organization of power, truth and representation. Power categorizes the individuals, attaches him to his own identity and imposes the law of truth on him. It is a form of power that makes individual “subjects” due to this power; an individual has been identified or subjectified. So power attempts to subject an individual becomes successful with the help of knowledge. To subject an individual means to compel someone else to be under control or dependent and to tie a conscience or self knowledge to his own identity. Regarding the ‘subject’ in “Subject and Power” Foucault writes, "May be the target nowadays is not to discover what we are but to refuse what we are. We have to imagine and to build up what we could be to get rid of this kind of practical 'double kind' which is the simultaneous individualization and totalization of modern power structure" (336). Here, Foucault seems to be appealing to the governed that they should resist against the domination and exploitation. Further, his opinion is that a subject can possess a critical attitude of not being governed. Therefore, according to Foucault, subjects also keep “guts” to resist from a certain location in the power structure. They resist from “within” and try to alter the power relations by rising from another discourse. Because of being the components of power structure, the subject cannot get rid of the subjectivity imposed on them but only try to alter the prevailing power relation.

In Foucault's opinion, subjects are sure to fail if they attempt to create the next essentialist notion by rupturing the prevailing one. Such kind of discourse will also be

more adjustable in comparison to the previous one. In Foucault's view the claims arising from the resistance are also the products of another discourse and can never be disinterested and objective. Truth, power and knowledge are all essential in analyzing discourse. Discourse has been affected through those elements. Foucault sees truth as being something for more worldly and more negative. In his book *Discipline and Punish*, he writes:

. . . truth is produced these by virtue of multiple constraints. Each society has its regime of truth, its general politics of truth: that is the types of discourse it harbours and causes to function as true; the mechanism and instances which enable one to distinguish true from false statements, the way in which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures which are valorized for obtaining truth. (46)

In Foucauldian opinion, truth is something which societies have to work to produce. It is produced by multiple constraints. So, it can be said that discourses do not exist in a vacuum but are in constraints-conflict with other discourses and other social practices which inform them other a question of truth and authority. In this book he talks about the power relation and oppression. Here, his focus was on how discourse formed the power and how this power was practiced on subjects. He also gives an account, on how the prison became the form of punishment. Foucault also mentions about the notion of power being systematized, refined and fully exercised over the years by the authority. By using minute control of activity and with repetitive exercise now science of discipline was established

Foucauldian analysis of power is that it disperses throughout social relations. Power produces possible forms of behavior as well as restricting behaviors. The role of power is of great importance in discussion of discourse. For discourses are produced as

the dominant and marginal respectively which are supported by social institutions, state and which are not supported. Thus, power is not always repressive but productive as well. According to Foucault, where there is power there is resistance. Power is never monolithic. Regarding resistance Foucault, in his *The History of Sexuality* (Vol I), remarks:

Resistance [. . .] can only exist in the strategic field of power relations. But this doesn't mean that they are only a reason or rebound, forming with respect to the basic domination on underside that is in the end always passive, doomed to perpetual defeat [. . .] it is doubtless the strategic codification of these points of resistance that makes a revolution possible, somewhat similar to the way in which the state relies on the institutional integration of power relationships. (95-6)

Here, Foucault rejects all modern theories that we see power to be anchored in macro structure or ruling classes and to be repressive in nature. He further develops new post-modern perspectives that interpret power as dispersed, indeterminate, subject-less and productive that constitutes individual's identity. Foucault opposes the history which saw itself as tracing the development to culmination, implicitly outside time based on the behalf of an eternal truth, a stand point from which all can be measured. Truth and power are interwoven but it is linguistic discourse that originates the truth and the truth produces the power and it is knowledge that brings the better discourse and effective power produced through the better knowledge. So from this concept we can say knowledge and discourse are closely inter-related. Discourse is produced within real world of power struggle.

Power, for Foucault, operates not through physical forces or representation by law, but through the hegemony of norms and political technologies. Power is rational

that is exercised from innumerate points and indeterminate in character. Power is never something acquired, seized or shared. There is no source or center of power to neither contest, nor are there any subjects holding it. Power is purely structural activity for which subjects are antonyms by products. He conceives power as purely structural activity for which subjects are antonyms by products. He conceives power as purely fragmentary and indeterminate. His subjectivity is nothing but a construct of domination.

For Foucault, the term 'discourse' refers to not the language or social interaction but to relatively well-bounded areas of social knowledge. He views every historical event and every action as an exercise of power. In his concept of power, discourse and truth are closely interwoven. Thus, for Foucault, a discourse is a strongly bounded area of a social knowledge. To him discourse is inseparable from power because it is the governing and ordering medium of every institution. Focusing this concept, in his *The History of Sexuality* (Vol. I), Foucault points out:

[. . .] discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than silences one. We must make allowances for the complex and unstable process whereby discourses can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produce power; it reinforces it, but also undermines it and exposes it, renders it, fragile and makes it possible to thwart it. (100-101)

Here, Foucault seems to be arguing that discourse is both the means of oppressing and the means of resistance. To Foucault, there are multiple discourses rather than a discourse. This notion sees such discourse contradict each other and as a result, there is

no harmony and oneness in the society. It happens because every discourse controls of power which is produces out of one work of representation and truth.

For Foucault, subjectivity is nothing but a construct of domination. Discourse operates to form an identity of any individual in relation of truth, power and representation. Regarding discourse, Orientation function as a hegemonic force in relation of ideology. The “term” ideology means the domination of powerful one over powerless. This concept can be seen over the orientation. And orientation function under Foucauldian discourse in relation of ideology. Thus, the subjectivity has been formed out of the fusion of these three concepts.

According to Foucault, truth is outside power. It is rather a thing of this world which is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraints in a society. So each society has its own regime of truth. Power diffuses itself in the system of authority and the effects of truth are produced within discourses. But the discourses themselves are neither true nor false. Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. There is a battle “for truth” or at least “about truth” - it being understood once again. Adopting this idea in *The Foucault Reader* Paul Rabinow writes:

“Truth” is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements. “Truth” is linked in circular relations with systems of power which produces and sustains it, and to effects, of power which it induces and which extends it. A “regime” of truth. (74)

According to Foucault, truth is outside power or lacking in power it is rather a thing of this world which is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraints in a society. So each society has its own regime of truth.

The tendency of new historicism to view history as a social science and the social sciences as historical became very radical in its textualization of history and historization of text. The age-old demarcation between history and fiction was now blurred and this merging of historical actuality and fiction parodied the search for 'Objective Truth' in the history. Like a work of art, history, became something like a negotiated product of a private creator and the public practices of a given society. Foucault refuses to see history as an evolutionary process a conscious development toward 'the present'. While analyzing a text with reference to all historical forces, it is not possible to have a single and definite meaning. The new historical thinkers, therefore, are unlikely to suggest that a literary text can have an easily identifiable historical context. With this parallel reading, then, we can say fictionalization of text, both result in indeterminacy and various truth.

Chapter III: Textual Analysis

Blending of Genres as a Postcolonial Project in *In An Antique Land*

Amitav Ghosh's *In An Antique Land* has been noted for its quick and lively defiance of generic classification. It is constructed upon a dichotomy between somewhat idyllic medieval Middle East which is reconstructed through fragments of an ancient collection, the Geniza documents, which are now stored at Cambridge. This book is readily accessible of reading as an intellectual product of the rich dialogue between contemporary poststructuralism and postcolonialism. This book is split into two adjacent narratives- the first, an autobiographical account of Ghosh's anthropological/ historical 'field trip' in Egypt as a young doctoral student and the second provides the content of his discovery of the story of Bomma, the 'Indian Slave' and lifetime companion of Abraham Ben Yiju, a Jewish merchant originally from Tunisia, who arrived in India around 1130 AD and lived nearly seventeen years. Being an Indian educated at Oxford, Ghosh gains access to Ben Yiju/Bomma documents in western libraries and museums; from these documents he blurs the structure of traditional version of writing. He establishes new structure of writing by mingling many genres in this novel.

Ghosh's *In An Antique Land* is an unusually constructed book that deals with the themes of historical and cultural displacement, alienation and the complexities of imagining another person's view of reality. The book is based on the investigative work Amitav Ghosh conducted during his studies at Oxford University in the course of which he lived in Northern Egypt and found out the history of Abraham Ben Yiju, a mid-twelfth century trader, and his slave Bomma to whom a few letters from the time refer. He shows the value of those letters which were written to Yiju. Among those letters, the first one was written by Khalaf ibn Ishaq in 1148 from Aden to Ben

Yiju in Mangalore in south western India. 1148 was the same year when a large crusader army had assembled outside Damascus, which raised the political tensions. This letter brought to scholarly attention in 1942, when E. Strauss wrote about and finally came out into printed form. Ghosh wrote about such hidden incidents and showed the importance of these documents. To bring out such unknown matter for accessible of every person, Ghosh mingled both history and fiction in the book.

The book is not recognizable as a novel, nor it is simply an historical investigation: it is a new genre which blends an anthropological record with a travelogue, a diary and perhaps some imagine sections. Two main narratives interwoven here are anthropology and history. The anthropological narrative is that of Ghosh's going to two villages in the Nile Delta in Egypt, the first time almost a year in 1980/81 to conduct field work related to his doctoral dissertation and then again briefly in 1988 and 1990. From an ethnographic memoir, *In An Antique Land* is also the story of Abraham Ben Yiju, a Jewish merchant active in Indian trade in the twelfth century. He is the man originally from Ifriqiya who went as a trader on Mangalore on the Malabar Coast before 1132 AD and lived there nearly two decades. He owned a female slave Ashu whom he married and had two children to her.

Like most immigrants, Ghosh felt alienated when he arrived in Britain for his study, but that was nothing compared to the alienation that besets him in the Egyptian village of Nashawy. In Nashawy, Abu-'Ali offers him some money in which Ghosh is suspicious of the motivation. He feels himself outside and sees himself shrinking, dwindling away and this certainly rings to for anyone who is travelling in another country and has to negotiate another language and the set of customs: it can be infantilizing. The following statement may explain it further:

I stared at the wallet, mesmerized, wondering whether custom demanded that I touch it or make some other symbolic gesture of acceptance or obeisance, like falling at his feet. I saw myself shrinking, dwindling away into one of those tiny, terrified foreigners whom pharaohs hold up by their hair in New Kingdom bas-reliefs. (17)

From the above citation, we know that Abu-‘Ali wants to convince Ghosh by offering some help but Ghosh is suspicious about his intention. Actually Abu-‘Ali wants to tempt him by showing kindness but in actuality his intention is another. Abu-‘Ali thinks Ghosh is foreigner and he is ignorant and new for many things of Egypt. So, it is a good time for Abu-‘Ali to motivate Ghosh according to his own will. Being anthropologist researcher, Ghosh is conscious about saying and behavior of the foreign country’s people and community. Ghosh thinks that the acceptance of Abu-‘Ali’s saying is to fall on his feet which are the symbol of domination. Ghosh imagines himself from outside and sees himself declining away which is true for anyone who is outside and travelling in another country.

The anthropological narrative is based on Ghosh's own fieldwork. By finding Geniza documents, especially religious nature almost all written in Hebrew script, which came to be considered holy in itself. The history of the discovery of the old documents – the Cairo Geniza and the reconstruction of the story of Ben Yiju is based mainly on documents found in Synagogue Geniza. The book grapples with related questions surrounding the role of the ethnographer as translator. Ghosh frequently discusses the process of translating words or concepts into another language. As an ethnographic participant- observer in the Egyptian villages of Lataifa and Nashawy, he is irked by the impossibility of translating certain concepts into Arabic. Ghosh is interrogated by teenaged Jabir about his country's attitudes towards

‘circumcision’, and he is unable to explain himself adequately due to Arabic linguistic nuances. For this Ghosh further writes:

‘It is not important, he said grinning, elliptical. It is good to put a distance between your thoughts and things like that. But tell me this – of course you have circumcision where you come from, just like we do? Isn't that so, mush kida?’

I had long been dreading this line of questioning, knowing exactly where it would lead . . . ‘there are people in your country who are not circumcised?’ (44)

In Jabir's view Indian people are not circumcised. They are unable to distinguish what is good and what is wrong. They are superstitious and cannot define old tradition so they follow them strictly. Jabir also criticizes Indian death rituals and cow worshipping by thinking the Indians uncivilized. Indian people including Ghosh are incapable to change the rituals. Jabir thinks that Egyptians are superior and do many modern things. Egyptian people leave their old tradition because they are modernized but Indians are uncivilized and follow traditional ritual. In Egypt, Ghosh becomes powerless because of linguistic nuances to prove his saying about Hindu rituals so he cannot give proof to the queries of Jabir.

Ghosh also finds that there is a kind of caste system in this regard: based upon Mustapha’s comments, at any rate, the poor are less interested in blending religion and politics than are the bourgeois Muslims. Ghosh also finds that hierarchial caste system in the Egyptian community and seems to align himself with the lower caste. Being Hindu, Ghosh finds his low position in Egyptian community. As a non-Muslim, he becomes increasingly aware of and uncomfortable about the ‘exclusion’, he feels this in the case during Ramadan when he is not called upon to fast as are the others

around him. He realizes that Muslims all over the world are undergoing the same ritual, and he is struck by the attraction of that global community. Many Egyptians want him to convert but he remains unchanged. Ghosh is not impressed by foreign culture and tradition.

Ghosh labours hard to show 'dialogic' relation between past and present that is ambiguous with contemporary cultural systems. The dialogic structure is inscribed in the complex temporality of Ghosh's text, which cuts insistently between past and present. Three episodes stand out as exemplifying this dialogic or allegorical mode. They are Ghosh's account of the Cairo Geniza, his encounter with a village Imam and his final visit to an American research library on the eve of the Gulf War.

The Geniza was the archive of the Synagogue and was a storehouse where writings containing the names of God could be kept to prevent their dissemination. In his description of the Synagogue, he deploys a post-modern idiom that playfully intercuts any suggestions of presence or recoverable origins. Much of Ghosh's narrative is built upon the careful piecing together- over a ten year period- of details in manuscripts. From this process, the unknown slave Bomma gains a name, an occupation, travels and even emotions. The preservation of the documents themselves makes a compelling story of Indian slave. Most of the documents that interest Ghosh come from the Geniza of the Synagogue of Ben Ezra outside Cairo, in Fustat. More than eight hundred years writing which were practiced among Jewish groups, invocation about God were deposited in Synagogue. About this Padmini Mongia writes:

The story of the dispersment of the documents from the Geniza is fascinating one. In the eighteenth century, the documents began to be collected (or stolen) by Europeans who were responding to the waves

of Egyptomania that swept Europe at that time . . . By 1864, when the Suez Canal was well underway, Egypt was under British control and crucial to becoming the stepping-stone to India. At around this time, the documents of the Geniza caught the attention of the scholarly world, and the wealth of these documents was soon spread in Europe.

(Companion 80)

Before the dispersal of the Geniza materials, Fustat was a single place which nurtured these documents for eight hundred years. The dispersal of the Geniza materials during the late nineteenth century under the impact of European and particularly British 'scholarship' coincides with the age of high imperialism and orientalism. The value of these documents is spreaded from the Geniza in Fustat to all over the world. Then these documents come into scholarly attention of many writers and scholars. From the mid nineteenth century, the Geniza was visited and described by several European scholars and antiquarians.

Among many scholars, Goitein also started working with the Geniza documents. Ghosh's this pioneer research without these scholars labour and inquiry into the lives of Ben Yizu and the slave of MS H.6 would not be possible today. We can now also know the references of the individuals, such as Ben Yiju, Bomma through the Geniza documents. By researching such type of unknown documents, Ghosh opens the way to the new and non-oriented form of historical study of texts. In doing so he gives priority to many languages which is clear from the lines:

Ben Yiju's documents were mostly written in an unusual, hybrid language: one that has such an arcane sound to it that it might well be an entry in a book of Amazing Facts. It is known today as Judæo-Arabic; it was a colloquial dialect of medieval Arabic, written in the

Hebrew script . . . the conquerors soon came to supplant the other languages of the empire, including Aramaic, the language then generally in the use among the Jews of those regions. (78)

Here, Ghosh shows the importance of Geniza documents which were written in Hebrew script which was not dominant language at that time. The Geniza documents about Ben Yiju were written in a Judæo -Arabic language which was the colloquial dialect of medieval Arabic. Ghosh brings such colloquial, regional and unusual language like Aramaic in dominant position to show the value of Geniza documents. Ghosh subverts the monolithic English language's importance by giving priority of such Jews regional language. Here, Ghosh makes clear that every language has its own importance.

At the time when Ghosh had written this text, he was an ethnographer research student. He was living and working in a foreign land and among a religious and cultural group alien to him. He was also fully aware of the ideological consequences of representing that group in any written form. In the writing of this text, Ghosh closely follows the principles celebrated in modern ethnographic practice by allowing his characters a set of strong discourses juxtaposed with his own which are deliberately designed to present self-consciously by contrast. From a stylistic aspect, in this work particularly, the deliberate use of polyphony in this manner appears at times heavy-handed and awkward but the underlying effect is some what more subtle but it is what Ghosh actually achieves that is important here. Ghosh is fully aware of the ideological consequences of representing other culture and language in his text. To write this text he labours hard to follow the principles of modern ethnographic practice. He succeeds not only to write the life of village Egypt, but to allow the villagers– the plurality of full valued voices. Ghosh has also chosen examples that

include religious exchanges between Muslim and Hindu religion. By bringing some excerpts from the woman side, he gives chance to the woman's jocular and mocking mode. He subverts the traditional form of writing, giving priority to the woman's voice which is clear from the asking of queries to Ghosh when he visits to Ustaz Sabry's house and finds entrapped with the questions asked by her. For this, Ghosh writes:

Then, all of a sudden her eyes focused brightly on me, and she stretched out a thin, bony finger and tapped me on the shoulder. 'Tell me,' she said. 'Is it true what they say about you? That in your country people burn their dead?'

'Some people do,' I said. 'It depends'.

'Why do they do it?' she cried. Don't they know it's wrong? . . . You have to put a stop to it,' she called out after me as I hurried away down the lane. 'You should try to civilize your people. You should tell them to stop praying to cows and burning dead.' (99)

Ghosh left Egypt in 1981, and it was not for another seven years that he could again turn his attention with any seriousness to investigate Abraham Ben Yiju and his slave Bomma. To understand the actual incident about them and the modern Egypt, Ghosh had tried and learned some Arabic to communicate with his host, but that would not have been very helpful in his investigations. He had also spent time learning Judæo-Arabic, a colloquial dialect of medieval Arabic written in Hebrew script that Ben Yiju had used. From his research he found that the dialects spoken in Lataifa and Nashawy in the twentieth century were not remote from the sounds he was reading on Ben Yiju's pages. By breaking the traditional notion, Ghosh wants to give equal priority to past and present. For this he further writes:

To my surprise I found that he was right, that the Hebrew script was indeed much easier to decipher than cursive Arabic since the letters stood apart, each by itself. Soon enough, I made other surprising discoveries. I found that some of the usages of the dialect of Lataifa were startlingly close to those of the North African Arabic spoken by Ben Yiju; that far from being useless the dialect of Lataifa and Nashawy had given me an invaluable skill. (81)

From the above lines it is clear that the dialect which was spoken in twelfth century was no more different than the present. Ghosh discovers the importance of Hebrew script and gets some skills. Ghosh knows this value of the language by practicing the Arabic language. But sometimes he feels uneasy to speak such language which is not his own mother tongue. The difference in language spoken is very problematic for him. He searches alternatives of some of the words but he could not find any solution and he was trapped by language. Ghosh finds himself in Jameson's prison house of language in which his answer cannot but confirm to authoritative contours of the questions. It is unbelievable that the dialect spoken in Lataifa and Nashawy in the twentieth century were not remote from the sounds which were spoken in medieval past.

Ghosh works hard to find out the details in which the reader may sometime wonder why he insists on giving us such forgotten set of titles about Masr al- Qadima, Masr al-'Atiq, Mari Gargis, Fustat Masr, and Fustat. Fustat served as Egypt's capital for more than three centuries. Cairo took its place, and Fustat today is attached to the Metropolis as an immense rubbish dump. The European navies had reduced the importance of Fustat in eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. From this vantage point, an Indian in contemporary Egypt, Ghosh observes the imaginative and temporal

impoverishment of postcolonial world which surround him and in which he is implicated through the shared experience of colonization. The pre-colonial world Ghosh creates *In An Antique Land* challenges many of the assumptions we make about it; about the advent of colonialism and indeed about the postcolonial world.

Ghosh relates the difference between the medieval world and his own eight hundred years later: the intertwined histories, Indian and Egyptian, Muslim and Jewish, Hindu and Muslim had been partitioned long ago. The medieval world of trade between Egypt and India had been running smoothly and graciously when it was interrupted by the Portuguese and brought under the system military dominance. In 1498, they gained control of the Indian Ocean trade and these new rules, dominance and autonomy- altered the history of the world. Then all the Muslim traders were expelled from the city-state of Calicut. Ghosh describes the changes in power over the sea and trade that result from the arrival and intervention of the Portuguese:

Within the Western historiographical record the unarmed character of the Indian Ocean trade is often represented as a lack, or failure, one that invited the intervention of Europe, with its increasing proficiency in war. When a defeat is as complete as was that of the trading cultures of the Indian Ocean . . . in a quiet and inarticulate way, the product of a rare cultural choice- one that may have owed a great deal to the pacific customs and beliefs of the Gujarati Jains and Vantias who played such an important part in it. (236)

While in Mangalore, Ghosh finds that the medieval world of trade between Egypt and India was running smoothly but it was interrupted after the arrival and control of the Portuguese. Ghosh writes the advent of Portuguese is as a violent, meditated encounter, one which highlights the distinction between different modes of

organization. The allegiances between the Egyptians, Tunisians, Indians, and others in medieval times are revealed to have been based on relation other than power and possession, relation the European powers had no terms to understand. After the arrival of Portuguese, the remains of the civilization that had brought Ben Yiju to Mangalore were devoured by that unquenchable, demonic thirst that ever since. Before this time, India and Africa did very well with each other, living and trading peacefully, before the European colonizer intervened with violence.

It is precise that *In An Antique Land* deliberately crosses the boundaries of race, religion and culture. It provides an ideal focus for exploitation against the work of a number of theorists' and experts' writing about another race and culture. To write about another race and culture, many ethnographers omit the value of simple facts which have cultural importance. So, the text is deceptive as his writing is inevitably tempered by an ethnographic training. The book is as much about social ethnography as it is a disjunctive text, a multi-level discourse, an amalgam of fiction, history, anthropological input, manuscript fragments, auto-biographical incident and pure speculation, the blending and juxtaposition of which highlight the degree of self-reflexivity. The text is a socially and politically conscious and primarily concerned with the concept of dislocation or displacement. In this text, most of the main characters leave their birth place for social, economic or political reasons and while some return, others do not. This is clear from the conversation between Ghosh and Isma'il. For this Ghosh writes:

Why didn't Nabeel come back with you? What news of him?'

He wanted to come back. In fact he thought he would. But then he decided to stay for a few more months, make a little more money, so that they could finish building this house . . . he wanted to come back.

He's been there three years. It's more than most, and it's aged him.
 You'd see what I mean if you saw him. He looks much older. Life is
 not easy out there.' (192)

Ghosh asks with Ismail about Nabeel who has gone to Iraq but did not return to his own homeland. Ismail informs him that Nabeel also wants to return but the main cause is money, earned in foreign country especially in Iraq. Many Egyptians are tempted by new technology and modern household goods. And in Egypt there is not appropriate opportunity to earn money so many young people are compelled to go to foreign country and bear many problems given by foreigners.

Ghosh subverts the traditional ethnographic trope of conflicting personal commentary to the prefaces or afterwords. He omits the conventional arrival scene and his deception of the Egyptian villages. To do ethnographic research about Egyptian villages, he does not mention of his arrival. He sandwiches his text between a 'prologue' and an 'epilogue', but it is worth noting that these are more novelistic terms than the text's imaginative purchases on anthropology. Yet in a curious reversal of anthropological convention, the prologue is one of the most straightforwardly academic passages of Ghosh's text, loaded as it is with historical details, dates and footnotes. Only in the last two paragraphs he situates his interest in the slave in a subjective space and connects it with his experiences in modern day Egypt. The epilogue is more personal, interweaving description of exodus of Egyptian workers from Iraq at the beginning of the Gulf war with an account of the last reference to Bomma in an ancient manuscript kept in a hi-tech Philadelphia library.

In the context of analyzing the motives underlying the text, in one of the reviews of *In An Antique Land* in which Bruce King claims that *In An Antique Land* “could be seen as a better return, reader-friendly, improve version of the self-

conscious contemporary anthropological study in which the author deconstructs his expected story, puts the cards or documents on the table for critical inspection, discusses the dangers of constructing 'other'" (12). Here he provides Ghosh with sufficient connective tissue to give him the "sense of entitlement" that he needs to sanction his "right" to be in Egypt at all (8). For this motive, how this relationship works to assuage Ghosh's conscience on the matter is not as important as his recognition – and the voicing of that recognition – of the fact that as a non-national he is trespassing on the foreign territory. This double-link – in so far as the slave provide him with a "right" to research the slave's life in Egypt and that the scholarship that enable him to do so was provided by "a family of expected Indians" - mention only owns in the text and never fully explain. It exists as a partial discloser but treats as a gap for or silence; it gains stature within the book and becomes intrinsic to the meaning and therefore the final argument. For this Ghosh further writes:

I came upon Professor Goitein's book of translation in a library in Oxford in the winter of 1978. I was a student, a twenty-two years old, and I had recently won a scholarship awarded by foundation established by family of expatriate Indians . . . I was expected to do research leading towards a doctorate in social anthropology. I had never heard the Cairo Geinza before that day, but within a few months I was found in Tunisia learning Arabic. (8)

It provides the clue that Ghosh is fully aware of the difficulties of representation of – or "the danger of constructing other" and also points up a nationalist disposition discusses earlier in that he does not choose to research or write under the broad and Oriental umbrella. Ghosh makes clear that he is Indian not Egyptian in writing about Egypt, he makes obvious his understanding that he is as vulnerable to charges of

'Orientalism' as any other traveler on alien ground. However, the Saidian thesis provides that Ghosh is vulnerable to charge of 'Orientalism' on two counts: both in studying another culture and writing about it. Said's insistence on this point is negotiable:

For if it is true that true that no production of knowledge in the human science says can never ignore or disclaim its author's involvement as a human subject in his own circumstances, then it must also be true that for a European or American studying the Orient there can be no disclaiming the main circumstances of his actuality: that he comes up against the orient as a European and American first, as an individual second. And to be European or an American is by no means as inert fact. (*Orientalism* 11)

From these lines, it could be argued that Ghosh is an oriental – which in this instance, overrides his Indianness – and is after all, writing about only about another country within that sphere, I know that his words – “I knew nothing then about the slave of MS H. 6 except that he had given me right to be there, a sense of entitlement – for grounded his need for justification to be there” (8).

Throughout Ghosh's diverse and generically composite oeuvre, he attempts to find connections between seemingly unrelated subjects. His interrogation of boundaries accords with the preoccupation with hybridity, “in-between” spaces and diasporas in postcolonial debate. Although Ghosh dislikes being categorized as “postcolonial” in his writing he frequently focuses on the ways the portioned South Asian subject has been affected by, and yet can, to some extent, resist, colonialism's legacy. At the heart of Ghosh's corpus is the contention that knowledge is produced by structures of dominance, particularly the military, economic and epistemic strategies of colonialism.

His main focus is the impact that Western Paradigms of knowledge have had and continue to have in India. Ghosh is also crucially concerned with highlighting filiations and connections which go beyond the (neo) colonial relationship, such as persistence of pre-colonial trade connections between the Indian subcontinent and the Arabian Peninsula, or the existence of an Indian community in Burma which was almost entirely erased by nationalism.

By mingling fact, fiction, autobiography, history and travelogue, Ghosh maps ethnographic field work undertaken in Egyptian villages of Lataifa and Nashawy on to his subsequent research in to medieval Indian Ocean trade. In so doing he explores the connections and ruptures between two worlds – the medieval and the contemporary. As the book progresses, the two seemingly disparate strands – description of the Egyptian families and village communities with whom Ghosh resides in the early 1980s, and the narrative of his attempts to trace the "the slave of MS H. 6" – increasingly dovetail, each narrative helping to shed light on the other. Here, my findings reinforce the prevalent hypothesis Ghosh poses radical questions about western 'knowledge'. Ghosh indicates that the knowledge which we get from other is partial, subjective and historically conditioned. His multidisciplinary research in a fragmentary and imaginative way challenges the claims of definitiveness of academic discourses. In this book Ghosh challenges the within and outside intellectual discourses of anthropology that have emerged since the 1980s.

Anthropology defines itself as fieldwork methodology. Like the historian points to time spent in archives analyzing documentary evidence as the 'sin qua non' of the historian discipline, so the anthropologist views 'time spent in the field' for the attempt to write about another culture. Such as the reconstruction of 'Bomma' drives an anthropological research project that exists alongside Ghosh's representation of the

subaltern. Ethnographers have long been aware that fieldwork is subject to certain problems. For example, indigenous people may act in artificial way due to the ethnographer's presence, they may present account of their culture that they may imagine the ethnographer wishes to hear or they may resist investigation altogether refusing to answer questions and trying to evade examination. Sometimes anthropology tends to infer that one village or sub- community is representative of a whole society, when it is in fact dependent, representative only of a particular group of individuals at a specific moment. From the early 1980s to the mid 1980s groups of anthropologist began to aware and argue that field work is also complicated by its eventual presentation as a text. The people of particular group in stead of giving lucid and accurate oral testimonies, should act normally in the study period which the ethnographer still has to translate their lives through the act of writing. In such kind of writing there is not actual representation of the culture. In "The Concept of Cultural Translation in British Social Anthropology", Talal Asad has been pointing out a comparison between ethnography and the act of translation. He further argues that:

The metaphor of translation is often employed by social anthropologist to elucidate their role. He cites the following statement by Godfrey Lienhardt for its recognition of the similarities between the role of translator and ethnographer: [t]he problem of describing to others how members of a remote tribe think appear[s] largely as one of the translation of making the coherence primitive thoughts has in the languages it really lives in, as clear as possible "our own". (142)

This comment reveals many different types of translation that the ethnographer has to tackle in attempting to explain another culture. To describe another culture, it is obvious that the literal translation of the other culture from "the language it really lives in" to

"our own". Asad and John Dixon explain elsewhere this question of language is an area of concern often neglected by ethnographic theorists. They both remind us that most ethnographers have to learn another language in order to interact with the people with whom they live during the field work. They then face the difficulty of translating different language into their own, often having to explain concepts of which their language has no equivalent. Many theorists have interpreted this to be productive, benign process, in which the ethnographer's own language is altered and enriched by the encounter with foreign words and concepts. The translator hopes not only to translate the text, but hopes to translate non-native reader into native one. The optimistic views of translation as a way of reworking one's language and unsettling one's cultural assumptions have been challenged by the recent translator. Asad and Dixon work on the relationship between anthropology and translation. They similarly emphasizes unequal status of languages in the colonial or postcolonial or neocolonial world.

Linguistic issues are therefore not only one's that arise from the comparison between ethnographer and translator. As indicated above, it is also important to be aware that the ethnographer translates the oral accounts into a written text. The translation process is always embedded in existing power relation. The linguistic turn taken by various humanistic disciplines, demands a renewed focus be paid to the ethnographer/historian as well as the sites of academic and/or literary production. But now the ethnographic mode has been subjected to severe scrutiny and analysis resulting in anthropology acknowledging constructed, artificial nature of cultural accounts. The older ethnographic model, which erases the specificity of the participants/observer, has been replaced by ethnographies where acute attention is paid to the observer as well as the object of study. Recent ethnographic accounts draw self conscious attention to the

anthropologist as well as the scene of writing which are equal partners in the ethnography produced.

Ghosh claims that to write about one's surrounding is anything but natural: to even perceive on immediate environment one must somehow distance oneself from it: to describe it one must assume a certain posture, a form of address. In other words, to locate oneself through prose, one must begin with an act of this location. Thus, while in Egypt, he researches the story of the slave in the Alexandrian archives, once he has left Egypt, he writes his own story into his research. Some critics point it in two different spheres at which a clear understanding of the difference between anthropology and ethnography clarifies and exemplifies what Ghosh trying to achieve with this text. Stating that before the late nineteenth century, there was a definitive division between the ethnographer as a "describer-translator of custom" and "the anthropologist as builder of general theories about humanity." Clifford updates – and reinflects–this distinction by claiming that a clear sense of tension between ethnography and anthropology is important in correctly perceiving the recent and temporary conflation of the projects. He further says about it:

Modern ethnography appears in several forms traditional and innovative. As an academic practice it can't be separated from anthropology. Seen more generally, it is simply diverse ways of thinking and writing about culture from a standpoint of participate observation . . . constantly moving between cultures does not like its western alter ego 'anthropology,' aspire to survey the full range of human diversity or development. It is perpetually displaced both regionally focused broadly comparative, a form both of dwelling and of travel in a world where the two experiences are less and distinctive. (250)

Thus, by situating himself in rural Egypt and his co-protagonist in India, with this text Ghosh aptly fulfills Clifford's ethnographic criteria of 'constantly moving between cultures' of 'perpetual' displacement where the acts of 'dwelling' and 'travel' merge to become.

Like all ethnographers, Ghosh has to negotiate the tricky task of translating oral evidence given by native informants into a written text. Early ethnographies tended to rewrite local accounts of culture from a narrative distance, so informants were perceived as a somewhat homogenized 'they' who were observed and understood by the detached ethnographer. More recently ethnographers have begun experimenting with dialogue as a more nuanced way of representing oral evidence, so that the other is given a space to reply, argue and question. Ghosh follows this newer dialogic model of ethnographic textualization. In *An Antique Land* Ghosh chooses to include uncomfortable or even humiliating conversation, joke such as the Jabir's question about his religion and cultural practices, Imam's dissenting voice, questioning Ghosh's ability to explain Egyptian culture when he does not even write in Arabic and condemning India's death rites and religious beliefs as 'primitive' and backward, subverts the traditional ethnographic assumptions that indigenous people are illiterate and primitive.

Ghosh is self-conscious about the ambiguity of his standing amongst the villagers, acknowledging his privileged position as an anthropologist from that center of western academe, Oxford University, as well as his low status as a Hindu in Egypt. His Indian nationality provokes particularly complex and often contradictory reactions from the community in which he lives as he is at once an insider (fellow inhabitant of a Third World country) and outsider (cow worshipping, uncircumcised infidel). The Egyptians identify with Ghosh as a member of a country which as Ustaz Sabry tells his friends: has been ransacked by imperialism just like Egypt has and which is similarly trying to

alleviate poverty, a deficient agricultural infrastructure, and other colonial residue [. . .] At times he is treated with extra respect, as when Khamees begs him to ask the Imam for mediocrity arguing "[h]e'll come if you ask him – he knows you're foreigner. He'll listen to you (125).

Ghosh as a representative of India has constructed himself as educated, knowledgeable and altogether epistemologically superior to the villagers amongst whom he dwells. And note, too, the qualities described to the Indian slave who was literate in an era when literacy was uncommon and whose relationship with his Jewish master could not be said to fit the typical master/slave binary. Contrast of this, with the manner in which the village and villagers as 'other' are portrayed, held back by either lack of education or lack of money or both. In Egypt, as a non national, Ghosh conceives the 'sense of elitism' and 'right' and how this relationship works in his life. He also writes the story of Bomma in silence, partial and gap. To write about him, Ghosh is fully aware of the difficulties of representation– or 'the danger of constructing other' and also points up a nationalist disposition discussed earlier so that he does not choose to write under a broad Oriental umbrella. Ghosh makes it clear that he is an Indian, not Egyptian, and is writing about Egypt, he makes obvious his understanding that he is as vulnerable to charges of 'orientalism' as any other traveler on alien ground.

Ghosh also reveals that his findings about the relatively unimportant (a-historical) Hindu slave, and at the same time also reveals the casual demolition of the process of making history his search for Bomma yields. There is a link between two processes: the learning of one trade (writing fiction) while practicing another; and the subversive search for an anonymous unremarkable historical figure. The link is that Ghosh's writing shows subsidiary pleasures. By breaking down barriers between genres, Ghosh is not simply attacking the boundaries, or trying to destroy the power

structures inherent in genre boundaries. By offering a glimpse into the cosmopolitan, human circuit of relations prevalent in medieval India up to the present when European dominance via colonialism enters its history, Ghosh poses a postcolonial challenge via the pre-colonial. Thus, the research shows an alternate picture of history that is provoking and heartbreaking and also offers a picture of the world and of relations between peoples which might have unfolded and introduced colonialism not occurred. Ghosh's postcolonial world questions the inevitability of European colonialism and imperialism. The world which Ghosh creates reveals the possibility of futures and histories other than the one we have come to regard as inevitable.

Chapter IV

Conclusion

Ghosh, in the novel, writes about his experiences during his doctoral dissertation in Social Anthropology. This research shows the tense relationship between Egypt and India which although very different countries, share a history of colonial violence and a desire for modernization. Ghosh adds more details about the networks of exchange which have circulated between Egypt and India, describing the money, goods, and people which were traded between India and Egypt in the Middle Ages as in the twentieth century. Ghosh also shows less visible exchanges which have linked between Egypt and India throughout history such as: etymology, culture and religion. He reminds us that historiography is often limited to the history of literate- those individuals who could write their way in the journals, letters and ledgers. The slave Bomma would die in obscurity if one of Ben Yiju's friends would not mention him in the letter.

Ghosh weaves the realities encountered in Egyptian villages and his documentary record in England, North Africa, Princeton and Philadelphia. Ghosh provides a dynamic and self consciously problematized space in which many kinds of voices are represented equally. His main focus is the impact of western paradigms of knowledge and its continuation in India and Egypt. Ghosh tries to write some ancient analogue to his own sometimes bewildering experiences to subvert the traditional version of writing and representation of hidden and minor groups.

To map ethnographic fieldwork undertaken in the Egyptian villages of Lataifa and Nashawy onto his regular research in a fragmentary and imaginative way, Ghosh challenges the claims of western definitiveness of academic discourse. Ghosh indicates that knowledge of the 'other' can only ever be partial, subjective and historically

conditioned. Ghosh rejects grand narratives and gives chance to the minorities, suppressed, women as well as hidden regional people's voices in his writing. He opens the new way of literary writing tendency. If Ghosh has not given interest in this new form of writing, the documents which were stored in the Geniza would not come in the accessible position to the people.

Ghosh discovers the value of the Geniza documents and bears many problems to write about them during his research period. Ghosh becomes conscious to translate actual subject matter in his writing. He does not hesitate to describe his own humiliating situation during the research period. He clearly puts these matters in his writing such as circumcision, Indian death ritual and cow worshipping. Indeed, Ghosh's text reveals the impossibility of finding any pure traditions or discrete differences when he first goes to Egypt for his field work; he expects to find in that ancient land, a settled and rooted people. He rejects any single historical or anthropological account's claim to provide an authentic and complete version of the other. His discussion of anthropology suggests that its fieldwork methodology is based on concealed relation of dominance. In place of the epistemically coercive discourses of history and anthropology, Ghosh offers partial and dialogic narrative. He suggests that to provide a non-coercive translation of alterity, the text should be multi-faceted, imaginative and open-ended.

Ghosh attempts to write missing narrative struggling with theoretical questions regarding historiography. Now we have no simple definitions of postcolonial literature, many critics would agree that postcolonial literature has made a tremendous impact both within and outside the academy- in the last two decade. The contributions made by postcolonial writers have challenged the traditional literary forms and the structures defining inherited literary genres. Ghosh as a postcolonial writer seamlessly weaves together history and fiction and forces us to rethink traditional disciplinary forms from a

postcolonial perspective. In this book, he melds ethnography, anthropology, fiction, history, twelfth century detective story of Indian slave Bomma and his own experiences of twentieth century. Anthropology and field work do not allow him to include the sweeping historical research of the ancient analogue of Bomma to his own sometimes bewildering experiences but he includes and writes such things. Ghosh's melding of these genres within a single work in a fragmentary and imaginative way challenges the boundaries and borders of disciplines of traditional writing. Thus, this book offers a distinct form of travel, anthropology, ethnography and history writing in postcolonial era.

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