

Chapter One

Introduction

Travel Writing as a Genre

Travel writing is a fine art. It is an accepted literary genre that is read. Writers who are gifted with an ability to understand what they see and can breathe life into a place when they narrate their travel experiences, gives rise to travel literature or genre. Travel is prosperity and leisure pursuit, which is a result of many things: history, heritage, culture, natural beauty and a quest to know what is unknown and meet wonderful people.

Travel writing as a cultural practice is engaging the attention of scholars and commentators in a wide range of disciplines and its study is becoming recognized as an important academic field. In part, this is recognition of the existence of a broad range of texts which can be examined and interpreted in terms of their social and cultural significance. It is also related to the fact that in recent years, the writings about travel have become ever more sophisticated - reflecting the diversity and sophistication of modern travelers and tourists. People are encouraged to seek out new experiences in different countries and cultures through what they have read and their experiences feed back into written commentaries on travel and tourism. So popular is travel writing as a genre that major bookshops have entire sections devoted to the area and there are even bookshops which stock nothing but books of this type. Mark Grover points out that the success of Mungo Park's travel narrative paved the way for travel writing to be considered as a genre as:

The volume became an immediate success that went through several editions and printings in the next 200 years and influenced a large number of writers, including Wordsworth, Thoreau, Melville, and

Hemingway. The book owes its popularity to many factors, primarily its unusually perceptive glimpse of the common life of the African before European imperialism. Because of the way in which he traveled, Park had more contact with the ordinary life of the African than any other European traveler. This edition is well analyzed, with a lengthy introduction and voluminous footnotes that significantly add to an understanding of the original document. Import for any collection on Africa, especially those in academic libraries. (87)

Travel literature is travel writing considered to have value as literature. Travel literature typically records the people, events, sights and feelings of an author who is touring a foreign place for the pleasure of travel. An individual work is sometimes called a travelogue. To be called literature the work must have a coherent narrative, or insights and value, beyond a mere logging of dates and events, such as diary or ship's log. Literature that recounts adventure, exploration and conquest is often grouped under travel literature, but it also has its own genre. These genres often overlap with no definite boundaries.

One of the earliest known records of taking pleasure in travel, of traveling for the sake of travel and writing about it, is Petrarch's (1304–1374) ascent of Mount Ventoux in 1336. He states that he went to the mountaintop for the pleasure of seeing the top of the famous height. His companions who stayed at the bottom he called *frigida incuriositas* ("a cold lack of curiosity"). He then wrote about his climb, making allegorical comparisons between climbing the mountain and his own moral progress in life. Other later examples of travel literature include accounts of the Grand Tour. Aristocrats, clergy, and others with money and leisure time travelled Europe to learn about the art and architecture of its past. In the 18th century, travel literature was

commonly known as the book of travels, which mainly consisted of maritime diaries. In 18th century England, almost every famous writer worked in the travel literature form. The diaries of Captain James Cook were the equivalent of today's best sellers.

Talking about travel writing and humanistic culture, Joan-Pau Rubiés says:

An influential historiographical tradition has opposed the accounts of extra-European worlds produced by sixteenth-century travel writers to the concerns of humanists and other European men of learning, even detecting a 'blunted impact' up until the eighteenth century, when the figure of the philosophical traveller was proclaimed by Rousseau and others. It is my argument that this approach is misleading and that we need to take account of the full influence of travel writing upon humanistic culture in order to understand how the Renaissance eventually led to the Enlightenment. A first step consists in analysing the collective impact of accounts of America, Africa and Asia, rather than opposing the 'New World' to other areas. (135)

The texts of travel writing have always played and at present play a great role in the current socio-political life of the world. Travel writing is a literary form that expresses the self-definition of the author. He uses his cultural experience to get a taste of other cultures. Travel Writing is a literary form comprising of-aesthetic, political and scientific. It compares the society at home and abroad and observes the nature of many processes taking place in the society. Travel Writing serves as raw material out of which descriptions of indigenous peoples, developments, traditions and events emerge. All objects in it should not only be described with truth and clarity in them but should also be represented within a credible frame of relationships.

Art and science work in nexus in travel writing, combining visual and literary imagination. Modern anthropologists, historians, geographers, philologists have never ceased relying heavily on the travelers' memoirs as sources of information about peoples whose cultures were damaged or destroyed though they were regarded as an aside from scientific analysis. Recent critics of ethnographic convention, however, have challenged the division of science and storytelling. Sometimes permitting more exchange between them and at other times erasing altogether the line between the author's tale and ethnographer's evidence.

Romantic era travel writing held a very different place in the mind of the reading public. It was a form in which almost all were immersed, to a greater or lesser degree. Travel writing was also an important theme and preoccupation in the imaginative literature of the Romantic period. Writers drew extensively on travel writing, plundering the genre for storyline, settings and exotic details. The exploratory endeavor of Mungo Park was an offshoot of Britain's imperial expression that often assisted that expansion. In the veil of an explorer, people like Mungo Park went to explore different parts of the globe outside Europe. It was part of a colonial project, yet it had masqueraded itself merely as geographical or medical exploration.

There has been a great interest in historical African travel literature in recent years. The many travel literatures have provided a valuable source of information about the continent's people, plants and animals as they existed in the past. Moreover, the interpretation of these texts by anthropologists, literary scholars, natural scientists and others has brought forth important insights into the mindset of European explorers and how they presented their experiences of a land so vastly different than the temperate environs of their native countries. Travel writing has traditionally been involved in socio-political discourses. Travel books feature prominently among the

texts Said handles in *Orientalism*. Andrew Myers comments on the book *Kenya Mountain* (1929) by Eric Dutton, as an understanding of colonial discourse at a later point in the colonial period than has been commonly analyzed in studies of British colonial geographies and travel literature as:

The book is a window onto the ambivalences and contradictions within British colonial ideology in Africa in the interwar years. In particular, Dutton's struggle with hegemonic masculinity and his complex relationships with the African men on the climb are interrogated as manifestations of broader ambiguities in Britain's African empire. (25)

Mary Louise Pratt's much-quoted *Imperial Eyes* remains the most comprehensive study of travel writing's intimate connection with the ideological apparatuses of the European nation-state. Relying on the ground work laid by *Orientalism*, Pratt dwells more extensively on the imperialist underpinnings of the travel account. Significantly, one of her case studies is *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa* (1799), the most popular travel book of the nineteenth century, written by Mungo Park, a Scotsman working for the London-based Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa. Pratt's seminal work has influenced many scholars of travel literature.

As a genre, travel literature is as diverse as the cultures, places, and peoples that span the globe. Although much of the world had been extensively traveled and explored, the nineteenth-century saw the rise of the British Empire and an explosion in world travel by British citizens. Although Park traveled to Africa on his own in 1795, the expedition was not an individual or maverick understanding. It was sponsored by the African Association, an organization dedicated to acquiring knowledge of the continent, and to putting that knowledge to practical and profitable

use. It was also instrumental in the production of the published narrative. This research will be a great help in understanding how the African Association was able to mould public opinion by creating a discourse about Africa.

In 1794 Park offered his services to the African Association, then looking out for a successor to Major Daniel Houghton, who had been sent out in 1790 to discover the course of the Niger and had died in the Sahara. Supported by Sir Joseph Banks, Park was selected. Sir Joseph Banks, one of the leading men of the Association, immediately pointed out Park as one peculiarly eligible for taking the management of the expedition, and the offer being accordingly made to him, was eagerly accepted. He immediately prepared himself, therefore, for the task, being liberally supplied, according to his own statement, with the means of furnishing himself with everything he reckoned necessary, and sailed from Portsmouth on the 22nd of May, 1795, in the *Endeavor*. His instructions were, to proceed to the Niger by the nearest and most convenient route, and endeavor to trace its course, from its rise to its termination; as also to visit, if possible, all the principal towns and cities on its banks, particularly Timbuktu and Houssa, and afterwards return to Europe by the river Gambia, or any other way he thought advisable. On June 21, 1795 he reached the Gambia River and ascended the river 200 miles to a British trading station named Pisania. On December 2, accompanied by two local guides, he started for the unknown interior. He chose the route crossing the upper Senegal basin and through the semi-desert region of Kaarta. The journey was full of difficulties, and at Ludamar he was imprisoned by a Moorish chief for four months. He escaped, alone and with nothing save his horse and a pocket compass, on July 1 1796, and on the 21st of the same month reached the long-sought Niger at Segou, being the first European to do so.

Mungo Park commences his journey to ascertain the direction of Niger River up to Timbuktu. But, he employs himself to expose the African people and their customs, traditions, culture and ways of living. His narrative on publication is constructed to form a discourse about the 'barbaric' Africans. Park's representation of the African people constructed a truth about them as the 'other' and that narrative, functioned as a political discourse, enabled the Europeans to prepare themselves to colonize and civilize the 'savage' Africans. This research will be a great help in understanding how the African Association was able mould public opinion by creating a discourse about Africa.

Mungo Park was received with distinguished honor by the African Association, and almost all the other scientific bodies and eminent literary characters of the metropolis. Having made arrangements in London for the publication of his travels, he proceeded to Scotland in June 1798, and spent the succeeding summer and autumn at his native place, Fowlshiels, among his relations and friends, his mother being the only parent then alive. His time, however, was far from being passed in idleness, or merely in social meetings with old friends and acquaintance, much as his company, as may readily be imagined, was sought after. He applied himself indefatigably to the compilation and composition of his travels, which he finished and carried back with him to London in the end of the year.

In the autumn of 1803 he was invited by the government to lead another expedition to the Niger. Park, who chafed at the hardness and monotony of life at Peebles, accepted the offer, but the expedition was delayed. Part of the waiting time was occupied perfecting his Arabic. In May 1804 Park went back to Foulshiels, where he made the acquaintance of Sir Walter Scott, then living near by at Ashesteil, with whom he soon became friendly. In September he was summoned to London to leave

on the new expedition; he left Scott with the hopeful proverb on his lips- Freits (omens) follow those that look to them. Park had at that time adopted the theory that the Niger and the Congo were one.

A statue to his memory stands in the centre of Selkirk and the Mungo Park Medal is presented annually by the Royal Scottish Geographical Society. The Mungo Park Medal is awarded by the Royal Scottish Geographical Society in recognition of outstanding contributions to Geographical knowledge through exploration and/or research, and/or work of a practical nature of benefit to humanity in potentially hazardous physical and/or social environments. It was founded in honour of the Scottish explorer Mungo Park.

Mungo Park's voyage has been the center of reviews and criticism since its publication in 1799. Unlike many contemporary analysis on African travel that are rife with polemics on European ethnocentrism, Kate Ferguson Marsters presents a balanced perspective on Mungo Park's writings and says, "It is hard to come to any other conclusion, because Park gives a more neutral and un-sensational account of Africa than other European explorers. He wrote detailed descriptions of the customs and living conditions of the peoples he encountered" (247).

On the other hand, James Searing talks about Park's role in the debate over slave trade as, "The African Association, which sponsored Park's expedition, had members on both sides of the debate. Both abolitionists and defenders of the slave trade cited Park's travels. Park did not openly take sides because of his ambitions to lead a second expedition" (407).

Marry Grover talks about the popularity of Park's narrative as, "The book was its popularity to many factors, primarily its unusually perceptive glimpse of the common life of the African before European imperialism. Because of the way in

which he traveled, Park had more contact with the ordinary life of the African than any other European traveler” (408).

Questioning the validity of Park’s observations, Roy Bridges writes:

Most modern readers will be more attracted by Park’s own narrative. As with many travelers’ writings, one would like to know how Park’s published text relates or fails to relate to the original notes and journals he kept. For those interested in the quality of the evidence on Africa and its environment and peoples he provided, this is surely a key question. (133)

Thus, it is evident from the review of the criticisms available that there is no coherent voice emerging from the above cited critics. This research will explore the issue of Orientalist discourse in Mungo Park’s travel narrative.

Chapter Two

Construction of Discourse: Orientalism

Anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient in its general aspects is an orientalist and what he or she does is Orientalism. Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and 'the Occident.' Orientalism can also be defined as a western style for dominating, restructuring and having an authority over the Orient. Orientalism expresses and represents the Orient culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles.

In his seminal book, *Orientalism*, Said argued that European travel writing, notwithstanding its claims to be pure knowledge or harmless entertainment, must be seen as part of the apparatus of empire. It provided not only the information but also the conceptual framework of the images of 'savages', which enabled imperialism and colonialism.

The orient had helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea personality and experience. Yet none of this orient is merely imaginative. The orient is an integral part of European material civilization and culture. Orientalism expresses and represents that part of culturally and even ideologically. (1-2)

With this Eurocentric notion, the westerners always define the orient as the matter of interpretation for them. To maintain the superior identity of the West, the discourses play vital role for analyzing and imposing the oriental stereotype which dominate and prove their hegemonic nature. Edward Said further clarifies this point as, "the relationship between occident and orient is a relationship of power, of

domination, of varying degree of complex hegemony” (1). Hegemony is the power of the ruling class to convince other classes that their interest is the interest of all.

Because of this, ruling class becomes successful in promoting its own interest in the society.

Discourses, according to Said, cannot be free from social and political sphere of an era. Different types of conflicts and contradictions, which are at play in the society, are at the heart of the text in a contextualized form. The text in this context becomes even more powerful. The language used to produce the text not only reflects the reality but it also creates the text’s own reality. By this it can achieve power and authority over the reality itself. Such texts or discourses produce a tradition of knowledge which according to Said is, “not the originality of a given author is really responsible for the texts produced out of it” (94). Here, the text is governing the reality not reality governing the text. Said, asserting the power of the text, writes in “Crisis of Orientalism” that people, places and experiences can always be described by a book so much so that the book(or text) acquires a greater authority, an use, even than the actuality it describes” (93). This is to say that language used to create text instead refers to itself rather than reflecting the context external to it. Edward Said in his Book *Representations of Intellectual* argues:

The construction of the fiction like “East” and “West” to say nothing of racist essence like subject races, oriental, Aryan, Negroes and like, were what my books attempted to combat. For from encouraging a sense of aggrieved primal innocence in countries which had suffered the ravages of colonialism, I stated repeatedly that mythical abstractions such as these were lies, as were the various rhetoric’s of blame they gave rise to; cultures are too intermingled, their contexts

and histories too interdependent and hybrid, for surgical separation into large and mostly ideological oppositions like orient and occident. (XI-XII)

The psychological domination of culturally privileged is clearly seen in the concept of Said's *Orientalism*. Grounding upon the psychological concept of attitude the occident clearly others the orient and this same concept reveals or manifests in orientalism. Orient and oriental have come to define their identities always in relation to what they are not, and therefore, what they are demonized as 'others'. Occident deliberately produces 'the other' in order to create its identity and then, consolidate colonial power over the 'other'. They become always conscious about heir belongingness, which in turn bars them from promoting mutual bond with the 'other'. Unlike orient, they believe 'we' are true human being; so, 'we' have the right to govern, to rule and even possess 'them'. Their psychological attitude makes them believe that it is their human prerogative not only to manage the non-white but also to own it, to teach it an to make it civilize. Said clearly shows the purposes served by orientalism:

To subordinate or underplay military power in order to aggrandize the project of glorious knowledge acquired in the process of political domination of the orient; to formulate the orient, to give it shape, identity, definition with full recognition of its place in memory, its importance to imperial strategy, and its "natural" role as an appendage to Europe; to dignify all the knowledge collected during colonial occupation with the title "contribution to modern learning." (43)

Significantly, the discourse of orientalism persists into the present, particularly in the West's relationship with orient, as is evidenced in its study, its reporting in the

media, its representation in general. The representation declares the oriental obscurity, alienation, and strangeness. So the westerner feels the responsibility to bring the lost orient into identification. The identification created by the West to study the orient becomes a set of symbol and image which estranges the orient rather than to make it familiar. The images and symbols used to refer the orient are made for the purpose of degenerating the demoralizing the orient. The discourse represents the oriental as savage, barbaric, uncivilized, immoral, and unfinished. These are the authoritative symbols which help the West to maintain its supremacy. The symbols and images imposed upon the oriental create the binary representing the westerners as educated, civilized, and moral.

The significance of orientalism is a mode of knowing the other, a supreme example of the construction of the other, and a form of authority. The orient is phenomenon constructed by generations of intellectuals, artists, commentators, writers, politicians, and more importantly, construction by the naturalizing of wide range of orientalist assumptions and stereotypes. The relationship between the occident and the orient is a relationship between power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony. Consequently, orientalist discourse, for Said, is more valuable as a sign of power exerted by the West over the orient than a true discourse about the orient. Said further says that eighteenth century onwards, there emerged, “a complex orient suitable for study in the academy, for display in the museum, for reconstruction in the colonial office, for theoretical illustration in anthropological biological, linguistic, racial, and historical thesis about mankind and the universe”(7). Orientalism is not, however, a western plot to hold down the oriental world. Said asserts it as:

A distribution of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts; it is an elaboration not only of a basic geographical distinction... but also of a whole series of 'interests' which not only crates but maintains. It is, rather than expresses, a certain will or intention to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even incorporate, what is a manifestly different world. (12)

In fact orientalism is a cultural and political fact which has germinated by analyzing and interpreting the orient. The discourse is manipulated by power which belongs to West. So the main aim of the discourse is to represent the oriental culture, geography religion, and socio-economic milieu. Within a familiar framework of grammatical and symbiotic structure the orient is represented. The main purpose served by the discourse is the experimentation with lives, and above all with meaning of oriental geography, culture, religion and language.

Representation: Distortion of Fact

The western writing reveals the images, representation, and depiction of culture, geography and people of non-west. These texts involve westerners' point of view concerning the superiority of their culture, race and religion. Such texts are not accounts of different people and societies, but a projection of their desires of scientific/objective knowledge. West and westerners within that textual model are situated as normative. They invent certain images and symbols that help them analyze and interpret the orient. Such designation of framework represents the orient, as Said writes in his *Orientalism*, "a place of romance, exotic beings, hunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences"(1). Such discourse portrays the oriental as primitive, insurrectionary force, and libidinous. These shared assumptions of

westerners vastly differ from the cultural realities of the world societies because the fact or nature of the orient does not remain static. The westerners manipulate the raw material from the imperial quest of the travelers and traders of the European organization to explore the orient. They create static symbols and images to study the orient. The orient subject is characterized as 'other' through such writing which makes the distinction between 'we', the westerners, and they, the other. So, the representation asserts the idea of western identity as a superior one in comparison to other. Bill Aschroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffen argue in *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*:

It is through education and in terms of modes of production and consumption that colonialist representations persist and currently circulate in, for instance, popular television shows, cartoons, novels the derogatory representations they promulgated that they offered a transparent 'window' on an objective reality' that relations between producers and consumers, or writers and readers, did not really exist and thus did not foster and reflect unequal colonialist power relations.

(15)

The texts, which colonizers used to show their objective knowledge and the fragility of the colonized, tried to find out unfamiliar spaces by the descriptions and authoritative symbols from the fantastical tales of the earlier travelers. Strangeness was made comprehensible by using everyday names, dependable conventions, both rhetorical and syntactic. In writings as various as romances, memoirs, adventure tales the view of the world as directed from the colonial metropolis was consolidated and confirmed. The aim was to legitimize colonial rules in the indigenous people and to

extend the imperialism. Elleke Boehmer further states in *Colonial and Postcolonial literature*:

From the early days of colonization, not only text in general, but also literature was broadly defined. It underpinned efforts to interpret other lands, offering home audience a way of thinking about exploration, Western conquest, nation, valor and new colonial acquisition.

Travelers, traders, administrators, settlers, read the strange and new by drawing on familiar books such as the *Bible* or *Pilgrim's Progress*.

(19)

So, a traveler's imagination was able to work associatively with a familiar framework of grammatical and symbolic structure which brought geography into being.

The European textuality defines itself as a rational being by representing the characterization of colonized people as secondary, abject, weak and feminine. The discourse can be taken to refer to that collection of symbolic practices, including textual codes and conventions and implied meanings, which Europe deployed in the process of colonial expansion and, in particular, in understanding the bizarre and apparently unintelligible strangeness with which it came into contact. Its interpretations were an expression of its mastery which mobilized its authority through certain symbols. Race, classification, therefore, could be used to explain not only biological variety but the superiority or inferiority of different cultural types ranged on a scale of evolutionary progress. Boehmer further explains it as:

The characterization of the European was asserted in relation to an opposite, a 'rest' of the world and other. Depending on the context, this opposite took the form of women or slave, servant or beast, and with

the onset of colonization, as became the colonized a category of representation which subsumed within itself those other significance of difference. The feminized colonial other allowed the European the more intensively to realize himself- and in certain conditions, herself also. (81)

One example of paradigmatic text of western representation is Daniel Defoe's *Robison Crusoe* (1719). In this text Defoe represents Crusoe as an agent of western representative. The text represents Crusoe as superior human being who, after all, confirms his identity of being white belongingness and the disciple of Christianity. Crusoe, like the archetypal colonialist, strives to assert his own reality and establishes right to the Island. The act of renaming the cannibal 'Friday' represents Crusoe as a father figure who has authority to control the slave. It explains Crusoe's concern to make of the cannibal survivor Friday, an image of him, and an opposite who will confirm the reality of his own being. Thus the West conceived of its superiority relative to the perceived lack of power, self-consciousness, or ability to think and rule, of colonized peoples. The act of Christianizing 'Friday' is the image which shows westerners as conquerors and civilizers of the world.

Said's foundational orientalism examines the process by which this discursive formation emerges. Said holds the belief that the discourse of orientalism has been functioning from the ancient times. The Greco-Roman writers reflected the orients, in their writing, always in the static manner. In their writing they drew a line of geography between two continents-Europe and rest. In this model Europe was powerful and articulate; the 'other' was defeated and distant. These were the lenses through which the orient was experienced, and they shaped the language, perception, and form of the encounter between West and non-West. And, the representation of the

orient, until now, remained always same because the west inherited and articulated the same 'images' of the orient as 'barbaric', 'uncivilized', 'sensual', 'enigmatic' that needed 'our' project of civilizing 'then'. Such types of patronizing and didactic qualities of the orientalist representation were self-containing, self-reinforcing character of a closed system having no empirical base of analyzing 'other'. The orient is always represented as outsiders in the rhetoric of orientalist. By manipulating certain images of the orient, the westerners legitimated the vocabulary which could help them control and dominate the orient. What is far more significant is that Said has assembled that whole narrative of European literature from Aeschylus to Edward Lane, as a history of literature's complicity in inferiorization of the orient. Said further expresses his idea in *Orientalism*:

Imaginative geography, from the vivid portraits to be found in the *Inferno*, legitimates a vocabulary, a universe of representative discourse peculiar to the discussion and understanding of Islam and the Orient. The vocabulary employed whenever the orient is spoken or written about is a set of representative figures, or tropes. (36)

In this way we need not look for correspondence between the language used to depict the orient and the orient itself. These figures are like stylized characters in a play.

From the beginning of the nineteenth century until the end of World War II Europe dominated the orient, since World War II America dominated the orient, and approached it as Europe once did. The American produced large body of texts representing the stereotype of oriental culture, religion, and politics. And the American orientalist manipulated their writings by making their culture, religion and politics an epitome that was essential to follow by the orient. The power that they

manipulated through language changed into knowledge which could govern the rest of the world. The 'knowledge' defined other culture as primitive, religion as conservative and heretical, and the political practice as terror-stricken. But in reality the discourse made by the American imperial policy could not involve the orient as it is. The language that the orientalist used to define the orient can not be judgmental.

Said advocates it as:

In any instance of at least written language, there is no such thing as a delivered presence, but a re-presence, or a representation. The value, efficacy, strength, apparent veracity of written statement about the orient therefore relies very little, and cannot instrumentally depend on the orient as such. On the contrary, the written statement is presence to the reader by virtue of its having excluded displaced, made supererogatory and such real things as 'the orient'. Thus all of orientalism stands froth and away from the orient that orientalism makes sense at all depends more on the west than on the orient, and this sense is directly indebted to various western techniques of representation that make the orient visible, clear, "there" in discourse about it. (10-11)

Michel Foucault has similarly insisted both upon the materiality and the social productivity of discourse. Foucault is concerned about the involvement of textual practices in relation to power. The written discourses or the texts are representation because they are always constructed.

Discourse, according to Foucault, is produced in which concepts of madness, criminality, and sexual abnormality and so on are defined in relation to sanity, justice and sexual normality. Such discursive formation massively determines and constrains

the forms of knowledge, the types of normality and the nature and subjectivity, which prevails in a particular period.

Every system of knowledge establishes rules for exclusion and discriminations and it always implies taking sides. The discursive practices have no universal validity but are historically dominant ways of controlling and preserving social relations of exploitation. Foucault's interest is in historical dimension of discursive change. System of knowledge establishes rules and procedures governing the particular epoch by exclusion and regulation. Foucault regards the nature of discourse as an event in time since it is not only that which represents struggle or systems of domination, but the object through which and with which we struggle-the power we seek to possess. For him, as for Nietzsche, any attempt to produce and control discourse is will to power.

Foucault sees every action and every historical event as an exercise in the exchange of power. He has spent a large part of his career analyzing the system of power in different situations with relevance to different aspects of human life. Structure organizes and broadens the web of power. The overall volume of power rises with each individual involved in the play. The power tends to be concentrated toward the higher echelons. Power flows simultaneously in different directions and different volumes according to the various forms of "power relation" in the "network" of power exchange. Regarding power and truth Foucault writes in *Truth and Power*:

Now I believe that the problem does not consist in drawing the line between that in a discourse which falls under the category of scientificity or truth and that which comes under some other category, but in seeing historically how effects of truth are produced within discourse which in themselves are neither true nor false. (1139)

Each society creates “regime of truth” according to its belief, values, and mores. Foucault identifies the creation of truth in contemporary western society with five trails: the centering of truth on scientific discourse, accountability of truth to economic and political forces, the diffusion and consumption of truth via societal apparatuses, the control of the distribution of truth by political and economic apparatuses and the fact that it is the issue of a whole political debate and social confrontation. Individuals would do well to recognize the ultimate truth. ‘Truth’ is the construct of the political and economic forces. There is no truly universal truth at all. So that he or she can be connected to one of the truth generating apparatuses of the society. As Foucault explains it:

“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 produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it. A “regime” of truth. (1145)

Because of this, Foucault sees the problem in the representation of the discourse.

The representation of orient can thus be regarded as a manner of orientalised writing, vision and study, dominated by imperatives, perspectives, and ideological biases. The discourse is a system of representation framed by a whole set of forces that brings the non-west into western learning and western consciousness. So, the representation of oriental people, geography, culture, religion and language cannot be matched with the essence of real orient. The representation is distortion of fact

because the fact or nature of the orient does not remain static but the western knowledge about it becomes static and unchangeable.

Invention of Africa

Edward Said and V. Y. Mudimbe are both whistle-blowers against the ideologies of otherness which Mudimbe calls 'alterity' and for Said it is 'Orientalism'. The orient is perceived as exotic, intellectually retarded, emotionally sensual, culturally passive, and politically corrupted. Edward Said's main focus is about the invention of the 'orient' whereas Mudimbe's is about the invention of Africa. However, Said insists that the orient does not exist and has never existed outside the imagination of the West. Mudimbe is prepared to accept that the invention of Africa is a prophecy in the process of self-fulfillment. And, African thought somehow seems to be basically a product of the West. Such thought is established and consolidated on the basis of the local economic histories into the western perspective.

One of the paradoxes of history is that Africa has been analyzed and interpreted by the western consciousness and western empire. Sexism as well as racism has often informed the orientalist mind. How Africa is defined has been a product of its interaction with the western civilization. In a European language one cannot imagine Africa calling itself today as a black land. It took European conceptualization and cartography to turn Africa into a continent. Africa was regarded as an empire of barbarism and darkness. When European map-makers were at loss to identify African towns or cities, they drew picture of elephants or lions. This was an era when boundaries of continents were yet to be demarcated. The phase was particularly fertile for the orientalist imagination.

The process through which Europe colonized Africa was particularly marked in the treatment of the black populations of the continent. The humiliation and

degradation of Black African across the centuries contributed to their mutual recognition of each other as “fellow Africans”. So the Europeans handled their domination by their ethnocentric assumptions. In their project of studying African people, the Europeans devalued, demoralized and even brutalized the African for their “inferior” race. This European way of making judgment about African race and culture using their standard has been analyzed as an ‘episteme construction’ by the recent scholars of Africa. The mode of conceptualization has been usefully flossed by Mudimbe, with reference to anthropology. Mudimbe distinguishes two kinds of ethnocentrism in his book *The Idea of Africa* as:

In fact they are often complementary and inseparable. In fact is a link to an episteme; that is, an intellectual atmosphere which gives to anthropology its status as discourse, its significance as a discipline, and its credibility as a science in the field of human experience. The second is an intellectual and behavioral attitude which varies among individuals. Basically this attitude is both a consequence and an expression of a complex connection between the scholar’s projection of consciousness, the scientific models of his time, and the cultural and social norms of his society. (19)

However, scholars in postcolonial studies, including Mudibe, have tended to situate Eurocentric in epistemic terms as an intellectual atmosphere or hegemonic modes of conceptualization. This essentially Foucauldian understanding of Eurocentrism as an intellectual atmosphere then gives way almost inevitably in much contemporary postcolonial theory to a further proposition, as to the constitutive Eurocentrism of western thought.

Related to racism was translation of 'other' culture that Africanized or orientalized Africa. It is obvious that to approach the questions "what is Africa?" and "How do we define African culture?" one should know African language and culture to generalize its features. One cannot neglect a body of knowledge in which Africa has been subsumed by western disciplines such as anthropology, history, theology or whatever other scientific discourse. So, the European cannot speak and write about a tradition or its contemporary practice with colonial library that has invented African identities. With the colonial mentality, the process of translation involved in making African culture comprehensible entails varying degrees of violence. Mudimbe points out the representation of Africa in European discourse as the invention of Africa. He further writes in *The Idea of Africa*:

I do not doubt that there is in the primary discourse of African cultures an reading that could possibly relate to la chose du texte, to its fundamental local authorities. Yet the fact is there: African discourses have been silenced radically or, in most cases, converted by conquering Western discourse. The popular local knowledge's have been subsumed critically by 'scientific' disciplines. This process meant only transcending or original locality, but also through transcending (which is, in reality, a transmutation), what I call 'invention' of African took place... Western interpreters, as well as African analysis's, have been using categories and conceptual systems that depend on a western epistemological order. (xiv-xv)

The constructed African identity is the false presuppositions of errors and inaccuracies. The invented African culture and religion are myth having no empirical base. Invented histories, invented biology, invented cultural affinities of Africa can not

be the objective reality. The objective reality which the West has made to sustain its discourse is the continuous process of imposing authority upon the African people and inventing their history.

Subordination and Resistance

Subordination and resistance are very broad arenas within which the relationship between West and non-west has taken place. The western texts such as anthropology, histories, and fiction capture the non-western subject within the familiar framework of westerners' rhetoric. Such texts inferiorize the 'other' by depicting and representing it as savage unfinished, barbaric and liar. Such subordination is resisted properly in the postcolonial literature.

So, postcolonialism on the one hand reveals the inconsistencies and dominations formed in colonial discourse and on the other hand counter attacks those inconsistencies and colonial discourse. The colonialism, a western discourse, presents and represents everything non-western as inferior, and manifests westerners' desire to rule, to dominate, and to control the 'other'. This western notion helped to flourish this colonial purpose in an effective manner. It produced a kind of myth and stereotype of the orient in order to make it easy to have power and authority over them. As Elleke Bohemer argues in *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*:

The colonized made up the subordinate term in relation to which European individuality was defined. Always with reference to the superiority of an expanding Europe, colonized people were represented as lesser: less human, less civilized, as child or savage, wild man, animal or headless mass. What distinguished European hegemony (though may not have been unique to it) was its strong belief in the

potential for universalization of its knowledge of science, politics, and religion, and in particular, of its own forms of rationality. (97)

The West was always desirous to dominate and rule upon the non-west. The colonial discourse is greatly implicated in ideas of the centrality of Europe by inferiorizing the rest. It is a system by which dominant groups in the world constitute the field of truth by imposing specific knowledge, disciplines and values upon dominated groups. And the same knowledge, the colonial discourse regards as the universalism. Chinua Achebe writes in *Colonialist Criticism* (1992), “they dress it up in fine robes which they call universality” (1193), and the nature of thing the work of a western writer is automatically informed by universality. For Achebe, the colonial discourse is based on the colonizers’ assumption of their own superiority, which they contrast with the alleged inferiority of native people, the original inhabitant of the land they invaded. The Westerners believe that there is a hierarchy of race and ‘we’ by the right of the race belongs to the superior position. The colonialist writers always devalue the non-European writers, who write about their people, geographies and cultures, thinking that ‘they’, the colonized writers, do not know as ‘we’, the colonialist writers, have known. It is a system which divides the world between ‘us’, the ‘civilized’, and ‘them’, the ‘savage’ and ‘other’. Achebe more precisely clarifies this system:

The later-day colonialist critic, equally given to big-brother arrogance, sees African writer as a somewhat unfinished European who with patient guidance will grow up on day and write like every other European, but meanwhile must be humble, must be learn all he can and while at it give due credit to his teachers in the form of either direct

praise or, ever better since praise sometimes goes bad and becomes embarrassing, manifest self-contempt. (1191)

Because of this subordinate representation, the postcolonial literature studies the context and historicity of the colonial literature. Postcolonial literature had got impetus by the theoretical proclamations propounded by postmodernism. The static characteristic of non-European is supposed to be untrue. Derrida's theory of deconstruction erodes the idea of 'center' and 'margin' in which the first term functions privileged and superior and second term as derivative and inferior. So, the westerners' assumption that 'we' are civilized and 'they' are savage could not maintain such hierarchy. Derrida's aim is to invert the hierarchy by showing that the center is center because of margin. Instead of stopping at this reversal he goes on destabilize both hierarchies, leaving them in the condition of undecidability. So, the discourse of westerners, which regard the non-westerners as savage, barbaric, and uncivilized by heightening the westerners as intellectual, civilized and guardian, can't be valid.

Similarly, Foucauldian idea of post structuralism questions the structure of any discourse. For Foucault any discourse is constructed by power relation. Foucault develops a theory of discourses in relation to the power structure operating in a society. His main thesis is that discourse is constructed by the nexus between truth and power. He views that discourses are rooted in social institutions and that social and political power operates through discourse. The discourse, therefore, is inseparable from power because it is the ordering force that governs every institution. So, the truth is constructed by those who practice power.

In *Truth and Power* Foucault states, "Truth is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and

operation of statements” (1145). For him truth is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produces and sustains it. So, in this modality, the westerners’ discourse which depicts the non-westerners is also output of the nexus between truth and power. The orient is constructed rather than enquired in the discourse of orientalism because West is powerful to represent non-west in any way it likes.

Said projects the similar views that without examining orientalism as a discourse we can not understand the enormously systematic discipline of westerners by which Europeans become able to manage the orient as an ‘other’ by politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively. To resist the discourse of orientalism, Said brings reference from Foucauldian idea that any discourse is constructed by the power relation. Said examines the processes by which the orient is constructed in European thinking. For him the orient is not an inert fact of nature, but a phenomenon constructed by generations of intellectuals, artist’s commentators, writers, politicians and more importantly, constructed by the neutralizing of a wide range of orientalist assumption and stereotype. And those generations of intellectuals’ imposition of the same stereotypes on the orient have been the fact in the discourse of orientalism. So the relationship the westerner and the non-westerner is a relationship of power and domination. Said writes in *Orientalism*:

Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the orient-dealing with it by making statements about its authorizing views of it describing it., by teaching it, setting it, ruling over it, as over the style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the orient. (2)

Thus the postcolonial literature, a discourse of resistance, is mainly concerned on the material effect of the historical condition of colonialism as well as on its

discursive power. By redefining previous European colonialist institutions and their contemporary colonial motives from the view point of the colonized, postcolonialism established itself as a discourse. Postcolonialism is now used in wide and diverse ways to include and analyze of European territorial conquests. The various institution of European colonialism, the discursive operations of empire, the subtleties of subject construction, in colonial discourse and resistance of those subjects, and the differing responses to such incursions and their contemporary colonial legacies in both pre and post-independent nations and communities. So, the postcolonial literature is the reconfiguration of cultural, historical, political, economic, sociological impact of European imperialism upon world societies. Bill Aschorft, Griffith and Hellen Tiffin argue in *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*:

Postcolonialism is a continuing process of resistance and reconstruction. This does not imply that postcolonial practices are seamless and homogeneous but indicates the impossibility of dealing with any part of the colonial process without considering its antecedents and consequences. However, we would argue that post-colonial studies are based in the 'historical fact' of European colonialism, and the diverse material effects to which this phenomenon gave rise. (2)

The postcolonial writers write to give expression to colonized experiences. They write to destabilize the discourses, which supported colonialism directly or indirectly. Now English literature is not the sole property of the England and English people. It has become the common property to the world. Former colonized countries' writers also write in English to attack the colonial discourse. The resistance proves that the discourse is constructed by power west for its sake.

Chapter Three

Construction of Western Discourse

Politics behind the journey

Mungo Park's *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa* (1799) was one of the great publishing successes of the Romantic era, going through three editions within a year of its appearance. The narrative recounts an eighteen-month exploratory expedition in West Africa, through present-day Gambia, Senegal, and Mali, that commenced in May 1795. The simplicity and directness of Park's style serve only to emphasize the more bizarre elements in a tale which is extraordinary throughout. The narrative oscillates between apparent fantasy and the starkest reality, curious dream and horrific nightmare.

In 1788, the African Association set itself the task of replacing guesswork with knowledge. It was known that there was a mighty river in West Africa, somewhere south of the Sahara, but no living European had ever seen it. The river had been described by two long-dead Arab geographers, Al-Idrisi, in the 12th century, and Leo Africanus, some 400 years later. Both described it as flowing westwards. By the end of the 18th century several theories had been established about the Niger. Some thought it part of the Nile, others part of the Senegal. Some even said that it evaporated at an indefinite point south of the Sahara. With Banks behind him, Mungo Park was now appointed to settle the matter. After his return from the East Indies in 1793, Park says:

Having learned that the noblemen and gentlemen associated for the purpose of prosecuting discoveries in the interior of Africa were desirous of engaging a person to explore that continent, by the way of the Gambia river, I took occasion, through means of the President of

the Royal, to whom I had the honour to be known, of offering myself for that service. (1)

Park's narrative advocates for the extension of British influence in the region for economic gains. The British, Park suggests, must play a civilizing or emancipating role in the region.

Park's Travels contributed to a significant shift in the British public's attitude to the wider world. Characteristic of the Romantic era was a growing conviction as to Britain's global mission, its role as reformer and improver of the planet, and as steward of the natural resources gifted to mankind by God. Even those who were skeptical about the British imperial project could find themselves fascinated by Park's Travels, and by the many other exploration narratives of the Romantic period. In a sense, these narratives opened up to the British public the whole planet as an imaginative resource. Remote regions and alien peoples became the objects of fantasy, conjecture, and aspiration. Complementing Park on his journey Simon Craig writes:

It is surely one of the most extraordinary travelogues ever written. In outline, the story is simple enough -- a 965-kilometre hike to find the great river, followed by his return journey, taking a different route. The devil was in the detail. (57)

The organization of men and materials across the globe and the application of the latest technology to remote areas were mobilized. The gathering and classification of useful knowledge at the metropolitan center, the export of explorers and scientists, all these were features of imperialist government developed by Banks. Literature played its part in this process. The travel narratives he shaped and the poems they stimulated placed Africa and other unmapped regions tantalizingly almost within

reach, whilst assuring readers that the native inhabitants were naturally inferior and therefore ripe for colonization. In presenting remote lands to the imagination Banks made them objects of “knowledge” and desire of the self that could be explored. After being selected for the exploration Park was also happy as:

The committee of the Association having made such inquiries as they thought necessary, declared themselves satisfied with the qualifications that I possessed, and accepted me for the service; and, with that liberality which on all occasions distinguishes their conduct, gave me every encouragement which it was in their power to grant, or which I would with propriety ask.(2)

In his seminal study *Orientalism* (1978), the critic Edward Said argued that European travel writing, notwithstanding its claims to be pure knowledge or harmless entertainment, must be seen as part of the apparatus of empire. At one level, Turkish tales seem intended to rebuke smug British notions that Christian Europeans are morally superior to Islamic adversaries in the Middle East. At another level, however, they confirmed orientalist preconceptions about the East as a place of fantasy, passion, and adventure. Consequently, and paradoxically, these imaginings launched many a glittering career in service of the empire. Park was happy to lead the exploration and contribute to the empire as:

I had a passionate desire to examine into the productions of a country so little known, and to become experimentally acquainted with the modes of life and character of the natives. I knew that I was able to bear fatigue, and I relied on my youth and the strength of my constitution to preserve me from the effects of the climate. (2)

Romantic literary texts interact with contemporary travel writing, and the full complexity of their engagement with both the touristic and exploratory contexts outlined above. People of that period were attentive to these contexts, and they were also to be aware of the sheer ubiquity and prominence of travel writing in British culture. Since the Romantic period, travel writing has become far less critically esteemed. Romantic era travel writing simply provided source material to the Romantic imagination. The literary work subsequently produced by that imagination was held to stand apart from travel writing. We can also place those literary texts that rightly remain at the heart of the canon in a far more dynamic and interactive relationship with contemporary travelogues. It becomes apparent that the original meaning and resonance of many Romantic-era literary texts was to some extent the result of their relationship with the vast hinterland of contemporary travel writing. Exploring, and sometimes subverting, generic expectations that derived from the reading public's great relish for voyages and travels, many romantic era poems, novels, and plays tap deliberately into debates taking place in the form. On the beauty and treasures of Africa, Park writes:

The country itself being an immense level, and very generally covered with wood , presents a tiresome and gloomy uniformity to the eye; but although Nature has denied to the inhabitants the beauties of romantic landscapes, she has bestowed on them , with a liberal hand, the more important blessings of fertility and abundance. A little attention to cultivation procures a sufficiency of corn, the fields afford a rich pasturage for cattle and the natives are plentifully supplied with excellent fish, both from the Gambia river and the Walli creek (6)

Prepared and guided by Banks, explorers could go aboard again, exporting to those foreign cultures the versions of them they had constructed at home. Sir Joseph wanted to turn the lands that Park had brought within his imaginative reach into real possessions. If Britain did not “possess” itself of the “Treasures” of Africa discovered by Park, ‘some rival nation’ soon would. Chief among those treasures was gold, which Park had seen traded as dust. Park’s narrative emphasized that Britain should send troops up the Niger to secure the gold reserves. When Park sniffs gold in Africa he writes that:

Those valuable commodities, gold and ivory (the next objects of our inquiry), have probably been found in Africa from the first ages of the world. They are reckoned among its most important productions in the earliest records of its history. Gold is found in considerable quantities throughout every part of Manding, a country which is indeed hilly, but cannot properly be called mountainous, much less barren. It is also found in great plenty in Jallonkadoo another hilly, but by no means an unfertile, country. (80)

Park’s narrative begins by alerting readers to its truthfulness. Park says the preface, can be trusted because he is faithful to experience. Trustworthiness it seems is an effect of plain “unvarnished” realism. Realism, however, is a style, and Park was a quick learner. The general public and scientific community thought so too. When *Travels to the Interior Parts of Africa* was published in April it became an instant success, necessitating two more editions of the book after the first sold out within a week. It was not just the realism of the travel that made it popular. The public imagination was captivated by a narrative that portrayed exploration as a quest

romance. Describing the accomplishment of his mission as transcendental, Park narrates:

I saw with infinite pleasure the great object of my mission- the long-sought-for majestic Niger, glittering in the morning sun, as broad as the Thames at Westminster, and flowing slowly to the eastward. I hastened to the brink, and having drunk of the water, lifted up my fervent thanks in prayer to the Great Ruler of all things for having thus far crowned my endeavors with success. (129)

Having reached it with him, the reader had become a mental traveler, only to discover that it was a discovery made in the interior of the self as well as in the interior of Africa. It was the discovery that a “civilized” man could be alone, abandoned and destitute in the heart of the overwhelming otherness of a “savage” country, without losing his faith, his self-command, his resourcefulness.

Although Park traveled to Africa on his own in 1795, the expedition was not an individual or maverick undertaking. It was sponsored by the African Association, an organization dedicated to acquiring knowledge of the continent, and to putting that knowledge to practical, profitable use. The African Association guided by Sir Joseph Banks, accordingly dictated the goals of the expedition, and defined the data Park was expected to acquire. He was also instrumental in the production of the published narrative. Banks arranged for Bryan Edwards to act as editor, and for Major James Rennell to provide two new maps and a seven-chapter appendix summarizing the new geographical knowledge arising from Park’s endeavors. Park’s published narrative follows closely the notes he took whilst traveling, and we are meant to recognize this fact. For the greater part of the narrative, a journal format is adopted, and great emphasis laid on specificities of time and place. Park writes that the native unlettered

negros in general had no means of dividing time as the Europeans did. This showed their backwardness and urged for Europeans to carry the white man's burden. Park writes that he was surprised:

The negros in general, have no artificial method of dividing time. They calculate the years by the number of rainy seasons. They portion the year into moons, and reckon the days by so many suns. The day they divide into morning, midday, and evening; and farther subdivide it, when necessary, by pointing to the sun's place in the heavens. The subject appeared to them as placed beyond the reach of human investigation. (57)

The narration of the journey, however, is occasionally interrupted with passages, some a few paragraphs long, others taking up whole chapters. They bring together in a more consolidated form Park's findings and thoughts about a particular place or culture or issue. This stylistic formula was customary to convince the reading public, and the critics, that the explorer was a reliable eyewitness to the events and phenomena described. As Sir Joseph Banks knew, authenticity and credibility were crucial in ensuring the success of an exploration narrative. Banks had witnessed the savage reception given to James Bruce's *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* (1790). Bruce had written in an overly flamboyant, egotistical style, paying too little regard to the recognized procedures of scientific observation and telling too many astonishing or self-glamorizing stories. Park's narrative is chiefly preoccupied with the external world. On occasions, it turns to the more specialized discourses of contemporary science for greater precision and authority. In some contemporary exploration accounts, his language was beginning to predominate in an attempt to

present the explorer's findings as wholly objective. Park also seemed to notice the role of women in Africa as:

The education of the girls is neglected altogether: mental accomplishments are but little attended to by the women; nor is the want of them considered by the men as a defect in the female character. They are regarded, I believe, as an inferior species of animals; and seem to be brought up for no other purpose than that of administering to the sensual pleasures up for no other purpose than that of administering to the sensual pleasures of their imperious masters. Voluptuousness is therefore considered as their chief accomplishment, and slavish submission as their indispensable duty. (100)

In all these ways, the narrative established Park as an eminently trustworthy traveler, an assiduous but plain speaking gatherer of information. Such data collection is presented to us as morally neutral. On occasions we are invited to smile at the simplicity of African leaders who cannot believe that someone travels so far, and takes so many risks, simply to satisfy intellectual curiosity. The sort of information Park collects implicitly reveals the more pragmatic agenda underpinning the expedition. As one of Park's guide argued:

When he was told that I had come from a great distance, and through many dangers, to behold the Joliba river, naturally inquired if there were no rivers in my own country, and whether one river was not like another. Notwithstanding this, and in spite of the jealous machinations of the Moors, this benevolent prince thought it sufficient that a white man was found in his dominions, in a condition of extreme

wretchedness, and that no other plea was necessary to entitle the sufferer to his bounty. (133)

Park's narrative is also subtly suffused with the logic of improvement that thinks in terms almost of a moral obligation to render West Africa economically productive and profitable. If the local population will not develop the resources bestowed on them by God, that obligation falls to others. In his closing assessment of the region, Park points the way not just about trading links but to a more active British intervention in West Africa as:

It was not possible for me to behold the wonderful fertility of the soil, the vast herds of cattle, proper both for labour and food, and a variety of other circumstances favorable to colonization and agriculture; and reflect, withal, on the means which presented themselves of a vast inland navigation, without lamenting that a country, so abundantly gifted and favoured by nature, should remain in its present savage and neglected state. (124)

The huge contemporary popularity of Park's narrative derived in no small way from the skill with which park coupled a mercantile and colonialist agenda with other, more moralistic concerns. It did not simply inform its readers as to new commercial opportunities, but also flattered and reassured them with a sense that they might be a force for good in the world. The many scenes of suffering also enable Park to introduce religious and sentimental dimensions to the narrative. Park's faith is an obvious if unobtrusive presence throughout the text. He frequently quotes the Psalms, but it becomes more prominent during Park's captivity, when he is tormented by the Moslem Moors for being Christian. Talking about their religion, he says:

The inhabitants are Mandingoes, and like most of the Mandingo nations, re divided into two great sects- the Mohammedans, who are called *bushreens*, and the pagans, who are called indiscriminately *kafirs* and *sonakies*. The pagan natives are by far the most numerous, and the government of the country is in their hands; for though the most respectable among the bushreens are frequently consulted in affairs of importance, yet they re never permitted to take any share in the executive government. (22)

When Park reached central Africa, he found that opening new commercial channels carried appalling risks. He was vulnerable to local chiefs, who imprisoned him, and at the mercy of brigands, who stripped him of his clothes. After one brutal attack, when he had been robbed and left for dead, he lamented, “I say myself in the midst of a vast wilderness in the depth of the rainy season, naked and alone; surrounded by savage animals and men still more savage. I had no alternative but to lie down and perish” (76). He did not perish, though, but restored his resolution by a desperate measure of which Banks the botanist would have been proud.

Park: The Agent of Imperialism

Colonization became the buzzword in 15th century Europe. Britain, France, Portugal, Spain and the Netherlands, which were the forerunners in colonizing the third world nations through means of trade and military conquest, control over local resources and markets. Before gaining control over nations, Europe had to know the sources and places of economic importance.

For this reason the colonizers dispatched their agents to explore the unexplored lands they intended to control. Such an explorer was Park from Britain, whose expedition started from Gambia River, the trading post for the Europeans in

1793 for the exploration of West Africa. His expedition was inspired and sponsored by the African Association, an organization aiming to procure knowledge of the continent, and putting that knowledge to practical and profitable use. His sole motive was to ascertain the course or direction Niger River flowed into. The reason behind knowing the course of the Niger River was to establish navigational commerce in the near future on behalf of the British. His return from finding the course of Niger River opened a new channel of commerce for the British. The imperialistic trajectory of the exploration is summed up by Simon Craig as:

By the end of the 18th century, most of the Earth's surface had been mapped in some detail. Easily the biggest gap in geographers' knowledge though was central Africa. Although Arab northern Africa was familiar, as was the entire coastline, the *interior* of sub-Saharan Africa was largely a blank for cartographers to fill in with their imaginations. (56)

The Gambian river and its coast had already been the commercial post for the Europeans. They would exchange iron, pots, hats, and clothes for gold, ivory, bee wax, etc. With that, colonialism had established its root in the soil of natives and natives' mentality. The text, *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa*, itself bears witness to that motive of exploration was for the commercial opportunity in the region, with an urge for the improvement of the natives through civilizing mission or Christian rule. As Park states his colonial objective in the beginning as:

If I should succeed in rendering the geography of Africa more familiar to my countrymen, and in opening to their ambition and industry new sources of wealth and new channels of commerce, I know that I was in the hands of men of honour, who would not fail to bestow that

remuneration which my successful services should appear to them to merit. (2)

The above statement proves that Park's mission was imperialistic. His imperialistic motive would render the geography of Africa more familiar to the Europeans who had a strong aspiration to own and dominate Africa economically and culturally. When Park embarked on his expedition, he found that opening new commercial channels carried grave risks.

Throughout his travels his inquisitiveness was always heightened by caution. He maintained his sense of humor when he found himself in awkward and dangerous situations. His sense did not let him show his abrupt emotion and temper in his deplorable situations. Rather he calmly showed his desire to involve in a mutual appropriation with the natives. In many cases Park maintained reciprocity with the natives. It was because he would have to achieve his imperialistic goal. Proud of his white European lineage superiority, Park narrates an incident where:

When I was about to depart, my landlord, with a great deal of diffidence, begged me to give him a lock of my hair. He had been told, he said, that white men's hair made a saphie that would give to the possessor all the knowledge of white men. I had never before heard of so simple a mode of education, but instantly complied with the request.
(124)

In course of the expedition, Park's journey account seems to be loaded with the natives of commercial expansion. He observes the things and makes an idea of the possibility of possessing them as:

It is observable, however, that although many species of the edible roots which grow in the west India Islands are found in Africa, yet I

never saw, in any part of my journey, that they were known to the natives. The pine-apple and the thousand other delicious fruits which the industry of civilized man (improving the bounties of nature) has brought to so great perfection in the tropical climates of America are here equally unknown. (48)

Park's observation exposes the objects found in Africa that have to be commercialized in profit for Europe, especially for Britain. With the commercial goodies, he arrests the attention of the British towards Africa in order to make Africa a great commercial outpost. He uses the words very tacitly and tactfully. The words, delicious and edible, attract internal taste of the British and make them hurry towards Africa to grasp them in their clenches. In this ways he just makes exposition of what Africa has for commercial motive but he does not do commerce by himself.

We see Park using European commodities to barter for his safety and the gratification produces symbolic exchange and subsistence. Symbolic exchange refers to the European's desire to explore the African geography in the name of improving its sources to profitable and scientific uses. For this they will give the native knowledge of science and civilize them, but they will be utilized in such field only for cheap labor.

In reciprocal vision, Africa and Africans are not only the demonstrations to be scrutinized by Park. When Park is being taken captive in the Moorish Kingdom, his suitcase becomes a body of curiosity for African people, and his body becomes simultaneously an object of scrutiny and survey:

The surrounding attendants and especially the ladies were abundantly more inquisitive; they asked a thousand questions, inspected every part of my apparel, searched my pockets and obliged me to unbutton my

waistcoat, and display the whiteness of my skin; they even counted my toes and fingers, as if they doubted whether I was in truth a human being.(80)

As the passage suggests the reciprocal seeing is organized along lines of gender. While African men are the chief objects of Park's own seeing, African women are special agents for viewing of Park. The scene quoted above begins with Park's approach to the despot Ali, who is looking at himself in a mirror held by a female attendant. Ali loses interest in Park when he finds he knows no Arabic. Park then becomes the object of female gaze, whose aggressive voyeurism feminizes him. It is another anti-conquest Park undergoes. The African ladies minutely observe him searching every part of his apparel. They even ask him to unbutton his waistcoats and display the whiteness of his skin. They do so because they doubt whether he is a real human being or something occult. Obligation to put the things and himself on show makes Park an innocent lamb, but he triumphantly narrates the scene that whiteness of his skin gives a new identity differentiating the natives. He becomes a whole self in the midst of them, so slightly displaying superiority to them, followed by displaying simultaneously his white skin to the African women. In another scene, he again becomes the object of Moorish gaze. He becomes the bear of a circus like:

I was no sooner seated in this my new habitation than the moors assembled in crowds to behold me. For I was do take off one my stockings, and show them my foot, and even to take off my jacket and waistcoat to show them how my clothes were put on and off; they were much delighted with the curios contrivance of buttons. All this was to be repeated to every succeeding visitor; for such as had already seen these wonders insisted on their friends seeing the same; and in this

manner I was employed, dressing and undressing, buttoning and unbuttoning, from noon till night. (81)

Often such activities serve as a delight to the Africans. Park functions as a joker to fulfill their curiosity by making them delighted at European products. For him maintenance of his innocence is much more important than being joker. He knows that, “hope deferred maketh the heart sick” (86). So he can’t help being an innocent man to retain his hope for the fulfillment of his mission, opening the new channel for commerce. In being the object of African surprise, he also maintains his innocence in front of danger he supposes and views. He becomes again an object of wonder when Park writes:

They rallied me with a good deal of gaiety on different subjects, particularly upon the whiteness of my skin and the prominency of my nose. They insisted that both were artificial. The first, they said, was produced when I was an infant, by dipping me in milk; and they insisted that my nose had been pinched every day, till it had acquired its present unsightly and unnatural conformation. (37)

The interactive character of Park makes the text lively and intelligible to the readers. Park gains knowledge of the continent and simultaneously the culture of the natives wherever he travels. His effort to gain them is his motive he has for the maintenance of his position as anti-conqueror. Park often takes pain to report the Africans’ reaction to him as well as his to them, and affirm the commensurability of European and African life ways though they may be different. His account includes many instances in which the two are very deliberately juxtaposed with reciprocal vision. On one occasion, for example, Park’s medical skills are called on, and he

proposes an amputation to save a young man shot in the leg. The African responds in horror:

They had never heard of such a method of cure, and would by no means give their consent to it; indeed, they evidently considered me a sort of cannibal for proposing so cruel and unheard – of an operation, which, in their opinion, would be attended with more pain and danger than the wound itself. (70)

Indigenous healing practices are followed, and the patient is prepared for death. Park voices no criticism of the decision to reject the European cure, nor does he attempt to counter it with commentary of his own. Rather, the reader is enabled to accept that the Africans' view of amputation is as plausible as Park's views that the patient will die without it. By narrating this particular incident, Park wanted to show how backward the civilization of Africa was. He has reached out yet for special goal that the western treatment is much more fruitful and plausible than that of the east, and that the natives have to be given plenty of knowledge about the western way of treatment. It's another kind of civilizing mission Park proposes through the text. It is also notable that European civilizing mission is always undoubtedly imperialistic and not altruistic.

Park reports a scene in which he views the Mohammedan priest teach and instruct pagan as well as Mohammedan children in the tenets of the prophet or Koran. He realizes priests, "fix a bias on the minds of their young disciples" (40). He observes with pleasure the great docility and submissive deportment of the children and "heartily wished they had better instructors and a purer religion" (40). The question arises about who the better instructor and what a purer religion will be. To this query, Park imagines the possibility of Christianity to take the place of the purer religion and the white teacher of the better instructors. This idea also solicits the

British to educate the natives of all tribes fairly. This idea of Park can be reinforced when he observes and estimates the character and behavior of the natives. He wishes the natives would be subjected to the mild and benevolent spirit of Christianity. He expresses his desire, “How greatly is it to be wished that the minds of a people as determined and faithful be softened and civilized by the mild and benevolent spirit of Christianity” (11).

This idea confirms that, “Park was not only leading a powerful empire-building expedition his way alone, armed mainly with intellectual equipment reflecting the Enlightenment” (Roy 135). Those natives can be cleansed by the light of Enlightenment and Christianity captures the mind of Park. So he expects civilizing mission to be applied in the continent. On one event he recounts an event when he had been robbed and left for dead after one brutal attack He lamented:

I saw myself in the midst of a vast wilderness in the depth of the rainy seasons, naked and alone, surrounded by savage animals and men still more savage and I confess that my spirits began to fail me. I considered my fate as certain, and that I had no alternative but to lie down and perish. (34)

The structure of the episode can be described as Othering. Park, as the representative of the colonizer, sees himself at the centre, possessing what a human being should be ‘self’. He reduces natives to the level of savage animals. They are still more savage than wild animals. Native people are savage, different, and therefore ‘other’ and inferior. This practice of judging all who are different as inferior is called othering. It divides the world between ‘us’ the civilized and ‘them’ the other and the savage. Othering is the colonialist ideology. In addition to othering, Park intends the natives

are uncultured; therefore they should be made humanlike by the mild light of enlightenment and education.

Park confesses that in the world of savage, his spirit begins to fail him, he has no alternative but to die. He calls the natives savages implied as inferior, and establishes his innocence and self, about to perish. However he did not perish but restored his resolution by a desperate measure and inspection of the plant:

At this moment, painful as my reflections were, the extraordinary beauty of a small moss in fructification irresistibly caught my eye. I mention this to show from what trifling circumstances the mind will sometimes derive consolation; for though the whole plant was not larger than the top of one of my fingers, can that Being, thought I, who planted, watered, and brought to perfection, in this obscure part of the world, a thing which formed after His own image? (35)

The small moss in fructification appears to him as a creature perfected with everything by the Christ. The God has fashioned even the lowliest part of creation. With this hope revives in Park or the plant restores his Christian faith. Then, he finds the strength to continue his journey. Reflection of the moss vanish his despair, “disregarding both hunger and fatigue” (35), Park travels forward.

Park postulates that like the moss image, Christianity gives people the feeling of love, light of knowledge and strength for determination. Therefore, the natives have to be instructed and taught by the light of Christianity and Christian education. Similarly, Masters sees “the Association’s attempt to send travelers like Park into western Africa as part of a long-term economic plan” (10) to promote governmental-protected commercial ventures. The plan was apparently accompanied by a ‘sense of the civilizing mission that was to become as central to justifying nineteenth century

imperialism” (9). In this way Park’s travel accounts are closely bound with the quest for new commercial opportunity. In his closing assessment of the region, Park points the way not just to a trading link but to more active British intervention in West Africa:

It was not possible for me to behold the wonderful fertility of the soil. The vast herds of cattle, proper both for labor and food and a variety of other circumstances favorable to colonization and agriculture, and reflect, withal, on the means which presented themselves of a vast inland navigation, without lamenting that a country, so abundantly gifted and favored by nature, should remain in its present savage and neglected stage. (91)

The extract tells the internal motive of Park to colonize the continent for cheap labor and food. Along with the reference to possible colonization, Park’s use of ‘proper’ is worth remarking as:

Labor and food are evidently what cattle are intended for after, and it is implicitly wasteful, not to put them to this use. He would rather like to convert the sources gifted and favored by nature to profitable use. He laments the vastly gifted continent should remain in its present savage and neglected stage. He sees the inability of the local people to use the vast sources, so he directly demands the attention of the British to colonize the continent. His imperialistic attitudes ascertain the British’s possible rendering West Africa economically productive and profitable to both the British and the continent. In addition to this, he envisions “nothing is wanting to this end but example to enlighten the minds of

the native and instruction to enable them to direct their industry to proper objects. (91)

Banks felt the hunger for new discoveries. But, rather than be consumed by it, he fed it. More than any other scientist of the period, he manipulated the public's taste for exploration narratives for his own purposes. Banks seemed to place the remote within Europeans' reach, viewing the new world through his narratives, pictures, and specimens. Banks was vital in giving Europe the confidence to believe it 'knew' the culture it was beginning to explore. They gave Europe power to act from a distance, for they produced a system in which the time and space, the history and geography, of remote areas were reconstructed from the metropolis. Banks imported data and objects. He classified, depicted, and reproduced these returned fragments of foreign cultures, so that they became a code that could be used again and again to make the distant appear familiar.

Chapter Four

Conclusion

Park's narrative was to fire the imperial desire by constructing a discourse about Africa. Travel writing is imperialistic and self aggrandizement. The strong model of travel writing and empire would insist that their texts promote, confirm and lament the exercise of imperial power. The travel narrative is addressed to the home culture, by its very nature, however, that to which it refers cannot be verified. In this flux, *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa* by Mungo Park is able to construct a discourse about Africa. Mungo Park was assigned to ascertain the direction of Niger River up to Timbuktu. But, he employs himself to expose the African people and their customs, traditions, culture and ways of living. His narrative on publication is constructed to form a discourse about the barbaric and savage Africans.

Park does not show the aggressiveness of the Europeans to the natives. The Europeans have aspiration to know and use the continent for their economic and scientific purpose. For this, Park was made an agent to open the new channel for commerce to them. Park plays with the politics of representation, to gather public opinion in favor of expeditions that would pave for the expansion of the empire. His narrative is his testimony of what he saw and experienced in Africa. His version of the truth is political and presents the facts in plain language. Park had to be encouraged to write like a gentleman amateur, so that gentleman of science, themselves often amateurs would trust his testimony when they had no means of checking it. Only then would his claims be believed, only then his text be accepted as truth and accorded the status of "knowledge". Park was trying to appeal to the soft side of British hearts by visualizing Africa as agricultural and commercial heaven. The narrative establishes Park as an eminently trustworthy traveler and describing his journey as sublime. The

editors had a great role in doctoring and fabricating Park's narrative before its publication.

For the Europeans, the other was always alluring. The imperial acquisitiveness of the African Association forced it to channelize its resources to fund Park's journey. The journey at first was for commercial purpose, rather than for exploration. It is only after Park's return that Joseph Banks creates a discourse about distant land Africa, making it alluring for the imperial British greed. The mission of Park's travel was to be familiar with the terrain of Africa. It would later enable the empire to go and capture the distant unknown territory. By describing Africa as rich in minerals and the land of savages, Park was laying the ground work for its colonization.

Park's narrative was able to construct a discourse about Africa to the British and European public goes to prove my hypothesis. Park's representation of the African people constructed a truth about them as the 'other' and that narrative, functioned as a political discourse, enabled the Europeans to prepare themselves to colonize and civilize the 'savage' Africans. What we have to realize is that *Travels in the Interior districts of Africa* by Mungo Park was instrumental in contributing to the discourse of Europe's other. Park's narrative was not a complete discourse in itself, but a vital cog in the wheel of creation of discourse. In his narrative, Park was able to construct Africa as something precious to be acquired and possessed.

Though he claims that what he has written is the "truth," the narrative has been fabricated and molded to suit the imperial designs of the African Association. His imperial eye looks at Africa as a land rich and wealthy in minerals. The natives are described as savages and people who follow a decadent way of life, and do not follow the European civilized way of living. Africa was colonized by the Muslims, and Park says that Europeans must replace the enemy. His narrative seems to be

evoking sensibility. He described his journey as a pilgrimage of a holy Christian, a travel on behalf of Christianity for abolishing slavery in Africa.

Park shifts the European guilt about slavery to the moors, describing them as ruthless and non-Christians. Under the veil, Park wants the enlightened Europeans to carry the white man's burden and march to Africa. He tends to build public opinion for abolition of slavery. He describes extensively the slave trade going on in that region. Park also tends to inferiorize the natives in comparison to Europeans.

When Park finally with great difficulty reaches the mouth of the Niger River, a feeling of euphoria and accomplishment encompasses him. His mission seems transcendental, because Park knows that his mission is an important milestone in the larger project of imperialism and colonization. He says that the Niger is known by various names, which shows the importance for colonial purpose.

Park's narrative appears to be loaded with the logic of improvement that thinks in terms of a moral obligation to render West Africa economically productive and profitable.

Improvement is directly linked with civilizing mission. It comes to be moral obligation for the European to civilize the natives in return for economic imperative. In another idea, if local population will not develop the resources bestowed on them by God, that obligation falls to others. Park's motive is to direct the European's, especially the British's interventions towards West Africa. Park's mission was as imperialistic as it was adventurous. Banks and the African Association soon set about shaping his experiences into a publication designed to open the unknown continent to the eyes of European readers.

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