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Appendices

i) Map of the Ganga

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ii) Map of the Narmada

Source:
http://www.mapsofindia.com accessed on 18 November, 2014 at 1.23 pm

iii) Interview with author Dhruv Bhatt on 20 May, 2011

iv) Interview with author Amritlal Vegad on 17 October, 2015

v) Sketch of the Banks of the Narmada by Mr. Ashok Srivastava from personal collection of Ms. Miraben

vi) Sketch of the banks of the Omkarewhsar by Amritlal Vegad

Source:

vii) Published Research Paper

Interviews were conducted by the researcher in Gujarati as the authors were more comfortable in that language. Presented below are English translations of the same.

1. **Interviewee:** Shri Dhruv Bhatt  
**Date:** 20/05/2011  
**Time:** 10:15 to 11:30am  
**Venue:** Karamsad, Anand, Gujarat.

1) **ક્યાં તમે સ્વીસ્તાન રાજયના તર્ફ કેશી રાખીની ગાળી રાખ્યો હતો?**

**DV:** You have worked in different fields. Your formal education is also in Commerce discipline. Amidst all these diversities, how did you start creative writing?

**DB:** I don’t know what the difference is between creative and non-creative. I am a man of dialects. I don’t have any control over language. I don’t know even criticism. They sound as jargons so I don’t go to seminars and such literary gatherings. Also one cannot bifurcate life like different disciplines as whatever one does in life is common. But something different what one does along with routine is an identity. Everybody does a job and lives life but something other than this routine, I think, that makes one creative. I used to write letters. I don’t know how creativity comes in but I used to write whatever I see and adding imagination to those real experiences.

2) **નિષ્ણાત વિક્ષેપ કંદમાં કયા કારણે શ્રી સૂર્યંદ્ર સ્વીસ્તાનની જ થતી છે?**

**DV:** You write prose and poetry both. Does this dual personality create conflict for the writer while writing or they complement each other?

**DB:** Both forms of writing remain quite separate for me. If thoughts have come in the form of poetry, than I can write a poem only. Yah, but prose needs thinking because whatever is experienced, one needs to add story to that. There I need to add imagination, techniques and tricks – nitty grity of writings – that which you people from literature call it a creation.
3) Do you write keeping any specific character/personality or place in mind?

DV: Do you write keeping any specific character/personality or place in mind?

DB: Yes, I do try to write keeping in mind some character/personality, place or event. But mostly my personal experiences provide me content for writing. For example, Atrapi is the outcome of my experiences and in case of Tatvamasi I had to answer the question of a German man that why the marriages are not organized in the year of Simhastha. To get details for that we roamed around the Narmada and gathered what people said. In such cases, we have to think for what we have set out.

4) You had mentioned once that your childhood experiences help you in writing. Do you think childhood experiences can make you write so dense and thought provoking?

DV: You had mentioned once that your childhood experiences help you in writing. Do you think childhood experiences can make you write so dense and thought provoking?

DB: Actually experiences of childhood allow you to bring out an aspect which needs to be focused in the entire writing. Without the concept of give and take is mentioned and discussed in Tatvamasi. Without the discussion of this concept there is no meaning of the whole novel. Because much has been written on Indian culture but if we want to establish the fact that culture and religion are two different things, we have to take help of this idea. At this point such experiences help.

5) What is your opinion on travel writing as a genre?

DV: What is your opinion on travel writing as a genre?

DB: I have read Kaka Kalelkar’s travelogues. But I don’t enjoy reading travel writing because I feel they are much like statements. They simply narrate details of the places, whereas in the fictions when the story is included it entertains. I enjoy such travelogues which are able to retain the curiosity. I am simply amazed reading the descriptions of Ved Vyasa in the Mahabharata. It feels as if the whole epic is a travel narrative. The description of each place in India is so picturesque which gives the feel that Ved Vyasa must have been an eternal traveller. Such experiences of travel provide content for writing. My writing also comes near to travel writing but I add story element to it.
6) ‘तत्त्वमसि’ नवलकथा लाभी ये पहलां गुजरतीमां के अन्य कोष भाषामां कोष प्रवाससाहित्यां सुसळक वाचेलुं?

**DV:** Had you read any other travelogue from Gujarati or any other language before you wrote *Tatvamasi*?

**DB:** Yes, in my childhood, I had read Kaka Kalelkar and then Bholabhai Patel’s famous travelogue. But I preferred to experience the feel of wander myself. For example, the narrator in *Tatvamasi* feels while bathing in the river as if he himself has merged with the Narmada; I had actually heard the same experiences from many people. So I wanted to know how and why does this happen, few of us jumped into the river with tubes from the morning and kept floating with the flow of the river till the evening. We were speechless when all seven came out of the river in the evening. It was a tremendous experience.

- Do you believe that such experiences can be fictionalized?

Yes, they can be put in a character’s mouth and the feel he shares of becoming one with the river is the experience character describes. I could realize with self experience how this feel occurs. When you are into the water for almost 12 hours, you don’t feel that you are different from the water. I enjoyed that self experience rather reading it.

7) नर्मदा पर लाभेल अन्य नवलकथाओ अने प्रवाससाहित्यां सुसळक श्रेणी के गीतां महेंदानी A River Sutra अने अमृतलाल वेगडां प्रवास वणों करतां आपणी नवलकथा ‘तत्त्वमसि’ क्या रंगे अलग क्रे?

**DV:** Can you distinguish how *Tatvamasi* is different than the other novel like Geeta Mehta’s *A River Sutra* and Amritlal Vegad’s travelogues written on the Narmada?

**DB:** Amrutbhai has tremendously worked in this area. I cannot match with him. He has reached to the state of realization of river. He has internalized the river. I have not reached that level of. Anyway, my main focus was not the Narmada. My main concern was to answer that German couple who had asked why during *Simhasth*, no marriage takes place. And I had an idea in mind that because of religion, our people get distracted. I wanted to check if all these rituals have actually to do anything with religion. I have to visit the Narmada as I realized that I can get such details from its banks only from some old person or saints. My writing is different than other writers on the Narmada because even though the Narmada is there in the story, it is just a string which keeps the story connected. The Narmada reads the narrator’s story from his diary.
8) You name your novels as prai bhramankathao (travel narrations). So what distinction you find between these two genres – fiction and travelogue – of literature?

DB: Any writing is categorized as genre once it is written. Readers decide the genre. We don’t decide that. Also I don’t get involved into such matters. I like reading travelogue, poem, story and any form which has an element of imagination or mystery. I don’t enjoy flat reading. I can differentiate this much only but if I am asked to categorize the genre, I can’t do that. Even if I am asked to criticize or give its reason, I am not able to do that.

9) Do you travel to write or you have visited some place and get inspired to write about that place?

DB: I travelled only Gir to write Akoopar. It was my commitment to write something for Gir. I have been doing camps there since many years and Mr. Sinha used to tell me that I have not reported anything on Gir. And made me realize what have I done for Gir? So after he passed away I felt I should write something on Gir. Otherwise if something very peculiar experience takes place during any visit and I feel like ‘must shared’ with others, I write from that travel experience. For example, if you see something scenic, like a beautiful cloud, you feel like showing it to others. Same way, I feel in case of writing and that is why I write what I have seen, I want to share it with others.

10) Have you undertaken the Narmada parikrama? If yes, how much distance you had covered? What inspired you to take this parikrama?

DB: I have not done parikrama. It was a short journey from Nareshwar to Dhamnod-Mandu. Had anyone told you to take this journey or you took it for your pleasure?

No, that German couple was to be answered so I took this journey thinking that if some old generation person who knows all such rituals is still alive on the banks of the Narmada, I can know the details for this restriction on the marriage in a particular season. There was no such planning.
11) गुजरात अने मध्यप्रदेशना नर्मदाकंकी परना लोकजीवन तस्मान कोहे सामय के तथाकाल आपने शोधा मायो?

**DV:** Did you find any similarity or dissimilarity between the lives and cultures of the people on the banks of the Narmada in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh?

**DB:** There is a great difference at both places. Banks of Gujarat are rich. There are many huge temples. One cannot starve because at very near distance there is another temple, whereas in Madhya Pradesh, there is severe poverty. People don’t have food for evening meal. They dig roots for meals.

- Tribal people mainly live there?
  Yes, mainly different tribes.

- May be the values must be same for the people on both the banks.

Values are the same on both the banks. In Gujarat there are temples which have their system. They have their managers to organize things. But the personal attachment and reverence that tribal have on the banks of Madhya Pradesh for the person who is walking on the river banks is missing in temples of Gujarat. Even if the tribal doesn’t have any grain of food in his house, he would invite *parikramavasi* to come to his place and offer whatever little he can, even grain of salt. Such respect is not found in the temples of Gujarat but in the smaller villages people are still concerned. Perhaps the power of money changes attitude. Probably the feeling of ‘we are the care takers of *parikramavasis’* become more powerful for them. Whereas the tribal feel that if a *parikramavasi* comes to their place, he is obliging this poor tribal. Thus the way of thinking is different.

12) नर्मदा पुवास पंखी आपने कोय अलग ज्वालनसिंह प्राप्त रहे होय तेवुं नन्हूं?

**DV:** Did it happen that you got a different insight for life after your journey around the river?

**DB:** Not actually. But what my notion was that all these traditions and rituals are made and being propagated by saints and other religious figures, is changed. I realized that it is not a religious but a cultural system. But the people of our country were either very poor or busy in their chores that nothing but religious commands can only work. They cannot understand things beyond *paap* and *punya*. Nothing could be done in education or another thing can be we did not want to do anything; we did not want to get educated.
13) आपनी नवलकथाओमें circular प्रकार से शुरूआत और अंत होते हैं. कोई योगदान कारण?

DV: If we talk about the technique of your writing, a circular kind of opening and end is found in your novels. Do you plan this? Or is there any specific reason for this?

DB: Whatever I have said in the beginning, I prefer to end with the same idea. The whole novel is the expansion of that initial thought. Moreover, first and last paragraph I can think simultaneously in the beginning. I retain both those two paragraphs. I get the idea of the story.

14) स्त्री पात्रों को लघु ज्ञान के सक्रम रूप में शिक्षा लेते होते हैं. अब तो?

DV: Female characters are quite strong in your novels. Any reason for this?

DB: May be I must have read more on female characters in my childhood! I have seen many such strong women at different points of time form whose characters, I have taken few qualities. Like the character of Aval in *Samudrantike* is just like an old granny in my family, in the presence of her mother-in-law, this lady had not allowed her drunken husband to enter house saying that the habit of drinking might spoil their children. Faint impression of a strong lady, who cares for her husband and life of her children is rare and less found in men, may be creating such characters.

15) आपने वार्ताओं में मनुष्य-मनुष्य और पृथ्वी-पृथ्वी के संघर्ष से अच्छी तरह से पরिणत हो गए हैं. विलियम्स और उसके साथ रहने की तयारी के लिए किसी ने उपयोग किया?

DV: There is a conflict between human and other human being, nature and culture in your stories. But there is no evil or villainous element for a longer time. Do you deliberately avoid such aspect in your writing?

DB: I cannot write such things. Even if I try I find it difficult to execute. After writing *Samudrantike*, I had visited Keshod where I was asked by a student in the college, how it can be possible when such a huge estate is there and nobody is in conflict to claim that! I could not answer it. Even if I try to create such character, I fail in developing it properly. I had tried it in *Atarapi*. Character of Vishvakadru is against Sarmey, the protagonist but at the end he also becomes Sarmey’s friend. So I could
not sustain it for long. May be I did not have such negative experiences.

16) आपनी वातांमां सारे आपके हाँ हाँ मोला हो अने पढ़ी अं पाटू स्वाथक


नवलक्षणां माइ चे तेवूं वनूं हा बु/भा? जमड़ `समुद्रांति'मा टेंडलनूं पात?

DV: Has it happened that you have met some person and then that personality features as a character in your novel? Like character of Tandel in Samudrantike?

DB: 70% characters in Samudrantike are from real life. That is why I say that why do you label it as a creative writing. It has come from real life, from people. If I create something of my own, then it can be called creative in true sense.

- Any such character in Tatvamasi to whom you had met in real life and then became character in the novel?

In case of Tatvamasi only two Kabas I had met really.

- Kabas loot but at the same time they take care of their prey. What kind of relation is this?

Actually they loot as per their tradition and one cannot oppose or save one’s self. But after the loot they relay a message of their loot and if in between the traveller get down with health or other problem, these tribal take their care and recover them.

17) ‘तत्वमसींमा नरम्दा एक कथानायक छ. अथा नरम्दामा पात तरीसँजेटुं महत्त्व छ?

DV: Narmada is playing a role of a narrator in Tatvamasi. How important it is to portray a river as a narrator almost a significant character?

DB: It is not only a technique. The significant message it conveys is that the natural sources take your responsibility. Whatever we do, they take its charge on them and keep things balanced, as the Narmada takes the responsibility of the diary of the narrator. So we must think before doing something as whatever we leave behind, the nature will suffer of that.
18) દંતકાથાઓનો આપ કેવી રીતે આને શા માટે આપની આધુનિક વાતાવરણમાં ઉપયોગ કરો છો? આ રીતનો ઉપયોગ આપની લખાણમાં કેટલી પહોંચ પાડી છે?

DV: Why and how do you use ancient myths in your modern texts/stories? Do they support in furthering the stories or making them more interesting?

DB: I recollect the myths and try to connect them at proper places in my writing. I enjoy taking references from the Puranas and more I like to prove that even in Modern times, these ancient myths are not changed. For example, jinda sagbaan can be seen in the film Avatar. We may not believe that such myths are there but why to believe that it is not there. We don’t have any proof for either.

19) આપની નવલકથાઓ અને કિવતાઓમાં એક રહસ્યવાદિત તાલુકા છે. તેનું કોઈ કારણ?

DV: There is an element of mysticism in your writing. What could be the reason for that?

DB: I used to like stories full of secrets in the childhood and may be that continues in my writing. But it is also a mystery that when you start writing, you cannot write exactly that was planned.

20) કોઈ વ્યક્તિગત philosophyમાં માનો છે, કે આપ આપના લખાણ દ્વારા લોકો સુધી પહેલાં મળી શકે?

DV: Do you believe in any individual philosophy which you want to extend to your readers through your writing?

DB: I don’t have any such individual philosophy. I don’t believe in such ideology.

- With the passage of time, your belief might get changed?
Yes, it can change. We used to go to temples when I was writing Atarapi. But few experiences of rituals were not convincing for me so I stopped getting involved into those rituals. Thus these experiences can come as philosophy in my narration but by this I don’t want establish any ideology. I do meet people of different beliefs but I tell them what I like and dislike. But I don’t force them to believe what I do.
21) अपने लागे छे के समयानी साधे आपनी मान्यताओमां परिवर्तन आते छे अने अन्य लम्बात पर असर थाय छे?

DV: Do your beliefs change with the passage of time? If yes, do they affect your writing?
DB: So far it has not happened so. Writing makes impact in life but it is very much for a temporary time. Even reading makes its impression but I am not sure how long it would sustain. For example, I was on Gandhiyatra train for almost a year. During that phase I was quite influenced by Gandhian philosophy because of constant reading but once got back to routine life, it was no longer in practice.

22) ‘तत्त्वमसि’ भरे वांछिए कैसे संदेश आपवा मागो छो?

DV: Do you want to send any particular message through Tatvamasi to your readers?
DB: I have not thought any such message. Readers will have to find if there is any message hidden.

23) ‘तत्त्वमसि’ने साहित्य अकडमी अवदेश मागले छे. एक लेखक माटे अवदेशकु ल केलाल भवत्व होय छे?

DV: You have been conferred Sahitya Akademi Award for Tatvamasi. What is the significance of an award for a writer?
DB: A writer enjoys receiving award. But at the same time it creates and increases responsibility to give better or performance of a certain level. Such pressure disturbs and a writer/creator starts becoming a worker.

24) नर्मदाना सौदर्य बिशे आपनो श्रृं पनाल छे?

DV: Would you like to share anything on the beauty of the river Narmada?
DB: Beauty of the Narmada cannot be described completely. It is extremely beautiful. An ancient shloka describes the extent of reverence of different major rivers at a particular place which says that Narmada is holy at any place. Scientifically it actually describes the situation of pollution of and around the river. Because there are not many industries on its banks It doesn’t have any connection with religion. The Narmada unusually flows from a mountain, runs into the plains and again goes back to a mountain. This is the beauty and specialty of this river.
25) ‘तत्त्वमाः’मां नायक कहे है, ‘नदी मने तेना मोहमां बांधती गये हैं’. परंतु वाणप्रसासन वियारे नींदोल यात्री दृष्टि मोहमां पड़े ये केटन्य योग्य है?

DV: In Tatvanasi, at one point, the narrator says that this river fascinates him. So if somebody comes on the river banks – especially on the Narmada to renounce the world, how could he/she again get entangled in the worldly attachments?

DB: मोह doesn’t mean possessiveness in context of the Narmada. मोह शब्द भी मोह है. One who is alive and has the ability to think can fascinate you or create attachment. One must be able to think and the Narmada has that quality. Thus the narrator in Tatvanasi starts believing that Narmada can fascinate him.

26) लोकभाषा अने दिल्ली गुजरातीनो मेण देवी रीते बेसाड़ी हो?

DV: You use local dialects and chaste Gujarati both in your novels. How do you manage different usages?

DB: As a writer I write in a chaste language but if I am using characters from local places, I try to retain their language. I used to record their speech. Characters speak dialect and when message is to be written or when narrator speaks it is a chaste language.

27) लम्बाश वपने inward journey केटली शाये हे के से लम्बाश मादे केले प्रेषण आपे?

DV: While writing do you find any inward journey taking place? Does something inspire from thoughts going along?

DB: Nothing such happens. But I enjoy when I write.

28) नमेदा आंदोलन विश्व कशी कहेशी?

DV: Would you like to say anything on Narmada Movement?

DB: I cannot comment on anything which I don’t know completely. I must read and know about the issue otherwise just because of emotions or to bring in the momentum to what is going on; I must not blindly jump into any issue. But I do appreciate the award that was given in the form of a patch of land to rehabilitate farmers and other depending workers on them. Also dam has both the pros and cons but I don’t have that critical ability to comment or take any stand in this movement.
29) जाज्ञातः के अधानां आपना लघाणो आंतरराष्ट्रीय सते यथाता पर्यावरणां
पुण्यनु धाला अंशे उपाय आपवा सक्षम है. आप आयु माने ही अने ते
ध्यानमां राजनीति लगो है?
DV: Your texts are kind of local solutions to global issues of ecology
and environment at quite some extent. Do you write keeping such
issues in mind?
DB: Nothing such intended but I certainly feel agitated seeing current
situation of the natural sources that whatever is natural beauty, will be
spoilt. And these facts I would like to bring in focus in and through my
writing.

30) ‘अजिकन्या’धी लहने ‘लवली’ पानहाउस’ सुधीना लघाणा आपने कोहे के
फेरदार के सुधारे शब्दजु झलाय है?
DV: Do you see any change or improvement in your writing from
Agnikanya to Lovely Panhouse?
DB: No such major change is noticed. I think there is a variety of
subjects and there can be improvement in me as a thinker/writer but I
don’t know the nitty gritty of a creator.

31) आपनी लघेली नवलकथाओमाौं आपने सोधी वयु कुन नवलकथा पसंद है?
DV: Which is your favourite book from all your written works?
DB: I like Atarapi the most. I enjoyed writing that novel. I used to feel
as if I myself am a puppy. Such freedom cannot be found anywhere.
2. **Interviewee:** Shri Amritlal Vegad  
**Date:** 17/10/2015  
**Time:** 11:30am to 01:30pm  
**Venue:** Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

1) **કોઈ યોક્કો સધારણ કટલે વિભિન્ન વ્યક્તિઓને વધારણામાં લાગીને લાગવાનું પસંદ કરો છો?**  
**DV:** Do you write keeping any particular person, event or place in mind?  
**AV:** The object or the place that is to be described needs proper attention then only one can describe it well. So it is important to give proper attention and retain it when plan to describe something.

2) **પ્રવાસ દરમિયાન જ આપ નોંધ ટપકાવતા જણો છો કે પાછળથી લખતી વખતે આપ મૂદ્રાઓ થાંક કરીને લખો છો?**  
**DV:** Do you make notes while travelling or try to remember and then start drafting at one go?  
**AV:** I was not writing anything during my first journey on foot but started to make short notes/jotting down points in my second trip.

3) **Creative Writing સાથે સીધો સંબંધ ન હોવાં છતાં આપના લખાણ લગભગ ક્યાં મેળવી રહી છે?**  
**DV:** Even if you are not a creative writer by training, your writings are full of figures of speech. How do you manage writing like this?  
**AV:** I don’t know how do I manage these techniques.

4) **આપ વિત્તકાર અને લેખક બંધ છો. લેખક તરીકે આ બંધ વ્યક્તિત્વ ઓખ્ખીજ ક્ષેત્રમાં મદદ થાય છે કે મુક્કેલી કરી ક્યાં?**  
**DV:** You are a painter/artist and a writer both. When you write, do other aspects of your personality hinder your thoughts/expression for writing? As in, does it happen that while writing, you feel that this idea would have been expressed better in the other form of art?  
**AV:** Both the personalities help/complement each other.

5) **આપના લખાણમાં બોલી અને ગુજરાતી ભાષાનો મેળખી રાખી રહ્યા બેસાડો છો?**  
**DV:** During your journey, you must have met people of different regions having different dialects and languages. How do you manage the use of chaste language – Gujarati or Hindi – while writing?  
**AV:** I manage different use of dialects and languages because of coming into the constant touch of different groups of people.
6) Any languages among your books have been translated into different languages. You know two-three languages. In which language, you find yourself most comfortable while thinking and writing?

**DV:** Your books have been translated into different languages. You know two-three languages. In which language, you find yourself most comfortable while thinking and writing?

**AV:** I am more comfortable in Hindi amongst all.

7) Myths in travelogues: Do you agree that myths should be used only if required badly?

**DV:** What is the importance of myths in travelogues? Do you agree that myths should be used only if required badly?

**AV:** Lesser the better. More use of the myths makes the travelogue a kind of information document only. Like Narmadanandji’s Travelogues is more of this kind. I prefer to make it more creative.

8) Inward journey – आंतरिक मथामण

**DV:** Does any inward journey takes place while writing?

**AV:** No truthful writing can come out without inward journey. Inward journey is a part of any writing process.

9) Comment on the genre of Travel writing?

**DV:** Any comment on the genre of Travel writing?

**AV:** To my mind, travel writing should be truthful. Describe what is seen.

10) Why did you select genre of travel writing and not the other popular forms of literature to describe your experiences of the river?

**DV:** Why did you select genre of travel writing and not the other popular forms of literature to describe your experiences of the river?

**AV:** As mine were the travel experiences (As I travel and then write), I felt that only genre of travelogue can best express them.

11) Do you believe that travel writing can give the readers the feel of good literature rather than just a document of information?

**DV:** Do you believe that travel writing can give the readers the feel of good literature rather than just a document of information?

**AV:** Yes. And I see to it that my real experiences of travel also offer pleasure of reading to the readers and not only the data of the places.
12) एक लेखक तरीके अपना लिखाणमा किर सुधारो के देखका जुम्लो छो?

**DV:** Since your first write up for a magazine to your recent articles, do you see any change in your writing style?

**AV:** I don’t see any major or remarkable changes or improvement.

13) नर्मदा पर लघुचित्रालं अन्य नवलकथाओ अन्य पुस्तकसाहित्याच्या पुस्तके कार्याच्या आपना लिखाणपुस्तकमार्गी कये वातावरण बांध रेवे प्यः?

**DV:** Do you feel your writing is different than the other novels and travelogues written on the Narmada?

**AV:** Some critic may be able to answer this better.

14) आपे लघुचित्रालं आपना पुस्तकमार्गी आपने लेखकी वात बांध गेमे प्यः?

**DV:** Which is your favourite book form your writing oeuvre?

**AV:** I like them all. But some critic may be able to offer a good critique.

15) एवोरेन्जु एक लेखक माते षु महत्त्व होई प्यः जे जवाबहारी वातावरणे के मात्र प्रशिमि अपाये प्यः?

**DV:** What is the significance of the award for any writer? Does it add to the responsibility of a writer or it merely gives fame?

**AV:** An award works both the ways. It adds to his/her responsibility as a writer and it also fetches some fame.

16) नदींची पसंदगी आपना लघुचित्रालं अन्य चित्रीं विषय माते कर्मांकाच्या आवाती प्यः पासु एस संजीवनींगों कोट पासु नदी हेक शेरे. नर्मदा जे देम?

**DV:** River is a writing material for you. So it could have been any other river. But amongst all, why the Narmada only? How did you get the inspiration for Narmada Parikrama?

**AV:** Yes. It could have been any river but I chose the Narmada because I have been living on its banks since my childhood. There is a special kind of bonding with her.

17) आपने नर्मदा परिक्रमानी प्रेरणा क्यों देवी रीते मली?

**DV:** How did you get the inspiration for Narmada parikrama?

**AV:** I actually took this journey in search of the subject for my paintings.
18) आपे नर्मदा सौंदर्यनु मन बरीने पान करू हे अने कराव्य हू हे. आपनी सौंदर्यनु प्रायः शी हे अने तेने घडणारा परिवारी कथा हे?

DV: What is your concept of beauty?
AV: For me, something which gives pleasure to your inner self is a real beauty. In the group of Satyam (Truth) – Shivam (Good) – Sundaram (Beauty), Sundaram complements and thus completes the other two.

19) नर्मदा परिक्रमानं नियमं कों नक्की करू? कहेलाव छे के माइकेय अथिने आ विशे वाल करी हे.

DV: Who formed the rules of Narmada parikrama? How is Rushi Markandey connected to it?
AV: I don’t think there are evidences in the scriptures. I feel that the tradition of the parikrama is not old more than 300 years.

20) आपे परिक्रमा शुरु करी ले तेहेला नर्मदानंदज विवाच अन्य केल्हनु प्रवास साहित्यांनु पुस्तक वाचेलंय? जे हा, तो आपना तबाहा पर अन्य केल्हअसर जेवा माळी हे?

DV: Had you read any travelogue other than Narmadanandjì’s travelogue before you started your parikrama? If yes, do you feel any impression of that writing on your writing?
AV: I did read few other travelogues but there is no such influence of any reading on my writing.

21) आपने नर्मदानंदज विशेष माहिती केली रीते मिळी हती?

DV: How did you come to know about Narmadanandji?
AV: I could know about him through his books only. I happened to read his books and this is how I came to know him who had travelled around the Narmada and written his experiences.

22) नर्मदाक्षणाची लोकी का आंत्वानेने पूजेचे? के नर्मदा ज तेमना माटे ठसर चे? के शंकर?

DV: Which deity is being revered by folk of the Narmada? Or the river itself is their deity? Or the Lord Shiva is their God?
AV: People on the banks of the Narmada revere both – the river and Shiva also. As the Narmada is considered to be the daughter of the Lord Shiva, she has equal importance of deity. There are many Shiva temples on her banks.
23) How was the experience of Shoolpaneshwar Zadi? Don’t you feel you missed the excitement of the loot as you had walked with the armed guards? Are there any records if female traveller is robbed in this Zadi?

**DV:** Yes, we did miss the excitement of being robbed in the Shoolpaneshwar Zadi. I haven’t heard of women being robbed in this Bush.

24) Are there any records if female traveller is robbed in this Zadi?

**DV:** Do ladies get involved in the loot in Shoolpaneshwar Zadi? If not, what activities they do while the men are busy in loot? Is this the only activity that men do or they do farming etc. also?

**AV:** Female members of the family don’t get involved into the loot. Even not all male members are involved in the act of loot. Loot is a kind of extra activity. Farming or fishing is their main activity.

25) What is the peculiarity that you like the most from the local life of the people residing on the banks of the Narmada?

**DV:** People on the banks of the river don’t have habit of storing up things. They selflessly offer from whatever little they have. They don’t tend to take away. They are always ready to help *parikramavasis*.

26) Do you find any similarity or difference between the life lived on the banks of the river in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh? Anything that you feel it is remarkable?

**AV:** I feel people in Madhya Pradesh have more attachment and greater reverence for the Narmada than the other parts from where the river flows.
27) Any pravasis who are travelling through your travels who stand different from the rest can be heard. Are you among the storytellers who have narrated the experiences of women folk? Who among the writers like Narmadandniji’s writing? How did you manage recording this?

DV: Your writings have descriptions of women folk and their life experiences whereas it is rare to find such narrations in other travel writers like Narmadandniji’s writing. How did you manage recording this?

AV: It depends. Changes will be there as time changes.

28) Gujaratis who have travelled to mountains in other states and foreigners come to the Narmada. Do they come with the purpose of making sincere parikrama or just to get shelter on the banks on the name of religious travel?

DV: People from other states and foreigners come to the Narmada. Do they come with the purpose of making sincere parikrama or just to get shelter on the banks on the name of religious travel?

AV: Well, one will find both the types of people on the river banks.

29) Do you believe that the Narmada parikrama is made to attain renunciation?

DV: Do you believe that the Narmada parikrama is made to attain renunciation?

AV: It is not that this parikrama is only for those who want to attain renunciation. Even temples also make this parikrama. Couples do come and take this parikrama.

30) Do you believe in any philosophy which you want to reach to your readers?

DV: Do you believe in any philosophy which you want to reach to your readers?

AV: I believe that love for nature is the first step towards the love for the nation. I strongly recommend that we should go and live amidst nature.

31) Do you believe that the Narmada gives darshan i.e. it reveals herself in the human form or it is just a local belief?

DV: Do you believe that the Narmada gives darshan i.e. it reveals herself in the human form or it is just a local belief?

AV: I believe it is just a local belief.
You have made travels on the banks in different years and seasons. What remarkable changes you found during all your travels?

In each season, a change can be observed. At times the banks are lush green; the river is full of gushing water and sometimes, there is scanty water.

The Ganga is suffering from different kinds of pollution. Does the Narmada face such problems of pollution? Do you feel that a travel writer can convey a message or play a significant role in making an appeal for saving rivers from pollution?

The Ganga is found by the foreign writers in English except few regional writers whereas most of the writings on the Narmada are found in Gujarati. Don’t you feel that even for the sake of reaching the knowledge of this river, people should also write in English?
35) Why there is less concern regarding the Narmada? Because of the Sardar Dam, the river was in discussion, otherwise how much reference does this river find in any literature? May be some reference in Gujarati literature. But what about other literatures?

AV: We are not bothered much about the river because we think more of our comforts. We don’t prefer to wander aimlessly or try out an adventure. This lack or disinterest creates the feel of carelessness for this river or natural places.

36) People and the government are much worried about the Gangetic flora and fauna, how about the crocodiles and few species of fish which are found only on the banks of the Narmada?

AV: I would simply say that the Narmada is not only for our use. Its water is also meant for the crocodiles, fish and other creatures. The polluted water leads to the death of these creatures that live in such water. I would appeal to keep the rivers clean.

37) A common man does not know about the ancient cave paintings like Putlikhoh and marble rocks which are preserved by the Narmada. What efforts can be taken to bring them to the notice of the people?

AV: To know about such hidden treasure, people will have to take pain. They would have to travel. Start enjoying hardships of the journey.
DV: Much uproar has been created by the Narmada Bachao Aandolan. Any comment on that?
AV: I would say that proper justice should be done to those who are displaced from their lands because of the Dam on the river.

DV: What changes will the dams bring? Are you anxious because of the dams or you see them as a boon for the society?
AV: I feel that a dam is a necessary evil. Because of the increasing population, we have to build dams. So the controlling the population is very important.

DV: After your parikrama, what does a river mean to you? Do you feel after Narmada parikrama, you have started thinking differently?
AV: I suggest that don’t have the tendency of taking things. Give more than you take.

DV: What are your activities now as you have stopped taking journey to the river?
AV: I am making collage of Narmada parikrama.
Omkareshwar is the biggest place of pilgrimage on Narmada and is an island.
Critical Practice
A Journal of Critical and Literary Studies

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Editorial Note

It is human nature to explore new places. The exploration is most often followed by explication for as Pat Conroy affirms, “Once you have traveled, the voyage never ends, but is played out over and over again in the quietest chambers. The mind can never break off from the journey.” What is significant in this explication is the travel experience. The chronicling and exploration of travel has been quite popular in historical writing. Merchants forged new routes and returned with reports about fantastic places and cultures. These earlier entrepreneurs propelled travelers to undertake a journey. The Venetian explorer Marco Polo (1254-1324) spent many years traveling to China, India and the Middle East which is recorded in the 13th century travelogue The Travels of Marco Polo. The book got many Europeans interested in trading with China and the Middle East. The travelogue describes in great details, the silk route and the great wealth and power of China. So fascinating was the travelogue that it propelled Europeans to visit China, India and the Middle East and to trade with these splendid places. The seventeenth century Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Huen Tsang traveled to Central and South Asia recorded in his travel account Xiyu Ji. Likewise, the Moroccan Islamic scholar Ibn Battuta, often called the world’s greatest traveler, traveled the entire Islamic world for thirty years of his life. His travels are recorded in Ribat (The Journey).

In the wake of cultural studies, contemporary world has seen a renewed interest in travel writing. Various factors have contributed to this awakening. Cultural encounters and the rise
Culture: Translated and Interpreted through Riverine Travelogues

DHWANI VAISHNAV

I: Idea of 'culture'

To define is to know something from two interpretive perspectives: what a thing is and what it is not. The formulation of definition requires to have a definitive construction of idea which according to Indian knowledge system must be free from three faults, viz. atilakṣpti (over implication), anyādṛtī (limited implication), and asambhāwa (improbable) so as to avoid relativism and pluralism in meaning. In other words, act of defining is to know the knowable with conditions of exclusion, inclusion and probability. Sten in this light, defining the term 'culture' defies all these objective criteria. The term 'culture' has been variously defined with the differing scope of exclusion and inclusion of its constituents. In fact, the problem is it hardly excludes anything and includes everything. Since there is very little agreement among critics on what precisely would merit the adjective 'cultural.' This is because there is very little agreement among critics on what precisely the noun 'culture' means. The

most comprehensive and systematic attempt—one that has become a starting-point for all subsequent critics—to unravel the various layers of meanings of the word 'culture' is imbued with Raymond Williams, first work Culture and Society (1958), and the

with more depth in Keywords (1976), which carried a subtitle: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society, wherein he surveyed this word right from its etymology to the various connotations it put on in the history of British thought. The following is an abridged version of his lengthy note on this word:

Culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language. This is so partly because of its intricate historical development, in several European languages, but mainly because it has now come to be used for important concepts in several distinct intellectual disciplines and in several distinct and incompatible systems of thought. 'Culture' comes from the Latin 'root' word cultura which had a range of meanings: inhabit, cultivate, protect, honour with worship. Some of these meanings eventually separated, though still with occasional overlapping, in the derived nouns. Thus 'inhabit' developed through the Latin 'incolere' to 'colony.' Honour with worship developed through the Latin 'cultrum' to 'cult.' The Latin 'cultur' took on the main meaning of 'cultivation' or tending (of plants and animals), and by the early 15th c. passed into English as 'culture.' Thus the primary meaning of this word was in husbandry, the tending of something, basically crops and animals. From early 16th c., the tending of natural growth was extended to a process of human development and this meaning remained until the early 19th c. By the mid-19th c., the continental development of this world, especially the

German 'Kultur' started gaining ascendance. The debates of German intellectuals like Herder and (by the 1900s) Humboldt bifurcated 'Kultur' to have two senses: 'civilization' and 'culture' with the former suggesting the material and the latter the spiritual development of the human society.

II: Riverine Civilizations

Societies have historically developed on the banks of the great rivers thus laying the foundations of the famous riverine
civilizations including Mesopotamia (considered generally as the cradle of civilizations), the Nile Valley, the Indus Valley, the Yangtze Valley and the Congo Valley. Culture develops with the emergence of civilization because it mainly includes experiences, rituals, local myths, values and different ways of life of a particular region which has become 'culture' of that land. The development of farming caused ancient people to give up their nomadic lifestyles and establish permanent settlements, which grew into civilizations. Governments, social structures, writing systems, and belief systems developed as population grew. Ideas spread from one culture to another with the help of migration, trade and warfare. So, the assumption that human civilization developed initially in the river valleys holds true not only for India but also for many of those cultures of the world, which too have been the seat of ancient civilization. In this way civilizations developed and diversified different disciplines of knowledge like History, Geography, Anthropology, Literature etc. Cultural Studies, a relatively recent discipline, has attempted an understanding of various such civilizations and its knowledge systems.

In India, a river is a mini-cosmos in concept. Every river is a mother deity possessing or inspiring mythology, art, dance, music, architecture, history and spirituality. Each one has a clear identity, appearance, value, style and spirit. In every age, diverse human communities have reinvented themselves on river-banks with fascinating nuances. For millennia, Indians have worshipped seven holy rivers that crisscross the sub-continent, fertilizing its sprawling plains and watering its misty mountains and lush forests. The quality and appearance associated with each of these seven rivers have such a strong influence on the Indian psyche. History, architecture, art, music and dance show their impact. Each river represents a specific colour and image and Indian scriptures weave innumerable legends around them; for example, the Ganga shimmers white-and-gold and represents purity or salvation (Moksh), whereas the dark and elusive Narmada is often referred to as the Virgin River associated with the quality of detachment and surrender (Vairagya).

III: Travelogue: the genre

One is always in search of the best medium available which can convey life in its best manner. Travel writing has often been considered a useful mode to apprehend and describe the lived life as this is the genre which is considered to be nearest to reality. Travel writing is more real, because it is recorded mostly after seeing and many a times after living that real life. When time comes to record lived lives on various rivers, which can be a source for the succeeding generations to trace their pedigree and culture, one has to think of the medium which can best convey this life to the masses; it is then that travelogues become such relevant chronicles. Yet, as Charles Grivel remarks, the problem with this genre is that travel literature is a neglected literature and as compared to the samples of canonical genres it can hardly offer something like 'works'. (Korte 5)

Traveller's tale is as old as fiction itself: one of the very earliest extant stories was composed in Egypt during the Twelfth Dynasty. Moreover, the biblical and classical traditions both are rich in examples of travel writing, literal and symbolic – Exodus, the punishment of Cain, the Argonauts, the Aeneid – provide a corpus of references and intertexts for modern writers. In particular, Homer's Odysseus gave his name to the word we still use to describe an epic journey, and his episodic adventures offer a blueprint for romance. The centrality of the pilgrimage to Christianity produces much medieval travel writing. The narratives of the late Middle Ages mark the beginnings of a new impulse which would transform the traditional paradigms of pilgrimages and crusades into new forms attentive to observed experience and curiosity towards other lifestyles. During the sixteenth century, writing became an essential part of travelling: documentation an integral aspect of the activity as political or commercial sponsors wanted reports and maps. For Francis Bacon, the traveller of the Renaissance had discovered a 'new continent' of truth, based on experiences and observations. In effect, travel writing laid the foundations for the scientific and philosophical revolutions of the seventeenth century. Prose fiction in its modern forms built its house on this disputed territory trafficking in travel and its tales. Early modern European novelists are full of traveller-protagonists and authors like Daniel Defoe were skilled at exploiting the uncertain boundary between travel writing and fiction. Many travellers journeyed in search of types of scenery that became known as 'picturesque' or 'romantic' or 'sublime'. Modern tourist sites were being defined at this time,
but travel was still for the rich and the hardy. By 1841, the literature of travel and exploration was in full flow. Travel writing in English had started much later than its Spanish counterpart but had soon produced all kinds of accounts—scientific travel, voyages of exploration and discovery, descriptions of foreign manners—about almost all parts of the world. The 20th century began with the race to the poles. Polar writing reinforced travel writing’s growth in popularity, already evident in the 19th century. But whereas scientists and explorers would inevitably—to use an old shorthand—put content before form, literary writers were also beginning to travel and to write about their travels. Dickens, Trollope, Stendhal, and Flaubert had done so earlier in the 19th century; but now writers such as Robert Louis Stevenson, Henry James, Edith Wharton, and D.H. Lawrence commit large amounts of time to travelling and travel writing. Travel writing gained new prestige from the standing of its authors, and was still immensely popular, but critical attention was lacking, perhaps because literary modernism valued fictional complexity over mimetic claims, however mediated. Travel writing was becoming travel literature and was therefore taken with a new seriousness during the 1970s. Modern writers in the 1970s and 1980s found radically different approaches to new and old material as the age of mass tourism impinged on the terrain of the solitary travel writer. The systematic study of travel literature emerged as a legitimate field of scholarly inquiry in the mid-1990s, with its own conferences, organizations, journals, monographs, anthologies, and encyclopedias. The study of travel writing developed most extensively in the late 1990s, encouraged by the currency of Foucauldian criticism and Edward Said’s postcolonial landmark study Orientalism. This growing interdisciplinary preoccupation with cultural diversity, globalization, and migration is expressed in other fields of literary study, most notably Comparative Literature. Major directions in recent travel writing scholarship include: studies about the role of gender in travel and travel writing; explorations of the political functions of travel; postcolonial perspectives on travel; and studies about the function of language in travel and travel writing.

Most importantly, travel has recently emerged as a key theme for the humanities and social sciences, and the amount of scholarly work on travel writing has reached an unprecedented level. The academic disciplines of literature, history, geography and anthropology have all overcome their previous reluctance to take travel writing seriously and have begun to produce a body of interdisciplinary criticism which will allow the full historical complexity of the genre to be appreciated. In fact, travel writing has played an important role in recent years in the creation of an international literary field thereby impinging upon critical studies to include this popular form of the day for a more serious consideration.

Cultural exchange has always enriched India as a vehicle of this process of exchange has been the rich corpus of travel writing by Indian and foreigners about the home and the world. Perceived in at least two perspectives, travelling both within and outside the country for pilgrimage as well as leisure, the journeys are the nite of passage into more realms of experience and Indians have recorded their multivarious travel experiences in different kinds of literary genres for a long time. Travel broadens the mind, and knowledge of distant places and human societies. Travel can be in the form of pilgrimage, journey, itinerancy, adventure or expedition and it has been noted very clearly in both the histories-English and Gujarati–of this genre that the early travellers were often sent by patrons on journey with different purposes of academics, cultural, discovery, research and many others. But travellers will usually follow their instincts and opportunities, rather than directions from home and it is travellers' eccentricities and extravagances in the literal sense of wanderings off–which have attracted many readers to the genre of travel writing. Travel writing provides us not only with an impression of the travelled world, but the travelling subject is always also laded bare; accounts of travel are never objective; they inevitably reveal the culture-specific and individual patterns of perception and knowledge which every traveller brings to the travelled world. Travel writing can also be educational in as much as it allows the reader to accompany the traveller and to be influenced and perhaps even transformed by his or her experiences. However, thanks to their very content matter, accounts of travel are also capable of giving delight. They satisfy the reader's curiosity about foreign countries and 'strange' experiences; depending on the type of journey and the place involved, they may also fulfill a need for adventure.

Travel writing characteristically fuses various modes of presentation: in very different proportions, narration is
intermingled with description, exposition and even prescription. Despite the generic hybridity and flexibility, one formal feature sets tone: a text about a journey is not normally considered an account unless the journey is narrated. Travel accounts or travelogues are defined by a narrative core; they always tell the story of a journey. This is also true of travel books which present the reader with a great deal of factual information. The element of storytelling in travel writing is closely related to another genre characteristic, namely its element of fictionality. At first sight, this fictional element might appear to contradict the criterion that travel accounts depict journeys which have actually taken place. Certainly the stamp of authenticity may well be what makes travel writing attractive to many readers (as it does in autobiography and historiography). To many writers, too, the distinction between authentic and 'fantasized' accounts is essential. (Charles Grivel) Ultimately, however, a reader's sense of reality only lies in his or her assumption that the text is based on travel fact, on an authentic journey, and this assumption can only be tested beyond the text itself. As far as the text and its narrative techniques are concerned, there appears to be no essential distinction between the travel account proper and purely fictional forms of literature. Notwithstanding their authentic and factual element, reports of travel necessarily re-create the experience of the journey on which they are based. Thus travelogues produced long after the completion of a journey often include extensive passages of dialogue which at least in the days before tape recordings, can only be reconstructions of the traveler's actual conservations. The experience of travel is translated, in the text, into a travel plot. As a result, reports of one and the same journey by various authors can be very different without one being more 'true' than the other. Evelyn Waugh, at the opening of Ninety Two Days (1934), stresses his role as re-creator and translator of the original experience:

Just as a carpenter, I suppose, a piece of rough timber an inclination to plane it and square it and put it into shape, so a writer is not really content to leave any experience in the amorphous, haphazard condition in which life presents it; and putting an experience into shape means, for a writer, putting it into communicable form... for myself and many better than me, there is a fascination in distant and barbarous places... It is there that I find the experiences vivid enough to demand translation into literary form.

The actual experience of a journey is reconstructed, and therefore fictionalized in the moment of being told. This is even the case with accounts in the form of (more or less private) diaries and letters written during a journey, in which the interval between the experience and its telling is smaller than in retrospective travelogues, which narrate a journey after—even years later—it has been completed. Travelogues which emphasize the delay between original experience and the reporting make the process of fictionalizing particularly clear. Another distinct feature of travel writing, as is understood today, namely is its autobiographical element (which is, of course, closely related to the element of authenticity). The narrator of the account and the travelling person in the plot are fused in the union of first-person narration; the autobiographical nature of the text arises from the author's extension of this union to the author of him or herself.

Notwithstanding this assumption, a narratological analysis of travel writing must distinguish between the author, the narrator and the travelling persona of an account. The voice narrating the journey may appear quite distinct from the 'real' author, for example, when the narrator is posing or controlling him or herself in accordance with certain aims or social expectations. The narrator may also, just as the first-person narrator of a novel, create certain distance from himself as persona in the travel plot. The generic features considered here are evident, in varying degrees, throughout the history of travel writing. Thus, the form of travel writing enjoys flexibility as it allows co-option and free play between the material and the immaterial; facts and fanciful; documentation and narrative. As a result, travelogue acquires interpretative flexibility. In the distant time and place, a travelogue may assume the character of historical writing; as an informative discourse, it than may well be read as travel literature with geographical descriptions; a discourse on culture and ethnicity; as a narrative of exploring the unknown, travel writing can be as well engaging as any form of literature.

IV: Textual Examples

The metaphor of translation is effectively used in various disciplines to explain many situations other than a transcription of written documents. Cultural translation, is used in the
discipline of Social Sciences as a powerful tool to evaluate cultural phenomena. The term refers to the process of cultural transmission during a linguistic translation of a text or a migration of ideas from one culture to another. Travel writing is one of the best and effective tools to translate culture as the author and the traveller (generally the same persona) has him/herself has travelled that world and then tries to communicate that visited land and experiences to the readers in written form. When this document transcends and transfigures the journey, it becomes a translation for the reader. For a reader it might not be possible to visit every nook and corner of the world so when he reads a travelogue, virtually he is taken to that world. For a reader, a travelogue would be a good translator of culture, local myths, religious beliefs and the lives of a particular land.

Rivers have been the most ancient sources for inception and cultivation of civilisation and cultures. In India, the Ganga is regarded as one of the most significant life lines. Following her descent to the mortal world to sanctify human efforts to attain salvation, the Ganga is perceived as mokshadari, the Mother Goddess whose waters bring relief from sin, sorrow and suffering. Through the millennia, the river’s banks have been hallowed by a galaxy of saints and seers who either meditated or built great institutions of spiritual research and teachings on her embankments. From India’s prehistoric ages, the Ganga, with her myriad tributaries, has not only been the barthonger of rich harvests in India’s plains, but also the precious lifeline of India’s cultural heritage. Same is the case with Gujarat, the dark and elusive Narmada, rising in the Vindhya-Satpura range in Central India, meets the Arabian Sea in Gujarat. With few, if any, tributaries, the Narmada is often referred to as the Virgin River associated with the quality of detachment and renunciation (Vairagya). These are the basic values attached to both these rivers and when a reader reads travelogues these values are to be translated the way the narrator has interpreted and presented them.

Rivers are the most suitable areas for travelogues to flourish as the journey around a river allows narrator to look into the given culture and lives of the people. Culture can be studied in this way because a river has always found its presence in local myths, beliefs, festivals and every walk of life. Experience of witnessing all these factors exists even with the winds of change through centuries on both the rivers, and which make travelogues happen. In this way rivers have been the reservoirs of heritage for a region in every sense, i.e., agricultural, civilization and cultural.

The Ganga

As Jawaharlal Nehru has observed, the Ganga has been a symbol of India’s age-long culture and civilization, ever-changing, ever-flowing, and yet ever the same Ganga... It is truisim to say that the Ganga is considered as the most representative river of India, because of its ancientness and ethnicity. This emblematic nature of the Ganga has attracted so many travellers either with purpose of delight, pilgrimage or just to amass the facts and present as their findings to the world. Eric Newby is one such traveller who visits Ganga pher with his wife and makes a journey down the holy river of India, from Hardwar where it enters the great plain down to where the waters of the Hoogly finally flow into the Bay of Bengal. Travelling in a variety of boats, and sometimes by rail, bus and bullock cart, staying on sandbanks, in villages and in towns, they encountered an engrossing assortment of characters and the dusty enchantment of India. Always the continuity lay with Ganga Ma – Mother Ganges herself, pure and sacred to millions; shifting, tranquil and evocatively described with Newby’s brilliant talent in Slowly Down the Ganges. The travelogue presents the astonishment of the traveller who thinks that millions live on the banks of the river, regarding it as an essential adjunct without which their existence would be unthinkable and towards unshakable shoraddha of people in the water of this river. The author through this narrative discusses various events taking place on the Ganga ghat like Kumbh Mela which has historical and religious significance when lakhs of people come together for Ganga worship across the world. He meets various people who make the life eventful on the ghats like Pandas, women sants, Aghori Sadhus and Avadhut Sanjayis. Every group of saints has its own peculiarity and different levels of significance. For example, pandas are debased Brahman, and other Brahman consider them to be of low status. From all these experiences about discrepancy in belief regarding the myths and
legends, the author learns that in Hinduism, as in most other
religions, there is a remarkable lack of unanimity amongst the
devotees. Newby has made the journey down to the mouth of the
river where it merges with the Bay of Bengal and concludes that
with his journey only thing that was consistently agreeable was
the river; life on it was sometimes hard, but it was always
supportable, and in some strange way it produced feelings that
were a combination of elation and contentment which neither of
us experienced anywhere else.

The Narmada
Meandering through mountains and valleys, the Narmada
twists and turns her way through forest glades, sculpting boulders,
carving deep gorges and creating scenes of unsurpassed beauty
and loveliness. Rich in history and mythology, she is India’s fifth
longest river and the most sacred after the Ganga. Artist and writer
Aniruddha Vega has been capturing the Narmada on canvas and in
print for over a quarter of a century. Parikrama Narmada Maiyani
and Saundarya Nadi Narmada (Narmada: River of Beauty) detail
Vega’s journeys on foot over a period of years, along the
riverbank. The geography of the Narmada has changed since the
last time the author traversed it, in 1987. Several hundred villages
have been submerged as a result of the Sardar Sarovar project, as
well as cultivable land, flora and fauna. Using exquisite prose
and vivid imagery, Vega has captured the beauty of the valley in
its pristine form. Alternating between the exciting and the serene,
his account mirrors the Narmada’s course from source to mouth.
He narrates his encounters with the villagers who live on the
banks of the river, their easy faith and generous hospitality,
hardworking days and restful nights; his nerve-racking journey
through tribes country where the tribals are known to loot pilgrims.
Though these documents reveal places and distances more, it
has the capacity to capture glimpse of beauty of the river, local
life lived by the author with the village people. Vega has taken
this journey as a pilgrimage to offer his gratitude to this river. One
of the significant motives of the author seems to be of promoting
the sublime beauty of the river and the feeling of awe and of
reverence. She commands from the beholder. Starting from the
text Parikrama Narmada Maiyani, the author records various
experiences on the banks of the river. Early in the morning he

witnessed rustic women getting busy in their daily chores. The
author was surprised when he was denied entry to a farm without
taking his shoes off, outside the farm, by the farmer couple. He
came to know the reason when he overheard them discussing that
for them khushi and khetar are wealth. So wealth should be
worshipped. Though the tribal people are always in dearth of
sufficient provision of material they have learnt the ways to
manage their lives full of hardships. Though they rob
parikrama they often half a chappati and shelter in their small
cottage. The author met various categories of sanyasi out of which
few were sincerely devoted to their journey with complete faith
in the river and few were just enjoying their few days of happiness
in the garb of sanyasi. The author enjoyed folk songs and ritualistic
celebrations of individual tribes on various occasions.
Humorously at a time when people were not ready to accept the
author as a genuine parikrama and to keep a check on him
they arranged a gathering and enjoyed themselves with songs
and funny remarks on each other. Local people traditionally
believe even in the possibility of marriage between a mango tree
and a flower plant (vel) because they believe that one should not
eat fruits without the tree being married. In this way there are
many rituals and traditions local people follow which the author
has been able to capture with its original flavour by staying among
them.

Saundarya Ni Nadi Narmada is capturing more of beauty
of the natural scenery, waterfalls like Jogno Dhodh and
Saharkhadara, small tributaries, beautiful curves of the Narmada.
The text shares speculative pondering of the author regarding
life, illogical social rituals like dowry, religious beliefs and Time
because the Narmada has not remained the same as he had
witnessed it earlier flowing like a careless (allad) young girl. He
fears that the river might lose its natural beauty because of
human intervention and fears that the beautiful site of the
Narmada might turn into an archeological monument for the
researchers. He notes that the dam means a bow in the hands of
the river and the canals are arrows from those bows. He compares
civilized and cultured behaviour by saying that speech
(vachalata) is the gift of civilization (sahyata) whereas silence
likes to be with culture (samsukti). He notes that the Narmada
holds varieties of cultures on its banks as on its North she has
Aryans (aacharpadhan) and on its South she has Dravidians (vicharpadhan). He personifies human emotions in the natural sources and especially in the river.

Thus his first book is a book of events and the second one is a revelation of the concept of beauty and philosophy (though from the subjective point of view of the author) on the river.

V: Conclusion

Hence, both the travellers have their own perspectives for presentation. Eric Newby is narrating his journey as one who does not belong to this land and being a foreigner how he has received things here. He is treated with respect being a foreigner and at times people have tried to take advantage of his ignorance.

He has narrated his experiences from the point of view of an outsider for whom it is a nice amalgamation of extreme faith on one hand and his curious queries on the other. However, Amritlal Vegad is rooted to this land. So, very naturally, his experiences would be very similar for any reader who knows this tradition. In Vegad's case, he already knows the river but he has taken up this journey to promulgate the sanctifying nature and beauty of the river Narmada to a larger audience. Both the narrators have tried to justify their experiences through translation and interpretation of the local myths, religious beliefs and rituals, and lives lived by and with people on the banks of these Sacred Rivers. So travel narratives are proven to be the best sources of knowledge and give social image of a foreign land, civilization and culture. This knowledge leads to the comparative flexibility and complexity of this genre as it shares with few other genres. This comparative analysis of travelogues provides an occasion to enter into various disciplines and fulfills the contribution of this genre towards the aims of Comparative Literature – a discipline becoming interdisciplinary and thus a global phenomenon.

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