Chapter - 4

SOCIO-CULTURAL REPRESENTATION OF CONTEMPORARY INDIA

There is no foreign land: it is only the traveller that is foreign. (qtd. in Hulme and Youngs 1)

- Robert Louis Stevenson

This chapter sets out to narrate the socio-cultural representations of India and how perception about Indians is produced through ‘images’ in the selected travel writings: The Age of Kali: Indian Travels and Encounters, Nine Lives: In Search of the Sacred in Modern India by William Dalrymple and No Full Stops in India, India in Slow Motion and India’s Unending Journey: Finding Balance in the Time of Change by Mark Tully. Here images signify description of something in speech or writing and the impression produced thereby, through representation. W. K. Wimsatt in The Verbal Icon observes that the “verbal image which most fully realizes its verbal capacities is that which is not merely a bright picture (in the usual modern meaning of the term image) but an interpretation of reality in its symbolic dimensions” (61). So, an image is a representation in words of an experience or of a person, place, or object and the word ‘images’ is used here for representational practices that play important role in making or creating images of other cultures and people. Hence representation is the way in which meaning is somehow given to the things which are depicted through the images. Representation is the maker of the image, or the creator of images of a particular society and culture.

‘Society’ refers to people that have interaction or perhaps share a common way of life in a specific place along with the cultural connection such as shared opinions, values, and even activities. Culture and society are intrinsically linked i.e. a culture includes the objects of a society, while a society is composed of the individuals that share one common culture. So in order to understand a society it
is essential to learn about the culture of that particular society. ‘Culture’ as a term evades any single definition but one can arrive at an understanding of ‘Culture’ that originated from the Latin word ‘Cultura’ which means ‘to cultivate’. Culture holds the recognition that all individuals are living in a world that is made by humans, and where they find meaning. Culture consists primarily of “thoughts, moods, feelings, beliefs and values” (Wuthnow 3). It is the ‘way of life’, comprising of the customs and beliefs of a particular group within a specific geographical and temporal space. Mary Douglas, the cultural anthropologist, considers culture as “a world of ordinary symbols, rituals, objects, and activities all of which dramatize the construction of social life” (81).

It needs to be understood that culture is not only “aesthetics or perhaps the arts” but also “process and practices” produced as well as followed by people through their social interaction with other people. “Culture, is not so much a set of things - novels and paintings or TV programmes and comics - as a process, a set of practices. Primarily, culture is concerned with the production and exchange of meanings - ‘the giving and taking of meaning’ - between the members of a society or group” (Hall 2). Within every culture, there is usually more than one way of interpreting or perhaps representing it. Therefore culture relies on its own participants interpreting meaningfully what is going on all around them. People give objects, individuals, as well as happenings meaning by the frameworks of interpretation that they convey to them. Hall rightly points out:

We give things meaning by how we represent them - the words we use about them, the stories we tell about them, the images of them we produce, the emotions we associate with them, the ways we classify and conceptualize them, the values we place on them. Culture, we may say, is involved in all those practices which are not simply genetically programmed into us but which carry meaning and value for us, which need to be meaningfully interpreted by others, or which depend on meaning for their effective operation. Culture, in this sense, permeates all of society. (3)
Thus ‘Representation’ is the pivotal medium through which culture is produced. The term ‘Representation’ embodies a range of meanings and interpretations. Etymologically, ‘Representation’ means to use language to point out something significant about, or even to represent, the world meaningfully, to various other individuals. The word has two-fold meaning, “one is “to present,” “to image,” “to depict” - to offer a depiction of something and in second sense the word representation or representation is the notion that something was there already and, through the discourse, has been represented” (Hall 15). So ‘Representation’ can be understood as a presentation drawn up not by depicting the object as it is but by re-representing it or constructing it in a new form.

Thus, representation acts as an essential element in the process by which meaning is produced or exchanged. It involves the use of language, of signs and images which stand for or represent things. Under the growing influence of literary and cultural theory there has been a revival of academic interest in the concept of representation in the study of culture. Cultural representation helps to form the images people have of others. These images are accompanied by words, which are the part of the representation.

Stuart Hall mentions that there are three approaches through which representation works: “the reflective or mimetic approach”, “intentional approach” and “constructionist approach” (24). In the reflective approach, the meaning is believed to lie within the thing, person, concept, and occurrences in the real life, and language operates as a mirror, to represent the real meaning as it previously exists in the world. The second approach is opposite of the first one. It holds that it is the speaker, the writer, who “imposes his or perhaps her unique significance on the entire world by way of language. Words and phrases mean what the writer intends they need to mean” (24). The final approach recognizes that neither things nor the specific users of the language are able to fix meaning. Things do not mean; meaning is constructed by individuals using representational techniques - “signs and concepts”.
In travel literature, representation is pivotal because that forms the basis of the construction of the images of a particular culture, people and area. It has been rightly said that “the narrator works as brine that will save or perhaps sap out the characteristics of the society based on the strength of representation within his narrative” (Dhishna 2). In the earlier accounts, India had been caged within the stereotypical image of the exotic. Elizabeth Bruce Elton Smith opens *The East India Sketch-Book* (1832) with the question “How to write about India?” because travellers have always been charmed by their first view of India:

Two hundred years ago India was the land of the fabulous and fantastic, the ‘Exotic East’. Travellers returned with tales of marble palaces with gilded domes, of kings who weighed themselves in gold, and of dusky maiden dripping with pearls and rubies. Before this sumptuous backdrop passed elephants, tigers and unicorns, snake charmers and sword swallowers, pedlars of reincarnation and magic, long haired ascetics on beds of nails, windows leaping into the pyre. It was like some glorious and glittering circus - spectacular, exciting, but a little unreal. (Keay 13)

This chapter aims at examining how William Dalrymple and Mark Tully have delineated the vignette of Indian society, depicting vividly Indian caste system, gender issues and people from different social strata. India is usually regarded as one of the most spiritual and culturally diverse countries with its grand history, many religions, traditions and rituals. This has endeared India to both the writers, William Dalrymple and Mark Tully and they consider India as their second home. Tully’s long career of thirty years in India as a BBC Correspondent brought him very close to India. Though later in 1994, he resigned from the BBC but he continued to live in India. His affection for Indian people and culture is evident in his writings. In an interview Tully says, “I want my epitaph to read “A person who really loved India”, and “I wish to be reborn an Indian” (Sengupta 1).

Likewise, in an interview Dalrymple admits his fascination for India: “Some people fancy stamps, some railways, some pigeons... well, I fancy India” (Austa n.pag.). He says that ever since he visited India for the first time in January
1984, he has never wanted to leave. He believes being in India was the best thing that has happened to him. “Living in India has been so enriching. If I had may be five more lives I’d want to live in India and I’d find more and more stories to write about” (Raj n.pag.). A friend who was going to India asked if Dalrymple would like to go along and instantly he agreed. Further he says, “it must have been a mixture of extreme strangeness and familiarity and the latter a result of the colonial rule - that I jumped at the chance to go along to India. I’ve never looked back... never really left India and I am obsessed with the country and just cannot think of living anywhere else” (Raj n.pag.). Thus it is evident from the above that both Dalrymple and Tully have a deep interest in India.

In regard to the writings on India, Amartya Sen categorizes three distinct approaches that underlie the attempt by outsiders to understand and interpret the Indian subcontinent. He points out:

...the first (exoticist) category concentrates on the wondrous aspects of India. The focus here is on what is different, what is strange in the country that as Hegel put it ‘has existed for millennia in the imagination of the Europeans’. The second (magisterial) category strongly relates to the exercise of imperial power and sees India as a subject territory from the point of view of its British governors. This outlook assimilates a sense of superiority and guardianhood... The third (curatorial) category is the most catholic of the three and includes various attempts at noting, classifying and exhibiting diverse aspects of Indian culture... as very special and extraordinarily interesting. (142)

With reference to both the selected writers’ sustained engagement with the socio-cultural milieu of India, it can be said that their approach falls under third category. Their works as travel writers reflect a scholarly interest in the diverse aspects of the subcontinent’s culture and history. William Dalrymple and Mark Tully are such writers who have been living in India for long and they have understood India not only as an outsider but also as an insider. Their curiosity to know more about India is visible in their travel writings. India has been presented
by the ancient travellers as an exotic place but these writers do not exoticise India rather they present real images of Indian society. They have thrown light on the issues that prevail in the Indian society whether it is caste, political happenings, corruption, gender inequalities or other social evils such as sati practice, child marriage, widowhood etc.

Despite the fact that caste system was abolished in 1950, it continues to plague the Indian society and its “persistence through a couple of millennia” (SarDesai 103) cannot be denied. In “Dancer of Kannur”, Dalrymple brings to the fore the realistic picture of the Dalits in Kerala - ‘god’s own country’. Dalrymple weaves the story of Hari Das along with the history of Kerala as the “Indian terminus of the Spice Route” (NL 34) and one of the trading ports. Dalrymple says that the land of “unearthly futility” and “benevolent landscape” (NL 35) is one of the most conservative, socially oppressive and rapidly hierarchical societies of India. Hari Das is a poor dalit who works as a manual labourer and digs wells during the week, then on the weekends he works in Tellicherry Central Jail as a prison warder. In order to meet the needs of his family, he becomes a theyyam dancer for three months because “theyyam can bring in much more than labouring” (NL 42). He says:

Only during the theyyam season, from December to February... we give up our jobs and become theyyam artists. For those months we become gods. Everything changes…We bring blessings to the village and the villagers, and exorcise evil spirits… For them three months of the year we are gods... Then in March when the season ends, we pack away our costumes. And after that, at least in my case, it’s back to jail. (NL 33)

Other dalits also adopt different occupations like Hari Das to earn their livelihood. Hari Das gives example of his friends who do other jobs apart from theyyam: “Chamundi makes wedding decorations and Narasimha is a waiter at a hotel. That boy playing Bhagavati is a bus conductor”. Interestingly, Hari Das says, “though we are all dalits even the most bigots and casteist Namboodiri Brahmans worship
us, and queue up to touch our feet” (NL 33). The theyyam he says completely alters the power structure in these auspicious days.

Kerala has always been “one of the most conservative, socially oppressive and rigidly hierarchical societies in India” (NL 35) and caste inequalities are still prevalent in most parts of the state and “dalits are still expected to bow their heads and stand at a respectful distance” (NL 35) from the upper class people. They are discriminated on the basis of caste and they have to follow certain codes of conduct. It is these inequalities from which theyyam grew. However,

…the dance form has always been a conscious and ritualized inversion of the usual structures of Keralan life: for it is not the pure and sanctified Brahmins into whom the gods choose to incarnate, but the shunned and insulted Dalits. The entire system is free from Brahmin control… the theyyams were tolerated as an acceptable safety valve to allow complaints against the misdeeds of the upper castes to be expressed in a ritualized and non-violent manner. (NL 35-6)

So, today theyyams are a stage where the social norms of everyday life are inverted, and where “for a short period of the year, position and power are almost miraculously transferred to the insignificant and powerless” (NL 36). Hari Das sees theyyam as a tool and weapon to resist and fight back against an unjust social system as a “religious revelation” (NL 37). Dalrymple says that apart from the theyyam season the condition of dalits has not changed much. They are touchable only at religious ceremony and otherwise they are deprived of the basic human rights. For example as Hari Das says, “There was a Brahmin last month who worshiped me during a theyyam, reverently touching my feet, with tears in his eyes, kneeling before me for a blessing. Then the following week I went to his house to dig a well as an ordinary labourer. He did not recognize me” (NL 37).

Further he throws light on the discrimination they face as:

He gave us lunch but we had to take it outside on the veranda and there was no question of being allowed into his house. He used an extra-long
ladle that he could serve us from a safe distance. And he used plantain leaves so that he could throw them away when he had finished: he didn’t want to eat from anything we had touched, and he told us he didn’t want us to come inside the house and wash the dishes ourselves. Even the water was left for us in a separate bucket, and he did not even allow us to draw water from the well we had dug for him. (NL 37)

The above cited excerpt shows the condition of Dalits in this age of globalization. However there is some change in the way upper castes behave with lower castes but still “caste bigotry” (NL 37) exists. Dalits are not allowed to drink or eat with the upper caste. They are given items to eat and drink with extra-long ladle to keep safe distance from them. They still refuse to mingle with them. To the people like Hari Das they may respect him as a “theyyam artist during the theyyam, but outside it they are still as casteist as ever” (NL 38).

Likewise, Dalrymple brings forth that the high caste does not want the lower caste to be literate or get any kind of support and education. They do not want them to be equal in status. This is evident in the essay called ‘Caste Wars’ from the book The Age of Kali which focusses upon the atrocious attack on Dr. Tyagi’s field centre set up at Gagadi village near Jodhpur As he says “about three truck loads of high-caste Rajput youth raided his campus” and turned “everything we had build up over seven years into ashes” (AK 111). Dr. Tyagi’s field centre tries to literate and educate the ‘Harijans’ and Dr. Tyagi says that because of services towards the lower caste, the upper caste feels that they are being deprived of their so-called ‘slaves’ and explains the reason behind their attack:

The lower castes have always been the slaves of the higher castes… They work in their fields for low wages, sweep their streets, clean their clothes. If you educate them, who will do these dirty jobs? …The Rajputs hate this place because it frees their slaves. (AK 112)
While on his way to Jodhpur Mr. Tyagi tells Dalrymple about “how caste is written into the Indian landscape” and shows the picture that “spoke of repression and caste-apartheid” (AK 114). He explains to Dalrymple:

The stone village with the *pukka* houses belongs to Rajputs. The huts belong to *Harijans*. They are not allowed to live together, and if a *Harijan* wishes to come past the Rajput houses he must remove his shoes… If a woman from *Harijan* family wishes to take water from the public well, a person of high caste must come and provide it… It is the same in the every sphere of life. In the village tea-house, the cups for the *Harijans* are kept separately… If there is a public meeting, the *Harijans* cannot share the same *durree* [carpet] or *charpoy* as the Rajputs. (AK 114)

Dalrymple brings out many facts regarding the rigid caste system in the Hindu society especially in the villages of Rajasthan. He observes different kinds of caste system in which even dress is an essential component, “a pin stripe suit and tie places the wearer in one caste and a workman’s dirty overalls in another… caste nonetheless describes not just what you put on, but the place you reside, what trend you adopt, with whom you marry including the colour you paint your home” (AK 115). He says that each and every detail of living in the Indian village is controlled by caste system.

Through this essay Dalrymple tries to show that constitutionally “untouchability was outlawed at independence” but it makes little difference in the villages and it will take “much more than a change in the law to alleviate” (AK 112) the *Dalits*. Not only this, Dalrymple brings into point that such deep rooted caste-system can “create a political and social havoc and a movement, massacres and murders throughout the whole Indian subcontinent”. He brings into discussion the issue about Mandal Commission’s implementation of reservation in government jobs for *Dalits*. The announcement that “half of the jobs in the government were to be reserved for the lower castes” (AK 116) made the upper caste youth think that their rights to have government jobs are shrinking and they opened a ‘caste war’ against the government. In one such event of expression of
the protest against the implementation of reservation, Rajiv Goswami, a young man from a middle class Brahmin family, set himself on fire and died. Rajiv’s death proved a catalytic agent and added fuel to the movement against job reservations. The caste system is so deeply rooted in the Indian society that the upper castes feel the increased ratio of reservation quota would turn the hierarchy upside down and the persons of the lower castes would have more success and power in the time to come. Dalrymple takes the views of Bhera Ram, an old man from Bishnoi caste about the government’s plan to reserve government jobs for the lower castes, Bhera Ram says:

In the old days, under the Maharajah, everyone knew their place… now these bungi [oiks] want to break down social barriers. How can a sweeper be my equal? …Just as I respect a Maharajah, so the bungi must respect me. The ones who are educated create problems. When I want them to work on my fields they do not come. (AK 120)

Whereas the new generation does not think like that as Dalrymple gets a chance to talk to one of Bhera Ram’s grandchildren. He enquires him to know whether there is any difference in the thinking of new generation towards lower caste people or not. Dalrymple asks:

‘Is there any untouchable in your class.’
‘There is one sweeper boy.’
‘Is he your friend?’
‘Yes, but I cannot mix with him out of school because of my family.’
‘Do you think that is a good thing?’
‘No,’ replied his grandchild. ‘I treat everyone equal.’(AK 121)

Dalrymple also brings forth the case of some untouchables who were doing good and were self reliant and successful by citing the case of Gadvada village near Jodhpur. There the Harijans have obtained great economical success in their leather business, and have set an example of progress but still in the majority cases the Harijans find their place at the lowest. Dalrymple sums up by saying
that this kind of situation is prevalent in the rural areas, especially in Bihar and U.P.

On the other hand, in another essay “The Age of Kali” Dalrymple describes an opposite case where high caste people are attacked by the lower caste and also brings out an ‘image’ of violence in northern part of India especially in Bihar: “two hundred armed Untouchables surrounded the high-caste village of Barra in the northern Indian of Bihar… and one after another, they slit their throats with a rusty harvesting sickle” (AK 3). Violence dominates almost every aspect of life in Bihar. Dalrymple explains:

...the economy is stagnant, crime is completely out of control: 64,085 violent offences (such as armed robbery, looting, rioting and murder) took place between January and June 1997. This figure includes 2625 murders, 1116 kidnapping and 127 abduction for ransom, meaning that Bihar witnesses 14 murders everyday and a kidnapping every four hour. Whatever index of prosperity and development you choose, Bihar comes triumphantly at the bottom. It has the lowest literacy, the highest crime, and the fewest cinemas. Its per capita income is less than half the Indian average… is now nearing a situation of anarchy. (AK 17)

Dalrymple concludes ‘caste hatred’ has been persistent to the Indian socio-cultural milieu and ‘caste warfare’ is one of the main factors behind India’s problems:

The lower castes, so long oppressed, have now begun to assert themselves, while the higher castes have begun to fight back in an attempt to hold on to their ground. Moreover, job reservations for the lower castes have begun to be fitfully introduced around the country, reawakening an acute awareness of caste at every level of society. (AK 22)

The issue of caste finds substantial space in the travel books by Tully as well. In “Ram Chander’s story” from No Full Stops in India Tully describes the ever-existing caste system with reference to his servant Chander. Ram Chander, as Tully describes, is from bhangi caste who are at the lowest rung in the Harijan
 caste hierarchy. At the outset Tully mentions that he wants to write about Chander “to show those who have a horror of the caste system that a Harijan is a human being” (NFS 15). However, he aptly brings forth the intra-caste bonding that exists prominently in the society. He provides examples of how the caste system helped Ram Chander when he left his village and came to Delhi. On his way to Delhi, he met a member of his caste who took him home and offered to help him until he found a job. The next day Chander got lost and was helped by a washerman. He was given a place to stay, food to eat, and was helped to find a job. Similarly, when Tully visits Chander’s village after her daughter’s marriage to know more about caste system he comes across its positive side. A young man Kamal, who was a relative of Chander, defends the system and says:

    We help each-other in the biradari from birth until death. When anyone dies, one or two hundred people collect for the funeral and will take the ashes to the Ganges. Only biradari people help you in times of trouble. (NFS 50)

Similarly another elderly villager says:

    Many of our quarrels were among ourselves and we have our own panchayat in our biradari so they sort out the quarrels. Even when we had quarrels with the other castes, the leaders of the panchayat knew that the village could not do without us and that if too much injustice was done to us we would not do the necessary work. (NFS 38)

Further in the same essay, he talks about the exploitation of lower caste people by putting forth the case of an elderly person Tau, who is a sweeper in the government school. His payment is sixty rupees per month but due to his illiteracy and lower caste he is paid only thirty rupees each month. Tully asks him, “How much do you sign for?” He replied “I don’t know. I make a thumb mark.” However Tully left Tau’s case as there are no sweeper unions in villages that could raise his issue but he promised Tau to take his case to the U.P government on his own. The case of Tau shows that the people of lower caste are the worst
victims of the system, firstly due to caste discrimination in the Indian society and secondly due to their illiteracy. The deterioration of the lower caste greatly concerns Tully and he tells the changes in the life of village and especially about the life of the people of the lower caste because they have suffered the most as they were the poorest community.

In another essay “The Return of the Artist” through the example of Jangarh Singh Shyam, a member of one of the clans of the Gond tribe of Madhya Pradesh, Tully brings forward the issues related to the tribes, their exploitation and marginalisation. Tribes in India are known as ‘adivasis’, or ‘original inhabitants’ and used to live in remote jungles and remained outside the mainstream life. However, after independence they were given special privileges like seats in parliament and state assemblies, quotas in job and special tribal welfare departments were set up in central and state governments. But despite these special privileges, there has been no satisfactory improvement in their condition. Tully states that efforts are being made to preserve the tribal culture and people like Jangarh who belong to the marginalized group try to preserve their own culture. Tully says that despite vibrant art and culture of their own, they are easily influenced and exploited by more sophisticated people and Jangarh Singh’s death is the cruel example of how tribal people can be exploited:

A Japanese art dealer regarded Jangarh as a commercial prospect and lured him to lonely but he was not allowed to return home. He sent despairing letters to his family but they could do nothing to help him, and in the end he committed suicide. (IUJ 78)

Tully acknowledges that, “I have tried to give a balanced description of caste… I repeatedly tried to explain that caste did not imply ownership of one social group by another. I had condemned the excesses of the caste system… the caste system had some merits” but he also admits that “when I have attempted to explain that caste is not entirely negative, I have failed to acknowledge the pain and suffering it can inflict” (IUJ 59) and Jangarh Singh is the example of the pain and suffering through which lower caste people have to go.
In an essay in his book *India’s Unending Journey* he signifies the changes taking place in caste system, “the caste system is shifting now, in a typically Indian way. Changes are taking place, although not necessarily fast enough, but there is no talk of a violent swing against this progress” (*IJU* 61). On one hand, caste is enabling dalits to stand together in the fight for their rights and the other, as a social construct it continues to perpetuate tensions and atrocities. Tully gives example of India’s most populous state, Uttar Pradesh where dalits have become a powerful political force and has had a dalit Chief Minister and also one of the most powerful politicians in U.P. Tully also gives an example of a dalit community in eastern U.P who had decided that they did not want to worship in the same temple as the upper castes but wanted to have their own temple in which to pray to their own saint, Sant Ravi Das. However, the upper castes objected to it but the dalit community stood together and built their own temple.

It is interesting to note that Tully is equally critically of the treatment rendered to the dalits by the Christian missionaries. The Christian missionaries exploited the lower caste and converted the dalits and tribals into Christainity. They categorized them as ‘Rice Christians’ and they were not treated with respect by the other members of Church. These people were lured by the missionaries by offering money and food. The lower caste expected that Christainity would give them dignity that was denied to them by Hindus but they remained equally marginalised:

In many churches, *Harijans* were separated from the rest of the congregation by a screen. They were not even united with the rest of the church in death - special parts of cemeteries were set aside for them... The church did little to educate *Harijan* Christians. (*NFS* 76)

Tully gives another example of their bad treatment as:

Reporting on a flood on India, I came across some tribal Christians who had taken refuge in the large compound of the Parish priest’s house. Instead of caring them he said, ‘you see the state we are in. I have to put
up with these sort of people in my house!’ On another occasion, a Roman Catholic headmaster from south India said to me, ‘I wouldn’t take communion from the hands of a dalit priest.’ (IUJ 78)

Thus, Dalrymple and Tully both foreground the issue of caste that is a persistent reality in India. They rightly conclude that the root cause of most of the problems in India is the caste system. They exhibit an understanding of the Indian social fabric that is woven with the threads of caste affinity as well as caste discrimination. They are objectively observant of the change in the mindset of the younger generation for the good.

Sharmila Rege, an Indian sociologist and feminist states that, “the recognition of caste as not just a retrograde past but an oppressive past reproduced as forms of inequality in modern society requires that we integrate questions of caste with those of gender” (6). So, in India the social discrimination could be seen not only on the basis of caste but also gender. In a patriarchal society woman’s place remains inferior and subsidiary. The representation of women in modern society is “an evasive idea as it relates to the amount of women’s access to social as well as material resources within the family and the society” (Sheikh 171). Since time immemorial, women have been devoid of the “concrete powers” and with the help of biased laws and societal codes, dependent status has been enforced upon them:

…man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him: she is not regarded as an autonomous being… The body of man makes sense in itself quite apart from that of woman, whereas the latter seems waiting in significance by itself… Man can think of himself without woman. She cannot think of herself without man. And she is simply what man decrees: thus she is called ‘the sex’, by which is meant that she appears essentially to the male as a sexual being. For him she is sex - absolute sex, no less. She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the
essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute - she is the Other. (Beauvoir 16)

Though the status of women in India has improved and gender equality in all respects is the call of the day, not all women get access to education, economic social and political empowerment. In the light of the plurality of women’s experiences it can be said that dalit women are doubly colonized. Gayatri Spivak in her essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” raises the issue of marginal subjects such as the place of the subaltern women in the society and their empowerment. She goes on to add that “in the context of socio-cultural backgrounds, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow” (287). So, dalit women in India are the worst victims of the system not only because they are poor and women but more unfortunately because they are dalit. Dalrymple demonstrates their condition by an incident with poor lower caste lady, Bahveri Devi in the village Batteri. She was raped by an upper caste person in order to avenge himself for the insult that she had brought to his family by informing the district collector about a child marriage that was being organised in his family. The rape was committed in order to teach her a lesson “that a woman of her caste - a potter, an Untouchable - did not interfere with men of their caste, Gujjars - proud yeomen farmers, cowherds and landowners” (AK 98). Especially in rural India, “women have little say in the running of village affairs, and lower – caste women have virtually none” (AK 101). Dalrymple in this essay pinpoints the social dominance and arrogance of the upper castes. The dilemma is that the lower caste women are not even supported by the other fellow beings of their own society or caste; and there is a total boycott. Even there was a deliberate intention in keeping the legal proceedings slow in order to paralyze the case. Bahveri explains:

Our caste panchayat has declared us outcasts. No one, not even our families, will acknowledge our existence now… It has become very difficult for us to make ends meet. (AK 100)
Even the woman is afraid to tell her sufferings because this would further enhance problems for her and her family. Bahveri felt that reporting the incident would help no one and only cause further trouble and even the police would be completely “unsympathetic to lower-caste woman lodging a complaint against a prominent local figure” (AK 103). Child marriage and rape are other issues that Dalrymple raises in this chapter. Regarding rape cases in India Dalrymple mentions that:

…Rape is actually very common in Indian villages… particularly the rape of lower-caste women. But because of the shame and stigma it goes largely unreported: in all of India, astonishingly, only four or five cases are reported each year. The victim knows she will be labeled for life; moreover, everyone around will encourage her to hush it up, as the stigma will be attached not only to her, but also to her family and to her village. So in most of the cases women just hide such things. (AK 107)

Similarly, Dalrymple finds that child marriage is still widespread in India. People in villages do not oppose child marriage and in Rajasthan it is more common. In 1992, official figures published in Delhi showed that child-marriage was more prevalent in Rajasthan than anywhere else in India. Embarrassed by these statistics, the Rajasthan government appointed sathins to act as informers on any family planning or a child-marriage. (AK 102)

In the essay “The Daughters of Yellamma” Dalrymple shows how in the name of Indian ancient tradition of devadasi, women are exploited and thrown into the business of sex. The tradition of the devadasis is “one of the oldest professions of India” in which “a woman enters for the service of the god or goddess” and the word originated from “Sanskrit- ‘deva’ means god or goddess and ‘dasi’ means ‘a female servant’” (NL 65). In this chapter, Dalrymple is particularly concerned with the representation of the figure of the devadasi and reveals the present status of these marginal figures. The tradition of devadasi has continued in the South Indian region since the ancient times. By the seventeenth-century the term nautch girls was used to describe devadasis that were meant for
dance and entertainment. It was also when an increasing number of British artists travelled to India seeking the new and exotic, dancing girls became a popular pictorial metaphor of difference. Some experts trace the institution to the ninth century and others maintain that the origin of the tradition of devadasis:

...is far older and the most ancient... Several of these inscriptions are from the area around Saundatti: one from A.D 1113 can be found at Alanahalli, only a few miles from Yellamma’s temple, which is one of the very earliest to use the word devadasi... The largest collection of inscriptions, however, come from the Chola temples around Tanjore in Tamil Nadu, where the great Chola kings of the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries boast of gifting thousands of devadasis. (NL 65-66)

However, not all the ‘temple women’ referred to in the inscriptions are dancing girls or courtesans. Some of them were like nuns, “busy with their devotions and temple cleaning duties and others were the domestic and personal servants of the temple Brahmins” (NL 66). Dalrymple also presents the mythical context of Yellamma and narrates the complete story of Yellamma. Yellamma, the wife of the famous Rishi Jamadagni, was cursed by her husband and thrown out of the house to beg. When she came to seek pardon from her husband, the Rishi still enraged ordered his sons to behed her. To his command, Parshuram, the youngest one, beheaded her. The Rishi, pleased at Parshuram’s obedience, asked him to seek a boon and Parshuram asked for the revival of his mother. Thus, the rishi forgave Yellamma but left her forever.

Though the tradition of devoting the girl child to the goddess Yellamma has its roots in the ancient scriptures but the 1984 Karnataka Devadasi Act as well as a number of non-government social organizations worked towards its prohibition and minimization of the social evil. The Devadasis in Karnataka still have auspicious status as they are considered the symbol of fertility. In the earlier period, devadasis came from the grandest families, and many of them were literate and learned women. Today, however, the devadasis come from the lowest Dalit Madar caste and are almost entirely illiterate. While many “medieval temple
women had honoured positions within the temple hierarchy,” today they are “straightforward sex workers” only (NL 70).

Today, most of the women who have dedicated themselves to the goddess Yellamma are in a pitiable condition and this has led them to take up prostitution for a living. The actual life of Rani Bai - a devadasi, too offers similar kind of dreadful plight. She was devoted to the Goddess at a tender age of six and eventually Rani ended up being a sex worker and had two kids in Bombay. Rani then shifted to her village and continued the life of a devadasi. The story of each of Rani’s daughters is likewise touching and pitiful. Rani tells Dalrymple that each of them died of AIDS at some interval. Dalrymple, through the case of Rani Bai, throws lights on the entire class of devadasis. In society devadasis are looked at with lust and as the tools to quench sexual desires by men and in the name of marrying god, they are drawn into the sex business to earn money. Dalrymple draws a parallel between the lives of both the goddess as well as her devotees- devadasis:

Though the story is full of sadness and injustice, devadasis - as those who have been dedicated, or ‘married’, to a god or goddess are known - like Rani Bai, tell the tale as they believe that it shows how their goddess is uniquely sympathetic to their fare. After all, their lives are little better than hers: cursed for crimes of love outside the bonds of marriage, rejected by their children, condemned like Yellamma to live on roads, begging for favours, disfigured by sadness and without the protection of a husband. (NL 60)

Similarly, another grave problem that is highlighted in their travel writings is the condition of widows in India and Vrindavan is considered as the second home for the destitute widows of Indian society. Widows from all over India choose this place as their secure shelter of widowhood. As victims of rigid ancient Hindu customs, they are forced to give up all comforts and desires. In “City of Widows” Dalrymple presents the sad plight of widows spending their days and waiting for death in the pious city of pilgrimage, Vrindavan which is known as a traditional
refuge of the Hindu widows. “Everyday widows from all over India arrive in Vrindavan, they come to seek the protection of Krishna, to chant mantras and to meditate on their own mortality. They live in great poverty” (AK 50). The custom of sending widows to Vrindavan still exists in certain parts of India. In the traditional Hindu society, a woman loses her status the moment her husband dies. She is forbidden to wear colours or jewellery or any sort of adornment as well as to remarry and to own property. In many traditional communities, particularly in the more remote villages, she is still expected to shave her head and live like an ascetic and sleep on the ground. The widows are thrown out of their house and society and forced to lead a pitiable life. The ritual of sending old widows to Vrindavan is painfully narrated by Dalrymple as:

They come to seek the protection of Krishna, to chant mantras and to meditate on their own mortality. They live in great poverty. In return for four hours of chanting, the principal ashram will give a widow a cupful of rice and two rupees - about four pence. (AK 50)

Dalrymple through the story of Kanaklatha demonstrates the socio-economic condition of widows in Vrindavan. She is a widow who has been staying in Vrindavan for more than forty years and spends her life chanting the name of god and begging. Her day starts at four thirty and after offering service to her private idol of Krishna, she would go for chanting shift from six to ten and after that her time would be spent in begging in order to meet her expenses and serving her ill mother. Dalrymple also meets her landlord, Pandit Krishna Gopal Shukla and receives some eye-opening details regarding the widows in the city. Shukla informs him about the black trade of the young widows and the scandals of selling them to the whore houses. Dalrymple realistically foregrounds the miserable plight of the widows and shows how in the name of tradition, the widows are deprived of their rights and left in vulnerable conditions. Perhaps the old woman who comes up to Dalrymple in the end rightly says: “We all died the day our husbands died. How can anyone describe our pain? Our hearts are on fire and sorrow. Now we just wait for the days when all this will end (AK 59). And perhaps all this makes Kamala Ghosh a local women’s rights activist say, “If I
were to sit under a tree and tell you the sadness of the widows of Vrindavan, the leaves of that tree would fall like tears” (*AK* 51). The condition of widows is so bad that they “think even sati would have been preferable to the life of a widow” (*AK* 54).

Mark Tully also writes about the position of women in family and society. In *No Full Stops in India*, he says that women should become informed and should strive for change like in the essay “Ram Chander’s Story”, Ram Chander’s daughter uses an IUD for birth control but village women force her to remove it as they consider its use to be immoral. Similarly, the condition of Muslim women is also not good and in “Typhoon in Ahmedabad” Muslim women discuss with Tully about family planning and the restrictions laid upon them:

Most women do still have larger families. Our mother had ten children, but then she has been brought up to be very traditional and to accept that the Koran says family planning is bad.

Hanifa further adds:

We all know about family planning, and if we want to we adopt it. If an elderly person asks us why we are not having more children, we tell them, we don’t know. Perhaps it’s the will of Allah. But we don’t favour the operation. We make our own arrangements - like taking pills... they don’t even allow their women out of the house very much. If they do go out, they have to wear burqa. (*NFS* 245)

Sati Pratha is another social evil that has plagued India and the society has played a major role in making sati a common phenomenon in the country. Once the ‘Subject’ is gone, the ‘Other’ cannot remain as a single entity and the widow has to join with the dead husband in the funeral pyre for the completion of the cyclical process. Both Dalymple and Tully, take up the issue in their travel writings. Though *sati* was abolished by William Bentinck in 1829, it continues to be a part of rural India. Deorala case where a nineteen year old widow Roop Kanwar immolated herself on the funeral pyre of her husband is the most talked about case
of sati in recent times. Deorala is a village in Rajasthan, “which is now the centre of the cult of the goddess Sati Mata… a memorial put up to mark the place where a living, breathing widow chose to climb atop her husband’s burning funeral pyre, sacrificing herself to ensure her husband’s successful rebirth” (AK 122). Historically, widow burning is not unique to India:

Greek myths record its presence in Europe, and there is archaeological evidence for its existence among the Scythian tribes of the Central Asian steppe. Moreover, the practice has links to the widespread ancient belief that a man needed his companions in the afterlife as much as in this world. But its presence in India is recorded from at least the first century B.C - sati appears in the Mahabharata and in the Indian writing of the Greek historian and traveller Diodorus Siculus and from the third century A.D onwards it became increasingly common. (AK 123)

Both the selected writers Dalrymple and Tully have written on the controversial incident of sati of Roop Kanwar from Deorala, Rajasthan that took place in September 1987. An eighteen years old woman, Roop Kanwar, died on the funeral pyre of her twenty-four years old husband. A photograph of the funeral shows a smiling Roop Kanwar in her wedding outfit and holding on to her husband’s body as the flames rise around her. The picture was widely distributed all over Rajasthan to prove the survival of an ancient tradition as the voluntary choice of self immolation. After Roop’s death, which was witnessed by thousands of supporters who claimed that it was an entirely voluntary act, this view was protested and questioned. Roop Kanwar was said to have been in a drugged state and the famous photograph is fake. However, whether it was a forceful murder or a practice fabricated as sati by the villagers is an unsolved mystery.

Dalrymple and Tully both visited Deorala and had conversation with the villagers. All the villagers insisted that Roop Kanwar’s sati act was voluntary and look up to the act with pride and reverence. On the other hand, following the incident many articles appeared that addressed the controversial issue of sati as a non-voluntary act. However, both the writers play safe by not taking sides,
whether it was a forceful act or voluntary act. They present the point of view of both sides from the villagers who maintain that it was a voluntary act and also the protestors, police and feminists who call it forceful act. It can be said that both, Dalrymple and Tully, try to bring out a realistic image of the sensitive gender issues in India and maintain an objective stance with a sense of involvement and concern.

Dalrymple and Tully also try to map the image of modern India in their travel writings by approaching different people at different locales. They represent that in the last decades of twentieth century, Indian culture and society have undergone a massive transformation in all spheres be it social, cultural or economical and even religion is no exception. Like in Nine Lives: In Search of Sacred in Modern India Dalrymple not only chronicles the social issues and but also the “friction between tradition and modern culture” (xi) in India. Each story of the nine lives dealt with in the book has its own facet which makes it stand out from the others, yet, they all share a common theme of religion and culture. In the introduction, Dalrymple writes:

Living in India over last few years, I have seen the country change at a rate that was impossible to imagine. The speed of development is breath taking to any one used to the plodding growth rates of Western Europe: the sort of construction that would take twenty-five years in Britain comes up in five month. (NL xii)

Nine Lives portrays practices that are far beyond the mainstream and are “suspended between modernity and tradition” (xii). As the sub-title of the book In Search of Sacred in Modern India shows that through this the author tries to examine how ardently the religious matters are observed in the Indian society though the entire scenario is going through transformation in the wake of globalization. Dalrymple picks up the accounts of certain religious figures and the challenges they face. He brings forth the diverse cultural traditions co-existing in India but also emphasises that in the fast flow of modernity in the Indian society, “somewhere the ideological spirituality and the devotional avenues are eroded”
The new generation is deviating from the long cults of conventional lineages and looking forward to some new forms of careers. The concerns of Srikanda, the idol maker, in *Nine Lives* represent the worries as when Dalrymple asks him about the future of his family lineage: “I don’t know”, said Srikanda, shrugging his shoulders. “It’s all part of the world opening up. After all, as my son says, this is the age of computers. And as much as I might want otherwise, I can hardly tell him this is the age of bronze caster” (*NL* 204).

Some of Dalrymple’s characters like Hari Das, the dancer of Kannur, or the bard, Mohan Bhopa of a desert village of Rajasthan believe themselves shielded from change, or have adapted to it. Bhopa explained Dalrymple that, though they are careful “to propitiate the great ‘national’ gods, like Shiva and Vishnu, who control the cosmos, but for their daily needs they pray to their local god-kings and heroes who understand the intimacies of the daily life of farmers in a way the great gods could not” (*NL* 108). But today the cable channels and DVDs are big threat to these recitative arts.

Similarly Tully shows his concern towards Indians aping the West. He says that India is no longer a land dominated by the white sahibs who ruled them but “India is still a land dominated by foreign thinking… Western thinking has distorted and still distorts Indian life… they are parables… they provide no answers to India’s poverty but suggest we should begin to look for those answers in India itself” (*NFS* 12-13). Tully considers ‘cultural exchange’ as a new form of ‘cultural imperialism’. He gives the example of Ganapati Stapati, a sculpture from the small seaside town of Mahabalipuram, Madras and Stephen Cox, an English artist, exhibited at the Delhi Triennial in 1986, who had spent some months in Mahabalipuram working with Stapati to know more about Indian temple sculptors. Cox had been given a scholarship “to learn and to teach” (*NFS* 58). But with conversation with Stapati, Tully came to know that Cox never learnt anything and even made sneering remarks about Indian art like “they have been doing same thing for hundreds of years. It has lost its meaning for today” (*NFS* 59). Later Tully personally meets Cox and finds his studio as an example of modern colonialism. Tully mentions that he is doing exactly the same as the
colonists did by using cheap labour and raw material, finishing it himself and selling it at a large profit. Tully makes a significant observation that Tourism and English language are post-independence colonizers and that it is rightly said “if you want to destroy a people, first destroy its language” (NFS 66).

In *India’s Unending Journey*, Tully’s paints the economic condition of India and how globalization can be made to work in a right way? He says India “has certainly benefited by globalization but there are many voices who say that we need to look at the issue of globalization again” (187). He termed the Indian method of globalization a failure as the fruits of economic growth never percolated to the lower strata of the Indian society. His economic vision is based on the conversion of economic growth into development. For him real growth is one which brings qualitative change in the life of majority and not just the minority. Tully gives an example of a rickshaw puller, Nukun, who came to Delhi from a village near Morena in Madhya Pradesh for livelihood:

I had to earn money and there was no work in the village, nor do I have any land. I have to keep my family, wife and four children. (*IUJ* 183)

Tully describes his situation and says that Nukun earns about one hundred rupees a day and works from seven in the morning till seven in the evening. He pays twenty rupees to the rickshaw owner and sends most of the rest money back to his family in the village. Though affiliation with the global market has given a boost to the automobile industry, but the rickshaw pullers like Nukun still have to go with the existing models and that they have not benefitted despite advancement:

The rich now demand ‘five-star’ hospitals, and they get them. Equipped with the most modern equipment and staffed by highly trained doctors, these hospitals now also entered the health-tourism business. The website health-tourism-india.com advertises orthopaedic surgery, eye care, heart surgery, gynaecology, cosmetic treatment, dental care, all in India. (*IUJ* 184)
Tully mentions that India has certainly benefited from globalization. India has generated many entrepreneurs and increase in industries and manufacturing companies has elevated the status of Indian economy. The expansion of industries and commerce has gifted new luxuries and products in the market but there are many voices who say that there is a need to look at the issue of globalization again. Tully raises the questions regarding the success of globalization in the developing countries as:

Whether globalization has been fair to the poorer nations, whether it leads to greater rather than less inequality, whether it allows governments sufficient autonomy to do what they see as best for their own people, whether it is a threat to an open society and, finally whether it brings with it the threat of a monoculture. (IUIJ 187)

Tully also brings forth the images of Indian villages in his books and its degradation due to modernization. The economic growth is only in cities, the villages are still far behind. Tully through the example of Budh Ram, a dalit who lives in a village in Eastern Uttar Pradesh, acquaints the reader with India’s economic growth in villages. Budh Ram believed that “the basis of his family’s economic problem was the lack of jobs - a complaint that is echoed in every Indian village... the money was in the cities, where people could afford to pay out bribes to secure their jobs” (IUIJ 205). The poor villagers due to lack of money are not able to secure their place in government sector and due to lack of opportunities in the private sector. Even the poor are not benefitted by the government schemes run for them like the one “that guaranteed work for one hundred days a year to one member of every family living below the poverty line” (IUIJ 205). Budh Ram while dismissing the scheme as just another way of putting money in the pockets of local officials, says:

The money has reached the office of the Block Development… but then he gives the list of people registered as below the poverty line to a contractor who draws up a false list of names, so that he can show on paper he has
employed below-poverty-line people. But in fact he uses machines to do his work because they are cheaper. (205)

Tully mentions that “the strength of India lies in the resilience of the poor” but “in fact, the rich got richer and the poor got poorer” (IUJ 206). Budh Ram summed up his position on the growth of India’s GDP: “We did get some freedom from poverty in my generation; we have got something. We hope the next generation will get full freedom” (206).

In one of his lectures ‘India’s Rise and its Obstacles Ahead’ Tully uses the phrase that describes the condition of India: “India is not a failing state but a flailing state” (n.pag.), and by that he meant the problem with India is that “the government flails around it, draws up policies, it spends money on health, on education and on other such services but it flails around the place because it is unable either to see that that money is properly spent or to see that the policies are implemented” (n.pag.).

Tully also acknowledges that the economic growth driven by consumerism can lead to imbalances with nature too, because humans give priority to need for economic growth over everything else, including nature’s own need to grow. He gives the example of Bhopal gas tragedy which was due to the leakage of a poisonous gas in Bhopal on 3 December 1984, caused by the manufacture of a highly toxic pesticide. The pesticide was supposed to provide a short-cut to agricultural growth, but in the event it damaged far more than pests. Tully suggests that organic farming, including organic pesticides can re-envision the relationship between humans and nature. Further he says:

The opponents of organic farming argue that chemical fertilizers and pesticides give a higher yield, but yield is, like GDP growth, a very narrow measure which takes no account of broader benefits such as long-term health of the soil and indeed the health of those who eat the food. (IUJ 215)
Tully is also critical of the western impact on religion in India. He states that the Indian elites being influenced by the West, are drifting away from religion. He fears that the elite’s secularism will lead to disrespect for religion and states that “the vast majority of Indians, who don’t enjoy the benefits of majority, still believe that religion is one of the most - if not the most important - factors in their lives” (NFS 5). Similarly in his book India’s Unending Journey he talks about the pluralistic tradition of India. Since independence, India has faced a number of crises between communities and probably the most dangerous was that of the attack on Golden Temple. Tully says that it was due to India’s ‘pluralism’ that Sikhs were not alienated despite all violence that happened after Indira Gandhi’s death. Similarly while interviewing Maulana Wahiduddin, a Muslim scholar, he finds a similar stand in favour of pluralism. The Maulana praises India’s religious pluralism and says “Muslims enjoyed far better conditions in India than in any Islamic country… In Islamic countries they either have peace or freedom; in India they have both” (IUJ 88). Tully concludingly states that:

India is like a great ocean liner, which is hit from time to time by storms and gaint waves that would capsize most ships. She pitches and rolls dangerously but sails on. However, sailing through such stormy waters and surviving can lead to dangerous complacency, a sense that India will always muddle through somehow and so there is no need to worry. (IUJ 77)

Tully acknowledges that in India, maintaining the tradition of pluralism is essential for the unity of the nation. He says, “in a country where the majority of people are devout, religion cannot be ignored, while the wide ranges of religions within the nation means that each one must respect the other’s beliefs” (IUJ 89).

Tully also draws the image of farmers who are the backbone of the Indian economy. Many of them commit suicide because of the pressure of the moneylenders. Tully gives the example of Karnataka where the farmers are in debt though it is one of the most prosperous states. The debt is always a burden for farmers and too hard to come out, those who recover from it survive and those
who do not commit suicide. “The Indian farmer is born in debt, lives in debt and
dies in debt” (ISM 194). Even it is very hard for them to get a loan from any bank
because they have to go through many formalities:

He has to produce, one - land records, two - records of rights, three - no
dues from the government, four - records of all land revenue paid, five - no
dues certificates from other banks, six - land valuation certificates, seven -
no dues from agricultural societies and if he is a minor, permission from
the court. (ISM 193)

Tully visits Karnataka to witness the condition of farmers and their families. He
visits the home of Ashwathnarayana Achari, a vegetable farmer who had ended
his life by committing suicide. His neighbours inform Tully that:

He had gone to his fields and drank pesticides after selling the last of his
cauliflowers and tomatoes at a price so low that he couldn’t pay off any of
his debts.

Ashwathnarayana had left a widow and two sons aged eighteen and fifteen. He
was in debt for fertilizers and pesticides, for labourers’ wages and seeds and also
took loans from traders, friends and relatives. He even had sold his bullocks and
cow but still could not repay his debts. Tully writes that more than seventy percent
of Indian population is living in villages and most of them do farming as they
have no jobs and opportunities. These issues have been brought out by Tully
through the farmers of Karnataka. In one of his interviews Tully asserts:

I think India made a mistake with concentrating on top-down development
and it should have listened to Gandhi and concentrated on growth from a
grass roots level, at least, as much of the country would be quite a different
place. One of the biggest challenges India faces is making development
happen in the villages. (Sengupta n.pag.)

Tully also brings to light the ecological problem and its solution in “Water
Harvesters” where he tells how people attempt to express the value of the
harmony of nature in their lives as well as the human efforts to resolve these problems. Tully draws attention towards “the worst drought of the century” (ISM 239) which hit some parts of India including the State of Gujarat in 2000. Tully visits Rajkot in Saurastra region of Gujarat to get first-hand information about the drought. He meets few people there and he discovers that the people of the area believed in social service towards preserving the ecology of the area. One of them, named Dinesh Raja, who was the editor of a paper called Fulchab explained to him. “The effects of this drought are being mitigated by the tradition of social service the saints left us” (ISM 241). The people of the area started a movement to fight Saurashtra’s water shortage by reviving traditional methods of harvesting water. Because of this drought and the people’s movement, “the villagers are now turning their backs on the government propaganda, and not only that, they are building the check dams and digging the ponds for themselves” (ISM 241). However, the government only provided them the satellite images of the underground water ducts and dykes of the area. They were looking after their own needs and they knew that following the ethics of the nature was the only way to come out of this problem. The revolution started in the village of Rajsamdiyala. Tully learnt from Dinesh Raja that one Mansukhbhai Suvagia, with the help of some “water-harvesting saints” (ISM 252) inspired one hundred villages to build their own check dams in a region to the west of Rajkot. Tully visits one of the water-harvesting saints and the saint gave Tully his definition of the eco ethics - “that God is everywhere including in water. Water is H2O and God is the hydrogen in water… that if God was the hydrogen in water obviously we should not waste it, so it was our dharmic duty to harvest it” (254). The logic given by the saint may appear incongruous, but the message is not.

Thus in their writings, Dalrymple and Tully draw on the various practices and traditions of India and exhibit a deep understanding of India. Their writings deal with present social problems in India and they try to present a realistic image of India and its people. They represent the images of contemporary India while concentrating on the problems of class, caste, and gender in their travel writings. They also focus on the impact of modernization in which Indians are trying to
adopt the Western way of living. They map the transforming rural India and the urban India that is trying to catch the fastest pace. In their writings, they foreground palpable social evils like corruption, caste system, community riots etc. and make a call for a conscious effort to maintain India’s pluralistic tradition.

In an interview with Tabish Khair, William Dalrymple quotes Colin Thubron:

> The sympathetic traveler who takes time to immerse himself in a country may gain not only factual knowledge but also a sensuous and emotional understanding, and convey a people’s psychology and their response to things in a way that can never be accessed studying in a library. A good travel writer can give you the wrap and weft of everyday life, the generalities of people’s existence that are rarely reflected in academic writing or journalism, and hardly touched upon by any other discipline. Despite the internet and revolution in communications, there is still no substitute for a good piece of travel writing. (180)

The same could be said about Dalrymple and Tully who enjoy the privilege of being insider and outsider. Their works encompass very pertinent issues that need immediate attention. Moreover, their expert gaze captures many occult details which they pick up and weave in their lively narratives. Travelling not only enhances insight into different cultures and brings cultural heritages closer but also induces understanding and social integrity and this is true in the case of Dalrymple and Tully. However, they are aware of the fact that they have chosen to write about sensitive issues that might raise some protest and notes of dissent from Indians. Dalrymple makes it clear at the very outset of his book *The Age of Kali* that all his labour, research and attachments have been bred out of his tender affections and love for this land. Similarly, Tully says in one of his books that in his stories he has “let Indians do as much of the speaking as possible” (*NFS* ii), as to overcome the probable accusation that being a foreigner he could not comprehend the Indian situations.
Thompson says that “it is feasible for travel writing to produce images of various other cultures that are complex, respectful and (where appropriate) sympathetic” (2011: 167) and that it is unusual these days to come across the “overt racism” as well as “cultural supremacism” (2011: 154). In fact, modern day travel writers from the west are a lot more prone to espouse what Debbie Lisle identifies as being a “cosmopolitan vision” (4). This kind of cosmopolitanism typically seeks not in order to denigrate but to celebrate cultural difference and alterity. Lisle says that travel writers today generally “frame encounters with others in positive ways”, so as to “reveal moments of empathy, [...] realizations of equality, and insights into shared values” (4). In this light it can be said that Dalrymple and Tully exhibit a “cosmopolitan vision” and empathetically produce various images of India, no matter how selective.

Narratology is a significant part of any piece of work. For better understanding and examination of the narrative techniques employed in their travel writings by Dalrymple and Tully, the next chapter would focus on the narratology through a close textual reading of the selected travel writings.