CHAPTER-I

TRAVEL NARRATIVES AS TEXTUAL EVIDENCES OF CULTURAL DOCUMENTATION

There is no foreign land: it is only the traveller that is foreign. (Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing: 1)

-Robert Louis Stevenson-

Travel narratives are non-fictional prose forms that are written out of the personal experiences of the traveller/writer. Travel literature is a “non fiction prose form that depends largely on the wit, powers of observation, and character of the traveller for its success. In past centuries, the traveller tended to be an adventurer or a connoisseur of art, landscape, or strange customs who may also have been a writer of merit.” defines the Merriam Webster’s Encyclopedia of Literature. Travelling is an endeavour in which the writer moves through a selected region, giving information and commentaries about the place that he/she visits.

Travel narratives are often records of the places, people, and occurrences of a particular region that a traveller visits. An individual work is often known as a travelogue. Travel writing is a conscious act of the traveller/writer to render his/her experiences into documents for future reference to the readers. In The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing, Roy Bridges, critic on the approaches to travel writing, comments on the significance of the genre:

Travel writing . . . has a complex relationship with the situations in which it arose. It is taken to mean a discourse designed to describe and interpret for its readers a geographical area together with its natural attributes and its human society and culture. Travel writing may embrace approaches ranging from an exposition of the results of scientific exploration claiming to be objective and value-free to the frankly subjective description of the impact of an area and its people on the writer’s sensibilities.
Travelogues or travel narratives have value beyond mere cataloguing of occurrences and dates. They contain tales of conquest, exploration and adventure compiled often in a non-fictional nature by the narrator. The role of the interpreter/narrator is of importance in understanding a travel narrative, because the interpreted land or people are preserved in the narrative of the writer. The narrator acts as brine which can preserve or sap out the qualities of the society depending on the power of representation in his/her narrative. The accounts of the narrator/writer can be an act of creativity or destruction of the particular society that he/she is representing.

“A travel writer should have an unnatural cleverness in representing unusual incidents in a humorous manner. They should be literary writers than being mere travellers.” Observes a writer referring to the context of travel writing in India. Travelling is an activity that helps a traveller to transgress the cultural, social, racial, ethnic, religious and gender based boundaries that exist among humanity.

Any perception of any individual about any place is bound to be unique. The manner in which a traveller/writer views a new/foreign place will be different from the way in which the people living in that place perceive it. Hence, the accounts of a traveller would reflect much more curiosity in comparison to that of the indigenous person. The travel writer usually highlights the quality of the place, its culture, custom, people etc. that acquires only secondary importance in the accounts of the narrative of an indigenous person of that region. Hence the perception of the traveller/writer about the culture of a place/people is important in understanding any travel narrative. Travel narratives describe in detail the customs, traditions and life styles of the people of different places. The power of the travel narratives to mirror life’s reality is emphasised in Sanchara Sahithyam Malayalathil (Travel Literature in Malayalam):

In travel literature, importance should be given more to the writer as an individual. A work that contains descriptions of the places visited, the hotels to stay and the sights to see will only be a travel documentation. Along with that the writer should document his
experiences and responses. Travel literature is more closely related to autobiography. If an individual has travelled throughout his lifetime, then his autobiography and travel accounts will be the same.4

Documentation of travel in the form of literary texts/narratives had been a less explored area until recently when travel and the study of culture have gained prominence in the academic circles. Travelling and documenting about travel could help in the clearer understanding of humanity. Travel narratives help in answering many doubts that we have about our fellow beings across cultural boundaries as explained by Homi Bhabha, culture critic, in Nation and Narration thus: “When did we become a people? When did we stop being one? Are we in the process of becoming one? What does this big question have to do with our intimate relationships with each other and with others?”5 A clearer understanding of the places and people is possible through the study of travel narratives as it gives a clear picture of the areas that had been explored and documented by the travellers/writers.

Travel through sea, land and air are of growing significance in the present. As not only for mere pleasure, travel gained greater significance, shift has turned towards the study of travel narratives. Travel narratives have become valuable sources of history as it contains representations of the social, economic and political condition of a place that was visited by the traveller/writer. Travel narratives were looked upon as a popular genre of literary study. Mary Baine Campbell, remarks thus:

The sense of travel writing as a genre was, where it manifested itself, often crude and restrictive, but the articulated concept of a corpus or ‘tradition’ was in fact useful, especially to social historians, in showing contemporary readers how to be proficient at reading with the grain of older accounts. Without that we cannot do the ‘deeper’ work of reading against it.6

Travel narratives as part of the academic inquiries, focus more on the ways in which different cultures are perceived across different time periods by the
traveller/writer. The relation of human beings with the environment can be studied through the study of travel narratives. Travel narrators concentrated more on narrating the social, political, cultural and environmental aspects of the region that they explored. These explorations are mainly done out of the curiosity of the traveller to understand a ‘foreign’ place/people. This may be due to the personal need of the writer/traveller to get displaced from the society in which he/she lives in.

Inspiration serves as an important factor for the documentation of most of the travel narratives. Inspiration behind writing a travel narrative may differ according to the writer. It may be due to the need of the writer to give a social/political representation of the places that he/she had visited. It could be due to the economic gains and popularity that the writer aims out of it. Inspiration to write travel narratives could be due to the traveller’s personal interest in gaining knowledge and his/her intention to supply it to the readers who doesn’t have a chance to visit those places and experience the life there.

The traveller/writers selected for my study includes, D. H. Lawrence (1885-1930), Sir. V. S. Naipaul (1932-), Bruce Chatwin (1940-1989) and S. K. Pottekkatt (1913-1982). I aim to provide a comparative study of travel literature and cultural encounter by randomly choosing authors from various parts of the world. The aim of such a study is to understand the deeper meanings in travel narratives by focusing on different cultures. The importance of comparative literature as understood from A Dictionary of Modern Critical Terms is:

Techniques of comparisons form a natural part of the literary critic’s analysis and evaluative process: in discussing one work, critics frequently have in mind, and almost as frequently appeal to works in the same or another language. Comparative literature systematically extends this latter tendency, aiming to enhance awareness of the qualities of one work by using the products of another linguistic culture as an illuminating context; or studying some broad topic or theme as it is realized in the literatures of different languages.
Thus comparative study provides larger hope for literary appreciation by exploring different levels of comparisons and contrasting approaches to travel literature. The major travel narratives used for this study includes, D. H. Lawrence’s *Twilight in Italy* (1916) and *Sea and Sardinia* (1921), V. S. Naipaul’s *India: A Wounded Civilization* (1977) and *India: A Million Mutinies Now* (1990), Bruce Chatwin’s *The Songlines* (1987) and *In Patagonia* (1977) and S. K. Pottekkatt’s *Kappirikalude Nattil* (The Land of the Blacks) (1951) and *Simhabhoomi* (The land of the Lions) (1958).

The travellers chosen for this study are all established male writers. Even from its earliest stages, travel writing has been a mostly male prerogative. This is not to deny the place of the female travellers. But as Susan Bassnett, in the context of female travel writing, has efficiently shown in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing:*

Male writers for the most part appear, at least from the way in which their texts are presented, to have had publication in mind from the outset. This difference reflects the difference in social terms between men and women in the nineteenth century, with men occupying a far more public role and women only assuming a public role in particular circumstances. Some pieces of writing were clearly conceived as monograph, others written in the form of letters, diaries, or sketches and then assembled into book form.8

As has been amply evidenced, women’s travel narratives remain for the most in the form of diary entries, travelogues, letters and memoir. My field of inquiry moves beyond into the wider area of cultural encounter.

Travel narration is a conscious activity that requires a lot of effort from the part of the traveller who is usually a literary writer. Travelling and narrating about one’s experiences is purely not of course a male prerogative area, even though critics on travel writing, like Billie Melman, claim that travelling is purely a masculine endeavour. She remarks: “This is a distinctly masculine bond and indeed the travel epic purports to be a masculine genre.”9 This comment makes
travelling a male centered endeavour even though women like Mary Kingsley and Susan Montague had already established their prominence in this field. Susan Bassnett, renowned for her contention of translation studies, contrasts this opinion of Billie Melman and comments:

Alongside the myths of the heroic explorer, however, are other kinds of narrative, some of which have been produced by women. The travel text as ethnography or social commentary transcends gender boundaries and increasingly in the twentieth century, male and female travellers have written self-reflexive texts that defy easy categorization as autobiography, memoir, or travel account.\(^{10}\)

However, travel writing is an area of interest to the readers as the narratives are charged with personal descriptions of the traveller/writer about the people and places encountered and visited. This study on travel writing and cultural encounter further does not purport to lead to any value assessment of any particular community or civilization. It is purely meant to understand how cultural encounter is documented in a travel narrative by taking into account the various discourses that blend into the making of the narrative. Questions remain to be answered about how one writer sees another culture? What might be that interests him/her? What might be of less interest to the writer? Edward Said’s remarks, in *Culture and Imperialism*, on culture could guide one on this inquiry on travel narratives and cultural encounter:

It is more rewarding-and more difficult-to think concretely and sympathetically, contrapuntally, about others than only about ‘us’. But this means not trying to rule others, not trying to classify them or put them in hierarchies, above all, not constantly reiterating how ‘our’ culture or country is number one. For the intellectual there is quite enough of value to do without that.\(^{11}\)

From this comment it could be gathered that writing travel narratives is a difficult and challenging task for any writer, taking into account the personal biases that the writer could have while ‘narrating’ about a foreign place. The writer need
to be careful not to slip into making sharp criticism regarding the similarity or dissimilarity between his/her culture and the ‘other’ culture that he/she visits. Value based assessments as such need to be avoided while documenting a ‘different’ culture.

Travel narratives have undergone innumerable structural changes. And so have writings on travel narratives. It is not unusual for such a field of inquiry to be constantly under change. Further, any inquiry into the narrative modalities and cultural prescriptions that are available in travel narratives is bound to invoke innumerable questions. The travel writers chosen for analysis and the texts could be in many ways prescriptive of a top sided conclusion. There is little alternative for a researcher in this field.

An analysis of the select travel narratives will enable in the better understanding of the personal experiences that these writers had while encountering a foreign culture. This study will help one understand what a travel narrative is? How are travel narratives and cultural encounter interconnected? What are the problems that the writer encountered in a new culture? How does the vision of a foreign culture influence his/her narrative? Is the writer creating a new identity to the place that he/she visited through his/her encounter of a foreign culture? Is it a deliberate attempt through the travel narratives to construct a new global identity for a ‘strange’/‘foreign’ place that the writer had visited? These are among the many questions that this dissertation attempts to analyse.

Travel Narrative and Documentation of Culture

Travel narration is a conscious effort taken by the writer with precision and care. The experiences of the traveller are documented in the form of literary texts called travel narratives. Documenting travel is a skill which is employed by the travel writer with great accuracy as the period when he/she travelled is of greater significance in any reading. William H. Sherman, travel critic, comments in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*:
Documentation had always played an important role in travel, particularly in overseas ventures. English merchants and mariners had long been instructed to keep careful records of their movements, to direct the travellers who would follow in their footsteps and fill in the gaps of geographical knowledge.\(^{12}\)

My interest is particularly on those travel narratives that are filled with geographical information as well as with information about the life of ‘strange’ people. In the late 19\(^{th}\) century, many literary writers began to explore other regions and indulge in travel documentation. “Dickens, Trollope, Stendhal, and Flaubert had done so earlier in the nineteenth century; but now writers such as Robert Louis Stevenson, Henry James, Edith Wharton, and D. H. Lawrence began to commit large amounts of time to travelling and travel writing. Travel writing was becoming travel literature and was therefore taken with a new seriousness.”\(^{13}\)

Travelling had become a self-reflexive endeavour which had to be done with certain amount of seriousness. From there on, travel narratives often employed the first hand narrator/traveller as the focus of attention. The first hand narrator or the ‘I’ of the narrative is the center of the consciousness surrounding which the travel narrative works. The ‘I’ or the first person narrative came to occupy greater significance in the study of travel narrative as the narratives centers on the writer/traveller. Susan Bassnett emphasizes on this aspect:

In the twentieth century, evidence of a change in the construction of travel narratives can clearly be seen in the stylistic terms. Though the I-narrator still occupies a dominant position, the increasing use of dialogue in travel writing has further closed the gap between travel account and fictions making the travel text resemble the novel much more closely. The protagonist engages in conversations that introduce a range of other characters into the narrative, and the reader is expected to believe that such conversations which apparently transcend any language barrier are recorded rather than invented.\(^{14}\)
The new/foreign place/people would be narrated based on the experiences of the first person narrator or the writer/traveller. The narrator leads the readers to all the places that he/she visited through his/her narrative. The narrator’s experience could be seen as the prime focus of attention in any travel narrative. Only few writers talk about the experiences of their fellow travellers using them as the center of their narratives. The narration by the second or third person often makes the narrative looser in its framework. The narrator/writer deliberately avoids such type of narration in order to avoid fictionalization of the narrative. This could be the possible reason why the second and third person narratives are very little used in travel literature. Crossing of cultural boundaries by the traveller is an act of exploration of a foreign culture and experiencing a foreign land/people. Travel is an endeavour for the people from different cultural background as seen from the words of Mary Baine Campbell, in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*:

Much of the work of observing, interpreting, articulating the explosion of that world, as well as the historical development of the imperialized world that led to it, was done through recovery and analysis of people’s writings about ‘foreign’ and especially ‘erotic’ places in which they had travelled and lived: as colonial masters, pilgrims, explorers, ambassadors, ambivalent wives, roving soldiers, ecstatic cross-dressers, conquistadors, missionaires, merchants, escaped slaves, idle students of the gentry and aristocracy, ‘adventurers’, and alienated modern artists.

The traveller/writer often has a feeling of alienation in the new/foreign environment, creating notable changes in his/her subject matter. This signifies that there is a mental and physical displacement or dislocation that occurs when the traveller visits a foreign place. Encountering a new culture could be seen as a method of conditioning the traveller/writer’s preconceived ideas of a new culture through the various experiences that he/she had. This may make notable changes in the texture of the travel narrative.

Understanding cultural encounter is a difficult endeavour for an enthusiast in this field of enquiry. It requires a clear knowledge of the term ‘culture’.
According to the *Key Concepts in Cultural Theory*, culture entails “recognition that all human beings live in a world that is created by human beings, and in which they find meaning. Culture is the complex everyday world we all encounter through which we all move.”\(^{16}\) In contemporary social sciences “culture consists primarily of thoughts, moods, feelings, beliefs, and values.”\(^{17}\) Cultural anthropologists like Mary Douglas consider culture as “a world of ordinary symbols, rituals, objects, and activities all of which dramatize the construction of social life.”\(^{18}\) Literary critics like F. R. Leavis, through mixed cultural-literary criticism were considering various issues on culture in the contemporary society. For him, culture:

> “belong to a tradition dating back to at least the eighteenth century, whose thinkers were alarmed by the growing separation of the economy and society. Would commercial values triumph over human ones? Wasn’t personal well-being more important than the pursuit of wealth? Shouldn’t co-operation, not competition, be the ruling principle of society?”\(^{19}\)

Culture is a term which is often studied and critiqued by scholars. With this element of inquiry in mind, it could be worthwhile for us to dwell on the significance of culture. Culture is an expressive act of the human behaviour. It includes gestures, utterances, ideologies, customs, religious beliefs etc. It deals with the meanings that are attributed to specific behaviour of individuals in a society. Culture was used in the nineteenth century as a synonym for ‘civilization’. It was used to refer to a series of individual activities. Culture is further explained by Edward Said in his *Culture and Imperialism*:

> Yet just as human beings make their own history, they make their cultures and ethnic identities. No one can deny the persisting continuities of long traditions, sustained habitations, national languages and cultural geographies, but there seems no reason except fear and prejudice to keep insisting on their separation and distinctiveness, as if that was all human life was about.”\(^{20}\)
Studying culture enables the reader to understand the travel narratives in a clear manner. The word ‘culture’ originated from the Latin word *Cultura* which means ‘to cultivate’. The term ‘Cultural Studies’ was coined by Richard Hoggart, as evident in *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*, when he founded the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in 1964. I use this concept with a clear understanding that the Frankfurt school: “viewed literature under capitalism as part of the industry of culture dominated by the existing social order. They searched for revolutionary elements in literature, describing them as reflections of sociopolitical realities.”

The study of culture has its relation with the practices of society in day-to-day life. It focuses on the life style of the groups of people in a community or civilization. Cultural Studies analyses human experiences considering the assumption that human nature and culture are related. At present, the focus has shifted from the consumption of art, fashion and literature to a complex link of people from different places and different societies. Different social groups were able to construct different social identities based on this. Hence the study of cultural encounter would be incomplete without the understanding of cultural identity in travel narratives.

Culture enables the individual to find meaning in the environment in which they live through mutual relations with different social groups. Culture is a term that has intricacies within its totality. No clear distinction or demarcation could be made about the definition of culture as Michel Foucault comments in *Cultural Analysis*: “No culture can claim authenticity-although many of them routinely do-and no value gives access to truths that lie beyond itself, beyond its own discourse.” The traveller’s duty as the observer and interpreter of his/her experiences is to give the reader a clear picture of the culture of the foreign people/places that he/she had visited.

Finding meaning out of the writer’s experiences has an important role in the analysis of travel narratives and cultural encounter. The traveller/writer should take extra care while reconstructing a new ‘cultural identity’, for the people and
places that he/she had visited, through his/her writings. This is stressed in by Jurgen Habermas:

Meanings are sufficiently idiosyncratic to prevent approaching them from the stand point of scientific criteria, including canons of verifiability and reliability. Instead the observer must take the role of participant, actual or vicarious and in this way discover the meanings implicit in that situation. The observer brings preconceived models of interpretation to the situation. Thus, it is less accurate today that the observer ‘discovers’ meanings than to recognize that these meanings are ‘reconstructed’.24

Limitations arise in the travel narratives in describing a foreign culture due to various reasons. One of the important reasons among them is the use of language. Language poses a barrier in representing the culture of a foreign place as the writer will not be able to relate completely his/her personal experiences with the real life experiences of the indigenous people that he/she had experienced in the places that were visited. Linguistic barrier occurs in the travel narratives in the geographical description of the places, physical description of the people and the manners in which cultural practices are described. The unawareness of the native language of the people of the foreign place that the writer/traveller visits creates a barrier in mingling with the people. The ‘other’ culture/the culture of the foreign place, is often represented to the best of the writer’s knowledge and belief even though he/she does not have a hold on the new language. This can create gaps in the narrative. Hence language is an important requisite in the encounter of a foreign culture.

The importance of language in the understanding of culture is emphasised by Jurgen Habermas, in Cultural Analysis: “Language provides a key to the analysis of culture. Even though the individual attributes unique personal meanings to objects and events, language must be used to express these meanings to anyone else.”25 Linguistic constrains makes the writer fail in understanding a foreign culture that he/she comes across. This makes the narrative unreliable as it creates only a vague image of the people/places that are being represented in the minds of
the readers. These gaps have to be sealed from the travel narratives. The positive feature of learning the language of a foreign place is that the writer/traveller could be able to understand the culture of the people that he/she visits. Hence understanding a new language minimizes the effort that has to be taken to understand the culture of the people of the new place.

Travel Narratives and Cultural Identity

‘Culture’ and ‘identity’ are two complex terms that evolved out of human interaction with each other. Identity derives from assumptions of assigning oneself to any particular group or community. Culture, as already seen, is a complex set of human actions that makes a particular group different from another. ‘Culture’ is related to identity as the culture of any community itself is its identity from the rest of the parts of the world. The relation of culture with identity is further explained by Kath Woodward, in Questioning Identity: Gender, Class, Nation, thus: “Identity presents the interface between the personal-what is going on inside our heads, how we as individuals feel about who we are-and the social-the societies in which we live and the social, cultural and economic factors shape experience and make it possible for people to take up some identities and render others inaccessible or impossible.”

Travel narratives can be read as documents that blend culture with identity based on the encounter of a foreign place that the writer/traveller had.

‘Strangeness’ is associated with the people of the new place as the people of the foreign land is different and distant from the writer’s cultural ‘self’ of which he/she is talking about. I would like to emphasise that travel narratives from any part of the world could be used for the study of cultural encounter as texts that construct the identity for a particular place/people. Travel narration is a literary genre that deals with the representation/re-presentation of the people and places. Travel narration is a developing genre of literature that emphasises the experiences that the writer had in a foreign land. What makes travel narration a new genre in literature as understood through the comments of Tony Thwaites, critic on culture and media studies:
Genre is not simply a cataloguing device, but instead names the ways in which texts can relate to each other. As emerged in the previous section, the relations between texts—what makes them seem ‘similar’ or not—are complex and variable. Furthermore, these relations not only depend on a text’s internal features. They are also constructed through the social readings that texts may be given by different groups.27

Thus, travel narratives may be considered as an emerging genre of literature due to the multitudes of meanings that are assigned to this genre by the readers across different cultures. These texts are sources for information and entertainment for any readers.

Travel narratives could be considered as sources that document cross-cultural encounter of the traveller/writer through which new people/places are better understood through the descriptions of the writer’s experiences. Travelling and narrating about one’s experiences is done by the travellers irrespective of the differences that might form ‘other’ civilizations. This could be seen as a major aspect stressed by Fred Dallmayr, in Beyond Orientalism: “Cross-cultural inquiry and exegesis today is no longer the monopoly of Europe or the West; in our century, non-Western voices have increasingly come to infiltrate the “conversation of humankind,” thus correcting (at least in part) the monological privilege chastised by Said.”28 Inquiry across cultures is no more a Western prerogative, as seen from this comment. Third world travel narratives that covered all the major continents emphasise that non-Western voices have also become authentic in the present context. Travel narratives describe the culture of a foreign place that the writer had visited based on the beliefs, mannerisms, customs and traditions that the people of that particular place follows and represent. The ‘strange’ nature of the people creates an identity for them. It is through travelling that the writer/traveller encounters the foreign culture. Travel narration is a mode of cultural representation through which the foreign people/place gains its significance. ‘Culture’ is a term that has a whole set of meanings enclosed/embedded in it as we have already seen. Culture is described by Tony Thwaites, in Introducing Culture and Media Studies: “Culture is the ensemble of social practices by which meanings are produced,
circulated and exchanged.” Travelling is a deliberate endeavour of the writer/traveller to encounter the foreign culture and to generate meanings out of it. The purpose behind the study of the encounter of culture in travel narratives could be understood through the varied areas of interest that the study of culture itself has, as clearly defined in *Culture and Imperialism*, by Edward Said:

> As I use the word, ‘culture’ means two things in particular. First of all it means all those practices, like the arts of description, communication and representation, that have relative autonomy from the economic, social, and political realms and that often exist in aesthetic forms, one of whose principal aims is pleasure. Included, of course are both the popular stock of lore about distant parts of the world and specialized knowledge available in such learned disciplines as ethnography, historiography, philology, sociology, and literary history.

From this comment, it could be seen that travel narratives could also be used for the study of culture as they deal with the social and aesthetic peculiarities of the foreign land/people. In the process of representing a foreign culture, travel writing poses many questions regarding the ‘factual’ nature of narration. Mary Baine Campbell, travel critic, explains this:

> As a kind of writing, ‘travel writing’ provokes certain kind of essential literary questions and formulations. Most interesting here are works of literary criticism that find themselves directly facing issues of power, knowledge, and identity as a consequence of the very nature of the formal matters raised. Formal issues that have been fully explored with relation to travel writing in recent decades include the nature and function of the stereotype, lexical matters such as the hidden etymologies. . .the subjective presence of the author(s) in texts of knowledge, truth value in narrative writing, the independent or hard-wired shape of narrative itself, the rhetorical nature of ‘fact’, ‘identification’ in reading (with its consequences in
social and political life), the representation of time, inter-cultural ‘translation’, and the function of metaphor and other figures.31

Critics are addressing all these formal issues in travel narration at present. ‘Identity’ of the encountered people/place and the identity of the writer/traveller is a major issue that has to be addressed in any travel narration. This would also form one of the prime areas of focus in this dissertation. In the process of defining oneself or representing one’s identity, the easiest way to distinguish or differentiate a community from another is to use the terms ‘self’ and ‘other’. ‘Self’ and ‘other’ are the terms that are defined elaborately by critics including Edward Said. In analysing cultural identity in travel narrative scenario ‘self’ and ‘other’ are used by me to distance the writer/traveller from the foreign land by assigning ‘self’ to the writer and ‘other’ to the ‘foreign’ land that he had visited.

Identity can be seen from the remarks of Wang Bin, a theorist on identity, in *Keywords Identity*, as the ability “to define or talk about themselves as a totality when confronted with the Other.”32 This definition would be the right fit for defining identity in terms of the travel narratives as the traveller/writer do have an identity that differentiates him from the rest of the world.

Travel narration is a deliberate attempt made by the traveller/writer. Narrating travel experiences is not an easy task that could be accomplished by any traveller/writer. Narration/documentation depends on the motive behind writing, the readers who are addressed to, the social, political, economic and cultural problems that the writer addresses to and so on. Travel narration is not easy to accomplish like any other prose narration. The difficulty involved in travel writing is explained by William H. Sherman, travel critic, in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*:

Early modern travel writers were often torn between giving pleasure and providing practical guidance, between logging and narrating, between describing what happened and suggesting what could have happened. These rhetorical challenges, along with the novelty of their experiences, left travel writers with acute problems of
authenticity and credibility. The myths and stereotypes which could be reproduced in otherwise sober and scholarly accounts led to associations between travel and lying.\textsuperscript{33}

Authenticity and credibility in travel narration are aspects that cannot be fully focused or based on individual texts. The traveller’s psychology might be different from that of what he feels while documenting. Hence there is more likelihood for the presence of fictional elements in travel narration. Travel narratives gain their credibility when the documentation is closer to the facts of the place that are narrated. The significance of narration of any prose accounts is described in \textit{Introducing Culture and Media Studies}, by Tony Thwaites thus:

Narrative occurs in many different kinds of genres and social contexts, it cannot properly be said to be a genre itself. We can think of it as a textual mode rather than a genre; one that depicts events and ideas by foregrounding this movement through time. Narration is just as much a feature of non-fictional genres as it is of fictional genres.\textsuperscript{34}

Travelling is a mode for the direct encounter of any foreign civilization or group of people. The writer’s encounter with the new civilization makes the narrative more interesting through the presentation of his experiences. The whole process involved in the encounter of culture is addressed by Fred Dallmayr, a theorist, in \textit{Beyond Orientalism}:

While the nineteenth century was a time of immense encyclopedic, but one-sided, erudition about other cultures, our century inaugurates a phase where “those other peoples themselves” are present; thus large-scale compilations of data are now progressively supplemented by “a living encounter—a large-scale face-to-face meeting among persons of diverse faith.”\textsuperscript{35}

The traveller carries the notions about his selfhood in the form of an identity which could be different from that of the native’s viewpoint. Identity is a
term that has a broader focus of attention. This is described in *Keywords: Identity*, where David A. Hollinger, comments thus:

Identity is a degree of personhood established more by internal, psychological mechanisms than by afflictions with a group. Indeed, some psychologists in the United States do use the term identity in this way, and assume that to have an identity is to have a unified self, capable of acting effectively in the world. Sometimes this will involve close ties with this or that group, but group affiliation is incidental rather than definitional to the process.\(^36\)

Identifying oneself with a community is a process that includes associating oneself with the social, cultural, economic and political aspects of that particular community/group. Any single entity from this aspect could make a person associate himself with a new community. Inequalities also shape the identity construction. Dissociating oneself from a community makes a person to automatically associate with another group/community. Hence identity plays a dualistic role of association and dissociation. Aziz Al-Azmeh, critic on identity, talks about this in *Keywords: Identity*: “On the question of identity, some of the most salient of these are socio-economic and sometimes political and cultural inequalities.”\(^37\) From this comment it could be established that identity is an abstract term that fits into any process of association or dissociation from any community, group or civilization that forms a part of social representation of an individual.

Travelling and narrating about foreign place/people occurs when the traveller/writer deliberately cross the cultural boundary. The traveller/writer acts as a mediator between the readers who decode the new messages without losing the credibility. Helen Carr, critic on travel writing, mentions the role of the writer in the creative endeavour, in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* thus:

The shared concerns of imaginative literature and travel writing at this time, as well as the mobility of so many novelists and poets, perhaps account for the emergence of travel writing in the latter part
of this period as the more literary and autonomous genre that we understand it to be today. Earlier travel writing often came out of travel undertaken for the reasons of work, as soldier, trader, scientist, or whatever, or perhaps for education or health; increasingly in the twentieth century it has come out of travel undertaken specifically for the sake of writing about it.38

Thus the traveller/writer acts as the mediator between the readers and the text. Readers would be able to decipher the cultural peculiarities of a place through the paths shown by the writer. The entire perception of the readers about a place depends on the narration of the writer. Tony Thwaites talks about the role of mediation in any accounts, in Introducing Culture and Media Studies: “Mediation occurs when one party acts between two others, bringing them into a recognizable relationship.”39 Mediation creates the identity of a foreign place through the representations of a culture. Mediators/writers should be conscious while constructing the identity of a place/people. The role of mediation is described by Tony Thwaites when he says: “Mediation produces a relationship between parties based on social identity and cultural values.”40

A critic while referring to the notion of identity, points out the role of place in the construction of a people’s identity, in A Place in the World: “Identity is connected to a particular place . . . by a feeling that you belong to that place. It is a place in which you feel comfortable, or at home, because part of how you define yourself is symbolized by certain qualities of that place.”41 Newness of a place is the feeling associated in the mind of the traveller who views a foreign place. ‘Strangeness’ is the attitude that he/she nourishes in the mind during the visit. Strangeness is the same feeling that is cultivated in the mind of the readers who reads the narrative. Often the travellers who visited strange lands could be seen as risk takers. The challenges faced by the travel writer are condensed in Beyond Orientalism by Fred Dallmayr as follows:

Strangeness does not mean the self’s displacement into the world from a realm of permanent essences. Rather, the soul’s strangeness on earth implies the need for a distant wandering or journeying,
which points not toward a safely familiar abode, but toward a painful dislodgement or nihilation in the precinct of ‘death’.42

Traveller could be seen as an adventurer exploring unseen lands and associating it with all the strangeness that he/she could, which would not be the same with the case of the native visiting that place. Encountering a foreign community, group or civilization is a deliberate process by the writer/traveller. Identity could be used as the yardstick for analysing cultural encounter in travel narratives. It could be used as the key that opens the whole world of narration. The writer’s ‘self’ and the encountered ‘other’ can be compared and contrasted through analysing the cultural identity that is prevalent in the narratives. The analysis of cultural identity helps in the better understanding of travel narratives. Identity can be defined as given in Keywords: Identity, where Emmanuel Renault, a theorist, says: “Let us take identity to mean what we are individually, as well as what we aspire to be, what determines or specifies us, as well as how we present our particularities to ourselves, how we refer to ourselves individually, and how we identify ourselves with groups and with the general norm.”43 This definition makes the analysis of cultural encounter in travel narratives easier. Travel narrative is a discourse that creates a new identity of the people who are represented.

Travel narration tracks the cultural boundaries and assigns roles to the people whom the writer meets. All the characters that the writer represents in the narrative relates to his personal interest in describing the people/place. Hence travel narratives become a discourse. A discourse is described in Introducing Culture and Media Studies, by Tony Thwaites: “A discourse is the particular mode of textuality of an institution. It is a set of textual arrangements which work to organize and co-ordinate the actions, positions and identities of the people who inhabit them.”44 Travel narratives generate an understanding in the minds of the readers regarding a place. Power relations are further explained and roles for the people are assigned in a narrative based on the location/place that the particular people live. Many questions are likely to be encountered in this process of reading and interpreting a travel document.
What is identity? Is there a difference between the personal identity and the identity of belonging to a nation/civilization? What is personal identity? Does personal identity or national identity play an important part in travel narrating? What is the writer’s ‘self’? What is the ‘other’ that the writer focuses on? Is identity a construction of the writer? What is the significance of identity in this study? Is identity in any way related to travel narrative and cultural encounter?

The traveller usually does have his/her own notions of personal identity. The writer’s individual ‘self’ will be always on the move with certain motives. Most of the travels are meant to fulfill the writer’s personal interests or needs. It is when these needs are not met with that the writer often ends up with hatred for the people. Preconceived notion about a place/people is often the reason for this disappointment.

There are basic questions about identity that any individual new to this field would obviously have. This dissertation would focus on how a new identity of a place/people is constructed by the writer in the travel narrative through cultural encounter of the traveller. Travel writing is not merely a creative activity meant for the readers. It contains multiples of hidden meanings that have to be decoded based on the social, political, economic and cultural backgrounds of the place/people that the writer is narrating about. Emmanuel Renault’s definition in *Keywords: Identity* helps in the understanding of Identity: “Identity is a given fact that we will be content with affirming so long as we can define ourselves as being part of a larger and indisputable whole.”

Travel narratives could also be examined as a discourse that deals with the people. The role of a travel narrative as a discourse could be understood further through the words of Tony Thwaites: “Discourse is a matter of the way in which things said are embedded in the social world. Even before it is concerned with what is said, it may be concerned with where things are said, by whom and in what relationships of power.” Travel narratives further fit into a new discourse as it reproduces the life of a particular group of people depending on how the writer wished to represent them. Certain aspects of the life of the new people that the writer met are represented in the travel narrative. Certain aspects that the writer
does voluntarily or involuntarily want to omit are not seen in the narrative. Hence travel narratives can construct discourses on the identity of the people who are represented. This would also be my major concern in this dissertation. Travelling is done by the traveller often with some preconceived ideas about the place that he is about to visit. These notions are provided by the already existing identity that the place has in a global level. The traveller often sticks to the existing identity that the foreign place and people have. It is with these views that the writer encounters the new culture.

While dealing with the association and dissociation of a particular individual from a community, geographical, social, political and cultural boundaries are drawn including or excluding the individual depending on the nation that is to be represented. The process of drawing a boundary is a human construct, so these boundaries themselves are elastic in nature. Aziz Al-Azmeh, a theorist, describes the need for drawing such boundaries in *Keywords: Identity*: “Communities do indeed exist, provided their social and geographical boundaries are defined.” Hence identity formation could be seen as a process of defining one’s own cultural, social or political boundaries that are different from another community. Identity defines the individual in relation to the community that he encounters. Travel narratives can be seen as sources of cultural identity as the process of cultural encounter takes place. What the writer as a traveller experienced during his visit need not be the same as what he describes in his narrative.

Narrating about a travel experience is a conscious work done by assigning identity to the people and places described, in consideration with the writer’s own personal ‘self’. Assigning one’s identity with reference to a foreign place could be understood further through *Questioning Identity: Gender, Class, Nation* by the remarks of Kath Woodward, who mentions:

Considering the claim that identity involves how I see myself and how others see me has led to some suggestions about how this takes place. First, we have to be able to imagine ourselves, to reflect on who we are and how we appear to others. Second, we do this
through symbolizing, through producing images and visualizing ourselves. The ability to visualize ourselves and to represent ourselves gives us some degree of agency, although the repertoire of symbols upon which we can draw is always limited by the peculiar culture which we inhabit.48

The writer, through travel narration assigns an identity to himself/herself that might be different from the already existing notions. The identity that the writer constructs for a foreign place/people in a travel narrative need not be the same while comparing with the already established notions about it. This is the point that I would like to stress in my dissertation.

The motive behind the narration of the travel experiences, can alter the identity of the people/place that are narrated by the traveller/writer. The standpoint of the writer need not be the identity of the ‘narrated’ place/people. Emmanuel Renault provides an elaborate definition of identity, in *Keywords: Identity*, that could make this point clearer. He remarks: “Identities cannot be reduced to the simple pre political dimension of knowledge, of background, static and pre reflexive, because they are capable of being altered in the struggle to be recognized and in their entry into public space.”49 This remark emphasizes the fact that identity can undergo changes while it is used in a public/social circle. Identity to which a writer associates is based on how he associates/dissociates with a foreign place. Kay Ferres, culture critic, observes about the process involved in identifying oneself with the ‘other’ in *Deciphering Culture*. She says: “I do not know my ‘place’ except through its relation to these other alluring places.”50 From this comment it could be seen that identity has its relevance only in relation with the other people/places. It do not have a separate stand beyond that. Notions of identity are generated by the writer/traveller during cultural encounter. Cultural encounter on the other hand happens due to generation of curiosity.

Curiosity of the traveller plays a major role in the encounter of a new/foreign culture and in describing the identity of a group of people/civilization. Curiosity makes the people of a foreign place appear to the writer as strange/foreign. Curiosity is described by Kay Ferres: “As a noun, curiosity refers
to a (small) object, valued as exotic or strange. It is a remnant, there to be known, because it is out of place, other, excessive." Thus, curiosity is one of the basic aspects behind the encounter of culture. Curiosity makes travelling a deliberate endeavour for the traveller to encounter a foreign culture.

Curiosity has much deeper connotations than merely to give pleasure out of a new experience. The roles played by curiosity are described in *Deciphering Culture*, by Gillan Swanson, when she said: “The concept of ‘curiosity’, therefore, refers to more than just a state of mind, or an object.” Curiosity to attain a new knowledge is hence a state generated in the mind of the traveller/writer. The state of mind of the traveller/writer and the motive behind the travelling/writing do have a major role in the formation of the ‘identity’ that a foreign place acquires through travel documentation. Curiosity generates a pleasure in the mind of the traveller. Curiosity could also be seen as a pleasure generating aspect in the mind of the readers who read the travel narratives. Curiosity is further defined by Gillan Swanson, when she states:

> The concept of curious pleasures also focuses our attention, therefore, on a cultural habit we have developed. The ‘habit’ of establishing a difference between the ‘self’ and that which lies between the self and its environment—which we mark through routines of everyday life, through practices of the body, through habits of thinking, etc.

Curiosity to understand a foreign culture frames the ‘identity’ of the ‘strange’ place/people. While analysing a travel narrative, one should be clear about the position that the writer/traveller takes during the narration of a foreign culture. Clear distinction should be made regarding the writer’s point of view of a foreign place and his view of the indigenous people.

‘Self’ and ‘other’ are the stand points that are to be defined in the analysis of any travel narrative where cultural encounter is involved in. This frames the identity of the traveller/writer as well as the place/people that are described. ‘Self’ is defined by Gillan Swanson: “We understand the self as a ‘cultural category’, one
that is defined through cultural representations and practices. It may be strange to think of the self as a *definitional* achievement rather than as an organic and unified entity which just ‘is’, or which we just ‘live’.”54 Thus, defining ‘self’ and ‘other’ has to be given special attention in any cultural analysis. It would give a holistic approach to the understanding of travel narratives and cultural encounter.

The transformation of ‘self’ into an individual identity is a long process that is involved during travelling and documentation. The boundaries that are created in defining the cultural identity of the traveller/writer in the travel narratives are elastic in nature as it could be extended as well as reduced according to the writer/traveller’s wish. The writer’s ‘self’ could associate with any place/people that draws his/her attention. ‘Self’ is described in *Deciphering Culture*, by Gillan Swanson, thus:

The spaces of private life-constituted in relation to home, family and personal bonds- functioned as a refuge from the public world, maintaining the boundaries of individual ‘nature’. Thus, the notion of the subjective self-and its translation into individual ‘identity’ or ‘character’-became associated in the nineteenth century with intimate realms of activity.55

Thus notions of ‘self’ define the individual and public space shared by the writer/traveller. The notions of ‘self’ is not limited to the state of mind of the traveller/writer. It is defined by the political, social, cultural and economic spheres in which the writer/traveller live. ‘Self’ is further defined by Gillan Swanson that would enable in the clearer understanding of the travel narratives. She remarks:

Even the definition of the most intimate realms of the self takes place through the regulation of customs and manners, and, just as behaviour is shaped by its harnessing to a socially legible, communicable, system, so too are ways of feeling made habitual and depend upon those established ‘ways of being’ that are offered within specific social environments. The differences between such environments have long been the subject of representations of
various sorts. They were of particular interest in that period I am identifying as that which consolidated distinctions between public and private, and the sense of an inner and personal realm of individuality formed in the intimate, everyday habits of self-fashioning.56

This remark by Gillan Swanson broadens the understanding of ‘culture’, ‘identity’, ‘self’, and ‘other’. Thus cultural encounter and travel narratives could be studied, taking into account the various binaries; public/private space, individual/collective sense, self/other notions, strange/foreign, people/place, and so on. Clear notions about all these binaries would make the study of travel narratives interesting as well as informative to the readers where by peripheral view points of the traveller/writer would attain significance in viewing a foreign culture. This dissertation attempts to analyse cultural documentation, motives of the traveller/writer and the conscious construction of cultural identity by the traveller/writer in the upcoming chapters.

**Travel Narratives of D. H. Lawrence**

D. H. Lawrence (1885-1930), a poet, novelist and critic, travelled and published innumerable travel experiences. Lawrence’s travelling episode began after his elopement and marriage with Frieda von Richtenhof Weekley, the wife of a Nottingham Professor in 1912. He had travelled from Europe upto North America. The trauma of the war years had left a deep impact in Lawrence that boosted his desire to go for a period of voluntary exile from Europe. His wanderlust led him to Italy, Ceylon, Australia, North America, Mexico and France. Lawrence’s travels began in 1919 when he abandoned England and headed to Italy. He excelled as a travel writer by understanding the ‘spirit of the place’ that he had visited between 1919 and 1922. His intention for travelling was mainly due to the inhospitable climate in Europe due to consumptives, problems in his life with a German wife and his anti-war stance. Accusation on Frieda being a German spy compelled them on the move. War time experiences made him lose hope in having a literary career in England. This made him go for a deliberated travel out of Europe.
After his brief stay in Sicily he made excursions to Sardinia, Malta, Italy, Austria and Germany. His intention was to migrate to America. Most of his fictional and non-fictional works where produced during this period. He headed to England in 1923 on his visit to Mexico. His health condition made him return to England. His unfavourable health condition made it difficult for him to travel for the remainder of his life. He disliked the mechanized life of the Westerners after the industrialization period. Natural and physical instincts were unseen in their culture. Lawrence was aware of the cultural decline that was happening in the European society. This had generated unrest in him. His literary output was remarkable considering his unsettled life and his poor health condition. He lived in constant anxiety about money and was helped by his friends and admirers. His travels can be considered as rich sources of his encounter of ‘culture’. He wrote his travel accounts with vividness considering the need for ‘cultural awareness’. His reputation as a travel writer remained always high considering the larger volumes of travel accounts that where published by him.

Lawrence’s travel narratives are filled with the desire to seek the unfamiliar/foreign places. *Twilight in Italy* was written when Lawrence travelled to Italy by tramp, ship and on foot. He enjoyed walking around Italy on foot rather than taking other means of transportation. The pleasure that he finds during his long walks was explained by Lawrence, in *Twilight in Italy*, when he comments: “I was walking for my pleasure through the countries of Europe.” This comment emphasises that Lawrence had interest in understanding people and places closer. Walking enables him to spend more time in a place rather than passing hurriedly by any other means of transportation. The special interest that he had for walking, could be seen from the remarks that he had made in *Sea and Sardinia*: “Comes over one an absolute necessity to move.” The necessity to ‘move’/travel came out of the bitter war experiences. Most of his travels where a kind of escape from the modern world in quest of untouched or unaltered part of the world. In 1919, just before he started to travel, he wrote to his American friend Brewster as evident in *Sea and Sardinia*: “I feel I am seeking myself free to get out of this country for good and ever.” Later discussing about his travel he described his condition to Brewster in *Sea and Sardinia*: “I am so ridiculous, wavering between east and
These lines show the unrest in Lawrence that was generated by the unfavourable conditions in his life. Human experiences were given importance in Lawrence’s fictional and non-fictional works. His individual perception of the remote parts of the world can be seen as elaborated through his travel narratives.

Lawrence’s works are based on the motto ‘art for my sake’. R. P. Draper, critic on Lawrence, in *D. H. Lawrence*, comments on his idea of ‘art for my sake’ thus: “Among modern English authors Lawrence is pre-eminent for the seriousness and fullness of his commitment to what he is writing. He is a great artist, but one who despises the idea of ‘art for art’s sake’. Art is for him necessarily a criticism of life.”

(1) This comment highlights the individualism in Lawrence. Lawrence’s travel narratives could be seen as charged with an independent outlook of the world, a firm Catholic background and an intense perception of humanity. He was aware of the politics of the world and had freshness in his approach towards the crisis of the modern world. He had wide ranging knowledge of Western European culture and an intense sympathy towards the people of the West. He was able to handle criticism and creative writing together in his narratives. R. P. Draper, comments on the writer’s skill in handling both his individuality and his art, in *D. H. Lawrence*, thus:

For Lawrence art and life are inseparable—both life in general, and his own particular life, which he drew upon extensively for the material of his fiction. The study of his life is an essential preliminary to the study of his work. His early life specially shows the circumstances which helped to condition his personality and his art, and when related to his work is a further reminder of how close his writings are to their source in actual experience.

Lawrence’s travel narratives are remarkable for the absolute precision and care that he had given in understanding the foreign culture that he had encountered in the various places that he had visited. The values of the primitive culture are opposed with the modern culture through his travel narratives. His interest as seen in *Sea and Sardinia* was in visiting those places which had “no history, no date, no race, no offering.” Lawrence reserved less sympathy for the modern man and
enjoyed re living his life in the remotest part of world. This shows the elements of humanism in the writer. He was in constant search of the authentic life through his travels. His travel narratives were written based on his individual experiences even though it was enriched with the presence of his wife Frieda.

The importance of the ‘I’ or the individual/first person narrative can be vividly seen in his travel narratives. His narratives reveal his personal likes and dislike, his prejudices and his view points. His travel narratives are charged with his emotions and his metaphoric and symbolic description of the sights, events or people that he had come across. Lawrence was always travelling, never waiting for any inspiration to overpower him. His experiences were presented in a natural manner in his travel documents.

The trip to Sardinia gave fame to the writer and had established him in the field of travel writing. He wrote extensively about the hilly landscapes transportation facility and culture of the dark eyed people of the places in his narratives. Later he visited Sri Lanka. He was eventually disgusted with the people and climate of the place so Lawrence and Frieda left to Australia. The place left a deep impression in the writer’s mind. He completed The Boy in the Bush (1924) during this period. His later work Kangaroo (1923) was completed at Taos. Later, he travelled to New Mexico taking the Aztec ruins along the way. These travels inspired him to write Mornings in Mexico (1927) and The Plumed Serpent (1926). His health deteriorated in the meanwhile. He was suspected of having tuberculosis. His narratives remained unaffected by his poor health.

In 1926 he had his last visit to Europe. He later returned to Italy to trek in the Etruscan sites. This resulted in his travel account Etruscan Places (1932). In 1928, he visited Switzerland. He had a frenzied travel to Alpine resorts and the Mediterranean towns trying to find relief from his illness. He wrote poems, articles and letters during this period. His health declined and he died in Venice on March 2, 1930. His body was exhumed and shipped to New Mexico where his ashes where interred. Now it is a part of the University of New Mexico Campus. Lawrence’s Twilight in Italy was written during the time of his elopement with Frieda. In his introduction to the work Richard Aldington, a critic on Lawrence,
comments in *Twilight in Italy*, on Lawrence’s literary style, compared to that of other writers. He states:

Lawrence differs from them in the fact that his approach is non-literary. There is in him not a trace of the superior young highbrow just released from Oxford or Cambridge, giggling or carping his way from the Alps to Paestum. Lawrence is free from their burden of second-hand culture.65

From this comment it could be understood that Lawrence was unspoiled by the snobbery of the European culture. It could be seen that on his visit to Italy, he was able to understand the feelings of the working class people in Italy. He was frank in his narrative while voicing his opinion about the nature of the Italians. Simonetta de Filippis, critic on Lawrence, comments in *D. H. Lawrence in the Modern World*, on Lawrence’s perception of Italy thus:

Italy represented to Lawrence everything England was not: freedom, the pagan landscape, the source of primitive passions, the authenticity of life, the way towards re-birth. England, by contrast, was the symbol of a mechanical, corrupt society ruled by hypocrisy, intellectualism, power and money.66

Lawrence was able to compare the Western European culture with that of the Italian culture in his documentation. His cultural identity is established through the comparison of Western Europe with Italy. *Twilight in Italy* is an outstanding narrative due to the descriptions of the landscape and people in a more elaborate manner than mere historical representation of monuments, old towns and works of art which other writers were concerned with. The images from Italy that the writer presents in his narrative make the place ‘remote’ and the people ‘strange’. *Twilight in Italy* could be seen as an outstanding work of Lawrence due to the various themes that he handles in his narrative. But the draw back in his narrative is that it did not attract the publishers till 1916. In *Twilight in Italy*, Lawrence documents the pathos of Italy that is threatened by its industrial present. His fascination towards physical violence and pain is embodied in the description of the wooden
crucifixes in the narrative. The trauma left by the war years had a greater impact on his narrative. His interest in the culture of the Italians and the physical description of landscape could be distinctly seen through his travel narrative *Twilight in Italy.*

**Travel Narratives of V. S. Naipaul**

V. S. Naipaul is a Trinidadian born, British novelist with Hindu heritage and an Indo-Trinidadian ethnicity. Naipaul had travelled extensively through India, Africa, Pakistan, Malaysia, America and Iran. Most of the diaspora writers had set to travel in the modern times. Manjit Inder Singh, critic on Naipaul, comments on the increase in travelling by the writers in the modern period, in *V. S. Naipaul:*

> The writers too, are involved in this multiplicity of global travelling and they are part of this dislocation of people and cultures. Hence, Naipaul and David Dabydeen writer from the West Indian Diaspora, Bharati Mukherji represents the US Diaspora, Rushdie and Dhondy write from the UK Diaspora, Rohinton Mistry comes from the Canadian Diaspora and so forth.67

Naipaul could be seen as a writer/traveller who had a dislocated ‘culture’. This was mainly due to his Indian and Trinidadian identity. Even then, most of the diasporic travellers/writers are in quest of foreign land/people. Naipaul’s non-fictional writings could be seen as often unsentimental explorations of the places that he had visited. The themes of his writings are alienation and exile as seen from his fictional and non-fictional narratives. Naipaul was the product of colonization as seen from his travel narratives. The colonial elements in Naipaul are the product of the writer’s personal ‘self’ identity that his life had contributed to him. Bruce King, a critic, talks about the writer’s life in *Modern Novelists V. S. Naipaul:* “He was part of a generation that had to face the problems that resulted from the withdrawal of imperial order and the resulting cultural confusion. Yet his story is perhaps unique in his having started with so little and having come so far.”68 The ‘cultural confusion’ that occurred to the writer was a product of his diaspora ‘self’. This could be seen as reflected in his India series of narratives which would be analysed in the subsequent chapters. This comment emphasises the observation
that Naipaul was a product of colonization. Chandra Chatterjee, critic on Naipaul, comments on Naipaul’s themes in the travel narration due to the Western cultural influence in him. She remarks in *An Anthology of Recent Criticism*:

> The emphasis is unmistakably on a lost world represented at that time only in unflattering vignettes. It was a lost world which Naipaul recuperated with his writer’s imagination. It is this process of discovery, the very act of re-location that Naipaul goes through in his three travel accounts of India.69

Naipaul had the feeling of being cut off from his Indian ancestry and from the ‘European culture’ to which he belonged. This ‘cultural chaos’ leads him to a dislocation in his position of being a Western traveller in India and to a ‘re-location’ of the narrator as an Indian in his travel narratives on India. Naipaul’s representation of India its landscape/people will be analysed in this dissertation.

Naipaul visited India in 1962. The strangeness that he experienced in India is reflected in his travel narrative. His personal views on Indian politics, tradition, and the life of the people are evidently seen in his Indian travel narratives. Naipaul is always obsessed with a sense of India’s past as can be seen from his narratives. The technique of conjoining past, present and future of a country makes Naipaul’s narrative unique. Manjit Inder Singh, a critic on Naipaul, comments on the power of Naipaul’s narrative contrasting Indian civilization’s past and present, in *V. S. Naipaul*:

> Naipaul’s travel literature, always transparent in its contrasts and contradictions between society, culture, history, religion and their relationship to modernization in the post-imperial phase brings out the most possible illusion and gaffe the people are caught up in.70

The obsession that Naipaul had with India’s past is mainly due to the importance that the writer had given for the documentation of ‘place’ in his narrative. Manjit Inder Singh, comments on Naipaul’s relation with the ‘place’ in his narratives. He states:
The psycho-somatic attributes of the ‘place’ that have gone into his and his works peculiar identity-individual and literary. Naipaul’s interviews themselves form a sizable corpus of his confessions and reservations of his disgust, rage and traumata connected with issues and experiences ranging from individual crises, the history of imperialism, politics, race, multiculturalism, religion, metropolis, literary vacuum, the writer’s problems and so forth. . .this is the Naipaul everyone has known for the last three decade or so, the writer as exile, the writer in search of place and mornings, the writer becoming the refracted theatre of the ‘worlds’ that have produced him.71

‘Place’ gave Naipaul a sense of identity. The problem that Naipaul had in positioning himself in his Indian narratives is mainly due to the conflicting identities that the writer had. Naipaul was interested in indulging in racial, social and political problems of the places that he had visited. This can be seen in his Indian narratives vividly. India: A Million Mutinies Now (1990) was written during Naipaul’s visit to India, his native land. It is a narrative that deals with the life of the Indians amidst the social and political chaos that the country faced soon after India attained Independence. The second series of his Indian narrative, India: A Wounded Civilization, was published in 1977. This travel narrative was written in the backdrop of the Emergency period 1975-76, declared by the then Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi. Kate Teltscher, remarks on Naipaul’s Indian travel narratives, in The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing:

An Area of Darkness (1964) recorded the narrator’s first impressions of the subcontinent which his grandfather had left as an indentured labourer: a land of abject poverty, dirt, and defecation. The second book, India: A Wounded Civilization (1977), was written during the emergency declared by Indira Gandhi in which civil rights were suspended and political opponents imprisoned. For Naipaul, the emergency exposed the inadequacies of Indian civilization and the shortcomings of the intellectual resources. But the India encountered in the final book, India: A Million Mutinies
Now (1990), is in some respects a country renewed. The poverty which had neurotically haunted the narrator was now diminished, and the country which, according to Naipaul’s earlier works, had lacked any sense of a past, was awakening to history and self-assertion. This new autonomy was mirrored by a narrative style which allowed individuals to tell their own stories with little apparent meditation.72

Naipaul’s aim behind the narrative, as evident from the reading of the work, was to make the Indians aware of the past glory of the country. His inquiry of India was not merely political it was an inquiry into the culture that his ancestors followed through years. This could be seen from his narrative when Naipaul states: “An inquiry about India—even an inquiry about the Emergency—has quickly to go beyond the political. It has to be an inquiry about the civilization itself, as it is.”73

Naipaul’s non-fictional works were the outcome of his extensive travel between 1960 and 1970. His non-fictional narrative include The Middle Passage (1962), An Area of Darkness (1964), India: A Wounded Civilization (1977), The Believers: An Islamic Journey (1981), Finding the Centre (1984), A Turn in the South (1989) and India: A Million Mutinies Now (1990). The Middle Passage is the product of the writer’s ten years life, as a self-exile, in England after returning to the Caribbean. Though his travel narratives had been criticized for the unsympathetic portrayal of the third world countries, critics like Bruce King in Modern Novelists V. S. Naipaul, comments on Naipaul’s capability to present a clear picture of India through his narrative. He remarks: “The travel books are filled with characters, voices, representative documents, places. Naipaul has created an image of our era and its discontents.”74 Naipaul’s narratives gave a distinct and distant vision of India. It is blended with the writer’s first person narrative, the comments about the people and also on the present social condition of India through the voice of the characters in Indian literary works.

Naipaul as a traveller/writer was always obsessed with the themes of exile. Manjit Inder Singh, in V. S. Naipaul, comments on the obsession that the writer had with the theme of exile:
Naipaul is still preoccupied with that older theme, almost an obsession in his case; varieties of dislocation, migration, exile, the idea of being unanchored and displaced, the enigma of a decentered and disorienting experience in the explosive and disconcerting realities of the post colonial world anywhere, everywhere. From his earliest comic novels about the multicultural, multiracial and farcical, de intellectualized climate in Trinidad, to his last authentic work of fiction, *A Bend in the River*, the preoccupation with and the glaring presence of the outsider-exile figure in varied shape and experiences hardly needs much corroboration.75

This comment shows the interest that the writer showed on the themes of dislocation, displacement and exile which he himself felt. Naipaul’s travel narratives make the readers feel that he is striving for the development of the third world countries. His outlook for the development of the countries about which he is writing is seen through his travel narratives. His narratives on the third world countries show the open minded nature of the writer to perceive the culture as he sees it. His narratives highlight the inability to accept the freedom that the Indian’s enjoyed. He feels that the people are not aware of the countries past and are living a stagnated life as could be seen from the description of the experiences that the writer had in India. The world that Naipaul views is brutally alive with human activity whether it be India or Trinidad. Naipaul’s view of the reality of the world is vivid and his presentation is linked with the history of the place. Naipaul states in *India: A Wounded Civilization*:

India in the late twentieth century still seems so much itself, so rooted in its own civilization, it takes time to understand that its Independence meant more than the going away of the British; that the India to which Independence came was a land of far older defeat; that the purely Indian past died a long time ago. And already, with the Emergence, it is necessary to fight against the chilling sense of a new Indian dissolution.76
India is presented as a land of disillusionment by the writer. Naipaul’s writing deals with the cultural confusion in India. His experiences after encountering the culture of India and the feeling of dislocation from the country could be seen in his narrative. Naipaul states in *India: A Wounded Civilization*:

> India is for me a difficult country. It isn’t my home and cannot be my home; and yet I cannot reject it or be indifferent to it; I cannot travel only for the sights. I am at once too close and too far. My ancestors migrated from the Gangetic plain a hundred years ago; and the Indian community they and others established in Trinidad, on the other side of the world, the community in which I grew up, was more homogeneous than the Indian community Gandhi met in South Africa in 1893 and more isolated from India.77

The ‘difficulty’ that Naipaul documents in his narrative shows the psychological distancing of the writer from India. The writer feels as a dislocated Indian in West Indies and as a West Indian in England. He suffers from a fractured identity during his visit to India. Manjit Inder Singh, in *V. S. Naipaul*, remarks about this condition of Naipaul: “He was the prophet of historylessness and traditionlessness in the West Indies.”78 Naipaul’s personal views on Trinidad are voiced in the historical and political analysis of *The Loss of El Dorado* (1969) and in the India series of travel narratives.

The emancipation of Indians after 1857 mutiny could be seen as a major social situation that falls as the backdrop of the narrative *India: A Million Mutinies Now*. Naipaul represented Indian life and attitudes through this narrative. He could be seen as portraying the economic and political condition of India through his Indian narratives. *India: A Wounded Civilization* deals with the withdrawal of the Indian civilization into itself after the long years of colonization. Naipaul’s views on India will be analysed in the upcoming chapters by using *India: A Wounded Civilization* and *India: A Million Mutinies Now*. Special emphasis would be given on the understanding of the cultural encounter, from the writer’s point of view, as narrated in *India: A Wounded Civilization*. 
Bruce Chatwin’s Travel Narratives

Bruce Chatwin was a British novelist and travel writer who got disenchanted with the world of art and turned his interest into archeology and travelling. He was the endorser of the famous Moleskine note book that was used throughout his travels for documentation purposes. He was the proponent of the post modern travel writing. His literary style was a blend of storytelling and reality. Nicholas Shakespeare, critic on Chatwin, in his introduction to the writer’s travel narrative, in *In Patagonia*, mentions the writer’s style of documentation in travel narratives. He explains:

Generally speaking, he did not subtract from the truth so much as add to it. He told not a half-truth but a truth and a half. His achievement is not to depict Patagonia as it really is, but to create a landscape called Patagonia—a new way of looking, a new aspect of the world. And in the process he reinvented himself.79

As evident from this comment on Chatwin, it could be seen that his narratives had a combination of fiction and non-fiction included in it. Bruce Chatwin could be visualized by the readers as a traveller/writer who mingled with the strangers without any hesitation on his travels to Australia and Patagonia. He was interested in sharing his travel experiences in exchange of the information provided by the people about foreign places. He persuaded the readers through his writing to view the world as he saw it. He was attracted to border countries of the world which had a mixture of different cultures. His career as a travel writer began when the ophthalmologist diagnosed problems with his sight. The best way suggested was to stop looking closely at paintings and to turn his attention to distant horizons.

Chatwin’s interest in travelling to Patagonia developed when he saw a piece of skin in his grandmother’s glass cabinet which was explained to young Chatwin as the skin of a rare beast named brontosaurus. His interest in archeology and geography increased after he gained this information. He talks about his passion to study geography in *In Patagonia*: “My interest in Patagonia survived the
loss of the skin; for the Cold War woke in me a passion for geography. "

Chatwin’s interest in travelling to Patagonia was boosted by an interview with Eileen Gray, a ninety three year old architect in her Paris saloon as evidenced from the narrative In Patagonia. He noticed in Eileen’s cabinet, the map of Patagonia that represented Gray’s long ambition to visit the place. His interest was amplified to visit Patagonia after the interview with Gray. The writer later commented about the interview in In Patagonia thus: “It was almost one of the things that decided me in fact to go.” His six months stay in Patagonia resulted in the book In Patagonia (1977) which established his reputation as a travel writer. His journey to Patagonia changed him into the most stylish writers of the late twentieth century. To travel through Patagonia, as evident from Chatwin’s opinion in In Patagonia:

The most jaw-digging experience because every where you’d turn up there, sure enough was this somewhat eccentric personality who had this fantastic story. At every place I came to it wasn’t a question of hunting for the story, it was a question of the story coming at you. . . . I think the wind had something possibly to do with it."  

Chatwin’s travels enabled him to write many fictional and non fictional works. His later works included The Viceroy of Ouidah (1980), on his visit to the West African state of Benin where he studied slave trade in detail and fictionalized it. The Songlines (1987) was the product of his visit to Australia. The book was based on the Australian aboriginal mythology. It was a combination of myth and reality. The Songlines tracks the connection between the aboriginal songs and its connection with the life of the ancestors. It describes the writer’s journey through Australia and his encounter with the culture and mythic tradition of the people and landscape. His later works include On the Black Hill which was set in the Welsh Borders and Utz (1988) a novel set in Prague. He died in 1989, while he was concentrating on his future works, due to some unknown illness which was later confirmed as AIDS. Most of his works where fictionalized accounts of the places that he had visited.

Chatwin is popular for his innate story telling abilities which he developed more in his travel narratives. His literary talent was in making the readers feel
involved in his fantasies. Francis Wyndham, Chatwin’s first editor, comments about this literary style of the writer. He states in *In Patagonia*, thus: “He made you participate in what, in that moment, did not seem to be a fantasy. One was included in it, even though he did all the talking.” Chatwin himself acknowledges his style of adding stories into factual narration. He narrates in *In Patagonia*: “I once made the experiment of counting up the lies in the book I wrote about Patagonia. It wasn’t in fact, too bad. There weren’t too many.” Chatwin as observed from the narratives, was much interested in wandering. His fascination was for human stories from the remotest parts of earth.

Chatwin’s travel to Patagonia was in quest of the roots of the brontosaurus skin. Patagonia as Chatwin argues in *In Patagonia*, was: “the source of everyone’s restlessness too” This restlessness that Chatwin had was not due to the unfavourable living conditions. It was the quest to understand his ancestry. In Patagonia, he met many exiles, bandits, salesmen and beautiful women. His love for human stories can be evidently seen in *In Patagonia*, from the responses to the questions that were asked to him by an Argentinian journalist, Uki Goni: “Your fascination is people?” Chatwin’s answer was: “Yes, in the end. It took rather a long time to discover that.” Chatwin’s travels consciously or unconsciously paved the way to understand people from the remote parts of the world to the writer as well as to the readers. Critics, like Paul Theroux, commented on the genuineness of the description of the land and the people by the writer, in *In Patagonia*: “How had he travelled from here to there? How had he met this or that person? Life was never so neat as Bruce made out.” From this comment, it could be understood that the life of the people that the writer presented does not fully depict the reality. Though Chatwin employed in his narratives more strategies of story telling, his travel writing is a rich source of information on the culture of Australians and Patagonians as evident from the travel narrative *The Songlines*. A detailed analysis of the travel narratives *The Songlines* and *In Patagonia* is done in the upcoming chapters to understand the encounter of culture that the writer had experienced in the various parts of the world.
Travel Narratives of S. K. Pottekkatt

S. K. Pottekkatt was an Indian writer who had contributed immense travel narratives to Malayalam literature. His reason behind travelling was different from that of his contemporaries. He represents the first generation of realistic writers in Malayalam literature. Pottekkatt had a different perception towards travel writing as amply evident in *Africa*: “Writing travel literature is a service or sacrifice which I am proud of.”88 As it could be inferred from this comment, Pottekkatt was much bothered about the general reading public while he sat to narrate about his experiences. Pottekkatt’s travels where a union of wonder and wit. He was having the vision of an artist who enjoys all art rather than a painter who paints only with a specific intention in his mind. His quest was to find diversity of life through his travels. He is referred to as one among the trio of writers associated with Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai (1912-1999) and Vaikom Muhammad Basheer (1908-1994). The reason for the underdevelopment of travel writing in Malayalam literature is focused by Pottekkatt, in *Africa*:

The reason why travel writing didn’t develop in Kerala is their poor financial status. Most of our writers are not able even to visit throughout Kerala for ones. It was not a custom here to visit foreign countries only for the sake of writing travelogues.89

As it could be observed from this comment, travelling itself was a difficult task due to the financial crisis that the people of India suffered during the writer’s period. Pottekkatt travelled around the world in a period when the neighbouring places were a distant wonder and the major countries were broken images of a dream for the Indians. Between 1935 and 1947, he travelled through various places in India. The golden period of his travel was between 1949 and 1956. Between 1949 and 1950, he visited Africa, Switzerland, France and England. Between 1952-53, he travelled widely to Malaya, Ceylon and Indonesia. His important non-fictional works include *Kappirikalude Nattil* (In the Land of the Blacks) (1951), *Nile Diary* (1954), *Soviet Diary* (1955), *Indonesian Diary* (1955), *Pathirasuryante Nattil* (In the Land of the Midnight Sun) (1956), *Balidweep* (Bali Island) (1958), *Simhabhoomi* (The Land of the Lion) (1958), *Bohemian Chitrangal* (Bohemian
Pictures) (1960), London Note Book (1970), Cairo Katthukal (Cairo Letters) (1974) and Cleopatravude Nattil (In the Land of Cleopatra) (1977). His travels portrayed the real life images of the continents that he had visited. Pottekkatt had travelled as a member of the cultural promotion committee. His Soviet Diary, Pathira Suryande Nattil (In the Land of the Midnight Sun), Bohemian Chitrangal (Bohemian Pictures) are all the products of such visits. He travelled with uncontrollable wandering lust. Pottekkatt, during the last years of his life was sad because of his inability to cover the whole world by travelling. Sukumar Azhikode, critic and writer in Malayalam, comments on the thrill of wander lust that Pottekkatt had, in Asia:

National ideologies or cultural differences don’t matter for S. K. Pottekkatt in meeting human beings. I see a hard working honey bee in Pottekkatt that moves around through different flowers gathering honey by slowly moving across the thorns. Even though it is the land of Africans, the land of lions, the land of Cleopatra, the land of Catholics, the land of streams, or the land of politics we can taste the innate sweetness of his love for the world. We enjoy reading the brightness of the dark Africa, the darkness of the white Europe and the newness of the old Asia.90

This comment emphasises the fact that Pottekkatt’s travel narratives were realistic in nature. This could be seen in the various characters that Pottekkatt portrayed in his travel narratives. Pottekkatt mentions in his London Note Book, the snobbishness of the human beings in a detailed manner. He narrates his meeting with a Jamaican lady named Reema in Europe in London Note Book. Reema, on hearing that Pottekkatt had come from Puthiyara, a place in Calicut, had asked him: “Are you the Maharaja (King) of Puthiyara?”91 For which Pottekkatt got reminded only about a popular sweet selling neighbour Maharaja who stays near his place at Calicut. He replied to Reema in London Note Book: “not exactly but somewhat near to.”92 The lady mistook him to a Prince. This incident shows the false notions of the foreigners that India is exclusively the land of Kings. This comment also shows the beautiful narrative strategy employed by the writer. Pottekkatt’s narrative excellence helps the readers to visualize his experiences
without losing its originality. This could be evidently seen from his description of the beauty of the caves in Capri Island. The roof of the cave had a blue colour which resembled the arrangement of precious stones. Pottekkatt had to lie on his boat facing the top of the cave to get this visual experience. On reaching inside the cave, the boat man splashed some water on the top of the cave and the water showered on him after touching the cave, like the shower of millions of blue stones. This clarity in narrative helps the readers to visualize the incident without losing its whole beauty.

An understanding of the background of S. K. Pottekkatt would help in the better understanding of his travel narratives. Pottekkatt began writing literary works from his school days. Kerala had formed a part of his obsession in his narration. Pottekkatt’s love for his native land, Kerala could be evidently seen through his fictional and non-fictional works. Sukumar Azhikodan, critic and writer in Malayalam literature, talks about Pottekkatt’s love for his native place, in *Asia*:

> Where ever and to whatever extent one travels, the best thing that one will be in search of, will be discovered in one’s native land. This is the best knowledge that foreign travels give. This knowledge can be gained even from one’s indigenous place. But foreign travels enable it in a more heart touching manner. One should return from the travel both physically and mentally. Pottekkatt was a writer who returned in such a manner. By reading his travel books, one experiences the self satisfaction of living in one’s native land along with the amazement of experiencing a foreign travel. What attracts me more in this volume is the love of this great traveller, from Kerala, for his mother land.93

This remark emphasizes the point that the writer had in him an ability to attach more closely with a foreign place as well as to distance from it when necessity demands both mentally and physically. Pottekkatt had travelled through Asia, Africa and Europe. He took part in the Peace Conference as a representative of India, held at Helsing in 1955. In this nine months long stay, he visited Finland, Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. He visited Nepal in 1965 and Himalayas with

In 1945, he visited Kashmir ‘the travellers paradise’. His first travel narrative, *Kashmir*, was published in 1948. His love for writing poetry along with travel experiences did not last long. His ‘Sanchariyude Geethangal’ (The Songs of a Traveller) was published in 1947 and ‘Premashilpi’ (Sculptor of Love) in 1958. It is rare to see such a travel writer who used travel experiences to make short stories on India. He travelled to get the thrill of travelling. He showed his literary excellence in prose and poetry. He was awarded the Jnanpith Award for his novel *Oru Deshathinte Katha* (The Story of a Land) (1980).

The thrill of wandering began for Pottekkatt, from his childhood days. It persisted even in his adulthood in the form of morning walks to unknown places. Morning walks, for S. K. Pottekkatt were through the routes that he had not travelled before. This habit that he had in Calicut, prevailed when he was in Helsing, Moscow, Cairo, Cambala, Katmandu and London. Daily exercise was not the only aim behind these walks. It was to experience the pleasure of travelling, to see new sites and to build new relations with unknown people. He was the first Indian to visit London without crossing Seius canal as it was due to his thrill to find new routes and new experiences that he had travelled. Other than these travel accounts he wrote prose works that had elements of travel in them. They include *Gadhyamekhala* (Prose Levels), *Vazhiambalangal* (Resting Place), *Samsarikunna Dairy Kuripukal* (The Talking Diary Inscriptions) etc. His effort was to make travel as the theme for his short stories, novels and poems. The setting of most of his famous stories, to list a few like *Pulliman* (Spotted Deer), *Kattuchembakam* (Forest Lilies), *Siddiqui, Dahl Thadakathil* (In the Dahl Lake), *Vigneshwaran* (Lord Ganesha), *Karutha Kamadevan* (Black Cupid), *Kuladrohi, Karutha Kaumadi* (Black Moon) and *Rahasyangalude Adizoyuku* (The Underflow of
Secrets), are outside Kerala. The novel *Karambu* (Clove) was purely set in Africa. The setting of *Moodupadham* (Mask) and *Oru Deshathinde Kadha* (The Story of a Land) extends outside the Himalaya.\(^95\) His poetry ‘Premashilpi’ (The Sculptor of Love) and ‘Sanchariyude Geethangal’ (The Songs of a Traveller) is filled with travel experiences. Pottekkatt had written an anthology of poems *Prabathakanthi* (The Morning Rays) in 1936. He had tried to visualize travel experiences even through his poems. When he came to understand the difficulties in visualizing his experiences through poetry, he set for extensive travel narration.

Pottekkatt’s interest was in roaming around without any particular intention. It was through these travels that he was aware of the roads and short cuts in London, Bombay and Cairo just familiar like the lines on his palm. He was able to experience the dirty sights of the country sides through these walks. In Russian lanes, he saw beggars and quarrelling couples at night. In London, he saw the after effects of the Second World War in the form of prostitutes and unemployed people who formed the underworld of London. Pottekkatt could be seen as an enthusiast in portraying nature and in describing the landscapes through his narratives. He had taken pains to stay in the forests for a week to see the Murchison waterfalls. He had also stayed in the Sarimgetti reserve forest. This kind of adventurous life can be considered as quite impossible for any other traveller/writer. His travel accounts were not written for financial gains. Pottekkatt himself comments, in *Africa*: “I had not got even the money that I had spent on my cigarettes out of my writings.”\(^96\)

Pottekkatt had visited most of the places in Asia during his travels. He had visited all the ancient archeological sites of Nalanda and Thakshashila, the volcanic mountains of Krakathur and also saw the virgin dance of the Bali islands. His famous trips were in between 1945 and 1965. He was unable to undergo long and distant travels as he grew aged and was having health problems. He could be seen as in search of the real humanity in the dense forests of Africa in his travel narrative *Kappirikalude Nattil*. He travelled in bullock carts, lorry and bus in order to interact more with the natives. He did not hesitate even to share cigarettes with them. Africans were quite comfortable with him. They enjoyed travelling with him. He was able to represent the innocence of Africans and the snobbery of the
Europeans through his travel narratives. Pottekkatt’s, *Kappirikalude Nattil*, deals with his experiences in Africa in 1949. Most of the places in Africa were under British rule during that time. He depicts through his narrative the beauty of the African landscape, the life style of the Africans, their rebellion for Independence, the problems that Indians residing in Africa faced and the indigenous people’s cultural peculiarities. Sukumar Azhikodan, critic and writer in Malayalam Literature, critiques on the importance of his African travel narratives. He explains in *Asia*:

> It is to prove, that Africans are not down trodden and to tear off the dark mask of misrepresentation that was put on many nations and to show the brightness of the nations, that these books have always succeeded in. The writer might have travelled twenty five years back, but the reality in the theme of the book doesn’t fade away with the fading seasons.97

Pottekkatt, as seen from this comment, had tried to provide a new picture of the places around the world through his travel narratives. The existing notion about a place/people in the world is relooked at and a new identity is created for the same. Pottekkatt’s travels to Africa saw light only in 1977 in the form of *Kappirikalude Nattil*. His travel to Bali Island, *Balidweep* was published in 1958. His travel narratives often had an index at the end where he had listed the reference books that he had used for authenticity in his description of travel experiences. This index could be seen in the travel narratives *Simhabhoomi* (The Land of the Lion), *Balidweep* (Bali Island), *Kappirikalude Nattil* (In the Land of the Blacks) and *Cairo Katthukal* (Cairo Letters) which shows the care and credibility that he had kept in making his narratives more natural and most interesting. Sukumar Azhikodan, appreciates the effort that Pottekkatt had taken in publishing his travel narratives, in *Asia*: “it is more difficult to write a good travel account than undergoing a good travel.”98 This comment shows that Pottekkatt had taken sufficient pains to narrate his world travels. It was the quest to understand the human beings that the writer set to travel. He mentions in his travel writing *Africa*, the difficulties that any traveller has to face while writing a book:
Writing a story or a novel requires only a little bit of ink and paper. The rest is the activity of the brain. For writing about Helsing, Cairo or Singapore, it requires a lump sum amount to be spent. Huge amount has to be spent on stay, travel and for buying reference books. It requires more time to read them. Hence it is an act of blending lots of experiences, bookish knowledge, memory, deduction and new ideas. The readers could ponder on whether the amount that has been spent for this can be gained by the twenty five or thirty percent of royalty gained out of selling thousand copies of the book.

Pottekkatt’s travel narratives on Africa, *Kappirikalude Nattil* and *Simhabhoomi*, will be analysed in detail to understand the encounter of culture of the people of Africa in the upcoming chapters. Special attention will be given on the accounts described in *Kappirikalude Nattil* for the understanding of cultural encounter from the writer’s point of view.

Travel narrative and cultural encounter could also be seen as a study that deals with the writer’s construction of identity for foreign people/place. Edward Said’s comment on culture would be the apt one to begin with the study of the encounter of culture. He remarked in *Culture and Imperialism*:

There has been a gathering awareness nearly everywhere of the lines between cultures, the divisions and differences that not only allow us to discriminate one culture from another, but enable us to see the extent to which cultures are humanly made structures of both authority and participation, benevolent in which they include, incorporate and validate, less benevolent in which they exclude and demote.

This comment emphasizes that culture is a human construction through authority and participation in which they create an identity for different cultures, by including and excluding in the documentation, certain aspects that make each culture different from other. The study of cultural encounter and travel narratives
could be viewed, taking into account the notions about the public/private space, individual/collective sense, self/other notions, identity, new/foreign, and so on. Clear notions about all these aspects would make the study of travel narratives interesting as well as informative to the readers where by peripheral viewpoints would attain the center of attraction in viewing a new culture from the writer’s point of view.

This dissertation would analyse the means of representation, motives of the traveller/writer, the conflicts between self/other, the conscious construction of cultural identity by the writer etc., in the upcoming chapters. This dissertation could be considered as the first attempt to understand travel narratives through the encounter of culture of the traveller/writer. The various themes that the travel writers conveyed through their narratives, among others, includes humanism, feeling of discontent/disillusionment, the quest for one’s ancestry and the thrill that one attains out of wandering. These themes would be analysed in the upcoming chapters in relation with the major motives behind their narration. The study is expected to help in the better understanding of other similar narratives. This study is expected to enhance the vision of the readers across other cultural boundaries and to get a clearer insight into the ‘nature’ of travel narratives.

D. H. Lawrence ideally represents the Western European traveller and is thus explored in this study further as having documented evidences of the white man’s travel in Europe. V. S. Naipaul harbours cultural discontent and disillusionment and his narratives that disclose such cultural prejudices - a product most often of cultural shock-are chosen as texts for further examination. Bruce Chatwin and S. K. Pottekkatt are travellers with no specific destinations in mind. Chatwin rediscovers the ancient human roots and discloses cultural bareness, while Pottekkatt travels to wonderous locales.
Notes


4 Ibid., 29.


18 Ibid., 81.


24 Ibid., 194.

25 Ibid., 194.


40 Ibid., 144.


53 Ibid., 26.

54 Ibid., 26.

56 Ibid., 84.


59 Ibid., 9.

60 Ibid., 9.


62 Ibid., 2.


65 Ibid., ix.


71 Ibid., 20.


77 Ibid., 8.


80 Ibid., 3.

81 Ibid., xiv.

82 Ibid., ix.

83 Ibid., xi.

84 Ibid., xxiv.

85 Ibid., xvi.
86 Ibid., xvi.

87 Ibid., xvii.


89 Ibid., v.


92 Ibid., 43.


95 Ibid., 1.

96 Ibid., 3.


98 Ibid., 11.