

Travelogues: The Fully Emerged and Innovative Literary Genre

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ABSTRACT

Travel Writing or Travelogue is an old canon of Literature, dealing with nature writing, adventure writing, exploration writing, guide books etc. Even the Picaresque form of the novel had elements of travel writing in it. It's a herculean job as one has to be an effective use of language and at the same time be a keen observer to portray and display analytical data. This paper focuses on the real need, utility, relevance, and importance of travel literature in today's rapidly changing tourism sector and globalised society as people try to see a new world through the writing and impression of a writer who serves to be an informer, advisor and guide. The canon of travel writing has acquired the centre of importance now rather than being in the periphery it also focuses on the changing paradigm of travel writing today.

Keywords: Travelogues, Innovative, Canon, Genre, Monologue.

INTRODUCTION

Travel Writing is a genre of Literature which deals with nature writing, adventure writing, exploration writing, guide books etc. Travelling has always been a basic human urge. Men have travelled with various motives- out of curiosity, adventure, on personal and political errands, on diplomatic missions, for pilgrimage and spiritual satisfaction, on voyages, for business and trade and nowadays as a part of multi- cultural immigration and emigration in jobs. Some travellers with alert and methodological minds recorded their observations and experiences and facts of history, as appeared to them in a kaleidoscopic view of the world, which came to be known as travel writing.

A travelogue is a truthful account of an individual's experiences travelling, usually told in the past tense and in the first person. The word travelogue supposedly comes from a combination of the two words travel and monologue. In turn, the word monologue comes from the Greek words 'monos' (alone) and 'logos' (speech, word). A travelogue is then, in its most basic form, a spoken or written account of an individual's experiences travelling, which usually appears in the past tense, in the first person, and with some verisimilitude. Because a travelogue aims to be a true account of an individual's experiences travelling, descriptions of what the traveler sees, hears, tastes, smells, and feels in the external world while travelling are essential components. Of course, thoughts, feelings, and reflections are important parts of our experience of travel. So, descriptions of a traveller's inner world are not out-of-place in the travelogue. Likewise, notes and observations on history, society, and culture are also common features of travelogues, as we certainly learn about the world when we travel.

In olden times People were familiar with travel books of Chinese pilgrims like Fa Hein and Huen Sang, Tavernier, Bernier, Marco Polo, Batuta and Alberuni etc. In modern times Interesting Travelogues have been written by such literary celebrities such as Aldous Huxley, Graham Greene, V.S Naipaul, Ved Mehta etc. The Purpose of this genre of writing serves as a diary and a receptacle of accurate records of particular peoples, places, customs, and ceremonies etc. They give us an account of the prevalent social milieu and a deep insight into their culture and habitation. The Picaresque form of novel was also a type of travelogue, where the author tried to showcase different places and its culture, through the protagonist's travelling journey and adventure, example the Adventures of Tom in t Fielding's Tom Jones. Last but not the least it's a communicative interaction between a writer and the place and its people.

Travel Book, Travel Guide, Travel account and Travel Record all these can all be called travel writing. Some of these have relation more to history than to literature, since history in the past is sometimes culled from the explorer's and traveller's records. They are extremely valuable in spite of their not having high literary values. There is an encyclopedia of Literature of Travel and Exploration. Though these are called books and so literature, what makes a literary work is the unfolding or the revelation of the writer's feelings, personality, imaginativeness and fine turns of expression, to describe some qualities essential for literary compositions.

Travelogue, the dictionary says is after monologue, which is narrative with the aid of slides and pictures before an audience. But nowadays all travel writing is included in the term Travelogue. KM

George the compiler and editor of the Encyclopedia of Indian Literature included several entries from different languages under the head Travelogue. Broadly speaking Travel Essays may be just occasional pieces of writing of a comparatively transitory or ephemeral nature with no just claim to literary value. For example a Travel Guide, which is essential for a tourist has no literary merit in as such. Much of travel-writing is not primarily intended as a literary artefact.

Travel Accounts or Travel Literature needs to be looked at from the point of view of its purport, the manner of writing and the involvement of the writer's personality to be accorded the status of literature. Literary historians did not seem to be inclined to include travel writing as a genre or form of literature, both in our country and in the West. It is, however, not very easy to draw a clear line of distinction literary travel writing and non-literary writing. But some travelogues easily stand out as remarkable literary achievement.

We can generally agree that travelogue has a high degree of literary merit in conveying personally and informally the information relating to the journey, travel or peregrination involving spatial displacement. Travelogues, then, are primarily written in prose. It is helpful to agree that a travelogue, for our purpose here, is beyond recording observations without feeling or observations that do not arouse any feeling.

Travelogues as the Fully Emerged Literary Genre

Not very long ago, it has been the trend to consider travel writing as peripheral to literary writing. Academics considered this writing as not very valuable to be considered literary. Owing to the emerging trends of travel experience among the different categories of travellers and tourists, travellers with religious considerations like acquiring merit (teerthayatras) travels with journalistic motivation, travels for probing, understanding and reading histories with a new point of view, with personal, spiritual and philosophical motives and aspiration, travelogues came in the limelight. Any systematic and aesthetic analysis of travelogue studies need to view the corpus selected for specified purpose with stress on the 'W's: who produced the discourse, where, when and how it is produced are all matters deserving study. We need to examine 'when' for broadly a travel discourse may belong to many categories, some of which readily could be stated. These categories do not purport to be exhaustive.

Ancient writing: Travel Records of foreign travellers in India, Megasthenes, Fahien, Huen Tsang, Al Beruni etc.

Medieval writing: travel Records in the medieval times: Marco Polo, Ibn Batuta, Nicolo Conte, Abdur Razak, Dom Manuel etc.

Pre Colonial and Colonial writing: Scorer, Tavernier, Captain Basil Hall, Count Herman Keiserling, etc.

Colonial Writing: Robert Burton, Edward Gibbon, Hakluyt, Mark Twain, etc. The characteristics of each of the categories listed above are bound to be different. Tourist places of interest, cultural or

religious destinations are spaces where different cultures throng, meet, interact and share information and experience. They are thrown into the company of one another to form and perceptions and exchange ideas and feelings. The visits and stay at destinations help forming, correcting and revising ideas and perceptions for the better. Today's tourists and travellers are a thick medley of migrant, neo-settlers, short -time tourists and religious enthusiasts. Many a travelogue does contain literary merit and artistic excellence. Travel accounts as literature are widely varied. There is no homogeneity in this form though it is surely a genre. The purpose of writing may vary from writer to writer and from time to time. Travelogue in the hands of imaginative-artistic people charter fresh regions (fresh fields and pastures new) clearly demarcating, mediating, reconciling or harmonizing cultures through observation, understanding and mutual appreciation. Widening horizons is precisely the purpose of a travelogue.

A historical study of various travel texts help us to understand our history as well as the personality of the individual travel writers, their attitude towards the life of the people they travelled among, the ways of governance in those periods among various other things. What those writers saw, felt and experienced and the degree of their subjectivity or objectivity in their writing can be studied. We have a huge body exclusively of travel literature to be studied and analyzed distinct from the mere factual details they recorded.

Need of Travel Literature

For most of the readers travel book is an escape to an imaginary land which is far from the reality of this mundane world. It is a way to get transported to a forlorn land with all safety in their homes. For the writers themselves, it is often somehow a way of preserving a present for themselves and a past of posterity. In an era of modernization it helps to preserve the natural landscape of a place and also feel its atmosphere. It is a dimension of the recorded part that does not exist in history books. It also gives an account of the culture, history and geography of a place.

Kinds of Travel Writing

A travelogue can exist in the form of a book, a blog, a diary or journal, an article or essay, a podcast, a lecture, a narrated slideshow, or in virtually every written or spoken form of creation. So the different types of writings are: Promotional Literature Brochures, booklets, Pamphlets and other materials which are put by national and state tourism sectors with a view of inducing people to visit a particular area. So here a writer's objective is to persuade the reader by extolling point of interest, the enjoyable activity it promises and may be on shopping and recreational facilities. So it needs advertising as well as creative writing skills. Informational Articles for the Tourist It might be published in a Sunday supplement, where the writer's role is of an advisor, so he should give a comprehensive and honest account of the place as much as possible. Articles Aimed for Business Travellers Where a writer's job is to collect information and also do a little of sampling activities. So the style of such writing should be clear and concise. Articles for ArmChair Travellers These are categories of reading public who are intensely interested in exotic places and avoid dislocations and discomforts. It requires anecdotal accounts of particular journeys. Among the best known travel

writers of this genre are Paul Theroux, Jan Mouris etc. It requires a style of writing that is both lively and distinctively the writers own.

Travelogues and its various Linkages

Travel essays could be primarily informative, offering worthwhile information to readers who wish to be travellers or tourists just as a hobby. As travel guides they are purely intended to give information regarding availability of food, facilities for accommodation, food etc indicates distances from various points to destinations, modes available for travel, places not be missed for sightseeing and such basic information.

Journey is a metaphor widely used in all literatures. It is used as a literary device in scriptures, epics and widely read literary artefacts. Travel is used in satire as in Jonathan Swift's Gulliver Travels or a means of conveying information in an interesting manner or Joseph Addison's creation of a Citizen of the World, are cases in point. There is a whole genre in English Fiction well received as the Picaresque Novel.

Writers who produced travel accounts and travel-writing are from a variety of professions, temperaments, ages and climes. They have been adventurers, explorers, diplomats, scholars, missionaries, professionals like doctors and clergymen or just travel enthusiasts. Travel writings have linkages with History, Exploration and Adventure in its non-literary exposition and in its literary exposition with Autobiography and experience-related personality revelation. In both the categories, travel, movement, journey and peregrination are involved in different degrees. Travel literature meaning travel writing can be classified in several ways according to its linkage.

The travelogue – meaning literary exposition of travel experience – may conveniently be classified again as (a) fantasy described or given as exposition of fact, (b) literature of recorded fact and (c) literature of artistic presentation of recorded impressions and feeling during travel. The examples that readily come up to our minds are R.L. Stevenson's Treasure Island of the 19th century of foreign travellers to India like Megasthenes's Indica (of ancient times) and (c) Scinde or the Unhappy Valley of Richard Burton of the 18th century.

Fantasy is a very popular literary genre and Treasure Island is still a great favourite with school children. The adventure and the suspense elements take the reader forward with ease as well as urgency to know what happens next. The place is imaginary but the adventures portrayed are fantastic. The introduction of characters, the conflict and the denouement are dramatized before the reader with élan. This novel has a high literary quality. Journalism and travel together yielded travel journalism, a special category wherein journalists travel and produce works with their intrinsic journalistic flair – from the point of a journalist. Sometimes as in Graham Greenes' Lawless Roads or his Journey without Maps, the writer's personality and the journalistic presentation of facts are brilliantly presented. These have high literary value again. Sometimes a tourist group consisting several individuals go on a long travel, for example on a pilgrimage to Kailash Manasarovar, the most important destination for Hindu religious enthusiasts next only Kashi (Varanasi, (Banaras) or Rameshwaram.

Travel as a literary mode and an adjunct in literary writing is evidenced in literatures of almost all languages. Homer's Odyssey is an account of the travels of the hero Odysseus. Dante's Divine Comedy is an account of a travel through the different regions of hell. This device is used in our epics and kavyas (imaginative literary poetic compositions), in Sanskrit and other Bhasha literatures in our country. In the title Ramayana yana refers to journey or travel of Rama. Mahabharata describes Arjun's pilgrimages, again travels. In Bhagavatpuran Balaram Vidur takes to travels for self-purification. Kavyas too exploit travel motif as in Kalidasa's Meghsandesh. In Hindi Rahul Sankrityayan (1893-1963), the culture icon, wrote several travel books of great literary value. In Malayalam KeshavMenon's Bilayati vishesham published in 1930 belongs to the same category. In Gujarati Kaka Saheb Kalelkar wrote Jeevanleela, considered a classic and widely translated. Autobiographies record experiences, impressions revealing feelings, relating to certain incidents in one's own life. Such a work may also contain travel experiences and travel-related information but these may either just be incidental or not of much importance.

Features of a Good Travel Writing

A good travel article's style should first of all be readable and lively, which should be able to sustain the reader's interest. If possible personal experiences and anecdotes can be included in it, which makes it more authentic and credible. Therefore a personal record with universal touch and appeal should be the aim and strategy.

Prerequisites for a Travel Writer

Travel Writing involves a multidimensional role of being a narrator, observer and reporter. Therefore A good travel writer must have the following characteristics: Travelogues: An Innovative and Creative Genre of Literature.

- Amalgamation of skills and living experience and at the same time is a storyteller and informer. He is the assimilation of a reporter, novelist and also a researcher. A person who lives in the past as well as the present. He should have visual imagination and creativity, with a capacity to communicate a picture of a place.
- Have a completely open mind, well informed and free of subjectivity and prejudice. Completely alert to record the minute details and facts.
- He should read about a place, its history, its geography, its politics, and culture. It fills the writer with the natural and historical landscape of a place, its architectural styles, the racial types, its aborigine tradition, demography etc.
- Writing informative articles involves reading a lot about places and putting the information in a factually correct form and in an informative way. Information on a particular place can be available in pamphlets, brochures, tourism booklets etc.

- Travel magazines should be substantiated with adequate illustrations, photographs, graphs and statistics to give it a more serene, picturesque and statistical touch.
- When one is writing for a travel trade purpose, one has to keep himself or herself abreast with all developments and terminologies of trade and commerce, which can be achieved by reading a lot of trade journals and publications.
- Creative Travel writing is a class by itself. Creativity is inborn; it cannot be inculcated but can be just fine tuned.

Style of Travelogues: Factual and Creative

Style is the most important asset of Travel writing. It should not be a mere description and poetic phrases which would carry away the reader, which would be in vain at the end. Also it should not be a repository of factual information, make it completely bald and dry. So a travel writer needs to blend fact and creativity to make a place come alive to the readers. So a writer must use very simple, short and plain English, use appropriate and deemed adjectives and avoid exaggerations and hyperboles as much as possible. One has to be like a reporter with keen and observant eyes along with being an efficient communicator being successful to portray people, places, customs and festivals etc. Therefore one needs to be factual, imaginative, sympathetic, and relevant and enjoy the writing. A travel writing which is written for a magazine allows a writer greater leeway in terms of style and content. In such an article one can work on impressions of places, history, conversations, quotes, stories and incidents. One should be also able to bring in local customs and traditions. One good aid to gather such information is to Consult a map, consult tourist literature and guidebooks. Given below are two examples, where one of the passage's tone is prosaic whereas the other is poetic. Extract 1 Fasten belt, the sign flashed overhead. The two-hour Indian Airlines flight from Calcutta was coming to an end. Below the landmass suddenly came into view. Nearly every passenger was vying to peer through the windows. The island looked like large emeralds splashed by crystal blue waters. Extract 2 It rose from a perennially blue sea, or so it seemed to be entranced eyes as we approached Sicily, which was just a hazy outline in the morning sun and the endless blue skies. Sicily, the largest island in the Mediterranean, is known as the island of grand volcano and volcanic passions.

Conclusion

With tourism sector spreading its tentacles in all modes of life, people now travel for short periods, covering long distances and large areas comprehending as much as they can. People try to see a new world through the writing and impression of a writer who serves to be an informer, advisor and guide. The canon of travel writing has acquired the centre of importance now rather than being in the periphery. Since it's a comparatively new field where the creative and critical faculty of the writer is put into test, there is more scope in it than in some other kinds of feature writing. It can be achieved by the use of black and white and coloured pictures with high resolution and intensity which should be well cropped and masked. Sketches and illustrations are also a good and vivid source. One should use either pictures or illustrations but never both and it should be relevant and to the context.



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