

**“UNDER EASTERN EYES”: REPRESENTATION OF
THE WEST IN SOUTH ASIAN TRAVELOGUES**



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Dedication

To my Father (late)

And

My Beloved Wife

Without whose unflinching support it would have been impossible for me to
accomplish my research

Acceptance by the *Viva Voce* Committee

**Title of the thesis: “Under Eastern Eyes”: Representation of the
West in South Asian Travelogues**

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ABSTRACT

Title: “Under Eastern Eyes”: Representation of the West in South Asian Travelogues.

Representation, especially, of the colonized societies and cultures have been the subject of many studies particularly since the publication of Edward Said’s *Orientalism* which theorized that the West’s history of the East is, in fact, the history of representation. The present study deals with representation-in-reverse in post-colonialism with special reference to three South Asian Travelogues: *Images of the West*, *Westward Bound* and *Seamless Boundaries* by Munshi Itesamuddin, Mirza Abu Taleb and Lutfullaha Khan respectively. Written in the 18th and 19th centuries these texts function as eyewitnesses to the events that mark the advent, rise and culmination of colonialism in the sub-continent. The travelogues had been aimed at (re)presenting the West or the Occident to the natives of India by the Indian (Muslim) writers so that they could perceive and understand their cultural *Others* in the West. All these travelogue writers have carried out representation of the colonizers in their literary discourses and their accounts are deeply embedded in the particular socio-political, cultural, religious and literary traditions of their societies. Thus, the empire, in a way, not only writes back but challenges the claims of Eurocentricity and universalism as unearthed by Edward Said. In this research the issue of representation is explored, alongwith its differing connotations and multi-pronged interpretations and the travelogues have been analyzed in their light. The primary focus, in this dissertation, has been the discursive practices which the East adopted to write back to the West in its efforts to assert its own identity and blur the identity imposed by the West. The theoretical framework is based on Postcolonialism and further delimited to Occidentalism/Reverse-Orientalism. Research questions address the extent, nature and use of the discursive practices to represent the West as the Others of the East. As reverse Orientalists, these writers manifest the religious, cultural, racial, social, and geographical binaries existing between the two halves of the world in their travelogues. Unlike Orientalist discourse, there was no single grand and meta-narrative governing their interaction with their Others. This study may help the future researchers to investigate the phenomenon of Othering in the travelogue writing of different epochs not only about the West but different cultures across the globe.

DECLARATION

I, Yasir Arafat Son of Muhammad Mehfooz Registration No.58-FLL/PHDENG/F11 Discipline English, PhD scholar at International Islamic University, Islamabad do hereby declare that the thesis “Under Eastern Eyes: Representation of the West in South Asian Travelogues” submitted by me in partial fulfillment of PhD Degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

I also understand that if evidence of plagiarism is found in my thesis at any stage, even after the award of the degree, the work may be cancelled and the degree revoked.

Dated: July, 2017

Signatures of Deponent
YASIR ARAFAT

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Chapter One

Introduction

This chapter deals with multiple issues including representation, Orientalism, Occidentalism/Orientalism-in-reverse and their relationship. It also highlights the framework, research methodology, statement of the problem, research rationale and division of chapters.

The present study is primarily concerned with the issue of representation that Edward Said terms as grandest of all narratives, but the focus and perspective are quite opposite to those of Said. As Said unearthed the discursive practices employed by the Occident to represent the Orient, this study is related to Occidentalism/Orientalism-in-reverse, which serves as a counter discourse and reverses the discursive practices exploited by the West to develop its cultural and textual view of Oriental Others. The three travel narratives that I have selected for this study are, *Images of the West*, *Western Bound* and *Seamless Boundaries* by Munshi Itesamuddin, Mirza Abu Taleb Khan and Lutfullah Khan respectively. They all belonged to the same Indo-Muslim tradition and received their education and training in the same literary sensibility that had marked the educated people of their class (Fisher, 2007, p. 160). Written in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries they encapsulate both the advent and the rise of colonialism in India.

The narratives all alike establish that if Orientalism had developed into Western ethnocentrism, the Eastern discourse had now developed a reverse form-that of asserting its own culture and traditions as inherently superior to the West. As a result, they have established the essentialist and reductionist mode of thinking especially in the areas of religio-cultural putative superiority

of the East. This way, two of the narrators – Taleb and Itesamuddin especially – have had detailed discussions with the Western representatives and they managed to uphold the cultural and religious superiority over their counterparts. Although Lutfullah Khan did not engage often in any detailed discussions with the host culture about religious controversies but his discourse is marked with the same intensity of criticism over the Western norms and values as the other two discourses reveal. Mushirul Hassan states that, in their encounter with the West, Munshi Itesamuddin, Mirza Abu Taleb and Lutfullah Khan, “combined with their endearing prejudices, surveyed to different degrees and in different ways industry, agriculture, faith and doubt, morals and ethics, prosperity and poverty and progress and decline in Europe” (Hasan, 2009, p.xvi). In their narratives, unlike Orientalists, they succeeded in not assuming the West to be a homogenous geography and civilization, but they could not free themselves from looking at the West through Oriental Indian Muslim’s prism. Quite interestingly, the idea of the cultural Other was the brainchild of the West but in Occidentalism and as shown in all the above mentioned three narratives, the cultural Other is not the *East* but it is rather the *West*. This results into a new putative identity of the West as the *Cultural Other* of the East.

The time period of the journey as well as of the publication of these travelogues were highly important because there were many political changes taking place and they had a lasting impact on the history of the sub-continent in general and the relationship between the East and the West in particular. The representatives of the crown and the company in India had maneuvered the situation in their favour such a way that now they had

imposed a kind of aggressive sub-imperialism and turned the trading organization into a commercial republic. In 1765, the year when Itesamuddin departed for England on diplomatic mission marked a significant breakthrough in the political and economic ambitions of the East India Company because in the same year the treaty of Ilahabad was signed which granted the authority to Lord Clive that he “obtained from that ill-advised and unfortunate monarch, the Emperor Shah Alum, the commission of Diwany, for the countries of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa” (Alexander, 1827, p.viii). Thus, the downfall of the Mughal dynasty and rapid transfer of power to the English put the Indian Muslims, as a whole, on defensive. Similarly, when Abu Taleb Khan travelled in 1799, the East India Company had got hold of the Sub-Continent and in 1844 when Lutfullah Khan undertook the journey, the Mughal Empire was at the brink of its fall and the subjugation was almost over. This resulted into a change of the relations between the Orient and the Occident which, at times, is reflected in these travelogues. So, if Munshi Itesamuddin travels at the request of the Mughal Emperor, Abu Taleb Khan and Lutfullah Khan had had the offers from their English friends as the Mughals were practically out of power when the latter two undertook their journeys to the West.

These Oriental travelers who documented their travel narratives during and after their visits to Europe, in fact, encountered the Western accounts of and about the East during the course of their journey-to and from and sojourn in the epitome of the Empire. However, this reciprocation regarding the representation of Europe by the Orientals, and that too in the Western genre of travel writing, established the fact that the Orient was not

only capable of (re)presenting itself but also had the potential to represent its cultural, geographical as well as historical and racial Others. In this regard, the Travelogues by Dean Mahomet can be cited as a prime example as he was the first ever Indian travelogue writer, who had, unlike his contemporaries, opted to stay in the West permanently.

Dean Mahomet's *The Travels of Dean Mahomet: An Eighteenth Century Journey through India* was published in 1794. In this travelogue Dean Mahomet writes about the multitude of the Europeans, their traditions, customs and culture that they practice. This was the first ever book written in English by a person of Indian origin. He portrays Indians as human beings who are worthy of as much respect as the Britishers. Michael Fisher describes the travels by writing that the travels are more of memoirs and less of autobiography because Mahomet's main focus is on the outer world and events. Mahomet did not discuss his inner self and, indeed made his own life only a relatively minor theme ... he described the outer world of events, customs and natural features he encountered. His apparent goals were to provide his readers with pleasure and edification (Fisher, 1998, p. 896). But this does not necessarily mean that his travelogues cannot be taken as an autobiography or conventional travelogue in which he writes back to the West.

Mahomet's efforts to bridge over the gaps between Indian colonized and the English colonizer are materialized in the partially successful fusion of the Eastern and Western cultures. For example, he was the first person to introduce the shampooing in the West and feels proud of it. He says that he had to struggle with "doubts and objections raised and circulated against

my bath, which, but for the repeated and numerous cures effected by it, would long since have shared the commonest fate of most innovation in science” (Mahomet, 1997, p. 27). While in India he served Bengal Army of the East India Company as a camp follower, it was under the patronage of Godfrey Baker that Dean Mahomet served as a lieutenant in the British Army. He resigned from Army after eleven years of service and went to England where he served the Bakers. Later he converted to Anglican Christianity and married a fellow student Jane Daly. Mahomet learnt English and got proficiency in it and published his first autobiographical travel book about his observations about the Indian life throughout his service of the East India Company. His travel narrative shows multiple complexities frequently encountered by the Indian servicemen whose alienated attitudes distanced themselves from the British officers because the Indians were ambiguous towards the conquests of the colonial masters. These servants remained apart and aloof from the European colonists and endeavoured to create, through their own distinct ways, the social space for themselves in the cultural interaction of the colonizers and the colonized. In his narratives, he portrayed the Indian people through sympathetic representations and as “human beings worthy of respect” (Fisher, 1997, p. 04) due to his common thread of nativity. His representations were different from those of the Europeans because their accounts and descriptions were composed as the colonizers and not the colonized. It was for the first time that the Indian people were not perceived as exotic, others and inferior but rather, they were presented as respectable human beings with many innate virtues peculiar only to them. Fisher, while analyzing the

hybridized outcome of Diaspora cultural identity presents him as a struggling fellow who wishes to merge and be acknowledged as part of the British culture. It is however inverted and as the empire expanded further, the attitudes of the British also changed and hardened especially towards the Muslims. He outlines that “these English ideologies of an essential “difference” between English and Indians diminished the space available for his own representations of India to the British” (Fisher, 1997. p.17).

Dean Mahomet’s travels is an important contribution towards the body of literature because it was the first effort of an Indian to construct his own narrative and present his own representation as compared to the European representations of the Orient. It provides him an opportunity to change the course of unilateral cultural representations of Asia as assessed by Said in Orientalism. Since the Orient has always lacked the ability to represent itself, the void had to be filled and it was, therefore represented by the West. The same streak can be discerned when different critics even fail to acknowledge that Travels were written by Mahomet. In Pratt’s words Dean Mahomet has contributed immensely by writing Travels and it was during his cultural interactions with the Europeans that Mahomet managed to create the contact zones, and in the words of Pratt, “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as slavery colonialism, slavery” etc. (as cited in Carter, 2010, p. 01). The relationship between the colonizers and the colonized as perceived by Dean Mahomet and defined by Pratt highlights the conflicting modes employed by each geographical entity, group or community to ascertain its identity and prove its superiority

over the other(s). This very perception gave rise to Occidental and Orientalist literature(s) and discourse(s) framing the representative narratives of *us* and *them*. The very discourse that had objectified, represented, stereotyped and labeled the Orient as the Others, not- quite-like- us- and sub-humans who needed to be represented and given the identity, was reversed and the same discursive practices were being used by the heretofore Others to locate their counterparts offshore.

He intersects and interacts between the culmination and fall of two great empires of the time: The Mughal Empire in its downward journey and the British Empire in its ascending mode. Mahomet not only is aware of the European modernity, but he is also well versed in Indian socio-political and cultural heritage. In recognition of this Catherine L. Innes is of the view that, one of the most striking instances of the ability of some “Asian and Black writers is to draw upon their cultural heritage and double identity as loyal subjects and ‘outsiders’ to offer themselves as pathologists, able to redeem the ills which will make Britain a whole and healthy body” (Innes, 2002, p. 55).

As Said implies the accounts of the Westerners into the East are written by the people who not only speak out of the depths of the European culture but also reflect that they are “speaking on behalf of that culture” (Said, 1978, p. 253). Similarly, the accounts by the Oriental travel writers to the West had the same motivation behind. They wrote not only out of the depths of the Eastern culture but perceived the West through the very Indian Muslims’ eyes.

Earlier, a number of travelers from the West or Europe would travel and bequeath us their impressions. Those people, as Claudia Liebeskind comments on the review of Gulfishan Khan's research, focused on

The weird and wonderful things people observed and experienced; their absurd and irrational customs and the barbaric and unhygienic rituals they followed. Among the many areas normally covered in these travelogues were the cosmology of the primitives, their belief systems, the ordering of their community life, their technical skills etc (Liebeskind, 2000, p.112).

It was on such basis that the Western representations of the East were drawn resulting into what Said termed as colonial discourse that portrays and presents the Orient as the land of the Others. It was through this discourse that the European culture was able to manage the Orient scientifically, militarily, ideologically and imaginatively. In other words, the West not only socially constructed but in fact actually controlled the Orient through representative discourse across disciplines including literature, art, visual media and socio-scientific discourse. Thus, the East and the West have been defined as binary oppositions which colour the imagination, ideas and perceptions of each other.

On the other hand, the Eastern discourse on the West also attempted to present, define, portray and project the West through its Eastern Eyes. Although the Orient/East had little to offer in terms of scientific and technological innovations/developments yet in terms of religio-ethical and socio-cultural aspects it deemed itself superior and cajoled the West in its discourse. The very aspects of Oriental culture and civilization that had been caricatured by the West were, in fact, lauded by the Orient in writing back to the West.

The travelogues, produced by Munshi Itesamuddin, Mirza Abu Taleb and Lutfullah Khan in particular aimed at seeing, perceiving, defining and representing the Europe and especially the British Whites through Orientalism-in-reverse or the inverted gaze. Since “representations and modes of perception are used as fundamental weapons” by colonial powers in order to acquire, assert and maintain their authority and domination, over the colonized, it is “time to reverse the gaze” because, the West had “constructed the East through certain imaginative strategies that exoticised, estranged and emptied it of its reality” (Satchidanandan, 2001, p. 10). Fanon had also asserted that the only cathartic practice against colonial subjugation was the violent resistance against the colonizers. It is this very practice that purges the colonial servility from the consciousness of the colonized and helps him (re)gain the self-esteem and respect (Fanon, 1963, p.144). The inverted gaze, though not new in the historical perspective of post-colonialism was warned about even by Said himself. He had a strong belief that “the answer to Orientalism is not Occidentalism” (Said, 1978, p.328). Said’s forewarning about launching an Occidental discourse/eying the West through inverted gaze was however too feeble and too late as the perceptual modes of the East had already been viewing, judging, analyzing and representing their counterpart-the West/Occident thus making statements about it, describing it, defining it and above all resisting its domination in the textual realm of its discourse.

As far as their counter-discourse was concerned it was a twofold process by which the travelers attempted to present themselves, their cultures, traditions and civilizational artifacts before the colonizers through

their inverted gaze. On the one hand, they aimed at (re)assuring the West of their different lineage than the one it had in its imagination evident throughout academic and non-academic discourses. It was, on the other hand, a perceptive account of the Empire for the readers and scholars back home so that they may develop or (re) affirm their existing notions about the West/colonizers. Therefore, the exercise of travelogue writing was a “gesture of self-assertion” (Sen, 2005, p. 204) as well as a kind of interactive episode between two different geographies, cultures, societies and civilizations. The myth of Europe was demystified by the colonized, periphery-dweller travelers by constantly asserting their perceptions, judgments and the truths as they had formed. Their handling of different Orientalist themes and issues that are said to be stock-in-trade are manipulated in order to create a location and position with respect to Europe. Although, all three were devout lovers of scientific and technological developments taking place and shaping up the society on different grounds, yet the resulting moral and ethical codes collided with their conventional Eastern models of religion and mythology yielding aggressive and in a way abhorrent attitude towards the West.

But in their portrayal of the West they were not governed by any single theory like Orientalists who had extended their support to (re)present and (re)carve their Others’ image and show to the people the inevitability of what was due to them to ‘civilize’ the ‘uncivilized’ and this discourse aided the Empire in the attainment of its objectives.

I have benefited from both the translations by James Alexander and Kaiser Haq for the study of *Images of the West* by Munshi Itesamuddin. The primary objective was to avoid textual interplay and assure

impartiality, therefore, I did not rely more on any one of the two translations because as Schurer points out there were some interpolations and maneuvering in both the texts (Schürer, N. 2011, p.140) which I balanced out by benefiting from both. Thus, the tug of war which started in Anglo India continued in Great Britain and later engulfed the translations of the texts giving rise to politics of representation through interpolations, in the textual discourse. As regard the *Westward Bound* by Abu Taleb Khan, I have benefited from Charles Stewart's translation and Lutfullah Khan's *Seamless Boundaries* as an original text as he had written it in English.

1.1 The politics of representation

The politics of Representation, its divisive nature, ensuing impact(s) and its role in shaping up the power narratives, have been primarily investigated, debated, analyzed, (re)presented and theorized by Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1978). The Orientalists have always sought justifications for the expansion of their imperialistic projects and establishment of hegemonic designs through the representative narratives and texts especially in the wake of East vs. West divide. This way, the hegemony is created that provides Orientalism its strength to operate and colonize (Said, 1978, p. 07). The accomplishment of "civilizing mission" (Kodjo, 2016, p.71) though self-proclaimed and self-imposed, added to the "White Man's Burden" (Kipling, 1889, p.180) which resulted into myth-making on the basis of Orient/Occident and Us/Them. This practice, especially in the Orientalist discourse, provided the West a context which they maneuvered for the attainment of power across the shores and sought the justifications to establish their colonies and dominate the people by forcing them to compromise their political

sovereignty. In this regard, the focus of the research has been mainly on the identity construction of the colonized by the colonizers who regarded them as incapable of representing themselves because of innate inferiority, degeneration, illogicality and irrationality etc. As Karl Marx had suggested that “they cannot represent themselves, they must be represented” (Marx, 1852, p. 04), the West assumed the responsibility to label the East or the Orient as it saw and perceived it not necessarily as it was or might have been. The evolutionary sciences, geographical discoveries, cultural artefacts, civilizational traits, traditional discourses, religious philosophies and socio-economic theories were used to create, propagate, endorse and enforce the typical stereotypes that could have (re)presented the non-Western peoples as dehumanized figures who needed to be tamed and governed by the colonizers from the West. Such representative notions about the Orient/East were not limited to a single genre but as Said describes, it involved all the possible fields of knowledge—from visual arts to literature, natural sciences to social sciences and religious texts to travelogues—any discourse that could contribute in proving the Orient as inferior to the Occident through a binary. This is however to be noted that Said’s *Orientalism* has helped many postcolonial critics in analyzing the travel writings. One of the notable works is by Mary Louise Pratt’s *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* although Pratt does not acknowledge the background contribution of Said in her studies. It was pointed out by another critic Kennedy who wrote, “although Pratt does not mention Said, her analysis of travel writing would be unthinkable without the groundbreaking work of *Orientalism*” (Kennedy, 2013, p. 37). It shows that Saidian discourse on Orientalism also shaped up

many other countless fields of inquiry including travel writing. The above examples prove that the phenomenon of labeling/defining and identity construction not only existed in the travel writings but expanded to all other notable genres, too.

So, it was not only the occupation of the geographical territories but the domination of the Western discourses as well that was fostered in this socio-political milieu. The (re)making of knowledge and its use for the colonial domination resulted in the form of dismantling of many societies on the one hand and establishment of Western empires on the other. In this regard the purposes of “white patriarchal myths were to justify the conquest, occupation and destruction of non-western societies” (Low, G. C. L. 2003, 02) across the globe.

Europe, especially the English, discovered their ‘Others’ in imaginative and scientific literature and portrayed them through different discursive practices to prove them different from the colonizers or would-be-masters. The politicization of such scholastic literature in the field of Orientalism, despite Said’s forewarnings, gave birth to its opposite and rival discipline called Occidentalism which developed as an anti-thesis to the former. Thus, the counter-narrative started brewing and the empire started writing back exploiting and executing all the notions and practices used earlier for the dehumanization of the colonized or the “subalterns” (Spivak, 2005, p. 475). The investigation into this field reveals that in their literature, the colonized perceived and represented the colonizers on the basis of certain prejudices, reduced images, preconceived notions and stereotypes in order to define, represent and portray their cultural *Others* and their former colonial

masters as is evident in the currently selected travelogues. Although Occidentalism as a field came into being as a response to Orientalism, however, the Occidental perspective permeated through the writings of the South Asian Travelogue writers as their consciousness was already conditioned by the East-West interactions.

Said propounded that in the European discourse which had already established the nexus between power and knowledge, the representation of the Orient was carried out in different fields and disciplines including travelogues, scientific literature, anthropology, history, philosophy, cultural studies and evolutionary sciences which contributed to the creation of binary oppositions of self- other, orient-occident and civilized-uncivilized (Said, 1978, p. 150). It resulted in the creation and promotion of European hegemony and cultural matrix that was regarded as the culmination of the civilizational progress of Europe. The resulting binary sketched the East as uncivilized, ignorant, irrational, illogical, degenerate, and primitive while the West was portrayed as civilized, educated, rational, logical, cultured and modern thus deepening the “binary distinction” between the two (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2007, p.20). Said’s thesis addressed the discourse shaped by the Orientalists regarding the above-mentioned fields of study that had been formed in the very centers which later started governing those peripheral territories, with all the justifications coded in that plethora of discourses.

Though, Said’s research is of seminal category but there have been many other theorists who contributed in this and other related fields discussing and theorizing the representative nature of works in all the major

genres and disciplines. While Hodgson, Tibwai, and Djait are some of the important names in this regard, Said's addition involves a fresh and unique dimension of literary criticism to the heights of scholarly and historical analysis where he managed to bring closer the varying strands of critique(s) under a single interdisciplinary framework which transformed "disciplinary critiques of Orientalism into multidisciplinary cultural analysis. Said regarded Orientalism as the grandest of all narratives, an all-encompassing discourse that both represented and contained the Orient, that is key to the success of Orientalism" (Sardar, 2002, p.67). In this way, Orientalism was the triggering force behind the colonization process.

On the other hand, in their endeavor to discover Europe, the Muslims' view of Europe was that of a damned place and the White people were considered as "Gog and Magog" (Lewis, 2001, p.139). The complete version of one of the earliest discoveries of Europe and Europeans is summed up by Bernard Lewis who writes, "As regards the people of the Northern quadrant, they are the ones for whom the sun is distant from the zenith, as they penetrate the north, such as the slaves, the franks, and those nations that are their neighbours. . . .the warm humour is lacking among them" (Lewis, 2001, p.139). It throws light on the perceptual modes of the travelers from the East who regarded themselves as the Self and the West as the Other. This was so mainly because the West was perceived through the religious eyes, that too, from the East. Thus, the binary was twofold as also displayed in the travelogues under current study; the West as the binary of the East and the West as the religious Other of Muslims.

Although Said's thesis served as a ground-breaking discourse on the subject, the critics of Said and Orientalism have propounded their arguments in defense of the Western academia. For example, Dennis Porter, John Mackenzie and Aijaz Ahmed, through their contrary views, repudiate Said for his over-generalized and sweeping statements regarding Orientalists and in particular Aijaz Ahmed regards Said's history of Orientalism essentially "ahistorical" (Güven 2019, 421). To them, Said ignores the history of resistance undertaken not only by the colonized but also by the colonizer in general. All the dissenting voices have been given no credit by Said at all and according to his critics Said carries out a sweeping analysis based on a unilateral approach. Mackenzie goes to the extent of saying that the Western intelligentsia approached the orient with perfectly honorable intentions and utmost reverence for other people in order to value their cultures and learn from them through mutual cultural interactions. He dismisses the observation that all the Orientalists or the Westerners were casting a gaze or were looking down upon the Orient in a crude way as Said had supposedly portrayed by ignoring those voices in *Orientalism*. For example, Said ignores many genuine contributions to the study of the Eastern cultures made by Westerners during the Enlightenment and Victorian eras" (Baofu, 2012, p. 23).

One area that Said's critics and theorists point out emphatically is the *representation* of the colonizers/White people/Occident by their counterparts; the colonized/East/Orient subjected by them for a long time. Said's thesis focuses on the representation of Europe to itself and the representation of the others by Europe, "not as accounts of different peoples and societies, but a projection of fears and desires masquerading as scientific/ objective

knowledges” (Ashcroft et al, 2006, p. 93). Ahmed also unleashes his criticism on Said for his “hegemony” of the West (Loomba, 2007, p. 78) with regard to *representation* in *Orientalism*. On the other hand, apart from delineation of power and its working in the shaping Orientalist discourse, the theorization of the counter narratives also formed the anti-thesis of Orientalism known as Occidentalism.

The reactionary or counter-discourse phenomenon termed as Occidentalism, “in all its forms is, like Orientalism, the enemy of understanding, of the mutual enrichment of cultural exchange”, (Lary, 2006, p.11). That is why, Said had emphasized through his forewarning that no Occidentalist discourse should be constructed to function as a counter discourse to Orientalism. Nevertheless, it seems that Said’s warning was just issued too late and too feeble as discourses on the West have been used for centuries. “Occidentalism, the imagining of the West by the Easterners is as old as the interaction between the two sides” (Jouhki, 2006, p. 59). The Eastern texts, like the Western texts, were grounded on the stereotypes which involve a reduction of the images and ideas to a simple and manageable form and are based on lack of real, impartial and authentic knowledge. It is done in order to create the difference between the Self and the Other. This stereotyping is based on different oppositions, for example, race, gender, religion and socio-political structures. It is more like projecting others in the form of a reduced image to bring about the dehumanizing aspect of other people, cultures and civilizations. These reduced images of the Other or the colonized become their identity and they are, as a result, labeled according to this new construct of identity.

Michael Fisher is of the view that in India, people belonging to different groups, “religious communities, regions, and genders, adopted different attitudes toward and participation in overseas travel and interactions with various Others there” (Fisher, 2007, p.157) especially the West. The image of the West as imperial and domineering has been studied by scholars who have identified it as another instance of Orientalism-in-reverse, a discourse and rhetoric associated with what they called Occidentalism. Santos offers an important definition of the term Occidentalism:

First, Occidentalism as a counter-image of Orientalism: the image that the others, the victim of Western Orientalism, construct concerning the West. Second, Occidentalism as a double image of Orientalism: the Image of the West has of itself when it subjects the ‘others’ to Orientalism. (de Sousa Santos, 2009, p. 105)

What is really important in Santo’s second definition of Occidentalism is that it is shown as a strategy and tool by Westerners in the West against the imperialistic and hegemonic practices of their nations. This second definition equates with the way people in the East use Occidentalism to counter the hegemony associated with Orientalism.

Occidentalism is defined, though with a “problematic interpretation” (Zachs, 2011, p. 125) as “the dehumanized picture of the West painted by its enemies”. (Buruma & Margalit, 2005, p. 05). Occidentalism, in this regard, is taken to be an anti-Western view by which the West is portrayed as a diabolical creature that is ready to catapult all the other civilizations in order to assert its imperialistic might. They located the rhetoric of Occidentalism in early-twentieth-century Germany where there was hatred for Jewified, American and French people. The anti-Western groups not only opposed its culture but also “diminished and de-legitimized it as a poisonous materialist

civilization” (Zachs, 2011, p. 125). On the other hand, Zachs delimits Occidentalism as “the attitude, both negative and positive, of the East to the West” (Zachs, 2011, p. 125). Ying Birks, a Chinese researcher has further highlighted an aspect of Othering. He introduces a new aspect that deals with positive delineation of the Others. He calls it the Positive Othering and defines it as the “practice {that} disputes the claims of the Other as a purely negative concept” (Birks, 2012, p.128), thus assuming it to be Positive in its portrayal of the Others.

Another important concept central to my research area is reverse Orientalism defined by Claire Chambers as:

Orientalism’s power-knowledge dialectic and the way in which it stereotypes Indians and its definitions of Indians have been to some extent reversed at social and cultural levels . . . but without this being a symmetrical counter discursive response to the cultural hegemony of British Orientalism within India (Chambers, 2015, p. 34-35).

This term was first used by a Jamaican poet Louise Bennet as, “Orientalism in reverse” (Chambers, 2015, p. 36). Reverse Orientalism is one of the many discursive practices employed by the travel writers to represent their Western Others.

The above discussion about Orientalism and Occidentalism is the central argument running through the entire analysis of this study whereas both these theoretical concepts contend, overlap and sometimes bring forth an interdisciplinary academic space giving way to such an analysis. The travelogue writings selected for this interdisciplinary study have been analyzed keeping in view Claire Chambers’s notion of Orientalism-in-Reverse which I have used throughout this study. This study is primarily

concerned with Orientalism-in-reverse/Occidentalism, which at first glance seems remotely related to Orientalism. Nevertheless, it is my proposition that the single aspect cannot be studied in isolation without taking into account both the binaries as a whole. In addition, examining the validity of using the term ‘the West’ is problematic when trying to postulate its meaning. But I have used it as Lewis wrote that ‘the West’ was used in the Orient as a European frame of reference, that is: the West meant Europe (Lewis, 1968, p. 29).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Before and since Edward Said’s anti-Orientalist discourse, a lot of research has been done to expose and challenge the Western imperialist meta-narratives. However, very few studies have been carried out to investigate what Said himself had warned about, that is, the tendency to Occidentalize the “Western” or cultural other of the “East” or the Orient. This study is an attempt to see how the ‘eastern gaze’ perceived its colonial other in terms of representations in the travelogues by three selected Indian Muslim writers of 18th and 19th centuries.

1.3 Research Questions

- To what extent are the selected travelogues Occidentalist in their nature?
- How do the selected narratives postulate the Positive Othering of the West by the Indian Muslims?
- What are the discursive methods/practices of the three selected writers to *represent* their European *Others*?

1.4 Theoretical Framework and Research Methodology

The theoretical framework applied for this study has been adapted to analyze and interpret the data discussed in the ensuing chapters in order to understand the perceptual narratives of the Indians/colonized about the West. The reversal of discourse, that too on the soil of the masters/colonizers and on the soil of the Empire (India) on socio-cultural levels is very significant. My theoretical framework is eclectic and is based on Postcolonialism and further delimited to Occidentalism/Reverse Orientalism and representation. Scholars like Bonnet believe that as far as Occidentalism is concerned, there are two views about it. There are some people who define Occidentalism as a “Western project of self-invention and those who ally it with the examination of the images of the West from across the globe” (Bonnett, 2004, p.07). Bonnett has identified at least three basic characteristics of Occidentalism. At the first place, though often seen as Orientalist’s creation of the distorted Orient, it was a practice long before the term was coined. Bonnet propounds that Russian, Japanese and Indians have long been creating and constructing the West and the resulting stereotypes are reflected in their literature and political discourse. Secondly, Occidentalism has been associated with the influence and intrusion of the West by force or ideas during the colonial and postcolonial eras. Interestingly, the construction of Western Other is twofold at this stage; it is the *Positive Western Other* as well as the *Negative Western Other*. The former is a model Other that has modern sensibilities, technological developments and enlightened and forward-looking approach; however, the latter is equated with the evil Other that has to be despised and shunned away. Thirdly, Occidentalism has been used as a political tool for

non-Western countries to dwell upon nationalistic movements and charter their own socio-economic and cultural identities (Bonnett, 2004, pp. 63-69). In a nutshell, Occidentalism, as a self defining strategy is instrumental for the non-Western people not only to assert their national and cultural identities but also to write back to the West in its own coins.

Postcolonial and Occidental approaches to studying and interpreting the discourse emphasize the tension between the metropolis and the (former) colonies. In this regard it is pertinent to quote Hans Bertens who says that Postcolonial theory and criticism, “radically question the expansionist imperialism of the colonizing powers and in particular the system of values that supported imperialism and that it sees as still dominant within the ‘Western’ world” (Bertens, 2007, p.200). There is no doubt that the defense mechanism or the resistance movement of the colonized also adopted representation as one of the strategies to defend themselves and caricature the Other’s culture. Therefore, we can say that the issue of representation has its grounds in the theoretical framework of Postcolonialism. It is in this regard that the Postcolonial critics and theorists “examine the representation of other cultures in literature” (Barry, 2002, p. 131) by rejecting the Eurocentric universalism. Moreover, they also pay heed to the issues of cultural differences, polarity, and cultural polyvalence, that is, the situation whereby individuals and groups belong simultaneously to more than one culture. Peter Berry opines in his book *Beginning Theory*, “the first step towards a postcolonial perspective is to reclaim one’s own past, then the second is to begin to erode the colonialist ideology by which that past had been devalued”

(Barry, 2002, p. 128). It also provides me with the binoculars to focus on and investigate the phenomenon of representation in the above-mentioned texts.

Another important tool that I have dwelt upon is stereotyping and caricaturing of the West carried out by the selected writers. Alluding to representation and stereotyping Bhabha opines that stereotyping is a much more “ambivalent text of projection and introjections, metaphoric and metonymic strategies, displacement, guilt, aggressivity; the masking and splitting of official and fantasmic knowledges” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 80). Bhabha shows that the colonialist ideology manufactures many methodologies to devalue and erode the past of the colonized, out of which one is to represent them and create their negative images through stereotyping. Similarly, in the resistance literature one of the methods used by the colonized is to pay back the colonizers in their own coins. Thus, the *counter-representation* or *representation-in-reverse* are the discursive practices or techniques used by the colonized, Orient or the Others-of- the-West to represent their Western Other.

This research, being Qualitative in its nature, uses descriptive and exploratory methodology and the postcolonial theory is used for textual as well as contextual analysis of the text. As far as my research technique/tool is concerned, I have chiefly benefited from Close Reading to analyse the literary texts. Close Reading has been used to reinforce the methods of selecting, interpreting and analyzing selected textual examples, events, interactional situations and speeches. These methods have helped me to determine the presence of relevant concepts within discourse and textual samples. Researchers quantify and analyze the presence, meanings and relationships of

such words and concepts, then make inferences about the messages within the texts, the writer(s), the audience, and even the culture and time these have been a part of. The term Close Reading refers not only to “an activity with regard to texts but also to a type of text itself: a technically informed, fine-grained analysis of some piece of writing” (Smith, 2016, p.58). There are three aspects examined through it: the rhetor, or author, of the text; the audience(s); and the message itself. Texts, in this context, refer broadly to books, book chapters, essays, historical documents, speeches, conversations, or any occurrence of communicative language within the selected works.

1.5 Research Rationale

Debates and controversies surrounding Orientalist discourses abound in the academia, especially since Said’s controversial work *Orientalism* published in 1978. Said’s thesis outlines that the studies on Orientalism, Representation and Empire focused on the passivity and receptivity of the Orientals in the whole historical process of happenings. The other side of the Others had been left open for further research and I have intended to view and investigate the relationship between the British colonizers and the Indian colonized and how it resulted into perception of the former about the latter. This study is different from other studies in one additional sense as it is neither about an individual nor the collective but a sample of Muslim travel writers from the sub-continent. Moreover, these writers make almost a series of chronological order ranging between 18th and 19th centuries and representing the advent, rise and culmination of colonialism in India respectively. Although the reversal of Orientalism cannot and has not reversed the power/knowledge dialectic, yet the discursive structures of Orientalism

and Orientalist discourse have been challenged on socio-cultural levels impacting the customs and traditions of the British landscape. More interestingly, Occidentalism had no backing of the Empire as had been the case with Orientalism.

In addition, the colonized or natives' point of view has always been ignored due to their historical, political, cultural and academic marginalization; so, it's been pertinent to study how the natives look(ed) at their imperial masters especially in the metropolis. Similarly important is the question as how the Indian intelligentsia whose whole body of literature, according to Macaulay, is inferior to a single shelf of Western books, (Macaulay, 1965, p.111) view(ed) the "emissary of light" and the torch bearers of civilization (Conrad, 1977, p. 24) in their literature.

In my current study I have interpreted, evaluated and analyzed how during the 18th and 19th centuries, Oriental (Indian) Muslims identify the *Others* and what mechanisms this process of Othering involves. In response to Saidian Orientalism, a parallel critique of Occidentalism deals with the construction of the *Western Other* through discursive practices. And, similar to Orientalism, the *constructed image* of a Western Other has developed the perception and images of the West by the non-Western people at large. The study of the Western Other is captured by the term Occidentalism which appeared in 1990s and gradually gained attention by the theorists and literary critics. It largely refers and is limited to the perception of the white people by the non-whites and how they construct and represent them.

1.6 Chapter Division

In total, this study consists of six chapters and the first one introduces research problem. The literature review spans over two parts (one and two) keeping in view the enormity of the area(s). The following three chapters present the analysis of the texts (each dealing within a separate chapter) followed by the last chapter that rounds up the argument(s) in the form of the conclusion.

In the second chapter, (part one) the discussion of issues such as Orientalism, Occidentalism, Reverse Orientalism and their relevance with the Indian subcontinent and Muslims has been explored. This chapter deals with the critique of Orientalism, Occidentalism, and counter-ethnography or reverse-Orientalism through which the Western Other has been constructed over the period of centuries. This study reveals that the Western Other is not an imaginary or fictional idea rather it is primarily a socio-political and cultural construct as tenable as envisaged by the South Asian Travelogue writers of 18th and 19th centuries. The discussion revolves around the basic question that Occidentalism developed as a reaction to Orientalism; moreover, the theoretical grounds have been established for such a debate. The focus of the discussion though is more in the context of postcolonial literature both on the basis of Said's thesis and its intense reaction and the development of Occidentalism vis-à-vis Orientalism in the historical perspective. The nascent prevalence of Occidentalism and Orientalism and its continuous fostering and nursing kept going throughout the history until Said theorized latter and provided the theoretical framework for the former, though with a forewarning, thus bringing both the theories and thereby their respective subscribers

(colonizers as well colonized) at par, at least on the theoretical levels. Therefore, all the discursive practices that had been employed by the Empire for the construction of its representative narratives through stereotypical discourse(s), were written back to the Empire by once marginalized, colonized, non European subalterns not only to counter the existing notions but also to reconstruct their own social and personal identities by launching the rebuttals for their former colonial masters. However, this debate is not based on the geographical divisions as the Eastern or the Western views rather the dissenting voices from both the Oriental as well as the Occidental fronts have also been discussed in order to shun away the label of partiality.

The second chapter (part two) is devoted to literature review in which I have focused more on the critical analysis of the relevant/related literature in the field of travelogues especially in the context of Muslims as well as the travelers of the sub-continent. The historical perspective of the Muslims' (both Arabs and Non-Arabs) discovery of the Europeans, their interaction, ensuing conflicts and resulting construction of socio-political and cultural stereotypes and representations shaped up much of the early discourse(s) since they first encountered and intersected each other. While the Muslims saw the Europeans as Gog and Magog, the Muslims themselves were seen as barbarians, uncivilized and invaders into Europe. Later, throughout the Middle Ages and upto 18th and 19th centuries, the Europeans or for that matter all the other communities/nations were perceived by the Muslims on the basis of religious identities. So, they were Kafirs (non-Muslims), Infidels, Non-Believers, Seculars, Communists or whatever; therefore, religion played its pivotal role in defining the Non-Muslims especially Europeans. This chapter

also looks into these perceptual notions through the discussion of the travelogues produced by the travelers who were not Muslims but were certainly from the Sub-Continent.

In the third chapter I have discussed and analyzed *Shigruf Namah-I-Vilayet* or *Images of the West* by Munshi Itesamuddin (1730-1800) which is a travelogue. It is a commentary of an outsider on different issues such as history, sociology, politics, religion, and the West in general. This travelogue provides us with not only the prevalent domestic situations, intrigues, political upheavals but also sheds light on the ways of the West. Originally written in Persian, it was translated into English by James Alexander but I have also relied on Kaiser Haq's translation in order to get to the more balanced and near-the-original-text version and to avoid the complexities and politics of interpolations. During Itesamuddin's journey as well as stay in Europe especially England, he had many a chances to meet the people from all ranks and files-from beggar to the king- and visited many institutions and their representatives in his personal as well as professional capacity. He had ample time to study and investigate the behaviors and attitudes of the natives not only about each other but also about the peoples of the other parts of the world including the Indian colonized masses. His reaction to the West was inspired by the progress, prosperity, development, evolution and innovations on the one hand and the disintegration of family systems, worldliness, material preferences and the exploitative capitalistic patterns on the other hand. It is interesting to note that his journey towards the West parallels the West's journey towards the East albeit the former's stay prolonged for further a century and a half in the Indian sub-continent.

Chapter four deals with the investigation of the discursive practices employed by Mirza Abu Taleb in his travelogue *The Travels of Mirza Abu Taleb Khan in Asia, Africa, and Europe during the years 1799, 1800, 1801, 1802, and 1803* translated by Charles Stewart. It is established through the official sources of the British Govt. that the decision of the publication of the text was taken in the national interest of the British Empire. Their expectations were that it would cast quite a favourable impression in the minds of the Indians about their Imperial masters. The commentary and critique of the Western world view and canonical structures across the seas helps him portray the society in black and white terms. Khan's perceptual tenets were disseminated both ways; from the East to the West and vice versa. His simultaneous emulation as well as critical overview of the Western frame of thought, cultural artefacts, scientific, technological and industrial developments, material progress and political supremacy leave him without any options to compare and contrast with the Indian world in the sub-continent. But as regard the representative practices, Khan withholds the belief about the Oriental practices and presents his counterparts as the Others (sometimes positive and sometimes negative) which are widely discussed in the travelogue and analyzed in the discourse of this research. Moreover, his post-return treatise also reflects what he, in fact, took the West to be at that time. Starting from the hardships of the journey towards the West, and encountering the Western gaze are equally full of challenges involving the counters, encounters, actions, reactions and such like other chain of narratives and meta-narratives. Sometimes, these are shown bridging the gulf and at other time deepening the differences between two different socio-political,

cultural, religious and geographical identities existing in two different and distinct worlds; Orientalism and Occidentalism.

The fifth chapter of this study deals with *Seamless Boundaries* by Lutfullah Khan. This travelogue can be divided into two parts; the first and a longer section deals with Lutfullah Khan's autobiographical lineage and challenges, and the second part is devoted to Khan's relatively shorter stay in the West. But this chapter gives a fuller understanding of the status of the relationship between the colonizers and the colonized in the Indian subcontinent as well as the transformations that it underwent in the metropolis as an aftermath of the imperial expansion and subjugation of the Indians. In fact, it serves as a sequel of the earlier two travelogues because of its historical and temporal location in the existing discourse of this genre. This travelogue also serves as quite a unique status compared to Munshi Itesamuddin and Mirza Abu Taleb's travelogues because it was not translated but written directly in English thus addressing the people of the land without any direct or indirect linkage. It is quite a revelation that whereas so much literature has been produced on the previously discussed travelogues, Lutfullah Khan's work barely attracted the attention of the theorists, critics as well as the readers both in the East as well as the West. His journey to the West took place with Mir Jafar Ali Khan who had sided with the British during the tumultuous periods in India starting from the 1st half of the nineteenth century. The British life envisaged and encountered by yet another Indian colonized who is already familiar with their language and gets introduced to the customs in their homeland presents a glimpse of almost all the major institutions, personalities, events and the decisions that he came

across during his journey and stay. His intellectual and representative journey started when he located them as the speakers of a strange language in a strange accent and ended with his perception of them as cultural Others

The concluding chapter of this study deals with the results of the research questions posed earlier in introductory chapter. After a detailed discussion in the previous three chapters, in the last chapter the findings include all the discursive practices employed, exploited and executed by the travel writers in their respective times and travelogues. The study has explored and charted out the reciprocation of the discourses endorsing and reinforcing the fact that the East was equally capable of representing itself as well as its counterparts or cultural Others. In this whole process, it is ascertained that in comparison with the Western travel writers, these Oriental writers and travelers were more subtly aware of the cultural, religious, racial and geographical diversities in the European part of the world. They would not and did not consider the European terrain as homogenous and unified as was done and perceived by the European travel writers about the Orient portraying it only as homogeneity and never alluding to multi faceted entities prevalent in this part of the world.

Munshi Itesamuddin, Lutfullah Khan and Abu Taleb Khan, stressed and highlighted the voices of what the West deemed as peripheries. On chronological accounts, all three mark the beginning, middle and culmination of imperial expansion and colonial subjugation of the subcontinent during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. At the bottom of all this study and discussion lies the fact that for all three travel writers to Europe religion has

been the basic identity marker whether they practiced it or not, however, is a different debate.

Chapter Two

Section 1

Literature Review: The debate between Orientalism and Occidentalism

This section of the chapter debates Orientalism and Occidentalism as two distinct discourses. It places Occidentalism vis-a-vis Orientalism to analyse how the former can be understood in relation to the latter. It analyses the construction of Orientalism and the relationship between power and knowledge in this discourse. It also focuses on different aspects of Saidian definition of it, followed by a critique. One important aspect of Orientalism is representation of the Others which is also defined in this context. Moreover, Occidentalism is discussed at length with its characteristics, brief history and Indians construction of their Western Other. The term Positive Othering in relation to (Negative) Othering helps to understand the attitude and perceptions of the East about the West. Finally, it also focuses on the construction of India in the discourse of Orientalism.

2.1 Occidentalism: a reaction to Orientalism?

Occidentalism, by and large, deals with the imagining of the West in geography, social sciences, literary and popular discourses, either in the West or the East. As Fernando Coronil asserts the binary relations formulate and establish connections in the paradigmatic chain of concepts in history, geography and social sciences. He further says that three modes of representation describe the relationship between the East and the West.

The first phase is the dissolution of the East by the West. The East is described as the Other whereas the West is depicted as the Self. Therefore, in the Western consciousness East is identified and acknowledged but only in relation to the West. In this regard, Hegel's view was Eurocentric and its evolutionary nature dealt with the conflict between the colonizer and the colonized. In this whole story, the history was drafted by Europe while the non-European was at the command of the West for its salvation. Nevertheless, in this exercise, the Other is hybridized, while the West becomes more tolerant of the Other. Thus, in Hegelian discourse, the West and the East need each other to find a better self.

The second mode is where the West incorporates the East. This mode focuses on the developed, advanced and modern West in which the East immerses itself. This view dwells upon the imagined differences between the East and the West, and it was because of these differences that the imperialist West expanded itself further.

The third mode of representation manifests that non-Western peoples are considered as a source of knowledge to the West. Dissolution or incorporation is no longer the solution. It is important to note that in all these modalities the Other is understood as a mirror image of the Self (Coronil, 1996, pp. 57-65). Now, in the reverse Orientalism, the discursive practices are employed back on the Occident. The East not only locates its Western Other but also stereotypes, labels, defines and represents it in relation to itself as the Self and the West as the Other.

Different Postcolonial scholars (from both the East and the West) have drafted varying perspectives in this regard. Hanafi is of the view that

Occidentalism, unlike Orientalism, is not triggered by the desire to dominate nor does it intend to deform the object, consciously or unconsciously, by creating stereotypical images or making value judgments on it. One of the main rationales behind Occidentalism is to “liberate one’s self from the yoke of the image imposed on it by the Other” (Hanafi, 2010, p. 03). Occidentalism may produce counter-images for the Other, with its desire to dominate, and for the self, with a self-producing image of endogenous creativity, as a desire for self-liberation. The nativity/nativism is the core of Occidentalism as it is believed that only the natives of a culture can understand it best and no foreigner can ever comprehend the subtleties of any other culture than his own. In this regard Diana Lary is of the view that, “only Japanese can understand Japan, only Chinese can understand China; no foreigner, however well versed in language and culture, can ever understand a culture that they were not born into” (Lary, 2006, p.09). Occidentalism deals with the impression and perception of the Other by the Other and also touches upon some other issues like appropriation and representation: The questions whether white people can write about Black people, the West about the Rest and men about women are not easy to resolve as they may involve misrepresentation and certain biases and prejudices. Occidentalism and Orientalism, in their reverse forms, are formed as a major part by the reaction of the Muslims. Eliza Karczynska, quotes Taleb in this regard that, “If Orientalism had developed itself into Western ethnocentrism, we observed that the former colonized people had now developed a reversed form-that of asserting their own

culture and traditions as inherently superior to the West, or what Said termed as nativism” (Karczynska, 2012, p.190).

The term Occidentalism, in the context of postcolonial literature, yields a brief history but the practice of constructing others has been centuries old. Tracing the history of Occidentalism Jouhki is of the view that the relationship between the two halves of the world is not new, rather it has always been there. (Jouhki, 2006, p. 59-60). Said’s warning in the concluding chapters of his book *Orientalism* (1978) regarding initiation of Occidentalism was not only too feeble but too late as well. Both the above-mentioned terms are often used in the generalized sense constructing the homogeneity, and taking both halves of the world as separate, distinct, opposite and in a diametrical binary, as Kipling had said “East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet” (as cited in Stedman, 1906, p. 01). According to Said the history of the empire reveals that the Orient has been constructed as a “monolithic” entity by the West (Said, 1978, p. 278) suggesting that East and West have been portrayed as a binary where latter negates the existence of its ‘other’. In their portrayal and construction, the social scientists, political theorists, literary writers, evolutionists, philosophers, scientists and travelogue writers, and to name but a few, have dwelt upon representing the Orient as the European Other. It resulted into broadening the divisions and deepening the gulf between the two. Therefore, as Said notes, “Orientalism presents an Orient absolutely different from the West that Orientalists have promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, us) and the Strange (the Orient, the East, them). (as cited in Carrier, 1992, p. 195).

In this regard Bernard Lewis decodes the experiences of 10th century Arabs whose observation about the Europeans manifests their pre-conceived notions in their description as the cursed people whom even nature disowns as it is at the maximum distance from them and they have been living in the neighborhood of the slaves and Franks which, in itself, is a reflection of their being outcasts. Further they are depicted as abnormal beings called Gog and Magog because their “bodies are large, their nature gross, their manners harsh, their understanding dull, and their tongues heavy. Describing their complexion, he says that “their colour is so excessively white that they look blue and their religious beliefs lack solidarity” (Lewis, 2001, p.139). It proves that the binary of the Self/Other and Orient/Occident is not new; rather it has a long history since the interaction between the East and the West started. The decoding of the Arabs’ experiences of the West were based on their religious identity and they perceived the West through both Eastern as well as religious eyes. It also establishes a strong link with the current study where all three travelers carry and manifest their religious identity markers throughout.

The term Occidentalism is quasi-theoretical (Ning, 1997, p. 62), having a wide range of connotations, but it generally refers to practices in which non-Western people, especially the colonized, perceive and present the West (the colonizers) and its people. The studying subject in Orientalism becomes an object of study in Occidentalism and the object of study in Orientalism becomes the studying subject in Occidentalism. Occidentalism, unlike Orientalism which was the creation of the center, is the creation of the periphery which was marginalized. However,

Occidentalism reverses the roles and relationship. According to Hanafi, Occidentalism is often criticized for being born in an ethno-racist culture and because of its focus on Eurocentrism which pits Whit against Black, reason against magic knowledge against ignorance and so on. The history of the Western world was written while keeping the West in the center of the universe while the history of the non-West was written by reducing it to the minimum. The textual management of history was based on the prejudices and whereas, five hundred years of the history of Europe were expounded in several chapters, the three thousand years of the Orient were summarized in a single chapter (Hanafi, 2010, p. 03-04). The working of Occidentalism is not different from that of Orientalism as it dwells upon two tools; projection and inversion, and its explicit or implicit aim is to buttress a particular distribution of power and privilege within a society by showing how awful things are elsewhere. *The West* is often defined as the *Europe* that had “literally commanded the vast part of the earth’s surface” (Said, 1978, p. 41). Occidentalism is defined, interpreted and understood as a binary of Orientalism.

2.2 The Oriental Other and Orientalism

Western Orientalists have scripted the Orient, particularly Middle East and Asia for centuries. Otherness and the politics encapsulated in it are defined with reference to “the tension between two groups of people, regardless of whether one group aspires to imitate, or despises and wants to distance itself from the other group” (Papadopoulos, 2002, p. 166).

Said’s definition of the Orient is triangular or three-fold. Its first aspect includes the study of the Orient by the Western Academia which

studies the East with pre-conceived notions. The second aspect challenges them as others by putting Orient in a binary with Occident based on their episteme and ontology. It thus portrays them with some negative epithets, for example, “colonized, bestial, primitive, evil, bad and ugly etc.” (as cited in Ashcroft, 2007, p.19). And the last aspect reveals the hegemony of the Occident and the control that it seeks, in order to manipulate Orient’s resources by labeling it as a “corporate institution” (Said, 1978, p.03). Thus, according to Said, the construction of Orientalism is followed by colonialism which is justified on the basis of the constructed image. It is on the basis of the study of languages, and texts of Oriental people, that Said draws in broad strokes a portrait of European scholarship at the service of empire and its consistent expansion. Orientalism, according to Said, is perceived, conceived and understood as Europe’s other and not as a separate and independent entity. Said further elaborates by stating that “Orientalism is principally a way of defining and locating Europe’s Others” (as cited in Moosavinia, Niazi, & Ghaforian, 2011, p.105). Being Europe’s Other it is being described, taught, tamed and ruled by those who ascribe Orient’s identity. Said, in this regard, proves that Oriental discourse creates and constructs the Oriental Other by highlighting the essential differences between the East and the West, and this knowledge has been used to further empower the European Self to dominate the Orient. Said’s critique holds that Orientalism, as a form of knowledge, has widely constituted the Western people’s perception of the East and its people and the “Orient is itself a constituted entity” (Said, 1978, p. 322). Discussing the working of Orientalism, Aijaz Ahmed is of the view that one of the main features of

Orientalism is that the Western texts and textualities have always been examined, investigated, perceived, understood and comprehended in sheer isolation with regard to the responses of the colonized (Ahmad, 1992, p. 172). In the discourse of representation Said's *Orientalism* as well as the responses to it are equally important because they help the readers and researchers develop the critique.

It is important to note that in Orientalism, the object of research is described less, and the searching subject is described more. But, in Occidentalism, only the reverse is true as the object of research is described to a great extent and the subject describes himself quite less. Moreover, more than intuiting Oriental Soul, it focuses on uncovering and revealing the Western mentality. It is a tug of war between the Self and the Other, between the West and the non-West and above all between the colonizers and the colonized.

The history and background study of Orientalism reveals that Said owed much to his predecessors in tracing the theoretical thread of Orientalism. He was neither the first nor the last to have theorized about Orientalism, nevertheless, his contribution is seminal by all means. Ziauddin Sardar in *Concepts in the Social Sciences; Orientalism* explains this phenomenon by saying that, "Said borrowed and built upon the earlier studies of Tibawi, Alatas, Abdel – Malek, Djait and others such as Abdullah Laroui, Talal Asad, K.M.Panikkar and Romila Thapar; but he did not acknowledge any of them" (Sardar, 1999, p.65). The first formal "criticism on Orientalism and the Orientalists emerged during the years of decolonization in the early 1960s and was mounted by ethnic Asians

educated and living in exile in the West” (Hubinette, 2003, 74). The critique was presented by an Egyptian scholar Abdel-Malek who highlighted that the “intimate relationship” (Hubinette, 2003, 74) between the Orientalist scholars and the colonial powers paved the way for the accumulation and concentration of Asia’s treasures later resulting into the West’s conquests in the name of civilizing and enlightening the uncivilized and uneducated masses. He also opined that due to success of anti-colonial and freedom movements Orientalist profession was in a “serious crisis” (Hubinette, 2003, 74) making direct control of the West over the East virtually difficult. To him, the un-learning and re-learning of Asia was imperative in order to form an unbiased and neutral view of the place and the people.

The second important voice before Said was that of Tibawi who pointed out that “the heritage of a religious hostility heavily influenced the classical Orientalists who formed an alliance with the Christian missionaries and started to evaluate Islam and Islamic societies in extremely derogatory and scornful terms” (Hubinette, 2003, 74). This resulted in a big failure on the part of the academia to perceive and present the fresh point of view about Orient and Islam.

All the efforts undertaken by the Western Academia centered round reducing, distorting and aggravating the otherness of the Orient in order to neutralize the potential threat from the Orient. The Orientals inhabited the exotic, mysterious, unknown and strange place called Orient which along with the geography and lifestyle of its inhabitants “wore away the European discreteness and rationality of time, space, and personal identity” (Said,

1978, p. 167). That is why, “the most effective approach to reduce this threat was labeling and creating a fiction about the Orient” (Furumizo, 2005, p. 131). Said’s major area of concern, however, is twofold whereby the political and economic interests define the pivots of the relationship between the two entities. This is why Orient is promoted by Orientalists as being opposed and separate. “The construction and domination of the Orient are inextricably linked” (Rosenau & Singh, 2002, p. 15) and particularly an inferior Orient was constructed and used to develop a moral justification for colonialism. Said highlights that the relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power and of domination and maintains that this was the starting point for “elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts” (Said, 1978, p. 02). As he sees it, the creation of the Orient as inferior, with the Occident described as superior, was essentially the empowerment of the Western Self. Sara Mills, while giving a critique of Orientalism and stressing the West’s politics of undermining the Orient, noted that the colonized countries, if at all exist, do so not independently or on their own but with reference to the British past in a kind of underdeveloped parody of the British/European /Colonizers’ civilization. Further, the colonizers always describe the subjugated in the

distant past tense, relegating them to a period which has been superseded by the colonizers, and hence denying them ‘coevalness’, and through the use of terms such as ‘backward’, ‘primitive’, ‘feudal’, ‘developing country’, and ‘pre-industrial’ to describe colonized countries (Mills, 1997, p.111).

So, all the negative epithets used in the above quote are ascribed to the colonized/Orient/East. However, it may be pointed out here briefly that

since 1970s the Western academia has, one way or the other, accepted the critique on Orientalist writings distancing themselves from their predecessors. Instead, it survived in the form of “popular Orientalism” – as a romantic and colonial nostalgia reproduced in arts, movies and literature. Nevertheless, there is no imagining the world beyond Orientalism so long as the West has hegemonic powers (Hubinette, 2003, 78). However, Hubinette believes that in the classical sense of the word Orientalism has survived as something which may be termed as “Post-Orientalism in the geopolitical sphere of security politics, and as so called re-Orientalism in its indigenized form of nationalism and fundamentalism in Asia” (Hubinette, 2003, 79). As a reversal, though not in exactly the same epithets but similar manners, the East unleashes its representative discourse in Occidentalism mode by deeming the West as a binary of the East, as Others and even dehumanized figures no less than Gog and Magog.

Said managed to launch a “frontal attack” (Hubinette, 2003, 76) on Orientalism and theorized it in a formal way. As stated earlier, Said defined it as a way of “thinking about Asia and Asians as strange, servile, exotic, dark, mysterious, erotic and dangerous” (Hubinette, 2003, 76) who were to be subjugated and ruled over by the West which was its binary where the West was the “colonizing self” and the East as the “colonized other” (Eagleton, 1996, p. 205). The relationship between knowledge, culture, imperial and colonial control and hegemonic designs of Europe is further explored by Said in *Culture and Imperialism*. Said noted that the Western canonical narratives are full of notions such as the mysterious East, the underdeveloped mind of the Africans, the uplift of the barbaric

people/tribes and their inclusion in the mainstream of major civilizations by enlightening them. Moreover, “the disturbingly familiar ideas about flogging or death or extended punishment being required when ‘they’ misbehaved or became rebellious, because ‘they’ mainly understood force or violence best; ‘they’ were not like ‘us’, and for that reason deserve to be ruled” (Said, 1994, p. xi). Therefore, even the violent and aggressive West was not the cause, but the outcome enforced on it by the behavior of the Orient.

Said suggests that European academia “imagined” the Orient and portrayed it as such in their literature: “The Orient was almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences” (Said, 1978, p. 01). However, in their journeys to Europe, the non-Europeans had never imagined encountering sub or super-humans on their way. The idea of fear often expressed in Orientalist literature hardly existed in the Occidental writings. In this regard Nederveen Pieterse writes that, “superior condescension and fear of the colonized Other were key tenets of colonialism” (Nederveen, 1992, p.34). Moreover, the Orient had been created as an object and so it was denied capacity to define, represent and speak for itself. The Westerners, through their interaction with popular culture, such as novels and films, have read, watched, perceived and absorbed the much-distorted image of the Oriental Other. So, Orientalism as concept does not influence the academia only, but it has far reaching implications as well. Therefore, it reflects that “at certain moments in history, Orientalism constituted the underpinnings of the Western culture,

popular opinion, and even foreign policy” (Rosenblatt, 2009, pp.52). Since the Occident knows the Orient well than the latter itself, therefore, the former has the right to manage, manipulate and ‘civilize’ it. Hence, the construction of the idea of the linear Other, in fact, served as the rationale for the expression of colonial oppression and served to give vitality and strength to the culture of the West (Salazar, 2008, p.72). In Said’s words “Orientalism is a considerable dimension of modern political intellectual culture, and as such has less to do with the Orient than it does with ‘our’ world” (Said, 1978, p.12).

Said’s thesis about Orientalism was groundbreaking and it generated the debates in order to further demystify the Orient and present it as it is and not through the prism of the Western models crafted for representation. The discourse about power/knowledge, cultural constructions and Othering etc., challenged the Western Academia’s supposed superiority and unveiled its claims of civilizing the Oriental Others. This assertion is substantiated further by the British Prime Minister Arthur Balfour’s statement justifying the occupation of Egypt in the early twentieth century. He says that, “we know the civilization of Egypt better than we know any other country” (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia, 2009, p. 56). By saying this he implies that their expedition and occupation of Egypt was justifiable. Hence the manipulation of knowledge, politics and power gives vent to their hegemonic designs and colonial possessions all around. Thus, the West’s reliance on binary of the East is a story of despotism, ignorance, temporal and spatial aloofness and cultural stagnation but its own history is a story of socio-cultural richness, rationality, success and freedom. Said’s

success lays in deconstructing Orientalism as a relatively unified discourse ranging from earliest recorded epoch to contemporary times. The Orient, as suggested by Said, is not an inert fact of nature, but a constructed phenomenon that is consistently pre-conceived by generations of scientists, evolutionists, theorists, intellectuals, writers, artists, commentators, politicians and the policy makers of the West. Furthermore, said holds that Orientalism is a “distribution of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical and philosophical texts” (Said, 1978, p.12).

According to Said’s definition, Orientalism estimates both how the West hatched the narrative of the Orient and the Orientals and how their control and subjugation was achieved by this instrument of representation/stereotyping during and for process of colonization. These stereotypes about Orient were dug out by Said in order to expose the so-called ulterior motives of the West. Said highlights the binary of Orientalism and Occidentalism by writing that “Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction between the Orient and (most of the time) the Occident” (Said 1978, 02). As per this basic binary, a westerner, walking to Oriental lands was moving backwards both in senses of space as well as time. This was so because of the Orient being exotic, impoverished uncivilized, and under-developed. Furthermore, Orient was considerably and oddly different from the Occident as unusual, fantastic and exotic.

Said argues that the imperialistic expeditions and hegemonic designs of the colonizers were triggered by their motive to govern and

accumulate treasures of gold, ivory and wealth which is manifested across all disciplines. However, in order to appease and justify their public as well as the colonized, the Western academia came to rescue the imperialistic possessions in the name of civilization as pointed out by Said. He further asserts that the land has always had its importance in the imperialistic expansions and “when it came to who owned the land, who had the right to settle and work on it, who kept it going, who won it back, and who now plans its future – these issues were reflected, contested, and even for a time decided in narrative” (Said, 1994, p.13). But as mentioned earlier, the Occidental approach is limited only to the discourse/text and does not extend itself to the land. Unlike Orientalism, Occidentalism focuses more on resistance, decolonization, textual rebuttals and shunning away the identity imposed by the West.

2.3 Constructing Orientalism

Said maintains that Orientalism is an archive where all the similar ideas or Orientalists’ information on the behavior, customs, manners, attitudes and socio-economic relations and norms have been accumulated. The thread line is the treatment of the Orientals by the Orientalists whereby they undermine, underestimate and represent them as they perceive them. It is all about the East and the West and the West and the rest. The interaction between the two has been from the standpoint of the Westerners. Said discusses it by writing that “When one uses categories like Oriental and Western as both the starting and the end points of analysis, research and public policy[...], the result is usually to polarize the distinction – the Oriental becomes more Oriental, the Westerner more Western – and limit

the human encounter between different cultures, traditions, and societies” (Said, 1978, p.45-46).

It is through the compartmentalization of the East and the West that Said sees them as different entities. Harold W. Glidden, an American Academic, has presented his ideas about the Arabs. He refers only to four texts, writes a summary of about four pages about the history of the Arabs covering 1300 years span of time and having at least one hundred million people. This kind of work creates the types and overlooks the diversity of the Arab world. Glidden, according to Said, writes a stereotypical discourse in the following words:

Arabs stress conformity; that Arabs inhabit a shame culture whose “prestige systems” involves the ability to attract followers and clients (as an aside we are told that “Arab society is and always has been based on a system of client-patron relationships”); that Arabs can function only in conflict situations; that prestige is based solely on the ability to dominate others” (Said, 1978, p. 48).

Although, since the publication of Said’s *Orientalism*, Orientalists’ discourse has been dulled, yet, there are many popular, scholarly and semi-scholarly texts which are deeply Orientalist. These texts function in multiple ways; essentializing and stereotyping the Muslims and the Indians. The Orientalists’ texts show a discursive consistency in representing others.

In contrast to Massignon, Said presents H. A. R. Gibb who thought of Islam in terms of Muslim life. Apart from other differences, Gibb considers only Islamic governments regardless of the fact whether they are democratic, monarchies or feudal. In his book *Modern Trends in Islam* Gibb is of the view that the “Orient can be reconstructed anew” (as cited in

Cristante, 2016, p.126), and reformulated by Orientalism. He further adds that Orient lacks the capability of doing it for itself. Said compares Massignon and Gibb and concludes that while Gibb states his observation as knowledge, Massignon dwells upon metaphysical speculations (Said, 1978, p. 280). Gibb implicitly maintains that Islam can be best understood by the Western experts than by the Orientals. This observation or judgment is at par with the general Orientalist tendency since the very beginning of Orientalist discourse as the Orient had never had permission to speak for itself. The authentication of the texts and literature about Orient had to be got validated from the Westerners. In Orientalism as a discourse, the centrality is of hegemony of the powerful leading to colonialism. This discourse weaved narratives and developed threatening or sinister images of the Other. Looking at the critique of Orientalism, the post-paradigm theorists and critics analyzed Said's Orientalism as anti-Western propaganda showing bias against the West. But, on the other hand, Said is generally appreciated for unmasking the stereotypical discourse of the West and breaking falsehood of hegemony to the Other. Michael Beard is of the view that the personal commitments on which [Said's] research is founded become increasingly visible. Said is honest enough to forego the pretense of the detached, unaffected observer taking in impassionately the folly of others, and the obvious biographical facts are drawn into the picture (Beard, 1979, pp.07-08).

Said is also blamed for not being a rationalist and professional academic rather, he is viewed as an impressionist and a simply bad historian. Nevertheless, *Orientalism* deals with the crisis of representation

which produced the images that are simplistic, essentialist, and reduced. It can be deduced that essentialism and political motivation have distorted “our” view of “them.” The West and the East have a great gulf of episteme and ontology between them. Basim Musallam is dismayed by Said’s approach to view the West. To him, not only the project is too simple to deal but his singling out Europe and attacking her for being stereotypical, racial and imperialist is unjustifiable because all the human societies are the same in this regard (Musallam, 1979, p.23-24). Therefore, to him, expecting unaffordable generosity from Europe to be otherwise is unjust.

Although according to Said, the compatibility between Imperialism and Orientalism results into representation, Musallam opines that the latter is not wholly dependent upon the former. Therefore, imperialism and Orientalism are not integral parts of each other and must always be kept at a distance. Minear does not regard colonialism as the essential basic requirement for Orientalism. In order to argue for his claims, Minear presents Japan as an example. In his view, Japanese were not only considered an inferior race, rather, they were incapable of modernizing themselves and above all, they were castigated. Thus, Said’s assertion that Orientalism and colonialism are always inseparable and compatible is under question (Minear, 1980, p. 511-512). On the other hand, Germany’s example can also be quoted which had had strong tradition in Orientalists’ discourse, yet it has no history of colonialism in the Orient. But it must be remembered that Said aims at describing a particular discourse and not giving alternatives to Orientalism or displacing it. Said, according to Amal and Chambers, attacks Orientalists but he himself is open to blame for

political bias (Amal & Chambers, 1980, p.511–512). Since Orientalism is grounded in Orientalists representations; Said's discourse is likely to serve the Orientals' political purpose. James Clifford notes that Said's *Orientalism* could be criticized for the same charges that he levels against the Orientalists: stereotyping and essentialism (Clifford, 1988, pp. 273-274). Amal and Chambers assert that Said's fundamental question is the relationship between power and knowledge and the Western representations of the East have a political purpose at its basis. (Amal & Chambers, 1980, p.511–512). Said's Orientalism receives harsh criticism on the pretext that he accuses Orientalists of complicity with colonialism but they fail to understand that not Orientalists but Orientalist discourse was intertwined with colonialism. Although Said admits that there were many Orientalists who had anti-colonialist views and they had all their sympathies towards the Orientals yet, the critics of Said are not appeased with this statement. Hence, it seems that unfortunately, numerous anti-Saidian scholars have misinterpreted, misread – or not read – *Orientalism* (Kopf, 1980, p. 504).

Said's reminder about the hegemony of the West in academic world proves that the Oriental scholars cannot ignore the West, however, the West can afford to ignore the Oriental Scholars. Arabs' contribution, for example, to the study of the Arabs or on a global level is not significant or substantial enough. Said claims that they are encouraged to "sit at the feet of American Orientalists, and later to repeat to their local audiences the clichés [...]." Such productions give a sense of superiority to such scholars over their own people. They may be able to "manage" the Orientalist

system, but for the Western scholar they serve only as native informants. Quite interestingly, Said's claims are made boldly but without his reflecting on his own ethnicity. Said also observes that there are hardly any *Oriental* institutions to study the *Occident* nor are there any Oriental institutions to study the Orient. Said is of the view that the sole most important factor in the Orient is consumerism which brings the Western ideologies including Orientalism. Said describes the processes of capitalism, modernization and Americanization and asserts that modern Orient is a participant in its own Orientalizing (Said, 1978, pp. 323-324). This, at least, appears to be the case in India. However, it may be argued why Said thinks that the Orientals are incapable of defining and deciding for themselves. If they Orientalize themselves, it should be assumed that they know what they are doing and what implications it all has. Said does not produce an alternative to Orientalist discourse and thinks that the old ideological straight jacket should be removed, and the scholars should avoid Occidentalism. Said considers that the hegemony of discourse can be challenged by developing the tools of contemporary studies dealing with human, societal and cultural phenomenon. There is also an ethical critique of *Orientalism*. According to Ahmad, *Orientalism* functions to release the Third World from guilt, because Said's vision is a tool with which to arouse Third World nationalism and anti-Westernism. Ahmad claims that the horrific deeds his fellow citizens (Indians) have done to each other are forgotten, (Ahmad, 1992, pp. 165-167) and the history of colonization – whether it be by the British, the Muslims or the Aryans – is blamed for anything bad in the society.

Some Saidian scholars, hailing from India, appear to have developed a sense of “primal and permanent innocence” that functions to comfort them in the problematic *status quo* of Indian society. Ahmad opines that *Orientalism* states several phenomena (e.g. communalism and caste) to be taken as colonial constructions. Colonialism was deemed responsible for the cruelties committed by the colonialists as well as by the native people of colonized countries. *Orientalism*, in any case, unveiled “the truth” and “bad will” of the Western academia and initiated the attitude that commended the good faith, authenticity and liberation in “Third World Literature” (Ahmad, 1992, pp. 165-167). Said’s unresolved ambiguity, in Coronil’s view, reflects whether Orientalist constructs are incomplete representations or (mis)representations reflecting the imbalance of power in colonialism. The fundamental issue is not that there is a gap between representation and reality, but the fact that specific representations result into certain consequences. In other words, the effects of existing representations and the development of more enabling ones should be given immediate and proper attention. Turner sees two important challenges in excoriating Orientalism. First, we might naively trust the “native” representations merely because they are not corrupted by Westernization. Second, if we dismiss Orientalism, there might be a possibility of indigenous conservatism posing as progressive anti-Westernism. Non-Westerners may think that Orientalism has failed to form an impartial and correct image of Orientals. Therefore, in order to form the self-image of “the Orientals”, they may come up with Occidentalism or ethno-Orientalism (Turner, 1997, pp.104-109). What is the way forward from this

predicament of Orientalists' discourse? Is it to remain bound by such hegemony? Is it inevitable to initiate another discourse to counter the previous one? Is counter-discourse the ultimate solution? One possible solution that brings all the discourses to nihilism is postmodernism that renders all the representations as pointless as their correlation with reality is not verifiable. But this would entail rethinking, reshaping and remodeling of the human studies altogether. The issues raised by Orientalism concern all social sciences dealing with representations.

2.4 India as imagined in Orientalist Discourse

Said's *Orientalism* brought a paradigm shift in the history of Orientalism. The Indologists, as Wendy Doniger says, were widely acknowledged and respected for their so-called contributions, but anti-Orientalist critique unfolded that Orientalists were committing a grave academic sin. So, the word 'Veda' and 'adult' changed their connotations altogether, referring to 'fascism' and 'pornography, respectively (Doniger, 1999, pp.943-944). As far as India's colonial history is concerned, the Indians had always been told that "we are bringing civilization to these savages", whereas the hidden agenda was to "accumulate the military power to make England wealthy by robbing India" (Doniger, 1999, pp.943-944). She further says that India was quite capable of inventing itself and went right on inventing itself for centuries before, during and after British presence. Her view on Orientalism and Orientalist discourse shows that Saidian interpretation of Orientalism is part of Orientalism's history.

The Indian self-representation is ignored by the claimants of Orientalism when they blame Orientalism for "Imagining India". But this

discovery or imagination showed India at its worst. In its imagination, Orientalism portrayed India as caste-centered, spiritual and holistically religious that can never be at par with the West. The above views show that India is imagined to be in a timeless vacuum which is essentially ancient and stagnant. If there is any movement at all, the movement leads to degeneration and decadence in India. In their reply, the Indians depicted the West as immoral, immersed in materialism and indulged in individualism as mentioned already by Buruma above. However, the bridge-builders have tried to synthesize the European rationality and Indian spirituality stressing the need of bilateral exchange of spirituality for Europeans and rationality for the East.

The discourse on Indo-Orientalism is somewhat equally intertwined in nationalism and colonialism serving the representative interests of the both. Said, while talking about Orientalism and authority says that “all the attributes of authority apply to Orientalism, and much of what I can do in this study is to describe both the historical authority and the personal authorities of Orientalism” (Said, 1978, p. 20). This assertion on authority and Orientalism, used by the Europeans throughout, prolonged their colonial quest. However, during the interwar period, the reconsideration of the knowledge about the Orient and Orientalists was sought. The knowledge and understanding of the Orientalists was challenged and the threat was posed to Europe. In order to fulfill its apocalyptic mission, the white man had to handle the colonized with more subtlety. The problems of the world were divided into two halves: Orientalism and Occidentalism. As Said opines, “[i]t was believed, then, that for the Oriental, liberation, self-

expression, and self-enlargement were not the issues that they were for the Occidental” (Said, 1978, p. 263).

As far as the Muslims’ treatment by the Orientalists is concerned, Said mentions Louis Massignon who awakened the Western interest in reinterpretation of Islam and also showed the Europeans who were not only expansionists but also had unjust and ruthless economic policies governed by obsolete political philosophy. He holds the European/Western colonialists and expansionists responsible for the loss of Oriental’s religion and philosophy (Said, 1978, p. 268-270). But, quite ironically, though the texts of Massignon were refined and sympathetic they still repeated the ideas of French Orientalists (Said, 1978, p. 271), and even she could not resist the pressure of ongoing Orientalist tradition. Said observes that the post Second World War period brought new challenges to Orientalism when most of the Orient had already gained independence from the West. The new colonial powers were the Soviet Union and America who were not encountering the stagnant and passive Orient but rather a politically motivated and armed orient. What H. A. R. Gibb, stated in his lecture on the Arab mind in 1945 was lamented by Said that “[w]hen some Orientals oppose racial discrimination while others practice it, you say ‘they’re all Orientals at bottom’ and class interest, political circumstances, economic factors are totally irrelevant. [...] History, politics, and economics do not matter. Islam is Islam, the Orient is the Orient (Said, 1978, p. 107).

Said further identifies the stages of the phenomena leading to modern or academic Orientalism. The expansion of colonialism was followed by the spread of scientific and popular literature which was

accompanied by missionary work and seizure of the government systems. Whereas the boundaries of Europe expanded, the center was always Europe herself thus Eurocentrism prevailed. But it was mainly because of the experiences of explorers, travelers, historians and the masses' interaction that a knowledge-based attitude was adopted towards the Other. Said quotes Morroe Berger who stated in *MESA Bulletin* 1, no. 2 (Nov. 1967) in the following words: "The contemporary Middle East [...] has only in small degree the kinds of traits that seem to be important in attracting scholarly attention" (Said, 1978, p. 288). Berger is of the view that it is "an instance of how a learned perspective can support the caricatures propagated in the popular culture" (Said, 1978, p. 290). In short, the process of Orientalism evolved through four stages; expansion, confrontation, sympathy and classification were the elements of eighteenth-century phenomenon that led to contemporary Orientalism. These elements helped Europe carry out the typical representation of the Orient. On the other hand, the evolution started breaking the rigid classification based on the binary of the Christian/Pagan dichotomy and the secularization started taking its roots. However, the Bible had its share in the colonization process as is evident in the Indian and African discourses.

2.5 Orientalism: A Critique

Said's Orientalism invited most vitriolic attacks from Occidentalists like Aijaz Ahmed, Denis Porter, Robert Young and Bernard Lewis who unleashed their criticism on Said by calling his work as "an ahistorical and an inconsistent narrative" (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia, 2009, p.70) yet the fact remains proven that Said's theorization of discourse on the West's

stereotyping of the Orient is not only widely applauded and recognized but proved groundbreaking in Postcolonial theory. Because, Said has decoded, reinterpreted and analyzed the Western texts that have been produced over the span of centuries. These texts range from philosophy, anthropology, history, to literature and even natural sciences to carry out the analysis based on a holistic view of Orientalism and he has shed light on all of its major aspects namely, social, political, cultural, ontological and most important of all epistemological.

A large number of critics from the East as well the West have launched a volatile attack on Said's Orientalism on a number of grounds. Said's views about the binary as a static feature of the Western discourses, from classical Greece to present day, is made the object of the basic objection. The relationship between East and West is analyzed as a permanent of oriental history ignoring the fluctuations existing between the two. Thus, this generalization of division, in critics' view, is a farce. Loomba states that, "Said posits the unified character of Western discourse on the Orient over some two millennia, a unity derived from a common and continuing experience of fascination with and threat from the East, of its irreducible otherness" (Porter, 2013, p. 152). Homi.K.Bhabha asserts that there is always in Said a suggestion that colonial power and discourse is possessed entirely by the colonizer to "construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types" (Bhabha, 1994, p.70), which is a historical and theoretical simplification. Since Said's discourse is considered as essentially ahistorical, therefore, it is objected that it does not take account of historicity for drawing the conclusions.

Aijaz Ahmed objects that, “Said never thinks about how the Western representations might have been received, accepted, modified, challenged, overthrown or reproduced by the intelligentsias of the colonized countries” (Ahmad, 1992, p.172). He opines that Said totally ignores and never mentions the self-representation of the colonized on the one hand and never gauges the reaction and resistance of the scholarly public in the colonizers’ countries. Therefore, it can be said that “every European, in what he could say about the Orient, was consequently a racist, an imperialist and almost totally ethnocentric” (Said, 1978, p. 204). This statement from Said seems to be generalized and sweeping in its totality because it ignores all those dissenting voices that opposed colonial expedition and voiced against the resulting horrors and terrors unleashed on the colonized.

In addition, the writings of the women from Empire have also been ignored by Said. The history of colonial discourse reveals that though the Western women were empowered in socio-economic terms, yet they were disempowered otherwise, especially, in relation to colonial discourse. In this regard, the intersections of colonial and patriarchal discourses often place the Western women in a contradictory position, “in subordination to Western man and in a relation of domination to non-Western men and women” (Shankar, 2001, p. 42). Nonetheless, Said’s thesis and its academic and theoretical impact is unprecedented in the field of Orientalism. So, neither the central premise of Orientalism should be underestimated, nor should it be ignored that Said was the prime mover in Oriental discourse. In the current research however, unlike the Eastern woman who was the

subject of dual marginalization; from colonizers as well as patriarchy, the Western woman stands equal to the man albeit it becomes the subject of Oriental gaze.

In the formation of his views Said owes much to Michel Foucault and Antonio Gramsci on their work on Discourse and Cultural Hegemony respectively. Therefore, Said also stresses upon the fact that Orientalism is a textual reality. This reality takes its concrete form in the threading of the text from which the perceptions of the Orient are born. The theoretical groundings of the Western mind take their roots from the collective consciousness and canonical inevitability. This is somewhat different from Occidentalism approach because in Occidentalism there is no single theory governing the narratives from the Orient thus lacking the canonical inevitability.

Homi.K.Bhabha, though obscure, mainly because of his mystification, obfuscation and the use of slurred language, unfolds many psychological layers in post-Coloniality in the light of Sigmund Freud and the poststructuralist Jacques Lacan's theories. Bhabha held that the colonial discourse aimed at colonizing the colonized on the basis of stereotypical discourse and "racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 70). Resultantly, the stereotypes of and about the colonized represented them in derogatory ways. Ironically, it is the Otherness of the colonized that qualifies them for the Oriental discourse. So, in Bhabha's words, "colonial discourse produces the colonized as a social reality which is at once an "other" and yet entirely "knowable and visible" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 71).

Nevertheless, Bhabha also maintains that though the colonized are not portrayed as very different the substantial difference between them, however, is maintained. This is so because otherwise, the justification for the colonial expedition will be obliterated. Moreover, Bhabha points out that the discourse on colonialism brings those “terrifying stereotypes of savagery, cannibalism, lust and anarchy which are the signal points of identification and alienation” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 71). These have been central to the power-knowledge dialectic propounded by the West.

Bhabha also points out that stereotypical representations are split between sharp contrary positions. On the one hand the colonized are represented as harmless, domesticated and knowable and on the other hand they are seen as harmful, mysterious and wild. As an outcome, ambivalence complicates the whole process and the repetitive use of stereotypes is very helpful to reduce the colonized subject in the discourse of colonialism. Consequently, the construction of the colonized both as *similar* to and the *Other* of the colonizers, results into failing in doing either. Bhabha also throws light on Mimicry which he explains by stating that the mimic men or the colonized figures menace the colonizers because they threaten to disclose the ambivalence of the discourse of colonialism which the use of stereotypes anxiously tries to conceal. So, the dictum that *almost the same and not the quite* is, according to Bhabha, a source of anti – colonial thinking and they challenge the representations which attempt to define and fix them. Bhabha’s theories enable us to comprehend and decipher cultural interaction between the East and the West from a psychological and psychoanalytical perspective. According to Zach, Bhabha contends that

a new hybrid identity (subject-position) emerges from the interwoven elements of the two cultures. This replaces the established pattern with a mutual and mutable representation of cultural differences located in-between, in a third space that give rise to new possibilities. {...}This hybrid third space is an ambivalent site in which cultural meaning and representation have no primordial unity or fixity (Bhabha as cited in Zachs, 2011. p. 126).

It is therefore not a simple generalized understanding of the relationship between the East and the West but a complex, intricate and ambiguous link that has different layers of assimilation, appropriation and negation. This further deepens the representative view of each other in terms of Others. The new putative identity resultantly attempted to amalgamate the two cultural entities, the East and the West. Orientalism and the mechanics of representation and stereotyping are not unfamiliar. Throughout history, man has been trying to define, subjugate and rule over others and in this regard his onslaughts have been justified with the help of religion, racial supremacy or the theories of enlightenment etc.

The theory that the resources of the world should be exploited and managed by those who know their best use is merely a justification for colonial and imperial designs. Stereotyping or representation, however, is not the discourse of the colonizers only, rather, the colonized have also been caricaturing and labeling their masters to prove their occupations as unjustified. In addition, the Occident, which the Orient always perceived as unable to represent itself, though not quite true, gives its critique of the West holistically.

2.6 Representation / Stereotyping and Orientalism

The theories about the half-humanness of the non-Europeans helped

trigger the whole process of colonization. The main tool that the Europeans dwelt upon was representation or stereotyping defined by different theorists and critics in their own way. However, they all share the common ground—that of denouncing the representative narratives based on stereotyping because it cajoles a group or community on the basis of one or more typical/general characteristics marking the negativity of the target people. Michael Pickering outlines the definition of stereotyping as the “images and notions that are usually held to be simplistic, rigid and erroneous, based on discriminatory values and damaging to people’s social and personal identities” (Pickering, 2001, p. 10). So, stereotyping refers generally to a set of categorical beliefs or propositions about members of real or putative groups. The holders of such beliefs are frequently constructed to be rigid in their adherences, and the beliefs themselves are often constructed as emotionally coloured, fallacious or exaggerated.

Homi.K.Bhabha defines Stereotyping as something that “fixes individuals or groups in one place, denying their own sense of identity and presuming to understand them on the basis of prior knowledge, usually knowledge that is at best defective. This problem is, of course, present in colonial discourse” (as cited in Huddart, 2006, p. 25). He further says that, “through racist jokes, cinematic images, and other forms of representation, the colonizer circulates stereotypes about the laziness or stupidity of the colonized population” (as cited in Huddart, 2006, p. 24). All this is carried out to prove the other group/communities as different ‘lacking’ the essentials possessed by the group that labels them.

Said proves that there are a number of features which recur in texts about colonized countries ruling out the possibility of being the beliefs of an individual author, rather they are held in the collective consciousness and are structured by discursive frameworks. He traces the mechanics and politics of representation by saying that the pre-requisite for any Orientalist is that he must locate himself vis-à-vis the Orient which means that all his discourse must reflect the “kind of narrative voice he adopts, the type of structure he builds, the kind of images, themes, motifs that circulate in his text –containing the Orient and finally representing it or speaking in its behalf” (Said, 1978, p. 20). This is the process of identity construction and labeling which transforms into discourse to hold others as inferiors.

Sara Mills in her book, *Discourse*, opines that the Western scholars had portrayed Orient as, “a repository of western knowledge, rather than as a society and culture functioning on its own terms” (Mills, 1997, pp. 95-96). She further adds that “these representations were structured largely according to certain discursive formats which developed over time, but which accrued truth – value to themselves through usage and familiarity” (Mills, 1997, pp. 95-96). In fact, each text which was written about the Orient reinforced particular stereotypical images and ways of thinking.

In *Black Skin White Masks*, Frantz Fanon quotes Sir Alan Burns legitimizing stereotyping while referring to Bible

It is laid down in the Bible that the separation of the white and black races will be continued in heaven as on earth, and those blacks who are admitted into the kingdom of Heaven will find themselves separately lodged in certain of those many mansions of Our father that are mentioned in the New Testament. We are the chosen people – look at the colour of our skins. The

others are black or yellow: That is because of their sins
(Fanon, 1986, p 30).

It can be argued that the science of religion/Christianity ascribes the colours not to the genetic, climatic and geographic conditions but to the sins. The motive behind such stereotyping was to justify the ways of the colonizers to the colonized. In Fanon's words Europe is literally the creation of the third world in the sense that it is the material wealth and labour from the colonies that has fueled the opulence of Europe (Fanon, 1963, p.58). The religious discourse, as cited above, is also used to justify the means and ends of such stereotyping.

In the Oriental discourse *stereotyping/representation* was carried out by citing mythical representations of the East portrayed as a dualism where exoticism and barbarism are inevitably and inextricably intertwined. The stereotypical regime which emerged in literary and pictorial representations included "corrupt and irrational despotism, fanatic religiosity, exotic mysticism, teeming markets and dreamy harems, sexually predatory and insatiable men, and sensual, decadent and devious women" (Pickering, 2001, p. 11). The West's depiction of the East in its mystical form and as an abode of all the negative epithets could not be freed from exaggeration. Pickering further notes it by saying that, "when exotic mysticism is transmuted into the benign transcendental spirituality of Eastern wisdom, even then, they tend to exaggerate the East/West differences as absolute and unchanging" (Pickering, 2001, p. 148). Africans, Chinese, Arabs and Indians, in particular, were considered as a chaos filled by the presence of European discourse about it.

The stereotypical discourse used the upcoming epithets describing them as “inscrutable Chinese, the untrustworthy Arab, the docile Hindu and so on” (Mills, 1997, p. 109). Such categorizations denied human status to certain groups, communities and nationalities and paved the way for their elimination. These simplistic conclusions and sweeping generalizations were deduced from the discourses wrapped up not in propagandist texts but in natural, evolutionary as well as social sciences and humanities. The stereotypical discourse was not only limited to certain ethnicities, geographies and communities but it also dwelt upon genders and the related stereotypes. Therefore, Oriental male is described as sexually wild and promiscuous and female as unchaste and immodest lacking morals and deviant from the ethical code. As pointed out by Macleod, the Western woman is regarded as chaste and loyal while man is supposed to be active, brave and strong negating their presence in Oriental male and female. He further notes that, in Orientalism, the East as a whole is “feminized, deemed passive, submissive, exotic, luxurious, sexually mysterious and tempting; while the West becomes masculine- that is, active, dominant, heroic, rational, self-controlled and ascetic” (as cited in Lee, 2015, 176). Thus, the roles assumed by both the genders in daily life are amplified in literary and non-literary discourses.

In addition to the whole of the Orient, the Muslims of the sub-continent were also represented through a stereotypical discourse. The identity of Muslims as the practitioners of horror and terror is not a new phenomenon. Alfred Lyall, in giving recommendations to his colonial masters, is of the view that,

Mohamedans, with their tenets distinctly aggressive and spiritually despotic, {and who} must always be a source of disquietude to us so long as their theological notions are still in the uncompromising and intolerant stage when they openly encourage the natural predilection to all devout believers for the doctrine that their first duty is to prevail and, if need be, to persecute (as cited in Padamsee: 2005; 74).

Lyall, in his generalizations about the Muslims and their particular religion, deeming them as the persecutors and perpetrators of terror, reflects the gaps existing between the two halves of the world: the East and the West. His representation of Muslims' religion shows naivety because religious dictums, whichever and wherever, are always held as unchangeable, but his labeling of only one religion is quite telling.

2.7 Occidentalism: a brief history and characteristics

Occidentalism is often understood as a reaction to the Orientalist's construction of the distorted Orient, it was, however, a practice long before that term was coined. For instance, perceptions of the West had developed in the Arab world in about 10th century when some Arab Writers textually managed their experiences about the people on the Northern Quadrant. Centuries later China had also developed its stereotypical discourse about the West since the intrusion of the Western powers during the mid-19th century. The non-Western countries such as Egypt, Russia, Japan, China and India have been stereotyping about the West for at least a century before the idea of the West became the West's own key geo-political concept. However, it was different than the West's maneuvering of such discourse since it entailed Colonial and Imperial subjugation of the Orient.

The construction of the Occident by the Orient has been twofold. On the one hand, the West is constructed as a "positive" other (Zachs,

2011, p. 125) that includes the Western democracy, enlightenment values, innovation, technological developments and modern ways of living etc. On the other hand, the West is portrayed and conceived as “negative” other (Zachs, 2011, p. 125) that highlights Othering, carves reduced images, outcasts the Western people as inferior, and labels them as sub-humans. This binary portrayal suggests the ambivalent and hybrid attitude of the Orientals towards West. Buruma is of the view that “Occidentalism is fed by a sense of humiliation, of defeat” (Buruma, 2004, p. 02). And the negative Othering, she implies, results out of such defeated psychology of the East.

Third, Occidentalism characteristically has been used as a political lever for non-Western countries to pursue wider national interests. Thus, while the West as a positive Other has helped excoriate traditional norms and values or even re (form) socio-political milieu, the West as a negative Other shunned Western values and safeguarded non-Western countries’ cultural and political identities. According to Wang Ning, Occidentalism plays a key role in supporting the movement against Western colonialism and cultural hegemony. He maintains that reinforcing the Western image as hegemonic helps non-Western countries to decolonize and defend national interests, promote and establish the narrative of nationalism, to form an independent socio-economic system and to protect cultural integrity (Ning, 1997, pp. 63-64). It appears that quite similar to discursive practices executed and manipulated by Orientalists, the non-Western people also posed the same threat to the Westerners. They have been silenced, marginalized, stereotyped and represented, though not beyond the textual

boundaries usually, by the Occident and as Conceison argues, they are to assert for “global legitimacy and national identity”. (Conceison, 2004, p. 46). In this regard, the colonizer/colonized order was reversed and the tendency to dominate the Western Other seems quite evident. Nonetheless, as compared to Orientalism the study and the critique of Occidentalism only takes a very small portion in lacking broader, deeper and critical attention. Occidentalism, as a critique, deals with the discursive practices employed to construct the Western Other by the non-Westerners. The discourse of Occidentalism rests on the fundamental differences outlined by the Occidentalists. These practices are never devoid of their political implications and interests such as to protect and empower non-Western people to resist Western domination. The Occident, mainly because of its own literacy as a sign of superiority, produced, controlled and manipulated its power/knowledge discourse and had a voluminous literature with much louder voice in representing the Orient. These factors proved advantageous even if the judgments were erroneous. The Orientalists were drafting the Eurocentricism, logocentricism and graphocentricism in order to exploit the non-Europeans. And the Orient, in its endeavours to reverse the discourse of Orientalism not only claimed its own identity but also strived to blur that of the West as well.

2.8 Indian’s construction of the Western Other

Indian sub-continent has been a colonial state for about hundred years. The struggle for independence continued throughout the subjugation against the Western imperialism and the Muslims had also had their share in this struggle. The Muslims’, through their different worldview,

differentiated themselves from the foreign Other. There are different grounds on the basis of which this differentiation affected their perceptions of the Western Other. Clarke is of the view is that, though ethnic origins and physical features were used to build boundaries between the Indian Muslims and foreigners, the foreign Other was mainly constructed by cultural differences and cultural consciousness. They drew a boundary between self and the foreign Other based on Indo-Islamic values and moral codes and believed the boundary could be erased as long as foreigners accepted those values and codes and fully participated in their society. He further posits that this tradition of racial consciousness contributed to the construction of the Westerners as a racial Other at the turn of the 20th century (Clarke, 2002, p. 25-28). Then, as Dikötter notes, racial difference and biological specificity became a dominant issue in the minds of official/intellectual elite, and a racial theory became systematically developed in which racial markers, especially hairiness, were used to differentiate and distance the Westerners (Dikotter, 1992, pp.67-68). The racial discourse emerged from a need to unite the nation to survive the Western powers (Poo, 2005, p. 46). The advent of Western colonialism and its onslaught changed the perception of the Indians of the West.

The postcolonial scholars and historicists insist that the new wave of strong anti-Western sentiment was more a result of the national narrative which oozed out of certain national movements which helped in constructing the West as an anti and Other force. The Socio-political and historical experiences and backgrounds of different nations and countries have led them to highlight distinctive characteristics in their practice of

Othering because of their varying and different encounters with the West (Bonnett, 2005, pp. 509-510). And as was the case with Orientalism, the constructed image of a Western Other has also constituted the perception of the West. However, he believes that the critique of Occidentalism in postcolonial reading must have “broader and deeper critical attention” by the theorist and critics, which it ultimately gained in the first half of the twentieth century. (Conceison, 2004, p. 41). Papadopoulos holds that, people seize on the Otherness of the Other while interacting with other ethnic or cultural communities, thus focusing on the strangeness or differences only. He differentiates Othering from Otherness by stating that Othering is “an actual process which produces Otherness” (Papadopoulos, 2002, p.166). In this sense, an imaginary or constructed boundary is created to maintain the difference with the other group considering it as a separate entity. Colonial/canonical literature establishes this discourse by promoting Eurocentricism and on the other hand, whatever is out of the bounds of Europe is portrayed as less civilized. For instance, Addison quotes Edinburgh Review by stating that “Europe is the light of the world, and the ark of knowledge: upon the welfare of Europe, hangs the destiny of the most remote and savage people” (Addison, 2009, p. 43). This way, Europe is described as the center and the rest of the world as its periphery.

2.9 The Negative and the Positive Other

The study of Occidentalism is a counterweight to the powerful Western representations of differences between the East and the West. According to Coronil, the Other’ representations of the Western

Occidentalism may restore power balance and realign the setting between the two.

In the representations of the East and the West, the latter is seen as a negative Other existing as an immoral entity, estranged in its individualism, sans spirituality, a competitive society enjoying the luxuries and grown rich by exploiting and manipulating the resources of the East. In its portrayal of the positive Other the representations of the West depicts it as an abode of innovative individualism, liberty and as a source of progressiveness and enlightenment.

The West, at any rate, is set in binary opposition with the East. In their book *Occidentalism*, Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit describe the view of the East about the West. The West is portrayed as a society filled with the people that are “soulless, greedy, decadent, faithless and unemotional” who are more like machines than humans (Buruma & Margalit, 2005, p.10). The West and the East perceive each other as opposites which cannot come to terms with each other. The pursuit of materialism by the West makes it soulless and unfeeling for the East and the picture of “the soulless whore as a greedy automaton”, is the image the Occidentals have of capitalism, and of the Western civilization as a machine (Buruma & Margalit, 2005, p.19). The image of the soulless whore suggests that in the West everything is for sale and is treated as a commodity which further makes it inhuman. The view West as a “sinful city of man is the abode of hubris, empire building, secularism, individualism and the power and attraction for money” (Buruma & Margalit, 2005, p.16). The attitude of the Muslims and Arabs in particular

was ambivalent in its nature. In this regard Fruma Zachs asserts that in the travel literature of 19th century the Arab writers were ambivalent towards the West. She further maintains that the Arab writers' attitude involved both negative as well as positive Others in its portrayal of the West. In this scenario, on the one hand they perceived its "innovations, cultural materialism, and its order with enthusiasm, amazement, and even with admiration. On the other hand, they applied caution and suspicion, criticizing Western morality, humanity, religious attitudes and materialism" (Zachs, 2011, p.130). But the fear of endangering their own culture by adopting the Others' culture always loomed over their heads.

2.10 The Essential Ancientness of India

The main idea in Orientalist discourse, during the colonial epoch, focused on racial, civilizational and linguistic features of the Orientals. As in *Orientalism* Said outlines that colonial expedition and imperial expansion were justified with the help of white man's civilizational uplift, racial superiority and the potential to know the world better and thus qualified enough to handle the resources best. Said writes that, "a peculiar amalgam of science, politics, and culture whose drift, almost without exception, was always to raise European race to dominion over non-European portions of mankind" (Said, 1978, p. 232). Even the natural sciences came to the rescue of the white man's racial and discriminatory theories and reinforced the representational views by validating the stereotypical discourse. This vindication came from Darwin, for example, who put the white nations on the top of the civilizational scale and held them as the most evolved of the species and races. Empirical data, collected

in social sciences and Biology, vindicated the origin, evolution and development of the Orientals as was conceived by the Orientalist literature and texts. The seemingly scientific and generally agreed upon sweeping generalizations were crafted to rank the Orientals in their infancy of civilizational evolution (Said, 1978, pp. 232-233).

Notwithstanding the general antipathy towards the Orient in their discourse, Europe, in totality, cannot be erroneously perceived as the monolithic entity bent upon proving the Orient as Other. There were many dissenting voices too that excoriated colonialism and sympathized with the Orient and Orientals. They didn't believe in what the others called an inherent inferiority of the Orientals. In this regard, Coronil expresses his surprise that how the representatives of very different ideologies around the globe are unanimous about the thought that the West is the Origin and "locus of modernity" (Coronil, 1996, p.78). These and such other generalizations show that India has invariably been associated with ancientness while the Europe with modernity. They intended to help rescue the residue wisdom of the degenerate contemporary Indian society. Many Orientalists, in their endeavor to study India, thought it to be their sole mission to safeguard Indian spirituality from the degenerate and rotten modernity of Europe.

The Orientalists have always portrayed India as an unchanging phenomenon. This notion has been vindicated in general by Orientalists that even after the external influences India has remained the same for ages. This idea of absorbing and unchanging India recurs throughout the twentieth century in both popular as well as scholarly literature. This,

however, reflects that India has remained stagnant. Weber explains why Indian civilization has not developed as did the Western civilization. He asserts that, Indian civilization is essentially magico-religious whereas Europe represented rationality. He further states that it is due to Indian's concentration on religion that denigrated empirical world (Weber, as cited in Jouhki, 2006, p.80). Weber's view of India, quite interestingly, portrays it as other-worldly and holistically religious Indian society and it still has a strong hold of the Western discourse on India.

2.11 Orientalism and India

Edward Said, in *Orientalism*, only slightly mentions Orientalist discourse on India. Said asserts that William Jones (1746–1794), the founder of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, was the prime mover in the initiation of scholarly Orientalism in and about India. Jones aspired to know, learn about Sanskrit, Indian religion and history and interest in knowledge of Islam (Said, 1978, p.75). It explains as how and why the colonial discourse treats the colonized as the Other by highlighting the inherent contradictions referring to each other as Others. This Othering was, in certain cases, not crudely done; rather it was executed in a finer way. For example, William Jones, an Orientalist himself is of the view that whereas the “Western mind” is compact, rational and bases itself on reason, its very counterpart in Asia soars high in the realm of imagination. Said notes that early Orientalists in India were jurists and missionaries like Jones and other doctors of medicines. These people supposedly had a twofold mission; improvement and betterment of the quality of life in India and contributing to the knowledge and advancing the art back home in the

metropolis. Said catalogues many British writers who had always had their definite beliefs and views about racial superiority and imperialistic designs. The relationship between “the Occident and the Orient is a relationship of power, of domination and of varying degree of complex hegemony” (Said, 1978, p.05). John Stuart Mill, mainly because of the above reason, never approved of representative government and independence for India as he considered Indians to be, if not racially, at least on civilizational basis as low.

In Said’s view India, unlike Islamic Orient, was never a threat to Europe. India was rather more susceptible to European threats and conquest and so the Indian Orient could be dealt with without the same sense of danger that is usually associated with the Islamic Orient. In Islamic Orientalism, however, the problems of mankind were seen and categorized into “Oriental” and “Occidental” modes (Said, 1978, p.261). Said propounds the idea of romantic Orientalism, which, with the knowledge of Indian culture, religion and spirituality, sought to regenerate materialistic and mechanistic Europe. The Oriental languages were mastered by the Orientalists who were seen as spiritual heroes giving back to Europe its lost holy mission. It may also be noted that dissatisfaction with Judeo-Christian thought and the cold materialism of the Enlightenment made many Europeans seek for a lost spirit in the promised land of India.

Hence, a new Romantic and metaphysical thirst replaced the earlier moral/ethical and political need for Orientalism. India, thus, was to be seen as the realm of spirit. The Orientalists who had earlier formed racist theories looked to the East to excoriate degenerate Europe. Orientalism

without colonialism is “a headless theoretical beast, that [is] much [...] harder to identify and eradicate because it has become internalized in the practices of the postcolonial state, the theories of the postcolonial intelligentsia, and the political action of postcolonial mobs” (Breckenridge & van der Veer, 1993, p. 11). The Occidentalists, on the other hand, followed the patterns used by the Orientalists to represent Orientals; they made use of the same epistemic violence, the same we/they, West/East distinctions of which Said accused Orientalists were perpetrated for Asian post-colonial purposes as well. Thus, the binary was and has been central in the discourse of two halves of the world.

According to Bhatnagar, Fanon sees this relationship as an Oedipal tyranny in which the colonized people search for identity and continually return to the terms of opposition set by the colonial mother. An impossible pure origin is something the reactionary forces of indigenous revivalism use and long for to obtain meaning for their contemporary being. Bhatnagar claims that this uncritical and politically suspect ideology is especially dangerous in the Indian context where the plural and secular identity has had to give way to a Hindu identity that has its imagined source in Vedic times (Bhatnagar, 1986, pp.04-06), coloring their identity within religious paradigms.

There is a charge levied on Orientalists that they, in fact, paved the way for colonization of India by the British. The Muslims and Christians, in comparison with Hindus were seen as the followers of foreign or imported religions, not rooted in India (Viswanathan, 2003, p. 37). Ultimately, the divide further weakened the bond of the Indians as a nation

and the colonial powers deemed it fit to conquer the sub-continent. The least we can do is to admit that we, as humans, are imperfect tools to study other human beings yet it appears that we are the best tools available.

Section 2

History and Ethnography of Travelogues of the East

This section deals with the travelogues, both from Arab and non-Arab world over the period of time and how they developed their perceptions of the Western Other. It is not only the Muslims however, but some non-Muslim travelers including women from the East who have been discussed and an evaluative overview has been formed. Although, the focus has been on the 18th and 19th centuries but the early discovery of Europe by the Muslim travelers and their views about the West have been highlighted, too.

Orientalism and Occidentalism, the two main theories in post colonialism, with their discursive, oppositional and contrasting practices determine the focus of this study. The techniques and strategies of these frameworks are employed to (re)interpret and (de)construct the texts within and outside their temporal and socio-political milieu. Munshi Itesamuddin (1730) Mirza Abu Taleb (1752) and Lutfullah Khan (1802) travelled to Europe and published their travelogues in 1784, 1810 and 1857 respectively. So, there is a chronological thread connecting the events and span of more than hundred years. This study will focus on the travelers who are from different descents and carry different legacies but in the imperial center their identities as the Muslim travelers from the sub-continent dominate their regional and personal identities. During the eighteenth century, the travelers from India were not, strictly speaking, “colonial

subjects” (Schurer, 2011, p. 138) and though they admired Britain profusely for its scientific and technological advancements but in the end they were disillusioned supposedly due to its spiritual hollowness and the confused roles in gender relations etc.

The Oriental Muslims, travelling and publishing in a chronological fashion, though incidental, provide a framework and historical range for the current research. The figure of the Oriental/Eastern traveler exploring the Western/Occidental lands and culture “conjures up in the modern imagination the world of Sindbad the Sailor from the Arabian Nights” (Alam & Subrahmanyam, 2007, p. 04), however the basic concern in this study is about the travel literature produced during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with the focus on a particular area termed as Indian culture although some of the travelers carry their different legacy as well. This was so because of the hazy borders between Indian, Iranian and Arab Muslim travelers and authors. The frontier between Iran and India is especially amorphous and shifting because these two countries shared overlapping experience of the East India Company’s incursions along with a border and the Persian language.

2.12 The Muslim Travelers from the East; a Critique

Mohamed Tavakoli Targhi and Nabil Matar have contributed significantly as far as the Iranian, Arab and Turkish travel accounts about the Occident are concerned. It is however to be noted that no scholar of significant posture has dwelt upon the travel accounts of the sub-continent in comparison to the above two. Therefore, there has always been a wide gap regarding this particular geography as well as academic field. Although

Michel Fisher, Gulfishan Khan and Claire Chambers have been currently working on this area, but the scope of their contribution is limited in many respects. From the West, Bernard Lewis has also documented the travel journeys and the resulting perceptions of the Muslims about the West, but his discourse is more based on xenophobia rather than xenophilia.

Bernard Lewis views the Muslims, their discovery, perceptions and (re)presentation of Europe lopsidedly. It was mainly based on the premise that Muslims were least interested in locating, knowing, understanding and developing interactions with Europe. His categorization of the Muslims' discovery of the European continent is not without the Orientalist prisms through which he underpins his stereotypical discourse against them. Therefore, he alludes and attaches all the negative epithets to these early discoverers and his mention of them casts them rather as outsiders who had known Europe either through their naïve understanding or through Crusades. This myopic, erroneous and stereotypical understanding leads him to portray them as barbarous, uncivilized and untamed. To him, the continent of Europe, as it became known to the Muslims, has four phases of its discovery which he has based on Turkish, Persian and Arabic literature related to history and geography.

The first phase is based on the remoteness and thus unfamiliarity of Europeans for the Muslims because as parts of Europe had been conquered and included into the Muslims' growing Empire during the earlier Middle Ages, the rest of them were labeled as barbarous, uncivilized and remote both in time and space.

In the second phase, most of the discovery took place as a result of Crusades that were launched by the Europeans in order to give a counterblow to the Muslims. Such onslaught however, later helped to develop the diplomatic channels and commercial relations which were initially based on the military relations. The Muslims during the time of Crusades had no “Great Debate” (Lewis, 1985, p. 03) and they underwent just another wave of barbarism from the Franks.

The third phase is also based on invasions and wars related to the establishment and later the expansion of Ottoman Empire. As had happened in the eighth century, the perception of the Muslims about the Europeans had not changed much. The Muslims, especially the Arabs, still considered Europe as the land inhabited by the infidels and considered it their religious duty to either convert them into Muslim faith or conquer and subjugate them. They regarded it as “sacred and rewarding to bring the enlightenment of the Muslim faith and the benefits of Muslim rule” (Lewis, 1985, p. 03) to the Europeans.

The last or the fourth part of Europe’s discovery by the Muslims, according to Lewis, took place during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and still continues. During this phase, the Muslim rulers across the world felt the need to (re)discover Europe as a fountainhead of modern scientific and technological developments. Therefore, the European warfare, politics, economy, languages and sciences became important for the Muslims and they started perceiving it as a mighty and perilous entity to be understood and comprehended as a new and unavoidable phenomenon. Lewis concludes his arguments by outlining the reasons for such type of

representation; it was because of lack of communication channels and moreover, there was no such drive as intellectual curiosity in the beginning of the early phases. This kind of lack of information about each other's cultural entities resulted into labeling, farming and stereotyping which defined them and their identity. The evolution from cleansing of the infidels to the adaptation of their culture took place only after the centuries of interactions. But still the threatening and dangerous Europe lurked over the imagination of the Muslims especially in the sub-continent who had become colonized and subjugated.

A more progressive, impartial and eulogizing assessment of the white people was concluded by 'Abd al-Rahmān Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) who found English nation to be revolutionizing the scientific fields and making remarkable discoveries. The Europeans, he wrote, were thriving in the fields of science, their works reviving, "their exponents numerous, and their students abundant. But God knows best what goes on in other parts" (as cited in Lewis, 2001, p. 149). This was the first kind of admission or acknowledgement made by a Muslim historian who openly confesses their surpassing over the Muslims. It is however noted that as far as Ottoman Muslims were concerned, they had little interest in Europe or its achievements. They were least interested in socio-political, cultural, literary or linguistic changes and developments taking place and giving shapes to the world around them. It is needless to iterate that it was the end of middle ages and a new era of Renaissance that had begun in Europe that finds little or no mention in the literature of the Muslims. The Ottomans were only interested in one thing European: the art of war. But this art could be and

was being studied through captured guns, ships and the renegades. It all had lead them to perceive Europeans only as enemies who were either to be subjugated or were forced to pay tributes to their rulers/conquerors. Queen Elizabeth of England received many letters by Muslim rulers across the world and even in their personal and official correspondence they mentioned the Spaniards, Hungarians, Austrians, Polish and Portuguese people as infidels.

It is owing to such over-generalizations by Lewis that scholars like Nabil Matar have answered back by questioning and challenging such notions. Matar has worked exhaustively regarding the travel narratives of the Turkish and Arab travelers in the seventeenth century. Based on his scholastic understanding, he counters the assumption about Muslims, as espoused by Bernard Lewis, that Muslims of Middle Ages were completely lacking in “curiosity towards Europeans” (Matar, 2003, p. 14). Matar not only debunks this assumption but response emphatically by challenging such representative discourse about Muslims. He is of the view that it was not due to intellectual or theological reasons but some practical reasons that had deterred the Muslims from undertaking their journeys to Europe (Matar, 2003, p.25) but certainly not the lack of curiosity as Lewis believes. In the pre-modern era, the travels were governed by either commercial interests or religious motivation, owing to the dangers involved in this process. If the Christians were traveling in the European continent, the Muslims were also undertaking their journeys in the world of Islam. Therefore, “curiosity” had nothing to do with the traveling and discovery of each other.

Notwithstanding, since Matar was quite aware of Lewis' Orientalist discourse, especially after Said's theorization of Orientalism, he asserts that the Muslims of the Middle Ages had discovered their European counterparts without "particular myths, visions and fantasies that characterize many (if not necessarily all) Europeans texts" (Matar, 2003, p. 32). To him, the travelers from the Arab world cannot be studied, perceived and understood as those of the Europeans because the Arabs writers were not governed by any imperialistic designs and these travelers were exploring Europe without any support of the meta-narrative(s) of the Muslim Empire(s). In addition, the Muslim travelers did not use any previous models like those of the Europeans who used "classical or biblical sources" (Matar, 2003, p. 32) as their guidelines but they explored their counterparts with an "open mind and clean slate" Matar, 2003, p. 32. Since the seventeenth century saw both the Islamic as well as the European worlds as wealthy and prosperous, there was no defensive position, both in cultural as well as historical perspectives, for the Muslim travelers. Thus, through historical and empirical evidences, Matar counters the narrative of Lewis and furthers that of Said who had also criticized Lewis for his assertion that the Muslims were "addicted to mythology" (Said, 1978, p. 318) and were incapable of telling the truth.

In his another book, *Europe through Arab Eyes, 1578-1727*, Matar argues that the period 1578-1727 "has been ignored by historians of Arabic and Islamic civilizations, who have turned their attention either to the study of the medieval period....or to the modern period" (Matar, 2009, p.04). During the medieval period the "Islamic power" had resonated, whereas, in

the modern or post renaissance period, the Western/European imperialism subjugated most of the “Arab and Muslim world”. Matar is of the opinion that both the periods are marked with extreme approaches regarding each other’s perceptions and it resulted in “stereotypes of otherness” giving birth to “thriving and triumphant Orientalism” (Matar, 2009, p.04). The gulf was so vast that upto the end of the seventeenth century, there was not be found even a single theoretician or a political philosopher who had vouched for the “possibility of tolerance for the Muslims qua Muslims”.(Matar, 2009, p.133). Finally, John Lock came to the front but even his theories were not practically implemented to grant the Muslim citizenship in the nation-states of the West as the Muslim states or Caliphates were granting to their religious minorities. So, these “monochromatic” societies were in sharp contrast to “polylingual, polyethnic and polyreligious” (Matar, 2009, p.133) societies of the Muslims.

He delves deeper and observes that Western Muslims, in their encounters with the Europeans, knew them only through their insignia-the cross or the *salibiyyun*. That is why they would call them as cross bearers. Moreover, the Muslims, despite their rivalries and wars had always hoped to establish the political relations with them but owing to their exclusionary Christianity the process was always halted and never materialized to the fullest (Matar, 2009. p. 29). He also notes that despite the fact that ambassadors from Europe were often clergymen, military officials or noblemen, but “the religious openness of Western Islam resulted in the willingness to employ non-Muslims” (Matar, 2009, p. 132) quite contrary

to the approach practiced by the Western Europe where it had never occurred.

So, as a reaction to Said's unmasking of Orientalist discursive practices, Bernard Lewis mainly held the Muslims responsible for their inability and shortcomings for living in the cocoons and for not discovering the Occident either or doing so in negative manners. Nabil Matar however furthers Said's thesis and deflects the charges levied by Lewis. He further proves that not only the Muslims were capable of discovering their European others but quite unlike them, had done so in order to initiate even the socio-political and economic relations with the West.

The interaction between the Europeans and the Muslims, especially in the Mediterranean and subcontinent has also existed throughout the history. But the acceleration between the interactions resulted out of the Europeans' imperialistic designs as well as through trading companies like the East India Company in the sub-continent. Leask argues that the presence of the public culture of the Europeans, though little, was rarely acknowledged by the Muslims in their lands. He furthers his argument by saying that "the Renaissance, the Copernican revolution, the printing revolution, the Reformation, and the Enlightenment all might as well not have occurred for all the cognizance most Muslims intellectual took of them" (Leask as cited in Franklin, 2006, p. 223).

The eighteenth century, in particular, marked a significant difference because it was for the first time that such a large body of travelogues or travel narratives was produced in one century especially by the Oriental writers. Before this century there were relatively few

indigenous accounts of the Westerners that had formed Orientalist discourse that Said later unfolded. It was this very century when the first ever Muslim traveler from the Sub-Continent, named Dean Mahomet also produced and published his travel account about the West. Following him, the three travel accounts selected for this research were also conceived and published during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Abul Hasan's account of Operas and visits to some other buildings like banks etc had bewildered him especially the transactions in the bank in terms of notes were quite unusual for him. Therefore, he uttered his surprise by noting that the printing notes were as valuable as gold. He also admired the English laws protecting the liberty and rights of the servants who, unlike their counterparts in India, could not be locked up or punished by their masters. If that happened, the servant might complain to the judge who would announce punishment or payment of fine for the master. So, the English "master did not have absolute power over his servants" (Sen, 2005, p. 41) which made it mandatory for them to be just with their servants. It is surprising to note that although the travelers were in the foreign country, yet they expected the English to behave according to the former's expectation. Therefore, when the announcement of their reception was officially made it was so eloquently made that his heart bounced, and spirits transformed. It seemed to him that he had shuffled off the garb of being a guest and felt at home with the English. In the whole situation, the travelers like Abdul Hasan Shirazi placed "the onus of behaving properly squarely on the Westerners" (Sen, 2005, p. 39). Like his contemporaries, Shirazi's views about the Houris or the beauties reflect his sensuality in the narrative.

Like Itesamuddin, he calls Europe a paradise quoting the verses like “If there be paradise on Earth/It is this, oh! It is this!” (Najmabadi, 2005, p. 47). In drawing a comparison, he observes that the Iranian women, in their prestige, rights, and status in the society are at a disadvantageous position as compared to their European counterparts. He wishes that the Iranian women were like the English women. Even in the matters of chastity, there is an element of choice that rests with the English women but the Iranian women are shut away from men and there is no concept of developing public association or intimacy with anybody lest it should expose them to moral corruption. As a result, chastity was a societal imposition not an individual choice. The English women do not shut themselves up but enjoy freedom with responsibility. Their loyalty, usually, to their men is not questionable nor are they morally corrupt even if they move around without veil. If there are guests invited by their husbands, they are treated as their personal friends and acquaintances. He was greatly impressed, “bewildered and mesmerized, and he remained so until his very last day in England” (Sen, 2005, p. 48). The gentility, cordiality, warmth and boldness of the women had a lasting impression on Hassan that he kept cherishing throughout his life and referred to in his narrative many a times.

Yousaf Khan Kambalposh was a traveler from the Sub-Continent and he undertook the journey to London and Europe in 1837 although the travelogue was published much later. During his visit, he had surveyed the socio-economic and religio-political conditions of the European continent and contrasted them with the same in his own homeland. Masood Ashraf Raja, a postcolonial critic, categorizes Kambalposh’s travelogue either as

an attempt to normalize the existence of the Empire or to engender the inferiority complexes about the native culture and uncritical acceptance of the master's superiority (Raja, 2014, pp.133-134). However, his reversal of the gaze to perceive the West or the imperial power-centers familiarized the readers back home with the new outlook of the Western world. He not only described the people and places but provided an insight into the power-relation between the colonizers and the colonized.

The travelers like Mirza Fattah Garmrudi viewed the ballrooms, theaters, parks and such like places as the gathering places of half-naked women who were bestial in their sexual encounters and used their puppies as the sex-toys. Mirza Fattah is also quoted saying that the Western women had escaped the borders of chastity and their uncontrollable sexual desire was bondless never to be satiated by their men. Their coquettish and flirtatious desire for union with men combined with their "occidental desire for sex" resulted into insatiable lust not to be quenched by the Occidental male figures that are represented as effeminate. Mirza Fattah, in his book *Shah Namah* called Europe as the land of the infidels and dismissed their culture and traditions especially related to women and their condition. His views were different rather in a sharp contrast with those of Abu al Hasan, Itesamuddin and Mirza Abu Taleb etc. The debauchery and sexual exploitation, according to Fattah, were the result of freedom granted to women in England. His views about England are contrived as pornographic and he equated the freedom of women with the lack of honour and chastity. As a result, Fattah constructs the image of Europe and their women that may be termed as "Europhobic and misogynist" (Tavakoli-Targhi, 2001,

p.67). But it is generally believed that Fattah's narration of negative and pornographic denunciation of Europe was a result of the mistreatment of his delegation by the English authorities when it wanted to condole on the death of the King.

In his book *Refashioning Iran*, Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi gives an account of the Persian travelers whose body of writing depicts the eroticized yet empowered and independent women of the West. Such portrayals were in sharp contrast to the veiled women of Iran whose body also served as a terrain of religious, cultural and political identity and contestations. The Iranians idealized those women by viewing them as “educated and cultured {whereas} the veil became the symbol of backwardness” (Tavakoli-Targhi, 2001, 54) which, to them, had to be shunned if Iran wanted to progress as a modern state and dissociating it from Arab-Islamic cultural tenets. Mirza Salih who is remembered as a member of the first group of student travelers to Europe in 1810 says that their women needed “instruction in reading and writing their own language” (Jahanbegloo, 2004, p. 145). He says that English women abstain from wicked deeds due to education and awareness and need not be wrapped in veils. Tavakoli Targhi also quotes Sahhafbashi who is of the view that the girls raised by the Orient are not instructed to find pleasure in education and learning rather they are bound and restricted to enjoy nothing more but eating and sleeping (Tavakoli-Targhi, 2001, 65). Tavakoli highlights the heavenly imagery and epithets occurring frequently in the texts reflecting and conjuring up the female-male intimacy in the heaven as outlined and imagined by Muslims. Therefore, phrases such as fairy-faced

and houris-like etc reinforce the desire of the Oriental Muslims to fulfill the erotic desires be those in heaven as a compensation for earthly restraints.

During his travels in 1775-1776 to England as a Persian teacher, Isfahani notes that he had gathered many new ideas related to cosmos, new discoveries, religion and overall life on the planet earth. The basic purpose of his visit to Europe was not to serve the interests of the East India Company but to acquaint himself with the new ideas and discoveries. He writes that India was lagging far behind in the dissemination of new scientific ideas and there was no flow of such advancement, “consequently, to satisfy mental curiosity, I undertook a trip to the countries of Europe in order to enjoy direct access to the mines of ideas and knowledge” (Yazdani, 2017, p. 29). On his return, he met disillusionment and failure in his project to translate the important scientific works into Persian. Instead of carrying out the representations of the West, Isfahani perceived the West as a fountainhead of scientific and technological advancement.

Mirza Sheikh Itesamuddin’s cultural excursion in London is analyzed by Stevie Friesth in *Indo-Persian Identities and the Harlequin*, whereby Itesamuddin viewed Harleuinda and “adopted and mimicked the performative identity of this theatrical character” (Friesth, 2015, p. 03). However, Abu Taleb Khan also watched such performance but did not “adopt this identity as it was beneath him socially and racially” (Friesth, 2015, p. 03) and he adopts the identity of a Turkish nobleman rather than an English one. The reaction of both the travelers is that of adoption and rejection as a performative identity resulting into hybridity. Friesth also mentions “hyper-sexualization” by Itesamuddin when he alludes to the

women around as houris and nymphs who want his company by kissing him. This is termed by Friesth as “hyper-Orientalism” by which he is both desired and is desirable (Friesth, 2015, p. 09). The second performative identity that Itesamuddin adopts is that of a narrator—a more ambivalent one. To Friesth, he acts as a “Parabolic narrator” not only for the target community but also for the readers back home. This shift from “a stage’s Harleuin to a literary narrator of parables can be explained as a matter of reclaiming an old identity” (Friesth, 2015, p. 18). In the end, he develops his identity as an Indian Muslim who believes that in the binary relationship between the East and the West, the former is culturally superior to the latter. Later, Abu Taleb Khan also adopts the identity of a poet who composes ghazals—ascertaining his identity as an Oriental/Indo-Persian. Friesth concludes their construction of performative identities by stressing that their “ambivalent identities allowed them to assert and maintain agency with a culture that would otherwise render them marginalized” (Friesth, 2015, p. 33). But ultimately, they had to refer back and return to their Islamic and Indian/Oriental identities and that is one of the reasons why they made homebound journeys shunning many offers to stay and assimilate in the West.

Furthering the debate on identity, Tabish Khair shows Mirza Abu Taleb Khan as well versed in rational, philosophical and scientific discourse and engages himself “whenever a new discovery or invention is revealed to him” (Khair, 2001, p.35) and inquisitively evaluates its pros and cons to the fullest. This way, he demonstrates his ability to approach the European culture and its articles with open mind and broad vision. Khair

terms him as a “patriarchal man” (Khair, 2001, p. 36) of his times who is against utmost freedom granted to the Western women. However, to Khair, Abu Taleb’s identity was a fixed one, unlike Friesth’s opinion, because “he considers himself the equal of any cultured English person, and finds enough in his own traditions to both accept and critique European novelties” (Khair, 2001, p. 37). Khair’s analysis of Khan’s disposition, therefore, does not render him as hybrid or mimic but an Indian Muslim who kept his identity intact throughout.

The same question of cultural identity and its construction is raised by Kate Teltscher who refers to the “cultural oscillation” of Dean Mahomet as in the early period in the travelogue he represents himself as the Indian native whereas in the later part of his travelogue he locates himself “among the Anglo-Irish gentry” (Teltscher, 2000, p. 414). That was owing to one more fact that he was the pioneer of shampooing in England which provided him with an opportunity to develop interactions with the local elite and he was eventually positioned as a Shampooing Surgeon to King George (Teltscher, 2000, pp. 415-416). On the other hand, Abu Taleb was dubbed as The Persian Prince by local newspapers and “he accepts this generic oriental title” (Teltscher, 2000, p. 418), and it helps him move into the gentry. When encountered by a party of girls, he exchanges flirtatious comments with them. As a result, he shuns his coyness that he had experienced earlier in Cape Town. At this moment, he “transforms himself from feminized, blushing passivity to masculine assertion” (Teltscher, 2000, p. 419), thus moving from the object of gaze to the subject of gaze. His identity as a Persian poet was also established and was widely known

for his Ode to London and ghazals. In the end he not only establishes his own identity but extend the identity of the Indian women by answering the stereotypes framed about them by some of the Western Orientalists.

Nigel Leask's rationale for underpinning the travel writings of Abu Taleb Khan is quite unusual as he himself charts it out that as compared to the usual colonial expeditions to India, Abu Taleb "travels the other way" (Leask, 2006, p.220) and casts his critical eye on the colonial patterns. He places Abu Taleb among the writers who have had the transactions of "cultural ventriloquism" (Leask 2006, p.220) while traveling the other way and transgressing the cultural boundaries. In the same breath Leask dismisses Lewis' Orientalist discourse about the Muslims whereby they are portrayed as lacking curiosity essentially. Leask counters his dismissive attitude by stating that the fundamental problem with the Muslims was rather the limited circulation of the manuscripts and not any essential lack of curiosity (Leask, 2006, pp. 222-223) which is often used as a stigma for the Muslims of the Middle and post-middle ages.

In this article, Leask surveys the areas that Khan had documented in his travels including social, political, economic and cultural aspects of the British life. He refers to one particular example where Khan made "devastating criticisms of the English Common Law" (Leask 2006, pp.229-230) which was exploitative and ruthless particularly in the Sub-Continent. But Abu Taleb had also lauded many aspects of British people as well as the society namely, the scientific/technological developments and the virtues of the English mannerisms which Leask terms as the balancing act (Leask, 2006, pp 230-231). But above all, Abu Taleb Khan was aware of

the “British Orientalist representations of South Asian culture, an interest which ironically mirrors the European fascination with reverse travelogues” (Leask, 2006, p. 232). Leask’s reading of Abu Taleb Khan’s travelogues is “a more nuanced historical context and a more complex play of cultural agency” (Leask, 2006, p. 236) through which he discovers Europe and particularly his host culture. To Leask, Khan's self-confident voice considerably differs from that class of travelers and writers of nineteenth century who held the Europeans as anterograde and the Indians as retrograde.

Kumkum Chatterjee and Clement Hawes’s contribution in the beginning of the twenty first century was important to identify and understand the cultural and literary lenses through which the East and the West perceive each other, particularly how the former portrays the latter. “Europe Observed” was the project of interdisciplinary essays and it had an “Introduction” by its editors that proved to be a groundbreaking discourse because it introduced the pre-colonial/imperial “Europe” to the readers. While in the early modern period “Europe” and “Christendom” were interchangeably used in different parts of the world, there were “no fewer than seven possible maps of Europe” in *The Myth of Continents* by Martin W. Lewis and Karen E. Wigen (Chatterjee, 2008, p. 03). They are of the view that in the interactions between the East and the West, there was a “reasonably equal exchange of gazes” (Chatterjee, 2008, p. 18). In this reciprocal exchange, however this book mainly deals with the perception of the West by the Easterners/Orientalists whose literary and cultural lenses provide them with the prisms to perceive and portray the West.

In his book *Provincializing England: Victorian Domesticity and the Colonial Gaze*, Krishna Sen is of the view that Itesamuddin's perception of the West was wholly based on his Islamic consciousness as he "constructs the West as idol-worshipping Other" because his religious beliefs are his fundamental tools to analyse the West (Sen, 2017, p.6), whereas Abu Taleb Khan reverses the "imperial binary of cosmopolitan West/provincial East" by giving the remarks that "England is placed in the corner of the globe where there is no coming and going of foreigners whereas in Asia people of various nations dwell in the same city" (Sen, 2017, p.7). This view reverses the perception of England/the imperial metropolis against the popular belief of centrality of the West and the periphery of the East.

According to Denis Wright Mirza Abu Taleb Khan casts a critical as well as an appreciative look at the imperial centre. He lauds many aspects of the British life and culture including their naval achievements, incorporation of technological advancement in their daily life, the constitution and the harmony between the King and the Parliament, the love of the English for liberty, the taxation system, as well as the printing press and its outreach to the general public. He had also had the opportunity to meet and interact with the British and Irish intelligentsia owing to the influence of his hosts and his own title of the Persian Prince. On the other hand, he excoriates many aspects of the men and manners and wrote a catalogue of twelve defects of the English (Wright, 1985, pp.47-52). These defects cover all the epistemic and ontological aspects of their life namely, their lack of faith in religion to vanity, hubris, passion for money and extravagance etc. His views about the Irish and Scots were no less different

as he considered the Irish less tolerant than the English and more spendthrift than the Scots. Humberto Garcia, on the other hand, records Abu Taleb's love for the Irish and theirs for him as he calls it mutual xenophilia. To him, Khan realigns the relationship between metropole and colony by holding Ireland as the bridgehead between the two cultures. He not only enjoys the hospitality of the host culture but also traces the linguistic-ethnic relationship between ancient Celts and Persians by recalling the similarities in sub-imperial capital and a Mughal city, Lucknow (Garcia, 2017, p. 241). He also calls this journey as part of a nineteenth century westward bound travels that "made up a small yet significant counterflow" (Garcia, 2017, 232) to the metropolises exciting their curiosity for these "alien sojourners"(Garcia, 2017, p. 233), though very few accounts of them have survived, if at all written at that time.

Garcia calls Abu Taleb's affection for Ireland as genuine in contrast with his unarticulated reservations about his imperial patrons. His xenophilia for Ireland and Irish people might be the result of the identical situation of both India and Ireland-the oppressed and colonized. Therefore, he discredits the assumptions and judgments of the English about the Irish and focuses rather on affinities between two societies and cultures. It appears that the "Ireland of his imagination" (Garcia, 2017, p.241) is not only civilized but quite in proximity to India. On the other hand, his portrayal of the English shows them as "inconsistent, degenerate, and regressive" (Garcia, 2017, p.241). That is why he presents a catalogue of twelve defects about the English but none about the Irish.

Khan, however, enumerates eight virtues of his host culture that characterize and define them. These virtues are generalized although they are part of the individual characters. They are listed as having the sense of honour, respect for privacy, a strong desire to progress in all walks of life, craving for fashion and the like.

Abu Taleb Khan's travelogue must have opened the eyes of the Persians as he described "the great differences that then existed between the Asiatic way of life and that of the inventive, mechanically minded, prosperous and powerful English" (Wright, 1985, p. 52) with their strong and well developed institutions. Wright's comprehension and analysis of Abu Taleb Khan's discourse is limited to its historical significance and he interprets it in that framework only.

2.13 Non-Muslim travelers from the Orient

It is by furthering this argument that Simonti Sen has enlisted a number of travelers from the sub-continent like Trailokyanath Mukherjee (1847-1919), Romesh Chandra Dutt (1848-1909), Girish Chandra Basu (1853-1913), Indumadhav Mallik (1869-1917), Debaprasad Sarbadhikari (1862-1935), Bijoy Chand Mahtab (1881-1941), Brahmabandhab Upadhyay (1861-1907), Protap Chandra Mozoomdar (1840-1905), Shibnath Shastri (1847-1919) and Debendranath Das, Krishnabhabini (1864-1919) who not only travelled to Europe but documented their travel narratives (Sen, 2005, 15-20).

Whereas all the above travelers belong to late nineteenth century, travelers like Mirza Abul Hasan Khan (1809-10), Ardaseer Cursetjee (1840) Jehangeer Nowrojee and Hirjeebhoy Merwanjee (1841) have been

termed as the pre-colonial belonging to the first part of the nineteenth century. The journey that these pre-colonial travelers undertook marked a considerable difference in their writings. The ship they were traveling by was not only “a vehicle for transportation of people and ideas; it was a spectacle in itself” (Sen, 2005, p. 60). Their descriptions, which usually narrate the challenges and difficulties encountered overboard, were meant to not only acquaint the readers with the unforeseen troubles but also inform them of many new things and wonders that they had witnessed during their journey. Traveling with the colonizers in the same ship would afford them an opportunity to develop acquaintance with them and leave the distinction of colonizer/colonized behind them. Although some of the English people did maintain the distance even when they were in England and never recognized the Colonized Indians as worth returning a courtesy visit nor would they acknowledge them as equals yet the latter considered themselves far superior than their colonizers/masters.

Cursetjee was a Parsee traveler who was also serving the East India Company and showed his indifference towards his surroundings during his journey to Europe. His only preoccupation was technology and experiments in the field of art and architecture. Cursetjee’s narrative is not in the form of a proper travelogue rather, it is in the form of a diary written about day to day affairs. His participation in the meeting of civil engineers prompted him to write that he hoped the progress of science and technology will be imitated by India as well and in this way the concentration of the scientific resources of India will be possible (Cursetjee, 1840, pp.27-38). Throughout his diary-writing however, the tone of judgment is not assumed by him

rather he keeps describing the things as they appear without passing value judgments. Nowrojee and Merwanjee's experiences in London, like those of Itesamuddin, made them the spectacles and they were perceived as the objects of curiosity. He writes that the people in London flocked around them and looked at our Parsee/Eastern costumes with wonder. He estimated the number of people around thousands and the presence of such a big mob made it difficult for them even to pass their carriage (Sen, 2005, p. 34). The Londoners, on the other hand, had many scientific and technological spectacles that these Parsee travelers found on their tour of the city. Overall, these travelers were impressed by the physical infrastructure like bridges, railway network and luxurious life that the metropolitan offered at that time. The Indian people from all creeds and classes, as a counter flow, started travelling to England since about 1600 and may be comprehended as the narratives about Others.

Nowrojee and Merwanjee, in their narratives, addressed the issues pertaining to technological, scientific and commercial progress of the Europeans especially the English. To them the secret of the English's success was twofold; unilateral approach or uniformity on the one hand and establishment of private enterprise on the other hand. While they confessed that England was nothing more than a speck on the map of the world yet in its progress and prosperity it stood unchallenged and unrivalled. The private enterprise had developed not only the physical infrastructure – railways, bridges and other means of transport etc-but also all the educational, scientific and charitable institutions were administered and supported by them and had received little or no support from the

institutions of the government. He believed that it was, for that matter, not possible for any government to support the number of institutions which are to be seen in England (Sen, 2005, pp.52-53). Their contemporaries like Masakiyo and Cursetjee, however, wrote nothing else except the wonders of technology so rampant and giving so much boasts to the progress and prosperity of the society. Cursetjee was obsessed with the idea of steam power engines and earnestly desired to return to Bombay to educate the masses about this miraculous invention that had transformed the lives of the English on the whole. This invention alone had “greater influence upon the interests of mankind, than all the discoveries of many centuries past” (Cursetjee, 1840, p. 05). The conveniences and luxuries that the English could afford were largely due to this and other giant-like machines. It was quite natural for the Indian travelers to revel on the sight of novelty which they could also hope to benefit from due to their association, though imposed because of being colonized, with the civilization and culture of the imperial center. Keeping the epistemological differences apart, these travelers and writers, at time, would reflect about their parent society and culture and compare them to the modern Western people and society. In case of evolution of both Orient and Occident, the latter had made progress by leaps and bounds. Trailokyanath, in his treatise writes that London can be labeled as the center of the most active people ever imaginable anywhere in the world. In this regard, there is absolutely no comparison between the Londoners and the Indians altogether as the latter, be they in crowds, are not more than a crowd of living men inhabiting the planet. They can also be seen with their emaciated faces, unwillingly being

dragged to the workplace as if they were doing drudgery. He concludes that laziness and idleness are peculiar and “natural to the Indian races” (Mukherjee, 1902, p. 89).

Some of the writings by the Indian/Bengali travelers during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries show that they had very powerful childhood imaginative associations with Europe. This can be noted in Nirad C. Chaudhary's book titled as *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*. In two of its many chapters, he devotes one chapter to his growth of consciousness in his village where he was born and the second chapter to England which he never visited during his childhood but nevertheless, was a very important component of his imaginative association ushered in from different childhood sources. The very name of the chapter was England (Chaudhary, 1988, pp. 03-56). As far as the description, mapping and comparison of the metropolitan center with the Indian cities are concerned a traveler named Krishnabhabini Das perceives London in a very different way. It is the newness of everything-people, traffic, dresses, culture, traditions and customs etc. that keep him mesmerized for a long time. A glimpse around shows great walled houses and an upward gaze reveals fuming chimneys speaking volumes of the industry which had already established its roots. Moreover, the wires, be they of electric supply or of the telegraph facility, surprise her the most.

In addition, she is astonished at the display at different shops which are covered with bright glass from the front. The paved streets and clean roads are also something new for him. She writes that, “The more I compare the two countries, the more I realize the great difference between

them and looking at the poor condition of India, I keep on suffering within” (Das, 1885, p. 150). Speaking of the railways, Mukherjee expresses his astonishment at the sight of so many stations/trains leaving for different stations at the same moment. He calls it the wonder of the world. Everywhere there are people coming in and going out of the city. All around there are “engines puffing and whistling, passengers running in and out, guards shutting doors, faint hum of voices” (Mukherjee, 1902, p. 34) combining to give a look of busy life of the people in England.

The institutions established by the English including Postal Services, Railways, Police and Civic departments had been functioning very properly and even their little efficiency reported to the Indians would render it impossible for them to believe in it and deem it exaggerated. For example, another Bengali traveler Mahatab expresses his surprise over the dexterity of the police in regulating and managing the traffic of the city. He acknowledges that all the incidents about London Police, narrated by people back in India appeared quite unrealistic to him unless he himself observed and experienced their professional working unimaginably true. He says that in contrast to his expectations what he “heard was by no means an exaggeration” (Chand, 1908, p. 126), and it proved to be true and just.

On the other hand, travelers like Tagore expressed their utter disillusionment and frustration over the non-literary and too much worldly/commercial kind of life that was quite contrary to his expectation. Tagore’s expectations lead him to believe that in England Tennyson’s ideas, Gladstone’s eloquence, Tyndall’s theories about scientific wonders and discoveries, philosophical profundity of Bain and Carlyle etc would be

floating around but to his utter dismay, nothing of that sort was observable. Instead people were busy in their routines as they were busy in Bengal or India. He wrote that he was utterly disappointed and “the women are engaged in discussing fashion, men are engrossed in work, life is flowing as it does everywhere else-only politics inspire occasional storm and furore” (Sen, 2005, p. 79). So, the people of the sub-continent thought of Europe as the place inhabited by the Others who are not like us. Similarly, London a supposedly ideal place was found out to be full of gloom spread around, smoke engulfing the city, clouds hung over the buildings, drizzle a permanent source of irritation and the people too busy to look around had utterly dismayed Tagore. The most depressing of all the spectacles, according to Tagore, was the monotony of the landscape which was, nonetheless, not peculiar to London alone but extended upto the whole of Europe as well (Sen, 2005, p. 79). Tagore’s inability to discover his ideal abode in England lead to his utter disillusionment and all he found around was nothing more than smoke-stricken city.

Some other visitors, like Tagore, expressed their estrangement by describing Londoners as “advertisement maniacs” (Sen, 2005, p. 79) who had transformed everything into advertisement and therefore sellable. The commercialism had swept away every place including stations, parks, markets and even the human beings in its flow of business and trading. The walking human beings were the common spectacle all painted or covered with the commodifying slogans. Trailokyanath sums it up by writing that the prices of the objects are very low, and the designs are illustrated in a fantastic way. The example of Cherry Brandy’s advertisement is enough to

highlight the situation in which “Hottentot man and his wife” (Sen, 2005, 80) are shown rejoicing and enjoying the nectar promising them all happiness possible. On the one hand this slight glimpse of capitalistic modes of running the business and accumulating wealth are evident and on the other hand the abject poverty also becomes the subject matter of the travelers’ narratives.

Mahatab shows to the readers how he found the poor strata living a miserable life in the center as well as the suburbs of London. He narrates one particular incident in which some poor gypsies are reported to be picking up the leftover food that some of the rich people had thrown away into the garbage. He thanks God for sparing India any such sight although people and the continent both are very poor there. Such spectacles of poverty served to draw comparisons between the two different worlds of the East and the West. All the people who travelled to and saw London had different tales to share; some perceiving it to be a place full of advertisements, others noted it to be a city full of commercial activity and yet others labeled it as a city of riches or poverty etc. A.K.Roy, gives a counter discourse by attributing the disillusionment only to the Indians as compared to the other nationalities mainly because “the dull, dismal, foggy and muggy look of London adds a touch of sadness to his disappointment” (Sen, 2005, p.82). The exterior and interior of the city reflected that all that glitters is not gold, and the reverse of this is just as true and the same is true of London as well. The exoticism of the English visitors to the Indian bazaars was narrated by the Indian travel writers who observed that the Indian bazaars often produced astonishment on the faces of the English

masses. They were quite surprised to see that all the articles that had been discarded by the English were re-produced excellently by the Indians giving new shape(s) and designs to them. But in moving around in those and such other bazaars the narrator, just like Itesamuddin, found himself to be a spectacle. So, the exhibition of city and the city of exhibition provided them with an opportunity to view and then being viewed.

The intelligentsia of the Sub-Continent at that time, while visiting England, was conscious of its colonized status and the idea of Othering, therefore it endeavoured to give a counter-narrative or discourse through their travel narratives. The Indian visitors, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, were not interested merely in the sights and sound of the city but in “the manners, morals, social condition, ethics ” (Sen, 2005, p. 93) and the working of different institutions like education, health and politics etc. Some of the educated Indian travelers at that time always held modernity and Englishmen as synonymous. It is quite surprising to find out that this notion not only prevailed but was practiced by the Oriental writers who, contrary to Said’s claims, had been making the Occident an ideal place and their dwellers as the ideal people who were worth imitation.

Trailokyanath’s description of an Englishman named Christy speaks volumes of the oppressed psychology of the colonized. He describes him as a paragon of typical English qualities having the qualities like generosity, openness, masculinity and strong physical appearance. He keeps himself aloof from all kinds of nonsense affairs and is busy in his actions rather than mere lip service. In his comparison of the colonizer and

the colonized he writes that “he (the English) is the essence of action while the Indian is the essence of inaction” (Mukherjee, 1902, pp. 86-87). It is while alluding to the Indian that he renders him incomplete and underdeveloped whereas the European/English is perceived to be developed in all his capacities and capabilities. The division between ‘we’ and ‘they’ is highlighted, and the construction of the ideal English man is done with the help of literati as well as literal knowledge. In their description and perception of the English, these travelers comprehend them as the positive Others. Das observes that the English are very hard working and put their maximum potential to produce the desirable results. They are quite unlike the Indians whose climate as well as “natural laziness” renders them incapable of working properly, therefore getting exhausted in few hours and asking for rest repeatedly (Das, 1885, p.101). On the other hand, Sen is of the view that the fundamental difference between the Oriental and the Occidental people is that of their attitude towards life and work. Whereas the former keep meditating in cool spring breeze, the latter find it the most apt moment to work laboriously. In the West the people try to raise each other and ultimately raise the country but in the East people, according to Sen, are unable to comprehend the meaning of the proverbial notion that says “raise others and then you will raise yourself” (Sen, 2005, p. 97).

It is surprising that these travelers were voicing and writing almost the exact words with which the Englishmen of the day would justify their national importance and their colonial possessions. It does not necessarily mean that they were writing for the English or that they had not criticized

them for their wrongs as perceived by these travelers but rather, they are giving due credit to the former while unleashing their criticism as well which, in fact, makes the narratives credulous and impartial. It is also important to note that in their writings, these travel writers also wrote without gender discrimination. The importance that the women received in their texts is reflected in the following lines where a scene of the skating snow is described. Basu, the traveler narrator is of the view that “It did not seem to me that the women were less efficient than men; in fact, they can be even considered as better performers”. (Basu, 1887, p. 74). To him, Several men and women, both adult and children, enjoying a game together-such a scene is both novel and entertaining

Just like Munshi Itesamuddin, Abu Taleb Khan and Lutfullah Khan, the travelers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries could not help themselves comparing the Western educational institutions like Oxford and Cambridge with the Indian education system and institutions. In this regard Shibnath Shastri is of the view that the Western education system is far more superior compared to the world education systems. He believes that the Western education system incorporates the love for knowledge among the aspirants and also helps them generate the longing for knowledge as well. Describing the failure of the objectives therefore, he concludes that in our present mode of education such an attitude receives no nurture. Thus, the primary object of education is not being attained. So, the superiority of the Western institutions is confessed by the Oriental visitor(s). Besides education, the sense of freedom was another hallmark of England. This was one of the basic differences between both the cultural entities. To him, even

if a slave enters the British borders, he becomes free and is no more a slave. He briefly sums up that while England is the land of freedom India is one of servility. She could exercise her freedom in dressing as she says, that “it is a few months since I have come to England; I have started eating and dressing like the English” (Das, 1885, p.35). The streak of the West as positive Others continues in this discourse. But not all the travelers from the Orient perceived the West as positive Others.

There were people rather, like Vivekananda who had altogether a contrasting opinion. In his analysis of the Occident’s political institutions he considers the Indian systems fairer than the European systems where people in the name of politics rob others and fatten themselves by sucking the very life blood of the masses without any exception of any country (Vivekananda, 2019, p. 1356). He also hints about the offshore adventures undertaken by the Europeans in order to colonize the nations and expand their empires. He also lays it bare that the capitalistic pundits of Europe manipulate, exploit and dictate even their governments through their money and resulting influence. These sponsors of wars get their due share as a bounty so their power and influence, according to him, continues multiplying. But inwardly, there were many fissures and cracks quite visible which had shown the Othering in the form of certain divisions in the society. The political differences and biases matched against the prejudices of the caste systems, according to Mukherjee, had been weakening the society. He says that to all the Indians or the Asians all the Britishers (including the Irish) were alike, high and low, conservative or local. The Asians as well as Indians would always perceive the white-skinned

foreigners as the English not deciphering the differences marking their separate identities. But he notes that there were certain inherent differences between them for example between the conservative and liberal or the rural/pastoral and urban etc. The fixation of identities of the people was due to their political and ideological commitment with their guiding philosophies although these political affiliations sometimes lead them to despise each other and unleash the diatribe, resulting into splits/divisions in the society. Mukherjee associates such affiliations and blind faith by linking it to the Hindu caste prejudices and he compares the resolution of the liberals as well as that of the conservatives with the Rock of Gibraltar which was so immune to the reasoning and logic that it would not be jolted even a bit no matter how strong and just the argument may be.

As far as the Eastern view of the Western women is concerned it has always been twofold; while they are criticized for their freedom and education on the one hand, they are appreciated and emulated for the very same reasons on the other hand. The idea that the Indian women were better in their moral conduct and the European women were not, is repudiated by Mukherjee when he says that he had himself observed that “with all the education, freedom and independence allowed to women in the West there was no more immorality than in India. This was so because the education and training of the Western women had imparted enough confidence among them to choose what was right for them. Therefore, they were as much concerned and careful about their honour and chastity as their Indian counterparts. Unlike the Indian women who were more domesticated due to cultural and religious constraints, the Western women

enjoyed greater sum of freedom. He also however, excoriated the European women for their frivolity and exhibition. Their social circles and the related activities revolve round their fashions and extravagance. Mukherjee sums it up by saying that the women dress themselves nicely, return visits, read novels, play at piano, sing songs, go to churches and theatres and sometimes take interest in some charitable project. What an amount of money they spend every year on their clothes! And what a tyrannical sway fashion wields over both men and women in Europe.

It all reflects their daily and routine engagements which kept them pre-occupied throughout. This is reiterated by another traveler cum writer named Jagatmohini Chaudhury who writes that the European women, unlike their Indian counterparts are not merely decorative pieces but are rather highly educated, cultured and well equipped with music, art, literature and are treasured as the “prized ornaments of the society and home”. Sen comments on this observation by saying that in comparison with the European women, the traditional Bengali model failed, and the women suffered as a result (Sen, 2005, pp.145-146). Although the Oriental especially the women in sub-continent were, in general, loving, caring, with religious predilection and a strong sense of self-respect but the male-dominated social structures refused to acknowledge her potential for up keeping her morality unless she is confined under lock and key to safeguard her chastity .

The Bengali writers and travelers during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were mostly moving in the typical middle-class social circles. Their observations and reflections are marked by cultural and social

Othring as well. For them the predilection of the women for fashion was a vice and it is noted by A.K.Roy who is of the view that the English women are obsessed with the idea of fashion which has certainly no limits. He observes that should the princess of Wales think of patronizing the Scientific Dress Cutting Association, you shall soon find the streets of London thronged with female forms resembling the fathers of Roman Catholic Church (Roy, 1905, pp. 141-142). Tagore on the other hand keeps supporting the traditional patriarchal structures of the family system and deems the Oriental/Indian institutions better than the Europeans in nurturing the human relations. He opines that “The Indian woman can realize her needs within the boundaries of a large family (and) she gets the space to spread her love and affection. It may entail drawbacks; however, “lack of work does not harden or dry up her heart” (Sen, 2005, p.159). This helped the Orient as well the Occident to (re)construct their family institutions according to the varying needs and demands of the society.

One of the main issues dealt with by the traveler writers has been the poverty and class discrimination that had torn the English society from within. Another traveler named Mohan Lal from Kashmir further highlights and substantiates the fissures between the upper and lower classes in England which he deemed as a rich country but “it had many starving people” (Lal, 2013, p. 92). He also refers to the abject poverty that made the people miserable and impoverished. Comparing such scenes of poverty with the Indian social classes which, according to Tagore, had yet retained their moral superiority because though ignorant and illiterate “it was difficult to find people as debased and immoral as these (English) in the

whole human race. They could just be described as biped animals” (Sen, 2005, p.159). This is reflected in their two things: drunkenness and cruelty to their wives. Both these vices are “unheard of among the poorest families of our country” (Dutt, 1896, p. 27) and despite being poor the Indians are not that cruel and beastly with their kith and kin. Such people, though not the majority, are poor and their illiteracy does not let them change their socio-economic conditions. This was so because of the absence of religion and lack of the fear of God. This observation is furthered by asserting that it was only his visit to England . . . that had opened his eyes to the fact that people could be so uncouth or disgraceful (Sen, 2005, p. 103).

The travelers endeavor to find intersections and polarity between vices and virtues on the one hand and rich and poor on the other hand. Furthermore, the English society, unlike the Indian society, is not simply based on the division of rich and poor, rather, it has a distinction of gentlemen and lowly in their social structure. The possessions and riches define the gentlemen and their lack degrades them to the position and status of lowly people or class. Such and other descriptions of the classes construct the image of the West on the basis of the model of *lack* which had, hitherto been, associated with the east.

Behramji Malabari was a social reformer who travelled to Britain to pursue them regarding remarriage of widows and revision of the consent age for women in India. His travelogue titled as *The Indian Eye on English Life* was published in 1893 which marks the culmination of colonial rule in India. In this textual experience, Malabari draws many comparisons between the metropolis and the colony; however, he does not place India as

a yard stick to measure the manners, customs and culture of the British. He excoriates the British culture when he writes that let us remain ignorant in India. Although earlier he states that “a trip to London has been my dream for years, a hope long deferred (Malabari, 1895, p.01). But later concludes that I had much rather that India remained superstitious enough to worship her stone-God.

Malabari compares the Indian life with that of the British and highlights the positivity of the British while stressing that the Indians are poor, ignorant and superstitious and extends his argument by commending the charitable, hospitable and humanitarian streak of the British. He seems deeply impressed by their humanitarian services to others and records that, there is no caste or sect here to slay the hand of charity; workers in the field of humanity work together as brothers and sisters, giving readily unto all that are ready. The portrayal of metropolis shows that side by side with such heart rending scenes of misery one sees gorgeously dressed, luxury, flaunting . . . in the streets. here, again, one has a vivid picture of the extremes of wealth and poverty (Malabari, 1895, pp. 86-87). The positive and the negative Other merge at times as in the description above. In the beginning he feels quite uncomfortable with the scenes of couples roaming around and making love publically but as the time passes, he gets accustomed to it. The British society was more tolerant of the public scenes of love and sex than the Indian society. Malabari is of the view that “these sights, queer as they are, do not offend me now. They would be an eyesore amongst our own people. I myself could hardly bear them at first; but that is no reason why I should judge others in such a matter, before I am well

equipped to form a judgment” (Malabari, 1895, p. 32). Thus, he becomes and feels detached and disinterested in such matters and co-opts himself alongside the civility of the Victorian life. Phillip, a post-colonial critic opines that Malabari is not and should not be treated as a passive reader of the narrative of colonial modernity rather he was able to draw on purity movements that in England were closely identified with Christianity.

Mulk Raj Anand, a writer from Punjabi descent, is acclaimed as the founding father of Indian novel in English and has contributed enormous writings in English. His *Conversations in Bloomsbury* recalls his encounters with famous English writers like D.H.Lawrence and Huxley. His first impression about England shows his ecstasy when he visits London after he was set free from jail in India. He found the ambiance in England very suiting for the promotion and exhibition of pleasures of art and literature. It was a herculean task for Anand to get his intellectual achievements acknowledged among the literary figures of the time. Many a times he felt as a stranger because the Group would not give him what he thought as due credit and acknowledgement. The reverse Orientalism can be clearly seen in the lines following where he could feel the pinch.

Anand’s dialogues with T.S.Eliot also reveal the strife between the two writers over the issues such as colonialism, imperialism and their relations with Occidentalism and Orientalism. Whereas, Anand admires the craft, skills and poetic achievements of Eliot, he explicitly differs with him in political and social views. Anand criticizes Eliot for failing to correctly pronounce Muhammad Iqbal’s name implying that he doesn’t consider the East/Orient worth correct calling. Anand feels upset when he discovers

Eliot's prejudices against the Indians and says that, sometimes, I feel the Indians should pursue their culture and leave government to the British Empiricists. Eliot fully supports the Empires' motifs and advocates for the cause of Imperialism.

The Bengali travelers' contribution to travel writings of Europe is also immense. One of the leading intellectuals Bankim Chandra Chatterjee commended Romesh Chandra Dutt's travel writing *Three Years in Europe* in the following words

. . .What England will look through our Indian eyes we are unable to see in English publications. Monsieur Taine is a well known Frenchman. He wrote a history of England perceived from a French point of view. Reading that we gather that an Englishman's England is substantially different from a Frenchman's England. (Sen, 2005, p.7)

All this leads to the conclusion that how different a Bengali's England will be from the existing one. The travelogue by another Bengali writer Trailokyanath Mukherjee also highlights the division between "us" and "they" when he says that the (typical Englishman) is the essence of action while the Indian is the essence of inaction. He is lauded as having "a flair for the bizarre and the extravagant and could spin unbelievably delightful yarns out of the ordinary tell-tale events" (Datta, 1988, p.1455). He is sometimes involved generalizing and essentializing the typical stereotypes but interestingly not about the West but about the Indians. The pendulum of positive Others and negative Others sways permanently, and the perceptions are discussed as realities. Mukherjee highlights two types of England: on the one hand are the people who are educated, civilized, prosperous, cultured and humane, while on the other hand are the people

who appear to possess not even an iota of humanity-they are as if a step higher than beasts. This was so because the lower classes of England were suffering from abject poverty and ignorance, therefore, they were termed as biped animals who had no fear of God nor of any religion.

A couple of decades before Munshi Ismail Travelled to Europe, an American Christian traveler named Joseph Emin also visited Europe and England in early 1750s and composed his narrative account. He was a laborer and worked as a seaman who later, under the patronage of Edmund Burke, participated in different wars fought by the English and retired from the Bengal Army managed by East India Company. Emin, unlike Khan, Munshi Itesamuddin and Lutfullah Khan however, not only adapted to the British culture but also married English ladies and settled in England permanently. In his travelogue titled as *The Life and Adventure of Joseph Emin, An Armenian, writing in English by Himself*, was published in 1792 and proved that in his cultural identity, he aligned and related more to the West rather than the East. The text reveals that not only does he defy Semitism but carries out representations of the Jews, Muslims, and Roman Catholics whom he describes as stereotypically convincing and treacherous in his narrative. It is interesting to note that unlike Khan and Munshi Itesamuddin, Emin caricatures the people on the basis of faith and not on the basis of geographical entities like Occident and Orient. On the other hand, all his praises and gullibility is reserved and consumed for the English whom he considers as the greatest nation and looks up to them for liberality and freedom. He profusely admires the character-traits of the English who are upright, straightforward, law-abiding and honest. He is

ethnically different as he hails from Armenia but equates with Lutfullah Khan because both these writers wrote their travel narratives not in their own languages but directly in English.

Emin's narrative is different from Munshi Itesamuddin , Mirza Abu Taleb and Lutfullah Khan's narratives because of his detailed portrayal of the upper as well as lower classes of England as the latter three had limited contact with the English working class because they were neither the settlers nor the labor workers. Emin, due to abject poverty, especially in the beginning of his stay had himself undergone the financial plight and impoverishment which enabled him to observe and later document his past experiences. Later, he rose out of abject poverty but was subject to curiosity and hostility of the host culture due to his Asiatic origin. He recalls one incident when he was sent on false leads to a town to find a job only to tease him because of being a foreigner. When he talked to the people after reaching the place he was informed that "You are made a fool . . .Some of them said, he looked very ugly; some swore; some said, he looked nine ways for a Sunday; and another said, If anybody should chance to see your countenance, he would not have good luck for a fortnight together.

As a counter strategy, Emin employs and exploits the fraternity with the English not on the basis of race and ethnicity as he is not one amongst them, but on the religious grounds since he shares his Christian beliefs with them. In this way, he finds the religious and cultural proximity with the English and adapts to their customs and traditions. This helps him diffuse all the negative reactions that the English have about him and it serves as

an important strategy to define him in the face of his interlocutors who are not ready to acknowledge him only on the basis of physical feature and outlook (Narain, 2012, p. 156-157).

The representation of Europe in was not as rampant as that of the Orient/Indians executed by the Europeans. There were a very few genres notably the travelogues and narratives of the Indians, Arabs and the Turkish that became well known to Europe but on the other hand the Europeans used multiple genres and disciplines for the same. Schurer enlists these multifaceted and varying means by writing that Claude-Marie Guyon, John Henry Grose and Alexander Hamilton's travelogues, Jonathan Scott, Alexander Dow and Francis Gladwin's histories and William Daniel and William Hodges' visual images are full of representative discourse about the Indians. He also mentions the novels such as *The Indian Adventurer*, *Calcutta and Letters of a Hindu Raj*, the poetry of Eyles Irwin; dramas such as *The Widow of Malabar* and a *Mughal Tale* etc. that have been the vehicles of representative narratives about the Indians/colonized. But the fact remains ascertained that by the nineteenth century there were quite a handful of narratives especially in the form of travelogues that countered the textual Othering of the Indians by the Europeans. These texts provide the readers with glimpses of Europe and especially England by the Indian travelers. They not only travel to the land of the Others but also constructed and defended their own personal, social and religious identity while confronting their European counterparts especially in the imperial center (Schurer, 2011, pp. 137-138).

Since eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are marked with the advent and rise of colonialism, especially in India, therefore the cultural intersections and confrontations were imperative. Colonial expansion was geared by political, economic and religious motives and the existing parallel structures either got obliterated and dysfunctional or resisted the onslaught for their survival. As a result, certain stereotypical discourses emerged to define the identities of both the Orient and the Occident. Farangi was the word coined during this era and it was constituted as a political, cultural and religious adversary and diverse images and stereotypes of Europeans were constructed. Moreover, these Occidentalists travelers discovered and imagined similarities and differences, concord and conflict, with “Europe and Europeans” (Tavakoli-Targhi, 1991, p. 38) during that time thus forming the basis for the politics of identity. The European Other and the Self lead to the emergence and introduction of new discourses marking the boundaries of Farangi Other and self-identification. It is pertinent to note that whereas the non-Muslim travelers mostly relied on their national identity, the Muslim travelers dwelt upon their religio-national-cultural to the core deeming it superior over that of the West.

Chapter Three

Representation of the West by Munshi Itesamuddin

This chapter brings into account the socio-political background of Mirza Itesamuddin's times, his position in the society, the journey to the West and his perceptions developed en-route and, later, in the metropolis about the Western Others. The discussion also involves the questions as how his idea of Europe was formed over the period of time, and what different modes and techniques have been employed to identify the Western Other. Another aspect that comes under investigation is whether his Othering is limited to the British Whites or extends to the Europeans as well.

3.1 Introduction and background

Mirza Sheikh Itesamuddin's account of his travel "written originally in Persian was translated into English by James Edward Alexander, titled *Shigruf Namah-I-Vilaet or Excellent Intelligence Concerning Europe, Being the Travells of Mirza Itesamuddin*, was published in 1827" (Trivedi, 2003, p. 172). Kaiser Haq claims that Sheikh Itesamuddin was the first ever Indian traveler to Europe who wrote a travelogue about his journey (Haq, 2002, p.08). This travelogue marks the beginning of the history of relations cultivated over the centuries between the East and the West. *Shigurfnama* or *Images of the West* is the result of the early Indo-Muslim voyages overseas and "it is a vivid mixture of travel writing, sociology, social history, and international politics" (Hasan, 2009, p. xiv) suggesting that in many ways, this travelogue is emblematic of the experiences, perceptions

and cultural constructs of Muslim visitors to Europe during that epoch. Itesamuddin's journey to Europe was, in fact, a diplomatic mission which he undertook on the orders of the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II. "The Mughal Emperor commissioned him as an assistant to envoy Captain Archibald Swinton, a Scot who had resigned from the East India Company's service to accept this post" (Fisher, 2007, p.161). Since Lord Clive was not authorized to order the placement of the British soldiers in a foreign court and extend the British military assistance, therefore, he suggested that "a letter containing the request would be dispatched, together with the present of 100,000 rupees from Emperor to his British counterpart" (Haq, 2002, p. 08). The mission was to be headed by Captain Swinton and Mirza Sheikh Itesamuddin, who was well-versed in Persian. Mirza's times were tumultuous, and it was during his lifetime that the East India Company took over India. "When he was born, the East India Company was one among several European trading houses; when he died, they were the effective rulers of most of India" (Haq, 2002, p.11). He was not a colonial subject (in the strict sense of the word) because of Persian lineage and therefore his views about the West and their colonial expeditions were set outside the rigors of colonial discourse.

Mirza embodied the humane qualities and had a very keen observation that helped him manage his textual experiences in an alien culture. Itesamuddin's travelogue was written in 1784, but he had visited Europe about two decades ago. Originally, the travelogue was written in Persian, "then the language of the Indian ruling elite, from the perspective not of an immigrant who must adapt to survive but rather of a passing

visitor who needs make no concessions whatever” (Trivedi, 2003, p.171). It shows that he discovered Europe, particularly England, like an open-minded tourist for whom Britain was the “reverse of what the Western travelers thought of the East....the metonymic and Indocentric concept of the White/foreign Other” (Satapathy, 2012, p. 02). This reversal of the perception is manifested when he embarks on the journey and continues throughout.

Itesamuddin completed his education under the guardianship of a Munshi called Salimullah who was employed in the court of Mir Jafar; the Nawab of Bengal. His “likely dates of his birth and death are 1730 and 1800 respectively” (Haq, 2002, p. 09). Although the claim that Mirza’s family’s descent was from the holy prophet Muhammad may or may not be true, but he would call himself Sayyid.

His family was educated and had important positions in the administration and Judiciary. His elder brother was an advisor on Muslim Law to Nawab Alivardi Khan who had been the ruler of Bengal from 1740 to 1756. Itesamuddin was a Munshi, i.e. a scribe or a clerk, except that the word in his day also meant a linguist or a scholar whose knowledge of Persian was inevitable because of its status as an official language (Haq, 2002, p.09-10). All the official, administrative, judicial and diplomatic business could not be conducted by ignoring Persian, therefore, Munshi Itesamuddin’s command over the language made him indispensable for the Company. He was bestowed the title Mirza (which is loosely an equivalent of knighthood) in recognition for his services to the Emperor Shah Alam II and his long period of employment within the East India Company. In short

“Itesamuddin was a scion of an aristocratic family in Bengal’s Nadia district, one with a fairly established tradition of gentility and learning” (Sen, 2005, p. 25). Munshi Itesamuddin’s perceptions and observations about Europe and England were original, less biased and influenced as compared to nineteenth century travelers mainly because by the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the imagination of the Indians was not constructed by English literature. Rahman notes that the colonized travelers of India, during the nineteenth century, had ample expectations of varying nature from the Imperial center. It was mainly because of their interest that they would read, discuss and know their traveling destination much in advance and after they landed there, “the geographical space of Britain was not an unfamiliar terrain as it was already known to the travelers. England to them as some have admitted was as familiar as if it were the next village to their home” (Rahman, 2013, p. 02). It was, perhaps, for the same reason that like many other writers Rabindranath Tagore had expressed his utter disappointment for not finding the real England matching his imaginative England. To him, it was more mundane than he had expected it and had very little to offer him, therefore, Rahman quotes him saying that, “like a fool I expected that this small island would reverberate with Gladstone’s oratory, Max Mueller’s discourse on the Vedas, Tyndall’s scientific theories, Carlyle’s deep thoughts and Bain’s philosophy”(Rahman, 2013, p. 12). But to his utter dismay he came across the people who were very much engrossed in the worldly affairs like the rest of the world with the women discussing the fashion trends while the men were found busy in their struggle for bread and butter. The only

distinct pattern that he found was some occasional furore about political discourse (Rahman, 2013, p. 12).

As far as Mirza Itesamuddin is concerned, he had no prior study of England or Europe before his departure. Therefore, he has not recorded any disappointments altogether regarding the mismatch between Persianate genre of the *siyahatnama*, using the name wonder-book with a factual and descriptive account of real life scenes that approached the contemporary English genre of autobiographical travel writing in which he contrasts with “European Orientalists” (Fisher, 2007, p. 170). This travelogue, it is worth mentioning, was written at a time when the travelers would not document their experiences for one or the other reason. There are already a handful of narratives from the Mughal era but “Michael Fisher has exhaustively documented that there were many Indian visitors in Britain before 1800, but these visitors either did not write down their experiences, or those reports have not survived” (Schurer, 2011, p.137). This travelogue gives us an idea or glimpse of the eighteenth-century empire as the accounts of the European travelers give us indications about the Indians as envisaged by the British. Fisher is of the view that in this travelogue Itesamuddin adhered to the traditional chronological idea as the travelogue begins and ends with the departure and arrival. However, he seems to be dissatisfied with the account and amount of information provided by the writer as it is scanty. To him, the travelogue is marked with many digressions, elaborative metaphors, the mechanics of different socio-political happenings, the commentary on Christianity and “occasional verse interjections” (Fisher,

2007, p.163) reflecting his perceptual modes. Overall, it is only a generality that marks this travelogue which is full of sweeping statements.

The duality of the narrative is marked from the very beginning when the public as well as the personal reasons and details of his journey are intertwined. On the personal front he undertook the journey because of the desire to explore the West and the cultural Others. On the non-personal level, he expounds over the imperial and hegemonic projects of the White people who have already initiated the civilizing mission and are “torchbearer of emancipation” (Rahman, 2013, p. 02). In the very beginning of his narrative, Itesamuddin excoriates Lord Robert Clive because he failed to accompany them on their voyage to Europe. His visit was aimed at serving as an emissary to submit Shah’s letter and monetary gift to the King. Itesamuddin’s immediate discomfort unleashes and he expresses his annoyance over the absence of the Lord. When he was informed about Clive’s absence, he says that he was struck dumb by this information and clearly realized that a deep game was afoot in which the journey was a mere pretext. He says that had he been aware of the political and diplomatic betrayal behind this journey and his unwitting involvement, he would never have undertaken this journey at all. Itesamuddin believed that he was completely deceived by Lord Clive and Captain S¹., and both of them were complicit in the final outcome of the letter and the monetary gift. It was for the same reason that the whole purpose of the journey, however turned out to be a damp squib. In the concluding lines of his travelogue he says that the gifts presented to the Queen were in fact, not on behalf of Shah Alam but by Lord Clive himself to attain the Queen’s

favors. This was an utter violation of the agreement between the Indian ruler and his emissary. So, when Clive met the Queen, “he made no mention whatever either of Shah Alam’s letter or message, neither did Captain Swinton make any disclosure regarding the above” (Itesamuddin, 2009, p. 89). Thus, in the power relations of the Occident and the Orient, the former is shown commanding the structures and the latter, be he the royalty, is reduced to non-entity unworthy of a mention.

It is written during and about the time period which marks the transition in social, political, economic and technological transition. Itesamuddin in this narrative surveys in different degrees and ways, the “industry and agriculture, faith and doubt, morals and ethics, prosperity and poverty, and progress and decline in Europe” (Hasan, 2009, p.xvi). It is all combined with his endearing biases and prejudices that he manifests at different occasions in this narrative but interestingly, the West welcomes the commentary and criticism by translating and publishing his travelogue in English.

3.2 The perceptions; enroute and later

Itesamuddin completes an exciting six-month sea voyage from India to England via many such places such as Mauritius, Cape Town and France. Itesamuddin’s travel account “began by describing the sea voyage or by charting the route that bound the *home* with the *destination*. Here we see the initial formation of the major boundaries of ‘we’ and ‘they’, which were subjected to multiple reworking in the rest of the travelogues (Sen, 2005, p. 58). {Italics are mine for stress}. He leaves with a very heavy heart and writes that, “God only knows the grief that assailed my heart at being

separated from my native land” (Itesamuddin, 2009, p. 05), showing his grief at the time of departure and stressing the binary between the other and the native land. At these places he meets seven other Muslim lascars from East Bengal and elsewhere in India who are celebrating Eid and he feels a sense of kinship.

En route, he describes encounters with factual as well fictitious beings including cannibals, Muslim converts, slaves, flying fish and mermaids. It is quite interesting to note that the West has always attached the element of mystery and exoticness with the East but when the Oriental figure (Itesamuddin) visits the West his journey is marked with the very wonders and mysteries that the West often dwells upon. To him all that “appeared strange” (Itesamuddin, 2009, p.06). If the ship was a wonder then so was the sea, its endless expanse and its daunting powers being further proof of the “benumbing creativity of Allah” (Itesamuddin, 1981, p. 27). Moreover, the ship was also taken as “a symbol of the ‘magic sound of Europe’, of ‘the land beyond the moon’. But then again, it was not merely a symbol; it was the very theatre in which our travelers would first see the beginning of the great drama that was Europe” (Sen, 2005, p. 59). His rich offering of mysteries and wonders continues when he passes by St. Hellena (an island) adjacent to which some islands were occupied by the Portuguese. “In one of them we saw flames of fire. I was told that this fire is always there. Some people say that this is because of the gold mines underneath, then some other believe that it is due to the machinations of the devil” (Itesamuddin, 1981, p. 47). As far as the other wonders were concerned, the narrator mentioned the flying fish and the mermaid as well,

nevertheless he was incredulous about the claim that Alexander the Great had fathomed the sea.

Sen comments on these issues by writing that the up-to-date and state of the art technology installed in the navigational systems, “the genie, the mermaid and the prime mover could cohabit with the full potency of their conception and without encroaching upon each other’s territory” (Sen, 2005, p. 31). The mystery and exoticness impress him further throughout their journey and during his stay in the West. Furthermore, the idea of awe and wonder is stressed by referring to the mystery, exoticness, supernatural beings around and the unusual happenings through magic or other incomprehensible means. At the very outset of his journey, all these epithets are reversed by Itesamuddin as hitherto, they had been associated with the Orient.

His ship eventually docks at Dover, where he landed and informed Captain S. through a letter written and dispatched immediately (Itesamuddin, 2009, p. 17). His first experience in the land of the White people was quite harsh and inauspicious as after they had landed at Dover, Itesamuddin and some others travelers were arrested because one of their European co-passengers had illegally brought contraband clothes along with them (Itesamuddin, 2009, p. 16). However, he was soon released after the intervention of hosts.

Itesamuddin’s narrative is regarded as an earliest modern travelogue composed by any non-Westerner, especially Asian, about their colonial masters. I say modern in contradistinction to the medieval West, which had come under the observation of Arab writers. All accounts of “Otherness”

are significant, but “modern” ones naturally possess an added relevance for us” (Haq, 2005, p. 316). But despite being modern, Itesamuddin, like other eighteenth century travelers was not only culturally but geographically immersed in Eastern consciousness as well. In the Islamic tradition of geographical division, the world is largely divided into seven climes. In this categorization the whole emphasis is on the Eastern hemisphere, therefore, Europe falls in the last or the seventh category marking it as least significant. It is in this context that when Itesamuddin and others sail along the African Coast, they reach the place from where they could see the Western hemisphere. He writes that “this mass of land is an island although it is treated as the same as Firangistan, however, it is not included in the seventh Iqlim” (Khan, 1993, p.120). It shows that visiting Europe meant entering into a geographical place that did not exist in their knowledge base. So, Europe emerged not only as a cultural concept but a geographical representation as well. Europe was insignificant, outside the knowledge base and even not worth studying and mentioning in the historical context of the Muslims’ history and knowledge of geography. Gulfishan Khan writes that the focus of the Indian intelligentsia was on anything but scientific and technological education. It is with particular reference to geographical and navigational sciences that the Indians lagged far behind than their European counterparts. These phenomena lead to the supremacy and emergence of the European powers as cultural as well as geographical entities (Khan, 1993, p.312). So, literally they were entering the land of the Others.

Although Itesamuddin eulogizes his hosts whom he calls “hat-wearing firinghees of Vilayet” (Itesamuddin, 2002, p 87), the English are shown maintaining a distance and establishing a differentiation from the Turks, Indians, Arabs, Iranians and Persians through their dress as their Others were usually wearing turban and fezes. This emblem is indicative of the parting ways of perceptions of both the continents and the highlighting the distinction between us and them. In this travelogue, Mirza delineated the concept of Otherness and the West is perceived and analyzed with an Oriental gaze. Since he was placed and positioned among the Indian elites, so his social position helped him deal with the West by expressing confidence and belligerence. The interaction of the writer with the West still places him on the position of the Other which marks him out as a foreign traveler that Itesamuddin not only understands but stresses while comparing both the cultures. He never loses his control over the self nor does he relegate himself to the bottom of civilizational ladder. His realization of the fact of Otherness and strangeness, however, is voiced in the following words when he says that “an Englishwoman of an inferior class might be willing to marry me, but I wouldn’t have her” (Itesamuddin, 2009, p. 54), referring to classism and racial prejudices marking the discourse and casting a gaze of Othering on the Occident. His later episodes show that the Western women freely courted him and had no iota of class-consciousness whatsoever, but such relationships never got materialized in the wake of his perception of them as cultural Others.

The journey of Itesamuddin parallels with that of the West particularly in the sense that as he is sent to Europe on a geopolitical

mission, the West also encroaches on the East for economic and political gains. The imperial politics drives all the economic and political agenda and the sea routes are being mapped to gain maximum economic outputs. He further says that the White people managed to chart out the sea routes so that their trade would be increased and their direct relations with the regions were established (Itesamuddin, 2009, p. 05). Thus he ascertains the Occidental notion that the white people's maneuvering of knowledge and power was to strengthen their control over the colonies.

Itesamuddin seems to be quite aware of the contemporary political trends and the intra-European rivalries and the discursive practices employed to represent each other. In the whole journey, Itesamuddin's response to representative notions of/about the West/Occident has been two-fold. At some occasions he positions himself as a silent recorder of such stereotypical and representative notions considering it the strife of the Others. At other times, he explicitly forms different stereotypes and shows his pontifical disdain by disparaging and trivializing Others. In this regard, the Dutch are regarded by his co-passengers as "fish-mongers and besides from their having no king, they are accounted mean and of no consideration" (Itesamuddin, 2009, p. 42). The representation is not only limited to the Dutch but extends further to the other Europeans as well. For example, the Russians "call them (the English) as indolent and lazy" (Itesamuddin, 2009, pp. 42-43). Along with these nationalistic representations, the representations based on the faith or religiosity were also wide spread as for example, the "Jews are accounted by every other nation as base and contemptible: no person respects or esteems them; on

the contrary, every other caste, and likewise the Muhumedans, wish to put them to death” (Itesamuddin, 2009, p. 44). The anti-Semitic, inter-faith as well as inter-nation representations highlight typical characteristics attributed to certain nations owing to their collective behavior as perceived by others. In this regard, while commenting on the impoverished conditions of the French, Captain S. and Mr. Peacock laughed and said that, these (French) are very wretched people, but it is all owing to their own indolence, stupidity and blindness that they are not industrious like the English (Itesamuddin, 2009, 45-46). In the above instance, he portrays the Jews as the cultural and religious others of Muslims and they, to Muslims, have no right to live on the face of the earth. On the other hand, he records the English’s representation of the neighbours across the channel who are “dirty eaters” and majority of them are so poor that they can’t “afford shoes” (Itesamuddin, 2002, p. 50).

Despite being Europeans, this observation and perception is not only distancing the English and the French but it also reveals how they perceive and represent each other. The French are not only termed as wretched but the onus of being poor is also put on them resulting from their indolence. The French, in response, assert that the English used to be lacking both the abilities as well as the skills and they would compare them with the Indians in their backwardness. The French would divide the English into two classes thus saying as far as the lower strata of the English society is concerned, they prefer staying home rather than opting for jobs in the foreign lands mainly because “they are a stupid race and slow at acquiring knowledge” and lacking the potential for adaptability as well. As

a result, they find no prospects in experimenting in the distant lands and feel comfortable at home (Itesamuddin, 2009, pp. 16-17). In the above examples, Itesamuddin's explicit generalizations about the Jews and French are particularly significant as he plays the role of a xenophobe and is less cordial about the Jews.

The above excerpts show that although Saidian Orientalism focuses on the representation of the Orient by the West, the fact remains that the West itself was both the subject as well as the object of representation. The varying castes and nationalities in the West would carry out each other's representation proving that the Other was also to be found within the bounds of Europe also and not only and always in the Orient. The Oriental/Occidental gaze was not targeted only outside the boundaries of Europe but was very much cast within the bounds of Europe, too. At both the occasions however, Itesamuddin participates either as a silent recorder of the impressions or explicit articulator of representative notions.

In addition to the nationalistic stereotyping and representation of the Westerners about each other, the narrator also passes the pejorative remarks about different nationalities that fall under his observation. For example, talking about them in general he is of the view that, "in every country, there is no scarcity of the fools and blockheads...the country people, in particular, are commonly ignorant and stupid" (Itesamuddin, 2009, p. 40). Thus, Apart from religious, nationalistic, racial and gender discriminations, the narrator dwells upon the territorial, regional as well as urbanized/ruralized representations as well. The reduction of the Others at such a micro level is quite telling about the approach of Itesamuddin in this

discourse. The narrator establishes, that too in a categorical way that the abode of ignorance is especially in the countryside and among the rustics thus carrying what can be termed as geographical representation. The people of the Highlands command his curiosity and it is surprising that they wear coats and hats but do not wear shoes. "Instead of shoes they tie a piece of wood underneath their foot. These people are innocent and rarely very intelligent" (Itesamuddin, 1981, p.79). His gaze delineates them as exotics far and away from the civilized world thus cast as unintelligent and devoid of abilities. In addition, he makes up the sketch of the Irish people not from the first-hand sources rather, he derived it from a variety of stories in circulation and was centered around twin qualifications-credulousness to the point of naivety and a surprising sense of valour (Itesamuddin, 1981, p.79-80). This notion or observation tends to generalize as if all the non-rustic are geniuses and are free of follies and stupidities.

The narrator's essentialism goes on when he refers to the French clergy and says that "among the French, there are lakhs of hypocritical and wealthy priests" (Itesamuddin, 2009, p. 46) who, through their prayer and fasting, intercede with the Almighty in the behalf of the sinners and ask for his mercy for them. They, in return, charge the sinners with money and presents. His excoriation continues when he writes as "what folly and blindness is this! How will God, who is the king of kings and cazee of the Day of Judgment, pardon the sins of the people from the intreaties of such impure and useless priests" (Itesamuddin, 2009, p. 46). Thus, through his mockery and satirical discourse, he undermines the French and labels them

as irrational, illogical, superstitious, unscientific and devoid of common sense. All these epithets were, in fact, used by the Orientalists for the Orient but now through the intermediacy of an Oriental narrator, the discourse is reversed, and the same discursive practices are being used for the Occident. Moreover, the French are chided by both the English as well as the narrator for placing the “effigies of Hussurut Eesa and Mureum in their churches” (Itesamuddin, 2009, p. 45) and worshipping them. The English not only consider it wickedness but also term it as idolatry and condemn it by all means. The contemptuous and ironical laughter of Captain S. and Mr. Peacock are followed by their derision that “this schism (or change from the general belief) arises from ignorance and folly. This prevails both in the religion of the French and others, but the English are free from this wicked practice” (Itesamuddin, 2009, p. 45). The exoneration declared by the English for themselves and charges levied against the French and others show that their vision was blighted and in the inter-faith conflict they would always unleash their vitriolic attacks on any other community or group under consideration. Itesamuddin also shares the generalization about the French and vouches for it alongwith the English interlocutors. But despite this he later condemns English too, albeit for a different reason; they attach scant importance to religious observances. He outlines that “once a week, on Sunday, men and women congregate in church for prayers. Many of them regard prayer as optional” (Itesamuddin, 2002, p.93). He strictly disregards their skepticism and derides their irreligious ways of life.

In his narrative, Itesamuddin, at times, is diffident about his own abilities and says that “my life so far has gone by aimlessly, and so will what remain of it (Itesamuddin, 2002, p.52). However, this humility is contrasted by his claim soon that he had taught much of his knowledge about India to William Jones (1746-94), who had written a lot of books about the Orient. Thus, the native is not ignorant, illiterate, degenerate and uncivilized; rather he had the privilege of being the source of knowledge for renowned Orientalist who later assumed the position of a Judge in India. It is worth mentioning that the Orientalists who had had the claims of hegemony over the knowledge and always claimed of knowing the Orient better than the Orientals themselves, are represented as despondent by Itesamuddin. While Jones continues to be remembered as a giant in comparative linguistics, the contributions of Indian and Iranian scholars including Itesamuddin have been erased. This erasure or non-acknowledgement is evident as there are no mentions of them in the Occident’s discourse altogether.

His visit to the Oxford University (which he calls madrassah thereby showing his rudimentary understanding of the Western structures) and its library highlights the intellectual and artistic constructions of the Orientalists. On the hoarding of Oriental art, he re-emphasizes that in “one of the libraries [in Oxford] I saw many statues, and excellent pictures, by the hands of skillful painters, and old masters. These were brought here from foreign countries” (Itesamuddin, 2009, p.30). In this instance, Itesamuddin shows an incredible awareness of the burgeoning Orientalist project, both, the way the Orient was collected and then re-projected in the

West for the Western public and reader imaginatively, as much as in material terms. Thus, Itesamuddin as a reverse-Orientalist aims at correcting and altering these projections by offering an alternative account of the development of the Orientalist project that preceded and produced the colonial world. To Itesamuddin, “Europe is literally the creation of the third world” (Fanon, 1963, p. 60) because of the accumulation of the Orient’s treasures in the metropolis.

As the West was judgmental about the Orient and considered it sans the system of morals, so the East also highlights the deficiencies and speaks from atop moral grounds. The French and English alike had proven themselves to be thieves as they had “brought some pieces of cloth from Bengal, concealed them, like thieves, in their pockets, tied them round their necks, rolled them round their waists, and went to their own houses” (Itesamuddin, 2009, p. 16). He ascribes the notion of characterlessness to both the nations and not the individuals responsible for such crimes. It all proves that the Europeans who were all set to carry out the “civilizing mission” (Watt, 2011, p. 01), and were preaching the tenets of Bible with missionary zeal and zest had, in fact, failed to comply with their teachings and tenets themselves. The lack of character in the Orientals that they were complaining of in the Orientalist discourse was observed in them when the discourse was reversed. In addition, the stories about the brutalities of the English artist who was devoid of morality and professional ethics were widespread. The artist had crucified a man in order to portray the feelings during crucifixion. Itesamuddin writes that the artist lured a man to his room through intoxication and when the latter fainted, he tied him from feet

nailed him to the wall also extending and nailing his fists with the nails of iron. Then he stabbed the man “in the breast with a knife, and when he was in the agonies of death, and about to give up the ghost, he (the painter) made a correct delineation of his expression of countenance and (convulsed) limbs (Itesamuddin, 2009, p. 31). Thus, whether it’s the knowledge about the Orient or the art and architecture of the Europe, he ascribes, to their indifference.

Itesamuddin’s writings can be viewed as a counter-narrative to the Western grand and meta-discourses. Itesamuddin’s account included his explanations of European technical accomplishments-for example, the compass and London’s systems of streetlamps and water supply. He often embedded these descriptions in the ancient cultural traditions of Islamic sciences underpinning the development of the West at large.

3.3The Wonders of England

The very title of the memoir/travelogue conforms to an Orientalist paradigm in that it highlights the idea of awe and wonder, both crucial elements of this travelogue. Compared to all the following nineteenth century Indian travelogues of Europe and especially of Britain, Itesamuddin had no prior mental map imprinted in his mind telling him how England ought to be viewed and perceived. Thus, Itesamuddin’s curiosity is genuine that lends his orientation towards Britain and Europe as pioneering and unique. His sea voyage is marked with the unusual experiences and he instantly remarks that “the ocean is full of wonders. If I chose to write of them all it would require a separate volume” (Itesamuddin, 2009, p. 13). Therefore, until and unless he encountered disappointments by the end of

his journey, his positive perception/Othering about the English are also noted. His consciousness about the West especially England undergoes different stages. In the beginning, when he is onboard, he sees the ships moving dexterously and praises the English by saying that “they (European) are a very powerful race, by reason of their industry and bravery. They have facilitated, in like manner, other matters of difficulty” (Itesamuddin, 2009, p.05). Apparently, this is a sweeping statement coming from the man “who has seen the Europeans at close quarters for no more than a few days at best” (Hasan, 2009, p. xxx). When he lands on the shores of Britain the urban landscape of London is described with awe and he admits that the city surpasses the beauty and symmetry beyond limits. He writes that “What can I say in praise of the City of London?” He finds himself short of words because, to him, on the whole face of the earth there is no other so large or so beautiful a city. His tongue lacks ability to describe in “befitting manners the excellence of that city” (Itesamuddin, 2009, p.20). Nevertheless, digging deeper, amid the beauty of the city, he notices the country divided between rich and poor. During his stroll in London he notices a gun which is quite large and can hold a person inside. A mother with her illegitimate child was living there while her “seducer came at night and brought meat and drink for her, and no other person knew of it” (Itesamuddin, 2009, p.20). This incident bears Itesamuddin’s judgmental reaction however, it reflects that even in the metropolis, the people, especially poor, were treated as outcasts and marginalized and they had to adopt the ways and means to avoid the wrath of the society for their individual acts that the society deemed immoral or anti-social. The

decadence of the moral and cultural paraphernalia of the social life (often attached with the Orient) is too obvious for him to be avoided. He, therefore, quotes that the same gun had been used by a family as their abode. It is quite shocking for him to notice the chasm separating the poor and the rich right in the center of the metropolis. As he casts his quasi-anthropological gaze on them, he notices their poverty, division into classes, and marginalization of the oppressed and the lack of social mobility which are an anathema to him.

The beauty and splendor that impresses him in the first glance, now lead him to notice the lack of diversity in the architecture and construction of the city. In addition, as “it is the whim of every traveler to find some similarity with his homeland when in a foreign territory” he leaves no occasion when he does not compare the metropolis with the periphery (Satapathy, 2012 p.06) thus reversing the gaze. The distinction between the *home* and the *Others' land* is drawn vividly. Therefore, he says that on both sides of the city there “are houses, three and five stories in height, which are uniform, resembling the Calcutta barracks: (Itesamuddin, 2009, p. 22). Thus, as far as the layout of the well-planned city is concerned, he brings home the name of Calcutta to define the metropolis. This uniformity is in fact the lack of variety that the metropolis holds and does not offer anything extraordinary to the Oriental Immigrant. He was impressed by the extensive row-houses in London but found their unrelieved uniformity bewildering and disorienting (Itesamuddin, 2009, pp. 21-22). In addition, he describes the King's palace with a hauteur common to many upper-class Indians of that time. To Itesamuddin, the palace is “neither magnificent nor beautiful:

and can be easily mistaken for the “houses of merchants” (Itesamuddin, 2009, p. 21). Though, as he concedes, the palace is elegant and beautiful from inside, yet, in a comically incongruous way, calls the private quarters of George the 3rd as a harem and states that “the suits of rooms and the buildings of the harem are painted of a verdigris colour” (Itesamuddin, 2009, p. 21). These examples show that he was not always ebullient in praise and also uses his dispassionate tone to establish that the royal palace does not look so gorgeous from outside; its outer wall does not even have a whitewash. It is as if a large house of some rich man of Banaras. In this way, he reduces the magnificence of the royalty to a mere businessman’s abode which is to say that he is not impressed even with the epitome of the Empires’ center.

Itesamuddin’s perception of the West as Positive and Negative Others is unequivocal although, the negative Other outweighs its rival in the end. He notes that in English Judicial system, a strict code of conduct is enjoined. The bribes or gifts are not permitted at all and if one party attempts to offer bribes, even its just cause will be assumed to be otherwise. There is no preferential or partial treatment of the people of rank, and the law is designed to deter the rich and powerful from oppressing the poor and weak. The structures of the British society are commended and, in particular, the strength of the British military is conveyed in a categorical way. The English give special importance to the construction of large and sturdy warships and surpass all other European nations especially in naval warfare; they have a natural genius for it. Their navy is so large and their army so well equipped that none of the other European nations can ever

hope to conquer them. In these deliberations, Itesamuddin demonstrates his ability to read and present modernizing England as a technological and developing force that distinguished it from the social, political and economic structures in India, which were not as much amenable to change. He also understands that these forms of technological, militaristic and political modernity could be enriching and protective of a vibrant and powerful nation state (and Empire). Itesamuddin showcases a subjectivity which co-mingles the positive aspects of modernity with the tenets of his own cultural and religious world, which could variously be in conflict with British modernisms such as the military and machine technology (Itesamuddin, 2009, pp. 24-32). Itesamuddin, who found himself pushed from the old order into the new, talked of the advanced navigational science of England. He admired Oxford's Octagonal observatory and the exhibits in the medical institute which had impressed him deeply.

Itesamuddin's viewing of the city of London can be interpreted with the help of the definition of modernity by Anthony Giddens by which modernity refers to modes of social life or organization which emerged in Europe from about the seventeenth century onwards and which subsequently became more or less worldwide in their influence. It links/associates modernity with a time period and their particular "geographical location" (Giddens, 2013, p.01). Itesamuddin is wonder struck at the efficiency of the Western modernity (which is evident through industrialism) in much the same way as the Eastern antiquity would have been placed under the microscope. Itesamuddin can be viewed as showing the globalizing intent and potential of the Western modernity. It can also be

seen as an emphasis for the connection between the spread of British modernity and rise of colonialism in India.

In the beginning of his exploration of London, Itesamuddin is impressed with everything he comes across in the metropolis. Hasan writes that, Itesamuddin's reactions to different activities like theatre, acrobatic scenes, and other spectacles in the town have been ecstatic. His innocence in seeing the fireworks at night is manifested when he shows his excitement over it and similarly, he feels overjoyed when he comes across a tall woman, approximately five-cubit high, in the exhibition. His judgments about art and architecture, painting, music and sculpture etc make him declare England as "the emporium of art" (Hasan, 2009, p. xxxi). However, all these praises are reduced to nothing when he refuses to keep a distance from their culture by not learning their language, opposing the marriage proposal on account of their being different and stressing the cultural and religious otherness of the West.

3.4 The Women-The Exotic Gaze and Eroticism

This dynamic of exotic gaze usually associated with the Orient or the East is consciously reversed by Itesamuddin who in response describes how he himself is placed into the erotic gaze of the British ladies who he calls as celestial beings. The British are shown casting exotic gazes on him, and in particular, the females displayed their exotic perception of him. He says that the English "who had never had a chance before to see a Hindoostani man dressed in the manner as he was, and therefore looked at him with all curiosity" (Itesamuddin, 2009, p.17). This exoticism, attached to the Orient, is further seen as a collective trait of the White people when

he visits the assembly-room where a music performance was going on. When he enters the room, he says that, all the people around began to stare at me, and after noticing my complete dress like robe, turban, shawl, and all other parts of my costume they held that it was a dress for actors and dancers. He tried to persuade them to the contrary, but “they would not believe me; and everyone in the assembly continued to gaze at my dress and appearance” (Itesamuddin, 2009, p.17). He was even expected to dance for a group who mistake him for a performer. It is through their exotic gaze that they viewed an outlandish with interest and awe and his dress is interpreted as effeminate.

The gaze of the exotica, usually associated with the Orient in Orientalism, finds its new abode among the Westerners. Thus, an Oriental who, as a type, would cast an exotic gaze in the Orient, falls prey to the same when in the metropolis. He connects his Othering to the notions of race and culture, and it elevates him in terms of cultural understanding of the Other. It is very rare when he identifies himself with the natives, rather, many a times he identifies and defines himself in contrast to the Europeans around him. Therefore, the Otherness or strangeness is highlighted, and he recognizes the exotic gazes and is conscious of the fact that he is made into a spectacle by the native culture but instead of recoiling from the Otherness he actually embraces it. “Itesamuddin himself is as much of a wonder to the West as the West is to him. Europe he saw and Europe saw him too” (Trivedi, 2003, p. 177). The inhabitants of the metropolis have never before seen an Indian wearing such opulent clothing because they are only used to seeing poorly dressed lascars, therefore, there is much gawking and people

stare in wonder. In spite of becoming the spectacle and encountering the strange attitude of the Europeans, he does not change his attire and keeps himself dressed up till the very end of his stay there. He retained his traditional dress and never during his stay had he opted for any other dress than his own customary one. His adherence to the Oriental dress shows that Europe and its manners and customs were never practiced by him and he only spent his time not as a participant but as an observer.

It becomes understandable that he never thought himself to be inferior and maintained and sustained his identity as an Oriental figure. It is quite evident that wherever he goes he excites curiosity and exoticism among the people of his host country. He expresses his reaction by saying that how ironic it was “I, who went to see a spectacle, became myself a sight to others” (Itesamuddin, 2009, p.17). Although he was conscious of being a spectacle before the Western eyes, but this consciousness was never showcased with any sense of diminution or particular unease. If they had a right to wonder, so had their Other to gaze back. So, whenever he would go out, the people would be flocking to the streets just for a glimpse of a person who had come from Hindoostan to London and who looked different than them all. It shows that Itesamuddin, who presents himself as a “spectacle”, sees women as “fairies” and is perceived by children as “black devil” is comparable to a play he watches in a theatre where “people are disguised as fairies . . . {and} an elusive man with a black face, is presented as a kind of devil (Itesamuddin, 2009, 17-18). The reference to English women and himself as characters in a play he once watched, suggests that he actually sees himself as a lead character and the roles of

the English women and children are of the supporting ones thus marginalizing them, even in the fiction. It is further reinforced when he gives the description of his clothes and says that many people were pleased with his costume and “they thought that it was a dress for dancing or acting” and the others thought that it was the “dress of the harem and of delicate females” (Itesamuddin, 2009, pp. 17-19). He, in the understatement refers to the exiguous cultural resources of the Londoners. It all shows that Itesamuddin not only catches attention but also enjoys being different to both the English and himself. Along with his representation, he also reverses the Oriental discourse and labels the West with all the negatives epithets that the later had used in Orientalism.

This is further suggested when he writes that the English “supposed that I was the brother of some Nawab or other in Bengal, and the Captain Swinton having been in Bengal had become so great a man that he was accompanied home by the brother of a Nouab” (Itesamuddin, 2009, pp.82). So, to them, a person with common lineage would never qualify to accompany their representative and he had to be from the elites of the upper class of the others. Yet, he is portrayed as different, is made the spectacle and turned into exotica. He accepts the role of the regality to avoid being the exotic. He is conscious of his own position in the Others’ culture and refers it when he is suggested by his English hosts to marry a Londoner. His answer is a detailed one but mainly it reflects that the narrator is conscious of his Oriental being and considers the West as exotic, different and Other unfit for matrimony. Therefore, he says that he does not intend to marry there because a lady of high class would not marry him and he does

not want to marry a lower class lady since “I myself, in my own country, am considered noble” (Itesamuddin, 2009, p. 54). Here, the gulf between the “us” and “them” is shown deep and wide. Itesamuddin’s exoticism does not disqualify him, though, from becoming a popular and sexually attractive figure. It is rather shown by him that because of his exoticism, the women would feel sexually attracted towards him. The women of the host country are depicted as licentious who approach him and while smiling would express their desire by saying “Come, my dear, and kiss me!” (Itesamuddin, 2009, p. 19). These lines show that he “recorded what he took to be the very suggestive words and lustful behavior of market women on the street toward him” (Fisher, 2007, p. 162). In this way, he delineates the Western women as licentious and lustful. However, it is to be noted that as soon as the conquest of India by the British expedited, the British women ceased inviting the Indian colonized men for kissing and lovemaking. Moreover, the mutual gaze, earlier shared by the Orient and the Occident could also not be kept up for long. “For, as every schoolboy knows, the Indians blinked and the rest was Orientalism and even worse, the Raj” (Trivedi, 2003, p. 177). Thus, he links the gaze with the politics of power and Empire.

The Oriental eroticism is demonstrated the very moment when he reaches the imperial center and notices the native British females wandering around. The objectification of the Western women through sexist remarks is quite evident throughout his sojourn in the West. He proclaims that he was greatly cheered by the sight of those lovely women and it dispelled the sorrow of his solitude and cheered him greatly. He re-

iterates his admiration for the Western female beauty stating that in such attractive company even the wisest are apt to lose their wits. The ladies were lovely as houris; their beauty surpassed even fairies into covering their faces (Itesamuddin, 2009, pp. 18-19). The use of hyperbolic expressions for the praise of the women's beauty is marked with typical Oriental traditional expressions whereby the women are excessively praised, and their beauty is deemed to be mystical. He states that when he came across the Hoorees he could not resist his gazes and "I myself, losing my senses, could see no difference between the brightness of a lamp and the splendor of their beauty" (Itesamuddin, 2009, p. 18). The Orientalist imagery is reversed, and the white female is lionized as the Oriental beauty was described.

The interest of the Indian reader is aroused by the use of Orientalist hyperbole and is consciously or unconsciously replicated. This is, in fact, an opening up of the Britain and British culture and this is the time for the subaltern to consume it. Britain too is not only Orientalized but sexualized too, whilst being converted into an imaginative creation. They were so beautiful that the earth seemed be converted into a paradise by their sheer presence. Even the heaven itself would feel proud to inhabit such lovely creatures (Itesamuddin, 2009, p. 22). His Orientalisation of the female body is reflected when he describes them as ravishers of hearts and further states that the women around there appeared to be like peacocks in their gait and fairies in their beauty.

In Itesamuddin's encounters during his wanderings in London, he experiences a libidinous sexual terrain. These experiences and perceptions

are reversed in the metropolis and are wrought in much the same fashion as Orientalist travelers who, during their journeys to the East, were confronted with different and at times perilous sexualities. The very threat against sexual propriety is documented when he portrays London as replete with sexual possibilities where young lovers meet openly without any restrictions and prostitution is rife on the streets of the metropolis. His narration of scenes and stories of lovers in St.James' park who flirted openly without fear of civic authorities need special mention. Therefore, throughout his narrative, Itesamuddin "highlighted the apparently greater sexual license prevalent in Europe, compared to India, and also the more generous care of the illegitimate children of those relationships" (Fisher, 2007, p.162). When venturing through the park near the Palace of the Queen, which is supposedly Hyde Park in West London, Itesamuddin observes that, the meetings between different lovers take place and they make love without any sort of fear or interference of the cutwal (police) or of the rivals, and "gallants obtain a sight of rosy cheeks without restraint. When I viewed this heavenly place I involuntarily exclaimed: If there's heaven on the face of the earth/ It is here! It is here! It is here! (Itesamuddin, 2009, p. 22). It is within this passage that a subversive attitude to sexuality is embedded and it complicates the Orientalist paradigm and notion that perceived the Orient as sexually unrestrained.

In Itesamuddin's narrative, the Oriental traveler is the subject who is threatened by sexual impropriety and Occident becomes the location of teeming sexuality, hence the roles of the Orientalist/Occidental paradigm are reversed. This imposing sexuality is evocatively narrated in

his encounter with a corpulent female who had come to see him out of curiosity as she had never seen a black Hindoostani man dressed in the manners as he was. So, when she stood by him, he only reached to her armpit. His eroticism is aroused and he writes that “truly, her figure was so desirable, and her face so beautiful, that my pen is unable to recount the praises of her countenance and stature, and my tongue has not the power to give a relation of her fairness. . . .and viewing her loveliness and beauty, I was confounded” (Itesamuddin, 2009, p.28). Itesamuddin, in these encounters and exchanges also had the opportunities and offers by his host culture to choose and marry a British girl of his liking which shows that such issues related to interracial marriages were very much allowed and were not taboos among them. But, his formation of the West as the Other never lets him think of this possibility any further. It was not only the Occident which would act as the subject; the Orient had also had the potential to play the role of the subject in the land of the Others.

In his narrative, though occasionally, he makes explicit his understanding of how the Britons viewed him even as he himself observed them as “others”. In this regard, Mohamad Tavakoli- Targhi says that,

Seeing oneself being seen, that is, the consciousness of oneself as at once spectator and spectacle grounded all eighteenth-and nineteenth-century Orientals and Occidental *voy (ag) eurs*’ narrative plotment of alterity or otherness. The traveling spectators appeared to the natives as traveling spectacles; *voy (ag) eurs* seeking to discover exotic lands were looked upon by the locals as exotic aliens. (Tavakoli-Targhi, 2001, p.36)

However, it must be noted that since he did not try to assimilate and nor did he learn their language, shows that he himself was hesitant and refrained from deep engagements with the target community owing to their otherness. Itesamuddin consciously reverses Orientalist motifs of exotica

and it is not imposed on him from some outside elements as was the case in Orientalist exotic canon. This narrative shows that he also engages in counter-hegemonic arguments and shows the Western society as a subject of Oriental wonder and fascination. The eighteenth and nineteenth century the West viewed the East out of curiosity and the East “had already been categorized with nomenclature-the Other, the exotic Other, the Oriental Other” (Satapathy, 2012, p. 07) and the East had already starting writing back instead of being written about by the West in the same vein and idiom.

Apart from London and Oxford, Itesamuddin also visits Ireland and Scotland as well and shows his awareness that the boundaries in Europe were marked by the contemporary exigencies and history alike and he treats these two places as distinct and the people as two different races. This “was in sharp contrast to the Indo-Muslim sources of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries which betray a profound ignorance of the world beyond the countries adjacent to India (Digby, 1989, p. 49). During his visit to Scotland, he describes it as “a place where it is dark night for nine months of the year” (Itesamuddin,, 2002, p. 66). Thus, the land and the weather are unattractive, dark, damp and unworthy of living. On the other hand, he casts his Eastern eye on the local farming and cereal crops. In a satirical tone he comments that, there is a grain with blackish seeds called corn, which the Scotch eat themselves and also feed their animals. In this way, there land as well as the manners and customs are stereotyped.

Notwithstanding his awareness of the geography, culture and people, it must also be remembered that this multiplicity and diversity was

not without troubles as is stated by Hasan “the multiple identities in the West produced bitter conflicts, persecution of religious minorities and prolonged wars” (Hasan, 2009, p. xix), that lasted for many years and resulted into great catastrophes.

3.5 Debating the Theological Divide

Bernard Lewis is of the view that the Muslim visitors and explorers of the West had always had a pervasive and hostile practice to call the Europeans as non-believers and infidels. There was a realization among them that they were overshadowed and overtaken by the West and their religio-moral legacies were being challenged by the Western cultural onslaught. Therefore, “Islam was the core of the identity of the Muslim visitors, and therefore of other men and women in Europe” (Lewis, 2001, p. 171). So, religious identity was the pivot for all the travelers flocking towards the West.

Itesamuddin, in his initial discussion, tries to comprehend and display an inquisitive and positive stance towards Anglican Christianity as he interprets the Christian parables with the help of Islamic conjunctions. At the same time, he insists on religious and cultural differences between Christianity and Islam, arguing that whereas Christians are too materialistic the Muslims are ultimately more devout (Itesamuddin, 2009, pp.53-57). Thus, he holds fast to his religio-spiritual beliefs and sustains his identity in the face of the challenges of European modernity.

Itesamuddin interprets two Biblical parables through Muslims’ sensibility and endeavors to prove ethos correct and those of Christianity as false. The parable is about the Christ (Hazrat Issa) talking about Dirham in

a bazaar. The parable states that once the Christ went to the bazaar and hired some workers for one dirham each. At the second watch he hired some more workers from noon to evening for one dirham each, too. At the third watch, when he was about to move to his house, he saw some more people sitting idle and nagging about not finding the work. He hired them too for the rest of the hours. In the evening when all of them finished their job, they went to the master to be paid. The master paid one dirham each to all of them. Then he noticed the first group murmuring. When enquired, they said that they had worked the whole day and they all were paid the same amount. The master referred to the bargain he had with them about giving them one dirham each. He told them to leave as he had fulfilled the promise to them (Itesamuddin, 2009, pp. 56-57).

Itesamuddin interprets this parable by saying that the position of the Muslims is akin to the third group of people who, though joined later, but will be rewarded equally. Since, Muslim's prophet was the last to appear, therefore, he is no less important than his predecessors. As a result, Muslims believe, so says Itesamuddin that they will enter heaven as the followers of the other prophets –Moses, Jesus etc., would. Schurer comments on this parable by saying that in Christianity, this parable usually means that either individuals “can be saved at any point in their lives or that humans are not saved through their works but because of their faith” (Schurer, 2011, p. 148). Off course, he also calls the Christ as prophet whereas the Christians consider him as the Son of God.

In another parable he narrates and somewhat distorts the Parable of Talents as the story of a father giving some money to his sons and getting

different amounts back. Schurer believes that “Itesamuddin changes the story from the Bible and specifically offers two different interpretations not present in Bible, a Christian and a Muslim one” (Schurer, 2011, p. 149).

According to the second parable a father gives one thousand rupees to each of his three sons before setting out on a journey himself. He wanted to test their intelligence and honesty. After he came back after some time, he enquired them about the money. The eldest son replied that he had buried the money and it was stolen by a thief. The second one returned the exact amount as he had spent the interest on himself. The third son gave back the original amount as well as the profit earned through business. He then entrusted the youngest son with the management of his estate.

The Muslims interpret this parable as follows: The foolish man represents those who are ignorant and disobedient. The sum of money stands for faith; and the thief is the devil, who steals the faith of the fools and careless people. The second son represents hypocrites who have partial faith in God. The youngest son represents those who do not deviate a hair's breadth from God's laws and the injunctions of his prophets. Therefore, they will be rewarded with the maximum. Schurer holds that this parable is also very different in the Bible. There

A master gives three servants five, two and one talents respectively and receives ten, four and only one back. While the first two servants are praised and rewarded, the third is chastised and even his last talent is taken away. In Christian theology, the story is understood to suggest that Christians must use their talents to be able to give back to God more than they received. (Schurer, 2011, p. 150)

However, the parable narrated by Itesamuddin is not as it actually was.

Itesamuddin presents and interprets the story after transforming it and using

it to differentiate between the fools, hypocrites and Muslims. Thus, in both the parables, the Christian set of beliefs is undermined, and his own beliefs are presented as supreme.

Itesamuddin's vitriolic and rhetorical attacks that he makes upon the belief and knowledge system of the West are carried out on the basis of the theological divide between his Eastern faith (Islam) and the faith of the Westerners/Others (Christianity). There is always a perception of the binary between the two faith systems. Therefore, the assertion by some of the historians and commentators that the Indian Muslim travelers, particularly the earliest ones, had never demonstrated any hostility towards Christianity, its belief systems, codes and practices is but too simple a statement. Hasan says that

This is not to suggest that they (the travelers) were not baffled and bewildered by the lands of fables, wealth and wisdom, or that they were not wrong-headed or pig-headed as they may at times have been. Nor is it intended to argue that they were free from prejudices and resentments or not repelled by the assumed superiority and cultural intolerance of the West. (Hasan, 2009, p. xxi)

This reinforces the assertion that the Indian travelers had engaged in the representative discourse and could never free themselves from such clichés. During their journey, not only had he defined the contours of his Muslim identity but also contested especially the matters related to his food, living and the controversies surrounding the discourse of Islam. However, like an omniscient narrator he gives almost zero space to Swinton or other interlocutors during their religious discussions. He scribbles their questions but not at a single significant place writes their answers, thus marginalizing them in the discourse. It is the Westerners like Captain Swinton and Mr.

Peacock who are always *shown* poking the Muslims or the believers through their stereotypical discourse bearing intolerance. Therefore, in response to their taunts and satirical questions (as reported), regarding the belief system of the Muslims, the narrator finds himself, *so it seems*, feels *compelled* to answer. The narrator himself believes that the Whites people's faith is not grounded on the original sources and implies that there is an element of doubt in its authenticity.

Itesamuddin challenges their religious knowledge systems by stating that “the original books of the New Testament have been lost to the world” (Itesamuddin, 2009, p.48) thus implying that the articles of faith mentioned in the New Testament are removed from the original sources which, according to Muslims, are lost forever. The White people have been marginalized in their discussion over the faith issues as it is only their questions that are quoted by the narrator and not their answers. It is evident that at no place in the narrative have the Whites people's point been given any consideration and place whatsoever and they are deprived of their right to answer. Rather, it is the narrator who plays the role of the protagonist in all the discussions ensuing from their questions. The text is full of evidences, as the following lines show that, “the English say, ‘if we could discover any notice of the prophetic notice of Muhammad in the New Testament, we would assuredly accept the faith of Islam” (Itesamuddin, 2009, p.48). Similarly, at another occasion Itesamuddin writes these lines, “One day, Captain S. said to me, ‘Musselmans content themselves with predestination and have no deliberation” (Itesamuddin, 2009, p.53). Through such examples he *reveals* and *reinforces* the thesis that it was

always the White interlocutor who would poke and raise the objections against the belief system of the Muslims. In response, he does not confine himself to challenging the belief system of the English but also grinds the Hindus and the French, too. As far as religious practices were concerned, he lumped together the belief systems of the French, English and the Hindus for their unreasonableness and inefficacy of the clergy system. The English, however, were seen as somewhat lacking in faith mainly because their primary religious practice was being confined to Sunday's church going only.

There were two main sources of the expansion of the Imperial project: on the one hand was the socio-economic agenda to multiply and maximize the benefits and on the other hand was the ideological and religious firmament that the Empire sought the inspiration from. Itesamuddin not only raises the questions and challenges the notions of Christianity but also excoriates the civilizing mission of the West to convert, educate and uplift what they considered as backward and downtrodden masses. As far as his own religion is concerned Itesamuddin regards his religious codes, belief systems and values as over and above any suspicions and hold them as most respected and venerated. It is because of his "unswerving loyalty to his own faith" (Hasan, 2009, p. xxxii) that leads him to resist all the blandishments offered by Captain S. His conviction is insurmountable as he manifests his abstinence from wine, pork and such other prohibited items and activities. Therefore, he is not allured by the offers of captain Swinton and rather insists on having his own cook and food prepared through kosher/halal ways prescribed by

Islamic codes and conjunctions implying his perception of them as Others and suggesting religio-cultural superiority over the West.

For Itesamuddin, anything un-Islamic was unacceptable. All the offers and temptations offered to him by Captain Swinton to mix freely in the society and consume non-halal meat were rejected by Munshi with clear disdain. It was his utter wish that the Christians should “accept the faith of Islam” (Itesamuddin, 2009, p.48) for their salvation. It was utterly disappointing for him that the British had been lacking in the practice of prayers and fasting and only the lower classes would visit the churches. But he kept succumbing to his own articles of faith because of the binary separating two halves of the globe. Many a times the difference aroused between Itesamuddin and Captain Swinton particularly when the religious injunction of the Muslims were questioned and challenged by the latter. The feud over Itesamuddin’s dietary preferences, according to his religious tenets, finally parted their ways. It was a really tough time for Itesamuddin to fulfill his religious obligations and carry out his duties as a devout Muslim and at times he would get frustrated. As Fisher says, “he also experienced anguish on a more personal level as he struggled on the daily basis to fulfill his religious duties, particularly in obtaining halal food” (Fisher, 2007, p.162). The choice of his diet was dictated by the articles of his faith that he had always cherished, practiced and held supreme. This reason alone was sufficient to prove that the binary of Othering was too wide and deep to be engulfed and bridged up. Throughout his stay in Europe and London, Itesamuddin was accompanied by his servant Muhammad Hakeem who would procure and prepare food for his master.

He had brought this servant from India especially for these chores, however, Captain Swinton's insistence on leaving the servant behind and travelling without Muhammad Hakeem angered Itesamuddin who was being forced to consume only what Swinton and others had been eating, and this leads to a major, no-holds-barred confrontation between the Sahib and the Munshi.

Captain Swinton was enraged over the refusal of Itesamuddin to share his food, but the latter never agreed to even have a morsel from his food. Captain Swinton says "You Musselmans are possessed with an idea that we are gross feeders" (Itesamuddin, 2009, p.84). This remark of the cultural Other vividly depicts that Itesamuddin had always portrayed the West as culturally exotic and he would generalize the West as practicing the contrasting articles of faith thus representing them as one. It may be interesting to note that although Itesamuddin was aware of the geographical variation of the West and doesn't consider it as a homogenous body, yet culturally, he would term it as "gross feeders" as reported by Captain Swinton above. In his reply Itesamuddin states in Occidentalist mode that ". . . . in between your manners and customs and ours there is the distance of the West and the East" (Itesamuddin, 2009, p.85). In saying so, Itesamuddin refers to the binary between the East and the West that the traditional Orientalism propounded and practiced, although, his approach and sensibility allows him to believe in diversity and not the imposition of the West's set of conventions, values and faith upon others. In this and other likewise theological and philosophical discussions, he refuses to be

defined by Others and considers his faith and cultural identity as unique and defining.

Itesamuddin employs the binary of the East/ the West again when, at the end of his travelogue he says “each nation has its own peculiar customs and practices, and so the food of one country will be pleasant to the taste of its natives, but to foreigners it maybe unpalatable” (Itesamuddin, 2009, pp.84-85). By declaring this he also challenges the notion of the Orientalist discourse which stated that the East needed to be tamed and taught as the West knew more about it than the itself.

Thus, Itesamuddin has been repeatedly asked by his host culture to ignore the conjunctions of his religion in the matters related to food and drinks but he refuses to comply altogether. He feels repulsive over the very idea that unlike Muslims, the White people/Non-Muslims eat the meat which is neither Halal (kosher) nor is it slaughtered by offering a prayer. In this regard he says that, “It is not lawful to eat meat that has not been sacrificed by the hands of a Mussulman. In sacrificing, it is not merely the cutting the throat of the animal, but the prayer must be offered up likewise, and ablution must follow, all which cannot be done by any other than a *Mussulman*” (Itesamuddin, 2009, p.84). Thus, the elements of binary creep up and heighten as his stay prolongs in the world of his cultural Others.

It is therefore noted that he prefers starvation overeating the food that is not halal for him. He is so particular about his faith and religiosity that when he was in London, he was “nearly fainting and until the second watch of the day remained without sense” (Itesamuddin, 2009, p.85). He was just like a corpse deprived of all motion because of longevity and

severity of hunger. The servant who discovered him informed Captain Swinton who brought rice and fowl for him along with spices but Itesamuddin himself slaughtered and cooked the meat to make sure that it was not against his religious faith. On one occasion, Captain Swinton starts a debate with Itesamuddin and narrates that his experience with the Nawab and sons of noblemen in Bengal shows that they would not be hesitant to drink wine in secret. They would also praise wine for its excellence but would refrain from having it in public. “Hitting below the belt” (Hasan, 2009, p. xxxiii), he then concludes that since Itesamuddin follows his faith abstemiously and is steadfast, so he is not a man of rank and as he is a Bengallee, “the Bengallees of Hindoostan are notorious for their folly and stupidity” (Itesamuddin, 2009, p.86). Moreover, Captain Swinton severely criticizes Itesamuddin on the basis of class and caste system and has developed his sense of Othering for Itesamuddin as well. The Western Other seems to have been threatened by his Oriental counterpart and thus gives vent to his racial prejudices too. Gulfishan Khan writes that “Swinton ascribed his strict adherence, unyielding conservatism and orthodoxy to a lack of aristocratic social origins” (Khan, 1993, p.85). However, the very choice of food by Itesamuddin is labeled as his obsession and foible by Trivedi and his resistance to eat the prohibited food provided by Captain Swinton leads to no-hold-barred confrontation between the two. Moreover, his justification is mockingly downed as irrelevant when he refers to the heavenly rewards for such restraints as advised by his religion.

In his thorough account of travels, the preparation and consumption of halal food becomes the breaking point with Captain Swinton as well as

with the indulgence in the Western culture. It all proves him to be an orthodox Muslim who is devout and is unwilling to assimilate with the Western culture. Even at the very start of the sea journey, he criticizes the eating habits of the Westerners including the French who would eat goose whose meat was tough, and an unpleasant stench could not be got rid of. At last we (Muslims) threw the whole dish into the sea. But the Europeans ate them, having first grilled them on the fire. Europeans, particularly “the French caste, are certainly very dirty feeders” (Itesamuddin, 2009, p.13). In this way, Itesamuddin endeavors to prove that the Muslims are far more superior in their customs, traditions, living and dietary habits than the Europeans. It is exactly when he keeps clinging to the bottom line of religion that “Itesamuddin feels fully equal, and even superior, to the British. The Halal is not just food; it is self-respect, dignity, identity” (Trivedi, 2003, p. 176). The Oriental figure shuns Orientalists’ discursive practices and rather reverses them to be applied on them who should learn from what they consider as backward, degenerate, marginalized, illogical, irrational and uncivilized. The Oriental figure considers the West at its infancy and as Others whose episteme is different than that of the East or Orient.

It is on the basis of his faith that the religious taxonomies are reversed, and the presumptuous superiority of the West is annihilated. It gives him an opportunity to compare and place his faith over that of the West. The debate between Captain Swinton and Itesamuddin becomes central in the last section of the travelogue where the later challenges the epistemological and ontological constructions of the West. The dynamics

of faith, its relation with life, the prophets and their role in religion, the growth of civilization and the impact of faith in the development of the society and civilization etc are discussed in great length. Some derision was directed at his Islamic beliefs by the hosts. He refuses to be defined by the Christian episteme and traditions and rather, makes Christianity the focus of investigation. In a humble start, he acknowledges that he was not an expert in the matters of faith, religions and history etc; however, he has learnt something from different English books and evangels' translations and tries to explain Christianity and defend his own faith. Amid the discussions over inter-faith differences and controversies Captain Swinton challenges Itesamuddin by saying that "Mussulmans content themselves with predestination and have no deliberation" (Itesamuddin, 2009, p. 53). He further charges that in comparison the English are ruled by wisdom and they make their decisions on the basis of rationality.

The Muslims, according to him, consider fate to be over-ruling and therefore hold fate responsible for their success or failure. The fate and its dominant role in the lives of Muslims, as defined by Captain Swinton, is termed by him as "an absurdity" (Itesamuddin, 2009, p. 53), to which Itesamuddin replies that though fate is over-ruling yet man is gifted with wisdom in both spiritual as well as worldly matters. Muslims are not supposed to trust to fortune in everything because it "is wise to use all deliberations" (Itesamuddin, 2009, p. 54). Thus, he tries to convince the Captain that not only in the matters of religion, faith and wisdom but also in the matters of the world Muslims have a far superior and practical approach to life as compared to the other faiths. Itesamuddin, quite lucidly, compares

and analyzes the religious doctrine of the West and deconstructs and displaces it from the place of universal theological doctrine. The lack of centrality is also evident when Itesamuddin observes that as compared to Indians, the English give very little importance to religious rituals and observances like prayer, fasting or chanting.

Itesamuddin was offered the trip to Europe by the Captain, on the condition that he would not be accompanied by his servant and may also relinquish the dietary preferences. But he outlines the hidden purpose of such insistence in the following words

Captain Swinton's real intention in traveling was this: ignorant people, upon seeing me dressed out in my usual manner, supposed that I was the brother of some Nouab or other in Bengal and that Captain S having been in Bengal had become so great a man that he was accompanied home by the brother of a Nouab. For (on my account) his name was greatly celebrated, both in the Edinburgh (the home town of captain S) and in the towns in the neighborhood, and by making a tour with me he thought to add to his reputation. (Itesamuddin, 2009, p.82)

In this way, keeping his religio-cultural associations intact and dear to him, he outrightly rejects the proposal and ends up stereotyping the White masses as ignorant. In the reversal of the identities, it is the Eastern/Oriental Self-giving, ascertaining and assuring the identity to its Western Other.

Itesamuddin's alienation and failure to assimilate in the British culture is because of one more but very important reason that he never attempted to learn their language and was totally dependent on either Swinton or Persian. Since he has a language barrier and he is unable to use this cultural tool effectively, he finds himself suffering from cultural

confinement. Fisher endorses this point further by saying that, Itesamuddin never endeavored to learn English nor did he make any attempt to socialize very much with his counterparts across the seas and largely remained dependent on Swinton. Indeed, he “confined his explorations of Europe to reading Persian language books and visual observation of its technology, people, and amusements” (Fisher, 2007, p.162). Moreover, it is quite interesting to note that all the temporal and spatial indicators are the reflection of his being deeply entrenched in Indo-Islamic traditions. Whenever he refers to the year(s) he writes like “in the year of Hejira⁸, 1180” (Itesamuddin, 2009, p. 03) or “on the 7th of Shoual I arrived at the Mauritius” (Itesamuddin, 2009, p.07) going back home. Such debates demonstrate that the socio-political, cultural, religious and philosophical debates date back to pre-colonial era and are not a post- colonial phenomenon.

In the concluding chapter of *Images of the West* Itesamuddin and Captain Swinton develop differences between them and the former refuses to accompany the latter on his further trips. His refusal is not because of any personal reason but on the premise that his religious limitations and sensitivities were likely to be violated. The later events show that many a times, he faced certain situations which were quite detrimental for his health and life alike. Sometimes, he had to starve because he would not eat the meat not slaughtered according to the injunctions of his faith and at other times, he had to eat very meager food not enough to invigorate him (Itesamuddin, 2009, pp. 84-86). The debates and discussions with the representative(s) of the West and Itesamuddin’s challenges to their articles

of faith clearly demonstrate the refusal of the immigrant to assimilate into the culture of the Others. He rather not only justifies himself and his religiosity but also offers the alternatives to them. At the end he decides to bring an end to his journey and rushes back home claiming no interest in acquiring and stashing riches or “temporal advantages”, leaving behind the “Machiavellian deviousness” of Lord Clive (Hasan, 2009, p. xxix). The whole journey of Mirza Sheikh Itesamuddin is summed by Trivedi in the following way “So, Swinton and I’tesamuddin were cast by history somewhat in the role of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in Hamlet, except that they didn’t even have a letter and simply had to cool their heels until Clive/Godot arrived. Unlike the Shakespearian messengers, however, I’tesamuddin survived to tell the tale, which he did in 1780 or 1784” (Trivedi, 2003, p. 172) in the form of the travelogue.

His return was not marked with any great transformation favoring the imperial power, rather, he certainly “rejects most aspects of British culture, reproduces the core of his own beliefs {and} recovers his Muslim Indian identity” (Schurer, 2011, p. 141). Finally, he finds out the advantages of Indian structures of polygamy, gendered distribution of chores and the strengthening of family institution already disintegrating in Europe.

The Wonders of Vilayet by Mirza Sheikh Itesamuddin carries out the representations of the Europeans/British/White people in the heart of empire. The travelogue, rendered as the reverse discourse on Orientalism, was aimed at educating and familiarizing the native Indians about the West as perceived by an Indian Muslim. He wrote about many issues ranging

from government institutions to the private businesses, history to arts and architecture, trade to royalty and military to parliament. He is still considered to be first Indian Muslim traveler in the foreign lands who wrote about his adventures pre-dating the formal colonial rule in the Sub-Continent after the end of Mughal era.

To conclude, Itesamuddin's encounters with the foreign culture during his visit help him shape up and define the idea of Europe especially England. Munshi Itesamuddin employs various techniques of representation such as stereotyping, labeling, objectification, erasure and metonymic ways of representation. For example, he excludes the West as an insignificant place in the world that doesn't even exist in the Eastern consciousness. He objectifies the Western women as celestial objects of pleasure. To him, the West is a binary of the East whereas all the white people are images opposite to the brown figures of the East. Unlike the West, that stereotyped the East as one, he is able to distinguish the Scots from the Irish and the British from the Welsh. On the other hand, he lumps the British and the French Whites as alike. He finds more monotony in the geography and the architecture of Europe than that of his homeland, India whereas the latter to him is much more diverse. He even demeans the British King's Palace to be a simple building unlike the grandeur of Indian Kings' palaces. Sticking to his Islamic identity, he sees all the European as white infidels. He is very skeptical about Europeans' Christian faith which, to him, is faulty, unoriginal and lacking genuineness. He even stereotypes all the non-Muslim infidels as one type while he elevates his own faith, religion, dietary habits, cast, colour, creed above all Europeans. In this

respect, his writing augers the dawn of an era of counter narratives nevertheless after more than a century of his death.

His initial response to the intersections between Islam and Christianity undergoes a huge transfiguration when he rejects the Western pursuit of material culture and remains devout and unwavering follower of spiritual traditions of his own religion. Even his very decision of returning from England marks his conviction that his own homeland is far superior in terms that he deems appropriate. To him, the ultimate aim is not to amass wealth and pursue the worldly treasures but to lead an upright life obeying the laws of Allah and His Prophet. This spiritual credo is manifested through all his actions, debates and pronouncements. The myth of Europe was demystified by the colonized, periphery-dwelling traveler through his perceptions, judgments and the representations outweighing rest of his claims.

Chapter Four

Mirza Abu Taleb Khan– The Persian Prince

This chapter begins with a brief historical account of Mirza Abu Taleb Khan's era, its impact on his life and the resulting events. How it all formed his identity, the journey which he undertakes and how he constructs the West as the Other. During his sojourn in the metropolis what different ways does he perceive the West in relation to the East, particularly, in the context of Eastern and Western values and norms? What representative notions he develops about the Western women and what is his response, as a reverse Orientalist, to the Western notions about the Eastern values and women.

4.1 Introduction and background

Mirza Abu Taleb Khan was born into the same social background as Mirza Sheikh Itesamuddin; the son of Shi'ite Muslim immigrants to India from Iran he was born at Lucknow in 1752 and his father's name was Muhammad Baig Khan who had fled from Persia for India in order to avoid the wrath of Nadir Shah, the Persian King. Muhammad Baig Khan was admitted into the friendship of Nawab Munsur Khan Safder Jung and he was appointed as an assistant to Muhammad Culy Khan who had an important position in the government (Khan, 2009, p. 02). Abu Taleb Khan's father, "who came to Hindoostan and enrolled himself among the followers of Nawab Safdar Jang" (Sen, 2005, p.26) lost his position because Nawab Shuja-ad-Dowleh was not pleased with his conduct. Therefore, when "Shuja seized power, Khan's father was forced to flee to Bengal with all his wealth" (Khan, 2009, p.02). But, in spite of the above

fact, having had old family connections and relations he took a great care of Khan and his mother for the education and well-being of the family. Khan was instructed / taught by the Iranian scholars who had come to India and resided in Lucknow, making it a city of learning. However, he had to flee from his house due to certain factional disputes and find refuge in irregular jobs in the East India Company. Abu Taleb Khan too, like Sheikh Itesamuddin, selected the genre of travelogue to write about the West. He is described as “a Muslim of respectability from Lucknow {who} arrived in England and stayed there for over three years” (Ballhatchet, 1985, p. 160), and returned in 1802 to Sub-Continent.

Khan’s life is full of trials and challenges posed by financial insecurity and resulting disappointment and despondency. It was by 1799 that Khan found himself unemployed, though temporarily, and when he received an invitation from Captain Richardson who was “an old friend who had the knowledge of Persian and Hindustani to dispel his gloom and despondency” (Khan, 1993, p.114), Khan took no time accepting the invitation and decided to visit London which, understandably, for him was an obscure geography at that time. Trakulhun claims that one of the purposes of his visit to England was to “establish a governmental Persian language training institute in England under Abu Taleb’s direction” (Trakulhun, 2017, p. 182), however, this project never got materialized and he had to return without achieving anything in this regards. His travels began on “the 1st of Ramzan, AH 1213 (7 February 1799)” (Khan, 2009, p. 07), and it ended in August 1803. Later, Khan “explained with geographical clarity that the kingdom of England (Inglistan) comprised

England, Scotland, and Wales, the royal heir-apparent having the title of Prince of Wales. All the three together constituted Great Britain (Bartanya Buzurg) (Khan, 1993, p. 148). So, like Mirza Itesamuddin and unlike the Orientalists, he had enough understanding of the Western geography and never lumped the West as single homogeneity.

Khan's manuscript existed among his friends and acquaintances and later was shown to a captain in the British Artillery that paved its way for Charles Stewart who was a Professor of Oriental Languages at Haileybury College. The first edition of the travelogue was published in 1810 posthumously under the self-explanatory title *The Travels of Mirza Abu Taleb in Asia, Africa, and Europe during the years 1799, 1800, 1801, 1802, and 1803* and was translated by Charles However, there was a Persian version of the text published in 1812 and it was edited by Khan's son who was employed at the college at Fort Williams. It was followed by two abridged versions in 1827 and 1836. In the annual register of the Government, the decision of the Bengal Government to print the text in Persian language was also published. According to the decision, the interests of the Britain in India would be served in a far better way if the manuscript of the travelogue is circulated through the press in the Oriental Territories. They also expected "in the minds of the natives, impressions highly favourable to the British nation, and to its interests in India" (Dodsley, 1825, p. 757).

4.2 Early Perception, Positive and Others

Khan's perception and portrayal of the West is twofold; the positive Other and the negative Other and they form his consciousness but in the

end the latter outweighs the former. While the technological innovations render him awestruck the cultural criticism over the colonizer's politics, religious practices, fashions, the position and status of the women, along with the commentary on various vices and virtues gives the impressions of Othering. Khan's travelogue and critique of the Western life becomes more important in the wake of the fact that while much research has been initiated into the British representation of India, the reverse is not necessarily true. Thus, Abu Taleb was a noteworthy and valuable source to disseminate the perceptions of the East to the West and vice versa. Khan, in his travelogues, discusses many questions related to cultural differences, interfaces, identity, the politics of travelling and that of representation. Even in the very early stages of colonization he displays his awareness of the dynamics of the cultural negotiation.

As far as the choice of language was concerned, Khan and his contemporary Indian Travelers to Britain wrote in Persian which was the language of elite's culture in India (Fisher, 2013, p.01). The Persian title of his travelogue is *Masiri Talibi*, which can be translated as Taleb's trajectory, as well as the path of wistfulness or the path of aspiration implying the objectives of his writing the travelogue. He was "not the first or the last Persian traveler to London and Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries" (Quinn, 2008, p.11). However, this narrative is one of the earliest accounts of an Oriental subject discussing the cultural dynamics of the imperial center, and its complex critique of empire challenges many preconceptions about intercultural relations during this era. This as well as other travelogues of the long 18th century reveal that it

were not only the Westerners who were writing about the Orient, rather, many Orientals like Abu Taleb Khan were writing about the West as well. Moreover, it also shows that there was a two-way flow of representation and communication that existed between the two cultures belonging to the colonizers and the colonized. These modes of representations were the discourse about the Orient (by the West) and about the Occident (by the Orient). The West lauds his views by stating that “the free remarks of an intelligent foreigner on our laws, customs and manners must always be considered as an object of liberal curiosity” (Stewart, 1810, p.xxxi). In this way, his travelogue was translated, published and lauded by the West.

Khan and Sheikh Itesamuddin share many things: Firstly, both of them did not write in English and their mode of expression was Persian. It was later on that their works were translated into English by the English translators. Secondly, both of them explicitly identified themselves as Muslims and actually made the return voyage to India and unlike Dean Mahomet never preferred staying in Europe. Moreover, unlike Dean Mahomet the readership of Itesamuddin and Abu Khan is quite different as they had Indian audience in their minds and they had wished to narrate their observations, experiences and wisdom attained through travelling to the distant lands “which they saw and by giving an account of the manners and customs of the various nations they had visited” (Khair, 2005, p. 327). Mushirul Hasan, in his introduction to the most recently published edition of the trilogy of travelogues, stresses Khan’s self-conscious designs as a traveler and ethnographer whose “claim was to describe the curiosities and wonders and give some account of the manners and customs of the various

nations [he] visited, all of which was little known to the Asiatics” (Hasan, 2009, p. x). His observation is not limited to the British Isles; rather it extends to Europeans as well.

In the very beginning of his travelogue Khan positions himself as a writer, a traveler and ethnographer whose intention was to give some account of the manners and customs of the various nations he visited. It is through his ethnographic details that he communicates across cultures and it allows him to comment on the culture of the colonizers. In the very first of his encounters with the West, he portrays the in the following words.

the generality of the Dutchmen are low-minded and inhospitable, neither do they fear the imputation of a bad name, and are more oppressive to their slaves than any other people in the world. If a slave understands any trade, they permit him to work for other people, but oblige him to pay from one to four dollars a day, according to his abilities for such indulgence. The daughters of these slaves who are handsome they keep for their own use, but the ugly ones are either sold or obliged to work with their fathers. (Khan, 2009, 25)

His generalization of the Dutch as low-minded, oppressive and great exploiters reflects that the epithets that the Orientalist discourse had had for the Orient are being reversed and they are also categorized in the same manners by the Orient as well. In few remarks the whole of this European nation is defined as block-headed, racist, slave-traders, oppressors, misogynists, and quite unworthy of any honorable title. Thus, the Orient starts writing back to essentialize, stereotype and label the West.

Khan, soon after he reached London, got introduced with King George and Queen Charlotte. But his access to the gentry and intelligentsia was based on what Fisher terms as “misleading title, the Persian Prince” (Fisher, 2007, p. 167). However, *misleading* this title might have been but Claire Chambers credits it to his educated background and high-ranking

service to the Nawab of Oudh. In addition, “this experience, coupled with his practicum class background, probably gave him the mannerisms and graces that led the greater part of the English people Abu Taleb met to agree that he was a Persian Prince” (Chambers, 2015, p. 32), although his own cultural referent has invariably been India and not Iran. It is mainly owing to his royal lineage that had helped him establish acquaintance with the royalty and he “receives excellent hospitality and even obsequiousness from the British” (Chambers, 2015, p. 32). She further emphasizes that, “Abu Taleb and other South Asians were lionized by their hosts, skittering through London’s most celebrated chambers and drawing rooms, stopping only to sign the visitor’s books of royalty” (Chambers, 2015, p. 32). Khan was warmly received by the gentry as well as the public which gave him a direct exposure and opportunity to see the life and culture from a close corner. Furthermore, he had very rich cross-cultural experiences which he cultivated there. During his sojourn there, his scholarly contacts with the British intelligentsia like literary figures, scientists, artists, painters, “Orientalists and scholars, including the members of the Royal Society of Britain” (Khan, 1993, pp. 201-202) gave him first-hand account of the society. Khan also locates himself within the paradigm of academic scholar whose purpose of traveling is to observe, analyze, evaluate and finally narrate the findings to his fellow countrymen back home in India so that they may also benefit from his experiences. He wanted to write the circumstances of his journey through Europe which were not known to Asiatics and will be quite beneficial for his countrymen especially for those who are aspirants of travelling to Europe. In particular, he wants to relate

“hardships and mortifications which {he}endured on board this ship, in hopes that they will take warning by my sufferings and derive some advantage from my experience” (Khan, 2009, p.18). The Orientalists’ tropes are reversed, and the gaze is returned.

It becomes evident at the outset that it is not only the journey to the Orient that is full of hardships and mortifications but the journey from the Orient to the Occident is also equally full of dangers. The Orientalists’ assertion of the distant lands of the Orient is challenged by the Oriental traveler who outlines the tribulations and challenges posed by the Westward journey too. The Orient, now, has started turning the gaze back to the Empire in the same manners as is manifest by Abu Taleb’s observation which echoes Reginald Heber’s cautionary declaration regarding the dangers of British missionary travel to India: The warning or advisory thus states that,

The cholera morbus is making great ravages among the natives. Few Europeans have yet died of it, but to all it is sufficiently near to remind us of our utter dependence on God’s mercy, and how near we are in the midst of life to death! Surely there is no country in the world where this recollection ought to be more perpetually present with us than in India. (Heber, 1826, p.60)

When Khan’s journey begins, he starts encountering the hardships and issues his advisory, though of different nature by writing that the journey on the ship was nightmarish. He had a small cabin and was constantly abused by his European co-passengers. Earlier, he had this realization that the “journey was long and replete with danger” but still he wanted to undertake it (Khan, 2009, p.06). The weather conditions were worse, and Khan’s ship was not a match to the adverse winds that forced them to

change their route and seek shelter. As his ship reaches and docks on Nicobar Islands for shelter, he encounters the first of the Islands outside Indian borders and he delineates the ethnographic designs and portraits. In his description about the landscape, inhabitants, culture, traditions and norms of these people, the sites of estrangement and outlandishness find their way into his narrative. So, these “Islands being situated near the equinoctial line have two springs and two autumns; and the Sun had lately passed to the north of the line, we had incessant showers of rain” (Khan, 2009, p.12). This passage is immediately followed by a physical and sartorial description of the native inhabitants who “resemble the Peguers and Chinese in features but are of a wheat colour, with scarcely any beard. Their clothing consists merely of a narrow bandage round their waist” (Khan, 2009, p.12). Apparently, the first encounter outside the Indian borders is quite unfamiliar for him.

Mirza Abu Taleb overturns and subverts the Orientalist gaze as the natives are portrayed within the frame of the Western travel writing and he defines/labels them as Orientalists would do to the Orient. He frames or defines them inside his own episteme delineating them as Others. This seems to be a reaction to Orientalist discourse framed by the Occident to compare all other cultures to the Western norms and practices and deem them inferior inhabiting a land that bears estrangement and is thus perceived as the abode of the Others.

Khan’s encounter with the Western co-passengers onboard reveals their partisanship as they cajole him for going to bed in trousers, in response, he puts forward the logic that if the English ship faces an

emergency its European inmates will have to rush to the deck naked (Khan, 2009, p. 153). Their scanty dresses are an anathema for him, and they are made to look exotic beings. He, in essentialist terms, repudiates their cultural practices. He shows his incarnate aristocratic sensibility couple with class consciousness and pride that Lutfullah Khan and Itesamuddin had lacked. He expresses his disdain about the crew by saying that the Second Officer, and other mates, were low people, not worthy of being spoken to, and quite ignorant of navigation (Chambers, 2015, pp.32- 33). So, at the very outset, his observation terms the White people as Others, who are unworthy of interaction.

Khan has deliberately and consciously distorted the dialogism of the conventional Orientalist and he challenges and questions the moral, social and ethical certainties of this discursive convention. In typical examples, the savagery of the colonized native parallels the benevolent colonial subject who reports and sometimes tames him. But Khan seems to have reversed this discursive convention by narrating an incident that took place there. The Lascar officers, who had deserted the ship and had disappeared in the neighboring areas due to the ill-treatment of the captain, are brought to the vessel with the aid of the island's inhabitants in exchange for cloth. When the Lascars return, the captain, instead of showing gratitude, however, "repaid their exertions and kindness by the grossest treachery; for, pretending that he could not open the hold while it was dark ... and, before the islanders were aware of his intention the vessel had proceeded many miles to the southward (Khan, 2009, p. 13). It is within this paradigm that the duplicitous and treacherous native is replaced by the European who

is presented and exposed as greedy, selfish and deceitful and an opportunist who is all ready to exploit others for personal gains.

Although not explicit, yet, the passage is also a powerful commentary on the inequalities and exploitation of the imperial project as a whole. The passage lays bare the hollowness of the whole façade and depicts the ongoing phenomena. As a traveler, Khan also posits his journey into Europe as one that is governed by lurking danger and conflict-ridden zone. “As we were then in the track between Europe and America, and most of the Kings of Europe were at war with each other, these latitudes ...[were] considered to be more replete with danger than any other part of the ocean ” (Khan, 2009, p. 33). It shows that while for a Westerner travelling to the East poses certain dangers, in Orientalist terms, by antiquity and backwardness, the journey towards the West is marked by the dangers resulting from modernity displayed in the form of modern killing machines over their heads. Thus, his advisory parallels that of Heber’s about dangers resulting from cholera outbreak in India.

The journey that Khan undergoes is one fraught with challenges, difficulties, fears and a sense of overwhelming danger posited by modernity, and its incumbent armor and military technology. He enlists a number of factors positing challenges encountered onboard namely “neglect from even the servants, the impossibility of [physical] purification, tyranny of rudeness of neighbours, abusive language and the like. Such experiences constituted definite interventions in the process of “imagining Britain for Indians” (Rahman, 2013, p. 04). Once he lands in and explores Britain and Ireland, the gaze is explicitly reversed, and he offers

descriptions of the minutest details which are imbued with a sense of wonder because it bears exotic elements in it. Amitav Ghosh in his foreword to *Other Routes* (2006) argues that the “true corollary of a genuine sense of wonder is not fancifulness but, on the contrary, certain meticulousness” (Gosh, 2005, p.09). This comment can be tested throughout the text produced by Khan. In the beginning he avoids generalizations and delves deep into the details. His adherence to the minutest details can be seen whenever he describes anything, be it people, landscape, customs, rituals or anything that crosses his eyes. This emphasis on personal details and reluctance to generalize the analysis is brought forth when he alludes to the climate and soil of England referring to something quite peculiar that results into so much of diversity. It is this variety which, according to Khan, creates huge differences among the people, their habits, tempers and manners etc. This makes the people of Britain different from each other eliminating unanimity and creating distinct and diverse communities as well as individuals. His role assumed as a reverse Orientalist continues and he avoids what a westerner would have presumably done by issuing generalizing statements. But interestingly Khan like Itesamuddin endeavors to draw comparisons between his home country and the metropolis. There are hints of comparison for example, between “Ganges and Thames” (Khan, 2009, p.36) or Liffey with the Gomati of Lucknow and streetlamps resembling those of Mausoleum at Lucknow revealing his perceptual modes into which he immerses himself.

But it is interesting to note that his comparative mode was not limited to *home* and the *destination*, but it extended to London and Paris as

well. It was there that he declared Paris much inferior as compared to London. Thus the binary which separates his home from foreign lands strongly exists between the European nations as well. He perceives them in the generalized terms. Gulfishan Khan is of the view that When Khan visited England, it was not only an already advanced imperial power, but it had also embraced the latest possible industrial innovations which had transformed the whole of the Kingdom. Earlier when Itesam ud Din visited England, he had only a few references relating to the industrial transformation unlike Khan who noted even the minutest of the details pertaining to scientific and technological innovations (Khan, 1993, p.360) marking the beginning of industrialization in the land of the Others.

Khan, at times, does differ from an Orientalist as he does not prescribe and compare details of his travels and observations to a body of universal values in the way an Orientalist in Saidian terms would do but that is relatively true. “Ghosh’s correlative argument only partially makes sense when he states that “this is why so many apparently trivial details find their way into these [Oriental] narratives”, because these Oriental “travelers feel obliged to record what they see and what they hear. They do not assume a universal ordering of reality; nor do they arrange their narratives to correspond to teleologies of racial and civilizational progress” (Ghosh, 2005, p.09). However, Khan, in his description, consciously or unconsciously, allows for the element of strangeness and surprise.

When describing the reaction of the people after they notice him around in Ireland, Khan states that “they were all very curious to see me,” (Khan, 2009, p. 55) and their curiosity leads to a spectacle in which the

Westerners' gaze turns them into a spectacle themselves. A great crowd assembled to see him and on the advice of a shopkeeper he went into his shop where he amused himself by looking around the shop when the crowd started getting larger and as a result, "the people ... thronged so about [the shopkeeper's] windows, that several of the panes were broken; and the crowd being very great, it was in vain to ask who had done it" (Khan, 2009, p. 55). His depiction of them as violent, unrestrained and unfettered beings not civilized enough to bear the presence of someone different from them marks it as a representative scene. One obvious reason for the people casting an exotic gaze on Khan may be the Oriental ways he would dress up and in public. As Fisher finds that while many Asians- especially settlers-adapted to British culture, others-especially temporary visitors-continued to wear their customary clothing and wrote the language of their own literary circles (Fisher, 2007, p. 156). His immersion in his own cultural outfits and practicing of the Oriental sartorial choices shows that he never wanted to assimilate in the culture of the Others and maintains the boundary of the binary steadfast.

Abu Taleb Khan does not appropriate his position as an omniscient narrator relaying on objective testimony although he plays with the Orientalist conventions throughout. The reader is inadvertently allowed into the aperture between his perceptions and the actions that unfold around him, events that may not synthesize or coalesce with his subjective report but may differ widely. When narrating about the above incident to his readers, Khan can be regarded as showing a tacit criticism of the way Orient was politically framed by the Western thought. An example of this

political subjectivity can be seen through the moral pretensions of British Orientalists, who consistently stress the civilizing mission and its imperatives of colonial intervention at the cost of native cultural practices: “The lower classes of people in India are like children; and, except in the more considerable places, where they meet with uncommon encouragement to industry from Europeans, are generally in such a state of apathy, that without the orders of government, they will hardly do anything” (Mill, 1820, p.413). But in the metropolis, their own people are shown as children who need to be tamed and educated to accept the presence of an Oriental figure that has just been to their geographical territory. Khan did not encounter such a heightened situation in England partly because of his perceived status as a “Persian Prince” (Khan, 1993, p.115) and it serves as a shield from the abuse directed at lower-class non-white people. So, the West is shown as casting and dwelling upon the differences resulting from class, culture, colour and racial bearings.

These pictures or caricatures that he sees in the metropolis represent different nations including Irish and Scottish men and women of different professions. The nostalgic sensibility oozes out when, in his recollections, Khan states that all those places that he quit, would appear better when he reached the next destination. So, the former place was always more appealing and attractive than the next place that was yet to be explored. He writes that,

Thus, after a long residence in London, Paris appeared to me much inferior ... But when I arrived in Italy, I was made sensible of the beauty of Paris. The cities of Italy rose in my estimation when I arrived at Constantinople and the later is a perfect Paradise, compared to

Baghdad, Mousul and other towns in the territory of the faithful. (Khan, 2009, pp.24-25)

There are times when he draws comparisons against the conduct of the colonial British in both India as well as in England. It is generally concluded by the eighteenth-century travelers to England that the English behaved better at home than in their Indian colony. This observation is supported by many kinds of evidences one of which is the reception and favours that he received during his stay in London. He mentions the royal favours by remembering the acts of kindness shown by the King as well as the queen. Both the royal figures were pleased with Khan and he was attended by them in their drawing room. He would frequently visit them and always felt pleased when addressed by them directly. The royal couple would always maintain the direct contact with Khan not depending on the translator altogether and acknowledged Khan's English as comprehensible (Khan, 1993, p. 114). It is by moving into and exploring the high society that he records his "pleasure at finding the English more polite and hospitable in England than their countrymen in India. Although as narrated earlier it was, owing to his *misleading* identity. He thought that common people enjoyed remarkable liberty and equality" (Ballhatchet, 1980, p.160) in England. But this must also be noted that Khan's socialization- circle was confined only to the upper class including the people like Warren Hastings, Captain Baker, Sir George and Colonel Wombell etc. Many of these people had served in India under the East India Company and Khan, therefore, could compare their conduct at home as well in India. However, the comparison and experience of the colonizers' conduct is strikingly different from Lutfullah Khan's experiences as he had never been

entertained by the colonial British at home, rather he had complained of the indifference of the British subject who had served in India. In comparing different inhabitants of the British Islands, Khan employs another classic Orientalist trope in much the same way as the Orientalists like Reginald Heber used to compare the various inhabitants/natives of India. For example, Heber writes that “A Hindu hardly ever strikes an equal, however severely he may be provoked. The Arabs, as well as the Portuguese, are less patient” (Heber, 1826, p. 33). It is imperative that Khan’s access to the elites’ clubs was only possible, as quoted earlier by Fisher, because of his false and *misleading* identity.

Khan, while recording his perceptions about the West, describes them as (Positive) Others too. He compares the Irish to Britons but does not frame them with reference to himself or other Orientals. They have been portrayed as uncontrollable and unrestrained earlier but, when compared with their countrymen, they surpass the English and the Scotch in bravery, determination, prodigality, and freedom of speech (Khan, 2009, p. 52). Thus, the deconstruction of the British hegemonic conceptions of moral and civil superiority continues. He explicitly challenges their framing of the Irish people when he states that “I had heard from Englishmen that the Irish, after they were drunk at the table, quarrel and kill each other in duels, but I must declare, that I never saw them guilty of any rudeness, or of the smallest impropriety.” (Khan, 2009, p. 54). Khan classifies Britain, Ireland and Scotland as different countries having their own sets of customs, cultures and traditions. This is quite interesting to note that such realization of distinctness was present only among the visitors and the rest of the

people lumped them as a single entity/homogeneity. It is noted that Khan acknowledged Ireland as a distinct and independent country. But his representation, classification and generalization about all the above nations/communities continues throughout.

Unlike Orientalists, Khan's awareness of the geography is evident when he states that the separate homeland of the Irish people had fully functional governmental machinery needed to run the affairs of the state. It had all the important institutions that any independent country may require, for example, parliament, bureaucracy, and the capital. He gives elaborate descriptions about the parks, schools, colleges, churches, entertainment opportunities, markets, custom houses, roads and historical monuments and buildings. He describes everything with the same graphic and copious detail as London, capital city of England (Khan, 1993, p.249). All this reveals his ethnographic approach to understanding the metropolis unlike the Orientalists who constructed and framed the Orient as a homogenous entity in their discourse.

One of the main reasons why Khan described Ireland in a great detail was that he had many acquaintances inhabiting Ireland. Thus, Khan's frequent visits to them show that he felt at ease with them. These people had served in India at different times including Lord Cornwallis and Captain Baker etc. The majority of the Irish was the follower of Roman Catholics and had a moderate world view. The Irish, according to Khan were considered very brave, hospitable, generous and open minded as compared to the English who implicitly defined and represented as the opposites and Others of the Irish. But as far as the perceptions of the Irish

were concerned, the English considered them low and outcast in their portrayal of them (Khan, 2009, p.38-40). This representation of the Irish is supported by Khan's observation who notes that "in literary and scientific acumen, the Irish were considered inferior to the English; nonetheless they were quick in comprehension" (Khan, 2009, p.252). On a personal level, the Irish could follow his broken English while the British, with whom he had spent much of his time during his stay, had been still struggling to comprehend him. Interestingly, when Taleb visited the Irish people he changed his opinion about them and the notions of representation that were fed by the English in his mind underwent tremendous transformation. Therefore, he sought to discard prevalent notions about them, like the one about heavy drinking. Such views, he thought, were baseless. At the same time, he did not seem to have favourable views about the Scottish people. He thought that the main characteristic of the Scots was lack of fidelity among them (Khan, 2009, pp.55-56). As a rather reverse ethnographer, he castes his gaze on the center of the metropolis and exposes the contradictions and inconsistencies within hegemonic British assumptions of the Other. When read with all the minutest details, the Muslims and Asiatics are shown privileged over the Europeans. For example, the travelogue shows the Muslims of Cape Town are superior, civilized and kind hearted; the shipmates of Europe are not preferable in comparison to their counterparts of Andaman though they are portrayed as savages; the ancient temples in India are like Oxford; the English judicial system is flawed in comparison to the Qazi's system of the Muslim courts. The European and the Oriental perspectives crisscross at points and no

necessary order of privileging is provided. Yet in passage after the passage the admirable qualities are challenged by counter critiques. The judicial system is excoriated because of the loopholes exploited by the lawyers. Therefore, to him, the equality is more in appearance than in reality. He summarizes the notion of equality by saying that “In short, the ambiguity of the English law is such, and the stratagems of the lawyers so numerous, as to prove a course of misery to those who are unfortunate enough to have any concern with it or them” (Khan, 2009, p.139).

He undercuts Orientalist constructions of the Other in a broader sense, ones that cast and represent the Occident in those same terms: passionate, unrestrained and essentially violent. In this way Khan endeavors to write a counter narrative or produces reverse ethnography to challenge the hegemony of Orientalist discourse.

4.3 Khan- The Orient Writes Back

Khan belonged to the Oriental/Persian tradition that was prevalent in India during the time he produced his writings about Europe. The official business was conducted through Persian which was the language of the court and the ruling elite. But as the colonial rule advanced, slow and gradual erosion of Persian took place in the Mughal courts. The texts in Persian language were still being written in India in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and it is proven that Abu Taleb Khan’s book is by no means the only travel narrative in Persian from this period. Khan, by following the Indo-Persian or Oriental tradition yet proves his sensibility about the Orient as well as the binary, Occident. According to Hasan, Khan’s literary canon and the tradition within which he was writing “meant

that [the Orient] had a refined culture and literature of her own, her people had a fine taste for poetry, plays and operas, and a keen zest for philosophical speculation” (Hasan, 2009, p. x).

Khan in his discourse serves as a reverse Orientalist who appropriated and reversed the Orientalist discourse of exotica and gives his rebuttals either by carrying out representations of the offshore others, noticing and mentioning the inter-nation and inter-cultural representative notions or by deconstructing the Orientalist myths by acting as contrary to their farming in Orientalist discourse propounded by Said. Chambers credits Jamaican poet Louis Bennett for the use of the term, “Orientalism in reverse” and is of the view that

Orientalism’s power-knowledge dialectic and the way in which it stereotypes Indians and its definitions of Indians have been to some extent reversed at social and cultural levels by these travel writers, but without this being a symmetrical counter-discursive response to the cultural hegemony of British Orientalism in India. (Chambers, 2015, pp.37-38)

Khan displays his consciousness of the West’s Orientalist assumptions which label, represent and define the Orient as their cultural other. He expresses his astonishment for the West which “reproaches the nobility of Hindoostan with wearing gold and silver ornaments like women” but excoriates the parallel extravagance displayed through marble statues in the metropolis and all of Europe and deems useless. Here, in his one of the earliest accounts about London he excoriates the West for setting up the statues which are held in “high estimation, approaching to idolatry” (Khan, 2009, p.46). This proves shocking for him and he presumes the West to be extravagant in its display of cultural implements. Instead of viewing it as a

cultural artifact and architectural object, he ascribes it to the working of “Satan to throw away their money upon useless blocks” (Khan, 2009, p.46). The religious jargon is employed to undermine the Others’ culture and deepen the boundary of the binary between the two.

Khan also shows his streak as a reverse Orientalist when he refers to the sources of the British knowledge. He undermines them and writes that they “disseminate books which have no more intrinsic worth than the toys bestowed on children, which serve to amuse the ignorant, but are of no use to the learned” (Khan, 2009, p.149). It, in fact, anticipates Macaulay’s famous Minute on Indian Education whereby he had rendered the books and knowledge base of the Indians as redundant. He also censures William Jones, a famous Orientalist who had written Persian Grammar as well as some other books about India. He is of the view that his book “having been written when he was a young man, and previous to his acquired any experience in Hindustan, is, in many places very defective” (Khan, 2009, p.150). He denigrates his understanding of Persian language as merely academic as he had never been to India by then.

Khan displays his admiration and fondness for the modern European technological innovations and deconstructs the myths that the Orientalists had created in the minds of the West about the Orientals bearing all the negatives of the English idiom. His keenness, understanding and appreciation of the Western innovations help him portray the West as positive other, though in end it all crumbles. Khan is very much fascinated by the British educational system, scientific culture, and innovation in the field of industry. His description of a factory reveals his liking of the

progress in this field. He says that anyone who just takes a round of the factories and sees the machinery installed therein, is overwhelmed and feels bewildered altogether. There is so much symmetry, method, precision, regularity and efficiency that he is left awestruck and Khan is no exemption. He also describes London and was “enchanted by . . . houses, parks and streets with their lighting which reminded him of the street decoration during the marriage celebrations of Wazir Ali Khan in Lucknow” (Khan, 2009, p.105). Such comparisons drawn between the metropolis and the Oriental city reveal that he viewed his home equal, never inferior, if not superior to the colonial power-center.

The discursive constructions of the West are revealed which open up and answer the questions of how the Muslim world was just as interested in Europe, its culture, modernity, social policy and technologies in order to understand the power relations. Khan’s text shows that he makes continuous references to different technologies of the West and his portrayal is not negative or hostile. Thus, he postulates an Islamic sensibility that is not anti-modernity in the way Orientalists had started to show them; rather, he unveils a sensibility that was both highly pragmatic as well as curious in its valuations of different modern technologies such as the printing press and its utilities, modern machinery, transport and industry in general. Khan’s description of several modern technologies is documented in glowing terms. The widespread use of machinery had greatly impressed him and he was interested not only in industry but even in the kitchen-he had seen a mincing machine (Khan, 2009, p.104-105). This, he explained by reference to “psychological and economic factors”

(Ballhatchet, 1980, p.160). Moreover, the appreciation and liking for the European life and civilization, especially after the advent of industrialization, is summed up by Khair who writes that “many of the customs, inventions, sciences, and ordinances of Europe, the good effects of which are apparent in those countries might with great advantage be imitated by Mohammedans” (Stewart, 1810, p.xxxiii). The greatest admiration, by Khan, is reserved for the print media which is highly useful even though its utility may not be fully comprehended by the Asiatics. The art of printing is the most admirable element in the progress and uplift of the European society as a whole. By its aid, “thousands of copies, of any scientific or religious book, may be circulated among the people in a very short time” (Khan, 2009, p. 95).

Khan’s admiration sees no bounds for the systemization and increasing efficiency of the labor system that brought about the industrial revolution which had set Great Britain on the path of great achievements. Labor in England is much facilitated by the aid of mechanism and as a result the price of commodities is not only stable but much reduced: for if, in their great manufactories, they made use of animals like horses, bullocks or men, as in other countries, the prices of their goods would not be controlled. Eulogies are also offered for healthy environment of the crew and disciplining of the members. In addition, “the hydraulic machine for supplying London with water is [labeled] a stupendous work” (Khan, 2009, p. 104).

It is from these statements that one can formulate a pre-colonial sensibility that does not concur with Orientalist assumptions of

backwardness, antiquity and an aversion to progress. Khan, while taking a different route, highlights an Indo-Islamic sensibility that was commensurate with material progress, civilizational uplift, scientific revolution and modernization in a broader sense than that which had historically been allowed for.

My positioning of Khan as a writer who reversed the Orientalists' hegemonic gaze within the metropolis, can perhaps, find no greater example than in his "*Vindication of the Liberties of the Asiatic Women*" This chapter highlights the various forms in which Khan assumes the position of moral high ground and not only answers the stereotypes of the West but later bends on formulating the same stereotypes about the Western culture.

Khan's vindication proves the persistence of the idea of the alleged relative positions of the Western and the Asian women as suggestive of the moral standing of their respective cultures. "The European woman (zan-i-farangi) was the locus of gaze and erotic fantasy for many eighteenth and nineteenth century Persianate voy(ag)eurs of Europe" (Tavakoli-Targhi, 2001, p. 54) As the Indians were hegemonized by the Europeans especially in political terms, the body of the woman also became as a symbol of identity, and of political contestations. His narratives also reveal his endeavors towards reversal of the prevalent European valorization of these respective positions or statuses. Khan highlights six prevailing stereotypes which relegated or pushed Asian women to the peripheries of Asiatic societies, and he answers them through the reversal of the gaze. The European conceptions of Indian social rules are challenged by Khan and he

offers contrasting definitions of arranged marriage, inequality in judicial procedures, divorce right of the males and its denial to the females, polygamy, veil and the status and rights of the widows in general in the society. Khan offers contrasting depictions of these practices that amounted to a large degree to the general representation of Asiatic societies as exotic, backward, illiterate, licentious, unequal and unrestrained. He advocates for a more balanced appraisal of Muslim women's rights when he writes that "Mohammedan women ... are prohibited from mixing in society, and are kept concealed behind curtains, but are allowed to walk out in veils and to go to the baths (in Turkey) ... and to sleep abroad for several nights together" (Khan, 2009, p. 112). But when the people like Khan gave the rebuttal in the form of their narratives, many Orientalists even suppressed memories of their exchanges with these early Asians in Europe through what Tavakoli-Targhi calls an act of "genesis Amnesia" (Tavakoli-Targhi, 2001, p.18).

4.4 Perceptions of women-How the West views the East and vice-versa

Khan believes that that the Europeans' notions about the Muslim women especially from Asia are based on ill-gotten sources thus he challenges their assumptions. The Europeans opined that the Asian women were living under the repression and oppression of man who would exploit and restrict them to serve them as slaves. Therefore, the images of the oppressors and the oppressed floated in England about the Asian men and women respectively. In reply to such discourse, Taleb would always defend his own culture and brush away the opinion and commentary of the

Europeans around him. The Persian travelers to Europe were bequeathed with double consciousness because “they critiqued European social settings with their own ethical standards and censured their own society from a European perspective” (Yazdani, 2017, p.84).

In the cultural matrix, the West is shown to have failed in understanding the Orient and he shows the West as the consumer of the generalized and stereotypical discourses. The binary is further highlighted when he shows the sensibilities of both the cultures in the portrayal of each other. The West presumes, through its Orientalist discourse, that the Muslim women are not only debarred from all kinds of amusements and recreations but also never see a man’s face except their husband’s and all “proceeds entirely from misinformation” (Khan, 2009, p. 299). According to Khan, Europeans also misconstrue that the Asian women have pseudo-sexual confinement and do not enjoy the privileges and rights offered by the West to its women folk. Khan further contends that the women in Asia can keep company with the male relatives of their parents as well as of husband and there are no restrictions on that. Moreover, they also socialize even with “old neighbours and domestics, and at meals there are always many men and women of this description” (Khan, 2009, p. 299). Khan further rejects the European stereotypes and notes as how Asiatic women exercise power over their domestic sphere, enjoy parental authority over their children, have their share in the inheritance of their property, all factors that European women neither enjoy themselves nor do they acknowledge them for Asian women as their privileges that they enjoy. During his sojourn and interaction with the West he perceived their

immodesty in dress and behavior but they are shown as judgmental about the Asian women. He argues that in contradistinction to the culture of Europe, the Asiatic women enjoyed higher status than the European women (Mukund, 2005, p.07). Thus, he displays his religio-cultural superiority by eroding all the conception of the West about the East. So, Khan establishes his stature as a commentator who was giving the critique as an authority on his own culture. As fisher points out, throughout his time in England, Abu Taleb strongly “defended his own culture” (Fisher, 2007, p. 167). Moreover, it was perceived by Khan that “Britons living in Britain had a more positive response to [the Orientals] than the condescending attitudes, a result of power and political dynamics, which the British living in India had towards Indians, thus revealing an important heterogeneity in British attitudes towards Indians in the 18th century” (Narain, 2012, p. 151). It was by identifying socio-political, religious and gender differences with the Western culture and through comparison with the Oriental culture that provided the travelogue writers a way and means to analyze, assess and critique the Indian culture.

When discussing about the West, Khan outlines generalization based on certain assumptions about them. These stereotypical notions, generalized statements and particular perceptual modes are grounded on Khan’s own cultural superiority and tendency to label and define the Others. Khan mentions twelve defects of the British people, but the lexicon of Orientalist dogma is used in order to describe the British character. The British character is labeled with all those epithets that were henceforth used for the Orientals. In this regard he can be viewed as an observer and

commentator on a foreign culture who “criticized the English for their lack of religious faith, for their pride and contempt for the customs of their countries, for their love of luxury and dislike of exertion, for their love of money and for their sexual immorality” (Ballhatchet, 1985, p.160). Khan proves partisanship through his criticism of the European culture in general and British culture in particular. It may be concluded that if a balance sheet is framed on these basis the vices far exceeded the virtues. The positive Othering of the West continues when he enumerated their virtues including, the sense of self-respect, respect for merit across the board, supremacy of the law, willingness to work for the welfare of the less privileged and destitute, preference for modernity over the old traditions, love for technological innovations, simplicity of their life style, intellectual disposition, steadfastness and continuity for knowledge, fame and riches and finally their virtue of hospitality and liberality marked them as very cultured and civilized beings on the European continent. Khan draws his conclusions by stating that all the appreciable and admirable traits of the English culture, in fact, are not the modern constructs but these laudable virtues were the hallmarks of their ancestors and forbearers, and were perhaps more firmly rooted in their ancestors.

Khan’s enumeration and elaboration of different cultural constructs about the Others is quite detailed and complex and he writes twelve national character defects of the British. He frames, labels and defines them on the basis of their generalizations. To him, the lack of faith by the English in religion and their preference for philosophy ignited the lower classes and converted them into sharp rivals of the affluent class. The

divide between the lower and the upper class grew wider as a result of class consciousness and lack of religiosity. So, the lack of religious practices and not the unfair distribution of the wealth was the ultimate reason for the division of the classes. The second vice of the British is described as their hubris, pride or haughtiness which stopped the intelligentsia and powerful elites to reform the system. The third point is referred to as worldliness or too much involvement of the British in worldly affairs that leads them to miserliness. The fourth vice is an extension of the third one which leads them to ease of life and too much fondness for the luxuries and comforts. The fifth vice was related to their hot temperament, their inability of disposition and forbearance, over sensitivity, [and] quickness to take offence and get ignited. As a result, they were easily provoked and had a negative impact on societal level as a whole.

Khan strongly disapproved the upper English class's fondness for over dressing that involved twenty –five articles of clothing. To him, the English were displaying their extravagance and indulgence by opting for such superfluous pomp and show. Next vice was related to the luxurious ways of British life because it too, demanded extravagance and prodigality. The eighth vice referred to Orientalism (though the term was not coined at that time) because according to Khan one of the many problems with the Europeans was that they would first learn and master the languages and other literature of other nations and communities. But after having achieved the excellence and proficiency in the subject field, they would pretend as if they knew everything and that knowledge does not exist outside their judgments (Khan, 2009, pp.145-154). Furthermore, he suggests that, they

would write books, get them printed and disseminate them to the general society thus, it is through their knowledge and ideas that they gain power and recognition

The selfishness and policies of aggrandizement of the East India Company was another vice recorded by Khan. He was of the view that the British were quite indifferent to the Indians and never cared about them although their policies were totally detrimental for other cultures. The last vice that Khan enlists is that the British were possessed with the sense of narcissism and never appreciated the other cultures whatsoever. Rather, they would appreciate whatever belonged to them even if it was not admirable.

In terms of showing courtesy and general conduct, the French surpassed the English because in contrast to French courtesy, there was “irritability and surliness that he often found among the English” (Ballhatchet, 1985, p. 160). The epicenter of colonialism is inhabited by the people who are lazy, selfish, unchaste and temperamental. British nature is explicitly Orientalized rather than Occidentalized, as many of the foibles Khan identifies are dug out from within Orientalist taxonomies. He also raises certain questions about the civilizing credentials of the impending colonial mission by highlighting the inequalities resulting out of the class system in England. Khan surmises that British social equality “is more in appearance than in reality; for the difference between the comforts of the rich and the poor is, in England, much greater than in India” (Khan, 2009, p.113). This is also endorsed by a number of eighteenth and nineteenth century visitors to England who had observed the same poverty and it was

observed that the people belonging to the poor strata were worse off than their counterparts in Indian subcontinent.

Hamid Ali Khan, a poet traveler was also struck by the urban poverty also referred to it when he was bidding farewell to London. His lines are quoted as “Virtue and plenty on the surface lie/beneath are vice, crime, want and misery” (Khan, 2013, p. 329). But he also looks at some of the traits of the English as well and establishes that they “were naturally impatient and did not like trifling and tedious employments” (Ballhatchet, 1985, p. 160).

Mirza Abu Taleb Khan, in his endeavors to deconstruct the myths about the Orient by the Orientalists ends up creating many about his host culture; the English are the locus of all the negativities despite their technological progress. Their women are licentious, unrestrained and wanton and the men are lazy and haughty. Their conduct is immoral, and their society is reflected as ‘virtue and plenty on the surface lie/beneath are vice, crime, want and misery’ as quoted above. It is imperative to view Khan within his own cultural and social paradigms, be they confined to Islamic or within a wider Indian cultural framework. His project varyingly acknowledges the pros and cons of Western modernity, discusses them in great detail while encompassing almost all aspects, but is consistent in eulogizing his own cultural elements; his conviction is undaunting and he believes in the incorporation of Islamic and Indian traditions within a grand narrative of a global modernity. Khan’s employment of Orientalist tropes of the grand tour and reversal of the Orientalists’ erotic and exotic eye is further explored in the following analysis.

4.5 The Politics of Religion and religious representation

The discussions on religion, religious tradition and politics abound in the ethnographic narrative of Abu Taleb Khan. The Christian-Islamic history of beliefs and perceptions which included centuries' long controversy oozed out during Khan's sojourn and discussions in London. The nature of the controversy that had led dialogue was about the renouncement of the Christian faith and introduction of Islamic beliefs by God through his yet another revealed religion i.e. Islam. Khan's intimacy with the Bishop of Liandeff promised him many opportunities to interact and exchange the views on different issues pertaining to the Gospels and their authenticity. But he places the two religious doctrines as a binary to each other. According to Khan's narrative, the Bishop finally acknowledged the tradition that described the prophet's arrival and authenticated it with the Greek version of the Gospels mentioning the special account of the coming of the prophet. His conversation, quite like that of Munshi Itesamuddin, absences the interlocutor most of the times and records their views through his omniscient presence. Thus, the Other is also marginalized in the cultural interaction between the Orient and the Occident. He challenges their ontological basis of knowledge by alleging and stressing some particular verses which the Bishop denied as original. To further his arguments Khan referred to Prophet Muhammad's discussion with his contemporary communities assuring them that he was the promised Ahmed, the one whom Jesus commanded them to follow. The Christians however still believe that the promised person has yet to arrive to bring them salvation.

Khan was quite aware of the fact that the upper middle class of Britain was rationalist and skeptic and he explicitly criticized the secular understanding of life and universe by the Europeans and considered it a great neglect on their part to lead a faithless and irreligious life. He was also very critical of their inclination towards natural sciences, logic and philosophical pursuits to decode the mysteries of life and universe. It was mainly the upper class and their fondness for secular values that Khan criticized and objected the most. As far as the lower classes were concerned, they lacked in their religious uprightness and lagged behind in carrying out their duties with the help of the teachings of religion. He notes that the British –Christian law did not interfere in the affairs of the state and the socio-economic life of the people. Thus, the lack of religious guidance is included, as quoted above, as one of their greatest vices. He, in a satirical tone, maintains that the Archbishop of Canterbury, who was the head of all churches in England, had literally no part to play in the realm of politics at all (Khan, 2009, pp. 121-123). His religious clerics had a few roles to play namely, naming the child, uniting the people in the bond of marriage, funeral services and the like.

Khan, on the other hand, much appreciated the religious class which was socially and economically well placed. During one of the meetings the Bishop of Durham informed Khan that during the scarcity of food, he would eat only after feeding thousands on daily basis (Khan, 2009, p.123). But in spite of the commemoration of such individual cases in the religious realm, his main appreciation rests on the scientific progress, technological innovations, cultural diversity, social welfare, and geographical expansion.

One purpose to discuss such issues might have been his endeavor to show the efficacy, efficiency and competence in religious matters yet on the other hand he also exposes their impotency in the affairs of the politics and the state. His narrative about the clergy and their hierarchy also reveals his intent to comprehend all the aspects of British life presenting a holistic picture to the readers back home.

The British, at times, were very critical of some of the aspects of different religious practices of Muslims. In one instance, Khan was questioned and challenged by his hosts about Hajj: a pilgrimage by Muslims towards Holy Mecca. Khan, in his own capacity, had to rationalize and defend the tradition of the pilgrimage which he simply does by rather challenging the Christians' tradition of baptism and asked his hosts to defend that practice. Khan was highly critical of that ceremony in which a child was made a Christian saying that "what were the reasons to baptize the child, i.e., to present it before the Padre, the clergymen, in church to make a child Christian" (Khan, 2009, p.153). Furthermore, when criticized about the use of fingers to eat food he maintains that hygienically, the fingers are supposedly cleaner than the feet of the baker's boy who kneads the flour with his feet in order to prepare bread. Khan, in the binary relationship of the East and the West holds them not only as cultural Others but religious Others too.

The catalogue of weaknesses as enlisted by Khan is concluded on the note of frustration because of the haughtiness of the British who would desperately respond by arguing that all the nations and peoples of the world have had all these weaknesses and no one has ever been exempted from

them. Although these were the subjective conclusions drawn on the basis of his observations, the retaliation and response of the native people is enshrouded in their understanding of life and history. They were of the view that all the virtues and vices that had been pointed out by Khan in his catalogue of the British life, the earlier nations must have had them as well. To them those strengths and weaknesses were not peculiar with them only as history was full of such instances. It is nowhere in history that any nation was so perfect that it had none of the inherent challenges and vices. Similarly, the British are also subject to the worldly capriciousness and allurements like all other nations without any exception.

Khan's observation almost covers up all the aspects of life not discussed in any kind of detail by any of his fellow visitors. Khan, it may be summed up, criticizes bourgeois norms taking roots in the contemporary British culture. The most specific points regarding the religion(s) and religious differences are highlighted and in order to balance out their lives they drew certain rules to govern their individual as well as social life. Moreover, their pursuit of rationality had dominated the realms of the religion and therefore whichever religion or sect one may belong to, he was protected by the law indiscriminately. However, this equality and domination of the law hardly got translated in the economic terms as the classes had somewhat created the differences in the society. In his words the notion of equality was nothing but a farce because the upper and lower classes were not and could never be equal on any grounds possible. It was merely an illusion to imagine that such equality ever existed in the history of the world. He warns the British power structures that a mere glance of

the world history would reveal that “luxury and prodigality have caused the ruin of more governments than was ever effected by invading enemy: they generate envy, discord of animosity and render the people either effeminate or desirous of a change” (Trakulhun, 2017, p. 191). Thus, he rings the bell against inequality and denounces the unimaginable comforts and luxuries that the upper class enjoys. This gulf between the two is wider than it has ever been in India. The servants had to stay with their masters and were not allowed to leave them before a certain time (Khan, 2009, p.113). These restrictions were such that even the slaves in India might be considered kings in comparison to them which sum up his supposedly innate superiority over the West. Moreover, the English are portrayed as pinchpennies too who are not ready to give even a small sum of money to beggar, or a poor poet or a starving musician. These persons they have a great aversion to; and should one of them follow a coach he would not be able to soften the hearts of seated therein. In this way, the English are defined and represented as indifferent, callous and stone-hearted race who pay little or no heed to the needy among them.

4.6 The Exotic/Erotic gaze

Abu Taleb Khan’s direct and consistent cultural contact with the British women places him in a very advantageous position as compared to his European counterparts in the Orient/India where the socio-cultural strictures would not allow the access to the foreigners or strangers. On the other hand, during his stay in Britain his easy access and frequent interaction with the European women enables him to form a holistic socio-cultural picture of the West. In comparison, the British Orientalist had very

narrow and meager chances of interacting with the Oriental women thus putting them into a disadvantageous position to form a complete and holistic idea of the Oriental society. Although, this in itself lead to certain kind of Orientalized essentialisms about the Oriental women. As a result, the picture which was painted by the West/Occident or the Orientalists about the Eastern women was far from what was impartiality.

Fisher highlights that Khan's ability to genuinely draw a comparison between European and Asiatic women through his method of participation which "emboldened him to elevate himself above his hosts, and his culture above theirs" (Fisher, 2000, p.223). He seems to be trading on his exoticism when he describes how he was elevated to the title of a Persian Prince by his hosts. Otherwise, a bankrupt servant of the East India Company, Khan receives tremendous attention and respect from the host culture. In Lord Mayor's banquet, Khan and their national hero Nelson are seated together, and both are approached by the guests with bows and courtesies for them; For Nelson because of his victory of the Nile and for Khan for being the Persian Prince. In this way, Khan engaged himself in a kind of auto ethnography.

It is to be asserted that Khan produced his travelogues at the times when colonialism was taking its roots in India and had not won the Imperial identity so far. The implementation of the discourse of cultural superiority was yet to be launched in the metropolis. In this regard Fisher points out that the Indian travelers to Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were not, in fact, suffering from any kind of inferiority complex at all. They were quite loyal and content with their own customs, traditions

and values back home. It was rather observed and quoted that these scholars would engage in certain dialogues and advocate their religion, religious traditions and customs displaying, rather superiority over Others. The supposed superiority of the British as an imperial and colonial power never weakened their belief in their own set of systems. But it does not mean that the British cultural, political, social, scientific, technological and economic progress never impressed them. They had the realization that their own societies lacked the military, technological, economic and scientific advances that Europe had achieved far earlier than the Indians could even have thought about it (Ahuja, 2004. pp. 105-106). Sen points out that “their xenology thrived on differences and disjunctions in which the other was seen as equal to the self” (Sen, 2005, p. 52). It can be safely said that these travelers were pre-colonial not in the temporal sense but also in the sense of historicity and differentiation between the self and other. As far as the defining moment for the segregation of the communities was concerned, it was the 1857 that shaped the identities in different ways than before. It was the defining moment where the definite segregation of identities of the colonial self and the colonized other took place and this was the moment that led to the rise of the nationalist discourse and identity. Khan’s exposure to cross cultural interactions develops his insight and sharpens his understanding of both the cultures and resultantly, his account can be read as genuinely cross cultural. Although he was not well versed with English language in the beginning but along with his journey, his increasing knowledge of English initiated when he set off to Britain, also greatly facilitated his interaction with British society: His claim to have

improved and learnt English is made in these words. “In fact, after I had resided for a whole year in England ... [I] could speak the language a hundred times better than on my first arrival” (Khan, 2009, p. 53).

Khan consciously and wittingly writes about and even courts his own experiences regarding sexualisation; he turns back or reverses the Orientalists’ eye for the exotic and directs it onto the metropolis. This is evident when he willfully accepts the moniker of Oriental royalty that is bestowed upon him; he writes that some people opined that “I must be the Russian General. . . . ; others affirmed that I was either a German or Spanish nobleman; but the greater part agreed that I was a Persian *Prince*” (Khan , 2009, p.55) and Khan quite conveniently incorporates this within the identity that he willfully projects. Khan later adds that his poetic ability, the verses as well as the use of oriental imagery was discussed in the socio-literary circles of the upper class. He confesses that during his sojourn in London, he had one of the happiest times of his life and he gave himself up to love and gaiety as per the advice of Hafiz, the immortal poet of Persia. This shows that Khan represents a splitting of Orientalism’s hegemonic control of identity; here, it is the Oriental who retains definition of his own self and identity, by shaping the epistemological framework of Orientalism and then projecting it back upon the imperial centre.

In his portrayal of the European women Khan, in a patriarchal tone asserts that it is through their effective education system that the Europeans in general and the English in particular have restrained their women from the deviant ways and deeds. While drawing the parallel between the institution of education and that of the veil, he comments that “the

institution of the veil as a form of restraining an instigator of sedition and corruption” (Tavakoli-Targhi, 2001, p. 63). The Orientals and Europeans share the characteristic of constructing the images of each other’s women by not adhering to but rather divorcing the facts. James Morier, a nineteenth century diplomat in Iran observes that

the first questions put to me by my acquaintances in Europe, has ever been on that subject; and from the conversations I have had with Asiatics upon the same topic, both parties have universally appeared to entertain in their imaginations highest ideas of beauty of each others; women (Morier, 1818, p.39).

The above note shows that both the Orient as well the Occident perceive their women as the objects of eroticism and excite exoticism. The objects of male desire are the idealized women of the other. As far as the travelers or the journeymen are concerned, they sought the fulfillment of their unfulfilled fantasies and pursued exotic sex unobtainable at home. In the same fashion, a late nineteenth century Iranian traveler named Ibrahim Sahhafbashi is of the view that “Anyone who wrote a travelogue, exalted [Europe] and anyone who heard these reports desired [to visit] it (Tavakoli-Targhi, 2001, p.62) to return the gaze. The Europeans as well as the Persians share the characteristics of ethnocentrism and misogyny in their narratives about each other. The Europeans view the Oriental women as the isolated beings of harems, gynoeceum and saraglios whereas; the idea of the Europe in Oriental mind is that of an eroticized heaven on earth. The European women are considered as lascivious and licentious. The travelogues by the Persian writers are full of the stories showing the European women as such. He found them mixing up with men in the dance parties as well as in the masquerades exhibiting their sexual laxity. Earlier,

Khan wanted to learn English sciences but later on he abandoned the idea of learning in favour of love and gaiety. Later, on his return to India, he visited the shrines of Shiite imams Ali Husayn and Zayn al Abidin and sought their forgiveness for his sins in Europe (Khan, 2009, pp.262-263). This reveals that though he enjoyed and admired the promiscuity, licentiousness and wantonness of the Western women, yet his inner guilty self-compelled him to plead for forgiveness. It is quite interesting to note that objectivist posture, like remorse and guilt, helped the narrators to realign and reintegrate themselves with the natives. This reabsorption takes place after having eroticizing and exoticising experiences in Europe.

Both Persian and Europeans constituted the body of the other women as a site for sexual and political imagination. The politics and rhetoric over the issue of veil has been quite in fashion. The modernists usually would link the unveiling of the women with the uplift and progress of the community or the nation. In the same way, the same rhetoric was utilized by the women in their struggle for suffragette and participation in public life. The hospitality of the British is shown by Khan when he makes frequent references to the attention paid to him by his hosts/patrons and fellow dinners at the banquets where he was often invited. He makes full use of his distinction for being different than his hosts who are cast as cultural *Others*.

Khan, in his patriarchal Orientalist paradigm, considers education as the means to restraining the women from getting involved in deviant deeds. Education and veiling are seen as two distinct patterns that help in disciplining women. Thus, in Khan's narrative, even the Western women

are marginalized as he wants to save them from deviant deeds and wishes to discipline them too. Mirza Abu al Hasan comments that the European, especially English women are very beautiful as well as handsome. He further compares them with the women of other nationalities and writes that “I have seen best Georgian, Circassian, Turkish, Greek ladies-but nothing so beautiful as English ladies-all very clever-speak French, speak English, speak Italian, play music very well, sing very good-very glad for me if Persian Ladies were like them” (Smiles, 1891, p.148).

The European women are depicted with the tinge of eroticism engendering a wish for the celestial beings, heavenly beauties on earth and those fairy-like inhabitants who had been displaying their beauty and splendor. Khan, in many of instances ends up objectifying them, and defining them in nothing more than the terms of sensuality. His celestial epithets are reserved for the female body only as he says that “these angels made tea for us” (Khan, 2009, p.39). In this regard, Tavakoli observes that as far as the observation and the opinion of the early travelers was concerned, they had always portrayed Europe as heaven on earth. They always considered it as the birthplace of beauty, elegance and splendor. The attraction of Europe masqueraded the attraction to “hour-like”, “fairy-countenanced”, and “fairy-mannered” women of Europe” with “elegance of manners” (Khan, 2009, p. 55).

The unveiled women who appear in the public parks, markets, theatres and different parties deeply impress the Persian travelers who had never had any experience of seeing such a display of female beauty. It was only the Muslim heaven that could have equated the European environment

of male-female intimacy. Although, the existing colonial structures are not threatened or even shook by his presence at the center of imperialism, yet he is successful in escaping the labeling of promiscuity and eroticism placed upon him and successfully reverses towards the Westerners he encounters. After his arrival in South Africa, he was accosted by a large number of Dutch women who had snatched away his handkerchief. At this moment he makes a reference to the Turkish customs whereby this eroticism would be a precursor to the invitation and execution of sexual intercourse. It is quite surprising and in sharp contrast to the stereotypes that he was able to decline the offer, thus making it possible to subvert the generalizations and assumptions about the promiscuousness of the Orientals. On the other hand, he reverses the same Orientalist tropes by portraying the Western Women as licentious and sensual beings ready to sexualize. It is while describing his experiences that he comments about the Dutch women. According to Khan, he was quite unaware of the Dutch language and did not understand even a bit of it. However, through the gestures and gesticulation of the Dutch girls, it was crystal clear that while dancing they appeared so voluptuous that they seemed to have been inviting him. Initially he blushed and retired to other room in order to avoid the situation. "A part of these girls once attacked me; one of them, who was the handsomest and most forward, snatched away my handkerchief, and offered it to another girl of her own ageI withdrew it, and said I would only part with it to the *handsomest*" (Khan, 2009, p. 26). So, this time it was not the Oriental male but the Occidental female who was licentious, unrestrained and lustful.

However, Khan resists the tease by saying that he would only part with it to the Handsomest, “the laugh was turned against my fair antagonist, who blushed, and retreated to some distance” (Khan, 2009, p. 26) The above episode does not reveal at all that Khan has no inclination towards the sexuality or he refrains from it for one reason or the other. He never claims to be a saint nor an angel, but he decently displays agency the way his sexuality is portrayed. The above-mentioned incident is, in fact, an answer to those categorizations and dominant Oriental stereotypes that label him as unrestrained and lascivious as cited by Said and many other Orientalists in their research findings. In his study, *Empire and Sexuality* (1990), Ronald Hyam proclaims that, “Empire provided ample opportunities for sexual indulgence throughout the nineteenth century, though it was more obvious in frontier situations and the fighting services than in the settler communities” (Hyam, 1990, p.02). Khan’s travelogue represents a contrasting strain to the already existing narratives and historical accounts of colonial sexuality such as *Empire and Sexuality* by Hyam and Kenneth *Race, Sex, and Class Under the Raj* by Ballhatchet.

Like other Persianate travelers, Khan also makes immense use of the diction and figures of speech usually and traditionally employed in the Persian poetry. So, his descriptions of the European beauty involve the machination of the Persian literature. And though he may write an Ode to London, but it is set in the Eastern literary tradition and sensibility, as he says that he wanted to “compose the Ode, in imitation of Hafiz” (Khan, 2009, p.70). So, it’s the East that defines the metropolis, in its own language, in its own imagery and in its own literary tradition. Thus, in order

to indulge in the sensual pleasures in London he sought to justify his participation through Hafiz. In his Ode to London Khan describes the city as a place which may rightly be termed as a haven of sexual opportunity.

Henceforward we will devote our lives to London
And its heart-alluring damsels . . .
Adorable creatures! Whose flowing tresses,
Whether of flaxen or of jetty blue
Or auburn gay, delight my soul,
and ravish all my senses.
Whose ruby lips would animate the torpid clay,
Or marble statue
Had I a renewal of life, I would, with rapture,
Devote it to your service (Khan, 2009, p.70).

The Orientalist and Romantic imagery present a dominant image of the houris of the metropolis whose beauty surpasses the Orient and reminds the narrator of nothing less than the angelic faces of heaven. For him, he turns his exotic gaze at these damsels and objectifies them. While describing the objects of beauty Khan alludes to Oriental mythical characters and postulates that I am an impostor, if I had ever seen a woman like lady Palm in Europe and Asia. While these women have been mentioned in ancient myths, I have never seen one in real life. In his view the fairies of London were much more beautiful than the heavenly beauties, thus reaching heavens in the hyperbolic use of diction. Khan as well as his contemporaries objectify and falsify as much as the British and the Europeans did when cartographizing Asia and Africa. He writes that he had heard the description of the garden and inhabitants of paradise enough times, but it was only in London he had seen better than it many times. The city of London itself becomes the centre of Khan's affection and devotion.

No more in gardens, rivers, fields,
The wearied eye can find delight;

Henceforth each joy that London yields
Be ours – where beauty charms the sight ...
We thirst no more for golden fruits
That deck the trees of Paradise
Ye sure were form'd my soul to bless:
I gaze - and die as I behold (Khan, 2009, p.290).

Khan's use of the phrase, "die as I behold", is particularly very significant because it can be interpreted in different sexual connotations. London itself is described in such an imagery whereby it conflates with the "heart alluring damsel" where the erotic tension between the writer and women gets intertwined and interchangeable with the city. In this Ode the gaze of sexuality is reflected back on to the city and in this regard, Khan holds that the spectacle of propriety is always being challenged, threatened and thus needs to be restrained.

Khan, in his observation and analysis, does embed Orientalist tropes in the mode that he uses to contemplate on his host culture. He says that in the metropolis he enjoyed, in particular, the company of the women wherever he moved. He was greatly fascinated by the English ladies and their extensive banter was a treat for him. The elegance, beauty, charm, manners, and the demeanor had a great appeal for him. As he says that he always enjoyed all the luxuries that his heart could ever desire. Their viands and wines were delicious, exquisite and superb. The dance as well as the beauty of the women always delighted his heart and he felt rejoiced and jubilated. His imagination was always delighted while seeing the women and his soul was charmed with all the variety and music played around by those ladies (Khan, 2009, p. 63). The restraint that he displayed in his earliest encounter with the Dutch girls was long gone and was replaced by his sexist and often erotic remarks about the Western women.

It is apparent that Khan does not move around in Europe by enforcing Islamic strictures on himself. It is rather obvious that he enjoys all the bounties available to him. He is fascinated with the British women as well as the Christian culture of wine. He proved the toast of three London seasons and repeatedly recorded his twin intoxications, European female beauty and wine, both of which he indulged (citing Persian poet Hafiz for justification). However, since he himself was not only married but had approached fifty years, his links with the women were apparently not taken very seriously by either side except one beauty for whom he brought an abrupt end to one of his visits to former Governor General Warren Hastings, writing my desire was aroused by a fair beloved in London, so I could not be detained. It can be safely surmised that his interaction and relations with the British and European were not always purely sociological; therefore, he did not have a permanent attachment with almost any of them.

Khan had learnt during his stay in London that the priority of the British men goes for physical beauty, rather than to their morality. It leads him to consider the British as culturally inferior and suffering from moral decadence. To him the only function of the women in the British society was nothing else but sexuality and licentiousness which had made their life prostitutes-like in their culture. He wrote about their plight and superiority of the Asiatic women in his essay entitled as “Vindication of the Liberties of Asiatic Women” and proved that European women enjoyed much less freedom and respect as compared to the Asian women. Abu Taleb Khan expiated extensively on the pervasive want of chastity and extensive

licentiousness among the English generally. He described many unmarried cohabiting couples he noted and the vast number of prostitutes he observed throughout his stay there.

It is through his reverse ethnography that the metaphorical, literary as well as literal pictures are drawn which all negate the Oriental ontologies and epistemologies and casting a reverse gaze back upon the imperial metropolis. In one of his poems dedicated to Miss Garden he addresses the ascetics and writes that in the streets of London, there are hundreds of fairies who appear in blandishment. His poetic lines begin like,

To you, the ascetic, merry be the houris!
I am content with the face of miss Garden
With honey and apple, you deceive me like a child
But I am content with the gem and apple of the chin

(Tavakoli-Targhi, 2001, p.57).

The Persian imagery and the figures of speech are used to describe and appreciate the Occidental beauty. Khan, during his travels had immense opportunities to interact with European women whom he not only *defines and labels* but also presented them with all their sensual attractiveness. The imagery used in these poems belongs to Persian literature and the characterization is also typical reflecting the tradition of addressing the unnamed beloved in order to keep her identity secret. It must also be remembered that in the Persian tradition of literature, especially poetry, the beloved would always be addressed through different symbols and in certain cases even through neutralized genders. This, however, is still true not only about Persian literature but literature of the sub-continent as well, especially Indo-Arabic and Indo-Persian tradition. But contrary to that, in Europe, he wrote certain Odes which are dedicated to different ladies

whose names are also mentioned explicitly which shows that he had started absorbing the impact of English life, culture and literature all alike.

Khan's reaction towards the women is twofold; on the one hand he is shocked to notice the indifference of the ladies to their religion and religious connotations and on the other hand casts shows them as celestial beings. Discussing the former, he notices an irony in the addresses of the court workers and digs out the idiosyncrasies by writing that,

The conduct of these women is rendered still more blamable, by their hiring lodgings in, or frequenting streets, which from their names, ought only to be the abode of virtue and religion; for example, 'Providence Street', 'Modest Court', 'St. James's Street', 'St. Martin's Lane', and 'St. Paul's Church-yard' (Bronson, 1811, p.98).

On the other hand, he was very much infatuated with the beauty of the European females and wrote many poems in their honour. Since the language contained heavenly objects abandoned in favour of the physical love of the ladies, Mirza referred to them as "plunderers of heart and religion" (Tavakoli-Targhi, 2001, p.59), and feared to the great extent that many believers may convert for those objects of beauty. Since the operas, masquerades, theatres, dance parties and playhouses etc were the common and often visited places for the common people, but Mirza defined this experience as a "sensual employment" (Tavakoli-Targhi, 2001, p.59).

In this narrative, the power and right to gaze is assumed by the Oriental traveler who sexualizes the socio-cultural terrain and conquers it as well. His sexual adventures may not be taken to be in any kind of retaliation; however, he makes certain ambiguous and sugar coated references to the hospitality that was being offered to him. The specter of sexual desire and fulfillment is left to the reader to interpret and decode as

the description and narration is not explicit at times. Khan proclaims and confesses that in those parties he enjoyed every luxury his heart could desire. When spurning the invitation to visit Colonel Cockerell, Khan also recalls that prior “to my leaving London, Cupid had planted one of his arrows in my bosom, I found it impossible to resist the desire of returning to the presence of my fair one” (Khan, 2009, p.69).

In this recollection, there are majority of erotic exchanges described in the travelogue and they illustrate his willingness to actively pursue sexual gratification with English women at times of his interaction and selection to move ahead. It is within this paradigm that Khan can be viewed as echoing and reflecting Frantz Fanon’s provocative claim that sexual connections or liaisons between black men and white women disturbed the colonial power structure where Khan is quite able to “grasp white civilization and dignity and make them [his]” (Fanon, 1986, p.63). Khan subverts the sexual power structure of colonialism which by that time had subjugated the narrative(s) of the Indians and he actively pursues his erotic adventures and opportunities, and thus displaces another Orientalist narrative; that of the effeminate Indian native. The exchange and exploitation of sexual opportunities are reflected when he is shown asserting and delineating a process where he is in pursuit and in control of the adventures. His pursuits are endless and continue throughout his stay in Europe especially with the Londoner women.

Khan’s traveling, travel writing and ethnography in Europe and especially metropolis highlights a sensibility that is pre-colonial and which challenges both Orientalist discourse and its subsequent critique by Edward

Said analyzing it as a completely hegemonic framework. In the beginning, his initial project was to set up an academy which would be patronized by the Government, for instructing such of the English as were destined to fill important situations in the East, in the Hindustani, Persian and Arabic languages (Khan, 2009, p.104). It is therefore to be noted that Khan was not merely a visitor but was engaged in the process of political representation. In the whole process Khan undergoes transformation-from a colonial subject to the Persian Prince-that changes his positionality as well. Early in his narrative, his critique of the English is guarded, and he is keenly aware of his status as a colonial subject. Once he attains his title (which ironically, he never sought but was thrust upon him) his gaze is transformed to the critical and almost superior.

Mirza Abu Taleb's journey back home took him to about a dozen big cities of the world including Genoa, Malta, Istanbul, Mosul, Malta and Basrah etc. but as far as his favourite place was concerned it was always London which won all his favours. His comparison however is between his native city Lucknow and the Ottoman city of Baghdad. To him, Lucknow was certainly superior in terms of its manners and urbanization and its houses and famous buildings like those of the Pashas could not be compared with the houses of the middle classes of Lucknow. It was during his presence in France that he quit voyeurism and abandoned it for good. His disapproval goes like this when he says that he is not a moralist and is easily affected by the tempting situations round. He writes that he has lost the desire for the profession of voyeurism that he had in London signaling a transformation of his identity.

After his return to India Khan was disillusioned both by the colonizers as well as the colonized owing to the treatment that was meted out to him. While the colonizers were not considering him worthy of any position in the colonial administration, the native Indians found him unsuitable for any job because of his supposed proximity with the British. Moreover, he himself had raised his expectations to such heights which made it impossible for him to accept any lower post which he found utterly attractive. As a result, he died in relative poverty in 1806, thus, in Britain, Khan was distinguished in the highest circles, but in colonial India this distinction disqualified him. Nevertheless, Khan wanted his reflections to be spread throughout the Muslim world because he wanted them to understand and analyze the factors contributing in the development and uplift of the West. He wanted to educate the Muslims who were not aware of the developments taking place around the world. They had no idea that in the other part of the world (especially Europe), they had undergone tremendous changes. The education system of the children, the standards of living, the manners of the people, sciences, arts and all such areas had improved dramatically. These developments were the reasons of the prosperity of the Europeans.

But there were many practical considerations including the lack of resources on his part, the lack of interest on the part of the upper class and the indifference on the part of lower class. Therefore, he not only felt constrained but also very disillusioned and frustrated for quite some time. Nevertheless, Khan's travelogue "published articles and books had

especially wide audiences in India and Europe” (Fisher, 2004, p.105). He presents to his readers a vivid and graphic picture of the West.

Mirza Abu Taleb’s *Western Bound* was a result of his close observation of English society for three years. In his extensive travelling to England, Scotland, Ireland and France, Khan enjoyed the company of all levels of society with a misleading title, *The Persian Prince*, because of his dress and paraphernalia. He was addressed and recognized as a learned and experienced man well acquainted in the highest circles of England at that time. Even his portrait was painted by six different artists and was displayed in the exhibition of the Royal Academy in 1801. His socio-cultural exploration of the English society exposed him to many people of different ranks and classes who gave him an ample opportunity to highlight the positive as well negative Others. Whereas some people are praised for their “sense of honour, for a general wish to improve the condition of the people and for their plainness of manners” there were others who were criticized for “their lack of religious faith and contempt for the customs of other countries” referring indirectly to their Orientalist discourse developed by them (Ballhatchet, 1985, p.160).

His subversion of the Orientalist discourse and re-orientation of the colonial narratives led him to view Britain in a literary and metaphorical fashion that can be seen as a negation of the Orientalist epistemologies and ontologies. He also subverts the perception and understanding of Europe and challenges the European understanding of Indian social milieu. It was Edward Said who had indicated and enveloped the Orient without response. In this regard Khan can be viewed as post-colonial or post-Orientalist when

neither term had been conceived or coined. He was able to reverse the exotic and erotic gaze back upon the imperial metropolis, whilst exhorting the need for social cultures to be viewed relatively and out of the epistemic framework dictated to the Orient by the West.

Mushirul Hasan has also placed Khan's work within the Indo-Persian literary tradition. Hasan has argued for Khan's work to be analyzed through a twofold approach: The first one is the acknowledgement of it as a pioneering status; the second one is as a direct challenge to the assumptions of Orientalist dogma which put the realm of art purely within the Western episteme. Khan and such other writers were just as interested as British Orientalists in making the Other visible.

To conclude, Mirza Abu Taleb Khan's account casts the stereotypes of familiar Indian judgments on the English. These stereotypes range from socio-cultural to religious and even economic spheres of the Western life. As is described earlier in the catalogue of the Western defects, the West is described in two ways; what it lacks and what it ought not to have. For example, it lacks religious morality, chastity, contentment and magnanimity. On the other hand, it ought not to have misplaced vanity, (especially due to progress in the scientific and technological realms), irritability of temper, passion for accumulating material possessions, selfishness, hubris or haughtiness, and intolerant attitude towards others especially the biases towards the customs and traditions of others' ways of life.

He considers the West as a binary which leads him to defend the stereotypes coined by the Western episteme about the Oriental Women

and culture in general and assumes the 'responsibility' of answering and constructing the representative discourse about the Western women and culture in particular. His listing of their moral and ethical depravities in the qualifies it to be the Other of the East. He challenges the very base of Orientalist assumptions and expresses his censure for Jones' knowledge about India and Persian Grammar and deems his books as useless as children's toys. He also issues warning to the power structures of the West to abandon the wanton ways of voluptuous and luxurious life as the plight of the workers might bring about a change/disintegration similar to that of French revolution. So, it is through reversal of Orientalist tropes, exotic and erotic gaze, objectification of the women, and stereotypical discourses about the West that he portrays it as the Other of the East. Thus, the Orient writes back and does it emphatically.

Chapter Five

Seamless Boundaries by Lutfullah Khan

5.1 Introduction and background

This chapter opens with the discussion of milieu of the sub-continent before Lutfullah Khan's departure to the West. It also highlights the general notions developed by the East about the White people at that time. How, after he landed in the metropolis, his views undergo transformation about English language. How he perceives the West, its idea of Trinity, family institutions, culture and women in general. The discussion also involves the employment of different modes of perceptions that are not limited to the British only but extend to the European and American as well.

Lutfullah Khan, unlike Munshi I'tesamuddin and Mirza Abu Taleb, not only travelled later than both the above but also wrote in the most tumultuous of times in the history of the subcontinent. *Seamless Boundaries* was written and published "in the year of the great revolt of 1857" (Hasan, 2009, p. xv), when the sub-continent, after centuries of Muslims' rule was taken over by the East India Company for next ninety years of direct rule. It may be termed as "a watershed event in the history of British India" (Streets, 2001, p.85) that was being witnessed and documented by Lutfullah Khan in his travel writings. The "original title of the travelogue was 'autobiography of Lutfullah Khan, a Mohamedan gentleman; and his transactions with his fellow creatures': it was published by Smith, Alder, and Co. in London in the year of the 1857 revolt and this travelogue is a treasure as well as rarity in literature" (Hasan, 2009, p.viii).

It is interspersed with remarks on the habits, customs, and character of the people with whom he had to deal. The present title ‘Seamless Boundaries’ is given to this travel writing by Mushirul Hasan a scholar and editor of the *Three Travel Narratives*.

Seamless Boundaries, Images of the West and *Western Bound* have a remarkable cross-linking and these texts present a holistic picture of the European society, traditions, norms and cultural artifacts. One distinctive characteristic that distinguishes him from his above-mentioned predecessors is that he directly wrote in English whereas Khan and I’tesamuddin’s works were translated by the native as well as non-native speakers of English. The travels of Munshi I’tesamuddin were translated by James Edward Alexander and *Western Bound* was translated into English by Charles Stewart but Lutfullah Khan’s *Seamless Boundaries* was a direct product by the author himself in English. In this way, the readers don’t have to rely on the *translations* and the possibility of interpolations is minimized.

Lutfullah Khan’s *Seamless Boundaries* has been an under-researched area and it seems quite strange that the historians and Scholars like Michael Fischer and Gulfishan Khan who have written about Mirza Abu Taleb Khan and Munshi I’tesamuddin etc. have chosen to ignore it altogether. Hasan writes that such omission by the scholars is quite strange “for even though time separated Khan and Lutfullah, they shared many ideas and feelings about the West” (Hasan, 2009, p. ix). Mujeeb Ashraf highlights the significance of this text by writing that the travelogue was written in a simple and direct way and it can be safely said that it was the

first among the best travelogues in the history of the subcontinent and it was “not only the first but almost the best autobiography by any Indian in English” (Mujeeb, 1967, p.497) in the form of an autobiography written by an Indian in the language of the colonizers. This is so because this narrative, like its two predecessors’, acquaints the readers with all the important places, people, customs, traditions, sites and scientific and technological developments paving the way for the much-celebrated industrial revolution in England. Moreover, the very thesis of the above-mentioned texts is not only cross-linked but intersects, thus providing reinforcement to “India’s encounter with the West” (Hasan, 2009, p. ix). The importance of the exploration of such neglected/hidden texts is further increased when the scholars like Alastir Bonnet hold that “we are familiar with the West and yet, this does not mean that we know much about it” (Bonnet, 2004, p. 06).

Lutfullah is a Persian name which means the favours and bounties of God. He was born in 1802 exactly the same year when Abu Taleb Khan was on his sojourn to Europe. His father belonged to the family of Sufis in Malwa province and he died when Lutfullah was just four years old. The family had been counting on the lands bestowed to them by Sultan Mahmud Khalji but with the conquest of Malwa in 1723 when, after the reign of Aurangzeb, to the Marathas, not only they lost the lands but also the allowance granted to them by the government (Hasan, 2009, p.x). While referring to their family affairs and the wrath of the rulers they were subjected to, he himself writes in his autobiography *Seamless Boundaries* that “the light of the day was withdrawn and the shadow of the night had

gathered around them” (Hasan, 2009, p.x) and they were reduced to destitution. Resultantly, their plight was deplorable and his father’s demise had put them in a disadvantageous position further worsened by the co-sharers of property (their relatives) who were “unceasing in their endeavours to compass our destruction” (Khan, L. 2009, p.03).

Khan’s childhood was dynamic and by the age of eight he had already acquired substantial knowledge about the Holy Quran, mastered the grammar of Arabic language and had gained proficiency in Persian language. His love for Persian literature is manifested by his fondness for Sheikh Sadi; a Persian legendary poet. As for as English is concerned, Khan learnt it by his consistent reading of J.B.Gilchrist who was a Scottish Orientalist and had contributed in the form of Hindustani Grammar, Persian Text books and Hindustani dictionary. Moreover, his study of Shakespeare, Byron, and Gibbon also acquainted him with the literary traditions and philosophical disposition of the West. It also introduced him to the customs, manners and traditions of the Western as well as Russian societies. His mastery of the above quoted fields is reflected by the comments from an English political Agent James Erskine who is quoted to have said that Khan is not only an expert on the Oriental languages like Persian, Gujarati, Hindi and Marathi but also treasures “great knowledge of structure, idiom, and the intricacies of English language that is only a domain of the few Orientalists (Hasan, 2009, p. x). Similarly, the Assistant Resident of Sindh W.J.Eastwick referred to Khan’s acumen for knowledge and learning by saying that he displays an “ardent desire of knowledge and indefatigable industry in its pursuit” (Hasan, 2009, p. xi). Khan’s

knowledge was not based on reading the books only, but his travels had largely contributed in giving him an insight into the socio-political, economic and literary affairs of the world. His exploitation of Urban morphology, grasp on the local as well as international affairs of that time, and informative voyages both native as well as abroad, widened his horizon and equipped him with all the skills and expertise that was required to survive in the competitive world of the nineteenth century. His journeys throughout India familiarized him with different flavors of the society, for example, during his journey towards Gohad, he encountered a thug named Juma Khan who was a horrible man. He asked Khan to join his band guessing that Khan was no more than a mercenary himself and had no acquaintances in the world (Singha, 1993, p. 108), however, he declined the offer.

Lutfullah Khan's status as a Munshi gave him remarkable position at the helm of affairs in the Indian service of the Company where especially by the end of the eighteenth century the company "relied heavily on the Indian Munshis and elite languages of the Mughal state" (Trakulhun, 2017, p. 182), because of their knowledge of Persian and familiarity with the conventions of the court. However, in the later part of the nineteenth century, the Company started relying on the British personnel and it endeavoured to "constrict the authority of the Indian officials to a merely supportive role" (Fisher, 1990, p.419). Moreover, the attitude of racial superiority of the British towards their Indians Munshis as well as all the Indians in general also prevailed and the Munshis were suspected of

dishonesty and temptation because of their intermediary role between the court and the company's Resident.

The first ever journey that Lutfullah undertook was under the guardianship of his uncle during his early childhood. The family, tired of the sufferings consequent upon poverty, resolved to go to Baroda in order to find out the means of livelihood. He describes the journey by stating that this was my first travel and the curiosities of nature and sweetly fragrant breeze of the woods refreshed my mind. The scenes of mountains, brooks, rivers, greenery and multitude of flowers on the way and the melodious chirping of the birds enchanted my mind and soul (Khan, L.2009, p.20). After a short stay in Baroda and Ujjain, Khan moved to Agra to avoid the wrath and maltreatment by his stepfather. He fled with a loaf of bread, the divan of Hafiz Shirazi (a Persian poet) and the Holy book of the Muslims. When he was twelve, he was offered a job as an apprentice with a Hindu physician named Hakim Rahmatullah Khan. After a short-lived stay in the capital, he returned to Ujjain and starting developing acquaintances with the British army men that he encountered there. Khan's visit to Deccan in 1818 proved to be a failure and all his hopes to ascend in life were dashed to the ground. All he could manage was a minor job in the East India Company initially but later he was offered a better and respectable position by Lieutenant B. MacMohan.

By that time Khan had started his career as a multi-lingual teacher dealing in Persian, Arabic, Hindustani and Marathi languages taught to the British officers freshly arriving from Great Britain. Although Khan worked in different fields and professions, it was, however, "as a teacher that

Lutfullah spent the best part of his life” (Ashraf, 1982, p. 220). Khan claims that his students hailed from different backgrounds and professions but when it came to their performance, he states that none of my scholars returned unlaureled or unsuccessful from the Government examination committees (Hasan, 2009, p. xiii). Khan had tutored more than a hundred students and his dossier was full of certificates appreciating his contribution towards the linguistic development of the British officers. Khan never stayed idle and kept moving to Satara Surat, Sholapur and Ajmer. It was because of his services as a teacher and partly his preference for the English culture and its artifacts that he received yet another letter of appreciation from the political agent of Kattiawar. In the letter he was highly praised and acknowledged as the valuable asset for the British government because of his “acquaintance with the European character and, and his contempt for the follies and deprivations of the natives of India” (Khan, L.2009, p.137). The letter thus contains the superiority of the European culture, race and descent and the generalization is made for Asiatics, as the people full of follies and foibles and not capable of showing character like the Europeans. This Orientalist assumption and cultural superiority is further reinforced when he writes that Khan’s ability, integrity and veracity are incomparable with his “equals among those of pure Asiatic descent” (Khan, L.2009, p.137). The attitude of the British towards the Indians varied considerably and the terms of communication between the British and the Indians depended largely on the socio-economic class of both. In particular, the British who were serving in the colonies based their perceptions on the ideas such as race, colour and creed. Therefore, they identified the

Oriental, especially Indians, under different categories like Asiatic, Oriental, East Indian and Indian etc. in order to maintain the distinction of being the colonizer. It is evident in the recommendation /reference letter issued by Eastwick as well. Thus, the superiority complex brings colours, race, as well as culture in the marking of the identity. The binaries are weaved, and two different entities are compared whereby the sweeping statements are superficial, generalizations are made to construct the representative narratives for Indians. It belittles the culture of the Indians and represents them as an inferior class who look up to the European character for imitation. This realization and acknowledgement of being the Indian and the British or Asiatic and Occidental is tantamount to being inferior and superior in their own cultural domains.

Lutfullah's journey to the West started in 1844 when he accompanied Mir Jafar Ali Khan to England. They journeyed through Ceylon and reached England in mid May 1844 and reached the Southampton docks. In England, Lutfullah Khan and others were received courteously, and they had their meetings with many dignitaries throughout their stay there. His travelogue presents a unique picture of the British customs, culture and civilization and he shares his observations about the sights and sounds around him there. His visit served as a source of information as well as knowledge by visiting and learning about all the museums, galleries, hospitals, different societies and meetings with many men of letters like the Saiyid Aminuddin Ali, the Ambassador of Turkey for Britain etc. He remained utterly busy with his itinerary packed from dawn to dusk with his sight-seeing, parties, visits and amusement

gatherings. Lutfullah Khan left England in October that year and arrived in India in November, proceeded to Surat via land route and reached home on December 5, 1844. Not much is known about his life thereafter except that he lost his wife in 1847 and a few months later he remarried in the family of Nawab of Surat's family. Khan's narrative is a blend of personal autobiography as well as the Travel writing "which helped to shore up the public perceptions" (Donovan, 2006, P. 40) of the Victorian era England as imagined and understood by the Orient.

In his travelogue, Khan gives a glimpse of the various British social, political, economic, educational and cultural institutions. His and his predecessors like Khan and Itesamuddin's descriptions of the British life and manners represented Britain not only for the Indians but for British themselves. Their relevance for the Indian readers was created by informing them as what and how could they avoid, anticipate, imitate and practice while for the British readers they offered certain counter-narratives, approvals or disapprovals of certain views and recommendations for reforms in different areas.

Lutfullah Khan's predilection to the learning and acquisition of languages enabled him to write this autobiography in English and hence avoided many interpolations that the politics of translation involves. His first encounter (during adolescence) with English language took place in Ujjain where he heard many British soldiers speaking to each other in their native language. It aroused curiosity in him and he resolved to employ and translate his irresistible desire to learn English and speak like the native speakers do. It was merely in three to four days that he managed to learn

about thirty-seven words in English and it paved his way to master the language with all the intricacies and subtleties. His internal motivation and exposure with the English-speaking community provided him with the opportunities to excel both in jargon as well as accent. He writes that owing to his mastery over the skills of English language his English friends would invariably and insistently inquire me about his parents supposing that either both or one of them must be English. Khan claims that this was so because of my excellent skills in reading, writing and speaking skills and to them, my expertise and native like accent distinguished me from the rest of the Indians and held me get closer to the White people (Khan, L. 2009, p. 120). Khan was eulogized for his English proficiency skills because he was self-tutored and had no formal training or learning session altogether and it was generally edited, approved and praised by Eastwick who commended its style, accuracy and presentation in succinct manners' (Hasan, 2009, p. vii).

Lutfullah Khan's autobiography can be divided into two sections; In the first and major part the focus is laid on the advent, coercive control and rise of the colonizers in the sub-continent whereas the second part deals with Khan's troublesome and agonized journey to the epitome of the colonial masters. He says that it was a hard journey and many a times he felt very uncomfortable and tired of being tossed up and down (Khan, L. 2009, p.196) because of the ebb and flow of the tides in the vast sea. Even in the very beginning of his travelogue, like Itesamuddin and Khan, he found the weather to be very upsetting. It was very harsh and the night and the next morning were as bad as the preceding day and it caused a very uncomfortable situation for Khan and the other travelers alike (Khan, L.

2009, p.195). The harshness and severity of weather and the indifferent attitude of the white co-travelers has been the subject of the other writers like Itesamuddin and Mirza Abu Taleb Khan as well. Unlike the *Images of the West* and *Westward Bound, Seamless Boundaries* comprehensively explores the happenings in the sub-continent and at the tail end of autobiography dwells upon the socio-political, religio-cultural and technological innovations of the West. However, the travelers-cum-authors of the above narratives, as Hasan writes, contribute to the idea of the West by reflecting on the general and holistic processes of Europe. Therefore, they may be credited of possessing the degree of autonomy from Orientalist's discourse and are regarded as credible architects of the non-Western representations of the West.

5.2 The cultural and religious Others

In this backdrop where multi-lingual, religious and multi-cultural communities were dwelling for centuries there were many stereotypes and representative narratives developed about the Christians who had yet to make their grounds. Even before the advent of the White people in India, the natives' perceptions about them varied labeling and representing them exotic, aliens, sub-humans, Others and having detestable skins. Khan's encounter with the European priest for the first ever time not only aroused his superstitions but also held them as true. It was in the beginning of his journey from Juria to harbor when he saw the priest. His perception and defining the Other was coloured by the pre-conceived notions held by the Indians about their Others who were classified as detestable. It was held among the Indians that seeing a European/Christian priest in the beginning

of the journey always resulted in a bad omen and in Khan's case it proved to be true as he missed the tide to set off for his journey (Khan, L. 2009, P. 141). He writes that "it is unlucky for a traveler to see a priest at the time of starting on his way and it proved to be so in my case" (Khan, L. 2009, P. 141). There were many strange stories weaved about them showing them as dehumanized figures who were abominably white because they had a membrane and not the proper skin to cover their body. Khan writes that they were also adept in the art of magic and therefore would be successful in all their enterprises and undertakings. The magico-mysterious qualities attributed to the Orient by Orientalists were being tossed back to them through reversal of such stereotypes. Being the Christians, they believed only in Jesus Christ and not in the teachings of Islam. But as far as their book Bible was concerned, they would not follow its teachings either but rather had managed to do many interpolations in the original text to serve their worldly ends (Khan, L.2009, pp.18-19). The Christian discourse on the status of Jesus Christ is also, to Khan, erroneous because "some make him their God, others the son of God and yet others one of the three persons of their trinity" (Khan, L.2009, p.13). Khan maintains that since there are different narratives about the religious signifier, therefore its correctness is under question thus turning into an erroneous version about Christ.

The lack of religious centrality and the divisions among the different versions, though stressed by Khan, hardly affected the state of affairs of the colonizers because now their social and political endeavours are hardly governed by the religious fountainhead rather it is all managed by their King and Parliament and not by the Church. All the above

constructions portray the white people or the Christians as ‘physical others’ or ‘exotics’, proving the two different worlds of *us* and *them*. While the world of *us* was religious, civilized, cultured and progressive, the world of *them* was all about lacking the religious morality and practicing cannibalism because it is also reported by Khan that people were told that in the cases of extremity, these strange people coming to India would eat everything including the human flesh (Khan, L.2009, pp. 18-19). It had been neither observed nor tested by any means, but these kinds of stories were crafting the images showing the newcomers as despicable and abominable beings.

The lineage and legacy of the revealed religions often thought of as a strong bond between Christians and Muslims was turned apart by stating that the Christians were not the monotheists rather they were the polytheists who believed in the trinity which means that they had made three gods for themselves, instead of one - the only omnipotent being - in a sharp contrast to the teachings of their first commandment: and in all their absurdity, they would imagine their God having a wife and children and also begetting a son as well (Khan, L.2009, p. 19). These reports were widespread even before these people had seen or encountered the white people on their grounds. Khan says that these and such other tales were common among the people and he and his uncle were very anxious to come across these people so that they could question them about their *supposedly* erroneous belief system. But till that time none of those Europeans had descended down to their city. Hasan endorses the point by saying that as far as colonizers’ presence was concerned only some groups of the Muslims were

hostile, indifferent and resentful towards the British. It is perhaps because of this reason that the British survived in India for more than a century. As far as the administration of justice was concerned, Khan seems to be challenging the very notion of justice in his own case. This is so because he was employed on the post of district clerk in the service of the East India Company with the written promise that if he remained loyal and faithful servant, his rise in the career would be certain. But to his dismay, just after the service of four months, he received an order from headquarters which surprised him like a shot striking a bird because he was dismissed from his service with immediate effect. The most ironical part of the order ascertained his performance by saying that he had conducted his services for the company to the great satisfaction of the sublime government. All his loyalty and faithfulness were in vain and he had to forsake his job for good.

Although there were many imaginative representations about the British in the mind of Khan, his first real encounter translated those imaginative stereotypes into reality long before he took the journey to Europe. He shows his astonishment and writes that he was quite surprised by noticing the presence of the English in the whereabouts of his dwelling. He adds that "One morning as I was walking in the city to divert myself, I saw four white men, two of them on horseback and the other two walking with them" (Khan, L.2009, p. 22). The first and foremost important point is that these four men are having only the racial identity and they are shown as nameless figures. After perceiving them as strange white beings, the first thing he avoids is to greet them with Islamic way of saying "Asalam O Alikum" meaning 'peace be upon you (Khan, L.2009, p. 22). He later

defines that since they were infidels, he could not greet them with such sacred Islamic words. It reverberates the story of a poetic genre by Kipling who was writing about the Indian runner delivering the mail. The marginalization of “The Overland Mail is not given any name of his own, save that of the important baggage he delivers” (McLeod, 2000, p. 61). Moreover, it also echoes *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe where the colonizers were not only called Albinos but were also referred to as abominable. Achebe writes that “the world has no end, and what is good among one people is an abomination with others, as we have albinos among us” (Achebe, 1978, p. 122). Thus, Achebe equates the White colonizers with abominable people, creating the binary of *Us* and *Them* and portraying them as outcasts even before their encounter.

In the following events, Khan finds and matches their complexion with the pre-heard and preconceived notions about them, therefore, when he notices them, he finds them exactly corresponding to what he had already heard (Khan, L.2009, p. 22). As far as their language is concerned, though Khan cannot decipher anything owing to his unfamiliarity with English, he finds it harsh and wild thus divorced from the civilized discourse. The acoustic effects being unpleasing, the conversation was reduced to babbles. So, not only were they seen as physical others, outcasts and ‘not like us’ but they were also shown incapable of performing communicative acts. Their appearance, outlook and gait were also immodest, scanty and out of the bounds of decency (Khan, L.2009, p. 22). This being brought forward to depict them as *culturally others* and not sharing anything with the invaded or colonized territories as well as

demography. Khan's gaze finds them rather alienated and marginalized. The foreigners who were considered as intruders were unworthy of communication owing to their being different and Others. The religious fervor and piety being dominating in Khan, therefore he, consciously or unconsciously, halts and deems it sacrilegious to utter the sacred and customary salutations for them as they were 'religious others' as well.

There was a considerable difference between Khan's perception of the English in India at the earliest stage and how he perceived them when he visited them in England. As already written above, even before their arrival in India they were regarded as outcasts, exotic, Others and sub-human or de-humanized etc. This perception, with slight variations, persisted even after they had several frequent physical encounters with the local population. It is however to be noted that unlike his predecessors like Mirza Abu Taleb and Munshi I'tesamuddin, Khan's visit was not very long enough. Therefore, he had fewer chances to embrace all aspects of British life and thus his coverage is narrow but not inconsequential. Nevertheless, his stay though relatively short, was full of opportunities which he utilized to the fullest to understand the British life and cultivate the relationships with the nobility and the common people as well. Like his predecessors he "constituted Europe as an object of analysis and gaze" and authored important texts for the production of knowledge about the Farangi-Other (Tavakoli-Targhi, 1991, p.18). It was perhaps also his objective to (re)discover and (re)imagine the West and highlight the similarities, differences, concord and discord with the East as far as possible. Since the colonization of India had already started, therefore the West was

constituted as a political, cultural and religious adversary and diverse images and “religious based stereotypes” of Europeans were constructed” (Tavakoli-Targhi, 1991, p.40). These representative texts and narratives further endorsed and reinforced the already existing texts, narratives, representations and stereotypes of the West by the Easterners. As far as his exposure to the British society, culture and life is concerned, he had a great exposure to all these and Hasan writes in his introduction to the autobiography that during his stay, he interacted with royalty, including the Queen and the Prince Consort, and met scholars like “John Shakespeare, author of Hindustani Dictionary . . . poets, writers, painters, surgeons, scientists, and retired civil servants . . .and visited many sites in London”(Hasan, 2009, p. xvii), a city of twenty lakhs that contained the riches of the whole world.

5.3 The Indianized perceptions of the Others

Khan’s first impression, however, about the colonial centre was that it was all under the spell of ‘iron mania’ because iron was used excessively. Whatever he saw or wherever he went, it would be iron catching his attention first. He says that, the country, we felt convinced, must have some inexhaustible mines of this {iron} metal, which is so essential for the people; because apart from the bridges, iron was used profusely in all sorts of constructions (Khan, L.2009, p. 212). He also visited the East India Company’s headquarters where his patriotic emotions were triggered, and he thought of them as the usurpers who had managed to overthrow the Mughals and had got hold of his motherland. The images of autocratic rule, dictatorial control and usurpation of the foreign lands is manifested in his

narrative when he writes that ‘this is the place where the fate of his motherland is decided by a couple of dozen people’ while ironically, the colonizers’ own country “was not more than a small island which was not more than a small mole on the body of a human being” (Khan, L.2009, p. 212). The geographical littleness of England highlighted above seems to be ushered in by Khan because he himself comes from a place which, in comparison to England, is far too wide, big and magnanimous in terms of its geographical size and demography. It is ironic that the transcendental signifier that he holds responsible for the colonization of the sub-continent is the very element which deems the Muslims superior and the Christians as inferior on the basis of religion. If this time the will of God is with the colonizers, it is not with them in temporal, historical and religious terms. However, he disparagingly remarks that the Christians seemed “to have fallen into various erroneous opinions respecting the prophet Jesus Christ” (Khan, L.2009, p. 13). At another occasion he writes that as the tales of the Christians were spread around India, he and his uncle “wanted particularly to see some of these people and to question them on their erroneous religion” (Khan, L.2009, p. 19). This all proves that no matter how superior the colonizers considered themselves, all their transcendental signifiers, the narratives and meta-narratives and the teachings of the scriptures was based on mere fictitious tales signifying nothing but a pack of lies for Khan and his fellow beings. As far as the reasons for the colonial usurpation were concerned, unlike Khan, Lutfullah Khan attributed them to the will of God because no other explanation sounded logical to him since the colonizers had owned nothing but a small island from where they were controlling the

reigns of their colonial government in India. On the other hand, Khan considered industrialization as one of the major factors behind the political supremacy of the British whose empire would not see the sunset owing to its huge expansion.

Khan's exploration of the British life and literary tastes was full of socio-cultural and multi-lingual shocks. It was customary that all the foreign visitors were occasionally invited to ballrooms, theaters, concerts and masquerade parties sponsored by the nobility and the upper-class European ladies and gentlemen (Tavakoli-Targhi, 2001, p. 55). In such gatherings the intimacy of two genders would appear quite unusual to them, often resulting into a cultural shock. It is perhaps for the same reason that Khan's experience of visiting an Italian Opera does not please him at all. So, when he saw the actresses they appeared to be "dressed indecently . . . and during their dances, their gowns flew up to the forbidden heights . . ." (Khan, L.2009, p. 213). This is so because back home, in their cultural ambiance he was used to seeing women who would be veiled especially in the open public gatherings let alone that she would be found dancing on the stage with other women or men in front of audience gathered to see the particular show. To him, the basic purpose of the dance and Opera seemed to be tantalizing the whole assembly and nothing else. Since he is unfamiliar with the cultural signs and signifiers of Europe, he translates his observations and analyses them in his Indo-Muslim prisms. The display of women in public sphere was found to be exotic, erotic and eccentric in the orbit of gender relations in Europe. That's how their discovery and rediscovery of Europe would take place. His description of the lower

classes especially the artisans in the Opera is given in a rather disparaging way. Although he does not vow to represent or not to represent the Britains yet he presents them as crude, xenophobic, and dangerously sexual. It is perhaps for the same representations that Lutfullah Khan appears censorious and titillated who exhibits Euro-eroticism of many elite male visitors. The worst part of it all was that they had understood nothing because of the linguistic barriers. These linguistic limitations in this case stemmed out of the Italian language which Lutfullah and his fellows were not familiar with. However, the barriers in the discourses of the East and the West existed even when there was a familiarity with the language. This is evident when Khan attends the lecture in Asiatic society where the governor made the speech. Although Lutfullah knew English very well yet, he was unable to comprehend even a single point because “his lordship used a language too high for a foreigner to follow” (Khan, L.2009, p. 213) revealing the gap and gulf existing between the discourses of the East and the West. This leads further to the point which reduces Eastwick’s recommendation and appreciation letter for Khan as redundant in which he had stated that his [Lutfullah’s} potential and knowledge made him superior to his fellows of Asiatic descent and equal to his European fellows (Khan, L.2009, p. 137).

Since the visitors were unfamiliar with the culture and languages of Europe, therefore, it would be difficult for them to comprehend, understand and analyse the scenes presented or dramatized on the stage. Thus, unable to decode the cultural signs of an exotic civilization, they would interpret the observed scene by displacing it onto their familiar cultural environment. One such incident that reflects the (mis)interpretation of the cultural signs

and signifiers develops a farcical situation for Khan when he notices two young men who were very well dressed with “ashes sprinkled over their heads” (Khan, L.2009, p. 211) which lead him to believe that there might have had been a mourning going on in that house. However, upon inquiry from his host Mr. Scott, Khan came to know that it was an old tradition rooted deep in their culture of powdering the hair that was being practiced by them. However, he says that because of his naivety, Scott “laughed at my beard” (Khan, L.2009, p. 211) and Khan felt overwhelmed by the wonders and curiosities surrounding the life there everywhere for him. It provokes him to conclude that the English customs, traditions, manners, language, ways of living and the constitutional developments are way too different from the Oriental societies. In this way the readings of the Western culture were immersed in the politics of self-perception. Whatever they observed and said about the Other was in fact also an utterance about self as well. So, it becomes evident that if at all, Khan admires the British, either in India or in England; his admiration does not go uncritical. There can be seen a hidden and obscure tension between the Western world view, culture and life on the one hand and his own customs, traditions, and culture on the other hand (Hasan, 2009, p. xix). In Said’s words, to overlook or generally discount the complementing and intersecting knowledge of the Orientals as well as that of the Westerners, the association of cultural and social territories where the colonizer and colonized coexisted and battled through the means of projections and rival geographies, narrative accounts and histories, is to miss what is fundamental about the world (Said, 1994, p.20). Khan also offers the

conflicting and not all eulogizing views of the Western world and its socio-cultural, religious and civilizational terrains.

It seems quite unusual that in the beginning of the colonization when the British appeared on the Indian soil, it was not their presence, conquest or colonization that was challenged in this narrative. It was rather their skin, race, language and faith which aroused the curiosity of the natives who would seek opportunities to have a glimpse of these infidels. It appears so when Lutfullah himself encounters them and although he salutes them by raising his hand to the forehead but does not greet them in the Islamic way by saying “Assalamun alaikum” (Khan, L.2009, p. 22) because to him, only the true believers, like Muslims, were qualified and entitled to such salutation and not the infidels. Moreover, in another instance, Lutfullah engrosses in an argument over their belief in trinity. He repudiates them by challenging this concept and writes that “most absurd of all, they attributed to the Almighty God having wife and children” (Khan, L.2009, p. 19). This belief leads them to defining further relations with God, thus, considering themselves as children and their prophet as the son of God. On the political front very few observations or remarks have been made about the colonization process. Khan observes that the compromise of the political sovereignty of India resulted out of sheer incompetence of the local incumbent establishment. To him, had Akbar’s successors been “half as wise as himself, it would not have been the fate of the country to be ruled by the foreigners” (Khan, L.2009, p. 46). Their presence however was felt when the locals themselves became strange and stripped of their identity when to their “great annoyance” they were searched thoroughly

and minutely as if they were rather the foreigners with questionable identity (Khan, L.2009, p. 49). The process of trade starting from the reign of Jehangir⁶ resulted into turning the traders as masters while the subjects became strangers in their own land.

The Asiatic and European dresses, when compared by Khan, reflect the underneath Otherness contriving two different worlds of the East and the West. To him, the Asiatic garb, apart from covering the body, commands respect, is useful and pragmatic. There are “many other advantages derived from it, which, if described, would take up time and space unaffordable here” (Khan, L.2009, p. 65). The pragmatism and utility of the coat may be seen in using it as a bed if need be and the dopatta can be used as a tent to safeguard from the broiling sun heat. The turban can be conveniently used in order to save the life of a thirsty traveler in the woods or deserts and as an added advantage could be used as a bandage as well (Khan, L.2009, p. 65). The dress is associated with the aesthetic, moral, socio-cultural and geographical compulsions of the East only and no due consideration is granted to the cultural, moral, social, aesthetic and geographical necessities of the West. The East, with all its incumbent values, is given the centrality and the authority to perceive, judge, analyse and define the West which ought to look as the East wants it to look. The religious verdicts or commandments are not quoted in support of the Asiatic dress because it was on the basis of the East-West division and not as Muslims-Non-Muslims basis which triggered such arguments.

The Western attire, on the other hand, is described as the “patchful light pieces of dresses” with the hat that attracts and does not repulse the

heat (Khan, L.2009, p. 65). In Khan's view their dress is neither impressive nor does it have any utility. He undermines the choice of the dress by the West and unleashes his taunts. He seems to be overlooking the geographical and climatic inevitabilities commanding the sartorial choices of the West. This observation by Khan is not devoid of the politics of representation. As a result, the reaction of the British on seeing the Indians is reported by Fisher who writes that "The British mob gaze and laugh at the barbaric crowd in feminine garb" (Fisher, 2004, p.416) implying the effeminate outlook of the colonized in the metropolis. Thus, the whole episode was reduced to an Oriental farce and not a contributory factor to the honour of the Indians. The realization of the differences in outlook, however, is not peculiar to Lutfullah Khan or the Asians because the gaze was returned to Khan and his mates when they travelled to England and "were not only gazed at by all with curiosity but followed by a crowd" (Khan, L. 2009, p.210) as well. But Khan had already bought himself a Turkish suit in order to avoid the gaze of the Westerners when he landed there. Therefore, he felt safe and secure from all the curious questioning and exotic looks surrounding him wherever he moved. (Khan, L. 2009, p.210).

Fisher holds that during the 1st half of the nineteenth century many Britons began to regard Oriental Quarter as an alien presence in the imperial capital owing to their socio-political and cultural differences emerging through commercial relationships between the center and the periphery. On the other hand, the position and reception of an Indian in British society largely depended on individual as well as collective

background (Fisher, 2007, p. 1703). Although, the fact remains that the influx of the Indians could not be controlled because of imperial commerce and they kept flowing to the West. The exoticism and strangeness of the Indians is stressed on the one hand but on the other hand, the West is shown to be intolerant of the others. It is evident when the Indian guests staying in the Union Hotel were looked upon by the curious natives as one of the seven wonders of the world mainly because there were a different race, clad with non-European and non-Britain dresses, looked strange and didn't belong there in the imperial center. Their very identity that they were carrying as Indians was shaken and they not only tried to hybridize it (as was done by Lutfullah by switching to Turkish dress) but they also became reactionary in their frantic attempts to gaze back at them and hurl with the help of abuses and anger towards them. This over curiosity of the White people was, in fact, aimed at threatening and alienating them because they gathered, followed and pushed them to their hotel without giving them space for shopping and they retreated "with a mob at their heels" (Khan, L. 2009, p.210). The crowd was so threatening that it ensured the voicing of its resentment and antipathy by surrounding them and shouting Hurrah to intimidate them further. Thus, the European Others are portrayed by Khan as unrestrained, uncivilized, uncontrollable and thus a potent danger to the existence, being and identity of the Indians. It is for these reasons that in their reaction the Indians also shout back at them disparagingly and counterbalance their antipathy by calling them "over-curious white devils" (Khan, L. 2009, p.210). The whole farce leads Khan to label them as Others by referring disparagingly to their racial otherness. Khan stood safe among

them because he had already arranged a Turkish attire which was in cultural proximity with the British and thus escaped the situation through his Anglicized dress and by avoiding the “simple Indian dresses” (Khan, L. 2009, p.210) merely proved to be a catalyst to move the mob that haunted them all through from the market to hotel. The reaction of Khan reinforces this very dictum by suggesting to others to keep away from them since those people (the British) are very hostile. He further recommends aloofness from the molesters as the exoticism rather than proximity is the only possibility with them.

As far as the treatment meted out to the Indians in the metropolis is concerned, it is reflected in the indifference of Colonel Miles who behaved in a grim cold way and never returned even the courtesy visit of Lutfullah Khan leading him to presume that the Colonel was still under the spell and charm of authority and contempt used to undermine the Indian subjects. Since the colonizers were the ruling elites in India, they behaved the same way even in the land that promised freedom to all. To him, the British, serving in India, imported more race-based attitudes and distinctions present and practiced there. And though the British’s desire to know and enhance their understanding of Indians gave ample opportunities to them to develop their image, nonetheless, British stereotypes about Indians were hardening by the mid-nineteenth century.

Nevertheless, the attitude of the royalty and upper class largely differed as noted by Khan in this travelogue though his explanation seems very naïve. While describing his interaction with the Queen and the Prince whom they paid profuse bows he writes that they treated them very kindly.

All the Indians were dressed in their local attire wearing the turbans and robes but the English Royalty as well as the intelligentsia present there greeted them warmly without casting the exotic gaze that they had encountered everywhere they went in the streets. Their treatment of the Indians was not replete with “the vulgar curiosity” (Khan, L. 2009, p.216) of the common people.

The entry of the British Bourgeois in the sub-continent, according to Khan, owes much to simplicity of the Mughal emperor and *cunningness* of the mercantile approach of the British. Captain Hawkins, the British businessman, was elevated to the position of the Ambassador by the English King and he managed to win the “favourable negotiation for the trading people of his country” (Khan, L. 2009, p.99). He was warmly received by Jehangir, the Mughal emperor, and it was through the bribery of some trifling presents to the King and his close associates that he won the agreement as well as a Christian lady from the King. They started establishing themselves while exploiting the weaknesses of the King and nobility and of the discords prevalent among universal power brokers in the regime. In this way, their imperialistic designs, process of colonization and hegemony all expedited and resulted into their becoming masters and the whole of India their slaves. The English, in this way, paved their way for the imperialistic expeditions which cost the Indians very dearly.

The Christian’s discourse on Islam, to Khan, is rarely impartial, objective and without any malice. He shows that the Christian’s knowledge about Islam is scarce and forms an all their views are based on certain pre-conceived notions and prejudices hatched to undermine Islam by maligning

one of the Caliphs of burning the library in Alexandria but Khan notes that the historians must be “void of all partiality, and ought to have a thorough knowledge of the nature and character of the subject” (Khan, L. 2009, p.207) that is being undertaken by them. Thus, he shows the Christian historians as biased and ignorant bent upon representation of Muslims as wild, uncivilized and enemies of knowledge. But in his effort to defend his faith and co-believers Khan unleashes his criticism on them by saying that it is rather the Christians and English who have no regard for “their Bible, and would use it as leaves” (Khan, L. 2009, p.207) and discard them as useless papers. In this shifting of the arguments Khan presents the Muslims as true believers who practice their religious tenets and creates the binary to place and (re) present the Christians in the opposite frame.

The advent and rise of colonialism in India never went unnoticed. The people, even the simple villagers of Sindhi origin always perceived these foreigners as usurpers who had seized most of India and as far as the rest of the country was concerned, “the English would take it soon” (Khan, L. 2009, p.145) While some held responsible some tribes like Talpurs for being too intimate with “omnivorous English” (Khan, L. 2009, p.145), the others looked towards Shir Muhammad of Mirpur as their saviour. As far as Khan’s opinion is concerned he ironically passes the remarks “the English would not take their miserable country (Khan, L. 2009, p.145)” which produced only fish and rice because English had much more prosperous, golden and precious lands to colonize, govern and manage. However, there is a very relevant background to all this narrative. It is interesting to note the observations of the British travelers who travelled and wrote about

India especially Sindh in the first half of the nineteenth century. Richard Burton who is the renowned translator of *The One Thousand and One nights* and Sa'di's *Gulistan* discussed Sindh and its culture in detail. Burton's representative narrative about Sindh is reflected in an old legend by which a secret agent was sent to Sindh by a Caliph to know about the locale and inhabitants. The spy reported back to him by saying that "the water was black, the fruit sour and poisonous, the ground stony, and the earth saline" (Burton, 1851, p.125). Burton regards the secret agent as a discerning traveler whose representative narrative about the Sindh and Sindhis was full of truth. His representation of Sindh, in fact, seems to be echoing back in the above lines from Sindhis, about the British when he says that everything in this place seems to hate us. Nevertheless, Khan, in *Positive Portrayal*, had been a great admirer of good governance and good laws based on tolerance of different religious communities employed by the company and all living in harmony without any discrimination by the colonizers. He says it to the tribal chief in Sindh who had referred to the fear of forcible conversions to Christianity. Lutfullah answers him to dispel his fears and see the regiments of the army with his own eyes, in which he would find people of all castes following their own religion without any interference on the part of the Government (Khan, L. 2009, p.145). Thus, the White people were lauded, among many other things, for their justice and tolerance in the colony.

While on their journey to England, they landed on an island and stayed in the English hotel recommended for short sojourn. He received his cultural shock the very next morning when he saw the pigs roaming around

their rooms. He shows his astonishment and disgust in the Christian quarters by saying that when they woke up the next morning, they noticed “a herd of unclean animals, running, grunting, snorting, and roaring about our rooms” (Khan, L. 2009, p.196). Thus, the stigma of unhygienic and unclean environment, usually associated with the Orient, is reversed and shows the lack of tidy ways of the West. As a remedy, they quit the Christian hotel immediately and shifted to the abode of the Muslims nearby. The cultural and religious Otherness thus displayed in his preference for Muslims community leaves the Christians as the other-worldly and forsaken community that needs to be avoided on the basis of beliefs. The binary between the two halves of the globe is shown further deepening and the cultural differences lead to Othering of the offshore inhabitants. Since *our* food is different from *their* food, *our* drinks do not match with *their* drinks and *our God* is different from *their God*, therefore, the barriers must be erected to exercise seclusion. It displays a dichotomy between his admiration and appreciation of the Enlightenment values of the West while, on the other hand, it reveals his affiliation with the Indian/Islamic ways of life. Moreover, it also establishes that his liking for the British literary, artistic and cultural life was not uncritical. This sense of religiosity yet stems at another occasion when Khan visits the Cathedrals in London and notices the statues and images displayed there. His Orientalized and Indianized sense of perception bars him from appreciating the aesthetics and he rather disdains their placement in the temple. Even after having acknowledged their display, though not on religious grounds, Khan still has an objection to raise; “a temple dedicated to sacred purposes, whether

humble or majestic, ought to be plain so as not to withdraw the attention of the congregation from the sermons and preachings” (Khan, L. 2009, p.212).

5.4 The Western vs. the Eastern women

As far as the European woman is concerned Lutfullah Khan, like his predecessors Khan and I'tesamuddin, made her the object of his observation, Oriental gaze and eroticized fantasies. The Western women, in comparison with the Eastern women, are erotic, exotic and the Others. The Western woman was not treated as a human being but as a binary of man and the only relevant and significant discourse about them was circled around their beauty, splendor, and “nymph” (Khan, L. 2009, p.218) like outlook. During his stay in London, Khan describes his meeting with an English woman whom he had the pleasure of being introduced. She was the loveliest of all the English ladies that he had met in England. Further recounting he says that after a while he had the honour of playing chess with that “nymph of Paradise. I played two games with her and allowed myself to be beaten both times to please her” (Khan, L. 2009, p.218). The description of the European women cannot be accomplished unless the religious metaphors like the houris and nymphs etc are used. It seems, there is no alternate creature on the planet earth which could help describe or outline the beauties and grandeur displayed by these women of Europe. Therefore, the Muslim travelers in general and Lutfullah Khan in particular recalled the male-constructed promised heaven where all earthly limitations were to be obliterated and the supra-beautiful creatures existed.

Khan’s exoticism, eroticism and infatuation regarding the English women result into their objectification whenever he sees any “gazelle-eyed

nymph of Paradise” (Khan, L. 2009, p.206) lady. He also met Mr. Larking who took him to his house where he was introduced to Mrs. Larking, whose personality dazzled his eyes and he feels himself to be impotent to describe her beauty. He writes that the lady was so attractive and consummate in beauty that she deserved to be sketched and eulogized by an extraordinary artists and vivid-minded poets, and not by a poor writer like him who only knows how to write prose. He was so much spell-bound by the seeming beauty and fairness of the lady that even when he describes her academic and intellectual potential and pursuits, he clubs it with her beauty. In his observation the beautiful lady seemed to have known several languages, but she conversed mainly in two showing that her beauty comes first and then the capabilities of being multi-lingual colonizer.

His display of eroticism is reflected in everything he writes for her and it appears that it was a wonder-creature that he was dealing with. His bodily attraction, physicality, complexion, and outlook all overshadowed and surpassed her mental faculties and even cognitive skills. It was for the first time that he witnessed and “heard a fair mouth scattering pearls of eloquent phrases in that scientific language” (Khan, L. 2009, pp.205-206). This appreciation and emulation is, however, limited to the ladies since such profuse praises rarely mark any notable entry in these travelogues. Lutfullah Khan, like Itesamuddin and Abu Taleb Khan views European and English women as fairy-faced and ravishers of heart. He was also bewildered by the charms, spells and beauty of women and, though not very extensively, yet many a times makes certain references to them. The very presence of the Christian/European women in the males’ company and

participation in their conversation also surprised many travelers because it was a rarity among Muslims especially in Indo-Persian traditions. Khan and others, as shown above, are startled with the beauty of women because they had rare access to it in their own societies.

In addition, the hegemony of the males in politics of Europe was not unnoticed for them but the self-display of women in the political arena was found and perceived to be exotic, erotic and eccentric by these writers including Lutfullah Khan. The politics of gender relations was not only new to them but rather it was startling and bewildering as well. That is why, their focus on the gender is remarkable and their focus on the women is also obvious. For them “the public appearance and behavior of European women symbolized a different order of politics and gender relations” (Tavakoli-Targhi, 2001, p.62). Lutfullah Khan’s desire to interpret the personality of Mrs. Larking with all the possible cultural proximity finds its expression in the religious jargon and imagery again. He unfolds his relationship with her with the help of re-defined, re-discovered and re-translated relationship in the cloak of religious metaphors. His encounter with the *nymph-like* creature leaves him to imagine that he was holding conversations with one of the gazelle-eyed nymphs of Paradise who spoke no other language but Arabic. In this way, he was returning his exotic gaze back to the center and objectifying the women, describing them as the plaything.

Furthermore, the very language (English), does not sound harsh to him nor does it appear anymore soaring to his hearing, merely because now it was spoken not by the male colonizers but the beauties and the nymphs

of paradise who were articulating the “pearls of eloquent phrases” (Khan, L. 2009, p.205) and that too in scientific language. The transformation of the perception of jargon/language from *harsh* to *pleasant* owes to the switching of interlocutors (first males and now females) as well as the acquisition of English due to which he was able to decode and reinterpret the cultural signs of the Occident hitherto Orientalized.

The superiority of English language is also established by acknowledging as the language of science/ modernity/ learning but ironically, this language, when spoken by the females, is parallel with the language of paradise thus using another religious/Islamic metaphor to portray them as the heavenly creatures. It seems to be his yet another attempt to solemnize his proximity with the European female(s) through the route of religion and heavenly ways of constructing relationships.

Khan’s admiration for the English beauties and *nymphs of paradise* continues when he comes across the sisters of Mrs. Larkings who are described as the paragons of beauty. He is of the view that Mrs. Larkings’ sisters surpassed her in her beauty and Khan praises them profusely showing that gender and the bodies of women were instrumental in defining women for Orientals. It is further elaborated when Khan visits Astley’s theatre and sees the performance of a lady called by him as a very extraordinarily beautiful young lady and who was fairy-like in her countenance with a clear dominant streak of her physical beauty rather than the performance on the stage. They could never rise above and move beyond the restrictive role of women based on Oriental’s codes which held women as the creatures wholly dependent and performing their roles for

men. In their attempt to (re)define and (re)construct them, they are not addressed by *their* own names, rather, as is customary in the Orient, especially sub-continent, they are called and introduced by their husband's/male relatives' names. It appears that the female person is not as important in her own self as the male person who gives her the name and identity. In this process, the Oriental travel writers often strip women of their own identity and self-recognition. So, they meet the sister, wife or daughter of somebody (a male relative) and not the females with their own identity and recognition. Even in the above lines, none of the ladies have got the names of their own rather, they are associated, linked and named after a male representative and given their identity. When Khan refers to the hostess, he writes that she was "Mr. J. Tibaldie's sister, Mrs. Larkin" (Khan, L. 2009, p. 205) as if she was nameless or had only one public identity dependant on her relation with her brother or husband. This, however, must be taken into consideration that this family did not belong to the poor strata but had an elite background. This is evident in the lines written about their estate that "the house was sumptuously furnished like a place fit for a prince to reside in {moreover} the house was decorated with all kinds of rich articles" (Khan, L. 2009, p.206) reinforcing the idea that Khan's perception about the English people especially women was culture-bound and he was (re)presenting them through the prism of Indo-Islamic cultural precepts. It is also interesting to note that while in India, the strictures of segregation were strictly practiced by the colonizers and there was hardly any opportunity for the Indians to mix up with the British, but in England, they exercised no such limitations. The metropolis welcomed and

dealt with Indians in a different and equal way and many travelers considered their relationship with British women as valuable by enhancing their own self-esteem as well as providing their entrée into British society. The familiarity of the British women and Indian men was relatively easy in Britain and it was considered as empowering and unlike India there was no colonialists who emphasized their racial segregation and superiority and the social or sexual relations between the Orient and the Occident were prohibited.

It is quite ironical that while Khan himself enjoyed the company of the Western women especially in England, he condemns this very act of the English who, according to him, let their women remain free and unchecked in their life and don't believe in segregation of both the genders. To him, the seclusion of women from men is a virtue for true and noble believers although it is considered as a fault by the English. His description of these women however is aimed at depicting them as a mere libidinal entity or object whose only purpose was to provide sexual pleasure and satisfaction to men. Khan's concept of chastity, virginity and pioussness is rooted deep in the limited or zero exposure of the women to the men's company. He almost conditions the piety of the women of the *true believers* with the control exercised by the male chauvinists who regard women as only a body and a tool to perform sex. The very individuality that the West afforded for its women and was marred by the Eastern chauvinistic ideals undermined the potential of the women leaving them wholly on the mercy of the men. Khan terms the English men as poor and helpless creatures for not been able to restrict their women from mixing with the men either

privately or publically. It adds further to the irony that the colonizers who had been controlling Asia, Africa and Europe were labeled as impotent not been able to *control* their women. Moreover, the self-acclaimed righteousness is reassured when he calls his clan as true believers and, by creating and strengthening the binary, repudiated the cultural modernity of the West. The binary possesses the *truthfulness* of the belief and drafts and categorizes the English in the opposite corner suggestively that of the *non-or false believers*. The religio-cultural binary places the English women at the disadvantageous position where they are supposedly moral outcasts with their men at fault to control them. It is evident however that the English least allowed and encouraged their women to mix up with the *true believers* who were colonized by them, whereas there was no such limitation in England for the Asians. The women traditionally considered by Muslims as inherently weak may fall prey to the intrigues of men when they are not controlled by their men (Khan, L. 2009, pp. 177-178). They are called as naturally weak suggesting a twofold weakness; physical as well moral. Supposedly, they carry volatile sex bomb that will explode upon contact with freedom.

The patriarchal structures of the Indo-Muslim societies are depicted in the attitude and observation of Khan who, like his cultural fellows, deems the Western women as licentious compromising their virtuousness for their freedom. Primarily, Khan views freedom as the pivotal factor responsible for the downplay of the women in the Western society. The men are painted as active, brute, wild and intriguing whereas the women as passive, docile, dormant and weak with the predilection to fall prey to the

former's "brutal intrigues" (Khan, L. 2009, p. 177). Inversely, the Western woman, otherwise the co-partner of the Western colonizer, is represented as marginalized, suppressed and exploited by the Western man for his debauchery and sexual exploits. In this argument, the onus clearly falls on the Western man who lets the women behave the way it is depicted here. Neither does the Oriental man nor the Western woman is thought to be susceptible for their sexual adventures and are thus exonerated. In the pursuit of their "black deeds" (Khan, L. 2009, p. 177), Khan asserts, many families of London are ruined and about eighty thousand females are recorded for being licentious. In order to prove his point, Khan suggests an evening stroll on a street of London in order to confirm the above observation. He also establishes this as a catalytic factor for the disintegration of the Western institution of family. There are many women of exquisite beauty and remarkable accomplishments who are forsaken by their relatives and friends due to their involvement in the *black deeds*.

As an alternate ideal system, Khan presents the Oriental family system that prescribes and restrains the women from committing what he calls vices. The Oriental laws favoring the role of the women as domesticated beings regulating the household and performing religious duties hardly find themselves available for their admirers. It is also notable that while the whole of the Western culture is repudiated for being licentious, the Oriental culture is shown as partly virtuous and partly *correctable*. While the English culture is exhibited promoting vices, its antithesis the Oriental culture is shown promoting virtue in the society. The most important contributory factor in the enhancement of virtue is the

religiosity and business of the womenfolk not the strength of the character to resist and disdain the temptations. To Khan, the more the women are held free of duties and responsibilities, the more liable they are to think about their admirers. In this generalized statement Khan holds the Western society but Oriental individual responsible for their *deviant* acts. Because, according to him, whereas the Western society drives the women to this *deviant* area, the Eastern society holds her back to the limits of *decency*. This is so because above all, the Oriental laws and culture “at all events prevent increase in vice and decrease in virtue” (Khan, L. 2009, p. 177). And as far as the Western or Occidental laws and culture are concerned, it is not the individual but, satirically, the license established by the civilizers that is to blame in Khan’s opinion. Above all the conception of vice and virtue is wholly Oriental specifically devised through the prism of the Muslims and alongwith the Western women, the Oriental communities like Hindus, Sikhs and many dozen other communities have been marginalized and given no space in this debate of virtues and vices.

Khan’s traditionalism and religiosity repudiates the Others’ cultural signs that are in conflict with the Oriental ones. He further comments on the institution of marriage in the Oriental discourse where the responsibility of matrimonial cord of the children is undertaken by their parents. In his preferential mode of the parents’ will he portrays the woman catching a glimpse of the -would- be –husband not in any sort of meeting but “through a crevice or a loophole” (Khan, L. 2009, p. 178). In this way, the patriarchal dominance of the Oriental cultural structures is tacitly established, and the woman gets engaged till the elders decide for her

marriage. In this way, the marriages are arranged and the woman, as shown by Khan, is not consulted for her approval or disapproval altogether. The arrangement of the marriage between two people hitherto strangers is considered as an ideal one in which “marriage beds are not only free of contamination but from the dread of it” (Khan, L. 2009, p. 178). Thus, the Oriental institution of marriage, in comparison with the Western one, is held as superior by linking it with the Oriental concepts of chastity, virginity and seclusion from the company of the men. In his theorization of seclusion Khan writes that “seclusion secures women from those delusions and temptations” (Khan, L. 2009, p. 178) which are subjected to transitory happiness, but with a deep prick of consciousness later on. To Khan, the sense of remorse earned through the *black deeds* (italicized for emphasis) is full of remorse and penitence that the *beauty of Europe* (italicized for emphasis) undergoes in her quest for sexual enterprises. To Khan, the whole Western institution of womanhood misses the pivot, the seclusion of women. And it results into moral decadence, social chaos and failure of the parental/patriarchal institution which are thought to be guardians of virtue and piety for women.

In the above narrative, it is only the woman who is depicted as the culprit because she exposes herself before the man and the man seems to be exonerated and is freed of the debacle with impunity. So, basically, there are twofold failures of the freedom granted to women in the Occident; first failure is due to the absence of patriarchal control over women and the second failure results out of the exposure of women and free mixing with men. But in the whole debate woman is treated as a catalytic force that

leads the drive to engage men. The ingredients and recipe of her chastity are numbered as needlework, five times a day prayers, chores in the kitchen and household affairs and all these cooked up prescriptions guarantee the avoidance from “the permanent sting of bitter remorse” (Khan, L. 2009, p. 178).

The cultural superiority/inferiority is based on the geographical division and when the Orient is thought to be the standard moral force the West or Europe is represented as an antithesis and is denied such superfluous epithets. The women and sexuality, in the above stated narrative, are intertwined and the men-women relationship is always eyed through the prism of binaries with licentiousness at the very basis of it. It is therefore observed by Khan that “the freedom granted to womankind in this country is great, and mischief arising from this unreasonable toleration is most deplorable” (Khan, L. 2009, p. 225). The mischief and deplorable condition refer to the sexual assaults experienced by women and it all stems from the unbridled freedom that taxes them. To him, the resignation to the will and “submission to the female sex” are the factors that lead to the reflection that the English male is impotent and lacks the will and strength to control the women (Khan, L. 2009, p. 225). In his view, unless and until the men and society in general do not play the part of moral policing, the women will not be their subservient and would keep exercising their will. Khan fails to comprehend that the limits of moderation are cultural and geographical, and each territory and cultural entity has its own system of values in place and even the sub-continent has no single mode of delimiting the role of women. But it is also paradoxical that when their ship reaches

the shores of Southampton, the first thing that his friends and Khan himself notice is the presence of the English girls. Although the weather was cold and not very pleasant especially for an Indian, he still managed to get out of the bed and saw “several fresh and fair damsels of England of very dazzling beauty” (Khan, L. 2009, p. 209) revealing his Orientalized reaction at this spectacle. Further intensifying the argument Sahhafbashi, a nineteenth century Iranian traveler wrote that the women and men in Europe are seen kissing each other even under the trees and no one around bothers about them. Moreover, in his view, “Farangi virgin women are rare and womanizing is like eating bread and yogurt in Iran and is not offensive” (Tavakoli-Targhi, 2001, p.71).

There is an interesting point about the idea of freedom in the Orient and the Occident. In Orient the sovereign or the King enjoyed absolute freedom and there was no concept of restraints on his kingly powers but on the other hand the women in the Orient were controlled through patriarchal/religious and societal structures. In the Occident however there has been an inversion to this paradigm. There the king is restrained by his nobles, lords, ministers and other political bodies and he cannot decide independently on the matters related to the state affairs. But as far as the women were concerned, they enjoyed all the freedom imaginable in their societal structures. The individuals there could never think of ruling over others or being subjugated by their fellow citizens. Thus, the gender and politics switched their roles in two different geographical entities.

On the other hand, the attitude of the intelligentsia which had directly ruled India was very different as shown by Khan. The former

ruling class still considered itself far more superior to the Indians and even in England it would display its superiority and reluctance to see the Indians as equals. Khan had an old acquaintance with Colonel Miles who was a scholar on Arabic and had met Khan about twenty-four years back in India. Khan, after a difference of place as well as time, paid him a visit and expected his visit in return which never materialized. Khan alludes to his indifference and superiority and remarked that his not paying the visit led him to think that “he {Colonel Miles} was still in India and not in the land of freedom where all are equal” (Khan, L. 2009, p. 219). But this freedom, though slightly squeezing with the strengthening of the colonization and expansion of the Empire, still offered him and his fellows to at least visit and sit with the King, Queen, princes and the nobles in England. It was certainly improbable in India where the distinction between the colonizers and the colonized was getting greater and the marginalization of the Indians in their very own country was taking place rapidly. The reign of the destiny of the sub-continent was laid only “in the hands of some twenty-five men” (Khan, L. 2009, p. 211) who ruled over the millions of people. These English people in London were “ingenious, civil and active” (Khan, L. 2009, p. 211) unlike their counterparts in India who felt superior not only in India but carried the supposed authority to England where, as observed by Khan above (in case of Colonel Miles), treated Indians with same scorn and contentment which they used to exercise during their halcyon days displaying racial-based distinctions imported from the Oriental colonial quarters.

The Englishmen, Khan presumes, who have not been to Indian colony as the Masters, treat Indians differently compared to the Englishmen who have served in India in any capacity whatsoever. Their treatment is marked with scorn, resentment, cultural and racial superiority and Otherness as a whole. While in India these British servants of the Company always identified themselves with the English elites and would keep distance from the Indians. Many of them would still keep themselves away from the Indians while in Britain looking down upon them and considering them as outcastes because of supposed cultural and racial superiority.

Khan's representation is not limited to that of the English only, but it takes into account the Americans as well. The arrival of the Americans in the bazaar thrilled many including Khan who was curious enough to explore them, but their plight was deplorable. They were in a "rude state, dressed in skins, feathers and straws, made up and interwoven by themselves, (Khan, L. 2009, p. 223), suggestive of their socio-economic condition. Their outlook and language, both (re)present them as other-worldly with slightest touch of the world of civilization as their "appearance was wild" the complexion "was copper coloured" ranging from red to brown, their bodies were de-shaped and "arms were too slender" with the jargon resembling a native language of India; Marathi which needed re-interpretation by the English translator (Khan, L. 2009, p. 223). This representative text not only highlights the exoticness of two cultures but also bends on the mockery of the Other which is just not like Us. Their disconnection and distancing from the civilized *world of ours* is

because of their rude and uncivilized state and their wild appearance disqualifying them from any proximity with *our* world.

To conclude, Khan's autobiographical travelogue manages to reflect the representative narratives not only during English's presence in the Orient but also during his visit and presence in the Occident. So, when for the first ever time he encounters the priest, he considers that as a bad omen. He believes that these Other and *strange* people who also practice magic and are excessively white. He does not consider them worthy of Islamic greetings 'Asalam-o-Alikum' as it is reserved for the Muslims and not for the infidels. Therefore, he resorts to salute only and passes by. While listening to the English for the first time he thought of this language as slurred with very bad acoustic effects. However, after having mastered the language and after his exploration of England, he considers it a scientific language marking huge transformation in his perceptions of the Others. Their sartorial choices are denounced because they lack practicality as their dress is scanty and the hat does not reflect heat.

In addition, the English institution of family is shown crumbling and the women are to be saved from the *black deeds*. The European women are described as celestial beings and are objectified only in terms of entities since their charm, beauty and sensual attraction is referred to in this discourse. He is also critical of the religious dogmas of the Others and criticizes the concept of Trinity. In this way, he is able to mark the contrasts of their discourses, ethos and conduct both as colonizers in India and hosts and common masses in England. This opportunity also affords him a

glimpse of the cultural immersions and transformations taking place in both the societies after the contacts were established between them.

His labeling, stereotyping, Othering and religio cultural differences are not reserved only for the British and the Europeans but extend across the Atlantic to the Americans as well. When he sees them, he labels them as rude, dressed in skins, feathers and straws; their appearance was wild, and the complexion resembled copper. The reversal of Orientalist assumptions thus challenges the hegemony of the Orientalists who hitherto before had emphasized the inevitability of Orient's representation as the latter had lacked the ability to do it.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

From the outset, this research has investigated the representation of the West in South Asian Travelogues written during the 18th and 19th centuries. It deals with the three research questions posed in the beginning. First, the extent of the travelogues carrying out reverse-Orientalism/Occidentalism is determined by comparing them with each other. This is followed by the Positive Othering that these writers have delineated to the West. Lastly, and most importantly, the discursive methods and techniques have been explored to locate, label and define the Western Others.

The discussions on Orientalism and Occidentalism reveal that although both have been in practice on parallel basis but in the particular context of the Muslims, especially from the Orient, the former preceded the latter. The pitching of two binaries resulted in further Occidentalizing the West and Orientalizing the East. Their perceptions of Europe, in general, and Britain, in particular, were not constructed entirely in terms of abstract images; they were based on first-hand knowledge, observation and experience. They tried to understand a different culture and unfold various aspects of the Western life, according to their personal tastes and genuine intellectual curiosity. They concerned themselves with issues as diverse as British social life, religion, political institutions and the Western scientific and technological progress.

The extent of these travelogues, being Occidental in their nature, can be determined by analyzing their perceptions and response(s) to their Western Others. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Munshi

Itesamuddin, Mirza Abu Taleb Khan and Lutfullah Khan traveled to Europe and England (in particular) and formed a counterflow of connected histories bringing back the firsthand experiences and accounts of their sojourn for their native fellows. These Muslim travelers who contributed through travel writings had identified themselves with that class which had ruled India for many centuries and now it was being replaced by the colonizers who relegated these people to the status of clerk(s) Munshis or language tutors. But as discussed earlier, these travel writers never succumbed to the dominant cultural ethos of the West although, their machines and technological advancement had put them in awe and wonder. It is rather surprising that even being the colonized and oppressed, they were ready to guide the West about the supremacy of their religious, cultural and moral practices. They faced their European Others by retaining their identity and even kept challenging them by sustaining their Indianized or Orientalized cultural signs and symbols. Their coupling of religion with the status and position of women in the society was very much the focus of these writers who both felt threatened and empowered, titillated and repulsed by the freedom enjoyed by the European women.

Furthermore, in their travelogues, all three writers had portrayed the West as their geographical, cultural, racial, and religious others in their own ways and instances which determine the extent of Occidentalism in their discourse. Itesamuddin appears to have shown greater tilt towards Occidental strand as compared to Abu Taleb Khan and Lutfullah Khan's discourses. He has limited his appreciation of the Western civilization mainly to judicial institution and technological developments. His narrative

reveals that otherwise the West had very little to offer him to eulogize. For example, he refers to Islamic episteme of geographical division in which Europe falls in the last or seventh Iqlim, marking it as least significant in his tradition, thus marginalizing their geographical Others through erasure. In likewise manners, during the last days of Itesamuddin's stay in England, when he had developed a feud with Captain Swinton, he parts his ways by declaring in pure Occidental terms that, between your manners and our manners of life there difference of the East and the West. It is to be noted that as far as the Other two travel writers are concerned, none had expressed such disapproval in blatant terms which leads to the conclusion that his narrative was Occidentalized to a greater extent than his successors.

Similarly, Abu Taleb charts a catalogue of twelve defects of the English and proves them as cultural Others lacking in many ways compared to the Orient. The defects of English ranged from lack of religious morality to stereotypes and prejudices against the Western Others. But along with modern developments shaping the West, he lauds their political institutions as well and wishes the same for the Sub-Continent, too. Therefore, his discourse can be marked as lesser Occidentalized *but only in comparison to* Itesamuddin's contribution.

Lutfullah Khan, (during his childhood) shared pre-conceived notions of the white people with his community and considered it a bad omen to encounter a white priest before embarking upon a journey. He, like Itesamuddin, limits his appreciation for the Western Others to scientific and technological achievements but is also all praises for their tolerance and harmonious working especially in the Army institution of the Sub-

Continent. All the rest of the socio-political and religio-cultural institutions have been portrayed with the Indianized and Eastern eyes. So, his responses can be gauged as Occidental to a *greater extent* as compared to Abu Taleb but *lesser* than those of Itesamuddin. Therefore, these travelers had only an aspect or two of the Western civilization that they had found superior from which the East could learn from the Western Others. Otherwise, in their stance, it was the East which could guide, instruct and teach the West through its inherent superiority in the rest of the affairs.

These travelers, on the other hand, lauded some aspects of the British and European life and portrayed them as positive Others, too. They were great admirers of scientific and technological developments, navigational supremacy, governance structures of the West, dissemination of justice and rule of law. This transition was marked as the result of Industrial revolution which had been transforming the whole fabric of the society.

In recording the wonders of England and Britain's progress in the scientific, technological and navigational fields Munshi Itesamuddin is of the view that they attach special importance to the construction of large and sturdy warships and surpass all the Europeans especially in the naval warfare. Moreover, English Judicial system enjoins a strict code of conduct and bribery or gifts to influence the judgments are a great crime. The law believes in equality and no preferential treatment is meted out to anyone. He also vouches the resolve of the law to deter the rich and powerful from exploiting and oppressing the poor.

Mirza Abu Taleb, in one of the chapters of his travelogues discusses the nature of the British government. He outlines the characteristics of the British constitution which is supreme and is of mixed form. It is a union of the monarchical, aristocratical and democratical governments, represented by the King, Lords, and the Commons respectively. The distribution of the powers of each are so appropriately blended, that it is impossible for human wisdom to produce any other system containing so many excellences. He is appreciative of the harmonious working of different institutions. He also gives them positive delineation by cataloging some of the virtues of the British people such as the prevailing sense of honour, self-respect, respect for merit across the board, preference of modernity over traditional ways, love for technical innovation, quest for knowledge and respect for the rule of law.

Lutfullah Khan, in his positive portrayal of the West shows his utmost pleasure for the Royal Couple who he had a chance to meet and pay profuse bows. He has special admiration for the Enlightenment values of the West. In one instance he lauds their governance structure, tolerance of different creed and castes in the sub-continent and efficient working of different institutions. He gives examples of British control over the Army where people of different lineage work together in harmony “without any interference on the part of the government” (Chambers, 2015, p. 42). Moreover, he had a special liking for the English language and treasured it as a repository of scientific knowledge.

In the above instances all three Muslim travel writers from the Orient to the Occident portray their Western Others as positive who had

plenty to offer in these fields to the Orient and there was a large scope to learn and improve back in their homeland.

Notwithstanding the positive portrayal of their cultural Others, they have represented the White people in multiple ways. They have employed many discursive practices for example, binary, representation, stereotyping, labeling, objectification, erasure, and reverse Orientalism, to develop their perceptions of the White people and deem them as Others of the Orient. By (re) presenting them they were, in fact, dispelling and casting away the Westernized notions about the Orient that the Orient is incapable of representing itself and therefore, it must be represented.

Although Munshi Itesamuddin, Abu Taleb and Lutfullah Khan undertook their journeys in 1764, 1799 and 1844 respectively, they share many observations and responses about their Western Others. Their perception of the West, though lasted on the span of a century, with very slight variations, discerned the West through the same Oriental Muslims' prisms as they invariably considered it as the binary of the East. Since their own governing codes, so to speak, were primarily derived from their religion and were juxtaposed with the typical Eastern values, therefore, the results yielded by any yardstick are perceived to be the same. Their inoculated religious, ethical, moral and civilizational superiority over the West delimit and define their ends in perceiving the Western Others.

The Eastern Eyes classify Europe to be its religious binary/Others. Munshi Itesamuddin highlights the Otherness/binary by drawing distinctions between both the religions, their ethos and interpretations. While he parts ways with Captain Swinton and consequently with the West

owing to religio-cultural binaries that, he, in purely Occidental terms, declares that between the manners of both the civilizations, there is difference of the East and the West. The feud that sparked over the dietary preferences leads to his decision to quit the Occident and return home. Earlier, he showed his Biblical knowledge of Parables which Schurer (as cited above) believes are spun, transformed and distorted to suit his purposes. Itesamuddin also believes the Christ to be a prophet and not the Son of God, thus rejecting Trinity.

On the Other hand, Abu Taleb, in his famous twelve defects outlines the lack of religious morality to be the greatest of the vices of the White people. He denounces the rituals of Baptism and considers this activity as ridiculous because, to him, presenting a newborn before the priest for admission into Christianity is an absurd activity for him. He also defends the Muslims' congregation in Mecca every year named as Hajj and rationalizes it before the Christian interlocutors to the fullest.

Lutfullah engrosses in an argument with his Christian fellows over their belief in trinity. He repudiates them by challenging this concept and deems it improper to attribute to the Almighty God having wife and children. This belief leads them to defining further relations with God, thus, considering themselves as children and their prophet as the son of God whereas the Muslims are monotheists and consider Jesus as a prophet. Even during his childhood, as stated earlier, he shared a belief with his community that seeing or encountering a white priest was a bad omen for the journey. He also believed that the Priests possessed some magical powers and practiced necromancy.

As for as the cultural Othering is concerned Lutfullah Khan's experience of living in the Christian Quarters proved shocking for him. The early morning encounter with the pigs all around which he calls 'a herd of unclean animals' running, grunting, snorting, and roaring about their rooms, compelled him to opt for a neighboring abode nearby which was Muslims' Quarters. Similarly, the binary between the two halves of the globe is shown further deepening and the cultural differences lead to Othering. Moreover, he also highlights the sartorial differences between the Western and the Oriental realms. While he considers the Western attire as scant and impractical-the hat not reflecting the heat-he outlines many characteristics of his Eastern dress that may be used for multiple purposes like bandage and emergency services etc. Moreover, such cultural differences are also manifested when Munshi Itesamuddin prefers not to marry an English woman on the pretext that the socio economic and cultural differences between the East and the West make it a difficult choice for him and therefore he would rather prefer an Asian woman in comparison to a Western lady. Lutfullah Khan also preferred the dark-complexioned women of Hindustan to the fairy-faced damsels of England.

Abu Taleb and Munshi Itesamuddin, similarly, remained steadfast to their Oriental attires. Although it lead them at times to different spectacles yet they were resolute enough not to change and prefer the Western dresses, come what may. For example, at one occasion, Munshi Itesamuddin was mistaken for a joker/clown and was expected to perform for the audience but even then, he never vouched for any other dress code. Abu Taleb Khan was chided for going to bed in his trousers, but he

responded to his fellow passengers that it was far better than running to the deck naked. These feuds usually ranged, from religious beliefs, cultural binaries, linguistic differences to misleading identities during their journey, stay and interaction with their Western Others. This way, the cultural binaries, Othering and representations continue throughout the discourse.

As reverse Orientalist and by employing the discursive practices like erasure and the East/West binaries, these writers postulated the West to be insignificant and a distant place. The former is manifest when Itesamuddin, after reaching the African Coast from where they could see the Western Hemisphere states that Europe falls in the seventh Iqlim. In this way he minimizes the significance of the West that merely exists in the Eastern consciousness. On the other hand, when Lutfullah Khan visits England he calls it as little as the mole on the human body. In this way, not only metonymic representation is carried out but the binary of the East/West as self and other are also highlighted. The Orientalists' notions about the East are reciprocated through the reversal of the same.

Furthermore, all three travelers en-route to their Western Others, outline the journeys full of hardships and mortifications. Not only they noted the severity of weather but also referred to the indifference of the co-passengers. Abu Taleb, in stereotypical way refers to incompetence of the crew, calling them 'low', unworthy of spoken to and quite ignorant of the science of navigation. As the journey to the Orient was always reported by the Orientalists to be fraught and full of challenges, the Westward journey involved many dangers besides the already mentioned ones. These dangers, ironically, resulted out of modernity that the West would often boast about.

While journeying through the passage between America and Europe, he calls the tract as conflict-ridden zone because the kings of Europe were at war with each other. In this way the dangers of Oriental and Occidental journeys are paralleled. While, the West was fearful of backwardness and antiquity on its en-route the East, the East was apprehensive of its war machines looming over their heads.

As far as the status and position of the women in the Occident and the Orient is concerned, all the three writers, though initially lured, express their resentment over absolute freedom granted to them. They also objectify them; consider them as objects of celestial pleasure, describe them in terms of beauty, charm and sexualisation. Munshi Itesamuddin portrays London as replete with sexual possibilities and where they women come to him invitingly asking for kisses. Abu Taleb Khan, though due to *misleading* identity, enjoys great opportunities for sexual promiscuity. He also depicts the Western women as licentious and sensual although, later on he condemns the absolute freedom given to them. Lutfullah Khan also objectifies them by calling them beauties, nymphs of paradise, houris-like and explores the beauties throughout and denounces the *black deeds* of the Western women in the end.

The three travel narratives reveal that Itesamuddin, Abu Taleb Khan and Lutfullah Khan, unlike the Orientalists' discourse about the Orient and its homogeneity, have not assumed the West to be a homogenous territory or civilization. In spite of their own religious tilt and self-preservation they accepted the variety, versatility, pluralism, multi-faceted terrains and

cultural & civilizational currents. So, if the West had defined the Orient as homogenous, they, in reverse Orientalism, had averted doing the same.

Apart from other differences the travel writers from sub-continent also gauged the linguistic differences existing among the European languages and they were also familiar with the history, politics and social milieu of the Europe and thus formed a multi-pronged and multi-faceted approach to assess, evaluate and represent the West. Similarly, they were also aware of the geographical diversity and terrains of Europe. They also narrated certain stereotypes that these Europeans had for each other and Abu Taleb, in particular contested those stereotypes framed by the English against the Irish. The English stereotype represented them as always drunk who are busy quarrelling and killing each other. Abu Taleb's observation, however, does not testify that stereotypical notion during his interaction and intersection with them. Nevertheless, their observation and perceptions through cultural and racial prisms yields them many stereotypes. For example, Munshi Itesamuddin shares the Whites people's representation and stereotypes about the Dutch Whom the British represent as fishmongers, kingless and unworthy of any significance. Similarly, Abu Taleb Khan in his generalization states that the Dutch are low-minded, inhospitable, oppressive to their slaves, exploiters and misogynists. On the other hand, the Russians' stereotypes about the English are also interesting to note and are also endorsed by Abu Taleb Khan. For example, Russians hold that the English are indolent and lazy and Khan, too, in his catalogue of twelve English defects outlined that their aversion to hard work and preference for luxurious ways of life are their greatest vices. In another

instance when they are chased by the English in London he pejoratively and metonymically calls the over-curious white devils. During their feud, Captain Swinton addresses Itesamuddin and in a nagging way states that, according to Muslims all the White people/nations are gross feeders. The Jews are not spared in this inter-nation and inter-faith battle of stereotypical exchanges. Itesamuddin writes that the Jews are base and contemptible and are detested by every nation including Muslims.

Itesamuddin finds the architecture of Europe, especially England quite monotonous. He demeans the British King's palace by comparing it with the residence of any business of Banaras in India, lacking grandeur and beauty. On the other hand, Abu Taleb keeps comparing England and Europe with Lucknow and deeming the latter superior. During their visit to Oxford, while Itesamuddin calls it a Madrassah, Khan belittles and demeans it by comparing it to a Hindu temple. Lutfullah Khan calls the imperial center as under the spell of iron mania because whatever and wherever he saw, iron was used excessively in the construction. Therefore, London had not appeared him as exquisite as his predecessors probably for the reason that during the second half of the 19th century, industrial revolution had swept everything away. He certainly did not like the symbols in the churches nor did he like the construction of high roofed church-buildings in Europe.

Finally, these travelers, as reverse-Orientalists, challenge the assumed superiority of the renowned Orientalist William Jones who had written many books about India including Persian Grammar. However, Munshi Itesamuddin claims his part in imparting valuable information

about India to Jones, Abu Taleb excoriates his Persian Grammar owing to its poor standard. He also raises objections that though the former had written the book about an Indian language, yet he had not visited India by then. It is to be noted that nowhere in history the contribution of Itesamuddin has been acknowledged by the Orientalists.

Apart from these, we also find another important identifiable pattern in their narratives despite varying ideational frontiers. Their narratives were not governed by a single grand theory on an academic and political level as has been the case in the writings of the Western travel-writings. The Western world was motivated and moved for power in order to (re)discover the world and pave the way for its hegemony. In this regard the “I” of the Western self was marked as the “index of privilege” (Sen, 2005, p. 52) in contrast to the non-Western Other who was to be colonized, subjugated and ruled over. Therefore, rather than developing understanding and creating cross-cultural perceptual bridges, it endeavoured to create the cosmos or the world for itself that is based on the episteme or theoretical grounding to serve the purpose of imperialistic designs and colonial takeover. But such theoretical and epistemic grounds are lacking altogether and there is no such thread or common design found in the narratives of the Oriental travelers.

Although these travelers undertook their journeys at different times (spanning over around hundred years), they are ‘given’ a new identity by the local people upon their return to their native land. Later throughout they were addressed by their new identity-Vilayet-returned Munshi. So, they themselves were (re)defined, (re)labeled) and (re)presented even before

they undertook another journey of narrative writing. Their attempts to perceive and (re) present the exotic and the Other resulted in the extension of their identity.

The binary relationship between the two cultures and their discourses is quite evident since the individual travel writers viewed many aspects of socio-religious and cultural articles of the Western life lopsidedly, while trying to prove the superiority of the Eastern culture over that of the West. The Eurocentric myth of White man's cultural supremacy was dismantled by these travel writers. These textual responses from the marginalized and periphery questioned even the ontology and episteme of the West. But since Occidentalism has never been the part of imperially designed and colonially sponsored representative narratives/discourses and power-knowledge dialectic, these views of the individual travel writers cannot be generalized.

Finally, since history is widely based on myth-making and the human biases, prejudices and perceptions are largely coloured by one's culture and civilizational traits, the way-forward seems to be to study each other's cultures and civilizations through post-modernism which dwells upon minimization and neutralization of such issues through relativity. In this way, not only the binaries become redundant, but the partiality and subjective perceptions also reduce substantially. Since everything becomes relative, the twain of the East and the West can also come closer shunning the representative notions formed over the centuries. Moreover, further investigations about the explorations of these travelers can be made through

expansive archival studies both in the Sub-Continent and Great Britain in particular.

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