



Voyage To India In The Writings Of Pankaj Mishra's *Butter Chicken In Ludhiana*

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Abstract: The relationship between language and travel provides a conduit to investigate the relationship between language and spatial practices, between representation and domination, mapping and politics. Travellers have an integral bond between their discourse of experiences and their ethos of interpretations. The investment in the act of travelling and writing has moved beyond the intention of merely describing a culture. The narratives of journeys woven with the author's imaginations and experiences, gave us travelogues. An ancient genre of literature, travelogues serve as the base for various fictional and non-fictional works. Travelogues inquired the unknown, making us aware of the existence of diversified cultural extremities present in this planet. Travel entails a group away from recognizable places to an unfamiliar one, a familiar place that is diverse from one's home. Modern Indian travel landscape is composed of variety of voices language from the varied ethno cultural spheres and from the spaces in-between cultures. Pankaj Mishra depicts the social and cultural changes in India in backdrop of globalization and modernization, in the shape of a travelogue. His first book, *Butter Chicken in Ludhiana: Travels in Small Town India* (1995), was a travelogue that described the social and cultural changes in India in the context of globalization. In the travelogue Pankaj Mishra captures an India which has shrugged off its sleepy, socialist air, and has become instead kitschy, clamorous and ostentatious. It is a book without any dull bits, and the language has a full, rich flavour - and the strength of its argument, often more implied than asserted, from the picture of small-town Indian life it offers. It is a book that can be just as easily read to pass the time as to understand our age. Unlike most travel books, which suffer from more than a touch of the random and the inessential, it forges something cohesive from the writer's widely scattered roving. From a convent-educated beauty pageant aspirant to small shopkeepers planning their vacation in London, Pankaj Mishra paints a vivid picture of a people rushing headlong to their tryst with modernity. An absolute classic, this is a witty and insightful account of India's aspirational middle class.

Keywords: journey, texts, religion, tradition, culture

I. INTRODUCTION

Writer, novelist, essayist, lecturer, literary critic, journalist, and reporter Pankaj Mishra was born in 1969 in North India. Raised in a small town named Jhansi, his childhood and adolescence were spent in the Northern Indian province of Uttar Pradesh. As a child, he felt distaste for formal schooling because it kept him away from what he loved most: reading. Later he graduated with a bachelor degree in commerce from Allahabad University before earning his Master of Arts degree in English literature at the Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi. He wrote his first novel when he was only seventeen years old, and two further novels followed, although none have been published. He travels around the world writing on a wide range of topics, including religious violence, globalization, Bollywood, the Dalai Lama, and the Talibanization of South Asia.

Pankaj Mishra depicts the social and cultural changes in India in backdrop of globalization and modernization, in the shape of a travelogue. With the plan of presenting India in advancement, Mishra describes the lives of a variety of people all during a huge suggestion of economic and social change which in turn is altering the quality of people's values, customs, hopes and dreams. The knowledge of multiple cultural traditions and the

socio-political discourse which he had gained throughout his journey, which has found its way into the Indian travelogues, and is often, commented on food description which also emerges as a transcultural symbol. This travelogue creates a detachment from the philosophy of empire and present the encounters with other peoples and cultures in conditions of joint understanding, acknowledgment of disparity, and hope in the emancipatory potential of a global community.

II. Major Thrust

Pankaj Mishra's first book *Butter Chicken in Ludhiana: Travels in Small Town India* was published in 1995 is a travelogue that describes the gradual yet profound social and cultural changes taking place in rural Indian towns in the new context of globalization. Hailed as India's travel writing sensation, this book vividly brings to life 19 small towns of India, describing them not in exotic or quaint terms, but rather in the frightening new context of modernization and globalization. As it is mentioned in the subtitle of the book and as far as genre is concerned here, *Butter Chicken in Ludhiana: Travels in Small Town India* seems to be categorized by a set of related buzzwords such as travel literature, travel novel, travelogue, itinerary or even outdoor and adventure literature. Indeed, this adaptation is simply done according to encyclopedic definition which says travel literature is —travel writing considered to have value as literature. Travel literature typically records the people, events, sights and feelings of an author who is touring a foreign place or different regions within the same country for the pleasure of travel.

Based on the writers' personal predilection or intention and the nature of the places to be explored different kinds of travelogues could be found. Sometimes travel writing makes a living for its writer. It is true that Pankaj Mishra's travelogue is essentially built upon facts, but whereas he deals with popular culture to show the folkways, mind-sets, and customs of ordinary everyday people he can't avoid the occurrence of that —multiple voice, perception in his writing, since he has lived among and been one of the same people. As he sets for his journey from New Delhi Inter State Bus Terminal, the readers get to feel closely the woeful wretchedness, the blaring noise of cassette players, the smoke, the stench and the anxiety of a metropolitan city. The prologue sets the reader's expectations high and creates an anticipation of finding a way out of this maddening chaos of modern, globalised world of the national capital which later ironically turns into a disappointed narration of the towns which have lost their ubiquitous social, cultural and even architectural identity. The first three chapters are about towns in the North: Shimla, Mandi, and Ambala. Winter is arriving in the locale and the narrator stays one night at YMCA before starting for Mandi, five hours to the north of Shimla. During the evening, he encounters different people; American couple, Finnish missionaries, British couples and two Italian girls. Contemporary societies are characterized by gathering and mingling of various cultures. The means of establishing the consciousness of diversity and cross-cultural exchanges is considered as food. Different varieties of food make successful medium of addressing the issues regarding cultures, ethnicities and identities in literary and non-literary works. This book, focus on travel writer speaking from a range of ethnos cultural societies and communities of modern India, or in other words, contemporary multicultural travel writers of India, and their behaviour in relation to these issues. First, the author of the book chose food as one of the vital factors shaping our identity and personality. Second, the province of India was selected because of its exact socio-cultural setting which has been exaggerated by the execution of Indian multicultural strategy and by its following disapproval followed by searches for new concepts that would respond the wants of the pluralistic make-up of Indian society. And third, the alternative of writers of varied ethno cultural backgrounds was guided by a wish to demonstrate, at least partially, the variety of voices that shape Indian travel writings and to display the universality as well as diversity and specificity of food descriptions. In *Butter Chicken in Ludhiana*, Pankaj Mishra captures an India which has shrugged off its sleepy, socialist air, and has become instead kitschy, clamorous and ostentatious. From a convent-educated beauty pageant aspirant to small shopkeepers planning their vacation in London, Pankaj Mishra paints a vivid picture of a people rushing headlong to their tryst with modernity. An absolute classic, this is a witty and insightful account of India's aspirational middle class.

Conclusion

Pankaj Mishra explores different themes of love, grief, loss, self-doubt and emotional stillness, conflict between bookish ideas and desolate reality, class and caste problems, the meeting of East and West, culture clashes, transition and the change en route for a modern. *Butter Chicken in Ludhiana: Travels in Small Town India* (1995) seems to be categorized by a set of related words such as travel literature, travel novel, travelogues, itinerary or even outdoor and adventure literature. This travelogue is inspected with a prototypical or a critical approach, still a hybridity of non-fiction and literary elements are easily observed. Pankaj Mishra depicts the social and cultural changes in India in backdrop of globalization and modernization, in the shape of a travelogue. With the plan of presenting India in advancement, Mishra describes the lives of a variety of people all during a huge suggestion of economic and social change which in turn is altering the quality of people's values, customs, hopes and dreams.

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