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### **OTHERNESS AND TRAVEL: MORTENSON'S THREE CUPS OF TEA**

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**Keywords:**

*Construction, Other, Identity, Travel literature, Travel and Identity: constructing the Other in Three Cups of Tea.*

**Abstract**

*This study investigates the construction of “Other” in American writer, Greg Mortenson’s *Three Cups of Tea* (2006). The study reveals how Mortenson as a western Other, constructs the identity of Pakistani people during his travel and stay in Pakistan. For a detailed analysis, the underlying approach or theoretical framework was Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978), a foundational work on the genre of travel writing’s relation to the colonial project. Otherhood and identity construction has never been studied in travel literature written about Pakistan, which makes this research work a ground-breaking study addressing a genuine issue. To seek detailed answers, the data was analyzed qualitatively using Braun and Clarke’s Reflexive Thematic Analysis. The research has treated the logic of difference and othering operated by the western view as it has focussed on the construction and treatment of the Other (Pakistanis). The study reveals the Othering of the native population by Mortenson, both consciously as well as unconsciously. Classification of himself into a category different from natives has been seen as the natives have been presented as primitive and conservative throughout the travelogue. Othering Pakistanis on the basis of their religion has also been observed.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The ambivalent nature of the identity of *Other* can be altered by socio-political and cultural notions involved in its construction. Associating ideas can add to potential for discrimination, for instance, when the Other is objectified, sometimes even refused (by self) to be treated as a subject like self. Usually, a dominant group constructs the boundary between itself and other groups based on stigma of real or imagined difference. Dogan (2000) writes that Otherness is based on the idea of division ‘like normal and abnormal, insider and outsider, acceptable and unacceptable, and Us and them.

*Three Cups of Tea* has been written from David Oliver Relin’s perspective, a journalist interviewing the nurse turned mountain climber and a humanitarian the founder of the Central Asian Institute Greg Mortenson. Below is the analysis of the narrative examining Mortenson’s encounter with Pakistanis on their homeland during 1990s to 2000s and his representation of the land and its people through his text *Three Cups of Tea*. This study analyses how Mortenson has constructed the identity of Pakistanis particularly portraying the binary opposition of the self and other. This study aims to expose and underscore how the corpus of the travelogues constructs the identity of Pakistan as the Other, by drawing on the scholarship of Said and others. The method of analysis is thematic reflexive analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006).

In the current era of rapid globalization and cross-cultural contacts, travel writing has become extremely relevant to the current sociocultural, historical, and political debates. The phenomenon of Othering has not been discussed in travel writings and very little has been explored in this genre as compared to other literary genres, which makes it a very contemporary field to work. The travelogues written about Pakistan have not been explored through this perspective so far. This gives me a great margin to add to the genre’s subject as a pioneering work.

### Aims and objectives:

- To expose and underscore how the corpus of the travelogues constructs the identity of Pakistan as the Other, by drawing on the scholarship of Said and others
- To analyse the moderate traits of Pakistani women and their inclined tendencies towards modernity

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Othering is not merely knowledge of the Other, nevertheless Michel Foucault (1961 as cited in Thompson, 2015) considers it a creation and maintenance of fantasied or imaginary knowledge of the Other. Cultures are often misrepresented in order to suit the narrative of the sociopolitical powers and hierarchies of domination. Cultural representations manifest xenophobia, labeling non-Europeans as the weak and subordinate Others. Travel accounts construct an image of the Other, which would license the cultural superiority of the author and the readers, empowering the ethnocentrism. The motives of such pejorative depictions can be numerous, ranging from unintentional to deliberate purposes. For example, John Ross's *Travelogue Narrative of a Second Voyage in Search of a North West Passage* depicts the Inuit with a special ideological dimension. The British explorers were apparently looking for a North West Passage through the arctic to enable the ships sail from the North Atlantic Ocean to the North Pacific. However, it was not the only motive as they were searching for the natural resources of the area as well (Thompson, 2015).

Thompson (2015) writes that travellers often while narrating their experiences in a foreign land are engaged in a process called 'othering'. He further explains 'othering' as a process of identifying and highlighting the cultural differences between the outsiders (travellers) and the native population. However, it is more complex as specific strategies and processes have been used to portray another culture not only as different but inferior. According to Thompson (2015), 'Othering' is an inevitable phenomenon in travel writing as it offers newness in the text about the places unfamiliar and 'other' to the readers. It is however, the motives behind it, which make 'othering' different in its kinds. Often Othering occurs unconsciously yet instances of judgmental othering in travel narratives are crucial and have justificatory function.

Lately, postcolonial critics have paid special attention to study the power relations exhibited through travel texts with misrepresentation of other cultures in a condescending way. Edward Said was on the frontline with his seminal text *Orientalism*, which explored Western Images of the Orient from ancient times to the twentieth century.

Thompson (2015) while analyzing how John Ross along with his nephew presented the Inuit and their food particularly during their expedition in 1812, defines the process of 'othering'. He defines 'othering' as a process of identifying a culture in comparison to one's own culture, not only as different but also inferior. Almost all travelogues engage in *othering* somehow as people,

places, and cultures are unfamiliar to the authors and audience yet the extent or the level of this process could be varied. For Ross's representation, the British (his culture) was flag bearer of civilization and the Inuit (the other) were savage and uncivilized brutes. Hence, the narrator of a travelogue has assumed sense of cultural superiority, which generates prejudiced and ethnocentric attitudes reflected through their writings (Thompson, 2015).

Thompson (2015) has mentioned critics who have analyzed rhetorical conventions underpinning Western texts for presenting other cultures, for example Christopher Miller (1985), V.Y. Mudimbe (1988), Tim Youngs (1994) for exploring construction of Africa and Africanist in the West and Ronald Inden (1990) and Sara Suleri (1992) for India as well as Terry Goldie (1989) and others for north America.

Douglas Ivison has written an article "*Travel Writing at the End of Empire: A Pom Named Bruce and the Mad White Giant*", on travel writings in colonial times. The author suggests that travel narratives were involved in the creation as well as maintenance of the European expansionism. Travel texts acted as a source of information about the situations for the future colonial administrators. Further, the decline in colonization and the post-imperial age has different impact on the travel writers. Ivison examines the travelogues of two white British writers i.e. Bruce Chatwin and Benedict Allen. Allen writes adventurous tales ethnographically describing primitive tribes. Chatwin on the other hand, writes postmodern travel texts revealing the dark sides of the empire.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study has adopted a qualitative research paradigm analyzing the data through the Saidian perspective i.e. the travelogues are responsible for epistemological, material, and textual production of the Orient (Pakistan in this research). Therefore, patterns of meanings were identified and examined through Reflexive Thematic Analysis, an approach suggested by Braun and Clarke. Braun & Clarke (2006) also identify two different levels of analysis i.e. the semantic or explicit level and the latent or theoretical level. Since the current research seeks to investigate beyond semantic levels, therefore the thematic analysis will be done one latent or theoretical level. Braun and Clarke (2006) call this method Reflexive Thematic Analysis and assert on its reflexivity.

The process of research began by getting familiar with the data corpus. Codes were generated by reading the data, notes were made, and the codes were studied carefully to get possible answers of the research questions. Theme of Otherhood and identity construction was

interpreted carefully to study Mortenson's presuppositions about Pakistan, Islam and the native population. Another theme i.e. western heroism reveals how western travellers tend to believe them to be saviours of the east. Exoticising the place, sense of superiority and portrayal of the natives as primitive has also been discussed in this study.

In the current research, the process of generating codes, identifying themes and the analysis was however, loosely based on Edward Said's concepts on the representation of east through travelogues. Therefore, specific questions have derived the analysis in a particular orientation. The main objective was to study the construction of a reality about experience of travellers in Pakistan. The research has attempted to locate the data sophisticatedly into a wider social, historical, cultural and ideological perspective. The current research sought to investigate beyond semantic levels, therefore the thematic analysis was done on latent or theoretical level. Since, travelogues about Pakistan have never been explored through this perspective, therefore in this paper, particular research deficit area has been explored, which makes it a pioneering work.

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

### **The Division of Us and Them**

The Saidian concept of how 'they' know Orient (epistemological knowledge) is vivid through Mortenson's, his family's, co-authors and other American's presuppositions and presumptions about Pakistan. Davidson (as cited in Thompson, 2015) suggests that the tradition of colonial travel writing is followed even now and western authors reproduce a superior western civilization as compared to the cultures, land, and people they visit. In this way, the privileged position of westerner is continued to be secured by classifying, criticizing, and passing judgement on the comparatively lesser civilized places. This seems somewhat true for Mortenson's text too as *Three Cups of Tea* tends to present Pakistan and its people as primitive, in the process of constructing a western 'Other', opposite to Pakistan and vice versa.

This division of Us versus Them often leads to stereotyping in social order and human interactions, which overgeneralizes the whole groups into the same. Dogan (2000) argues that today's man is being told about the work before he sees it, imagines before experiencing and these 'preconception' mark out things and people as familiar (even if slightly familiar) or strange (even if slightly odd) emphasising the difference.

## **Religious Othering**

Mortenson (is involved in the process of othering by implying that Islam is severe religion comparing it to the harsh, stern, and rough landscape of Northern Pakistan.

Their Buddhism had been scoured away as they travelled over the rocky passes and replaced by a religion more attuned to the severity of their new landscape—Shiite Islam (Relin & Mortenson, 2006, p.21).

This looks quite similar to Said's philosophy of knowing the orient epistemologically as well as how it is represented textually. Mortenson's presumed ideas are presented on the paper as if he actually encountered the harshness of Shiite Islam and though he fails to prove any evidence supporting his statement. Additionally, Mortenson *others* himself too by calling himself infidel, which is a deliberate Othering, as Mortenson differentiates himself from Muslims on the base of his religion calling himself infidel.

While mapping the foreign space of their visit, travel writers chronicle the crossing of borders, both geopolitical as well as religious. When they meet people of different cultures and religions, the travel writers pass comment on the differences (both imagined and experienced/observed). Mortenson has also created a Muslim identity with an admiration for prostration, as Relin writes

For years, Mortenson had known, intellectually, that the word “Muslim” means, literally, “to submit.” And like many Americans, who worshipped at the temple of rugged individualism, he had found the idea dehumanizing. But for the first time, kneeling among one hundred strangers, watching them wash away not only impurities, but also, obviously, the aches and cares of their daily lives, he glimpsed the pleasure to be found in submission to a ritualized fellowship of prayer (Mortenson, 2006, p.68).

The aforementioned incident shows that Mortenson had been living with a perception of Islam without actually understanding it. He claims that he knew intellectually that the notion of submission to the higher power in Islam is dehumanizing. Now, when he encountered the actual space and experienced some level of this submission, his views changed depicting that travel writers hold greater responsibility as they can unlearn the wrongly learnt through first-hand experience and chronicle their experience to the readers sitting in their couches in their homeland.

Nevertheless, it is a common practice of observers to comment only on the exterior appearances of ceremonies, rituals, and holy place, without realizing the full scope with reference

to that particular society. Unconsciously, the writer conveys his own perceptions of a certain religion along with his personal values giving meaning to the Other and hence constructing a religious identity. Mortenson judges the Islamic call to prayer in a way, which might look quite strange to a Muslim as Relin (2006) writes his views in the following words

amplified wail of the *hazzan* implored the faithful to evening prayer (p.59).

His choice of words has constructed a very strange and odd identity of the Islamic call to prayer. Mortenson can be seen calling it a wail, while Muslims consider it a melodious voice, which has nothing to do with grief. Moreover, the Azan does not implore the Muslims to prayer as the translation shows that it is an invitation, which begins with the praise of Allah and invites the believers to peace through prayer. He also refers to the Azan as *cries* on another occasion as he mentions, “*muezzins’* cries from half a dozen other mosques flavoured the darkening air with exhortations” (p.59). The Azan might have sounded like a cry to Mortenson but to translating it keeping the emotions of Muslims in consideration. Travel writers have responsibility of translating foreign cultures for their own people. Descartes (1637) writes that it is good for a travel writer to know practices of different people that he could avoid thinking that what is different is absurd, unlike those who do not step outside their hometown (as cited. in Thompson, 2015).

Mortenson once again overlooks and presents his preconceived ideas about Islam and Muslims by commenting on his handshake with a man, a high altitude porter called Janjungpa at village called Khane. He comments that Janjungpa is “Westernized enough to extend his hand to a foreigner for a shake without invoking Allah (Relin & Mortenson, 2006, p 88)”. Islam does not prohibit shaking hands neither does Pakistani culture. Mortenson has been shaking hands with Pakistani strangers and acquaintances throughout the narrative as on page numbers (14, 22, 93, 94, 113, 124, 150, 169, 190, 200, 202, 216, 228). Even the local Islamic scholar Abbas shakes hand with him during their meeting (Relin & Mortenson, 2006, p.190).

It is quite strange that Mortenson has ignored what he has been narrating to the audience and presented Janjungpa’s handshake as an act done under the western impact on him. Mortenson has also mentioned another similar incident where the Korphe “girls wrapped their hands cautiously in their headscarves before touching the infidel.” (Relin & Mortenson, 2006, p.94) This might look disturbing and strange yet he should have given some cultural background as Muslim women do not shake hands with men, whether infidel or not. On another occasion, “At Haji Ali’s, Sakina took Mortenson’s hand in welcome, and he realized it was the first time a Balti woman had

touched him" (Relin & Mortenson, 2006, p.113). This reveals a practice common to Baltistan where local women do not touch those men's hands, who are unrelated to them. Scholl (2008) writes that traveller experiences various responses in the source culture, which in turn affects his objectivity. He tends to view the culture with the filters of his own cultural heritage and hence produces meanings without recognition of Other's subjectivity. Pratt (2007) mentions a need for reconciliation of their preconceived structures with what the travel writers learn from other culture . I agree to Pratt since in the aforementioned quote, Mortenson's judgement lacks the necessary explanation of the local culture, even if he is right claiming that the girls do not touch him for being non-Muslim. He fails to mention the source of his concept as it clearly needs a little explanation.

Mortenson's preconceived ideas are reflected during his encounters with the local clerics too as he writes that since his arrival in Korphe, 'he had kept respectful distance from the mosque, and Korphe's religious leader' as he was 'unsure how the mullah felt about having an infidel in the village, an infidel who proposed to educate Korphe's girls' (Relin & Mortenson, 2006, p.141,142). However, the religious leader's response is quite contrary to Mortenson's imagination as Sher Takhi had welcomed the foreigner with a smile (Relin & Mortenson, 2006, p.142).

### **Exotic Otherness**

West tends to see the orient or the eastern part of the world as primitive, simple, living in pleasure thus exoticising them and overlooking the difficulties of living in an area without basic human facilities. Hungry bellies need food more than ecstatic scenery. Duncan (1998) writes that European travellers tend to romanticise the lands of their visits paying minimal attention to the local people's lives. Mortenson (2006) also expresses the same as he says 'Many Westerners passing through the Karakoram had the feeling that the Balti lived a simpler, better life than they did back home in their developed countries (p.30). Moreover, he mentions that early Europeans had given it a romantic name translated as "Tibet of the Apricots." Mortenson (2006) mentions Fasco Maraini, an Italian photographer, mountaineer and writer, who during his visit to Askole in 1958, writes The Balti "really seem to have a flair for enjoying life," and admires the old men sitting under the sky in sunshine "smoking their picturesque pipes" (p.30). He appreciates men working at primitive looms under mulberry trees with experienced hands. Maraini presents even a disgusting act in very soft words as he mentions "two boys, sitting by themselves, removing their lice with tender and meticulous care" (Pratt 30). He has clearly overlooked the problems of hygiene

and manual labour, considering it an act of enjoyment, which is quite shocking. He later adds, “We breathed an air of utter satisfaction, of eternal peace,” he continued. “All this gives rise to a question. Isn’t it better to live in ignorance of everything—asphalt and macadam, vehicles, telephones, television—to live in bliss without knowing it?” (Relin & Mortenson, 2006, p 30).

Thompson (2015) argues that sometimes the romanticized image ignores the hardships and the sufferings faced by the other community. Similarly, Mairaini has completely ignored the fact that Balti people are deprived of basic human needs. Mortenson (2006) feels it and mentions that even after thirty-five years Baltis still lack convenient lifestyles. He admits that the west eroticise the Bali lifestyle and says that “Korphe was far from the prelapsarian paradise of Western fantasy. In every home, at least one family member suffered from goiters or cataracts’. He also reveals that the “children, whose ginger hair he had admired, owed their coloring to a form of malnutrition called kwashiorkor”. Women of Korphe died often during childbirth. The closest hospital was at the journey of a week. Those who have to fill a hungry stomach do not think of satisfying aesthetic sense. Perhaps, human life needs a little more than just fresh air, sunshine, and apricots.

Unlike the earlier tradition of western travel writers, Mortenson (2006) understands the hunger and poverty of the Korphe people. He narrates, “Watching the ardor with which the meat was devoured, Mortenson (2006) realized how rare such a meal was for the people of Korphe, and how close they lived to hunger. This depicts that Mortenson (2006) knows the mountain life and understands and admits the western trend of romanticising the problems of native population. Moreover, when he first joins them, being very hungry, he takes two cups of tea. While narrating it, Relin (2006) mentions , “If Mortenson had known how scarce and precious sugar was to the Balti, how rarely they used it themselves, he would have refused the second cup of tea” (Relin & Mortenson, 2006, p. 28).

### **Hospitality and Laudatory Othering**

Thompson (2015) argues that the Other serves a rhetorical function and has attributes and values often lacked in the traveller’s own culture. The constructed image may or may not depict the actual lives of native people. This can be termed as laudatory Othering. Like many other westerners, Mortenson’s narrator also praises the Pakistani hospitality by writing, “Arriving in Korphe with Dr. Greg, Bhangoo and I were welcomed with open arms, the head of a freshly killed ibex, and endless cups of tea” in one of “the world’s most impoverished communities” in Korphe. Despite lacking basic rights and fulfilment of basic needs like food, clean water, hospitals, bridges

and education, people of Korphe had managed to sacrifice their rams for the western guest. Unlike America, where Mortenson (2006) had to sleep in his car called the La Bamba to save money. He saved the money by not renting an apartment yet nobody (including his then girlfriend) had offered him a place to sleep unlike in Pakistan where strangers had always welcomed him in their homes. Relin (2006) narrates

Mortenson called half a dozen acquaintances in his mountaineering circle until he found a climber's crash pad where he could stay until he could figure out what to do next. In a dilapidated green Victorian house on Berkeley's Lorina Street, Mortenson slept on the floor in an upstairs hallway for a month... While he slept, people stepped over him on the way to the bathroom (p.102).

As compared to this, the Baltis had welcomed him with open arms and open doors, despite having no room or resources like Americans. The mountaineering had weakened him a lot. Therefore, when weak and worn out Mortenson arrived at Korphe back from a failed expedition to the K2 , although a total stranger, the *nurmadhar* ordered one of the biggest rams slaughtered for the debilitated foreigner .

### **The American Saviour**

Mortenson builds a school for the local children. Therefore, Relin, Mortenson's narrator, tries to legitimize his image as an American rescuer or a western saviour by Othering the native people. As an American narrator, Relin keeps on praising Mortenson's efforts for the poor, helpless Pakistanis ignored by their own government. In chapter 3, while discussing Mortenson's analysis of the struggle of villagers for basic human facilities like health and education, Relin (2006) mentions that Mortenson had heard the locals complain about the government's biasness against them. By mentioning the prejudice and ignorance of local government, Relin validates Mortenson's portrayal as a rescuer.

This heroic portrayal of Mortenson had roots in a customary writing style widely practiced by western writers. Sharpe (1993) claims that western traveller tends to adopt a writing style with ties in colonialism. This style typically assumes the western traveller's moral superiority, so his gaze on natives or local population will be like his colonial forbearers. Relin continues this practice here the similar trend and presents Mortenson as heroic figure who rescued people when they could not help themselves. To validate his representation, he overstates certain situations. As Thompson (2015) writes that even during recounting their journeys, travel writers fabricate incidents and

exaggerate their encounters as this capitalizes their readership

Moreover, Relin does not give even a little credit to the people helping Mortenson in the construction of school either in America or in Pakistan claiming that Mortenson's had singlehandedly brought the change to thousands of lives, presenting him as a heroic figure though people like him are apparently not welcomed in 'that part of the world' (Relin & Mortenson, p.5). Although, reading from the beginning of the book, it is clear that Mortensen did not intend to portray soft image of America during the media propaganda as shown by the author in the introduction rather he wanted to help people. His help was because local people had helped him.

In the very beginning of the narrative, Mortenson recounts his first meeting to the people when he had reached Korphe after being lost for days. He had been part of a team of five climbers attempting to climb K2, located in Karakoram range of Northern Pakistan. Weak and exhausted, Mortenson lost his ascent during his expedition. On arriving Korphe, despite having no previous familiarity, he was welcomed by the local chief Haji Ali in his poverty-stricken household with the utmost possible hospitality. Seeing Mortenson weak and feeble after his precarious survival, Haji Ali had 'ordered one of the village's precious *chogo rabak*, or big rams, slaughtered' (Relin & Mortenson, 2006, p.29). In a village, where they ate *chapatis* with *chai*, the sacrifice of a ram for a stranger was something Mortenson could not take for granted. It is strange that the narrator of the book still presumes the anti-American sentiments in the local population despite knowing these details of sacrificial hospitality. Therefore, Mortenson's help was primarily a goodwill gesture returned during hours of his trouble rather than anything to do with anti-Americanism. Moreover, how native people had welcomed him and shared their share of meagre amount of bread and butter with a stranger does not reveal any negative emotion attached to his nationality.

The thought of doing something to honour memory of Charista made him decide that 'he wanted to do something for them' (Relin & Mortenson, 2006, p.31). Initially, he thinks that 'he'd use the last of his money to buy textbooks to send to their school' (31) and plans to visit the village's school with Haji Ali. To his surprise, eighty two children had to study in open air and bare 'frosty ground' sharing only one teacher for they could not afford more and the government did not provide a school to the village. Mortenson was 'appalled' to see them studying under open sky, some 'fortunate' ones writing with mud liquid on a slate boards and the rest copying multiplication tables by scratching dirt using sticks. Astonished Mortenson compares these children to American kids in the following words;

"Can you imagine a fourth-grade class in America, alone, without a teacher, sitting there quietly and working on their lessons?" (Relin & Mortenson, 2006, p 32).

In addition, the scene had made him feel so emotional with 'his heart in his throat', therefore he decided to do something for them. Relin (2006) writes Mortenson's words

"I felt like my heart was being torn out...that reminded me of Christa. I knew I had to do something." (p.32)

The above examples have presented and proved the reason for why Mortenson had decided to build schools in Pakistan. Moreover, before 9/11, there was no or very little misunderstanding or media propaganda as mentioned by Relin, which could possibly contribute to the anti-Americanism in Pakistan. Perhaps, Mortenson's narrator changes his intentions according to the outcomes. The consequences might be true outcomes yet only due to luck as the text was published post 9/11. Mortenson did not help them with intention of cleaning up American name as mentioned above clearly, since it was early 1990s.

### **The solo super Hero**

The primitive orient has always been in need of a western hero to save it from barbarism and here, Mortenson has been portrayed as so. Wherever someone is appreciated and given credit of Korphe school in the narrative, it is always solely Mortenson. Relin writes

... he has single-handedly changed the lives of tens of thousands of children, and independently won more hearts and minds than all the official American propaganda flooding the region (Relin & Mortenson, 2006, p.5).

On the contrary, before this statement, Relin (2006) writes that poor porters had left their labour and worked with Mortenson on 'paltry wages' to help him giving education to children they lacked. A taxi driver had sold his taxi in Islamabad and became a 'fiercely dedicated fixer' for Mortenson (p.3). Exhibiting this portrayal, Relin's writing becomes highly exaggerated as he mentions that

Former Taliban fighters renounced violence and the oppression of women after meeting Mortenson and went to work with him peacefully building schools for girls (Relin & Mortenson, 2006, p 3).

Although, later on in the text, readers cannot find such an event, account or encounter in detail. However, this claim that Mortenson (2006) had 'drawn volunteers and admirers from every stratum of Pakistan's society and from all the warring sects of Islam' is quite true (p.3).

Mortenson's character has been presented so determined in his mission that he sacrifices his relationship for the school. The first rift between him and his girlfriend Marina was about money as Mortenson wanted to save all for school, refusing Marina's wishes 'bluntly' so "their weekend in the damp car simmered with unspoken tension" (Relin & Mortenson, 2006, p.53). Furthermore, he had "decided not to rent an apartment" (Relin & Mortenson, 2006, p.49). Once more, Mortenson appears as a hero who had forgotten his own life for a higher purpose.

Every rupee counted now. Every wasted dollar stole bricks or books from the school. For eighty rupees a night, or about two dollars (Relin and Mortenson, p.57).

He did not care for himself and spent nights in car, parking areas and lobbies, sacrificing all of his comforts. He is a rescuer of people, who had no one else to help them. Mortenson intentions are not doubted here yet he seems to be the typical western saviour, who is ready to cross all obstacles for the destitute.

### **Local Sacrifices and Efforts**

Relin, his narrator, has totally ignored the sacrifices and efforts of local people. One such example is that of a poor porter Mouzafer, who heroically carried cement bags to the site so that the school could be built in time. This was not done for money or for Mortenson's American-ness, but out of the desire for a school for their children..

A slight man then in his mid-sixties, Mouzafer had made more than twenty trips bearing his heavy load, skipping meals and walking day and night so that the cement would be at the building site in time for Mortenson's arrival (Relin & Mortenson, 2006, p. 147).

Relin, the narrator, has even overlooked the sacrifice made by the locals who out of their meagre wealth, were ready to give it all for the sake of a school claiming even in the title that it was a *one* man's mission. Another example of the sacrifice at local level is that of Haji Ali's (the local chief) conversation with the numardhar of the local mafia called haji Mehdi. Haji Ali had bravely called Mortenson more Muslim then haji Mehdi and gave the village's only wealth to haji Mehdi as extortion, i.e. all the best rams (Relin and Mortenson, 2006, p.152, 153)

Like Mortenson, Haji Ali was also a visionary as they shared the mission of a school. However, he had no opportunities to collect charity like Mortenson and his financial conditions did not allow him to do it on his own. The Balti chief could hardly afford wheat *chapatti* and tea as food like all other villagers. Nevertheless, he supported Mortenson's mission as much as he could and never left him alone. He should have been equally acknowledged. Mortenson (2006) has somewhat

balanced the situation by calling it “one of the most humbling things I’ve ever seen,” (p.153). At the end of the chapter Mortenson (2006) acknowledges the sacrifices made by the local people and accepts that he singlehandedly (as Relin writes over and over) had not sacrificed for the school.

Another local, the watchman of the Khyaban hotel Abdul had volunteered and helped Mortenson buying construction material from the most reasonable market with personal efforts of bargaining, though it was not his duty. The chapter entitled *Rawalpindi's Rooftops at Dusk* has details of how Abdul makes puts his heart into the shopping. No matter how trivial it looks, Mortenson would never have achieved his goal without the help of local people.

## CONCLUSION

Othering has been so much prevalent in the discourse of travelogues that the travel writers tend to ignore the civilized, cultured, and hospitable people they encounter among the native population. Leslie (2006) believes that modern travel writing has evolved and reinvented itself. Modern writers have inclination to espouse what she calls “a cosmopolitan vision”. This vision, unlike the customary Othering, does not denigrate but celebrates the alterity and cultural differences among the travellers’ home culture and the target destination/place.

The analysis of Mortenson’s narrative proves this concept right as throughout the narrative, he has presented his encounter with the people of Korphe (except one or two cases), especially with Haji Ali and his family as positive. In fact, their acquaintance had developed into a beautiful familylike relation over the passage of time. He dedicates an entire chapter to Haji Ali, celebrating their mutual relationship. Mortenson’s connection with the place and people had been deep. Gradually, he had developed familiarity with the foreign land, which had given him feelings of a home yet the othering of local people is evident from the aforementioned details.

At the same time, we see Mortenson’s involvement in religious othering as well as presenting himself a rescuer of the weak, underprivileged people of the east. In this process of identity construction, Mortenson has followed the tradition of presenting the third world country as a less civilized land. The representation of a western hero on a rescue mission of helpless Pakistanis has been carried out throughout the narrative sometimes even with overstating the facts and adding some fiction to it. At some points, he demarcates the borders of Us and Them too but that is mostly on the basis of religion. This study has successfully underscored how the corpus of the travelogues constructs the identity of Pakistan as the Other, by drawing on the scholarship of Said and others. It’s a pioneering work being an exploration of travelogues written about Pakistan.

Otherness is such a wide subject that it can be studied in travel writing through many different perspectives. For instance, Otherness in the contemporary multicultural and transcultural world, its origins, logical structures, effects, problems and multidimensional nature etc., can be studied through the experiences of travellers. Construction of cultural identity and attribution of a particular set of qualities to a population can be studied using travel literature. Questions like how ethnicities are defined and complexified? How imagined identities are shown as realities? etc., can also be responded.

Researches can also be carried out on the sources where Otherness has been originated, through the hermeneutic perspective, keeping a focus on the hindrance in communication as well. Therefore, travel literature is a vast genre which can be studied through a range of interesting perspectives.

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