

Travelling and Transgressive Experiences: An Anthropological-cum-Ethnographical Study of Heinrich Harrer's *Seven Years in Tibet* and Noo Saro Wiwa's *Looking for Transwonderland: Travels in Nigeria*

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study is to analyze Heinrich Harrer's *Seven Years in Tibet* (1953) and Noo-Saro-Wiwa's *Looking for Transwonderland: Travels in Nigeria* (2012) using interpretive frameworks of anthropology and ethnography. Harrer's work is a travel book based on the author's personal experiences in Tibet and his encounter with contemporary Tibetan culture, and Noo-Saro-Wiwa's work is an account of her journey to Nigeria which is her father's country. Using anthropology as an interpretive framework, the study seeks to contextualize the aforementioned narratives as transgressive practices. The study also emphasizes how people and events shape the writer's imagination.

Keywords: travel writing, anthropology, culture, ethnography

1. Introduction

Travel writing consists of experience of travelers/writers, travel adventures, and various other discoveries written down in an ethnographically compiled form that is non-fictional in nature. These narratives are a source of information as well as entertainment for readers, as they document the socio-political and economic refractions of the places surveyed by these travelers/writers. These peripatetic accounts are also used for further research as they deal with socio-political and aesthetic aspects of the foreign lands. Furthermore, travel writing is inseparable from anthropological approaches as both share the goal of exploring the world through travel.

The early 1990s saw a number extraordinary works in the field of Travel Writing Studies by Sara Mills (1991), Dennis Porter (1991), Mary Louise Pratt (1992), James Buzard (1993) and Tim Youngs (1994). Paul Fussell (1980) defines travel as work. According to him, "Traveler is one who suffers from travail. Before the development of tourism, travel was conceived to be like study, and its fruits were considered to be the adornment of the mind and the formation of judgment" (Fussell, 1980, p. 39).

Travel has also contextual influences over disciplines such as the humanities and social sciences. It can be seen as an important component in the academic field of literature, history, geography, and anthropology. Travel, as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary, is "To go from one place to another over a long distance". The word 'travel' has many synonyms, expedition, pass, tour, trip, excursion, excursion and many more. What all these words have in common is physical movement from one place to another over a long distance. The idea of travel is different from that in fiction which is a virtual, imaginary journey without physical movement. As the synonyms of travel suggest, it is risk-taking and risk that characterizes travel as adventure. The original word for travel is 'travelin' which can be traced back to the late fourteenth century and means 'to travel' and 'to toil'.

Travel expands human knowledge and understanding. It is not only a process that brings together or introduces different cultures and heritages but also helps in developing a better understanding of the human being and bringing social integrity. Travel has been an integral part of human society since the beginning, be it religious or secular. People travel from one place to another for many reasons - pilgrimage, conquest, adventure, education, recreation, trade, business, etc. The accounts of these people traveling from one place to another can take many literary forms, such as memoirs, autobiographies, travelogues, poems, stories, and various other forms.

Travel books are an important source of knowledge and understanding of a travel destination, told from the traveler's point of view. Travel writing entered scholarly circles in the late twentieth century and brought with it many approaches and theories to studying the travel experience and its documentation. 'Travel' has been a point of reference for many academic disciplines in humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. Disciplines such as literature, history, anthropology, ethnography, sociology, economics, and archaeology have their own perspectives and positions to deal with travel. Tim Youngs (1994) writes that "Travel writing feeds from and back into other forms of

literature. To try to identify boundaries between various forms would be impossible and I would be deeply suspicious of an attempt at the task" (p. 08). According to Roy Bridges (2002) travel writing is:

A discourse designed to describe and interpret for its readers a geographical area together with its natural attributes and its human society and culture. Travel writing may embrace approaches ranging from an exposition of the results of scientific exploration claiming to be objective and value free to the frankly subjective description of the impact of an area and its people on the writer's own sensibilities. (p. 53)

Anthropology is significant to travel writing. It uses ethnographic methods as a means of creating authoritative knowledge about the others. Johannes Fabian also opines that there exists a mutual relationship between travel writing and anthropology that has emerged through his postcolonial critique of the colonial exploration of Africa. This synergy between anthropology and the representational practices of travel writing has also been emphasized by Edward Said.

The shared acts and experiences of the travel writer and anthropologist present a kind of convergence between Anthropology and ethnographic travel writings. They both must travel to write. Both disciplines share a hybridity of genres and the two hybrid genres overlap in many ways. They borrow specific narrative and discursive techniques from each other. Travel writing is commonly described as a "hybrid genre" or "between" genres and discourses that sit on the border between literature, ethnography, historiography, and journalism. James Clifford explores the relationship between anthropology and travel. In his view, travel is a fundamental necessity not only for anthropological fieldwork but also for theoretical context because "Travels and contacts are crucial sites for unfinished modernity" (Clifford, 1997, p. 02). He also expounded on the need for reconceptualizing of the fieldwork and culture in travel writing.

Travel writing usually deals with world views and perspectives, including themes of adventure, misadventure, spiritual growth, encounters with foreign cuisines and cultures, and more. Sara Mills in her classic study *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (1991) identifies several discursive strategies involved in travel writing that vary according to gender and represent the places visited as alien with the purpose of othering them. These discursive practices can be represented through various analogies, paintings, photography, and pilgrimages.

Since the middle of the century, the impetus of travel has gradually shifted towards tourism. This shift from travel to tourism allowed travelers more freedom to explore and engage more closely with host cultures, and provided travelers with more self-conscious accounts. Mark Twain's *The Innocents Abroad* depicts how pilgrims began to turn into a type of business. According to Thomas Pynchon, after the rise of tourism a wanderer can become a feature of topography more than others that are already part of it. He opined that the guidebooks stifle the existence of local residents by simply being involved in the tourism business as it involves repeatability that others have to follow to travel. In the opinion of Jonathan Culler an example of a common cultural practice is that a tourist sees everything as a symbol of himself; a Frenchman is an example of a Frenchman, a restaurant in the Latin Quarter is an example of the Latin Quarter, suggesting the "Latin Quarter Restaurantness".

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1950) believes that "Travelling is a fool's paradise" (p. 165). It is taken to escape from the self. Travel, for Emerson, is for morally weak people and he condemns the travel business. According to Michael Mewshaw traveling is what Wallace Stevens called the "the joy of just wandering" and immobility reminds us of death. We are always moving around and traveling to prove that we are still alive. Travel can also be seen as an act of rebellion, an act of self-discovery and an assertion of one's identity. "Travel may be viewed as a rebellious, even a subversive act, part of the process of self-actualization. I travel to define and assert my existential identity. I travel. Therefore, I am" (Mewshaw, 2005, p. 03). Paul Fussell claims, that not traveling results in a "diminution of dimension, a loss of imagination and a literal loss of physical freedom". Mewshaw believes that all writing is travel writing and that we are inspired by the places we are; not only by people or events but we can be different people in different places. Traveling to new places brings a new and unexpected self. As Theodore Roethke says, "I learn by going where I have to go." Travel writings can be seen as a relationship between two places; place designated by the author and that designated as culturally other

Harrer's *Seven Years in Tibet* and Wiwa's *Looking for Transwonderland: Travels in Nigeria* have been studied from different perspectives but never examined through anthropological-cum-ethnographical lens. The researcher will analyze both the travelogues by studying the culture, geography, political issues, and social aspects as traced through the authors' journey applying ethnography as research method and anthropology as study approach.

2. Methodology

The purpose of this study is to describe the social, political, and cultural landscapes of Tibet and Nigeria as presented in *Seven Years in Tibet* and *Looking for Transwonderland: Travels in Nigeria* using interpretive frameworks of ethnography and anthropology. The researcher has also conducted a virtual interview with one of the authors selected for the study which helped to answer some of the research problems related to the text.

3. Discussion

3.1 *Seven Years in Tibet* (1953)

Written by Heinrich Harrer *Seven years in Tibet* recounts his journey to Tibet and his subsequent stay in the land. The journey is taken before the Communist Chinese People's Liberation Army invaded Tibet in 1950. It begins with Harrer and his partner Peter Aufschnaiter's attempts to escape from a British concentration camp in India and eventually reach Lhasa, the capital of Tibet spending the

next seven years in Tibet. The book not only depicts Harrer and his friend's journey from escaping a concentration camp in India to becoming the tutor and friend of the 14th Dalai Lama, but also paints a vivid picture of contemporary Tibetan culture which until then was very little exposed to the outside world. The book gives the world a last glimpse of life in a self-governing Tibetan state before it was taken by the Chinese army in 1950.

This story of Harrer can be divided into two major parts. The first part of the story describes the hardships of Harrer and Aufschnaiter's journey as they walk hundreds of miles with minimal resources such as food, clothing, and self-defense equipment. When they finally reached Lhasa in January 1946, against all odds, they were in the condition of poor refugees, bedridden, starved for days, barefoot, sore and calloused. This section of the book says as much about their endurance and resilience as it does about the hospitality of the hospitality of the Himalayan tribes who helped them on their way.

The following section of the story is about their reception by the local community and more importantly by the abbots and the Lamas mainly by the Dalai Lama in person and as the king of the country. After negotiating with their hosts, they are finally allowed to make their way to the capital, Lhasa. Starving and disheveled, they end up taking shelter in an aristocrat's house. There, in many ways, begins their full exposure to Tibetan culture. Harrer's companion, Aufschnaiter, is an agricultural engineer by training and they start to repay their hosts by building first fountains, then drainage and sanitary schemes. Finally, the author meets the 14th Dalai Lama, a teenager, and participates in his education. This is ended by the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1950 as Dalai Lama escapes South to India and the author returns to his homeland.

Seven Years in Tibet is an important read from anthropological point of view as it provides important insights into the Tibetan way of life and its culture, which until then was very little known to the outside world. Tibet was governed for hundreds of years by a Buddhist religious monarchy that existed at the time of Harrer's reporting. Tens of thousands of monastics split into several large monasteries reigned the country with unrestricted control through constitution based on purely religious beliefs. The Tibetan government did not need to raise taxes. The population gave their last pies to the lamas in their monasteries to assure them a happy afterlife. Apart from the monastery schools, there were no schools, no hospitals, no roads, no drainage system in the towns, no running water, no basic sanitation facilities, and no electricity. Only one generator provided electricity to the Palast printing shop to print religious books. Foreign influence was kept to a minimum and visits by foreigners were prohibited therefore, Buddhist monks always hoped to remain in power. Religion is a dominating force in the lives of Tibetan people.

Religion is the heart of the fabric of the State. The daily life of Tibetans is ordered by religious belief. Pious texts are constantly on their lips; prayer wheels turn without ceasing; prayer flags wave on the roofs of houses and the summits of the mountain passes; the rain, the wind, all the phenomena of nature, the lonely peaks of the snow-clad mountains, bear witness to the universal presence of the gods whose anger is manifested by the hailstorm, and whose benevolence is displayed by the fruitfulness and fertility of the land. The life of the people is regulated by the divine will, whose interpreters the lamas are. Before anything is undertaken, we must test the omens. The gods must be unceasingly entreated, placated, or thanked. Prayer lamps burned everywhere, in the house of the noble and in the tent of the nomad—the same faith has kindled them. Earthly existence is of little worth in Tibet, and death has no terrors. Men know that they will be born again and hope for a higher form of existence in the next life, earned by pious conduct in this one. The Church is the highest court of appeal. (Harrer, 1953, p. 168-69)

During their stay in Lhasa Harrer and Aufschnaiter learned about the local people's behavior and how conducted themselves in their daily lives as they were frequently consulted and were given details of public administration, family life, attitudes, manners, and ethics.

In Lhasa we were constantly invited out and often consulted. Thus, we came to know the life of the town from every angle. We had opportunities for studying the details of public administration and family life, viewpoints, manners, and morals. Something new turned up every day, and many mysteries became commonplaces, but not all. One thing had certainly changed in our situation. We were no longer outsiders. We belonged. (Harrer, 1953, p. 173).

Polygamy and polyandry can be seen in practice in Tibet, but most of the population is monogamous. It is common for a house without an heir to have multiple wives. The property goes to the children of the legitimate wife and remains in the family as the children of an irregular union have no right to inherit.

In Tibet one finds polygamy and polyandry, but most people are monogamous. When a man has several wives, his relations with them are different from those that prevail in a Moslem harem. It is common practice for a man to marry several daughters of a house in which there is no son and heir. This arrangement prevents the family fortune from being dispersed. (Harrer, 1953, p. 174)

In Tibet there was only one female incarnation, referred to as 'Thunderbolt Sow'. She became an abbess at a convent at Yamdrok Lake and was hailed as the holiest woman in Tibet.

There was only one female Incarnation in Tibet. Her name, as interpreted, was "Thunderbolt Sow." I often used to see her at ceremonies in the Parkhor. She was then an insignificant-looking student of about sixteen, wearing a nun's dress. However, she was the holiest woman in Tibet, and the people entreated her to bless them wherever she went. Later on, she became abbess in a convent by Lake Yamdrok. (Harrer, 1953, p. 179)

Harrer in the chapter, 'Life in Lhasa-2' describes about the oracles in Tibet whom people believed as mouth piece of the god and consult them on important occasions like Great Procession of Dalai Lama. "Just as the people apply to lamas and soothsayers for advice and help in the cares of daily life, so the government consults the State Oracle before making important decisions" (Harrer, 1953, p. 180).

Tibet has its own currency. Sang is a numerical unit that is decimally divided and sub-divided into SHO and Karma. Gold, silver, and copper coins are also used in Tibet, which bear the symbols of Tibet - mountains and lions.

Tibet produces its own paper money and coinage. The sang is the numismatic unit. It is divided and subdivided decimally into the sho and the karma. Paper money is made with the strong native paper brightly colored and watermarked. The numbers are very skillfully painted on by hand, and all attempts at forgery had hitherto been foiled by the difficulty of imitating the numbers. The bank notes have a very good appearance. Gold, silver, and copper coins are also used. They are stamped with the emblems of Tibet—mountains and lions, which also appear on postage stamps, beside the rising sun. (Harrer, 1953, p. 190)

Aufschnaiter and Harrer took many jobs while living in Lhasa including building the embankments for preventing floods, building dams and small channels, and translating newspapers and articles for the officials. Harrer describes the Dalai Lama's fascination with Western culture, his mischievous nature, and his desire to learn about all things, not just religious teachings. "He continually astonished me by his powers of comprehension, his pertinacity, and his industry. When I observed his zeal and thirst for knowledge, I felt quite ashamed at the thought of my own boyhood" (Harrer, 1953, p. 258).

Part autobiography, part travelogue, it is a charming, captivating account of mid-century Tibet, a feudal kingdom in the Himalayas. It is also a chronicle of a vanishing culture as 70 years ago, the kingdom was invaded by the Chinese "Red Army". 1.2 million people are reported to have died through subsequent starvation and activities akin to genocide, out of a population of 3 million. A large number also fled. Most of the monasteries in this Buddhist kingdom were dismantled and destroyed and 2% of the capital, Lhasa, remains in its original state.

It's undoubtedly an excellent record of mid-century Tibetan culture as seen through European eyes. The book is rich in its detailed, but never boring, descriptions of the various rituals of Tibet, whether religious, or cultural. The abilities of the author to speak the Tibetan language and his love for the mountains allowed him to have unparalleled opportunities to participate and record these authentic events. It is very tragic that a culture so unique, has been crushed by the occupying power of its larger neighbor and the Dalai Lama remains in exile, albeit with celebrity status and a superstar reputation being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

3.2 *Looking for Transwonderland: Travels in Nigeria (2012)*

Looking for Transwonderland: Travels in Nigeria is a travelogue set in Nigeria, a country that witnessed writer's father, Ken Saro Wiwa's execution for his campaign against despoliation of the rich oil delta. Selected as BBC Radio 4's Book of the Week in 2012 and nominated as one of the best travel books of 2012 by the Financial Times, *Looking for Transwonderland* has become a literary tour de force since its publication drawing the attention of literary scholars and critics alike who have engaged with it from diverse perspectives. For instance, Cristina Cruz-Gutiérrez in *(Re)Imagining and (Re)Visiting Homelands in "Looking for Transwonderland: Travels in Nigeria" by Noo Saro-Wiwa* (2016) introduces the concept of "fluid roots". Gutierrez argues that Wiwa's journey to Nigeria allows her not only to reflect on her personal history but also the history of her country. Madhu Krishan's *Reading Space, Subjectivity, and Form in the Twenty-First-Century Narrative of Return* (2018) focuses on diaspora, displacement, and identity. *Looking for Transwonderland: Noo Saro-Wiwa's Migration of the Heart* (2019) by Pressley Sanon explores Noo Saro-Wiwa's complex relationship with her homeland. Maureen Moynagh in *Afropolitan Travels: 'Discovering Home' and the World in Africa* (2015) talks about 'Afropolitan travel' as represented by Wiwa's writing.

This work of Wiwa can be seen as an account of two journeys. First it is the writer's journey around Nigeria, from Lagos to the north past east and southwest offering fascinating insights into the diversity (people, history, and culture) and contradictions of Africa's most populous country and second it is a relearning about one's own root through travelling. As she writes:

Having spent four months travelling around as an ethnic foreigner, being in a place where Khana was widely spoken carried a new and deep significance. These were my people – not sharp-nosed Hausas, or Efiks, Biroms or Yorubas – but Ogonis. I felt more Ogoni than ever. My people, the Ogoni, had been bit-players in the drama of Nigerian history in which the Binis, Yorubas, Hausas and Igbos played a leading role (Wiwa, 2012, p. 289; 256).

She traveled from the chaos of Lagos to the quiet beauty of the Eastern Highlands, from the Nigerian Dog Show to the abandoned Trans-Wonderland amusement park. She also studies the religious aspects of Christianity, visits the port to study its history of slavery, examines the corrupting effects of oil and investigates the mega-success of Nollywood.

Her encounters with the cities are full of pathos. She learned that her country is disappointing as usual, and was frustrated by its corruption and incompetence. But on the flip side she found that it was more beautiful and diverse than she had ever imagined, and was captivated by its dense tropical rainforests and ancient palaces and monuments. Most interestingly, she introduces us to the people she meets, and gives us a hilarious insight into the Nigerian character, her passion, wittiness, and creativity.

In the entire journey each city appears to be different from the other but "Okadas" remains one common character that unifies all these cities. It is a suicidal motorcycle taxi that functions most conveniently as a public transport across Nigeria.

The journey of Wiwa starts from the Lagos airport where she witnesses a fight and realizes the nature of Nigerian people. Signs and symbols on the boards outside the airport convey all about the Lagos city. "THIS IS LAGOS"- this sign board can be seen as a warning before entering the city or the announcement of visiting on its own risk. The city is overcrowded, aggressive driving can be seen on the roads, traffic go-slows, impatience, and armed robberies. The Yoruba is the dominant ethnic group of the city.

Wiwa stays at her Aunt Janica's house, which upholds Christian values and believes in superstitions. She has never visited her homeland before but now she is travelling the city independently, examining the pavements, supermarkets, and global brands. She is told that, Nigeria loses millions of barrels of petroleum every year killing hundreds of people with the explosions for the oil. More than half million people were captured in raids from different parts of the country and slave trade was banned in mid nineteenth century. She beholds the Slave Relic Museum from the prison building which is now run by the Mobee family. The writer also visits the Satellite town which was a separate universe from the fancy Lagos. Half of the Nigerian population is Muslim and half is evangelical Christian. Ibadan is three hours north of Lagos and Ibadan's dominant ethnic group was the first to mix with European missionaries and became the most educated European Nigerians. The University of Ibadan, fondly referred to as UI, is the first University in Nigeria. Noo Saro's father studied here in 1960s. Noo Saro Wiwa loves to visit the Disney world in US and when she learns about the Amusement Park in Nigeria, she wants to visit the same as she believes that it is impossible for Nigeria to have an amusement park but deep down, she also wants Nigeria to become a place which people admire and praise. As she enters the Transwonderland Amusement Park she sees the motionless machinery including 'chair o plane', 'the dragon' roller coaster, dodgem cars, a fairy wheel and merry go around. The park disappoints the writer as it does not have any facility for the travelers. It is in a bad state and requires urgent amendments.

Abuja remains her dream city even during her childhood. It is one of the cleanest and new metropolises and most orderly in the whole Nigeria. But the irony is that it is funded by the corruption and that corruption builds the reputation of the city. Kano is the oldest city of West Africa, people from Mali and North Africa settled here. Here she visited Kofar market, Kurmi market where people had traded for more than one thousand years. In Kano women were forbidden from riding the vehicles and alcohol was prohibited in the region. Next visit was Nguru and Yankari which was close to the Nigeria border.

Noo Saro Wiwa also visits Chad Basin National Park which is a nature reserve located in the north-eastern part of Nigeria. The reserve is underdeveloped although The Wetlands Conservation Project spends a lot of money for the development plan. After her visit to Chad Basin National Park, Wiwa visits Jos Museum. The Museum consists of the main exhibition building and the exhibition hall for traditional architecture. It contained the replicas of regional tradition architectural styles of Nigeria which includes famous terracotta figures of ancient Nok civilization. The Nok terracotta were first discovered during tin mining operations in 1928. These sculptures are placed in rich western collectors' houses.

The visit to Calabar was another unique experience for the writer. Calabar is the capital of cross river state in the south east. The billboards consist of signs for the people to pay taxes- "AIDS IS REAL, SEX IS RISKY and you should PAY YOUR TAXES". Diogo cao landed ashore in the Calabar region in 1482. This area was used for exchanging the services, goods to European countries. She also visits Alok village with her father's driver. Alok is wooded grassland where archaeologists found ancient monoliths carved with hieroglyphics. Each rock known as akashvani consists of geometric carvings known as insibidi. These rocks date back to 2000 BC. Saro Wiwa also wants to visit Benin one of the magnificent empires and influential kingdoms of West Africa. Benin's administration was organized and well knowledgeable ones. Signs on the boards depict the cleanliness of the city but the same sign boards are surrounded by banana skins, plastic bottles and all the sewage. Saro-Wiwa's travel finally leads her to her birth place, Port Harcourt also known as the Garden City. The author's visit to her hometown is very exciting but also painful as it brings back her childhood memories and memories of her father and brother's death.

This is the most troubled space for the narrator as it is the city at the center of her claims of un/belonging in Nigeria. It is also the site where her embodied sense of travelling becomes profoundly visible. Her genealogical journeys in the physical sense serve as a quest for attachment. This desire is manifested in the way she approaches Port Harcourt (Amimo, 2020, p. 174).

This travel of Wiwa to Nigeria is very important from the perspective that it wipes out all her negative feelings that she earlier had for her country. For her, the journey to Nigeria was a revisit to her own self. "At least my journey had cured my emotional fear of the country. [...] So, all was forgiven. [...] Travelling here as an adult helped me to finally wipe away the negative associations and start a new relationship with the country" (Wiwa, 2013, 304-305). Pressley-Sanon (2018) interprets Wiwa's return as, "A step toward coming to terms with, if not fully healing, her traumatic history" (p. 161) a passionate reconciliation of her past and future.

In addition to the author's recollection of her own experiences in her homeland, *Looking for Transwonderland* is an up-to-date account of a culture not often documented in Western books – not in this way. It turns out that Nigeria is perceived by other Africans as their naughty child, a mischievous "nation of ruffians" with a penchant for chaos that is sometimes entertaining. Saro Wiwa provides interesting details about Nigerian people and their behavior. "Nigerians love to shout at the top of their lungs, whether we're telling a joke, praying in church or rocking a baby to sleep," she says.

At theatre we can hardly find a person in the audience who is not chatting on cell phones at an "extraordinary volume" and not giving uninvited advice to the actors onstage. The "jaga-jaga" nature (a misnomer for 'mess') of Nigerian life refers to years of political corruption that have left the people "deeply suspicious of the ruling system. Saro-Wiwa writes that in the forty-seven years since its independence, Nigeria has gone from one kleptocracy to another. Portraits of national leaders on the museum's wall resemble "a

succession of incriminating mugshots, considered guilty of ruining Nigeria. Whatever the reason, this anomaly creates a unique fervor in the behavioral traits of Nigerians that the reader cannot help but, sometimes, love. Needless to say, that Nigeria was a major importer of the champagne during the oil boom in the early 80s, that Nollywood is the third largest film industry in the world before an avalanche of “misfunding, indifference and recklessness destroyed the best intentions in many sectors of society.

Noo Saro-Wiwa’s journey to Nigeria is in part a journey to a better understanding of her roots. She is the daughter of slain Nigerian writer and activist Ken Saro-Wiwa who was a staunch critic of the Nigerian authority. He angered officials over his criticism of their failure to enforce environmental regulations against widespread abuse by foreign oil interests leading to his arrest and execution in 1995. This heinous crime by the Nigerian authorities was condemned internationally and resulted in Nigeria being suspended from Commonwealth membership for three and a half years. Circumstances forced Saro-Wiwa to put aside her teenage rebellion and begin to reflect and realize that he had a father who dyes his home sea green to match the stripes of the national flag. It culminates in a book that is both deeply felt and heartwarmingly delightful.

4. Conclusion

Travelogues are not written just for fun or to pass the time, imagining distinct places through these writings. One can also observe the major and minor problems of the place one travels to. All kinds of physical, geographical, political, or aesthetic problems are reflected in this genre. Harrer’s *Seven Years in Tibet* is more than a journey from a POW camp to Tibet. It is about the true essence of Tibet, about how travelers enjoy and immerse themselves and find refuge in another culture. It not only glorifies the life of Dalai Lama, the God King, but the reader also learns about his solitude as well his hardships. How was a young boy forbidden from doing certain activities such as going to parties and making friends? It gives readers a glimpse into the Tibetan way of life- their customs, traditions, beliefs, and their hospitality. Their treatment of foreigners was admirable, contrary to popular opinion. Reading it only as a travel guide for Tibet will not fulfil the original purpose of writing it. It is a true and vivid picture of the real Tibet before 1959. The book came at a time when there were many misconceptions about Tibet. *Seven Years in Tibet* clarifies all these misconceptions. It not only provides geographical and ethnological information about Tibet but also focuses on the political structure, economic prosperity, the nature of the Tibetan people as well as their religious rituals including the great processions of the God King.

Part autobiography and part travelogue, *Seven Years in Tibet* reveals the true state of affairs in Tibet, whether it is about the route to The Roof of World, the corrupt nature of the authorities, the incarnation of the fourteenth Dalai Lama or be it about the superstitious nature of the Tibetan people. Readers can also witness the great nature of the Dalai Lama during his tutorials with Harrer with Harrer portraying the loving image of the God King.

The second Travelogue, *Looking for Transwonderland* can also be viewed through the lens of ethnography and anthropology. In the work Noo Saro Wiwa exposes both the beauty and brutality of superpowers in Nigeria. She cuts through the cliché associated with Nigeria since her childhood. Saro-Wiwa maintains the autobiographical nature of the work and observes everything as an outsider which allows the text to be seen as a non-ideal, non-pessimistic view of Nigeria. She also reclaims her Nigerian identity. The travelogue can be seen as visiting one’s own country again with a sense of knowing and not knowing it. It is a coming back to her homeland where her native and foreign selves contribute equally to knowing the country. She traces Nigeria, discovers new realities and finds ways to reconcile herself with her homeland.

This work of Saro-Wiwa presents a side of Nigeria that is contrary to the content and information provided in guidebooks and other proposed contents about Nigeria. Being a traveler from a foreign country enables the writer to comment on the current setting of the country and its effects on the local population. Danfos, mini buses and many other material things in Nigeria can be seen as a microcosm of the country where religion, politics and begging are placed on the same level. As she believes, Nigerians only trust in God will result in more corruption and destruction in the country. Saro-Wiwa takes a dig at the authorities for not taking care of the forests and natural reserves and for mismanaging the country. One can see the true picture of Nigeria through Saro-Wiwa’s account.

Travel writing cannot be read or written just for travel. One cannot separate travel writing from ethnography and anthropology as they provide substance and concerns to the genre. Although the travel writer, the traveler, the ethnographer, and the anthropologist have different jobs to do, they are all related in different aspects. In travel writings the reader can observe cultural, social, political, religious, economic as well as historical aspects which can be further viewed as part of the field of anthropology or ethnography.

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