

WALKING THROUGH THE PINK CITY- A GYNOCRITICAL STUDY OF FEMINIST CARTOGRAPHIES AND CULTURAL MEDIATION IN DHARMENDAR KANWAR'S JAIPUR 10 EASY WALKS

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Abstract:

This paper examines Jaipur: 10 Easy Walks by Dharmendar Kanwar as a feminist reworking of authorship, place, and identity in Indian women's travel writing. Kanwar reclaims walking as a form of self-expression and cultural mediation, transcending the colonial and patriarchal norms that have traditionally defined the genre. It explores how her story turns ordinary urban experiences into a conversation between gender and history through qualitative feminist textual analysis. The study analyses Kanwar's depiction of Jaipur as an act of re-inscribing female agency into the city's environment, drawing on theoretical frameworks from Gayatri Spivak's postcolonial critique, Virginia Woolf's spatial feminism, and Elaine Showalter's Gynocriticism. The depictions of home crafts, Hawa Mahal, and regional craftsmen show how women's inventiveness maintains ecological and cultural continuity. Walking becomes a metaphor for liberation and narrative serves as preservation in Kanwar's book, which represents an intersectional awareness. Jaipur: 10 Easy Walks turns the travelogue into a feminist archive of place and memory by fusing observation, empathy, and history. In addition to challenging patriarchal spatial hierarchies, the paper concludes that Kanwar's reimagining of the Pink City places Indian women's travel writing in a vital position for expressing identity, belonging, and cultural continuity within postcolonial feminist discourse.

Keywords: Feminist Travel Writing, Pink City Jaipur, Cultural Mediation, Women and Space, Gynocriticism, Indian Women Writers.

Introduction

The genre of travel literature, which has its roots in the desire to explore and document, has historically represented the relationship between geography, identity, and power. It was traditionally dominated by male voices and frequently reproduced patriarchal narratives and imperialist ideologies that framed the "Other" through prisms of conquest and control. In contrast, women's travel writing negotiates marginality and movement; rather than dominating, it turns travel into a means of cultural mediation and self-expression. Women travel writers rewrite the gendered dynamics of exploration and authorship by redefining travel as a dialogic engagement with space through feminist and postcolonial perspectives.

The female travel writer "writes within and against" the masculine discourse of travel, frequently undermining its power structures through subjectivity and empathy, as noted by Sara

Mills (1991). Within this evolving discourse, *Jaipur: 10 Easy Walks* (2007) by Dharmendar Kanwar stands out as a powerful work that reinterprets walking through the city as a feminist way to recover memory, space, and cultural identity.

In Indian literature, women's travel narratives play an important role in describing the intricate relationships between the local and the global, tradition and modernity, and private and public spheres. In the past, colonial travel narratives portrayed India as a place of spectacle and exploration, utilising the Orientalist lens to describe its people and surroundings. Writing from within this tradition, Indian women authors challenge and update traditional frameworks by turning travel into a space for reflection and cross-cultural dialogue. Through their intellectual and moral self-assertion, early pioneers like Cornelia Sorabji and Toru Dutt reshaped the colonial encounter. Later, authors like Bharati Mukherjee, Kamala Das, and Santha Rama Rau explored issues of migration, identity, and belonging, bringing political and personal awareness to travel writing. Their works, which are frequently characterised by narrative intimacy, provide alternative perspectives rooted in empathy, caring, and relationality that oppose the masculinist goal of conquest.

Indian women's travel writing has developed into a sophisticated form of cultural critique and preservation in recent decades, surpassing personal expression. India's ecological, social, and emotional geographies have been mapped by authors like Janhavi Acharekar, Arati Kumar-Rao, and Shivya Nath, who have provided complex depictions of place and the self. The feminist cartography that is forming in these stories prioritises experience and embodiment over distance and dominance. Although it belongs to this tradition, Kanwar's *Jaipur: 10 Easy Walks* adds something special by turning walking, a commonplace, everyday gesture, into a powerful feminist metaphor for self-determination and reclaiming. Her work positions Jaipur as a living record of women's existence, resilience, and voice rather than just as a historical or tourist destination.

Kanwar's travelogue highlights the city's architectural and cultural legacy by combining ethnographic knowledge, personal observation, and historical analysis. Every "walk" turns into a visual narrative that uses storytelling and the rhythm of footsteps to reveal layers of Jaipur's identity. Kanwar's focus on the little-known, the winding alleys, the workshops of craftspeople, the women behind lattice windows, and the quiet observers of time that mould the city's pulse, sets her work apart from traditional guidebooks. The narrative depicts how women can occupy and reinterpret spaces that have historically been assigned to them by infusing their movement with meaning. In this way, walking becomes a physical declaration of presence and belonging, serving as both a literal and symbolic gesture of liberation. Feminist theory provides essential resources for comprehending the ramifications of these kinds of stories. Elaine Showalter's *Gynocriticism* (1977) promotes the examination of texts written by women as reflections of distinct literary and cultural traditions shaped by their experiences. Readers can view *Jaipur: 10 Easy Walks* as a work that reconstructs female subjectivity through sensory perception by applying gynocriticism to Kanwar's text. The novel extends Virginia Woolf's concept of *A Room of One's Own* (1929) from the private interior to the public streets of Jaipur. A literal and symbolic declaration of female agency is made through the freedom to walk and inhabit urban space without being watched or constrained.

Kanwar's narrative may also be seen through the lens of postcolonial feminist theory, which acknowledges the many oppressions of colonial history, gender, and class in the production of cultural narratives (Spivak, 1988; Mohanty, 2003). As the historic capital of a prince, Jaipur represents the meeting point of colonial encounter and local agency, as well as tradition and modernity. Kanwar's interaction with this environment contests both patriarchal longing and Western romanticism. Her depiction of women illustrates how their labor and artistic expression uphold the city's heritage, whether it involves royal women confined behind Jharokhas or contemporary artisans crafting bangles in markets. What was formerly a symbol of seclusion, Jaipur's streets are now recognised as pathways of resilience and defiance.

Kanwar reclaims ownership over location and story by fusing feminist philosophy with the act of travel. Her writing supports Susan Bassnett's (1992) idea that women's literature reconstructs history through lived experience as opposed to objective observation. As a result, *Jaipur: 10 Easy Walks* becomes a dialogic book that engages with feminist pioneers while placing itself inside the living female traditions of India. The travelogue is more than just a genre; it is also feminist ethnography, literary mapping, and cultural preservation.

In general, Kanwar's writing invites reflection on the politics of narrative authority and visibility in women's travel writing. It explores how space becomes a location of power, whose movements are documented, and whose narratives are presented. In contrast to conquering or categorising, her narrative approach turns walking into an experiential act, an alternative method of understanding the world through sensory and emotional involvement. This viewpoint is consistent with Rebecca Solnit's *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (2000), in which walking is viewed as a tool for narrative and contemplation as well as a bridge between the inner and outer worlds. Similarly, Kanwar's walks are contemplative activities that challenge readers to reevaluate how they relate to location, gender, and identity.

This paper contextualises Dharmendar Kanwar's *Jaipur: 10 Easy Walks* within the realm of feminist travel literature, exploring how her narrative redefines urban environments as venues for cultural exchange and personal expression. It examines how her writing reclaims gender-specific spaces, integrates gynocritical principles, and promotes a postcolonial reassessment of Indian femininity. This study aims to demonstrate how Kanwar's travelogue employs walking through Jaipur as a symbol of female resistance, cultural preservation, and identity formation by analysing her narrative approach, imagery, and thematic emphasis.

Literature Review on Perspectives of Travel Identity and Cultural Mediation

The historical evolution of women's travel literature illustrates how female writers utilized narrative self-assertion to navigate movement and authority. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, travel transformed from a masculine pursuit of conquest to a personal and intellectual exploration, as seen in the works of authors such as Mary Wollstonecraft and Isabella Bird. Bird's *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains* (1879) and Wollstonecraft's *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark* (1796) both exemplified the notion that women might record their experiences as active interpreters of the world rather than passive spectators. According to Mills (1991), women's travel literature "reconfigures travel as introspection rather than possession," transforming travel into contemplations of identity and

freedom. Freya Stark's poetic portrayals of place, which emphasise that "tradition is not the past; it is the soul of a place," further broadened this feminist geography. Her remarks indicated a shift in viewpoint from perceiving geography as an impartial setting to understanding it as a lived, gendered experience shaped by societal limits and imagination. The development of feminist and postcolonial theory during the twentieth century led to the recognition of women's travel writing as an essential platform for the revision of literary canons and cultural hierarchies. Gynocriticism, coined by Elaine Showalter in 1977, highlighted the significance of examining women's work as a distinct literary tradition rooted in common female experience. This viewpoint was expanded by postcolonial theorists like Spivak (1988) and Mohanty (2003), who criticised Western depictions of the "Third World woman" and advocated for self-written stories that defy patriarchal and colonial repression. Women expressed their voice, presence, and intellectual influence through travel writing, which developed into a means of resistance during this pivotal moment in history. This approach was demonstrated by Indian women writers Kamala Das, Cornelia Sorabji, and Toru Dutt, who used translation and travel to negotiate their identities across colonial bounds. As a metaphor for female self-discovery, their works showed that travel may be both psychological and geographical.

Indian women travel authors expanded the genre in the post-independence era to represent evolving notions of modernity, diaspora, and home. While Bharati Mukherjee's *Desirable Daughters* (2002) investigated migration and hybridity through female awareness, Santha Rama Rau's *Home to India* (1945) focused on cultural return and belonging. This development is carried on by modern authors like Janhavi Acharekar and Arati Kumar-Rao, who connect travel to social justice, urban identity, and environmental consciousness. The lines between travelogue, memoir, and cultural documentation are blurred in their stories. Dharmendar Kanwar's *Jaipur: 10 Easy Walks* occupies a unique place in this ongoing dialogue, transforming local geography into a feminist cartography. Her focus on walking, an activity often constrained by patriarchal standards, reconceptualizes mobility as empowerment, mirroring Woolf's (1929) assertion that true creative freedom demands both "A Room of One's Own" and the liberty to move about freely.

In Kanwar's travelogue, walking is transformed into a feminist act of cultural preservation and space reclaiming. She transforms the streets of Jaipur into places of story and agency by drawing on Solnit's (2000) idea of walking as an act of freedom and introspection. Her depictions of the bazaars in Jaipur and the Hawa Mahal demonstrate how locations that were historically linked to women's confinement can now function as spaces for communal engagement. The ongoing creativity of women throughout cultural history is reflected in the portrayal of female artisans, festivals, and community life. This aligns with the arguments made by Bassnett (1992) and Lerner (1986), who argue that women's actual experiences should be prioritised over institutional narratives when rewriting history. By documenting the history of Jaipur from a female perspective, Kanwar ensures that the city's legacy is appreciated not only through its monuments but also through everyday traditions and the contributions of women. While existing research on women's travel literature emphasises its postcolonial and feminist significance, it sometimes overlooks that domestic, urban, and localised places can also serve as travel arenas. By portraying the city as a landscape of female action, Kanwar's *Jaipur: 10 Easy Walks* fills this gap. In her narrative, strolling around well-known streets is transformed into a symbolic reclamation of women's historical invisibility, implying that travel need not

involve travelling to faraway places to represent discovery. Alternatively, it can result from returning to one's own city with new perspectives. Kanwar places herself among the expanding body of Indian women writers who reinterpret travel as a journey of recovering identity through space, narrative, and self, a voyage of movement and meaning, by fusing personal observation, feminist reflection, and cultural documentation.

Theoretical Framework grounded in Postcolonial Feminism and Gynocriticism

This research is theoretically grounded on feminist literary criticism, namely in the ideas of postcolonial feminism, feminist spatiality, and gynocriticism. These frameworks provide essential resources necessary for interpreting Dharmendar Kanwar's *Jaipur: 10 Easy Walks* as a feminist work that reclaims space, identity, and authorship, rather than merely as a travel guide. This analysis places Kanwar's narrative in the context of women's literary self-expression and global empowerment, drawing on the perspectives of theorists such as Virginia Woolf, Elaine Showalter, as well as postcolonial feminist thinkers like Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Chandra Talpade Mohanty.

Elaine Showalter's (1977) conception of gynocriticism serves as the primary framework for this exploration. Showalter highlighted the importance of analyzing women's work through the lens of female experiences, creativity, and cultural identity in her proposal of gynocriticism as a counterpoint to male-dominated literary traditions. Gynocriticism emphasizes women as creators of meaning, focusing on the themes, structures, and language emerging from women's own cultural contexts, in contrast to previous feminist critiques that often centered on the portrayal of women by men. Kanwar's *Jaipur: 10 Easy Walks* exemplifies a female literary voice that weaves women's lived experiences into both literary and public realms. The gynocritical aim of reclaiming agency through storytelling is reflected in the act of walking, which is crucial to her narrative. Her voice, informed by empathy and observation, transforms travel writing into a gendered expression that validates female perception as a legitimate source of knowledge.

Additionally, gynocriticism offers a lens through which to view Kanwar's thematic and stylistic decisions. Her detailed focus on household crafts, regional customs, and Jaipur daily life reflects what Showalter refers to as the "female aesthetic", a form of representation that values the emotional, relational, and cyclical aspects of experience. Kanwar's narrative in *Jaipur: 10 Easy Walks* is presented as a sequence of connected walks that stress continuity, recollection, and cultural closeness rather than the straight line of conquest that is characteristic of masculine travel literature. Her writing demonstrates how travel, when framed through a feminine perspective, becomes a means for social critique and historical preservation, proving that women's writings "redefine both literary forms and cultural values," as Showalter claims.

The idea of female autonomy is extended from the symbolic "room" to the actual and social space of the city in Virginia Woolf's feminist spatial philosophy, which enhances this framework. Woolf makes the case that women need both material and intellectual freedom to create in *A Room of One's Own* (1929). This idea is carried into the city by Kanwar, whose strolls around the streets of Jaipur represent a symbolic extension of Woolf's private domain into the public space. Echoing Woolf's claim that women have traditionally been "shut out from

the most important experiences of life," the freedom to wander, observe, and narrate becomes a sort of resistance against centuries of space limitation. By transforming walking into a feminist act of geographical authorship, Kanwar's journey around the Pink City challenges patriarchal geographies that have historically restricted women's visibility in public spaces.

Walking is both a physical act and a cognitive process, according to Rebecca Solnit (2000), which is consistent with the relationship between movement and autonomy. According to Solnit, walking is a practice that allows people to interact freely and reflectively with the outside world. Walking takes on an extra political significance for women since it defies social norms that limit them to domesticity. Thus, Kanwar's leisurely "easy walks" through Jaipur take on symbolic significance: every step reclaims streets that were previously only accessible by men and reinscribes them with feminine experience. Her narrative transforms Woolf's symbolic call for artistic space into a real-life geography of liberation.

Although Showalter and Woolf lay the groundwork for comprehending gendered authorship and spatiality, postcolonial feminism enhances this examination by situating Kanwar's work within the intricate historical and cultural backdrop of India. Scholars like Spivak (1988) and Mohanty (2003) have critiqued Western feminism for generalizing women's experiences while disregarding the intersections of gender, race, and colonial legacy. Postcolonial feminism underscores how women from formerly colonised nations express their identities through negotiation, mediation, and resistance to both colonial and patriarchal narratives. Kanwar's *Jaipur: 10 Easy Walks* illustrates this intersectional awareness. Her writing engages with both Jaipur's colonial history and its indigenous practices, uncovering how the city's architecture and traditions reflect a complex history of power and resilience. By documenting these aspects from a feminist perspective, Kanwar enacts what Spivak refers to as "re-inscription," reclaiming history from the erasures imposed by both imperial and patriarchal forces.

Mohanty's appeal for "feminist solidarity through difference" is also consistent with Kanwar's portrayal of Jaipur's female artisans and cultural practitioners. Her portrayals of indigenous women, lac bangle makers, and folk artists place them as active agents of continuity and creation rather than as passive objects of tradition. Travel writing is redefined by this localized focus as an act of cultural mediation in which the writer takes on the roles of both participant and chronicler. Kanwar's work serves as a quintessential illustration of what Susan Bassnett (1992) describes as feminist historiography, which involves reinterpreting history through narrative empathy and personal experience rather than detached observation. Her travelogue delves into themes of gendered subjectivity, community, and a sense of belonging through the seemingly simple act of walking.

The feminist depth of Kanwar's story is revealed when different perspectives on theory are combined. Woolf's geographical feminism clarifies her reclaiming of public space; postcolonial feminism places her within India's socio-historical context of negotiation and cultural preservation; and gynocriticism exposes her contribution to women's cultural heritage. The convergence of these frameworks highlights the fact that *Jaipur: 10 Easy Walks* is a literary representation of women's freedom to observe, move, and tell stories rather than just a list of routes across the city. Walking is transformed into a feminist epistemology by the travelogue,

which becomes a cartography of emancipation through the blending of gender, geography, and history.

Kanwar's writing essentially illustrates how travel writing has evolved from discovery to self-articulation. It takes part in a larger feminist endeavour that aims to redefine literary, cultural, and geographical limits from within the local. This study interprets Kanwar's story as a dialogue between history and voice, tradition and transformation, an enduring testament to the power of women's movement, both physical and intellectual, in reclaiming the stories of place and self through the combined lenses of Showalter, Woolf, and postcolonial feminism.

Methodology based on Qualitative Feminist Textual Analysis

Dharmendar Kanwar's *Jaipur: 10 Easy Walks* is examined in this study using an approach to feminist textual analysis as a literary and cultural artefact that redefines women's relationship with place, identity, and narrative. Based on the frameworks of postcolonial feminism, feminist theory of space, and gynocriticism, the study uses an interpretive, descriptive, and analytical method to analyse the text. It stresses interpretative depth rather than factual validity, concentrating on how language, form, and imagery create feminist meaning. The approach is consistent with feminist literary inquiry's principles, which emphasise context, subjectivity, and the reappraisal of women's artistic expressions as sources of knowledge (Showalter, 1977; Woolf, 1929).

Kanwar's travel writing functions as a guidebook and narrative analysis of Jaipur's cultural and historical landscape is the main source used in this paper. The work is examined not only for its descriptive content but also as a feminist narrative in which the author's own voice plays a crucial role in how gender and place are portrayed. Kanwar's story structure, language decisions, imagery, and thematic concerns are all examined, with special attention paid to how she portrays women, mobility, and cultural preservation. The paper examines how Kanwar uses walking as a literary device and a metaphor for regaining agency, treating each of the book's ten walks as separate but connected journeys.

The paper takes a feminist theoretical approach, which permits interpretation to develop through discussion between theory and text. According to the gynocriticism of Elaine Showalter (1977), the study shows how Kanwar's authorship reclaims cultural narratives that have historically been dominated by men and represents female subjectivity. The interpretation of movement and visibility in the author's narration is guided by Virginia Woolf's (1929) concepts of spatial and creative freedom, especially her conversion of Jaipur's public places into locations of female authorship. By placing Kanwar's writing within India's socio-historical context and emphasising how her portrayal of Jaipur defies both patriarchal and colonial modes of representation, postcolonial feminist insights from Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988) and Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2003) further inform the analysis.

A thematic and stylistic analysis is employed to discover essential components such as walking, observation, handicraft, architecture, and domestic work, which collectively express Kanwar's female reinvention of space. The paper looks at how these patterns represent the ways that

history, culture, and gender intertwine. Her depiction of the Hawa Mahal, for example, is examined as a feminist metaphor of transition, from isolation to visibility, as well as an architectural wonder. In a similar vein, her depictions of craftspeople, celebrations, and women's crafts are interpreted as a way to oppose historical erasure and preserve culture. Feminist theoretical ideas that define travel as a sort of embodied knowledge are used to facilitate the interpretation of these topics through close reading.

Additionally, the paper uses inter-textual comparison to situate Kanwar's writing within the broader context of women's travel literature. Women's use of travel writing to express independence, empathy, and individuality can be traced through references to older authors such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Freya Stark, and Santha Rama Rau. The study shows how Kanwar influences the development of Indian women's travel writing from colonial to modern times through this comparative reading.

The qualitative approach acknowledges the researcher's stance within feminist critique, recognizing that interpretations are influenced by the understanding of gendered histories and cultural contexts. The goal is to reveal how Kanwar's own narrative structures and decisions enact feminist resistance rather than to impose external frameworks. The approach supports feminist ideals that prioritise lived experience and relational knowledge over abstraction by valuing textual nuance, emotional resonance, and narrative ethics as legitimate modes of analysis.

The study employs feminist textual analysis to uncover the multi-layered meanings within Kanwar's travelogue. It interprets *Jaipur: 10 Easy Walks* as a narrative of freedom by fusing close reading, theoretical synthesis, and inter-textual reflection; walking is both a literary device and an act of epistemology in this work. In addition to reading women's texts, feminist critique emphasises listening to women's methods of knowing, which manifest via movement, memory, and narrative.

Analysis and Discussion on exploring Hometown Identity and Cultural Mediation in Travel Writing

Dharmendar Kanwar's *Jaipur: 10 Easy Walks* blends documentation, memory, and emotion to create a feminist re-visioning of urban space. While the book functions as a cultural guide, its deeper significance lies in how it transforms walking into a metaphor for women's reclamation of history and identity. The text invites readers to see Jaipur not only through the grandeur of its monuments but also through the overlooked stories, gestures, and crafts that embody feminine endurance and creativity. Through this lens, Kanwar's work becomes a profoundly feminist act—an exploration of how women reinhabit spaces once marked by their absence. Kanwar reinterprets walking as a feminine act of self-liberation and creation. The author's wanderings across Jaipur imply meditation and belonging, in contrast to the conventional male traveller whose movements signify conquering. In the opening chapter, she observes,

“The walks will introduce you to many of Jaipur's best-known monuments that are still located inside the old walled city. Enter any of the lanes leading from the main streets,

and each one will unfold several interesting facets of Jaipur's traditional lifestyle, architecture, arts, and crafts, community living, havelies, and temples." (1)

The tone of her endeavour is set in this passage, walking turns into a ritual of self-discovery, a means to feel the pulse of the city instead of observing it from a distance. According to Showalter's (1977) theory of Gynocriticism, which holds that women's writing discloses alternate kinds of knowledge through experience and intuition, the phrase "each one will unfold" evokes a feeling of revelation and narrative layering. The author depicts Jaipur's spaces reflects how repressed feminine histories are emerging within them.

Her act of walking also reclaims visibility in spaces once restricted to women. In earlier centuries, as she reminds readers, by walking, she also regains visibility in areas that were previously only accessible to women. As she reminds readers, in earlier centuries, Indian women were forbidden to tread the streets of Jaipur. They were always relegated to live behind latticed windows in their personal Jharokhas like invisible ghosts living behind a wall of Hawa Mahal.

In Kanwar's text, the Hawa Mahal is one of Jaipur's most famous monuments, which becomes a powerful female symbol. It was an example of exclusionary architecture, constructed in 1799 to let royal women observe street life without being noticed. The author describes this area as "an enormous tapering structure with the numerals, arches, spires, and a mind-boggling 953 latticed casements and small windows" when she returns to it with sympathetic irony. The structure's paradox, which is graceful but cramped, grand but claustrophobic, is brought to life by her meticulous visuals.

She observes, "The women of the palace might see the pomp of processions below through the exquisite Jharokhas, like jewelled birds behind stone filigree, but they would never enter that world,". Kanwar uses this imagery to express what Woolf (1929) hypothesized symbolically in *A Room of One's Own*, which is the need for women to transcend the boundaries of invisibility and enter the public sphere of creativity.

Gerda Lerner's (1986) contention that history must be "rewritten by the living" is further demonstrated by Kanwar's reconstruction of the Hawa Mahal. She turns a symbol of imprisonment into one of perseverance and development by recounting the palace's history from the viewpoint of a woman. Her narrative voice serves as a link between the past and present because it is thoughtful, perceptive, and sympathetic. author expresses the ongoing feminist battle through movement when she states that women are no longer restricted by walls or tradition, and they are now able to walk freely in every street where they used to merely observe. A stroll around Jaipur becomes an embodied rewrite of history, as the contemporary woman's footsteps retrace those that were previously unattainable for her mothers.

In this way, Kanwar's travelogue aligns with both Rebecca Solnit's (2000) concept of walking as intellectual freedom and Virginia Woolf's Feminist Spatial theory. According to Solnit, walking is "a state in which the body, the mind, and the world are aligned." Kanwar accomplishes this exact alignment. Each "easy walk" is transformed into an act of contemplative composition by her narrative voice, which combines intellect, emotion, and

movement. She symbolically expands Woolf's private space into the public sphere by using the streets as her backdrop, turning Jaipur's sidewalks into writing tables of experience.

This feminist cartography relies heavily on Kanwar's descriptive ability. She uses language to carve women's creativity into the terrain, converting visual observation into narrative empathy. Her depiction of Hawa Mahal is a classic example of what Cixous (1976) called *écriture féminine*, writing the body into the language. She writes about The Hawa Mahal may have been a magnificent prison, a gilded cage where elegance and grandeur concealed peaceful imprisonment... The women of the palace might see the pomp of processions below through the exquisite Jharokhas, like jewelled birds behind stone filigree. These lines' rhythm and imagery combine material beauty with emotional depth, echoing the textures of stone and lace. The silent spectators of the past are actually given a voice by Kanwar's writing; her writing becomes their speech and her stroll their emancipation.

Kanwar's depiction of women's handiwork and domestic arts, which she views as living examples of culture rather than as charming customs, is equally significant. This is aptly illustrated in her part on lac bangle-making: "The bright coloured lacquer is gently moulded into shape over burning charcoals, then embedded with fine glass pieces or embellished with gold threads." (59). The contrast between "gently" and "burning" captures the paradoxes of women's labour, with graceful yet dangerous, delicate yet enduring. Kanwar uses this metaphor to highlight the tenacity of female artists. Her conviction that art, like identity, is created via pressure and care is highlighted by the picture of a woman sculpting molten lacquer into beauty. In Sarojini Naidu's "The Bangle Sellers" poetically expressed in, bangles reflect "the rainbow-tinted circles of light" that symbolize womanhood across its phases. Kanwar's inclusion of this craft thus situates her narrative within a larger continuum of Indian women's creative legacy. Kanwar's feminist metaphor is evident in her description of the artisan's hands: "The mehndi hands of the bangle maker delicately grasp the bangles and mould them into the ideal shape, while women sculpt themselves." The process of creating bangles is similar to the technique of creating an identity. Women recover their agency to define themselves through artisan repetition. This is in alignment with Showalter's (1986) theory that women's writing transitions from silence to expression by acknowledging shared experience. Kanwar's observation turns a commonplace action into a feminist allegory: to adorn is to define, to create is to survive.

Kanwar's story illustrates how tradition and modernity interact, supporting Spivak's (1988) claim that postcolonial women negotiate identity at the nexus of self-assertion and inherited conventions. Kanwar demonstrates how women's customs maintain cultural continuity and social visibility through her depiction of festivities like Teej and Gangaur. "Festivals in Jaipur serve as a living museum that connects the past and present", demonstrates her attention to detail and her understanding that legacy is acted rather than static. Kanwar uses women's celebrations, crafts, and voices to write Jaipur's past into the present, echoing Freya Stark's observation that "the past is not dead but is still alive in us." She challenges both colonial narratives that exoticized Indian culture and contemporary discourses that diminish it by recording these ongoing practices.

Her narrative style, which combines emotion, history, and observation, exemplifies what Susan Bassnett (1992) refers to as "feminist historiography," or the rewriting of history through experience and feeling. Kanwar presents herself as a participant-observer, entrenched in her city's rhythms, rather than as a detached tourist. Because readers walk beside her rather than behind her, her first-person narration encourages intimacy. She creates a tone that is both academic and intimate by alternating between the immediate sensory detail and thoughtful analysis. The structure of women's travel writing, which Mills (1991) defined as hybrid, open-ended, and self-aware, is reflected in this blending of styles.

Jaipur is transformed into a female geography by Kanwar's ethnographic sensibility, with every lane serving as a text of resistance. She insists that "true experiences can be found beyond the apparent, along lesser-trodden avenues that tie Jaipur's daily life to its historical character." The colonial way of travel, which aimed to catalogue and classify, is immediately opposed by this viewpoint. Kanwar, on the other hand, believes that knowledge arises from empathy rather than control and respects the constant change of experience. She democratizes the concept of adventure by taking readers through streets, temples, and workshops. Everyone, but especially women, can travel within their own house and document the everyday.

Kanwar's book's visual expression strengthens this feminist ethics of attention even more. Her use of photos and maps is interactive rather than decorative. According to Solnit's theory that maps are "narratives of possibility," each walk's map enables users to experience Jaipur through movement. In a similar vein, her images of street scenes and female craftspeople capture the vitality of lived tradition. For example, the picture of the bangle-maker's hands both literally documents and metaphorically testifies to women's ongoing artistic ability. By using these images, Kanwar reclaims mapping, a typically masculine tool, and turns it into a shared, physical exercise.

Ecofeminist undertones can also be seen in Kanwar's feminist engagement with cultural memory and history. Huggan and Tiffin's (2010) concept of postcolonial ecocriticism, which connects ecological care to cultural survival, is similar to her awareness of Jaipur's environment, architecture, and craft practices. The Jantar Mantar Observatory, which she describes as "a living monument where history, science, and culture come together under the open sky," epitomises this synthesis. Kanwar challenges the linear narratives of modernisation that eliminate indigenous wisdom by depicting historical knowledge systems as dynamic and persistent. Her narrative is situated within a feminist ethics of care, which sees culture as a living ecosystem supported by women's involvement, by emphasizing preservation, continuity, and respect for local ecology.

Kanwar presents herself as a mediator between voice and silence, history and modernity, throughout *Jaipur: 10 Easy Walks*. Her forceful, kind tone demonstrates how feminist writing may oppose domination without resorting to violence. She redefines authorship and travel by redesigning Jaipur's streets: authorship becomes preservation and travel becomes intimacy. Women's writing frequently "preserves memory against the erasure of time," according to Bassnett (1992), and Kanwar's story does just that. Every walk turns into a ritualistic mnemonic, a revival of voices that were before silenced by walls of stone and tradition.

In the end, Kanwar's travelogue creates a feminist map of the city and the individual. Her Jaipur is a living archive of women's adventures, from the invisible observers of the Hawa Mahal to the visible travellers of the twenty-first century, rather than a static museum. Thus, the metaphor of walking encompasses both intellectual and emotional freedom in addition to the literal. Kanwar's assertion that "every lane tells a tale, every craft preserves a memory, and every step links the tourist to a developing narrative" captures this ethos perfectly. Her words turn motion into meaning, presence into history, and description into conversation.

Rereading Jaipur through Kanwar's eyes presents the reader with a city that has been mapped by a woman who travels, observes, and writes rather than by colonial cartographers or royal chroniclers. Walking itself turns into an epistemology, a method of knowing through awareness, empathy, and presence. Showalter's appeal to restore "the feminine imagination" as a vital literary force is consistent with this reinterpretation of travel writing. The streets she traverses, the hands of the women she portrays, and the atmosphere of a city that has at last opened its windows to them serve as the foundation for Kanwar's imagination.

Kanwar turns the ordinary into the significant and the local into the universal through Jaipur: *10 Easy Walks*. Her writing is a prime example of how feminist travel narratives recover geography as a body, a narrative, and a place of belonging. To remind readers that liberty starts not in far-off places but in one's own streets, when a woman decides to go out, see, and speak, she wanders the city not to conquer it but to have a conversation with it.

Conclusion

Jaipur: 10 Easy Walks by Dharmendar Kanwar, which redefines how women experience, document, and inhabit space, is a noteworthy contribution to modern Indian women's travel literature. By transforming travel into a form of cultural exchange and a means of feminist expression, her work goes beyond the limitations of conventional travel writing, which often features colonial and masculine notions of exploration. Kanwar crafts a narrative that intertwines geography with gender, heritage with identity, and observation with feeling during her strolls through Jaipur. The book evolves into both a journey and a reclamation, serving as a rediscovery of women's historical presence in locations where they were once overlooked.

Kanwar's travelogue fundamentally shows that walking is a feminist act of re-visioning. Moving through Jaipur's streets, which have traditionally been used for male mobility and visibility, takes on radical meaning. Kanwar symbolically walks for the generations of women who were imprisoned behind "latticed windows in their personal Jharokhas like invisible ghosts living behind a wall of Hawa Mahal" by following her own footsteps through lanes, bazaars, temples, and monuments. Her words evoke the centuries of silence that shrouded the lives of Indian women, turning them into representations of resilience and transformation. Her gaze transforms the once-gilded jail, the Hawa Mahal, into a monument of reclamation. "Women are no longer restricted by walls or tradition, and they are now able to walk freely in every street where they used to merely observe," she notes. The core of female spatial reclamation,

which forms the basis of the whole story, is encapsulated in this transition from limitation to liberation.

Kanwar's feminist perspective also questions the traditional division between the public and the private sphere, as well as between art and work. Her focus on female artists, such as weavers, painters, and bracelet makers, redefines creation as a continuous dialogue between the past and present. She raises women's craft into cultural philosophy when she says, "The bright coloured lacquer is gently moulded into shape over burning charcoals, then embedded with fine glass pieces or embellished with gold threads." Lacquer molding becomes a metaphor for women shaping their identities; both are creative, resilient, and beautiful processes. Kanwar supports Showalter's (1977) gynocritical view that women's cultural expressions, which are frequently written off as trivial or ornamental, have profound epistemic and historical relevance through these portrayals. Her story emphasizes that cultural preservation is an active, gendered process supported by women's creativity rather than a passive inheritance.

Kanwar's travelogue also serves as a kind of feminist historiography, using empathy rather than authority to rewrite Jaipur's cultural memory. In contrast to Kanwar's perspective, which emphasizes street sellers, craftsmen, and family legacies, traditional histories of the city, recorded by colonial chroniclers or local elites, celebrate rulers, wars, and monuments. Her emphasis on common people, particularly women, is reminiscent of Lerner's (1986) demand that history be "rewritten by the living." By restoring the experienced, emotional, and sensory aspects of history that patriarchal discourse ignores, Kanwar's account accomplishes the fundamental goal of feminist literature. Through her exploration of crafts like block printing and gem-cutting, as well as her documentation of festivals like Teej and Gangaur, she portrays Jaipur as a living organism driven by female creativity and collective memory.

Another example of what postcolonial feminism aims to accomplish is Kanwar's *Jaipur: 10 Easy Walks*, which challenges both the imperial lens that glamorised India and the patriarchal vision that restricted women inside it. Kanwar challenges the conventional authority of the traveller by writing as a local woman seeing her own city. She is a participant in the society she describes rather than an outsider uncovering the Other or a detached scholar documenting fact. According to Mohanty (2003), this insider view turns travel into a type of relational involvement known as "feminist solidarity through difference." By depicting the city as a shared legacy rather than a show to be consumed, her story creates links between readers and locals, between the past and the present. By doing this, she reclaims the right to belong as well as the power to narrate.

Furthermore, Kanwar extends her feminist message from content to form through her stylistic choices, which include her inclusive tone, descriptive cadence, and visual drawings. The author-audience hierarchy is broken by the use of maps and photos, which enables readers to stroll with her. Walking is an act of contemplation and a means of "aligning the mind, the body, and the world," according to Solnit (2000). This alignment is accomplished in Kanwar's work, where her intellectual investigation of femininity is concurrent to her physical exploration of Jaipur. Every "easy walk" turns into a metaphor for the slow but steady advancements made by

feminists. Her writing moves at a pace that reflects the rhythm of her footsteps, highlighting the idea that movement and awareness are the sources of meaning.

Kanwar's *Jaipur: 10 Easy Walks* sheds light on how feminist travel writing turns geography into story and story into emancipation. Her work of art is a wonderful example of the transition from travel as conquest to travel as dialogue, from participation to description, from spectacle to empathy. She positions the Indian woman traveller as both an innovator and an inheritor, one who upholds history while pursuing change by fusing the political and the personal. Her efforts ensure that the history of Jaipur, once perceived through colonial or male perspectives, is now viewed through the lens of a woman who knows, cherishes, and explores her city.

Kanwar's travel narrative is an expression of freedom that transcends its literary genre. It suggests that female empowerment can sometimes be subtle and unwavering, expressed through strolls along familiar streets instead of through loud acts of rebelliousness. Her narrative illustrates how the reclamation of identity is deeply tied to the retaking of physical space. The streets she traverses, the landmarks she describes, and the women she highlights facilitate a collective reimagining of cultural identity. In this way, *Jaipur: 10 Easy Walks* acts as both a tribute to the city of Jaipur and an acknowledgement of women's resilience, reminding us that the true essence of feminist travel writing lies in the profound connections made rather than the miles covered. Dharmendar Kanwar ensures that the feminine voices, once muffled behind stone walls, now resonate throughout the vast streets of the Pink City, symbolising a journey toward liberation, remembrance, and belonging.

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