

THE SPIDER IN THE SKULL: TRAVEL AND SPACE IN W. G. SEBALD'S FICTION

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The Spider in the Skull: Travel and Space in W. G. Sebald's Fiction

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Submitted

in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

the



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In Memory of Maj.F.K.Sahney

Thesis Certificate

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “The Spider in the Skull: Travel and Space in W.G.Se bald’s Fiction”, being submitted by Siddharth Sahney to the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, for the award of the Doctor of Philosophy, is a bona fide record of the research work done by him. He has worked under my guidance and supervision and has fulfilled the requirements, which, to my knowledge, have reached the requisite standard for the submission of this thesis. The content of this thesis, in full or in parts, has not been submitted to any other Institute or University for the award of any degree or diploma.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work presented here in the thesis has been carried out by me towards the partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of a PhD from the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Delhi. The work contained herein is my own and is a presentation of my original research work. Wherever quotations from others are involved, every effort has been made to indicate this clearly with due reference to the literature. The content of this report, in full or in parts, have not been submitted to any other institute or university for the award of any degree.

Siddharth Sahney

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Abstract

This thesis charts the relationship between travel and space in W.G. Sebald's fiction through the rubric of causality. The four prose works by Sebald—*Vertigo*, *The Rings of Saturn*, *The Emigrants*, and *Austerlitz* are the subject of this study. The thesis also studies various essays Sebald wrote as well as his interviews as scholarly material, for it helps contextualize the varied concerns that stem from travel and space.

Through a close textual analysis of these four works, this thesis shows that travel and space are two essential features of a Sebaldian text, and many of its thematic concerns are framed around them. The analysis shows the tension between narrative and non-narrative forms of organisation in Sebald's text. The thesis charts out these concerns with reference to travel and space and emphasises causality since causality in any narrative is one of the primary factors that define the genre of the text. In Sebald, this factor becomes elusive for the narratives amalgamate various forms of writing—history, fiction, non-fiction, and photographs—setting a fine example of the possibilities that lie in fiction to be explored.

The thesis also charts the role of photographs in these texts and shows that the text employs them in various capacities apart from the illustrative principle. The analysis shows that they relay thematic concerns and subvert the written text, thus playing an integral role in the poetics. The analysis also shows that the text provides a commentary on its own construction and the effect the poetics intend to produce.

सारांश

यह शोध ग्रंथ डब्लू जी सिबल्ड के उपन्यासों में कार्यकरण के लेंस द्वारा यात्रा और स्थान में सम्बंध स्थापित करता है। सिबल्ड के चार गद्य कार्य—वर्टिगो, द रिग ऑफ सेटर्न, इमिग्रन्ट्स और औस्ट्रेलिस इस अध्ययन का विषय है। शोध ग्रंथ लेखक द्वारा लिखित विभिन्न निबंधों और उनके द्वारा दिए गए साक्षात्कार में दी गई विद्वत्तापूर्ण सामाग्री का भी अध्ययन करता है जो कि यात्रा और स्थान के विभिन्न विचारों को सन्दर्भित करने में सहायक होता है।

शोध ग्रंथ के चार कार्यों का एक गहन शाब्दिक विश्लेषण यह दर्शाता है कि सिबल्डियन मूल ग्रंथों की यात्रा और स्थान दो आवश्यक विशेषताएं हैं और उनके आसपास कई विषयगत विचार रखे गए हैं। यह विश्लेषण कथात्मक और गैर कथात्मक रूप के निर्माण/संगठन के बीच तनाव/खिंचाव को दर्शाता है। शोध ग्रंथ इन विचारों को यात्रा और स्थान के संदर्भ में कार्यकरण को जोर देता है क्योंकि किसी कथा में कार्यकरण एक मूल कारक है जो मूल ग्रंथ की शैली को परिभाषित करता है। सिबल्ड में यह कारक मूल ग्रंथ के लिए भ्रामक हो जाता है जो कि विभिन्न प्रकार के लेखन—इतिहास, उपन्यास, अकाल्पनिक लेखन को चित्रों के साथ मिलाता हुआ खोजने वाले उपन्यास में उपस्थित सम्भावनाओं का एक अच्छा उदाहरण प्रस्तुत कराता है। यह विश्लेषण इन मूल ग्रंथों में चित्रों की भूमिका का भी अध्ययन करता है

क्योंकि मूल ग्रंथ सचित्र सिद्धांत के अलावा विभिन्न क्षमता में काम करते हैं। यह विश्लेषण दिखाता है कि ये विषय गत विचार प्रसारित करते हैं और साथ में लिखित मूल ग्रंथ को विकृत कर देते हैं इस प्रकार काव्यशास्त्र में अभिन्न भूमिका निभाते हैं। विश्लेषण आगे दिखाता है कि मूल ग्रंथ अपने निर्माण और काव्यशास्त्र से उपजे विचार के प्रभाव का एक विवरण देता है।

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Abbreviations

The Following abbreviations have been used for Sebald's work:

The Emigrants	TE
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Vertigo	Ve
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The Rings of Saturn	TROS
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Austerlitz	Aus
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Campo Santo	CS
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A place in the Country	APITC
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