# 'Amphibious Historiography': Reading Samanth Subramanian's *Following Fish: Travels around the Indian Coast* (2010) through the Actor-Network Theory

## Gaana Jayagopalan

*Assistant Professor, English Studies, Christ University, Bangalore. ORCID: 0000-0001-9623-1329. Email: gaana.j@christuniversity.in*

**Abstract**
This paper explores Samanth Subramanian's travel writing collection *Following Fish: Travels around the Indian Coast* (2010) for its strength in establishing the significance of the human—non-human connection in the Indian coastline. Although a decade old, the work stands out even today for its strength in framing 'travel' from a non-terracentric point of view, as most travel writings have been often positioned. Subramanian's travel writing is an important departure from territorial historiographies via travel. His work traces the author's movement across India's coastal regions – the frontiers, as it were, of territoriality, literally following fish. Foregrounding a non-human subject as the travel writing's object of investigation, the paper deploys actor-network theory to analyze Subramanian's reconfiguration of the cultural imaginaries of India's coastlines via mobility thus reassembling the social of India's coastlines. His work, therefore, is argued to be an assemblage of the human and non-human actants creating a new water-based examination of socialities. Fish is the central node of his navigation of India's coastline assemblage, where he examines fish as food, as medicine, as commerce and as culture. By positing India's coastal regions as *waterscapes* to track movement of people, objects, and every day practices vis-à-vis fish, and moving in-land with the fish in some instances, Subramanian's work does not merely function as a commentary on the coastlines, but also emphasizes the need to interrogate mobility and travel across waterscapes.

**Keywords**: water histories; travel writing; Samanth Subramanian; actor-network theory; historiography

## Introduction

Mobility has been central to understanding the human question within cultural geography. Movement of people, things and objects, as well as other cultural artefacts, have traditionally been undertaken as a part of social science investigation. Travel writings by explorers and traders, for example, have given rich accounts of the geographies of travel and added knowledge about the cultural artefacts and the people represented. Postcolonial readings have also vehemently argued how some these accounts have also been responsible for the propagation of power by Europe(Lisle, 2006, p. 1). Notwithstanding these vast and significant contours of knowledge about mobility, let us agree that mobility has a rich history of academic engagement[i].

This paper explicates the fascinating 'amphibiousness' that Samanth Subramanian frames in his travel narrative *Following Fish: Travels Around the Indian Coast* ( 2010). His work accords centrality to fishing – an activity at water – to emphasize the creation of an exciting littorality along the Indian coast. Littoral spaces are those spaces that are porous, inscribed by transaction

of objects, beliefs and languages (Mukherjee, 2014, p. 91). Subramanian's work challenges the most conventional ontological claim of travel which privileges land and the human through the optic of littorality.

Drawing from Bruno Latour's actor-network theory, this paper argues that travel writing like Subramanian's makes the coastline not merely of waterscapes, but also of the highly interconnected exchanges between land, water, humans and other materialities, foregrounding the littoral. I engage with five paradigms of this littorality to argue that Subramanian's travel writing maps the ontological time-space of India's coastline through the schema of Actor-Network: 1) fish as/and food; 2) fish as commerce; 3) fishing and cultural history; 4) fish as identity, and 5) fish as fish. In effect, this travel account also maps the amphibiousness of fish, people, materials and cultures, thus creating a littorality that fosters new intersections of culture, commerce, cuisines and materialities of the Indian coastline.

## Locating Hydrography in Travel Writing

Travel Writing as an enabling and flourishing genre has contributed immensely to writings in India. Kuehn and Smethurst (2015) comment on the prominence of contemporary travel writing quite extensively in their work. The subject of travel writing often includes pilgrimages, backpackers touring the world, as also those writers contributing towards a significant development of the art of the form (Thompson, 2011, p. 1). Duncan and Gregory (1999) note that an important mode of inquiry of the form has been to engage critically with representation of space, and the manner in which this representation comes to reach the reader in a cohesive form through a mediation, negotiation and edition of its constructed form (Duncan & Gregory, 1999, p. 4). In this context they remark that travel accounts rarely say much about the places themselves, or their materialities and instead, tell us more about the traveler (1999, p. 5). This sort of engagement is far scanter in hydrographies of travel. In "World History as Oceanic History" David Armitage (2019) faithfully argues for a case for water histories. In what he calls for the need for a 'saltwater frontier' (2019, p. 356) instead of terrestrial ones which often underscore histories of borderlands and frontiers, he says:

> Historians, no less than other humans, are prone to terrestrial prejudice, an attachment to happenings on land, to the confronts of *terra firma,* to the gravitational pull of territory in all our lives. We might call this attachment terracentrism, a short-sightedness about our species, its environment and our connected history that is just as reassuring but also quite as debilitating as other prejudices, like Eurocentrism in history or logocentrism in philology. Terracentrism, of course, runs much deeper into our seeming destiny as animals of the land who are not at home on the sea. (2019, p. 343)

In this context, Subramanian's work functions as a fascinating work that underscores the amphibiousness of fish and humans along the coastline of India.

The Indian coastline has not received significant focus as its central space of engagement in travel writing as Subramanian's work does, thus inaugurating a new site of representation within contemporary Indian travel writing. This work extends the spatial contours of contemporary travel writing to a more amphibious space of the coastline, reflecting on the diverse nodes that create the assemblage of the Indian coastline. What is more interesting here is that Subramanian underscores their simultaneous co-presence while tracing their flows and connections. The matter-of-factness of these various experiences as shared by people of those

places become far more nuanced when seen as a part of a larger time-space. The human and nonhumans actants enable the mapping of the spatial and material concreteness of the time-space. In a sense, Subramanian uses fish, fishermen, boats, fishing, food, symbols of faith as the micro-, nonhuman-actants, that reassemble the macro 'Indian coastline'.

## Conceptual Framework

Bruno Latour's actor-network theory functions as an illuminating lens and as an important metaphor through which the timespace-materiality of contemporary travel writing can be analysed. This approach foregrounds mobility across space and time, as well as by human and non-human actants or actors that enable a network to be comprehended. Latour(1996) clarifies in one of his writings what constitutes a network. Distinguishing it from the technical understanding of network, Latour delineates the network in actor-network to have no fixed points or specific layouts and paths. Instead, it maps the myriad connections that, in turn, establish the relations of humans in their social and natural world (Latour, 1996, p. 369). The actor, on the other hand, implies more than a human individual actor, to encompass literally anything that can be a source of action. (Latour, 1996, p. 373). Much of this emphasizes an important point: it is important to understand Actor-Network Theory more in terms of a methodology – 'Theory' in its nomenclature is a misnomer, if one goes by the standards of evaluation of texts and contexts through critical theory. Latour observes:

> An actor-network is traced whenever, in the course of a study, the decision is made to replace actors of whatever size by local and connected sites instead of ranking them into micro and macro. The two parts are essential, hence the hyphen. The first part (the actor) reveals the narrow space in which all of the grandiose ingredients of the world begin to be hatched; the second part (the network) may explain through which vehicles, which traces, which trails, which types of information, the world is being brought *inside* those places and then, after having been transformed there, are being pumped back out of its narrow walls. This is why the hyphenated 'network' is not there as a surreptitious presence of the Context, but remains what connects the actors together. (Latour, 2007, pp. 179–180)

## Discussion

*Following Fish* takes the reader, along with Subramanian, into the textured and peopled Indian coastline. Subramanian's description of each of the places vis-à-vis fishing, fish, or acts associated with fish, provide rich inter-weavings and intersections of the amorphous waterline in his hydrography. Through these stories and discoveries, Subramanian's work draws for its readers the plaiting of various heterogeneous elements that make up the actor-network of the Indian coastline with fishing as its mediator. Therefore, his work counters any fixity or unity accorded to the coastline, especially by showing how the coast extends into the land and vice versa. Similarly, each chapter foregrounds either a type of fish and its collective, or the act of fishing and the 'sociality' that it establishes in the process. Subramanian takes on the role of a social investigator who tries to uncover the social by imbricating himself in the network of the assemblage, along with other actants. In the process, Subramanian lets his actants speak for themselves, whether it is the members of the fishermen community, or the dishes that he describes, or those involved in the business of fish. Let us now understand how Subramanian's work meaningfully engages with the actor-network metaphor.

**Paradigm 1: Fish as/and Food**

In pursuing fish as a commodity that is literally consumed, Subramanian's account of faith-healing while at Hyderabad, is a good place to start at. Harinath is the central figure of the Goud family disbursing the treatment arranged on the scale of a spectacle, attracting huge flocks of people willing to be healed through his fish-medicine—some traveling even from afar as Montreal—to willfully ingest "a live murrel fingerling that had been stuffed to its gills with an unknown medicine." (Subramanian, 2010, p. 21). Subramanian is amazed by how the fish is made part of this treatment and gains valuable cultural currency as a cure for bronchial conditions. He says:

> The recipe for this medicine has not left the Goud family ... All that's known is that it is a lumpy paste, in a vivid shade of yellow. The paste is rolled into a ball, stuffed into the mouth of a month-old, two-inch-long murrel fish, which is in turn stuffed into the waiting gullet of a patient, to be swallowed intact. 'As the fish wriggles on its way down, it helps disperse the medicine more effectively,' one pseudo-scientific argument in favour of the treatment goes, conveniently forgetting that the asthma plagues the bronchial tubes, not the oesophagus. (2010, p. 22)

In his travel to Hyderabad, he learns not just of this 'treatment' to cure bronchial conditions, but also how the treatment is mired in many legal battles to the extent that the government had to declare that the treatment had no curative properties. This is a fascinating instance of the coast's presence on land, intermingling with the legal, political, and belief systems of humans, thereby casting the net of the coastline far wider into the land, far away from sea. This creates new zones of interaction and meaning to understanding the larger, seemingly singular and unified entity of "India's Coastline".

In another timespace, when in Kerala, Subramanian goes looking for the *kallu shop*, or the quintessential toddy-selling shacks where the staple food is tapioca and oil-slicked *meen* curry or fish curry. Moving away from the coast into a space like the toddy shop that is typical to Kerala's highways, Subramanian chronicles the cultural significance that the fish curry-toddy dyad plays in Kerala's culture. In this reflection, Subramanian also highlights "the confluence of politics, religion and society"(p. 79) that characterizes the toddy shop where transactions are basic and minimal. This is an important travel narrative because here, it is the toddy that becomes more significant than the fish itself (and conversely, the toddy cannot exist devoid of the fish), and the fact that the ones in the littoral of Kerala including Alleppey, Kottayam, Calicut and Kochi, also reflect a rich give-and-take from the coast to create a cultural currency of toddy in Kerala.

While in Mangalore, his interaction with Baloor, an important bureaucrat in the fishing cooperative circles in Mangalore takes him to various restaurants serving the typical Mangalore fish curry, a dish he remembers very fondly. He learns, however, that the best fish curry is the one made at home. Subramanian is treated to Baloor's nephew's wife, Shailaja's culinary skill at making the dish. The account ends on a very interesting note when Subramanian informs Baloor that the curry made by Shailaja was indeed very good:

> Really, that good, was it?' Baloor asked. 'But then, I wouldn't know,' he went on, this stalwart president of the Mogaveera Vyavasthapaka Mandali and secretary of the Akhila Karnataka Fishermen's Parishad, of the National Fishworkers' Federation and of the Coastal Karnataka Fishermen Action Committee. 'You see, I don't eat fish' (Subramanian, 2010, p. 96).

The intersection of Baloor as the human actor facilitating several administrative positions in the fishing community is also with a Baloor who does not consume fish: it is only when this actant is placed in the intersections of other nodes—the fish, fishermen, the administration of fishing—that we recognize how the network works, and that fish is not only about consumption.

### Paradigm 2: Fishing as Commerce

In his travel to Goa, Subramanian again does not merely paint the beaches of Goa, but reflects, instead, on how the tourism boom has led fishermen to move away from fishing and concentrate on the more lucrative tourism business. For a community that fishes just to kill time, Subramanian traces the plummeting number of fishermen giving up on fishing. He ends the account with the image of *River Princess,* an ore-carrier that was abandoned by its owner after it expired on the sand bed and has buried itself eight to ten metres into the seabed for over a decade. He uses the materiality of *River Princess* to comment on the state of Goa:

> At such close quarters, the *River Princess* stopped being an eyesore, because it was easier to see her for what she was: An honest vessel, left to desolation and decay through no fault of her own. Alvares had called the *River Princess* a symbol of the inefficiency of Goa, but that didn't quite feel right. She was more a symbol of indolence of Goa, of a state that had come to be unfortunately infected with the idleness of its guests. (Subramanian, 2010, p. 127)

This is an important juxtaposition, considering the symbol that Goa and its coastline holds in the global imagination of tourism.

On his visit to Mangrol and Veraval in Gujarat, Subramanian loops the entire coastline back from sea on to the land. Here, he gives a detailed account of the 'reverse exodus' of boats from water to land to be maintained and prepared for the monsoon catch. His presence in the largest-producer-of-fish-but-the-least-consumed state, Gujarat(as few Gujaratis eat meat), highlights how fishing gains a highly commercial currency in the coast of Gujarat.

Both Mangrol and Veraval have a rich history in boat-making for several hundred years. leaving remnants of the past to be seen today. He visits Mohammad Razzaq a third-generation boat-builder carrying forward many techniques that are over a few hundred years old. In his account of the role of mechanized tools used in boat-making vis-à-vis artisanal methods, Subramanian highlights central presence of the power tools in such traditional industries. He says:

> The old codger grumbles about new-fangled methods, in part, only because they're putting him out of business. In reality, Mohammad Razzaq and other suthars could either have bought these electric tools to remain full-fledged boat builders, or they could have persisted with hand-cutting their logs of wood, taken triple the time to build a boat, and watched fishermen buy fiberglass instead. This kind of dilemma is no dilemma at all; the power saw is, in that sense, now a part of the natural order of things. (p. 160)

To imagine fishing as a commercial industry would be one thing, but to highlight its commercial potential through the role played by the ship building industry of Gujarat, and the history that moves the fishing industry, is completely another. Here, boat-building functions as a mediator that translates the meaning of fishing from a physical activity to one entrenched in the cultural history of the place, its people, and their traditional occupation.

### Paradigm 3: Fishing and Cultural History

Moving to yet another instance tracing cultural history along the coastline, Subramanian's visit to Manapad in Tamilnadu, a coastal town native to the Paravas – the fisherfolk – is an important one. Subramanian visits significant churches in the town that boasts of a rich history of interconnections with Europeans. He also meets Father Jerosin Kattar, who narrates the rich cultural history of Christianity, the Paravas, and their significance to the ethos of the place. In one instance, Kattar relates the Parava community to Subramanian:

> 'The Paravas are very religious folks,' Kattar said. As a people dealing on such daily basis with nature, with their very life at stake, they develop great respect and confidence for the supernatural, for the power that has created the sea.'
>
> ...
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> 'I think essentially you have to understand them to serve them .... For instance, many of the fishermen talk loudly, because they are used to shouting over the sound of the wind and the waves. But that can be misunderstood as shouting.'(Subramanian, 2010, p. 48)

Focusing on the Christian beliefs influenced by various sea-faring travellers and missionaries has developed a syncretism of both Hindu as well as Christian practices. He observes:

> ...I learned how Catholicism here resembled a veneer, applied upon an older base of Hindu customs and caste traditions, many of which the Church had wisely allowed to bubble up to the surface. There is syncretism in language ... in practice ... in the full stretch-prostrations that men performed ... even in the respectful act of leaving one's shoes outside the entrance of the church. And sometimes, there is syncretism in thought, in how a Christian fisherman still propitiates the Hindu god Murugan and refers to him as 'Machan' or 'Brother-in-law,' because Murugan's wife Valli came from Parava stock—at least according to a Parava legend that has somehow been comfortably ensconced within another faith for five hundred years now. (Subramanian, 2010, p. 49)

This mode of a belief system, strongly rooted both in land and in the water, becomes apparent when Subramanian relates St Francis Xavier's project of reaching the coast of Tamil Nadu to cement Catholicism by conversions of the fishing community:

> Before Christianity arrived, the fishermen here used to worship Meenakshi or Bhagavathi Amman, and Xavier knew they were attached to their feminine goddesses,' Kattar said. 'That was why he emphasized the role of Mary rather than Christ—for one maternal goddess to take place of another.' Even more animist beliefs, such as a near-superstitious regard for deities of the ocean, were subsumed by the Virgin; today, the Paravas of Tuticorin often call her their *Kadal Maatha*, or mother of the sea. (Subramanian, 2010, p. 48)

In this context, Subramanian's travel account foregrounds this network of human and non-human actants working together to create a spectral coastline determined by the actants' amphibiousness. In *Reassembling the Social*(2007) Latour highlights the importance of heterogeneous elements in the 'assembling' of the social as a collective:

> ...the question of the social emerges when the ties in which one is entangled begin to unravel; the social is further detected through the surprising movements from one association to the next; those movements can either be suspended or resumed; when they are prematurely suspended, the social as normally construed is bound together with already accepted participants called 'social actors' who are members of a 'society'; when the movement toward collection is resumed, it traces the social as associations through

many non-social entities which might becomes participants later; if pursued systematically, this tracking may end up in a shared definition of a common world, what I have called a collective … (2007, p. 247)

**Paradigm 4: Fishing and Identity**

What determines the coastline, for instance, is also what happens off the shore. Consider the opening of the work. Here, the readers are introduced to Subramanian's journey to Calcutta in search of the hilsa, "the undisputed champion of fish" the "darling of waters"(Subramanian, 2010, p. 2) and at the same time a symbol of a 'sibling rivalry' between East and West Bengal, a rivalry determined again by a hydraulic marker. He observes:

> As united as they are in the appreciation of the hilsa, Bengalis are divided by the geography over the relative merits of hilsa from the Padma and Ganges rivers. Bangladeshis prize the plumper fish from the Padma above everything else; the Ganga hilsa, they will concede magnanimously, is still hilsa, but really that is all that can be said for it. West Bengalis, on the other hand, look with sympathy upon their oriental cousins, who cannot appreciate the intense flavours of the Ganga hilsa; their collective opinion is that the Bangladeshis are more to be pitied than scorned their congenial error in judgement. (2010, p. 4)

Subramanian's account of the hilsa also emphasizes the symbiotic nature of both the fish and its people.

His next visit to Mumbai frames the traditional fishermen and their role in according centrality to the island city's ethos. He traces through testimonies of the fisherfolk called Koli who have left their mark even as they were pushed to the margins of the city. Talking about the Kolis, he says:

> They were, almost overwhelmingly, fisher folk and the very word 'koli' translates to both spider' and 'fisherman' because, as the historian D. D. Kosambi once explained, the fisherman uses his net much as a spider uses its web. Even as modern Mumbai marginalized her eldest children pushing them into their ever-tighter villages, the Kolis left their stamp on the city in nomenclature: their Kolibhat became today's Colaba, their Palava Bunder became today's Apollo Bunder, and their goddess Mumbadevi became today's Mumbai (Subramanian, 2010, pp. 133–134)

This important detail complicates the insider-outsider debate that plagues much of Maharashtra even today. Subramanian contrasts the Kolis against the mill workers who gravitated to Mumbai and over decades, began to regard themselves as 'authentic Mumbaikars' (136). The first migrants who joined these mills in the late nineteenth century were from the districts of Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg (137).

The Kolis and their traditional food was also hard to come by in Mumbai and Subramanian meets Gobind Patil, the local leader of 9000-odd Kolis living by the sea in Danda Khar. When he enquires about their fishing techniques, Patil instead tells Subramanian about the food that the Kolis ate. "On topics related to food, Patil was ready conversationalist; on topics unrelated, he would somehow reorient the compass of the discussion back towards food" (145). Here, Subramanian highlights a fisherman who was more fascinated by the food than simply the act of fishing.

**Paradigm 5: Fish as Fish**

This takes Subramanian to his next visit in 'Xanadu' in Maharashtra where he meets Danny Moses and Peter Baptista, who fish as a sport. Interestingly, Subramanian does not reveal the name of this place in his account because the said coast "was a rich mine for sailfish."( p. 101) The search for the sailfish, an important member of the Indian coastline, especially with its precise annual visit, which is otherwise found in the depths of the ocean for most of the year becomes the occasion for Subramanian to write about the very idea of fishing. Subramanian accompanies Baptista on one of his journeys to bait the sailfish. However, the entire adventure becomes one of not getting the fish, and how fishing and fishermen also revel in talking about their defeats in the ocean. Subramanian remarks:

> The sight of a worthy catch is breathlessly anticipated; the thrill of the sport resides in how suddenly it can turn. But for the rest of the time, the art of fishing is really the art of waiting in thin disguise—waiting not only from hour to hour, as we were doing at sea, or from day to day, as with the fisherman Santiago in Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, but even from year to year, as for the annual Indian visitation of the sailfish. There is no room in the boat for impatience ... (2010, pp. 102–103)

With this, Subramanian also pegs the great modernist tale of perseverance and patience by Hemingway, making it an important actor in the assemblage of the cultural imaginary of the literary representations of the coastline. Moreover, Subramanian also highlights the influence of time on spatial meaning-making: by emphasizing the year-long wait for the sailfish, he illustrates how an entire year is then planned by the fishermen around the sailfish, thus pinning the time frame of a year onto the brief two-week wait for the sail fish in the waters, annually. That this wait can indeed be faced with the prospect of not catching a sailfish makes this time-space far more significant. Consider this:

> As if sparring with a sailfish was an honour, many fishermen tell proud stories of their defeats in the battle with the monster at the end of their line ... participating in the extended sailfish mythos is sufficient in itself, and a mythos it has certainly become ... To actually catch one is closer to a benediction than a feat of skill. A veteran could fish his entire life without even spotting a sailfish, and a rookie could pull one in on his very first trip to sea ... Even a lost battle can often be spectacular. (2010, pp. 105–106)

With the Xanadu creek showing no signs of the sailfish, Baptista's search had to be called off, and Subramanian offers the consolation of the sailfish hunt possibly being successful in its next visit. It is in this light that Subramanian's relation of the account of fishing becomes significant – *fishing also as an act of the absent fish*, the catch that never was, the catch that must be waited upon until the next year. His ability to capture these affective moments onto the littorality of Indian coastline is what makes the actor-network an important metaphor to understand his travel account.

## Conclusion

The conventional notion is to think about the coastline as only spatial: that is, the space in which many movements take place in time. This is precisely countered in *Following Fish*. It emphasizes how the coastline does not produce individual stories of affect, rhythm, emotion, longing, energy, faith and desire. Instead, it is the other way around: all these foundational embodied ontologies create the time-space of what we call 'India's coastline'. While travel writing foregrounds the ontology of the traveller and the time-space as experienced by the traveller, Subramanian's work

provides importance to other ontological domains that creep into the coastline's time-space folding into the central event framed here – fishing. These primitive ontological constituents of kinesthesis include movement, rhythm, affect, energy, force and so on(Merriman & Pearce, 2017), making the entire mobility an embodied one, and, in turn, creating spatialities. It is the effort of fishermen on their boats, of their womenfolk back home, of bureaucrats of fisheries associations, of individual fishing connoisseurs and the toddy shop visitors that make the reality of the aquascape from a space of kinesthesis to a kin-aesthetic one (Merriman, 2012).

In his Afterword, Subramanian reflects on how he was struck by the variations as well as the similarities in the coastline and the stories he heard. Concerns of overfishing, ecological degradation were resonated across this journey. Yet, what remains with him is how they are all shaped by the enormousness of the sea. Locating how lands have been tamed by the farmer, thanks to chemistry and genetics, the sea and the fishermen, on the other hand, continue to work in the untamed natural world of the sea. He ends his work with an absolutely stunning image of the fisherman in a boat:

> … there isn't yet a substitute for spending long hours on the water, praying for a misguided fish to wander onto a line or into a net. Fishing is still elemental in the most elemental sense of the word—an activity composed of water and air and light and space, all arranged in precarious balance around a central idea of a man in a boat waiting for a bite. (Subramanian, 2010, p. 165)

Subramanian helps establish the significance of mapping the historiography of the human and nonhuman in India's coastline. The coast has always been– culturally and civilizationally – central to travel, and to most travel and exploratory writings. However, in many of these writings, it is the land that is foregrounded. Subramanian's work adds to a cultural and material reading of India's coastline. Subramanian notes:

> …this book goes beyond considering fish merely as food. Particularly in a nation with lengthy and diverse a coastline as India's, fish can sit at the heart of many worlds—of culture, of history, of sport, of commerce, of society. It can knit the coast together in one dramatic swoop: The hilsa, pride and joy of Bengal, now often arrives in many fish markets from Gujarat, at the very opposite end of the coastline. Or it can fragment the coast into a multitude of passions and traditions, each different from one found a hundred kilometers to the north or south of it. Looking more closely at even one aspect of these worlds is like picking up the most visible thread of a fishing net, and suddenly seeing the entire skein lift into view. (2010, p. xii)

By foregrounding the coastline, a certain border or boundary is drawn semantically and spatially. However, Subramanian's work, in true spirit of an actor-network, shows how this spatial binary is highly amorphous: the network, instead of the space, highlights the in-betweens of these nodal connections. Thus, his work begins to engage with ostensibly disconnected nodes and brings them back together into the network and maps the collective. The vast net of fishing as a field of inquiry is brought together in his travel to create a highly connected network of art, history, culture and commerce.

**Note**

[i]In their introduction to a special issue showcasing emerging work in mobility studies, Merriman and Pearce argue that several academic and publishing networks have kept the field alive with some significant travel writings capturing mobility being produced recently (Merriman & Pearce, 2017, p. 494).

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