I

INTRODUCTION

The objective of the thesis has been to explore the rootlessness in the major fictional works of V.S. Naipaul, the-Trinidad-born English author. The emphasis has been on the analysis of his writings, in which he has depicted the images of home, family and association. Inevitably, in this research work on V.S. Naipaul's fiction, multiculturalism, homelessness (home away from home) and cultural hybridity has been explored. Naipaul has lost his roots no doubt, but he writes for his homeland. He is an expatriate author. He gives vent to his struggle to cope with the loss of tradition and makes efforts to cling to the reassurance of a homeland. Thepresent work captures the nuances of the afore-said reality.

A writer of Indian origin writing in English seems to have an object, that is his and her imagination has to be there for his/her mother country. At the core of diaspora literature, the idea of the nation-state is a living reality. The diaspora literature, however, focuses on cultural states that are defined by immigration counters and stamps on one's passport. The diaspora community in world literature is quite complex. It has shown a great mobility and adaptability as it has often been involved in a double act of migration from India to West Indies and Africa to Europe or America on account of social and political resources. Writers like Salman Rushdie, RohingtonMistry, Bahrain Mukherjee, and V.S. Naipaul write from their own experience of hanging in limbo between two identities: non-Indian and Indian.

1.1 Life and Works of V. S Naipaul

VidiadharSurajprasad Naipaul was born on August 17, 1932, in Trinidad, where his grandfather, an indentured worker, had come from India. An agnostic, Naipaul very early in his life experienced a profound alienation, both from the close-knit family life of his Brahmin ancestors and from the social and political life of his native Trinidad which was a place where the stories were never stories of success but of failure: brilliant men, scholarship winners, who had died young, gone mad, or taken to drink. A scholarship winner himself out of the QueensRoyalCollege, he used the award to

escape to England in 1950, where he attended UniversityCollege in Oxford. England, more than Trinidad, became his home in the early 1950s.

The first fruit of Naipaul’s escape from the colony was a series of gently satiric short novels set in Trinidad. In *The Mystic Masseur* (1957) a semiliterate medicine man makes good as therapist to his village community because of the ignorance and gullibility of the local people. In *The Suffrage of Elvira* (1958), Naipaul turned a critical eye on the first general election held in a town where possibilities for democratic reform abort because of longstanding petty group enmities: Hindu-Moslem, black-white, Indian-Spaniard. *Miguel Street* (1959) is a "Winesburg, Ohio" collection of vivid character portraits drawn from the author's neighborhood. It closes in the Sherwood Anderson manner: the young narrator leaves his neighbors to continue his education in life abroad, but will immortalize them in his future role of writer.

Next came a big generational novel one of two Naipaul masterpieces *A House for Mr. Biswas* (1961). Set also in Trinidad, it echoes in some passages the light tone and fun of the earlier, shorter pieces, but achieves the stature of only a few other 20th-century novels largely through the detailed, compassionate picture of Biswas the fictional representative of the author's own father defeated in the struggle for a place of his own, alien both in a matriarchal Indian family and in the larger colonial society still not open to non-Europeans of talent in the 1940s.

Using London as a permanent return base, Naipaul began to travel extensively after 1960. His prolific writing continued, alternating between autobiographical fiction and reportorial non-fiction based on these travels. The unifying persona is that of an alienated ex-colonial, cut off temperamentally both from his native roots and from the European culture upon which he attempts to graft himself. In the novel *The Mimic Men* (1967) the action shifts between England and Trinidad. The protagonist, Ralph Singh, is out of place in both worlds as a scholarship student in London, and later as a deposed political minister and real estate speculator on his native island; his marriage to a liberal white English woman ends miserably. At the end of the novel, Singh, a disillusioned London recluse, is left writing his memoirs: "We pretended to be real, to be learning, to be preparing ourselves for life, we mimic men of the New World."

In two fine subsequent novels of the 1970s there is little trace of the earlier comic tone. *In a Free State* (1971) is set in a sub-Saharan African state in uneasy transition between incompetent post-colonial governments. Powerful descriptive passages juxtapose hauntingly beautiful natural settings with the detritus of European technology. New themes of sadistic violence and homosexuality link this work with the longer *Guerillas* (1975). In both novels the focus of alienation is on a liberal white couple whose pretensions political and sexual are ruthlessly exposed by the "Heart of Darkness" context. Naipaul himself explicitly pointed out his lineage to that earlier writer i.e., Joseph Conrad on authorial purpose to awaken the sense of true wonder. That is perhaps a fair definition of the novelist's purpose in all ages.

Perhaps Naipaul's finest sustained writing is to be found in the 1979 novel *A Bend in the River.* Here, in a small village in "New Africa," the writer explores all of his important themes, treated separately elsewhere: the disorder left in the wake of imperialism; the problems of emergent but underdeveloped third world peoples caught between old tribal ways and the new technology of dangerous arms and tinsel consumer materialism; and the liberal white woman as sexual symbol of Third World political trust and ultimate despair. Here, fortunes are made and lost overnight in gold, copper, and ivory; Hindu couples from Africa’s East Coast, poor shopkeepers one day, strike it rich the next when they are awarded proprietorship of the sole Bigburger franchise of the region. Instability and alienation are indigenous; the Moslem narrator of the novel, back from a short trip abroad, finds his small store nationalized by the Big Man, president-dictator of the ProgressiveState. After a brief stint in a concentration-camp-like prison, he is lucky to escape with his life. But to what place? He has no "home": "There could be no going back; there was nothing to go back to. We had become what the world outside had made us; we had to live in the world as it existed." Many felt the village was based on Kisangani, Zaire, and in 1997 as the city crumbled, some even hailed his 1979 work as prophetic.

A 1987 work, *The Enigma of Arrival,* was classified as fiction, although much of the material is indistinguishable from Naipaul's own life. The variety of Naipaul's interests as a traveller-observer is suggested by the following survey of some of his nonfiction. His two personal roots are explored in the fusions of history with contemporary political analysis which make up *The Loss of El Dorado* (1969),

about Trinidad, and *India: A Wounded Civilization* (1977). *Among the Believers* (1981) records impressions of the author's visits to several important Moslem nations, including Iran and Pakistan. *Finding the Center* (1984) includes an essay on his stay in the relatively stable and prosperous West African Ivory Coast. Here the observer analyzes sympathetically the balance of power between competing tribal and European values. In 1996 Naipaul released *The World's Great Places An Area of Darkness* to favorable reviews.

Naipaul published several new works in the late 1980s and early 1990s, including *A Turn in the South* (1989), *India: A Million Mutinies Now* (1990), and *Way in the World: A Sequence* (1994).

Naipaul has been a victim of double diaspora as his ancestors migrated from India to Trinidad in 1880; since then, his family has lived there. He went there as a student of OxfordUniversityCollege and after that settled there. The sense of alienation was in his blood because he was born and educated in a country which was not his own and now he is residing in England. As he is victimized by double diaspora, he can’t call any place his home. He is a visitor wherever he goes. He suffers from the crisis of identity, a feature which one cannot ignore while reading Naipaul. He is a West Indian writer who is disinherited from all traditions and exposed to different settings. He has a strong desire of independence and identity. His works have connection to the Caribbean literary tradition from which it arose. His works give a sense of his biography of departure from the constructive close background of the Trinidadian society of the open literate and cosmopolitan culture of the world of England. He has found the Trinidadian society very hostile to him and England is the place where he could make his career and become a writer. His works comprise of contemporary reality. He has taken fiction as a tool of revenge against all views. At the same time, he is interested in giving shape to his own experiences. He has condemned the Trinidadian or Caribbean society as backward. He has opposed these societies and has never been forever in these societies. To him, that world was patented by fear, deceit and treachery. In Naipaul’s view the colonial society was the product of colonizers and the culture of those societies has come from other countries. He hated the narrow, circumscribed, brutal life which surrounded him in colonial Trinidad with its limited possibilities, small range of profession, notorious political

corruption and racial and religious conflict Indians among whom he was raised lived in a social world of their own uninvolved with the races. The Trinidadians of African descent appeared to have no traditional culture of their own and modelled themselves on the English. The local whites had produced nothing of lasting values, were drunkards, uneducated and privileged. They had best jobs. Therefore, for them, "Home is where our (their) feet are and we (they) had better place our (their) heart where the feet are" (Jasbir Jain, 30). The man who settles abroad as an immigrant finds a location. Then which is his home,which he has already left behind? The theme of home/homelessness is an age old issue pressing the minds of the indigenous population and the settlers, ever since man started travelling from one place to another.

Eventually, the 'universal human condition' is not the figment of imagination of a fevered critic but is a state that is at once recognizable when a writer can provide form, structure and substance to it and it finds resonance in the readers' experience of the world with essential human condition.A writer should be able to observe external occurrences and events, place them in their historical and cultural contexts and make an effort to sieve out the details and frills that detract from the essential, the core. The writer who can connect the dots in seemingly unrelated events and see patterns, discern motives, understand how history and culture can influence people, can produce a literary work that can transcend barriers of region, race and religion. In this endeavor, the lonely journey of the writer, there is always the temptation to take the easy way out – to write what sells rather than be true to one's intuitive self.

V.S. Naipaul is one such writer, who has faithfully recorded the images, impressions, views and interpretations as per the dictates of his intuition. Concerns for political correctness, his Caribbean background, his Indian ancestry, and his domicile in England may have altered his perspective but were never allowed to distort and detract the essential reality he could perceive with such startling and sometimes uncomfortable clarity. This perception of reality is tempered by a concern for and an empathy with the universal desire of the individual to improve his lot and move on to a better state.

This concern and empathy are not always obvious in his writings – more often than not, they lie submerged under a veneer of criticism, apparent snobbery and

detachment that can put off the casual reader. For the cursory observer, Naipaul's body of work, both fiction and non-fiction appears to be the product of a disjointed, fragmented vision – the early light comedies of Trinidadian life, the more sombre stories of Mr. Biswas and Mr. Stone, the travel books with their caustic comments on the Third World (India, Africa and non-Aram Islamic nations) and his later fictional works. However, the observant reader can discern patterns, themes and motifs that recur in his works.

Thus, Naipaul's works represent a journey undertaken by a writer with a gift of intuitive awareness, a height of heightened perception of people and places and a keen sense of history and the driving forces that make people do what they do and become what they are. Naipaul's writing is economical, the tone matter-of-fact and the narrator is unobtrusive. Intense dramatic scenes do not unfold in Naipaul's novels.

However, life is unravelled in all its frailty and futility, embellished with the small details that make each person's life the same yet different from a million others with the same race, nationality and history. Naipaul's eye for detail that highlights the absurd, the hilarious, the comic and the pitiable in life finds expression in his works in characters, plots and themes that seem plausible and stories are narrated less as a careful dénouement of plot but more as vignettes of actual life caught in intuitive flashes by a creative mind.

An intelligent, enquiring mind with an intuitive understanding of the compulsions and legacies that motivate human behavior and the ability to represent the 'half-lives' with uncompromising clarity in unemotional tones defines Naipaul, the writer. This uncanny perception combined with an uncommon felicity with words and a fluid prose style make Naipaul, a 'high-fidelity' recorder of life par excellence.

Naipaul was, perhaps, aware of his intuitive creative abilities and encouraged by his father, he made a conscious decision to make writing his vocation. The issue was the subject matter onto which this considerable talent could be applied. For Naipaul, the familiar – Trinidad, the land and its people were never the subjects of any literary work. It required a leap of faith to attempt a transportation of these familiar things into literature.

Miguel Street was the first book that Naipaul wrote although it was published later. It is a series of character sketches with exaggerated personal eccentricities rather than any attempt at an in depth study of human nature. As it appears, Naipaul wished to write fast, to avoid too much of self-questioning, and so he simplified. He ignored the racial and social complexities of the street. He stayed at ground level, so to speak.*The Mystic Masseur, The Suffrage of Elviraand Miguel Street*, Naipaul's first three novels are therefore light satirical comedies. Naipaul is still unsure of the kind of reception that his novels will enjoy. He feels that an understanding of the region he writes about is required in order to appreciate his work. He feels that the major obstacle between him and an adequate audience is that distance.

However, he himself transcends that boundary as he sets his next novel *Mr Stone and the Knights Companion* in England. As he moves over from the West Indies to England there is a greater conviction that the issues he grapples with in his works and the problems he encounters in writing about them are not peculiar to regional writers.

In this context, wemust admit thatthe problems of Commonwealth writing are really no more than the problems of writing; and the problems of reading and comprehension are no more than the problems of reading the literature of any strange society.There is thus a self-assessment of the appeal of his works to a wider audience. Naipaul also becomes more acutely aware of the artistic responsibilities and functions of the writer, the need to be free from doctrines, to be 'universal' so to speak. As he says in the conclusion of his essay, *Images:*

> In the end it is the writer and the writing that matter. The attempt to perfect Indian English or achieve Canadianess is the private endeavor of an irrelevant nationalism … a country is ennobled by its writers only if the writers are good. (Naipaul,)

A House for MrBiswas, for example,transcends provincial boundaries and evokes concepts that are universal in their human implications. This novel has been called an epic and its protagonist an Everyman. *A House for Mr. Biswas* is the culmination of the early phase of Naipaul's artistic development. Naipaul has successfully converted his personal experience into books that were acquiring a universal appeal, his artistic

vision has broadened and he was more ambitious as a writer.But personal experience has its limitations – that was when travel came to his rescue as he recalls:

> "Accident, then, rescued me. I became a traveller. I travelled in the Caribbean region and understood much more about the colonial set-up of which I had been part. I went to India, my ancestral land, for a year; it was a journey that broke my life in two. The books that I wrote about these two journeys took me to new realms of emotion, gave me a world-view I had never had, extended me technically." (Naipaul,)

Naipauls's first travel book was *The Middle Passage*. It is an over-simplification to call his non-fiction books, travel books, because there is so much of the writer's individualistic comment on the societies he travels through. Though the genre is different, the vision and the intuition remain the same as in his fictional works. Naipaul wrote three books on India – *An Area of Darkness, India: A Wounded Civilization, India: A Land of a Million Mutinies*. The books were a voyage of self-discovery as Naipaul himself recalls the reasons that prompted him to go to India:

> I had to travel to India because there was no one to tell me what the India my grandparents had come from was like. There was the writing of Nehru and Gandhi; and strangely it was the writing of Gandhi, with his South African experience, who gave me more, but not enough. There was Kipling …The few Indian writers who had come up at that time were middle-class people, town-dwellers; they didn't know the India we had come from. And when that Indian need was satisfied others became apparent: Africa, South America and the Muslim world. The aim has always been to fill out my world picture, and the purpose comes from my childhood: to make me more at ease with myself.

Naipaul's works, thus, take the reader geographically across continents – Trinidad, England, India, Africa and so on. Naipaul makes a corresponding journey inward as the breadth of his vision increases, as a world-view emerges, as seemingly unrelated experiences and observations coalesce to form patterns that make sense. The writer moves from the local to the global in the external geographic sense and in the internal journey from a narrow perspective to a broader more encompassing vision.

1.2 Diasporic Identification

The term *'diaspora',* originally used for the Jewish extermination from its homeland, is now applied as a metaphoric designation for expatriates, refugees, exiles and immigrants. It refers to the work of exile and expatriates and all those who have experienced unsettlement and dislocation at the political and existential. Significantly enough, the diasporic Indian writing in English covers every continent and part of the world. It is an interesting paradox that a great deal of Indian writing in English is produced not in India but in widely distributed geographical areas of indenture ('Girmit') i.e. Indian diaspora in the South Pacific, the Caribbean, South Africa, Mauritius, and the contemporary Indian diasporas in the USA., the UK., Canada and Australia. Frankly speaking the very idea of 'India' needs to be understood properly when contextualized in the backdrop of cultural study of the Indian Diaspora. The diasporic experience can serve as a form of transcultural critique, offering the possibility of reading one culture's space and time from the space and time of another. We will also look at the strategic value of 'doubleness' in terms of identity constructions and self- (re)inventions, and also the concept of creolisation as a strategy for cultural resistance. It has been argued that comparative approaches (including the transdisciplinary) are inevitable in the study of post-colonial literatures. Since fictions produced in these contexts themselves transform languages and cultural traditions, reading from a cross-cultural perspective can thus become a way of discovering productive new modes of thinking and expression.

In an article published in 1991,William Safran set out six rules to distinguish diasporas from migrant communities. These included criteria that the group maintains a myth or collective memory of their homeland; they regard their ancestral homeland as their true home, to which they will eventually return; being committed to the restoration or maintenance of that homeland; and they relate "personally or vicariously" to the homeland to a point where it shapes their identity.

Globalisation has produced new patterns of migration and provoked divergent, responses worldwide. The seemingly homogenising effect of globalization cannot hide the different responses it has prompted in the various regions within its reach. Questions of diaspora arise with particular force: tensions between internationalism and nationalism; the relationship between place and identity; and the ways cultures

and literatures interact. New patterns of mobility are being drawn on the familiar landscape of migration and exilic exclusions.

Migration from centres of capitalist economies to cosmopolitan pockets in the margins ('first' to 'second' or 'third' worlds), migration from deprived economies to lands of opportunities ('third' and 'second' worlds to 'first' world, or margins to the cosmopolitan centres within the 'third' world) appear to be fertile ground for new forms of identity politics. New articulations of diaspora, necessarily overlapping with familiar ways of conceptualising, have found their way to literary writings. Diasporas – communities which live outside, but maintain links with, their homelands – are getting larger, thicker and stronger. They are the human face of globalisation. Diaspora consciousness is on the rise: *diasporans*are becoming more interested in their origins, and organising themselves more effectively; *homelands* are revising their opinions of their diasporas as the stigma attached to emigration declines, and stepping up their engagement efforts; meanwhile, *host countries* are witnessing more assertive diasporic groups within their own national communities, worrying about fifth columns and foreign lobbies, and suffering outbreaks of ‘diaspora-phobia’.

Migration is a growing phenomenon that can no longer be viewed as simply referring to the relocation of people from origin to the destination country. The implications and complexities of human mobility become clear once we disengage from a perspective and we strive to understand processes that elude the simplistic assumption that migrants will invariably (and eventually) ‘go back home’. Questions have arisen as to why do some migrants organise in groups and thus why do ethnic communities emerge and moreover what makes some migrant communities acquire a diasporic dimension.

Naipaul is of Trinidadian-Indian descent and has, in the main, adopted a metropolitan identity (having lived in England for more than twenty years). He spent a large part of 1965-1966 in East Africa and Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo) and returned to both places in the 1970s. In 1975, he published a report, ‘Mobutu and the Nihilism of Africa’, based on his observations in Africa. Many of the details of this report are included in his novel, *A Bend in the River*, which was written in his English home in Wiltshire. Pronouncements of Naipaul as ‘the Postcolonial Mandarin’ do not fully comprehend the partial and fragmented perspective that

attends Naipaul's formulations. While Naipaul's formulations give pretence to imperiousness, his use of irony deconstructs the text itself: foregrounding his role as author of the text as well as foregrounding the aesthetic constructions of the textual form. Thus, it is not only the subject matter within the text but the form in which the text is written that is open to methodological and epistemological interrogation; moreover the text lends itself to this line of critical inquiry. On one level the text addresses discourse and representation: what discourses are employed to talk about Africa, how are Africans represented, who is African? These are theoretical or scholarly questions, which the text yields. From these lines of questioning, in the text, theories of hybridity, mimicry, cosmopolitanism and communalism have emerged, theories specific to culture and subjectivity. However, as a writer Naipaul is aware, and foregrounds this point in the novel that the way in which words are used in political slogans and/or theoretical arguments, (rhetorically), the meaning has been emptied; instead words have become empty echoes used to evoke emotional and intellectual responses. Discourse and representation have *materiality*; it has a sensory dimension that is experienced by the body and therefore becomes real. Discursive practices reify these terms, forgetting that the body *experiences* these concepts. In *A Bend in the River* Naipaul explores the multiplicities of place (geographical, cultural and psychic) within in a diasporic space. The novel is a re-visioning Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, which, like the canonical text, is an imperial fiction set in Africa written by a non-African. Both texts make use of the river as a trope to convey movement and flux: the river Thames and the Congo River. Unlike Conrad, Naipaul does not fix his gaze only on English colonisation but proposes an anti-essentialist view of all cultures in a global diaspora. Naipaul uses the trope of the river to show the *seepage* of disciplines and cultures and its concomitant influence on subjectivity that prevent a view of cultures as that which is *pre-given* or part of a received tradition progressing in a teleological fashion. Within a diasporic space, the points of contact between cultures (intra- and intercultural exchange) it is clear that cultures are a *performative* act. In other words, culture and subjectivities are constructed. It is through the law (*pedagogy*) that the artifice of culture and subjectivities is made absolute. What the diaspora illuminates is that these cultural tempos are slippery: they overlap and produce conflictual subjectivities. In the context of migrant communities, the re-construction of cultural practices and identities are reliant on fragile memories and partial histories to re-construct their dislocated homes and cultural practices. In

Africa, there is, on the one hand, contact with outside (foreign) cultures and peoples that produce hybrid cultural practices and identities for both the foreigners and the indigenous African people. But also, the impact of slavery and colonisation has dislocated the indigenous African people in their own country. The effects of the diaspora on the (post)-colonial subject has formed part of Naipaul's oeuvre. Naipaul, through his narrators, often expresses a longing to return to a time that precedes 'the unnatural bringing together of people… which this great upheaval has brought about.' But, the author/narrator is sadly aware that this virtual longing has no place in society. It is a virtual longing to return to a mythic Edenic place. HomiBhabha in *The Location of Culture* has largely distilled the formulations and theorisations. What Bhabha explores conceptually and discursively, Naipaul explores materially and sensorily. Bhabha's discursive theorizations on the fraught subjectivities and cultural locations of the (post)-colonial subject, has derived from a number of resources that include the historical, the anthropological, the visual and the literary. Similarly, Naipaul's protean ability is reflective of the hybrid, (post)-colonial space in and of which he writes. Each of Naipaul's texts, fiction and nonfiction, seep into each other and thus his entire oeuvre is one continuous plot. In both Bhaba-cultural, social, political and aesthetic – this can be referred to as a non-position. While Bhabha's non-position is conceptual in nature; Africa's canonised writers, such as Chinua Achebe or NgugiwaThiong'o, have been educated in England. Their work is also reflective of the deep embattlement between empire and colony: psychically, culturally and economically. While in England, they viewed their societies from outside of its dominant cultural practices and a lens that was shaped by a Western episteme. They are African writers – nationalistically – both Achebe and waThiong'o have shown a deep commitment to Africa even though disillusioned with African leaders, but they are also travellers and this makes them something 'in-between'. Naipaul, on the other hand, shows no allegiances to Africa, India, the Caribbean and his position in England is haunted by his own restlessness and anxiety.

Naipaul's authorial stance echoes that of his narrator, Salim, 'I was unprotected. I had no family, no flag, and no fetish'. Naipaul pushes his exilic condition to the point where he occupies a no-mans-land: an ethnically/racially/nationalistically free zone. While, it is important to unearth the rich and diverse African epistemologies, it is equally important not to

essentialiseAfricanness – an ideological trap that ensnared the Negritude and nativist movements in twentieth century African discourse. *A Bend in the River* was written at a time in Africa when the decolonising missions incited by the Negritude movement and followed by nativism and Afro-radicalism, which had become very seductive to the social and cultural processes of African unity and African self worth. Yet, as Naipaul shows these epistemologies tend towards a homogenisation of African people and African knowledge systems that are in fact diverse and multifarious not only within their own indigenous tribal practices but also through the diaspora: such as the Arab and European empires which colonised Africa and the large Asian population that migrated to the east coast of Africa. Naipaul's depiction of Africa is subject to criticism based on the fact that he is not from Africa. He came to Africa as a visitor and thus his observations may misrepresent Africans. To claim that only Africans can write about Africa is to create a national and ethnic bias that stymies growth and flux. In fact, it perpetuates a form of thinking that is absolutist and exclusionary. The novel is written from a migrant's perspective of Africa, which, enables the partiality of knowledge and experience his novels attempts to address.

A Bend in the River is set in a fictionalised portrait of the Congo at a time of transition from colonial to postcolonial. The narrative presents a grim reality of the radical instability, grotesque violence and tyrannical rule that grips and ensnares this African country. The narrator of the story is Salim, an East African of Asiatic origin who migrates to a newly independent country in central (Francophone) Africa. The narrative is imparted through Salim's perspective and his conversations and observations with the range of characters that seamlessly float in and out of the story. Early in the novel, Salim is located among his Indian community at the east coast. It is at this coastal rim that Salim makes the observation that the source of his historical knowledge of Africa and India, he has learnt from European books. Those in the nativist camp would argue that this is the source of Africa's falsification by the outside world. Salim does not share this view. He realises that language and representation are powerful tools towards self preservation. In other words, it is the act of writing that preserves knowledge. Naipaul foregrounds the presence of Arab occupation in Africa. The image of the black Madonna and child represent the assimilation of the Judeo-Christian faith in Africa. Nativism argues that contact with the exterior world has falsified Africa. What these discordant and disparate religious

symbols and identities reveal is the inability to locate culture in a singular, originary way. There are no roots of culture or religion. These are performances. Africans no longer inhabit a singular, indigenous world but several worlds simultaneously. Africa should be considered no longer as a composed noun, but rather as an embattled verb undergoing re-vision and contestation. Naipaul foregrounds the presence of Arab occupation in Africa. The image of the black Madonna and child represents the assimilation of the Judeo-Christian faith in Africa.

People subscribing to nativism argue that contact with the exterior world has falsified Africa. What these discordant and disparate religious symbols and identities reveal is the inability to locate culture in a singular, original way. There are no roots of culture or religion. These are performances. Africans no longer inhabit a singular, indigenous world but several worlds simultaneously. Africa should be considered no longer as a composed noun, but rather as an embattled verb undergoing re-vision and contestation.

1.3Migration as one of the major elements of diaspora

Different responses to migration, whether as an attendant phenomenon of globalization or a consequence of political persecution, ethnic cleansing or natural disasters are articulated in literature produced in places where diasporic communities exist. The interaction between the 'host' and 'immigrant' cultures, complicated by translation, asks new questions of identity politics and the issues involved. It also problematises conventional notions of literariness, bringing to the fore an urgent need to re-explore the ways in which aesthetics, politics and ethics intersect, and cultural differences delineate patterns of such intersection. It also asks new questions of how culture and literature interact, more particularly, how the overlapping of old and new patterns of voluntary and forced migration is re-mapping cultural and identity politics, literariness, and literary texts. Questions of identity politics arise out of migration, diaspora and exile. Identity politics driven by migration, diaspora and exile have in turn mapped literary imagination and produced literary writings of distinct characteristics.

With more and more writers of Indian origin settling abroad and engaging themselves in creating/writing in the countries of their domicile, the theoretical

problem is that of the critical parameters by which their works have to be defined and assessed. Although there are certain common resonances in the literary representations of the experiences of the writers of the 'indenture' and the 'new' Indian diaspora, the responses and the narratives of the individual writers vary greatly. Writers like A.K. Ramanujan, Agha Shahid Ali, Bharati Mukherjee, David Dabydeen, M.G. Vassanji, Meena Alexander, RohintonMistry, Salman Rushdie, SatendraNandan, V.S. Naipaul, to mention a few, differ from each other not only in their socio-cultural backgrounds and literary ancestries but also in their thematic preoccupations and literary styles. Further, the responses of the diasporic writers to India are also varied and not always adulatory; they range from sentimentality and nostalgia to a cynical celebration of their coming of age. However, their diasporic condition, their sense of exile and alienation and their efforts to seek replenishment by making symbolic returns to their origins bind all these writings into a unity. The concept of diaspora has become an informing principle for exploring works from a variety of geo-political locations. Reading texts in relation to a diasporic context is useful, since it points to interrelatedness across geographic boundaries; while simultaneously foregrounding the discreteness of linguistic, cultural and geo-political contexts, traditions and experiences. Rather than focusing on the familiar crises of alienation and globalisation, the focus here will be on exploring the 'in-between spaces' opened up as a result of the diasporic experience. These cross-disciplinary approaches suggest that epistemologies are undergoing a shift in consciousness.

For example, *A Bend in the River*, the literary text is an archive; it is an epistemology that contains a corpus of the social, cultural and historical woven into the fabric of the novel. It opens up spaces for the fragile memory of an imagined place and space, the partial histories and fraught certainties that shape one's existence and experience in the world. The literary, in fact, is the 'archive of the present'. Eventually, there is a need to open up theoretical discursive arguments to the more contingent and partial aspects of culture, language, history, and politics that are constitutive of our social processes.

Displacement, whether forced or self-imposed, is in many ways a calamity. Yet, a peculiar but a potent point to note is that writers in their displaced existence generally tend to excel in their work; probably, the changed atmosphere acts as a stimulant for them. These writings in dislocated circumstances are often termed as

exile literature. The word “exile” has somehow negative connotations, but if the self-exile of a Byron is considered, then the response to that very word becomes ambivalent. If a holistic view of the word “exile” is taken, the definition would include migrant writers and non-resident writers and even gallivanting writers who roam about for better pastures to graze and fill their oeuvre. World literature has an abundance of writers whose writings have prospered while they were in exile. Although it would be preposterous to assume the vice-versa that exiled writers would not have prospered had they not been in exile, the fact in the former statement cannot be denied.

The Indian Diaspora is spread over 110 countries. It was said that the sun never sets in the British Empire. It is also the case with Indian Diaspora. The sun never sets in the world of Indian Diaspora. The Indian diasporic community is active in all walks of life. They are doctors, engineers, entrepreneurs, innovators, lawyers, managers, researchers, scientists, teachers, workers, and in some cases also politicians. They are an asset to their host countries as they contribute towards the development of the country in which they live. Every person in his own way is an achiever. There are some twenty five million of them living outside India. Indian Diaspora is not new. It started long time ago. It goes back to the time when during the period of Emperor Ashoka Buddhist preachers went to spread Buddhism in the South Asian countries. In the 19th century, under the British rule the so called indenture labourers who left India to seek their livelihood in a foreign country were the first batch that started the Indian Diaspora. Some of them did not come back and settled in the country where they were working. The second group of Indian Diaspora went to the Asian and African countries as skilled and semi-skilled workers artisans, traders, factory workers, engineers etc. The Petrodollars attracted them to Middle-East as well. A few moved across the ocean and arrived in the African countries. The third group is of recent origin. They are the professionals and the educated and privileged young Indians who went abroad in search of a better life. They went abroad mainly to countries like USA, Canada, UK, in recent times India has discovered the potential of their sons and daughters living abroad and the economic reservoir of this group living in all the nooks and corners of this world. NRI now means Now Required Indians. However, India recognised the contribution made by the diasporic Indians towards

improving India's image and relationship with the host countries. India discovered the economic potential of this group. The NRIs of today is a strong force. In the USA they are referred as the 'model minority'. In Europe the main base of the diasporic Indian is the UK followed by the Netherlands. Two third of the Indians living in the European Union live in the UK. The NRIs who have chosen a foreign country as their "home" are professionally trained and well-settled and have not only retained Indian identity but have also shown interest in the advancement of their kin back home in India. Many of them have retained Indian citizenship. They have gained considerable expertise in important spheres of economic and professional life. diasporic peoples often experience the need to maintain their cultural and national identity through contact with family and friends and through consuming mass media products from their home countries and communities of origin. If one speaks of an Indian Diaspora, it is because other forces have emerged to cement the widely different elements from India into an "Indian community". This is a combination of "nationalism" which can be translated as patriotism combined with love for the country, its heritage and its culture. They are proud to be Indians though they speak one speaks Assamese, Bengali, Hindi, Tamil, or any of the Indian languages or follow their own faiths. Nevertheless, still they preserve their "Indianness" – their "Diasporic Identity". In their heart they are still Indians. *Indian Writers* attempt to locate diasporic voices in the interstitial spaces of countless ideologies. Various forms of dislocation, such as exile, diaspora, and migration, have been productively and extensively explored in both postcolonial theory and literary texts. In this thesis it is explored how and why these phenomena, especially as they are associated with colonialism and its aftermath, have become central topics of postcolonial thought. We will be particularly interested in identifying the theoretical coordinates of this aspect of postcolonialism. Although diaspora has undeniably brought about profound changes in the demographics, cultures, epistemologies and politics of the post-colonial world, whether the sole emphasis on displacement--as opposed to indignity, belonging, or residence is true to the postcolonial condition, remains an issue.

It is an undisputed historical fact that the past century has witnessed the large-scale displacement and dispersal of populations across the world as a result of major political upheavals, among them the two European wars, decolonization and the Cold war. Following on these, globalization, spurred by free trade and increased capital

flows, and new technologies of communication, information, and travel, has accelerated the movement of people, commodities, ideas, and cultures across the world. Diaspora is regarded not as a singular phenomenon but as historically varied and heterogeneous in its aspects. The transnational mobility of people may be the result of forced or voluntary migration, of self-exile or expulsion. Refugees, people *in transit*, are the product of war, ethnic conflict and natural calamity.

Under the generalized rubric of 'diaspora,' we will focus our discussion on the following topics: the histories of slavery and indentured labour, the material aspects of migrant labour and livelihood, the experiences of displacement and homelessness (the 'politics of dispossession' as Said called it), the ideologies of 'home' and nation, the cultures of diaspora, the politics of multiculturalism, the predicament of minorities, the exilic perspective, the redefinition of cosmopolitanism, identity questions (belonging, 'national origins', assimilation, acculturation), and issues relating to race (racism), sexuality and gender. Postcolonial cultural studies has a special interest in theorizing the 'new' phenomena of borders and borderlands, mixing, hybridity, language (for example, global English), translation, double consciousness, history and its lack; and in the affective dimensions of migration and diaspora (homesickness, memory, nostalgia, melancholy).

Diaspora, however, is a multidisciplinary field, and we will draw on writings in anthropology, geography, psychoanalysis, post-structural theory, history, literary studies, and cultural studies. Writers of diaspora are Edward Said, HomiBhabha, Gloria Anzaldua, Stuart Hall, James Clifford, Paul Gilroy, Rey Chow, ArjunAppadurai, Theodore Adorno, Jacques Derrida, Deleuze and Guattari, V.S. Naipaul, Derek Walcott, and Salman Rushdie. Kiran Desai is an Indian author who is a citizen of India and a permanent resident of the United States. Her novel *The Inheritance of Loss* won the 2006 Man Booker Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Fiction Award. She is the daughter of the noted author Anita Desai. AmitavGhosh is one of India's best-known writers. His books include *The Circle of Reason, The Shadow Lines, In an AntiqueLand, Dancing in Cambodia, The Calcutta Chromosome, The GlassPalace, Incendiary Circumstances, The Hungry Tide*. His most recent novel, *Sea of Poppies*, is the first volume of the Ibis Trilogy. RohintonMistry is considered to be one of the foremost authors of Indian heritage

writing in English. Residing in Brampton, Ontario, Canada, Mistry belongs to the Parsi Zoroastrian religious minority.

The Indian diaspora forms an important constituency of India's economic growth and development. Estimated at over 30 million, the diaspora community is today the most diverse, heterogeneous and eclectic faction representing different regions, languages, cultures and faiths. Its contribution to the Indian economy and society is a matter of great pride and achievement for Indians the world over. Non-Resident Indians (NRI) and People of Indian Origin (PIO) have emerged as the largest pool of knowledge, skills, resources and enterprise, acting as India's brand ambassadors globally and adding in considerable measure to the basket of knowledge and innovation. One of the most important and noteworthy contribution has been made in the form of transfer of remittances in India, offsetting the rising trade deficits and building up India's foreign exchange reserves.Understanding the motivations for remitting is necessary for analyzing the wider economic consequences of remittances, for at least two reasons. First, the amount that a migrant transfers to family members remaining at home at any given time depends, among other things, on the migrant's underlying motivations to go abroad and to remit funds in the first place. The size and timing of remittance flows in turn determine their effects on economic activity in the receiving country. Second, the intended purpose of remittances affects the end uses of these funds, and the uses to which recipients put them is also an important determinant of their economic impact on the recipient economy.

Literature, for that matter, offers a number of approaches and studies identifying the main intentions of migrants to remit his/her earnings for family consumption or local use. However one of the main messages spelt out of the theoretical literature on the causes of remittances is that there exists plausible exchange motivations as well as altruistic motivations for remittances with the two co-existing at the same time in many circumstances. In recent times, the increase in the remittances is primarily attributable to many reasons. According to policy experts, factors was a clear benchmark, its real significance has taken time to crystallize. Indian economy has been witnessing a phenomenal growth since the last decade. The country is still holding its ground in the midst of the current global financial crisis. With increasing incentives and tax exemptions coupled with liberalized foreign exchange controls, the Diaspora continues to repose its faith on India even during the

turbulent times. According to an IMF study, NRI remittances are primarily sent to family members to support them for their survival. Once these remittances improve their living standards, they are invested in consumer goods, housing and land, and bank deposits. Very rarely are these remittances used to establish new businesses and industries. With rising share of such remittances in India's GDP, and with India emerging as one of preferred destinations for FDI, it is now time for the Global Indians to engage with the 'Emerging Global Power' beyond repatriating their wealth for personal consumption, and invest their effort, expertise, knowledge, time and wealth in the larger interest of India. The recently established Overseas Indian Facilitation Centre, a not-for profit public private initiative between the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs and Confederation of Indian Industry, will expand the investment and entrepreneurial ties of the Global Indians with India and drive them as partners in India's progress.

The effect that exile has; not on the writers' work, but on the writers themselves, seems apparently paradoxical at first. Exile appears both as a liberating experience as well as a shocking experience. The paradox is apparent because it is just a manifestation of the tension that keeps the strings attached and taut between the writer's place of origin and the place of exile. Whatever may be the geographical location of the exiled writer, in the mental landscape the writer is forever enmeshed among the strings attached to poles that pull in opposite directions. The only way the writer can rescue oneself from the tautness of the enmeshing strings is by writing or by other forms of artistic expression. The relief is only a temporary condition for no writer's work is so sharp a wedge that can snap the strings that history-makers have woven. Even if a writer consciously tries to justify one end, simultaneously, but unconsciously, there arises a longing for the other. Therein lies the fascination of exile literature.

The Indian diaspora has been formed by a scattering of population and not, in the Jewish sense, an exodus of population at a particular point in time. This sporadic migration traces a steady pattern if a telescopic view is taken over a period of time: from the indentured labourers of the past to the IT technocrats of the present day. Sudesh Mishra in his essay "From Sugar to Masala" divides the Indian diaspora into two categories - the old and the new. He writes that:

This distinction is between, on the one hand, the semi-voluntary flight ofindentured peasants to non-metropolitan plantation colonies such as Fiji, Trinidad, Mauritius, South Africa, Malaysia, Surinam, and Guyana,roughly between the years 1830 and 1917; and the other the late capitalor postmodern dispersal of new migrants of all classes to thrivingmetropolitan centres such as Australia, the United States, Canada, andBritain.

The Indian-English writers, notably, Raja Rao became an expatriate even before the independence of the country; G. V. Desani was born in Kenya and lived in England, India, and USA; and Kamala Markandaya married an Englishman and lived in Britain. Nirad C. Chaudhuri preferred the English shores because his views were not readily accepted in India. Salman Rushdie's "imaginary homeland" encompasses the world over. The Iranian "fatwa" phase has added a new dimension to Rushdie's exilic condition. Colonial and post-colonial India are divisions that are now more relevant to a historian than a litterateur because Indian-English literature has transcended the barriers of petty classifications and has become almost become part of mainstream English literature. A major contribution in this regard has been that of the Indian writers, like Rushdie and Naipaul, who live as world citizens - a global manifestation of the exilic condition. Indian-English writers like Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, ShashiTharoor, AmitavGhosh, Vikram Seth, Sunetra Gupta, RohintonMistry, JhumpaLahiri, and HariKunzru have all made their names while residing abroad. The non-resident Indian writers have explored their sense of displacement—a perennial theme in all exile literature. They have given more poignancy to the exploration by dealing not only with a geographical dislocation but also a socio-cultural sense of displacement. Their concerns are global concerns as today's world is afflicted with the problems of immigrants, refugees, and all other exiles. These exilic states give birth to the sense of displacement and rootlessness. The Indian diaspora has been formed by a scattering of population and not, in the Jewish sense, an exodus of population at a particular point in time.This sporadic migration traces a steady pattern if a telescopic view is taken over a period of time: from the indentured labourers of the past to the IT technocrats of the present day. Inevitably, Naipaul's characters conform to such a pattern.

MohunBiswas from *A House for Mr. Biswas*or Ganesh Ramsumair from *The Mystic Masseur*are generations away from their original homeland, India; but their heritage

gives them a consciousness of their past. They become itinerant specimen of the outsider, the unhoused, for the world to see. Their attempts at fixity are continuously challenged by the contingency of their restless existence - a condition grown out of their forefathers' migration, albeit within the Empire, from India to Trinidad. Naipaul's characters are not governed by actual dislocation but by an inherited memory of dislocation. For them their homeland India is not a geographical space but a construct of imagination. The novels of the older generation of diasporic Indian writers like Raja Rao, G. V. Desani, Santha Rama Rau, BalachandraRajan, NiradChaudhuri, and Ved Mehta predominantly look back at India and rarely record their experiences away from India as expatriates. It is as if these writers have discovered their Indianness when they are out of India. Obviously they have the advantage of looking at their homeland from the outside. The distance affords them the detachment that is so necessary to have a clear perception of their native land. In that sense, through their writing, they help to define India.

The modern diasporic Indian writers can be grouped into two distinct classes. One class comprises those who have spent a part of their life in India and have carried the baggage of their native land offshore. The other class comprises those who have been bred since childhood outside India. They have had a view of their country only from the outside as an exotic place of their origin.The writers of the former group have a literal displacement whereas those belonging to the latter group find themselves rootless. Both the groups of writers have produced an enviable corpus of English literature. These writers while depicting migrant characters in their fiction explore the theme of displacement and self-fashioning. The diasporic Indian writers' depiction of dislocated characters gains immense importance if seen against the geo-political background of the vast Indian subcontinent. That is precisely why such works have a global readership and an enduring appeal. The diasporic Indian writers have generally dealt with characters from their own displaced community but some of them have also taken a liking for Western characters and they have been convincing in dealing with them. Two of Vikram Seth's novels *The Golden Gate* and *An Equal Music* have as their subjects exclusively the lives of Americans and Europeans respectively.

Salman Rushdie in the novel *The Satanic Verses* approaches the allegory of migration by adopting the technique of magic realism. The physical transformation of

GibreelFarishta and Saladin Chamcha after their fall from the bursting jumbo jet on the English Channel is symbolic of the self-fashioning that immigrants have to undergo in their adopted country. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni in her novel *The Mistress of Spices* depicts Tilo, the protagonist, as an exotic character to bring out the migrant's angst. AmitavGhosh's novel *The Shadow Lines* has the character Ila whose father is a roaming diplomat and whose upbringing has been totally on foreign soils. She finds herself as much out of place in India as any foreigner. But when she conjures up the story of her doppelganger Magda being rescued by Nick Price from Denise, it shows the extent of her sense of rootlessness. AmitChaudhuri in his novel *Afternoon Raag*portrays the lives of Indian students in Oxford. Similarly, Anita Desai in the second part of her novel *Fasting, Feasting* depicts Arun as a migrant student living in the suburbs of Massachusetts. The important point to note is that in a cosmopolitan world one cannot literally be a cultural and social outsider in a foreign land. There are advantages of living as a migrant - the privilege of having a double perspective, of being able to experience diverse cultural mores, of getting the leverage provided by the networking within the diasporic community, and more. But it is often these advantages that make diasporic Indians, especially of the second generation, encounter the predicament of dual identities.

Such ambivalence produces existential angst. The world simply refuses to become less complex. The diasporic Indian writers of the first generation have already established their credentials by winning numerous literary awards and honours. But recently the ranks of the second generation of Indian writers in the West have swelled enormously and many among them have won international recognition. MeeraSyal, who was born in England, has successfully represented the lives of first generation as well as second generation non-resident Indians in the West in her novels *Anita and Me* and *Life Isn't All Ha HaHeeHee*. HariKunzru in his novel *Transmission* traces a part of the lives of three diverse characters LeelaZahir, an actress, Arjun Mehta, a computer expert, and Guy Swift, a marketing executive - traversing through Bollywood, the Silicon Valley, and London. Sunetra Gupta has shown with candor both the unpleasantness and the pleasantness of intercultural relationships through characters like Moni and Niharika from her novels *Memories of Rain* and *A Sin of Colour*. JhumpaLahiri's book of short stories *Interpreter of Maladies* and her novel *The Namesake* convincingly illustrate the lives of both first generation and second

generation Indian migrants in the US. This is possible because big issues like religious intolerance and racial discrimination are no longer the main concern of these writers. What matters now in the current world are the small things. Little, unacknowledged things gain enormous importance in changed circumstances. It is here that the differing reactions by Indian, Western, and diasporic characters towards similar situations are found to differ only superficially. It demonstrates that the inner needs of all human beings are the same. Alienation is a part of the experience of the Indian diaspora and even if people are at home in any part of the world it does not mean that they will not become victims of the sense of alienation. Increasing acceptance into the host society does not indicate that that the diasporic characters can feel at home. Social alienation is replaced by metaphysical alienation. After the thorough study of diaspora and the concomitant identity we will now touch upon the basic nuances of multiculturalism.

1.4 Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism has been accepted as a movementthe goal of which is to elevate and celebrate diverse ethnic backgrounds. Multiculturalism as a concept is both challenging and provocative. Responses to multiculturalism vary, depending on socioeconomic factors, political environments, and individual orientation to cultural pluralism. The reactions to multiculturalism range from valuing it for its contributions to society, acceptance as a de facto status of development within our society, suspicion of its roots and its intention to outright rejection by those who find it as a threat. Factors that affect an individual's response to multiculturalism include, but are not limited to, concerns about empowerment, social status and placement within society, availability and distribution of resources, and political acceptance or rejection of the concept. For social workers, multiculturalism is a reality within which the profession is practiced and always offers an opportunity for personal and professional growth. Currently, the challenge to understand and accept cultural differences in the United States is more difficult due to misconceptions and xenophobia created by fear of terrorism and immigration of people from countries in which English is not the national language and its people are predominantly of colour. In contrast to the European immigration in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the majority of the foreign-born population in the United States in 2000 came from Mexico, the Asia-

Pacific countries (India, Philippines, China, and Vietnam), Central America, and the Caribbean islands, which occasions cultural hybridity.

1.5Cultural Hybridity

Hybridity originates from the Latin hybrida, a term used to classify the offspring of a tame sow and a wild boar. A hybrid is something that is mixed, and hybridity is simply mixture. As an explicative term, hybridity became a useful tool in forming a fearful discourse of racial mixing that arose toward the end of the 18th Century. Scientific models of anatomy and craniometry were used to argue that Africans, Asians, Native Americans and Pacific Islanders were racially inferior to Europeans. The fear of miscegenation that followed responds to the concern that the offspring of racial interbreeding would result in the dilution of the European race. Hybrids were seen as an aberration, worse than the inferior races, a weak and diseased mutation. Hybridity as a concern for racial purity responds clearly to the zeitgeist of colonialism where, despite the backdrop of the humanitarian age of enlightenment, social hierarchy was beyond contention as was the position of Europeans at its summit. The social transformations that followed the ending of colonial mandates, rising immigration, and economic liberalisation profoundly altered the use and understanding of the term hybridity.Hybridity refers in its most basic sense to mixture. The term originates from biology and was subsequently employed in linguistics and in racial theory in the nineteenth century. Its contemporary uses are scattered across numerous academic disciplines and is salient in popular culture .The history of hybridity and its major theoretical discussion amongst the discourses of race, post-colonialism, Identity (social science), anti-racism&multiculturalism, and globalization The rhetoric of hybridity, sometimes referred to as *hybrid talk,* is fundamentally associated with the emergence of postcolonial discourse and its critiques of cultural imperialism. This second stage in the history of hybridity is characterised by literature and theory that focuses on the effects of mixture upon identity and culture. Key theorists in this realm are HomiBhabha, Stuart Hall, GayatriSpivak, and Paul Gilroy, whose work responds to the increasing multicultural awareness of the early nineteen nineties. Often the literature of postcolonial and magical realist authors such as Salman Rushdie, Gabriel GarcíaMárquez, Milan Kundera, and J. M. Coetzeerecur in their discussions.

A key text in the development of hybridity theory is HomiBhabha's*The Location of Culture* (1994) which analyses the liminalityof hybridity as a paradigm of colonial anxiety. His key argument is that colonial hybridity, as a cultural form, produced ambivalence in the colonial masters and as such altered the authority of power. Bhabha's arguments have become key in the discussion of hybridity. While he originally developed his thesis with respect to narratives of cultural imperialism, his work also develops the concept with respect to the cultural politics of migration in the contemporary metropolis. But no longer is hybridity associated just to migrant populations or border towns it is also used in other contexts when there is a flow of different cultures and both give and receive from each other. This critique of cultural imperialist hybridity meant that the rhetoric of hybridity became more concerned with challenging essentialism and has been applied to sociological theories of identity, multiculturalism, and racism. Another key component of hybridity theory is Mikhail Bakhtin, whose concept of polyphony is employed by many analysts of hybrid discourses in folklore and anthropology.

The idea of nation is often based on naturalised myths of racial or cultural origin. Asserting such myths was a very important part of the imperial process and therefore an important feature of much imperial writing and indeed postcolonial writing. The need for commonality of thought to encourage resistance became a feature of many of the first postcolonial novels. Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is an example of a novel dealing with the collective resistance to imperialism. More recently we have become aware of how problematic such accounts are. The simple binaries that made up imperial and postcolonial studies have in some way become redundant with regard to later literature. As Mudrooroohas said of the Aborigine's, they were a tribe like any other, susceptible to change and influence from outside forces. He says; "the Aboriginal writer is a Janus-type figure with a face turned to the past and the other to the future while existing in a postmodern, multi cultural Australia in which he or she must fight for cultural space". (Mudrooroo, Nyoongah, 24) so in a sense Mudrooroo embraces his hybridised position not as a "badge of failure or denigration, but as a part of the contestational weave of cultures". (ibid.)

Cultural hybridity has been a term to describe societies that emerge from cultural contacts of European "explorers" and those "explored". Instead of explaining

these contacts as mere imposition from a major culture upon a minor culture, hybridity emphasises their mutual intermingling. According to Roland Barthes a "third language" evolves that is neither the one nor the other. This model of hybridity is still based on a contact between two partners at one time. But what happens to cultures if hundreds of them enter into a form of dialogue all at once? Most of our images of different peoples, places and events stem from the mass media. We no longer board a ship and discover different continents but the world is now just a click away. But hardly anyone solely derives his knowledge about the world from the mass media. We are still embedded in local actions and social landscapes – although the latter can span around the globe. Thus we live in a "third place" as well. We understand and live in different languages – the language of the mass media, with all its models of encoding, processing and evaluating events and information and our given local tongues. Between these two languages we have to negotiate meaning, structure impressions and define our own personalities.One of the most disputed terms in postcolonial studies, 'hybridity' commonly refers to "the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone producedby colonisation." (Ashcroft, 118)

Hybridisation takes many forms including cultural, political and linguistic. Pidgin and Creole are linguistic examples. Within languages there can also be evidence of 'linguistic cross breeding' and the use of loan words from either the language of the coloniser or the colonised. Examples can be seen in Swahili, Aborigine and Irish. The coloniser's language cannot escape and one sees the many loan words in the English language today. In Ireland, for example, there are many sayings and words in English that an English man or woman would not understand; the use of the word 'amadan' meaning 'fool' is a case in sight. Labeled Hiberno-English, it is a typical example of linguistic hybridisation.

However, the crossover inherent in the imperial experience is essentially a two-way process. According to Ashcroft most postcolonial writing has focused on the hybridised nature of postcolonial culture as strength rather than a weakness. It is not a case of the oppressor obliterating the oppressed or the coloniser silencing the colonised. In practice it stresses the mutuality of the process. The clash of cultures can impact as much upon the coloniser as the colonised. In reading Juanita Carberry, the daughter of a settler in the WhiteValley region in Kenya, one gets a taste of the

hybridised nature of her childhood and her life. Growing up a Swahili speaker and playing with the wild animals against her father's wishes, her experience was essentially more African than English.

It is a commonplace of criticism that even under the most potent of oppression those distinctive aspects of the culture of the oppressed can survive and become an integral part of the new formations which arise. Ashcroft says how “hybridity and the power it releases may well be seen as the characteristic feature and contribution of the post-colonial, allowing a means of evading the replication of the binary categories of the past and developing new anti-monolithic models of cultural Exchange and growth’’ (Ashcroft, Bill et.al, 183)

However, the term hybridity has been mostly associated withHomiBhabha. In his epoch-making work entitled ‘Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences', Bhaba stresses the interdependence of coloniser and colonised. Bhabha argues that all cultural systems and statements are constructed in what he calls the ‘Third Space of Enunciation'. (Bhabha, 209) In accepting this argument, we begin to understand why claims to the inherent purity and originality of cultures are ‘untenable'. Bhaba urges us into this space in an effort to open up the notion of an inter national culture “not based on exoticism or multi-culturalism of the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity.” (ibid.) In bringing this to the next stage, Bhabha hopes that it is in this space “that we will find those words with which we can speak of ourselves and others. And by exploring this ‘Third Space', we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of ourselves”. (ibid.). So as Mudrooroo suggests, embracing the hybridised nature of cultures steers us away from the problematic binarisms that have until now framed our notions of culture.

V.S.Naipaul is of Indian ancestry, Caribbean-born and England-settled diaspora writer. He sketches out in his novels the cultural spaces in his speculative journey around the globe. He occupies a prominent role in the diaspora Literature. In his novel *A Bend in the River*, Salim the protagonist suffers from cultural alienation and cultural shock. *In a Free State* represents the indigenous cultural history of a post colonized country. V.S.Naipaul is of Indian ancestry, Caribbean-born and England-settled diaspora writer. He sketches out in his novels the cultural spaces in his

speculative journey around the globe. He Hybridity occupies a prominent role in the Diaspora Literature. In his novel *A Bend in the River*, Salim the protagonist suffers from cultural alienation and cultural shock. *In a Free State* represents the indigenous cultural history of a post colonized country. Therefore, as long as human life exists in this universe the diaspora literature will also exist and be relevant. It will definitely have hybridization of culture as its basic root.

1.6 Aim and Scope of the Study

The main objective of this study is to find out how diaspora, cultural hybridity and multiculturalism lead to diasporic identification in V.S.Naipaul's Works. Further, it is to analyse the implications that flow from the strengthening of diasporas, for global economics, identity, politics, and security. Some of these effects are new; others have been around for a long time but are now manifesting in different ways. Much at the same time, it is to be shown how the difference in race, nationality, culture, society and class influences the life of these characters.

The scope of the study is however limited to five majornovels [*A House for Mr.Biswas*(1961); *The Mimic men* (1969);*The Suffrage of Elivira*(1969);*A Bend in the River*(1980);*Half a Life*(2001)]as primary sources. Works by V.S.Naipaul have been identified to carry on a focussed investigation. Secondary sources of the analysis include available critical printed material in English as well as contemporary critics' points-of -view, essays, articles, and reviews.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

To trace Naipaul's own location in this vast framework is by no means an easy task. It would be interesting to briefly chart the course of Caribbean history to the present, by setting it against Naipaul's works. In his work he has mainly discussed about the successive European imperial adventure in the Caribbean, the period of persecution, "The cruelty inscribed in 'the tangled' web of Caribbean history, the way it has produced multiple and ruptured cultural identities."

An artificial or, as V.S. Naipaul would say, a "synthetic society" created by the massacre of its inhabitants, the Caribs and Arawak Indians; the Euro-African mixture of experiences as inherent in the structure of the contemporary Caribbean and the essence of that historical experiences, unmarked or unimportant except in a

communal, familial sense, have propelled Naipaul to look at the whole West Indian and the Manichean history of colonialism.

Patrick French's biography of V.S. Naipaul received glowing praise from A.N. Wilson, a reviewer not inclined to glow indiscriminately. Wilson called it "a prodigious achievement," "a justification for the art of biography itself," and compared it, astutely, to the authorized biography J. M. Froude wrote of Thomas Carlyle, a portrait that brought out the master's selfishness and cruelty toward his wife Jane. Froude also edited *Reminiscences*, in which Carlyle wrote passionately of the guilt he suffered after his wife's death. However, the entire postcolonial diasporic literature heavily relies upon concepts of 'mimicry' and' ambivalence' but the exceptional handling of the diasporic sensibility in the novel *A Bend in the River* further validates the theoretical base provided by Homi K. Bhabha in his *The Location of Culture* where he defines mimicry as 'almost the same but not quite'.

The related themes of homelessness, alienation and dislocation are characteristic of Naipaul's novels. Kenneth Ramchand suggests that *A House for Mr.Biswas*is a novel of "rootlessness par excellence". Bruce MacDonald further expounds on the novel using "colonial psychoanalysis." John Thieme penetratingly presents the colonial dislocation of Naipaul's more complicated novel, *In a Free State*. Other critics including Andrew Gurr, Anthony Boxill, Robert Hamner, and Timothy F. Weiss also explicate the interrelated themes of Naipaul's works. However, most critics deal with Naipaul's sense of homelessness, focusing on his early writings, especially those works prior to *The Enigma of Arrival*.

A number of cultural theorists have expounded on the fluid and unstable status of "culture." Stuart Hall speaks of unfixed identity; James Clifford of traveling theory, Doreen Massey of identity and place, HomiBhabha of mimicry, hybridity, and "third space." All these ideas can be applied to explain V. S. Naipaul's position constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and position. Travel also has a significant effect on one's concept of place and home. James Clifford speaks of the need to rethink cultures as sites for dwelling and travelling. He sometimes equates "travel" with "displacement." and involuntary) exile. Stuart Hall

claims that identity makings are “never singular but multiple, Naipaul also describes, in some works, the particular suffering and identity-confusion of immigrants.
In the “post-colonial” world, the concept of identity is linked to a local sense of place, and identity-creation shifts on account of the effect of colonialism and globalization. In terms of Doreen Massey’s concept of identity and place, tying the traditional sense of place to one’s original roots can offer a stable identity. In an interview with Bernard Levin in 1983, Naipaul metaphorically explained his concept of multi-cultural identities: “I don’t think any of us can claim that we come from one single, enclosed, tribal world. We are little, bombarded cells, aren’t we? – many things occur to make us what we are, and we can surely live with all the things that make us”. Massey’s theory lends support to the observation that Naipaul, as a nomad, can live in different places, though he may not feel himself to be ever intrinsically “at home.”
ToHomiBhabha, such hybridity is the most common and effective form of subversive opposition; Robert Young says that Bhabha’s concept of hybridity has transformed Bakhtin’s intentional hybridity into “an active moment of challenge and resistance against a dominant cultural power”. The hybridity of colonial discourse reverses the dominant structures in the colonial situation. Thus, it deploys dialogue between the dominant and the subordinate, forming (in Bakhtin’s terms) a “double-voiced talk.”
Bhabha further employs the concept of “the third space” to explicate the concept and the goal of hybridity. Speaking from a colonial standpoint, he elaborates on “the third space” as a strategy for opening up the possible space of cultural discourse by transcending cultural hegemony and crossing over its historical boundaries. Bhabha sees the key problems of cultural diversity as tied to the initial “norm given by the host society or dominant culture,” and to multiculturalism based on racism. Therefore he tries to look for the “productive space of the construction of culture as difference, in spite of alterity or otherness,” to show that different cultures have their own unique characteristics and that they are incommensurable. Identity can then be produced as a new site through the process of hybridization. Bhabha insists that a “cultural and political identity is constructed through a process of othering because the history of containment is now overcome and minority discourse emerges. Hence, the dialogue between cultures “beyond Orientalism” (Said) erases the misrepresentation or mere imagination of a given culture. Bhabha also speaks of the responsibility of intellectuals. He thinks that intellectuals (like Naipaul) should “intervene in particular struggles, in particular situations of political negotiation”. In other words, they are in a

position of opposition from which to examine cultural politics: thus Naipaul, as an intellectual with his own cultural particularity and position, can and should speak for the marginalized. Bhabha also claims that the colonial is neither "the colonialist Self nor the colonized other but the disturbing distance in-between that constitutes the figure of colonial otherness" (*The Location of Culture* 45). Bhabha's theory of in-between borderlines challenges the traditional concept of "place." Naipaul then turns his sense of alienation into a powerful capacity to feel at home in any place. The cultural critic Andrew Gurr argues that a definition of home can be derived from the relationship between the exile and his writing in the modern world; that is, the displaced exile may obtain his/her identity primarily through his/her writing. As BreytenBreytenbach points out, "To be in exile is to be free to imagine or to dream a past and the future of that past. To be an exile is to be written. Naipaul, as an exiled writer, can create his own place through travelling and writing. This "in-between" space provides him with a broader imaginative and creative space.

As John Thieme has commented, the vast majority of Naipaul's work, fiction and non-fiction, "has been concerned with the human consequences of imperialism in colonial and post-colonial societies.Gordon Rohlehr comments on the painful scene in *Biswas*, whereShama smashes her daughter's beautiful doll's house, a gift from MrBiswas, because in the communal world of Hanuman House it is unacceptableto single out one child for such distinction. "Anything which manifests individuality and difference causes dread, envy and hostility in Hanuman House," he notes. Mr Biswas insists on asserting hisindividuality and so, Rohlehr continues, he has to leave the communalspace, face the void, the fear of nonentity, the meaninglessness of theunknown outside world. Always there is the need to escape, to leave behind conformity to the mediocre norm and find a space where individual subject positions can be explored.

1.6.1Plan of the Study

The present thesis is structured into seven chapters.

Chapter one, 'Introduction', creates the occasion, the basic grounding for textual analysis. In this chapter we speak about the objectives, background of the study as well as methodology. We also introduce ourselves to V.S. Naipaul's works, diasporic

identity, and cultural hybridity. A brief on the foregoing chapters is also presented in this chapter.

Chapter two, 'Man and the Author', concentrates on Naipaul's works based on real people and actual events and how they are changed and re-imagined as they become part of fiction. It also explores his life-experiences - the films he had seen;the literary texts he had read; even his reading of history as sources of his fiction.Eventually, his life and the world he has experienced are at the core of his writings and vision of the world. There is often an autobiographical side to the fiction, although it may appear simplistic to equate the narrator with Naipaul.

Naipaul, as it appears, understands the novel as an investigation of society which reports back to society about the changing reality. The societies which were the subject of the great nineteenth-century novels have passed; novels which reproduce such forms and retrace such materials are likely to be minor. The great subjects of our time are political decolonization and its consequences, the migration of peoples, the universally shared desire for the goods and comforts of modern society, the resentments of those sharing such desires but whose cultures are threatened by modernity. His books are concerned with such topics, but they are also about writing and the relationship of art to reality and how in prose we create a narrative which gives form and order to life. His fiction often has subtexts: the novels can be understood as autobiographical in the sense that they are projections of his own life and anxieties of homelessness, of living in more than one culture, of needing to find a narrative order for experience, of needing to achieve, of having to build a monument to his own existence through his writing. His fiction is also often based on models to which he alludes. Such intertextuality provides a sense of historical continuity, revision and renewal.

Incidentally, Naipaul's books are filled with characters,who write, want to write or pretend to write; they are filled with parodies of bad writing, people who out of ignorance confuseserious literature with letter writing, bad journalism, pamphlets, unedited diaries, pornographic fantasies. There are characters who mistake prominence in the cultural industry, broadcasting or occasional book reviewing, with being a writer. Because he is interested in historical writing and sees himself as an historian of his time, someone inquiring into the condition of society and culture in

the late colonial and post-imperial era, there are many bad, foolish or mistaken historians in Naipaul's novels. He has been writing a history of our time, a record and analysis of many of the main events, such as decolonization in India, Africa and the Caribbean, the growing conflict between Islamic religious fundamentalism and Western enlightenment, or racial relations in the southern United States after the victory of the civil rights movement. He has often returned to the same places, India, Africa, the Caribbean, England, noting changes, re-examining society, revising his analysis. His novels are usually based on fact, known people and events. The travel books are filled with characters, voices, representative documents, places. Naipaul has created a portrait of our era. He has made conscious decisions about his subject matter or the direction his writing should take. They were decisions made from analysing his own situation as an expatriate West Indian writing for the British and American literary markets. He has also made decisions that can be explained by his own obsessions and by the high seriousness with which he invests being a writer. Much effort went into research for *The Loss of El Dorado*, an attempt to understand the historical causes that led to the creation and problems of modern Trinidad.

lthough Naipaul has published on an average of one book every eighteen months, his novels and many of his non-fictional works are often, over a period of years, written, revised, left unfinished and then started again from the beginning. There is the need to find the right 'idea', a story – selected from some larger experience – which will embody the themes; the 'idea' includes such methods of presentation and embodiment of the idea as the structure of the book, the kind and treatment of the narrator, the voice and language of narration, the recurring images, the tonalities. Each novel is a discovery; they have different ways of presenting material, even different sentence patterns. The continuity and liveliness that Naipaul desires in his writing comes only after the descent of the muse is followed by hard work. Certain conscious formal structures recur, such as the division of a story or novel into two equal halves, the importance of the centre of the book, the choice between prologues and beginning in the middle of the action, the use of epilogues; but writings not blessed by the muse must be put aside for another time or discarded. Although Naipaul is a realist such a description does not do justice to him or to his work.

As a writer he has always been conscious of literary models and conventions which he uses, parodies and revises. His fiction became more psychological, complex, distanced in tone, drier, less amusing, as he attempted to understand the world and his characters. As he became conscious of the private sources of his vision, including his reading, and became willing to reveal them, his writing mixed autobiography with the fictional and the observed world. As literary kinds blur together the writing becomes more self-referential. There are more gaps permitted, less causality visible in the narrative. Even his travel writing evolved: recent books appear more filled with the voices of others. As he allows the material to express itself, as he leaves room for contrasting opinions, his conclusions come as a surprise.

Chapter three, 'Multiculturalism and cultural Hybridity'

Although Naipaul is a rationalist, he has a unique devotion to study, scholarship, philosophical thought, vocation; there is a typical consciousness of cleanliness, purity, food and the various duties expected of a well-regulated life. While criticizing ritualistic practicesand caste discriminations, he reveals an interest in and nostalgia for all those. His books are of this world, but his characters and autobiographical passages reveal an attraction towards retreat into the spiritual life. Naipaul satirizes Indian notions of fate, but his novels are usually structured around such Indian notions as the four stages of an ordered life – student, marriage and house owner, retreat into study as a preparation for total withdrawal from worldliness. There is a continuing conflict in his writings between the chaotic freedom of the world and the fulfilment of Brahmin ideals.

The novels tend to have a double structure in which events are both seen from a Western perspective – causality, individual will – and allude to a Hindu explanation in which the world of desire and things is an illusion consisting of cycles of creation and destruction. The European perspective dominates, but the Indian world view contests it and has its attractions. He is conscious of himself as an Indian and is well read in Indian history and literature. His seemingly detached understatement (a characteristic found in such Indian writers as R. K. Narayan and A. K. Ramanujan) can be misleading; there is concern. The coolness covers anger at injustice, irresponsibility and irrationality. His criticisms of India are those of a nationalist who feels humiliated by the passivity, factionalism and traditionalism which allowed

foreign conquests of India and which contributed to the decay of the great Indian civilizations of the past. *India: A Million Mutinies Now* reveals a dislike for the Islamic conquerors of India who for many centuries cruelly and brutally killed those who opposed them. Naipaul regards the unification of India under the British during the second half of the nineteenth century as the beginning of a national revival which led India into the modern world with knowledge of itself and its history and which gave it the concepts that led to independence and growth. By contrast *Beyond Belief* examines the Arabization of parts of the Islamic world among non-Arabs as a new colonialism leading away from modernity towards medieval ignorance.

He has often said that his perspective is not that of a secure white European liberal preoccupied by historical guilt. Although slavery and imperialism were terrible crimes, they were not uniquely European. Africa, India and the Arabs practised forms of slavery and continue to do so. Indians have often been the victims of Africans and Muslims. His novels, such as *Guerrillas* and *In a Free State*, reveal a dislike of white liberals interfering in, and romanticizing, other societies, about which they know little and from which they can safely flee the consequences of their interference. Family life in Trinidad revealed to Naipaul that the world is cruel, competitive, antagonistic, a war for advantage. Imperialism can even be desirable if it brings order, peace, security and knowledge and raises people to a larger, more tolerant view of the world beyond their petty local conflicts and limited vision.

Naipaul's perspective has been shaped by the humiliations of his youth; it is also influenced by his consciousness of being Indian and the humiliations India and Indians have suffered. India's weakness led to its people being shipped around the world as indentured labour, to the abandonment of the Indians in black-dominated Trinidad and Guyana, the expulsions of Indians from Africa and Fiji. Although he avoids the useless, self-defeating, self-wounding rhetoric of protest and resentment, his writings note the humiliation of Indians whether during the Islamic conquests, the British destruction of the former Indian economy, the fear felt by Trinidadian Indians towards black policemen, or the confiscation of Indian businesses in postcolonial Africa.

Chapter four,Inthis study, while identifying the Sense of Alienation and rootlessnessI found V.S. Naipaul the widely acclaimed finest living writer of English

prose, is the seventh Indian or person with Indian roots to be awarded the Nobel Prize and the second, after Rabindranath Tagore, for literature . Born in Trinidad of Indian parentage, educated in Port of Spain and Oxford University. Naipaul has to his credit more than fourteen works of fiction and ten works of non-fiction. He is one of the finest winners of the prestigious Booker Prize (in 1971, for In a free State) and was knighted by Queen Elizabeth in 1990. Living in England, at his Knightsbridge locality of London. A relentless explorer of the traumas of postcolonial change with a moralist's outrage, Naipaul has focussed in his writings on individuals attempting to escape fate, for fate belongs to a world of magic, myth and ritual where the past exists but not history, a world which provides a sense of wholeness and belonging but proscribes ambition and curbs freedom. His heroes strive for the latter, for self-awareness and for change.

Although it would be preposterous to assume the vice-versa that exiled writers would not have prospered had they not been in exile, the fact in the former statement cannot be denied.

Half a Life, Naipaul's latest novel published just before the Noble Prize came his way, portrays and evaluates the lives of the people of mixed descent i.e, three countries- India, England and Portuguese Africa(modelled on Mozambique) and their struggle to discover their identities. Partly autobiographical, the novel delineates the traumas of a tainted and troubled past, of attempting to find some meaning and purpose of life. It beautifully analyses the pangs of the exiles, their living a half-life, their sense of alienation, and their cultural traditions.In this chapter we have highlighted the areas of cultural hybridity.

Chapter five, Homeaway from home:Expatriate feeling

Migration and immigration have directly or indirectly affected several generations of contemporary writers in English engendering hybridism and culture complexity within them and urging them to grapple with multiple cultures and countries and tensions between them.Naipaul, in this context, avoided the West Indian middle-class literary tradition of political and racial protest, of sentimentality and anger, with its contrasts between white and black, rich and poor, European and Creole. Instead he wrote about the rural Indian community from within; he wrote about it objectively and with a touch of satire, aware that its traditions were ossifying

and becoming sterile as a result of distance from their land of origins. This was the starting point for Naipaul's own writing, to which he brought a superior education and familiarity with the classics of literature, a heightened sense of structure, a greater dedication to the art of writing, the advantages of exile, distance and opportunities to publish in England.

Naipaul's early fiction brought to West Indian writing the social awareness and comedy characteristic of British fiction, the sense of form and economy found in the early fiction of James Joyce and a Proustian awareness of change, time and memory. He brought a new depth and seriousness to West Indian fiction. Naipaul brought the West Indian novel into the mainstream of contemporary fiction at a time when Derek Walcott was establishing West Indian poetry and drama as worthy of international attention. They were part of a generation of writers who decolonized English literature.

The literary market for West Indian writers was also changing. Writing about his father's lack of opportunities Naipaul has said: A reading to a small group, publication in a magazine soon lost to view: writing in Trinidad was an amateur activity, and this was all the encouragement a writer could expect. There were no magazines that paid; there were no established magazine…My father was a purely local writer, and writers like that ran the risk of ridicule.

Attitudes began to change when Derek Walcott of St Lucia gained attention by publishing locally his first volume of poems in 1949 – it was soon republished in Barbados – and when Edgar Mittelholzer's novel about Trinidad, *A Morning at the Office*, was published in England. And then there at least appeared a market. The BBC Caribbean Voices took local writing seriously, had standards and paid well enough to spread a new idea of the value of writing.

Naipaul was part of this change both as an editor for 'Caribbean Voices' and through his own success as a writer. Besides being one of the small group who put West Indian literature on the international literary map, Naipaul was one of the Commonwealth writers who made the English aware that the new immigrant communities consisted of more than labourers, musicians and politicians.His writings include a history of the problems of coming to terms with life as an immigrant. Towards the conclusion of *Biswas* there are allusions to his unhappiness as a student

in England, *Mimic Men* portrays life in a London bedsitter and the lives of political exiles, *Guerrillas* examines the ways British women use black men for sexual excitement, *A Bend in the River* notes the new Arab presence in England, while *The Enigma of Arrival* tells of the slow process in understanding a new land and settling. Two stories in *A Flag on the Island* and his short novel *Mr Stone* show him trying to write about British society; 'Tell me who to kill' in *In a Free State* is a marvellous portrait of the frustrations of an immigrant. Naipaul would write about London during the 1950s in part of *Half a Life*.

The difficulty in making the transition from writing about the Trinidad, he took to writing about England in which he felt alien. It forced Naipaul into becoming the first of the new international novelists from former colonies who find their material in the postcolonial world. He discovered what was to become the most significant literary subject of the past half century. It is necessary to remember that Naipaul sees himself as part of the Indian diaspora and not as black. If he does not have Selvon's interest in and seeming easy ability at creating a black London, Naipaul begins the new great tradition of writers from the former colonies telling of the post-imperial world. It is clear from statements made by such writers and critics as Farrukh Dhondy and Homi Bhabha that his early fiction showed others that it was possible to write significant fiction about the former colonies without resorting to the clichés of European writing, and that it was possible to see the interest and problems of local life without nationalist stereotypes. Along with such writers as Soyinka and Achebe he was examining the problems of decolonization and why national independence rapidly led to political corruption, political violence, various forms of tribalism and tyranny. Rushdie, Gurnah and others follow from their example. Naipaul is the only writer to have taken on a broad perspective of the contemporary world and its discontents. His subject matter and travel books range from the Caribbean through India, Africa, and South America to Iran, Pakistan and Indonesia.

Naipaul has perhaps been influenced by his youth in Trinidad, discrimination against Indians in many parts of the world, his struggle to earn a living as a writer, his vision of life as being brief, insecure, without purpose, a jungle of warring groups, unless it is given purpose through achievement, continuity, an ideal of order backed by real power. He has also been attracted to giving up the struggle, accepting nothingness, withdrawing into inactivity, Indian fatalism.As a writer he knows it is

important to get facts right and not confuse them with ideas. He knows that writing creates the narrative order that the world lacks: through it we can understand and celebrate ourselves.

Chapter six, Diasporic Identification:

Naipaul often writes about the condition of India and the Indian diaspora, of which he is a part. He sees his travels as analogous to those of the diaspora as displaced Indians journey through the modern world attempting to create a home elsewhere and as they revise their history to explain their own predicament. Brought in the mid-nineteenth century to the West Indies, especially Guyana and Trinidad, to replace the freed black slaves, the Indians were indentured labourers on contracts with few rights. In Trinidad the Indians reformed their societies, even restoring caste distinctions, and purchased land for farming, but they remained isolated from the dominant white and black communities, without education in English and without legal consideration. Hindu marriages, for example, were for many decades unrecognized by law.

During Naipaul's childhood impoverished homeless Indians who spoke only Hindi were still hoping to return some day to Mother India. When talk of independence came to Trinidad the Hindu Indians felt insecure, fearing being left by the British under the dominance of the black community which had organized itself politically and which, concentrated in the cities and having gained access to English language education, staffed the police and civil service and influenced the government. The British Labour Party wanted decolonizationand favoured such black intellectuals as Eric Williams, who had studied in England and wrote books about the relationship of the West Indian sugar plantations to slavery and imperialism to capitalism. Williams's public lectures on such topics at Woodford Square were the beginning of a movement which resulted in the formation of a disciplined political party that led Trinidad to independence and governed it for decades. But for a Trinidadian Indian the rhetoric of decolonization was filled with black nationalism, pan-Africanism, Judaeo-Christian notions of black racial deliverance and Marxist models of single party states. In such a situation the Hindu was the outsider, the marginal, the opposition to those who felt destined to inherit the apparatus of the state at independence. It was only after Williams's death that

Indians shared in the government; even now tension can run high between the two major ethnic groups in Trinidad with the two major parties still regarded as black and Indian.

Chapter seven, Conclusion:

V.S. Naipaul's works, however, depict multiculturalism, diasporic identity and cultural hybridity. It will be safe to conclude that his works carry the elements of identity crisis. *A House for Mr. Biswas*ishismasterpiece which deals with the theme of negation, frustration, identity crisis and isolation. There is a clash of cultures between the old and the new in a multi-racial society. Therefore, this story deals with a number of physical and spiritual maladies. As a novelist V. S. Naipaul has carefully projected the complex analysis of the societies, individuals and cultures. Most of his novels have revolved round the recurring themes of colonial psychosis, individual's search for identity and clash of culture. Naipaul's fictions have acquired social, historical and psychological dimensions.

Most of Naipaul'sworks have a clear-cut influence on Indian culture. He has used such words and phrases and has created a situation that enables the reader to understand the Indian tradition, culture and civilization. His works are full of cultural ethos. The method adopted by him is somehow auto-biographical. With the settlement of more and more writers of Indian origin into foreign countries and their involvement in creating literature of their domicile, the theoretical problem of the critical parameters defining and assessing there work arises.

To sum up, V. S. Naipaul is typical in his socio-cultural moorings, and literary ancestry, his thematic preoccupations and literary style. He is not always adulatory. His preoccupation ranges from sentimentality and nostalgia to a cynical celebration of the coming of age. His diasporic condition, alienation, isolation, the spirit and sense of exile and his efforts to seek rehabilitation by making symbolic returns to his own homelands forge a meaningful identity. His diasporic experience includes the quest for identity. Eventually, the diasporic literature focuses on the

dislocation or unsettlement of a race or an individual and the consequent isolation. Alienation leads to a sense of loss, though life consists not in losing but in rediscovering one's own self.

The historical and social underpinning of the Indo-Caribbean literature needs to be carefully evaluated. Naipaul is thus constructing strikingly new identities that are at times contrary to the Eurocentric model. Adopting the postcolonical socio-potitico -cultural conditions into the web of his fiction, V.S. Naipual provides ample scope for exploration into the intricacies of the discourse by graphing it in terms of a diasporic dialect of the caribbeans. Therefore we have to admit that there are elements of multiculturalism, diasporic identification, cultural hybridity and alienation in the works of V.S. Naipaul.

1.6.2 Sources

This study is dependent on several sources, published in English. A number of primary and secondary sources are consulted and used freely with proper acknowledgement.

1.6.1(i) Primary Sources

The present study draws heavily on the primary sources in the form of printed texts in English. The other versions available in other languages are not consulted. Their film and TV versions have not been used. The interviews, essays, and critical materials from Naipaul have also been referred to.

1.6.1(ii)Secondary Sources

The secondary sources consist of the critical material available in English. The critical books, journals, periodicals, newspaper articles, doctoral dissertations (both published and unpublished), websites, online journals etc. Such sources are exclusively used for exploring diaspora, multiculturalism and cultural hybridity in the selected novels.

We have followed the MLA Style, based on the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers,in our references to works and articles cited, including

bibliographical references. We may also add here that we could not avoid repetitions and we hope they are justified by the context.

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II

Man and the Author

V.S. Naipaul

V.S. Naipaul is often viewed as one of the most controversial postcolonial writers. He is even blamed for having no loyalty, as it is claimed, to his home country and his ethnicity. Additionally, it is claimed that he doesn't seem to show sympathy for the oppressed, as he generally looks at them with contempt, and criticizes them with stinging remarks. Relying on Homi Bhabha's notion of unhomeliness and Melvin Seeman's highly influential five-fold classification of the theme of alienation, and considering Hegelian, and existentialist theories (we have

briefly touched upon all these in our in the previous chapter), V.S. Naipaul is likely to be blamed for having no loyalty for his native culture. In fact, he is one who has been perhaps trying to lead the people of once-colonized cultures to overcome the problems, they have been entangled in by narrating and portraying their situations in an objective manner. He tries to instil a sense of alienation in the psyches of once colonized people first; in the form of "normlessness." (one of Melvin Seeman's fivefold classification of the concept of alienation), and then in the form of which Hegel termed as "alienation as separation".

Born in the West Indian Trinidad to a family descended from the East India, educated, married, and mostly resided in England, Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul is regarded as a mouthpiece of displacement and rootlessness by the critics and scholars. Speaking in an interview, Naipaul confirms the above idea saying "When I speak about being an exile or a refugee, I am not just using a metaphor, I am speaking literally" (Evans, 62). It is clear that even after having lived in England for many years, he, still, has not had the sense of belonging, as he says: "I still had that nervousness in a new place, that rawness of response, still felt myself to be in the other man's country, felt my strangeness, my solitude" (*The Enigma of Arrival,* 7). He is, as Mohit K. Ray articulates, "an Indian in the West Indies, a West Indian in England, and a nomadic intellectual in a postcolonial world" (Ray, 208). Naipaul's A House for Mr Biswas is a tragicomic novel set in Trinidad in 1950s. It deals with an East Indian's struggle for a place to strike his deracinated root afresh. It also attacks the Indian society's segregated, traditional way of life, a shell rather, which strives to preserve its own special religious identity.

Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas* is based on his own experiences in Trinidad. Mr. Biswas is the prototype for Naipaul's father, Seepersad and Anand, Mr Biswas's son for Naipaul. In his book, *Letters Between Father and Son*: *Family Letters* (1999), Naipaul says that the relationship between him and his father is similar to that of Anand and his father Mr. Biswas. Reading the novel in the light of Naipaul's biography, we can clearly recognize similarities between the real and fictional fathers and sons. For example, Both Naipaul's father and Mr Biswas were born in a village. Both of them change many houses until they have one of their own. Living with wealthy relatives, working as sign painters, getting married to the daughters from conservative but wealthy Hindu families; holding a series of jobs are

some of the other similarities. Furthermore, Naipaul too, like Mohun Biswas, finds work in a newspaper agency after moving to Port of Spain.

The events in the life of Mr. Biswas's son Anand reflect those of Naipaul's himself. Anand, like Naipaul, is instilled with the idea of reading, being incited to be one of those students who achieve to win a scholarship at school and to share his father's involvement with writing. Naipaul, mentioning A House for Mr. Biswas says that it was "very much my father's book. The novel takes its subject matter from the marginalised people who have been alienated from societies to which they apparently belong, and who are in search of an identity.

2.1 Sense of Alienation

Naipaul portrays the West Indian life style, the reality of descendants of indentured servants by presenting his familial experiences as a miniature sample of the larger truths about the general colonial predicament in Trinidad. In his book *Reading and Writing*, he says that he began to see what his material might be: "The city street from whose mixed life they had held aloof and the country life before that, with the ways and manners of a remembered India" (Schmitt, 132). The state of one's feeling of having been deracinated and displaced is called 'unhomeliness', a term coined by Homi Bhabba and other theorists of postcolonialism. It is the sense of being in between of two or more cultures. An unhomed person does not have the feeling of belonging, since he is in a psychological limbo which generally ends in some psychological disorders and cultural displacement. Here, being "unhomed" does not mean being homeless.

Anyone who scrutinizes Naipaul's works, consisted of both fiction and non-fiction, can realize that Naipaul has a strong feeling of unhomeliness, although he has a home in Wiltshire, England. Being a person brought up by a culture that has been deracinated from East India to Trinidad in West India as indentured labourers who have been colonized long before, and having had a leap (due to being educated first in Trinidad by a colonial education system and later in Oxford, England) from a culture which had no self-determination to one which was a world power that initiated

reason, science, and logic, (the corner stones of modernism) Naipaul seems to be in a psychological limbo, having been alienated from the culture of his people.

Alienation and exile are the concepts which the writers of postcolonial literature discuss and treat in their works. Because the writers from once colonized countries encounter the distortments that the colonizer has left on their culture, eventually establish discrete responses. This sense of not belonging to a significant country or culture results either in its rejection by the writer through criticism and satire, or by his physical or psychological withdrawals in the form of various kinds of alienation, as it has been the case with Naipaul at the beginning of his adolescence and later in his matured life. Alienation is usually considered as a concept associated with minorities, the poor, the unemployed, and other groups in the margin who have limited power to bring about changes in the society.

Alienation is, however, accepted as a feeling of separation or isolation which results in problems stemmed from rapid social changes on account of industrialization and urbanization breaking down traditional relationships among individuals and groups and the goods and services they produce. However, this view does not give a comprehensive delineation of the term. The concept of alienation has intrigued and troubled many sociologists and philosophers and consequently enjoyed a turbulent history which stretches to Hegel. Due to its widespread usage through various disciplines, there hasn't been an agreement on even its most basic aspects yet. Iain Williamson and Cedric Cullingford have the comments: "There is disagreement about the definition, debate over whether the phenomenon is a sociological process or a psychological state, or both, and confusion over the inevitability of the experience" (Williamson & Cullingford, 263). Nevertheless the concept has been used widely in the contemporary literature, sociology and philosophy. Hegel uses two distinct German words *entausserung* (surrender) and *entfremdung* (a state of separation) for describing the theme of alienation. He, as Williamson and Culingford assert, was much influenced by Schiller's theological use of the term as a state of separation, and also by Rousseau's discussion of alienation as surrender of personal self and control. According to Williamson and Cullingford, Hegel's discussion of alienation (or *entfremdung*) can be drawn out in two major senses: alienation-as-separation, and alienation-as-surrender. The first sense echoes Schiller's writings and the second those of the social contract philosophers (ibid, 265). Hegel, as they claim, argues that

"through self analysis and contemplation, the human moves from an immature sense of universality to a powerful sense of his/her own individuality, but as universality is essential to all things spiritual, this process leads to an acute sense of self-alienation from one's inner nature and the extremity of discord"(ibid.). This is alienation-as-separation. They go on saying that "recognition of this leads the individual to a second alienation process where this particularity is yielded back to the universality of the social substance. This sense of universality is mature and the experience is one of actualisation, although Hegel remains vague on how this occurs". (ibid). This is alienation as surrender. To sum up, the issue that must be underlined in Hegel's understanding of the theme of alienation is that for Hegel the theme of alienation has a positive nature.

However, Williamson and Cullingford have made it clear in their assessment of the concept: "Seeman and other American sociologists and social-psychologists began to pay close attention to the concept, and it was this work that was to provide a valid paradigm for researches around the concept" (ibid. 269). Melvin Seeman, in his paper 'On the Meaning of Alienation', tries to put this complex structure of alienation into an order by a five-fold classification: Powerlessness, Meaninglessness, Normlessness, Social Isolation and Self- Estrangement (Seeman, 783). Seeman defines normlessness, the third variant of the alienation theme, as having been derived from Durkheim's description of 'anomie'. He asserts that "in the traditional usage, anomie denotes a situation in which the social norms regulating individual conduct have broken down or are no longer effective as rules for behaviour" (ibid., 787). In other words, normlessness refers to a situation lacking effective norms or in which individuals assume that unacceptable behaviours are required for success.

A House for Mr Biswas, metaphorically, is a miniature world which symbolizes the colonial world. Mr. Biswas's personal battle with the stronghold of the Tulsi household (the symbol of the colonial world) is a quest for existential freedom and the struggle for personality. As Singh underlines; "Mr. Biswas is the unaccommodated man representing the outcast's symbolic quest for a place in the hostile universe" (1998: 126). The Tulsis are running a sort of mimic world of colonialism and the important thing is that the Hanuman House too is run on the traditional Hindu familial lines and protocols. On the surface, the Tulsis have made an admirable reconstruction of the clan in strange and hostile conditions. It has its own schemes, leaders, duties,

law and order, religious rituals and provides jobs and help to men of their community on merits. Mr. Biswas is repeatedly accused of not being grateful to the Tulsis despite the fact, as Mrs. Tulsi says, "Coming to us with no more clothes you could hang up on a nail." (*A House for Mr Biswas,* 557). At first glance, Mr. Biswas's rebellion may appear meaningless and unfair. Because one is likely to think that the Tulsi family provides shelter and job for Mr Biswas whenever he needs, but nevertheless, he ungratefully reject their help propounding the idea that the Hanuman House is like a prison. But beneath the surface, one can see that the Hanuman House is not a coherent or benevolent entity of the traditional Hindu joint family. It is more a slave society where Mrs Tulsi and Seth need workers to boost their sinking influence and economy. They exploit the homelessness and poverty of men like Biswas and others. The acceptance of Hanuman House and its dubious claims is the submission of slavery. By such a picture, Naipaul tries to portray that subjugation is not something peculiar to the West, or to the whites. He satirises the Indians' insistence on carrying out their older caste system within themselves while they resent white colonialism. Naipaul's protagonist is alienated from the Hindu community in Trinidad, and is fighting out a personal battle for freedom and recognition. For him, to build a house of his own means freedom and recognition. And by the end of the novel, in spite of all its deficiencies, he manages to buy this house which eventually brings him his wife's respect, and saves him from his sense of being rootless and alienated. He does not regard the Tulsi's way of life which was consisted of the old traditions of the East India. The feeling of deracination and displacement and lack of a national community in Trinidad are the fundemental themes in *A House for Mr. Biswas*, as they were for Naipaul personally. Both Mr. Biswas and Naipaul are in search of a home by which they will be able to find their identities.

A sense of place and self which, at the time, was difficult for East Indians in Trinidad to have. Being an East Indian descendent in West Indies, a colony of England, Mr. Biswas is physically in one place (West Indies) and culturally in another (East India), and searches to find a genuine identity. Analysing the sense of alienation and the agony of exile experienced by the characters, *A House for Mr. Biswas* delineates the problems of a distorted and troubled past and tries to find a purpose in life. Alienated from his folk, family and from the TulsiWs Hanuman House, for Mr. Biswas, a house of his own symbolizes freedom and a place to strike a

root. Mr Biswas is an alien even in his own family since he was born with six fingers and feet first, signs for bad luck. Being considered as an unlucky baby, he stays as an outsider, a lonely individual in his own family. When one reads *A House for Mr Biswas*, one can easily observe that the sense of alienation that the protagonists Mohun Biswas experiences in his fictional life is the very sense that Naipaul has experienced in his real life. Thus, both Naipaul and Mr Biswas, the protagonist of *A House for Mr Biswas,* experience a sense of alienation first in the form of normlessness which eventually leads them to an existential sense of alienation which also is likely to be considered as having common qualities with Hegel's concept of alienation as separation. Melvin Seeman, in his paper *On the Meaning of Alienation,* classified the theme of alienation in five categories one of which is normlessness.

Normlessness, as Seeman states, is said to have been derived from Durkheim's description of, anomie' (Seeman, 787) (breakdown of social structure) which is considerd as "a condition of instability resulting from a breakdown of standards and values or from a lack of purpose or ideals". As for normlessness, as Seeman defines, it refers to a situation lacking effective norms or in which individuals assume that unacceptable behaviours are required for success (Seeman, 787). Naipaul's protagonist Mohun Biswas, as well as Naipaul himself, struggles for their individuality through a realization that the entanglements they are in stem from the immature (uncivilized) structure of their community. For Mohun Biswas, the Hindu folk of the Hanuman House represent this structure, as for Naipaul it is all communities that form the West Indies and the Third world. Having been alienated in the form of normlessness, both Mr Biswas and Naipaul improve a reaction relying on their creativity. They do not remain inactive in the face of their encounter with familial or societal norms. Thus; Naipaul became a writer and Mr Biswas built a house struggling with the drawbacks of their society. Hence, it is likely to assert that their alienation from their society leads them to a condition of existential standpoint. Existentialist, as Singh asserts, propound that alienation occurs when someone is constrained to become other than what he is. Being a constant feature of the human situation which can not be eliminated, they regard alienation as an unavoidable state in the course of creativity (Singh, 25).

In this process of taking one role and giving up another, s/he constantly faces this sense of alienation. In this respect, an existentialist's understanding of the theme of alienation resembles to Hegel's concept of ‚alienation as separation which reads "through self analysis and contemplation, the human moves from an immature sense of universality to a powerful sense of his/her own individuality" (Williamson and Cullingford, 265). But it differs from Hegel's concept of, alienation as surrender' being positively peaceful and free from worry due to the fact that "it involves a conscious relinquishment or surrender with the intention of securing a desired end: namely, unity with the social substance" (Schacht, 36) or any other entities like the state or religion. They abstain from all forms of power because authoritarianism or power conflicts with their basic views of life. They believe in one's own self-actualization and self-determination. A self-determined one, according to the existentialists, is capable of comprehending his/her problems without relying on any religious or political dogmas and ideology, and s/he can overcome these problems by bringing about realistic solutions that serve to him. In this respect, one can assert that, since they do not submit the authoritative and exploitive rules of the Tulsis and the Third World, Naipaul and his protagonist Mohun Biswas have experienced the sense of alienation first in the form of normlessness, then in an existential form which also can be considered to denote the same points as Hegel's concept of alienation as separation does. They never give up struggling for their existence and identity relying on their own capabilities which eventually lead them to be an eminent writer in the case of Naipaul, and to create or own the house that he longed for in the case of Mr Biswas which they consider essential for their authenticity and freedom. For alienated and displaced people of the colonized countries, Naipaul seems to suggest that searching for creativity (as Mr Biswas does and never gives up) relying on their own originality is one of the basic means to find their lost and alienated identity. Naipaul, through satire and irony, tries to instil in the psyches of the once colonized people a sense of alienation in the form of normlessness and 'alienation as separation'. Thus, he thinks, they will be able to leap into a phase of creativity which will consequently supply them with original and authentic identities of their own. It would be prudent here, if we go for analysing Naipaul's sense of history to understand the total colonial situation in the Caribbean Islands.

2.2 Sense of History

Caribbean history, as we know, speaks of two phases of colonization, the early phases are more significant in the sense that it is widespread and it reveals some of the ugliest pictures of human nature. This phase is known as the progeny of capitalism. Further Capitalism has two phases - the merchant capitalism and the industrial capitalism, corresponding with the two stages of the latter phases of colonization. The historical records reveal that the merchant capitalism originated with the expeditions of the European merchants to the distant new lands in search of commodities like sugar, tobacco, spices, pearls, minerals and so on. Subduing and often conquering the people and then usurping their territories for trade, agriculture and even settlement mark this period. However, it is not stained by brutal violence that marks the second phase. During this period, the whites are noted for exchanging goods with the natives. They abstain from interfering with the social and cultural systems of the natives. Nevertheless, the fact cannot be denied that they had plans to exploit the natives of the East and of Africa.

Naipaul's narrative refutes the arguments forwarded by the European historians regarding the colonization of the Caribbean islands. He believes that merely trade and settlement were not the motives on the part of the colonizers, who felt that the islands had many gold-mines, and hence their early expeditions were for the verification of the then prevalent myths of El Dorado and the gold city of Manoa. They wanted to plunder the islands, provided these myths were facts. Port-of-Spain, the capital town of Trinidad was the gate-way to the El Dorado lands and therefore control over it was essential for them.

Naipaul thinks that the raiders avoided confrontation with the natives, for they wanted to take their help in tracing out the goldmines. Once having won their confidence, they had planned to exploit them and plunder their wealth. As a part of their strategy, they exchanged their goods with them, took their children to England and assured them of protection against the other races. Once the mines were located, their plan was to invite their army for invasion. They were also in need for a piece of land to settle down, so that they could continue with their excavation of the mines. Trinidad was strategically very significant and hence they made it their base. Naipaul

counters the impression that violence was not used during this phases. He shows how, for their purpose, the colonizers have liquidated completely some of the races on these islands. The Indian race of *Chaguanas* has been exterminated by the Spaniards. In the "Forward" of the book, Naipaul quotes from a letter of 12th Oct.1625, by the king of Spain to the Governor of Trinidad, permitting him to punish these races, The Caribs met with the same fate. They were declared slaves first and then they were hunted down for ever. The official Spanish letter quoted by the author reads that "if something is not done about this, it will be impossible to maintain any settlement in Trinidad... and other places."(Naipaul, 79)

Naipaul further points out that the colonizers used religion to subordinate the native races. When they did not surrender, they were killed. Thus, religion was an important tool to colonize the natives. Naipaul refers to another letter which stated that there was no hope of reducing the natives by means of the Gospel. He states that if at all there was any desire for trade, and then it was the trade of the slaves whom they had started importing from Africa. In the same vein, the colonizers started taking interest in trade, settlement and agriculture only when they were sure that their pursuit of the goldmines was of no use, when they felt that they were after an illusion. Then they realized the richness and fertility of the soil there and diverted their energies to develop it as the centre for trade.

History explains that the new machine-age needed more raw materials, which were available in ample quantity in the poor countries of the other continents. Secondly, machines effected huge production for which they required a large market beyond Europe. When trade was not easy, they started imposing goods on them. They thought of the safe settlements of European merchants and agricultural purposes and also new transport facilities among other things. Thus, they took raw material from these lands and supplied prepared goods to them. These developments affected the barter system of trade, the labour system and also the legal system. Gradually, full-fledged European colonies came into existence on these islands.

Naipaul describes in detail this phase of evolution along with the conditions that shaped it. He shows that the provinces were almost ghost provinces and yet Europeans took interest in them because they knew the strategic significance of their

location on that part of the earth. They had discerned in it a potential centre for trade with America.

Politically, Trinidad was very crucial and, therefore, it was to be fortified and populated. For the British, capturing of the island meant the conquering of the whole Spanish Empire on that continent. Both Spain and Britain were busy in seeking control over it. Naipaul thinks that the Royal Decree for colonization was issued by the Spanish Empire in1776, when it directed the Governor of Trinidad to make the island a sanctuary for the settlers and insisted that they should be offered land, legal protection and insisted that they should be offered land, legal protection and exemption from taxes. They invited even the British traders.

These colonizers often seemed to be appeasing the natives, although it was not out of any humanitarian purpose but for selfish and political ends. Naipaul propounds that the French Revolution affected the affairs of the whole world and insurgency was witnessed on some of the islands also, e.g. Santo Domingo witnessed a Negro uprising for equality and liberty. The Spanish Empire was not in a position to take any risk. Further, there was a threat from the French Republicans. Hence, the Governor, in a way, was compelled to issue the Negro Code. Naipaul also states that a kind of competition or cold war had begun between the Spaniards and the British. The British had an army unit under Col. Thomas picton in the Gulf, which secretly aligned with the revolutionaries. Therefore, they offered the people many things which included among other things complete liberty for trade, abolition of import and export duties, freedom to plant and sell any crop and, above all, an elected government. This was a part of the policy to capture the island by giving them false promises because soon after this, Col. Picton turned an autocrat and proved to be a cruel Governor. The new code issued by him for the Negroes was very harsh for them. Naipaul comments that the colonizers were extremely brutal and inhuman to the people. They flogged, decapitated, burned, applied acid on their wounds and tortured them. He reveals the brutality in three chapters. One Mr. Pierre Francois was forced to put on a shirt with sulphur on it and the he was set on fire. A *mulatto* girl Luisa Calderan was tortured for several days in the worst manner.

As the circumstances kept on changing, the political objectives also kept on shifting. Nevertheless, the state of people never changed. Naipaul states that if at all

anything changed that was due to political needs only. For example, Col. Picton was called back because it was a political necessity. Mr. Fullerton, who was supposed to be liberal to the settlers, Negroes, Mullatoes and even the Spaniards, was sent as the new Governor. He suspended punishments in the jail until the crimes were specified. However, when the British felt that their existence was in danger due to the emerging insurgency and also that Mr. Fullerton was not suitable as the Governor to tackle the situation, they asked Mr. Fullertron to resign. The new governor Mr. Hislop was troubled from both sides, the British at home who questioned the legality of every action and the Negroes on the island whew re getting ready for the revolution.

Naipaul exposes the hypocrisy of the colonizers as the Empire was compelled to have a trial of Picton whom it admired a lot. The Empire was more important than any individual, be he of any importance in the past. Picton was found guilty. Yet, the Empire did not consider his actions inhuman. Rather, he was then seen as a governor persecuted on behalf of some *Mullatoes* and Negroes.

Then Naipaul describes how the British and the Spaniards became allies, bringing the competition to the end. However, the British saw to it that the Spanish hold came to an end on the islands. Then with the fall of the Spanish Empire, the British became the masters of the islands. The revolution in Venezuela also failed. As a result, the revolutionaries started fighting among themselves. All this led the British to conquer Trinidad completely and a colony came into existence. No revolution against the colonizers could succeed on the island because, Naipaul thinks, the Negroes lived in their fantasy world and they were nothing more than mere mimic men, imitating the ways and manners of their rulers. Moreover, they could not break the prevalent hierarchy among themselves. They also lacked a good and powerful leader. Naturally, they failed in achieving their goal.

Naipaul is not a chronicler. His narrative is a historical discourse and, therefore, everything that has taken place in the past is not necessarily essential for him. He selects the events from the debris of time and then narrates them as he deems fit. The relevance of the given events is determined by this consideration. He records the events with a specific perspective and seeks to present a vision of life. He does not act like a journalist, putting facts on the paper but retells the stories of the past. He aims at something higher, that is, to convey the patterns of events or the pattern of

human affairs. He does not follow the sequence of the actual events. He rearranges the historical material to reveal the fact as well as the meaning of it in larger sense.

Naipaul's choice of two stories pertains to the lives of many individuals and many countries. A journalist, while describing an event, presents the opinions of many but he does so without scrutinizing the facts and without separating the truth from the untruth. On the other hand, Naipaul evaluates the facts as in a historical discourse. He acts more like a judge who listens to all, goes through all evidence and then presents his assessment of the event along with the ground on which he has drawn his conclusions.

Naipaul's stories have 'secondary referenciality' that is they are particular as well as general stories of human civilization. We can say that they reveal a structure of temporality. He records the historicity of the event by allegorizing and symbolizing it. Naipaul's allegorized narrative has at least one trans-temporal meaning, revealing one of the basic human instincts of subjugating the weaker people and exploiting them for selfish ends. Naipaul's achievement, however, lies in presenting the experiences of the colonized and the colonizers in such a way that they become the experience of the people anywhere anytime, though they are, primarily, the experience of the Trinidadians and the Europeans.

The process of colonization described here can be seen as the same in Asia, Africa and South America later on. The narrative has geographical and temporal truth, but since the author has picked up those parts from the past which have historicity, it not only represents the factual past but also helps in understanding such events elsewhere. Moreover it assits in foreseeing and anticipating the future course of an event as well as in tracing the root of the present event .The narrative has scientific angle, as it has been proved in the laboratory of 'time.' Naipaul's treatise is expressive of his philosophical sincerity. His recognition and demonstration of the deeper level of meaning attains the depth of philosophical knowledge of life. His endeavour has been to resolve the mysteries of life through history and thus understanding the intricacies of human life which is his way of philosophizing on the events with sincerity.

Naipaul invents the plot underlying the event of colonization. He starts from the end and moves backwards having analysed the causes responsible for them. He

has made his narrative suggestive of the repetitive nature of history. The two events are very analogous. Even in case of individuals it is so. The names and nationalities change, but their modus operandi remains the same. Corruption, opportunism, selfishness and partiality among others are common to all. Even the setbacks that the colonizers experience are similar.

Naipaul does not confine himself to one angle, but looks at the event from multiple angles. He records the event from the points-of-view of the rival agencies, the people and the agents. Sometimes, the versions differ in content as well as in quality of its representation. Through varied perspectives he churns out the most plausible version of the event. His own view is based on his assessment of various conditions of the socio-political realities of the time.

Naipaul relies on various evidences for authenticity. He refers to diaries, journals, letters and books of the major persons associated with the event. He studies the correspondence between the governments and their agents on the island. He looks into the books, pamphlets, weeklies and the dialogue reported in various ways and available for the scrutiny. The author also studies, for the purposes, the reactions of the local people revealed from their letters of complaints to the governments aboard against the governors and the posters pasted on the walls. He presents all the geographical, social, racial, political, legal, commercial and human aspects of life and relates them in such a manner that they constitute an organic whole. He records the life on the island at that time. He surveys the political scenario in and outside Trinidad as far as they concern the event in question. He looks into the changes that were introduced from time to time in the policies and their reasons and consequences and thus arrives at an assessment.

Naipaul brings to light the cultural developments also. The aggressive campaign for conversion by the missionaries brought many changes in the lifestyles, language and manners of the natives. He shows how human dignity was rarely seen in the behaviour of the colonizers. They used to chop off the heads of the alleged individuals and display them in public to frighten them.

He depicts England, Spain, Frances and Trinidad as characters i.e. 'agencies' who act in the event. They can be classified into two categories - the victims and the victimizers. Trinidad is the prominent victim and the protagonist in

the narrative. It stands for all those who suffer and feel exploited. The colonizing countries are the antagonists, the exploiters. In Marxist terms, the Whites are the 'haves,' as they are more equipped and rich in resources of the have-nots. Nevertheless, Naipaul does not deal with any heroic protagonist from among the victims who resists the injustice.

The struggle between the two forces represents Hegelian 'politico social order,' as the have are in minority. Yet, since the resources are in their control, they become the unopposed rulers. As they are the executors, legislatures and judiciary, everything is in their favour. They are conscious that power does not slip into the hands of the have-nots. Hence even the slightest resistance is handled brutally. The paradox is the fact that, though all resources belong to the islanders, though they toil from morning to evening, they are slaves. The haves have become rich by exploiting the have-nots.

Naipaul does not suggest the 'dialectical materialism' of Karl Marx, though he comes very close to it. According to dialectical materialism, the two forces are eternally at war. That is the case here too. But Naipaul adds one more point. He has shown even the two 'haves' at war with each other. England and Spain are shown struggling for the possession of the island. Further, the British are also fighting among themselves. For example, Picton is fighting with the Trinidadians as well as the White immigrants and Mr. Fullerton, his Commissioner. Marx spoke of class struggle, but ignored the struggle within the class.

Naipaul presents the history of nations. Naturally, he projects the nations as characters, that is, the agents whose actions determine the event. Individuals have personalities when they are alone, but when they are a part of a community, they have the personality of the community. In order words, human beings have personal character as well as national/racial /community character. Naipaul, with the help of different individuals portrays the individual as well as the national characters of the nations involved in the action. The individuals presented operate on behalf of their respective societies and reveal their cultural and social trends. Naipaul penetrates into their psyche and mind and unravels the national characters. Thus, Britain or the British, Spain or Spaniards, and Trinidad or Trinidadians are the major characters, different traits having been revealed through different individuals. Therefore, all

major individuals having distinct qualities put together make the complete individuality of the nation concerned.

Naipaul presents individuals with insight into their private as well as public lives. He makes use of the records available regarding their public images, their official relations with various people, their achievements and failures as the parts of the entire machinery in operation. All these things put together make their national character. Although Naipaul's work, fictional and otherwise, is a serous, some might say almost compulsive engagement with "history," extracting any coherent view of history out of his corpus is fraught with difficulty. His arguments depend so much upon the force of his words, and the dramatic context from which they emerge, that to redescribe them is to always risk caricature. This is so for many reasons: Naipaul's "views" defy and resist any easy summary. But perhaps more challengingly. Anyone thinking about Naipaul the author is faced with the following paradox. There is perhaps no other modern author whose own biographical presence looms larger in his or her texts than Naipaul. Whether it is his fiction or non-fiction, Naipaul will never let you forget that his texts have an author; his texts more than anyone else's enlarge the author rather than supersede him. Like all great writers Naipaul creates whole worlds, but in his case, you can be sure that it is a world whose meaning Naipaul means to control. This makes the self descriptions Naipaul gives of his own work an ironic twist. For example, when Naipaul claims, "to me situations and people are always specific, always of themselves," it is less than clear what this means. Of course in a banal sense it means they are for Naipaul, yet it is difficult to imagine that they are for Naipaul, "always of themselves," and not simply exemplars of a stylized predicament that Naipaul has created. It would be difficult to find a reader who can take Naipaul writes, "This is a book about people. It is not a book of opinion. It is not a book of stories."

Naipaul is just, in his own words, a manager of narrative. Indeed, even when Naipaul steps aside, when the interesting cast of characters he assembles, are at the centre of attention, we can be reasonably sure about the voices, and the structure of the dialogue is arranged for dramatic effect. Naipaul the author will not let go. Authorial intention or not, the authorial presence occupies centre stage.

The centrality of the author in Naipaul's corpus might make it easier to extract Naipaul's views. After all, Naipaul is a character in his own writing. But almost all attempts to recover Naipaul's views end up as attempts to do his psychobiography, excavating the psychological complexes and anxieties at work in his writing. Naipaul's argument; it is to decipher a persona. That all of Naipaul's writing is extended autobiography in disguise has some truth it. Nevertheless this cannot be the whole truth. Naipaul the persona himself takes shape in an encounter with the world. Naipaul reveals at least as much about the world as the world reveals Naipaul to himself. What does Naipaul disclose about the world? This question is again, more easily asked than answered for reasons peculiar to Naipaul. The paradox of Naipaul's authorial presence is that censorious, overpowering and provocative as Naipaul's judgments, even in his fiction are, Naipaul will himself seldom give reasons for those judgments Foucault once remarked famously that "knowledge is made for cutting" and this sentiment is not entirely alien to Naipaul. But this raises a problem. Naipaul's disclosures are not intended to reveal truths in the sense that they have elaborate justifications to back them up. Nor does he appeal to any authority other than himself. He is the ground of his own knowledge and he expects the readers to be such as well.

The other difficulty is that the primary terms in which Naipaul sees the importance of history are moral-psychological. Naipaul is not a detached historical connoisseur who is interested in the past for the sake of the past; nor curiously who is interested in the past for the sake of the past; nor curiously for someone who invents so much in history is he interested in the narrative and literary forms within which diverse people and cultures understand, imagine and appropriate their past. Rather, his approach to history is largely moral psychological. History produces the complications in the psyches of the various individuals and culture he encounters. Plato and Nietzsche, two of the acutest moral psychologists ever to write, thought that the civil was that go on within most souls-to use the term in its non-religious sense-were closely aligned with mutilations that the civil wars that go on within most souls-to use the term in its non-religious sense- were closely aligned with mutilations that societies produce. Naipaul has a keen sense of this. His characters, whom he presents in all their individuality and striving, carry the imprint of their societies India: A Million Mutinies Now is prescient precisely because it relates the characters of social

movements to the existential burdens Hindu Society produces. A society that provides little by means of affirmation of any individual's self worth is liable to produce an apocalyptic politics of self-esteem.

But the contrast between Nietzsche and Naipaul may be instructive. For Nietzsche a kind of historical over-awareness, a sense of being in the shadow of the past, places heavy burdens on the self consciousness of individuals, paralyzing their will, atrophying their ambition and denuding life of originality and creativity. Nietzsche, therefore, searches for a history in the service of life rather than the other way round. For Naipaul, on the other hand, for colonized peoples especially, the reverse is true. Historical amnesia, only a dim awareness of the past, impedes the development of a healthy self-consciousness. It condemns them to hover somewhere between a repression of who they are on the one hand, and a non-confident imitation on the other. Lack of historical self-awareness impedes self-examination; a lack of a sense of history disables the agency. Not to be aware of the past that has made us what we are disables us from coming to terms with future options fully and clearly. In this sense, lack of historical consciousness disables us. For Naipaul the alternative to this sort of self-awareness is an unthinking and undiscriminating flowing with the tide. In texts such as *India: A Wounded Civilization* he sees Indian culture as having become one that endlessly repeats its own truisms; even the glorious Vijaynagar was a facile imitation of something that had gone before. Nothing new was possible, because the old was not properly understood. The first thing that strikes most writers on India and its multicultural mélange, its free appropriations, its simultaneous motion in many different directions is of little interest to Naipaul. Even as early as in *India: A Wounded Civilization*, Naipaul's chief concern was the lack of proper historical awareness. He insistently attributes this intellectual depletion to centuries of conquests. Unlike, say Nirad Chaudhari, who finds that India is infused with life only when the flow of world history descends upon it in the form of conquest, for Naipaul conquest's chief achievement is to distort historical consciousness. European colonies had at least this redeeming feature - it began to impart an inchoate sense to Indians of India's own inadequacies, but it produced no intellectual movement that could allow India to transcend those adequacies.

For Naipaul, whose great achievement was to bring to light, in the words of the Nobel citation, "suppressed histories," forgotten historical complexes,

sedimented into our psyches, distort us. If there is one such complex that Naipaul seems to consistently dislike, it is historical amnesia. The reasons for this are not hard to see. Any attempt at coming to terms with one's own self, that does not fully and honestly reckon with the historical legacies that constitute it, is a form of delusion. Naipaul, as it appears, might have been unmusical about religion, but the authenticity of religious faith, for him, was neither here nor there. Its denial of the world was an impediment to self- understanding; it betrayed in the final analysis, a lack of integrity.

Such an analysis provides us with the clue to understand two other positions frequently associated with Naipaul. We may point out, with some justification, that Naipaul lets it go unremarked that some people in fact experience American – or for Naipaul western civilization as just the sort of thing that produces ulcers. In his essay "Our Universal Civilization" he celebrates it on more unexpected grounds. There is a great sense of the creatureliness of human beings; we cannot escape the need for medicine and the ulcers that occasion them. This is juxtaposed with those who will exalt humanity by finding higher meaning, only by associating it with divinity or redemption at the hands of divinity.

Naipaul's peculiar interest in history may in part explain the asymmetry with which Naipaul treats Hindu nationalism and Islam. As reviewer after reviewer has pointed out, Naipaul will excuse in Hindu Nationalism what he will condemn elsewhere: a collective narcissism, a will to swallow up individuality under the banner of some large abstraction, a will to homogenize and render a messy plurality defunct, a sense of exaggerated injury, and an artifact of resentment rather than hope. But Hindu nationalism is for him in the end redeemed by its attempt to recover a suppressed history; it is a will to overcome historical amnesia and the burden of vanished supremacies that had marked India. It is nothing if not about generating a new historical consciousness, about a vanquished people attempting to come to terms in a messy way, but at long last, with their history. But for Naipaul Islam is about effacing history, removing people from themselves. Amidst all the mind-boggling simplifications and distortions that Naipaul brings to bear upon the histories, he begins to realize that Beyond Belief is least interested in the complexities of history in any important sense of the term. It is rather an admonition to those who don't take own histories seriously.

The admonition is that the convert is trapped in an endless cycle of turning away from self and place. The convert in Naipaul's rendition, is less a figure of rage and fanaticism, than a prisoner of a fundamentally flawed historical imagination; the erasure of history is a kind of self-erasure. Dismissing Naipaul's account of these histories as trite and shallow, as at best abridgements of a complex civilization and at worst outright prejudices are in some senses to miss the point. For him the question is not whether scholars like Edward Said or Michael Gilsenan will find his histories wanting; nor does the political offence he gives matters much. The question is whether the characters that speak thought Naipaul's prose will ever take the existential stance where the complexity of history becomes an issue. Naipaul would seem to insist that in this instance the truth is not in the facts.

This might explain a puzzle about Naipaul's own presentation of his self. Naipaul seems to carry with him all the layers of history he can decipher: his Indian roots, his Trinidadian inflections (now disowned in an act of bad faith) his anglophilia, and even his cosmopolitanism. It is writing of loss and of anger, of unsettling confrontations, and confident certainities. Naipaul has, on the one hand, a keen eye for the displaced and the unrealized that opens him up to other worlds: on the other hand one notices that openness is belied by his sense of futility about most peoples he writes about; the closure of damning judgment is never too far. Naipaul means to encompass these seemingly contradictory impulses, just as he claims not to deny the encumbrances of any of the layers of his history. In a way for him to deny the imperiousness in favour of a sympathetic openness would be as fake and demeaning as denying moments of vulnerability all together. Naipaul can both be present in his work and can allow his characters to take over at the same time. It is as if Naipaul is saying: not to let his judgment, his enlightenment, inheritances would be an act of hypocrisy of the kind that purveyors of easy cultural sympathy always exhibit. If the choice were between an attitude bordering on misanthropy on the one hand and the pieties of sympathetic understanding on the other, Naipaul would decidedly choose the former. Misanthropy is at least honest in a way almost nothing else is.

In a way Naipaul's interest in history is a call to take responsibility for which one is an attempt to subvert all attempts to escape. Yet and oddly enough Naipaul's work is unable to bring out the pathos that the heroic integrity of being able

to see the world clearly and describe one's own place in it might entail. In *Beyond Belief* he quotes a Malay expression for those who are prisoners of a limited perspective. They are 'like a frog living under a coconut shell, and they mistake the coconut shell for the sky'. Naipaul's sympathy for writers and poets comes from the fact that they provide glimmerings of the open sky, they expand horizons. Naipaul's evocative description of Linus represents someone who has broken through, and is experiencing the pain of release; it is difficult to attribute the pathos and integrity to Naipaul himself. This is so for three reasons. First, Naipaul's own historical judgment does not inspire confidence; in the end his easy and reckless judgments close horizons, replace one coconut shell with another, and obstruct the path of self-discovery. Second, there is a touch of narcissism hovering over Naipaul's own sense of release. It is not simply that Naipaul's own way of looking at the world seems to dominate every book he writes. It is the fact that the pain of his own story, his displacement and struggles, his anger at the fact that most people choose to remain trapped, fails to be emblematic of any more general predicament. For instance on the one hand Naipaul carries the burdens of his own past: the difficulty of being born in Trinidad, of finding a job etc. He is burdened by the accident of his birth, burdened, as he sees it, by being born in a place incapable of recognizing his vocation. He had little choice but to escape. There may be honesty in expressing this desire to escape; but this honesty sits somewhat at odds with the enterprise of taking history seriously. Like the figures of faith that Naipaul gives enough rope to hang them with, he can also, in a sense reckon with his own history only by seceding from it. Honesty about one's own aspirations may be at odds with a full recognition of one's own history, and this is a tension that Naipaul is unable to escape anymore than all those whom he indicts. The individuality Naipaul achieves through knowledge is disfigured by the easy superiority that comes with it, its peevishness obscuring its own insights. Third, and perhaps most importantly the suspicion of emptiness hovers over Naipaul's exhortation to integrity. It is difficult to see the kind of knowledge that Naipaul brings into the world as an ascent into a different order of being. It is rather that usual expectations associated with the pathos of integrity are missing in Naipaul. An exhortation to honesty, a will to integrity and a clear eyed understanding of one's way in the world, is usually seen as the prelude to a more responsible position. But in Naipaul the end point is almost always himself. History exists to give him the contradictions and pains he can work through. To demand that Naipaul has a clear

position would be unreasonable and unfair. But it is not entirely inappropriate to insist that history be not made into simply a template for the polities in the wider sense of the term, of Naipaul's own story. After all, getting your own place clear in the world, involves letting it go sometimes, of letting it be, of eschewing fantasies of intellectual mastery, as if life and cultures could be easily possessed. In short, it is an integrity vitiated by what ought to accompany genuine integrity: some humility.

There are moments where Naipaul might be seen as providing an elegy for the sacred. Our sacred world has vanished, reads the concluding line of the single most moving paragraph Naipaul has penned in *The Enigma of Arrival*. It has been suggested that the peoples about whom Naipaul writes are largely a disguised expression of his own longing for an undivided self, of a hallowed place of belonging where the narrative of one's own being is not ruptured. Naipaul's own resolution of this sense of rupture is not, as in Rushdie, to celebrate the mélange it produces. The post- modern hybridization for Naipaul will be too indiscriminate a form of existence, too passive in its renunciation of the will to order oneself and the world to some degree. It aesthetisizes the world too much, and is striking the degree to which Naipaul, whatever his own limitations cannot be accused of an essay aestheticism. Faith, an attempt to escape history is intellectually compromised. A traditional ritualism that provides teleology to everyday life is incapable of creation and achievement, too closed to the world to be attractive. Naipaul's own response is rather to create his own hallowed and purified world through the binary oppositions that mark his narrative. Nor is Naipaul likely to be attracted by the sentimentalism that the world is my home. Rather what gives his own ruptured and layered history its coherence is the fact that as a writer ha can come to terms with it. Everything that made his vocation as a writer possible his English education, colonialism, the West, his Worcestershire country garden becomes Naipaul's hallowed ground. Naipaul, at least in his own mind, seems to have found his home through writing, through the ability to imagine himself, and through writing to respond to his own fate. The binaries he creates, between the west and the rest, in the rest, in the end do not define a geographical space; they create, consecrate and reproduce a mode of being an existential space that is not intellectually compromised. It is no accident that the greatest tribute he pays to "Universal Civilization" is that it makes his writing possible.

This is the literal meaning of Naipaul's claim that Trinidad was unhallowed because it hadn't been written about. The unresolved struggle and confusions of the self can be resolved only through writing. Writing creates its own hallowed ground. Read sympathetically, this is an existential stance: which can be ordered only by a certain way of writing. Read politically, this might reinscribe a new dichotomy, between those who can represent themselves and those who need to be represented. Trinidad is unhallowed because it hadn't been written about. Unhallowed for whom? Even this question cannot be posed outside the parameters of writing. It is to concede his very point. For this question cannot be posed outside the parameters of writing. Contrary to what one might think, to ask this question is, not to unsettle Naipaul's imperious authority. It is to concede his very point. For this question cannot be posed effectively outside the ambit of writing. To pose this question is to already have taken a step towards a literary construction; it is a step in hallowing Trinidad, bringing it into history as it were. The difference between stylized European colonialism, that Naipaul is allegedly soft towards, and what he thinks of as Arab colonialism is just this: even in its acts of desecration European colonialism invited a counter response, a questioning, articulacy, a preparation for writing that opened up the space for hallowing what was once merely invisible. The colonial powers that destroyed and created Trinidad can be seen, though in complex and contradictory ways, as creating hallowed ground. They bring, as any nineteenth century believer of grand narratives like Marx and Hegel would have insisted the colonies into history, open up the possibility of writing. Arab conquest, a conquest of faith, brooks no room for such a counter question. It does not clear the space but produces a further alienation; it is a "self imposed tyranny" emptying life of everything other than shallow psychologising or causal history is debatable. But in Naipaul's engagement with Hindu Nationalism, with European colonialism and with Arab conquest, we find the same preoccupation with the possibility of thinking in genuinely historical terms. Everything else is subordinate to that preoccupation; it is the lens that enables Naipaul to see, at the same time as it shuts out much from him.

Perhaps in the end, like Nietzsche, Naipaul's distortions are less a product of prejudice, but stem more from a fear of levelling, a fear of philistinism, and a fear of democracy. For Naipaul, to be able to adopt many viewpoints is not an achievement of understanding; it is dissolution of the self. We have to take history

seriously, but only to the point that it does not compromise our self possession and flatten our responses. That Naipaul cannot live up to the will to lead a life without illusions; that he cannot achieve a clairvoyance that most ordinary and benighted characters he writes about cannot even dream of, is not a limitation of Naipaul's writing. Nor is it a particularly serious indictment to point out that an author does not live up to his own ideals. For that gap between ideals and reality is also an honest register of our history and our self.

2.3 Sense of Exile

The reading of Naipaul's *The Mimic Men* places it in a postcolonical framework, but it is a negative analysis of the text's postcoloniality. The understanding of a colonial subject in a postcolonial society is limited, and that the choice he (Naipaul) makes and the action he takes in relation to his identity is meaningless. Naipaul does not give his postcolonial subjects a sense of agency, or the ability to transform socially and politically, because he adheres to a colonial ideology first and foremost. In other words, Naipaul does not say anything useful about colonialism; in fact, he blames the colonized for their failure to become postcolonial. Our reading of MM from the perspective of exile will suggest the text's potential contribution to postcolonial concerns in a more positive way. It seeks to show the inherent conflicts within the text itself. As MM is an early novel of Naipaul and it was written in the early stage of decolonization and the break up of Empire, its deconstruction of colonial ideology is also met with a sense of futility in regard to the colonizer's mimicking of the colonizer. However, the text can also be read using Bhabha's sense of mimicry as empowerment. This ambivalence is the result of the effects of modernism on the colonial diasporic subject. He/she resists modernity through his difference but he/she also desires it.

A close analysis reveals that the contradictions that make up MM lend themselves to a greater understanding of the kind of postcolonialism that is not governed by the celebration of interconnections, discontinuities and hybridity. Rather MM foregrounds the loss inherent in such fragmented realities. The main conflict in the text is on the one hand, the polemics of self and other, fragmentary and original identity and on the other hand, destabilizing of such binaries. In Naipaul, the lack of resolution because of the fracturing of whole identities (and what they signify - order,

stability and containment) does lead to anxiety and a sense of futility. Ralph's struggle to negotiate his identity provides a significant postcolonial narrative which explores how colonization has exiled the subject from knowing himself/herself. Naipaul's writing while similarly expressing a modernist yearning for lost essence possesses a postcolonial bent in which he suggests that colonization and migration are directly responsible for this alienation.

However, Naipaul is often accused of undermining the historical, political and creative potential of the Caribbeans. But if we look at it from another perspective, his narrative of exile which is pervasively despairing (as opposed to nihilistic), is a complex indictment of the experience and effects of colonialism, especially, the fragmentation of the self. Fragmentation in MM distances the subject to a great extent, from the possibility of achieving a sense of reality or stability of self. Naipaul writes in *A Way in the World*: "Most of us know the parents or grandparents we come from. But we go back and back, forever, we go back all of us to the very beginning; in our blood and bone and brain we carry the memories of thousands of begins… Sometimes we can be strangers to ourselves' (*A Way in the World*, 9).

The representation in MM of the fractured diasporic colonized subject is a critique of the colonial project of modernization/progress that was based on 'the metaphysics of presence/permanence' in which the self was regarded as a whole, stable and rational (Mishra, 24). In MM the narrative of Ralph's alienation, rootlessness and homelessness problematises this project. Ralph is not a mimic man playing at being a whole person as much as he is the 'subject that had been the silent underside of the project of modernity' (ibid., 20). The discontinuous subaltern haunts the project of modernity and colonialism which acts as a tool to bring others into modernity. Not only notions of self but ideas of culture are also challenged by the diasporic narrative. Further, Vijay Mishra says:

> To rethink culture in terms of the diaspora would imply that the rootedness of culture or its presumed compulsion towards such rootedness (in search of permanence, fixity, immobility, eternal values, etc.) is now replaced, through a diasporic epistemology, by a definition in which the root is less important than the route. (Mishra, 24)

MM thus attests the condition of diaspora and exile through semantics of loss. It evokes the image of melancholy tension which is derived from a separation from our origins. The semantics of loss is not seen as desirable, and that is partly why Naipaul is seen as a colonialist and typecast as a mimic man. Colonialism in MM is seen as violence, not only towards land and resources but towards the concerns of subjectivity. Naipaul, perhaps, does not yield to hybrid and interconnected forms of identity because he reads the fractured identity in terms of loss.

In a flash forward, at the beginning of the novel, Singh describes his condition as an exile colonial politician, writing his autobiography, at the age of forty, in a hotel room in a suburb of London. The "ambivalent relationship" between the "colonial" and the "imperial metropolis" emerges again in this passage:

> … We lack order. Above all we lack power, and we do not understand that we lack power. … Our transitional or makeshift societies do not cushion us. … For those who lose, and nearly everyone in the end loses, there is only one course: flight. Flight to the greater disorder, the final emptiness: London and the Home Counties. (MM*,* 8)

The "colonial society" is clearly criticised in this passage: it "lacks order"; it is "transitional" and "makeshift", and nearly every politician loses in the colonial country. However, what comes after this criticism, is astonishing and creates an "ambivalent confusion" in the mind: London, the "Centre of Empire" and power, is "the greater disorder, the final emptiness," which certainly also entails a criticism of the "Imperial Centre". The first person narrator is obviously in a confused state of mind. This flash forward episode ends with an insight of the protagonist that involves binary oppositions, to explain an ambivalent double vision: "I no longer dream of ideal landscapes or seek to attach myself to them. All landscapes eventually turn to land, the gold of the imagination to the lead of reality." (*The Mimic Men*, 10) Singh being a colonial who has chosen to live his exiled life in London, the binary oppositions of "gold" and "lead," and "imagination" and "reality" might be interpreted to stand for the "dichotomy" of the "centre" and the "margin", the

"metropolis" and the "colony". It could be seen to stand for the in-between-ness of the colonial protagonist: what he has imagined to be gold has turned out to be lead. Ideal landscapes are eventually only land. London is finally only a crowded city.

2.4 Colonialism, Capitalism and Apocalypse

Naipaul's perspective of colonialism recognizes the historical ramifications and catalytic effects that capitalist production of the imperial centre had on the colonial periphery. An acknowledgement of this understanding of Naipaul is absent from many critics' responses to the novel. Critics, however, have failed to see what MM focuses on. In this context, the primal wrongness of Caribbean colonialism in all its phases - the creation of a slave society and economy, the prolongation through indentured labour of a form of serfdom long after black slavery ended, and the relegation of the island for many decades to the status of slums of empire, a relegation culminating in an ill-prepared granting of independence comes to the fore. This was the violation the novel lets us not to forget, as it traces out the pattern of rejection, impairment, alienation, in individual lives as well as in the groups that compose this heterogeneous society.

The Mimic Men thus envisions that a very deep state of exile for the colonial subject is the result of his/her separation from his/her original home and that on one level, there is no recompense, not even ironically so, to be gained from this situation. That is, the intermingling of cultures, hybridity is not offered by the novel as alternatives or as a comfort. Ralph acknowledges:

> The restlessness, the deep disorder, which the great explorations, the overthrow in three continents of established social organizations, the unnatural bringing together of peoples who could achieves fulfilments only within the security of their own societies and the landscape hymned by their ancestors…The empires of our time were short lived, but they have altered the world forever; their passing away is their least significant feature. (MM, 32).

Eventually, Naipaul's narrative disrupts the narrative of Empire by suggesting that a comfortable hybridity is not an acceptable outcome of these colonial dislocations. The subaltern figure of modernity makes the text itself dystopic. It

challenges the utopic vision that colonialism will lead to progress. The colonial world that Naipaul depicts in *The Mimic Men* has parallels with the world Orwell imagines. Both books deal with oppressive forms of power which dehumanize the self. Ralph experiences a sense of defilement in the metropolitan centre, primarily through his sexual experiences, and seems connected to those primary experiences of violation, that is, colonialism. The making of colonialism as the source of violation is unmistakable in MM. Images of being wounded, maimed and damaged are visible in the text. Examples of such images will be given later (in the sub-heading - 'post-lapsarian Narrative). Thus, colonialism is a violation because the colonial subject is dehumanized and reduced to his economic value. Moreover, Orwell's vision of the insignificance of self is visible in Ralph's sense of stasis about his life. Ralph's envisioning of his life inevitably resembles Orwell's vision of man subject to totalitarianism. Now, we can explore the limits of desire in a colonial context.

2.5 The Limits of Colonial Desire

Ralph, the rejected politician of Isabella, migrates to England. But he discovers that his colonial fantasy of arrival in which he imagines he will feel more like a real person, is. Ralph's fantasy that reality is located in the assumed solidity of English identity and English tradition is constantly subverted by the fragmented identities of the English characters themselves. The tension visible in the text between colonial desire and reality exposes the limits of colonial desire for both the colonized and the colonizer. It takes Ralph the outsider to suggest both of view. The text suggests that colonial desire does not only refer to the colonized. It implies that the English themselves are mimic men and women who imitate certain 'Englishness'. The only way in which to achieve stability and wholeness is by keeping the cultures of the colonizer and colonized intact. Through Ralph's narrative of exile and difference, the novel contains an 'awareness that the epistemological "limits" of ethnocentric ideas are also the enunciative boundaries of a range of other dissonant …histories and voices'. Bhabha, refers to this idea of excess in his notion of mimicry. He proposes that even while one is making duplication, that duplication will be more than the double which suggests its limits. Naipaul in MM evokes this notion of excess, suggesting that it questions authority through its lack of a fixed centre, solidity and authenticity. Thus, Ralph's colonial history is a shadow history to the narrative of

Empire. His ‘partial presence … incomplete, virtual’ (Bhabha, 86) stands in contrast to ‘the too solid three-dimensional city’ (52). He says: ‘I could never feel myself as anything but spectral, disintegrating, pointless, fluid’ (52). This forms part of a postcolonial narrative that draws on notations of the unheimlich (unhomely), ‘the name for everything that ought to have remained …secret and hidden but has come to light’ (MM, 10). In the metropolitan centre, Ralph and other immigrants keep their otherness a secret as they also did in the homeland: Ralph says, ‘we had converted our island into one big secret’ (95). We can now read MM in terms of Bhabha’s notion of the unhomely which foregrounds the limits of the narrative of colonial modernity by mimicking colonialist history through the diasporic life. Naipaul takes the diasporic life which has always been in parenthesis that is, the unheimlich, and foregrounds it. So then, the parenthesis becomes for the colonial Indian diaspora, a ‘source of energy as its “familiar temporariness”. It becomes a site from which a counter-critique of modernity (with its penchant for linear narratives) may be mounted’ (Mishra, 24). In MM, although Ralph’s personal sense of empowerment is limited, his writing of the history of his own world and more so Naipaul’s reconstruction of ‘Trinidad’ is enabling. As Bhabha notes: This act of writing makes art, to take a phrase from Toni Morrison, ‘the fully realized presence of a haunting of history’ (Bhabha, 12).

Initially, of course, Ralph idealises England as ‘the promised land’ which will provide him with the order, solidity and protection which he so desperately seeks and so vehemently believes in that Isabella is not able to provide. While he perceives Isabella to be a third-rate place, London is a place of excitement, romance, magic and greater subtleties. Ralph’s colonial education entraps him in a narrative in which England is projected as an object of desire, but he also realizes that he had been seduced by this colonial fantasy:

> So quickly had London gone sour on me. The great city, centre of the world, in which, in which, fleeing disorder, I had hoped to find the beginning of order. So much had been promised by the physical aspect...there is no light like that of the temperate zone. It was a light that gave solidity to everything and drew colour out from the heart of objects. To me, from the tropics, where night succeeded day abruptly, dusk was new and enchanting. (MM, 18)

Ralph's statement suggests that he has undergone a journey which allows him to acknowledge his difference in terms of coming from somewhere else. The limits of the colonial fantasy are visible in the ambivalent nature of arrival in which there is only deferment because of difference. Ralph says: 'Here was the city, the world. I waited for the flowering to come to me…Its heart must have lain somewhere. But the god of the city was elusive…. But the god was veiled' (18-19). That is why home is always a matter of deferment. Vijay Mishra argues thus: 'Home is always a matter of postponement, it always posted'. (Mishra, 22). Bhabha's point about mimicry is relevant here, in that arrival is not fully possible because one is always more than one is supposed to be. The analysis now opens the scope for an understanding of the nuances of empowerment, especially in a post colonial setting.

2.6 Postcolonial Empowerment

George Lamming, also from the Caribbean, is appreciated to a greater extent for he writes empowering narratives about the Caribbean's capacity to generate history, to become politically independent and for the colonial subject to make choices or take action that are meaningful in a political and social context. However, Naipaul and Lamming need to be studied in a context relevant to their specific Africa-Caribbean or Indian- Caribbean situations.

Both Naipaul and Lamming come from culturally different roots (Indian and African respectively) and different colonial histories. One could argue that Lamming is more removed from the experience of African slavery in the Caribbean, than Naipaul is from the indentured experience. The Africans were the first slaves and migrants to the Caribbean island; the Indians were transported later. As a result, Naipaul has seen remnants of this group of people on Trinidadian streets, excluded from society. Naipaul's awareness of the exclusion of this Indian indentured community from Trinidadian society has been shown in Ralph Singh's ambivalence: 'Although he recognizes the hybrid or mixed character of the island, he at the same time conceives of himself as an intruder' (*The Mimic Men,* 94). In *The Mimic Men*, Ralph Singh shares Naipaul's anxieties and feels betrayed by a history that has resulted in his exclusion from the colonial relationship: 'The descendant of the slave owner could soothe the descendant of the slave with a private patois. I was the late intruder, the picturesque Asiatic, linked to neither '(78). This biographical reading of

Naipaul's work recognises the impact of history on Naipaul's writing (personal and collective). This type of reading is also brought out in the blurring of the writer's subjectivity and also the same in case of his key protagonists. This is typical of Naipaul's narrative strategy.

In order to further illuminate the Indian diasporic colonial subject's alienation, one may turn to Naipaul's book of mixed genres *A way in the World* (1994). The narrator writes about how Indians were not part of the growing political movement for independence. Naipaul's self-exile to England included a strong sense of being rejected. In *A Way in the World* (1994), the narrator says: 'I found with every visit I made to Trinidad that I was more and more cut off from the past'. (55) This is because of the 'racial politics' 'of the early black movement' which resulted in 'anti-Indian agitation' (Naipaul, 355).

The Mimic Men thus speaks about postcolonial empowerment. The main argument of the novel is the apparently ephemeral quality of postcolonial stability. Naipaul's portrait of Ralph as a mimic man emerges as a capricious shadow of a whole person playing at being both historical and political. Unfortunately, Naipaul also casts the novel's historical analysis in much the same light. However, Naipaul suggests in *The Mimic Men* that postcolonial stability is unstable and unreal because Isabella (modelled on Trinidad) is an artificially created society, designed for colonial profit, in which very different peoples have been forced to live together. According to him this society cannot be empowering until it comes to grips with these power relations. His political analysis draws attention to the underlying layers of damage suffered by the colonial society: 'the bigger truth came : that in a society like ours, fragmented, inorganic, no link between man and the landscape, a society not held together by common interests, there was no true internal sources of power'(206). The neurosis of this new political society of the Caribbean (fictionalized as Isabella in MM) is however reflected in the mimicry of the colonized. The following passage from *The Mimic Men*, spoken by the narrator, constructs a binary between 'them' (West) which signifies authenticity, presence, reality and 'us' (Caribbean) which signifies mimicry, absence and unreality:

> There, in Liege in traffic jam, on the snow slopes of the Laurentians, was the true, pure world. We, here on our island, handling books printed in this world

> and using its goods, had been abandoned and forgotten. We presented to be real, to be learning, to be preparing ourselves for life, we mimic men of the New World, one unknown corner of it, with all its reminders of the corruption that came so quickly to the new. (Naipaul, 146)

This passage also evokes the figure of the island not as a unified and unitary identity but as 'a fragment, a part of some greater whole from which it is in exile and to which it must be related, in an act of (never completed) completion that is always also, as it were, an exile, a loss of the particular. Thus, the island marks a different reality. Ralph also describes the island of Isabella as being hemmed in by an 'encircling tainted sea' (179).

Nevertheless, Naipaul has been denounced as 'a lover of the West, a black imperialist, a colonial renegade and even a racist' (Shelnutt cited in Mishra, V., 20); in other words, a mimicry man himself. Inevitably, both Naipaul and his protagonist, Ralph, are 'colonial people [who] are doomed forever to be pale reflectors of the dominant power' (102). However, MM contains something of the subversive ambivalence of mimicry that Homi Bhabha discuses at length in his essay, 'Of Mimicry and Man". Bhabha refers to the character Ralph Singh, Decoud (in Conrad's *Nostromo*), as well as historical figures, Grant and Macaulay, as 'the parodists of history'. Bhabha argues thus:

> Despite their intentions and invocations they inscribe the colonial text erratically, eccentrically across a body politic that refuses to be representative, in a narrative that refuses to be representational. The desire to emerge as 'authentic' through mimicry – through a process of writing and repetition - is the final irony of partial representation. (Bhabha, 88)

Further, according to him:

> Colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite. This is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference. (Bhabha, 86)

Ralph and his wife Sandra belong to a group on the island of Isabella which consists of Indian men and their expatriate wives, a colonial outcrop. They

mimic memories, stories, lives and landscapes that are not their own. This alienation from their own cultures, selves and island landscape is a product of colonialism and results in a certain kind of vulnerability and fragmentation. Ralph's generation reimagines the Caribbean and remarks 'home' through a mythology of Englishness. Ralph changes his name given to him at birth- Ranjit Kirpal singh – to the anglicized version, Ralph Singh. Mimicry is present in the duplication of a Midland landscape and the excess that it was never really an authentic experience. Colonialism is a rupture for this particular group because they are cut off from authentic experience and identities. But Ralph's self awareness is not representative of the general experience.

While Ralph's generation is trapped in colonial mythology, his mother's generation harks back to the Indian cultural landscape. Mimicry in relation to his mother's generation is not subversive but imitation and repetition and a parody of itself. When Ralph's mother performs Hindu religious rites over him and his wife when they first arrive in Isabella as a married couple, these sanctions were pretence, no doubt; but they were also an act of piety towards the past, towards ancient unknown wanderings in another continent. 'It was a piety I shared' (MM, 57). He believes that her maintaining of the link with the past is an attempt to acquire a greater sense of continuity and wholeness, but acknowledges that these gestures are removed from their immediate reality.

Ralph is aware that part of the reason for his feeling unreal, unstable and inauthentic is his suppression of his own history. This is something that other migrants also do: 'Each person concealed his own darkness. …The threat of other people's lives, the remembered private landscapes, the relationships…' (27-28). The novel holds awareness that in the metropolitan centre, there are many people (not only migrants) who are trying to be accepted in the city by denying their pasts. For example, this suppression of one's part relate to the English women as well. When Ralph marries Sandra, an English woman, he had desired her 'confidence, ambition, and rightness' (69), qualities that he sought in the English landscape. But Ralph discovers that Sandra carried her own darkness. Once he perceives her insecurity and sense of placelessness, his love for her begins to dissolve. He remarks:

> She had begun to get some of my geographical sense, that feeling of having been flung off the world … she told me she had awakened in the night with a feeling of fear, a simple fear of place, of the absent world… The very things I had once admired in her….were what I now pitied her for.” (MM, 69)

All Ralph’s relationships with women according to Pamela Mordecai never spring from any intent of good towards the woman, all are directed by ‘a logic that perceives each woman as a way of grasping the elusive self - Singh is after’ (641). Ralph meets other politicians in London who have been exiled from their colonies because they do not fit into pro-independence schemes. Ex-politicians in London or expatriates on the island, as John McLaren comments, ’have become detached from their native systems of culture, production and nationality’ (MM, 64). Ralph’s life degenerates into a vapid cosmopolitanism and a fetishising of English women as can be seen in his sexual relations with them. However, deterritorialisation also leads to a gaining of self-knowledge. Firstly, Ralph escapes to England. He then withdraws from metropolitan life to a London hotel. This move gives him the necessary impetus and perspective with which to look at and write generally about the history of colonialism and specifically about his own roots. His sense of disorder and distortion, of being fragmented and unsettled begins to be healed through the activity of writing which is shown to be way of gaining self-knowledge and provisional order. Ralph who rewrites the history of Isabella and his personal and political experience of exile with the awareness of the debilitating legacies of colonialism, achieves some degree of order from this process. Writing is a way to find self enlightenment. Ralph’s gaining of self-awareness vis-à-vis the shallowness of his power as a politician is displayed in the reflection that from the very beginning he did not belong on the island:

> There was my sense of wrongness, beginning with the stillness of that morning of return when I looked out on the slave island and tired to pretend it was mine. There was my sense of intrusion which deepened as I felt my power to be more a matter of words. So defiantly, in my mind, I asserted my character as intruder, the picturesque Asiatic born for other Landscapes’. (MM, 207)

Ralph's sense of exile is strengthened by his lack of connection with the island landscape. He is the representative of the Indian Caribbean colonial subject, but at the same time he takes himself away from the Caribbean. This double alienation gives him a particular insight. The Afro-Caribbean character, Browne, helps Ralph to historicise the island's landscape: 'Browne, helps Ralph to historicise the island's landscape: 'Browne showed me that its tropical appearance was contrived; there was history in the vegetation we considered most natural and characteristic' (146). The novel deconstructs the colonial ideology which posited the Caribbean as this resources-rich Edenic beauty. Ralph looks at the island in a new light realizing the illusion of this image of the Carribbean: 'Our landscape was as manufactured as that of any great French or English park. But we walked in a garden of hell, among trees, some still without popular names, whose seeds had sometimes been brought to our island in the intestines of slaves' (147). MM subverts the colonial narrative in which the Caribbean islands were portrayed as an Edenic paradise, by showing that in reality 'paradise is a battlefield' (White, 174); it was a landscape in which its people were migrants in exile.

Naipaul constructs a narrative in which colonialism represents rupture, fall and violation. This narrative also includes the estrangement from the homeland. Ralph returning from England to Isabella, describes his arrival in terms of alienation: 'I saw through each porthole the blue, green and gold of the tropical island. So pure and fresh| And I knew it to be, horribly man made; to be exhausted, fraudulent, cruel and above all, not mine' (50). The text is also subversive of this colonial idea of the island paradise by naming one of the most underprivileged characters (before the rise of the black movement), an Afro- Caribbean, 'Eden'. The Christian Biblical myth of the fall is translated to a colonial narrative in which the colonial subject is marked as a fallen being. MM charts a journey of self- discovery in which the crippling effects of colonial on the colonized are recognized. Ralph concludes: 'it is only during the climb back up that we can see how far, for all the continuing consciousness of wholeness and sanity, we had become distorted' (26).

Notions of impurity and trait in the novel are linked to women. Ralph sees the English women as a source of escape from the insecurity of his past and through his relationship with them he imagines he can align himself with a secure tradition. His sexual relationship and marriage are viewed by him in terms of their failure to

provide the security and connectedness that he yearns for. He reflects:' how right our Aryan ancestors were to create gods. We seek sex, and are left with two private bodies on a stained bed. The larger erotic dream, the god has eluded us' (18). The body is seen as the vessel. Ralph's feeling of alienation in the metropolitan centre leads him to destructively use his body and the bodies of woman. He seeks a temporary refuge in 'anonymous flesh' (28) but he ends up feeling a greater sense of emptiness and disgust, and viewing sex in terms of 'violation and self violation'(25).

The frequent use of the words 'violation' and 'taint' in the novel suggest that Naipaul subscribes to a discourse of purity which is related to his idea that colonialism resulted in the violation of colonies like Trinidad. There is certainly a puritanical quality about Naipaul's writing. One example of the purity discourse is Ralph's Aryan fantasies of superiority and the related fantasy that a celestial camera in the sky is following him and marking him as an 'outsider', someone with a special destiny. Furthermore, the mythic conception of home in the Aryan narrative which relates to notions of purity and superiority is critiqued by the disgust Ralph feels at his father's sacrifice of the Deschampsneufs horse, Tamango, according to 'an ancient sacrifice, 'Asvamedha' (140). For Ralph, Aryan purity has been violated by history- by his exiled father's actions in an unknown island. The text conveys the intervention of history in myths of purity. Ralph is not the only one on island who attaches himself to an alien tradition in order to imagine his identity as authentic. He says about his Chinese friend with the Afro- Caribbean mother: 'Hok had dreams like mine, was probably also marked, and lived in imagination far from us, far from the island on which he, like my father, like myself , had been shipwrecked' (97). Moreover, apart from the fantasy of the ancient Indian homeland, it was also part of the colonial mentality to believe that freedom lay in escape from the colony to the true home, England. Ralph referring to another character, Browne, says: 'Here was a longing, like my own, for freedom and what we considered the truth of our personalities' (212). Ralph and Hok are an example of two boys who are trying to deny the realities of their bi- cultural identity by desiring to be someone else. Their denial of their present condition of shipwreck is sustained by fantasies of purity which enable them to repress their difference, but this alienates them further from their desire to belong. The paradox is that racial or cultural miscegenation causes people to cling even more to myths of purity.

Exile is depicted in MM in terms of the mutilation of the body. In London, Ralph thinks to himself: ‘but I felt I was bleeding, with that second intimation of the forlornness of the city on which twice, I had fixed so important a hope’ (251). There are many images and incidents of damage scattered throughout the text. For example, when the narrator visits the site of the Kripalville Housing Scheme in Isabella or ‘Crippleville’ as it was later known, the foreman shows him the ‘the crater: a monstrous wound in the red earth’(61) . While the men were landscaping they came across the stump and the roots of a giant tree and used dynamite to get rid of them. Although the narrator tries to play down this incident, the suggestion that progress attempts to root out the past seems deliberate. Ralph leaves Isabella and attempts to reorder his life in London. His migration reflects the experience of ‘departure’ and reconnection in terms of the bone that ‘fractures’ and ‘has to be set anew each time’ (180).

However, Naipaul’s way of presenting his character’s “ambivalent attitude” serves, as has been studied here, to reveal the coloniser’s sinister policies in striving to keep control over the colonies, while seeming to satirise the colonial attitudes. Often, Naipaul’s protagonists discover that fleeing from the past only results in a greater sense of shipwreck. Naipaul suggests that the restlessness of the diaspora that left Trinidad for the West started a century back. In MM, arriving in London only intensifies Ralph’s sense of not having arrived anywhere: ’I knew that my own journey, scarcely begun, had ended in the shipwreck which all my life I had sought to avoid’ (7). This ‘deep sense of uneasiness’ that Ralph feels, although he is now in the centre, has been named ‘the enigma of arrival’ by Naipaul.’ England is not the utopian home he hoped it would be. Shipwreck is a metaphor of homelessness or exile from a true home. It express this feeling of being ‘cut off’ (118),’of having been flung off the world’ (69). It manifests itself as ‘a simple fear of place, of the absent world’ (69). However, that desire for the mythic home in England is subverted by Ralph’s experience of a mundane and anonymous existence in London.

Shipwreck is narrativised here in terms of enclosure, reduction of space and possibilities. Ralph depicts his first residence in England, Shylock’s boarding house in the following way: ‘We boarders lived, narrowly’ (9), in our ‘private cells’ (18) and ‘life was two-dimensional’ (19). Bhabha’s idea of the unhomely in the case of Henry James ‘The Portrait of a Lady is appropriate in this context. He says, ‘you can hear the

shrill alarm of the unhomely when Isabel Archer realizes that her world has been reduced to one high, mean window' (Bhabha, 9-10). The image that is readily evoked here corresponds to Ralph's self- description in *The Mimic Men*: 'And always at the end of the evening the book-shaped room, the tall window, myself sitting towards the light or towards the mirror' (28). This containment is symbolic of the history of a people in parenthesis, with parameters that have been imposed, accepted, reproduced and taken as fact. Naipaul disrupts the colonial narrative from the angle of the subaltern experience, especially the shock and agony of one being homeless.

2.11 Homelessness

Homelessness is conveyed in *The Mimic Men* through the series of temporary homes that Ralph occupies: Shylock's boarding house, the expatriate bourgeois house in Isabella, the London hotel room in which he writes his memories. Ralph and Sandra are unable to give their home in Isabella a sense of permananence. He reflects: 'It had never seemed important to us to have a house of our own. I had no feelings for the house as home as personal creation' (71). The transition from a HB in which Biswas' dream was to build his own home to Ralph's state of mind in *The Mimic Men*, suggests a deepening sense of exile in the author's imagination. Before Ralph finds the London hotel which he stays in for fourteen months, he is threatened with homelessness. He narrates: 'I travelled from small town, seeking shelter with my sixty-six pounds of luggage, always aware in the late afternoon of my imminent homelessness '(249). His situation recalls Edward Said's comment: 'The exile knows that in secular and contingent world, homes are always provisional.' (Said, 365).

The culture of homelessness focuses on the journey more than a fixed point of destination. Ralph gives priority to his period of exile in London over his days as a colonial politician and an expatriate in Isabella: 'this present residence in London, which I suppose can bee called exile, has turned out to be the most fruitful' (248). By the end of the novel, Ralph suggests that the detachment that exile affords, leads him to a higher state of consciousness" 'I no longer yearn for ideal landscape and no longer wish to know the god of the city. This does not strike me as loss. I feel, instead, I have lived through attachment and freed myself from one cycle of events' (250).This leads us to analyse further the concern for historical reality and the concomitant void in it.

2.8 History and the Void of History

As we know, the phase of the merchant capitalism began in 1497 and continued up to the end of 18th century. The phase of the industrial capitalism commenced soon after the industrial revolution took place in Europe. Naipaul records both the phases. History has never been considered such an important field of human study as it has come to be in the last few decades. It has occupied almost the central place in the literary and critical discussions and has been helping in the interpretation of life through its insight.

History formed a part of religion and philosophy in the ancient days. Then, during the classical period, Herodotus and others (5th like Century BC) distinguished historical narratives from others narratives like fictional progression were given to the West by Bible because it defined time in terms of a beginning, middle and end. Before it occupied the central position in our social, political literary and critical discussion, history was considered mainly as a series of related developments containing practical and moral lessons.

Then 19th century onwards, historians made conscious efforts to distance themselves from the rhetoric which was characteristic of historical writings. Thus, it moved a step towards gaining the status of a science. Hegel, Marx and their followers saw it representing the workings of certain ideologies. The Annals school of France realized the need for freeing it from ideological representational strategy and transforming historical studies into genuine science.

In the last few decades, history has come under severe skepticism. The question, whether it is really an account of what has taken place in the past or what the historians have recorded, are being asked. In the 70s and 80s, the post- modernist theorists discarded the then exiting concept of history as causal, closed and linear. They viewed it as 'made up' by the historians and therefore criticized it as a political act. It seemed to them that the "ideology – dependent subjective criteria of the historian as a maker determines what the historian suppresses or emphasizes or the order in which he arranges the historical material."(Singh, 192)

Modern historiography differs from classical or old historiography in several ways. The old historiography shares with fictional narratives the heritage of

rhetoric to present the subject matter in a particular way while the modern historiography is away from rhetoric. A historical narrative is both realistic and symbolic at the same time as the event being narrated is specific and, further; many such events take place in the world. And what is more important is the fact that the order of the event is by and large the same. Therefore, understanding of such events through historical narratives is quicker and smoother. Since it is possible to derive certain universal patterns from the events, a modern historiographer tends to discover and then exhibit them. In this regards, the historical description tends to be symbolic, as it describes the actual event and at the same time suggests similar events either elsewhere or in future. Further has always been a mystery. One is keen to know the course the present would take. Every good historical narrative is an allegorical representation of temporality as it satisfies the universal human desire of disclosing this certain moment in the event. Once they are able to relate it with certain moment in a historical event, the future course becomes visible.

Inevitably, historicality of an event implies that has secondary referentiality i.e. it does not refer to the event in question only, but also to many more events having similarity with it, because such events can occur anytime anywhere and approximately in the same order, and with the same consequence. However, every historical discourse worthy of name is not only a literal account of the past and the figuration of temporality but, beyond that, a literal representation of the content of a timeless drama that of humanity at grips with the experience of temporality. In this context, we are to admit that historiography is a 'poetic' discourse and writing history is to represent an event by means of selection and interpretation. He further points out that the stories come to us with beginnings, middles and ends, which the narrator places in the order that corresponds with his notions of meaning rather than out of a certainty that it is believed to have. In other words, the text is given a shape by the historian by imposing a plot on it. Thus, historiography comes close to the novel writing. Hayden white perceives a similarity between the two as both share emplotting strategies of exclusion, emphasis and subordination of the elements of story. Both present the 'structure of human time' in a series of actions having the cause and effect relation. The question of plot is very important in the narratives, history being the 'discourse of real' and the novel being the discourse of imaginary or desire.

Both the novelist and the historiographer indulge themselves in inventing a plot for their narrative. However, in history the tail wags the dog, as the plot is already found because the end of the event is known to all. Therefore, the historian begins form the end of which he is sure and moves towards the beginning. During the course, he discovers the inherent plot involved in it and records it. On the other hand, the novelist begins from the beginning, invents a plot and narrates it. He is privileged in the sense that he can steer into any plausible direction. The meaning of stories lies in their plot, which helps configuring events in such a way that it represents symbolically the human experience of the time.

Historical plot-setting is a poetic activity. However, the imagination involved in it is productive rather than reproductive or associative as in fiction. Historiography is a work of scholarship requiring painstaking historical investigation. He takes recourse to the technique of analysis employed in social sciences for identifying the social forces at work. Moreover, he avails himself of hindsight and its advantages. In other words, he does not confine himself to seeing the events from the point of view of past agents alone, but provides his own assessment of them too. Of course, historiography does not become a matter of style, for the stories are not only well- made but their outlines correspond with the sequence of events they represent.

V.S. Naipaul has been much beholden to history and as a scholar of history and as a scholar of history and a modern historiographer; he has made a significant contribution to it. As a journalist and world traveller, he has visited many countries and has investigated into some significant and controversial matters with skeptic vigour. Naipaul is a modern historiographer with reference to his *The Loss of El Dorado* (1969).

History has attracted a good number of commonwealth writers like M.R. Anand, Raja Rao, M.Malgaonker, Khushwant Singh, Chinua Achebe, Ngugi Wa Thiongo, Wilson Harris, George Lamming and Naipaul, among others. These writers have made considerable use of history in their fictional writings and have striven to represents their past through fictional worlds with a new perspective on it. They tend to recast and re-assess the prevalent views about their past. Often they question and challenge the versions of history that they have received from their colonial masters/rulers by brining on the surface the hidden facts of the past. Often this story is

more accurate than the versions in the annals of history. Naipaul differs from his counterparts in the sense that while the other writers tend to reject the given history through their fictional writings only, Naipaul questions the validity and reliability of history through his writings of pure history itself.

The hidden pain of history is connected in Ralph's psyche with his father and not his mother as was the case in HB: 'I cherished my mother's family and their Bella Bella Bottling Works. But in my secret life I was the son of my father and a Singh' (97). The relationship between son and father is an important one in the book, and is partly based on Naipaul's relationship with his father. The father descends into a kind of hysteria which the son, Ralph, notes: 'His face was drawn; the pouches under his eyes went dark; and the unusual mood of the day now showed itself to have been a type of hysteria' (123). Vijay Mishra asserts thus:

> Naipaul's narrative is not part of the grand narrative of Empire- his autobiographical narrative is an antidote to colonial history. The focus shifts from the rulers to the colonized as memory recalls narratives of loss and neurosis (Mishra, 23).

Ralph regrets that his father's neurosis has become his own, but the realization that their destinies are linked: 'mine, for all my unwillingness, was to be linked to his '(124) brings him to a greater understanding of the effects of the colonial experience. Though the inheritance of his father's obsessions, he is able to see how that neurosis is repeated in his own generation. It is a history that he cannot suppress altogether. He has to confront it. Thus, the link between him and his father is not simply debilitating. Similarly, Biswas' father in HB, dying a slow death on the island, his talent unappreciated, one day looks into the mirror and cannot see himself and has a nervous breakdown. He feels unwanted by the land of his birth and has visions of his own extinction. In *The Mimic Men* Ralph who has inherited this fear of being a nobody from his father, has a similar experiences in London, where he feels 'the panic of ceasing to feel himself as a whole person' (27).

Naipaul has been criticized for his insistence that the Caribbean is surrounded by the void of history. But he is pointing to the fact that Caribbean history needs to take into account the fact that the history of the colonized from their point of view had been rooted out. Naipaul's writing question why there is that void and in a

sense attempts to 'fill' the void even as he criticises it as a void. He acknowledges that when he had written about Trinidad's landscape in the past, it was the one that he was familiar with as a child. But there was an older landscape which had been wiped clean (207-209). Naipaul tried to recreate this aboriginal landscape in his mind's eye in order to gain a sense of wholeness and re-imagining: "it was hard to hold on to the idea of the aboriginal and fabulous. This is an implicit admission of the limitations of his attempt to 'fill' the absence in Caribbean history. Moreover, Naipaul rewrites the colonial narrative which has put the blame of the disappearance of the natives of the island on the migrant peoples: We, who had come in a variety of ways from many continents, were made to stand in for the aborigines and were held responsible for the nullity which had been created long before we had been transported to it" (Naipaul, 77).

This ambivalence of exile is visible in *The Mimic Men*. On the one hand, there is Ralph's feeling of temporariness on the island, and on the other there is his undeniable rootedness to the island. This dual sense has resulted from an accident of history. But it seems Ralph does undergo a journey in which his questing for order in the beginning of his own history. In a London hotel, he begins the task of re-imagining his own history of 'disorder'. Naipaul is conscious of himself as an Indian and of his heritage. He is well read in Indian history and literature. His criticisms of India are those of a nationalist who feels humiliated by the passivity, factionalism and traditionalism which allowed foreign conquests of India and which contributed to the decay of great civilizations of the past.

Naipaul's perspective has been perhaps shaped by the humiliations of his youth; it is also influenced by his consciousness of being an Indian and the humiliations India had suffered. Its weakness led to its people being shipped around the world as indentured labour, the abandonment of the Indians in black-dominated Trinidad and Guyana, the expulsions of Indians from Africa. Although he avoids the useless, self-wounding rhetoric of protest and resentment, his writings note the humiliation of Indians whether during the Islamic, the British destruction of the former Indian economy, the fear felt by the Trinidadian Indians towards Negro policemen or the confiscation of Indian businesses in post-colonial Africa.

A writer of Indian origin writing in English seems to have an object of his or her imagination has to be there for his mother country. At the core of diaspora literature is the idea of the nation state. The Diaspora literature focuses on cultural states that are defined by immigration counters and stamps on one's passport. The diasporic community in World literature is quite complex .It has shown a great mobility and adaptability as it has often been involved in a double act of migration – from India to West Indies and Africa to Europe or America on account of social and political resources. Writers like Salman Rushdie, Rohington Mistry, Bharati Mukherji, Jumpa lahiri eventually write from their own experience of hanging in limbo between two identities: non-Indian and Indian.

The diasporic Indian is like the banyan tree, the traditional symbol of the Indian way of life, he spreads out his roots in several soils, drawing nourishment from one when the rest dry up. Far from being homeless, he has several homes, and that is the only way he has increasingly come to feel at home in the world. Naipaul has been a victim of double diaspora as his ancestors migrated from India to Trinidad in 1880; since then, his family has lived there. He went there as a student of Oxford University College and after that settled there. The sense of expatriteness was in his blood because he was born and educated in a country which was not his own and now he is residing in England. As he is victimised with double diaspora, he can't call any place his home. He is a visitor wherever he goes. He suffers from the crisis of unbelongingness that is a feature which one can't ignore while reading Naipaul. He is a West Indian writer who is disinherited by all traditions and exposed to problems of becoming a writer. In Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*, the protagonist and narrator, Salim, moves from the east African coast to start a new business – and with it, he hopes, a new life – in the African interior. Salim's ancestors are from Gujarat in India but his family has lived on the African coast for many generations; they are a family of traders, with links to the Indian Ocean coasts of Arabia, Persia and India. In Salim says that the coast was not truly African. It was an Arab-Indian-Persian-Portuguese place, and they who lived there were really people of the Indian Ocean. True Africa was at their back. Salim decides to leave his family and move by himself to a town in Central Africa at the bend of a great river; the town, the river and the country, though very obviously Kisangani at the bend of the Zaire and in what was then the Zaire (the novel is set in the 60s and 70s), are never mentioned. Naipaul, presumably, uses this

technique so he can make certain abstractions that might have otherwise not been possible.

People from many different tribal backgrounds live in the Central African town that Salim has moved into; they have come from villages around to make a living in the town. Even in periods when things are going well and business is booming there is always a feeling that collapse will come soon, that the town will go back to being a ruin just has it had at the time of the country's independence.

What Naipaul seems to be suggesting is that being part of a civilization or a heritage – however distant you may be from it or however peripherally you may be associated with it: just as the Indians, Greeks and Italians in town were – could somehow give you a certain dignity and a sense of your own importance? What he is also suggesting is that the backwardness of the Africans Salim is writing of is such that they have nothing to look back to. There's a hint of condescension and snobbishness in this assessment; it is a feature of Naipaul's writings; in other parts of the novel Naipaul's prejudices are more directly stated (more on that in the next post). Presumably the backwardness or primitivism Naipaul is talking about refers to village ways, ancestor-worship and animist ways, ways that were mostly self-contained and had never been in any broad sense part of a larger empire or tradition. And the encounter of these backward Africans with modernity, with European achievements and colonization had left a wound; it had filled African minds like those of Ferdinand's with "all kinds of junk".

Naipaul has been making news for his work of non-fiction: *The Masque of Africa* is a serious attempt to understand real African attitudes. But the parts that have made news are where Naipaul's strong sense of disgust takes over him, particularly over the news that several African communities eat cats. This is what has lead to headlines about Naipaul describing Africans as primitive pet-eaters. Naipaul's essential attitude to food is shown in what is possibly the earliest piece of his writing to find its way into print. This is in a letter dated September 21, 1949 to his elder sister Kamla which starts the collection *Letters Between a Father and a Son* (1999). Naipaul is describing an agonising Old Boy's Association dinner:

> Special arrangements, I was informed after dinner, had been made for me but these appeared to have been limited to serving me potatoes in different ways – now fried, now boiled.” The others were served turtle soup which the vegetarian Naipaul would not eat and he asked the manager for corn soup instead. He ignored this and the waiter bought me a plateful of green slime. This was the turtle soup. I was nauseated and annoyed and told the man to take it away. This, I was told, was a gross breach of etiquette.”(*Letters Between a Father and a Son,* 67)

Writing a food column on someone who doesn’t seem to like food much may seem perverse (and given Naipaul’s probable scorn of something like food writing we hope he never gets to see this!) Yet as that first printed letter shows, Naipaul often does write about food, if not in terms of any relish. Rather, as a writer who builds on carefully noted details, he uses observation of food – its preparation, rituals, and consumption – to convey larger points. In *The Middle Passage* (1962), his Caribbean travelogue, he looks with horror how in an Amerindian hut in Guyana food is kept exposed to the dirt inside: “I felt then that reverence for food – rules for its handling, interdictions – was one of the essentials of civilization.”

Reverence doesn’t translate into much liking. In Naipaul’s novels if food is consumed with enjoyment it usually has disastrous consequences. In *A House for Mr.Biswas* (1961), Naipaul’s most famous protagonist comes a cropper when he over-indulges, in bananas in one finely comic scene, seafood in another. He eats 26 oysters and a tin of salmon and soon regrets it: “The raw, fresh smell of oysters was upsetting him now. His stomach was full and heavy, but unsatisfied. … Secret eating never did him any good.” Mr.Biswas’ 26 oysters are topped by the 100 that the narrator of the title story in *A Flag on the Island* (1967) puts away, causing queasiness that colours his perception of all subsequent events.

Physicality in general doesn’t come off well with Naipaul. His distaste for food is generally matched by his unappetising view of sex, but in *The Mimic Men* (1967) food still comes off worse. The narrator visits prostitutes, and “once, more quickening of self-disgust than any other thing, I had a sight of the prostitute’s supper, peasant food, on a bare table in a back room.” It seems to make what he is doing

worse, that he has been intimate with someone who eats that way. The same book has one of Naipaul's few pleasant depictions of food, an elegant spread at a cocoa plantation: "Cocoa and pawpaw and fried plantains, freshly baked bread and avocadoes; all served on a tablecloth of spotless white…"

Naipaul doesn't fare much better in his travels. In his last Indian travelogue *A Million Mutinies Now* (1990), despite misgivings, he accepts food from a man in Madras who lives to the strictest Brahmin standards (which prevent him from eating with his guest, something that, instead of finding annoying, Naipaul characteristically rather seems to admire). But eating the food "did make my writing fingers oily. This became hard to ignore; it called for a more than ritual washing outside – Kakusthan pouring for me, not complaining, wasting precious water from the well…" But this problem is minor compared to that in the climactic scene of *An Area of Darkness* (1964) when he finally reaches the Uttar Pradesh village that his grandfather left for Trinidad. A female relative insists he has food, or at least water. But Naipaul is adamant against this.

A Bend in The River (1979) was published twelve years after *The Mimic Men* (1967).

The latter was different from the two previously analysed novels in that it contained less dialogue and had a first person narrator, who used a contemplative narration. *A Bend in the River* has in common with *The Mimic Men* a contemplative first person narrator, but it adds another difference from the earlier works of Naipaul: the setting is radically changed; this time the protagonist, Salim, lives in a tropical country of Africa. In addition, he is a Muslim; nevertheless, this difference is only superficial, because Salim is the member of an immigrant family whose ancestors have migrated to Africa from India and belong to a sect of Muslims who are closer to Hindus. In that respect, the religious difference between Salim and the previous protagonists only reflects itself in the name, and little else. Having pointed to the complete change of geography, it has to be said, however, that this difference does not decrease the usefulness of this text for this study, as it depicts an African country that has been under the rule of "colonial powers" for some time, but has achieved independence. On the contrary, the change of setting to a "post-colonial country" in Africa has given this

study the chance to explore how Naipaul depicts characters and events in this distant "colonial location".

A Bend in the River starts with an account of Salim's drive from the East Coast of Africa to the centre, where he has bought a shop. After this account, the narrative flashes back to the East Coast to tell about Salim's motives for leaving his family and community and start a new life in the town at the bend in the river. Salim is the member of a community which settled on the coast of East-Africa some centuries earlier. Ethnically they belong to the North-Western part of India. He believes that their community is under imminent threat and therefore decides to buy Nazruddin's shop in the centre of the African continent.

The first chapter of the novel, *The Second Rebellion*, is about this period of Salim's life, when he struggles to build his own existence in this foreign postcolonial African country, until a second rebellion hits the town. The second chapter, *The New Domain*, tells about the period that follows the second rebellion, in which the town goes through an economical boom, and Salim meets Indar, an old friend and member of his former community, and Yvette, the wife of a Belgian historian who has come to the new Domain in the town to give lectures. In the third chapter, *The Big Man*, the authority of the new native ruler, "the Big Man," is felt more and more until the town suddenly slides into social unrest again. In the final chapter, *Battle*, Salim loses much of his property as a result of the president's scheme of "nationalisation" and narrowly escapes the imminent destruction in the town by boarding the steamer that takes him away from the field of battle on the dark river. This text has in common with all the previously studied novels, a criticism of the colonised. Remarkably, this criticism appears in the very first sentences of the text:

> The world is what it is; men who are nothing, who allow themselves to become nothing, have no place in it. Nazruddin, who had sold me the shop cheap, didn't think I would have it easy when I took over. The country, like others in Africa, had had its troubles after independence. The town in the interior, at the bend in the river, had almost ceased to exist; and Nazruddin said I would have to start from the beginning. (Naipaul, 9)

The critique in the first sentence is not an open one, but the following sentences of the paragraph explain who the addressee of the implied critique is: the colonised people of Africa. There are two different arguments in this paragraph, which remind of typical arguments of "colonial discourse" that try to "justify" the "conquering and exploiting" of foreign lands: The first one is, if they "allow" themselves to be conquered, they deserve it; the second is, they "cannot rule" themselves, because as soon as they get "independence" they fall into turmoil.

The binary opposition involved in this description of "trouble" after the "coloniser" has left is obvious: "civilisation" versus "bush," civilisation represented by the "European suburb," and bush representing the "African people." The interpretation of this would be then, that as soon as the colonizer leaves the African alone, he destroys the civilisation that the "European coloniser" has brought into the jungle. However, Salim also shows the other side of the coin. As he makes his difficult journey through bush and jungle, he thinks of the past, when enslaved Africans had to make the same journey, but in the opposite direction, to reach the East Coast. Salim can suddenly sympathise with them, as he experiences a similar paradoxical irony to the one the slaves used to face:

> The further away they got from the centre and their tribal area, the less liable they were to cut loose from the caravans and run back home, the more nervous they became of the strange Africans they saw about them, until at the end, on the coast, they were no trouble at all, and were positively anxious to step into the boats and be taken to safe homes across the sea. Like the slave far from home, I became anxious to arrive. (10).

This paradox of the slave's journey shows the dramatic plight and "victimisation" of the African, and provides a counter opinion to Salim's use of "critical discourse against the colonised", thus indicating an "ambivalent attitude" in Salim. Hence to conclude, V.S. Naipaul's creative oeuvre touches multiple nuances of the Caribbean socio-cultural life. His variegated genius with a typical historical sense

provides him with the opportunity to stand connected not only with the ancestral home, but also with the space, he traversed through his otherwise meaningful life. It would be prudent now, if we concentrate on multiculturalism and cultural hybridity in the works of V.S. Naipaul.

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III

Multiculturalism and Cultural Hybridity

There goes the saying: no nation is born multicultural and multiculturalism is an unnatural as well as unhealthy condition that can only afflict states in national decline. A multicultural state carries in its genes the seeds of eventual national destruction. Eventually, all multicultural nations are found to be in a state of political, moral, economic and social decay. Greed and corruption characterize the government, which ordinarily take to oppressive measures directed against citizens. Lies and deceit remain the stock and trade of media, politicians, and educational institutions. In recent times multiculturalism is instituted from the top down as an elitist ruling class tool used to play one or more racial or ethnic groups against another.

Multiculturalism is a policy that immigrants and others should preserve their cultures with the different cultures interacting peacefully within one nation. Today, this is the official policy of Canada, Australia and the UK. It is the defacto policy of most European countries, most notably The Netherlands and Scandinavian countries. However, contrasting views on the Australian model articulate a fundamental shift that identifies a singular homogenised culture derived from a heterogeneous society. Multiculturalism has been described as preserving a "cultural mosaic" of separate ethnic groups, and is contrasted to a melting-pot that mixes them. This has also been described as the salad-bowl.

Multiculturalism is a Marxist social theory which asserts that all cultures, races and religions are equal and able to live with harmony. Multiculturalists advocate the protection and recognition of cultural differences by the state. Multiculturalism is opposed to the idea of a dominant national culture as well as to the thought of a melting-pot, which expects the assimilation into the dominant culture. The goal of multiculturalism is the multicultural society, in which there is no governmental or non-governmental incentive or pressure to assimilate. The ethnic and cultural groups should rather co-exist. This model is based on the premise that the respective ethnic

groups are mutually understanding, respectful, tolerant, and view each other as equals. Since multiculturalism has been the official policy in several Western nations from 1970s, many of the great cities of the Western world are increasingly made of a mosaic of cultures, for reasons that varied from country to country. Multiculturalism, as distinct from the adjective multicultural (''of or pertaining to a society consisting of varied cultural groups''), first came into wide circulation in the 1970s in Canada and Australia as the name for a key plank of government policy to assist in the management of ethnic pluralism within the national polity. In this context, the emergence of the term is strongly associated with a growing realization of the unintended social and cultural consequences of large-scale immigration. Coined by a Canadian Royal Commission in 1965, this governmental use of ''multiculturalism'' is widely supported and endorsed by its proponents as both a progressive political imperative and an official article of faith – a term associated in principle with the values of equality, tolerance, and inclusiveness toward migrants of ethnically different backgrounds. ''Canadian multiculturalism is fundamental to our belief that all citizens are equal. Multiculturalism ensures that all citizens can keep their identities, can take pride in their ancestry and have a sense of belonging. Typically, multiculturalism here is a social doctrine that distinguishes itself as a positive alternative for policies of assimilation, connoting a politics of recognition of the citizenship rights and cultural identities of ethnic minority groups and, more generally, an affirmation of the value of cultural diversity. Even nation states which had traditionally been known as fiercely homogeneous, such as Germany and Japan, could no longer avoid acknowledging the ethnic and racial diversification of their populations. As a result of intensifying global migrations, the world becomes increasingly a place of multi-ethnic states, with up to 30% of the population coming from other societies ''Multicultural'' is thus often equated with multiethnic in public discourse, which in turn is conflated with multiracial, indicating the extent to which debates on multiculturalism are concerned predominantly with the presence of non-white migrant communities in white, Western societies.

While the precise meaning of the word is never clear, it refers generally to the dilemmas and difficulties of the politics of difference. Critics come from both conservative and radical angles. Left-radical critics have found fault in (liberal) multiculturalism because it allegedly depoliticizes or aestheticizes difference by

emphasizing the cosmetic celebration of cultural diversity, rather than the socially transformative struggle against racism or white supremacy. For them, multiculturalism stands for a strategy of containment of resistance and revolt rather than for a true desire for the elimination of racial/ethnic oppression. In a more postcolonial vein, the celebrationist notion of diversity – the practical expression of which can be witnessed in the proliferation of multicultural festivals organized by local governments in areas with a high presence of migrant populations – is often dismissed by cultural critics because of its folkloristic, and consumerist nature: Multiculturalism in Australia is acceptable as a celebration of costumes, customs, and cooking from the perspective of postcolonial and postmodern theory, multiculturalism is criticized for its implicit assumption that ‘‘ethnic groups’’ are the inherent proprietors of ‘‘culture’’ and that ‘‘cultures’’ are fixed and static realities. These diverse critical strands have in common that they consider multiculturalism, as a state-managed policy and discourse, as not going far enough in transforming the white-dominated dominant culture. Hence, the term critical multiculturalism is sometimes coined as a radical alternative to liberal multiculturalism. Unlike the latter, the former sees diversity itself as a goal, but rather argues that diversity must be affirmed within a politics of cultural criticism and a commitment to social justice.

The Third World intellectual, cross-pollinated by postmodernism and postcolonialism, has arrived: a migrant who, having dispensed with territorial affiliations, travels unencumbered through the cultures of the world bearing only the burden of a unique yet representative sensibility that refracts the fragmented and contingent condition of both postmodernity and postcolonialty. Journeying from the "peripheries" to the metropolitan "centre," this itinerant intellectual becomes an international figure who at once feels at home nowhere and everywhere. No longer disempowered by cultural schizophrenia or confined within collectivities such as race, is class, or nation, the nomadic postcolonial intellectual said to "write back" to the empire in the name of all displaced and dispossessed peoples, denouncing both colonialism and nationalism as equally coercive constructs.

The ideological lineage of this itinerant postcolonial intellectual is typically hybrid because postcoloniality is the condition of what we might ungenerously call a comprador intelligentsia: a relatively small, Western-style, Western-trained group of writers and thinkers, who mediate the trade in cultural commodities of world

capitalism at the periphery**.** These cultural mediators are invariably dependent on and inevitably influenced by Euro-American publishers and readers, Western universities, and westernized elite educational institutions in Asia or Africa. Not surprisingly, then, the first generation of postcolonial novels largely reflected the belief held by both Third World intellectuals and the high culture of Europe—that new literatures in new nations should be anti-colonial and nationalistic. For instance, Indian sub-continental as well as African novels of the 1950's and frequency are represented as the imaginative re-creations of a common historical/cultural past crafted into a shared tradition by the writer in the manner of Walter Scott. Since the late 1960**s,** however, such celebratory novels have gradually faded away. Their place was taken by novels that aimed to expose corrupt national bourgeoisies that had championed the causes of rationalization, industrialization, and bureaucratization in the name of nationalism and nativism, only to keep the national bourgeoisies of other nations in check. In addition to stridently opposing nationalism and nativism, the novels of the 1970s and 1980s strongly repudiated the realist novel because it naturalized a failed nationalism. Far from being celebrations of the nation, the novels of the second postcolonial stage are novels of de-legitimation they reject not only the Western imperial but also the nationalist project of the national bourgeoisie. The basis for that de-legitimation does not derive from a postmodernist relativism; rather it is grounded in an appeal to an ethical universal, a fundamental revolt against oppression and human suffering. It is precisely as spokespersons for the dislocated and the disenfranchised that postcolonial immigrant intellectuals have gained legitimacy in the international media-market, which can be explored in Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*.

In *A Bend in the River* there is conjuring up of a small culture, an Indian culture in exile in Africa. Mahesh, Indar and Nazruddin have learnt the art of survival. Salim the narrator, without any special qualifications or education, does not want to break the links with the past to come to terms with his bewildering present. He cannot overcome his sense of loss with the casualness of Mahesh or Indar. "The outside world no longer offered refuge; it had remained for me the great unknown and was, increasingly, perilous." (BR, 221)

In this context, we are reminded of the image of the postcolonial writer as migrant. Salman Rushdie's politico-aesthetics is a case in sight, which regards the

experience of multiple dislocations - temporal, spatial, and linguistic - to be crucial, even necessary, for artistic development:

> It may be argued that the past is a country, from which we have all emigrated, that its loss is part of our common humanity. Which seems to me self-evidently true; but I suggest that the writer who is out-of country and even out-of- language may experience this loss in an intensified form. It is made more concrete for him by the physical fact of discontinuity, of his present being in a different place from his past, of his being "elsewhere." This may enable him to speak properly and concretely on a subject of universal significance and appeal. (*Imaginary Homelands*, 12**)**

The passage, which begins by presenting immigration as a metaphor for a common human experience, quickly proceeds to privilege the geographically/culturally displaced writer as someone uniquely equipped at once to reclaim the faded contours of a specific lost homeland and to speak of things that have 'universal' significance. In contemporary corporate parlance, we might say the migrant writer combines local touch with global reach. The experience of dislocation apparently gives the writer an enhanced ability to self-consciously reflect on the constructedness of reality:

> The migrant suspect's reality having experienced several ways of being, he understands their illusory nature. (Rushdie, 125).

Multiculturalism has become a racket, says VS Naipaul. Nobel laureate VS Naipaul has condemned terrorism and blamed Saudi Arabia for funding it. He has also attacked multiculturalism in Britain and said immigrants must integrate into their host country instead of demanding special privileges. Born in Trinidad of Indian origin, Naipaul calls multiculturalism 'absurd' and a racket creating jobs for the race relations industry. In an interview with Tatler he said:

> What do they call it? Multi-culti? It's all absurd, you know. I think if a man picks himself up and comes to another country he must meet it halfway.
>
> (Naipaul, interview)

Naipaul, who lives in Wiltshire, came to Britain in the 1950s and was educated at Oxford. His latest interview is to coincide with the publication of his novel *Magic Seeds*. In 2001 he won the Nobel Prize for Literature. *A House for Mr Biswas* is a 1961 novel by V. S. Naipaul, significant as Naipaul's first work to achieve acclaim worldwide. It is the story of Mr Mohun Biswas, an Indo-Trinidadian who continually strives for success and mostly fails, who marries into the Tulsi family only to find himself dominated by it, and who finally sets the goal of owning his own house. Drawing some elements from the life of Naipaul's father, the work is primarily a sharply-drawn look at life that uses postcolonial perspectives to view a vanished colonial world.

In 1998, the Modern Library ranked *A House for Mr Biswas* on its list of the 100 best English-language novels of the 20th century. Time magazine included the novel in its "TIME 100 Best English-language Novels from 1923 to 2005". Mohun Biswas (Mr Biswas) is born in rural Trinidad to parents of Indian origin. His birth is considered inauspicious as he is born in the wrong way and with an extra finger. A pundit prophesies that the newly born Biswas "will be a lecher and a spendthrift. Possibly a liar as well, and that he will eat up his mother and father." The pundit further advises that the boy be kept "away from trees and water. Particularly water". A few years later, Mohun leads a neighbour's calf, which he is tending, to a stream. The boy, who has never seen water "in its natural form", becomes distracted watching the fish and allows the calf to wander off. Mohun hides in fear of punishment. His father, believing his son to be in the water, drowns in an attempt to save him, thus in part fulfilling the pundit's prophecy. This leads to the dissolution of Mr Biswas's family. His sister is sent to live with a wealthy aunt and uncle, Tara and Ajodha, while Mr Biswas, his mother, and two older brothers go to live with other relatives.

Mr Biswas is withdrawn prematurely from school and apprenticed to a pundit, but is cast out on bad terms. Ajodha then puts him in the care of his alcoholic and abusive brother Bhandat which also comes to a bad result. Finally, Mr Biswas now becoming a young man decides to set out to make his own fortune. He encounters a friend from his days of attending school who helps him get into the business of sign-writing. While on the job, Mr Biswas attempts to romance a client's daughter and his advances are misinterpreted as a wedding proposal. He is drawn into a marriage which he does not have the nerve to stop and becomes a member of the Tulsi household. With the Tulsis, Mr Biswas becomes very unhappy with his wife Shama and her overbearing family, which bears a slight resemblance to the Capildeo family into which Naipaul's father married. He is usually at odds with the Tulsis and his struggle for economic independence from the oppressive household drives the plot. The Tulsi family (and the big decaying house they live in) represents the traditional communal world; the way life is lived, not only among the Hindu immigrants of Trinidad but throughout Africa and Asia as well.

Mr Biswas is offered a place in it, a subordinate place to be sure, but a place that's guaranteed and from which advancement is possible. But Mr Biswas rejects that. He is, without realizing it or thinking it through but through deep and indelible instinct, a modern man. He wants to be, to exist as something in his own right, to build something he can call his own. That is something the Tulsis cannot deal with, and that is why their world—though that traditional world, like the old Tulsi house which is its synecdoche, is collapsing—conspires to drag him down. Nevertheless, despite his poor education, Mr Biswas becomes a journalist, has four children with Shama, and attempts (more than once, with varying levels of success) to build a house that he can call his own. He becomes obsessed with the notion of owning his own house and it becomes a symbol of his independence and merit. This strand of reality in Biswas's life creates the occasion for us to delve deep into the postcolonial formulations and to analyse how significantly justified they are in case of Naipaul's multicultural anchorage.

3.1 Postcolonialism in the Fiction of V.S.Naipaul

Postcolonial theory is more or less characterized by cultural and historical dislocations. Diasporic literature in the same vein is the reflection of cultural and historical crises, place and identity, East-West encounters, multi-identities such as ethnicity, racism, regionality, nationality, transnationality, gender and cultural locations, displacement, fragmentation, internalization and marginalization, memory, home land, house and self-identity. These above mentioned salient features are reflected in Naipaul's groundbreaking novel, *A House for Mr.Biswas*. (1969). The novel, *A House for Mr. Biswas* is otherwise rated as the West-Indian epic. The story of the West-Indies is also the story of Mr.Biswas and the Tulsi family. Lack of definite cultural past, search for unity at cultural level, colonialism, multiculturalism, brokenness of land, fragmentations of minds are some of the dominant features which contribute to the West-Indian ethos.

A House for Mr.Biswas exemplifies bondage of an individual and a society and it is also a work which demonstrates how a motif of freedom is achieved. At the individual level it is the story of Mr. Mohan Biswas who moves form bondage to freedom and Naipaul explains this with autobiographical reminiscences. Like Naipaul's own grandfather, Biswas confronts slavery right from the beginning. He is a person those psyche is imprisoned though a superstitious philosophy. His birth at twelve o'clock in the midnight, the six fingers he carries, the prophecy that is told about him are the factors planting the seeds of his constructive philosophy. Moreover, the physical conditions around him lend him to a survival tendency.

Under colonialism and slavery the longing for survival wipes out a person's sense of self and causes alienation. Soon after the death of his father the family is disintegrated. Pratap and Prasad are sent away. His mother Bipti works at Tara's

place, Pagotis. Disintegration of a family is also a dominant feature of salve condition both in America and the West-Indies. Mohan Biswas's bondage is finally conforms when he is married to Shama. His arrival into the Tulsi family is the second phase of Biswas's slavery. Like a slave or the colonial subject, Biswas cannot exercise the power of his free will or his free will not easily allows making any choices. Karl Marx in his book Das Capital describes the pathetic condition of a slave as "Interpellation" where a person has to make choices when there are no choices really available. Mr.Biswas cannot go back to his past, nor can he go to a future, for none of them are available to him. A slave occupies place assigned to him by the master and Biswas prefers to remain constantly in the geographical and ideological orbit of Tulsi dome. At the physical level he is granted no autonomy so far as his living and work is concerned. He accepts the work assigned to him by Mr.Seth and Tulsi, moves to their estate one after the other like Albert Camus's wooden lock flouting adrift endlessly. Like the existential hero of Camus' all his actions proved to be futile. Like Camus' Sisyphus the more the struggles the more he fails in life. From Hanuman House to the chess, from the chess to Green Vail, and from there to the short Hills is the journey of Biswas. These are the places making Biswas rootless all the time. He cannot claim any identity or sense of belonging. More than Biswas, an individual, he becomes one of the Tulsi's sons-in-law who are nothing but persons reduced to the status of a slave. Rootlessness, loss of identity becomes the sign structure signifying Biswas's life.

At the ideological level Biswas is not a person totally assimilated in Tulsi dome as are Pandit, Hari, Madhao and Govinda. There is an aching consciousness in him to fend liberation from Tulsi dome. However, muteness frustrates his desire for revolution can be made meaningful through a liberated action. Biswas does not act, he becomes mute, or he is muted through physical violence and suppression as well as psychological exploitation. Frantz fanon in his book Black Skin White Mask maintains that salience is nothing but mute agreement or it is the sign of death, which is final salience. Biswas is not able to break the law of Tulsi dome, nor is he able to articulate his desire for liberation concretely. He remains imprisoned.

The novel is not about bondage; it is about liberation of Mohan Biswas. At the short Hills finally he is able to build house of his own. The house is not a place but

a symbolic place in the world of placelessness. It is a mark of identity in the world of alienation. It is symbolic zone of a liberated psyche. Mohan Biswas moves from the imprisoned zone of Tulsi dome and makes a departure into a new paradise characterizing ontological transmutation. Mohan Biswas feels liberated before the final liberation, his death that occurs at the age of forty-six. Biswas, as Naipal suggests, is not an individual but the metaphor of the West Indian culture. He represents that society. Historylessness, pastlessness, fragmentation, colonialism, slavery, cultural dislocations are common to both, Biswas and the West Indies. Liberation of the West India from the British Empire is like the liberation of Mohan Biswas himself. The West Indian islands gain autonomy politically, society and economically through the disintegration of British Empire. Biswas ultimately gets liberation, which Tulsi dome is totally shortened. The old order passes away, new minds are liberated and happy are born. Rebirth of a culture, rejuvenation of the self is established once again. Hence, the novel is called the West Indian epic telling the story not of an individual but of the entire West Indian society. George Lamming has written "His books can't move beyond a castrated satire." A House for Mr.Biswas made Lamming's criticism out of date and Naipaul's subsequent writing continues to demonstrate the value of his independence.

Naipaul is not only interesting to his readers; he at times poses an invitation to postcolonial critics to take stock. Most of them focus on Naipaul's documentary interests (in both fiction and travelogue) to argue that the symbiosis of writing and recording in his work reflects the responsibilities of writing out of others' articulated experiences, of transforming something already framed—a technique which almost amounts to an intertextuality of history. Throughout, literary strategies are discussed in relation to the meanings of Naipaul's cultural critique. Inevitably, perhaps, the weaker analysis relates to the fiction. Not much is made of the narrative complexities of, for example, *Guerrillas*, or to the economic arguments underpinning the novel, and the debt to Fanon established by Michael Neill. The whole point is that there are no guerrillas, merely a simulacrum of resistance which is used by the authorities to lure potential opposition into the open, to be suppressed.

> We violate no body so much as our; towards it we display the perversity of the cat that constantly rips its wounds open. I saw that there was waster; and I felt, let there be waste. The habits of my student days, which had never altogether died, were now revived. On the island I had become acquainted with a number of women of various races, of the utmost discretion; what had been an occasional extravagance became, as before, an addiction, but now guiltless and clinical. Sometimes I had to stifle my own disgust; sometimes it went well. And it was after a good and successful afternoon- they speak of the sadness of the animal after coitus: but in my experience fulfilment was always followed by a mood of exceptional gentleness and optimism- it was after one good afternoon that I found myself about to say to Sandra as we were dressing to go out- the sentence was fully phrased: delight had been converting itself into reporting words all afternoon. (MM, 74)

V.S. Naipaul the widely acclaimed finest living writer of English prose is the seventh Indian or person with Indian roots to be awarded the Nobel Prize and the second, after Rabindranath Tagore, for literature. Born in Trinidad of Indian parentage, educated in Port of Spain and Oxford University, Naipaul has to his credit more than fourteen works of fiction and ten works of non-fiction. He is one of the finest winners of the prestigious Booker Prize (in 1971, for *In a Free State*) and was knighted by Queen Elizabeth in 1990. Living in England, his Knightsbridge locality of London. A relentless explorer of the traumas of postcolonial change with a moralist's outrage, Naipaul, in all of his writings has focussed on individuals attempting to escape fate, for fate belongs to a world of magic, myth and ritual where the past exists but not history, a world which provides a sense of wholeness and belonging. His heroes strive for the latter, for self-awareness and for change. This could also be a metaphor for peoples and nations. The Swedish Academy citation rightly remarks, "He is to a very high degree a cosmopolitan writer, a fact that he himself considers to steam from his lack of roots; he is unhappy about the cultural and spiritual poverty of Trinidad, he feels alienated from India, and in England he is

incapable of relating to and identifying with the traditional values of what was once a colonial power." (Swedish Academy citation)

Half a Life, published just before the Noble Prize came his way, portrays and evaluates the lives of the people of mixed descent three countries - India, England and Portuguese Africa(modelled on Mozambique) and their struggle to discover their identities. Partly autobiographical, the novel delineates the traumas of a tainted and troubled past, of attempting to find some meaning and purpose of life. It beautifully analyses the pangs of the exiles, their living a half-life, their sense of alienation, and their cultural traditions. *Half a Life* combines many of the traditional Naipaul's themes such as cultural alienation the concept of national literature how we define ourselves, with an unusual narrative structure.

The Story of the novel, moving through three different settings and three different eras, is told by three narrators. The first part of the story is told to the hero, Willie Chandran, by his 'self-deluded' father. A Brahmin by birth, coming from a line of priests (5) Willie's father decides to join the mahatma's campaign against casteism and marries a 'backward' girl very low in caste, as a supreme gesture of sacrifice, something the Mahatma would have approved of.' (10) Even as he takes the vow of 'brahmacharya' (33) he fathers a son and a daughter in quick succession. The son is Willie Somerset Chandran, the middle name taken from the visit by the famous English writer Somerset Maugham to his ashram; and the daughter is Sarojini, named after the 'woman poet of the independence movement.' The stigma of marrying below caste, the disappointment of the college Principal who wanted him to marry his daughter, the fear of the fire-brand uncle of his wife and his own shell-shocked parents forced him to leave his job in the Land Tax Department of the Maharaja and find shelter in the courtyard of the temple, Subsequently he set up his own ashram and began living the life of a 'holy man.' "This pantomime of high intention and pathos subsumes the story of Willie Chandran's father's life; his stints in the Maharaja's Land Tax Department, his refuge in melancholy and his eventual career as a bogus holy man. Curiously it stands Naipaul's own most poignant story on its head; the story of his first father's ambition and failure." (5) This was the story that Willie

Chandran's father told. It took about long years. Different things had to be said at different times. Willie Chandran grew put during the narration of the story (35).

It is at this point that the omniscient author intervenes to narrate the second part of the story. Having inherited the shaded, undistinguished ancestry in 'an undefined place in pre independent India, 'Willie Chandran sets out on a journey of life. Disillusioned with his stay at the Mission School and his parents, and uncertain of his future, Willie obtains, with help from one of his father's contacts, a scholarship to a college of 'education for mature students' in London. He arrives in England to find himself on the fringes of the 'special passing bohemian-immigrant life of London of the late 1950s 'The immigrant community of post-war London, its dingy west-end clubs, lonely pavements and sexual encounters and even the eccentric milieu of the English writers captivate much as frighten Willie. He is portrayed here as a young man 'with nothing to his name but his promise as a writer, drifting aimlessly, grouping for a voice.' Egged on by his creative triggers and armed with the advice of his publishing friend Roger, Willie begins to recreate himself with little lies in his stories, modeled on the borrowings from 'old Hollywood movies' and the 'Maxim Gorky trilogy from Russia.' Reviewers, however dismiss his book of short stories as a 'nondescript savory' and he quickly abandons his plan to be a writer.'Let the book die, let if fade away…I will write no more."(123)

Willie's life in London is fraught with many a frightening experience. He suffers from alienation and emptiness in being in the metropolis, 'a sense of being without history or understanding, the difficulty a writer from the colonies faces in finding material and his shocking sexual encounters.' He sleeps with prostitutes and friends' girl friends only to discover his own sexual incompetence. "Willie realizes that these own failures mirror the failure of colonialism; Britain losing India and Portugal losing Mozambique."(6) Willie, however, finds love in a chance encounter with Ana, mixed race girl from Africa and admirer of his abandoned book. They meet in his hostel-room. Willie has been a little tense and nervous before her arrival. But as soon as he saw her, all his anxieties fell away, and he was conquered.'(125) The most intoxicating thing was 'that for the first time in his life he felt himself in the presence of someone who accepted him completely.' At home his life had been ruled by his mixed inheritance. It spoilt everything. Even the love he felt for his mother, who should have been pure, was full of the pain he felt for their circumstances.'(125) His

experience of love with Ana, he hopes, might bring him the fulfilment he so desperately seeks. With her, he travels to her home in a province of Portuguese Africa 'a country populated by desperate businessmen and their frustrated wives, all uncertainly living out the last days of colonialism.'

The eighteen years of Willie's life with Ana in Africa recounted by him to his sister Sarojini forms the third and final part of the story running into 87 pages. At Ana's estate house in Africa, Willie feels like a stranger but draws sustenance from Ana: 'It may be because of something in our culture,' Willie reflects, 'that in spite of appearances, men are really looking for me because I depended on her for my idea of being a man.' (142) Willie gets along passionately with Ana, who helps him to live with 'a new of sex,' a new idea of his capacity, He experiences with her 'some genuine excitement, some moments of sexual discovery,' 'We each found comfort in the other; and we had become very close, not looking beyond the other for satisfaction, not knowing, in fact, that another kind of satisfaction was possible.'(189) But he does not look beyond Ana for satisfaction when in the company of Alvaro, the Correias' estate manager, he visits the converted warehouse on the cubicles and sleeps with a small, young girl who 'with her extraordinary look of command and aggression, need filled eyes, body becoming all tension' receives him and thus helps him recover from all the shame and incompetence of his earlier sexual encounters in London. Returning home, he doesn't feel that he has betrayed Ana in any important or final way. He feels that split-second still locked away in his mind. These furtive visits to the warehouses continue for some time until one day when he spots among the 'rouged and dressed up girls,' Julio's daughter. Ana's little maid who had evinced some interest in him on the very first morning of his arrival in Ana's estate house. Recalling the day, Willie feels that 'that was the day when I betrayed Ana, sullied her, as it were in her own house. Willie's visit to the 'places of pleasures' cusses to give him away any real pleasure now. This was partly due to the 'worry about seeing Julio's daughter again,' 'But the main reason was that the act of sex there, which used to excite me with its directness and brutality, had grown mechanical. (195) He tries to renew his lovemaking with Ana 'hoping to recover the closeness that had once seemed so natural (195) but it doesn't work. Soon, at a weekend lunch party he meets Graca, Correias' new Manger's wife and Carla's Convent school friend who has 'disturbed eyes and looks at him 'in a way that no woman had looked at me

before,(198). He makes love to Graca in the deserted cobra-infested German castle. “It would have been terrible.” Willie thinks afterwards, “If he had died without knowing this depth of satisfaction, this other person that I had just discovery within myself. It was worth any pieces, any consequence.” (205). this stormy affair is, however, short-lived. Willie’s sensual life receives a setback when he realizes that he has not been living his own life all these years.

“Africa’s brutalities intervene to dry up sexual urge. He slips one day on the front steps of Ana’s estate house and becomes unconscious. He wakes up later to find himself in the military hospital in the town ‘among wounded black soldiers with shining faces out in Ana’s land. When she comes to see him in the hospital, Willie tells her that he is going to leave her: “I have given you eighteen years, I can’t give you any more. I can’t live your life anymore; I want to live my own.” (136) He leaves Ana, leaves Africa and thus arrives in Berlin, at his sister’s house.” Willie discovers, as he narrates his life in Africa to his sister in Berlin, that ‘there was something in the African heart that was shut away from the rest of us, and beyond politics, a large part of that something happens to be raw sexual abandon.

> Willie’s submission to sexual desire is wholly believable for the very reason that he has previously been stunted into half-life by the constrictions of caste in India and class in England. Africa releases him into sensuality (HL, 7)

A major theme running through the novel and supported by its structure is that of exiles living a half-life. The story of the first forty years of the life of Willie Chandran, living in exile first in London the in Portuguese Africa in the years leading up to independence and civil war seems to suggests that man’s search for wholeness is only half-successful. ‘The displacement of the novel’s character from Willie through to the other exiles he comes into contact with, and how they manage this disappointment forms the tension in the story.”8 Willie’s circle of acquaintances in London consists of many an exile that lives in a ‘half –and-half world’ and suffers the pangs of alienation. There is that smartly dressed Percy Cato, a Jamaican of mixed parentage, ‘who appeared to have no paper place in the world’ (62) and who becomes Willie’s guide to the city; Marcus the west Indian, West African with his plans for a white grand child; and of all people, Ana who looks like an extension of Willie’s own

existence, mirroring his own sense of being on the outside of life, homeless without a direction back. Her autobiographical tales of Luisa also mirror Willie's half-lies about his own background.

All these exiles are living a half life or are looking for a life and perhaps having to borrow a life, never living life to the full. Even Sarojini, whose life remains largely untold, is homeless, wandering from one city to another with her German film maker husband. Her life is no more her own than Willie's sarojini's drift is more poignant than Willie's because she has hardly anything to fall back on. Willie has his stories and a hope of finding some purpose in life: 'All that he had was a belief in magic- that one day something would happen, an illumination would come to him, and be taken by a set of events to the place he should go.' (122) Willie discovers some purpose in life, though temporarily, through his sensual associations and sexual encounters in Ana's Africa but he realizes their futility soon after as these happen to be experiences in external settings and cannot be permanent for him. Near the end of his African life when Ana proposes they should go to Portugal, Willie replies, 'Even if we go to Portugal, even if they let me in there it would be still your life. I have been hiding for too long.'(227) And Ana's assertion, 'Perhaps it wasn't really my life either' suggests that even those who seem to be living their own lives don't really have more of a personal life than an exiled.

Allied with that of exile and alienation is the theme of cultural tradition. The bonds of tradition are too steely to break. Trying to explain his sexual incompetence, Willie speaks on phone to Perdita, Roger's girl friend: 'But I have a need of you. It was bad time. But I'll tell you. It is a cultural matter. I want to make love to you, but then at the actual moment old ideas take over and I become ashamed and frightened, I don't know of what, and it all goes bad.'(118) later in Africa, Willie does not feel the excitement he has been seeking desperately with the small, young girl in the warehouses: 'I couldn't feel any longer for her. Even if I did, all the ghosts were already with me, the ghosts of home… all the shame and incomplete (187) Further, in a post-coital exchange in a Land Rover in the bush, Willie whispers to Graca, 'I am smelling you on my body as I drive, (205) At the same time, he remains aware that the life into which he has been initiated is not really his own. The 'sexual simplicities of his own. The 'sexual simplicities of his earlier days are replaced by the opening up of new sense by a life of sensation in the company of Graca and he feels

helpless. At the same time now same half-feeling of the inanity of my life grew within me and with in there came the beginning of respect for the religious outlawing of sexual extreme.’ (211) Rooted, thus, in his own cultures tradition, Willie finally fails to establish any fulfilling relationship through his escape from caste and class. Willie’s real life, however, lies in waiting for something to happen, like the character in *Waiting for Godot*. Whether something really happens or not is not the issue. There is no full life except for the life we live. We make and remake ourselves to suit our circumstances. Naipaul’s *Half a Life* raises intersecting questions about what life really is all about. In a prose style that has the controlled yet curiously alluring frontier experience; *Half a Life* brings its own unique illumining to a novel aspect of our shared humanity.

On the more obviously documentary works, however, Naipaul is superb. The discussion of *A Way in the World*, in particular, deserves to be singled out, as a work which explores differently acculturated ways of seeing for the sake of the differences themselves. In the mature documentary texts, Naipaul combines a variety of narrative strategies: the narrator's questions, direct quotation, free indirect discourse, retention of elements of the speaker's voice, the narrator's paraphrases, editing, information presented in his own voice, direct and indirect comments, straight facts, and fictional inventions, including wholly invented characters. Writing of this calibre demands a highly sophisticated and attentive reader, and Barnouw is head and shoulders above many of Naipaul's less skilled critics. As she explains it, in his works, different people's stories move into the foreground as pieces of cultural puzzles, which the author puts together in front of the reader, with the emphasis on reconstructing the speakers' cultural environments from their stories, while retaining individuality. Naipaul develops a gestalt principle of people in their cultural context, much as a good chess player can rapidly sum up the meanings of a complex constellation. Not all pieces of the puzzle will fall into place. As in an Oriental carpet, there is always a marker for incompleteness. Quite explicitly Naipaul treats the problem of narrating from a position of partial knowledge, with the result that the interviewed person assumes something of the nature of a fictional character. The same is true of the narrator, also in some ways a stranger to himself, and of the past, perhaps the ultimate stranger, and more unknown to us than the most distant physical phenomenon. In this exploration of strangeness, the result is an understanding of the

instability of difference, as something that changes in the process of looking and listening.

It is important here to distinguish Naipaul's practice from any easy celebration of postcolonial difference, or the creative reading-against-the-grain of some theorists. Like Iris Murdoch or Simone Weil, Naipaul vests his morality in a vocabulary of attention, offering a concrete and careful understanding of the historicity of human conduct. This attention to historical agency is very much the key to our sympathetic discussion of Naipaul. We are to keep in mind here that Naipaul's strangers are in some fundamental way unknown, as opposed to the other of postcolonial theory, now almost a familiar face to readers; we don't know the other only as a Henry James's hostess does not know her social inferior, not as a mysterious stranger but as the object of liberal condescension and trivializing multiculturalism. The other in short is something of a myth, whereas Naipaul, sharply aware of his own historicity, documents both the modern necessity of history and the dangerous seductions of myth. It is unsurprising therefore that he has fallen foul of the myths of fundamentalist or Manichean postcolonialism. Critics of rationalism rarely consider all the damaging effects of irrationalism. Naipaul seeks defense of both a differentiating historiography of colonial and postcolonial cultures, and the value of Enlightenment reason. Nailing her colours to the mast at the outset, she declares if today's postcolonialists easily denounce the European Enlightenment, they tend to forget that for the people who lived at the time the importance of finding their way in the world was self-evident since they were in real terms much more likely to get lost; so are many people now who do not live in the proverbially well-lit developed countries.

Where Western readers have tended to be shocked by the perceived meta-colonial tentativeness of Naipaul's observational position, our spirited defense may decry Naipaul for his fear of merging with the Indian crowd. Naipaul was in the crowd, apparently a small Indian. Naipaul breaks the taboo in multicultural critique in pointing out the limitations of particular peoples or cultures, and refuses to freeze the postcolonial subject as a perpetual victim of colonialism, whose condition can only be improved by those all-powerful oppressors. As early as 1967, Naipaul declared that "the oppressed have their responsibility as well."(10)

As we know, postcolonial criticism risks becoming the monopoly of a comprador intelligentsia, mediating the trade in cultural commodities and marketable alterity. Said (seen as having near-Biblical authority in the field, despite his historical eclecticism), Bhabha and Spivak come in for sideswipes along the way, taken as representative of the effects of postcolonial discourse, which leaves texts disfigured and unrecognisable. But all of them accept the fact that history can itself become a master narrative of considerable obscurantist power. Salim, in *A Bend in the River*, observes a Belgian historian who is so entranced by the abundance of raw material for his study that he fails utterly to make Africa intelligible. However, Naipaul as a writer in tune with the present creates new cultural and political constellations, much too large and complex for postcolonial certainty. Diverse peoples worldwide are mostly engaged in hating each other - that is, when they are not killing each other. A diverse, peaceful, or stable society is therefore against most historical precedent.

Thus, from his distinct dislocation within the metropolis, Salman Rushdie declares, to be a migrant is, perhaps, to be the only species of human being free of the shackles of nationalism (to say nothing of its ugly sister, patriotism). It is a burdensome freedom (A whole mythology of migrancy and a concomitant oppositional politics, of course, has been formulated by Rushdie, who sees the development of the migrant sensibility to be one of the central themes of this century of displaced persons. Not only does Rushdie endow the migrant sensibility with the freedom and facility to construct its own (contingent) truths, he makes it a singular repository of experience and resistance as well. Like the Afghan refugee Rushdie's migrant is a fractured yet autonomous individual, segregated from the collective sites of history. By focusing attention on Rushdie, he is somehow unproblematically paradigmatic of the postcolonial (exile) writer. However, it cannot be denied that he stands foremost among those spokespersons for a kind of permanent immigration who has been elevated by global media-markets and metropolitan academies as the preeminent interpreters of postcolonial realities to postmodern audiences. With the cultural productions of cosmopolitan celebrities such as Rushdie increasingly forming the critical archival material of alternative canons in the metropolitan academy, the language of migrancy has gained wide currency among today's theorists of identity and authority.

James Clifford's travelling theory goes a step further, metaphorizing postcoloniality into a restructured relationship between anthropologist and informant and casting the theorist in the role of traveller. The critical centrality of migrancy has acquired prominence in contemporary cultural discourse, which raises important questions about the nature of postcolonial diaspora, the role of Third World immigrants, and the function of metropolitan academic institutions. How has the uprooting of postcolonial populations helped to generate a vocabulary of migrancy? What part has the cosmopolitan, Third World intellectual played in the manufacture of diasporic consciousness? How have metropolitan discourses framed contemporary conceptions of hybridity and migrancy? Has the mythology of migrancy provided a productive site for postcolonial resistance or has it willy-nilly become complicit with hegemonic post-modern theorizations of power and identity? To answer these questions, we must consider the nexus of historical, political, economic, cultural, and ideological forces affecting the construction and consumption of postcolonial realities and representations. The figure of migrancy indeed has proved quite useful in drawing attention to the marginalized, in problematizing conceptions of borders, and in critiquing the politics of power. However, it also appears to have acquired an excessive figurative flexibility that threatens to undermine severely the oppositional force of postcolonial politics. The metaphorization of postcolonial migrancy is becoming as overblown, overdetermined, and amorphous as to repudiate any meaningful specificity of historical location or interpretation. Politically charged words such as diaspora and exile are being emptied of their histories of pain and suffering and are being deployed promiscuously to designate a wide array of cross-cultural phenomena. The compulsions behind such claims are not only enormous but actually symptomatic of the discursive spaces in which many 'Third World' intellectuals that choose to live in the First World function. The entry of postcolonialism into the metropolitan academy under the hegemonic theoretical rubric of postmodernism obviously has been a powerful factor in determining how the 'Third World' is conceived and consumed. Frequently, the postcolonial text is approached as a localized embellishment of a universal narrative, an object of knowledge that may be known through a postmodern critical discourse. Analytical attention is focused primarily on the formal similarities between postmodern and postcolonial texts, while the radical historical and political differences between the two are erased. The complex local histories and culture specific knowledge's

inscribed in postcolonial narratives get neutralized into versions of postmodern diversity, allowing "others" to be seen, but shorn of their dense specificity. Class, gender, and intellectual hierarchies within other cultures, which happen to be at least as elaborate as those in the West, frequently are ignored. Thus Fredric Jameson's paradigm of postcolonial literature as national allegory uniformly constitutes all ‘Third World’ intellectuals, regardless of their gender or class, as marginalized insurgents or as Nationalists struggling against a monolithic Western imperialism. Difference is reduced to equivalence, interchange ability, syncretism, and diversity, while a levelling subversive subaltern is indiscriminately attributed to any and all.

Given that metropolitan attitudes towards the postcolonial are caught between Orientalism and nativism, between unmitigated condemnation and uncritical celebration of Otherness, identification with subaltern and commodification of the ‘Third World’ often seem the only assured means to authority for many Third World intellectuals. The very modes of access to power are thus rife with the risk of reification and subordination under such popular theoretical categories as cultural diversity, hybridity, syncretism, and migrancy. However, if postcolonial politics is to retain its radical cutting edge, what Third World intellectuals must confront is not our subaltern or even our subaltern-in-solidarity-with-the-oppressed, but the comparative power and privilege that ironically accumulate from our oppositional stance, and the upward mobility we gain from our semantics of subaltern. To challenge successfully culturalist hegemony, it is not enough to concentrate exclusively on the unequal relations between nations, such as those between the First and the Third worlds, but to include an investigation of the unequal relations within societies as well. We therefore must face up to the fact that any mythology of migrancy that fails to differentiate rigorously between diverse modalities of postcolonial diaspora, such as migrant intellectuals, migrant labour, economic refugees, political exiles, and self-exiles, exploits the subordinate position of the Third World, suppresses the class/gender differentiated histories of immigration, robs the oppressed of the vocabulary of protest, and blunts the edges of much-needed oppositional discourse.

A myopic focus on migrancy also may potentially shut out alternative figurations of postcoloniality by marginalizing the visions of those who may not be dis located within the metropolis or who may be dislocated in ways not recognized in metropolitan circles. The problematic discourse of diaspora and exile in contemporary

critical discourse clearly calls for a systematic examination of the material conditions and ideological contexts within which migrancy has emerged as the privileged paradigmatic trope of postcolonialism in the metropolis. Attempting such an examination, this essay considers such factors as the circulation of Third World populations, the peripheral position of the Third World, the pedagogic presence of the metropolitan academy, and the influence of its poststructuralist/postmodern theories. Based on a critical review of Rushdie's formulation of migrancy, the second section explores the ideological intersection between postcolonialism and postmodernism. Colonial discourse is not only accessible and acceptable but also assimilable to dominant postmodernist theories. The irony of this exchange becomes evident in the simultaneous elevation and subordination of the immigrant intellectual in the metropolis. Interpretations of this individual author's works and more as symptomatic pointers towards a larger ideological field. The overblown rhetoric of diaspora and exile in vogue today calls for vigilance over the excesses marginal discourses accrue in the very process of theorizing the obsolescence of marginality. The rhetoric of migrancy, exile, and diaspora in contemporary postcolonial discourse owes much of its credibility to the massive and uneven uprooting of Third World peoples in recent decades, particularly after large-scale decolonization in the 1960s.

As the euphoria of independence and the great expectations of nationalism gave way to disillusionment and oppression, emigration increasingly became the supreme reward for citizens of impoverished or repressive ex-colonies. Millions of people dream of becoming exiles at any cost, and many government officials make a living helping or hindering the fulfilment of this mass fantasy. The rhetoric of migrancy in contemporary postcolonial discourse, however, does not stress the economic and political forces behind immigration. Salman Rushdie thus observes:

> The effect of mass migrations has been the creation of radically new types of human being: people who root themselves in ideas rather than places, in memories as much as in material things; people who have been obliged to define themselves—because they are so defined by others—by their otherness; people in whose deepest selves strange fusions occur, unprecedented unions between what they were and where they find themselves. (*The Location*, 124)

This passage tells an almost spiritual or mystic vocabulary to describe the formation of the migrant sensibility. By emphasizing mental or psychological processes over sociological or political forces, Rushdie de-materializes the migrant into an abstract idea. The insistent and pervasive use of such terminology tends to obscure or at least minimize the material and historical contexts of Third World immigration. It fails to account for two fundamental factors that fracture immigrant experience: the exigencies of neo-colonial global capitalism determining the dispersal of Third World peoples, and the distinctly class- and gender-differentiated nature of immigrant experience. The historic pattern of Indian emigration since the 1960s alone is quite revealing. Until the last decade, women formed but a small percentage of immigrant populations and often subsisted in conditions of complete dependency if not abuse and exploitation.

In addition, there is a distinct class character to the current pattern of Indian emigration. The vast majority of Indians immigrating to the United States and, secondarily, to Britain are members of the commercial or professional bourgeoisie and typically have lithe to do with the working-class inside or outside India. By contrast, the oil-rich countries of the Persian Gulf, and to a lesser degree Britain, attract a predominantly working class population (the trade to the Gulf being as much traffic in female flesh as in cheap labour). Lured by unscrupulous job-recruitment agencies and victimized by greedy travel agents, these working-class immigrants frequently end up as little more than indentured labourers subsisting on the margins of alienating societies. Their dehumanized condition casts an inescapable shadow upon the exuberance that characterizes metropolitan perceptions of migrancy. Clearly, the grim realities of migrant labour inflect the notion of migrancy in ways that make it difficult to link consistently freedom and liberation with movement and displacement. By contrast, what takes place for many postcolonial intellectuals is a transition to an industrially advanced capitalist society with the latest word on individual liberty on its lips. Taking this route, in many ways, is like going home because it brings one closer to a world that one had imagined all along. Rushdie has rightly confessed thus :

> In common with many Bombay-raised middle-class children of my generation, I grew up with an intimate knowledge of, and even sense of friendship with, a certain kind of England: a dream-England I wanted to come to England. I couldn't wait. (*Imaginary Homelands*, 18).

Edward Said therefore is quite correct in describing the migration of the superior scholar from the non-Western "periphery" to the Western "centre" as a voyage in**.** Once they find themselves within the belly of the metropolitan beast, immigrant intellectuals indeed do face the grim facts of racism and Eurocentrism. For most, however, what Bharati Mukherjee calls Toss-of-face meltdown" rarely involves floundering around among disempowered minorities. In fact, Mukherjee's fiction typically casts immigrant aspirations in terms of class expectations: "Great privilege had been conferred upon me; my struggle was to work hard enough to deserve it. And I did. This bred confidence, but not conceit Calcutta equipped me to survive theft or even assault; it did not equip me to accept proof of my unworthiness Indeed, class origins and professional affiliations open up an adversarial kind of assimilation into metropolitan institutions. Thus Rushdie is able actually to use his class privilege as a platform to chastise English society for failing to live up to its promise of tolerance and fair play:

> England has done all right by me; but I find it difficult to be properly grateful. I can't escape the view that my relatively easy ride is not the result of the dream—England's famous sense of tolerance and fair play, but of my social class, my freak fair skin and my English accent. Take away any of these, and the story would have been very different. Because of course the dream-England is no more than a dream. (*Imaginary Homelands,* 18)

Rushdie's status, of course, has been transformed into a grimly real exile by the Ayatollah Khomeini's ominous *fatwa).* Unlike the prolonged pain of exile, the anguish of self-exile is usually more accommodating. Often no more than a longing for the imaginary homeland's sensuous characteristics, it is easy to summon up, especially if emigration has turned out to be a financial and professional success. Words such as "exile" or "diaspora" barely describe the moment of departure; what follows is both too comfortable and too autonomous to be called by these names, which suggest so strongly a comprehensible and sustained grief. In *A Bend in The River* there is conjuring up of a small culture, an Indian culture in exile in Africa. Mahesh, Indar and Nazruddin have learnt the art of survival. Salim the narrator, without any special qualifications or education, does not want to break the links with

the past to come to terms with his bewildering present. He cannot overcome his sense of loss with the casualness of Mahesh or Indar.

> "The outside world no longer offered refuge; it had remained for me the great unknown and was, increasingly, perilous." (BR, 221)

It is not an intention to question the motives of any ' Third World" immigrant motives that are always heterogeneous and personal, ranging from political persecution and economic desperation to professional ambition and cultural preference. Nor do mean to imply that class privilege alone necessarily delegitimizes one's testimony against the injustices of bourgeois racism, colonialism, or nationalism. Clearly, if "diasporic consciousness" is fundamentally "an intellectualization of the existential condition" of dispersal from the homeland then we must acknowledge the fact that this consciousness has been shaped not so much by the haphazard accidents of history as by the material and ideological realities of immigrant intellectuals.

De-legitimizing the self-privileging affirmations of bourgeois humanism through its ironic negations, postmodernism has transformed the world into a vast playful text and legitimized the pleasures of nonattachment and non-commitment. The change from a comparatively modernist to a more postmodernist interpretation of exile may account, in part, for some of the differences between writers such as Salman Rushdie and V. S. Naipaul - a point to be noted in the assessment of the two authors: one of Rushdie's most appealing notions is that immigration, despite losses and confusions, its sheer absurdities, is a net gain, a form of lévitation, as opposed to Naipaul's loss and mimicry. Although it is the creative impulse of exile that generates novels such as *The Mimic Men* and *Mr. Stone and the Knights Companion,* exile, especially in Naipaul's early works, is often an experience of division and defilement, alienation and isolation, frustration and futility. Instead of discovering new and exciting worlds in the mode of the imperial explorer, Naipaul's postcolonial traveller frequently ends up in the same arid place from which he has been physically but not quite psychologically unmoored. In the end, Naipaul's apparently "objective" eye tends to leave the observer as maimed as the observed. A markedly different view is

evident in *The SatanicVerses,* which offers a whole typology of postcolonial migrancy. Rushdie's narrative divides the postcolonial into two basic identities:

> The migrant and the national, as polarized most sharply in the figures of Saladin Chamcha and the Imam, respectively. While Saladin as postcolonial migrant seeks to assimilate into the metropolis, the Imam lives segregated from the metropolis within the metropolis. Although Saladin's definition of migrant as metropolitan is not endorsed unequivocally by the text, its condemnation of the Imam's view of migrant as (fanatic) national is far more stinging and forthright: "Exile is a soulless country" (*The Satanic Verses,* 208).

If Naipaul's position may be characterized as one of eternal exile, Rushdie's may be defined as one of permanent migrancy. Unlike the painful condition of eternal exile, the state of permanent migrancy emanates an exuberance that dissipates the pain of multiple dislocations and translates migrancy into a positive and prolific idiom. Instead of disempowering the self, dislocation actually opens up an abundance of alternative locations, allowing the individual to own several different homes by first becoming homeless. Notwithstanding these differences, however, there is one feature shared by both paradigms: a deterritorialized consciousness freed from such collectivities as race, class, gender, or nation, an unattached imagination that conveniently can become cosmopolitan and subaltern, alternately or simultaneously. In emphasizing a de-territorialized postcolonial consciousness, the views of Indian immigrant writers such as Naipaul and Rushdie depart from the positions taken by many African writers who, in the wake of colonialism, have sought to re-territorialize rather than de-territorialize themselves. The uncritical privileging of immigrant writers prevents us from seriously considering figurations of postcoloniality that may be grounded in alternative strategies for change. If postcolonial politics is to retain its radical cutting edge in demanding the dichotomy between margin and centre, we can hardly afford to indulge in self-legitimizing mythologies and self-aggrandizing manoeuvres that dilute efforts towards decolonization.

3.2 Cultural Hybridity and Construction of Subjectivity: Naipaul's *Half a Life*

It is a common premise in cultural criticism that cultural heritages have their ethnic, cultural, and historical specificities. On the basis of the said postulation, we will now explore the construction of subjectivity and/or otherness, complexity of colonial predicament, rupture of identity, sense of alienation of diaspora, among other things, as reflected in Naipaul's *Half a Life.* Naipaul has indeed an urge to articulate his fluid, multiple and unstable identities in terms of his unique postcolonial cultural perspective. *Half a Life* records Naipaul's exiled life and manifests the ruptures among subjectivity, geography, and language towards multicultural and fluid identity. The masterpiece also portrays the protagonist Willie's constant exiled life from India, England, Africa, and Germany so as to rediscover and affirm his self-identity.

Postcolonial discourse, like other minority discourses, is mainly about the location of culture. This newly emergent literary study describes an on-going process of identity loss and identity recovery for non-Westerners. In the domain of postcolonial literature, different ethnic groups, based on their different original cultural heritages, have their ethnic, cultural, and historical specificities ; hence, the condition of the dislocated and dispossessed is especially poignant and complicated because they cannot find a "home" of their own. Deracination, exile and alienation in varying forms are the conditions of existence for the modern writer the world over. The basic response to such conditions is a search for identity, the quest for a home, through self-discovery or self-realization. The slave colonies of the West Indian Islands exemplify this genre to which many displaced people belong. They have been uprooted from their native land to be transplanted into an alien environment which gives rise to their sense of homelessness, placelessness, alienation, and deracination." Lacking a sense of belonging, they may nonetheless be able to develop an inner urge to construct their subjectivity in order to confirm their own identity.

V. S. Naipaul himself experienced, and repeatedly described in his fiction, this particular urge. Throughout his life he has desired a place to identify with. From genealogical mining, especially in his homeland (the Caribbean), through the quest for his cultural roots (India), and finally to his place of education (England)—he has

attempted to search for his own identity. Being an Indian by ancestry, a Trinidadian by birth, and an Englishman by education, V. S. Naipaul possesses a multi-cultural background. As a colonial, he has always needed to locate his place in the world through writing. Prolific and critical in both fiction and nonfiction, he presents colonial anxieties in his quest for self-identity. For him, travel is a way to understand oneself, to achieve self-knowledge.

In *Finding the Center*, V. S. Naipaul particularly mentions the significance to him of travelling for self-understanding. He states that "to travel was glamorous. But travel also made unsuspected demands on me as a man and a writer, and perhaps for that reason it soon became a necessary stimulus for me. It broadened my world view; it showed me a changing world and took me out of my own colonial shell; it became the substitute for the mature social experience – the deepening knowledge of a society – which my background and the nature of my life denied me…I learned to look in my own way" (11). Thus, his physical journey echoes his mental one, and his writing is a journey toward self-identification. As shown in *Half a Life*, the protagonist Willie, just like Naipaul, intends to search for his self-identity and construct his own subjectivity in the world via traveling. Willie initially departs from his hometown India to England in search of his own world at the adolescent age like Naipaul. After that, he goes through Africa and Germany in order to find his own place in the world. Eventually, he can courageously confront his identity loss and open up his new life in the future.

V.S. Naipaul has always constructed his subjectivity through the sophisticated and subtle art of his fiction. He attained knighthood in 1990 and was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2001. He delineates his process of writing by intuition in his 2001 Nobel Lecture entitled Two Worlds:

> I have trusted to intuition. I did it at the beginning. I do it even now. I have no idea how things might turn out, where in my writing I might go next. I have trusted to my intuition to find the subjects, and I have written intuitively. I have an idea when I start, I have a shape; but I will fully understand what I have written only after some years. (*Nobel Lecture*, 480)

Through his writing, Naipaul is able to rediscover a link between his unknown past and his present self-understanding:

> I am the sum of my books. Each book, intuitively sensed and, in the case of fiction, intuitively worked out, stands on what has gone before, and grows out of it. I feel that at any stage of my literature career it could have been said that the last book contained all the others. (*Two Worlds*, 480)

His West Indian voice is heard from the margins through his writings. Similarly, Willie, like Naipaul, as a writer, realizes the connection between his unknown past and his present situation through his writing. Willie, in *Half a Life*, implicitly reflects Naipaul's shadow. The related themes of homelessness, alienation and dislocation are characteristic of Naipaul's novels. Critics like Andrew Gurr, Anthony Boxill, Robert Hamner, and Timothy F. Weiss explicate the interrelated themes in Naipaul's works. However, most critics deal with Naipaul's sense of homelessness, focusing on his early writings, especially those works prior to *The Enigma of Arrival*. Naipaul's philosophy of life significantly changed from negative to positive after the publication of this novel. *Half a Life* can be regarded as the pinnacle of Naipaul's career of more than four decades, leading Naipaul's life of writing toward self-definition.

Naipaul indeed goes through a series of life-stages between homelessness and home, as so vividly portrayed in his fiction and nonfiction. In his early fiction, the Trinidad trilogy including *Miguel Street*, *The Mystic Masseur,* and *The Suffrage of Elvira*, the author wields irony in order to manifest the corruption and failure of Trinidad. He cannot bear the stifling atmosphere and must find a position in the world for himself. In *A House for Mr. Biswas* and *The Mimic Men*, Naipaul demonstrates the colonizeds' predicament and their struggle for a place in the world stemming from their feeling of alienation, isolation, homelessness, rootlessness. He even lays bare the more complicated problems of dislocation faced by the exile in *A Bend in the River* and *In a Free State*. However, in his later works such as *The Enigma of Arrival*, the author comes to adopt a more conciliatory stance and seems to accept that men, to a certain extent, must adapt themselves to new places. He seems to move toward a clearer feeling of place, of being at home. We thus, regard Naipaul's novelistic writing as a process of identity recovery undergoing a series of transformations: he

denies or negates his Caribbean homeland, adopts a stage of mimicry in England, searches for his cultural roots in India, and finally reconstructs his identity out of his multi-cultural particularity and uniqueness. His writing career comes in four stages: (1) placelessness and alienation, (2) colonial predicament, (3) cultural heritage in India, and (4) writing for self-definition. By accepting his homelessness and statelessness, he (re)creates a new identity in exile. He makes a voice not only for himself but also for other marginalized people. Through writing, he translates his cultural incommensurability to the world and articulates the representation of his cultural particularity.

V. S. Naipaul plays a significant role in the postcolonial writings. For him, identity is not given, but constructed and contingent. *Half a Life* records Naipaul's exiled life and manifests the ruptures among subjectivity, geography, and language toward multicultural and fluid identity. *Half a Life* also delineates Willie's constant exiled life from India, England, Africa and Germany toward affirming self-identity. This study aims to explore the construction of subjectivity, otherness, complexity of colonial predicament, rupture of identity definition, sense of alienation of diaspora, among other things, reflected in V. S. Naipaul's *Half a Life* through postcolonial cultural perspective. In this research, Stuart Hall's assertion of unfixed identity, Doreen Massey's concept and definition of place, James Clifford's travelling theory, Homi Bhabha's theories of mimicry, hybridity, and third space, as the identity-making process will be applied to explain the identity-making process in V. S. Naipaul's *Half a Life*. Simultaneously, this study also aims at playing Naipaul's heterogeneity of postcolonial writing in the process toward his self-definition.

Therefore, we can say that V. S. Naipaul belongs to the marginalized people. He intends to make a voice for his ethnic identity from the margin to the center. Through *Half a Life*, he successfully makes the mapping for his ethnicity and discovers a position for himself toward self-identity and construction of subjectivity.

3.3 Post-colonial Discourse on Identity and Place

A number of cultural theorists have expounded on the fluid and unstable status of culture. Stuart Hall speaks of unfixed identity; James Clifford's travelling theory, Doreen Massey of identity and place, Homi Bhabha of mimicry, hybridity, and third space. All of these ideas can be applied to explain V. S. Naipaul's position of (both voluntary and involuntary) exile. Stuart Hall claims that identity makings are "never singular but multiple, constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions" (*Who Needs Identity*? 4).

Travel also has a significant effect on one's concept of place and home. James Clifford speaks of the need to rethink cultures as sites for dwelling and traveling. He sometimes equates "travel" with "displacement." Travelers are comfortable with more than one culture, so the question is not "Where are you from?" but "Where are you between?" ("*Travelling Cultures*" 109). Travellers are affected by the sites they travel to; travelling and dwelling conjointly affect (and help to determine) one's identity. Even if he had a largely mono-ethnic, mono-cultural background, Naipaul would be regarded as a citizen of the world" as a result of his excessive and constant traveling. Thus even in the more normal case culture and identity may be relatively moveable, changeable, unfixed entities. However, someone like Naipaul, with a complex and diverse ethnic and colonial background, needs a special kind of strength and resilience, a special ability to contain and manage his/her multiplicity of cultural identities. In addition, such people are especially likely to be not just travelers and tourists but immigrants and even refugees.

Naipaul also describes, in some works, the particular suffering and identity-confusion of immigrants. Aiming to assert himself, to claim his identity and find his place in the world, then, Naipaul must articulate his multiple identities; eventually he is satisfied with the state of exile, of belonging nowhere and yet everywhere, although he undergoes a long period of solitude in his life. In our post-colonial world, the concept of identity is linked to a local sense of place, and identity-creation shifts on

account of the effect of colonialism and globalization. In terms of Doreen Massey's concept of identity and place, tying the traditional sense of place to one's original roots can offer a stable identity. Nevertheless, "the concept of place is not static but unstable" and "places are processes" (Massey 155). Massey says of the reproduction of place:

> Places do not have single, unique "identities"; they are full of internal conflicts […] [such as] conflict over what its past has been (the nature of its "heritage", conflict over what should be its present development, conflict over what could be its future. None of this denies place nor the importance of the uniqueness of place. The specificity of place is continually reproduced. (155)

In an interview with Bernard Levin in 1983, Naipaul metaphorically explained his concept of multi-cultural identities: "I don't think any of us can claim that we come from one single, enclosed, tribal world. We are little, bombarded cells, aren't we? – many things occur to make us what we are, and we can surely live with all the things that make us" (98). Massey's theory lends support to the observation that Naipaul, as a nomad, can live in different places, though he may not feel himself to be ever intrinsically "at home." In addition, Homi Bhabha's concept of mimicry, hybridity, and the third space best sums up Naipaul's colonial situation (or predicament), his ambivalence, his search for identity and the narrative strategy that emerges from it. At first "mimicry" was the method by which the British imperial power controlled and dominated the colonized people in the nineteenth century: the British rulers made the colonials "imitate" the culture and language of the colonizer (the British Empire); thus the ideology of the colonized was drastically changed, and became—as an inevitably "poor imitation" of the "original"— inferior to that of the colonizer. However, in the post-colonial era writers began to use mimicry as a counter strategy, "writing back" to the imperial power and negotiating their own position or place with respect to the mother country. In "imitating" the English language and even the form of the English novel, writers like Salmon Rushdie (and to a lesser degree also Naipaul) can of course also mock and parody various aspects of the "imperial" tongue and culture; they've learned so well from their "masters" that they now know how to make fun of what they have been taught, show its intrinsic

weaknesses and absurdities. The process of mimicry thus creates a new entity through the difference between self and other.

The attitude of a colonized also determines whether the inevitable stage of mimicry can create obstacles or greater force in one's search for self-identity. Consequently, Naipaul's hybrid identities can never be wholly constructed "from the origin" because he needs to renew his powers of articulation. Although Naipaul was educated in the mother country, England, it still remained his second home. Even Trinidad was an alien land for him because he always felt slightly like a stranger. He could not authentically feel truly at home in any one place; therefore, all of his "homes" form his hybrid identities. He himself must creatively articulate his distinguishing cultural "features." To Homi Bhabha, such hybridity is "the most common and effective form of subversive opposition" (Ashcroft 9); Robert Young says that Bhabha's concept of hybridity has transformed Bakhtin's intentional hybridity into "an active moment of challenge and resistance against a dominant cultural power" (23). The hybridity of colonial discourse reverses the dominant structures in the colonial situation. Thus, it deploys dialogue between the dominant and the subordinate, forming (in Bakhtin's terms) a "double-voiced talk."

Bhabha, further, employs the concept of "the third space" to explicate the concept and the goal of hybridity. Speaking from a colonial standpoint, he elaborates on "the third space" as a strategy for opening up the possible space of cultural discourse by transcending cultural hegemony and crossing over its historical boundaries. Bhabha sees the key problems of cultural diversity as tied to the initial "norm given by the host society or dominant culture," Naipaul turns his sense of alienation into a powerful capacity to feel at home in any place.

However, a definition of home can be derived from the relationship between the exile and his writing in the modern world; that is, the displaced exile may obtain his/her identity primarily through his/her writing. We are to keep in mind that to be in exile is to be free to imagine or to dream a past and the future of that past. Naipaul, as an exiled writer, creates his own place through travelling and writing. This "in-between" space provides him with a broader imaginative and creative space. The space of the "in-between" also gives the exile, the immigrant, the migrant, the

colonial to have more chance to choose possibilities from their multi-cultural background. It goes without saying that their identity will not be fixed, won't be defined by the past. The exile of the twenty-first century inevitably negotiates between spaces as between cultures; he negotiates and makes or finds a temporary "place" for himself between cultural spaces. And writing is a very potent way of performing such a negotiation. Also, writing, as reflected in *Half a Life*, for Willie, offers a way to create and construct his racial subjectivity; meanwhile, provides him with the opportunity to re(in)trospect his past history so as to understand more about his cultural heritage.

In *Half a Life* he accentuates the issue of the chronically dispossessed, the characteristics of the permanent exile. We see in this novel that Naipaul still feels like an outsider, though the ending leaves a ray of hope for readers. *Half a Life* is a tour de force and can be regarded as the culmination of Naipaul's career of more than four decades because the novel includes almost all of Naipaul's thematic concerns; simultaneously, it is a melting pot which mixes Naipaul's main concerns with key issues of the colonial and post-colonial worlds, especially the problems of man's loss, placelessness, isolation, and alienation. The masterpiece delineates Willie Somerset Chandran's search for self-development and self-knowledge. Naipaul masterfully manipulates the protagonist Willie Somerset Chandran's colonial predicament, his anxiety and dislocation in this novel.

Half Brahmin and half Untouchable, Willie was born in India in the 1930s. He is stuck in the conflict between his father from Brahmin family and his mother from untouchable class. He despises his father's ridiculous opinion to fulfill "a life of sacrifice" by getting married with his mother from a low-class family because his father leads the so-called sacrifice life out of his hypocrisy (*Half a Life*, 36). He couldn't accept the Brahmanism and racism. Nevertheless, he falls into the racial loss after departing from India to England in order to construct his own subjectivity. The novel begins with the words, "Willie Chandran asked his father one day, 'Why is my middle name Somerset? The boys at school have just found out, and they are mocking me'" (*Half a Life* 1). From Willie's father's story, Willie understands his family history, culture, heritage and roots. However, he couldn't accept that his second name is named after the famous English writer Somerset Maugham, who visited Willie's

town in the years before Independence since he thinks that he should be named after his family. Willie thus possesses only "half a name." The novel seems to reveal Willie's father's intention that his son "mimic" the whites, since he gave him half of a white man's name. Willie can clearly see the gap between the colonial's mimicry of the colonizer and his desire to construct himself in a chaotic world. He is aware of the paradoxical nature of his mimicry. However, he becomes a "mimic man," the person people expect him to be, just like Ralph Singh in *The Mimic Men.* As a matter of fact, the Western name is hollow because he cannot possess a Western identity simply by possessing a western name. In contrast, identifying with the Western name and dismantling his Indian name symbolizes the loss of his original culture. He is still excluded in and from "Western space" though his father intends to "bleach" him via giving him a half-whitened name.

In the novel, Naipaul presents characters that are products of a racial and cultural mix and shows how they struggle to find their identity in the multi-cultural society they live in. In general, these characters tend to deny one or more racial characteristics in order to become "more respectable," in their estimation. However, they eventually discover that their identity cannot be fixed because they are the fruits of multiple cultures. All through the novel, Willie is drifting without a solid and fixed identity. His identity is multiple, unfixed, and changing, just like the concept of identity expounded upon by Stuart Hall, James Clifford, Doreen Massey, and Homi Bhabha, etc. He cannot try to achieve one fixed identity because of his multi-background. The novel has three settings: first there is post-independence India, then London, and finally pre-independence Africa. All three are places that Naipaul can identify with. However, the three locations seem to signify different meanings in the novel. India and Africa are "inexact and vague," while the representation of London "with street names and other markers" is clearer; thus, Meenakshi Mukherjee contends that "for Naipaul, England is situated at a different level of reality, firm and stable, while other regions can be relegated to haziness" (4). In the narrative Willie's preconceived notion is proved false. Like Naipaul, Willie initially thinks of London as a "solid" place; however, he senses that he is still in limbo as a marginalized wanderer in the big city. This situation is just like Ralph Singh's experience in *The Mimic Men*. Such dispossessed people as the colonial, the exile, the immigrant, the marginal, and the uprooted must confront their being in an indefinite state of suspension. Caught up

in this limbo, Willie the Indian immigrant loses not only his native cultural heritage but also his sense of place. He identifies neither with his homeland, an old world, nor with the new world does he desire. In the 1950s, Willie moves to London and drifts into bohemian circles; feeling lost, he half-heartedly faces his English education at school:

> The learning he was being given was like the food he was eating, without savour. The two were inseparable in his mind. And just as he ate without pleasure, so, with a kind of blindness, he did what the lecturers and tutors asked of him, read the books and articles and did the essays. He was unanchored, with no idea of what lay ahead. (HL, 58)

Worst of all, Willie cannot face his real ancestral history, his true genealogy. He employs his imagination to shape a make-believe identity and tries to live behind its mask:

> He adapted certain things he had read, and he spoke of his mother as belonging to an ancient Christian community of the subcontinent, a community almost as old as Christianity itself. He kept his father as a Brahmin. He made his father's father a 'courtier.' So playing with words, he began to re-make himself. It excited him and began to give him a feeling of power. (HL, 61)

Likewise, Percy Cato, "a Jamaican of mixed parentage who was more brown than black, falsely fabricates his family history." (61) He is in reality Willie's shadow. He misleads Willie to believe that his father is a clerk in Panama; in fact, his father went there "as a labourer" (62). Willie and Percy's fictional recreations only seem to end up cheating themselves; they are an escape from an unbearable reality. Their make-believe identities are their performances. The creation of identity here has doubled meanings. Apparently, Willie seems to forsake his Indian tradition and family history. It is his loss of cultural heritage. Even so, when he looks back on his life, he will understand his loss of cultural heritage at the stage of being in London. On the other hand, his performance of creating identity displays Homi Bhabha's so-

called "the third space." He constructs his own subjectivity in London by learning to create his identity. The content of the third space is what Bhabha called "hybridity," through which other, non-Western-centric positions may emerge to articulate and set up "new structures of authority, new political initiatives" (Bhabha*,* 211). The process of hybridity thus produces "something different, something new, and unrecognisable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation" (*Identity,* 211).

In England, Willie is continually drifting: "he was unanchored, with no idea of what lay ahead. He still had no idea of the scale of things, no idea of historical time or even of distance." (58) He intends to discover his own identity. Finally, he apprehends that the construction of subjectivity can be created freely: "Willie began to understand that he was free to present himself as he wished. He could, as it were, write his own revolution. The possibilities were dizzying. He could, within reason, re-make himself and his past and his ancestry" (60). This is just like Stuart Hall's assertion: the process of identity making is unstable; it can even be created. Similarly, Willie's identity is "in-between," subject to "change." In terms of Stuart Hall's theory, identity-formation is not a static "being," but a dynamic "becoming." Stuart Hall states:

> The processes of forced and "free" migration […] have become a global phenomenon of the so-called "post-colonial" world. Though they seem to invoke an origin in a historical past with which they continue to correspond, actually identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not "who we are" or "where we came from," so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves: not the so-called return to roots but a coming-to-terms-with our "routes. ("Who Needs Identity?" 4)

Indeed, to some degree it is true for Willie, in this increasingly complex, culturally diverse and ambiguous world, that his identity has become a condition that is not given but that he must continually negotiate anew, construct or create afresh. Thus, Willie may construct non-one identities and "the identities of places are

inevitably unfixed" (Massey, 169). However, failing to obtain a concrete place of his own in London, Willie doesn't know where he is going. He can "only go back to India, and he doesn't want that." (121) The cultural identities focus on searching for a new route and creating new meanings in the flow. Just like James Clifford's assertion on travel, Willie must undergo the journey of traveling toward his self-identity. Willie decides to go to Africa with Ana, the first woman who has admired his writing. Later he marries Ana, who is of mixed Portuguese-African descent. Willie follows her to her inherited estate in one of Portugal's East African outposts in an attempt to make a new beginning. He intends to construct his own identity. In his wife's home country the colonial system is gradually breaking down.

Willie remains a stranger and outsider in this country, just as in India and London; indeed, now he suffers an even greater sense of alienation. Readers know only that Willie has arrived "at a little low built concrete town" and that he does not want to stay here long: "I don't know where I am. I don't think I can pick my way back. I don't ever want this view to become familiar. I must not unpack. I must never behave as though I am staying" (135). In Africa, then, Willie does not have a sense of belonging. He feels he is "nowhere." Ironically, he stays here for eighteen years. In search of a place for himself, he has gone to Africa, but he becomes lost. In London, at least, he was a writer known as Willie Chandran, but in Africa he becomes merely "Ana's London man" (145). He is unable to find a place for himself in Africa; worse, he loses his autonomy. He goes nowhere. He becomes nothing. His only consolation is that he ironically discovers an affinity with "half-and-half friends" (162) in this "half-and-half world" (160). These friends regard themselves as "the second rank" (160) including Correias, Ricardo and Luis (the estate manager of Carla Correia) and his wife Grace. Willie portrays Correias's plight:

> To destroy a Portuguese like himself would have been to break caste, according to the code of the colony, and to become disreputable. There was no trouble at all in throwing a man of the second rank into darkness, someone from the half-and-half world, educated and respectable and striving, unusually knowledgeable about money, and ready for many reasons to do whatever he might be required to do. (HL, 174)

The exiled people share Willie's sense of loss, disorientation, and dereliction. Willie sees his own shadow in his half-and-half friends. Through their images of reflection, he gets epiphany to understand that, by employing the perspective of the "other," he becomes even more trapped. Furthermore, immigrants develop a sense of not-belonging in a new and alien world on account of the loss of their native language. In his Nobel lecture, Naipaul recalls what it felt like to lose his original language due to migration:

> The world outside existed in a kind of darkness; and we inquired about nothing. I was just old enough to have some idea of the Indian epics, the Ramayana in particular. The children who came five years or so after me in our extended family didn't have this luck. No one taught us Hindi. Sometimes someone wrote out the alphabet for us to learn, and that was that; we were expected to do the rest ourselves. So, as English penetrated, we began to lose our language. (*Two Worlds*, 483)

It is also accepted that language articulates a man's identity. Losing one's original language entails the loss of one's original culture and indigenous identity. From India through London to Africa, Willie is constantly drifting from one place to another, and losing his native language. Educated in London, he handles English very well. He becomes a writer in London and achieves a certain public status. Yet in Africa he is forced to communicate in another language. He is confused about this linguistic shift during his journey from Southampton to Ana's African country: "He thought about the new language he would have to learn. He wondered whether he would be able to hold on to his own language. He wondered whether he would forget his English […]. Willie was trying to deal with the knowledge that had come to him on the ship that his home language had almost gone, that his English was going, that he had no proper language left, no gift of expression." (132) It is quite ironic that English, the language Willie loses, is his "proper language" as a writer in London, since he once was seen there as "a subversive new voice from the subcontinent." (122) When a writer loses the language he is used to writing in, he is truly silenced and deprived of his power. To Ana, English is a very important language because a man can "expand his knowledge" through it. She states why she is learning English:

> I wanted to break out of the Portuguese language. I feel it was what had made my grandfather such a limited man. He had no true idea of the world. All he could think of was Portugal and Portuguese Africa and Goa and Brazil. In his mind, because of the Portuguese language, all the rest of the world had been strained away. And I didn't want to learn South African English, which is what people learn here. I wanted to learn English. (HL, 154-55)

Here, we see the significance of English as a universal language, since this means it is also the "language of the diaspora"; this imperial language, as *lingua franca*, is we might say a necessary evil. Identifying with the imperial language, as in a sense he is forced to do, means man's assimilation to the empire. The preservation of one's original language, one's mother tongue while learning the imperial language is the most important task for immigrants, migrants, colonial subjects. Willie doesn't want to follow his father's way of life to lead a life of sacrifice with hypocrisy. At his adolescence, Willie intends to master English fabricating his ancestral and cultural history. With the power of English usage, Willie can write back to the imperial power and create his own position of place in the future, just like Bhabha's theory of mimicry. After staying in Africa for one year, Willie witnesses his "half-and-half friends" who intend to bleach their identities:

> But then after a year or so I began to understand – and I was helped in this understanding by my own background – that the world I had entered was only a half-and-half world, that many of the people who were our friends considered themselves, deep down, people of the second rank. They were not fully Portuguese, and that was where their own ambition lay." (HL, 160-61)

Through his objective observation, he consciously understands that he shares the homogenous cultural heritage and loss with them. Originally, he intended to bleach his family history and cultural roots; however, Willie discovers his loss of his precious cultural background when he looks back on his journey from India, England and then to Africa. Thus, he finds his cultural heritage and desires to construct his subjectivity. Finally, he decides to end his wandering time and escape days.

Having lived half a life in Africa for eighteen years, then, Willie consciously senses his "loss" in this new land, especially after slipping "on the front steps of the estate house"(*Half a Life* 135). At this moment he has an epiphany: living with Ana in Africa only mirrors for him (in her) the intrinsic limitations of his half-life. This self-realization forces him to get back the time he has wasted. Therefore he decides to leave Ana in the hope of discovering his own true identity:

> I mean I've given you eighteen years. I can't give you any more. I can't live your life any more. I want to live my own." "It was your idea, Willie. And if you leave, where will you go?" "I don't know. But I must stop living your life here." (HL*,* 136)

He makes a decision to courageously face any possible challenge in the future. After leaving away from Africa, Willie goes to Germany where his sister lives. He sees Tamil boys who raise "funds for the great Tamil war" on the street:

> That was how I appeared in London. That is how I appear now. I am not as alone as I thought" Then he thought, "But I am wrong. I am not like them. I am forty-one, in middle life. They are fifteen or twenty years younger, and the world has changed. They have proclaimed who they are and they are risking everything for it. I have been hiding from myself. I have risked nothing. And now the best part of my life is over. (HL, 138)

Willie deeply realizes that he must seize the time to construct his subjectivity because he has spent too much time leading a life of escapism. Willie is looking forward to starting anew with the future half of his life. The rest of his story is left open: Naipaul leaves an imaginative space for his readers. Willie will continue to search for his identity and a place of his own in the world. In the process of constructing subjectivity, Willie confronts the sense of placelessness and discovers that he can't create a fixed identity. He therefore comprehends that identity is not stable but created in the process making just like the assertion of the postcolonial

discourse. He learns to accept the cultural significance of "unhomely" asserted by Homi Bhabha:

> …To be unhomed is not be homeless, nor can the "unhomely" be easily accommodated in the familiar division of social life into private and the public spheres…In the stirrings of the unhomely, another world becomes visible. It has less to do with forcible eviction and more to do with the uncanny literary and social effects of enforced social accommodation, or historical migrations and cultural relocations. The home does not remain the domain of domestic life, nor does the world simply become its social or historical counterpart. The unhomely is the shock of recognition of the world-in-the-home, the home-in-the-world. (*The world and the home*, 1)

Willie will obtain broader and more multiple perspectives to examine his life. His identity making will continually in process. The life of culture exists in the continuous boundary crossing and represents the self-identity through the way of hybridity. Only through the hybridity, can Willie find his own way to make a whole new, hybridized, and multiple construction of subjectivity. Finally, Willie will recreate a new sense of place, and thus of self, through a profound acceptance and "working through" of his own position as a permanent exile, so will Naipaul.

The autobiographical writing, *Half a Life* presents a more optimistic attitude toward the future than the previous ones: when a man can candidly face the dilemma of his own situation in life, he will fear nothing. Significantly, Naipaul empowers himself through his writing. Like his father before him, he is seeking his own home in the world; he constructs a home for himself through his creative writing. He constructs his own subjectivity via the powerful writing.

Through the "geographical imagination" of his writing, Naipaul thus creates a home for himself. He makes an effort to resist the sense of insecurity and of uncertainty. Willie in *Half a Life* decides to start a new life, no longer desiring to live under Ana's protection. He rethinks his life and decides to face challenges of the future without attempting to escape or withdraw. Willie remarkably rebuilds his identity and finds the placeslessness as a kind of placeness. He is caught in in-

betweenness. Also, he must enjoy the third space. Naipaul, as an exiled writer, is caught in-between: writing between home and homelessness, he takes advantage of being an exile to create his own space, his own home, one which is simultaneously nowhere and everywhere. We are to admit here that to be on the margins is to be part of yet not part of; in the self's encounter with others, the exile can live a double exteriority for he or she belongs to two cultures without identifying wholly with either. The exile can engage in a cross-cultural dialogue and through that dialogue can affirm both his uniqueness and the interrelationship between himself and others.

In terms of postcolonial perspectives, Willie in *Half a Life* just like Naipaul himself has the unfixed identity in the construction of subjectivity though he must experience the ruptures among subjectivity, geography, and language toward multicultural and fluid identity. Inevitably, colonialism is primarily political and economic exploitation resulting in cultural and psychic crisis. Colonialists on the other hand justify it as a process of civilizing the savages. The cultural blindness of the white world assumes that all the black men look alike. In Naipaul's A Bend in the River, the bush symbolises the primitive world. It begins outside the city and goes on forever. It is a cover for violence and traditional security. It is super-imposing. Raymond, the professor who writes for the President understands this problelm. He tells Indar and and Salim: "It takes an African to rule Africa –the colonial powers never truly understand that. However much of us study Africa, however deep our sympathy, we will remain outsiders." (BR, 141-42)

Though Salim acquires a domestic life with Raymond and his wife Yvette, he doesnot accept it. At the time of crisis when everything is undergoing change, stable relationships are not possible. The political and economic stability of place overwhelms an individual's effort to find a place in it.

To sum up, Caribbean writing in English has been and remains significant for the development of the field of postcolonial literary studies. It is also an area of literary studies that offers an immediate yet complex and rewarding global frame of reference. While recognizing the geographical, linguistic, racial and cultural diversity contained within the Caribbean basin, this survey style module will examine Anglophone Caribbean literature of the twentieth century, primarily works written

after World War II. It will draw upon a range of literary forms –poetry (including epic, performance and dub), drama, short stories and novels –but will also make use of other cultural and aesthetic materials –film, music and art –to aid understanding of the interactions between literature and other artistic and popular practices in the Caribbean, especially carnival, calypso and cricket. Many of the key thematic concerns of Caribbean writing will be explored: slavery, legacies of empire, cultural imperialism, the canon of English literature, connections to the land & sea, the politics of independence, the carnivalesque, racial difference, gender & sexuality, emigration/immigration & alienation, diasporic identities, and neo-colonialism –to name but a few. As the module progresses, the texts move us from the Caribbean to Britain, the US & Canada and then the world, illuminating a vast network of connections –literary, linguistic, cultural, political and economic. The module places some emphasis on the work of V.S. Naipaul, whose worldly horizons and challenging literary and political ambivalences make his writing a key site of postcolonial contestation and an access route for thinking about global literature.

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IV

Sense of Alienation and Rootlessness

Chambers Dictionary defines alienation thus: "To be strange is to be foreign, alien - a stranger is a person whose home is elsewhere." Naipaul, through a quirk in history, is a stranger, if not a foreigner in his native Trinidad, as he is a third generation immigrant from India. Therefore, it is difficult in Naipaul's case to define that 'elsewhere' which is home. As the word home is inevitably linked with identity, it is commonplace to remark that the Nobel laureate's work often centres on what has frequently been called an identity quest. If identity is what differentiates individuals, a displaced person is an individual who for some reason lives in a country or society other than his/her own.

Identity is often constructed on an individual basis, but within a given social structure, the alienation of which could lead to a corresponding alienation of identity. Thus, a displaced identity equals alienation – a favourite theme in Naipaul. We all write and speak from a particular place and time, from a history and a culture which is specific. V.S. Naipaul is often blamed and even hated for having no loyalty, as it is claimed, to his home country and his ethnicity. Additionally, it is claimed that he doesn't seem to show sympathy for the oppressed, as he generally looks at them with contempt, and criticizes them with a severe language. Relying on Homi Bhabha's notion of unhomeliness and Melvin Seeman's highly influential five-fold classification of the theme of alienation, and considering Hegelian, and existentialist theories on the notion of alienation as well (we have discussed it in detail in Chapter II) Naipaul is likely to be blamed for having no loyalty for his culture. In fact, he is one of the postcolonial writers who has been trying to lead the people of once-colonized cultures to overcome the problems they have been entangled in by narrating and portraying their situations in an objective manner. He tries to instil a sense of alienation in the psyches of once colonized people first; in the form of normlessness (one of Melvin Seeman's fivefold classification of the concept of alienation), and then in the form of which

Hegel termed as 'alienation as separation' which also resembles to the existential concept of alienation.

Naipaul's writings frequently carry references to his complex cultural heritage, rooted in three countries; Trinidad, the country of his birth, India, whose ancestral rites regulated his tightly-knit family circle, and Britain, the source of his colonial education. His reticence to claim either India or Britain as 'home' has been the source of several books. In an article 'Jasmin', written for the *The Times Literary Supplement* in 1964, he wryly remarked: "The English language was mine, the tradition was not." (Naipaul, *Critical Perspectives,* 19) Conversely, during his travels in India, he notes that he effortlessly melted into the Indian landscape, but the minute he spoke, he gave himself away as a foreigner, an alien. This displacement of cultural identity is underlined by an anecdote the writer relates in the same article. Naipaul recounts how, upon recognizing a sweet-smelling flower in a British Guiana garden from his childhood memories, he asked his hostess her name, and was told: We call it jasmine. Naipaul comments: ''Jasmine! So I had known it all these years!''(22)

Putting a sprig of jasmine in his buttonhole, the writer smelled it and repeated the word jasmine, jasmine. But, he notes: "the word and the flower had been separate in my mind too long. They did not come together". (22) It is a well-known fact that Naipaul suffered writer's block until the signifier and the signified did, in fact, come together in his mind, and thence, in his writing. His earliest published writings, including his first major work, *A House for Mr. Biswas,* are all set in Port of Spain, the city where he grew up and which he knew intimately. However, as the writer himself remarked, positioning himself culturally in Trinidad was not possible. He noted in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech: "There was my Hindu family, with its fading memories of India, there was India itself." The key to this sentence is really the phrase "it's fading memories of India". Naipaul feels that he grew up at a time of transition, marked by the transfer of values from ancestral Indian customs and values to Western values. East Indian Caribbeans were weaning themselves from India, yet Naipaul notes that no values really replaced those of their grandparents. This problem of a displaced and non-replaced cultural identity is

poignantly depicted in *A House for Mr. Biswas.* Mr. Biswas, a portrayal of Naipaul's own father, is a man caught up in three cultures, and in the process, dispossessed of all three. Unable to integrate culturally in Trinidad where he lives, rejecting Hindu culture which he dislikes, and which cannot help him in his ambition to be a writer, he is equally unable to identify with British culture, the only means available to him to achieve his ambition. For example, the Ideal School of Journalism, based in London, requires Mr. Biswas to write about English seasons, which for obvious reasons, he has never experienced. The novel is the story of a life which could be called a failure, but which could also be called a success. In a way, Mr. Biswas achieves very little - even the famous house is only partly paid for at the time of his death. On the other hand, when he finally moves into the house at Sikkim Street towards the end of the novel, despite all its failings, the house secures Mr Biswas's dignity, and his tragic-comic quest is over.

Born in the West Indian Trinidad to a family descended from the East India, educated, married, and mostly resided in England, Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul is regarded as a mouthpiece of displacement and rootlessness by the critics and scholars of the field. Speaking in an interview, Naipaul confirms the above idea saying, "When I speak about being an exile or a refugee, I am not just using a metaphor, I am speaking literally" (Evans, 62). It is clear that even after having lived in England for many years, he, still, has not had the sense of belonging, as he says: "I still had that nervousness in a new place, that rawness of response, still felt myself to be in the other man's country, felt my strangeness, my solitude" (*Enigma of Arrival:* 7). He is, as Mohit K. Ray articulates, "an Indian in the West Indies, a West Indian in England, and a nomadic intellectual in a postcolonial world" (Ray, 208). Naipaul's *A House for Mr Biswas* is a tragicomic novel set in Trinidad in 1950s, and was published in 1961. It deals with an East Indian's struggle for a place to strike his deracinated root afresh. It also attacks the Indian society's segregated, traditional way of life which is contented to live in its shell and preserves its own special religious identity. Naipaul based *A House for Mr. Biswas* on his own experiences in Trinidad. Mr. Biswas is the prototype for Naipaul's father, Seepersad. And Anand, Mr Biswas's son for Naipaul. In his

book, *Letters Between Father and Son: Family Letters* (1999), Naipaul says that the relationship between him and his father is similar to that of Anand and his father Mr. Biswas. Reading the novel in the light of Naipaul's biography, we can clearly recognize similarities between the real and fictional fathers and sons. For example, Both Naipaul's father and Mr Biswas were born in a village. Both of them change many houses until they have one of their own. Living with wealthy relatives, working as sign painters, getting married with the daughters of conservative, wealthy Hindu families; holding a series of jobs are some of the other similarities. Further more, Seepersad Naipaul, too, finds work on a newspaper after moving to Port of Spain, as Mohun Biswas does. The events in the life of Mr. Biswas's son Anand reflect those of Naipaul's himself. Anand, like Naipaul, is instilled with the idea of reading, being incited to be one of those students who achieves to win a scholarship at school and to share his father's involvement with writing. Naipaul, mentioning *A House for Mr. Biswas* says that it was very much his father's book. It was written out of his journalism and stories, out of his knowledge he had got from the way of looking MacGowen had trained him in. It was written out of his writing. The novel takes its subject matter from the excluded peoples who have been alienated from societies to which they apparently belong, and who are in search of an identity.

Naipaul portrays the West Indians' lives, the reality of descendants of indentured servants by presenting his familial experiences as a miniature sample of the larger truths about the general colonial predicament in Trinidad. In his book *Reading and Writing*, he says that he began to see what his material might be: "The city street from whose mixed life they had held aloof and the country life before that, with the ways and manners of a remembered India" (Schmitt,132). The state of one's feeling of having been deracinated and displaced is called unhomeliness, a term coined by Homi Bhabba and other theorists of postcolonialism. It is the sense of being in between of two or more cultures. An unhomed person does not have the feeling of belonging since s/he is in a psychological limbo which generally ends in some psychological disorders and cultural displacement. Here, being "unhomed" does not mean being homeless. To be unhomed, as Lois Tyson states in

Critical Theory Today, "is to feel not at home even in one's own home because you are not at home in yourself; that is, your cultural identity crisis has made you a psychological refugee" (Tyson, 421). In this regard, anyone who scrutinizes Naipaul's works, consisted of both fiction and non-fiction, can realize that Naipaul has a strong feeling of unhomeliness, although he has a home in Wiltshire, England. Being a person brought up by a culture that has been deracinated from East India to Trinidad in West India as indentured labourers who have been colonized long before, and having had a leap (due to being educated first in Trinidad by a colonial, namely, British education system and later in Oxford, England) from a culture which had no self-determination to one which was a world power that initiated reason, science, and logic, (the corner stones of modernism) Naipaul seems to be in a psychological limbo, having been alienated from the culture of his people. Alienation and exile are the concepts which the writers of postcolonial literature mainly discuss and treat in their works. Because the writers or intellectuals from once colonized countries encountering the distortments that the colonizer has left on their culture, eventually establish discrete responses. This sense of not belonging to a significant country or culture results either in its rejection by the writer through criticism and satire, or by his physical or psychological withdrawals in the form of various kinds of alienation, as it has been the case with Naipaul at the very beginning of his adolescence and later in his matured life. Alienation is usually considered as a concept associated with minorities, the poor, the unemployed, and other groups of periphery who have limited power to bring about changes in society. Alienation may be viewed as a feeling of separation or isolation which results problems stemmed from rapid social changes such as industrialization and urbanization which has broken down traditional relationships among individuals and groups and the goods and services they produce. However, this interpretation does not give a comprehensive delineation of the term. The concept of alienation has intrigued and troubled many sociologists and philosophers and consequently enjoyed a turbulent history which stretches to Hegel. Due to its widespread usage through various disciplines, there hasn't been an agreement on even its most basic aspects yet. As Iain Williamson and Cedric Cullingford highlight: "There is disagreement about the definition, debate over whether the

phenomenon is a sociological process or a psychological state, or both, and confusion over the inevitability of the experience." (263). The concept has been used widely in the contemporary literature, sociology and philosophy. Melvin Seeman underlines that "It is a central theme in the classics of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim; and in contemporary work, the consequences that have been said to flow from the fact of alienation have been diverse, indeed" (783). Hegel uses two distinct German words *entausserung* (surrender) and *entfremdung* (a state of separation) for describing the theme of alienation. He, as Williamson and Culingford assert, was much influenced by Schiller's theological use of the term as a state of separation, and also by Rousseau's discussion of alienation as surrender of personal self and control. According to Williamson and Cullingford, Hegel's discussion of alienation (or entfremdung) can be drawn out in two major senses: alienation-as-separation, and alienation-as-surrender. The first sense echoes Schiller's writings and the second those of the social contract philosophers (Williamson, 265). Hegel, as they claim, argues that "through self analysis and contemplation, the human moves from an immature sense of universality to a powerful sense of his/her own individuality, but as universality is essential to all things spiritual, this process leads to an acute sense of self-alienation from one's inner nature and the extremity of discord"(265). This is alienation-as-separation. They go on saying "recognition of this leads the individual to a second alienation process where this particularity is yielded back to the universality of the social substance. This sense of universality is mature and the experience is one of actualisation, although Hegel remains vague on how this occurs" (265). This is alienation as surrender. To sum up, the issue that must be underlined in Hegel's understanding of the theme of alienation is that for Hegel the theme of alienation has a positive nature.

Thus, Hegel puts forward two different processes, alienation-as-separation being distressing but necessary for maturity, and „alienation-as-surrender being positively peaceful and free from worry due to the fact that "it involves a conscious relinquishment or surrender with the intention of securing a desired end: namely, unity with the social substance" (Schacht, 36). Meanwhile, during those interpretations on the concept of alienation, as

Williamson and Cullingford put it: “Seeman and other American sociologists and social-psychologists began to pay close attention to the concept, and it was this work that was to provide a valid paradigm for researches around the concept” (269). Melvin Seeman, in his paper *On the Meaning of Alienation*, tries to put this complex structure of alienation into an order by a five-fold classification: Powerlessness, Meaninglessness, Normlessness, Social Isolation and Self- Estrangement (783). Seeman defines normlessness, the third variant of the alienation theme, as having been derived from Durkheim's description of anomie. He asserts that “in the traditional usage, anomie denotes a situation in which the social norms regulating individual conduct have broken down or are no longer effective as rules for behavior” (anomie, 787). In other words, normlessness refers to a situation lacking effective norms or in which individuals assume that unacceptable behaviors are required for success.

A House for Mr Biswas, metaphorically, is a miniature world which symbolizes the colonial world. Mr. Biswas's personal battle with the stronghold of the Tulsi household (the symbol of the colonial world) is a quest for existential freedom and the struggle for personality. As Singh underlines; “Mr. Biswas is the unaccommodated man representing the outcast's symbolic quest for a place in the hostile universe” (126). The Tulsis are running a sort of mimic world of colonialism and the important thing is that the Hanuman House too is run on the traditional Hindu familial lines and protocols. On the surface, the Tulsis have made an admirable reconstruction of the clan in strange and hostile conditions. It has its own schemes, leaders, duties, law and order, religious rituals and provides jobs and help to men of their community on merits. Mr. Biswas is repeatedly accused of not being grateful to the Tulsis despite the fact, as Mrs. Tulsi says, "Coming to us with no more clothes you could hang up on a nail” (HB, 557). At first glance, Mr. Biswas's rebellion may appear meaningless and unfair. Because one is likely to think that the Tulsi family provides shelter and job for Mr Biswas whenever he needs, but nevertheless, he ungratefully reject their help propounding the idea that the Hanuman House is like a prison. But beneath the surface, one can see that the Hanuman House is not a coherent or benevolent entity of the traditional Hindu

joint family. It is more a slave society where Mrs Tulsi and Seth need workers to boost their sinking influence and economy. They exploit the homelessness and poverty of men like Biswas and others. The acceptance of Hanuman House and its dubious claims is the submission of slavery. By such a picture, Naipaul tries to portray that subjugation is not something peculiar to the West, or to the whites. He satirises the Indians insistence on carrying out their older caste system within themselves while they resent white colonialism. Naipaul's protagonist is alienated from the Hindu community in Trinidad, and is fighting out a personal battle for freedom and recognition. For him, to build a house of his own means freedom and recognition. And by the end of the novel, in spite of all its deficiencies, he manages to buy this house which eventually brings him his wife's respect, and saves him from his sense of being rootless and alienated. He does not regard the Tulsi's way of life which was consisted of the old traditions of the East India. The feeling of deracination and displacement and lack of a national community in Trinidad are the fundemental themes in *A House for Mr. Biswas*, as they were for Naipaul personally. Both Mr. Biswas and Naipaul are in search of a home by which they will be able to find their identities. A sense of place and self which, at the time, was difficult for East Indians in Trinidad to have. Being an East Indian descendent in West Indies, a colony of England, Mr. Biswas is physically in one place (West Indies) and culturally in another (East India), and searches to find a genuine identity. Analysing the sense of alienation and the agony of exile experienced by the characters, *A House for Mr. Biswas* delineates the problems of a distorted and troubled past and tries to find a purpose in life. Alienated from his folk, family and from the Tulsi's Hanuman House, for Mr. Biswas, a house of his own symbolizes freedom and a place to strike a root. Mr Biswas is an alien even in his own family since he was born with six fingers and feet first, signs for bad luck. Being considered as an unlucky baby, he stays as an outsider, a lonely individual in his own family. When one reads *A House for Mr Biswas*, one can easily observe that the sense of alienation that the protagonists Mohun Biswas experiences in his fictional life is the very sense that Naipaul has experienced in his real life. Thus, both Naipaul and Mr Biswas, the protagonist of *A House for Mr Biswas,* experience a sense of alienation first in the form of normlessness which eventually leads them to an

existential sense of alienation which also is likely to be considered as having common qualities with Hegel's concept of „alienation as separation. Melvin Seeman, in his paper *On the Meaning of Alienation,* classified the theme of alienation in five categories one of which is normlessness. Now we can explore the Marxian interpretation, which will lend an edge to our understanding.

4.1 Marx's theory of alienation

Marx's theory of alienation argues that things that naturally belong together are kept separate, or things that are properly in harmony are made to be antagonized. It refers to the alienation of people from aspects of their "human nature" (Gattungswesen, usually translated as 'species-essence' or 'species-being'). Marx believed that alienation is a systematic result of capitalism. His theory relies on Feuerbach's The Essence of Christianity (1841), which argues that the idea of God has alienated the characteristics of the human being. Stirner would take the analysis further in The Ego and Its Own (1844), declaring that even 'humanity' is an alienating ideal for the individual, to which Marx and Engels responded in The German Ideology (1845).

Marx's Theory of Alienation is based upon his observation that in emerging industrial production under capitalism, workers inevitably lose control of their lives and selves, in not having any control of their work. Workers never become autonomous, self-realized human beings in any significant sense, except the way the bourgeois want the worker to be realized. Alienation in capitalist societies occurs because in work each contributes to the common wealth, but can only express this fundamentally social aspect of individuality through a production system that is not publicly social, but privately owned, for which each individual functions as an instrument, not as a social being.

There is a commonly noted problem of translation in grappling with ideas of alienation derived from German-language philosophical texts: the word alienation, and similar words such as estrangement, is often used to

translate two quite distinct German words, Entfremdung and Entäußerung, interchangeably. Many sociologists of the late 19th and early 20th century were concerned about alienating effects of modernization. German sociologists Georg Simmel and Ferdinand Tönnies wrote critical works on individualization and urbanization. Simmel's Philosophie des Geldes (Philosophy of Money) describes how relationships become more and more mediated through money. This idea of alienation can be observed in some other contexts, although the term may not be as frequently used. In the context of an individual's relations within society, alienation can mean the unresponsiveness of the society as a whole to the individuality of each member of the society. When collective decisions are made, it is usually impossible for the unique needs of each person to be taken into account. In a broader philosophical context, especially in existentialism and phenomenology, alienation describes the inadequacy of human being or mind in relation to the world. The human mind, as the subject of perception, relates to the world as an object of its perception, and so is distanced from the world rather than living within it. This line of thought can be found in Soren Kierkegaard, who examined the emotions and feelings of individuals when faced with life choices. Many 20th-century philosophers, both theistic and atheistic, and theologians drew many concepts from Kierkegaard, including the notions of angst, despair, and the importance of the individual. Martin Heidegger's concepts of anxiety (Angst) and mortality drew on Kierkegaard and are indebted to the way in which the latter lays out the importance of our subjective relation to truth, our existence in the face of death, the temporality of existence, and the importance of passionate affirmation of one's individual being-in-the-world.

History has become an important field of human study in the last few decades. The literary and critical discussions have the main place for history and historical aspects have helped in interpretation of life throughout its insight. In the ancient times history was supposed to be a part of philosophy and religion. But during the classical period, Herodotus (in the 5th century BC) distinguished historical narratives from other narratives like fictional and mythical narratives. The Bible gave concept of historical progression to the

West as it defined time in terms of a beginning, middle and end. The historians made conscious efforts to distance themselves from the rhetoric which was characteristic of historical writings. The 'Annals' School of France realized the need for freeing it from ideological representational strategy and transforming historical studies into genuine science. The old historiography differs from the classical one in several ways. The modern historiography differs from the Classical one in several ways. The old historiography comprises fictional narratives along with the heritage of rhetoric while the modern historiography is away from rhetoric.

The novelists a historiographer indulge themselves in inventing a plot for their narrative. The meaning of stories lies in their emplotment, which helps configure events in such a way that it represents symbolically the human experience of the time. V.S Naipaul differs from his counterparts in the sense that while the other writers tend to reject the given history through their fictional writings only. Naipaul has questioned the reliability of history through his writings of pure history itself. Naipaul has considered these two moments to be the most crucial moments to be the most crucial moments of the history of Trinidad. He says that these two moments 'touch history'. The two moments have historicality; they are potentially symbolic and representative in nature. The give an idea about the two phases of modern colonization and they provide insight into our understanding of colonization elsewhere.

The *Loss of El Dorado* is primarily a historical narrative about the colonization of the Caribbean Islands in particular. Naipaul has investigated its various aspects i.e, social, political, cultural, legal, commercial and human, has strived to reproduce a comprehensive picture of the society. He exposed the brutality of the white Colonizers and their ways of exploiting their ignorance and helplessness of the native islanders. He unveils in vivid narrative what Karl Marx has observed regarding colonization: The profound hypocrisy and inherent barbarism of bourgeois civilizations lies unveiled before our eyes, turning from its home, where it assumes respectable forms, to the colonies, where it goes naked.''(Moin Shakir, 260)

History speaks of two phases of colonization, the early phasei.e.pre-15th century phase and the latter phase is more significant in the sense that is widespread and it reveals some of its ugliest pictures of human nature. This phase is known as the modern phase of colonization and it is understood as the progeny of the capitalism. The phase of Merchant Capitalism began in 1947 and continued up to the end of 18th century. The phase of industrial capitalism commenced soon after the industrial revolution took place the industrial revolution took place in Europe. According to the historical records the merchant capitalism originated with the expeditions of the European merchants to the distant new lands in search of commodities like sugar, tobacco, spices, pearls, minerals and so on. Subduing and often conquering the people and then usurping their territories for trade, agriculture and settlement mark this period. During this period the Whites exchanged goods with the natives. The Whites actually had plans to exploit the natives of the East of Africa. Naipaul's narrative refutes the arguments those have been forwarded by the European historians regarding the colonization of the Caribbean islands. He believes that merely trade and settlement were not the motives on the part of colonizers. Rather they felt that the island has gold –mines, and hence their early expeditions were for the verification of the then prevalent myths of Eldorado and the gold city of Manoa. They wanted to plunder the islands, provided these myths were facts. Port of Spain, the capital town of Trinidad was the gateway to the ElDorado lands and therefore control over it was essential for them. Naipaul has provided evidences to support his view on the intensity of the European appetite for wealth. He states that Sir Walter Raliegh, who was awaiting his execution, was released on parole from the London Tower on the condition that he "would find mines without disturbing the Spaniards and that the penalty for failure would be death".(*The Loss of El dorado*, 92)

Reading Naipual's correspondence with his father, one easily recognizes Mr. Biswas in Mr. Naipaul senior. Like his fictional counterpart, Mr. Naipaul (senior) achieved little in life – at any rate he considered himself to be a failed writer. A quote from his letter to his daughter:

> I see Sevlon has had a novel accepted by the Wingate Publishing House and it has been recommended by the British Book Society as its 'Book of the Month'. Lucky fellow. The book, entitled A Brighter Sun, deals with a marriage of two teen-age Indian children in Trinidad. My own idea. And I doubt whether Sevlon knows really much of the realities of the Indian way of life in these parts. I don't mind admitting that the thing depressed me. I feel – very foolishly of course – that I have been robbed of my theme. (*Letters*, 144)

He nonetheless weathered the transition period, paving the way for his sons. And in real life, both V.S. Naipaul and Shiva Naipaul are gifted writers. In his introductory speech to a Symposium on East Indians in the Caribbean, held in 1975, Naipaul explained his father's dilemma: he has so many difficult things to come to terms with. He was himself part of the process of change, and he couldn't distance himself from this process of change. He couldn't take a longer view, like those of us who have come afterwards.

Naipaul has a view that the raiders avoided confrontation with the natives, for they wanted to take their help in tracing out the gold mines. Once having won their confidence, they had planned to exploit them and plunder their wealth. As a part of their strategy, they exchanged their goods with them, took their children to England and assured them of protection against the other races. Once the mines were located, their plan was to invite their army for invasion. They were also in need for a piece of land to settle down upon so that they could continue with their excavation of the mines. Trinidad was strategically very significant and hence they made it their base.

Naipaul's blackest vision of the destruction of identity through geographical displacement is to be found in his book *In a Free State* composed of three linked stories. All three present geographical displacement as a final irrevocable destruction of identity. Naipaul's pessimism is all the gloomier as in each case there is some sort of choice – the protagonists attempt to reach a 'free state'. However, the cost of the dislocation annihilates them. In the first story, 'One out of many', the protagonist, Santosh, an Indian domestic servant transplanted from Bombay to Washington DC, loses his identity as his

links with his own community are broken. He manages to conform to the demands of American society, and materially he is relatively successful, but at the cost of a mutilated soul. The irony of the situation is that every step he takes to his ultimate state of 'limbo' is an act of free will. His Indian cultural experience simply does not apply to the American context. He is a foreigner, a stranger, incapable of translating the American experience into anything that corresponds to what he knows and therefore can control or integrate, and ultimately, live with. Naipaul uses the Hindi word *hubshi*, (demon or monster) with great effect to express the gulf between the two cultures between which Santosh is caught. On arriving in Washington, the protagonist voices his wonder at finding *hubshis*, everywhere:

> Once or twice a week I went to the supermarket on our street. I always had to walk past groups of hubshi men and women", "Scattered among the hubshi houses were others just as old but with gas-lamps. . . . I also felt that it was like a warning to the hubshi to keep off; there was always a couple of hubshi guards… some old hubshi beggar men in rags. There were also many young hubshi boys. (*In a Free State,* 27)

This inability to read cultural codes dooms him from the very start. His first shopping expedition leads him to buy a green hat and a green suit too big for him and therefore unwearable. The next step is his 'would be emancipation' from his employer, and finally, the ultimate act of alienation - his proposal and marriage to a *hubshi* woman. Yet, Santosh recognises the process of destruction engulfing him. When buying the preposterous suit, he tells himself: "When I considered all that cloth and all that tailoring I was proposing to adorn my simple body with, that body that needed so little, I felt I was asking to be destroyed." (30-31)The story ends on what is undoubtedly one of the most sombre notes in literature:

"I was once part of the flow, never thinking of myself as a presence. Then I looked in the mirror and decided to be free. All that my freedom has brought me is the knowledge that I have a face and have a body, that I must feed this body and clothe this body for a certain number of years. Then it will be over." (53)

Thus Santosh voices Naipaul's pessimistic view of the impossibility to escape: the foreigner has become a stranger, an alienated being, trapped in a dislocation of culture. The protagonist of the second story, "Tell me who to kill" is a West Indies Indian labourer. But the second story is bleaker, insomuch as at least Santosh has golden memories of an earlier life in Bombay when he walked by the Arabian Sea, waiting for the sun to rise – when "the city and the ocean gleamed like gold". (16)

The West Indies, as presented by Naipaul, offers no salvation of any kind, no golden glimpses. The only salvation possible is through departure. The protagonist pins all his hopes for a better life on his adored younger brother, following him to London, working day and night, so as to ensure his brother's studies, and hopefully, thus ensure his freedom from a labourer's life. But neither brother is capable of dealing with life in the metropolis any more than they were able to in the West Indies. The younger boy is flawed – both weak and selfish; the elder has a strong character, and is capable of selfless love, but is consumed by hatred for a world which denies him the means to the story is narrated in a Pidgin English which echoes the incapacity of the protagonist to escape his marginal position in both countries. It ends like the first, with total alienation of identity through dislocation - with Naipaul's darkest lines – the elder brother seeing the ruin of his hopes, his life, asks God: "O God, show me the enemy. Once you find out who the enemy is, you can kill him. But these people here they confuse me. Who hurt me? Who spoil my life?" (98) And yet every step he took was a considered step to freedom. In the third story, the novella *In a Free State*, it is the other way around, and the dislocation of identity affects a white person who chooses to live in Africa. The scene is set in an unnamed African state in the throes of revolution. As the full impact of a cultural/cum/political crisis hits the country, all certainties are rendered null and void. The journey from cultural location to culturally dislocated is depicted symbolically, as Bobby (a white civil servant working in Africa,) and Linda (the wife of a BBC cadre) drive from the capital to their 'compound' or home (roughly a day's journey) through the country. At the beginning of the drive, both locate themselves culturally in Africa, albeit colonised Africa. Bobby who represents the white coloniser 'gone native',

insomuch as he wears ‘native shirts’ (“designed and woven in Holland” (101) notes Naipaul ironically), and chats up or rather, attempts to chat up African boys, remarks to Linda: “My life is here” (123). Linda, “one of the ‘compound wives’ from the Collectorate, one of those who lived in the government compound” (106) and who has the reputation of a ‘man-eater’ does not appear to consider the idea of returning to England to live either. (123).

Throughout the journey, Naipaul plays on a dual tension – that between the two white colonisers, and that between the colonisers and the Africans. At the end, Linda will rejoin the world of ‘whites’ where she belongs, but Bobby will remain stuck in a dislocated space, at home neither in Africa, which rejects him, nor in Linda’s universe of the ‘white coloniser’ which he rejects. The transition of the moribund colonial world which is the creation of ‘white men’ and therefore has become their ‘home’, into “a free state” where they are foreigners is set into motion as Bobby drives his car across a picturesque African landscape. A transition epitomised by the old ‘Colonel’, an old time white settler who runs a hotel as decrepit as himself, located halfway along their journey. Colonial Africa is caricatured in the garrulous old man, who tells his guests: “There’s not good and bad here. They’re just Africans.” (185) The dismantling of colonial Africa and the emergence of indigenous power is increasingly visible as they journey ‘home’ in the form of an increasing number of roadblocks. If at the beginning, they are waved on, with Bobby casually remarking: “They’re very good that way”, “they have a pretty shrewd idea who we are” (155), this complacent certainty is completely undermined at the last roadblock, where they are not stopped, but Bobby is badly beaten by a ‘just African’. At this point, Bobby’s comradely Pidgin English – “I report you” rings hollow in his own ears.

Within the space of a journey, he has travelled from the certainty of a familiar and controlled world to an unfamiliar universe which he has no means of understanding, leave alone controlling. Reality merges into nightmare when his own houseboy, Luke, suddenly acquires an unknown face on realizing that his master has been beaten. The story closes with Luke’s laughter, and Bobby thinking: “I will have to leave. But the compound was safe; the soldiers guarded the gate. Bobby thought: I will have to sack Luke.” (239) But Bobby

cannot sack Luke's laughter, nor will he ever be safe again in the compound. Bobby will awaken to the frightening fact that the place he considered 'home' has simply ceased to exist.

This pessimistic view locks the displaced individual in a void – or non-space, from which there is no escape. The more the individual exercises his/her right to be an individual in an 'alien' universe, that is to say the right to 'difference', the more the individual becomes subject to an alienation, or 'dislocation' of identity. To be a stranger thus becomes synonymous, not with being 'strange', but with becoming 'estranged'…

In his book *The Enigma of Arrival,* written some sixteen years after *In a Free State,* Naipaul describes the genesis of *The Enigma*:

> The story had become more personal: my journey, the writer's journey, the writer defined by his writing discoveries, his ways of seeing, rather than by his personal adventures, writer and man separating at the beginning of the journey and coming together again in a second life just before the end. (EOA, 309)

Further,

> We, here on our island, handling books printed in this world, and using its goods, had been abandoned and forgotten. We pretended to be real, to be learning, to be preparing ourselves for life, we mimic men of the New World, one unknown corner of it, with all its reminders of the corruption that came so quickly to the new. (MM, 146)

V. S. Naipaul's novel *The Mimic Men* is the fictional memoir of protagonist Ralph Singh. Written in a boarding house in London, it is a retrospective, first-person account of Ralph's life, ranging over his childhood in the fictional West Indian island of Isabella, his university days in London where he meets and marries his wife, and his somewhat successful business and political careers back in Isabella. Yet with all the particular details, Ralph

Singh is also a prototypical colonial character, an intelligent and sensitive person confused by the plural but unequal society he's raised in and for whom identity is a primary issue. Because the story is related through flashbacks and memories, Ralph has the opportunity to weave in reflection with narrative and self-analysis with exposition. In the process of reading, the reader finds certain words and phrases occurring again and again, the repetition establishing the threads of themes that slowly emerge from the novel like a raised embossed pattern. Ralph admits himself that his feelings, his actions, his life fit in with `patterns. Ralph's sense of alienation, his experiences as a colonial politician, his struggle with a sense of personal identity, and his inability to connect with others are linked as various expressions of Ralph's sense of loss and disconnectedness. These experiences and reactions also fit into general patterns of colonized persons acting within `typical' colonial situations. Everywhere Ralph Singh looks he sees `taint' and `corruption.' History itself is corrupt. Isabella's history of slavery has left the island with a 'taint' Ralph wishes to escape from while the result of his own East Indian immigrant history, in which he "is the late intruder, the picturesque Asiatic, linked to neither" [master nor slave] (78), serves to complete a "little bastard world" (122). As a result, the inhabitants of Isabella compose "a haphazard, disordered and mixed society" (55). The history of Trinidad, on which the portrayal of Isabella is based, confirms that for decades the East Indian community suffered unique discrimination due to their initial economic situation as indentured servants and to their desire to adhere to their traditions and religion and, as of the 1970's, they still economically lagged behind all other ethnic groups on the island. Even in describing his success in real estate, land ownership rather than business being an historically encouraged endeavour for East Indians in Trinidad, Ralph speaks of his success as a gift that is tainted, that “sets us apart, it distorts us” (61) and the name of the land development, Kripalville, is "corrupted to Crippleville" (59).

Ralph, his wife, and the social set they associate with are also apart from the rest of Isabellan society. The members of this group, like Ralph, have “all studied abroad and married abroad;” they were “a group to whom the

island was a setting" and for whom "the past had been cut away" (55). They represent what Frantz Fanon calls an underdeveloped middle class, the result of an anaemic colonial economy that cannot support a vital middle class engaged in production as financiers or captains of industry but rather engaged in intermediary activities like small-scale business, agriculture, and the professions (149-50). Ralph Singh's interests and those of his social set epitomize the profoundly cosmopolitan mood of this class' mind-set for whom the 'narrowness' of island life is a constant contradiction.

The corruption Ralph perceives in history and the society it produces, and his resultant sense of alienation from both, permeates Ralph's experience of every aspect of public life in Isabella, especially politics. When Ralph is a child, his father doesn't return home one day and Ralph and his family later learn that he has become the leader of a small quasi-religious, quasi-revolutionary group. Yet his father's movement is only one of many movements, part of the unrest in the colonies...just before the war" characterized by labor strikes and general agitation for improved economic conditions (127). In Trinidad prior to the Second World War, labour and working class mobilization did indeed lead the British Parliament to agree to transfer some aspects of colonial control to local representatives even though many of these reforms were never implemented. But Ralph learns a political lesson that he rediscovers briefly during his own political career: His father's movement, politically impotent as it is, is positive in that it brings people together if only to share their despair and anger, it generates comradeship. Yet when Ralph suspects that his father's group is responsible for the slaughter of a prize racehorse he sees how pitiful and useless the gesture is, being as it is "performed by a shipwrecked man on a desert island." (142). Ralph decides the movement itself is weak and ultimately pointless and his horror at being connected to another strand of the corruption he sees all around him is made palpable as if he were forced to consume "tainted oil" and "raw flesh" (142), phrases repeated elsewhere and possible allusions to the morally corrupt and cannibalistic nature of a colonial society built on slavery and indentured servitude.

Ralph's own involvement in Isabella's nationalist movement and

new transitional government is also ultimately disillusioning, confirming that promised independence does not easily offer chances to create a new uncorrupted society but rather is tainted from the outset by the history that has gone before. Ralph's recounting of both his part in the nationalist movement and the resultant difficulties encountered by the transitional government are experiences common to former colonies, following a pattern that "has happened in a twenty countries" (190). He is proud that, unlike his father's movement which could only "disturb the peace," he and Browne and their supporters can, by virtue of their education and 'courage', "question the system itself" (190) as they also set out to tap the collective power of the people "who responded and could be manipulated" (197). And how befitting and ultimately ironic that they plan and strategize in Ralph's house, an homage to Roman architecture and a reminder of Rome as a dual symbol of both an ancient Western democracy and of a once mighty imperial power. But their rhetoric and ideas are not original or tailored to their situation but "borrowed phrases" from other revolutions in other places (198). Nothing new is created, their efforts are tainted by the past, and in the midst of their victory when they win seats in the government Ralph realizes that `the people's' support gives them no real power to create a new society since their movement does not have the backing of either organized labour or capital (204-5).

Their lack of real power also makes Ralph's and Browne's efforts at governance futile since they are stopped at every meaningful turn by those who truly hold power. They realize the government cannot run without the help of colonial officials and government aid from London (209) and the island's natural resources are already contracted out to multi-national firms with no chance of renegotiation (216). They cannot nationalize their industries or expel expatriate civil servants because London will not allow it (220). Ralph realizes that his and his companions' efforts have been pointless and learns that success changes nothing, the island is still under the colonial yoke and they are compelled to cater to the interests of those powerful actors that they cannot control. This outcome conjoins with Fanon's contention that "in the majority of cases, for 95 per cent of the population of underdeveloped countries, independence brings no immediate change" (75). But this does not

prevent the various local political elites of Isabella from beginning to fight over what scraps of power or influence they perceive they could have as representatives or agents for the old colonial power and the lines of division between the locals become more and more racially drawn, not an unusual consequence between “men who distrusted each other and saw their own power as nothing more than bluff” (219). Given that a colonial government is specifically structured to protect and promote the interests of a small group of colonizers, being an instrument of both class and racial domination, the gradual infiltration of local elites does not fundamentally change its structure or purpose. As in Trinidad in the 1950's where racial issues soon destroyed any potential for lower class solidarity, Ralph is accused of attempting to create racial divisions (239) and dismissed from his political party and his government post amid a period of communal tension and racial violence. It is surely no comfort that decolonization is always a violent phenomenon.

4.2 The Empty Self

Ralph Singh's life in parenthesis, his business success, marriage, and political career, is thus corrupted by association. Moreover, after an initial albeit shallow idealism, he can't construct any positive meaning out of his political experiences; his slogans are borrowed phrases and the impetus of the nationalist effort ran the same course as twenty others. He was one of the faceless politicians “made by distress and part of distress” (240). But the ultimate hollowness and futility Ralph discovers in business and politics are mere echoes of a much more personal and profound emotional emptiness. Indeed, his entry into politics was prompted by “some little hurt some little incompleteness” (37) and his perceptions of outside events are coloured by and filtered through this internal reality. Though Ralph's public life is significant in that it resonates with the complexities and contradictions inherent in decolonization and post-colonial nationalism, at the heart of Ralph's recounting of his fictional life in The Mimic Men is the story of how and why this sense of personal incompleteness grows to almost destroy him. Ralph is not unaffected by the corruption he perceives all around him. In fact, apart from all the external disorder, Ralph and the reader come to realize that

the “chaos lies all within” (192). Reflecting on his adult years in Isabella as a businessman and politician, Ralph writes, “I see that all the activity of these years existing as I have said in my own mind in parenthesis, represented a type of withdrawal, and was part of the injury inflicted on me by the too solid three-dimensional city in which I could never feel myself as anything but spectral, disintegrating, pointless, fluid” (51-2).

Though he is speaking of his traumatic university days in London, Ralph indicates elsewhere that many of his struggles with a sense of identity began during his childhood. His reactions to many of the events in his childhood are similarly characterized by disassociation and emotional withdrawal. He refuses to identify with his family's history in the island; it is simply a place where they have been ‘shipwrecked,’ (97). Instead, in his imagination, he is often a chieftain on a beautiful but sparsely populated tropical isle (100,111), and admits “I had been able at certain times to think of Isabella as deserted and awaiting discovery.” (146). Ralph is “putting himself in the place of the settler” which Fanon claims a colonized person never ceases to dream of doing (52). This view is only one of many of Ralph's secret childhood attitudes that seem to be influenced by his reading, both at school and at home, in which he adopts a European or Western view as when he disdains his given `Indian' name and adopts a Western one. Since Isabella's status as a British colony obliged it to model its educational system on English educational patterns in order to provide increased career opportunities for its students, schools are one of the “social apparatuses which have a heavily ideological function” (312), Ralph is simply responding as a good student when he freely internalizes an appropriate picture of [his] social world. Ralph accepts the Western European view of the world as the only correct one rather than one possibility among many. Yet this only serves to disorient Ralph, dislocating his sense of place and history from Isabella to London, creating what Albert Memmi calls “a permanent duality” within him (106).

Ralph's conscious and imaginative identification with Britain and the West affects him psychologically in a number of interrelated ways. When he considers his origins, he is descended from a line of the unimaginative, unenterprising, and oppressed which is “a cause for deep, silent shame.” (83)

This fits with Memmi's contention that “love of the colonizer is subtended by a complex of feelings ranging from shame to self-hate” (121) Ralph's sense of shame leads him as a child to withdraw more and more from the people and activities around him and he looks forward to escaping to London and the European landscapes that are his proper backdrop. He conceives of himself as protected by the West, since he thinks he is one of their own, and imagines a ‘celestial eye’ that watches over him (94-5, 111). Just as he disassociates his concept of home from Isabella, Ralph projects authority away from himself toward a symbolic, disembodied eye representing the watchful and superior culture. This projection slowly begins to sap his sense of will and engenders the feeling of helplessness that plagues him more as he grows older. And, as he chronicles, Ralph finds instead that London does not welcome him, he is not in his rightful place after all and he fails to integrate into the ideal culture presented to him through books. From childhood Ralph had disowned Isabellan history and culture, yet he doesn't find a place in British society either.

Memmi discusses Ralph's situation as a common experience among colonized persons who emulate the colonizer: The colonizer simply responds with disdain and makes clear “to the colonized that [his] efforts are in vain,” he has simply made himself appear ridiculous (124). Ralph feels estranged from both cultures and experiences a crisis in identity that he never fully recovers from. The result is a persistent and pervasive sense of emotional emptiness. His identity has no culture to centre around and he becomes the double, yet hollow hybrid colonial subject that Homi Bhabha examines in “Signs Taken for Wonders” (169). He literally loses a feeling of place, or his sense of identification with a place, and he equates placelessness with loss and disorder (154). This primary experience in London serves to propel Ralph into an accelerating downward spiral of emotional distress, loss, and growing sense of helplessness and futility that colour all his adult experiences to follow.

Another consequence of Ralph's amorphous sense of self is that he takes refuge in developing and playing a number of social roles. Unanchored by a coherent identity, he takes a childhood revelation as his cue, “A man was only what he saw of himself in others.” (100) As a politician, Ralph affirms

that he knew his role (193) and did indeed become what others saw in him (197). Yet, Ralph is always conscious of role-playing since none of his roles ever `fit.' In retrospect, he asks the reader to "understand my unsuitability for the role I had created for myself, as politician, as dandy, as celebrant" (40), therefore one should not be surprised at his "inevitable failure" (184). He asserts, "From playacting to disorder: it is the pattern" (184), yet for Ralph his sense of disorder also led to his role playing; he finds himself in a cycle of action and reaction that continually feeds on itself. His failure is certain because of the fact that he feels he must pretend. The colonized "can never succeed in becoming identified with the colonizer, nor even in copying his role correctly" Memmi maintains (124) but Ralph continues to try and play his roles because he feels he has no authentic alternative identity, his real self has been too damaged by his youthful experience in London (57). However, later in his narrative Ralph dates his "poisoning feeling of inadequacy" prior to his first stay in London (179) and confirms his psychological damage began years earlier as a child; his London experience was only his most dramatic confrontation with a personal psychic state that had been developing for some time. Ralph writes, "Certain emotions bridge the years and link unlikely places. Sometimes by this linking the sense of place is destroyed, and we are ourselves alone: the young man, the boy, the child" (154). Thus, the stage was set for Ralph's `dramatic roles' in the early years of his childhood.

4.3 Relationships as Broken Mirrors

> The diasporic subject crosses territorial and cultural boundaries by living in one home yet imagining another home as he is haunted by repressed histories. (Bhabha, 9)

Given Ralph's overwhelming sense of inadequacy and dislocation, it is no surprise that all his relationships with others are affected. Ralph is perceptive in recognizing many of his own conflicting feelings in his childhood friends like Hok and Browne. They also internalize feelings of shame and inadequacy regarding their racial and cultural origins. Like Ralph, Hok reads voraciously and no doubt dreams of being anywhere but in Isabella. Browne becomes politically active, but the reader also learns that the plot of

his one attempted novel closely resembles that of Uncle Tom's Cabin in which an escaped slave "returns willingly to slavery and death" (156). And, as an adult, Browne still feels ambivalent about his `kinky' hair. Though Browne enters politics in order to eventually help Isabella achieve independence, Ralph claims he too "became a prisoner of his role" (203). Yet, in regards to his school friends in Isabella, Ralph was conscious of already creating distance between himself and others: "So at last, in this matter of relationships at any rate, I began to eliminate and simplify" (112-3). He refuses to attend the farewell dinner his school friends plan for him due to an impulsive "fear of warmth and friendship" (179). Further Ralph is not close to his parents, siblings or other relatives and develops no close or lasting friendships in adulthood.

Therefore, Ralph's most interesting and telling forays into the realms of intimacy occur in his relations with women. Many of these attitudes can also be traced to his childhood experiences. Ralph's description of a dream he has as a young boy, becoming an infant again and seeking comfort and fulfilment at his mother's breasts (116) prefigures the delight and solace he takes in his wife Sandra's breasts. But this dream not only makes him feel ashamed, but the marital intimacy suggested by conceiving of his mother as a `wife' leads him to think of it as a `terrible' word (90). Thus, in later years the temporal comfort Ralph finds in the physical closeness of sexual intimacy does not extend to a greater sense of connection based on love or trust. Instead, the emotional intimacy Ralph discovers with women is never as satisfying as the physical unions and any emotional `buffer zone' he creates with them cannot help him transcend the difficulties he encounters in the greater world around him. From his early sexual encounters with his cousin Sally based on "that shared feeling of self-violation, which was for me security and purity" (155) to his marriage with Sandra, "I felt we had come together for self-defence." (69) to his brief `play-relationship' with Lord Stockwell's daughter, Stella (232), the inevitable corruption creeps in :

"But in every relationship I would be aware of taint." (155) Just as most people who have problems with addictions, Ralph uses sex and his patronage of prostitutes in London and Isabella as a way to fill his sense of

emotional emptiness or incompleteness. For Ralph, sex becomes a source of temporary comfort but also a source of `original sin' and corruption and an arena where Ralph again plays out the particular issues of his contradictory existence. Ralph is attracted to Sandra because of her confidence and her `rapaciousness' (an imperial trait?) and he writes, "...it seemed to me that to attach myself to her was to acquire that protection which she offered, to share some of her quality of being marked, a quality which once was mine but which I had lost" (47).

Obviously, part of Sandra's attraction is that she is English, she belongs to British culture in a way Ralph never can, and his marriage is simply another strategy to attach himself to this culture. Memmi writes, "A product manufactured by the colonizer is accepted with confidence. His habits, clothing, food, architecture are closely copied, even if inappropriate. A mixed marriage is the extreme expression of this audacious leap." (121) Ralph is also attracted to Stella for similar reasons. Stella's manner "was a way of looking at the city and being in it, a way of appearing to manage it and organize it for a series of separate, perfect pleasures" (231). Both Sandra's and Stella's natural ease in operating within their own culture appears as a unique quality or gift to Ralph. Unable to successfully claim a place for himself in the colonizer's culture, Ralph's relations with women serve either to divert him from this disappointment or as an attempt to bridge the gap. Ralph's ultimate reaction to both public and personal events is emotional and physical withdrawal. Though his confused sense of identity contributes to an emotional distance between himself and others, further difficulties and a culmination of events intensify this tendency. At one point Ralph writes that he throws himself into various activities because they link him with the `real' world and distract him from his internal reality (57). But fear becomes the mediator between the external and internal, fear of the external propelling him inward where he discovers he has no resources with which to meet it. He fears too close a personal involvement with Browne and the history he represents (188) and he fears `the people' and their destructive potential in the midst of political triumph (197); these lead to his complete denial and withdrawal during the racial riots (241) Emotional withdrawal had become an habitual way to deal with problems early on in his

life (145) but Ralph explains to the reader, "Understand only that centre of stillness, that withdrawal, that compassion which was really fear." (40) He writes later that he feared the unreality around him, "it was the fear of the man who feels the veils coming down one by one, muffling his deepest responses, and panics at not being able to tear down the unreality about him to get at the hard, the concrete, where everything becomes simple and ordinary and easy to seize." (72)

What Ralph really fears is that the world around him is real. The confusion and disorder is incomprehensible to someone who wants, who needs at an emotionally primal level, the `simple and ordinary. He has rejected the cultural traditions of his people and with them, any comfort of traditional religious teachings. He is unanchored in a sea of chaos and rather than grapple with this reality and continue to fail, Ralph concludes that the corruption, the wrongness of the world can never be put right (207). His only chance for survival is to retreat into the emptiness. Ralph reflects on what he hopes to achieve by writing of his life: "It was my hope to give expression to the restlessness, the deep disorder, which the great explorations, the overthrow in three continents of established social organizations, the unnatural bringing together of peoples who could achieve fulfilment only within the security of their own societies and the landscapes hymned by their ancestors, it was my hope to give partial expression to the restlessness which this great upheaval has brought about" (32). But he realizes he cannot do this because, as he says, "I am too much a victim of that restlessness which was to have been my subject." (MM, 32)

Naipaul succeeds in what Ralph disclaims, *The Mimic Men* is brilliant in its analysis of the historical legacy of colonialism and some of its political and psychological effects, the issue, even the possibility, of political and personal transformation are hardly raised.

The Mimic Men carries more than a shot of the self–consciously differentiated worlds of the two islands and its narrative and stylistic features merge comfortably with England and are deliberately distanced from the Carribean.*The Mimic Men* is an early novel of Naipaul's and it was written in

the early stage of decolonization and the break- up of Empire ,its deconstruction of colonial ideology is also met with a sense of futility in regard to the colonized's mimicking of the colonizoner .The main conflict is on the one hand on ,the polemics of self and other, fragmentary and original identity, and on the other hand ,the destabilizing of such binaries . There is a sense of futility and anxiety in V.S Naipaul due to lack of resolution because fracturing of whole identities has taken place .The protagonist Ralph Singh struggles to negotiate his identity that provides a significant postcolonial narrative which explores alienation and how colonisation has exiled the subject from knowing himself/herself . *The Mimic Men* is interested in the idea of originary identity but more in terms of its loss than its recuperation That is, it does not propose the 'nineteen-century European desire' for the ending of man's alienation by reconciling him with his essence. Naipaul's writings express a modernist yearning for lost essences, possesses a postcolonial bent in which he suggests that migration and colonization are directly are responsible for alienation. The representation of MM of the fractured diasporic colonized subject is a critique of the colonial project of modernization/progress that was based on 'the metaphysics of permanence'in which the self was regarded as whole, stable and rational. In MM the discontinuous subaltern haunts the project of modernity and colonialism which acts as a tool to bring others into modernity. There are many questions that why is it a state of despair for Naipaul. He has suffered due to exile. The concept of alienation can be seen in this novel MM. He celebrates transculturation and hybrid identities. Colonialism in MM is seen as violence, not only for land and resources but for subjectivity. Naipaul does not yield to interconnect and hybrid forms of identity because he has read the fractured identity in terms of lack and loss. George Lamming, also from the Caribbean, is appreciated as he also writes empowering narratives about Caribbean's capacity to generate history, to become politically independent and for the colonial subject to make choices or take action that are politically and socially. Naipaul has shared indentured experiences in the Trinidadian society .He has recognized the hybrid or mixed character of the island, he at the same time conceives of himself as an intruder.

In *The Mimic Men*, the protagonist Ralph Singh is an autobiographical character being an East Indian from Trinidad who now lives in London and suffers from diaspora. Ralph Singh shares the anxieties same as Naipaul has. He has the similar painful relationship with his father, feels betrayed by a history that has resulted in his exclusion from the colonial relationship: 'The descendant of the slave –owner could soothe the descendant of the slave with a private patois. I was the late intruder ,the picturesque Asiatic ,linked to neither'[78].This biographical piece of reading of Naipaul's works recognises that history has a great impact on Naipaul's writing [collective as well as personal].Such type of reading is also brought out in the blurring of the writer's subjectivity and his key protagonists. This is typical of Naipaul's narrative strategy. Naipaul has a mixture of genres i.e. *The Mimic men* in terms of its lack of postcolonial empowerment. Naipaul has portrayed the character of Ralph Singh as a mimic man who emerges as a capricious shadow of a whole person playing at being both historical and political. Naipaul has suggested in *The Mimic Men* that postcolonial stability is and unreal because Isabella is an artificially created society, designed for colonial profit, in which very different people have been forced to live together. His political analysis has drawn attention to the damage suffered by the colonial society which makes postcolonial empowerment more difficult to achieve. Naipaul has a deep sense of powerlessness of his colonial society 'the bigger truth came: that in a society like ours ,fragmented ,inorganic , no link between man and landscape ,a society not held together by common interests ,there was no true internal source of power'[206]

Naipaul's prespective of colonialism recognizes the historical ramifications and catalytic effects that capitalist production of the imperial centre had on the colonial periphery. *The Mimic Men* envisions a painful state of exile for the colonial subject is the result of his/her separation from his/her homeland. There is a total intermingling of cultures, creolisation and hybridity. The neurosis of this political society of the Caribbean is fictionalized as Isabella. The following passage from *The Mimic Men* signifies authenticity, constructs binary between them i.e. West that is presence, reality and Caribbean which signifies mimicry, reality and absence.

> There is Liege in a traffic jam, on the snow slopes of the Laurentians was the true, pure world. We, here on our islands, handling books Printed in this world and using its goods, had been abandoned and forgotten. We pretended to be real, to be learning, to be preparing ourselves for life, we Mimic men of the new world, one Unknown corner of it, with all its reminders of corruption that came so quickly to the new. (146)

This passage also evokes the true figure of the island that it is not a unified and unitary identity .It is a fragmented part of a greater whole .i.e. it is an exile as well as an exile ,a loss of the particular .Thus ,the island marks a lack .Ralph has described the island of Isabella as being hemmed in by 'encircling ,tainted sea'.(179)

4.4 A World without a Centre

V. S. Naipaul's novel *The Mimic Men* is the fictional memoir of protagonist Ralph Singh. Written in a boarding house in London, it is a retrospective, first-person account of Ralph's life, ranging over his childhood in the fictional West Indian island of Isabella, his university days in London where he meets and marries his wife, and his somewhat successful business and political careers back in Isabella. Yet with all the particular details, Ralph Singh is also a prototypical colonial character, an intelligent and sensitive person confused by the plural but unequal society, he's raised in and for whom identity is a primary issue.

> We, here on our island, handling books printed in this world, and using its goods, had been abandoned and forgotten. We pretended to be real, to be learning, to be preparing ourselves for life, we mimic men of the New World, one unknown corner of it, with all its reminders of the corruption that came so quickly to the new. (MM, 57)

As the story is related through flashbacks and memories, Ralph has the opportunity to weave in reflection with narrative and self-analysis with exposition. In the process of reading, the reader finds certain words and phrases occurring again and again, the repetition establishing the threads of

themes that slowly emerge from the novel like a raised embossed pattern. Ralph admits himself that his feelings, his actions, his life fit in with `patterns.' Ralph has sense of alienation; his experiences as a colonial politician, his struggle with a sense of personal identity, and his inability to connect with others are linked as various expressions of Ralph's sense of loss and disconnectedness. These experiences and reactions also fit into general patterns of colonized persons acting within `typical' colonial situations. The novel has a dark conclusion and comprises apparent dismissal of the possibility of transformation.

Despite their intentions and invocations they inscribe the colonial text erratically, eccentrically across a body politic that refuses to be representative, in a narrative that refuses to be representational. The desire to emerge as authentic through mimicry - through a process of writing and repetition - is the final irony of partial representation. Mimicry is not the familiar exercise of dependent colonial relations through narcissistic identification so that, as Fanon has observed, the black man stops being an actional person for only the white man can represent his self-esteem. Mimicry conceals no presence or identity behind its mask: it is not what Usaire describes as 'colonization-thingification' behind which there stands the essence of the presence Africaine. The menace of mimicry is its double vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority. And it is a double vision that is a result of what I've described as the partial representation/ recognition of the colonial object. A desire, which is the basis of mimicry, articulates those disturbances of cultural, racial and historical differences. It is a desire that reverses 'in part' the colonial appropriation by now producing a partial vision of the colonizer's presence; a gaze of otherness, that shares the acuity of the genealogical gaze which, liberates marginal elements and shatters the unity of man's being through which he extends his sovereignty.

Almost the same but not white: the visibility of mimicry is always produced at the site of interdiction. It is a form of colonial discourse: a discourse at the crossroads of what is known and permissible and that which though known must be kept concealed; a discourse uttered between the lines

and as such both against the rules and within them. The question of the representation of difference is therefore always also a problem of authority. The 'desire' of mimicry, which is Freud's 'striking feature' that reveals so little but makes such a big difference, is not merely that impossibility of the Other which repeatedly resists signification. The desire of colonial mimicry - an interdictory desire - may not have an object, but it has strategic objectives which is the metonymy of presence.

Those inappropriate signifiers of colonial discourse - the difference between being English and being Anglicized; the identity between stereotypes which, through repetition, also become different; the discriminatory identities constructed across traditional cultural norms and classifications, the Simian Black, the Lying Asiatic - all these are metonymies of presence. They are strategies of desire in discourse that make the anomalous representation of the colonized something other than a process of 'the return of the repressed', These instances of metonymy are the non-repressive productions of contradictory and multiple beliefs. They cross the boundaries of the culture of enunciation through a strategic confusion of the metaphoric and metonymic axes of the cultural production of meaning.

In mimicry, the representation of identity and meaning is rearticulated along the axis of metonymy. Mimicry is like camouflage, not a harmonization of repression of difference, but a form of resemblance, that differs from or defends presence by displaying it in part, metonymically. Its threat, comes from the prodigious and strategic production of conflictual, fantastic, discriminatory 'identity effects' in the play of a power that is elusive because it hides no essence, no 'itself'. And that form of resemblance is the most terrifying thing to behold, as Edward Long testifies in his History of Jamaica (1774). At the end of a tortured, negrophobic passage, that shifts anxiously between piety, prevarication and perversion, the text finally confronts its fear; nothing other than the repetition of its resemblance 'in part: Negroes are represented by all authors as the vilest of human kind, to which they have little more pretension of resemblance than what arises from their exterior forms.

From such a colonial encounter between the white presence and its black semblance, there emerges the question of the ambivalence of mimicry as a problematic of colonial subjection. Mimicry, as the metonymy of presence is, indeed, such an erratic, eccentric strategy of authority in colonial discourse. Mimicry does not merely destroy narcissistic authority through the repetitious slippage of difference and desire. It is the process of the fixation of the colonial as a form of cross-classificatory, discriminatory knowledge within an interdictory discourse, and therefore necessarily raises the question of the authorization of colonial representations, a question of authority that goes beyond the subject's lack of priority (castration) to a historical crisis in the conceptuality of colonial man as an object of regulatory power, as the subject of racial, cultural, national representation.

'This culture ... fixed in its colonial status', Fanon suggests, is both present and mummified, it testified against its members. It defines them in fact without appeal. The ambivalence of mimicry - almost but not quite - suggests that the fetishized colonial culture is potentially and strategically an insurgent counter-appeal. Its 'identity-effects' is always crucially split. Under cover of camouflage, mimicry, like the fetish, is part- objects that radically revalue the normative knowledge of the priority of race, writing, and history. For the fetish mimes the forms of authority at the point at which it deauthorizes them. Similarly, mimicry rearticulates presence in terms of its ‘otherness’ that which it disavows. There is a crucial difference between this colonial articulation of man and his doubles and that which Foucault describes as 'thinking the unthought' which, for nineteenth-century Europe, is the ending of man's alienation by reconciling him with his essence. The colonial discourse that articulates an interdictory otherness is precisely the 'other scene' of this nineteenth-century European desire for an authentic historical consciousness.

The 'unthought' across which colonial man is articulated is that process of classificatory confusion that I have described as the metonymy of the substitutive chain of ethical and cultural discourse. This results in the splitting of colonial discourse so that two attitudes towards external reality persist; one takes reality into consideration while the other disavows it and replaces it by a product of desire that repeats, rearticulates 'reality' as mimicry.

Such contradictory articulations of reality and desire seen in racist stereotypes, statements, jokes, myths - are not caught in the doubtful circle of the return of the repressed. They are the effects of a disavowal that denies the differences of the other but produces in its stead forms of authority and multiple beliefs that alienate the assumptions of 'civil' discourse. If, for a while, the ruse of desire is calculable for the uses Of discipline soon the repetition of guilt, justification, pseudo-scientific theories, superstition, spurious authorities, and classifications can be seen as the desperate effort to 'normalize' formally the disturbance of a discourse of splitting that violates the rational, enlightened claims of its enunciatory modality. The ambivalence of colonial authority repeatedly turns from mimicry - a difference that is almost nothing but not quite - to menace - a difference that is almost total but not quite. And in that other scene of colonial power, where history turns to farce and presence to 'a part' can be seen the twin figures of narcissism and paranoia that repeat furiously, uncontrollably.

In the ambivalent world of the 'not quite/not white', on the margins of metropolitan desire, the founding objects of the Western world become the erratic, eccentric, accidental objects troubles of the colonial discourse - the part-objects of presence. It is then that the body and the book lose their part-objects of presence. It is then that the body and the book lose their representational authority. Black skin splits under the racist gaze, displaced into signs of bestiality, genitalia, grotesqueries, which reveal the phobic myth of the undifferentiated whole white body. And the holiest of books - the Bible - bearing both the standard of the cross and the standard of empire finds itself strangely dismembered.

4.5 Healing the Wounds of Imperialism

The Mimic Men presents the constraints of a recently decolonized country in the Caribbean island of Isabella. The previous protectorate has now become independent but the formerly colonized people of the island are unable to establish order and govern their country. Since they are far away from their native soil, their own traditions and religions have become meaningless to them and they cannot even associate with the colonizer

because of the difference in terms of culture, tradition, race and religion. As a result, they replicate and echo the colonizer's life styles. The novel considers the relationship between the socio-political and the psychological consequences of imperialism. A forty-year-old colonial minister, Ralph Singh, is the narrator of *The Mimic Men*, who lives in exile in Private Hotel in Kensington High Street area, London. He writes about his childhood and adulthood, his life in Isabella and in England, his political career and marriage, and his education to give shape to the past and his experiences, and to understand himself. By writing his memoirs, Singh tries to reconstruct his identity and impose order on his life as the place in which he is born is associated with disarray. Thus, writing remains a means of releasing himself from the pain of being a displaced colonial citizen. Ultimately, through the presentation of the events, he is able to take control of the wreckage of his past and shape them into a spiritual autobiography.

However, the irony is that in search of order, Singh is incapable of following a sequence in imposing order on his writing. The constant shifts between the past, the present, and the future may also reflect Singh's mental disturbances. The novel apparently outlays Singh's desire to find out the worth of a colonial subject in a postcolonial society. We learn how colonial experiences have affected and shaped his life and personality. He reads books on Asiatic and Persian Aryans and dreams of horsemen who look for their leader. He creates an ideal and heroic past which is in conflict with the real-life condition in Isabella. Like Singh, his Chinese friend, Hok, reads book on his own origin and discovers that he has black ancestors. Singh's black revolutionary friend, Browne also fantasizes his origin and his room is full of pictures of black leaders. Thus, the boys are preoccupied with their own racial origin and the ethnic group to which they belong and the novel, therefore, implies that the emotional security and a real sense of identity are inaccessible in assorted Caribbean societies.

As a result of his psychological need for identity and fulfilment, he tries to achieve order, meaning, and success as a politician. He takes politics as a drama and examines its effects on himself but he does not concentrate on his people or the institutions that are established on the island with his assistance.

Singh's obsession with naming clearly shows his psychosomatic need for power and ownership; by naming roads and buildings, he reinforces the reality of his power and political career, and by renaming himself, he redefines his own reality. He feels incomplete because he is aware of the meaninglessness of his role as a colonial politician. Singh is very well mindful that the "drama" has not brought serenity and order to the isle; rather it still suffers from social turbulence and economic setback. Under such conditions the government finalizes to take over of the sugar estate, owned by Lord Stockwell, an upper class Englishman as the only way of solving the economic constraints and bringing the people together. Accordingly, Singh is impelled to go to England to accomplish the negotiations. However, he fails to persuade the English to help his government; Lord Stockwell refuses to talk seriously about the problems and the sugar estate. Instead, the Lord, the Ministers and the Representatives of the Colonial Power reduce Singh to a child and impose their supremacy on him. Without any help from the Authorities concerned, Singh is incapable of finding any solution to his country's tribulations, and consequently, Singh faces personal loss.

> My sense of drama failed. This to me was the true loss. For four years drama had supported me; now, abruptly, drama failed. It was a private loss. (MM, 221)

Due to lack of a real political goodwill of their own, colonial politicians are looked upon as 'political jesters' by the authorities. Singh also suffers from dislocation and alienation because of his educational background. As a prey of the colonial education curriculum, Singh has always been persuaded to become a mimic man. When he takes lessons on English culture and history, he feels that his original culture is substandard to that of the colonizer. Endeavouring to find his identity and the ideal landscape, Singh goes to London merely to realize that the metropolis does not assure anything to an East Indian colonial dweller. Singh realizes that he can never be an Englishman despite his education, and that one can be English only if he is born in England. Estranged from his own society, Singh voyages to different places so as to overcome his feeling of isolation. Although Singh cannot completely solve his psychological problems, he ultimately draws the

conclusion in course of the inscription of his memoirs that his experiences and his feeling of desertion cannot be separated from his imperial background.

Inevitably, Singh’s final state is a real ultimate emptiness because he loses everything at the age of forty. Conversely the very emptiness refers to his indifference from the proceedings and attests that he is currently ready to start a fresh existence, but he is afraid because he does not want to reengage into the barren cycle from which he has freed himself. Eventually, Singh takes control of his sense of displacement as he comprehends that he does not have an ultimate place with which he can make out himself. In a nutshell, Singh scrutinizes and analyses the colonial and postcolonial era, historical, cultural and political milieu, economic tribulations and psychosomatic conflicts and finally concludes that writing can be exultation and can be an extension of the bygone years.

Thus, the novel is masterful in evoking a colonial man’s experience in a newly decolonized society. Also, it is astounding to find out that a psychosomatically disturbed colonial subject derives contentment from the inscription of his memoirs. The novel is suitable for the historians as it talks about how the colonization affected the culture, tradition, race and religion of the imperialized nations in the times of yore. The novel is also for the colonizers as it talks about colonial shame and fantasy.

4.6 Corruption Corrupts Utterly

Just as most people who have problems with addictions, Ralph uses sex and his patronage of prostitutes in London and Isabella as a way to fill his sense of emotional emptiness or incompleteness. For Ralph, sex becomes a source of temporary comfort but also a source of `original sin' and corruption and an arena where Ralph again plays out the particular issues of his contradictory existence. Ralph is attracted to Sandra because of her confidence and her `rapaciousness' (an imperial trait) and he writes, "...it seemed to me that to attach myself to her was to acquire that protection which she offered, to share some of her quality of being marked, a quality which once was mine but which I had lost" (47). Obviously, part of Sandra's attraction is that she is

English, she belongs to British culture in a way Ralph never can, and his marriage is simply another strategy to attach himself to this culture. Ralph is also attracted to Stella for similar reasons. Stella's manner "was a way of looking at the city and being in it, a way of appearing to manage it and organize it for a series of separate, perfect pleasures" (231). Both Sandra's and Stella's natural ease in operating within their own culture appears as a unique quality or gift to Ralph. Unable to successfully claim a place for himself in the colonizer's culture, Ralph's relations with women serve either to divert him from this disappointment or as an attempt to bridge the gap. Ralph's ultimate reaction to both public and personal events is emotional and physical withdrawal. Though his confused sense of identity contributes to an emotional distance between himself and others, further difficulties and a culmination of events intensify this tendency. At one point Ralph writes that he throws himself into various activities because they link him with the `real' world and distract him from his internal reality (57). But fear becomes the mediator between the external and internal, fear of the external propelling him inward where he discovers he has no resources with which to meet it. He fears too close a personal involvement with Browne and the history he represents (188) and he fears `the people' and their destructive potential in the midst of political triumph (197); these lead to his complete denial and withdrawal during the racial riots (241). Emotional withdrawal had become an habitual way to deal with problems early on in his life (145) but Ralph explains to the reader, "Understand only that centre of stillness, that withdrawal, that compassion which was really fear" (40). He writes later that he feared the unreality around him, "it was the fear of the man who feels the veils coming down one by one, muffling his deepest responses, and panics at not being able to tear down the unreality about him to get at the hard, the concrete, where everything becomes simple and ordinary and easy to seize" (72).

What Ralph really fears is that the world around him is real. The confusion and disorder is incomprehensible to someone who wants, who needs at an emotionally primal level, the `simple and ordinary.' He has rejected the cultural traditions of his people and with them, any comfort of traditional religious teachings. He is unanchored in a sea of chaos and rather than grapple

with this reality and continue to fail, Ralph concludes that the corruption, the wrongness of the world can never be put right (207). His only chance for survival is to retreat into the emptiness. Ralph reflects on what he hopes to achieve by writing of his life: "It was my hope to give expression to the restlessness, the deep disorder, which the great explorations, the overthrow in three continents of established social organizations, the unnatural bringing together of peoples who could achieve fulfilment only within the security of their own societies and the landscapes hymned by their ancestors, it was my hope to give partial expression to the restlessness which this great upheaval has brought about" (32). But he realizes he cannot do this because, as he says, "I am too much a victim of that restlessness which was to have been my subject" (32).

The Mimic Men is brilliant in its analysis of the historical legacy of colonialism and some of its political and psychological effects, the issue, even the possibility, of political and personal transformation are hardly raised. Can anything be salvaged from the corruption of the past? Can anything be created that is not suspect? Will every effort and expression of identity by formerly colonized peoples be forever viewed as hopelsslessly entangled mimicry? Is there any dimension of human life or experience that can exist untainted, a source from which one can draw to construct positive meaning as a springboard for transformation? Ralph Singh gives the reader a comprehensive view of his problems. The whole idea of transformation in the novel is itself transformed into sterile acceptance. Ralph's political experience raises the interrelated issues of nationalism, independence, and democracy and serves to introduce the possibility of creating a better society only to discount it. Ralph concludes "The truth of our movement lay in the Roman house, the court inside, the guard outside" (196); in other words, the movement was simply the conceptual abstractions of a small group isolated from the mass of people whose lives their rhetoric sought unsuccessfully to change. Because it is such a common story, the stereotype of ivory-tower idealists who are brought to earth by the first political difficulty or unplanned riot, it doesn't necessarily follow that this is the only possible scenario. But Ralph concludes that the only thing his group creates is drama which has no lasting effect on actual

conditions (214). Memmi agrees that colonized society "is a diseased society in which internal dynamics no longer succeed in creating new structures" (98-9) but Ralph never entertains a suggestion like Fanon's that "underdeveloped countries ought to do their utmost find their own particular values and methods and a style which shall be peculiar to them" (99). And it is interesting that while Ralph sees so clearly the difficulties facing those who want to change the political and economic conditions in Isabella, he focuses mostly on the pathetic nature of their plight rather than on the British rationalizations and responsibilities for constructing and maintaining the colonial situation. Ralph reaches a similar pessimistic conclusion regarding his own fate. Every personal endeavour or relationship is tainted from the outset and Ralph discovers nothing in his experiences or in himself that suggests any possibilities for overcoming his initial failures or disappointments; obviously he does not subscribe to Fanon's belief that "shame is a revolutionary sentiment" (14). One of Memmi's statements is apt, "As long as he tolerates colonization, the only possible alternatives for the colonized are assimilation or petrification" (102). Assimilation denied him; Ralph obsesses on his own `extinction' and elects finally to withdraw into an anonymous London boarding house where he belatedly attempts to make sense of his life. Interestingly, this decision is reinforced by Lord Stockwell who tells Ralph of his meeting with Ralph's father. Through implication, Stockwell suggests that Ralph too should withdraw from politics and become a similarly `picturesque' and non-threatening symbol for his people (228-9). Really unable to do anything else, Ralph dutifully and thankfully withdraws and at first, the writing of his memoirs seems to help Ralph discover himself, or rather to recover a basic identity buried within that he can proceed into the future with, this rediscovery being the real whole drama of decolonization. Ralph confesses his gratitude for the "order, sequence, and regularity (244) of life at the hotel and for the internal order he creates with the writing of his book (241). He then describes the boarders and equates himself with one particular elderly English woman who, after living as a colonial in a number of former British colonies, has given up the Empire and come home to London (245). But I think Ralph is wrong, he is not like this woman, an expatriate coming home. He is a colonized person of colour trying desperately to find a place for

himself in the dominant culture who has, by the end of the narrative, simply found a refuge where he can deceive himself that he is safe. Like a moth determined to throw himself into a flame, Ralph hovers around the glittering city of London until he makes one little corner of it his `home.' Though he claims he no longer has the youthful expectations of belonging he once had and he is no longer troubled by the watchful eye in the sky, rather than throwing off the pressures the dominant culture has put on him and, as Eagleton writes, "trying somehow to go right through those estranging definitions to emerge somewhere on the other side" (24), Ralph has instead buried the contradictions he previously struggled with by assuming that these are all in the past. He claims his actions henceforth will be those of a free man (251) but the intensity with which he clings to his small boarding house world casts doubt on this idea. Ralph has not become a whole man because he has not ceased to define himself through the categories of the colonizers. Instead of expanding, Ralph's sense of identity and consciousness of possibility appear greatly reduced.

One difference, if not a major distinction, between an idealist and a realist is the former's belief in the possibility of transformation. V. S. Naipaul seems to suggest this possibility by The Mimic Men's conclusion yet does not summon an imaginative vision to suggest what this possibility for Ralph might be like. Besides the necessity for believing in the possibility, one needs to make a possibly `irrational' leap of faith to give the process of transformation a chance. One needs to envision something new even when one is surrounded by the monuments of the aged. Though Ralph seems unable to construct a whole identity from the fragments of his life, forever caught in the empty space between two cultures and two identities, the fact that V. S. Naipaul continues to write, rather than withdrawing from life like his character Ralph Singh does, indicates a probable and continuing effort on the author's part to make sense of the world and of his situation, the situation of the formerly colonized. In writing, perhaps Naipaul himself is struggling to imagine an alternative to Ralph Singh's `solution' even though in The Mimic Men the human will to create and to transform is stifled by temperament and circumstances. Though a realist might say that to imagine the post-colonial

world being a place where people can transform and reinvent themselves in original ways is to dream a fool's dream.

The ultimate dilemma in applying representation and resistance theory to post-colonial literature rests in the notion that a novel, a literary form that arises in the western world of print culture, may challenge as well as perpetuate colonial institutions. It seems an unlikely paradox, yet the paradox is very real and very present in post-colonial literature. In "Figures of Colonial Resistance," Jenny Sharpe uses the term mimic man to describe a figure who represents this paradox: "The mimic is a contradictory figure who simultaneously reinforces colonial authority and disturbs it" (99). The mimic man can be a character in a novel or even an author himself.

The Mimic Men represents a by product of colonial civilization, not a entity separate from the colonial sphere. As result, the fact that he was produced with the colonial voice relegates the seemingly more important issue of whether the mimic speaks for or against colonial authority. Sharpe continues along this line of argument stating, “To think of the relation between the discourse centring on the production of the colonial subject [mimic man] and what it occludes as an eclipse is to see that the subaltern classes are not situated outside the civilizing project but are caught in the path of its trajectory.”(100) From protagonist Tambudzai's point-of-view, Babamukuru represents all that she could possibly achieve and more:

> Then I discovered that Nhamo had not been lying. Babamukuru was indeed a man of consequence however you measured him . . . Nhamo's chorus sang in my head and now it sounded ominous. Its phrases told me something I did not though he was. He was wealthier than I had though possible. He was educated beyond books. And he had done it alone. He has pushed up from under the weight of the white man with no strong relative to help him. How had he done it? Having done it, what had he become? A deep valley cracked open. There was no bridge; at the bottom, spiked crags as sharp of as spears. I felt separated forever from my uncle. (64)

Babamukuru cannot exist without his Western education. Without it, he suffers the fate of his brother Jeremiah, being nobody with absolutely any importance. Babamukuru seems genuinely vested in the social and financial improvement of his family, notions which serve to infuse pride into the indigenous people. However, he must also use his identity of a Western educated scholar as the means for improvement. In fact, the mimic man is the only means of improvement in Tambudzai's family. Therefore, Babamukuru reinforces the dominance of colonial institutions and disturbs it at the same time. He uses Western ideas of success to garner respect and worship from Shona people. While Babamukuru's vested interest in his family makes it difficult for readers to condemn him, his dependence on colonial institutions prevents him from receiving the full glory he may deserve. He is indeed a paradox, belonging to both Western and indigenous culture and at the same time being forever separated from both as Tambudzai observes. Perhaps the sacrifice that one pays for becoming a voice or a symbol for a certain people or nation is the ultimate alienation from both his people and his audience.

The discourse of post-Enlightenment English colonialism often speaks in a tongue that is forked, not false. If colonialism takes power in the name of history, it repeatedly exercises its authority through the figures of farce. For the epic intention of the civilizing mission, 'human and not wholly human' in the famous words of Lord Rosebery, 'writ by the finger of the Divine' often produces a text rich in the traditions of trompe-l'oeil, irony, mimicry and repetition. In this comic turn from the high ideals of the colonial imagination to its low mimetic literary effects Mimicry emerges as one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge. Within that conflictual economy of colonial discourse which Edward Said describes as the tension between the synchronic panoptical visions of domination - the demand for identity, stasis - and the counter pressure of the diachrony of history - change, difference - mimicry represents an ironic compromise. The authority of that mode of colonial discourse called mimicry is therefore stricken by indeterminacy: mimicry emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal. Mimicry is, thus the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline,

which 'appropriates' the other as it visualizes power. Mimicry is also the sign of the inappropriate; however, a difference or recalcitrance which coheres the dominant strategic function of colonial power, intensifies surveillance, and poses an immanent threat to both 'normalized' knowledge and disciplinary powers.

The effect of mimicry on the authority of colonial discourse is profound and disturbing. For in 'normalizing' the colonial state or subject, the dream of post-Enlightenment civility alienates its own language of liberty and produces knowledge of its norms. The ambivalence which thus informs this strategy is discernible, for example, in Locke's Second Treatise which splits to reveal the limitations of liberty in his double use of the word 'slave': first simply, descriptively as the locus of a legitimate form of ownership, then as the trope for an intolerable, illegitimate exercise of power. What is articulated in that distance between the two uses is the absolute, imagined difference between the 'Colonial' State of Carolina and the original state of nature.

It is from this area between mimicry and mockery, where the reforming, civilizing mission is threatened by the displacing gaze of its disciplinary double that my instances of colonial imitation come. What they all share is a discursive process by which the excess or slippage produced by the ambivalence of mimicry (almost the same, but not quite) does not merely 'rupture' the discourse, but becomes transformed into an uncertainty which fixes the colonial subject as an 'incomplete' and 'virtual'. It is as if the very emergence of the 'colonial' is dependent for its representation upon some strategic limitation or prohibition within the authoritative discourse itself. The success of colonial appropriation depends on a proliferation of inappropriate objects that ensure its strategic failure, so that mimicry is at once resemblance and menace.

In *The Enigma of Arrival*, one more attempt by Naipaul at painting the portrait of the artist, the protagonist is about to start a trip to Europe, a hallmark in his literary career:

> This journey began some days before my eighteen birthday [...] It was the journey that took me from my island, Trinidad, off the northern coast of Venezuela, to England. (EOA, 97)

In this way, it is interesting to return to Naipaul's earlier masterpiece, *A House for Mr Biswas*, to realize that the writing vocation is a constant in many of Naipaul's Indian characters, even those who do not undergo the plight of exile. Biswas is aware of the fact that he is endowed with a literary vocation, rising from the deepest layers of his soul. After his mother's funeral writing soothes him and helps him recover his emotional balance:

> He got out of bed, worked his way to the light switch, turned it on, got paper and pencil, and began to write. He addressed his mother. He did not think of rhythm; he used no cheating abstract words [...] The poem written, his self-consciousness violated, he was whole again. (HB, 484)

First-person narrators in *The Mimic Men, The Enigma of Arrival* and *A Bend in the River* show an attitude towards books and learning which often verges on fascination and fits into the pattern defined by Bruce King as the "Brahmin's devotion to study, scholarship, philosophical thought"(King, 9) ascribed to Naipaul. In *The Enigma* the great pleasure experienced by the protagonist at being in a book-shop is confronted with memories of the smaller and miscellaneous shops in Port of Spain, where books were grossly mixed with assorted everyday common gadgets, as an indication of the sterility of intellectual life in the British colony. Once in New York he buys a copy of *The New York Times*; this ready availability is a source of wonder for a person who has evinced his artistic and literary inclinations, as the multiple references to painters, writers or the classical world indicate. Salim in *A Bend in the River* regrets not having had the chance to go abroad so as to carry on with his studies, something he perceives as a privilege others have enjoyed. Throughout the novel there is a deliberate insistence on his attempt to fill his cultural gaps by reading all sorts of materials. Given his background and

circumstances his ability to quote Latin inscriptions is also noteworthy. It is in this respect, the intellectual stature and attitude to writing and learning, which we will realize that there are overt differences between Willie Chandran and the protagonists of *The Mimic Men, A Bend in the River* and *The Enigma of Arrival*, considered so far. These are all first-person narrators who are somehow allowed to poeticise some elements in their biography. Lillian Feder (26) points out that "The affinity between Ralph Singh or Salim and their author, for example, is readily apparent". Furthermore, taking into account the well-known autobiographical nature of the protagonist in *The Enigma*, Feder (235) states that "Naipaul has 'split' himself into a variety of characters who share certain of his traits and qualities of his background. This is especially true of those who write".

Willie Chandran is also a writer but it is difficult to place him in such direct relationship with the author. In the case of Willie, the desired distance with the character is established mainly by means of third-person narrative, used in most sections of the novel. In this way, some elements in his characterization are clearly demeaning. The paternal influence on his writing career is not conveyed in the reverential tone mentioned above in connection with works such as *The Enigma*, *A Way in the World* or in Naipaul's biographical collection *Letters Between a Father and Son*. On the contrary, Willie hates his father as much as Stephen in Joyce's *Portrait*. After his progenitor's 10-year-long Herculean task of telling the history of their family he asks his son for a comment; he spits out laconically: "I despise you" (35). Furthermore, Willie writes the It is not difficult to realize that Willie's involvement with culture gets ridiculed and his relationship to writing seems very trivial and there is an air of foreboding in the family connection to Somerset Maugham, who will scornfully answer Willie's letters asking for help. It is to be expected that someone named after a celebrity, for the sake of friendship, be let down when reading, in laconic terms: It was nice getting your letter. I have very nice memories of India, and it is always nice hearing from Indian friends. Yours very sincerely. (58) Willie's irrelevance is further emphasized by other letters from family acquaintances, such as the one who grossly insults him by making a fatal spelling error: Dear Chandran, Of course

I remember your father. My favourite babu [...] ‘Babu’, an anglicised Indian, was a mistake; the word should have been ‘sadhu’, an ascetic. story of a man who makes a vow to kill his father; this alarms Willie’s father to the point of thinking he has reared a monster: This boy will poison what remains of my life. I must get him far away from here” (43); “His mind is diseased. He hates me and he hates his mother,” 47. His fears are later turn to alarm when he catches a glimpse of another story by Willie where a father kills, although accidentally, his two sons. It is not possible to equate mechanically first-person narrative and a positive treatment of the protagonist, since this rule would broken in “A Christmas Story” as we have already seen, but the fact is that we might consider this an exception in the writer’s career. Suman Gupta helps to explain this oddity by saying that Naipaul, in this story from a very early stage in his career, is experimenting “with narratorial voices which emulate characters that are not omniscient or identifiable with the author” (26).

Willie’s mimicry goes to the extent that the narrator considers that it is easier for him to write borrowed stories far outside his own experience. Mention of the most canonical of writers in
English cannot be but one more step in the ironical depiction of this character: “Shakespeare had done it, with his borrowed settings and borrowed stories, never with direct tales from his
own life or the life around him” (86). Willie’s antiheroic departure from his literary career also deserves mention. He rejects a commission to report on race riots in London; when a BBC producer tries to allure him into this kind of vicarious writing, sacrificing truth and journalist ethics to the advantage of commercialism and drama his indignity leads him to bargain for the fee; only the disagreement about monetary issues makes him turn down the offer. As a conclusion, we can say that V.S. Naipaul, a descendant of indentured Indian labourers transported to Trinidad in the XIX century, has never adopted any kind of West Indian allegiance, turning instead to a search for roots in the Indian tradition. Early in his career he started writing about the land of his ancestors and to this day he still shows interest and preoccupation with current affairs in India. However, the fact is that he has neither considered settling down in this country nor coming back to the Caribbean, claiming his status as

a citizen of the world and permanent exile which has earned him much criticism from certain quarters. These are the circumstances that can arguably explain why expatriate Indians make up the most distinctive pattern of characterization in his work. Their in adaptation and struggle to come to terms with an alien environment turns out to be a highly productive line in Naipaul's fiction, related to the numerous autobiographical passages in works like *A Way in the World*, *Finding the Centre* and *Reading and Writing*. In fact, in a work such as *The Enigma of Arrival*, the Indian protagonist and narrator can be identified to a large extent with the author's own voice and circumstances, giving rise to long controversial discussions over the real fictional condition of this book. There is some evidence that allows one to consider that Naipaul's fiction is a continuum, confirming his own assertion that he is always writing the same book (Bryden, 1971: 367). In this way, we might expect Naipaul's latest fi ctional character, Willie Chandran, to share many of the features we find in the Indian protagonists of previous works. Like them, he undergoes the ordeal of exile, marked by loneliness, a quest for the self and an effort to grasp the outside world, which does not conform with previous assumptions made in a back-water colonial environment. This experience is related to the binary centre/periphery discourse that hierarchically structures reality so as to focus on metropolitan values that are transmitted and assimilated by the colonized. However, colonial individuals cannot appropriate the metropolitan reality so easily and, when confronted with its topography and social milieu, they realize poignantly that they do not belong in there, disrupting their sense of place. Thus Willie is reported to be "blind" or
to go into hiding, in such a way as to seem a mere repetition of scenes from earlier works by Naipaul. Some of the coincidences with these have to do also with Willie's delving into his past and his willingness to manipulate it so as to achieve a new identity. This may involve a certain degree of impersonation, related to the idea of mimicry imbedded in colonial subjects, as can be seen passim in Naipaul's fiction. The analysis of Willie Chandran, however, is not complete without a contrastive reference to other works written by Naipaul in approximate ten-year intervals, spanning the sixties, seventies and eighties: *The Mimic Men, A Bend in the River* and *The Enigma of Arrival.* In the three cases the protagonists are endowed with remarkable intelligence and linguistic

capacity, particularly significant since they narrate in first-person dignified accounts of their past and present plight. While they are telling their story, they are accorded privileges which Lillian Feder, (225) explains referring to one of them: “As narrator, Salim is participant, observer, creator, and creation. At times he is unaware of his drives and motivations operating unconsciously in diverse combinations with external circumstances; at others he is a perceptive, conscious interpreter of his own thoughts and actions”. There are many instances where we realize that Willie departs from this model of the vanquished enlightened exile, since there are passages in *Half a Life* in which third-person narration is intended to provide a distance from the character so that his literary ambition is clearly exposed as a sham.

As King notes, Naipaul’s assessments of the external realities of the postcolonial space become less embittered, and more likely to look for a sense of order in the turbulent flow of historical change: “Recognition that the problems of Trinidad, India and England are similar and that all life is subject to change was followed by a new mellowness.”(King, 136).

We can thus conclude that Naipaul’s protagonists more or less suffer from alienation and rootlessness. But, they in course of time develop the resilience to face the challenges, the sense of void coming out of such situations.

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V

Home Away from Home: Expatriate Feeling

"The Americans do not want me because I am too British. The public here do not want me because I am too foreign." (*The Overcrowded Baracoon,* 9)

These words from Naipaul's *The Overcrowded Baracoon* capture the nuances of typical expatriate feeling. Essentially Naipaul is an East Indian born on the colonial island of Trinidad and in course of time came to live in the seat of colonial power – the capital city of London. Naipaul was faced with the challenge of reconciling his Indian heritage with his British colonial experience in an island nation he could never fully call his home. Home is a concept that most would have little trouble visualizing; yet Naipaul is different. He is a self-styled stateless traveller who knows no permanent home. This lack of acceptance and sense of exile are two recurrent themes which appear in a number of V. S. Naipaul's early works, the culmination of which is found in his 1979 work, *A Bend in the River*. What causes these two qualities to continuously appear as a part of Naipaul's "tragically flawed" characters? While many viable solutions have already been presented to this point, which will be touched upon shortly, there is one contributing factor which has been little explored: the tendency for many of Naipaul's characters to fall prey to deception. Throughout his works, Naipaul's characters often misperceive their surroundings. As a result, they feel alienated in a world that they thought they knew but which they realize they know very little. In a number of examples, Naipaul's characters even end up questioning their own role in this alien environment. The sense of alienation

which V. S. Naipaul himself has carried throughout his lifetime and transposition of Naipaul's own psyche upon so many of his literary characters has specific examples from Naipaul's writings, with the most blatant found in *A Bend in the River*, which illustrate just how deceiving his perverse reality may be.

5.1 Naipaul: A Stateless Traveller

After examining themes of exile and alienation in Naipaul's works, it is most beneficial to study the source of these emotions and how they are used in some of his early works. Naipaul's early writings focus on the experience of Trinidadians during the early twentieth century, a time when the concepts of national and cultural autonomy first begin to appear on this island nation. These writings mirror Naipaul's own sense of cultural isolation. Literary critic Selwyn R. Cudjoe speaks of Naipaul as an East Indian who can never reconcile his cultural heritage with the British-ruled and predominantly African-inhabited island of Trinidad. As a result, Naipaul travels to England to begin his writings. However, he does not find peace here either. Naipaul represents the colonial subject in the colonizer's land. His Eastern Hindu heritage does not easily conform to Western Judeo-Christian society. In *An Area of Darkness*, Naipaul states that "London was not the centre of my world. I had been mislead; but there was nowhere else to go" (Cudjoe, 21). During this period Naipaul writes mostly in short story form as he seems unable to organize his thoughts into a coherent novel in which he expresses his "solitary condition" while living in London. Naipaul's works ultimately begin to examine the problems of East Indians as a whole rather than his personal despair. Naipaul examines the plight of East Indians in Trinidad as an ethnic group who is separated from everyone else because of their vastly different religious and social beliefs. As a result of this isolation, the younger generations begin to adopt many Western cultural traits, an acculturation which signifies a split between the original East Indians in Trinidad and their creolized sons and daughters. Naipaul cites this split as the decay and breakdown of the Hindu family, a phenomenon which, according to Cudjoe, leads the East Indians in Trinidad into a new era.

This new era represents a period when the East Indian community in Trinidad is in “transition from feudalism to capitalism” (Cudjoe, 37). Many of Naipaul's first novels examine this transition. Feudalism is represented by the old ways of the Hindu religion: arranged marriages, the belief in not educating women and the idea that one's fate is predetermined and irreversible. These concepts are incompatible with the more modern teachings of Christianity and Western culture which stresses individual freedom and self-determination. To accommodate these Western beliefs, Naipaul advocates rejecting certain Hindu traits in order to assimilate more easily into Western culture. However, in all his infinite wisdom, at this point in his career Naipaul does not advocate a complete renunciation of Hindu beliefs. He hopes that East Indians can strike a balance between East and West. An example of this desired balance is the life of Mahatma Gandhi. W. T. Stace states that "Gandhi's enormous stature is in part due to the fact that he combined all that is greatest and strongest and noblest in both East and West" (Cudjoe, 43). Naipaul's own struggles are a vivid proof of the difficulties that colonial subjects came to experience during such a tumultuous transition. But how does Naipaul transfer this part of his psyche onto his literary characters? One of the most artistically obvious examples is the character Mr. Biswas in Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas*. Mr. Biswas is an East Indian who desires to break free from his Hindu heritage but has difficulty assimilating himself into Western culture. The narrator tells of Mr. Biswas' struggle to find a new position in the colonial society while he remains surrounded by elements of his East Indian culture. For example, the Tulsis, connected to Mr. Biswas through marriage, “symbolize the solidity and continuity of the East Indian in Trinidad... there is hierarchy in Hanuman House and his problem is that it is not a hierarchy which he can accept.”(Cudjoe, 240) Mr. Biswas cannot accept this hierarchy because he longs to express his individuality which Western society encourages. However, Eastern tradition suppresses this desire because the welfare of the whole family overrides any individual needs. To break free of this oppressive home environment, Mr. Biswas moves his family to ‘The Chase’ and ultimately ends in disaster as “he begins to feel trapped by a future that is closing in on him.” (Cudjoe, 55).

The novel reaches a turning point when Mr. Biswas moves to the island's major city, Port of Spain. At the same time, the Tulsi family breaks up and many of

the relatives move to a new estate closer to the city. These two events, both portraying a move from countryside to city, indicate the break up of Hindu tradition and culture, the alienation of its religious subjects and, what Cudjoe refers to as, the beginning of the transition from “feudalism to capitalism”. The devout Hindu Tulsi family are unable to exist in such a system, so that they leave the estate near the city. While Mr. Biswas still has difficulty reconciling his Indian heritage with Western ideals in the city, he finds an instrument which provides some relief. Ironically, it is the same instrument Naipaul discovered: writing. Biswas begins to write “in an attempt to externalize and objectify the past so he can examine it.” (Cudjoe, 60-61) However, by the end of the novel, Mr. Biswas, according to Kelly, “remains the frustrated artist whose dreams are elusive but whose spirit and humanity are never diminished in his quest for order and placidity.” (Kelly, 72)

After this transition from feudalism to capitalism, Naipaul begins examining the effort by colonial subjects to forge a new and unique national identity. However, many of the dynamics of this development cause an even deeper sense of exile and alienation. Most notably, during this period Naipaul is centred in London, attempting to write about foreign lands. Being in London, he is too alienated from the plight of both his own people and many others about which he attempts to write. One example of Naipaul's literature on post-colonialism is *The Mimic Men*, which we have discussed in detail in the earlier chapters. This novel analyzes the role of former colonial subjects in a post-colonial society. Naipaul focuses on the first post-colonial generation or the first ‘free’ East Indians. As a result, they face a challenge which never existed in earlier generations. Selwyn Cudjoe illustrates this situation by stating thus: “Slavery and colonialism reduce people to almost exclusively their economic functions; the primary goal of independence should be to enable them to realize their social functions.” (Cudjoe, 101) However, this change is difficult for post-colonial citizens because their former social function was to be an obedient colonial subject, hardly a position which encourages self-realization. As a result, Naipaul's characters in *The Mimic Men* are in a constant state of disarray. His characters are unable to realize their true function because they mimic the men of the New World... colonial people are doomed forever to be pale reflectors of the dominant power.

5.2 The Inevitable Social Transition

The culmination of Naipaul's state of exile, sense of alienation and expatriate feeling occur in his novel, *A Bend in the River*. As rebellion overcomes an interior African nation, a new national consciousness is forged. However, this nation is one which aims at producing a new African man. He would witness the emergence of Africa as a viable force, spiritually, economically, intellectually and politically. Yet this new Africa does not embrace everyone. Those who are left from the days of European colonialism are fresh out of luck. East Indians, such as the main character Salim, despite being of Africa, had "no use at all for the kind of freedom that had come to Africa" (BR, 160).While Salim has lived in Africa his entire life, he is alien to this "new" Africa. He is a coastal African. At least there he thought he had some roots on which to build and to cling. Yet here he is as alien to this land as an Eskimo to the Amazon. Though he has spent his entire life in and among Africans, Salim believes that "however much the rest of us study Africa, however deep our sympathy, we will remain outsiders" (BR, 141-42).

Now that it has been established that so many of Naipaul's characters are alienated from their environment, the question that arises in our mind is: what may be a possible explanation for this alienation? One possibility which merits further discussion is the tendency for Naipaul's characters to fall prey to deception. Many of Naipaul's characters, as will be illustrated in course of our analysis, come to grossly misjudge certain aspects of their respective settings as well as in regard to their fellow characters. Such acts occur in *A House for Mr. Biswas, Guerrillas* and in *A Bend in the River* where such deception becomes a focal point of the novels in question. This deception, when discovered, leads to a sense of being lost in a world the character believed that he/she once knew. The characters begin to feel alienated and in a state of exile from what they once thought of as home. As a result, they wish to leave their respective settings in an effort to escape the chaos ensuing around them.

One such example of deception is found in *A House for Mr. Biswas*. During his first visit to Hanuman House, Mr. Biswas believes it to stand "like an alien white fortress... little was really known about this family" (HB, 80, 85). To Biswas, both the house and family hold a mysterious attraction, a possible way to advance his future well-being. However, appearances can be deceiving. Upon marrying one of the Tulsi daughters, Mr. Biswas pays a dear price for this apparent life of security, his "loss of identity" (Kelly, 72). Mr. Biswas becomes a prisoner in Hanuman House

until he manages to divide the once united Tulsi clan. As a result of his initial deception, Biswas feels his life has been irreparably altered at the hands of "this domineering matriarch and her unruly household [who] stand ready to swallow up the dreams and individually of the young" (Kelly, 57) Mr. Biswas. Two subsequent examples of deception appear in Naipaul's 1975 novel *Guerrillas*. The first such act relates to Jane's perception of Peter Roche. After a bitter divorce, Jane is looking for a marked change of lifestyle. She sees the fulfilment of this hope in Peter Roche. Roche, the exiled former leader of the South African resistance, is perceived by Jane as a 'doer', "a man who has suffered greatly for his convictions... he would remake the world" (Kelly, 121). She sees him as a savvy businessman who fills an important position on this, otherwise unimportant, island as a business liaison to the "honourable" revolutionary commune of Thrushcross Grange. However, reality and ultimately disappointment sets in when Jane realizes "that she had come to a place at the end of the world, to a place that had exhausted its possibilities" (Kelly, 121). Her only link to these surroundings is through Roche. However, Jane soon admits to her deception concerning Roche. She realizes that Roche is an emotionally impotent (it would seem that the pun applies here in that Jane and Roche's physical relationship is less than riveting). Jane becomes an exile in a foreign land acting out "a gripping drama of death, sexual violence, and political and spiritual impotence that illuminates the savages of history on individual lives" (G, 215). A second example of Naipaul's use of deception lies in his treatment of Thrushcross Grange. The reference to *Wuthering Heights* gives the reader a sense of English arrogance. The commune is most literally a “People's Commune for the Land and the Revolution” administered by the High Command and led by Haji James Ahmed. Such an institution sounds like a marvellous and most beneficial place; however, reality sets in when Jane and Roche travel to the Grange. There was "no sign of cultivation... so bogus... so hidden away" (G 6-7). If this is the state of Thrushcross Grange, then what is the purpose of Roche's job with Sablichs? Roche himself has been deceived by his job; it is a meaningless position that holds no prospects for advancement. The most striking examples of deception come into play during Naipaul's most riveting work, *A Bend in the River*. From as early as the second page in the novel, Naipaul instils in his characters a constant self-doubt of their lives. Salim is given the opportunity to take over a business in the African interior if he leaves the familiar African coast. The town where Salim must travel to is located on a bend in the river. Although the town

has had its problems because of its strategic positioning on the river, it is a promising locale for a savvy businessman. However, in what becomes a very Conradian vision of one man's journey into depth and despair (*The Heart of Darkness*), the reader watches as the world Salim thought he was entering is vastly different from the one he comes to experience. Salim states: As I got deeper into Africa - the scrub, the desert, the rocky climb up to the mountains, the lakes, the rain in the afternoon, the mud and then, on the other, wetter side of the mountains, the fern forests and the gorilla forests - as I got deeper I thought, 'But this is madness. I am going in the wrong direction. There can't be a new life at the end of this (BR, 10). As early as the first chapter of the novel, Salim begins to doubt his reasons for leaving the relatively safe African coast for this journey into what now appears to be the bowels of the earth. However, he settles into his new home and attempts to make the best of what he has. After a short rebellion, law and order are established with the emergence of the new President. However, with this new sense of stability comes Salim's disillusionment with this town on the river. Salim recalls:

> During the days of the rebellion I had had the sharpest sense of the beauty of the river and the forest... when the peace came I had simply stopped looking about me. And now I felt that the mystery and the magic of the place had gone. (BR, 103)

The new President is, apparently, an educated man who sees himself as the savior of this African nation. He will bring the country out of the "dark ages" and into an era of progress and stability. The only catch is that this is to be a nation of Africans (black Africans that is). Colonialists, such as Salim, are now looked upon as outsiders. They are not of this new nation; they are merely passers-by. One project of the President which represents this commitment to progress is the establishment of the State Domain. This new entity is to be the proof of African intellectualism. It will foster education and cultural advancement for its students and faculty. Lecturers and scholars come from all over to be a part of this new African creation. Yet, the Domain is distinctly un-African. It by-passes “real Africa, the difficult Africa of bush and villages... it is like a curious fulfilment of Father Huisman's prophecy about the retreat of African Africa, and the success of European graft.” (BR, 108) The Domain, ironically, does not even fulfil its original purpose. It has deceived the entire community into believing that it is a monument dedicated to the glory of the new

African nation. Yet this can not be farther from the truth. Outside of the main concourse, the Domain has been allowed to physically deteriorate. The funds are not available to maintain the entire complex in such a pristine state. After witnessing both the nuances of the African colonial city and the Europeanized Domain, Salim concludes thus:

> The Domain was a hoax. But... it was full of serious men. So I moved between the Domain and the town. It was always reassuring to return to the town I knew, to get away from the Africa of words and ideas as it existed on the Domain (and from which, often, Africans were physically absent. (BR, 131)

The Domain becomes a uniquely European institution which attempts to fill the needs of an African nation in search of its own identity. It is no wonder that so many people experience such a profound sense of exile in this struggling community. Throughout his early novels and particularly in *A Bend in the River*, V.S. Naipaul explores the themes of exile and alienation of colonial peoples from their colonial lands. Naipaul uses his personal experiences as an East Indian to add a sense of legitimacy and artistic flair to his works. The fact that so many of Naipaul's characters seem to gravely misperceive their surroundings is a major factor which contributes to these characters alienation. The sense of exile from one's home and even oneself that appears so fervently in Naipaul's work is perhaps best illustrated through the following words spoken by Salim in *A Bend in the River:*

> I had my first alarm about myself, the beginning of the decay of a man I had known myself to be... I was homesick... but home was hardly a place I could return to. Home was something in my head. It was something I had lost... I began to feel that any life I might have anywhere - however rich and successful and better furnished - would only be a version of the life I lived now. (BR, 184)

.The community of migrants that V.S. Naipaul focuses on in *A Bend in the river* constitutes an element of post-colonial society that requires close examination. It occupies a highly unstable position in the colonial situation described in the book, torn as it is in so many competing directions: its Indian ancestry; its present location in East and Central Africa; its relatively powerful economic status; its political

weaknesses due to its numerical inferiority vis-à-vis the indigenous Africans; its desire for refuge in Britain, the former colonial power; and the pressure to remain in the post-independence country subsequent to the assumption of internal self-government by the local Africans, among other contradictions.

5.3 The Migrant Population

Traditionally, such groups are referred to in post-colonial studies as 'migrants' in order to denote the problematic space they occupy in their host countries as a result of their foreign ancestry. However, the term appears limited when it is applied to immigrant groups that occupy more powerful racial and economic statuses than the local peoples but that are colonized along with them by imperialist powers, such as those that form the central focus of Naipaul's book. It does not fully account for the problematic role they play in the colony as a locus so many literature about the lives and creative writings of people residing in regions to which they do not directly trace their ancestry or heritages. The literature in question encompasses all genres and involves all of the world's peoples. Contradictory forces intersect. It would appear that such groups are best understood as 'non-native natives', in the sense that they are neither fully native (i.e. colonial subjects) nor fully colonial.

In *A Bend in the River*, Naipaul suggests a way out of that problematic situation for the immigrant groups of Indian origin that settled in East Africa more than a thousand years ago, or that were brought there by the region's British colonizers at the turn of the nineteenth century to work on the Kenya-Uganda Railway. He implies that the solution to the problem lies in their relocation to globally powerful nations like Britain (within the context of globalization), from which they can acquire more influential and internationally relevant identities. Salim, the novel's first person narrator, who is trapped in a seemingly intractable identity crisis as a result of his confinement in the pre-and post-independence situation of East and Central Africa, achieves the sense of liberation for which he longs throughout his life only after he experiences British culture on its home ground. From within British culture, whose influence is global, he is infused with considerable satisfaction as a result of his conviction that he now possesses the power to carry out his merchandise business on an international scale. (BR, 258)

Chinua Achebe accuses Joseph Conrad and Naipaul of racism on the grounds that, in certain respects, they use their remarkably powerful creative capabilities to perpetuate the myth of the African as pathologically primitive.(In *Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays: 1965-1987)*, He objects to *Heart of Darkness* on the grounds that its organizing principle is the desire on the part of the author to reinforce the traditional separation of Europe from Africa on the basis of their supposed respective civilization and barbarism. So far as Naipaul is concerned, Achebe terms him a "purveyor of the old comforting myths" of Africa's former colonizers, in the sense that one of Naipaul's most cherished literary objectives is his determination to use his creative works to prove that the supposed validity of Conrad's observations regarding Africa in *Heart of Darkness* remains despite the departure of Africa's former colonizers. (Achebe, 18-19) Achebe further wonders whether an author who arguably possesses great abilities to craft works of art, but who uses those abilities to champion the cause for the dehumanization of an entire race, can reasonably be termed 'great'.

An evaluation of *A Bend in the River* that seeks to clarify its ideological origins show that Achebe does have a point when he accuses Naipaul of racism against Africans. Throughout the book, Salim, the narrator, functions primarily as a conduit for Naipaul's apparent belief that Africans are incapable of negotiating the transition from underdevelopment to modernity because their faults in that regard are inherent. Achebe's criticisms of Naipaul comprise of the view that Naipaul cannot be accused of the faults of his narrator, a constructed identity; the concrete and creative (fictional) realms of existence are wholly independent of each other, with their own respective social formations, historical trajectories, and Naipaul does not employ the medium of the book to endorse neo-colonialism; in fact, he does the complete opposite, subjecting neo-colonialism to considerable criticism by employing Salim's constricted frame of reference, and Salim's futile struggle to break beyond those boundaries, primarily to underscore the extent to which a particularly repressive form of colonialism can oppress a member of a minority group beyond measure—by incorporating him within the prevailing framework.

When these objections against Achebe are subjected to critical review on the basis of the interpretive criteria developed within contemporary literary criticism, particularly post-structuralism, however, they are found to be wanting in a number of

respects. To begin with, the supposed separation between the respective concrete and fictional realities of the author and the text disappears when Naipaul, as the author of the book, is examined in terms of the manifestations of aspects of his social-cultural context in his general frame of reference. It becomes clear that Naipaul, as author, is best understood as a valued member of what we may want to term the discourse community of neo-colonial Europe whose primary organizing principle consists of the construction, reproduction, and dissemination of forms of knowledge that seek specifically to advance neo-colonial European interests in Africa within the context of the unequal economic relationship that characterizes the prevailing form of globalization.

To put it differently, *A Bend in the River* consists of an intellectual medium that marks the confluence of Naipaul's frame of reference and the value-systems of neo-colonial Europe that he has adopted and internalized over the years in so far as they manifest themselves in textual form. As the author of the text, Naipaul operates within the boundaries of the interpretive criteria for good literature imposed by that discourse community on its members through its ideological demands, especially the separation of Europeans from non-Europeans on the basis of the traditional opposition between civilization and barbarism. He takes advantage of the malleability of language in general, and English in particular, to mix up the available signs such that he reproduces, repackages, or develops the commonplaces of that discourse community in so far as they apply to relations between Europe and Africa.

Naipaul combines the elements that constitute the novel as a form (the circumstances, characters, conflicts, resolutions, points of view, and themes) in so far as they manifest themselves in *A Bend in the River* in ways that serve to advance the idea that the primary distinguishing factor in relations between Europe and Africa consists of their supposed civilization and primitivism. The intertextuality of the book consists of traces or quotations drawn from the intellectual traditions that constitute the web of neo-colonial European culture that link the images associated with Africa (the African person, the African environment, the African physical landscape, etc.) with concepts that underscore Africa's supposed primitivism. responsible for the unequal social, economic, and political relationships the former European empires established with much of the rest of the world during the colonial era—despite the assumption of internal self-rule by most of those other worlds.

5.4 The Discourse Community

The term "discourse community," for its part, was developed by Michel Foucault in his many theoretical works, to represent the critical role that cultural institutions such as the family, the school, the nation, etc., play as the primary medium through which knowledge is constructed and disseminated, and consequently how power is appropriated and exercised by individuals and groups of individuals in the struggle over available resources. James E. Porter, in his essay "Intertextuality and the Discourse Community," for example, provides an interesting general understanding of Foucault's conception of the discourse community and the influence it has on the construction of texts in that regard. As will become clear from examinations of available critical evaluations of Naipaul's cultural, personal, and intellectual background such as Paul Theroux's autobiographical examination of his long relationship with Naipaul in *Sir Vidia's Shadow: A Friendship across Five Continents*, the trajectory of Naipaul's relocation from his native Trinidad to Britain was concomitant with his incorporation within British culture, from which, and on behalf of which, he appears to have drafted most of his subsequent books, the central focus (with respect to those relating to the underdeveloped world) of which is the supposed degeneracy of non-European cultures in comparison to their European counterparts.

The problematic notion that Africa has no hope in terms of its future economic development is precisely because Africans are inherently incapable of resolving the crises that bedevil their environment. Achebe's criticism of Naipaul's racist theories camouflaged as fiction can be authenticated through critical examinations of parallels that bring together Naipaul and his narrator in *A Bend in the River* (Salim), in so far as their perceptions of relations between Europe and Africa are concerned. These parallels can be unearthed not only through close examinations of Salim's relationships with his African circumstances in *A Bend in the River* but also through reviews of prevailing critical responses to Naipaul's work that link his fiction to his cultural, personal, and intellectual backgrounds in ideological terms.

The ideological origins of a creative work that confronts a particular community from within the culture of another community can be identified and analyzed within the context of what Foucault termed the discursive (or discourse)

community. When *A Bend in the River* is scrutinized from that perspective, it becomes clear that its primary value is the role it plays as a forum through which Naipaul reproduces the value systems of the discourse community of neo-colonial Europe through the medium of literature as a way of making sense out of his problematic cultural background. The term "discourse community," as James E. Porter observes in his assessment of Foucault's contribution to our understanding of textuality, is used to refer to a group of individuals bound by a common interest who communicate through approved channels and whose discourse is regulated. Essentially, the term applies to all cultural institutions, whether the family, the school, the church, the tribe, the nation, or even the regional block, because every cultural institution constitutes a medium through which individuals who are bound by a common ideology construct various forms of knowledge for the purpose of advancing their common interests, whatever those interests are. The importance of writing is that it works as a "forum" through which the discourse community, in its determination to advance its material interests, constructs, stores, and disseminates appropriate forms of knowledge.

The primary criterion by which individuals are either accepted or rejected as members of a given discourse community consists of their ability—or the lack thereof—to advance the ideology of the discourse community through their rhetoric. By themselves, individuals are oftentimes incapable of fulfilling their social, economic, or political interests to their complete satisfaction. Therefore, through the medium of consensus, they align themselves with like-minded individuals in order to advance their interests from positions of power. But the fact that they now belong to communities, and therefore regulated systems of perception and behaviour, creates conflicts between their individual interests and those of others (within the context of the communities) that require mediation. They are consequently compelled by the dynamics of the groups to resolve the problem by relinquishing all their interests except those that the groups consider the most crucial. Therefore, their interests coincide with those of their communities, so that by advancing the common interests of the communities they in effect advance their own interests. The importance of writing lies in the fact that it constitutes perhaps the most effective medium through which individuals seek to fulfil those objectives. In so far as the interests of particular discourse communities are concerned, the most valued writers are those who possess

the capability to use their written work to advance the ideological interests of their communities through the medium of literature. In the evaluation of the textual characteristics that differentiate "experienced" from "basic" writers in "Inventing the University," David Bartholomae underscores the function of writing in that respect. He identifies the "commonplace" of the discourse community, as represented in the work of a given author, as the context that brings together the ideology of the community and the process of knowledge-production in society as manifested in the frame of reference of the author. The commonplace constitutes "the culturally or institutionally authorized concept that carries with it its own necessary elaboration" In other words; the commonplace of the community encapsulates the sum total of the values of the discourse community.

So far as colonialism (or neo-colonialism) is concerned, the Empire (or the former Empire), on the one hand, and the colony (or the post independence state), on the other, can be said to be two distinct discourse communities. The program of colonialism (or neo-colonialism) revolves around the production of forms of knowledge designed to advance the interests of the Empire beyond its borders within the context of international capitalism. The programs of independence and nation building, for their part, centre on knowledge intended to recuperate the humanity of the colonized (or formerly colonized) person as the foundation for his social, economic, and political development. In post-colonial studies, the relationship between the colonizer and the native is given a great deal of attention. The colonizer is represented as the embodiment of the values of the Empire responsible for the invention perpetuated by post-independence regimes. Abdul anMohamed's *Manichean Aesthetics: The Politics of Literature in Colonial Africa* uses the Fanonian conception of the capitalist colonial situation as pathologically divisive to undertake exhaustive examinations of the place of the post-colonial African subject as depicted in various creative works. Elleke Boehmer's *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors* provides broad explanations of the nature of postcolonial literatures and of transformations that they have undergone in the course of history. Since the early 1990s (when the debate regarding the nature of globalization began to gather momentum), observers have increasingly questioned the concept of globalization as an unfolding democratic "global village." Among the most interesting of these observers is Joseph Stigliz in his book *Globalization and Its Discontents.* In

it, he provides wide-ranging forms of evidence to show generally that what we have come to know as globalization is in fact the same age-old process whereby the world's industrialized societies (led by America) are advancing their specific interests, for the most part at the expense of their less developed counterparts, through prevailing unequal social, economic, and political global mechanisms.

The native is represented as the physical and psychological manifestation of the scars inflicted on the colony by the Empire. For the most part, these discussions are carried out at the expense of another important participant in the development of the colony: the immigrant communities who either come to the colony of their own volition or are imported into the region from another part of the world by the colonial regime are generally overlooked. Yet they play an important role in shaping the nature and direction of colonial rule and therefore contribute considerably to the evolution of the colonial situation.

These groups of immigrants are best understood collectively as "non-native native" communities. This is because they occupy positions in the relationships established in the colony that both identify and separate them from the colonizers, on the one hand, and the natives on the other. In general, they are positioned between the colonizers and the natives in the hierarchical relationships of communities, races, and lasses established by the colonial situation. They are non-natives because they trace their heritage to another part of the world. But they are natives because, like the indigenous groups, they are subjected to the power of the colonizer. They are non-natives because they are less threatening to the colonizer than the natives, on the basis of which they enjoy privileges that the colonizer denies the native proper. But they are natives because they are excluded from certain economic and political privileges that are reserved for the colonizer. In response to these forces, they exist as closed societies in the colonies. Apart from their participation in the life of the colony as workers, they are cut off socially, economically, and politically from both the colonizers and the natives.

In East and Central Africa in the colonial era, there were two prominent non-native native groups: Arabs and Indians. Arabs arrived on the East African coast about two thousand years ago. They came in dhows driven by the seasonal monsoon winds. Initially, they confined themselves to trade, exchanging goods originating from

their home countries for African goods. But as time went on, they settled along the East African coast. Some among them intermarried with Africans, producing what we have come to know as Swahili culture. Still later, they established colonies on the coast either on behalf of their home governments or on their own behalves. The hierarchy in question was in part established by Social Darwinism, the theory that was developed on the foundation of evolution established by Charles Darwin and his followers from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards. The hierarchy was based on supposed differences in the biological and corresponding intellectual attributes of the various races. It placed the European at the top of the rung, followed by the Asian, the Arab, and the African in that order, within a comprehensive understanding of the attributes of all of the world's living creatures. In "Britain, Race, and Africa: Racial Imagery and the Motives for British Imperialism," Michael S. Coray offers an exhaustive explanation for the role of the theory in the advancement of Britain's colonization of Africa. He shows that Social Darwinism constituted the common denominator that informed the thinking of the various theoretical positions that underlay much of Europe's colonization of Africa. trade; they participated actively as middlemen in the transportation of Africans to the Middle East. They raided villages in the interior of the continent, captured Africans, and transported them to the coast for sale to Europeans and Americans.

Similarly, Indian migrants arrived on the East African coast around 1000 AD. Like the Arabs, they were traders who travelled to and fro between their home country and Africa in accordance with the direction of the Monsoon winds. But unlike the Arabs, they did not settle on the coast in large numbers until quite recently. The majority of them were brought to East Africa at the turn of the nineteenth century by the British colonial government to assist in the building of the Kenya-Uganda Railway. As time went on, they were gradually integrated into the colonial system.

They graduated from providing manual labour to British engineers to running small-scale shops and cottage industries throughout East and Central Africa. Eventually, they became so powerful that they began to play a determinant role in the life of the region's European colonies. The communities represented in *A Bend in the River* - the Indian, Persian, and Arab communities—are non-native native communities. They are characterized by an ambiguous and ambivalent relationship with their ancestral origins in India and the Middle East and their presence in East and

Central Africa. They look back to their glorious contributions to human civilization with a great deal of nostalgia and pride, but they are trapped in Africa on the basis of the cultural roots they have sunk on the east coast and the economic power base they have developed over the years. When they are examined within the context of the prevailing neo-colonial framework, they are viewed as inferior to Africa's former colonizers in terms of their racial attributes and their economic power, but they are considered superior to the indigenous communities in both respects. Furthermore, they are non-native natives because, due to their numerical inferiority vis-à-vis the local peoples, they cannot contribute significantly to the political destiny of the region despite their economic power. The result is that they exist in the region more or less as enclaves of Asian and Middle Eastern cultures in an overwhelmingly African cultural context. During the colonial era, they strove to avoid political confrontation with Africa's European colonizers, on the one hand, and the local peoples, on the other, concentrating their energies on the economic and cultural aspects of their lives and for the most part interacting with information on the history of the Arab communities in East Africa, see, for example, John Middledon's has analysed that the Immigrant Communities of the East indigenous groups only within the context of the workplace. But in the course of the transition from colonial to independence rule, their middle ground social status was disturbed by the departure of the former colonizers and the increasing political power of the indigenous groups. They found themselves in a situation whereby they had to decide whether to remain in the region—this time as subjects of a people they had learned to consider inferior to themselves—to relocate to their ancestral homes, which were manifested in their lives only as memories of distant pasts, or to relocate to the geographical locations of their former European colonizers, whose passports they continued to possess despite the dawn of indigenous independence.

The story of Salim in *A Bend in the River* is the story of the process through which he comes to resolve that the best option for him, under the circumstances, is to relocate to Britain, East Africa's former colonizer, whose global reach provides him with the opportunity to break beyond the constrictions he discerns in his former African environment. The story is important because it reflects, and consequently opens up an interesting window through which to examine, Naipaul's own relationship with his circumstances in the course of his upbringing and childhood

education in Trinidad, his relocation to Britain first as a student and later as a naturalized citizen, and finally his determined struggle to unravel the dilemmas confronting non-native natives the world over through the medium of literature. The reason is that, in many respects, Naipaul is Salim and Salim is Naipaul.

Salim's experience with the colonial government stamps, to which he is exposed, while a small boy growing up on the east African coast. (BR, 15) plays an important role in the development of his biased frame of reference and his subsequent estrangement from his coastal people. The stamps expose him to an important aspect of his culture—the "adventure spirit" of his people symbolized by the dhow painted on one of the stamps - but the message is mediated through the point of view of the European artists who painted the "local scenes" on the stamps. From the stamps he learns about his culture, but he does so exclusively from the point of view of the colonial master, through whose conceptual framework the message they carry is mediated to viewers. Therefore, in the course of appreciating the paintings, Salim is introduced to the hierarchical relationship established by the colonial situation between Europe and the rest of the world, particularly between Europe and non-native native peoples. In comparison to the "liners and cargo ships" that routinely call at the harbour, the dhows on the stamps are "quaint" but reflect a relatively underdeveloped culture. (BR, 15)

Salim encounters the stamps at a time in his life when he is relatively gullible, not yet having become exposed to an ideology that would have forestalled the devastating impact that colonialism will have upon his life. Hence, his response to the stamps (and, through them, to the power of colonialism) is quite naïve. "It was as though, in those stamps, a foreigner had said, 'This is what is most striking about this place', and he informs us. The emphasis is placed on the word "foreigner." The stamps derive their importance from their association with the "foreigner." The stamp bearing the image of the dhow leaves a particularly deep impression upon Salim's mind because it addresses an aspect of non-native native culture that he admires above all else—their love for the sea symbolized by the dhow. He recalls:

> Without that stamp of the dhow I might have taken the dhows for granted. As it was, I learned to look at them. Whenever I saw them tied up at the waterfront I thought of them as something peculiar to our region, quaint,

something the foreigner would remark on, something not quite modern, and certainly nothing like the liners and cargo ships that berthed in our own modern docks. (BR, 15)

The encounter with the stamps is crucial, again, because it establishes the foundation for his subsequent indoctrination into the prevailing neo-colonial framework in its totality: for his prejudices toward Africans, for his estrangement from his coastal community, and for his struggle for escape through absorption within "European civilization." His childhood fascination with the dhows and other "local scenes" depicted on the stamps matures into concern for his culture generally, while the frame of reference demarcated by the colonial artists who painted the scenes grows to incorporate the overall neo-colonial frame of reference. The result is that his subsequent education is wholly informed by the prevailing framework: his interest in his own culture grows, but his attempts to account for it are invariably hijacked by the medium of neo-colonialism; in the end, he is transformed into no more than a medium for colonialism. The problem is highlighted in the following passage:

> All that I know about our history and the history of the Indian Ocean I have got from books written by Europeans. If I say that our Arabs in their time were great adventurers and writers; that our sailors gave the Mediterranean the lateen sail that made the discovery of the Americas possible; that an Indian pilot led Vasco da Gama from East Africa to Calicut; that the very word cheque was first used by our Persian merchants—if I say these things it is because I have got them from European books. They formed no part of our knowledge or pride. Without Europeans, I feel, all our past would have been washed away, like the scuff marks of fishermen on the beach outside our town. (BR, 12)

Salim sees his people exactly as the colonizer sees them. He brings to his culture exactly the same prejudices that the colonizer disseminates through the literature he produces regarding Arabia, India, and Africa. He derives a sense of pride from knowing that his people have done great things in the past. But because he perceives his environment exclusively through the prejudiced perspective of the colonizer he is invariably discontented with his culture. The innovations and "adventure-spirit" of non-native natives, though an important contribution to

"civilization," are miniscule in comparison to those of the Europeans. The civilization of Europeans belongs to the present, while that of non-native natives belongs to the past. Through Salim's recollections, we acquire access to much of the history of his people as he understands it. We learn that Arabs, Persians, and Indians were once "masters" of East Africa, but that they have now lost their power to Europeans who have subsequently taken control of the region. In the distant past, we are told, Arabs, Persians, and Indians were among the most "civilized" communities in the world (11-12). Before the coming of the Europeans to East Africa, they ruled over much of the region: "They had pushed far into the interior and had built towns and planted orchards in the forest" (14). In addition, they played a crucial role in the development of the slave trade during that era. Unlike the slaves of the West Coast, the slaves of the east coast "were not shipped off to plantations" but were either retained by local Arabs, Persians, and Indians or sent "to Arabian homes as domestic servants" (12). In fact, as recently as the turn of the nineteenth century (long after the official banning of slavery), many among the Arabs and Indians on the east coast were still practicing the trade. For instance, Salim's grandfather "once shipped a boatful of slaves as a cargo of rubber" (11), implying that the incident occurred in the Congo in the 1880s, when King Leopold II of Belgium ran the country as a personal plantation intended to meet the demand for rubber for bicycle wheels. With the eradication of slavery, some former slaves "became members of the family they had joined" (12). For example, "there were two slave families [who had lived in Salim's family] for at least three generations," first as slaves and later as domestic servants). In this way, non-native natives acquired enormous wealth and power and held considerable sway over Africans.

In course of time, we are informed further, the Arabs, Persians, and Indians developed a unique culture on the east coast, one that distinguished them from Arabs, Persians, and Indians in their ancestral homes and from Africans in "the interior." Their separation from Arabia, Persia, and India estranged them from their roots, while their foreignness prevented them from identifying fully with Africa. They became "non-native natives" in the true sense of the phrase:

> Africa was my home, had been the home of my family for centuries. But we came from the east coast, and that made the difference. The coast was not truly African. It was an Arab-Indian-Persian-Portuguese place, and we who lived

> there were really people of the Indian Ocean. True Africa was at our back. Many miles of scrub or desert separated us from the upcountry people; we looked east to the lands, with which we traded - Arabia, India, Persia. These were also the lands of our ancestors. As time passed, the power of non-native natives gradually waned as other groups took control of the region. "First the Arabs had ruled here," recalls Salim: now the Europeans were about to go away. (BR, 12)

The Europeans, through their program of colonization, conquered the region, carved it up, and shared it among themselves as extensions of their respective empires. The Arabs, Persians, and Indians (who were numerically and militarily weak in comparison to the Europeans) could not stand up to them. They opted to co-exist with them—to pay homage to their power. The Europeans ruled relatively peacefully until around World War II (the time Salim appears to have been born), when their power began to weaken in the face of the growing political strength of Africans. It thus became inevitable that Africans would eventually take power away from Europeans—and Salim, reviewing the events through his adopted point of view, becomes increasingly worried for the Arabs, he informs that he was also worried for them. Because so far as power went there was no difference between the Arabs and themselves. They were both small groups living under a European flag at the edge of the continent.

Therefore, it is not surprising that Salim becomes increasingly disillusioned with his African circumstances on the east coast. When he says that he was "worried for the Arabs" and for Indians, he is expressing his fear that the region's non-native natives could have no future because of the growing power of the Africans of "the interior."

Physically, he remains trapped among non-native natives, but psychologically he resides among Europeans. His decision to relocate from the coast to the interior can, therefore, be said to arise from his need to reconcile the two halves of his self. When he leaves the coast for the "bend in the river" he is inadvertently seeking to recuperate his humanity, which has been severely undermined by colonialist ideology. When Nazruddin, the uncle who serves as a sort of role model for him, offers Salim the opportunity to buy his shop at the bend in the river. In his

version of psychoanalysis, Lacan re-reads Freud within the context of post structuralism, re-writing the stages of sexuality in terms of a combination of Saussure's diachronic conception of language and his own concept of the imaginary. In the process, he shows that the individual generally develops his or her ego on the basis of persistent attempts on his or her part to approximate his sense of self via external objects that he or she idealizes as coherent and stable. In Following Nazruddin's decision relocate to Britain, Salim seizes the chance, not necessarily because he intends to use it to advance his business interests, but because it constitutes a stepping stone toward the proximity with European culture —which is represented at the bend in the river in the form of a large presence of European settlers—that he intends to establish.

Salim's recollections regarding his journey to the bend in the river and the experiences he has there with the Africans of the interior are informed primarily by Conrad, whose *Heart of Darkness* appears to have featured prominently among the European books he tells us constitute the primary medium of his access to knowledge concerning his people and their environment. (BR, 11-12). Conrad would like us to read *Heart of Darkness* as an allegory of civilization as defined by colonialist ideology. Given that Europeans that Africans embody primitivism, it follows that these qualities are reflected in the geographical locations occupied by the two races, i.e. Europe and Africa. In other words, just as Europeans can impart their will upon their environment, so Africans cannot achieve that feat; hence, Europe symbolizes civilization while Africa mirrors barbarism.

For Marlow, therefore, travelling from Europe to Africa (and particularly sailing up the river Congo in his steamer) is equivalent to travelling from the present to the very beginning of time. Behind him is Europe with its highways and skyscrapers, its democratic institutions, and its excellent intellectual achievements, embodied in its gentlemen and its ladies. In front of him is Africa with its jungles, bushes, and savages. When Marlow encounters Africans, he sees them primarily from afar. Conrad has rightly said that they are "black savages," peeping at him from behind bushes, producing distant, unintelligible noises in the dark of the night, or cannibalistically hungering after human flesh.

Thus, the conception of Africa as the Dark Continent in European colonialist literature reflects a deeply rooted psychological problem: Quite simply it is the desire—one might indeed say the need—in Western psychology to set up Africa as a foil for Europe, a place of negations at once remote and vaguely familiar in comparison with which Europe's own state of spiritual grace will be made manifest. (Achebe 2) Naipaul, a close disciple of Conrad, employs the same strategies as Conrad in his review of the relationship between his hero and his African environment. Although Salim is disillusioned with the non-native native communities of the coast, he believes that they are more civilized than the interior. Like Marlow, therefore, Salim, while travelling from the coast to the town at the bend in the river in his Peugeot, imagines himself travelling from the present to the past.

The consternation that Salim exhibits when he finally arrives at the bend in the river reflects the same problem. Before he leaves the coast, he hears that "Nazruddin's adopted country" (presumably the Congo) has won its independence (presumably from Belgium). In other words, the Africans he so much dreads are now in charge of the region. Yet he soldiers on. He is overwhelmed by the alluring stories he has heard from Nazruddin about the wines, the restaurants, and the food available at the European town located at the bend in the river. Therefore, when he discovers that the Europeans have abandoned the town— that Africans have taken it over, that the town is in ruins, that it has been looted, and that it is overrun by bushes— he is thunderstruck. He sees the event as Africa's final return to its erstwhile barbarism. As Salim walks among the ruins of the town, furthermore, he comes across a dilapidated building bearing the following Latin message: *Miscerique probat populos et foedera jungi*. Because he does not speak Latin, he does not understand the words; but because they are written in Latin, he is convinced that they bear considerable meaning. "I knew the words by heart," he informs us. "I gave them my own pronunciation, and they ran like a nonsense jingle in my head" (26). The words are attractive because the Latin language in which they are written symbolizes European civilization. In speaking them out loud despite his inability to speak Latin, Salim expresses the overwhelming extent of his desire to access that culture. Later on in the course of the narrative (62-63), Father Huismans, the European evangelist and collector of African artifacts whom he subsequently befriends, explains their meaning to him. From what Huismans says, it becomes clear to us (though not to Salim or,

apparently, Huismans himself) that the Latin words were inspired by Virgil's *The Aeneid*. It will be recalled that Virgil, in his attempts both to bolster the image of Augustus as well as to equate Roman culture to Greek culture, modelled *The Aeneid* after Homer's two epics: *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*.

To Salim, the European settlers committed sacrilege against their god and, therefore, their settlement at the river was "a hoax." The gods had decreed against any such relationship between Europeans and Africans, and it was wrong for them to turn the situation around. The separation between Europeans and Africans was "divinely" ordained and was therefore beyond their control. Europeans were destined to rule Africans, not to intermingle with them biologically. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Salim's relationship with his circumstances at this point is his almost immediate identification with Europe. Although he has never lived among Europeans, having acquired access to "European civilization" primarily through books, he has so identified himself with Europe that he imagines himself to be a European. Thus, as he examines the ruins of the town, he behaves and thinks like a European who has come to the town from Europe. It is as though he has flown in "from the future" and is beholding his own destroyed handiwork. He is shocked, but he is also consoled by the fact that the same civilization exists elsewhere in more abundance (27). It is within the context of Salim's struggle to overcome the perceived dangers he discerns in the upcoming indigenous African intelligentsia that Naipaul presents us with globalization, as we have come to know it, as the most appropriate solution to the prevailing African crises. Disillusioned beyond measure by his African circumstances, Salim visits Nazruddin in London hoping to acquire permanent residence there. "I decided to rejoin the world," he informs us, "to break out of the narrow geography of the town, to do my duty by those who depended on me. I wrote to Nazruddin that I was coming to London for a visit, leaving him to interpret that simple message." He is convinced that the young generation of Indians living under African rule, like their predecessors under European colonial rule, "have no place in the world." "They were empty in Africa," he tells us, "and unprotected, with nothing to fall back on. They had begun to rot. I was like them." (BR, 228)

But Salim does not find his Europe even in London. The Europe he encounters is by no means the Europe "that had defeated the Arabs in Africa and controlled the interior of the continent," nor the Europe "that gave [the non-native

natives of the coast] the descriptive postage stamps that gave [them their] ideas of what was picturesque about them selves." It is a Europe that "still [feeds those peoples] in a hundred ways with its language and [sends them] its increasingly wonderful goods, things which, in the bush of Africa [add] year by year to [their] idea of who [they are]…." But it is not an ideal environment: "It is something shrunken and mean and forbidding" (229).

Walking around London, Salim is shocked. The city is saturated with non-native natives like him who have come to London in search of refuge from Africa but who have not found it. While the city gives them the opportunity to pursue their business objectives on a larger scale than Africa has done it does not afford them complete freedom. The relationship the society establishes between them and the indigenous whites is much the same as the one the colonial situation maintained between them and Africans. They live on the margins of society, cut off from the centre of political life (229-230). And yet Salim does not evolve a revolutionary outlook toward life. He does not break beyond the confines of his neo-colonial framework. He does not engage the system in any critical analysis. On the contrary, he embraces it further. He blames the victims for their problems, rather than their oppressors. Non-native natives, according to him, owe their predicaments to their adamant (and "unthinking") adherence to their cultural particularities. Were they to assimilate within European civilization, they would overcome their limitations. As "Europeans," they would operate at the centre of European civilization rather than at its periphery. They would benefit from Europe's global markets, becoming lords over much of the world.

Hence we see Salim, as he walks around London sympathizing" with the idea, originally propagated by his friend Indar, that it is necessary for non-native native Indians "to reject the ideas of home and ancestry piety." He thinks that he is engaged in a kind of "rebellion" when he is, in fact, a reactionary working against the interests of his own people on behalf of the prevailing international order. The situation is ironic, but in a pathetic sort of way:

> What illusions Africa gave to people who came from outside! In Africa I had thought of our instinct and capacity for work even in extreme conditions, as heroic and creative. I had contrasted it with the indifference and withdrawal of

> village Africa. But now in London, against a background of busyness, I saw this instinct purely as instinct, pointless, serving only itself. And a feeling of rebellion possessed me, stronger than any I had known in my childhood. To this was added a new sympathy for the rebellion Indar had spoken to me, the rebellion he had discovered when he had walked beside the river of London and had decided to reject the ideas of home and ancestral piety, the unthinking worship of his great men, the self-suppression that went with that worship and those ideas, and to throw himself consciously into the bigger, harder world. It was the only way I could live here, if I had to live here. (BR -230)

In London, Salim reaches the apex, the culmination, of his long process of alienation from his non-native native community and his indoctrination into European civilization. He succumbs completely to the overwhelming power of Eurocentrism, and his physical self finally catches up with his psychological self. Salim embraces what we may term "utopian globalization," the idealized concept of a future global order where all of the world's cultures co-equally relate with one other within a fully democratic international space. He forgets that the reality of globalization consists, essentially, of the ongoing substitution of European cultures for the cultures of the developing world within an economically unequal international order.

This explains Salim's decision to return to Africa rather than to remain in London. What matters to him now is only ideology, not geography or ancestry. In view of the ongoing international transformations, he concludes, one does not have to live in Europe or America in order for one to benefit from Western financial resources. All that one has to do is accept the prevailing ideology and try to take advantage of it from within. Even in Africa, with all its "backwardness," one can make money, provided only that one is part of a network of international capitalists whose headquarters are in Europe or America. Back in Africa, Salim gets down to business. He establishes an international company and commences to buy and export gold and ivory derived from the mines and forests of the Congo. He throws all moral cares to the wind. He becomes a capitalist to the bone. He informs us:

> And so I began to live dangerously. I began to deal in gold and ivory. I bought, stored and sold; or, acting for bigger operations (who paid directly to my bank in Europe); I stored and shipped on, for a percentage.

> My supplier, and sometimes poachers, were officials or army people, and these people were always dangerous to deal with. (BR, 258)

5.5 The Globalised Self

Convinced that he is now a "global man" and that the whole world is his stage, he evolves into no more than a conduit for international forces engaged in the systematic looting of the wealth of Africa. He colludes with corrupt elements within the government of "the Domain" to advance neo-colonialist interests in Africa. But the most important point to note from Salim's appropriation of Eurocentrism, however, is the role he plays as a medium through whom Naipaul himself, as the author of the book, expresses his own prejudices toward Africa. As it will become clearer from the following examples of observers who have closely followed Naipaul's cultural, personal, and intellectual background in relation to his creative work, there are parallels in his thinking and Salim's that show that he intended Salim to serve, for the most part, primarily as a conduit for his own theoretical position on Africa.

Anyone who has delved deeply into post-independence African issues, irrespective of the medium he or she has employed, will not have escaped confrontation with the complexity of African issues. In terms of its cultural origins, historical development, and economic and political organization, Africa could very well be the world's most diverse region. Besides being home to hundreds of tribal groupings, it has experimented with wide-ranging economic and political policies and institutions. It is clearly one of those social, economic, and political configurations that cannot be understood from a simplistic, one-dimensional perspective.

A Bend in the River is a problematic novel, in part, because it overlooks or otherwise fails to underscore that important aspect of African reality, despite the fact that it sets for itself the objective of accounting for Africa's origins and destiny. Throughout the book, we are not allowed to break beyond the ideological boundaries of Salim's conviction that the African is *inherently* incapable of surmounting the crises that bedevil his environment in his post-independence era.

Naipaul could have solved that problem by including characters in the novel who would have conceptualized Africa from alternative points of view and given

them equally important roles in the novel. In that respect, he would have brought Salim into contact with a character who would have pressured him to re-evaluate his simplistic perception of Africa and to respond to it accordingly. But Naipaul does not do so; we are introduced to Salim's biased mind with the first words he utters, and we are confined within that problematic frame of reference throughout the book. We are expected to receive Salim's prejudiced views regarding Africa as the most appropriate explanation behind Africa's crises. That Salim is primarily a conduit for Naipaul's negative perceptions of Africa makes sense when Naipaul and Salim are examined in terms of parallels in their cultural backgrounds and their general conceptual frameworks in regard to Africa, as derived from available critical observations of Naipaul's life and writing.

Like Salim, Naipaul is a non-native native who has sought to resolve the dilemmas arising from his constricted reality through accommodation in the culture of the former colonizer of his adopted country. He was born and brought up in Trinidad among communities of Hindu and Muslim migrants from India who arrived in the country, for the most part, between 1845 and 1917. He received much of his childhood and young adulthood education from Trinidadian schools, including Port-of-Spain's Queen's Royal College, before proceeding to Britain's Oxford University for further studies as an international student. But after Oxford, he chose to remain in Britain, the former colonial power from 1802 to 1962, as a naturalized citizen, rather than to return to Trinidad to participate in the process of nation-building from his original home. It is from within British culture in that respect that he has built up his career as one of the world's most accomplished writers. From the observations of the comments of some of the observers who have closely followed his life and writing career in that regard, there is no doubt that he responded to the restricted space he occupied as a Trinidadian of Indian origin in much the same way as Salim does with respect to Africa—by seeking accommodation within British culture as a way of avoiding direct confrontation with his ambiguous cultural background In her article "Past and Present Darkness: Sources for V.S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*," for example, Linda Prescott identifies direct connections between Naipaul's conceptualization of Africa as the Dark Continent and comments that Naipaul has made in regard to Conrad's intellectual responses to Africa. It will be recalled that Conrad developed *Heart of Darkness* from experiences he himself had previously had

in the Congo, particularly at Stanley Falls as a thirty-two-year-old army officer, and that his primary objective in so doing was to underscore the horrors that he believed the African embodied. Prescott observes that *A Bend in the River* originated from similar travels that Naipaul himself made to the Congo more or less as an intellectual disciple of Conrad in the mid-1960s. From close examinations of a number of essays that Naipaul wrote on his travels in the Congo subsequent to those visits—particularly "Conrad's Darkness" and "A New King for the Congo"—Prescott concludes that Naipaul modified the concept of Africa as the Dark Continent not only to make it more forceful but also to suit his own ideological interests as a Trinidadian of Indian origin who sought to overcome the ambiguousness of his cultural background through accommodation in the more powerful British culture. He was motivated primarily by his desire to prove "that Conrad's perception of Africa is still relevant today by drawing attention to things that have not changed," principally Africa's inability to overcome its social, economic, and political crises. However, whereas Conrad's primary contention was that the African is trapped at the beginning of time on the basis of his primitivism; Naipaul's argument is basically that this primitivism consists of nihilism that renders the African unable to cope with modernity as manifested in the colonial rule imposed on Africa by Europe. In "A New King for the Congo," for example, Naipaul argues that the basis of the brutality that Mobutu Sese Seko exhibited during his rule in the Congo (from 1965 to 1997) was the momentary nature of the African's exposure to civilization through the rather brief period of European colonial rule in Africa. Thus the problem with post independence Africa is primarily about "African nihilism, the rage of primitive men coming to themselves and finding that they have been fooled and affronted," and Mobutu embodied the values of the primitive man who is transformed into a nihilist by his contact with a civilization which he is incapable of utilizing properly. The argument constitutes the foundation upon which Naipaul seeks to resolve the problematic nature of his cultural background and, in so doing, underscores the critical intellectual difference separating him from Conrad. In *Heart of* Darkness, Conrad, in line with the prevailing colonial ideology, refuses to situate the African within Africa's own historical trajectory, contending that the African's history begins precisely at the point of his encounter with his European colonizer. But in *A Bend in the River* Naipaul demonstrates a keen consciousness of African history by documenting the historical backgrounds of his characters, most notably Salim's. This is due to the dilemma that Naipaul has had to

endure as a person whose cultural background is not secure and therefore his desire to reconstruct a more appropriate (and stable) historical background for himself. As Prescott puts it, his personal sense of footlessness, derived from the experience of growing up in an immigrant community in Trinidad and then living in a rather restless exile in England, gives a sharp edge to his emphasis on the social necessity of history. It is that determination to rewrite history to suit his own ideological orientation that generally informs Naipaul's problematic perception of relations between Europe and Africa.

Naipaul "had a fear of being swallowed by the bush, a fear of people of the bush," implying that Naipaul, like Salim, presumed that the departure of Africa's former colonizers meant that Africa was destined for its erstwhile former primitivism. Naipaul perhaps used his writing, in general, to denigrate women on the basis of their supposed inferiority to men. Naipaul, as it appears, was forever finding women leaky and damp, in sadly wrinkled clothes, creases at the crotch and stains at the armpit.

Eventually, Naipaul's books have revealed his insight into India to be far above the judgement of an ordinary traveller. He has a privilege of a Brahmin but not the supporting beliefs or complacence or callousness. Naipaul's writing on India shows that a root Brahmin sensibility has overlaid with a western vision as a result of which ultimately there is no home for him in India: "His assumptions are too much of the West." (White, 7) Naipaul perhaps has never cared for the land of his own birth and his people. He admits it was a mistake to have been born there, that he always wishes to forget it. Trinidad was for him a "destitute society" without history, with achievement, it is unlikely, he cared for India.

5.6 Mock-Biography of a Society

The protagonist of *The Suffrage of Elvira* is Harbans. There is essentially rural setting with a commercial bias. The characters in the novel are immersed in physical labour and material existence, the world of challenges for removed, are content to live their circumscribed lives requiring nothing of themselves or their surroundings: the minimums level of survival becoming the maximum limit of possibility.

The Suffrage of Elvira records Naipaul's creative encounter with his time and place in the life he knew best. They revel his understanding of the local scene and his capacity to reinforce it with comic irony. *The suffrage of Elivira* exposes the distortion of such concepts as democracy and independence and the larger-scale corruption of the society itself by booking at the microcosm through the macrocosm. The novel demonstrates Naipaul's gift of atomizing the experience of a community into the intransigent particulars of colonial action and finally draw our attention from the community to the individual who constitute it.

In this Novel the awakening of the people of "the Elivira State" has been traced by Naipaul and a focus has been brought up on the prospects and "possibilities" harboured by democracy in a corrupt and dishonest society- a maze of deals and inducements. And before going to explore what democracy in Elvira is as Naipaul represents it, is worthwhile to note what he has to say on the political situation pervading Trinidad or any colonial society for that matter around that time.

Independence and the advent of democracy in Elvira which is inevitably followed by elections –all serve to manifest not only the gross characteristics of human nature and the eccentricities embedded in individual behaviour at a point of historical transition but also the cultural dwarfness the mimicry and ignorance of a society just coming out of colonial rule. Naipaul writes about his society a confused one-confused because of the sudden arrival of independence and absence of regulation, a central controlling authority, and refusal to accept any responsibility- becomes an authentic critical work of universal appeal. Though Naipaul deals with these things in an unserious and comic manner, he succeeds in putting forward the serious issues that affect individuals and communities in the complex cultural reality of such colonial societies as the Caribbean. In this novel an individual is treated in a satirical way the means which he adopts to achieve success. Naipaul's unbiased and impersonal diagnosis of the various ills of his society just coming out of colonial rule enables us to have a glimpse of the trickery, corruption, mimicry prevalent in such a society. The bitterness and irony behind Naipaul's presentation of the fact enables us to know about the confused state of affairs pervading every aspects of life including religion, tradition, and politics.

The ideal of democracy and democratic elections and its reality in a community that lives very much in the present propelled by immediate needs and personal interests seems to be Naipaul's major concern in this novel. The newly born concept, democracy, alien to a people driven by considerations of race, and class, provides Naipaul with a subject that aptly demonstrates the Trinidadian penchant for invitation. *The Suffrage of Elvira* is a dramatic account of the political awakening of the village of Elvira-remote, unconnected, and dingy, "Elvira" is the short form for the The Elvira Estate was named after the wife of one of the early owners of the cocoa state.

In this novel Naipaul makes an elaborate attempt to make the disordered past more concrete. This is done by making many villages still depend on the estate for work thought the estate is now only a shadow of its former self. The names for jobs in the days of slavery still survive. The social structure of Elvira also seems to be designed after that of a large estate. There is Baksh, the leader of the Muslims in the village, who lives in a "tumble down house of two storeys… built for an overseer in the days of Elvira state". His son is called Foam, short for Foreman, a title given to estate overseers. Chitaranjan, who lives in the "Big House" which is analogous to the Estate House or great House on a plantation, seems to be the owner of the estate. The disused cocoa house that still survives from the great days of the estate plays a central role in the action of the novel 'It's here that the skeleton of Elvira's past is buried. Elvira also has an unsavoury and brutal scandal which it had attempted to conceal.

Elvira, the mistress of the Estate, had a baby by a black servant, and to conceal this fact, she had buried the child in the foundations of the Cocoa house, which was then being built. It is also believed that the child's ghost still haunts the cocoa house. It is clear that Elvira is haunted and controlled by this unsavoury history. It becomes evident in the way in which the election is contested on the basis of prejudice and the superstition of the electorate. Obeah and black magic play an important role here. The politicians and the electorate are presented as tricksters and exploiters by Naipaul. Democracy becomes merely a guise for self-advancement. The candidate does not have a policy for the platform. Harbans makes a strategy of getting votes from the Hindus for him and persuades the Muslims to do so through Baksh. People talk about unity, religious and racial chauvinism always takes precedence over ideology for meeting their ends the politicians, infact, make the people more and more racially

conscious. There is a racial prejudice which causes bitterness that exists between Hindus and Muslims.

In the novel experiences of Surajpat Harbans, a PWD contractor, and the owner of a quarry and a transport service named after him, who wants to test his fortune in the elections has been recorded. Though John Thieme and Landeg White describes Harbans as an innocent repeatedly tricked and betrayed by the public, his sole aims seems to be to win the election. He submits himself to the exploitative demands of the people of Elvira. Foam perhaps voices forth his deeper thoughts or hopes. The fact that he had been able to persuade the Chief Engineer of the Country Naparoni against making big repairs on the Elvira road in order to make his transport service a becoming business establishes him as a swindler.

Since democracy was a brand new thing in Trinidad, a creeping nation, Harbans has to resort to demeaning and corrupt practice to appease different kinds of people in Elvira. To get the Hindus votes he has to please Chittaranjan by agreeing to marry his son to Chittaranjan's daughter, Nelly though it never materializes. To get the Muslim votes he has to satisfy Baksh, the tailor who till the last moment tries to exploit Harbans. Harbans then woos the Negro votes away from his rival, preacher; Harbans further adopts the strategy of distribution of petrol and run vouchers, posters, and banners. Baksh demands two hundred dollars and a loudspeaker van and seventy five dollars per month for his eldest son, Foam, who is to be the manager of the campaign. Harbans's path to the Legislative Council is further complicated by the appearance of the two self-styled witnesses of Jehovah and the dog Tiger. This brings to a focus the crucial role that Obeah and black magic play in such societies which are not yet ready to come out of their ignorance and superstitious tendencies.

The people are fickle natured on the polling day Harbans has to see that they would not change their minds in the last minute his men have to take care of the agents and clerks at the polling booths who would otherwise stagger the polling process. Some men of tried criminality have to be appointed to see that the ballot-boxes reach the warden's office without any problem , All these make him so desperate that he looks only sad and absent minded even in the moment of triumph. After the victory, Harbans leaves Elvira but reappears at the function arranged by

Ramlogan, who intends to present a case of whisky to the winning candidate. His appearance is totally transformed when he appears in an outfit. A different vehicle is driven by him i.e. an old Dodge lorry is replaced by Blue-and –black Jaguar. Harbans's car which is not even a week old is set to fire. Harbans gets agitated, and says "Elvira, you a bitch" a second time in the novel and he comes no more the Elvira. Harban's repeated impression "Elvira, you a bitch" can be taken to refer both to the person and to the town, for, as Anthony Boxill notes "Like the original Elvira […] the village Elvira is a bitch in the way she seeks to sell herself over again to Harbans." It is the characterization which transform The Suffrage of Elvira into a genuine and impersonal piece of criticism of a society that is just coming out of colonial rule but incapable of freeing itself from colonial influence.

In the novel Naipaul has offered mock-biography of his society by exposing its middle class manners and morals its philistine coarseness and vulgarity. All these evils surface during election time. Democracy the chief ideal to Usher in order and social equality, can only give rise to confusion and chaos. Elections tend to cause dissension or worsen exiting prejudices and rivalries among the individual races and religions. The kind of notions these ignorant, mentally immature, and irresponsible people entertain about democracy and election are worth-noting, Chittranjan's observation that everybody wants bribe these days becomes an ironical comment on the beginnings of the concept of democratic equality. The novel is a consistently satiric treatment of the human absurdities that men are capable of "performing in the name of ideology. Connivance and corruption consequently become common denominators for the rich and the poor alike.

And Mrs. Baksh's warning may be said to prove true in the end, in the Elviran context. There is only lip service to democracy by the people as they are anti-democratic in spirit.

Election is a carnival and democracy is a farce rather than a passion or a lasting value to the people. There is no social awareness and the unity of masses proves to be a shaky one i.e. not grounded on a genuine historical or social awareness. It is a culture overtaken by disorder and anarchy due to laxity of morals. Given these conditions, democracy and independence may be said to be obsolete and irrelevant in

ameliorating a society like that of Elvira. In addition to this concept of democracy, the great equalizer makes people equal not so much in economic terms as in their potential for mimicry. The obsolete and impotent nature of democracy in Elvira can well be suggested by the "Prologue" and the "Epilogue" of the novel Elivra is "the Trinidad " and so it remains even after the elections : So, Harbans won the election and the insurance company, lost s Jaguar. Chittaranjan lost a son- in law and Dhaniram lost a daughter in-law. Elvira lost Lorkhoor and Lorkhoor won a reputation. Elvira lost Mr.Cuffy and Preacher lost his deposit. Mazurus Baksh, the Muslim tailor, "a man of power", starts and ends as a trickster. All his energies are directed to extract the largest possible bribe from Harbans in return for the return for the promise of the Muslim vote. Though he has no dignity as a leader, he is popular among the Muslims, probably because he is a big talker. People call him the "mouther". He has long been a swindler. Years before the election he contrived fraudulent practices such as the shirt making scheme in which he sold cheap, one-size shirts as exclusively tailored. Depending upon the size of the offer made to him, he is ready to play the role of a religious liberal or a bigot, a sullen man or a clown, a poor tailor or the leader o the Muslim block. Though he secures a van and large sums of money from Harbans, he remains a trouble maker to the end inciting the voters to burn the newly elected MLC's car hence he is "no ordinary conspirator' he fits naturally as it were into the role of the Colonial trickster, capable of cunning expediency and ambush. Chittaranjan is the goldsmith who is the leader of the Hindus in Elvira. He is aloof and stiff and another power centre in Elvira. He becomes an important figure in the local politics because he has control over three thousand Hindu votes and one thousand Spanish votes: "As a Hindu chittaranjan naturally had much influence among the Hindus of Elvira, but he was more than the Hindu leader. He was the only man who carried weight with the Spaniards of Cordoba [it was he lent them money; Many Negroes liked him; Muslims did not trust him, but even they held him in respect. "Chittaranjan is a popular man in Elvira because he is rich and owns "the biggest house in Elvira ". Chittaranjan is a staunch supporter of Harbans, and off course he has his own selfish motive for it. He wants to marry his daughter Nelly to Harbans's son though Harbans is not keen on this alliance. Chittaranjan provides monetary help to the poor and the sick in Elvira and he chalks out all the election schedules and helps in devising certain strategies to win the eldest son of Baksh. Hard work is done by him for the elections He gets appointment as a Campaign Manger at

seventy-five dollars a month he is royal and responsible supporter unlike his deceitful father Lorkhoor, the childhood rival of foam is called by teacher Francis as “a born writer” Teacher Francis helps him to become the star of the Elvira social and Debating club as he talented boy with a gift of the gab and a creative hand. He secures the job of advertising for the cinema in a loudspeaker van through Teacher francies which otherwise would have gone to foam. This intensifies the enmity between them.

Lorkhoor acts as the campaign Manger for Preacher and betrays him in the end. He is self- centred and sells his votes to Harbans. Lorkhoor elopes with “doolahin”, the daughter in law of Dhaniram, and leaves Elvira for good just like Baksh’s , Lorkhoor’s character reveals the self centredness and the centrifugalism inherent in the west, Indian society, which surface at the time of elections. The Negro candidate i.e. Preacher is another eccentric character. He has the support of two thousand Negro votes beside some Spanish and Hindu votes wooed by Lorkhoor He is a tall Negro with high frizzy hair, long frizzy beared long white robe. His campaigning includes “energetic and long walking-tours with a Bible in one hand and a stone in the other. He is not disheartened by his defeat, but goes round briskly from house to house, thanking the people. He fades into anonymity as soon as the elections are over. Mahadeo and Dhaniram are the other two supporters of Harbans who play minor roles in the novel.

Dhaniram lives in Elvira in wooden bungalow with the paralyzed wife and his meek, young daughter-in –law who was dseserted, by Dhani Ram’s son just two months after the marriage. Mahadeo works as a sub-overseer, a driver of free labourers on the Elvira Estate and he is unable to influence them in the elections. He is a devout Hindu. He is very much concerned about old Sebadtian, a Negro, and expects him to survive at least upto the polling day to secure the other Negro votes. There are other characters like Mr.Cuffy who helps to bring fore the role that black magic Obeah plays in such a society as Elvira Naipaul has resorted to savage mockery and biting irony in order to reveal the demoralization of the Elviran community. Characterization comes in handy for Naipaul for exposing the follies and foibles of this picaroon society The author has associated the Negro characters of the novel with certain social virtues and courtesies indicative of central positive aspects of human interactions such as innocence, humanity, affection and something not corrupt. Thus

though Mr. Cuffy becomes the victim, he embodies in himself the possibility of human virtue, surviving through the assaults of political duplicity and corruption. The Preacher is defeated at the elections but then also he emerges as an affable and congenial individual capable of transcending the bitterness and rancour at the political hosting.

Teacher Francis, leaves Elvira, stands out as one capable of intelligent detachment which reminds us of the novelist's own point of view. The Negro community thus symbolizes the power of sanity magnanimity and grace in a world of confusion frenzy and rootlessness i.e. Diaspora It is the presence of such individuals which promises the otherwise frenzied and depraved society some hope for a better future.

Exploitation is done mostly during the elections with the help of superstition another heritage of slavery. Form uses five dead puppies to play on the superstitions of the people of Cordoba and to win back their votes from two American Jehovah witnesses who have persuaded them not to vote."It is simply a matter of black magic outdoing white magic in terrifying the people", as Chittaranjan puts it, "the dog cancels out the witnesses." The black bitch, the dog, her five dead puppies and tiger the puppy alive play very important roles in the novel in bringing to the fore the past of the village. When the dead dog in the Cocoa house is found dead by Foam, he buries it is exactly the same spot where Elvira the namesake of the village is said to have buried her illegitimate child. Foam keeps Tiger, the only surviving puppy, in the cocoa house which, in turn, becomes the ghost of the dead baby and haunts the present Elvira. People passing the cocoa house claim to have "often heard the baby crying". (SOE 116) The weak tiger can only manage a "ghost of a whine, a faint mew". (SOE, 116) The tiger does not only terrifies Bakshes and the village who see it as Obeah, but also becomes responsible for a scandal involving Nelly and Foam, quite an indiscreet act on the part of Elvira Naipaul takes care to associate the ghost of Elvira's baby with the black puppy which Nelly agrees to take care of the out of humane concern for the dog but her reputation suffers on account of the scandal. This is not merely history repeating itself. The society is being condemned to live by standards which it has accepted and is accustomed to live by the people are responsible for their own haunting.

In the novel, *The Suffrage of Elvira* we come across many character who are crazy for foreign things Nelly Chittranjan has her greatest wish fulfilled when “she went to London and joined the regent street Polytechnic”(SOE, 56) The D.M.O “hadn’t forgotten his association with England and continued to wear a Haris tweed jacked despite the heat.” It is in such instance as these that the cultural bankruptcy of the nation is seen glaringly. The characters revel, “a passion for modernity,’ which is an aspect of misery in the society. Chittaranjan’s pained house with properly tiled floors, Baksh’s dream of building a house in Californian style, the announcement of cuffy’s death over the radio amid the advertisement for ponds cream and carib lager are indicative of this. If viewed sympathetically this tendency to mimic is suggestive of the people yearning for a better world. It is indirectly suggestive of the aspiration of a people who are denied any culture or history.

The suffrage of Elvira offers analysis of the idiosyncrasies and the prevalent societal evils of the multi - ethnic, multi-racial culture of Trinidad there is analysis of the idiosyncratic and the prevalent societal evil of the multi-ethnic multi-racial culture of Trinidad It thrown light on how democracy and its ideals are distorted in the Third world nations. Naipaul could write so unobligatorily only because of the fact that he enjoys the complete freedom of an exile. Exile has bestowed on him emancipation from all kind of obligation the necessity to be faithful to his nation, or its ideals or its people.

Inevitably, *The suffrage of Elvira* is a dramatic account of the political awakening of the village of Elvira remote, unconnected and dinghy Its knowledge of outside world is limited to the comings and going of the two American girls, Jehorvah’s witnesses, or the frankly money making activities of Mr Surajpat Harbans as well as proprietor of the transport company which transports the road building materials. It is during the election campaign that it realizes the value of a printing press as a medium of communication and coercion. The political losses and gains of members of this community can be literally assessed in unambiguous material terms. The literal personality of this village established and summed up by the narrator in the prologue and the Epilogue. Elvira is “The smallest most isolated and most neglected

of the nine counties of Trinidad. And it has not changed significantly as a consequence of the elections.

The suffrage of Elvira thus sketches in the social history of Trinidad through the 1930s and 1940s until the fairs election in 1946 under universal adult franchise, Ganesh is representative of the first generation of politician's flamboyant individuals lacking politicial parties and organization. The suffrage of Elvira concerns, 1950 and the second general election under universal adult franchise' when people can gain, financially and socially, from politics. The buying of blocks of votes from leaders of ethnic communities the playing for funerals food and drinks was common practice in Trinidad at the time when Port of Spain was known Sodom and Gomorrah of West Indian politics.

Trinidad in this novel is not yet a nation or people with demands and common assumptions beyond bribery and 'possibilities", Candidates have no politics represent no ideologies of classes. The incongruities of applying foreign nations to such a society can be seen in various incongruities of speech and action. The case of whisky offers a democratizing of the earlier possibilities that chitteranjan Ramlogan and others saw in the electoral campaign.

Things were crazily mixed up in Elvira Everybody Hindus Muslims and Christians owned a Bible the Hindus and Muslims celebrate Christmas and Easter. The Spaniards and some of the Negroes celebrated the Hindus festival of lights. Someone had told them that Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity was being honoured they placed small earthen lamps on their money boxes and waited, as they said, for the money to bread. Everyday celebrated the Muslims festival of Hosein. Infact when Elvira was done with religious festival there were few straight days left.

Naipaul, however, lays a stress on the point that in Elvira also like in India there should be unity in diversity the words like races religious and Hindi songs depicts is nostalgia for India after settling down in the Caribbean Islands the people migrated Indian have not forgotten their roots anyhow. The group democracy and its portrayals, as discussed in this chapter, depict the rootlessness in the Caribbean society. Naipaul has truly captured his own feelings of rootlessness and displacement

through the characters of the stories of *A Bend in the River* and *The Suffrage of Elivira.* The analysis henceforward will focus on the diasporic identification, which inevitably remains the natural course of action.

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VI

DIASPORIC IDENTIFICATION

Diasporas refer to people who do not feel comfortable with their non-hyphenated identities as indicated on their passports. Diasporas are people who would want to explore the meaning of the hyphen, but perhaps not press the hyphen too far for fear that this would lead to massive communal schizophrenia. They are precariously lodged within an episteme of real or imagined displacements, self-imposed sense of exile; they are haunted by spectres, by ghosts arising from within that encourage irredentist or separatist movements.

The word 'diaspora' has originated from the Greek word, meaning 'dispersion' ('diaspeirein') or to 'scatter'. The meaning of Diaspora relates to the settling of scattered colonies of Jews outside Palestine after the Babylonian exile. In today's words diaspora means dispersal abroad. There are variations - historical, sociological and ethnic - that go into the makeup of diaspora. The idea of the principle of understanding behind a body of diasporic writing or diasporic 'discourse' primarily relates to the historical stages through which the populace of a country have undergone due to economic, political, sociological, military and other pressures or compulsions. "All diasporas are unhappy, but every diaspora is unhappy in its own way" (Mishra, 189).

Much diasporic literary energy at work today have to be intellectually grasped as vastly differentiated works in terms of terms of tone, terror, vision and values and the complex combinations of experiences. For instance, West Indies, India, Africa, etc have distinct diaspora backgrounds through which 'respective writers' works have echoed a variety of issues. The point is that racial, national, and regional and of course idiosyncratic and gendered distinctions and subtleties of response are the first that foreground diasporic writing. Nationalism, internationalism and the tied-up issues of cultural identity and cultural politics are recognized ways of cultural

politics, of conceiving and constructing modes of belonging and forms of identity. The expatriate writing is close to the diasporic writing. Naipaul has recognized that the nations of contemporary Asia, Latin America and Africa are politically independent, but they are in many ways as dominated and dependent as they were ruled by European powers. As a consequence Naipaul has perhaps suffered from the self-inflicted wounds. With the unique privilege of an exile who is convinced that "men need history; it helps them to have an idea of what they are. Naipaul depicts such a society and examines the imperialist divide in his search for identity.

There are varieties of literary diaspora and V.S Naipaul's kind of diasporic writing involves many of these sets of diaspora and the interrogations that characterize this writing. Naipaul's novels in general and his fiction dealing with the Third-World problems in particular reveal him as a social historian whose vision outlines an essential texture of mimicry glaringly visible in the fabric of the colonial society. His masterpiece *A House for* Mr. *Biswas* depicts the struggles of an Indian immigrant towards acculturation. It depicts the exile's desire to strike roots and attain an authentic selfhood. For example, *The Mimic Men,* which outlines the themes of mimicking the authenticity of selfhood, gives a brief picture of nationalist politics aiming at destroying an older order and the resultant chaos which does not lead to freedom. Rootlessness is something which never ceased to make Naipaul uneasy, as he never stopped reminding himself about the Hindu origins and beliefs of his Indian ancestors in the Caribbean. Naipaul at the same time did not devote his energies solely to tackle the problem of rootlessness.

Fragmentation and rootlessness was talked a few years back to define the kind of scattered and splintered experience (exampled by writers like Naipaul) one tried to come to terms with, is now perhaps better understood in the two tendencies of essentialism and pluralism. Diasporic assimilation or its possible failure (which is crucial to its own definition) rests on the one hand in a unitary, essentializing tendency derived from one's national identity, and the open, pluralistic one as internationalist.

There is a natural pull between the two: the unitary, essentialist and subjective and the internationalist, decentred, dispersed. This sort of 'binarism' between a static, old, fossilized and remembered identity, and its collision with the dispersed,

developing and somehow necessitated one, is grounded in one's location-where one speaks from. The reality of this cultural location and the dialogue or questioning of it results in the problematizing of diasporic writing. In this context the comments of Gayatri Spivak prove relevant: "You see these differences; in fact you feel them in the details of your daily life, because actually the system is not so blind it's the benevolent ones who become blind in this way." (Spivak, 1990) Recollecting her dialogue with some black film makers in London Gayatri has to say the following:

> You are diasporic blacks in Britain, and you are connecting to the local lines of resistance in Britain ……but don't forget the third world at large, where you won't be able to dissolve everything into black against white, there is also black against black, brown against brown, and so on. These young men and women thought I was asking them to connect with some kind of mystical ethnic origin because, of course, when they brought into places which they inhabit; their sense of the country was from the nostalgic longing towards customs, cooking and so on and so forth that they saw in their families. (Spivak, 65)

To trace Naipaul's own location in this vast framework is by no means an easy or straight task. It would be interesting to chart the course of Caribbean history to the present by setting it against Naipaul's words. In his works he has mainly discussed about the new world by Columbus, the successive European imperial adventures in the Caribbean, the naval battles, the bloody period of persecution. He has also analysed how the cruelty is inscribed in the tangled web of Caribbean history, the way it has procured multiplied and ruptured cultural identities. An artificial, or as Naipaul would say, in a "synthetic society" created by the Massacre of its inhabitants, the Caribs and Arawaks Indians, the Euro-African mixture of experiences is inherent in the structure of the contemporary Caribbean. Eventually, the colonial operations in the nineteenth century required fixed, stable identities of colonized societies to occur schisms friction and dissent. Today's self proclaimed, mobile identities may be seen not as a market of contemporary social fluidity and dispossession but a new stability, self assurance and quietism. This quietism indicates one's coming to terms with fixed modes of existence and professions. The history and the geographical location of the indentured Indians in the Caribbean was that they were somewhere between slaves

and the workers. While they carried their cultural and religious artifacts and texts, they were sidelined and excluded from the majority Caribbean black society from the outset. Their dereliction, isolation, physical rootlessness in alien locales and poverty, imaginatively rendered by Naipaul is now a part of his own inseparable destiny and place in the Caribbean literature.

The essence of that historical experiences, unmarked or unimportant except in a communal, familial sense has propelled Naipaul to look at the whole West Indian past and the Manichean history of colonialism with which the fate of all racial components of the islands are tied up. The intellectual responses of the West Indian writer are both shaped and conditioned by his respective response to colonialism through which he makes his link with Eurocentric image of power and the proliferation of that powering distorting identities and one's cultural bearings.

Anybody who thought writers as mad or abnormal was natural, for writing; or imagination could have no place in a populace engaged in the endless struggles with poverty on one hand, and a loss of authentic roots on the other. However, the inability to go back, the fateful twist that informed the East-Indians that it was the 'end of journey' that there could be no journey back forced them to enter a long ordeal to make adjustments in a hostile, mutually suspicious multi-racial atmosphere. The indentured Indian because of smaller number numerically stood a better chance for reshaping life.

And during their long indenture, many had acquired pauperism, hence first trying for commercial rather than academic success. This double struggle for financial security and intellectual advancement thus constituted the West Indian writers struggle to move away to attain this coveted goal in European hibernation or exile. *A House for Mr. Biswas* has the theme of his struggle for attainment of social identity. This also means going away, breaking off connections and a truncation of family ties, the nostalgic memories of childhood and alienation are perhaps recalled imaginatively.

Naipaul with his shift from London struggles to etch out new literary patterns of journey hardly easy in metropolitan London; each one had his own 'history' to describe. It is now commonplace to associate this period and the 60's with the large exodus to England that formed the Caribbean Diaspora. The 50's were and

are for a variety of reasons the most fruitful years for the Caribbean literature because to date, the creative and intellectual formulations by its leading writers are referred back for an authentic reading of Caribbean literary representation in World literature.

Naipaul was obviously concerned about the West Indian social condition, the culturally fragmented society, the question of literacy, the writer's role and of course, the question of cultural identity. The tremendous reputation achieved by the leading West Indian writers within a few years of their arrival in London catapulted the Caribbean literary production on the international scene. This was matched by the flood of West Indian immigrants into Britain who further stimulated the writers to both address the diasporic population and British audiences. The international reputations of Lamming, Harris, Naipaul and Selvon were made at the cost of exile and a racial distancing from the Caribbean setting and past, however haphazard or broken.

Naipaul has written about the writer's exile in London, its neutrality and 'non-attachment' in "The Regional barrier" which is well known piece. And, as it were, he made an almost prophetic remark in it, "I feel living here will eventually lead to my own sterility…." He might have got stuck up in his older themes (of Caribbean past), at least in his fictional works. The failure (or his ability) on the part of the exile to reconnect his homeland is something which is itself a controversial area of discussion and debate, particularly in the case of writers, like Naipaul who have reached a 'terminal' stage in their complicated umbilical relation with Trinidad, Naipaul, ever since his first visit to Trinidad in 1962 has been returning to dig out new possibilities of recapitulating the older link he has with the place. He has been moving closer to his childhood and the impressionistic years in Trinidad to refocus through a mental prism the events of European intervention in the Caribbean by viewing monuments, buildings, roads, squares and old plantations areas.

Naipaul thus has focused on the intellectual poverty and politico-cultural subordination of the ex-colonies to the Western world the lack of an authentic pattern of institutionalized body of codes. The search for order that generates from this experience figures as an important point of debate and elucidation of Naipaul's role as a writer who has transcended this or that geographical territory of his origins. Naipaul represents diaspora in two ways. Firstly Naipaul's involvement with the issues of

cultural and literary identity in multiple way and secondly, his intellectual and personal obsession with India as a country and metaphor that he evokes in a mood of anger and despair, at times signifying a desperate need to approach the new reality of India with a dramatic shift in stance. In the first place it is significant to record that Naipaul does not represent a racial diaspora in which Afro Caribbean's or Africans do.

The presence of this double Indo-Caribbean past in varied dimensions distances Naipaul's situation and identity in no unceratin terms. Naipaul belongs to the East Indian Caribbean 'sub-diaspora' abroad, and he appears to be the only writer of his stature and experience to have worked on the basis of that complex intermingling in the overall Caribbean historical journey. His migration and exile through, as is explicitly clear, is identifiable with similar migrations of other Caribbean writers. The difference lies in Naipaul's distancing and excluding himself from that literary phenomenon in highly personal terms. In a way this has also helped him in constructing his own kind of psychological explanation about his personal, familial and literary burdens to realize the ambition to be a writer. This is a subject and revelation which has of late surfaced prominently in Naipaul's writings - *Finding the centre*, *The Enigma of Arrival*, *A Way in the world*:

> The migration within the British Empire, from India to Trinidad had given me the English language as my own, and a particular kind of education. This had partly seeded my wish to be writer in a particular mode, and had committed me to the literary career I had been following in England for twenty years. (*A Way in the World*, 52)

Inevitably, Naipaul's is a fine instance of how a writer, carrying within him a whole burden of race, language, a personal ambition, history, quests for a viable tradition with knowledge that he is ex-colonial individual at a point of history. Naipaul's compulsive journeys through the leftover territories of the Empire, his dark peregrinations in search for parallels and literary correlatives- India, Caribbean, Africa, Latin America, the Islamic world multiplied and accentuated his creative burdens and harsh conclusions about things.

In fact, diasporic placement and identity-crisis are invariably linked with the name of the nation state which stands for a whole range of cultural forms, moral

trainings, colour neurosis, sexual openness or diffidence which outweigh or impede the natural process of identity formation. Naipaul, the aspiring writer thus recalls that fantasy from memory during a dull and dreary English afternoon within the 'Victorian-Edwardian' gloom of BBC freelancer's room. This was Naipaul's earliest restating into the words the aimlessness, the rootless isolation of the Indians in the West Indies. The later books which came within 1957-60, however, were mediated through loneliness and exile that followed his migration in 1950 and his student years at Oxford in between. The creation of a diasporic material was for Naipaul a process through complicated stages of skepticism, recollection and courage which accompanied his idea of not having a literary model, a tradition or viable subject matter. The ultimate result of this not having a subject matter or tradition ironically turned out be a positive one for Naipaul, for his insistence on writing out of an 'unknown' experience took him back to his own roots, Naipaul, at any rate, was successful in clothing this ugliness and decrepit state of poverty-ridden humans through the façade of fantasy and comedy.

In *The Mimic Men* his basic quarrel is with history that he knew and belonged to, is the lack of anything constructive and worth celebrating; what is left is only a residue of European exploitation and brutality in islands like the ones in the Caribbean. His lack of constructive or positive past is really connected with this non-availability to the writer for patterning a logical or moral paradigm of visions and values. While analyzing problems of diaspora in Canada, Jasbir Jain has given a view that Home is where our feet are and we had better place out heart where the feet are.

6.1 Nostalgia, Memory and Imaginary Homelands

Colonialism was essentially an encounter between cultures, languages, people, and systems of thought, all located within a structure where the power rested with the white race. Colonial rule in Asian/African/South American regions transplanted European forms of thinking, European languages and culture, and everything from food to sport into a native 'context'. As part of the 'civilizing mission' Europeans introduced Western thinking and languages such as English and Spanish, creating 'Europeanized' natives. The result is what Homi K. Bhabha and other postcolonial thinkers famously theorized as the 'hybrid' colonized native. The Colonial 'plan' for such a hybrid native is clearly described in T.B. Macaulay's (in)

famous Minute' of 1835 where he described the creation of Europeanized natives as the creation of a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals, and in intellect. Naipaul, in a devastating description of contemporary Caribbean society, captures this hybridized, half-native/half-Westernized, unsatisfactory identity of diasporic, once-colonized communities:

> A Peasant-minded, money-minded community, spiritually cut off from its roots, its religion reduced to rites without philosophy set in a materialistic colonial society: a combination of historical accidents and national temperament has turned the Trinidad Indian into a complete colonial, even more Philistine than the white. (*The Middle Passage,* 89)

Here, Naipaul is describing a Caribbean identity in which 'roots' have been erased and new ideas and ideologies planted. What we have is a protean, unidentifiable identity-the direct result of the colonial encounter.

In the latter half of the twentieth century, the writing of transplanted authors such as bharat mukherjee, Buchi Emecheta, David Dabydeen, Caryl Philips, and Hanif Kureishi have captured the diasporic, hybridized state of migrant communities. Black British cultural studies, exemplified by the work of Paul Gilroy and others links race with class in order to analyse identity. In this Black and Minority cultural studies approaches differed from 'traditional' cultural studies (exemplified by the writings of Dick Hebdige, and even Raymond Williams) that rarely used the category of race to speak of mass cultural forms and processes (Stuart Hall, of course, is the link between the two). Black and Minority studies looks at the processes-social, communicative, political, and cultural-through which immigrants and non-white races create and represent themselves within the 'First World'. Further it treats black cultural forms in terms of the uneven economic and social development of the communities, and aligning itself with 'oppression studies' (which includes Latino studies, women's studies, queer studies, Native American studies).

Diaspora is simply the displacement of a community/culture into another geographical and cultural region. Such movements were common during colonialism.

3 Such diasporic movements developed their own distinctive cultures which preserved, extended, and developed their 'original' cultures. Diaspora culture is the effect of migration, immigration, and exile. Diaspora is a particularly fascinating phenomenon because it has existed since the arrival of humans on earth. As communities settle down, they acquire and build certain traditions and customs. Later, when members of this community move away, they take with them the baggage of these customs and belief-systems. However, it is important to distinguish between kinds of migration and diaspora – refugees, asylum-seekers, illegal immigrants, voluntary migrants, and job-seekers constitute different forms of diasporic existence. Europeans moved all over the world leading to colonial settlement (Canada, Australia, US). They also transported Africans to colonies for slave labour, leading to yet another diaspora. Curiously, diasporic' writing today has come to signify the recent phenomenon of 'Third World' writers in Western metropolises, though diasporic writers by Africans and Asians go back to the eighteenth century (Sake Dean Mahomet, the first Indian author in English, lived in authors. It is surely not a coincidence that a large number of diasporic writing has spatial location implied in its very title: *An Area of Darkness and A House for Mr Biswas* (Naipaul), *Tales From Ferozesha Bagh* (Mistry), *The Famished Road* (Ben Okri), *The Nowhere Man* (Markandaya), *Bombay Duck and Poona Company* (Farrukh Dhondy), Brick Lane (Monica Ali)*, Nampally Road and The House of a Thousand Doors* (Alexander), *In An Antique Land*, *The Shadow Lines*, and *The Calcutta Chromosome* (Ghosh).

The shift, contrast, and relation between the centre, from where their ancestors/parents originated, and the periphery (into which they dispersed) is reflected in all these. The memory – individual or communal – of home, including details of childhood landscapes, historical events, people; the sense of alienation in a new society/culture/land; a need to retain features from the 'homeland' – all these include a determined effort to retain rituals, language, forms of behaviour; a reclamation of history of the homeland and childhood spaces; a conscious attempt to assert ethnic identity in terms of the home-land, while simultaneously seeking acceptance/assimilation in the new cultures. These themes can now be organized under three main heads: nostalgia, memory, imaginary homelands, hybridities and new identities of globalization and cosmopolitanism.

The borders of nations, communities, even families (dispersed across the globe) have become blurred in the late twentieth century. With increasing flows of people and money, culture and lifestyles, the very nature of the border is suspect (except, perhaps, for officers manning immigration booths at airports across the world), but especially in cities in ‘First World’ nations. An understanding of the enormity of displacement is relevant to explore the right to diasporic writing today. Harrowing tales of harassment at ‘ports of entry’, of humiliating interrogations in refugee centres, quarantining measures, and visa interviews constitute the largest chunk of contexts for diaspora. (Salman Rushdie, the perceptive observer of events, notes this first ‘scene’ as it were, of diaspora: the immigration barriers at London’s Heathrow Airport, where the people who had the greatest trouble getting past the control point were black or ‘Arab-looking’. ‘Step across this Line.’(Salman Rushdie, 368).

Diasporic writing, especially in the age of globalization, is a consciousness-raising genre, where political issues of cultural citizenship, cosmopolitan justice, and global inequality run alongside themes of nostalgia, imaginative reconstructions of the homeland, and identities. The theme of identity in diasporic writing is not merely an exercise in exploring multiplicities of location and subjecthoods. It is a larger political issue of global justice, cultural rights, self-determination, and cosmopolitanism. This chapter links the themes in diasporic writing to such larger issues.

6.2 Home and the Poetics of Return

Exile and displacement narratives frequently combine a sense of disquiet with their nostalgia and longing. Atwood recreates the world of Susanna Moodie, who migrated from Scotland to Canada in the 1830s, as a world in which the migrant is homeless and foreign. Such a migrant does not see the ‘new world’ as a land of opportunity. Much of diasporic writing explores the theme of an original home. This original home as now lost-due to their exile-is constantly worked into the imagination and myth of the displaced individual/community. Nostalgia is therefore a key theme in diasporic writing. Nostalgia, memory, and the theme of a lost home often take two main forms in diasporic literature.

Memories of the ‘original’ country normally haunt the spaces of exilic writing. Postcolonial diasporic literature can be read, as noted before, as presenting an analepsis–looking backward at the post-and prolepsis, facing forward to/at the future. Looking backward at the past involves the extensive use of memories of the ‘old’ country, the point/place of origin and ‘home’. Facing the future involves a degree of uncertainty at the prospective of a new location and life. However, in many cases, the memory of the ‘old’ country is false in the sense that the exile tends to superimpose a memory that may not necessarily be coterminous with the ‘real’ one. That is, the exile idealizes the ‘old’ home country from snapshots, songs, and rather vague memories.

Home’ or the ‘old’ country is thus more imaginary and imagined than real. It is an idea of the home country, a mythic place. Home is a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination. In this sense it is a place of no-return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as the place of origin. This suggests that home, or point of origin is less a reality than an idealization of how it really is. Such a ‘home’ is recontrructed out of memories from childhood, newspaper accounts, and fragments, what Salman Rushdie described as reflections made ‘in broken mirrors, some of whose fragments have been irretrievably lost. Exploding the myth of home, Rushdie speaks of ‘imaginary homelands, India’s of the mind. Home is here a product of speculation and imagination. It can be retrieved, reached, or returned to only in memory.

6.3 Dislocation, Re-location, Memo-Realization

Looking at the past (‘origins’) and at the future involves a process that Bharati Mukherjee in Jasmine described as ‘adventure, risk, transformation.’(Mukherjee, 240) Looking backward at ‘home’, such writers also look forward to what new belongings can be constructed through the process of ‘transformation’ of identity which accompanies a change of place. One might lose a home but never gain one. Or one might set up a new home in a space which will continue to treat him/her as a foreigner.

Spatially speaking, dislocation invariably means a move away from home. But in diasporic literature, it also means a move towards something, another destination,

perhaps another home. This produces a narrative that is often caught between a de-territorialization (the loss of place) and a re-territorialization (finding a new place). Transplantation in a new place in postcolonial diasporic writing is accompanied by the certainlty that the old place has not yet released its hold-which some roots still cling to the transplanted.

6.4 The Hybridity as the Cause of New Identities

The timbre/ In our voice/ Betrays us/ However far We've been/ Whatever tongue We speak/ The old ghost Asserts itself/ In dusky echoes. (Nichols, 30)

Grace Nichols' poem captures the schizophrenic state of the diasporic/immigrant individual as s/he seeks to combine two cultures and languages without abandoning either. There is very often a misfit between a migrant's imaginary homeland and the actual living conditions in the 'First World' metropolis. How do migrants negotiate this disjuncture between the memory of an old identity and the concreteness of a new one? A central them in diasporic postcolonial literature is the negotiation of new identities. Identity in diasporic writing can take various forms: A split-consciousness of being Indian and American (or Indian and British), Multiple identities and solidarities or, A re-assertion of 'native' cultural identity (as in cultural fundamentalisms).

They hybrid identities of diasporic or displaced Individuals/communities can be discussed under three heads: Double consciousness, Multiple identities and solidarities, Cultural fundamentalisms and ethnic assertion. Diaspora literature often projects the consciousness of the communal or racial collective such as 'Asian Americans', 'Non-Resident Indians', and 'Blacks'. Diaspora writing is an expression of this shared identity of being dislocated, and is a principal theme in the fiction from Caribbean, Asian American, and other countries. What this means is that national, ethnic, or communal identities are constituted in the absence of a territory. Non-Resident Indians, for instance, are Indians residing outside the politico-geographical territory of India. They retain their Indian identity-especially now with dual citizenship – despite the loss of a homeland. This is perhaps the most curious and paradoxical theme in postcolonial diasporic writing. Indians outside the territory of India claim solidarity with other similar Indians despite their differences (for Indians

of the Diasporas across the world do come from different linguistic, cultural, and regional, caste, and class backgrounds). Rohinton Mistry it seen as a Canadian, Indian, and Parsi writer by many of those 'formations' (Canada, India, Parsi).

Such hybridization, as suggested by many authors, is never complete, or easy. It is a process that continues through life. In Ngugi wa thiong'o's The River Between, Waiyaki is caught between his role as a bearer of Gikuyu tradition and Western, Christian modemity. Waiyaki, the narrative suggests, is the long –prophesied messiah of the race (12). However, he is also a messianic Christian (as Gikandi points out, 20096:59). He is therefore troubled by his hybridity: 'Waiyaki wondered if he himself fitted anywhere … He did not quite know where he was going what he was really going to tell his people' (141-42). Here the the prophet/messiah is unable to negotiate his Gikuyu role with his colonial inheritance karim amir in Hanif Kureishi's The Buddha of Suburbia is described as 'an Englishman, born and bred, almost' in the opening pages of the tale. In fact, in the novel, the 'almost' of the above description is the key theme (it is also crucial that Karim Amir is bisexual, and thereby occupies more than one identity category in sexual preferences). In an interview, Rohin-ton Mistry captures the difficulty of 'becoming' anything other than Indian in multicultural Canada. He states:

6.5 Cultural Fundamentalisms and Ethnic Assertion

The construction of new identities is never every easy, nor is the transition from old to new ones smooth. Edward Said characterized exile as 'one of the saddest fates' (7) because, they (exiled intellectuals) are in a 'state of never being fully adjusted' (53). Part of the problem of constructing new identities-and something that Homi Bhabha ignores when valorizing hybridity – stems from the marginalization of the exile within the adopted/dominant culture of the West, a condition best treated in the fiction of Sam Selvon (*The Lonely Londoners* 1956; *Moses Ascending* 1975; *Moses Migrating* 1983). When the adopted culture fails to see beyond the ethnic identity of the diasporic/exilic individual then this individual has no choice but to retrieve her/his indigenous identity. The tension is between a legal national citizenship and a desire for cultural citizenship within the community. Instead of multiple identities, such a context forces one to re-assert 'roots' and ethnicity. Bhabha ignores the fact that identity is not merely an individual assertion-it is socially sancitioned and

validated. If an Asian in Britain is seen only as 'Asian' rather than 'Asian British', how does the individual create a multiple, hyphenated space/identity? The individual does not 'adjust' to new identities or celebrate fluidity because s/he is circumscribed, fixed, and reduced by the dominant society into her/his 'native' or 'original' one. And, post 9/11, identities have been fixed, indisputably, irreducibly; Muslim, terrorist, anti-national, 'American', and so on. There is no real Bhabha-esque 'ambivalence' in contemporary perceptions of differently coloured skins or ethnic features, There is no doubt about the us/them divide, about 'who belongs', about friend and foe, at least in terms of state rhetoric or military strategies.

This socio-cultural non-acceptance, Hanif Kureishi suggests, is the cause behind cultural nationalism and ethnic fundamentalisms: The fierce truculent pride of the Black panthers is here now, as is the separatism, the violence, the bitterness and pathetic elevation of and imaginary homeland. This is spawned by racism' (1986:27-28). In Meena Alexander's *Manhattan Music* (1997), Sakhi voices the dilemma of never quite adjusting:

> Travelling places was hard, staying was harder. You had to open your suitcase, lay out the little bits and pieces into ready-made niches. Smooth out the sari, exchange it for a skirt … Then you tucked the suitcase under the bed and forgot about it, started accumulating the bric-a-brac that made you part of the streets around. (Alexander, 207)

In Naipaul's celebrated *A House for Mr. Biswas*, we have en example of how different people cope with such a new environment. Mr Biswas seeks to adapt to Creole society in Port of Spain, On the other hand we have the Tulsis who become insular and seek to preserve their 'culture'. As a result they convert their house, 'Hanuman House' into a fortress, known ironi-cally as the 'White Fortress'. Caryl Philips' The Final Passage deals with a woman's struggles to acquire a decent life – with her husband and baby - having migrated to England from the Caribbean. Eventually, disappointed by her efforts she decides to return to the Caribbean. The hybrid identity may not be very comfortable to wear either, as England-returned Nyasha in Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions finds out. She tells Tambu:

> We shouldn't have gone [to England] … Now they're [her parents] are stuck with hybrids for children. And they don't like it. They don't like it at all…

> And I don’t know what to do about it, Tambu, I really don’t I Can’t help having been there and grown into the me that has been there. (*A House for Mr. Biswas,* 78)

The recent furore in France over the Muslim woman’s right to wear a headdress is an example of the tension between a cultural citizenship which builds solidarity based on a common system of faith or cultural norms, and a national identity for the immigrant: are you French or are you Muslim? ``Cultural citizenship here appears to be at odds with national identity and leads to the rise of cultural fundamentalism – often driven, as noted before, by non-acceptance by the adopted culture.

Neil Bissoondath, a Canadian writer of Indian and Caribbean origin, rejects such an insular and revivalist homogenization of ethnicity, arguing that this results in a ghettoization of identities. He argues that immigration means change and renewal. Bissoondath suggests that such a ‘freezing’ would result in turning ‘ethnic communities into museums of exoticism’ (2002[1994]: 102). Bissoondath therefore insists on being called a Canadian writer and pleads for active integration into the adopted culture and society.

What is clear is that the issue of ethnic identity of a migrant group will always be in tension with the national one, If Land rights, wages, and health are issues that are decided as a result of their participation in ‘national’ citizenship; value, community, and relationships are negotiated at the level of cultural citizenship. Clearly, then, the task is to negotiate between degrees of inclusion, marginalization and exclusion – between the assimilatory bissoondath and the floating Rushdie.

6.6 Globalization and Cosmopolitanism

Most of the diasporic writers writing in the latter half of the twentieth century need to negotiate with increasing globalization and transnational movement of people and communities. Globalization, however, involves the movement of capital across borders, dissolution of nation-state borders (in economic, of not geographic terms),increasing communications and network linkages, and new forms of production and consumption (such as outsourcing and niche marketing). The debate in current globalization theory is divided along two lines: does globalization mean a new

openness to the foreign, or is it a more insidious mode of American imperialism? The globe is now increasingly one social space where common consumer goods pervade diverse communities. Even as hybridized communities come into being, they constitute a common, homogenized space in terms of consumerism. However, what must be kept in mind is that globalization repeats the phenomenon of national markets. It is on a larger scale with a smaller number of beneficiaries, but is the same exploitative set of processes. Globalization and the 'post national' world order that emerges in the late twentieth century is a move towards cosmopolitanism. As noted earlier, metropolises across the world have become postcolonial, cosmopolitan, and hybridized with globalization A whole new mode of reading 'dislocation' and 'immigrant spaces is now called for. It is also essential to look at the actual material conditions of immigrant populations, which face crises of racism, unemployment, poverty, alcoholism, disease, and homelessness.

6.6 Transnational Solidarity and Ethics

Antagonists can be cross-identified with each other without taking away the actual sufferings of the 'orignial' victim (the colonized native). Sincevictims have been collaboratiors within the oppressive system, and oppressors have been subversive within the same, the time to forge new identities is here. Post national constellations have often involved transnational linkages between voluntary organizations working for the environment, peace, women, or children. This transnational/global linkage where national boundaries are erased (or ignored) in favour of a collective movement against suffering may perhaps be the new ethics of hybridity that Leela Gandhi proposes Solidarities built on a common history of suffering or battles against oppression, and fought at various levels and in multiple locations constitute a postcolonial, hybridized, and transnational ethic. A good example would be the Dalit diaspora which has now held international conferences to discuss and work towards the emancipation of Dalits in India. The Vancouver Declaration (2003) states:

We, the Dalits, from all over the globe having assembled at the International Dalit Conference, to deliberate the issues conceming the 250 million Dalits (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) of India and their future in the 21st century.

> We call upon the Dalits of the world to unite in their activism in the true spirit of interfaith and multiculturalism, and resolve to work tirelessly for the upliftment of the community… (www.dalitconference.com).

Here a global diaspora has a local interest, It is also interesting to see a solidarity being built between two oppressed peoples-the Blacks and the Dalits (see Rajshekar 1987; Aston 2001). This solidarity is a god example of cosmopolitan postcolonialism and reflects a new ethics across identities and borders. Dalits who migrated to Britain and other places during the 1950s have also been influenced by Ambedkarite ideology. Ambedkarites in Briatain constitute a 'transnational Dalit movement that transgresses state borders' and are part of the same 'counterpublic' as Dalit activists in India and Ambedkarite Buddhists in Britain.

The debates about including caste as a kind of racism within UN discourses and actions against racism (especially at Durban 2001) have sought to re-articulate Dalit oppression as akin to racial discrimination. This ensures that anti-oppression movements would include anti-caste components within itself. What is to be noted here is that ethnic identities are now asserted on multiple, global locations that, unlike the nation-state, do not necessarily have a territory. The solidarity forged between ethnic identities in Asia and America (by Asians of American origin) reshapes the very contours of 'Asia' and 'America', and the relation between the two. The sites for the production of Asian ethnicities cannot be contained within national boundaries, and therefore, must be seen as part of a transnational ethnic identity. Such solidarities are increasingly facilitated by global telecommunications technologies. Rapid exchange of news and opinions and the establishment of contacts and cybernetworks herald, some argue the rise of a global civil society. Non-governmental organizations, trans-governmental organizations and activists link across the globe through these technologies. In a postcolonial world, such a network can be the source of a democratic, interventionary, and resistant civil society is best expressed in the global non-governmental movement. As a group, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are diverse and multifaceted. Their perspectives and operations may be local, national, regional or global. Some are issue-oriented or task oriented; others are driven by ideology.

Local communities building solidarities with other like-minded communities often become postcolonial in that they resist imperialism from within the metropolis. Thus, for such as Mumbai Resistance (which held parallel sessions opposite the World Social Forum, Mumbai, January 2004) and the Seattle protest marches are 'indictments…of consumer imperialism … from inside the fortifications of overdevelopment as well as outside them. Multiculturalism signifies the co-existence of multiple cultures, though not always on equal footing and not always in peaceable relation with each other. Multiculturalism after the second wave of immigration into Europe and the USA after the 1960s has been linked to debates about the rights of ethnic minorities. These included debates about the right to residence, equality of opportunity, affirmative action, representation, and other issues.

Cosmopolitanism, it is argued, expresses the need to 'ground our mutuality in conditions of mutability … to live in terrains of historic and cultural transition' (Pollock et al 2000: 579). That is, in a world/topos almost excessively migrant in nature, we need to find mutuality while dealing with constant change. As proposed above, insertion into the stereotype enables a degree of 'felling at home'. Modern nationalisms and cultural fundamentalisms can be treated as assertions of such stereotypes. How-ever, despite an immediate gain of 'discovering' roots or 'reclaiming' history for the diasporic community, the tendency to locate cultures in specific places becomes a 'retrograde ideology' (ibid.). What is required is a cosmopolitanism inspired by postcolonial claims for equality and justice. This postcolonial cosmopolitanism must not be grounded in European discourses of modernity, rationality, and nation. Cosmopolitanism takes the individual as the ultimate unit, and a unit 'entitled to equal consideration regardless of nationality and citizenship.

People without national belonging-refugees, for instance, who constitute a major, segment of the global diaspora today-represent a cosmopolitical community in and of themselves. It is not enough, Pollock and others point out, to see them merely as 'victims' or as a 'problem' of multiculturalism. 10 They are 'minoritarian cosmopolitans' that present a critique of a modernity that is based on nation and place (582). They vernacularize a great (Western) tradition and call into question grand narratives of 'rationality', 'modernity' through their recourse to the local, the particular, and the small this is where the counter-discourse of migrancy, cultural

citizenship, and 'locality' creates a 'third space' in diasporic culture, resisting homogenizing globalization. Originally, diversity was treated as a mix of single cultures (and described with the metaphor of a mosaic, where the different chips could be identified within the setting). Now, in cosmopolitan, transcultural conditions, there are no single cultures; every culture is hybridized and multiple. Therefore, the diversity produced by such already reified and multiple and their borders are blurred. Minoritarian cosmopolitanism work with such entangled cultures, each bringing multiple forms of epistemology to the Western city.

Cities like London become postcolonial cities. It becomes less a city that loses its imperial 'edge' its narrative of 'Englishness', as immigrant populations decolonize' London's spaces itself. As a result, no city retains its pure English or imperial character. It is now, increasingly, a zone where colonial and postcolonial collide, in a peculiar kind of immigrant colonization (even though the power relations between the immigrant classes and groups and the 'native' English may not be equalized). Such a process, of course, lends a dualism, schizophrenia, to both 'native' English and the immigrant in what is a fluid act of mutual transformation. Multiculturalism, the key word in cultural and social debates from the mid. 1980s, is not without its share of conceptual problems. Multiculturalism's cultural relativism assumes that locating every culture on the same plane is adequate. It also assumes that there is a core to every culture, which must be treated on par with the core of another culture, and thus essentializes culture itself. However, cultures are not equal: the experience of puberty, aging, and sickness are different in different cultures. To compartmentalize and equate cultures in the name of equality is to render them translatable. It also runs the risk of creating cultural ghettos. More nuanced readings propounding a critical multiculaturalism are attempts to remedy these obvious flaws. Critical multiculturalism refuses to see cultural essentials or cores. IT sees the nation-state as a mixture of cultural forms, some of which have been dominant. It situates cultural differences in terms of power relations between ethnic groups and communities. Most importantly, critical multiculturalism is self-reflexive: by locating culture within its modes of reproduction, internal hierarchies, and inequalities, it asks for an awareness of one's complicity in the process of cultural othering.

6.7 Diasporic identification: *The Mimic Men*

Naipaul's *The Mimic Men* marks an important phase in his fictional career. The novel is significant for various reasons. It is perhaps the clearest expression of the themes that shape Naipaul's novels, namely the escape of the third world into fantasy on being poverty stricken and isolated on the fringes of power, the sprouting up of various political and religious moments which, though ineffective, offer a sense of drama and empty excitement finally ending up in disorder diaspora,

Politics dominated by appeals to race and colour, the absence of real power, myths, culture, or competence which have resulted in a tendency to mimic, and a feeling of homelessness and identity crisis. MM also seem to provide a reply to criticism which charges Naipaul with being an exponent of the metropolitan values and ideologies. And, MM clearly marks the end of absorption with his (Naipaul's) personal homelessness, a final release from "A barren cycle of events," as Naipaul in this novel seems to be concerned with the rootlessness and placelessness of typical modern man, left alone a colonial individual.

Naipaul's later Novels deal with the subject of migration and its aftermath which involves the question of identity, rootlessness, cultural difference, assimilation, unconquerable stasis, and futility. And the tone for this is set, for the first time, in *The Mimic Men.* Naipaul presents the predicament of Ralph Singh, the protagonist of the novel, to be the same as that of any modern man including an ex-colonizer. The novel is told in the form of memoirs by the main character that is implicitly criticized by what he actually reveals about himself. It starts and ends in the present with narrative shifting back and forth in time between Ralph Singh's childhood, student life in London, his return to the island, his political career, and exile in London what we actually see is a series of compressed incidents ordered in sequence of contrasting events to build a unified plot.

The Mimic Men ends on an optimistic note. After having been through so many failures, set backs, the narrator protagonist still has hope enough to say, that he had cleared the decks, as it were, and prepared himself for fresh action, it would be the action of a free man. Ralph Singh, the protagonist narrator of the novel, is the representative of a generation which gains power at independence and can only Mimic the authenticity of selfhood His various failures at the level of personal life are indicative of a larger national failure. The novel begins with Ralph Singh, an exiled,

or rather a withdrawn politician, fatigued by disillusions rather than failure, writing his memoirs in an aseptic, placeless London Suburb. He sets out to write down his experiences with the hope of fashioning an order out of the various unrelated adventures and encounters through which he had been. He struggle like an artist to create something, to discover some meaning out of the muddled state of affairs, which his life has been. That is why this act of writing his autobiography turns out to be more than a discovery. It becomes a recovery, a retrieval of a blighted individual as a free individual with a clear and purged consciousness. At another end, this political autobiography transcends from the level of a personal, confessional report to an existential allegory of the modern man, Ralph Singh refers to this particular period of his life as something in parenthesis. The story he records can be described as tracing Ralph Singh's transition from innocence to experiences and his passage from external disorder to personal harmony.

The writing of his story becomes the very means to endure the terror, shipwreck, abandonment and loneliness of his situation. By analysing and interpreting his own experiences he hopes to find some order within the chaos of the present and the uncertainty of the future in the contemporary colonial society.The social analysis which he attempts in *The Mimic Men* is not confined to the West Indies but extends to the entire Third world. The novel is not in the form of a linear, chronological memoir because the narrator in his attempts to salvage his wrecked life imposes a deliberate order on the events and experiences of his life. This self imposed order endows him with a freedom from the restrictions a chronological and sequential narration might have imposed. It also enables him to muse upon his childhood experiences dispassionately and analytically with an adult mind which makes the second part of the novel all more interesting and amusing.

Ralph Singh, the narrator of *The Mimic Men*, has known different aspects of London- the boarding houses and university of his student days, the intervening visits to hotels and governments buildings as a political leader from the colony of Isabella (Trinidad) has a suburban hotel, the site of his exile, where he lives and writers his memories to alone for his betrayal of truth. He recalls his early years in London when he hopes for future of accomplishment and honour. In the past his aspirations have been unfulfilled. *The Mimic Men* conjures up all Singh's fears of the haphazard, disordered and mixed society of his island. The shipwreck suggests the

experiences of being stranded without the necessities of life. The Caribbean communities are culturally starved. Singh refers Isabella as a "Shipwrecked islands". It is only in writing about London that the image of Shipwreck continues to occur to him. The threat of failure, or actual failure- his father's, his own-in Isabella all take on its chaotic, perilous character. Naipaul moves back forth, where he portrays the processes of Singh's memory as he recalls various stages of his past, evaluating their relation to each other and their meaning in the present. Immediately after his mock heroic description of his postnuptial flight, he tells of his wife to Isabella, a trip he had never expected to make. He feels that this return was a failure and a humiliation he buried along his unease his alienation. After looking back he believes that this self deception this fundamental flaw, was the incipience of his failure as a political leader.

It is not his belief in justice, but rather in a moral balances that makes him admit that he should not have returned to Isabella, never have embarked as a would be celebrant, knowing as did that the tainted islands was not for him. Sandra and Ralph Singh find a place among a group of rich people, professional men and their expatriate wives mainly Indian in Isabella.

Ralph Singh describes Sandra and his responses to being accepted in this circle contain the contradiction inherent in this phase of their life without the help of the world 'dazzled'. He further described their attraction to the seemingly sophisticate mores of their new acquaintances and the constriction of their vision, their blindness to the superficial values, the petty concerns of these people whom they mimic as they seek their friendship, their example encourages Ralph Singh to claim his place among the wealthy and soon, using money and land he has inherited from the Bela Bela Bottling works owned by his grandfather, he makes a fortune by developing this land and dividing it into small plots, which he sells at a fair price. For a time Singh enjoys a new "Placidity", the inner core of his "new life of activity". In this placidity, he believes, lies his strength is his true character. He feels that he would never allow (himself) to be damaged again. He does not reckon with his increasing sense of separation from his continuing financial success and, at the same time, his and Sandra's separation from their group of friends. Singh attributes their friend's alienation not to jealousy or envy but rather to a feeling that they do not really belong, that their commitment is to making a fortune. Sandra's famous "gift of the phrase", which has become her means of belittling her former friends, and his own ironic

comment on the rituals of Isabella society are ways of striking out less at their ostensible victims than at the fraudulence of the roles they themselves have been playing.

As Ralph Singh and Sandra's marriage fails him (Singh) decides to build a "Roman house". He is attracted by such a house, example of which he finds in a book, are its simplicity, its outward austerity, its inner private magnificence, all qualities connoting an authenticity, its inner private magnificence. All qualities connoting an authenticity and a permanence that he longs for and patently lacks. Once again the contrast between the outward manifestation, in this case, the house, a sacred symbol awaiting only the installing of the household gods and the apathy of Singh and Sandra, emphasizes he emotional damage of self deception. Finally, at the housewarming, the household gods are violated as the guests replay their hosts for their wit, their irony, their apartness. They play a destructive game in a kind of frenzy, throwing a ball from the pool to the house and back again, breaking objects in is path, a window, plates, and glasses. At first Ralph Singh feels deep, blind, damaging anger due to the chaos around him. Then, driving away, he is overcome by," a nameless pain", not for the injury to his house, which can he repaired, but a "despair" that is absolute". He has identified himself with Alexander who, he now believes, wept for 'a deeper cause" than having more worlds to conquer In Alexander's history he sees his own "sense of futility, an awareness of the lack of sympathy between man and the earth he walks on".

In the opening section of *The Mimic Men* Singh's remembrance of his "first instinct", to write history, which surprised him during moments of stillness and withdrawal in the days of power as a politician have been described. Before turning to the events of those days, however, an abrupt shift to memories of his boyhood and youth is made, i.e. the background of his achievements and inevitable failures. In the second and longest section Naipaul has used and transformed autobiographical material, including his reactions to Trinidad. There are however, critical difference in it and Singh's responses to their milieu. Singh is the real estate developer- turned politician. Singh's recollections of his childhood have been "edited", says, by a complying memory," which "has obliterated many "of his "burdensome secrets".

The secrets are both those characteristic of many intelligent, sensitive, adolescents and those peculiar to Singh's character and circumstances. Main among these last are his self baptism, his feelings about his father, and his consciousness that "a celestial camera recorded my every movement, impartially, without judgment or pity. " Like Naipaul, as a young boy, Singh is aware that his family is anomalous, materially and culturally: his maternal grandparents, owners of Bela Bela Botting works and "the local bottlers of Coca-Cola", are wealthy, while his father is a poor school teacher resents and despises them. Singh envies his rich cousin, Cecil, and Deschampsneufs, another boy from a wealthy and distinguished family, compensates for his feelings of inadequacy by changing his name from Ranjit Kripal Singh to Ralph Singh. Actually Singh is merely competing with Deschampsneufs, whose many names herald his exalted status.

As a boy, reading in the Missionary Martyr or Isabella about his father's oratorical skills when he was a young missionary, Singh conceives an ideal image of "a man who had been cut off from his real country", a glorious place, from which he had been "shipwrecked" on the island. The heroic figure is a far cry from the "embittered school teacher" who, in his rage at his –in- laws influence on his son, breaks ninety six bottles of Coca-Cola at a soda fountain.

The inception of his role as Gurudeva, a name he adopts when he leaves his home and his job to lead striking dockworkers and other followers in a quasi-religious revolt against the injustices of their society. Singh's political career begins with an invitation to "proclaim" that name. When his former classmate, Browne, now a journalist and editor, asks him to write the "main article" on his father for an issue of his paper 'The Socialist', Singh enthusiastically accepts. He says that he meant to create the picture of a man who despite the disorder of his personal life had achieved certain poise. MM first appears to be another of Naipaul pessimistic essays on the difficulties of the colonized in becoming truly independent. Isabella is too small and lacks the economic resources, skills and knowledge to be free of domination by others. It lacks the homogeneity of population, culture and traditions that might provide unity of population, culture and traditions that might provide unity of purposes. Its history of slavery and white domination has resulted in a politics of protest and the symbolic revegenging of past wounds rather than the cool, rational appraisal of what needs to and what can be done within the possibilities available.

Because the nationalist movement has been driven by racial hurt, nation and race have become confused, and those who do not share in the dominant vision are treated as enemies. While the whites move to safety elsewhere the Asians, especially the Indians, are left as victims of the new black rulers. Due the especially the Indians, are left as victims of the new black rulers. The violence done to Indians in Isabella is mentioned by Singh.The Women and children assaulted, of hackings, of families were burnt alive.Singh feels uncomfortable around balks and is accused of racial exclusiveness in developing crippleville. His mother even refuses to accept his marriage to a white Englishwoman. The Indian world is racially enclosed and exclusive.

Besides the violence done to Indians there is the prospect of becoming culturally and ethnically extinct. The process of losing one's Indianness i.e. the rootlessness started with leaving India. That was the original sin, the fall. After the loss of roots Indian traditions could only either decay into deadening ritual or become diluted, degraded and eventually lost through outside influences and intermarriage with others. Ralph Singh is haunted by the notion of the extinction of the Caribbean East Indian. Singh in school in Isabella, reading and dreaming about India and its history as his lost home and Singh in London, disappointed at the poverty of his surroundings and lack of quality of his life have similarities to what Naipaul tells about himself in this novel (*The Mimic Men)*

Sandra, Singh's English wife has a similar experience. Rejection takes place as she rejects her family and past, she aspire to frame in London, fails her university examinations and with no hope for the future attaches herself to Singh and finds herself adrift and without purposes on Isabella where everything and everyone seen third rate to her. After the failed attempt to reconnect himself to India and the return to England, Naipaul had become like Singh and uprooted colonial, a permanent homeless exile, suffered from diaspora, wedded to his writing and his desk, seemingly writing about the upheavals and turmoil's of the colonial and post colonial world, but in actuality giving order to his own fie through writing Singh continually refers to disorder and need to find order. He claims that colonial societies lack the cultural, racial and historical homogeneity, and the resources to satisfy expectations.

The disorder that Singh finds inherent to decolonization has other, deeper roots. Shipwreck, the Caribbean commonplace found in the works of many West Indian writers, has a metaphysical dimension in *The Mimic Men*. Singh feels abandoned personally, culturally, racially and by the Universe, "This feeling of abandonment at the end of the empty world." (106) Singh continuously withdraws from decisive action and fails to do it. His confessions of sexual failures are similar to his inability to be part of or to lose himself in someone or some group beyond himself. When he does become involved it is superficial, brought about by the will of others, and he will eventually withdraw into himself or be pushed aside by those with more energy and purpose.

Leini attempts to seduce him and fails Sandra proposes marriage to him. He does not tell his mother he has married a foreign white woman. Sandra drifts away without Singh trying to prevent it. He watches, but does not help, the fisherman and others sat on the beach pulling the nets with the drowned bodies. He is seen as a nationalist leader because of what his father did. Browne proposes, they start a political journal, from a political party, but he takes command. As a youth Singh has fantasies of being a leader of the Aryan tribes that conquered India and became dominant castes. This myth of origins is similar to black American and West Indian dreams of being descended from African royalty. But when faced by situation in which he could actually become an authentic leader of his people Singh withdraws into passivity, generalities, distancing the actual world.

The failure is analogous to his sexual failure as a student in England and his despair at his in England. Seeking the ideal, the actual is rejected and is incapacitated from actions that might lead to any self-surrender and involvement. His performances are play acting. He courts Sandra in front of others at a party, but nothing comes of it and they sleep apart. He practices for a race at school, but once he sees the crowds he will not compete. In this novel the problem of conscious self revelation by Singh or even Naipaul is impossible to untangle, especially as the focus keeps rapidly, subtly shifting from the story to allusions to well known events which occurred in Africa and the Caribbean, generalizations about politics and the world, literary allusions and even suggestions that this is in some way Naipaul's own spiritual and emotional autobiography,

The Mimic Men is a novel about how the personal, including awareness of why one has not chosen the active worldly life, is transformed into a book.There is an analysis of the problems of the decolonization of the third world, questions whether authentic independence is possible where there is a lack of resources and a mixture of people without shared aims and culture, awareness of the endangered position of Indian diaspora in alien lands where politics are driven by the legacy of black humiliation and where political leadership may have no other politics or foundation than racial assertion and messianic hopes.

This novel looks critically at the contemporary fashion for decolonization and nationalist assertion, finding threats of disorder and myths of order. There is no ideal city, whether Rome, London or the city of God. There are only ideas of such an ideal. The only order is that given to the chaos of individual lives by writing about them, by creating narratives. In this novel, a father's insecurity and distress is passed on to a son who is shamed by his father's incompetence and abandonment of the family for a futile political gesture. The son attaches himself to a wealthy branch of the family which can provide him with a 'solid', seemingly secure house. But he learns that this security and order is threatened by the unwillingness of the poor to accept authority. The son is also troubled by his Indianness in the New World, both attempting to Anglicize himself and dreaming of an idealized Indian past to which he will return. Singh fears the extinction of his racial and cultural self. His fears are linked to a self defensive pride, a dandyism which is expressed in an unwillingness to compete or fight, attitudes of superiority, concern with how he appears to others, the cultivation of disdain for that which is flawed and imperfect. Such defensiveness makes him withdraw from active life, except when leadership or roles are thrust upon him by others, whether in politics or sex. He retreats into poses of indifference negativity and an implied Hindu spirituality.

Naipaul and Singh offer the various explanations for such hollowness and mimicry beyond fear of being hurt, insecurity and apathy. One theme which is foregrounded is that Singh has never grown up, never emotionally matured. His dream is homogenous organic traditional and is parallel to his fear of living in a purposeless, disorderly universe. A fracture is brought about by leaving Isabella for England. There are also vague allusions to a distressed mental condition in England.

In *The Mimic Men* Naipaul alludes to and disguises events in his father's life (the mental collapse that led to years of living apart from the family, the fathers of annihilation which was passed on to the son, the traditional Indian horse ritual which orthodox members of the family forced the father to perform as expiation for challenging them) and to events from his own life (his mental collapse at Oxford, his sense of futility in London, the attraction to withdrawal he felt in India. Naipaul often speaks of writing as a vocation and as the best means of investigating and making sense of life. Singh is thus a parody of the writer, someone who thinks writing easy, but he is also a Naipaul like figure who has made writing his life and also has made writing about himself and his discontents.

The Mimic Men might be regarded as post-modernist, post-colonial. Naipaul moves beyond the realism of colonial fiction to a manner which in its lack of straight forward narrative and its various convolutions, shifts in time, changes explanations, sense of defeat and withdrawal, appears to reflect the disorder of the post colonial world. It is never clear what Singh intends by writing his book, his purposes keeps changing until the act of writing itself becomes his existence, mimicry of life, mimicry of writer's life. Singh's many comments about his active life being parenthetical allude to the structure of the novel which is constructed as a series of parentheses.

There are two themes which are intertwined in The Mimic Men. One is the relation of freedom to origins and the conflict between freedom and engagement.Singh attempts to be free, to construct his own identity, but keeps returning to the question of whether he has his own identity, and keeps returning to the question of whether he is a product of his racial, colonial, educational and family past of failures, foreshadowing his later attachment to England, attaches himself to a successful branch of his family. He is willing to share the past neither of Browne, Sandra nor of the European woman he meets. Singh is wounded by his father's desertion and humiliated by the failure of his movement, which achieves nothing but temporary drama and disorder. But ironically because of his father's movement Singh is assumed to be one of the natural founders of the new political party which will demand Isabella's independence. History repeats itself with independence leading to disappointed expectations, disorder, violence, and Singh fleeing to England.

The Mimic Men is about a road not taken, about Hollow men, such action would have required passion, commitment to a larger group it would also have been a loss of individual freedom to write.The formal centre of the novel is section II, chapter 4. Here Singh a school boy, is offered the friendship of Browne, a Negro, who insists on his racial past and hurt.Browne his double, his opposite his friend and eventually his enemy. Both are products of colonialism a shame of their families and homes, but with different sense of cultural and racial history. They will together bring the island to independence. Browne being emotionally driven towards it, Singh uncommitted, and find themselves enemies as only through racial violence can Browne satisfy the unmet expectations of his followers. Singh fears Browne's interior life. "It was not my past. It was not my personality." This corresponds to separate social and cultural lives led by the Indians and blacks in Trinidad. But it is also similar to his unwillingness to share in the lives of the women he meets in London.

He and Stella even find their sexual satisfaction separately. Both sexual and political involvement requires self-violation and mingling. As Browne forces on him an awareness of racial distress Singh urgently wants to withdraw. The chapter ends with 'the disappointment of someone who had been denied the chance of making a fresh start, alone.' So at the centre of the Mimic Men the main character is concerned about his father's humiliating withdrawal from the family and his own need to escape the emerging racial pressures which are likely to engulf him if he remains on the island.

Singh's adolescent fantasies and restlessness are redirected through language and reading to idealize land and landscapes elsewhere. The first exile is from the mother's breast and progressively from the father and family (including the possibility of re- establishing wholeness through incest with Sally), the second exile is brought about through education and reading Singh's lack of wholeness, of identity and authenticity, leads to his posturing dandyism, and flights into exile. There is total homelessness or no place is his home. Everywhere he is shipwrecked, washed up., i.e. his roots have been lost and he has become diasporic. Education in mimicry is the start of literary mimicry. In the Mimic Men such echoes, parodies and allusions are fore grounded, with the novel itself becoming an act of mimicry, even self-mimicry. A close analysis reveals that the contradictions that make up Mimic Men lend

themselves to a greater understanding of the kind of post-colonialism that is not governed by the celebration of interconnections, discontinuity and hybridity.

The representation in *The Mimic Men* of the fractured diasporic colonized subject is a critique of the colonial, project of modernization that was based on 'the metaphysic of presence in which the self was regarded as whole, stable and rational. *In Mimic Men* the narrative of Ralph's alienation, rootlessness and homelessness problematises this project.

Ralph is not a mimic man playing at being a whole person as much as he is the subject that had been the silent underside of the project of modernity. The discontinuous subaltern haunts the project of modernity and colonialism which acts as a tool to bring others modernly not only notions of self but ideas of culture are also challenged by the diasporic narrative. Ralph Singh and his wife Sandra belong to a group on the island of Isabella which consist of Indian men and their expatriate wives, a colonial outcrop.., They mimic memories stories lives and landscapes that are not their own. This alienation from their own culture selves and island landscape is a product of colonialism and results in a certain kind of vulnerability and fragmentation. Ralph's generation reimagines the Caribbean and remarks 'home' though a mythology of Englishness. Ralph changes his name given to him by birth- Ranjit Kripal Singh – to the anglicized version, Ralph Singh, Mimicry is present in the duplication of a Midland Landscape and the excess that is produced. Ralph when hr tried to reimagine, recognizes that it was never really an authentic experiences Colonialism is the rupture for this particular group because group because they cut off authentic experiences and identities. But Ralph's self awareness is not representative of the general experience.

While Ralph's generation is trapped in colonial mythology, his mother's generation harks back to the Indian cultural landscape Mimicry in relation to his mother's generation is not subversive but invitation and repetition and a parody of itself. Ralph's colonial history is a shadow history to the narrative of Empire. This forms part of a post colonial narrative that draws on notions of the unheimlich (unhomely). *The Mimic Men* is the narrative of colonial modernity by mimicking colonialist history through diasporic life. Naipaul takes the diasporic life which has always been in parenthesis that is the unheimlich, and foregrounds it. So

then the parenthesis becomes for the colonical Indian diaspora, a 'sources of energy as its "familiar temporariness". It becomes a site from which a counter critique of modernity may be mounted.

Ralph's statement suggests that he has undergone a journey which allows him to acknowledge his difference in terms of coming from somewhere else. The limits of the colonial fantasy are visible in the ambivalent nature of arrival in which there is only deferment because of difference. Ralph is aware that part of the reason for his feeling unreal, unstable and inauthentic is his suppression of his own history. This is something that other immigrant's also do. The novel holds awareness that in the metropolitan centre, there are many people who are trying to be accepted in the city by denying their pasts for example, this suppression of ones past relates to the English women as well. When Ralph marries Sandra an English woman, he had desired her confidence, ambition, rightness, qualities that he sought in the English Landscape. Once he perceives her insecurity and sense of placelessness, his love for her begins to dissolve. He marks:"She began to get some of my geographical sense, that feeling of having been flung off the world …she told me she had awakened in the night with a feeling of fear, a simple fear of place, of the absent world… The very things I had once admired in her …were what I now pitied her for. Ralph meets other politicians in London who have been exiled from heir colonies because they do not fit into pro- independence schemes ex politicians in London or expatriates on the island have become detached from their native systems of culture, production and nationality. Ralph's life degenerates into a rapid cosmopolitanism and a fetishising of English woman as can be seen in his sexual relations with them.

Eventually, homelessness is conveyed in *The Mimic Men* through the series of temporary homes that Ralph occupies: Shylock's boarding house, the expatriate bourgeois house in Isabella, the London hotel room in which he writes his memories. Ralph and Sandra are unable to give their home in Isabella a sense of permanence. He reflects: It had never seemed important to us to have a house of our own. I had no feelings for the house as home, as personal creation.

Ralph's state of mind in The Mimic Men, suggests a deepening sense of exile in the author's imagination. Before Ralph Singh finds the London hotel which he says in for fourteen months, he is threatened with homelessness. He narrates:

> I travelled from small town to small town, seeking shelter with my sixty six pounds of luggage, always aware in the late afternoon of my imminent homelessness.
>
> *(The Mimic Men, 249)*

The culture of homelessness or diaspora focuses on the journey more than a fixed point of destination. Ralph gives priority to his period of exile in Isabella: 'This present residence in London, which I suppose can be of the novel, Ralph suggests that the detachment that exile affords, leads him to a higher state of consciousness. He no longer yearns for ideal landscape sand no longer wish to know the god of the city. This does not strike him as loss. He feels, instead he had lived through attachment and freed himself from one cycle of events.

V.S.Naipaul has thus given a social historical analysis regarding London and the world, Politics, and religion He has expressed how he had to hunt for a shelter in that diasporic condition of rootlessness when he needed shelter and due to imminent homelessness it became difficult and impossible for him. The effects of the displacement of peoples--their forced migration, their deportation, and their voluntary emigration, their movement to new lands where they made themselves masters over others, or became subjects of the masters of their new homes reverberate down the years and are still felt today. The historical violence of the era of empire and colonies echoes in the literature of the descendants of those forcibly moved and the exiles that those processes have made. The voices of its victims are insistent in the literature that has come to be called "post-colonial." Although the term "post-colonial" is insufficient to capture fully the depth and breadth of those writers that have been labeled by it (for it is itself something of a colonial instrument, ghettoizing writers in English who are still considered to be "foreign"), there is a common bond among the works of those novelists who understand the process of exile and see themselves as exiles--both from their homes and from themselves. In this eloquently argued book with meticulous theoretical groundwork, Dr. Cristina Dascalu presents a most lucid and concise examination of exile. In addition to her negotiation of the term "exile," what is most original and significant about Imaginary Homelands of Writers in Exile is the selection of authors.

Naipaul's use of this strand entails a deep pathos about life that many times ends in panic. Again, the great Naipaulian panic is brought forth. There is the mood and idea of decay and all that it can gather: dissolution, futility, corruption, and demise. It is a vision of the futility of life, especially in the post-colonial world. Lost colonials roaming across the post-colonial landscape, searching for a sense of identity, lost in a world that marginalizes them; their final destiny being desolation and dereliction. This Naipaulian philosophic strand projects the world as something that is constantly eroding and melting away. It constructs a deep pessimism about the world and its inhabitants who are viewed as totally absorbed in futility. Man is striving to understand his existence, trying to grasp it and find it s rationale, but is failing at it. It is as Doerksen has written when describing the search for meaning in life as, "the futility of the search for the meaning of existence in both the past and the future" (108). It is important to point out that not only is this sense of futility and dissolution present in Naipaul's fiction, but also embeds his travel literature and historical texts. Specifically, *The Loss of El Dorado* is certainly an existentialist history of the Caribbean where characters, plots and events are headed towards colonial dissolution and decay.

In Naipaul's writings there are images and terms utilized by early existentialist writers such as Jean Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, and Ernest Hemingway. Naipaul uses these terms, concepts, and images, the most important being the images or concepts of, "nausea," "nothingness," and "panic." All three form fundamental philosophical constructs in existential thought. Naipaul has articulated these in his own particular way. It is the existential condition of humanity, and for Naipaul, it is not a bed of roses. It is the existential angst in Santosh and Roquentin; the futility and the nothingness that gathers both of them into primordial existence. These disturbed sensations of the existential permeate many of Naipaul's writings. Sartre's "The Wall" is a story about political prisoners waiting for their execution at the time of the Spanish Civil War and the Franco regime. One of the characters, Tom, tells Pablo Ibbieta of the impending death that awaits them, something that will catch them off guard: "I've already stayed up a whole night waiting for something. But this isn't the same: this [death, mortality] will creep up behind us, Pablo, and we won't be able to prepare for it" (8). There is the sense of an ill feeling, a disturbing sensation, nausea of the spirit, in these characters. Again, in Sartre's "Intimacy," the female protagonist,

Lulu, is a disturbing character that provokes nausea in others. One is reminded of the many female characters in Naipaul that are presented in an unsavory manner such as Sandra in *The Mimic Men*, Linda in *In a Free State*, Jane in *Guerrillas*, Yvette in *A Bend in the River*, and finally, Willie's females in Half a Life and Magic Seeds. These women are projected as nauseating figures, as characters that invoke nausea and a general malaise. The image of nausea is, undoubtedly, fundamental in Naipaul's writings.

Santosh and Singh, and even of Salim in their situations and settings: the uneasiness, the plight, the futility of existence. These characters all reflect a kind of mental and spiritual, even philosophical, desolation and dereliction. It is one of Naipaul's main concerns in his narratives. The philosophic term and concept of "nothing" and "nothingness" is also of importance in existential thought, especially in Naipaul's particular strain. It is a term that is constantly repeated in many existentialist writings. It is a dictum that forces an individual into either making a decision of social or political commitment, or of dissolution into nothingness. One has to choose; it is one's responsibility to do so in this world. Ralph Singh in The Mimic Men is not merely informing the reader of a bad night, or even of his encounter with the fat prostitute, but rather, he is communicating his disgust toward his present condition: "In the hotel that night I was awakened by a sensation of sickness. As soon as I was in the bathroom I was sick: all the undigested food and drink of the previous day. My stomach felt strained; I was in some distress" (237). The image of nausea is invoked in this passage, but interestingly enough, this malaise has been with the protagonist since his exile, this sense of fear and dread about his existence. Santosh in "One out of many" also feels nausea while on the plane, but it is not just physiological nausea as the passage attests, it is also the "journey," as he states, "The journey became miserable for me.... I had a shock when I saw my face in the mirror. In the fluorescent light it was the colour of a corpse" (25). The "journey" may be that of life and existence, and the "colour of a corpse" may well be the ultimatum of existence: non-existence and mortality. Thus, one can assuredly see that the tenets of existential thought are embedded in both these narratives. Dayo's brother, the narrator in "Tell Me Who to Kill", is an estranged fellow, a tragic product of things gone wrong. He declares with great pain: "The funny taste is in my mouth, my old nausea, and I feel I would vomit if I swallow" (100). Again, this is not merely a sample of a specific

incident in the narrative but of the general feeling that sprinkles this text, a deep pessimism that envelops the whole discourse, emptiness, nothingness. Finally, in Naipaul's A Bend in the River the term, "nothing" is used many times. It is not just the mere word which is important, but its associative and connotative function. The narrator's first line reads: "The world is what it is; men who are nothing, who allow themselves to become nothing, have no place in it" (3). A casual reading of this first line would be useless; a close reading would bring out the hidden meanings and associations.

The final aspect of this existential angst in Naipaul that I would like to lay focus upon and connect to this philosophical strand is the ever present "panic" that Naipaul has felt since his youth. He has referred to it as his "nerves," while at other times critics have called it "anxiety attacks." This "panic" has been documented in Naipaul's fiction and non-fiction. The panic appears in his early Trinidadian novels, which includes the black cloud incident in The Mystic Masseur and Biswas's panic while in Green Vale in A House for Mr. Biswas. The last being more than just a mere "panic". It is the fear of becoming derelict or homeless, a fear that has been very close to Naipaul. It is the fight of an individual who does not want to end up in anonymity, who is fighting for an identity, and who many times ends up, as Naipaul terms it, a bogus. It is the philosophical theme of existential destitution in the contemporary post-colonial world. The "panic" continues in both his middle and later works; it is an ever-present feeling of insecurity; the possibility of falling into a black hole of non-entity. Biswas in Green Vale felt like this: "He put his feet down and sat still, staring at the lamp, seeing nothing. The darkness filled his head ... He surrendered to the darkness" (267).

Naipaul's first short, light-hearted and humorous narrative, Miguel Street, contains a light pessimism that would later develop into a devastating and utter darkness. There is a fatalism and futility in Elias trying to pass the sanitary inspector's examination; in fact, he never did. Elias ironically enough landed as a cart driver collecting garbage. In the last section of Miguel Street, "How I Left Miguel Street," the narrator communicates sadness in his short bitter remark, a sadness that will eventually turn into a sense of doom and futility in Naipaul's later texts. The narrator comments: "I left them all and walked briskly towards the aeroplane, not looking back, looking only at my shadow before me, a dancing dwarf on the tarmac" (172). It

was a foreboding of things to come. The references to the "black cloud" in The Mystic Masseur and its repeated use in *A House for Mr. Biswas* is connected to the existential panic in these characters: "not the passing shock of momentary fear, but fear as a permanent state" (*The Mystic Masseur 123*).

It is in A House for Mr. Biswas where this strand can be first identified. In the narrative Mr. Biswas was enveloped almost always in an atmosphere of insecurity. He had a constant fear of destitution and dereliction: "a dot on the map of the world," as he once remarked (237). This fear of becoming destitute is also part of Naipaul's autobiographical parcel: there was this "fear" always around him as a man and writer: the vision of existential nothingness, decay, and abandonment. For Naipaul, it is no joke; it is deadly serious. The following passage must be quoted in full because it exemplifies the existential consciousness of mortality felt by Mr. Biswas. It was when a piece of tooth broke off from Mr. Biswas' mouth. The existential dread is quite pronounced. The passage reminds one of Sartre's Roquentin and Santosh from "One Out of Many" in which both characters were conscious of parts of their bodies, and treated them as dislocated members of the whole. When a man can candidly face the dilemma of his own situation in life, he will fear nothing. Significantly, Naipaul empowers himself through his writing. Like his father before him, he is seeking his own home in the world; he constructs a home for himself through his creative writing. He constructs his own subjectivity via the powerful writing. Breytenbach discusses the relationship between writing and identity: “The individual creative act is certainly an attempt to make consciousness. This implies drawing upon memory. Memory, whether apocryphal or not, provides the feeding ground or the requisite space allowing for the outlining of imagination.” (68).

Through the “geographical imagination” of his writing, Naipaul creates a home for himself. He makes an effort to resist the sense of insecurity and of uncertainty. Willie in *Half a Life* decides to start a new life, no longer desiring to live under Ana’s protection. He rethinks his life and decides to face challenges of the future without attempting to escape or withdraw. Willie remarkably rebuilds his identity and finds the placeslessness as a kind of placeness. He is caught in in-between. Also, he must enjoy the third space. Naipaul, as an exiled writer, is caught in-between: writing between home and homelessness, he takes advantage of being an

exile to create his own space, his own home, one which is simultaneously nowhere and everywhere.

Thus, in terms of postcolonial perspectives, Willie in *Half a Life* just like Naipaul himself has the unfixed identity in the construction of subjectivity though he must experience the ruptures among subjectivity, geography, and language toward multicultural and fluid identity. Of Naipaul's latest fictional work *Half a Life* (2001), within the context of the fabric of Naipaul's fiction, in which exiled Indians constitute the most identifiable type or category of characters. This is only to be expected from a writer who has championed the condition of the third-world expatriate and has never lost contact with the Indian roots of his ancestors.

As happens in the case of previous characters, Willie attempts to improve his present condition by remaking his past and his own personality. He also complies with the stereotype of the Indian expatriate who feels displaced in a metropolis he had presumed to be acquainted with (because of the cultural impositions of colonial but which proves to be a totally unknown, not to say hostile, environment.

Finally, taking into account that the most significant characters in Naipaul's work are the protagonists of works such as *The Mimic Men, A Bend in the River* or *The Enigma of Arrival*, all of them first person narrators of their stories, we will consider to what extent does Willie Chandran, portrayed mainly through third-person narrative, depart from the overall positive characterization accorded to them. Indian heritage looms large in V.S. Naipaul's biography and literary career. Obviously, he was been aware from his childhood that the connection of Trinidadian Indians with the land of their ancestors had been affected by the passing of time and physical separation. Eventually, he becomes an agnostic who fi nds that the religious rituals performed at home are odd and even unpleasant. However, one of his first literary journeys takes him to India, in a clear attempt to trace his roots.

It is noteworthy that Naipaul is convinced that colonialism has created a historical vacuum in the Caribbean; Suman Gupta (1999: 35-36) summarizes the writer's negative perception of the Caribbean, as it is portrayed in *The Middle Passage:*Naipaul sees little that is positive in the racially mixed population: In his view the racial and cultural communities do not harmonize, inevitably there is conflict amongst them. More importantly, instead of synthesized hybridised culture appearing,

he encounters cultural and racial conservatism, which is matched by the absurdity of their displacement from their origins. *The Middle Passage*, published after a seven-month tour of the region, sponsored by the Trinidadian Prime Minister, Eric Williams, explains why Naipaul never considered coming back to his country after his stay in Britain to attend university. The relationship between the difficulties in the West Indies in the transition from colonialism to independence and Naipaul's antagonism towards the region is documented in various

In this way Naipaul, permanently looking for roots, has adhered with increasing conviction to his Indian background. He explains his writing on the land of his ancestors by saying: "I was close to India in my upbringing. I grew up in a very, very Indian household. That was the world for me". This seems to confirm Fanon's perception (1963: 148-149) that "when dealing with young independent nations, the nation is passed over for the race, and the tribe is preferred to the state". This is in keeping with the fact that one of Naipaul's earliest travel books, *An Area of Darkness*, reflects his first and, to a large extent, disappointing, encounter with India. He feels deeply troubled and is shocked by the extreme poverty and, above all, by the shortcomings in social organization which hinder any prospects of economic and human development. As happened in subsequent journeys to other regions in the world, objectivity fell prey to anger and it was not uncommon for Naipaul to explore the ground that separated him from Hindu nihilism and chaos, to the extent of disclaiming his Indian connections. For all this criticism, Naipaul's emotional attachment to the land of his ancestors was not severed and in *India: A Million Mutinies Now* (1990) he redressed the balance to mark his partial reconciliation with the country. Helen Hayward (2002: 111) sums up Naipaul's writing on India by stating:

He begins by writing a travel book and comedy of manners in *An Area of Darkness*. In *India: A Wounded Civilization*, he appears in the guise of a prophet of doom, and has excited hostility by assuming the position of one who knows more about India than Indians do, and by forecasting an impending chaos in Indian civilization, while satirizing the progress of Indian self-rule. In *India: A Million Mutinies Now*, Naipaul is reborn into a new persona: accepting and tolerant, he listens to characters as they recount the narrative of their own lives, and he refrains from offering overt authorial judgements.

For all his interest in the country, however, the writer will not consider settling down in India and, reluctant to come back to the West Indies, his residence in the U.K. becomes permanent, with long periods of travelling and reporting all over the world. As Timothy Weiss has stated (Weiss, 16-17): "Exile, then, as an experience of not-belonging, as an epistemology, and as a manner of perception and encounter informs Naipaul's works, variously shaping their characters, themes, narration, and views of the world". In this way, Naipaul has joined the ranks of a myriad of individuals from former colonial outposts now claiming a status as citizens of the world; in an interview (Adrian Rowe-Evans, 59) he states: "I come from a small society; I was aware that I had no influence in the world; I was apart from it. And then I belonged to a minority group, I moved away, became a foreigner [...] because one doesn't have a side, doesn't have a country, doesn't have a community; one is entirely an individual". { An Interview (Adrian Rowe-Evans, 59)}

Naipaul has been criticized for this detached attitude; RobNixon (1992: 17) exposes his "fashioning and sustaining an autobiographical persona who is accepted at face value as a permanent exile, a refugee, a homeless citizen of the world". However, it is surprising to note that other critics, from very different backgrounds and attitudes to the world, such as is the case with Gayatri Spivak (1990: 37-38), refer to their expatriate condition in terms which remind us of Naipaul: "I think it's important for people not to feel rooted in one place. So, wherever I am, I feel I'm on the run in some way. [...] I'm devoted to my native language, but I cannot think it as natural, because, to an extent, one is never natural … one is never at home". Graham Huggan (2001: 85) points out that the perception of not belonging, shared by established writers such as Naipaul or Rushdie, with long careers in Britain, is largely subscribed by critics and academics who will label them as 'cosmopolitan,': "to suggest that in some deep-rooted, almost atavistic sense, they are immigrant writers who 'really belong' somewhere else". Given Naipaul's condition as an exile and the claim of his Indian ancestry, it is not surprising that Indian characters living as expatriates cover a large section in Naipaul's production: Ralph Singh, in *The Mimic Men*; Randolph, in "A Christmas Story," written in 1962 and published in the collection titled *A Flag on the Island* (1967); Santosh in "One out of Many" and the unnamed protagonist in "Tell Me Who to Kill" (both stories included in *In a Free State,*); Salim, in *A Bend in the River*; the unnamed protagonist of *The Enigma of*

Arrival. They make up a gallery which complies with Bhabha's definition of the global society (1990: 291): "Gatherings of exiles and émigrés and refugees, gathering on the edge of 'foreign cultures': gathering at the frontiers; gathering in the ghettos or cafés of city centres; gathering in the half-life, half-light of foreign tongues". The latest contribution to this list is Willie Chandran in *Half a Life* (2001), a work whose critical assessment is unavoidably linked to the fact that Naipaul had previously avowed not to write fiction any longer. He considered, at a certain point in his career, that the novel as a genre was dead because of the unsuitability of this artistic form to reflect adequately the contemporary world. In an interview he admitted having lost faith in fiction and the possibilities it offered to the writer to develop his ideas: "Before the novel in Europe there was the essay, the narrative poem, theatre, the epic poem [...] There is no need for us to consider the novel now as the principal form" (Rashid, 1997: 167). Naipaul further accounted for his decision to give up writing novels (2000: 28): "Fiction had taken me as far as it could go. There were certain things it couldn't deal with. It couldn't deal with my years in England; there was no social depth to the experience; it seemed more a matter for autobiography. And it couldn't deal with my growing knowledge of the wider world".

Therefore, the publication of *Half a Life* came as a surprise and it has not been greeted with unanimous acclaim. In journal and newspaper reviews several authors have pointed out its technical failures and inconsistencies (time gaps, abrupt shifts in point of view, the presentation of barely sketched characters or the cliché-ridden and badly written prose) and somehow tend to attribute these shortcomings to authorial neglect. The writer himself admits (Dhondy, 2001) having sketched this work while he was engaged with what he calls *major books. Half a Life* is generally considered as a kind of coda to Naipaul's production, where we can track down many of his earlier themes and characters. The fact is that the protagonist, Willie Chandran is one more in the long list of Indian characters created by Naipaul, although one of the few to have been born in India. As happens with his fi ctional counterparts, the issue of the quest for his self looms large in the narrative. This is refl ected in the fact that Willie decides, at some point in his life, to give himself a new identity (2001: 60), He could within reason re-make himself and his past and his ancestry [...] now he began to alter other things about himself, but in small, comfortable ways. He had no big over-riding idea. He took a point here and another there. The newspapers, for

instance, were full of news about the trade unions, and it occurred to Willie one day that his mother's uncle, the firebrand of the backwards, who sometimes at public meetings wore a red scarf (in imitation of his hero, the famous backward revolutionary and atheistic poet Bharatidarsana), it occurred to Willie that this uncle of his mother's was a kind of trade union leader, a pioneer of worker's rights. He let drop the fact in conversation and in tutorials, and he noticed that it cowed people.

By remaking his past, more to his liking or convenience, he is following his father's example, who had also decided to wear a mask which suited him best in his effort to fi nd a place in society; as he says: "I began to acquire something like a reputation -modest, but nonetheless quite real- in certain quite influential intellectual or spiritual circles abroad. There was no escape now. In the beginning I felt I had trapped myself. But very soon I found that the role fi tted" (31-32). Similarly, Willie is reported to have written a composition for the Canadian missionaries who taught him, pretending he was Canadian himself: he called his parents "Mom" and "Pop" and he created a story of an archetypal Western middle-class family. The third-person narrator in *Half a Life* remarks: "All the details of this foreign life -the upstairs house, the children's room had been taken from American comic books" (39-40). Willie's compliance with colonial assumptions will be rewarded with full marks, an early encouragement from the establishment to carry on with the impersonation. Once in London, he follows similar strategies: "he adapted certain things he had read, and he spoke of his mother as belonging to an ancient Christian community of the subcontinent, a community almost as old as Christianity itself. He kept his father as a Brahmin. He made his father's father a 'courtier'. So, playing with words, he began to re-make himself. It excited him, and began to give him a feeling of power" (61).

This attitude in both members of the Chandran family resembles other passages in Naipaul fiction where characters play similarly with the fuzzy edges of appearance and reality. This is the case with Ralph Singh's conscious decision to abandon his real name, Ranjit Kripalsingh, so as to do away with some aspects in his past. The shortened Anglicized name partly erases his condition as an Indian; this is more surprising when we consider that the young Singh is only eight years old, but already capable of concocting such an elaborate strategy: "The name Ralph I chose for the sake of the initial, which was also that of my real name. In this way I felt I mitigated the fantasy or deception" (1969: 93). Like his father had previously done,

he wants to *relocate* himself questioning his Asian roots in the West Indian milieu. Singh is explicitly for the manipulation of one's image: "We become what we see of ourselves in the eyes of others" (20); this can be also interpreted as a defensive strategy against a hostile reality: "I exaggerated the role they admired" (21). Similarly, Salim says in *A Bend in the River*: "Africa was a place where we had to survive" (1980: 126). The individual comes to realize that sometimes it is more advisable to play a fictional role rather than keeping to one's own personality; thus, Salim is not reluctant to go into this kind of deception and his narrative is full of references to his acting differently according to specific social contexts. Obviously, this attitude is related to the multilayered and ambivalent concept of mimicry, deeply embedded in the colonized. Although it encapsulates originally the hierarchical assumption and imitation of metropolitan values, mimicry can be subverted so as to become an instrument of mockery and menace on the part of the colonized (Bhabha, 1994: 86). In the case of Naipaul's characters, mimicry can also be interpreted as one more strategy of resistance or a strategy of survival.

Willie Chandran is very close to the protagonist of a short story from the early period of the writer. Randolph in "A Christmas Story" is an Indo-Caribbean who estranges himself from his community by becoming a Christian. Like Willie, he is attracted by Presbyterian Canadian missionaries and he will also get engaged to a headmaster's daughter, so as to get social promotion. He changes his name as an effort to erase his roots; for him, Hindu religious practice is perceived as an empty and messy ritual, he considers traditional clothes such as *dhoti* embarrassing; in contrast, Christians are perceived as more rational and even neat. However, Randolph values more than anything else the professional opportunities he will have by opting for the new religious denomination. Presbyterians will enable him to become a teacher, a coveted position for humble rural Indians who would be delighted to marry their daughters to him "to acquire respectability and the glamour of a learned profession" (1967: 31-32). When he is promoted to school principal Randolph thinks he has achieved the zenit of the social ladder. It is interesting to note, however, that a pessimistic feeling pervades the story from the very beginning since his career will prove a failure because of his managing incompetence; what is worse, Randolph will resent his estrangement from the community and he pitifully evinces his attachment to the deepest Hindu feelings: he misses eating with his fingers and has to resist a

profound disgust to eating beef. Randolph will end up characterized as an archetypal mimic man whose impersonation verges on the pathetic: "I hung my treasured framed teaching diploma on the wall, with my religious pictures and some scenes of the English countryside. It was also my good fortune at this time to get an old autographed photograph of one of our first missionaries" (34).

Ralph departs from the model of Indians depicted by Naipaul insofar as most of them are expatriates trying to find their place in foreign environments, although he is commonly referred to as an exile within his own community. It is well known that exile revolves around the splitting of one's personality, sometimes leading to mental disorder such as depression (haunting Naipaul himself for some periods of his life) or schizophrenia. Furthermore, the plight of the exiled colonial may arise from the hardship at facing the reality at the place of arrival and confronting it with the stereotypes and imaginary landscapes created in schoolrooms, through canonical literature or films. Thus, Santosh is reported in "One out of Many" to have been leading a happy life surrounded by friends in the streets of Mumbai until he moved to Washington, only to find isolation and lack of communication; once in the United States he faces the quest for his identity. The old bonds of friendship in India, materialized in ritual behaviour that had made him feel integrated in his social milieu, are shattered by the coldness and distant attitude of the Americans, especially whites.

The sudden transition from one society to another makes his isolation in America even more poignant. Similarly, in "*Tell Me Who to Kill*" the West Indian protagonist comes to London, where his experience as an exile is equally traumatic. He is detached from the new environment where he merely does routine chores since his working activity is only intended as a means of survival, not leading to any kind of social integration. Opposite the British Museum, the immigrant ponders on and envies the better fortunes of tourists who will know their immediate future, once they board their buses character is less obviously Hindu than Santosh since his ancestors, like Naipaul's, had come to the West Indies as indentured labourers, in this way severing the links with the motherland. After years of living in England, his deepest feelings remain Hindu.

Willie Chandran is one more character travelling from a Third World country to London. His arrival in the metropolis is as puzzling as that of the author

and his other Indians. The previous assumptions created by literature, fi lms and all sorts of colonial preconceptions about the centrality of the Empire are soon questioned, when confronted with reality: He knew that London was a great city. His idea of a great city was of a fairyland of splendour and dazzle, and when he got to London and began walking about its streets he felt let down. He didn't know what he was looking at [...] The only two places he knew about in the city were Buckingham Palace and Speakers' Corner. He was disappointed by Buckingham Palace. He thought the maharaja's palace in his own state was far grander, more like a palace, and this made him feel, in a small part of his heart, that the kings and queens of England were impostors, and the country a little bit of a shame. His disappointment turned to something like shame at himself, for his gullibility- when he went to Speakers' Corner (52). Willie is not able to match his previous images of the land and the real city; therefore he is reported to be routinely doing his university academic assignments "with a kind of blindness," living "as in a daze," "within that idea of make-believe," and feeling "unanchored, with no idea of what lay ahead" (58). His situation will be further complicated when racial riots break out and he retreats into hiding, obviously recalling Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, the stereotype of the inner exile that can be tracked down elsewhere in *Half a Life* in the figures of Willie's father or the white settlers in Mozambique. Timothy Weiss's account of Ralph Singh's experience in *The Mimic Men* at the moment of arrival can serve to explain the feelings of Willie and other exiles, including Naipaul himself (1992: 96): "His images reflect a colonial and neocolonial dualism, which considers the metropolis or First World as central and true and the colony as marginal and false. A product of his colonial background, his romantic, quasi-religious images of the metropolis and the world beyond the colony assure his disappointment and eventual disillusionment on his arrival there".

It is significant that the most prominent accounts of exile in Naipaul's work are told by the protagonists themselves, sometimes acting as proper writers. This is the case with Ralph Singh and the unnamed narrator of *The Enigma of Arrival*, who are both presented while in the process of creating the story we are reading. This is the result of their artistic devotion and the vehicle to express their feelings; in fact, writing may prove to be the only way to give coherence to a chaotic outside world,

whose lack of order is partly responsible for the individual's emotional instability, leading him to question even his own existence.

Writing, however, reinstates his inner balance, a process that can be traced to V. S. Naipaul himself; as Victor Ramraj says: "Little of importance in his past existed for him until he started writing about it in *Miguel Street* and subsequent novels. And little existed for him in the present; he was overwhelmed by a sense of extinction [...] until he acquired a less illusory, more tangible existence by becoming a published writer. Through writing he came into being." (Ramraj, 193) In fact, in essays, letters and interviews Naipaul equates writing to survival. In *Reading and Writing,* one of his latest autobiographical pieces, the first words give some clues about his vocation: "I was eleven, no more, when the wish came to me to be a writer; and then very soon it was a settled ambition" (3). It seems that a complete series of details will follow but this short piece (only 35 pages in the first edition) does not allow for such coverage. In turn, the narrator indulges in references about his school reading list and prescribed books. In an earlier autobiographical piece, *A Way in the World*, it seems as if the same voice is recalling another episode of his vocation when he is guided by his father in Port of Spain, until they reach the newspaper streets, arousing in the six or seven year old boy "this new excitement, of paper and ink and urgent printing." (12).

This scene also reminds us of Stephen Dedalus' trip to Cork in the company of his father, who represents all the negative values associated with Ireland, so that when he goes on a drinking spree with his cronies, the sensitive young boy feels humiliated. On the contrary, Naipaul reveres his father and appreciates the influence of his modest writing career as a local journalist on his own vocation. Thus, the young Vidia Naipaul writes to his "dearest Pa" immediately after graduating from Oxford: "As soon as I have got a job, you are to come and live with me and fulfil an ambition of mine to have you idle, content and I shall certainly see that you have some whisky to hand." (268)

In *The Enigma of Arrival*, one more attempt by Naipaul at painting the portrait of the artist, the protagonist is about to start a trip to Europe, a hallmark in his literary career: "This journey began some days before my eighteen birthday ... It was the journey that took me from my island, Trinidad, off the northern coast of

Venezuela, to England." (97) In *A Way in the World* the narrator also refers to the redemptive quality of writing: "At the age of twenty-two, unprotected, and feeling unprotected, with no vision of the future, only with ambition, I had no idea what kind of person I was. Writing should have helped me to see to clarify myself" (84). In this way, it is interesting to return to Naipaul's earlier masterpiece, *A House for Mr Biswas*, to realize that the writing as a vocation is a constant in many of Naipaul's Indian characters, even those who do not undergo the plight of exile. Biswas will soon be aware of the fact that he is endowed with a literary vocation, rising from the deepest layers of his soul.

After his mother's funeral writing soothes him and helps him recover his emotional balance: "he got out of bed, worked his way to the light switch, turned it on, got paper and pencil, and began to write. He addressed his mother. He did not think of rhythm; he used no cheating abstract words [...] The poem written, his self-consciousness violated, he was whole again." (484)

First-person narrators in *The Mimic Men, The Enigma of Arrival* and *A Bend in the River* show an attitude towards books and learning which often verges on fascination and fits into the pattern defined by Bruce King as the "Brahmin's devotion to study, scholarship, philosophical thought" (King, 9) ascribed to Naipaul. In *The Enigma* the great pleasure experienced by the protagonist at being in a book-shop is confronted with memories of the smaller and miscellaneous shops in Port of Spain, where books were grossly mixed with assorted everyday common gadgets, as an indication of the sterility of intellectual life in the British colony. Once in New York he buys a copy of *The New York Times*; this ready availability is a source of wonder for a person who has evinced his artistic and literary inclinations, as the multiple references to painters, writers or the classical world indicate. Salim in *A Bend in the River* regrets not having had the chance to go abroad so as to carry on with his studies, something he perceives as a privilege others have enjoyed. Throughout the novel there is a deliberate insistence on his attempt to fill his cultural gaps by reading all sorts of materials. Given his background and circumstances his ability to quote Latin inscriptions is also noteworthy.

It is in this respect, the intellectual stature and attitude to writing and learning that we will realize that there are overt differences between Willie Chandran

and the protagonists of *The Mimic Men, A Bend in the River* and *The Enigma of Arrival*, considered so far. These are all first-person narrators who are somehow allowed to poeticise some elements in their biography. Lillian Feder (235-6) points out that "The affinity between Ralph Singh or Salim and their author, for example, is readily apparent". Furthermore, taking into account the well-known autobiographical nature of the protagonist in *The Enigma*, Feder (235) states that "Naipaul has 'split' himself into a variety of characters who share certain of his traits and qualities of his background. This is especially true of those who write".

Willie Chandran is also a writer but it is diffi cult to place him in such direct relationship with the author. In the case of Willie, the desired distance with the character is established mainly by means of third-person narrative, used in most sections of the novel. In this way, some elements in his characterization are clearly demeaning. The paternal influence on his writing career is not conveyed in the reverential tone mentioned above in connection with works such as *The Enigma*, *A Way in the World* or in Naipaul's biographical collection *Letters Between a Father and Son*. On the contrary, Willie hates his father as much as Stephen in Joyce's *Portrait*. After his progenitor's 10-year-long Herculean task of telling the history of their family he asks his son for a comment; he spits out laconically: "I despise you" (35). Furthermore, Willie writes the story of a man who makes a vow to kill his father; this alarms Willie's father to the point of thinking he has reared a monster: "This boy will poison what remains of my life. I must get him far away from here." (43); "His mind is diseased. He hates me and he hates his mother." (47) His fears are later turn to alarm when he catches a glimpse of another story by Willie where a father kills, although accidentally, his two sons. It is not possible to equate mechanically first-person narrative and a positive treatment of the protagonist, since this rule would have been broken in "A Christmas Story" as we have already seen, but the fact is that we might consider this an exception in the writer's career. Suman Gupta helps to explain this oddity by saying that Naipaul, in this story from a very early stage in his career, is experimenting "with narratorial voices which emulate characters that are not omniscient or identifi able with the author." (26)

It is not difficult to realize that Willie's involvement with culture gets ridiculed and his relationship to writing seems very trivial and there is an air of foreboding in the family connection to Somerset Maugham, who will scornfully

answer Willie's letters asking for help. It is to be expected that someone named after a celebrity, for the sake of friendship, be let down when reading, in laconic terms: "It was nice getting your letter. I have very nice memories of India, and it is always nice hearing from Indian friends. Yours very sincerely"(58). Willie's irrelevance is further emphasized by other letters from family acquaintances, such as the one who grossly insults him by making a fatal spelling error: "Dear Chandran, Of course I remember your father. My favourite babu [...] 'Babu', an anglicised Indian, was a mistake; the word should have been 'sadhu', an ascetic". The narrator not only foregrounds the humiliation inflicted on Willie's family but, what is more relevant, also evinces an ironic distance from the protagonist, exposing Willie as less than dignified: "But Willie didn't mind. The letter seemed friendly." (56)

In this line it will not be difficult to interpret Willie's writing career as a mock endeavour. He starts writing stories to give vent to his anger because of his father's disdainful attitude to him. However, this is a not a genuine enterprise; the narrator makes us aware that Willie is writing what is expected of him, an attitude he will resume once in London, although his attempt at fashioning a writing career there seems more serious. Even in this case, his fi rst steps as a published writer are determined by chance: "Roger said, 'I still have ho idea what you intend to do. Is there a family business? Are you one of the idle rich?' Willie had learned to keep a straight face when embarrassing things were said and to walk round the embarrassment. He said 'I want to write.' Once more the point of view from which story is told remains instrumental for the negative image projected by the character, and it does not go unnoticed that the narrator is eager to point out immediately: "It wasn't true. The idea hadn't occurred to him until that moment, and it had occurred to him because Roger, embarrassing him, had made him think fast." (82) Willie's stature as a writer is further toned down when we realize that he is applying the simplistic writing recipes of an opportunist turned into a literary agent: "You should begin in the middle and end in the middle, and it should all be there ... Have you read Hemingway? You should read the early stories. There's one called 'The Killers'. It's only a few pages, almost all dialogue." (83)

Soon after, the narrator reports Willie planning to rewrite one of his pieces, making it "almost all dialogue" (85). It is clear Willie is exposed as a futile, worthless writer, an idea which is corroborated if we bear in mind that Naipaul expresses in an

interview: “Different cultures have different ways of feeling, seeing, different visions, ideas of human achievement and behaviour. If you try to write like Hemingway and you are writing about India it will not match.” (Rashid, 167) Willie’s mimicry goes to the extent that the narrator considers that it is easier for him to write borrowed stories far outside his own experience. Mention of the most canonical of writers in English cannot be but one more step in the ironical depiction of this character: “Shakespeare had done it, with his borrowed settings and borrowed stories, never with direct tales from his own life or the life around him.” (86) Willie’s antiheroic departure from his literary career also deserves mention. He rejects a commission to report on race riots in London; when a BBC producer tries to allure him into this kind of vicarious writing, sacrificing truth and journalist ethics to the advantage of commercialism and drama his indignity leads him to bargain for the fee; only the disagreement about monetary issues makes him turn down the offer.

There is some evidence that allows one to consider that Naipaul’s fiction is a continuum, confirming his own assertion that he is always writing the same book (Bryden, 367). In this way, we might expect Naipaul’s latest fictional character, Willie Chandran, to share many of the features we find in the Indian protagonists of previous works. Like them, he undergoes the ordeal of exile, marked by loneliness, a quest for the self and an effort to grasp the outside world, which does not conform to previous assumptions made in a back-water colonial environment. This experience is related to the binary centre/periphery discourse that hierarchically structures reality so as to focus on metropolitan values that are transmitted and assimilated by the colonized. However, colonial individuals cannot appropriate the metropolitan reality so easily and, when confronted with its topography and social milieu, they realize poignantly that they do not belong in there, disrupting their sense of place. Thus Willie is reported to be “blind” or to go into hiding, in such a way as to seem a mere repetition of scenes from earlier works by Naipaul. Some of the coincidences with these have to do also with Willie’s delving into his past and his willingness to manipulate it so as to achieve a new identity. This may involve a certain degree of impersonation, related to the idea of mimicry imbedded in colonial subjects, as can be seen passim in Naipaul’s fiction.

The analysis of Willie Chandran, however, is not complete without a contrastive reference to other works written by Naipaul in approximate ten-year

intervals, spanning the sixties, seventies and eighties: *The Mimic Men, A Bend in* are endowed with remarkable intelligence and linguistic capacity, particularly significant since they narrate in first-person dignified accounts of their past and present plight. While they are telling their story, they are accorded privileges which Lillian Feder (2001: 225) explains referring to one of them: "As narrator, Salim is participant, observer, creator, and creation. At times he is unaware of his drives and motivations operating unconsciously in diverse combinations with external circumstances; at others he is a perceptive, conscious interpreter of his own thoughts and actions". There are many instances where we realize that Willie departs from this model of the vanquished enlightened exile, since there are passages in *Half a Life* in which third-person narration is intended to provide a distance from the character so that his literary ambition is clearly exposed as a shame. The resulting mock-heroic portrait seems more in tune with that of the protagonist of an earlier story such as "A Christmas Story."

There is identity Crisis in V.S. Naipaul's *House for MrBiswas* .Fragmentation, alienation, and exiles are common terms associated with postcolonial literature. Needless to say, imperialism played a key role in bringing a sense of alienation and disorder to the countries where imperialists ruled.

One of the best-known writers in English today is Naipaul, himself a product of post-imperialist society. To some, he might be better known for the controversial material in his travelogues than for his novels. But this does not undermine his acclaim as a novelist. Naipaul is an expatriate from Trinidad whose primary business as a novelist is to project carefully the complex fate of individuals in a cross-cultural society. He has written extensively about different aspects of post-colonial society, but knowingly or unknowingly, whether he is writing a travelogue or a novel, he tends to end up dealing with the identity crisis of an individual. In an interview with Roland Bryden in 1973, Naipaul remarked, "All my works are really one. I am really writing one big book. I come to the conclusion that, considering the nature of the society I came from, considering the nature of the world I have stepped into and the world I have to look at, I could not be a professional novelist in the old sense." (Bryden, 367)

Naipaul's magnum opus, *A House for Mr. Biswas*, can rightly be called a work of art that deals with the problems of isolation, frustration and negation of an individual. It tells the story of its protagonist, Mr. Biswas from birth to death, each section dealing with different phases of Mr. Biswas's life. Here, Naipaul has a more subjective approach towards the problems of identity crisis than the objective one a reader finds in his travelogues, especially on India. Partly autobiographical, *A House for Mr. Biswas* delineates the traumas of a tainted and troubled past and the attempts to find a purpose in life, beautifully analysing the sense of alienation and the pangs of exile experienced by the characters. Speaking about the writings of Afro- Caribbean women in the US, Carol Boyce Davis identifies the urge among migratory writers particularly writers like V.S. Naipaul: Migration creates desire for home, which in turn produces the rewriting of home. Homesickness or homelessness, the rejection of home or longing for home becomes motivating factors in this rewriting. Home can only have meaning once on experience a level of displacement from it. (113) The image of the house is a central, unifying and integrating metaphor around which the life of Mr. Biswas revolves. Delineated in compassionate tones, for Mr. Biswas the house represents a search for emancipation from dependence. The novel paints a poignant picture of Mr. Biswas as he struggles to preserve his own identity in an alien environment and tries to forge an authentic selfhood. Besides focusing on his dark world, the novel introduces brief glimpses of ethnic and social history of the marginalized East Indian community in Trinidad. The narrative tries to maintain equilibrium between Mr. Biswas's inner self and the disinterested outer view. The life of Mr. Biswas resembles the life of Naipaul himself, whose series of experiences of exile and alienation while living in Trinidad seem to be portrayed through the character of his protagonist, Mr. Biswas. Yet, the tone is not negative, nor does the reader find a pessimistic approach on the part of the novelist in his dealing with the problem of identity crisis, a theme found also in Naipaul's other novels. Instead, Naipaul addresses the problem of alienation, exile and displacement with a positive approach. He presents Mr. Biswas' relentless struggle against the forces that try to subdue his individuality. His struggle is long and tiresome, but in the end he is successful in having a space he can call his own. Naipaul describes *A House for Mr. Biswas* in his non-fiction book, *Finding the Center*, saying that it was "very much my father's book. It was written out of his journalism and stories, out of his

knowledge he had got from the way of looking MacGowen had trained him in. It was written out of his writing." (*13*)

Even though Naipaul is revisiting his own past imaginatively throughout *A House for Mr. Biswas*, his novel cannot be seen a family biography and the novelist keeps reasonable distance to the protagonist despite his personal attachment to the book. From the very beginning, Mohun Biswas is depicted as a marginalized individual who is constantly on the move to identify his place in the limited world of Trinidad. In fact, the character of Mr. Biswas is carved out of alienated experience as he tries to find his own roots in the socio-cultural environment around him. In the search of his own identity, Mohun Biswas shifts from village to town and from joint family to nuclear family but fails to find his own roots amidst socio-cultural change. While countless other novelists have depicted identity crises in established societies, Naipaul has depicted a protagonist in a society that is pandemonic and lacking in ideas and creativity.

'Pastorals', the first section of the novel, describes the birth and early childhood of Mr. Biswas. In this section, Hindu way of life with its customs, traditions, rituals, and philosophy of the people receives full expression in the small Indian world created by indentured Indian labourers in an artificially created colonial society of Trinidad. But here, too, it is the superstitious beliefs, the faith and reliance on pundits which cover the initial pages of the novel. Mr. Biswas has six fingers, a symbol of bad luck for his father and family, and this plays a d ecisive role in Mohun's life. Mohun is an alien even in his own family as from the very beginning he is declared unlucky in his horoscope, too, something that makes him an outsider in his own Indian world. He becomes a lonely individual who is trying to get a new social role but fails to a man and his origins and his inability to escape from it. Aware of his loneliness and dilemma, Mr. Biswas tells his son, "I am just somebody. Nobody at all" (279). Unlike his father and brothers who have inherited the social identity of labourers, this cannot be claimed by Mr. Biswas. Mr. Biswas is looking after his uncle's shop while his brothers are working as labourers. After leaving his uncle's store, he takes up a job as sign-painter where he meets Shama, a daughter of the Tulsis (an affluent family of the island), whom he later marries. His marriage makes him realize that life, even after a love-marriage, is not romance, but an act of responsibility.

Without money and without a dowry from the Tulsis, Mr. Biswas has no choice but to move in at Hanuman House. He develops a mental complex due to the disagreeable family atmosphere. To Mr. Biswas, it is a typical joint family which functions on the same pattern as the British empire in West Indies. Hanuman House provides shelter to Mr. Biswas but wants total dilution of his identity in return. In a novel dominated by the house metaphor, Hanuman House is described as follows: An alien white fortress. The concrete walls looked as thick as they were and when the narrow doors of the Tulsi Store on the ground floor were closed the House became bulky, impregnable and blank. The side walls were windowless and on the upper floors the windows were mere slits in the facade. The balustrade which hedged the flat roof was crowned with a concrete statue of the benevolent Monkey God Hanuman. (80-81)

When Mr. Biswas finds out that men are only needed as husbands and labourers or that they are non-existent in the Tulsi family, his inner self rebels. He finds himself unwanted in Hanuman House which he sees as a communal organization where "he was treated with indifference rather than hostility."(188) Although he tries to win acceptance in the family—he "held his tongue and tried to win favour" (188), this does not mean that he is willing to lose his freedom and independence. When Govind, one of Tulsi sons-inlaw, suggests that he leave sign-painting and become a driver for the Tulsi estate, Mr. Biswas immediately voices his dissent: "Give up sign-painting? And my independence? No, boy. My motto is: paddle your own canoe?" (107)

It seems that for Mr. Biswas, sign-painting, taken up by him voluntarily, has become a part of his identity. He refuses to adopt a profession which is associated with the Tulsis, and he is not ready to merge himself to insignificance like other son-in-laws, some of whose names are even forgotten in the Tulsi family. To assert his freedom in Hanuman House, Mr. Biswas joins the Aryans, a group of 'protestant' Hindu missionaries from India, and starts advocating the acceptance of conversion and women's education, on the one hand, and the abolition of the caste system, child marriage, and idol worship, on the other, knowing that these doctrines will anger the Tulsis. Similarly, in order to assert his individuality and to get acknowledged, Mr. Biswas takes up means that are as absurd as they are comic, such as his revenge on Bhandat (spitting in his rum) or giving various nicknames to the Tulsis such as "the

old queen," "the old hen," "the old cow" for Mrs.Tulsi, "the big boss" for Seth, the "constipated holy man" and "holy ghost" for Hari, or "the two Gods" for Tulsi's sons. His attitude makes him "troublesome and disloyal and he could not be trusted" (102). Even when Mr. Biswas's daughter is born, it is Seth and Hari who chose the name Savi for his daughter, not Mr. Biswas himself. To register his protest, Mr. Biswas writes on the birth certificate: "Real calling name: Lakshmi. Signed by Mohun Biswas, father. Below that was the date." (163)

In the section titled 'The Chase', Mr. Biswas begins his independent life with Shama. From the beginning, however, Mr. Biswas has the feeling that in Chase he is an unnecessary and unwanted man and that "real life was to begin for them soon and elsewhere"(147). To Mr. Biswas "Chase was a pause, a preparation." (147) Here, Naipaul, identifies the desire of Mr. Biswas to have a house of his own while also acknowledging the problem of alienation among displaced people. Interestingly, after coming to Chase, Mr. Biswas's attitude towards Hanuman House changes. Whereas he has used to think that Hanuman House is not ordered, he discovers that "the House was the world, more real than the Chase, and less exposed; everything beyond its gates was foreign and unimportant." (188) Mr. Biswas thinks that life in Chase will help him discover his own identity, but it is the sense of isolation that looms large and he fails to find his authentic selfhood. He also discovers that he wants to have his own identity among East Indians. Mr. Biswas now feels that despite hostility, he is recognized as a mimic man in Hanuman House. At Chase he feels alienated. What Naipaul seeks to convey, is that a person's social identity depends on the society to which he belongs, and that the family is sustaining and stabilizing experience for marginalized individuals like Mr. Biswas. For Mr. Biswas, life is meaningless without Shama, his children and even the Tulsis. This makes Mr. Biswas' visits toHanuman House more frequent. Life at Green Vale is a more distressing experience. After the spacious accommodation in Chase, the single room into which he moves with family and furniture leaves him feeling suffocated. Although Green Vale gives him a sense of freedom and importance on Saturdays when wages were both physically and mentally. Here, his dream to build a house begins to shape into reality. It is not that he wants a spacious place for himself, but he wants to be recognized as the father of his children, specially by his son, Anand. For Mr. Biswas, "Anand belonged completely to Tulsis." (216) Mr Biswas' first attempt to claim a portion of the earth fails. This

dream to build a house meets the same result as the doll's house had given to Savi, daughter of Mr. Biswas, on her birthday. Shama, his wife, had to break the house in order to quell the anger of the Tulsis and to satisfy their egos. Somehow, he starts building his house in Green Vale, but it is nowhere near the house of his dreams. Mr. Biswas moves into the finished rooms of his house thinking that the house is going to bring a changed state of mind, but the intensity of alienation and displacement continues and here, too, he fails to gain acceptance as an individual.

The second part of the novel focuses on Port of Spain, a place that opens new avenues for Mr. Biswas. The city provides him with opportunities to establish him professionally, something he has long searched for. He becomes a reporter for the *Trinidad Sentinel*, with a salary of fifteen dollars a month, a job that helps him earn some respect from the Tulsis, too. Now he is not a troublemaker anymore to Mrs. Tulsi. When she offers him two rooms in her house in Port of Spain, he readily accepts. He is not a nonentity anymore. Shama, on her visits to Hanuman House, is able to assert proudly that the "children are afraid of him" (340). Mr. Biswas, too, never feels what he used to feel when Shama is pregnant for the fourth time, "one child claimed; one still hostile, one unknown and now another." (227) His relations with Mrs. Tulsi gradually improve. There is no hostility from either side. For the time being, he forgets his wish to have a space of his own and enjoys his success and family life. His happiness, however, is short-lived. The takeover of the *Trinidad Sentinel* by new authorities, Seth's break-up with Tulsis, and Mrs. Tulsi's decision to live in Shorthills, all come as a blow upsetting the family hierarchy upon which the Tulsi family has used to run.

Through the family hierarchy of the Tulsis, Naipaul, in my view, tries to portray the typical Indian joint families where the authority of senior members is absolute. The absence of this authority means disintegration of the family. Here, too, in the Tulsi family, the disturbance of this hierarchy (due to the absence of Seth and Mrs. Tulsi) leads to dissension and disunity in the family. Instead of co-operation, a competition between Mr. Biswas's son, Anand, and Govind's son, Vidiyadhar, follows. Mr. Biswas'ambition to have a house re-surfaces after his shift to Shorthills. He has exhausted all his savings to build the house there. But the house is not conveniently situated. Shama has to walk a mile daily for shopping and there is also a problem of transportation. The children, too, want to return to Port of Spain. Even

though the house is not the house of his dreams, it helps him realise his responsibility as expected to lead to a discovery of his authentic selfhood and a proclamation of his identity. This time, owning a house comes out of the humiliation inflicted on his son and Mr. Biswas's helplessness to protect his family. At that point, the house will be on a piece of land where he and his family can live with self-respect and dignity. Even his wife, Shama, agrees to leave the house although she earlier advocated living with the Tulsi family, saying, "I do not want anything bigger. This is just right for me. Something small and nice." (580)

Mr. Biswas manages to get a loan from Ajodha and buys a house in Port of Spain. He describes his house thus: "The sun came through the open window on the ground floor and struck the kitchen wall. Wood work and frosted glass were hot to the touch. The inside brick wall was warm. The Sun went through the home and laid dazzling strips on the exposed staircase." (572)

Naipaul uses words like 'sun' and 'dazzling' in his description of the house, words that clearly reveal Mr. Biswas's sense of fulfilment. Later, Mr. Biswas discovers many flaws in the house, but the sense of satisfaction that he owns a house is there. Naipaul seems to suggest that for displaced people like Mr. Biswas, owning a house is not just a matter getting a shelter from heat, cold or rain. In fact, it is both an imposition of order and a carving-out of authentic selfhood within the heterogeneous and fragmented society of Trinidad. The novel portrays Mr. Biswas as a man who stays put; struggling against the hostile environment instead of running away from it.The theme of cultural disintegration receives detailed treatment in *A House for Mr. Biswas*, a novel describing three generations of East Indians. Naipaul's novel succeeds in transcending the individual self by universalizing the issue of alienation. Unlike Naipaul's earlier novels, this novel is not light-hearted, perhaps because the hero is engaged in a serious battle against the forces of oppression. The novel even grows gloomier as Biswas's struggle with the Tulsis becomes more complex. Nevertheless, as it does not end on a tragic note, this is not a novel of despair. Ultimately, Mr. Biswas succeeds. In the end, he finally has a house of his own. The meaning of *A House for Mr. Biswas* is made richly clear in the Prologue: How terrible it would have been, at this time, to be without it; to have died among the Tulsis; amid of the squalor of that large, disintegrating and indifferent family; to have left Shama and the children among them, in one room; worse, to have lived without

even attempting to lay claim to one's portion of the earth; to have lived and died as one had been born, unnecessary and unaccommodated. The choice of the protagonist's name in *A House for Mr. Biswas* is also interesting. Naipaul seems to have carefully chosen this name. His aim is not only to depict the Hindu background but also to relate it to the circumstances in which he is living. For instance, the protagonist's first name is Mohun, which means 'beloved' (according to the novel), even though he is depicted as an individual who is branded as unlucky and who experiences hostility and humiliation from society. Similarly, his surname, Biswas, means trust. While writing the novel, Naipaul seems to have decided to give the novel a happy ending, which is why he created a determined protagonist who, despite his unsuccessful attempts in the early stages, finally gains a piece of space which he can call his own. That may be the main reason why Naipaul instead of using the first name, Mohun, addresses the protagonist 'Mr. Biswas,' adding 'Mr.' to the surname to make his character dignified. According to Gordon Rohlehr, Naipaul is able to present a hero who is "in all his littleness and still preserve a sense of man's inner dignity." (Rohlehr 190) The language of the novel is simple and unaffected by literary fashion. The novel is part of Naipaul's early phase as a novelist when he, through his novel *A House for Mr. Biswas,* seems to search for his own identity so that he can understand his own place in the world. In Naipaul's own words, "Most imaginative writers discover themselves, and their word, through their work." (Naipaul, *Return* 211) In post colonial societies, the crisis of identity often seems to override all considerations. In Caribbean context this crisis is more acute. The social identity of people is rooted in their culture while at individual level it is determined by personal achievements. In order to achieve 'completeness' it is necessary to fuse individual and social consciousness. However, this affinity is broken and more evident in an artificially created colonial society like Trinidad.

Evidently, Naipaul, a diasporic writer, is the product of this very society. He has written many fictional and non-fictional works but his critically acclaimed novel is *A House for Mr.Biswas* where he sensitively deals with East Indians' struggle to find a foothold and quest for identity in the New World. The novel is on several levels a fictive version of Naipaul's family history. In the novel the protagonist Mohun Biswas tries to overcome the limitations imposed on him by putting up a relentless struggle against the forces that tries to suppress his individuality. The main

theme is the identity crisis but at the background it is the cultural clash and the gradual disintegration of East Indian community forms the major pre-occupation. The novel has autobiographical design but in truer sense the novel succeeds in transcending the individual 'self' by universalizing the issue of alienation and rootlessness in Postcolonial World and by capturing the diasporic feelings of an otherwise global citizen named Mohun Biswas.

To sum up, writers of almost all diaspora, including Naipaul, have sought to record the manner in which they chose and adopted their new environment and experienced identification, nostalgia, and loss from and to their old and new homelands. This bonding of culture, religion, ancestry, literature and history is especially strong in diasporic situation, but where it provides new patterns of ethnic identity, it can also place in a situation of exclusion in the metropolitan zones of the West.

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VII

Conclusion

In the course of our study in the foregoing chapters, we have embarked upon analysing in detail a novel by novel analysis of the theme, structure and significance of Naipaul's works.We have also evaluated Naipaul's development as a writer, while setting the texts in their autobiographical,philosophical, social, political, colonial and postcolonial contexts. Eventually, as it appears, Naipaulhasgiven a new shape to the West Indian literary tradition on the basis of his anchorage to the Western and Indian literary traditions. He has obviously emerged as an international writer whose subject matter includes the Caribbean, England, India, Africa, the United States, Argentina, and contemporary Islamic world.

Naipaul was the grandson of Hindu immigrants from East India. During the early six years of his life, his family lived in his maternal grandparents' imposing home, which was known as Lion House and which formed the model for the Tulsi home in *A House for Mr Biswas.* Much like the children of Mr. Biswas, theNaipauls passed through a struggling period before finally settling down in Port of Spain, the ethnically and racially mixed capital of Trinidad and Tobago. A good student who had been drilled at home in vocabulary and comprehension by his journalist father, Naipaul won a scholarship to Trinidad's finest high school and later a government scholarship to study abroad. Like Anand in *A House for Mr Biswas,* V. S. Naipaul went to Oxford University. He earned a degree in English literature in 1954 and remained in England to pursue a writing career. He supported himself by working as a freelancer and editor for the British Broadcasting Corporation radio program *Caribbean Voices*. During this time, he wrote shortstories set in Trinidad. The stories were published some years later as *Miguel Street*. In 1958 his first novel, *The Mystic Masseur,* a comic story of a Trinidadian conman, was accepted for publication. *A House for Mr Biswas*(1961)brought him international reputation. Reviewers in the United States and England admired his writing, both for its sense of humour and for its portrayal of people who felt separated from the culture of their own. After the success of *A House for Mr Biswas*, the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, who was also a historian, asked the novelist to consider writing a nonfiction work about the Caribbean. Naipaul felt uncertain about his ability to write nonfiction but decided to accept a scholarship to travel through the islands. This assignment was the

beginning of his expanded career as a journalist, and he became known as a writer who looked beneath the surface of a culture to examine its social and cultural underpinnings. Naipaul’s book about the Caribbean, *The Middle Passage* (1963), angered many Trinidadians, because it criticized social conditions in the newly independent colony. Soon Naipaul received a grant to write about India, his ancestors’ homeland. Before his journey to India, Naipaul had hoped that he would experience there a sense of belonging that he had not felt in Trinidad or England. But India’s poor living conditions and failure to make progress disappointed him.

Naipaul's travel books, *The Middle Passage*, *An Area of Darkness*, *India: A Wounded Civilization*, *Among the Believers*, *A Million Mutinies* and *A Turn in the South* have been discussed widely and have generated intense debate. In 1960 he began travelling and recording his impressions of postcolonial societies in South America, India and the West Indies, as well as post imperial England. Although he is described as a postcolonial writer he seems very comfortable working within the English 'tradition', much more so than other postcolonial writers like Salman Rushdie, Caryl Phillips and AmitavGhosh.

Naipaul is generally considered as a British writer. His output is evenly divided between fiction and travel journalism. His unwillingness to excuse what he considers evil, stupid, or foolish on the part of the governments and the peoples of developing countries sometimes offends those concerned and affect outside observers as well. Naipaul has won Britain’s top literary awards - including the Booker Prize. Queen Elizabeth knighted Naipaul for his achievements in literature.

The entire postcolonial diasporic literature exhibits mixed feelings through the essential dichotomies marking the lives of émigrés’. Love-hate relationships, contradictions between ‘self’ and the ‘other’, native-alien clash of cultures, hybridity,creolisation, nostalgia, mimicking tendency, sense of alienation and ultimate disillusionment prevail throughout Naipaul’s works. It is like in one way or the other. In his case, seemingly commonplacepostcolonial jargons make it convenient to penetrate deeper into the predicament of the peopleliving their lives in flux. The absurdity of so called civilizing mission is exposed in the novels bysatirizing the concept of ‘white man’s burden’. The natives, however, feel perpetually trapped in

their native socio-cultural setting for the destined wretchedness making them embrace the borrowedculture, language, fashion and style, only to experience the ever-prevailing and ever-tormenting ambivalence, which destabilises their lives in entirety. Naipaul, in this context, remains a typical case study of suchan equivocaland conflicting social matrix.

Naipaul has been beholden to history and as a scholar of history and modern historiography; he has made a significant contribution to it.Most of his works are travelogues in which he has investigated into some significant and controversial matters with skeptical vigour. Writers have made considerable use of history in their fictional writings and have striven to represent their past through fictional worlds with a new perspective on it. They tend to recast and reassess the prevalent views about their past. The writers often tend to recast and re-assess the prevalent views about their past, but Naipaul has his own ways of (re)visioning the ways of the world.

Naipaul's travel books and novels areessentially set in one time British colonies or in post-imperial England, and his attitude to developing countries such as India is one of disparagement and disappointment.He tends to offer a rather harsh critique of postcolonial societies from the perspective of a member of such a society. Unlike colonial travel writings, this venture cannot be accused of racism, as it brings to the fore the typical cases of mimicry, hybridization and diasporic longing in a multicultural social setting.

In postcolonial studies 'mimicry' is considered as unsettling imitations that are characteristic of postcolonialcultures. It is a desire to sever the ties with 'self' in order to move towards 'other'. Salimconfesses his penchant for colonial mimicry when he wishes to desert his roots: "Iwanted to break away. To break away from my family and community also meant breaking away from myunspoken commitment…" (BR, 31)

However, most of the postcolonial critics agree that mimicry disrupts the colonial discourse by*double vision*, *double articulation* or the *forked tongue*. Bhabha finds mimicry to be characterized by indeterminacy and a sign of double articulation. The dichotomy between 'self' and 'Other' being most striking feature of colonial discourse, he justifies mimicry of the 'Other' because, for a colonial, 'Other'

visualizes power. Salim acknowledges the significance of powerful ‘Other’ for the denizens of decolonised African colony when he asserts:

> When I was a child Europe ruled my world... Europe no longer ruled. But it still fed us in a hundred ways with its language and sent us its increasingly wonderful goods, things which, in the bush of Africa, added year by year to our idea of who we were, gave us that idea of our modernity and development, and made us aware of another Europe—the Europe of great cities, great stores, great buildings, great universities. To the Europe onlythe privileged or the gifted among us journeyed. (BR,246)

Nevertheless, the elusive reformatory zeal among the colonials referred as "mimic men" by Bhabhaand Naipaul is misleading and fatal. It is because, these postcolonial mimic men are authorized versions of otherness, and thus part-objects of a metonymy of colonial desire emerging in the process as inappropriate colonial subjects. The ‘self’ vs. ‘Other ‘dichotomy’ inevitably results into perpetual uncertainty, fluidity and permanent disillusionment within the colonized. Their situation has become all the more shaky and wavering.Salim admits that his ambivalence and love-hate relationship with the ‘Other’ has ultimately made his life more meaningless. Heobserves:“I was in Africa one day; I was in Europe the next morning. It was like being in two places at once. Both places were real: both places were unreal. You could play off one against the other; and you had no feeling of having made a final decision, a great last journey.” (246)

Theproblematics of mimicry lies in the fact that it repeats rather than represents,which further leads the mimic man to realize his nothingness and insignificance. In this context the remarks of Ralph Kripal Singh, the ambivalent hero of*The Mimic Men* is relevant: “We pretend to be real, to be learning, to be preparing ourselves for life, we mimic men of the New World, one unknown corner of it, with all its reminders of the corruption that came so quicklyto the new.” (MM, 416)Ganesh, Ralph Kripal Singh, Jimmy Ahmed and Willey Chandran (all Naipaul’s characters) are typical colonial figures lost in the world of oblivion; theysever their ties with their roots in the process of mimicking the ‘Other’. They are obsessed with the idea of mimicking the Other.

Disenchanted by their native conditions, they hide their identity under the garb of borrowed culture and hence start assuming the lies of white men.
The mimicking tendency is not only noticed among the colonized: rather, it is equally threatening for thecolonizer i.e. the people whose fate is 'writ by finger of the Divine'. In the novel *Guerillas*, thecharacters like Jane and Roche land on the Caribbean island with a mission to reform but their enterprise endsup in disillusionment and decay. Unaware of the fact that "it is the wrong time everywhere else too,…They land in the Caribbean island to find a meaning and purpose of their otherwise insignificantlives. On the other hand the decolonized natives have started "doing what they see the big people doing. (**G**, 256)

In *A Bend in the River*, Salim relies too much on the representation of thecolony by the Europeans. He asserts: "All that I know of our history and the history of the Indian Ocean Ihave got from books written by Europeans… without Europeans, I feel, all our past would have been washedaway…" (18) Moreover, the introduction of a Europeanized institution named Domain in theAfrican Colony with the motto *discipline avan tout* i.e. 'Discipline Above All', in the name of Domain with shoddy grandeur, the ambivalent President "… was creating modern Africa … He was bypassingreal Africa … wished to show us a new Africa." (110) With the mimicking ideology of thePresident, Africans were kept away from European atmosphere generated by Domain.This excessive reliance on the colonizers, according to Bhabha, exhibits the popular colonial belief that "theblack man stops being an actional person for only the white man can represent his self-esteem." (Bhabha,126) The perpetual distress and distrust prevailing among the colonial natives has made them becomeconscious of their eventual frustration. Salim's comments on the fate of the mimic men are revealing:"It was in the history of the land: here man had always been prey. You don't feel malice towards your prey. Youset a trap for him. It fails ten times; but it is always the same trap you set. The people were malins because theylived with the knowledge of men as prey."(**BR,** 62)

The failure of the colonial mimic men is further determined by 'hybridity', which subverts the narratives of colonial power and dominant cultures. Though the ambivalence marks the lives of allcolonials, hybridity and multicultural locale adds to its intensity. Ferdinand, 'an unprotected boy full ofambition' and a native of mixed heritage in *A Bend in the River* feels even more insecure as he has no culturalgroup

where he can feel associated. Salim finds that Ferdinand's ambivalence is twice agonizing and his"affectations were more than affectations … his personality had become fluid." (**BR**, 55) The seriesof inclusions and exclusions on which a dominant culture is premised are deconstructed by the very entry of theformerly-excluded subjects into the mainstream discourse. In *Half a Life*, Willey Chandran's journeymarks the movement towards empire and back as futile and senselessness not only because of indeterminacyprevailing among one culture but also because of the hybridity intensifying the anguish among the colonialexpatriates.Father Huismans' sense of belongingness with the natives could make nothing happen as his sincere effort todefend hybridity and multiculturalism was viewed as a plot conspired by the Europeans. Huismans' defence of*hybridity* seems to be based on the belief that the colonial ambivalence is an evident illustration of itsuncertainty; and second, that the migration of yesterday's "savages" from their peripheral spaces to the homes oftheir "masters" underlies a blessing. Killing of missionaries like Huismans' implies the resentment among thenatives against cultural assimilation. However, Father's murder couldn't stop the process.Salim's bitterness is relevant here:"But now we, who remained— outsiders, but neither settlers nor visitors, just people with nowhere better to go—put our heads down and got on with our business…. After each setback, the civilization of Europe wouldbecome a little more secure at the bend in the river." (**BR**, 95)

However, it further substantiates the idea that "Third-Worlding" the centre or "First-Worlding" the margins creates 'fissures' within the very structures that sustain them. It simply aggravates the distress of the colonialswho feel that "It isn't that there's no right and wrong here. There's no right" (102). Meanwhile,Bill Ashcroft, prominent postcolonial critic, contends that culture is a dynamic forcethat is always in a condition of absorption and production and hence the idea of a cultural purity that existedprior to the colonial invasion is mistaken and totalitarian. Ashcroft condemns this notion of cultural purity andpersuasively argues that all cultural interactions indelibly change both participants, irrespective of the nature ofthe relationship. He locates the anguish of the colonials in the obstinacy and inadaptability. Contrarily, Naipaul captures the colonial natives distributing pamphlets with a passionate appeal to condemn the initiativeto affect the purity of African culture:

> By ENEMY we mean the powers of imperialism, the multi-nationals and the puppet powers that be, the falsegods, the capitalists, the priests and teachers who give false interpretations. The law encourages crime. Theschools teach ignorance and people practice ignorance in preference to their true culture. (**BR**, 228-29)

The distress of the African natives in *A Bend in the River*, perhaps lies in their insistence on lack of tactfulness oftheir culture as observed by Salim who comments: “Once the Arabs had ruled here; then the Europeans hadcome; now the Europeans were about to go away. But little had changed in the manners or minds of men.”(18) Nonetheless, apprehending the consequences of the heterogeneity and hybridity, we have to accept that from such a colonial encounter between the white presence and its black semblance, thereemerges the question of the ambivalence of mimicry as a problematic of colonial subjection.

Thus, the concepts of mimicry, ambivalence and resultant disillusionment find proper representationin Naipaul, who being a sojourner and nomad himself, could have better understood the colonial situation, whereeverybody is ‘trampling on the past’. He has truly universalized the colonial predicament of mimic men; thus the statement: “You mustn’t think it’s bad just for you. It’s bad for everybody …. Nobody’s going anywhere.We’re all going to hell…” (291)

Contrastingly, the postcolonial literature is often viewed as the combination of initial dislocation, the possibility of gregarious acceptance of any new home. The homelessness can also be achieved due to multiple border crossings. Through their migration as border intellectuals, a new form of community becomes possible, a community of ‘un-homely’; a new internationalism, a gathering of people in the diaspora. To live in the un-homely world, to find its ambivalences and ambiguities enacted in the world of fiction, or its sundering and splitting performed in the work of art, is also to affirm a profound desire for social solidarity.

In the same vein, Naipaul has always resisted any attempts to be assigned either with national or political affiliations, causes which might limit his intellectual

freedom. Yet his work has inevitably had serious political repercussions, particularly when he has explicitly denigrated the potentiality of whole communities as we see as early as *The Middle Passage* (1962) in which he made the now infamous statement Nothing was created in the West Indies or, more recently, in his *Among the Believers* which provoked the ire of Muslim readers worldwide for its narrow and reductive vision of Islam.

Such abrasive commentaries on the failures of colonial and postcolonial societies have inevitably been read with dismay by many critics. They have also caused much controversy, not least amongst his fellow writers. Derek Walcott, a fellow 1992 Nobel winner and Caribbean poet has criticized his 'chronic disspiritedness' and called him 'V. S. Nightfall' in one of his poems. Salman Rushdie has not only condemned Naipaul's *The Enigma of Arrival* for being devoid either of passion or love but more recently, accused him of aligning himself with the dangerous and fascistic elements of Hindu nationalism. Paul Theroux (for whom Naipaul was an early mentor and friend) does not either mince his words in his scathing denouncement of both the man and his work in *Sir Vidia's Shadow*. Whilst such attacks on the political irresponsibility of Naipaul's position as a member of a coterie of elitist writers who play largely to a Western readership are not without foundation, his autobiographical and non-fictional essays make a clear case for a fiction which attempts to defy and breakdown traditional boundaries. As such, he posits a worldview that is sometimes unpalatable but fearless in its truth-telling, a vision which applies its critical eye as much to the failures in Western history as to the often deracinated protagonists of the 'Third-world' societies he describes. Whilst his recent travelogues have been more sympathetic in tone than perhaps the scathing tone of the harsh denunciations in early pieces such as *An Area of Darkness* (1964), Naipaul's voice remains (rather, like the traveller at the opening of his Booker-winning novella, *In a Free State* (1971) that of the outsider, the voyeur looking on ata world whichhe has not entered fully and does not wish to embrace.

Yet Naipaul remains one of the most widely read and admired literary figures of the contemporary world. He has never been afraid to discuss the pains of his own position as we see in *Reading and Writing* (2000) or, complacent about the responsibilities of his craft (see *Finding the Centre* (1984)). If in the 1990s, Naipaul

focused primarily on non-fiction, he has returned in his most recent books *A Way in the World* (1994) and *Half a Life* (2001) to a more intimate semi-autobiographical voice. Moreover, as is evident in Naipaul's description of his character, Leonard Side, in *A Way in the World*, it is the reconstitution of memory as active agent and subject of the present which holds the key perhaps to unlocking the Manichean divisions of Naipaul's dislocated migrant past. As he says: “With learning now I can tell you more or less how we all came to be where we were... I can give you that historical bird's eye view. But I cannot explain the mystery ... Most of us know the parents or grandparents we come from. But we go back and back, forever; we all of us go back to the very beginning; in our blood and bone and brain we carry the memories of thousands of beings....We cannot understand all the traits we have inherited. Sometimes we can be strangers to ourselves.”

In fine, V.S. Naipaul is one of the most celebrated names in English fiction today. In his fiction, Naipaul presents a subtle and sensitive account of the poignant experiences of the colonized people. On the other hand, his commitment to truth makes him conscious and critical of the shortcomings of traditional cultures as well. This, added to his vision of the world, makes him a highly controversial writer.

Naipaul is often accused of undermining the historical, political and creative potential of the Caribbean. But if we look at it from another perspective, his narrative of exile which is pervasively despairing (as opposed to nihilistic), is a complex indictment of the experience and effects of colonialism, especially, the fragmentation of the self. Fragmentation in his works distances the subject to a great extent, from the possibility of achieving a sense of reality or stability of self. Eventually, Naipaul's fictional and non-fictional writings trace a self-conscious symptomatic response to the need to discover an appropriate literary form to frame a psychic and symbolic sense of homelessness. A need, as many have observed, to write constantly about 'unhousing' while still remaining unhoused, to find a way of inhabiting an inherited language and 'tradition' which because of his 'colonial'

education and childhood as a twice-removed descendant of a Brahmin indentured family in Trinidad, simultaneously alienated him.

Naipaul's project as a writer can then best be seen as one which is located in the need to come to terms with the effects of a self-imposed literary exile and the dislocations created by the 'passing away' of Empire. This has however been less a political interest in the making and unmaking of 'Third world' societies than a psychic need to write and rewrite the self within the trauma of that history. In attempting over a long and distinguished career, to revision his location as twice-born immigrant both within Trinidad and Britain and later, in his exploration of his other 'area of darkness' - India - he has constantly shown that the stories of colonialism and its post-Imperial aftermath engendered what might be called, the continuous story of a 'narrative of anxiety'. For over and over again, it is the process of writing itself which becomes the means of travel, anact of intervention and survival. And it is through the craft of writing that Naipaul writes himself anew whilst at the same time (re)visioning the unfinished business of the past.

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