

## Chapter – I

### An Introduction: The Making of V. S. Naipaul

#### I.1 Purpose and Objective of the Research

The aim of this research is to analyze and compare V. S. Naipaul's trilogy of travel books on India, comprising *An Area of Darkness* (1964), *India: A Wounded Civilization* (1977) and *India: A Million Mutinies Now* (1990). This trilogy summarizes and describes the author's visits to India in 1962, 1975 and 1988 respectively and provides detailed account of comments and descriptions of India and its people. It seems that Naipaul is revealing not only the true state of modern Indian existence, but also his own personality, which is highly reflected in his characterizations. The feeling of disillusion and frustration by Indian cultural heritage and the mentality of Indian people may be considered one of the most important features of this trilogy.

This thesis studies the 'nation' from an emigrant's perspective. It questions the identity of India which goes beyond geographical boundaries. A perspective of the emigrant helps to broaden the framework within which India is defined. In his acclaimed 'Indian trilogy', Naipaul critically evaluates Indian history, culture and politics. These books take the reader on a voyage from India that was 'an area of darkness' which has lost its values and culture to a place which is 'a wounded civilization,' and later on Naipaul discovers where 'a million mutinies' are happening. The study will try to show how Naipaul's writings can be read as a record of the history of the first four decades of post-independence India. Instead of theorizing or fictionalizing India, in his travelogues, Naipaul offers a realistic picture of Indian society, culture, politics and economy.

While reading and examining his Indian travelogues, it is extremely important to be aware of Naipaul's relationship to India, which makes his trilogy unique and differentiates it from a typical travel book. These are not the mere summaries of the most important characteristics of India, but it is a very personal confession of an intimate relationship of a descendant of the Indian emigrant to his mother country.

Naipaul's Brahmin origins afford his descriptions a very subjective and original point of view. The author usually refers to India as "the country from which my grandfather came, a country never physically described and therefore never real, a country out in the void beyond the dot of Trinidad" (Naipaul, 1964, 55)

In the beginning, an attempt has been made to introduce the author. His figure is extremely important to be able to understand the development and shaping of the ideas throughout the whole trilogy. Naipaul's identity and his position within the world are very intricate. His Hindu origins, Trinidadian birth and permanent residence in England are highly reflected in his writing. The feeling of uprootedness as well as the strong bond with his ancestral country is influencing his own perception of India and Indian people.

Further, the researcher would like to analyse and examine each of the three books of the trilogy. It is noteworthy to see how Naipaul gradually changes his attitudes through this trilogy. His sentiments on India go through remarkable transformations as the time passes, as the author gets more experienced and as India changes in almost thirty years that the trilogy covers.

Each of these books is literally flooded with minute observation and skilful thoughts. Nevertheless, in this thesis, the researcher tries to concentrate on what are the most important features in Naipaul's travelogues. He mostly comments on the Indian colonial past and its influence on the present situation in India. Hindu principles and the caste system playing a very important role in India are widely discussed and examined in terms of social structure, mentality and intellectual capacities of Indian people. The author's enormous interest is driven to the figure of Mahatma Gandhi, the greatest Indian spiritual leader and the founder of the nationalist movement, who drove India through its struggle for independence. Naipaul's examination and description undergo major changes as the trilogy proceeds. What definitely cannot be omitted is the visual aspect of India to which the writer often draws the reader's attention. The detailed, colourful descriptions of the landscapes, cities and people provide the reader with a lively picture of India. All these factors together form an exceedingly advanced vision of India through the author's eyes. Last but not the least,

V. S. Naipaul's identity is also revealed and examined in his books. As the author sometimes consciously, sometimes unknowingly cognises himself through his Indian experience, he unveils his identity and personality.

## **I.2 Making of a Writer**

### **I.2.1 Early Childhood**

Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul was born in 1932 in an Indian-style house that his maternal grandfather had built in Chaguanas. His maternal grandfather had come to Trinidad as an indentured laborer on a five-year contract. He stayed on, made a lot of money and built a large house in Chaguanas. However, in 1926, he returned to India taking with him a woman with the intention of settling down in his native village in eastern Uttar Pradesh. His own wife and children stayed back. Unfortunately, he passed away during the train journey from Calcutta and never saw his village. The woman with him reached the village and settled there. Naipaul has written about his meeting with her in *An Area of Darkness* as well as in *Finding the Centre*. He writes that “her India had remained intact; her world had remained whole; no other idea of reality had broken through. It was different for thousands of others”. (Naipaul, 1985, 53). And that was because she was accepted and absorbed into the community. But thousands of Indians desperate to return had to face a different fate. Facing all odds they managed to book a passage on the Ganges that was to repatriate them but all that they saw on reaching Calcutta were “hundreds of derelicts, previously repatriated, who wanted now to be taken back.....India for these people had been a dream of home, a dream of continuity after the illusion of Trinidad. All the India they had found was the area around the Calcutta docks” (Naipaul, 1985, 53)

To Naipaul and his family India was just a far off dream. He grew up knowing nothing about his father's family and very little about his mother's family. It was only in 1972 that he got a complete idea of his family history. Indians had started coming to Trinidad around 1845 to the labor lost by the abolition of slave trade. They came on a five-year contract at the end of which they were to be given either a piece of land on the island or a free passage to India. But these promises were seldom kept and most

Indians found themselves homeless and penniless at the end of five years. His paternal grandfather had come to Trinidad as an infant in the arms of his mother who had accepted indenture around 1800. His grandfather was trained to be a Pundit through sustained efforts of his mother so as to follow the family tradition. However, his grandfather died young, leaving behind a penniless widow and three children. The bereaved family was to be sent to India, but just before the ship was to sail out, the youngest child refused to go and cleverly hid himself till his mother changed her mind about going back to India. The child was Naipaul's father, Sreeprasad Naipaul. They stayed on in Trinidad. The eldest child, a daughter was sent to work in a relative's house and she never learnt how to read and write. The elder son was sent to work on the sugar estates for a small amount of eight cents a day. The younger son, Naipaul's father was sent to stay with a wealthy maternal uncle so that he could be educated and trained to be a pundit. He went to school in the mornings and worked hard in his uncle's shop at night and thus got his education. He later became a journalist with the *Trinidad Guardian*. With the realization that dawned on him with the discovery of his family history in 1972, Naipaul says, he "worked back to proper wonder" at his father's achievement.

Naipaul's father strove hard for "the life of the mind-the writer's life" and gave his children a good education. (Gillon, 2000, Letter-1) Naipaul studied at the prestigious Queen's Royal College in Port of Spain and then moved on to University College, Oxford on a Trinidad Government Scholarship. Naipaul's elder sister Kamla studied in the Women's College at Banaras Hindu University, also on a scholarship. It was in the letters of Kamla written from Banaras that Naipaul had his first real glimpse of India. The first letter in *Letters Between a Father and Son* is from a seventeen-year-old Naipaul to Kamla who was then staying in Varanasi. He urges her to keep her eyes open "and let me know whether Beverly Nicholas is right...He saw the filth; refused to mention the 'spirituality' that impresses another kind of visitor" (Gillon, 2000, Letter-5) In a letter to Kamla written two months after the first one, Naipaul writes, "I want you to promise that you will write a book in diary form about your stay in India...study conditions; analyze the character. Don't be too bitter. Try to be humorous" In order to

cheer up his unhappy sister, he jokes about a book that she can think of writing. He even gets it a title- “*My Passage to India: A Record of Six Unhappy Months* by Kamla Naipaul”. (Naipaul, 1990, 517). Kamla never wrote the book but fifteen years later in 1964, Naipaul wrote *An Area of Darkness*.

### **1.2.2 Inheritance of the Craft of Writing**

Naipaul had inherited his ambition to be a writer from his father Sreepasad Naipaul who had struggled all his life between financial dependence on his wife’s family and his admiration for the craft of writing which he felt would help him break free from the ‘constrictions of Chaguanas’ and the chaos of his wife’s joint family (Naipaul, 1985, 71). Naipaul in *Finding the Centre* has recorded a gift he received from his father when he was three years old. It was a decorated anthology of poetry on which his father had inscribed:

To Vidhiadhar, from his father. Today you have reached the span of three tears, 10 months and 15 days. And I make this present to you with this counsel in addition. Live up to the estate of man, follow truth, be kind and gentle and trust God. (Naipaul, 1985, 72)

It was his gift of ‘the word’ to his son. Two years later, when Naipaul was six, their unit in the joint family moved to Port of Spain to stay with his father. It was then that father and son came closer. Naipaul was introduced to his father’s ‘book case-and desk’. (Ghosh, 1989, 74) It was the first piece of furniture that he could call his own. Naipaul would go through his father’s papers with a mixed sense of awe and delight at seeing his father’s name in the print. It was during this time that his father read *Oliver Twist* and *David Copperfield* to him. This love for Dickens stayed with him. Decades later in his self-explorations in *The Enigma of Arrival* he wrote: “Very few had the universal child’s eye of Dickens” Naipaul records this period as the ‘serenest’ in his life. However, it did not last long. At the end of two years, the family was forced to return to the disorder of the joint family of his maternal grandmother.

Naipaul grew up amidst disorder and chaos and came to hate it. More so, after the two years of ordered life in Port of Spain it was because of this repulsion for disorder that father and son came closer. There was no relief even when the family moved back to Port of Spain after a two-year stay at the cocoa estate. With an ever-increasing number of relatives flowing in, their living space was cramped. But even then 'like a wild religious faith that hardens in adversity, this wish to be a writer strengthened ....'(Naipaul, 1985, 38) Naipaul's Father involved him in the making of a story that he was writing during those days. He read out each new part to him, each new turn of events and Naipaul watched it grow. Apart from this, his father also read out his other stories to him. In 1946, when Naipaul was fourteen, Sreepasad Naipaul bought his own house and the family was on its own once again.

### **1.2.3 An Opportunity to study in Oxford University**

The idea of being a writer, "a fantasy of nobility", made young Naipaul want to break away from his world, his family and clan, city and colony. In 1949, Naipaul won a Trinidad Government scholarship and in 1950, he left for University College, Oxford to study English. In one of his earliest letters to his sister Kamla, he writes of his departure from Trinidad: '....and at about 12.50, V. S. Naipaul was cut off from all family ties' (Gillion, 2000, Letter-12) But physical distancing from Trinidad was not enough. Naipaul felt weighed down by his closed upbringing, he could not relate to other societies: My inability to understand other societies made nonsense of Huxley and D. H. Lawrence and Evelyn Waugh I tried to read...."(Naipaul, 1985, 39) Then there were the confusions of history. Naipaul had to grow up "with two ideas of history, almost two ideas of time." One of these was the history he studied at school that was comprehensible and the other was the history of his ancestry that he came across at home. The latter seemed to him extremely remote and "almost as imaginary as the land of the *Ramayana*.... Citing an example of 1919, Naipaul explains how 1919 as the year of Gandhi's first call for disobedience in India seemed recent but 1919 in the life of the Indians in Trinidad was "a time, beyond recall, mythical". These confusions plague him throughout. "True knowledge of geography and with it a sense of historical wonder" came to him many years later while he was working on a history of the Trinidad

islands. He read about the region, about Sir Walter Raleigh's raids, like he had never read in a school textbook. He also discovered the original name and history of his birthplace, Chaguanas. In his pursuit of the profession of a writer, Naipaul wanted to cut himself off from his past and if he did, he would "die from intellectual starvation". But then, after writing his first book, Naipaul awoke to a new realization:

To become a writer, that noble thing, I had thought it necessary to leave. Actually to write, it was necessary to go back. It was beginning of self-knowledge (Naipaul, 1985, 40)

In *The Enigma of Arrival*, Naipaul has described his earliest attempts at being a writer. He has described how at the age of eighteen he had written a short piece called 'The Gala Night' based on metropolitan material. The "fracture" between the writing and the man that he described, surfaced many a time:

....the idea given to me by my education....was that the writer was a person possessed of sensibility; that the writer was someone who recorded or displayed an inward development. So...the ideas of Bloomsbury, ideas bred essentially out of empire, wealth and imperial security had been transmitted to me in Trinidad. To be that kind of writer (as I interpreted it) I had to be false; I had to pretend to be other than I was, other than what a man of my background could be. Concealing this colonial-Hindu self below the writing personality, I did both my material and myself much damage. (Naipaul, 1987, 134)

The man and the writer that had separated in 1950 on leaving Trinidad came together five Years later in 1955 in a BBC room in London as the typewriter clicked away a distant Port of Spain memory: "Every morning when he got up Hat would sit on the banister of his back verandah and shout across, 'What happening there, Bogart?'" (Naipaul, 1985, 16) There was no looking back after that. Books followed in quick succession amidst widespread acclaim. The writer had been made, father's dream accomplished.

#### 1.2.4 Trinidad-centre of early writing

The very fact that Naipaul had to his “colonial-Hindu” self for his material implies directly that his writing would be built around his diasporic concerns. *The Mystic Masseur* (1957), *The Suffrage of Elvira* (1958) and *Miguel Street* (1959), his first three books span the period from the beginning of World War II to around 1950. All three are genial satires on the Trinidad society. *Miguel Street* (1959) a collection of seventeen stories, is a record of observations of the author. The language is the original Trinidadian English. It was written with a concern but with a certain detachment too. In the end the narrator leaves the street and goes to England for an education because he “...no longer wanted to be like Eddoes” (Naipaul, 1959, 165). It is the first record of his insights as a Trinidad East Indian. *The Mystic Masseur* (1957) sees the rise of Ganesh (a carryover from Ganesh Pundit) from a nonentity to G. Ramay Muir, Esq., M. B. E. It is a rise from failure to success. *The Suffrage of Elvira* (1958) is about democracy coming to an obscure island of multi-ethnic population. On the surface, three books are comical presentations but the undercurrent of pathos and satire is equally strong.

If his first three books were about the perplexities of various rootless individuals and their efforts to make a mark on their host society, his next book is an examination of the same theme in a more elaborate manner. The comic is replaced by pathos: there is a single protagonist, a Trinidad East Indian, striving to follow the profession of his Pundit ancestors in India. He wants to be a scholar (Pundit) and writer and in order to be so, he has to struggle against conflicting inputs from within and without. It is also a record of three generations of Indians in Trinidad- the Diaspora’s development and the deracinating effect that grows stronger as years pass. *A House of Mr. Biswas* (1961) seems to be Naipaul’s first full-fledged account of the Indian Diaspora in Trinidad. And it is from here that all his subsequent diasporic concerns can be traced.

#### 1.2.5 Experimentation with Non-Fiction

In 1962, Naipaul traveled to India and during his stay here, he wrote his novel with English characters and English setting, *Mr. Stone and the Knights Companion*



(1963). In 1962 also saw the publication of *The Middle Passage* a non-fiction work on the Caribbean for which the Government of Trinidad officially commissioned him. This book aroused instant and intense criticism and Naipaul was accused of criticizing the West Indian Populace. The book declared that the middle passage- the deportation of millions from Africa to New World as slaves had not been blocked; this passage continued on renewed patterns of mass emigration and thrived on the slavish mentality of the West Indians. However, *A House of Mr. Biswas* marks a sharp change from the bitter criticism of his earlier works. In 1962, he travelled to India, the land of his ancestors. He intended to write a novel on India but abandoned the idea. *An Area of Darkness* (1964) on the surface seems to be the work of an irritable and unsympathetic traveller. But then, the see-saw of the love-hate relationship of what he saw against what he had imagined cannot be denied. The area of darkness spread and this first dark vision of India found its development in *The Mimic Men* (1967). *The Mimic Men* takes on the topic of predicament of the Trinidad East-Indian society under the over-riding influences of the Western World.

The pathos in *A House for Mr. Biswas* is replaced by despair in *The Mimic Men*. It is the despair of an emigrant student, the social problems of the West Indian society, the despair of the colony struggling for an identity and the predicament of unending mimicry. Naipaul speaks “discursively on politics, power, isolation, displacement, racial conflicts and identity. He examines the educational system of the colonies, which with its accent on the things irrelevant to the local situation, produces mimic men” this idea found expression in *India: A Wounded Civilization* (1977) in which Naipaul tried to get to the root of the maladies ailing India.

### **1.2.6 Inter-Related Themes of Fiction and Non-Fiction**

Naipaul’s works of fiction and non-fiction are closely related. All the while, in all his writing, he is working on the problems and after-effects of the socio-geographical displacements during the colonial rule that later reduced independence to a mere act of mimicry. *The loss of El Dorado* (1969) deeply steeped in historical research, explores the motives and realities of Raleigh’s raid on the inviolate world of the Mythical Golden City of El Dorado. It not only works back at history but also looks forward and explains

why the transition from past to the present cannot be smooth one, why the present is still shackled to the past, why it is yet to be created. In 1971, the Booker Prize winning *In A Free State* came as a “rather final statement’ of the themes running through his first phase of fiction writing”. It captures the feeling of being a void, incapable of any positive action. Naipaul then turned to alternative modes of narrative to accommodate his ever-growing social and political concerns. In the third decades that followed, Naipaul moved towards non-fiction.

After reading *The Mimic Men*, Alaster Niven had wondered if Naipaul could write another novel. Although *In a Free State* (1971) proved Niven wrong, but its mixture of fiction and non-fiction in a way vindicated Niven’s stand. The next three decades witnessed the Naipaulian shift from fiction to non-fiction. Of the thirteen books that Naipaul came out with between 1972-1999, seven works were of non-fiction, two were classified as autobiography, and four were works of fiction. *An Overcrowded Barracoon* (1972) is a collection of essays divided into three sections. The first section deals with Naipaul’s world as colonial and its implications in the world of Naipaul, the writer. The second section contains Naipaul’s views on India and the third section crystallizes Naipaul’s vision and interpretation of the failure of former colonies to break away from a repetitive performance of the patterns of the “civilized” and the “primitive”. Naipaul has drawn dismal pen portraits of the island countries in search of nationhood, and the permanent damage caused by colonial rule. *Guerrillas* (1975) and *A Bend in the River* (1979) are both fictionalized versions of actual political occurrences and record the final collapse of an already weak social order. *India: A Wounded Civilization* (1977), his second book on India, sees it as a civilization repeatedly attacked by foreign forces, saddled with imported institutions that make a mockery of its independence. *The Return of Eva Person with the Killings in Trinidad* (1980) is a collection of four essays that forwards Naipaul’s thesis of the cruelty of the sixteenth-century being perpetrated even at the end of twentieth century. *Among the Believers* (1981) presents Naipaul’s observation of the societies of Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia and Indonesia. He investigates that political power that Islam had come to wield in the twentieth century and in *Beyond Belief: Islamic Excursions Among the Converted People*

(1998), he continues with his exploration of these four non-Arab Islamic countries. He sees non-Arab Muslims as people whose racial cultures stands contested by their religious faith and in the confusion that follows people lose sight of them and forget who they are. *A Turn in the South* (1989) is a record of his observations of societies as diverse as Atlanta and rural Mississippi. *Finding the Centre* (1985) is Naipaul's autobiographical attempt to trace his "literary beginnings and the imaginative promptings" of his "many-sided background" (Naipaul, 1985, 9) This process of making of the writer is further analyzed in *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987) Although it is classified as fiction, this book seems to be in-depth self-exploration of Naipaul's early years as a writer and his grappling with the question of identity. As he concludes, Naipaul writes that it was during "Hindu Death Ceremony" of his sister that he came to accept that "Men need History" in order "to have an idea of who they are" and this idea is remade by every passing generation (Naipaul, 1987, 318) However obscure this sacred idea might be, is indispensable. *India; A Million Mutinies Now* (1990) Naipaul's third book on India, is different from his other two books on India. It is a kind of final homecoming for Naipaul because he could now see India being "restored to itself". The book is as much about Naipaul as it is about India. Naipaul had steadily progressed towards a vision of terrible loss and eternal mimicry as the modern predicament of the third world societies. *The Enigma of Arrival* had marked a change in this vision and *India; A Million Mutinies Now*, changed it completely. *A Way in the World* (1994) comprises nine narratives in which Naipaul goes back to his theses of *The Middle Passage*, *The Loss of El Dorado*, *In A Free State*, and *Finding the Centre* in a more expansive vision.

Naipaul's literary career appears to be bold attempt at an honest portrayal of his view of the world that he inhabits. His vision has grown and changed over a period of time and he belongs to that rare variety of writers who have no concerns about going back and correcting themselves. He accepts the limitations of his experience:

And how could my knowledge of the world not be abstract,  
when the entire world I knew at the age of eighteen was the  
small colonial world of my little island...our little Asian Indian

Community: Small world within small world. (Naipaul 1987, 130)

He discloses that his initial denial of his experience was a blunder:

Thinking of myself as a writer, I was hiding my experience from myself; hiding myself from my experience. And even when I became a writer I was without the means, for many years, to cope up with that disturbance. (Naipaul, 1987, 117)

Naipaul has continually defined himself through his writing; through his writing he discovered the worlds that he contained within himself; he realized that his subject was not his “sensibility” but the different worlds that he “lived in” (Naipaul, 1987, 135). He writes; “To get anywhere in the writing I had first of all to define myself very clearly to myself” (Naipaul, 1987, 145). It seems that Naipaul’s engagement with India falls within this framework. His idea of India was not his own. It had been handed down to him by his family. This idea of India was a part of his idea of himself, which too was initially an inheritance. It was a world which he carried within him. When faced with the real India, He felt the India within him falling apart, and the man and the writer had to come to terms with it. The unity of his world was lost forever and the writing had to begin from an impossible place; a place of an un-healing wound, a place of immense loss and pain, a place where a highly charged memory is placed under erasure.

### **1.2.7 Nobel Prize-Recognition of the Great Writer**

In Oct.11, 2001, the Swedish Academy awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature to such a versatile postcolonial novelist V. S. Naipaul for having united perspective narrative and incorruptible scrutiny in works that compel us to see the presence of suppressed histories.

It might not be a surprising decision, though historically the Nobel Prize in literature were mostly awarded to white writers from Europe or America from 1901 to 1961, except in 1913 to Tagore from India and 1945 to Gabriela Mistral from Chile. But after 1962, more and more non-white (ethnic) writers from Asia, Africa and Latin America won the award. Up to 1990s, almost half of the winners were non-white

(ethnic) writers. This phenomenon could be looked as a reflection of the booming of immigration literature and postcolonial literature which linked closely with the collapse of colonial system and the global economic trend. Besides the Indian-British writer Salman Rushdie who is called the God Father of postcolonial novels and whose *The Moor's Last Sigh* has been forbidden by Muslims, Naipaul is obviously one of the noticeable postcolonial writers.

Head of the Academy, Horace Engdahl reached the laureate through Naipaul's wife, Nadia K Hannam Alvi, who had to call him several times to get him to the phone at his home in Wiltshire, England. Naipaul was surprised and he told the interviewer later that it was his native land India and other countries in South Asia sub-continent, where he got inspiration, deserved the prize.

Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>, 2001, Stockholm, on the grand ceremony of issuing the Nobel Prize in literature, Dr. Horace Engdahl said, "Sir Vidia! Your life as a writer calls to mind what Alfred Nobel said of himself: 'My homeland is where I work, and I work everywhere.' In every place, you have remained yourself, faithful to your instinct. Your books trace the outline of an individual quest of unusual dimensions. Like a Nemo piloting a craft of your own design, without representing anyone or anything, you have manifested the independence of literature. I would like to convey to you the warm congratulation of the Swedish Academy as I now request you to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature from the hands of His Majesty, the King."

Naipaul reviewed in his lecture his life journey and his career as a writer, the two inseparable parts of his life. One of his worlds is his homeland Trinidad and the rest of the third world countries. The other of his world is England where he was educated and naturalized. The two worlds supply the grand background and subjects for his writings. He said,

I said I was an intuitive writer. That was so, and that remains so now, when I am nearly at the end. I never had a plan. I followed no system. I worked intuitively. My aim every time was to do a book, to create something that would be easy and

interesting to read. At every stage I could only work within my knowledge and sensibility and talent and world view. Those things developed book by book. And I had to do the books I did because there were no books about those subjects to give me what I wanted. I had to clear up my world, elucidate it, for myself..... I am near the end of my work now. I am glad to have done what I have done, glad creatively to have pushed myself as far as I could go. (Naipaul, 1993, 10)

Many literary critics agree that V.S. Naipaul is a true Nobel Prize winner and he has been compared with Ishiguro and Rushdie by mass media. They have been considered as three outstanding writers in postcolonial literature. According to critics, Naipaul's novels and travelogues reveal the wounds in the hearts of immigrants who have lost their cultural roots in the postcolonial era. Naipaul is also criticized by mass media about his private life. But an academician of Swedish Academy declared that Nobel prize is supposed to award to literary works not to morality. He said, when literary writings are concerned, V. S. Naipaul, who wrote 26 books among 45 years and won Booker Prize in 1971, David Coen Prize for lifetime achievements in literature, deserves the laurel of the Nobel Prize.

### **I.3 Literary Creation - Products from Cultural Conflicts**

Written in English and rooted in British literary tradition and the West Indies social background, V.S. Naipaul's works are products resulting from cultural Conflicts and Integration. Naipaul was praised by the Swedish Academy when laurelled him the Nobel Prize, "The farcical yarns in his first work, *The Mystic Masseur* and the short stories in *Miguel Street* with their blend of Chekhov and calypso established Naipaul as a humorist and a portrayer of street life." Naipaul took the John Llewellyn Rhys Memorial Prize in 1958 for *The Mystic Masseur* (1957) and the Somerset Maugham Award in 1961 for *Miguel Street* (1959).

*A House for Mr. Biswas* was published in 1961. In this novel Naipaul focused upon the life in Trinidad. Taking his father's case as raw material, V.S. Naipaul

described an ordinary individual's experience of striving for a better life. The novel gained wide spread attention both in Britain and in Trinidad and has been translated into various languages and reprinted for more than 10 times. Mr. Biswas' father, who migrated from India to be a laborer in Trinidad, was born with one of his hands having 6 fingers and which was considered as an unlucky omen. He had been discriminated for it since he was a child. He struggled to seek his fortune as well as his root and identity. When he got married, his wife's family also looked down on him. So he wanted to be a journalist. He wanted to publish articles in newspapers so that he could gain respect from others. In addition, he wanted to have a house of his own. A house of one's own means a successful career and economic independence. He finally achieved what he wanted through tough struggle. His son wasn't satisfied with the life in Trinidad and left for Britain. When he completed his education in Britain and came back to Trinidad, his father had already died of illness in his own house, leaving behind \$3000 debt and a family in poverty. With a slow, fluent and simple narrative style, the novel, as a combination of biography and documentary records, gives a picture of an ordinary individual's life in line drawing. The compassionate mood of narrative makes the novel a true masterpiece.

Set in an imagined island, *The Mimic Men* (1967) tells a story about Ralph Kripal Singh, a frustrated politician and a dreamer. He always got a feeling of misplacement whether he was in London or Caribbean islands. This novel marks a turning-point of V. S. Naipaul's writings. Since then, a pessimistic tone became more and more prominent in his novels, and the political tendency became clearer. What makes Naipaul's novel distinguishing is not only his fine structure but also the tragicomedy of misplacement composed by an alienated tone. Naipaul had tried three times to put the story into a chronicle, but he failed. So he started the novel from the apartment in London suburb when Singh was writing his memoir. Along with the flashing back and forth of Singh's memory, readers of the book get a general idea of the whole story.

Naipaul won Booker Prize in 1971 for *In A Free State*, a collection of fictions. Through three narrators who have certain links with each other, the books explore issues of nationality and identity. Mislplaced people can be found in those stories, an

Indian chef immigrated to America, a young man from West Indian Island found himself in the alien streets of London, and two white people arrived in Africa – a place full of hostility. Departed from their own roots, they were at a loss and didn't know what to do. The title of this book is ironical because no one could harmonize himself with a strange culture. The freedom they've got is only a freedom to separate themselves from their roots.

In 1972, Michael Malik, the leader of Black power in Britain, was put to execution in Trinidad. He was accused of murdering a British woman Gale Benson, a divorcee who had been living with another black power leader, Hakim Jamal. Naipaul thought Michael Malik was wrongly accused and unjustly treated. Based on this historical event, he took the three characters as prototypes and wrote a novel entitled *Guerrillas* (1975). One of the heroes, Jimmy Ahmed was partly Chinese who had grown up in an African community. In his subconscious he had always been confused between feeling inferior and feeling superior through the Blacks. A British woman Jane sympathized with the black people and felt ashamed about the priority of the white people. Peter Roche, a leader of the black people, wanted to use armed force in the struggle against the government. He won Jane's respect and love. They all lived in an unnamed island in West Indies. Naipaul reveals their innermost feeling of homelessness.

*A Bend in the River*, a novel published in 1979, gained Naipaul considerable fame. It is set in a remote town near a bend in the river on the east coast of Africa, where people were living a miserable life. Salim, the hero of the novel, was an immigrant from India. He made his living as a shopkeeper. But the turbulent situation in this area forced him to turn back to a floating life. Naipaul is unique among Caribbean writers. By using the West Indies English, Naipaul describes the life of rootless people and the local customs in an unhurried pace and graceful tone. He examines the world with eyes of tragedies and then in his writings turns the tragedies into social comedies.

Though Naipaul kept the buoyant mood in his writings in 1970s, but it was not as obvious as in his early novels. His literary creative writings, affected by his non-



fiction writings, were more and more focusing on revealing the hardships of life and the ugly features of society. The acridity of his ironical criticism was much stronger than before. The pursuit of expressing his own feelings honestly limited the independence of the characters in his fictions. Characters often seemed to share too much with the author when they observed the world with keenness.

### **I.3.1 Naipaul's Mood of Recollection**

Stepping into a period of recollection, Naipaul's writing style changed in 1980s. In his early work *Mr. Stone and the Knights Companion* (1963), he wrote about the problems that people had to face when they got old. *The Enigma of Arrival*, published in 1987 and gained him the Nobel Prize in 2001, seemed to get back to the same concern as *Mr. Stone and the Knights Companion*. As Naipaul himself, the Narrator of *The Enigma of Arrival* is a novelist too. Growing up in British colonies and having education in Oxford, the narrator is similar to Naipaul in age and experience. He leaves a floating life after graduation, seeking his cultural root and spiritual home. When he gets old, he settles down in England and spends time pondering the relation between British culture and himself. The narration of this novel is in a slow pace and peaceful mood. The subject is "changing". Everything changes in every minute. It is only when the novel gets to its end that readers could tumble to the profound changes caused by the accumulation of minor changes. The elegant manners of English gentlemen have disappeared. The narrator could not find his spiritual homeland. What he has found is the extraordinary artistic style, which manifests the significance of *The Enigma of Arrival*. The author is concerned about the change of society and pondering how to negotiate with his own cultural background that has already fallen apart into fragments. What Naipaul ponders in his novel arouses resonance among readers who are now experiencing the same culture of fragmentation and confusion. According to Naipaul, the degenerated vanity caused by pointlessness exists both in Western and Eastern culture. He is to awaken people, by revealing the truth in the novel, to evacuate this kind of degenerated vanity and get back to their spiritual homeland. As the Swedish Academy's encomium has pointed out, Naipaul creates an unrelenting image

of the placid collapse of old colonial ruling culture and the demise of European neighborhoods.

Perhaps because Naipaul felt his concern hasn't been expressed completely in *The Enigma of Arrival*, perhaps because he thought he was old enough to make retroversion for his literary career, he published another novel *A Way in the World*. The publication of this book, which was neither a novel in tradition genre, nor history, nor biography, nor travel notes nor memoir, caused confusion among literary critics. Actually it appears to be a combination of all the genres above.

It is not the experience of the historical figure in *A Way in the World* that draws attention; it is the experience of the author himself. Naipaul also considers *A Way in the World* a combination of history, academic work and fiction. In *A Way in the World*, his own experience is integrated with other that of characters. When all the plots are put together, we get a whole picture of the histories of Trinidad as well as that of Naipaul. Naipaul's unique experience equips him with the multi-cultural perspective and enables him to examine different cultures with equivalent authorities. Naipaul has set his distinguished style through *The Enigma of Arrival* and has ensured his values through *A Way in the World*. To certain extent, *A Way in the World* could be looked as the sequel of *The Enigma of Arrival*. Both novels could be considered as two pieces of sparkling jade among Naipaul's later writings.

Naipaul's latest publications are *Beyond Belief: Islamic Excursion Among the Converted Peoples* and *Half a Life*, completed respectively in 1998 and 2001. *Half a Life* is based on the author's and his father's experience, tells a story of a British novelist who moves to Africa with his Portuguese wife and his psychological complex of seeking roots.

V. S. Naipaul keeps trying to find an appropriate style to describe colonial and post-colonial societies. With a plain manner and refined structure, his writings are affecting and charming. It seems that he resists the experiment in literary forms because he thinks it would destroy the expressive force of literature. He insists that literature should be based on careful observation and incisive reflection. Aesthetic

style and profound thoughts have been integrated skillfully in Naipaul's writings. That's why Naipaul is praised by the Swedish Academy in the laudatory speech for Nobel Prize that "Singularly unaffected by literary fashion and models he has wrought existing genres into a style of his own, in which the customary distinctions between fiction and non-fiction are of subordinate importance."

#### **I.4 Naipaul and Diaspora: An Evaluation**

##### **I.4.1 Theorizing Diaspora**

At the heart of diaspora is the image of the journey. Yet not every journey can be taken as diaspora. Diasporas are clearly not the same as travels. Nor do they normally refer to sojourns. Paradoxically, diasporic journeys are essentially about settling down, about putting roots 'elsewhere'. It involves dwelling, maintaining communities, having collective home from home. Diaspora discourse articulates, or bends together, both roots and routes to construct alternate public spheres. The question is not simply about who travels, but when, how, and under what circumstances. What socio-economic, political and social conditions mark the trajectories of this journey? The diaspora in question is constituted through conquest and colonization. It might have resulted from the capture or removal of a group through slavery or indentured labor. Alternatively people have had to desert their homes as a result of expulsion or persecution. Or they may have been forced to flee in the wake of political strife. Perhaps the dispersion occurs as a result of conflict and war, resulting in the creation of new state in the territory. Diasporas, in the sense of distinctive historical experience, are often composite formations made up of many journeys to different parts of the globe, each with its own history, its own peculiarities; as James Clifford states in *Diaspora* that a polythetic field would seem most conducive to tracking the contemporary range of diasporic form..

The essential difference between "diaspora" and "migration" is motive: a migration is willing, a diaspora is forced. The coercion can be either physical or economic. An important part of any diaspora is the discrimination against the diasporic group by the dominant social groups both in their homelands and the places where

they resettle. While this discrimination might moderate with time, it does not diminish the final, crucial aspect of diaspora: the longing to return and recreate the lost homeland. It is this longing which lies at the centre of the concept of 'diaspora'. Migrants may experience loss and nostalgia, but only en route to a new home in a new place. For diaspora people whose sense of identity is centrally defined by collective histories of displacement and violent loss cannot be assimilated by merging into a new national community. Nor a diaspora is a metaphor for individual exile but rather, diaspora emerges out of migrations of collectives. Exile denotes banishment from a particular place in an institutional act of force; but, appropriately for a word that probably derives from the Latin *Exsalire*, it also expresses a sense of 'leaping out towards something or somewhere, implying a matter of will.

Avtar Brah in *Cartography of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* states that: "The concept of Diaspora offers a critique of fixed origins, while taking account of a homing desire". (Brah, 1996, 180) "Home" is a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination. In this sense it is a place of non return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as the place of 'origin'. Home is also a lived experience of a locality. It is mediated by the historically specific everyday of social relations. The question of home is intrinsically linked with the way in which processes of inclusion or exclusion operate. It struggles personally and politically over the social regulation of 'belonging'. The problematic of 'home' and 'belonging' is integral to the diasporic condition, but how, when, and in what form are questions that surface.

#### **1.4.2 Diaspora- Conceptual Mapping**

The concept of diaspora signals the processes of multi-locationality across geographical, cultural and psychic boundaries. The term Diaspora should be seen as conceptual mapping which defies the search for origin absolutes, or genuine and authentic manifestation of a stable, pre-given, unchanging identity, but delineates a field of identifications where 'imagined communities' are forged within and out of confluence of narrative from annals of collective and re-memory. Processes of diasporic identity formation are always plural, and in process. The word diaspora often

invokes the imagery of traumas of separation and dislocation. But diasporas are also potentially the sites of hope and new beginning.

Clifford in *Diasporas* states that: ‘Diasporas also connect multiple communities of a dispersed population. Systematic border crossings may be part of this interconnection, but multi-locale diaspora cultures are not necessarily defined by a specific geopolitical boundary’. (Clifford, 1998, 304) It is a site of hybridity, change, newness and mobility. Diasporic space is the point at which boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, of belonging and otherness, of “us” and “them” are contested. “The diaspora space is the site where the native is as much a diasporian as the diasporian is the native”. (Brah, 1996, 209)

Theoretically, diaspora has been privileged because of its dissociation of ethnicities and political hegemonies as the only paradigm that maintains cultural identity, and because of its focus on mobility and on elastic or multiple identification in a world grown thoroughly and inextricably interdependent. Most diasporas are seen to be born of flight rather than choice, there are a number of displacements that are occasioned by events wholly outside the individual’s control- the purpose of work, trade or colonization, wars, ethnic cleansing and natural disasters. The idea of a shared origin and birthplace is a common feature of diasporas.

### **I.4.3 Naipaul on the Scene of Diaspora**

Vijay Mishra in *Bordering Naipaul: Indenture History and Diasporic Poetics* argues that “Naipaul is a product of the old Indian diaspora, situated between an old world that can only be memorially constructed and a new that lacks the certainties of the old.” (Mishra, 1996, 248) Mishra states that Naipaul’s difficulty lies with the structural inevitability of mimicry because for the colonized slave mimicry is one of two available models of self-legitimization of self-transcendence. The other is violence. Naipaul has referred to mimicry as a forced aesthetic intervention. In this aesthetic discourse a flower such as jasmine is known as a sign but its referent cannot be conceptualized. Mimicry is thus mastery of language of the colonizer through the impeccable logic of structural difference, but being alienated from the colonizer’s

history and culture, the colonized cannot internalize the word 'Jasmine' with any phenomenological certainty. In England, Naipaul could remember his initial encounters with Wordsworth's daffodils by acknowledging a prior phenomenological inadequacy: "There was, for instance, Wordsworth's notorious poem about the daffodil. A pretty little flower, no doubt; but we had never seen it. Could the poem have any meaning for us?" (Naipaul, 2004, 45)

Naipaul writes about the diaspora's familiar temporariness, the ambivalence of becoming part of the landscape and yet somehow beyond or beside it, experiencing "to-not-be-at-home" feeling. In *House for Mr. Biswas*, the failure of Biswas to actually build a house on solid foundations, the house that he finally owns and which is heavily mortgaged, the house in which he dies, this failure is part of the totality of the diasporic experience. The house, the sign that would have transformed the route into a root is unsteady. Gilroy in *The Black Atlantic* presents that the 'root' metaphor requires the subject to construct a pristine, uncontaminated homeland to which, ideally, one ought to return, the 'route' metaphor insinuates the significance of the trajectory itself, the suggestive power of the journey and the historical interaction between masters and slaves so as "to give flesh and blood to the notion of utopia, without betraying it to empirical life." (Gilroy, 1993, 193) Home becomes for Naipaul an ecstatic order, a posting of the past onto another landscape. In this act the fracture of displacement, the panic of escape from a stifling island community, can only be aesthetically contained or ordered.

Dagmer Barnouw argues in *Naipaul's Strangers* that: (Naipaul) has often been portrayed as the archetypal homeless intellectual, the eternal wonderer, the 'ultimate exile', suggesting the profound insights of marginality (Barnouw, 2003, 9). Naipaul has been concerned about the precarious knowledge of difference in a completely diverse world, where fears intimate and veiled. Straining to overcome his own cultural self-delusions caused by multiple displacements, Naipaul has sought out the obscurities of his origin so that he might escape their troubling strangeness. His intense, fearful dislike for that strangeness has its source in his fear of an imposed, alien cultural identity. For the boy growing up in multicultural Trinidad, 'the other' is not a stimulus

to understand himself in cultural terms. Rather, this 'other' is the constant reminder and he has to leave it alone by becoming a writer:

And what is astonishing to me is that, with the vocation, (Naipaul's father) so accurately transmitted to me-without saying anything about it-his hysteria from the time when I didn't know him: his fear of extinction. That was his subsidiary gift to me. That fear became mine as well. It was linked with the idea of the vocation: the fear could be combated only by the exercise of the vocation. (Naipaul, 2004, 110-111)

Naipaul needs the affirmation of his "vocation" by a functioning, complex literary culture to make sure that experiences which confirm rather than mitigate the anxieties and frustrations of his being 'other'. Fear has been a more powerful motivation for his writing than hope, releasing greater efforts of intellect and imagination. The father's lesson, that fear of extinction can only be combated by self-assertion through the 'vocation' of the writer.

..as a colonial, one had to first distance oneself from the familiar and focus on personal achievement before one could assume responsibility for others. The writer's cultural responsibility was his honest dialogue with his own undeveloped society, but his steady, unsentimental dissection of colonial and postcolonial irrationalism has never been easy to take. (Barnouw, 2003, 25)

It is true that Naipaul has never thought much of the intellectual's principled, literary compassion for the anonymous downtrodden. But such compassion does have the great advantage of being much safer than Naipaul's own appalled pity for the people from whom he came-immemorially poor, immemorially without a voice. He distanced himself from them to be able to see them and document their experience more clearly. One of the sources of Naipaul's composite perspective is Hinduism: speculative and probably also

pessimistic, not in the sense of things turning out badly, but a pessimistic view about existence; the men just end. It is the feeling that life is an illusion. Memories of the combined instability and the rigidity of the Hindu family have made him deeply uneasy: life within a constantly shifting immigrant society where people are randomly, casually thrown together. Naipaul escapes the terror of his family's fears with his own fear of extinction intact, and that escape is the source of his productivity. In "The Unsparing Vision of V. S. Naipaul" Scott Winokur praises Naipaul for being the supreme writer of disenchantment, a debunker of delusions:

He dislikes privileged people who are sentimental about primitivism in the Third World, and he dislikes the posturing of the Third World people whose only tactic is to blame their oppressor, and he is *pitiless* towards the fantasies of the helpless, which is what people don't like about him. But nobody makes more sense of what's gone on in the world at large than he does. (Winokur, 2006, 118)

Naipaul records his own sensations of what he observes, and in his truthfulness to his own experience of the world around him. He appears curiously unselfconscious, guileless, as if simply absorbing what can be seen. Naipaul states that:

To be a colonial was to know a kind of security. It was to inhabit a fixed world.....But in the new world I felt that ground moved below me. The new politics, the curious reliance of men on institutions they were yet working to undermine, the simplicity of beliefs and the hideous simplicity of actions, the corruption of causes, half-made societies that seemed doomed to remain half-made: these were the things that began to preoccupy me. They were not things from which I could detach myself. (Naipaul, 2004, 170)



#### **I.4.4 Evolution of personal History**

Naipaul experiences the origins and evolution of his homeland as part of his personal history. Throughout his career Naipaul has transformed self-creation into a cultural lens and a literary method that constitute his approach to the world, however contingent on the changing prospect of contemporary history and his own evolving skill as its interpreter. His engagement with the disordered and fast-changing world he observes, his empathy with the diverse people he describes in his travel narratives and creates in his fiction, not only discloses his origin and development, but also suggests that truth is not some immutable essence, divine or historical. When Naipaul speaks of the truth of one's responses, he refers to an individual mind contending with barriers to its authentic interpretation of experience. To surface Naipaul's stance, Fawzia Mustafa states:

The importance of Naipaul's achievement lies in the exemplary space his writings have helped to create in the understanding, and making, of late twentieth-century literary history. The steady emergence of Naipaul's novels, non-fiction, journalism, and travelogues, in other words, has allowed two generations of readers, scholars and critics one of the most sustained, and possibly one of the most unique, opportunities to witness and participate in the formation of a literary practice born of the implosive capabilities of its postcolonial, historical, cultural, and political divides. (Mustafa, 1995, 2)

#### **I.4.5 Naipaul's Controversial Position**

Naipaul's work is extremely different from that of other writers. He cannot be grouped with the writers such as Chinua Achebe or Wole Soyinka because he does not idealize his ethnic culture i. e. subcontinent India. Unlike writers from the West-Indies such as Derek Wolcott, who glorifies his birthplace, it appears that Naipaul never shows attachment for the land of his birth, Trinidad because of its being unimportant. He cannot be put in the same group as racial and political writers like C. L. R. James

because he rarely takes up the issue of race. A land violated by hordes of invaders, Naipaul's India suffered continual defilement, because of its vulnerability to intruders. On the other hand, Salman Rushdie's India is a valued land for that reason.

In postcolonial circle, Naipaul is known to generate controversy, disdain, and hatred in some cases. Many postcolonial writers and critics think that Naipaul neither successfully demonstrates hatred nor does he blame colonization for the plight of the ex-colonies and the Third World; he barely writes about racial issues, and he has no loyalty for his home country and his ethnicity. In addition he does not show sympathy for the oppressed for he often looks at them with contempt and a critically severe scrutiny. Critics see him as transforming himself into an Englishman looking down at the people of ex-colonies, who are in fact 'his own people'. There are numerous comments made by him in his travelogues which have created controversy. Many Indian writers, critics and academicians accuse him of betraying his own ethnicity because they think that it is not justifiable to write about only degrading sides of India, they argue that it is a prejudice not to acknowledge things that were admirable in their ancient civilization.

Hence Naipaul is different from other Diaspora writers because he is an opinionated person. Throughout his literary career he has commented on many issues. His comments are always taken seriously and some critics analyzed them differently.

## **I.5 Naipaul and Postcolonial Writing: An Evaluation**

### **I.5.1 Review of Post colonialism**

Post colonialism is an important discipline in cultural and literary studies today. As a major force in criticism during the late 1980s and early 1990s, it has played an important role in anti-colonial political movements in the colonized lands. Again, it became a field of intellectual inquiry when the colonial regimes began to disintegrate after the World War II. It analyses the literature produced by cultures that developed in response to colonial domination from the day of the first colonial contact to the present, while, on the other, it also analyses the colonialist and anti-colonialist ideological forces in operation politically, socially, culturally and psychologically —

which, on the one hand, pressed the colonized to internalize the colonizer's values and, on the other hand, promoted the resistance of colonized people against their oppressors. As the present thesis focuses on V. S. Naipaul's travelogues on India set in post colonial period, I try to present brief information about post colonialism in general and elements of post colonialism in V. S. Naipaul in particular.

The word 'postcolonial' is a much contested term. It is contested because it is often used with a hyphen in between 'post' and 'colonial' and thereby drawing diverse meanings and attitudes towards colonialism. As far as its current use is concerned, it does not simply mean 'after colonialism' or the period that comes after colonialism or imperialism, it also means the time that begins from the first colonial encounter. It may be true, however, that with decolonization, the once colonized lands achieved their independence, but, a large number of those lands could not recover themselves from colonial dependence often termed as colonial hangover or interference till today. There is, however, no proper demarcation between the end of colonialism and the beginning of post colonialism as none can say exactly when colonialism ended and postcolonialism started. Some scholars opine that some form of colonialism exists even today in the form of political and economic interventions, while others are of the opinion that, postcolonialism begins "from the very first moment of colonial contact" (Ashcroft et al 1989, 2). Again, in the introduction to their influential work *The Empire Writes Back* (1989), Bill Ashcroft et al have used the term 'post-colonial' (as hyphenated) to cover "all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day [since] there is a continuity of preoccupations throughout the historical process initiated by European imperial aggression" (Ashcroft et al, 1989, 2). They, however, designate the literatures produced from Africa, Australia, Canada, The Caribbean, New Zealand, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and South Pacific island countries as 'post-colonial' literature. Each of these literatures, therefore, has one thing in common beyond their distinctive regional characteristics. Each has "emerged in their present form out of the experience of colonization and asserted themselves by foregrounding the tension with the imperial power, and by

emphasizing their differences from the assumptions of the imperial centre. It is this which makes them distinctively post-colonial.” (Ashcroft et al, 1989, 2)

Robert C. Young sees ‘post colonialism’ as “a body of writing that attempts to shift the dominant ways in which the relations between western and non-western people and their worlds are viewed” (Young, 2003, 2). For Young, shifting of the dominant ways means turning the world upside down as if looking from the other side, for a different and yet significant experience. Post colonialism, thus, challenges the dominant ways of looking at things mainly from Western point of view. It gives voice to the weak, to the peoples who are in the margins or the periphery. Young, in his book *Post colonialism: A Very Short Introduction* (2003), opines that post colonialism claims the right of all the people on the globe equally. It is, however, unfortunate that due to European colonization and appropriation of power by the West, often referred to as Euro centrism, the world today is based on two unequal divisions: the West and the rest. Post colonialism, thus:

...seeks to intervene, to force its alternative knowledge into the power structures of the west as well as the non-west. It seeks to change the way people think, the way they behave . . . [it] is about changing world . . . It threatens privilege and power. It refuses to acknowledge the superiority of western cultures.”  
(Young, 2003, 7)

Thus, taking Young’s definition of post colonialism into consideration, it can be said that postcolonial literature is subversive because it seeks to intervene and dismantle the knowledge and power structures of both the West and the non-West. It questions the European superiority in knowledge production and at the same time, it critiques the native/non-Western ways of accepting the West’s hegemony

With the decline of the European empires and with decolonization, former colonies in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean became independent. The independence brought the colonizers and the colonized, at par. The once-colonial masters have been decentered (as the colonizers saw themselves at the center of the

world, while the colonized were seen at the margins), and thus, the hegemonic power paradigm is subverted. This resulted in cultural displacement of such people which created vacuum at cultural and intellectual level. This cultural and intellectual vacuum has resulted in voluntary intellectual and political exiles to metropolitan centers of the world, mostly located in the UK and the USA. People like Derek Walcott, Jean Rhys, Ben Okri, George Lamming, V. S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, C. L. R. James, Chinua Achebe, Ngugi Wa Thiongo, Richard Rodriguez, Kazuo Ishiguro, Timothy Mo and many others, had left their respective place of birth (mostly former colonies) for better opportunities and became expatriates. They later came to be known as migrant/diasporic writers. These writers share certain common things with each other.

In his collection of essays, *Imaginary Homelands*, Salman Rushdie writes about such cultural displacement and literary creativity thus:

Sometimes we feel that we straddle two cultures; at other times, that we fall between two stools. But however ambiguous and shifting this ground may be, it is not an infertile ground for a writer to occupy. If literature is in part the business of finding new angles at which to enter reality, then once again, our distance, our long geographical perspective, may provide us with such angles. (Rushdie , 1991, 15)

V.S. Naipaul seems to share Rushdie’s “long geographical perspective”. Being of an Indian descent and born into British colonies in the West Indies, he straddles not two, but three cultures. It appears that he falls between three stools. Naipaul has settled in England, and has written novels about coming from the former colony to the former imperial power.

In the more recent *A Very Short Introduction to Post colonialism*, Robert J. C. Young looks into the effects of colonialism on people’s everyday life. He points out that white culture is still regarded as basic to our ideas of what is legitimate civilization. Post colonialism draws attention to the fact that the continents previously colonized by

Europe, Africa, Asia, and South-America are still subordinate and economically unequal to Europe and North America. Besides advocating equality for the people of these areas, post colonialism asserts 'the dynamic power of their cultures, cultures that are now intervening in and transforming the societies of the west.' (Young , 2003, 5)

Literature and art are important channels for expressing the colonial experience and how this past experience continues to shape societies and individual identities. Postcolonial theory has subsequently emerged as a consequence of the inadequacy of earlier European theory in dealing with postcolonial writing. As pointed out in *The Empire Writes Back*, European literary theories are rooted in particular traditions which are hidden by false notions of 'the universal'. (Young, 2003, 11) The European failure to appreciate other cultures in their own right was thoroughly analyzed in Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1985), which continues to be an important point of reference for both postmodern and postcolonial cultural criticism.

According to Ashcroft and fellow writers, English emerged as an important academic subject parallel to the development of the nineteenth-century form of imperialism. The teaching of English literature as the only literature in the colonies became an important aspect of cultural imperialism, through which Western values were presented as a privileged norm and anything representing the 'peripheral' or the 'marginal' was devalued. Control over language is fundamental to imperial oppression. In British colonies RP-English (Received Pronunciation English) was taught as the norm, and any variant or other language spoken would be marginalized as impure. The discrimination of what was then considered deviant language helped maintain the power structure of the colony, and notions of what was true and real were established in the language that was considered the norm. For the various peoples in the colonies, the language they were forced to speak, read, and write fell short in describing their natural habitat and the gap which opens between the experience of place and the language available to describe it forms a classic and all-pervasive feature of post-colonial texts.

A majority of writers from former British colonies have chosen to write in English after gaining independence. In Africa, however, some writers and intellectuals

have argued that in order to achieve true decolonization, English and other European languages must be rejected. (Ashcroft et al, 1989, 9) Most writers choose to continue writing in English but the initiative does bring to mind an important difference between the former colonies of Africa and those of the West Indies. In Africa there are alternative languages in which pre-colonial cultures have survived, contrary to the West Indies where pre-colonial history to a greater extent has been lost.

### 1.5.2 Naipaul-a postcolonial writer

This study considers V. S. Naipaul as a postcolonial writer and will therefore employ methods of postcolonial theory in its attempt to show that the criticism by Naipaul's characters and narrators of the colonial world in fact inheres at the same time criticism of the colonizer.

To answer the question why Naipaul should be considered a postcolonial writer, some definitions of postcolonial criticism will be referred to. For instance John McLeod in his *Beginning Post colonialism* contends that postcolonial criticism involves one or more of such activities as,

reading texts produced by writers from countries with a history of colonialism ..., reading texts produced by those that have migrated from countries with a history of colonialism, or those descended from migrant families, which deal in the main with diaspora experience and its many consequences. (McLeod, 2000, 33)

This definition leaves no doubt that Naipaul is covered by the range of postcolonial literary analysis; he meets almost all criteria at once: first, Trinidad being a former British colony, he is a writer from “a country with a history of colonialism”; second, he migrated from Trinidad to England for his education and to start and continue his career as a writer; and third, he is the descendant of a migrant family, as his ancestors came to Trinidad from India as indentured laborers, both countries being former colonies of the British Empire. Similarly, Robert Young in *Post colonialism: An Historical Introduction* points out that:

Postcolonial theory is always concerned with the positive and negative effects of the mixing of peoples and cultures, whether it be through colonial domination and the transmutation of indigenous cultures, or the hybridization of domestic metropolitan cultures as a result of immigration. (Young, 2003, 69)

“The positive and negative effects of the mixing of peoples and cultures” as a result of colonial domination is an obvious theme that can be found in almost all the works of Naipaul. Finally, Bart Moore-Gilbert’s statement in *Postcolonial Theory: Contexts, Practices, Politics* that postcolonial criticism is a set of reading practices that analyses “cultural forms which mediate, challenge or reflect upon the relations of domination and subordination... between nations, races or cultures, which characteristically have their roots in the history of modern European colonialism and imperialism ...” (Gilbert, 1997, 12) equally proves to some extent, with such terms as “domination and subordination” and “roots in the history of modern European colonialism”, that Naipaul, as a writer coming from two countries with roots in the history of modern European colonialism (Trinidad and India) which have been “dominated” and “subordinated” by the British Empire, can be studied within the scope of postcolonial literary theory.

### **1.5.3 Postcolonial Travelogues**

Travelogues are considered as a genre of literature which show the reflections and replications of contemporary socio-cultural and ethnic societies in which they were inscribed. However, with the elapses of time their purposes were maneuvered intentionally. Earlier travelogues were used to be informative but in the colonial period, colonizers distorted and manipulated the very objective of these writings for their own advantages. They were projected in such a way that the settlers could easily prove the ‘otherness’ of the colonized. The culmination of the West’s fictive dramatization of the East begins in travelogue mixed with fantasy, such as those by Marco Polo. Historians of medieval trade now tell us that Marco Polo was not the medieval traveller as we always thought, but a fellow invented by the West to fulfill its



thirst for palatable understanding of the mysterious East. Switching centuries, from him to Naipaul via inescapable filter of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, have beheld that the twentieth century reincarnation of Marco Polo was none other than V S Naipaul, an invention of the West to fulfill its prejudiced and deliberately fantastic understanding of the East. Foreign visitors visited our country at regular intervals, and produced plethora of travelogues on India's contemporary socio-political, cultural, historical, economic, religious and even architectural significance. Eighteenth and nineteenth century travellers have been successful in not only watching the nation silently and applauding wherever required but also produced the televisual commentary, critique and discourse on it.

The postcolonial discourse of the nation has brought forth several issues to the fore. The discourse used by the postcolonial travel writer is constantly evolving and is not directly opposed to the colonial discourse. The postcolonial world has been affected by travels in many respects; the countries in question were discovered, explored, conquered, or settled by the people who came there from Europe. Displacement is an experience particularly associated with the postcolonial conditions, which for many individuals, entails a history of transportation, migration, expatriation, diaspora or exile.

Naipaul's unprecedented interest in his ancestral homeland led him to rediscover India as a leading Third World state in the post-cold war era. In the later part of the thesis, Naipaul's positive reconceptualization of India will be shown in his last book of travel in the country, *India: A Million Mutinies Now* (1990). His two earlier books on India will first be examined to demonstrate his radical move from instrumental rationality to a dialogic episteme.

By questioning the identity of India, beyond geography and place, the point of view of the emigrant helps to broaden the framework within which India is defined. Through a meticulous reading of V S Naipaul's trilogy on India, it will be argued how his worldview strikes on ambivalent relationship with his experience in India; how emotions of tenderness and pleasure compete with the zeal and short sightedness of a colonialist. In this thesis I intend to explore and explicate V S Naipaul's Indian trinity,

comprising *An Area of Darkness* (1964), *India: A Wounded Civilization* (1977) and *India: A Million Mutinies Now* (1990), which gives the odysseys of the nation's postcolonial insurgencies, at times insurmountable, which not only wounded once, twice or thrice but million times.

While the travellers of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, pre-empting colonialism, often found beauty, richness, fertility and virginity, the postcolonial contemporary travellers are quick to spot ugliness, disorder and banality. In the nineteenth century, the bounty of the discovered world was to be praised. Today, the absence of civilization and progress is regarded as a major disappointment and therefore the unruly and unwilling 'Third World' has to be treated with derisiveness. For Naipaul India is a problem not only with his buried past "...when I felt India only as an assault on the senses" (Naipaul, 1972, 46), but also with his neurotic feelings of the present "...India as an ache, over for which one has a great tenderness, but from which at length one always wishes to separate oneself" (Naipaul, 1972, 51). That is why his visits to the country have been attempts as much to get grips over its reality as to come to terms with his own past. In 1962, he feels so cut off from this past that he almost abandons the hope of ever being able to dig it up or make sense of it. That is why he fancies himself as a "colonial without past, without ancestors" (Naipaul, 1964, 274).

Naipaul is a writer of brilliant techniques that he used it transforming the travelogues into texts, especially postcolonial texts. His travelogues are not merely a record of his physical visits but also disseminate its colonial past vibrantly as Barbara Korte opines:

If travel is of special pertinence to Britain's former colonies, the travel writing produced in these parts of the world has been practically ignored by scholars until recently with the prominent exception of V S Naipaul. (Korte, 2000, 152)

Among the post-independence travellers to India, V S Naipaul has a special place because of his curious love-hate relationship with the country. It is a strange predicament, mainly a tension emanating from Naipaul's desire to remain apart from

the mainstream tradition of the country visited. Resultantly, he inscribes some sensitive travel writings that are impressionistic, emotional and erratic and his first book on India, rather controversial. The research work is a candid account of Naipaul's feelings that the vast, mysterious and agonized country has aroused in him and he promulgates his irritating and irksome thoughts in Indian trilogy in a way to discover a postcolonial India—India that is suffering in the hands of its postcolonial leaders who are still in the clutches of colonial tools. The paper studies Naipaul's experiences chronologically as he has expressed in his treatise on India.

Naipaul started his literary career in mid-fifties in London. Interestingly enough, the launch of Naipaul's career as an aspiring novelist and later travel writer coincided with unprecedented political uprisings on the fringe. The fifties were the time of anti-colonial movements across Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and the Caribbean. Since then the social dynamics of the Third World have attracted drawn him. The fact is that “recently free societies” like Trinidad, Kenya, Uganda, Iran, India, and finally Argentina, the settings of his novels and travelogues, have been placed by him in the single homogenizing category of Third World societies. Since 1950 the populace of these countries and the problems that these nation-states were or still are grappling with are the unifying elements in his works. The problems range from development and dependency to hunger and democratization. These peculiarly Third World issues are the common thread running through Naipaul's aesthetic productions in their entirety.

#### **1.5.4 Postcolonial Elements in Naipaul's Travelogues on India**

##### **1.5.4.1 *An Area of Darkness* (1964)**

Naipaul has been in India a much longer time and travelled much more extensively. Yet, the impressions of his first visit as recorded in *An Area of Darkness* seem to be journalistic and lack depth in some areas of observation. Naipaul journeys India, for the first time, with the professed aim of discovering his Indian identity. It has always been significant for a writer to establish a distinct identity, especially when he/she is an outsider or wants to be considered one. This leaves a mark on his

writings. To quote from his Acceptance Speech at the first David Cohen Literature Prize awarding ceremony:

I have always felt the need...to establish the identity of the writer, the narrator, the gatherer of impressions: To make the point that, whatever association came with the language, this English language traveller in the world was not English but colonial, and carried different pictures in his head. (Sunday Observer, 1993, 10)

His first visit to India in 1962 was undertaken as a quest for his roots in the country from where his grandfather had migrated to Trinidad as an indentured labourer. He first visited Bombay and found that it was not what he had expected. He hated being part of a crowd at Church gate station and craved for preferential treatment, something that he had always got-in Trinidad and England. But here in India he found no special attention from Indians. He kept himself seeing the film posters that seemed to divine from a cooler and luscious world, Naipaul writes:

...Cooler and more luscious than the film poster of England and America, promising greater gaiety, and ampler breast and hip, a more fruitful womb. (Naipaul, 1964, 43)

Naipaul's observations are based on his assessment of the Indian characters as romantic, emotional and exotic, which appears to be typical Western perspective. His comments on most socio-political events of the day were shallow. The Chinese attack on India in 1962 shook up the entire country. Naipaul was in India at that time but did not feel concerned about it. Nehru's greatest blunder, ill-equipped war against the Chinese, makes Naipaul angry and turns him bitterly satiric in his chapter on 'Emergency'. He was then in India and saw the hollowness everywhere in the land, a total misfit in a modern world. Naipaul was quite upset on the failure of Mr. Nehru. Shri Aurobindo had already warned Mr. Nehru regarding Chinese invasion, but Nehru was careless about the land saying that that is 'the waste land.' Naipaul heard many rumors in Calcutta. He writes:

...according to bazaar rumour, Chou-En-lai had promised the Chinese people as a Christmas present. The Indian Marwari merchants, it was said, were already making enquiries about business prospect under Chinese rule; the same rumour had it that, in the south the Madras, despite their objection to Hindi were already learning Chinese. (Naipaul. 1964, 264-265)

But these are peripheral like his comments on the Kashmir. He made no attempt to explore the psyche of a nation jolted out of its post-colonial euphoria, bordering on a sense of invincibility.

Apart from above-mentioned contemporary post-colonial events, the other aspect of India that Naipaul encountered in his visit was the caste system, especially as manifested in professional skills. From the sociological point of view such situation are common in societies undergoing rapid socio-political changes. The rigid hierarchy of the caste system in India, which he condemns, therefore, disturbs Naipaul, "...in India caste was unpleasant; I never wished to know what a man's caste was..." (Naipaul, 1964. 29) as dissolute and dissipated that propagated a kind of separatism. Naipaul writes, "Class is system of rewards. Caste imprisons a man in his function". (Naipaul, 1964, 76)

There is some truth in this observation though one notices a strong urge in Naipaul to say something sensational that would appeal to the western reader. His view on reservation of jobs was similarly biased and in the context of sixties, showed a definitely biased way of thinking that would be considered offensive today, "Reserving government jobs for untouchables helps nobody. It places responsibility in the hands of the unqualified..." (Naipaul, 1964, 82) The aforesaid views have authenticated Naipaul as a colonial mimic and have been successful in portraying him as a postcolonial predictor who foretells and compares the destiny of India to that of Trinidad saying that "Yesterday the mimicry was Mogul, tomorrow it might be Russian or American; today it is English". (Naipaul, 1964, 55) The entire experience seems to be deeply personal one and Naipaul himself behaves like a fussy, grudging and tight-fisted foreign returned guy. It is true that today he is English and this is the reason why he

looks at India from an occidentalist's eye in proving its age-long civilization as wounded. *An Area of Darkness*, much inspired by Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, conveys the acute sense of disillusionment of Naipaul, capturing the whole crazy spectrum of India in post-colonial period.

#### **I.5.4.2        *India: A Wounded Civilization (1977)***

The abovementioned book is V S Naipaul's second book on India which documents the political insurgencies of the decade of 1970s. As a post-colonial traveller who was unable to establish an Indian identity and had given up the attempts after his first visit to this country, Naipaul held the view that India should cut all connections with the past, which is understandable. After his first visit to India, Naipaul realized that the country was not and could not be his home. Yet he could not reject it or remain indifferent to it. When Naipaul revisited India in the said decade, he could find that this country takes much time to understand even after the departure of the British. However, Naipaul is not appeared with the independence of India. He expects something else. What he beholds, in post- independence India, he writes in these words:

But Independent India, with its five-year plans, its industrialization, its practice of democracy, has invested in change. There was always a contradiction between the archaism of national pride and the promise of the new; the contradiction has at last cracked the civilization open.  
(Naipaul, 1977, 8)

Thus from this comment one notices that the travelogue unfolds in a different direction. *India: A Wounded Civilization* is less personal and more analytically and culturally oriented. After the early introductory pages, however, the autobiographical section diminishes. Then Naipaul subjects to close scrutiny of Indian cultural and economic behaviour. At this point the diasporic self has turned into the analytical self. Perhaps the alienating experience of the first failed encounter with India has caused this change in focus in Naipaul's interrogation and interpretation of India.

On the second journey Naipaul examines the socio-economic prospects of an India that seems to him an essentially unstructured and unpleasant nation. Strategically, Naipaul's approach remains that of a logician who believes that "it is the writer's duty to order experience that he must bring his powers of reason to bear on what is essentially chaotic so that readers may better understand the fearful failures of our era." (Nightingale, 1987. 9) Intellectual contextualization is what frames Naipaul's discourse in the present book. Conceptually, the analytical Naipaul inscribes irrationality and incompleteness into Indian subjects and presents them as non-rational beings. The term "intellectual" occurs in a number of places, and is presented as the higher achievement of humanity that Indians lack. There are many instances in the book where Naipaul ascribes intellectual deficiency of all sorts to Indians, including "intellectual anorexia", "intellectual sleep", and "intellectual flaw".

In the course of his present visit to India, Naipaul conceived himself with ethnographic analyses of India, at the same time keeping a distance from the ordinary person most of the time, talking mainly to those in authority and power, like an IAS Officer in Bombay, the commissioner in Rajasthan, among others. He never tried to meet ordinary Indians on an equal footing until recently, always judging them based on standards borrowed from the West. The judgment of Naipaul is not confined to the people only but to culture, civilization, religion and politics also.

However, to Naipaul, India was not a socio-cultural alternative. For him at that point of time, India- a 'third world' country, without a sense of history, without a racial sense -had to break off all ties with its past in order to get the best out of its present, which, according to Naipaul, would progress as understood in the Western context. Naipaul criticizes a prince who had travelled outside India. And that prince always wishes to compare India with the western world. Unquestionably, he criticized westerners who consider India an alternative and was quite contemptuous about them. That is why Naipaul says that India should be judged in Indian way:

The world outside India was to be judged by its own standards.  
India was not to be judged. India was only to be experienced, in  
the Indian way. (Naipaul, 1977, 90)

One can observe that nobody writes like VS Naipaul. His visual descriptions of ordinary people always hit the nail on the head. His central theme is the vibrant, pulsating, intellectual Hindu civilization. After the initial burst of optimism following independence, India has faced one obstacle after another, turning inward, revealing 'a wounded civilization', a stilted and stiff culture who does not know herself any more or what made her great. Using his own method of analysis, V S Naipaul may not be an ideal person to do this analysis because like Gandhi and Nehru he studied outside India. But unlike them he seemed to be on the other side of the country. His passive support to Emergency, imposed on the country by Indira Gandhi government: "...Mrs Gandhi, that formidable lady in New Delhi, who had done a de Gaulle on the Congress...nationalized the banks... 'de-recognised' the princes... intended to change the constitution" (Naipaul, 1972, 110) which was criticized not only by political activists but also by writers, media stalwarts, social reformers and so on. Salman Rushdie too denounces the very act in his magnum opus *Midnight's Children* (1980) in these words "Emergency heralded the beginning of continuous midnight which would not end for two long years" (Rushdie, 1980, 612).

Naipaul further holds that Hindu India invited conquests and finds that this drawing upon the Hindu past in the present times has led to the creation of a new sense of identity. One can, of course, come to an agreement with Naipaul. Mohammad Gajanavi attacked and looted Somnath temple in Gujarat, Bakhtiyar Khilje destroyed and burnt Nalanda University and its library and Babar made Babri Masjid after destroying Rama temple in Ayodhya. Naipaul tries to cope with such movements in India which are trying to take revenge with its past. Naipaul considers the demolition of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya is true and justified and he declared that his observations in *India: A Wounded Civilization* is valid. He saw the demolition as a very small part of the vast change in the Hindus' idea of themselves and as an attempt to retrieve their identity of the pre-Islamic period. He saw in it the seed for a greater "Intellectual' of India provided it was kept safe from the hands of the fanatics in an interview with Dilip Pandgaonkar Naipaul confesses:



The people who say that there was no temple there are missing the point. Babar, you must understand, had contempt for the country he had conquered. And his building of that mosque was an act of contempt for the country. In Ayodhya the construction of a mosque on a spot regarded as sacred, by the conquered population was meant as an insult. It was meant as an insult to an ancient idea, the idea of Ram, which was two or three thousand years old... (Times of India, 1993, 4).

The travelogue can be seen as a critique of blindness of Indians to the 'real' world that prefer to live and judge themselves and others through the myopic glass of perceived high culture of 'centuries of rich civilization'. But the problem is that after being settled in the Western country most of the Indians start thinking and comparing the nation on the touchstone of the West. And they, sometimes, seem to be the recalcitrant of India and the country craves and cries for her ungrateful son.

#### **I.5.4.3        *India: A Million Mutinies Now (1990)***

Naipaul's third book on *India, A Million Mutinies Now* leaves his account of postcolonial impressions. This book stands closest to the idea of home coming for Naipaul. It marks Naipaul's surfacing after a long quest amongst the now diminishing ripples of socio-political and cultural paradoxes of India. He sees a million mutinies breaking out in the margins: mutinies of castes, of class and of gender. Compared to *An Area of Darkness* and *India: A Wounded Civilization*, the title of the latest book is less negative. But the use of word mutinies indicates that Naipaul's writings still have strains of the colonial discourse, though, by and large, they can be considered as the works of a postcolonial writer. To quote from Naipaul:

What the mutinies were also helping to define was the strength of the general intellectual life, and the wholeness and humanism of the values to which all Indians now felt they could appeal. And—strange irony—the mutinies were not to be wished away. They were part of the beginning of a new way for

many millions, part of India's growth, and part of its restoration. (Naipaul, 1990, 518)

Hence one notices, the change of perspective in Naipaul who seems to be aware of the dynamics of the socio-economic change that sometimes overwhelms him to the point that some critics have charged him—for the first time—with “gratuitous, irresponsible, willful optimism” (Nixon, 1993, 171). Broadly speaking, for Naipaul the third book on India is a point of departure. His present perception of India as a leading Third World state is totally beyond his previous travel writings on all the places he visited. Naipaul gives the impression that he is capable of accommodating the erstwhile opposing spaces of modernity and tradition in a harmonious, co-extensive manner. He is readier now to read tradition and modernity as complementary texts rather than in opposition to each other. He appears to have resolved to accept India as a hybridized cultural formation where Hinduism and parliamentary democracy, mantras and transistor radios, bullock carts and nuclear power can co-exist perfectly (Cronin, 1989, 113). It seems that the lateral vision largely induced by his own intellectual development has enabled the rational subject to perfectly see the bright side of the Indian darkness

In *India: A Million Mutinies Now* Naipaul has very beautifully painted the postcolonial picture of India. While in Bombay, Naipaul visited Muhammad Ali Road with Nikhil Laxman, a journalist, his first impression of the area as described in his book, captures the claustrophobic atmosphere which gives a ghetto insularity that infuses the dwellers with a sense of security. Naipaul sensed it as a very sensitive subject in Bombay. He noticed that everybody should survive in his/her community if he or she is from minor community. After seeing the life of Muslims in Bombay, he reminds his own situation in Trinidad. Naipaul recollects “I felt that if I had been in their position, confined to Bombay, to that area, to that row I too would have been a passionate Muslim.” (Naipaul, 1990, 31)

Political upheavals and separatist movements have perturbed India from time to time in post independence era. Naipaul was also in the mood to paint such movements and upheavals. Though he was not there but he collects all the pieces of

information from people, newspapers, and gazetteers and so on. For the first time, when Naipaul visited India in 1962 he was not aware with political setup. But during the course of second visit he depicted the period of Emergency very skillfully. In the third visit he was vigilant and curious enough about such movements which created digressions in day to day life of Indian people. The chapter 'After the Battle' is Naipaul's documentation of the movement in the Indian social fabric that occurred in the 1960s and 70s. This movement marks intellectual confusion of the times when the old ideologies were set aside and a search was on for a new set of ideologies to live by. This coupled with economic crisis accentuated the confusion of those times.

Thus, Naipaul seems very much on the side of India. His response is totally positive. He talks in support and favour of India and its mutinies. The excess he sees now felt to be excess in India. The mutinies were helping to define the strength of the general intellectual life. Mutinies not to be wished away as were part of the beginning of a new way for many millions a part of India's restoration.

The compassionate narrative vision in this book enables Naipaul to capture the theme of India collapsing, mutinying and reaching after a final integration. It is his ability to look for the sense of life in a mutinous spirit order that is a significant aspect of Naipaul's writing. Even in the midst of apparent chaos, he sees a semblance of continuity, coherence and harmony. Thus, the million mutinies come to symbolize the dawn of a post-colonial society for Naipaul. The new attitude expressed in this book brings to light a new Naipaul with 'a central will, a central intellect, a unifying idea' suggesting that the conflicting components of his identity are not to be wished away as they have been responsible for his growth and restoration and achievement of the particular truth he had in his mind all through.

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