



Post colonial Elements in V. S. Naipaul's Travelogues

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ABSTRACT

Travel writing as postcolonial discourse or the postcolonial travelogue has emerged as one of the most original and fecund offshoots in the late-twentieth century. Travel thus means by crossing cultural boundaries, trespassing and visiting. Travel writing has been represented as diabolic by postcolonial critics. V. S. Naipaul is a writer of remarkable expertise through which he transforms his travelling experience into texts, primarily postcolonial texts. His texts are not merely precise records of his physical visits but also a sort of circulation of colonial past of colonial countries. As a novelist he is an international figure and exceptional. He is one of the greatest Caribbean writers of Indian origin, writing in English. As a novelist he is an international figure and exceptional. He is fond of travelling and has been keen observer of the different cultures and geographical situations and chosen it as a best suitable form to satisfy his quest of creative writing. His writing reflects various aspects and any particular culture including social, political, religious and personal belief systems. He travels to different places not with an objective to reach far-off countries but to see life in a new way. Travelogue is a genre of historically realistic fictional work, more than a tourist guide and is certainly more than a graphic record of the places and personal impressions of the sojourner. This paper focused on postcolonial novels of Naipaul to explore his postcolonial experiences of travelling.

Keywords:- Postcolonial, travelogue, cultural, social, political, religious.

INTRODUCTION

Postcolonialism as an intellectual discourse is inextricably tagged to the cultural legacies of colonialism and imperialism. The term 'Postcolonialism' as such implies the freedom and political emancipation of the colonized from the colonizers and examines the cultural activities used by the imperial powers to overpower the body and mind of the colonized people.

The history of colonialism is itself associated with imperialism and exploitation of the marginalized so as to impose their dominant cultural hegemony and to make the colonized people feeble and voiceless.

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"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."

V.S.Naipaul has a unique place among the post-independence travellers because of his mysterious connection with the country.

Sir Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul was born on 17 August 1932 in an Indian Brahmin family at Chaguanas in Trinidad. He is one of the finest Caribbean writers of Indian foundation, writing in English. He was the second child of his mother Droapatie and father Seepersad Naipaul. His father was a journalist and his mom was a housewife. Naipaul completed training at Queens Royal College, Port of Spain Trinidad and then went to England on a scholarship. He graduated from Oxford University. He married Patricia Hale, his classmate in 1955. V.S.Naipaul is a zealous travel writer, like Hakluyt, Marco Polo, Darwin, Defoe. He travelled far and wide. Naipaul is an important West Indian novelist of the colonial experience. He was born in an impoverished area of Trinidad where his father had emigrated from India. His father, a local journalist and an aspiring fiction writer, introduced him to serious literature and instilled in him the notion that he should become a writer. He was the inspiring force behind Naipaul's masterpiece novel *A House for Mr. Biswas (1961)*. In 1960 he commenced touring and recorded his impressions of post-colonial societies in South America, India, Middle East Countries, the West Indies as well as post-imperial England. V.S.Naipaul is a great novelist, short-story writer, historian, essayist and travel-writer. He has won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2001 and many prestigious awards and literary honours. V.S. Naipaul, a prominent but controversial figure in contemporary literature, seems to have taken such a position in constructing the knowledge about the 'other' in the postcolonial world. Naipaul has been the subject of numerous serious studies and his position as a postcolonial writer is widely discussed in the present day literary context. He has constructed' knowledge about India, Africa, Caribbean and the Islamic world through his texts. Elleke Boehmer says that:

“from the early days of colonization, therefore, not only texts in general, but literature, broadly defined, underpinned efforts to interpret other lands”.

Travel writing has become a powerful vehicle of cultural critique specifically in the hands of postcolonial authors. Naipaul's major travelogues on India, Caribbean, Africa and some of the Islamic nations. Since a great amount of work has been done in the area of Naipaul's fictional writings, this study confines itself to his travel writings, an area not much explored. An attempt is made to study these travelogues in the light of the various aspects of postcolonial theory expounded by Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Bill Ashcroft, Gayathri Chakravathy Spivak, Homi K. Bhabha and others. The postcolonial theory is used as a major critical tool in the study to draw the reader's attention to Naipaul's writings which have 'produced the rest of the world'. The texts chosen for the study are *An Area of Darkness*, *India A Wounded Civilization*, *India A Million Mutinies Now*, *The Masque of Africa*, *The Middle Passage*, *Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey* and *Beyond Belief: Islamic Excursions among the Converted Peoples*.

After visit above countries Naipaul visit to India have wrote three books about India, *An Area of Darkness* (1964), *India: A Wounded Civilization* (1977), *India: A Million Mutinies Now* (1990). Above three novels is Naipaul's trilogy on India. And these are his famous nonfictional novel. outsider. This journey leaves a mark on his writings. He was upset when he saw the evasive Indian reaction to poverty and suffering. Above two books, Naipaul is found to be quite critical about India, whereas in third one his perception of India changes.

His first travel novel *The Middle Passage: Impression of five societies- British, French* He witnessed hollowness all around in the land and it made him quite distressed on the failure of Mr. Nehru. Besides the above mentioned postcolonial events, another aspect of India that Naipaul confronted was the caste system and he condemns the strict hierarchy of the caste system in India and with distress states, "...in India caste was unpleasant; I never wished to know what a man's caste was..." and *Dutch the West Indies and South America* (1962). He wrote in this travel book:

*“The history of the island can never be told satisfactorily.
Brutality is not the only difficulty. History is built around
achievement and creation; and nothing was created in
the West Indies”.*

An Area of Darkness is V.S.Naipaul's emotional journey to India, home of his ancestors. The book focuses on the experiences and reactions of writer as his journey across India about his roots and past. It was a journey undertaken with expectation for answers on questions of home and identity. Bombay is the first place visited by him but it was not as he had expected. He dislikes to be a part of a crowd at Church station and expected special treatment that he always got in Trinidad and England. But he found no special attention in India. The Chinese attack on India in 1962 put the entire country in crisis. Naipaul was not much concerned about this though he was then in India. Nehru's serious fault, inappropriate war against the China fills Naipaul with aggression and he gives bitter satiric remarks in his chapter on Emergency. He witnessed hollowness all around in the land and it made him quite

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India: A Wounded Civilisation (1977) that records all political upheavals of the decade of 1970s. Naipaul, as a postcolonial traveller failed to establish his Indian identity and withdrew himself from making efforts after his first visit to India. Naipaul realised after his first visit to India that this place could not be his home but he could not remain unmoved and detached from it. Naipaul's second visit to India brought in his mind that Indians would take long time to understand that Britishers left India and he sees no freedom of Indians and what he sets his eyes on post-independence India and states: “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.” (India 8) For Naipaul India at that point of time was a third world country without a historical and racial sense and he proposes that India has to cut off all connections with its past to get the best out of its present. He states that India should be assessed only in the Indian way and in comparison with any western country: “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.” (90) This fact cannot be refuted that nobody can replace Naipaul in writing and giving visual descriptions of common people.

Naipaul's next book *India: A Million Mutinies* gives his account of postcolonial experiences. This book shares the notion of home coming. After coming back to India Naipaul perceives million mutinies of castes, of class and of gender. His use of the word 'mutinities' in the title of his book indicates that his writings still have tensions of the colonial discourse. In this novel he has very nicely painted the postcolonial picture of India. Political turbulences have confounded India intermittently in post independence India. Though Naipaul was not in India at that time but he gathers all the required information from primary and secondary sources such as people, newspaper and others. In 1962 Naipaul visited India but he was not aware about political set of India but when he visited for the second time he narrated the period of Emergency very precisely. His vision became more clear with his third visit to India and he was a keen observant and inquisitive about such movements which created diversions in daily life of Indian people. Naipaul always talks in favour of India and its mutinies. The sensitive description vision of Naipaul enables him to reproduce the theme of disintegrated and disordered India before reaching a final integration. It is his intellectual brilliance to focus upon the sense of life in a rebellious spirit and that is a remarkable aspect of Naipaul's writing.

His travelling to the Islamic countries with two major books: They are *Among the Believers: an Islamic Journey* (1981) and *Beyond Belief: Islamic Excursion* (1998). He writes in this novel his visits to Pakistan, Afghanistan, Malaysia and Iran have been portrayed in these books. He focuses on the strength and weakness of the Islamic fundamentalism. *Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey* explored the political and religious turmoil in Iran, Pakistan, Indonesia and Malaysia. This is a remarkable book on race, culture and country. This book describes a six-month journey across the Asian continent after the Iranian Revolution. V.S. Naipaul explores the way of life and the explosive scenario in international locations in which Islamic fundamentalism was developing. His travels begin with Iran, directly to Pakistan, Malaysia and lead to Indonesia, with a quick stop in Pakistan and Iran on the return to the UK. *Among the Believers* is a compilation of Naipaul's travels from Iran to Southeast Asia, at a time in records, 1979 to 1981, that could later be visible as an inflection point for the Muslim global. Among different things he is a right away witness to the instant aftermath of the Iranian Revolution and the so-called Islamic awakening that became birthed in element from that occasion. In those forms of books Naipaul completely fails to self-study the Anglophile civilization he embraces so uncritically. He never raises the question of whether or not anti-Western ideologies are even partly a reaction to competitive overseas regulations, or in the event that they would were able to gain traction within the Muslim world without them. Nonetheless, despite now not being his greatest book, it's not a horrific one both. As ordinary the writing is ideal and makes reading it experience like a cheaper holiday the world over and returned a few decades in time. He even takes you to a few places that subsequent tragedies have made it no longer possible to go to.

Naipaul's account of his travels through Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia and Indonesia with a few trepidation, expecting a precept based on his writings. Naipaul is not as a whole lot vitriolic as repetitive and static in his reporting. His primary thesis is that Islam, from its Shia incarnation it publishes Islamic-Revolution; Iran to the animist incorporating version of Indonesia, gives most effective ideas. It fails to provide shape, institutions or a comprehensive political and criminal system that is constant and coherent for this century. This, claims through those he meets and talks to, that Islam is a whole social gadget that has failed handiest due to guys and no longer for any essential flaw in and of itself. This book carries his observations on Islam after assembly a lot of human beings in these kinds of nations. This book is sympathetic in tone, contrary to the same old accusation of Naipaul as a sympathiser of Hindu nationalism. This refers to the challenge of brand new war of words between the West and Islam.

His *Beyond Belief: Islamic Excursions Among the Converted Peoples* (1998) is a book of human beings and testimonies unshaped by his evaluations, but opinion and idea dominated his later work. His topics blanketed imperialism, freedom, emergent nationalisms, faith, revolution, fundamentalism and the colonial mentality. He saw the terror ready to be unleashed upon the arena by means of half of-baked revolutions, mutinies and holy wars, and with the aid of fundamentalism and fanaticism of any kind. By the Nineties he had made himself the cynical poet of post-imperialism and the strange prophet of violence, global disorientation and

homelessness. He feels that every individual in the world, however low his social and economic status, desires to possess some space that be his very own, his house or home. This desire is more evident in people who, for some reason or other, are displaced from their origins and for whom homelessness is an everyday phenomenon. The realization of this rootlessness forces them to create a solid home space even in an alien land. as written from the vantage point of one who is outside the mainstream of society.

The present study is an attempt to explore the concept of diasporic identity/sensibility that the authors of post-colonial literature are constantly preoccupied with and to present Naipaul's belongingness to the diaspora of exclusivism and his treatment of the questions of belonging, home, and career as symbol of both heritage and values. Naipaul expresses his life of exile through his characters and the study has identified the problems of existence faced by these characters who struggle for self-assertion. To present an authentic picture of social divisions, economic conditions and cultural expectations of the people, the study has adopted the notion of diaspora as social practice on the basis of an analysis of Naipaul's novels, travel writings, essays and stories.

The Masque of Africa is his recent journey of Africa. It is a quest through the continent for the spirit of African belief, the belief systems that preceded the arrival of Christianity and Islam. Naipaul's journey across the continent takes him from Uganda, where he lived for a short while in the 1960s, to Nigeria, then to Gabon via the Ivory Coast and Ghana, and finally to South Africa. Along the way, he meets and talks to people about their beliefs.

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