



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

POSTCOLONIAL ELEMENTS IN V.S.NAIPAUL'S AN AREA OF DARKNESS

Pinki kumari

Research Scholar

University Dept. of English

L.N.Mithila University Darbhanga

ABSTRACT

An Area of Darkness is a novel that Naipaul describes the India as a darkness area , he thinks that third world countries are such the place where people suffer from humiliation and tyranny, there is no human rights, no equality between men and women. It is an emotional travelogue written during his first visit to India in 1964. Naipaul's ironic view on India implies to the decay that society suffers from. In *An Area of Darkness*, he serves mainly as a representative of the western ideas and visions of the world and stands in contrast to the rest of Indian society. Naipaul writes about what he observed during his journey, India , Pakistan, Malaysia , Indonesia , Ivory coast, Iran, Argentina, Uruguay and so on , were his destinations, describing the societies , peoples and lives in his writings, Naipaul describes the reason why chooses postcolonial societies rather than England as his subject matter for most of his novels and travel books, determined to become a great and well-known writer , also he knows so little about England even he has spent many years in that country.

Keywords: - Postcolonial, society, country, journey, western, humiliation.

INTRODUCTION

Naipaul is a crucial West Indian novelist of the colonial experience. He was born in an impoverished region of Trinidad wherein his father had emigrated from India. Naipaul is a much discussed novelist. From the beginning of his literary career he has been surrounded by controversy because of his wry assessment of postcolonial societies. He arouses contrasting responses among his readers who are divided into opposite critical camps. On the one hand there are critics, who pay him endless praise while on the other there are those who, striking the opposite chord, attack him for his unfavourable portrayal of Third World. Naipaul's important travelogues are on India, Caribbean, Africa and some of the Islamic international

locations. Since an incredible amount of work has been explored about Naipaul's fictional writings, this study confines itself to his journey writings, an area not much explored. An strive is made to have a look at those travelogues within numerous elements of postcolonial idea expounded with the aid of Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Bill Ashcroft, Gayathri Chakravathy Spivak, Homi K. Bhabha and others. The postcolonial idea is used as a major tool to draw the reader's attention to Naipaul's writings. The texts chosen for the look at *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* the various Converted Peoples.

V. S Naipaul's *An area of darkness* – A discovery of India is the first of his acclaim. Indian trilogy. It is an emotional travelogue written during his first visit to India in 1964. It is logically the most emotional and subjective book. It describes his first journey to the country of his ancestors. The story abounds with descriptions of the extreme poverty of India. Naipaul describes India as 'the poorest country in the world.' The Indians defecate everywhere but fail to face up to this fact according to Naipaul. He analyses in a very logical way the reasons why he thinks Poverty exists in such a real way in India. He mentions at one stage how 'divorce of the intellect from body labour has made of us the most resource less and most exploited nation on earth.' The concluding section abounds in grim and rather depressing images of poverty. When Naipaul pays a trip to the village and meets the emaciated Ramachandra who is surrounded in dire poverty he is appalled and simply wants to leave the country at once. Poverty is seen as a self-defeating and destructive reality in this country. The most striking to the eye for Naipaul, before he could penetrate into the psyche of India, was its visual aspect. He sees the country full of dirt, dust, starved and sick people and poor beggars. Indian poverty, commented on throughout the travelogue, is for Naipaul an enormously painful experience. His vivid descriptions of people squatting in the streets and of dirty, decrepit beggars craving for alms create a typical picture of Indian environment. For Naipaul,

"India is the poorest country in the world" (an area of Darkness⁴⁴).

As Naipaul focus, beggary has its special position in India and cannot be judged from a European perspectives. Beggars have a secure position within the society. It is an inseparable element of India. Beggary has its "function", because every act of "giving to the beggar" is seen as "the automatic act of charity, which is an automatic reverence to God". Defecating belongs to India in the same way as beggary. It became almost a ritual. People walk in the streets full of excrements they do not notice, or even see. Although latrines and toilets are still not commonplace in India, the only reason for this situation is that Indians prefer defecating in an open air. It has become their daily routine and habit. For the westerner it is altogether incomprehensible as Naipaul asserts.

In An Area of Darkness opening section entitled Travellers Prelude deals with the difficulties surrounding bureaucracy in the country. The book is divided into three parts. First part entitled is A Resting Place for the Imagination. He speaks about his ancestors coming to India as indentured labourers. He also deals with his first experiences on the issue of race, of Muslims and Hindus. Naipaul was born an unbeliever. He grew up in an orthodox Hindu family. In India he explains how caste comes to mean the brutal division of labour and this was an unpleasant concept. While he was an unbeliever he was still saddened at the decay of old customs and rituals. Naipaul talks about the poverty in India and how it is one of the poorest countries in the world. When he moves to London he find himself as one more face in the midst of Industrialized England. Naipaul speaks about the Indian English mimicry and how this is just like fantasy. He goes on to speak about the custom of defecating everywhere and how they refuse to acknowledge this fact. The approach too many villages is not a pleasant experience therefore. Naipaul speaks about Mahatma Gandhi and how he was able to look at India squarely and see its problems in a totally objective manner.

“And for the first time in my life I was one of the crowds. There was nothing in my appearance or dress to distinguish me from the crowd, eternally hurrying into Church Gate station ... It was like being denied part of my reality.”

Second part opens with the image of a Doll's House on the Dal Lake. This is in fact a hotel called Hotel Liward, which is situated in Kashmir. He speaks about his relationships with the various people who worked in the hotel and the ensuing conflicts, which occurred. We learn about the function of the Indian Civil Service. He is encouraged to join a pilgrimage to the Cave of Amarnath the Eternal Lord, which is ninety miles north of Srinagar. He, speaks about his joy and that of the other pilgrims as they climb the Himalayas and try to get inside a cave. Even though they are on a pilgrimage Naipaul states how as soon as they got inside the cave it was like a typical Indian bazaar. Naipaul recounts many anecdotes among them one about a young couple called Rafiq and Laraine. Rafiq is a poor musician. They spend a good deal of time fighting but eventually they get married. They split up however as she is unable to bear the poverty in India. She returns home to America.

“The British refused to be absorbed into India; they did not proclaim, like the Mogul, that if there was a paradise on earth, it was this, it was this, and it was this. While dominating India they expressed their contempt for it, and projected England; and Indians were forced into nationalism.”

Third part entitled is Fantasy and Ruins deals how the British possessed the country completely. Their withdrawal was irrevocable. He speaks about the English of the raj how they swaggered and had mannerisms and spoke a jargon. He mentions Kipling and how he is a good chronicler of Anglo-India. He talks about how the “Taj Mahal” is a great building without a function. He goes on to speak about writers and how Indian attempts at the novel reveal the Indian confusion further. Naipaul moves on to speak about Indian railways and how he

befriended a Sikh while travelling by train in the south of India. He comes to the conclusion however that India for him remains an area of darkness. He has learned over the years his separateness his contentment with being a colonial without a past and without ancestors. At the conclusion of the novel he tells us about his encounter with an emaciated man called Ramachandra. This man wants help to start litigation and get some land, which formerly belonged to Naipaul's grandfather. Naipaul is disgusted at this incident and leaves in a mood of self-reproach. He talks about his flight home and how it was made up of anxiety and frustration. He admits that the journey to India should not have been made as it broke his life in two. Colonial India in the twentieth century forms the cultural context of this novel. Naipaul gives the reader a vivid insight into the various sects and cultural systems dominating this country. In Part two of the novel Naipaul analyses the whole colonial process. There are copious references to Hinduism and Muslims and Buddhism and he paint some vivid pictures of the various customs, which these people engage in.

“And in India, I was to see that so many of the things newer and now perhaps truer side of my nature kicked against the smugness as it seemed to me, the imperviousness to criticism, the refusal to see, the double talk and double think had an answer in that side of myself which I had thought buried and which India revived as a faint memory.”

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* are 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 district identity, especially when s/he is an outsider or wants to be considered one. 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, at the beginning of this century. 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. In Part two of the novel Naipaul analyses the whole colonial process. There are copious references to Hinduism and Muslims and Buddhism and he paint some vivid pictures of the various customs, which these people engage in. Naipaul's multifaceted and so frequently arguable writings have greater than once placed him in a private, unique courting to London, the centre of the British colonial Empire. Naipaul is observed to be pretty vital about India, whereas in third one his perception of India modifications. *An Area of*

Darkness is V.S.Naipaul emotional adventure to India, home of his ancestors. This book specializes in the experiences and reactions of author as his journey across India about his roots and beyond. It turned into a journey undertaken with expectation for solutions on questions of home and identification. Naipaul has himself confessed that It was 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.

Throughout *An area of darkness* there is a sense of humiliation, of a personal frustration that the India of his secret imagination and longings, of his imagined origins, in another oriental third world country despite its size and ancient history. He feels disgust at the dirt, decay, incompetence, corruption, passivity, the humiliation by the threatening Chinese army. Like many other nationalists, Naipaul wants a modern, western efficient industrialized state, and he wants a revitalized native, traditional, authentic culture. Naipaul as a person of Indian ancestry, his comments must be taken seriously as good counsel, but, then, there have been serious criticism of his views as ill-informed. For many Indian critics, Naipaul denies the optimistic side of India, despite making some strong valid points; Naipaul almost never touches optimistic side .As if he has decided to turn a blind eye towards the positive side of things. As Bhosale in his article writes: Naipaul's description of India is impulsive and anecdotal. His failure is evident in the overall gloomy picture that comes out of his writing. But again this is the beauty of a travelogue, as it captures the true responses of a visitor. The picture surely is not complete and lacks many facades of India. It is really sad; as most of Naipaul's analysis and criticism holds so true that I cannot deny it. What he saw in 1964 has seldom changed after almost fifty years. His sharp criticism of almost everything related to India offends and hurts us. But at the same time, it helps us to pause and look at our and our country from a different perspective.

REFERENCE

- Landeg white, *V. S Naipaul: A critical Introduction*. London: Macmillan Press, 1975
- Peggy Nightingale, *Journey through Darkness, the Writing of V. S. Naipaul*. St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press. 1987, 6.
- Gordon Rohler, *the ironic approach: the novel of V.S Naipaul*, Ed: in Louis James, the islands in between: essay in West Indian literature. London Oxford University Press, 1968
- Sudha Rai, *V. S. Naipaul: A Study in Expatriate Sensibility*. New Delhi: Arnold, 1982
- V.S Naipaul, *An Area of Darkness*. London: Penguin Books, 1968
- Ibid p-35
- Ibid p-211
- Ibid p-43

