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VS NAIPAUL – A FREE SPIRIT

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ABSTRACT:

CONSIDERED ONE OF THE GREATEST ENGLISH PROSE STYLISTS OF THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY, AND ARGUABLY OF ALL TIMES, V S NAIPAUL WAS A COLOSSUS WHO STRODE THE LITERARY REALM. HE WOVE A FICTIONAL LANDSCAPE AND WAS KNOWN TO SPIN MAGIC OUT OF WORDS, AND WAS EASILY IN THE LEAGUE OF LEGENDARY WRITERS LIKE CHARLES DICKENS, LEO TOLSTOY AND JOSEPH CONRAD. NAIPAUL WAS AWARDED THE NOBEL PRIZE IN 2001, WHERE HE HIGHLIGHTED ONLY HIS ADOPTED COUNTRY BRITAIN, AND THE LAND OF HIS ANCESTORS INDIA, BUT NEVER MENTIONED THE COUNTRY OF HIS BIRTH, TRINIDAD, PART OF THE CARIBBEAN ISLANDS.

THE GENRE OF HIS WRITING WAS FICTION AND NON-FICTION, ESPECIALLY NARRATIVISED HISTORY THAT INCLUDES SOME HISTORICAL RESEARCH BASED ON HIS TRAVELS. ACCORDING TO NAIPAUL, A NON-JUDGMENTAL OBSERVATION OF THE WORLD WAS A HALLMARK OF HIS WRITING. NAIPAUL WAS KNOWN FOR HIS VISION OF WRITING AND BELIEVED THAT EVERYTHING ELSE HAS TO BE SUBSERVIENT TO THIS GOAL.

IN WHAT CONCERNS THE QUESTIONS THIS PAPER INTENDS TO ANSWER HERE ARE SOME OF THEM:

1. WHICH IS THE RELATION BETWEEN NAIPAUL'S WORKS AND BIOGRAPHY AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY?
2. WHAT ARE THE DIFERENT MEANINGS OF NAIPAUL'S FREE SPIRIT?
3. WHY ARE VS NAIPAUL'S NOVELS A GRIM EVEN PESIMISTIC VIEW OF THE POST-COLONIAL WORLD?

KEY WORDS: VS NAIPAUL, FREE SPIRIT, AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITING, POST-COLONIAL WORLD, VICTIMHOOD

INTRODUCTION: A bio-bibliographical sketch

Date: 2001, December 7. Location: Stockholm, Sweden. Event: Nobel Award ceremony. Awardee: Sir Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul. It was on this date and at this particular location that Naipaul delivered *Two Worlds* – his now famous Nobel acceptance speech – to the distinguished guests of the Swedish Academy. Naipaul began his lecture by citing Proust, according to whom “a book is the product of a different self” from the daily self of the person who wrote it. In order to understand it, we should search deep in our souls, try “to reconstruct it there” and then we would probably reach it. It is in the light of this

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statement that we should approach the biography, or even autobiography, of all those who depend on inspiration:

“All the details of the life and the quirks and the friendships can be laid out for us, but the mystery of the writing will remain. No amount of documentation, however fascinating, can take us there. The biography of a writer – or even the autobiography – will always have this incompleteness. [1]” He then continues with a concise presentation of the history of his native Trinidad, the adoptive home of his parents and the other indentured Indian workers in the West Indies. It is like an incursion into the colonial past and postcolonial present, an attempt at self-discovery and self-understanding, an invitation to the two worlds of his childhood – his grandmother’s house and the world outside which, by its excluding attitude allowed the new the new arrivals to live their own private lives in their own ways, in their own “fading India”. In the world outside young Naipaul learned the rudiments of his Indian heritage – language, traditions, religion – and by meeting his Indian Muslim neighbours he became aware of the existence of the *other*. But the world outside was much more powerful. Even if the his elders were observing the ancient customs and religion, organizing ceremonies and readings of sacred Sanskrit texts, their “ancestral faith receded”, with a sense of not belonging to the present, and all possible links with India were severed. We are witnessing the colonizing process in a nutshell. Naipaul’s Trinidad is a cosmopolitan world, where the Hindu meets the Muslim, the Africans or other people of African descent meet the whites and the non-whites – English, Portuguese, Chinese – all surrounded by areas of darkness.

Who is, then, Naipaul?

A biographical account may sound rather dry: eighty years ago, on August 17, 1932, Naipaul was born in Chaguanas, Trinidad, into a Hindu family, belonging to the approximately 145,000 Indians who came to Trinidad between 1845 and 1917. Writing about the unfriendly reception of the Indians by the local population of Trinidad, Bridget Brereton stresses the humble social position assigned to the new-comers by the “planters, officials, upper-class whites, educated coloured and black Creoles and the black working class” once they became aware that the Indians were there to stay. It is in this tropical Trinidadian space with its multi-ethnic population and multicultural atmosphere that we find the explanation of a certain degree of preoccupation with, or obsession of the marginality detected when reading his books, the writer’s feeling that his native island, or the other countries visited, and their inhabitants – Christian, Muslim, or Hindu – are totally irrelevant to the (post-) colonial centre. During his boyhood on the island, Naipaul resolved to get away in five years’ time. He was only twelve then, and he kept his promise. At eighteen, he travelled to England to read literature at Oxford on a government scholarship, never to return. A Knight of the British Empire, Naipaul was conferred the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2001.

In *Indians Abroad: A Story from Trinidad*, Namit Arora provides additional information about the Naipaul. Obviously, Naipaul was not a poor Trinidadian of Indian origin. In spite of his documented extraction from the former indentured workers who had crossed the seas for a better, well-paid for job in the colonies of the British Empire, Naipaul’s father was a journalist and a writer. His marriage into the Trinidad based influential family of politicians and writers of Capildeo. Even today, situated about eleven miles away from Port of Spain, the little town of Chaguanas boasts the so-called *Lion House* – Naipaul’s birthplace. Despite the Naipaul’s apparent well-being, the letter exchange between Naipaul and his father more than often reveal financial difficulties which Naipaul Sr.’s humiliating payments for his newspaper articles could hardly cover. The same letters and other autobiographical

accounts hint at Naipaul's decision to define his relationship with the world he lived in, and to understand his origins.

VS NAIPAUL'S LITERARY ACTIVITY

The beginning of Naipaul's writing career – when he was almost twenty-three – was materialized in his first novel, *Miguel Street*, published in 1959, after *The Mystic Masseur*. It was written in only six weeks, in 1955, when Naipaul was working part-time for the BBC Caribbean Service, and sends the reader back to the writer's memories of his childhood and neighbours in Port of Spain.

His next novel, *The Mystic Masseur* was published in 1957. Its tone was similar to that of *Miguel Street*, but was set among rural Indians in Trinidad. It told the story of Ganesh, a chancer who progresses from failed teacher to masseur to entrepreneur, ending up as an author and politician. The success of the novel cannot be doubted. The *Sunday Express* critic called *The Mystic Masseur* “the deftest and gayest satire I have read in years.” The *Sunday Times* reviewer called Naipaul “a sophisticated and witty young Trinidad novelist who immediately takes a front-line place in the growing West Indian school”. Other reviewers were not so enthusiastic, as Diana Athill who opined that the favourable reception of the book was due to a passing British interest in new writing from the colonies, and particularly the West Indies; at the time, “it was easier to get reviews for a writer seen by the British as black, than it was for a young white writer, and reviews influenced readers a good deal more than they do now.”

Naipaul's third novel, *The Suffrage of Elvira* (1958), was awarded the Somerset Maugham Award. This satirical novel revolves around the election process in Trinidad, and describes the almost *commedia del'arte* circumstances informing the democratic process and the consequences of political change. It is also an incursion into multicultural Trinidad, insisting on the effects the election process may have on the various ethnic groups of Trinidad, which include not only Naipaul's co-nationals – the Hindus – but also the Muslims, and the Europeans.

The Suffrage of Elvira was followed by *A House of Mr. Biswas*. Worldwide acclaim followed its publication in 1961. As it is the case with Naipaul's novels in which autobiographical elements prevail, it is about the Indo-Trinidadian protagonist Mohun Biswas' strivings for success, his failures, and his final achievement of owning his own house despite his unhappy marriage. Over and over again, Naipaul is using a personal, postcolonial perspective to view a vanished colonial world, his father's world.

In 1963 Naipaul published *Mr. Stone and the Knights Companion*, a departure from what he had published before. It is a short novel about an old man with regular habits and a dull life; the peculiar trait of the novel is that the characters are exclusively English. As it has become usual with Naipaul's fiction, the autobiographical details prevail: his relationship with his first wife, Patricia, and his time at the Cement & Concrete Association. The book is a study of the author's loneliness in post-war London and a portrait of a marriage, drawing on solitary days at his desk and the stasis of sexually unsatisfactory married life. One of the keywords for this novel would be *a quest for renewal*, and the plot of the novel develops along the line of renewal in the midst of decay and signs of imminent extinction. Environment is the key feature of the novel for it reflects the hollowness and gloom of Mr. Stone's life.

Multiculturalism is the main feature of *The Mimic Men* (1967). The protagonists are an unusual mixture of races: Indian (Singh), Chinese (Hok), French (Deschampsneuf), African (Browne). The basic problem is identity, which inevitably leads to the question of

race, and the multiple and sometimes unpleasant problems of living in a society which is better described by its heterogeneity. There is only one solution left to them: to imitate masters in both in dress and attitudes. Interviewed by Shankar Israel, Naipaul referred to his concept of “mimicry” which he discovered at work in all the postcolonial societies he wrote about: “The people I saw were little people who were mimicking upper-class respectability. They had been slaves, and you can’t write about that in the way that Tolstoy wrote about, even his backward society – for his society was whole and the one I knew was not.”

Naipaul was awarded the Booker prize for *In a Free State* in 1971. The structure of the volume is not so unusual if we consider his later travelogues: Naipaul includes three short stories – the title of the third one is in *In a Free State* – into a framing narrative. Its structure is symphonic, in that its different movements are working towards a not so clearly stated main theme, which could be the price of freedom.

The following novel, *Guerrillas*, was published in 1975. Commenting on the success of the novel, Peter Ackroyd considered it “a powerful and thoughtful novel,” and Anthony Thwaite commended “a brilliant artist’s anatomy and emptiness, and of despair.”

A Bend in the River (1979) was short-listed for the Booker Prize in 1979. The setting of the novel is an anonymous post-independence African nation, and its narrator is an Indian Muslim shopkeeper whose comments on the recent developments in Africa are those of a distant outsider. Some of the reviewers of the novel recognized him as “a magnificent novelist,” and *A Bend in the River* has been described a “full-bodied masterpiece.” Some others were less enthusiastic and criticized the opinions and viewpoints expressed in *A Bend in the River*. The same Wheatcroft accused Naipaul of neo-colonialism, and of an “ancestral communal resentment” against blacks, while Whitaker mentions Naipaul’s tendency of ascribing a “mysterious malevolence” to the Africans.

The autobiographical novel *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987) is set in England, and contains Naipaul’s considerations on the contradictory perception of his place in the English countryside: first seen as frozen and unchanged, dominated by the mystical presence of the Stonehenge site, the surroundings of Naipaul’s cottage in England gradually unfold as constantly changing, where the inhabitants go on living their ordinary life isolated from the world beyond. Naipaul also analyses his own changing of places – Trinidad replaced by New York, New York replaced by Oxford – and the subsequent understanding of his own positioning in an entirely new environment.

Naipaul’s last three novels – *A Way in the World*, *Half a Life*, and *Magic Seeds* – were written over a span of ten years. As controversial as most of Naipaul’s writings, *A Way in the World* (1994) was short-listed for the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award. At the publisher’s specific request, Naipaul called the book a *novel*, though his suggestion for a sub-title was *sequence*, and a number of his reviewers preferred Naipaul’s sub-title.

Long-listed for the Booker prize, *Half a Life* (2001) is set in three continents: India, Africa and Europe (London, Berlin and Portugal). It follows the destiny of Willie Somerset Chandran, the son of a Brahmin father and a Dalit mother who goes all the way from India to England to finally become a writer and ends up in Berlin after having spent 18 years in Africa. The sequel to *Half a Life* is *Magic Seeds* (2004), which is also set in India and Europe (Berlin and London). The same protagonist returns to India, gets involved with the communist guerrillas, and finally returns to London to join a suburban, upper-middle class neighbourhood, with all its frustrations, and a pervading feeling of claustrophobia.

Travel and essay writing constitute the second dimension of Naipaul’s work, extending over a span of half a century, an impressive total of nineteen titles which cover not only the writer’s native Trinidad, the Caribbean Archipelago and India, but also Africa, the

Middle East, Asia, and the Americas. In his essay, *Our Universal Civilization*, Naipaul writes: “I was travelling from the periphery, the margin, to what to me was the centre; and it was my hope that, at the centre, room would be made for me” [2]. This statement is followed by the confession that his decision to live and write in London was a practical one, in that it had a “commercial organization” and a desire for new creative “stimuli” that was unavailable in 1950s Trinidad. It is a conviction repeated by the narrator in *The Enigma of Arrival* who realizes that his “literary life... was to be elsewhere [3]”

The Middle Passage (1962) is the outcome of Naipaul’s voyage to Trinidad, British Guiana, Suriname, Martinique and Jamaica in 1961. Writing about the book, Sybille Bedford came to the conclusion that its essence resides in the “perennial conjunction of historical misconduct with present and intrinsic human weakness”; it describes and explains “the spiritual chaos and material shortcomings of modern life in some post-slaveholding societies. [4]”

All the recurrent themes of his travelogues are announced in this first travel book: slavery and race, colonialism and post-colonialism, the position of the South Asian *Other* in the countries of adoption. More than once Naipaul-the-traveller has been compared to Conrad. Just like his famous predecessor, Naipaul was a globe-trotter who managed to capture the extent to which a foreign culture – with its repository of customs and traditions – is assimilated or not into a larger whole.

Two years later, *India: An Area of Darkness: A Discovery of India* was published. It is a detailed, rather gloomy and heavily pessimistic account of the writer’s first voyage to India, the first travelogue of his Indian trilogy. The anecdotal and descriptive style of the narration is heavy with the acute disillusionment of the author and the feeling of not belonging.

The second volume in the trilogy, *India: A Wounded Civilization*, was published in 1977. It was the outcome of his second visit to India, during the Gandhian Indian Emergency period (26 June 1975-21 March 1977). There is no sentimentality in this portrait of 20th century India, the product of centuries of foreign occupation and oppression, be it the four hundred years or so of Muslim rule, or one century and a half of British occupation. More than that, this trip to India is another adventure in self-discovery:

“An inquiry about India – even an inquiry about the Emergency – has quickly to go beyond the political. It has to be an inquiry about Indian attitudes; it has to be an inquiry about the civilization itself, as it is. And though in India I am a stranger, the starting point of this inquiry – more than might appear in these pages – has been myself. [5]”

India: A Million Mutinies Now (1990) is the third of Naipaul’s Indian trilogy and a more optimistic account of the author’s encounters, a reconciliation with his ancestral land, now “a country of million mutinies,” a country profoundly marked by visible signs of self-awareness and an incipient intellectual life, heretofore completely neglected: It closes the cycle, and is a more optimistic account of India than the other two. Naipaul witnesses the eccentricities of Indian daily life, over and over again commenting on the Indians’ particular way of coping with the obvious poverty and disorder unusual to a Westerner’s eye. It is a more optimistic book than the other two. In the last chapter, *The House on the lake: A Return to India*, the author summarizes his experience during his third visit to India, this being a reconciliation with the past and a kind of unexpected way of asking for forgiveness.

Based on contemporary British and Spanish sources, *The Loss of Eldorado* (1969) is an examination of the British and Spanish colonial ambitions in the basin of Orinoco during the gold rush, and the obsessive quest for gold which triggered the first European explorations of the area, with a particular stress on the expeditions directed by Sir Walter Raleigh. Then the writer’s interest moves to his native, British-occupied Trinidad of the early

nineteenth century, and to Venezuela and its people's struggle for independence. Not completely satisfied with the outcome of his quest for Eldorado, Naipaul "reworked some of its material in a later book, *A Way in the World*, where historical narrative is treated in a different way, and is in part rendered as fiction" [6]

In 1989, Naipaul published *A Turn in the South*, a rather surprising departure from previously exotic locations, in his attempt to understand the problems of the American South, made easier by the writer's Caribbean background. In this case he deals with the African Americans – the Blacks – of the American South, and the book may be seen as a new understanding of the author's perception of the South. Naipaul's conclusion is surprisingly optimistic: far from the racial violence the South identified with, Naipaul discovers striking similarities between the Caribbean island-states and the states of the American South, pointing to parallels between the histories of the two, and highlighting those differences brought about by slavery and, eventually, freedom. The value of the book resides not only in his memories of his own culture and its history, but also in the thoughts and ideas of the people he meets – which is valid for all his other travelogues. The writer focuses not so much on the difficulties he faces as a traveller in the Southern States; he is mostly interested in those particular events and ideas which have shaped this part of the USA.

Before turning his face to Africa, Naipaul wrote two more books on India, this time in cooperation: *Homeless by Choice* (1992, with R. Jhabvala and Salman Rushdie) and *Bombay* (1994, with Raghbir Singh), both published in India. Though India-oriented, they do not fit into the picture of our study.

Meanwhile, Naipaul had allowed Gillon Aitken to collect all his correspondence with his father, and the other members of his family during his three years stay at Oxford. The book, *Between Father and Son: Family Letters*, was published in 1999, and is a moving epistolary collection which offers an insight into the tight family ties within a Trinidadian Hindu family, on the Oxford student community, and on the literary community of Trinidad and London during mid-twentieth century.

The Writer and the World: Essays – (2002) is another collection of essays that cover Naipaul's fierce and sometimes much debated criticism upon and understanding of the countries visited, such as India, his native Trinidad, Zaire. In his extensive review to the same volume of essays, Algis Valiunas (2002) agrees that *The Writer and the World* is one of those works incapable of making its readers happy, that it takes "a very cold eye to take in and render a world as hard and bitter as this one," a quality which Naipaul has cultivated all along his life.

Literary Occasions: Essays (2003, edited by Pankaj Mishra) is another collection of essays – the author's musings on "writing and literature, evolving from Naipaul's own experience – his background and history, his development as a writer and his observations as a reader. Quite often they overlap, the same subject matter turning up in two or three different places. And usually they do so to effect, shifting the perspective slightly, complicating the significance of the whole."

A Writer's People: Ways of Looking and Feeling (2007) is a collection of essays in which Naipaul discusses how other writers – such as Flaubert, Anthony Powell, Evelyn Waugh, and Derek Walcott – have influenced his own writing.

The non-fiction books are journeys of (self-) discovery. Whether they are set in the Caribbean islands, in Africa, India, or America, Naipaul reveals himself as an Indo-Trinidadian, whose Trinidadian background explains his particular stance as regards the countries visited. We may question – to cite Namit Arora again – the extent to which Trinidad made Naipaul see the societies visited as "half-made, full or rage, hysteria, or mimic

men, trapped in narrow identities, short of self-awareness.” In *The Enigma of Arrival*, Naipaul confesses his indebtedness to the island which had given him, first, the world as a writer, then the themes of importance in the second half of the twenty-first century, and – last but not least – had made him metropolitan “in a way quite different from [his] first understanding of the world.” [7]

In *Our Universal Civilization*, Naipaul himself comments on some essential, defining features of the Indians in Trinidad, on their indebtedness to ancient rituals and holy texts and epics, cultural markers which helped them understand “the wholeness” of their world and “the alienness” of the world at large. In what follows, we can see Naipaul explaining his family’s propensity for literature.

VS NAIPAUL – A FREE SPIRIT

„Naipaul’s works take the reader on a journey of experiences from the local to the global and from a narrow perspective to a broader and more encompassing vision. This chapter will discuss some of the prominent themes in Naipaul’s fiction. Mr. Naipaul’s works are set in many places and explore many themes, but he is best known for his knowing depictions of Trinidad, where he was born and reared; for his explorations of modern-day India, his ancestral land; and for his bleak, unsparing portraits of postcolonial countries in Africa, Asia and South America. His fiction is often highly autobiographical, returning again and again to the themes of alienation, the burdens of the past, and the confusions of the present.

In a rare moment of self-revelation during his acceptance lecture for his Nobel Prize in Stockholm, Naipaul notes: "I said earlier that everything about me is in my books. I will go further now. I will say I am the sum of my books. Each book intuitively sensed and, in the case of fiction, intuitively worked out. Stands on what has gone before, and grows out of it. I feel that at any stage of my literary career it could have been said that the last book contained all the others. It’s been like this because of my background. My background is at once exceedingly simple and exceedingly confused. I was born in Trinidad. It is a small island in the mouth of the great Orinoco river of Venezuela. So Trinidad is not strictly of South America, and not strictly of the Caribbean. It was developed as a New World plantation colony, and when I was born in 1932 it had a population of about 400,000. Of this, about 150,000 were Indians, Hindus and Muslims, nearly all of peasant origin, and nearly all from the Gangetic plain." William Walsh in his book *V.S. Naipaul* says, "Themes to him assume the forms of action and ideas appeal to him only in so far as they satisfy him, as per Henry James, “the appetite for the illustrational.” His vision is his own, uneneruated by contemporary social clichés or political routines. His writing is nervous and present. This, together with the mixture in him of creeds, cultures and continents, with his expatriate career, his being able to practice an art in and of totally dissimilar worlds, all gives him a peculiarly contemporary quality."

Trinidadian themes occupy a privileged place, underlying the majority of Naipaul’s writings. *The Mystic Masseur*, *The Suffrage of Elvira*, *Miguel Street*, *A House for Mr. Biswas*, *A Flag on the Island*, *The Mimic Men*, *In a Free State*, *Guerrillas* and *the Enigma of Arrival*, are all related to Trinidad, V.S. Naipaul’s childhood home.

DISPLACEMENT, ALIENATION AND ROOTLESSNESS:

V.S. Naipaul has spent a lifetime pondering his place in the world, trying to square his own ancestral culture with that of England, the country he adopted as his home. Alienation is usually defined as a feeling of separation or isolation, associated with minorities, the poor and

other groups of periphery who have limited power to bring about changes in society. Mr. Biswas, the protagonist of *A House for Mr. Biswas*, is the unaccommodated man representing the outcast's symbolic quest for a place in the hostile universe. A sense of place and self, which was difficult for East Indians in Trinidad to have. It is difficult in Naipaul's case to define, 'home.' The word home is linked with identity, so his works often centers on identity, quest and displacement. Naipaul's writings frequently carry references to his cultural heritage, rooted in; Trinidad (birth place), India (ancestral place) and Britain (place of education). Naipaul says: "The English Language was mine, the tradition was not."

This problem of displacement is depicted in *A House for Mr. Biswas*. Mr. Biswas, portrayal of Naipaul's own father, a man caught up in three cultures. It depicts Naipaul's own cultural dislocation and displacement. Naipaul's strongest vision of destruction of identity through geographical displacement is found in his novel *In a Free State*. The story rotates around the protagonist, who attempts to reach a 'free state.' In *The Enigma of Arrival*, Naipaul again comes to terms with his own cultural dislocation and displacement.

POST-COLONIAL THIRD WORLD:

V.S. Naipaul has always represented a denial of the third-world spirit. Naipaul has represented societies that have recently emerged from colonialism. He describes the way these societies function in the postcolonial order. Though imperialism has passed and the colonies have attained an independent status, but these nations of the Third World faces a lot of problems like economic, social and political. Damage is also done to the psyche of the colonized people, through the subtle process of cultural colonization. V.S. Naipaul is termed as a West Indian novelist of the colonial experience. As a post-colonial novelist, Naipaul concentrates on major themes related to the problems of the colonized people. As an observer and interpreter of the ex-colonies, he exposes the inadequacies of such societies. In his novels, *The Mimic Men*, *Guerrillas*, *A Bend in the River*, *In a Free State* etc., the themes acquire a universality and observes and presents the fragmentation and alienation happen to be the universal predicament of man in the present day world. His works throw light on the Postcolonial and post-imperial realities that have shaped the contemporary societies and provides important insights relating to them.

DISORDER AND ESCAPE:

Robert Boyers has observed, "Naipaul is our primary novelist of disorder and breakdown." A large part of Naipaul's fiction is set in the independent states of America and Caribbean, with a pessimistic view. The natives of such places are unable to establish order. Naipaul, in his very first published work *Miguel Street*, depicts the conditions of disorder in Port of Spain, Trinidad.

A VARIATION ON THE THEME OF VIOLENCE AND ANTAGONISM:

Violence is a thoroughly used tool in the novels of V.S. Naipaul. The violence in his stories is not exclusively physical, but it is also intellectual. This violence stand for a barrier against self- realization. This violence is shown to violate the integrity of a society. It becomes a vicious cycle, into which Naipaul's characters find themselves engaged, which takes them from the state of submission to that of revolt against this violence. In the social, political and cultural context Naipaul's characters evolve in makes of antagonism, in all its forms; an essential characteristic of any relationship. Antagonism and Violence are overwhelming in *Miguel Street*. They are a galaxy of characters, fighting for the recognition of their status in the street." [8]

„Most of the works of Naipaul deal with the theme of isolation, frustration and negation in a colonized society which turns out to be cruel, villain and hostile to the expectations and aspirations of the protagonist. He also deals with the clash of culture between the old and the new in multi- racial society. Search for identity is the foundation upon which the works of Naipaul stand. Fiction is an instrument of analysis for Naipaul. Perhaps, this is the only reason why his literature revolves round the recurring themes of colonial phobia, individual’s search for identity and clash of culture.”[9]

CONCLUSIONS:

“In himself, Naipaul is a private man, who lives in the country in order to have the solitude for thinking and writing. Everything that has ever happened to him is pigeonholed with exactitude in his memory. Formidably well-read, he can quote books he read years ago, and all the conversations he has had. Melancholy grips him at the spectacle of “the steady grinding down of the old world” as he put it, and he might complain to an interviewer that he is living in a “plebeian culture that celebrates itself.”

Other writers born abroad have settled here and enriched our literature, but there has never been one like Naipaul. His personal story is moving; his achievement extraordinary. There is a great moral to his life’s work, that the human comedy will come out all right because, when all is said and done, intellect is more powerful than vicissitude and wickedness.”[10]

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