Introduction
Chapter One
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Literature is one of the fine arts that employs "language" as a medium of expression. It is essentially an expression of human feelings, emotions, sufferings and joys. Good literature is never outdated and knows no bounds of place and time. It is permanent. It is also universal, in the sense that it appeals to readers across national or linguistic boundaries. Language or culture may be different but human sentiments remain essentially the same in all literatures of the world. Among the literatures of the world, Indo-Anglian literature is a dynamic branch and has great inheritance commencing from the Vedas and it has continued to spread its mellow light and it is part of Indian literature, a modern facet of the glory which has ancient treasure of divine thoughts.

Indian literature in English dates back to around two hundred years of the Literature where several authors have written many Indian books in English, has for its starting point the year 1800. British domination eventually covered all aspects of Indian life – political, economic, social and cultural. The introduction of English into the complex, hierarchical language system of India has proved the most enduring aspects of this domination.

English is now being used with greater dexterity and has undoubtedly become a powerful instrument for the delineation and probing of complex psychological problems and status of mind. Many writers of fiction seem to have broken fresh ground and have come out with solid and outstanding works which compel close critical examination. Though all works cannot be considered very successful, many show a rare vitality and freshness and an all round competence. Graham Greene once told Toynbee
that his own writing was to "make people see something which they have failed to see" (103). Most of the Indian writers in English aim at the same thing. As Peter Berger avers:

Right from the moment the novel became available to the Indian writers, it has been a powerful means of exploration of the human situation. The vast canvas it offered came in handy to explore the many aspects of the stream of life, its curve and its meanderings, its flows and falls, its springs and falls, the reflection of its surroundings and the dances of its rapids. (301)

Any discerning critic can see that there are quite a few who have taken the craft of fiction seriously and who show a good grasp of Indian literary conventions and great concern for the transmission of genuine Indian thought and feeling. The Indian story tradition, the Puranic and Upanishadic tradition, the Indian epics like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata and even Panchathantra seem to have exerted considerable influence on the Indian writers of English.

Fiction, being the most powerful form of literary expression today, has acquired a prestigious position in Indian English literature. It is generally agreed that the novel is the most suitable literary form for the exploration of experiences and ideas in the context of our time, and Indian English fiction occupies its proper place in the field of literature. Various critics and commentators in England and America appreciate Indian English novels. M.K. Naik remarks, "...one of the most notable gifts of English education to India was probably a fountain head of story-telling, the novel as we story-telling, the novel as we know today was an importation from the west" (99).
The first generation of Indo-Anglian novelists has not shown anything like considerable merit. Most of the novels of this era rise above the level of well cultivated mediocrity. The early Indo-Anglian writing lacks deepness in art. It reflects social and religious atmosphere of the times. Since Bengal was the first region to come into contact with the British, the first novel sprouted from there. It was written by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee entitled *Raj Mohan's Wife* (1864).

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee is not only a successful historical novelist but also an equally successful novelist of social life. His great song "Vande Matram" which was included in his novel *Anandmath* has become a live unifying force, the rallying call of nationalism, almost a unifying national anthem of independent India. Translation of his novels in English has played a significant part in advancing the literary renaissance all over India and especially in Indo-Anglican fiction. In his social novels he ridiculed the social or political reformer, but he himself in his own way, was a philosophical reformer.

In the works of Tagore, Bengali literature has outgrown its provincial character and has entered the fraternity of World Literature. His novels are full of universal thought, currents and spirituality. He added practical and lyrical beauty to the novel. His works are translated into many languages. He has two thousand songs, numerous plays and many novels to his credit. Of the novels of Tagore that have been translated into English the most famous are *The Home and the World* (1919), *The Wreck* (1921) and *Gora* (1923). All the three are social novels.

The Indian English writers were greatly influenced by Mahatma Gandhi and novelists turned their attention from romanticism to realism. No discussion of Indo-Anglian fiction dealing with the Independence movement would be complete
without an assessment of the work of Gandhi in the novels. The presence of Mahatma is a recurring image in the novels used in different ways to suit the design of each writer. He has been treated variously as an idea, a myth, a legend, a symbol, a tangible, a reality and a benevolent human being. This trend has produced some of the finest novels in India.

The trio of writers who swept the Indo-Anglian scene were Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao. These novelists and their novels paved the way for the great trinity: Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao whose emergence was the most remarkable event in the realm of Indian English Fiction. They were the harbingers of the true Indo-English novel. These novelists began writing around the mid-1930s. Bhabani Bhattacharya was also a contemporary of these novelists by birth, but he started writing fiction after Indian independence. The writings of these novelists moved the Indian English novel in the right direction. They discovered a whole new world in Indo-English fiction and the Indian English novel owes much to their efforts for gaining solid ground and achieving an identity of its own. They defined the area in which the Indian English novel was to operate and brought the Indo-Anglian novel within hailing distance of the latest novels of the West. They established the suppositions, the manner, the concept of character and the nature of the themes which were to give the Indian novel its particular distinctiveness. According to K.R.Rao, they "laid the foundation for the genuine Indo-Anglian novel, each imparting to the Indian experience a dimension of individuality based on their particular approach to content and form"(144).
Mulk Raj Anand (1905-2004) was the most important writer in the new wave of realism that swept over Indian English literature in 1920s and 1930s. As befits the aspiration of a social realist, he choose the novel as his medium. Anand's early and best novels were deliberate attempts to expose the distress of the lower castes and classes of India. He exposes the socio-economic system that is inhuman, whether in its traditional feudal form of a caste system or in its more recent manifestation as imperialistic capitalism. Anand's novels are passionately realistic and a plea for the underdogs. His first three novels *Untouchable* (1935), *Coolie* (1936) and *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937) form a natural trio; all three have the victim-hero of the oppressed and doomed outcast whose fate is symbolic of India. Anand's Gandhi in *Untouchable* is intensely human. Gandhi appears as a revolutionary who urges the caste Hindus to stop sinning against the helpless Harijans. The thrilling image of Gandhi which the untouchable Bakha has formed in his mind was once the familiar image of Gandhi in the thirties.

Another twentieth century innovator in the field of Indo-Anglian fiction was R.K. Narayan (1906-2001), whose series of Malgudi novels have put him into its forefront. Narayan is essentially a humorous writer, interested in the lower middle classes of South India, in a world relatively free from the terrible privations and agonies, political conflicts and economic depression. Inspite of their rich fantasy and comic caricature, Narayan's novels are a faithful reflection of India. He sees South India as a fundamentally conservative Hindu society. The background of his novel is an imaginary south Indian village and he calls it Malgudi. His first novel *Swami and Friends* (1935) is a delightful account of a school boy, Swaminathan whose name, abridged as Swami, gives an ironic flavour to the title, raising expectations of Narayan's actual narration. Then his second novel *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937) exemplifies a sensitive youth caught in a conflict between the western ideas of love and marriage
instilled into him by his education and the traditional social set up in which he lives. Many of Narayan's famous works describe the mentality and madness of the people during the days of independence.

Raja Rao, (1908-2006) another novelist of repute constantly discusses the nationalist struggle and its revolutionary implications in terms of Hindu mythology religion and culture. He rejects his conservation and his charismatic religious consciousness, his essential Hinduism. He is moreover, a philosophical thinker and adds oriental mysticism in his novels. He handles the themes of religion and philosophy in his novels. His first novel *Kanthapura* gives an account of the Indian national movement for freedom in a small village, Kanthapura. Rao probes into the deeper questions of good and evil, and order and disorder, that lie beneath the tangled web of the political struggle. By choosing to develop the character of an Indian village, Raja Rao moves inevitably, conveys an uncanny impression of the immense longevity of Indian history.

The novel *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960) by Raja Rao has a very subtle and suggestive title. It is a parable on appearance and reality. Just as the sign board of a shop indicates the contents of the shop, the title indicates the theme of the novel. The serpent stands for appearance or illusion or unreality and the rope for reality, Brahma or the Absolute.

After gaining independence, India had many challenges to face and many changes came over Indian life. Complications took place in social, political, economic and cultural spheres but India handled them thoughtfully and adequately and progressed step by step. The fact of being independent and having its own identity spurred Indian English writing. It provided the writer with self-confidence, broadened
his vision and sharpened his self-examining faculty. As a result of these developments important gains were registered, especially in fiction, poetry and criticism. Fiction, already well established, grew in both variety and stature.

The convention of social realism in Indian English fiction, established by Mulk Raj Anand, went on flourishing during 1950's and early 1960's through Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgonkar and Khushwant Singh. Sudhin Ghosh, G. V. Desai and Anantanarayanan, through natural individual variation enlivened the trend of the experimental novel; they were inspired by Raja Rao's *Kanthapura*. In addition, the fictional works of B. Rajan present the combined effect of realism and fantasy.

- Bhabani Bhattacharya (1906 - 1988) too presents an authentic portrait of India - India racked by hunger and starvation due to the Bengal famine during the World War II. The war, its consequences, the imprisonment of the nationalist leaders because of the Quit India Movement, political violence and nature's ferocity are the contour lines in his novels. The Bengal famine is the background of his two novels *So Many Hungers* (1947) and *He Who Rides a Tiger* (1954). The other novels of Bhattacharya are *Music for Mohini* (1952) and *A Goddess Named Gold* (1960).

Manohar Malgonkar's (1913-2010) novels have obvious affinities with the stories of Kipling and John Masters. He writes the tragedy, the despair and the heroism of Indian independence and the bloody communal vivisection which followed it. Malgonkar searches for a code of heroism that is capable of sustaining men in the critical testing time of war and revolution. He gives an authentic picture of Indian army contained with the heroic virtues of the old Indian aristocracy. His novel *Distant Drum* (1960) celebrates the real history of the Indian army. He is most successful in narrating
adventures. His another novel *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964) shows that the author has not been deeply interested in the Gandhian revolution which was essentially a moral one. Owing to the lack of mental involvement in the movement, the novelist fails to carry conviction. He allows himself to be led by his own distrust of the politician. Due to this prejudice of Malgonkar the novel loses much of its credibility.

Khushwant Singh (1915- ) is one of the best-known writers of all times. His name is bound to go down in Indian literary history as one of the finest historians and novelists, a forthright political commentator and an outstanding observer and social critic. Being a humourous writer and an honest man with incorrigible belief in human goodness, he has been awarded as 'honest man'. His *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* (1959) is written in a supple style and is, no doubt, a moving tale told artistically. The author seems to have given more importance to the nationalist movement.

Partition of India has become the predominant theme in Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956). As this novel consists of a well-knit story and vivid characterization it tends to become melodramatic and sensational journalism. It is a picture of the triumph to the undying spirit of man over man-made miseries.

Later Indian women novelists discard the social realism of the earlier generation's writings and explore the inner landscape for inspiration dealing with the psyche and the inner conflicts of their protagonists. Domestic disharmony, conjugal conflicts in communication and alienation are some of the themes of these writers.
Santha Rama Rau (1923-2009) realistically portrays the cultural confrontations in her novels. She describes with authenticity the juxtaposition of the orient and the occident, the traditional and modern views of life. Her book *Remember the House* (1956) is a story of Bombay upper class society with its sophisticated ladies, drinking parties and princes. Her next work *The Adventures* has nothing to do with India. Neither the characters nor the places are Indian and in that sense Santha Rama Rau’s stay abroad has given her an insight into the character of the western men and women. She has published a number of travel books to her credit. In *Home to India* (1945), *East of Home* (1950), *My Russian Journey* (1959) and *Gifts of Passage* (1961) she often writes about things which are well within the range of her experience. Her childhood and girlhood at Jainabad are recapitulated with sensitiveness though nor with an accession of sentimentality. Her writing has an ease and urbanity appropriate to the theme and she explores and exposes ever so gently the dividing gulf between the East and the West.

Kamala Markandaya (1924-2004) also belongs to the older generation of Indo-Anglian novelists and she deals with the themes of hunger, poverty, conflict between tradition and modernity and East-West encounter. As one of the major novelists of the Commonwealth, she is quite significant in her plot construction. Her range of theme is vast. The theme of hunger in her first novel *Nectar in a Sieve* (1955) and East-West encounter in *Some Inner Fury* (1956) make a colourful kaleidoscope of beauty and design. From the stark starvation theme of her first novel, she moves to the subtle values of life and so each of her novels is a significant contribution to human understanding and relationship.
Ruth Prawer Jhabvala (1927 - ) too is a well-known Indian English novelist and she analyses the intricate human relationship especially among the women in the Hindu joint family. Her special focus is on the interaction between two cultures the East and the West. The urban middle class Indian life is pictured in *To Who She Will* and in *The Nature of Passion* (1956). As a novelist, she excels in treating the incongruities of human character and situation. Though Jhabavala is not an Indian by birth she shows keen knowledge of Indian life. The characters in her novels are true to life and full of vitality. She has very well succeeded in presenting the upper class New Delhi life, with its talk of Indian culture, poetry recitations, picnic, committee meetings and false polite talk. With her superb narrative skill and keen power of observation Jhabavala ranks with the foremost Indian novelists.

Nayantara Sahgal (1927 - ) is a novelist who deals with the political situations in India. Her novels faithfully mirror the contemporary political theme. Her first novel *A Time to be Happy* (1963) reports the congress activities and the events of 1942. *Storm in Chandigarh* (1969) portrays the situation after the division of Punjab into Punjab Haryana. In *The Day in Shadow* the novelist presents the theme of politics with a domestic plot dealing with a broken marriage. Her next novel *A Situation in New Delhi* (1989) deals with the theme of East-West encounter. It reveals how an English journalist has an encounter with a minister in the Government of India. The novel is an authentic picture of the politicians, the students and the terrorists. She tries to search solutions for the political problems in her novels. Though apparently she projects the political background in her novels, there is a human background as well. Sahgal's feeling for politics and her command over English are rather more impressive than her art as a novelist.
After 1960s Indian English fiction, like its Western counterpart, shifted its focus from the public to the private sphere. The mass destruction caused by nuclear weapons in World War II brought unrest and anxiety all over the world. The situation gave rise to psychological disorders and loss of moral values and profoundly disturbed man’s mental peace and harmony. World literature, responding to the new era started to deal with the different gloomy faces of modern society.

Indian novelists could not remain aloof from these currents and henceforth they were not exclusively concerned with the exploration and interpretation of a social milieu, but dealt with new subjects of human existence and man’s quest for self in all its complicated situations. This shift of focus in Indian English fiction becomes clearer particularly with Anita Desai and Arun Joshi who explore the agonized existence of modern man in their writing which “changed the face of Indian English novel” (Verma 1).

Anita Desai, (1937- ) a recent Indian English writer probes into the mind of her characters. The thought of exposing the inner recesses of a man, to delve deep into his hidden psyche and to go beyond reality, was alien to the novelists until Anita Desai came on the literary scene. Anita Desai breaks a new ground in Indian English fiction by moving the external world to the internal world. She creates a psychological world of her own which she fills up with extraordinary sensitive characters. Her novels usually delineate the inner lives of hyper-sensitive women who are in eternal guest for a meaningful life.

The novels of Anita Desai mark an important phase in the growth of fiction in India and also capture the atmosphere of the mind and directly involve the reader in the flow of a particular consciousness. The themes of her novels are the incompatibility of
couples, alienation and inharmonious relationship of spouses. *Cry, the Peacock* (1963), her first novel deals with the theme of the obsession of the central character, with death and her frustration. In *Voices in the City* (1965) she examines the spiritual yearnings of usually sensitive characters from affluent orthodox families. The third novel *Bye-Bye Black Bird* has the theme of frustration and loneliness which an individual feels in a foreign land. In *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* (1975) the conflict between the sensitive individual and the insensitive world is spotlighted. *Fire on the Mountain* (1977) deals with a woman's attempt to reject the society for lack of security and fulfilment in love. *Clear Light of Day* (1980) traces an embittered woman's childhood and youth as she comes to understand her own human inadequacy in her relationship with others. *In Custody* (1984) has the theme of illusion and reality, and it shows how man dangles these two. Most of Anita Desai's novels portray the struggle of the individual for a possible apprehension of self-identity. The majority of her characters are neurotic and they are tormented by the burden of their obsessions or hallucinations.

Arun Joshi (1939-1993), like Anita Desai, has recorded modern man's traumas and agonies in his novels with rare competence and gravity. "It is with the novels of Arun Joshi and Anita Desai that a new era in the Indo-English fiction began and also witnessed a change in the treatment of themes" (Bhat and Alexander 11). His emphasis is on the individual psyche of the protagonists throughout his five novels. His technique of introspection intensified by self-mockery opens a new dimension in the art of Indian English fiction. It is because of his novel approach, his psychological understanding of the inner conflict of human beings and his philosophical existential vision, that one is drawn into his writing. Joshi recognizes a reality beyond the mere phenomenal world, a reality which only an artist could imagine and capture by giving a consistent form to the shapeless face of human existence. Joshi's place among the major Indian English
novelists of the twentieth century is undisputed. He was exceptionally perceptive as a creative artist, but his premature demise in 1993 cut short his promising literary career. His contribution to Indian English literature are only five novels and a few short stories. His novels are: *The Foreigner* (1968), *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* (1971), *The Apprentice* (1974), *The Last Labyrinth* (1981), *The City and the River* (1990) and a collection of short stories, *The Survivor* (1975). There is also a work of biography entitled *Lala Shri Ram: A Study in Entrepreneurship in Industrial Management* (1975), which is more in the nature of domestic eulogy. He won the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award for his fourth novel *The Last Labyrinth* in 1982. It was very unfortunate that a man of such amazing abilities died of cardiac arrest in April 1993 at the age of fifty four in New Delhi.

After 1980 began the so-called period of "new" fiction. In this period a breed of new novelists emerged. It includes Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Upmanyu Chatterjee, Shashi Deshpande, Shashi Tharoor, Shobha De, Amitav Ghosh, Amit Choudhary and Arundhati Roy.

Shashi Deshpande, (1938- ) focuses her attention on the problems faced by career women, a refreshing new issue in Indian English fiction. She is gifted with an inborn literary bent of mind because she is the daughter of the renowned dramatist and Sanskrit scholar Shriranga. Her writing career started in 1970 and initially she wrote short stories. Like Anita Desai, her forte is also the inner mind of women. She understands the neurotic world of men and women because her husband is a neuro-pathologist. Her first novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980) poses the problem of a doctor - heroine and her psychological conflict because of her guilt consciousness. *Roots and Shadows* (1983) deals with a woman's attempt to assert her
individuality in a male dominated society. The next novel *If I die Today* (1982) marks the beginning of the woman for herself. To Deshpande life is real but it has been corrupted by want of self-assessment — a human weakness. This view finds expression in this novel. *That Long Silence* (1988) highlights the dilemma of a woman writer who plays the role of a housewife. Being a writer, she is expected to present her views before the public but she remains silent probing into the past, struggling with her present and trying to establish a rapport with her future. Her novel *The Binding Vine* (1992) is interwoven with the experiences of three mothers Urmi, Mira and Shkutai. It touches a chord in every woman as she responds to it with recognition of her own doubts, complexes, fears, desires and suffering.

Deshpande has projected successfully the domestic disharmony of the Indian women with more sensitivity and understanding as she belongs to this category, in the sense that she was born and brought up in India. So the projection of the woman's world in her novels is more authentic, credible and realistic. Her novels are woman-centered. She indirectly advocates harmony in homes and she visualizes togetherness of people rather than segmentation or fragmentation.


*The Last Burden* (1963) is the work of a much younger, truly second-generation postcolonial writer, Upamanyu Chatterjee. His first novel, *English August: an Indian Story* (1988) had created ripples with its explicit writing about sex mainly auto-erotic and drugs. Apart from its shock value, the test seems to be rather self-indulgent. *The Last Burden* shares the technical brilliance and linguistic experimentation of the first book but not its drawbacks. It is a powerful and mature exploration of the changing face of the Indian family and notions of filial responsibilities.

cultural heritage of the people into the socio-political realities centred around the life and message of Kshetrayya, a saint-composer of Andhra Pradesh. It turns out to be a good and imaginative reconstruction of the dream and quest of Kshetrayya, the encircling welter of laughter and tears, intrigues and attainments.

Indian literature in different languages, including English and particularly classical Indian literature subscribed to this paradigm to good extent. But there are a few events in the post-World War II era which gave an impetus to some definite dimension of this transformation. It can be traced to the post-independence and the subsequent eras of idealism, desperation, disenchantment and dissipation of the euphoria and a sense of achievement. The post-independence writers employ divergent forms of this monomyth, though this sort of mythic consciousness may not be so glaringly explicit in their literary endeavours. It is consequence of invisible chain of changes that brewed for long in the Indian mind during the last few decades. With the advent of postmodernism and postcolonialism, Indian writers began to talk about change, diaspora, alienation and fragmentation and identity crisis.

Diaspora is derived from the Greek ‘dia’ meaning over; ‘sperien’ meaning to sow or scatter and invokes images of multiple journey’s (Brah 181). While it was originally used to refer specifically to the exile of the Jews from Palestine, more recently the term has been adopted and adapted by postcolonial scholars and artists to refer to the forced and voluntary migrations set in motion by empire.

Displacement, whether forced or self-imposed, is in many ways a calamity. Yet, a peculiar but a potent point to note is that writers in their displaced existence generally tend to excel in their work. The changed atmosphere acts as a stimulant for them. These writings in dislocated circumstances are often termed as exile literature or Diasporic
Writing. The word ‘exile’ had negative connotations but if the self-exile of a Byron is considered, then the response to that very word becomes ambivalent. If a holistic view of the word ‘exile’ is taken, the definition would include migrant writers and non-resident writers and even gallivanting writers who roam about for better pastures to graze and fill their œuvre. World literature has an abundance of writers whose writings have prospered while they were in exile. Although it would be preposterous to assume the vice-versa that exiled writers would not have prospered had they not been in exile, the fact in the former statement cannot be denied. Cultural theorists and literary critics are all alike in this view:

The study of world literature might be the study of the way in which cultures recognize themselves through their projections of otherness. Where, once, the transmission of national traditions was the major theme of a world literature, perhaps we can now suggest that transnational histories of migrants, the colonized or political refugees - these border and frontier condition may be the terrains of world literature (Bhabha 12).

Bill Ashcroft in this regard comments thus:

The diasporic production of cultural meanings occurs in many areas, such as contemporary music, film, theatre and dance, but writing is one of the most interesting and strategic ways in which diaspora might disrupt the binary of local and global and problematize national, racial and ethnic formulations of identity. (218)

Similarly, “the multivoiced migrant novel gave vivid expression to text or of transgressive, non-authoritative reading” (Boehmer 243).
The Indian-English writers, notably, "Raja Rao became an expatriate even before the independence of the country; G. V. Desani was born in Kenya and lived in England, India, and USA; and Kamala Markandaya married an Englishman and lived in Britain" (Mehrotra 180, 186, 226). Nirad C. Chaudhuri preferred the English shores because his views were not readily accepted in India. Salman Rushdie's "Imaginary Homelands" encompasses the world over. The Iranian "fatwa" phase has added a new dimension to Rushdie's exilic condition. Colonial and post-colonial India are divisions that are now more relevant to a historian than a literarian because Indian-English literature has transcended the barriers of petty classifications and has become almost part of mainstream English literature. A major contribution in this regard has been that of the Indian writers, like Rushdie and Naipaul, who live as world citizens - a global manifestation of the exilic condition. Indian-English writers like Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Shashi Tharoor, Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Sunetra Gupta, Rohinton Mistry, Jhumpa Lahiri and Hari Kunzru have all made their names while residing abroad. The non-resident Indian writers have explored their sense of displacement—a perennial theme in all exile literature. They have given more poignancy to the exploration by dealing not only with a geographical dislocation but also a socio-cultural sense of displacement. Their concerns are global as today's world is afflicted with the problems of immigrants, refugees and all other exiles. These exilic states give birth to the sense of displacement and rootlessness.

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

This distinction is between, on the one hand, the semi-voluntary flight of indentured peasants to non-metropolitan plantation colonies such as Fiji, Trinidad, Mauritius, South Africa, Malaysia, Surinam, and Guyana, roughly between the years 1830 and 1917; and the other the late capital or postmodern dispersal of new migrants of all classes to thriving metropolitan centres such as Australia, the United States, Canada, and Britain. (276)

Especially after Indian independence the Indian diasporic community has acquired a new identity due to the processes of self-fashioning and increasing acceptance by the West.

It is interesting to note that the history of diasporic Indian writing is as old as the diaspora itself. In fact the first Indian Diaspora writing in English is credited to Dean Mahomed, who was born in Patna, India and after working for fifteen years in the Bengal Army of the British East India Company, migrated to "eighteenth century Ireland, and then to England" in 1784 (Kumar xx). His book *The Travels of Dean Mahomet* was published in 1794. It predates by about forty years the first English text written by an Indian residing in India, Kylas Chunder Dutt's "Imaginary history" *A Journal of Forty-Eight Hours of the Year 1945* published in 1835 (cited in Mehrotra 95). The first Indian English novel, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Rajmohan's Wife*, was to be published much later in 1864. It shows that the contribution of the Indian diaspora to Indian writing in English is not new. Also interestingly, the descendants of the Indian indentured labourers in the so called ‘girmit colonies’ have predominantly
favoured writing in English, the *lingua franca* of the world. The likes of Seepersad Naipaul and later Shiva Naipaul, V.S. Naipaul, Cyril Dabydeen, David Dabydeen, Sam Selvon, M.G. Vassanji, Subramani, K.S. Maniam, Shani Muthoo, and Marina Budhos are significant contributors in that field.

The novels of the older generation of diasporic Indian writers like Raja Rao, G.V. Desani, Santha Rama Rau, Balachandra Rajan, Nirad Chaudhuri and Ved Mehta predominantly look back at India and rarely record their experiences away from India as expatriates. It is as if these writers have discovered their Indianness when they are out of India. Obviously they have the advantage of looking at their homeland from the outside. The distance affords them the detachment that is so necessary to have a clear perception of their native land. In that sense, through their writing, they help to define India. Makarand Paranjape notes:

> Instead of worshipping the leftovers and relics of a now inaccessible homeland as the old diaspora of indentured labourers did, the new diaspora of international Indian English writers live close to their market, in the comforts of the suburbia of advanced capital but draw their raw material from the inexhaustible imaginative resources of that messy and disorderly subcontinent that is India. (252)

These writers record their away-from-India experiences and even if they look back at their homeland it is often in an elegiac tone rather than with nostalgia. Marakarand Paranjape explicates this point in considering “the novels of Rohinton Mistry” (251). Ultimately Indian writers in the West are increasingly identifying themselves with the literary tradition of the migrant writers of the world. Salman
Rushdie says that "Swift, Conrad, Marx and even Melville, Hemingway, Bellow are as much our literary forebearers as Tagore or Ram Mohan Roy" (20).

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

Two of Vikram Seth's novels *The Golden Gate* (1986) and *An Equal Music* (1999) have as their subjects exclusively the lives of Americans and Europeans respectively. Two of the earliest novels that have successfully depicted diasporic Indian characters are Anita Desai's *Bye-Bye Blackbird* (1971) and Kamala Markandaya's *The Nowhere Man* (1972). These novels depict how racial prejudice against Indians in the UK of the 1960s alienates the characters and aggravates their sense of displacement. Bharati Mukherjee's novels like *Wife* (1973) and *Jasmine* (1989) depict Indians in the
United States - the land of immigrants, both legal and illegal - before globalization got its impetus. Salman Rushdie in the novel *The Satanic Verses* (1988) approaches the allegory of migration by adopting the technique of magic realism. The physical transformation of Gibreel Farishta and Saladin Chamcha after their fall from the bursting jumbo jet on the English Channel is symbolic of the self-fashioning that immigrants have to undergo in their adopted country. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni in her novel *The Mistress of Spices* (1997) depicts Tilo, the protagonist, as an exotic character to bring out the migrant's angst. Amitav Ghosh's novel *The Shadow Lines* has the character Ila whose father is a roaming diplomat and whose upbringing has been totally on foreign soils. She finds herself as much out of place in India as any foreigner. But when she conjures up the story of her doppelganger Magda being rescued by Nick Price from Denise, it shows the extent of her sense of rootlessness. Amit Chaudhuri in his novel *Afternoon Raag* (1963) portrays the lives of Indian students in Oxford. Similarly, Anita Desai in the second part of her novel *Fasting, Feasting* depicts Arun as a migrant student living in the suburbs of Massachusetts. The important point to note is that in a cosmopolitan world one cannot literally be a cultural and social outsider in a foreign land. There are advantages of living as a migrant - the privilege of having a double perspective, of being able to experience diverse cultural mores, of getting the leverage provided by the networking within the diasporic community and more. But it is often these advantages that make diasporic Indians, especially of the second generation, encounter the predicament of dual identities. Such ambivalence produces existential angst in their psychology. The world simply refuses to become less complex.

Among those Indian writers of Indian origin V.S. Naipaul stands out in a unique way. He is a pioneer in diaspora writing, long before the present generation came along and began to write about the immigrant psyche and the diasporic experience. Naipaul
explored these untreaded paths. Deeply conscious of the various burdens of being displaced immigrant, he produced a series of fiction and non-fiction works that paved the way for the succeeding generations. Naipaul has written many fiction, non-fiction, travelogues and essays.

Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul was born in Chaguanas, Trinidad, on August 17, 1932. His Hindu grandfather had emigrated there from West India as an indentured servant. His father, Seepersad Naipaul (1906-53), was a journalist as well as a correspondent for the Trinidad Guardian whose literary aspirations were inherited by V.S.Naipaul. When Naipaul was six the family moved to Port of Spain. Seepersad Naipaul died of a heart attack in 1953 without witnessing the success of Naipaul as a writer. The family moved to Port of Spain, where Naipaul attended Queen's Royal College. In 1948, he was awarded a Trinidad government scholarship, which he was utilised to study literature at University College, Oxford, beginning in 1950. Following his graduation in 1953, Naipaul worked as a free-lance writer with the BBC, hosting the program 'Caribbean Voices,' and with the literary journal, The New Statesman. He married an English woman Patricia Ann Hale in 1955. Since then, he has resided in London, travelling extensively and writing many critically acclaimed novels, short stories and essays. In 1990, Naipaul was knighted by the Royal family. His wife died in 1996, and he remarried shortly thereafter, to a Pakistani woman named Nadira Alvi, a divorcee interested in journalism. He now lives in Wiltshire, England.

When Naipaul started his career as a free-lance writer, he felt himself rootless but found his voice as a writer in the mid-1950s. Naipaul is known for his penetrating analyses of alienation and exile. In fiction and essays marked by stylistic virtuosity and psychological insight, he often focuses on his childhood and his travels beyond
Trinidad. Writing with increasing irony and pessimism, he has often bleakly detailed the dual problems of the Third World - the oppressions of colonialism and the chaos of postcolonialism. A spirit of pure comedy flows through his early books. Then he began to travel for long periods in India and Africa. It was at a time of decolonization, when so many people over the whole world had to reassess their identity. Naipaul saw for himself the resulting turmoil of emotions, that collision of self-serving myth and guilt which make up today's bewildered world and prevents people from coming to terms with who they really are and to know how to treat one another. On these travels he was exploring nothing less than the meaning of culture and history.

On the contrary the absolute rejection of victimhood necessary to meet on an equal footing Naipaul has shifted public opinion towards this understanding as no other writer has done. Courage and persistence required to hold a belief quite so unfashionable in recent years, has made Naipaul the universal writer and humanist that he is. The comic spirit is still present, though submerged in his later books beneath a darkening sense of tragedy. Naipaul has written about slavery, revolution, guerrillas, corrupt politicians, the poor and the oppressed, interpreting the rages so deeply rooted in our societies. Long before others, he began to report on the irrational frenzy of the Islamic world, from Iran to Indonesia and Pakistan. This phenomenon too was a retreat from history into self-serving myth. Self-pity possesses Islamic fundamentalists so absolutely that they are able to close out everything else. Naipaul also observed with profound insight that even the most fanaticized among them know that the West will always be there setting the objective standards.
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 his personal story is moving; his achievement extraordinary” (www.nobelprize.org / nobel_prizes / literature / laureates / 2001 / naipaul_bio.html ). 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.

The first fruit of Naipaul’s escape from the colony was a series of gently satiric short novels set in Trinidad which include The Mystic Masseur (1957), The Suffrage of Elvira (1958) and Miguel Street (1959). Next came a big generational novel, one of Naipaul masterpieces A House for Mr Biswas (1961). Using London as a permanent return base, Naipaul began to travel extensively after 1960. His prolific writing continued, alternating between autobiographical fiction and reportorial non-fiction based on these travels. The unifying persona is that of an alienated ex-colonial, cut off temperamentally both from his native roots and from the European culture upon which he attempts to graft himself. Naipaul’s fifth novel Mr Stone and Knights Companion was published in 1963. In the novel The Mimic Men (1967) the action shifts between England and Trinidad. The protagonist, Ralph Singh, is out of place in both worlds as a scholarship student in London and later as a deposed political minister and real estate speculator on his native island; his marriage to a liberal white English woman ends miserably. In two fine subsequent novels of 1970s there is little trace of the earlier comic tone. In a Free State (1971) is set in a sub-Saharan African state in uneasy
transition between incompetent postcolonial governments. Powerful descriptive passages juxtapose hauntingly beautiful natural settings with the detritus of European technology. New themes of sadistic violence and homosexuality link this work with the longer Guerrillas (1975). Then came Naipaul's finest sustained work in the 1979, A Bend in the River. A 1987 work, The Enigma of Arrival, was classified as a fiction, although much of the material is indistinguishable from Naipaul's own life.

The variety of Naipaul's interests as a traveler-observer is suggested by the following survey of some of his non-fiction. His two personal roots are explored in the fusions of history with contemporary political analysis which make up The Loss of El Dorado (1970), about Trinidad and India: A Wounded Civilization (1977). Among the Believers-An Islamic Journey (1981) records impressions of the author's visits to several important Muslim nations, including Iran and Pakistan. Finding the Center (1984) includes an essay on his stay in the relatively stable and prosperous West African Ivory Coast. Here, the observer analyses sympathetically the balance of power between competing tribal and European values.

Naipaul has published a number of works since the late 1980s. In A Turn in the South (1989), Hel recounts his journey through the southern United States in search of similarities between his own Trinidadian culture and that of the American South. India: A Million Mutinies Now (1990) was Naipaul's third book about his ancestral homeland. Unlike the first two, in An Area of Darkness (1964) and India: A Wounded Civilization (1977) Naipaul overcomes his pessimism about India's ability to surmount centuries of religious and ethnic strife and holds out some hope for what he sees. A Way in the World (1994) is a formally experimental narrative that combines fiction and non-fiction in a historical portrait of the Caribbean. It also combines memoir, historical scholarship
and imaginative writing in a series of nine narratives of people whose lives have been altered by their encounters with Trinidad. *Beyond Belief: Islamic Excursions Among the Converted Peoples* (1998) looks at Islamic countries that Naipaul has visited which are non-Arabic—Indonesia, Iran, Pakistan, and Malaysia. Naipaul's memoir *Reading and Writing: A Personal Account* (2000) discusses the author's personal development as a writer. At a speech in October 2004 Naipaul announced that *Magic Seeds* (2004), the sequel to *Half a Life*, may be his last novel, "I have no faith in the survival of the novel," he said (www.kirijasto.sei.fi/vnaipaul.html).

Naipaul's first comic novel, *The Mystic Masseur* (1957) moves between farce and acerbic social commentary on Trinidad, the country of his birth. The characters are mainly members of Trinidad's South Asian Community. Ganesh Ramsuir the protagonist is a frustrated writer of Indian descent, who rises from poverty as a 'mystic' masseur to a life of plenty after becoming a successful colonial politician (G. Ramsay Muir). In each step of his career, Naipaul parodies, quite light heartedly, the rise to power and prosperity of a representative of the people in a newly independent state. "The history of Ganesh is the history of our time", says he congenially (www.nytimes.com/books/98/06/07/specials/naipaul_mystic.html). As Karl Miller aptly puts it:

The Mystic Masseur is a comedy of manners, and the manners are bucolic. The characters speak an English whose quaintness is relished, and is indeed a cardinal feature of the novel: all a bride needs 'to make she straight as an arrow is a little blows every now and then.' The rules and solidarities of village life impart something of an urban Victorian stiffness and sickliness. But this is essentially a bare, crude, secluded
society, with a large number of simpletons, and in a place like this the role of Charlatan can be interpreted fairly charitably. In Ganesh the simpleton and the Charlton are one and indivisible. His ruses and extortions are seen for what they are: they cause as much suffering as they relieve. But they are also seen as a livelihood, and as a social institution. In such a society, his skills are important. They are not marginal. There is nothing shady or surreptitious about them, however much they may be condemned in the press. (111-112)

The novel was adapted as a film with a screenplay by Caryl Phillips in 2001.

Naipaul’s second novel, *The Suffrage of Elvira*, which describes the slapstick circumstances surrounding a local election in one of the districts of Trinidad and is a satire of the democratic process and the consequences of political change appeared in 1958. It also delves into the multiculturalism of Trinidad, showing the effects of the election on various ethnic groups, including Muslims, Hindus and Europeans. In Gordon Rohlehr’s view:

The deeper implication of the first two books is that West Indian Society, emerging from ignorance and superstition, is peculiarly susceptible to depredation by the fraud and the politician, and by all opportunists who are prepared to exploit the social unease for their personal ends. That Ganesh and Harbans are treated so genially conceals Naipaul’s seriousness of purpose. Ganesh who poses as the defender of Hinduism while it is politic and profitable to do so, completely rejects Indian dress and changes his name to G. Ramsay Muir once he becomes a successful politician. This change of name and dress is always used by
Naipaul - to symbolize the acculturation of the East Indian to pseudo-western patterns of life, which is something he writes off with bitterness, despair and regret. One should not be misled by his genial tone to overestimate his admiration for Ganesh, the successful fraud. (180)

In 1959 appeared Naipaul's collection of a series of short stories entitled Miguel Street dealing with the life of people living in urban slums in Trinidad. The stories reveal Naipaul as a social historian. Miguel Street is a semi-autobiographical novel, set in wartime Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. Naipaul wrote it while employed at the BBC using a BBC typewriter and rustle-free paper.

In 1961 appeared A House for Mr Biswas, often regarded as his masterpiece, which tells the tragicomic story of the search for independence and identity of a Brahmin Indian living in Trinidad. The protagonist, Mohun Biswas, is partly modelled after the author's father. Biswas has been unlucky from his birth, but all he wants is a house of his own-it is the solid basis of his existence. The story, which fuses social comedy and pathos, follows his struggle in variety of jobs, from sign-painter to journalist, to his final triumph. This novel has a reputation as a New World epic celebrating the struggles of an immigrant towards acculturisation and success.

While Naipaul's prologue implies that Mr Biswas' history is to be seen as celebration, the actual emphasis of the novel is on those born "unnecessary and unaccommodated" in the New World (HMB 14). Naipaul tells two interrelated stories, that of Mr Biswas and his family and that of the Tulsis into which he marries. Both histories range over three generations of East Indians in their struggle to survive and find a place in Trinidad.
In 1961 Naipaul received a grant from the Trinidad government to travel in the Caribbean. His first non-fiction book was *The Middle Passage: Impressions of Five Societies* (1962), in which he described his first revisiting of the West Indies. Its examination of racial tensions made black West Indians call Naipaul a 'racist.' *The Middle Passage* is an account of a visit he made to the Caribbean in 1960 after living in England for many years. This sums up the West Indian Society as presented in *The Suffrage of Elvira* but in *The Middle Passage* Naipaul explains why West Indian Society is the way it is and an explanation is always a first step towards understanding and sympathy. Naipaul says that slavery, allied with Christianity did the greatest damage to the Negro by destroying his values and setting before him the ideals of White civilization. Unfortunately, this White civilization in the colonies is not really civilization as it is in Europe; it is a form of behaviour represented by third-rate white people who have had a chance to get rich in the West Indies in a way they would not in England. As for Indians, they were brought to the West Indies as indentured labourers by the British and formed about half the population; they were money-minded peasants, spiritually static because they are cut off from their roots and their religion. Reduced to rites without philosophy, they were set in a materialistic colonial society. The Blacks had a deep contempt for all that was not white, their values being those of imperialism at its worst. The Indians despised the Blacks for not being Indians.

Naipaul's fifth novel, *Mr Stone and the Knights Companion* (1963), is set wholly in England with English characters and deals with an old man's quest for renewal in the midst of decay and signs of imminent extinction. Its hero, Mr Stone, is a sixty-two-year-old bachelor librarian of a large firm called Exal in London. He is a man considered funny because of his principled habits and life in a neglected house under the care of an old housekeeper, Miss Millington. A tall, handsome, timid clockwork
man, thoughtfully living in the past, has lately been overcome by premonitions of retirement and death. Looking at the houses, offices and schools around him he hates their permanence. He takes to seeing people sitting or standing in mid-air, as it were, unsupported by floors, bricks and mortar. It occurs to him that only the flesh is important and that soon in the very place where he stands now, there will be vacancy, for he will die. One moment he is frightened, the next he daydreams. He fancies he can fly and passes hours in imaginary flights over the heads of other men.

Afraid that retirement will imprison him at home with his wife, he conceives a scheme to aid his company's pensioners. The success of the plan further destroys the security of his carefully routine life, bringing excitement, anger, hope and disillusionment. Ideas turning into practice attract human greed and vanities. Having experienced a period of despair, Mr Stone appears at the end of the novel to be on the verge of another burst of renewed energy. Stone's grey routine might be said to represent the solid, unchanging tradition that Naipaul had sought in England and India. Once challenged by innovation such comforting habits cannot be regained and the resulting freedom disturbs him by offering vistas of achievement which are complicated by all the messiness of human emotions. The slight hope at the end of the novel is not convincing and it is implied that the idea of creative activity is superior to its practice.

There is in Naipaul's work of this period a puzzled inability to find satisfaction in either the excitement of activity or the calm of passively accepting tradition. Neither seems real. One might speculate that the decision to leave the West Indies for the seemingly more impressive societies of England and India has resulted in disillusionment. The ideal of a more vital culture remain but the reality of exile has
fallen far below the ideal. If Naipaul has not flattered the West Indian, he has also been critical of the Indian and the English. According to Karl Miller,

In this novel, Naipaul renounces his multi-racial characters and colonial themes. To write about the English—the domestic English, moreover, at their sootiest and drabbest—is something which no West Indian novelist would lightly undertake. In fact, it is the lightness of the novel which assures its success. The ironic elegance of the early work reappears. Half-baked, stately Mr. Stone is a study in eccentricity of a kind which belongs naturally to a comedy of manners. And that is the point. His eccentricities are proper to a comedy of manners and are no more marked or exaggerated than are those of the worthies of Miguel Street. They are not there as a means of dissembling the blackness or condescension of the unacclimatized observer. Besides being Indian and Trinidadian, Naipaul is also English. (123-124)

*A Area of Darkness* (1964) is a book authored by Naipaul. It is a travelogue detailing Naipaul’s trip through India in the early sixties. It is the first of Naipaul’s acclaimed Indian trilogy which includes *India: A Wounded Civilization* and *India: A Million Mutinies Now*. A deeply pessimistic work *An Area of Darkness* conveys the acute sense of disillusionment which the author experiences on his first visit to his native land. True to his style, the narration is anecdotal and descriptive.

Naipaul’s sixth novel, *The Mimic Men* (1967), is probably Naipaul’s second most important novel. Here is, the report of his observations seen throughout his life. That is part of the novel's significance. Ralph Kripal Singh, the main character, is representative of a generation which gains power at independence and can only mimic
the authenticity of selfhood. His many unsatisfactory sexual encounters are similar to his house and politics; they show someone more concerned with the thought of possession than the actual experience.

_A Flag on the Island_ (1967), Naipaul's second volume of short stories, was collected from pieces written between 1950 and 1962; some had been published previously in English and American periodicals. Like the _Miguel Street_ tales, most of the stories of _A Flag on the Island_ take place in Trinidad and typically deal with a clash of values as local Trinidadians of Indian descent try in vain to structure their lives around a culture that is now far away and only dimly remembered. Other stories deal with the latent terror underlying seemingly ordinary lives of immigrants in London. While this collection again uses comic effect to intensify themes of alienation, failure and racial discrimination, the general tone of the collection is much more bitter and pessimistic than that in _Miguel Street._

_The Loss of El Dorado_ was published in 1969. The title refers to the El Dorado legend. It is a search for an elusive high prospects in an alien land. The book examines the obsessive quest for gold which is typical of the first Europeans to explore the region. In particular, Sir Walter Raleigh's voyages are examined with a psychological depth more typical of novels than historical works. In the second half of the book, the focus shifts to Trinidad around the beginning of nineteenth century under British Colonial rule, but Naipaul also looks at Venezuela's struggle for independence from Spain.

_In a Free State_, a novel by Naipaul published in 1971 consists of a framing narrative and three short stories. It had won the Booker Prize for 1971. The work is symphonic with different movements working towards an overriding theme. The theme
is not too clearly spelled out, but there is an important aspect relating to the price of freedom with analogies between the three situations.

*The Over Crowded Barracoon* was published in 1972. *Guerrillas* was published in 1975 by Naipaul. *Guerrillas* is set on an unnamed, remote Caribbean island populated by a mix of ethnicities, but dominated by postcolonial British. Probably the island is modeled after Trinidad, Naipaul's birthplace. The main characters of the book are Jane, a woman from London and her romantic partner Roche, a white South African man, who have recently arrived on the island. Roche is engaged with helping the poor on the island, which puts him in contact with a dishonest revolutionary opportunist named Jimmy. As they socialize with the privileged, Roche finds Jane contradictory and politically naive about her own place in the power structure, while also being challenged about his own motives and purpose. Jimmy has sexual fantasies about Jane and has a perverse relationship with the boys he keeps in his commune. Amid the tumult of a societal crisis, the climax of the novel, *Guerrillas* is violent and tragic.

With the postcolonial world so chaotic, it is fitting that the narrative should be expressed in fragments, with shifts of perspective and with an emphasis rather on feelings than on actions. The texture of the novel is both open, with spaces between scenes and yet detailed in its descriptions of impoverished landscapes and disagreeable emotional excitement. Close focus is on the disagreeable contrasts with the fragmentary narrative and dialogue, creating an impression of tension, alienation, cross purposes and irrationality.
If Naipaul's early novels use as their subject the cultural confusions and comedy that paralleled the emergence of the East Indian community into the wider society of Trinidad, the later novels can be said to reflect Naipaul's own attempt to define his identity within the postcolonial world. The novels and non-fiction seem significant to new and developed nations because the mixing of cultures, the collapse of older traditions, and rapid political changes have left most people confused, sceptical and uncertain. His achievement results from a profoundly analytical vision. His characters and their society are seen both from inside and outside, without excesses of criticism or sympathy. There is an understanding of what makes people and nations what they are. While economically emphasizing selected details, the novels offer a sense of life observed and meditated upon in depth. There are, however, no fixed positions that are identifiably Naipaul's. The sympathies and perspectives change; each novel has a life and form of its own.

*India: A Wounded Civilization* (1977) by Naipaul is the second book about India, after *An Area of Darkness* and before *India: A Million Mutinies Now*. It was on his third visit to India, that Naipaul came to write this book. In this work, he casts a more analytical eye than before on Indian attitudes while recapitulating and probing the feelings previously aroused in him by this vast, mysterious and agonized continent. What he had seen and heard on this visit is evoked so superbly and vividly in this work. In this book he reinforces his conviction that India, wounded by many centuries of foreign rule has not yet found an ideology of regeneration. Many reviewers have described it as a work of fierce candour and precision. Naipaul, though born in Trinidad, has Indian ancestors belonging to Hindu community. Hence, at a personal level the book is a generous description of one man's complicated relationship with the country of his ancestors, which has withdrawn into itself as a result of long years of
foreign rule. Naipaul wishes that his ancient homeland would come to terms with the past and move on towards the future.

Perhaps, Naipaul's finest sustained writing is to be found in the 1979 novel *A Bend in the River*. Here, in a small village in 'New Africa,' the writer explores all of his important themes, treated separately elsewhere - the disorder left in the wake of imperialism; the problems of emergent but underdeveloped third world peoples who are caught between old tribal ways and the new technology of dangerous arms and tinsel consumer materialism and the liberal White woman as sexual symbol of Third World political trust and ultimate despair. This is also a pessimistic novel about Africa, proclaiming the corruptibility of mankind. The story is set in a country like Zaire or Uganda. Salim, the narrator is a Muslim, whose family of Indian traders, has lived in Africa hundreds of years. Salim sets up a shop in a town on the bend of the river and gains success, which has no future in a country ruled by the Big Man. Though set in an unnamed but Zaire-like Central African state, this plenteous, sombre, apocalyptic novel is not so much about Africa as about the Western World's designs against the Third World and against itself and the consequent wreckage in human distortions, apostasies, self-denials and brutalities. It may seem nihilistic but it applies a stringently honest cant-test to most of the shibboleths of our times. With a balancing honesty it conveys wonder at the human capacity to survive in a hostile world.

The narrator-protagonist of this novel is a Muslim businessman of Indian origin in the African country. To him a break for freedom, away from family, community, the ritual life, is not just desirable; it is his only way to survive, with pride, with a history. As an individual, his wish is "not to be good, in the way of our tradition, but to make good" (*BR* 11). This is given a greater urgency by the precariousness of his community
itself; a community brought to Africa by one tide of history: “Forgotten by us, living only in books by Europeans that I was yet to read” (BR 15) and about to be swept away by another, that of black African nationalism.

The real danger, then, to both Salim and his people, is to disappear without a trace, to leave without any trace. Since Salim is an active and alert person he survives the African state's revolutionary movements. In Africa everything is uncertain. Fortunes are made and lost overnight in gold, copper and ivory. A Hindu couple from Africa's East Coast, who are poor shopkeepers one day strike it rich and the next day they are given proprietorship of the sole Big burger franchise of the region. Instability and alienation are certain in this land. The Muslim narrator of the novel who is back from a short trip abroad, finds his small store nationalized by the Big Man president-dictator of the Progressive State. After a brief stint in a concentration-camp-like prison, he is lucky to escape with his life. But he has no "home", "There could be no going back; there was nothing to go back to. We had become what the world outside had made us; we had to live in the world as it existed" (BR 51). Many readers have felt the village depicted was based on Kisangani, Zaire, and in 1997 as the city crumbled; some even hailed Naipaul's 1979 work as prophetic.

The Return of Eva Peron with the Killings in the Trinidad was published in 1980. Among The Believers: An Islamic Journey (1981) was accused by Muslim readers of narrow vision of Islam. Among the Believers recounts the author's seven month sojourn across Muslim Asia, from Iran to Pakistan to Malaysia to Indonesia and back again to Iran. It should be remembered that he had travelled in the immediate wake of the Iranian fundamentalist revolution that had overthrown the Shah, with at least implicit approval from Western intellectual elites and ushered in a supposed new
dawn of reform. Instead of finding cause for hope in the postcolonial muscle flexing of Islamic regimes, Naipaul is of firm conviction that the Islamic world could be never reconciled to modernity and perhaps irreconcilable.

Finding the Center (1984) is an autobiographical fiction. In this fiction, Naipaul seems uncomfortable when writing about himself. The first of the two pieces here, "Prologue to an Autobiography," as Naipaul confirms is a circuitous account of "my literary beginnings and the imaginative promptings of my many-sided background"(4). Naipaul starts with the mid-1950s day when he drafted his first publishable story, writing in a room at London's BBC and nervously showing the pages to three encouraging young colleagues.

Naipaul in his ninth and semi-autobiographical novel The Enigma of Arrival (1987) depicts a writer of Caribbean origin, who finds joys of homecoming in England after wandering years - during which world stopped being a colony for him. Central themes in Naipaul's works are damaging effects of colonialism upon the people of the Third World. As a writer he has been compared to Joseph Conrad because of similar pessimistic portrayal of human nature and the themes of exile and alienation. This novel holds in balance his immigrant community's longing for oneness with the spirit of the land of its origin and the futility of nostalgia, "There is no ship of antique shape to take us back. We had come out of the nightmare; and there was nowhere else to go" (TEA 25). Its ancestors cling to their rites of birth and death, because not to have done so would have cut them off from the past, the sacred earth and the gods. But its members can no longer do so as they have become self-aware and rites have lost all meanings for them. It is this tension between the dark world of wholeness and myth and the new one of self-awareness and change between the world that is handed down
to us by our ancestors and the one that we make up ourselves, that has shaped Naipaul's vision of human destiny in this novel.

*A Turn in the South* (1989) was a reflective journey by Naipaul in the late 1980s through the American South. He writes of his encounters with politicians, rednecks, farmers, writers, ordinary men and women, both black and white, with the insight and originality we expect from one of our best travel writers. Fascinating and poetic, this is a remarkable book on race, culture and country. His writings are supple and fluid, meticulously crafted, adventurous and quick to surprise. *A Turn in the South* should ultimately be read, not just as Naipaul's solitary experiment in First World travel writing, but as the consummation of his New World ventures.

*India: A Million Mutinies Now* (1990) is far from being a tabula rasa. The book bears the traces of many of Naipaul's lasting themes, such as his vision of extended family life as an analog for the corruption of collective political endeavour. *India: A Million Mutinies* reveals several kinds of group excess, sectarian excess, religious excess, regional excess; beginnings of self-awareness, a central will, a central intellect and a national idea. The Indian Union is greater than the sum of its parts.

In 1990s Naipaul concentrated on non-fiction. In 1994 appeared his long-awaited novel, *A Way in the World*, an autobiography and a fictional history of colonialism, presenting stories from the times of Sir Walter Raleigh to the nineteenth century revolutionary Francisco Miranda. This is Naipaul's tenth and latest novel. One has the impression, from many of his novels, that Naipaul is his own main character. His personal story, or parts of it that relate to his theme, is repeated over and over. It delineates how he escaped from Trinidad by going to England on a scholarship;
how he first became a writer; how he traced the darkness of India; how he wrote a history of Trinidad; how he came to terms with change and death.

Naipaul's latest travel book includes *Beyond Belief: Islamic Excursions among the Converted Peoples* (1998), intimate portraits from his journeys to the non-Arab Islamic countries of Indonesia, Iran, Pakistan and Malaysia. Naipaul tries to understand the fundamentalist fervour that has marked the Western image of the region. In Iran he meets war veterans, who express their disillusionment and their sense of being manipulated by the mullahs and in Indonesia he meets his former friend, who opposed, the Suharto regime and later became an establishment figure, an advocate of an Islamicist future.

In *Half a Life* (2001) the protagonist is Willie Somerset Chandran, born in India in 1930s. He got the second name from the English writer Somerset Maugham, whom his father met. Willie moves to London, drifts in bohemian circles, publishes a book, marries Ana, a woman of mixed African descent and moves with her to Africa, to her family estate. Willie has problems to come in terms with himself, as the son of a Brahmin, who has married an untouchable. His father is a rebel who ends at a monastery. Willie rebels against his own background and the wishes of his father, with whom he has more in common than he admits. In his wife's home country, in which colonial system is breaking down, Willie is also an outsider. After eighteen years he decides to leave her and find his true identity. He has lived half his life, a shadow life, but Naipaul does not tell what will happen to him. Willie's existential search continues and the rest of his story is left open.
His awarded works include *The Mystic Masseur* (1958) which won Mail on Sunday or John Llewelyn Rhys Memorial Prize. He is also the winner of Somerset Maugham Award for his work *Miguel Street* (1961) and Hawthornden Prize for *Mr Stone and the Knights Companion* (1963). *The Mimic Men* is the winner of the 1968 W.H. Smith Literary Award. *In a Free State* (1971), has won the Booker Prize for Fiction. In 1980s he began to write about Islamic fundamentalism and has since known as a harsh critic of its culture. Political controversies aside, Naipaul is recognized as one of England's best living writers. He was knighted in 1990 and in 2001 he was awarded the Nobel Prize. He was also awarded the David Cohen British Literature Prize by the Arts Council of England in 1993 for 'lifetime achievement by a living British writer'. He holds honorary Doctorates from Cambridge University and Columbia University in New York and honorary degrees from the universities of Cambridge, London and Oxford. Naipaul's manuscripts and extensive archives have been deposited in the University of Tulsa.

Like the great masters of the past, Naipaul’s stories show us ourselves and the reality we live in. His use of language is as precise as it is beautiful. Being a master of English prose style, he is known for his penetrating analyses of alienation and exile. In fiction and essays marked by stylistic virtuosity and psychological insight, he often focuses on his childhood and his travels beyond Trinidad. His stories reveal Naipaul as a social historian. His novels often seem conservative in manner and attitude, it is more likely that they mask a personality so radical in its scepticism, insight and yearnings that it will never be in tune with the political rhetoric of either emerging or developed nations. Writing with increasing irony and pessimism, he has often bleakly detailed the dual problems of the Third World - the oppressions of colonialism and the chaos of post colonialism. Naipaul remains one of the most widely read and admired literary
figures of the contemporary world. Writing in the *New York Review of Books* about Naipaul, Joan Didion said:

The actual world has for Naipaul a radiance that diminishes all ideas of it. The pink haze of the bauxite dust on the first page of *Guerrillas* tells us what we need to know about the history and social organization of the unnamed island on which the action takes place, tells us in one image who runs the island and for whose profit the island is run and at what cost to the life of the island this profit has historically been obtained, but all of this implicit information pales in the presence of the physical fact, the dust itself... The world Naipaul sees is of course no void at all: it is a world dense with physical and social phenomena, brutally alive with the complications and contradictions of actual human endeavor... This world of Naipaul's is in fact charged with what can only be described as a romantic view of reality, an almost unbearable tension between the idea and the physical fact. (20)

Every writer irrespective of his own preferences leaves his distinctive marks on some of his works. For their convenience, these are called their master pieces. These works could either be their most popular or widely read works or works that contain the essence of the spirit of the writer. Victimhood and quest for identity have been his central themes, granted his background. That same determination in a diasporic situation has made him unique. So his books are a matter of will and choice and above all intellect. Critics have sometimes argued that people in the Third World especially, are trapped in their culture and history without possibility of choice and can only be free if others make them so. To them, Naipaul's vision can appear like some sort of
First World privilege and a conservative philosophy at that. For the Third World postcolonial writers the concerns are different and uniquely psychological. In the case of Naipaul, the researcher considers *A House for Mr Biswas, The Mimic Men* and *In a Free State* as works that symbolize the essential Naipaul and his concerns.

Naipaul’s three novels *A House for Mr Biswas, The Mimic Men* and *In a Free State* have been selected for the present study. There are many reasons to select the novelist Naipaul and his novels for the present study. Naipaul’s insight, vision and writing are based on his knowledge of history, which through reimagining and changing become part of the core of his writing career. Naipaul’s novels are based on his own life and personal experiences. His books and essays become significant with new forms of blurred, mixed and blended literary genres, which can be noticed in most of his books, combining autobiography, travel writing, analysis and fiction. He has been writing a history, a record and analysis of many of the main events of the contemporary period. Naipaul represents postcolonial situation that is an essential part of today’s world. The world today is moving towards multiculturalism and fragmented identities. This is a new situation caused by various social and economic changes. His novels are usually based on facts, known people and events. His writings include the problems faced in the life of an immigrant. Naipaul understands the novel as an investigation of society which reports back to society how it is changing. His novels reflect the society, realism and invention and influences on Indian society. Based on these reasons, the researcher has taken the title “Identity Crisis in V.S. Naipaul’s *A House for Mr Biswas, The Mimic Men* and *In a Free State*” as the research topic.
A House for Mr Biswas (1961) is one of the Naipaul’s earliest novels that deal with identity crisis. Mohun Biswas is a Trinidadian Indian who dies at the age of forty-six in a house in Port of Spain where he has been living with his wife and four children. He was born in a country village, surrounded by ill omens. His family is scattered after his father’s death and he moves with his mother to Pagotes. At school he discovers a talent for lettering and later becomes a sign-writer. Initially, however, he is sent by his aunt Tara to the household of a Pundit to learn to be a Hindu priest; but he leaves in disgrace after eight months and works in a rum shop run by Tara's drunken brother-in-law. After being wrongfully accused of stealing he joins a former school friend in the sign-writing business, in the course of which he goes to Hanuman House, the home of the Tulsis. He is then trapped into promising to marry Shama, the sixteen-year-old daughter of Mrs Tulsi, as he is of the right Hindu caste. No dowry is offered and he is expected to join the family workforce by working on the land with the other husbands. He immediately rebels, but without any money or position of his own he finds himself dependent on the Tulsi household from then until shortly before his death. After successfully disrupting the smooth running of the house, Mr Biswas is sent to a small rural village, The Chase, to act as manager of a Tulsi food shop. During the six years he spends there with his growing family, the shop continually loses money and his family spends an increasing amount of time at Hanuman House. Finally, he joins them there and is then sent to Green Vale to act as overseer for Mrs Tulsi's powerful brother-in-law. He is wholly unsuited to such work and feels persecuted by the labourers under him.

He suffers a mental breakdown and has to return to Hanuman House to convalesce after a storm destroys the ramshackle house he has built. Forced to earn his living again, he leaves the Tulsis and goes to stay with his sister and her husband in
Port of Spain. He finds work as a journalist on the *Sentinel* newspaper and this leads to reconciliation with the Tulis. He goes to live with his family at Mrs Tulsi's house in the city which she shares with her younger son, Owad, until he is sent abroad to study medicine. Mr Biswas takes a growing interest in the education of his son Anand and a close relationship develops between them. Meanwhile the Tulis move to an estate at Shorthills and Mr Biswas is persuaded to join them. The Tulsi family begins to disintegrate under new social and economic pressures and Mr Biswas leaves the house. He builds a new house and it is destroyed by a fire. He returns to Mrs Tulsi's crowded house in the city and remains there until he moves to his own house in Sikkim Street after a fierce quarrel with Mrs Tulsi and Owad. His job at the *Sentinel* has changed to that of social investigator of Deserving Destitutes which leads to a new lease of life when he is given a government post in a Social Welfare Department. His hopes, however, increasingly centre on Anand, who wins an exhibition to the prestigious Queen's College in the city. The house in Sikkim Street leads Mr Biswas into heavy debt, especially as it is over-priced and in need of major repairs, but he is overjoyed at possessing his own house and land.

After the government department is disbanded, he returns to the *Sentinel* "on half-pay" (*HMB* 620). Here he develops heart-trouble and is eventually dismissed. Anand is now studying at a university in England and does not return during his father's illness, but his daughter, Savi, returns and gets a well-paid job. Mr Biswas then dies suddenly and receives a traditional Hindu cremation, after which his wife and children return to the empty house.
Naipaul’s *The Mimic Men* (1967), is divided into three parts and surprisingly the author has kept the name of the protagonist a secret until the second part. The action of the first part takes place in London in the youthhood of the protagonist Ralph Singh. He is the narrator of the novel. He has come there as a student on a scholarship. He lives in the boarding house owned by one Mr Shylock. The housekeeper is a Maltese woman known as Lieni. When the narrator looks back and begins to write his past, he is forty.

The second part of the novel talks about the protagonist’s unhappy childhood, unenterprising boyhood and the pressure that exerted him to leave his native island Isabella. He hailed from a poor family background. His father was a poor school teacher, whereas his mother was from a rich family. Her brother Cecil was at school with the protagonist. He used to imagine that his father had landed on the island after his ship had been wrecked and he had lost all hopes of going back. This second part also talks about his Aryan background in India and how he added another name to his original name of Ranjit Kripalsingh. He added on Ralph with his name and in school he was known as Ralph Singh. Ralph talks about his friendship with the French boy Deschampsneufs and his other friends like Hok and Cecil’s elder sister Sally. His father earned the notorious reputation as a bottle-breaker and cafe-wrecker. He would sing when he drove. Sometimes he would ask his family members to assemble on the dining table and with tears in his eyes, he would talk about the possible imminent extinction of them all.

This feeling of uncertainty might have been as a result of his association with Christian Missionaries or his Hindu background. However, it became infectious with the young Ralph. Suddenly a transformation took place in the family. Ralph’s father
left his teaching assignment and became a preacher. He left home. His father’s camp in the hills became another fact of their island life. In course of time, his father’s movement started fading. He had become a remote public personality. He assumed the name Gurudeva.

One of the popular entertainments in Isabella was the horse race and the Malay Cup for the winner. The favourite of the Malay cup was a horse known as Tamango. Deschampsneufs specially brought it up. A few days before the race, the horse mysteriously disappeared. After a week, the horse was found dead. It was given as a burnt offering to some deity for getting power. As Ralph’s father had already earned a sort of notoriety, the killing of Tamango was linked with him and his followers. The newspapers were terribly angry at it and called for the destruction of his camp. Ralph knew that such a sacrifice was called ‘Aswamedha’ the Aryan ritual of victory and over-lordship and to beat the feeling of imminent extinction. Such sacrifices were common at the time of the Emperor Asoka. This issue degraded Ralph. He was horrified. He wished to fly from Isabella.

In the third part, Ralph Singh shares the ups and down of his eventful life in Isabella soon after his coming over to that island nation with Sandra his wife from London. His marriage and his entry into politics were alterations, whimsical and arbitrary acts. Sandra quietly left him on a shopping trip to Miami. She never returned. He never heard about her after that. It was with the instigation of one of his friends Browne became a politician. Browne was a man of the people. He was editing a paper called Socialist. They soon became popular with many followers who would do anything for them. Deschampsneufs and Wendy added to that Movement. There were many rumours about Wendy. She was also linked with Ralph. The public also adored
her. She did not stay in the island for long. Being bored with the island and feeling rootless, she flew off to join her brother in Canada leaving Ralph Singh alone. Ralph's party was voted to power and he became a minister. He and the other members of his cabinet were awed. Like Browne, Ralph Singh was not a thorough politician. He did not want to make a quick buck. The prospect of power in Isabella fatigued him. He felt he had no hold with the earth. He had no positive vision and hope.

As a politician and as a minister, he had spoken the need to get rid of the English expatriates who virtually controlled the administrative section of the civil service. Minister Ralph Singh wanted to nationalize the bauxite industry and the estates. A delegation to London was proposed and Ralph Singh was to head it. Meantime there was a terrible violence in the island. For four years the drama he had staged supported him; now his sense of drama failed. It was a terrible situation to him. He felt like going to his death by a Luger on a sunless beach.

Having been in London obviously for the last time of his life, Ralph tried to recreate the past. As the glamour of the city did not rouse him as in the past, he tried to destroy the magical light. He felt himself totally helpless. In England the image that he had in the political circles was that he was a racialist, a dangerous man and a trouble maker. His request to meet his English counterpart was not complied with. Exasperated, Minister Ralph Singh asked his British counterpart as to what message he should take back to his people. "You can take back any message" was the reply (TMM 245). Ralph Singh felt shattered. He felt hopeless and helplessly realized his isolation. He felt dwindled and irritated. In order to boost up his self-image, another minister Lord Stockwell invited him for dinner. Lord Stockwell had earlier met Ralph Singh's father. Though the outcome was not a happy one, Lady Stella the British
Minister's daughter threw an invitation to him to visit her in her own flat. She had obviously expected a sexually powerful colonial minister. When they were on the bed, he began to fail. She realized that he failed miserably, her childish face became blank with disappointment and unforgiving anger. There came the end.

Ralph Singh was in a dilemma whether to return to Isabella as a failed politician or to stay back in London. In order to get some respite from his terrible loneliness and to boost up his self-image, he went to a brothel. With her also he failed as a sexual partner. Secretly he went back to Isabella. In a month he was discredited. No newspapers spoke for him. He had thrown away his power. He was offered a free and a safe passage to London by air, with sixty-six pounds of luggage and fifty thousand dollars. It was a fraction of his fortune. In his hotel room, he sat back to put in black and white his experiences with the hope that drawing out his experiences from his subconscious mind would give him some relief.

*In a Free State* (1971), as the title suggests deals with uncertainty and rootlessness. The narrator *In a Free State* is initially on a ferry to Egypt. The first tale concerns an Indian servant from Bombay who has no real alternative at home. He accompanies his master on a diplomatic mission to Washington. The two Indians suffer abominably from the poor value of Indian Currency. The servant lives in almost a cupboard and inadvertently blows several weeks salary just buying a snack. He meets a restaurant proprietor who offers him an apparent fortune as a salary. So he absconds and works for him. Once he has his affairs in reasonable order, however, he starts to live in fear that his master will find him and order him back. He also learns that he is working illegally and liable to exile. The only way to solve the situation is to marry a
woman who had reduced him but whom he had avoided ever since out of shame for his behaviour.

The second tale has a non-reliable narrator. It concerns a rural West Indian family, a set of cousins, one of whom being in a better situation manages to humiliate the narrator. The richer family has a son who goes to Canada and is destined to do well, while the others can expect nothing. The younger brother of the second family then sets out for England to study engineering while his elder brother does all he can to support him. Eventually the elder brother follows him to England with the aim of helping him further. He works all hours in demeaning jobs to keep him, but eventually makes enough money to set up his own business. He discovers that his brother is frequented by yobs. In a state of anger, he murders one of these yobs, who is a friend of his brother. When he attends his brother's wedding, with a prison guard for company the story ends.

The main tale is set in an East African State which has recently acquired independence. The king though liked by the Colonials is weak and is on the run while the President is poised to take absolute power. The level of violence is urban centres of the country is rising and there are rumours of violence in the country side. Bobby is an official who has been attending a conference in the capital city. He now heads back to the governmental compound where he lives and he has offered a lift to Linda, another colleague's wife. Bobby indulges in homosexuality. He is refubbled by a young Zulu when he tries to pick him up at the Hotel bar. He comes to know that Linda has plane of her own as they embark on the journey.
The relationship between the two is complex from the outset. Bobby intends on aggravating the initially calm Linda. His previous history of mental illness is explored. Things go from bad to worse when they put up at a Hotel, run by an old Colonel who cannot adapt to the new conditions in the country. They have dinner and they witness a scene between the Colonel and Peter, his servant, who he accuses of planning his murder. Bobby discovers that Linda is planning some extra marital activity with a friend along the way. He becomes furious and hostile. Bobby and Linda reach their destination, before witnessing the site where the old king was recently murdered, a philosophical Muslim planning to move Egypt and it begins a genocidal wave of violence. Bobby is beaten by the army at a check point, where he and Linda experience the first hand growing violence.

The present study analyses the three novels' major theme identity crisis of postcolonial situation, psychological angst in the characters and techniques used by the author. It has wide scope in the area of postcolonial themes of diaspora, alienation, fragmentation, exile, identity crisis, rootlessness, homelessness, slavery, creolization and balkanization. Out of many themes, the researcher has taken identity crisis as the major theme of the study in the postcolonial situation. Postcolonial theory is characterized by cultural and historical dislocation. Diasporic literature is the reflection of cultural and historical crises, place and identity, East-West encounters, multi identities such as ethnicity, racism, regionality, nationality, transnationality, gender and cultural locations, displacement, fragmentation, internalization and marginalization, memory, home land, house and self-identity. The study of colonial and postcolonial literature inherently involves the study of identity. Identity crisis refers to a psychosocial state or condition of disorientation and role confusion occurring as a result of conflicting internal and external experiences, pressures and expectations and often
producing acute anxiety. It is an analogous state of confusion occurring in a social structure, such as an institution or a corporation.

Naipaul deals predominantly with the East-Indian experience in the West Indies. He presents a poignant picture of the East-Indians struggling to preserve their identity in an alien movement. His writings deal with the cultural confusion of the Third World and the problem of an outsider, a feature of his own experience as an Indian in the West Indies, a West Indian in England and a nomadic intellectual in a postcolonial world.

The problem of identity has been one of the major problems of mankind in every society. It does not really matter which ethnic group, culture or religion someone belongs to as far as identity crisis is concerned. It focuses on the conflicts between The West and The East, The New and The Old or The Modern and The Conservative. This study explores the identity crisis of the different characters in the three novels. Mr Biswas is in search of his identity in the novel *A House for Mr Biswas*, Ralph Singh in the novel *The Mimic Men* and Bobby, Linda and Santosh in the novel *In a Free State*. Each character suffers from a certain lack of direction in their lives. They all seem to suffer a crisis of identity in the absence of a strong traditional culture. This crisis of identity, while not uncommon in other literature, is most severe when viewed in postcolonial literature.

The study also explicates the psychological approach and angst in the characters. ‘Angst’ is a key term in psychological study of characters, especially diasporic characters because these characters are always in a state of suspension and rootlessness. The nearest synonym is anxiety, though it does not capture the full meaning of the word. There are typically feelings of dread and frustration in a
fluctuating balance. The three novels in their own ways deal with dominant crisis of being displaced. Their protagonists and other major characters suffer from angst and anxiety.

As a displaced person himself, Naipaul uses these three novels to psychologically explore the dilemmas and crisis faced by such characters in real life. Among the various literary forms used by Indian writers in English, the novel is the most popular form because it has been flexible and offers scope for character analysis and psychological perspectives. Alongside Indians settled abroad and diasporic writers began to write about their alienation and identity crisis and angst. These psychological traumas placed human beings in a postmodern and postcolonial situation. Naipaul is one of these postcolonial writers who is concerned with the diasporic situation that is symptomatic of the postcolonial condition. A displaced and diasporic person himself, Naipaul explores the displaced psyche in all its manifestations. His works expand over a long period of time and space. The range of his genres is also broad – from fiction to non-fiction, short story and travelogue. Naipaul chooses a genre to suit his purpose.

Finally, the different techniques used in the novels have been examined. Literary techniques are tools, methods and a part of author's style to express and give more meaning to their writing. Novelists use a variety of techniques to convey their messages. There are major and minor techniques. Some writers use certain techniques repeatedly in their works, while some adopt a variety of techniques-each selected to suit the theme. The techniques put together form a style of writing that is characteristic of a writer. Often style and themes become inseparable.
Though all Naipaul’s novels lend themselves to different layers of arguments and conflicting perspectives, three novels *A House for Mr Biswas*, *The Mimic Men* and *In a Free State* have been taken up for indepth study and analysis. Their primary concerns are psychological trauma and the several and cultural shocks characters undergo when they are confronted by unknown and unfamiliar conditions. The researcher analyses the postcolonial identity crisis presented by the leading characters in these three novels. The succeeding chapter details the identity crisis as postcolonial themes and its influences on these three novels.