INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Books are the carriers of civilization. Without books, history is silent, literature dumb, science crippled, thought and speculation at a standstill. They are engines of change, windows on the world, lighthouses erected in a sea of time (qtd. in Prescott, Harley & Klein xvii).

The art of writing books in any field of study holds a special place of pride among all vocations known to men. Literature is replete with masterpieces of different periods and ages. Twentieth-century literature reflects the disillusionment that beset the two post-war generations and the deep spiritual isolation of man in a meaningless universe. Alvin Toffler, in Future Shock, says that modern man belongs to “a new race of nomads” (75) with no stable social identity. The themes of alienation, exile, fragmentation of the social order, the sense of the void, feelings of diaspora and Post-colonialism are pervasive in twentieth-century literature.

Post-colonial literature is a term that has been coined to refer to the literature produced by countries after their period of colonization. It deals with the life of the colonials who asserted their national identity after independence. The term ‘post-colonial’ emphasizes the significance of the impact of colonialism on the colonized. Colonialism had formulated and shaped the lives of many who used literature to articulate their profoundest creative urges and aspirations. Post-colonial writers feel that the gap which opens between the experience of place and the language available to describe it forms a classic and all-pervasive feature of post-colonial texts. Post-colonial literature brings to light the realities experienced by the colonized people.
along with their new perceptions; it focuses on the forces of oppression and coercive domination due to race, gender, nationalism and ethnicity. It seeks to express itself synthesizing different kinds of genre to project various forms of domination. This literature is a product of resistance to colonialism and imperialism. It commemorates the triumph of the colonist over the ruler. It depicts years of subjugation, slavery, loss of freedom and individual enterprise. In the 125th Anniversary Special Release of *The Hindu* on “Gandhiji in South Africa” on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanthi, the indignities suffered by the colonists are well highlighted. The article focuses on the barbarous treatment that the white population of the colonies inflicted on their coloured fellow subjects, despite the fact that the class of white settlers owed a great portion of their necessaries and comforts to the coloured subjects. Imperialism is a multi-faceted term incorporating a wide range of relationships of domination-cum-dependence that can be termed as historical, theoretical and organizational differences.

The writers of the once-colonized world are like Caliban of *The Tempest* filled with nostalgia for the happy days of the past when there was no cause for alarm, before the advent of Prospero. The delightful days would be restored only after the destruction of Prospero, the colonizer. Caliban echoes the despondency of the colonized and the triumph of the colonizer:

CALIBAN. This island’s mine, by Sycorax my mother,

Which thou tak’st from me. When thou cam’st first,

Thou strok’st me, and made much of me; wouldst give me

Water with berries in’t; and teach me how
To name the bigger light, and how the less,
That burn by day and night: and then I lov'd thee,
And show'd thee all the qualities o' th' isle,
The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile:
Curs'd be I that did so! (1. 2. 333 - 341).

To the post-colonial writers, literature served an important purpose—a means of protest. It is a protest against inequities, oppression and a focus on the loss of a culture and heritage eroded by colonization and the brutality meted out to them.

The prime concern of post-colonial literature in English is "historical and cultural differences, place, displacement, and a pervasive concern with the myths of identity and authenticity [...]" (Ashcroft 9). It leads to a crisis of identity that seeks to identify relationship between self and place. A valid sense of self is ruined by dislocation, which is the result of migration, enslavement or transportation of indentured labour.

V.S. Naipaul, a post-colonial writer, holds a place of eminence among the most distinguished novelists in English of the twentieth century:

born to the limited hopes and narrow horizons of an impoverished colonial existence, heir by conquest – conquered, not conqueror – of only one great and powerful weapon or talisman by means of which, with luck, perseverance, and talent, he might elude the mediocrity and frustration that had constricted his father’s life – that was V.S.
Naipaul, and the English language was his weapon or talisman (Gottfried 440).

At a very young age, Naipaul was drawn towards writing: he was eleven years old when the wish to become a writer surfaced in him. Naipaul remarks in Reading and Writing: A Personal Account that this tiny shoot of a wish soon grew into “a settled ambition” (3). His decision at that early age, though unusual, was not extraordinary. A renowned film director, Shyam Benegal of India, too, had at the age of six made up his mind to become a cinema director. According to Peter Hughes, Naipaul’s “mysterious ambition would seem to have been his attempt to redeem in his own life his father’s mostly thwarted hopes for a writer’s career and the sufferings of his last years” (39). Though Naipaul’s ambition to become a writer was steadfast, it opened up a plethora of problems:

In my fantasy of being a writer there had been no idea how I might actually go about writing a book. I suppose – I couldn’t be sure – that there was a vague notion in the fantasy that once I had done the first the others would follow. In those early days every new book meant facing the old blankness again [. . .]. My writing imagination was like a chalk-scrawled blackboard, wiped clean in stages, and at the end blank again [. . .] (RW 27-28).

Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul’s prolific writing career began at his humble birth in Chaguanas, Trinidad, on 17 August 1932, as the second child of Seepersad Naipaul and Droapatie Capildeo. His grandfather was an illiterate indentured
labourer from a village in Uttar Pradesh who was shipped to Trinidad to work on the sugar plantations. His father was a small-time journalist on a Port of Spain newspaper *The Guardian*. Under the editor MacGowan, Seepersad served as a reporter. But his popularity waned after MacGowan left. In 1943 Seepersad published *Gurudeva and other Indian Tales*, "a book whose more moderate local success in monetary terms had helped Trinidadian writers slough off the stigma of amateurism and perceive writing as a legitimate career" (Nixon 8). He passed on his deep-rooted love for writing as an invaluable legacy to V.S. Naipaul, his eldest and most brilliant son. Naipaul observes of his father in his Foreword to Seepersad's book, republished as *The Adventures of Gurudeva and Other Stories*: "The writer begins with his talent, finds confidence in his talent, but then discovers that it isn't enough, that, in a society as deformed as ours, by the exercise of his talent he has set himself adrift" (22).

Seepersad Naipaul was the primary motivating force in Naipaul's life. Naipaul owed a deep debt of gratitude to his father. In his talk with Nigel Bingham, Naipaul states: "My father was extremely important in my childhood. Nearly everything I am, I am because of this great link I felt with him [. . .]" (qtd. in Joshi 25). Naipaul's high regard for his father stemmed principally from the improbable, tragic tenacity of his father's literary commitments. Deprived of forerunners, Seepersad was compelled to traverse the arduous path of literary ambition with uncertainty. He loved writing and belonged to a literary circle that in 1947 published an anthology, mostly of poetry, in which appeared "They Named Him Mohan".
Naipaul used this as a springboard for beginning *A House for Mr Biswas*. Judging from Naipaul's autobiographical essays,

the most enabling presence behind his emergence as a writer was the less conspicuous, late-flowering figure of his father. Seepersad Naipaul proved an ambiguous inspiration: he came to embody writing as a desirable vocation, and yet, because the unpropitious circumstances of colonial Trinidad stalled his promise, he stood, too, as a chastening example of the lonely destitution that could accompany literary ambition (Nixon 7).

'Seepersad's depiction of Trinidadian life was an impetus to Naipaul to write about the world he was familiar with. It seemed futile to search for subjects elsewhere. Seepersad shunned the West Indian middle-class literary tradition of politics, racial concerns and segregation between Whites and Blacks, Europeans and Creoles. He wrote objectively on the rustic Indian community, spicing it with satire, conscious that its traditions were trite, being distanced from the homeland. Naipaul's early themes and characters recall the stories in *Gurudeva*. The dominant theme of the seven stories in *Gurudeva* is entrapment and escape: this forms the theme of Naipaul's first four books. Biswas' attempts at writing stories in *A House for Mr Biswas* centre on the theme of escape. Referring to his father's influence on his writing, Naipaul observes: "Part of the voice was my father's, from his stories of the country life of our community" (RW 25). Naipaul's initiation to writing was through his father: Seepersad was an avid reader of books; he read not for the story or its contents but he looked out for the special characteristics of the writer. He
would read to Naipaul three or four pages of writing he particularly relished. Hearing the stories read by his father, Naipaul was led into the fantastic world of letters: “In this unlikely way – considering the background: the racially mixed colonial school, the Asian inwardness at home – I had begun to put together an English literary anthology of my own” (RW 8). To his subjects, Naipaul brought erudition and knowledge of the classics of literature. He was conscientious as a writer and took the advantage of his exile, distance and the opportunities that came his way, to publish in England.

Naipaul won a scholarship to Oxford at the age of eighteen, by virtue of his splendid academic performance. He reminisces in The Middle Passage: “When I was in the fourth form I wrote a vow on the endpaper of my Kennedy’s Revised Latin Primer to leave within five years” (43). True to his determination, he left Trinidad after six years. He set foot in England firmly resolved to stay on and prove his mettle. Half a century later, he had left his indelible footprints on the sands of time. Writing is the supreme art for Naipaul. It was what he was born to do, a strong conviction, passed on as a precious heirloom by his father. The dominating feature of his life is his love for writing and its prime significance in his life. Peter Hughes rightly remarks: “It is a life decided by writing and dominated by visions of a world undoing itself; visions that arise out of the writing and reading he has made into his world” (10).

Naipaul launched his literary career by going back to his childhood days, forgetting Oxford and London. His early Trinidad days proved ample material in his hands. He embarked on a writing career dubiously and has reached the pinnacle of
its success. Writing was, to Naipaul, “a fantasy of nobility” (FC 38) that was accompanied by a “panic about failing to be what I should be” (72). Naipaul claimed in his interview with Tarun J. Tejpal: “I wanted to be very famous. I also wanted to be a writer: to be famous for writing. And the absurdity about the ambition at the time was that I had no idea what I was going to write about” (1). Like John Milton, he laboured to seek the fulfillment of his cherished ambition to emerge as a writer of renown.

It was indeed quixotic and brave on Naipaul’s part to stick to his unyielding decision to be a writer, for the road to letters was fraught with impediments. At the time Naipaul took to writing, there was no market in the Caribbean for serious literature which could support a writer. Few authors from the colonies had managed to support themselves as dedicated, serious writers. Naipaul had to struggle a great deal as an aspiring writer in London, where there was a demand for literature, but he was unable to channel his literary pursuits. The concluding thought-provoking lines of Alfred Lord Tennyson in Ulysses “To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield” bear ample testimony to the pressing hardships and the remarkable achievements of Naipaul.

Terms like “post-colonialism”, “post-imperialism” and “multiculturalism” were not in vogue when Naipaul started writing. Naipaul is one of Literature’s great travellers and his leading themes of rootlessness, the alienating effects of the colonial past on post-colonial people have taken him around the globe—not in search of roots but in tracing the rootlessness of man. In his search for subjects to work on, he deemed it fit to write about the place he knew best – Trinidad, the land of his
birth and upbringing. He launched on a literary career of writing novels: “To be a writer was to be a writer of novels and stories. That was how the ambition had come to me, through my anthology and my father’s example [ . . . ]” (RW 22).

Naipaul’s prolific literary output can be divided into two categories: novels and non-fiction. His first book that was published, was a novel and his is most recent one is also a novel. In between he has written a lot of non-fiction that includes short stories, travel books, enquiries into history and politics, critical essays, personal essays and innovative combinations of these forms. In his 2001 Nobel Lecture, “Two Worlds”, Naipaul says: “My aim every time was do a book, to create something that would be easy and interesting to read” (9). He felt that fiction functioned within fixed social boundaries and it pushed him back to his island world of childhood. There were other forms of writing that suited his needs. If he had depended only on the novel, probably he would not have continued writing. To him, the travel book was a fanciful interlude in the life of a serious writer. To view “semiderelict communities in despoiled land, in the great romantic setting of the New World, was to see, as from a distance, what one’s own community might have looked like” (RW 30). He found an additional source of income in travelling to different corners of the world and reporting on the social patterns of life and the underlying cultural problems of the newly independent nations.

Travel became his means of exploring and examining the societies of the Third World through the mode of non-fiction. Naipaul has travelled extensively, and his travel books are an outcome of these journeys. He discovered in non-fiction a mode of expression complementary to the vision of the novels. The travel
experiences paved the way for Naipaul to discover additional subject matter beyond his childhood memories of Trinidad. This experience provided him with a multifarious interesting life that goaded him to explore and reveal different lifestyles in various countries. Naipaul observes: “Fiction, the exploration of one’s immediate circumstances, had taken me a lot of the way. Travel had taken me further” (RW 31). His travel writing heightened his awareness of the great, wide world and unearthed immense writing potentialities. Naipaul has rightly observed in his Nobel Lecture “Two Worlds”: “Both fiction and the travel-book form have given me my way of looking; and you will understand why for me all literary forms are equally valuable” (10).

Naipaul felt that his own situation and the disordered world about which he was writing could not be effectively portrayed by having recourse to the traditional form of the novel – a form that assumed an ordered and stable society. He felt that he could not be a novelist in the conventional sense of the term. This awareness led him to remark in an interview with Ronald Bryden in 1973 that his “response to the world could be expressed equally imaginatively in non-fiction, in journalism [. . .]” (qtd. in Joshi 41). Naipaul’s non-fictional work interlinks with his novels. In fact, there is a reticulation of themes, motifs, ideas and personal reminiscence holding all his work together. Naipaul’s body of fiction and non-fiction equally complement and counterpoint each other. As Naipaul says, his work was really a whole, and it was like writing one big book. Robert D. Hamner has rightly observed in Critical Perspectives on V. S. Naipaul that he is “One of a rare breed of author who is an
articulate critic, not only of society and literature in general, but of his own life and work as well” (Introduction xxi).

Naipaul’s work is indelibly associated with colonial and post-colonial realism. He is renowned for his penetration into the lasting impairment of post-colonial societies, the focus being the deprivations of individuals who inherited a history of exploitation. He has carved a niche for himself as an observer of the world’s problems that have resulted from the end of an empire and the withdrawal of European rule from the Third World. Trinidad served as the starting point of his inquiries about the people in the world. Trinidad gave way to India, Africa, South America, Iran, Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia and England. Bruce King observes in V. S. Naipaul: “He was part of a generation that had to face the problems that resulted from the withdrawal of imperial order and the resulting cultural confusion. Yet his story is [. . .] unique in his having started with so little and having come so far” (1). Naipaul launched his literary career in 1957 with The Mystic Masseur and continues with the craft of writing to the present day. The last novel to appear from this prolific writer is Half a Life published in 2001. The March edition of Outlook 2004 has outlined yet another publication of Naipaul in late 2004:

Naipaul’s latest is a novel, Magic Seeds; a sort of sequel to Half a Life. The characters are the same, according to Kidd, but it reads as an independent novel in itself (67).

He is a leading novelist of the English-speaking Caribbean. His writings express the ambivalence of the exile. It reflects his own experience as an Indian in the West Indies, a West Indian in England and a nomadic intellectual in a post-
colonial world. As a post-colonial writer, he excels as a dissector of civilizations, cultures and social organizations.

Naipaul occupies a coveted place among the most celebrated twentieth-century writers in exploring and interrogating post-imperial issues and realities. He has overrun geographical boundaries and cultural spaces in his speculative and sceptical journey across the globe; he has dealt with man's multiple confrontations with power, authority and slavery. Rob Nixon has rightly said, “he is treated as a mandarin possessing a penetrating, analytic understanding of Third World societies” (4). Naipaul is a brilliant interpreter in English of the maelstrom of the Third World, beset with a whirlpool of problems. Joseph Epstein says Naipaul is “the most talented, the most truthful, the most honorable writer of his generation” (qtd. in Nixon 4). Naipaul is England’s favourite and revered nineteenth century Englishman. The crowning accolade was his knighthood in 1990.

Naipaul’s enviable command of the English language and its conventions enabled him deftly to paint portraits of the expatriate’s journey through the civilizations of the world. He has undoubtedly emerged as an emphatic voice of the modern expatriate. His vision of the world is very much of the twentieth century, his experience as an expatriate in England and later as an unsettled ex-colonial eternally on the move between countries makes him a post-colonial writer par excellence. Naipaul is a typical representative of the rapid social and cultural changes of the restless present-day world. His fiction deals with the collapse of a social order, the sense of futility and absurdity of man’s situation. He writes about peripheral, amorphous social groups which formed “a stunted society with the forms of tradition
and culture surviving but the core lost, submerged, destroyed: rendered meaningless and unimportant” (Kamra 14). They too, like Naipaul, are constantly finding the centre. His fictional world is a multiracial, immigrant, slave society imbued with the drive and insecurity of immigrants. Naipaul’s writing is highly appealing to those who have experienced the impact of mobility, social change, and immigration. It is indeed an irony that the world being wide, busy, and overpopulated is yet an empty space causing loneliness, frustration and mental anguish.

Naipaul’s subjects range from the impact of imperialism, individual crisis, politics, multiculturalism and the vocation of writing to the literary vacuum or writer’s inertia. His writings portray him in various shades – as a writer in search of moorings, as a writer who has emerged as the refracted creator of his own experiences, and as a writer desperately craving to establish his name in the literary annals of his day. Naipaul is a perennial outsider living on the periphery and a homeless wanderer who has no abiding faith to fall back on. Edward Said, who was a professor of English at Columbia University, observes that in the West, Naipaul is “considered a master novelist and an important witness to the disintegration and hypocrisy of the Third World” (qtd. in Suroor 55).

Naipaul is the proud recipient of most of the world’s major awards for fiction. “There remains hardly a literary award that has not come his way” (Josni xiv). He began his writing pursuit in 1954. He felt himself “on the fringe of a mighty enterprise”, (FC 15) launching on a career of promise. His first novel, The Mystic Masseur, appeared in 1957. This book was described by an Oxford teacher as a savoury from a colonial island. The John Lewellyn Rhys Memorial Prize was
awarded to Naipaul for his first novel. In 1958 *The Suffrage of Elvira* was published. A portrait gallery of the inhabitants of an urban slum in Trinidad appeared as *Miguel Street* in 1959 (though it was the first to be written). It won for Naipaul the Somerset Maugham Award. According to Naipaul, the concluding line of the book, being strongly autobiographical, "wrote itself" (FC 39). The narrator of *Miguel Street* goes abroad to study just as Naipaul left Trinidad in 1950 for Oxford.

Naipaul, has described in *Finding the Centre* how he wrote *Miguel Street*.

Naipaul has to his credit a large corpus of non-fiction: published in 1962, *The Middle Passage* gives his impressions of different societies in the West Indies and South America. His visit to India resulted in *An Area of Darkness* in 1964. *The Loss of El Dorado* (1970) is the outcome of his research into the history of the West Indies. The much-coveted Booker Prize went to *In A Free State* (1971), which consists of a novella and a number of short stories. Naipaul emerges as a keen journalist and a masterly reporter in *The Overcrowded Barracoon and Other Articles, India: A Wounded Civilization, The Return of Eva Peron, A Turn in the South, A Way in the World and Beyond Belief : Islamic Excursion Among the Converted Peoples, Among the Believers : An Islamic Journey* is the chronicle of a seven-month journey made in 1979 and 1980 to Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia and Indonesia in search of Islam. *India: A Million Mutinies Now* is Naipaul’s third book on India. For all his literary pursuits, in 1993 Naipaul was honoured with the first David Cohen British Literature Award, in recognition of his lifetime literary achievement.

The death of Graham Greene in 1991 indicated that Naipaul, like many deserving writers, had missed the Nobel Prize. In 1992, Derek Walcott, a West Indian like Naipaul, won the prize. It was felt that the Swedish Academy would take a number of years before awarding the Nobel Prize to a second writer from the same region. Fortunately, the critics and Naipaul’s new publisher, Picardo, were proved wrong, and Naipaul’s literary achievement triumphed. Naipaul’s years of toil and patient wait of decades paid rich dividends. He is a singular genius who, least affected by literary models, towered over his Caribbean origins to achieve a pride of
place among Nobel laureates. He was the proud recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature for 2001. It is a matter of enviable pride for Naipaul to have been honoured by the Swedish Academy on the 100th anniversary of the institution of the Nobel Prize.

The Swedish Academy, in its citation of the Nobel Prize in Literature for 2001, acknowledged Naipaul as “Conrad’s heir as the annalist of the destinies of empires in the moral sense: what they do to human beings. His authority as a narrator is grounded in the memory of what others have forgotten, the history of the vanquished” (1). His works explore and compel the readers to know about suppressed nations. On Naipaul winning the Nobel Prize, Nadira Naipaul (in her interview with Rahul Vyas in London) observes:

Vidia richly deserves the Nobel prize for literature. It is a mutual honour. He is honoured to get it and they are honoured to give it. This is the centenary year of the Nobel awards and I think, by giving it to Vidia for his body of work, for his great compassion for people in Africa, especially, they have infused life into the Nobel (18).

In A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man Stephen Dedalus’s creative urge to produce something new is of prime significance. He wanted to create with the freedom and power of his soul a living thing that had beauty, impalpability and imperishability. The figure of the artist is of paramount importance in James Joyce. In like manner, the writer motif is predominant in Naipaul. Writing was an obsession with Naipaul right from “his youthful romance with the idea of becoming a writer” (Nixon 7). He has emerged as one of the very few writers of the twentieth century
“who has always and only lived by his work” (Hughes 10). For Naipaul writing is a passion amounting to worship. It is his first and final love. Hence the proud assertion in the notes on the author, at the beginning of each of his works, “He has followed no other vocation”. His passion for writing is revealed in his conversation with Jim Douglas Henry in 1971: “One is in love with the concept of being a writer. I suppose it probably goes back to my childhood. I used to see my father writing – my father tried to write and wrote stories” (qtd. in Jussawalla, “Conversations” 23).

The involvement of Naipaul in the art of writing, his ardent love for writers and his cherished respect for the image of the writer is a challenging subject for study. Few writers have written comprehensively about the vocation of writing as Naipaul. He has shown his deep concern for writers and the writing process. This thesis aims at bringing out the prime significance of the recurring image of the writer in the novels of V.S.Naipaul. In the novels selected for study his protagonists are writers involved in the craft of writing. This study focuses on his novels at different periods of his life for several reasons. Right through his writing career, from 1957 to 2001, the image of the writer is a vital part of Naipaul’s oeuvre. It proves to be a focusing point that illumines a variety of issues that shaped the writer. Furthermore, the writer motif in Naipaul’s novels shows his admiration for the nobility of the vocation. In ‘Images’, published in New Statesman in 1965, Naipaul remarks that it is the writer and the writing process that really matter: “A country is ennobled by its writers only if these writers are good” (qtd.in Chattopoadhyay 216-17). In his novels, the protagonists at some stage of their life want to become a writer and try their hand at writing. The idea of writing and emerging successful in
this field overwhelms totally. In his talk with Bernard Levin in 1983, Naipaul reveals his attitude towards writing:

at really quite an early age I thought of myself as a writer[...]. It was just something that was given to me as a fantasy of nobility, a fantasy of the good life, the beautiful life, the civilized life. I became a writer because of this overwhelming idea of its nobility as a calling (qtd. in Jussawalla, “Conversations” 94).

This love for writing is transmitted to his characters in his novels who strive to write. Ganesh in The Mystic Masseur, Biswas in A House For Mr Biswas, Ralph Singh in The Mimic Men and Willie Chandran in Half a Life aspire to write and establish a name for themselves. In Finding the Centre and The Enigma of Arrival Naipaul throws light on his own writing career – his childhood ambition to write, the ordeals he faced, the selection of subject matter for writing and finally emerging as a writer of promise.

Chapter II deals with the image of the protagonist as writer in The Mystic Masseur, Naipaul’s masterpiece, according to critics A House for Mr Biswas and his sixth novel, The Mimic Men. These novels (published in 1957, 1961 and 1967 respectively) celebrate the art of writing as a noble vocation. The characters Ganesh. Biswas and Ralph Singh, respectively, find self-fulfillment and derive contentment through writing.

Chapter III examines the two novels of the 1980s – Finding the Centre and The Enigma of Arrival - to portray the role of Naipaul as a writer. “Prologue to an
Autobiography" in *Finding the Centre* is a journey down memory lane to his childhood and his early beginnings as a writer. Looking from the perspective of middle age at his initial hardship to emerge as a writer is undoubtedly thought-provoking. *The Enigma of Arrival* gathers up the theme of writing from where *The Prologue to an Autobiography* stops; it deals with his life as a writer and his struggle in this vocation. Both these novels centre on the theme of writing and provide clues to the origin of his other works.

Chapter IV analyses the protagonist-writer's debacle in Naipaul's last novel, *Half a Life*. The protagonist, Willie Chandran, aspires to write and publish a book, he is unable to pursue his literary career with a steadfast will. He falls prey to physical delights, abandons his literary career and follows the dictates of his heart. Naipaul shows that the path of literary fame is full of impediments. Through Willie Chandran, Naipaul highlights the fact that indomitable will is a prerequisite for a writer. If one does not have the right determination, it is easy to get diverted. *Half a Life* is the story of what Naipaul might have done if he had given up after his first fund of memories was exhausted. If Naipaul had not persevered in his ambition by secluding himself with his typewriter, he perhaps would have been another Willie Chandran.

Chapter V The conclusion, focuses on the technique, style and subject matter of Naipaul's works that have contributed to his emerging as one of the most distinguished writers of fiction in the twentieth century. Naipaul has successfully proved his own prophesy: "I am going to be a success as a writer. I know that. I have gambled all my future on that possibility" (qtd. in Srinivasan, 15). Writing involves
long periods of painstaking labour coupled with strong determination. In his interview with Ian Hamilton in Critical Perspectives on V. S. Naipaul the novelist observes that writing "has been a great effort; it has required greater and greater understanding of the world, greater growing up" (47). The Nobel Prize awarded to him in 2001 is the crown of his literary achievements and has been rightly bestowed.