Chapter V

On Mutinies: A Million Mutinies Now
“[Truth-an] immense human idea cannot be reduced to a fixed system. It can generate fanaticism. But it is known to exist; and because of that, other more rigid systems in the end blow away.”
quality. Like his other recent books it is also well populated, filled with the voices of a wide variety of people who are allowed to speak for themselves without much authorial commentary. He says about his impression about India:

India was the India of the independence movement, the India of the great names. It was also the India of the great civilization and the great classical past. It was the India by which, in all the difficulties of our circumstances, we felt supported. It was an aspect of our identity, the community identity we had developed, which, in multi-racial Trinidad, had become more like a racial identity. (IMM 8)

When he again visited India in the nineties he was surprised to see the changes in the country and to him the ‘efforts were now noticeable’ (9). He added:

Many thousand of people had worked like that over the years, without any sense of a personal drama, many millions; it had added up in the 40 years since independence to an immense national effort. The results of that effort were now noticeable. What looked sudden had been long prepared. The increased wealth showed; the new confidence of people once poor showed. (IMM 9)

Opinions, views, possible solutions are allowed to clash. The interest is more in what has created such voices than in imposing an order. Where Naipaul formally sought a tradition but found decay and darkness, now he has come to accept that life consists of change and to find interest in the ways that people strive to change their lives for the better. India: A Million Mutinies Now, contrary
to our expectations after *An Area of Darkness* and *India: A Wounded Civilization*, surprises us by its empathy and transformed attitudes towards the country. Naipaul's early attitude and later transformation become more understandable when we examine the circumstances of his life which made him an outsider wherever he went. Landeg White in his book *V. S. Naipaul* writes:

> His visit to the village of his grandfather, though briefly enchanting, arouses problems over language, fears about the food and water, demands for money, and concludes with Naipaul’s angry refusal to give a relative a lift into town. There is no home for him in India, his assumptions are too much of the West...

> Returning to Europe, he is no longer able to believe in the places in which he has lived and worked. A Brahmin-cum-Englishman in Trinidad, a European in India, an Indian in London. (7)

His inability to fit makes him see himself as a person utterly displaced, connected by birth and education with three different societies and yet unable to establish living contact with any of them. This recognition of himself as a displaced person peoples him into an awareness of homelessness as a universal feature. Defending his earlier stance of hostility in an interview with Dilip Padgaonkar for *The Times of India*, Naipaul says that this hostility stems from his involvement. He says, "I do not have the tenderness more secure people can have towards bush people...I feel threatened by them. My attitude and the attitude of the people like me is quite different from the people who live outside the bush or who just go camping in the bush on weekends" (10). From this statement we are to understand Naipaul's denouncement, criticism and attack to be a result of
involvement and a desire to help. From An Area of Darkness to India: A Million Mutinies Now, in the twenty seven years, the India he observes has changed in analogous way. It has changed from the confusions that accompanied independence to the many voices and perspectives of the post – colonial. Naipaul only tries to feel the pulse of the nation and draw a conclusion that India is coping with a huge discrepancy between the professed ideology and practiced reality. People abide by the conventional belief and custom but believe and function in just the opposite way.

His return to India again and again, his minute and detailed study of the Indian landscape and its people speaks of an obsession and commitment, and as a result, this book on India becomes a celebration and a positive assessment of the confusion and cultural variety represented by India. In his study of India, Naipaul reflects on a total experience, recognizing that even when he is most appalled he is considering a situation in which he is involved and which reflects aspects of himself. To use the words of Landeg White:

The author is at war with his subject, and the irony diminishes and is ultimately self-destructive. The irony of An Area of Darkness is a kind of perspective. It allows for discovery, for a constant revelation of new dimensions. It returns constantly to that personal crisis which is at the heart of the experience recorded. It depends on the fact of distancing in place and time. (23)

One finds Naipaul imposing an order on his own experiences of the Indians by describing specific encounters with a general commentary on the historical progression of a community, a caste or group. India: A Million Mutinies
Now is virtually an account of the Indian response to its own history. Kakutani says in his article “Naipaul Both Escapes and Recaptures His India”:

Seemingly selected at random, these individuals may not be entirely representative of the country, but they come from the variety of religious, social and economic backgrounds. What they have in common is a willingness to brave enormous hardships to realize their ideals or their dreams. (nytimes.com)

Sometimes the individuals encountered retract with a sense of guilt, sometimes it is an attempt to atone and rectify and at times it is accompanied by a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction. On the whole all the characters interviewed and described display a development and a consciousness of their history, a willingness to adapt and change, an ability to analyze their own past critically. Naipaul’s assessment of the situation he describes in this book is best reported in his own words,

There is a big historical development going on in India, wise men should understand it and ensure that it does not remain in the hands of fanatics. Rather they should use it for the intellectual transformation of India. (TTI 10)

Naipaul has projected through his characters a large vision of India, an India with a human association rather than a clannish, casteist obligation, an India which will utilize all “the bravery and the skills of its people” towards building a better nation. The glory and shame of its past is a spent force. Possibilities only lie in a future built upon the lessons learnt from the past. In Naipaul’s view it will have to be an India with a “larger view of human association” and he is sure that
"out of this larger idea, and out of the encompassing humiliation of British rule, there will come to India the ideas of country and pride and historical self-analysis, things that seem impossibly remote". (395)

Naipaul unabashedly admits that his return to India after 27 years has been different from his visit in 1962. He had shed what he calls his "Indian nerves" abolishing the darkness that separated him from his ancestral past. He writes,

I had carried in my bones that idea of abjectness and defeat and shame (his ancestors had left as indentured servants for the sugar estates of Guyana and Trinidad). It was the idea I had taken to India on that slow journey by train and ship in 1962; it was the source of my nerves. (516-517)

After the dark ages of invasions and wars, the freedom movement which led to the independence of India symbolizes to Naipaul "the truest kind of liberation". It has awakened the people to acknowledge who they are and what they owe to themselves. This liberation of spirit has taken the form of rage and revolt. India is now a land of a million little mutinies. Naipaul sees these as the beginning of self-awareness, the beginning of an intellectual life- an intellectual life which finds its focus in the idea of a nation. The mutinies become necessary stepping stones towards India’s growth and its restoration. What Naipaul describes in this book is the direction from which the winds of change blow.

In the starting, Naipaul is informed by an acquaintance, a writer, that the crowd could be Dalits celebrating Dr. Ambedkar’s birthday. This homage paid to a great man becomes a moment of triumph and honour to the men and women who had joined the celebration- an awakening of intelligence, knowledge and
honour. The awareness of their particularity and the courage to assert themselves are signs of confidence and change. The alienated sections of society forming themselves into groups and counter groups speak of an awareness of particularities and each group derives its strength from Dr. Ambedkar. Mr. Patel, the middle class Hindu, derives his confidence from the worship of the deity Ganesh, and Anwar derives his strength from his orthodox faith. Naipaul’s tour of Bombay brings him into contact with every cross-section of that city like Papu the stock broker, Mr. Patel the Shiv Sena ‘area leader’, Anwar the young Muslim, the Hindu Gangster, the Dalit poet Namdeo and his wife Mallika.

Naipaul begins with a description of Bombay. In ‘Bombay Theatre’ Naipaul, provoked by the large crowd, deals with the caste structure, the myth and reality about it. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar had been the great deity of the Dalits:

No leader of comparable authority or esteem had risen among the castes for which Dr. Ambedkar spoke. He had remained their leader, the man they honored above all others; he was almost their deity. (3)

But the birth celebration of Dr. Ambedkar doesn’t give equal pleasure to the officials of the hotel. He thinks ‘the country’s going from bad to worse’.

Naipaul’s reaction shows the corruption at different levels:

Men honored only money now. The great investment in development over three or four decades had led only to this: to ‘corruption’, to the ‘criminalization of politics’. In seeking to rise, India had undone itself... policemen, thief, politicians: the roles had become interchangeable. And with money many long buried
particularities had been released. This disruptive, lesser loyalty — of region, caste and clan now played on the surface of Indian life.

(4)

It is this money that brought education and an awareness among the Dalits and they started stressing for their own particular place. This was problematic for the upper classes.

In 1962 Naipaul had felt humiliated by his colonial past in Trinidad, a humiliation that he blamed on India where notions of greatness had been lost among pettiness. His failure in finding an emotional and cultural connection with India convinced him that he was not part of the family he imagined. He neither had the local clan nor did he belong to the local clan. Instead of national independence bringing renewal, he found poverty, feudal caste attitudes, fatalism, lack of rationality and a failure of vision.

Bombay is the first area visited, and it is the city's creativity with space that dominates all the interviews conducted and observations made. The sense of constriction with the Jain stock broker, and sense of openness with the gangster figures, combine to create an impression of destiny that mounts to a novelistic rendering of the multitudinousness that India is famous for. Rather than endorsing a cliché, Naipaul manages to redraw and then repopulate an urban setting distinct unto itself. This becomes specially clear when his visit to Calcutta, similarly evokes an urbanity charged with its own special spatial contours but one which he also sees as 'dying'. However, Bombay is where he begins his forays into the newly politicized communities expressing their particularities in organization like Shiv – Sena and the Dalit Panthers. The caste enfranchisement
and militant revivalist Hindu bases of these groups also serve as an introduction to the volume’s other loosely connected themes: namely, a search for something like a Hindu essentialism. Thus the chapter also includes a visit to the Muslim ‘ghetto’ area of Mohammed Ali Road, where the miniature like residential layout helps offset the proportional composition of a Hindu dominated country, where a monetary status necessarily helps define the secular urgencies of the polity.

*India: A Million Mutinies Now* stands closest to the idea of homecoming for Naipaul. It marks Naipaul’s surfacing after a long quest amongst the now diminishing ripples of socio-political-cultural paradoxes of India. He sees a million mutinies breaking out in the margins: mutinies of castes, of class, and of genders. He sees these rebellions as positive movements towards the restoration of India. Naipaul observes that the dark shrouds, holding beneath them centuries of violence are being torn apart; structures of dominance are being dismantled. Naipaul finds India in its offices, kitchens, galleries, and chawls; in Dalits rebellions and in women’s movements. In the very same sights that had shocked him into a rage in *An Area of Darkness* he now sees positive movement. He sees wounded India’s dark festering bandages being torn apart by these mutinous people in the margins. He sees these empowering symbols and with their coming to the center, he sees India on its way to being whole again. Suvir Kaul points out in his frequently read article ‘Burdens of History’:

> It is these mutinies and changes he records, whether it be the belief systems of the Shiv Sena or of separatist Khalistanis, the activism of Dalits and of other groups who have suffered from caste and class oppressions, and he reads in such mutinies both a productive
and a destructive loosening of the constriction of Indian society.

(Gentleman 39)

This change in vision marks a great shift from Naipaul’s first perceptions recorded in An Area of Darkness and in India: A Wounded Civilization. It brings into question the factors that go into the formation of a writer’s perspective. Naipaul himself explains the process-sometimes in direct sentences and sometimes in his manner of documenting facts. This discussion begins in “The house in the Lake; A Return to India” with the specific purpose of establishing a link between An Area of Darkness and India: A Million Mutinies Now. Although placed twenty seven years apart in time, both books are commentaries on each other and provide explicit examples of the diasporic forces at work within the writer, of which he is himself unaware. To cite a few examples:

What I hadn’t understood in 1962, or had taken too much for granted, was the extent to which the country had been remade...restored to itself... (MM 517)

I had carried in my bones that idea of abjectness and defeat and shame. It was the idea I had taken to India on that slow journey by train and ship in 1962; it was the source of my nerves. (MM 517)

In 27 years I had succeeded in making a kind of return journey, shedding my Indian nerves, abolishing the darkness that separated me from my ancestral past. (MM 516)

The India I had gone to in 1962 was like a different country. (MM 490)
The India of my fantasy and heart was something lost and irrecoverable. The physical country existed. I could travel to that; I had always wanted to. But on that first journey I was a fearful traveller. (MM 419)

These stand in contrast to the personal insights scattered all over An Area of Darkness:

The physique of Europe had melted away... Men had been diminished and deformed; they begged and whined. Hysteria had been my reaction... it mattered little through whose eyes I was seeing the East; there had as yet been no time for this type of self-assessment. (AAD 13)

Ten months later I was to revisit Bombay and to wonder at my hysteria... It was my eye that had changed. (AAD 45)

In a year I had not learned acceptance. I had learned my separateness from India... (AAD 252)

...the reawakening within India of disputes about language, religion, caste and region. India, it seems, will never cease to require the arbitration of a conqueror...this absence of growth and development...only a series of beginnings, no final creation. (AAD 202)

It is evident that Naipaul has written about something more than India. He has also written about himself in the process. The line of demarcation between the two subjects that Naipaul the writer deals with is very thin and one cannot entirely agree with Anniah Gowda that Naipaul is only “writing about himself, not India”
(Naipaul in India 170). Nor can one agree with William Walsh when he credits Naipaul for his “needle like precision” and “literary acupuncture”. India: A Million Mutinies Now is a book in which Naipaul has been able to create a pattern out of his double vision. The book strikes a wonderful balance between the internal vision of Naipaul’s insights and the external experiences that he encounters and observes. The book is divided into nine chapters and each chapter is a profusion of characters and voices, which speak for themselves.

‘Bombay Theater’ discusses the lives of eleven people from different walks of life, their families and acquaintances, their loyalties and their prejudices, but before that, it records, in Naipaul’s own words, the factors that had governed his reactions to India in 1962. This, in a way, provides a prelude to the entirely different way in which Naipaul records his reactions in the pages that follow. Papu is a twenty-nine year old Jain stockbroker, a mild mannered and God fearing person who has been doing very well professionally. The pattern of growth is drawn out. He “had more money in the last five years than his father had made in all his working life” (MM 90). Unlike his father, he had received formal education. He recognized his lack of the “killer instinct” in business and had thus moved to those business areas to which he was temperamentally more suited.

He suffered periods of anxiety regarding the predicament of the mild race of Jain businessmen in face of aggressive business tactics adopted by others. He was also deeply concerned about social welfare and wanted to devote most of his time to it. However, he was also aware that he could invest more money in social welfare by working harder in his profession rather than by working in the slums. Papu had devised his own programme of striking a balance between his job and
his devotion to social work. His idea of social work was also very different from that of the older generation of Jains. Instead of building marble temples, he believed in building orphanages and hospitals. He used the latest expertise in his work but was very deeply rooted in his religious beliefs. Papu is thus presented as a representative of positive growth in the conventional Indian business world.

Through Papu, the idea of criminalization is projected:

> It's growing in the cities. After 1975 – the time of Mrs. Gandhi's emergency – all the mafia dons gave up smuggling and took up building. They will encourage people, for instance, to vacate land, so that the land can be used for building. It was what many people spoke about. It was part of the 'criminalization' of Indian business and politics. (11)

Through Papu, one also gets a glimpse of the ways of functioning of other business houses like Tata, Birla, Bajaj, and Ambani. Papu also believes like Naipaul that there will be a revolution in the near future:

> I am sure there is going to be a revolution. In a generation or two. It cannot last, the inequalities of income. I shudder when I think of that. I am very sure that the Indian mind is religious, fatalistic. Even after all the education I’ve had, I still think that destiny will take me – I’ll get there whatever I do. This is why we haven’t had a revolution. Now, with the growing frustrations, even if people are religious there is going to be a revolution. The tolerance is being stretched too far. (15)
Bombay is a place where one can get a job. If one gets a room or place on pavement to sleep, he can survive in Bombay. But it is really questionable whether the aim of crore of people is to live only without any identity, without any warmth in relationship: “And yet people lived there, subject to this extra exploitation, because in Bombay, once you had a place to stay, you could make money” (IMM 60). The picture Naipaul presents here of Dharavi in the late nineteen eighties, still can be seen in Bombay:

...a general impression of blackness and greyness and mud, narrow ragged lanes curving out of view; then a side of the main road dug up; then black mud, with men and women and children defecating on the edge of a black lake, swamp and sewage, with a hellish oily iridescence. (IMM 58)

Mr. Patil is a Shiv Sena ‘area leader’. His father had worked for forty years in the tool-room of a factory and was so weighed down by family responsibilities that he had no idea of the activities of the Shiv Sena. Mr. Patil was brought up comfortably and this gave him security and the idea of his social concerns. He joined the Shiv Sena and steadily worked for the people in his ‘area’. Lillian Feder says:

Despite the success of the Sena, Mr. Patil, still nursing his rage at past injustices and, fearing for the future of his people, cannot understand the anger of the Dalits who, by any rational standards, surely had more cause for resentment than any other Indian group... (NT 125)
There was a paradox in the way Mr. Patil looked at things: he was deeply concerned about the deprivation of Maharashtrians brought about by non-Maharashtrians but he had absolutely no sympathy for the Dalit organizations. He believed that they hadn’t suffered much and their activism was mainly political. His antipathy towards Muslims verged on hatred but he had no worries about “exporting man power to Dubai and the Middle East” for a living (22). Although Mr. Patil’s *atma-vishwas* was his cherished gift from Ganapati, he was reluctant to recognize the same *atma-vishwas* in Dalits. At one point Naipaul reminds Mr. Patil of the Gandhian attitude. This reply is an interesting one:

I have contempt for Gandhi. He believed in turning the other cheek. I believe that if someone slaps you, you must have the power to ask him why he slapped you, or you must slap him back.

I hate the idea of non-violence. (24)

In Mr. Patil, one finds the earliest beginnings of the recognition of the ‘self’. His idea of ‘self’ and self-confidence is muddled up and biased but it is a kind of beginning. This was absent in his father’s generation when the main concern was the day-to-day needs of the family. In Mr. Patil’s generation, the concerns had broadened from the personal to the social sphere but this had also brought with it a lot of confusion typical to societies passing through change.

Anwar is an educated and sensitive young man caught between his Muslim faith and its degeneration into violence. He had absolute faith in Islam and its concept of brotherhood. He believed that the world could be set right through the teachings of Islam and its slogan “liberate humanity through Islam” (36). The lack of education was the main cause behind young Muslims
slipping into crime and violence. He recognized the hopeless situation of crime
and violence. He recognized the hopeless situation of the crime infested area
where he lived but could not ever think of leaving that area for a better life
elsewhere. Anwar's statement reveals the feeling of insecurity in people: "eighty
percent of people in this locality carry weapons" (38). His thoughts were not of
personal progress but of the progress of the community. The very fact that he had
been able to preserve his sensitivity and his reason in spite of living amidst group
fights and murders was a sign of change. Anwar's grandfather had died at forty,
his father was happy to have crossed sixty-four. This too, spoke of the better life
that had come to the people.

Mr. Raote had been one of the first eighteen recruits of the Shiv Sena and
was now the chairman of the standing committee of the Bomaby Corporation. His
father had worked as a mechanic in All India Radio and had educated all his
children. Mr. Raote's first ambition had been to join the military. He could not get
into the military; he could not do a course in engineering, as his father could not
afford the expense. So he took up a job as a clerk in the Corporation while his
father worked as a carpenter in a film studio to enable his sister to become a
doctor. His marriage was a "love-match" and thus was followed by more financial
burdens. He found an opening in furniture work and his designs found favour all
over Bombay. From furniture, he moved to the building business and had been
doing very well ever since. His dedication to the Sena and its work had continued
all along. Lillian Feder says:
Like Mr. Patil, he is religious, but in Naipaul's portrait, he is more at peace with his Hinduism, his "devotion to the Shiv Sena and its leaders", his life of "belief and action." (NT 126)

In his business he had worked "to accommodate the middle-class Maharashtrian" (52). His front door had no latch, it was always open. He was deeply religious and his religion was an extension of his courage and confidence which branched off into his social concerns:

The worldly man who wanted to be an officer and an engineer, the Sena worker, the devout Hindu: there were three layers to him, making for a chain of belief and action. (53)

Papu worked in Dharavi, feeding around five hundred people every Sunday. But his idea of service was to help people help themselves. Charity for the sake of charity had no value. It was no longer the old Hindu idea of charity as an automatic act to earn divine goodwill for oneself. It was now strongly linked to social concern.

Mr. Ghate was also a Sena official. His father had been a mill worker and his family "had never owned a book" till he went to college (62). In contrast to Mr. Patil and Mr. Raote, Mr. Ghate was not at all religious. Although he could afford better accommodation, he continued to live in a chawl because both he and his wife were used to the chawl life. His wife had had serious problems coping with the solitude of the staff quarters. "Absence of civic sense" was the most difficult problem and he believed that one had to start with the children to rectify this malady among the chawl dwellers (65). Mr. Ghate had progressed much as compared to his father a mill-worker. This progress had given him new ideas,
about himself and about others. These ideas were sometimes in conflict with each other but Mr. Ghate carried on, anchored by Sena's pride. Lillian Feder asserts:

Naipaul neither denounces nor lauds the Sena's narrow vision. In his view the Sena enacts its own varieties of "twenty kinds of group excess." Each group, he believes, is aware initially of only its own rage, its particular history, and the grounds of its own mutiny. Sunil Khilnani's view of the Shiv Sena is harsher than Naipaul's. He considers the movement "a deep potential within modern Indian politics" rather than a potential contributor to India's nationhood. (NT 126)

On the other side of the Sena monopoly was the criminal world of Bombay. The businessmen and politicians used professional criminals to get their work done:

...to deter political defections, to encourage political donations; to enforce payment of a debt, to compel adherence to an unwritten 'black-money' contract. (69)

Having turned criminals, these people had fallen out of the mainstream and now there was no hope of return. With criminal records against their names they were doomed to spend the rest of their lives in the underworld. Here too, the religious faith had somehow survived. How they explained their actions in the light of their deep faith in religion was a paradox. Living in the shadow of death, cut off from society, these people held on to whatever faith their deities inspired in them in spite of knowing that they were lost and had no hope: "The gangster at
the top...the dons...could be courted by political parties and film people...But the men below, the men in the middle...were doomed." (75)

Religion had a special place in a society that was passing through the stress and strain of change and pujaris were much in demand. In Bombay, with its paradoxes and its divisions of faith, the pujaris were as much in demand as the Sena men.

The "Electric pujari" customized religious ceremonies and offered recorded pujas on tape; the other pujari who has been dealt with in detail was satisfied with whatever he earned and conducted pujas in the traditional way. This variety appealed to the people of Bombay for whom the very concept of religion and puja was undergoing change. Nandini worked as a journalist and did not believe in ritualistic puja, but the pujari was called by her family on auspicious occasion. The pujari had a much more comfortable life in Bombay than what he could have had in his native village.

Subroto had come to Bombay from Calcutta. He was lucky to have adjusted to his work in the art department of an advertising agency. His friend, the film writer, had not been so lucky. His story was a story of defeat. He could not work in accordance with the current demands of the film directors. His loyalty to his art made him pay a very heavy price. He not only lost his work, but lost out on goodwill as well. He continued with whatever screen-writing he was offered and kept going back to Calcutta.

Calcutta is where I studied, I keep on drifting back. It's my home town, mentally. It's where I feel comfortable. That's where I feel
things are happening all the time, and that’s where I acquired the
ambition of being a film writer. (85)

The Bengali film writer was one of those millions who drifted across the
metropolis, those who could not be rooted.

Namdeo Dhasal and his wife Mallika represent another layer of society
where there has been considerable movement. Namdeo Dhasal was the founder of
the Dalit Panthers and was also known for the poetry that he wrote. His political
career had seen many ups and downs but he was not much bothered about that.
Initially, his political failure had caused him to fall ill but he recovered. His poetry
spoke of raw pain. His wife Mallika was the daughter of communist folk singers.
Her mother was a high caste Hindu and father a Muslim. Mallika and Namdeo’s
marriage was a marriage of the minds which faltered on ground realities. The
outcome was Mallika’s autobiography, *I Want to Destroy Myself*. Namdeo had
come a long way from being an outcaste Dalit in his native village. He drew
inspiration from Ambedkar and thus created an identity for himself and for others.
He worked for the prostitutes and other oppressed classes of people. He had
himself lived through much oppression as a young Mahar caste boy in his village,
as a taxi driver in Bombay, and as a resident of the “Dhor slum.” Therefore he
was full of anger. It was his exposure to Ambedkar’s movement that made him
channelize his anger into a positive political force.

This assertion of the self was the beginning of the dismantling of old
prejudices that required some men to be lower than others. It was a way of growth
for thousands of marginalized people. With the coming of education and equal job
opportunities a beginning had been made, but it was a political movement like
Namdeo's that gave people an identity which they could be comfortable with, and even proud of. 'Bombay Theatre' ends with Namdeo's story. Naipaul has presented a cross-section of life in metropolitan Bombay. Each nook and corner, each one-roomed chawl is closely observed. It depicts a metropolis undergoing great change. The movement shows in occasional ruptures of the social fabric and in the somewhat paradoxical values of people.

'The Secretary's Tale' is the story of Rajan, his father and his grandfather. It is a story of how people's idea of themselves change with the passage of time. Rajan's grandfather was a petty official in one of the law courts near Tanjore. He got into a fight with a British officer and had no option but to leave. He came to Calcutta with his family. There he trained his son to be a stenographer. The stenographer son rose to great heights and lived in style. In the 1946 Hindu-Muslim riots in Calcutta, he lost everything. Young Rajan was brought up by his step-sister. He began his career as a typist, but struggled all along for a more creative job. After a number of jobs with various firms in different capacities, Rajan too became a secretary with a firm in Bombay. He felt he had a lot more talent and creativity that could have been able to take care of all his responsibilities:

I haven't risen beyond what my father and grandfather could rise to, at the beginning of the century. The only consolation is that, even as a secretary, I am not as badly off as most other secretaries are. And perhaps, even, I no longer believe I am just a secretary.
Rajan is one of the interviewees of Naipaul. What Rajan tells here to Naipaul, is true in the present context also:

This was in 1980. I was forty years old. At that age, for the first time in my life, I had a room of my own. This was a dream in a place like Bombay, where people have to sleep on the pavement and in drainpipes, and it was perhaps the best thing to have happened to me. (IMM 133)

'Breaking Out' observes the layers of change that had come to the southern parts of India over a period of three generations. It begins with observation on Goa; its Portuguese past had nearly wiped out the old India. With the Portuguese occupation of Goa, the conquest of Vijaynagar and the rise of Mughal power in the North, Hindu India had very slim chances of survival. But Hindu India survived:

Through all the twists and turns of history, through all the imperial venturing in this part of the world, which that Portuguese arrival in India portended, and finally through the unlikely British presence in India, a Hindu India had grown again, more complete and unified than any India in the past. (143)

'Breaking out' is mainly about how the old Hindu-Brahmin India survived and turned itself into an agent of growth and development in new India. Deviah, a science reporter for a newspaper, went on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Ayappa every year. He was also well versed in the story of Ayappa and the mythological details it contained.
Dr. Srinivasan, chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission came from a family of priests. His grandfather had been a Purohit and was only a matriculate. He wanted his son to pass the university examination and so the son went to the university. However, Sanskrit lessons continued at home and the son was taught all the religions rituals. In 1925, the son, Dr. Srinivasan’s father, joined the education department and became a teacher. The new education and the Brahmin training stayed together in him. These were the forces that created Dr. Srinivasan. Naipaul sees this as a kind of continuity of old learning:

The old Hindu-Sanskrit learning – which a late 18th century scholar-administrator like Sir William Jones had seen as archaic...that old learning had, 200 years later, in the most roundabout way, seeded the new. (152)

Subramaniam, also a scientist, came from a similar Hindu-Brahmin background. His grandfather understood that knowledge of English was essential. He could not do much about his own education but he sent his son to an English medium school. This son went to the university and later worked with a leading scientist of those times. With knowledge of modern science, there occurred a change in sensibility. There was a conflict between science and the rituals he practiced at home. He rejected caste prejudices and rituals. The concept of puja also changed. He started writing books on science in the local language. Into this family was born Subramaniam. Subramanian could look at a century of change within his family in a very analytical manner. He saw the predominance of Brahmins on the Indian Science Scene a “development of history” and although he credited the old Hindu Brahmin tradition of pursuit of knowledge for this
development, he was also aware that Brahmins were “responsible still for many things on our social landscape” (160-61).

Reservations for different castes in India led the country on the path of revolution, protest, band and strikes. Demonstrations against reservations can be seen throughout the country. Subramaniam has aptly raised the question on reservation but it was not only limited for the Brahmins but for all the categories belong to the general or unreserved categories:

Entrance to universities is not based strictly on merit. There are quotas for different classes. Many Brahmins feel now that even education has become difficult. There are the quotas, and the private colleges are expensive…(IMM 161)

Pravas came from a priestly family of the East. His grandfather was a priest; his father had retired as a government clerk. His grandfather had lived in a secure world as a purohit to a royal family. His religion was his profession. For Pravas’s father the security of the old world was replaced. His job with the government gave him his livelihood. The puja, the rituals and the chanting of mantras become a part of his personal world. Here he talks about the general practice in the society:

My grandfather would practice the hard-core Sanskrit, the original Mantras as written in the Vedas or Puranas. It is the hallmark of ritualism that you don’t necessarily understand the deeper meaning of everything you do… (166)

He read religious texts and tried to interpret them. He also read modern philosophical works in English, Devnagri and Bengali. He had received the
Gandhian philosophy. All this brought about a change in him. His attitude towards rituals, food and dress changed. In his son, Pravas, these were further modified:

I have made one more level of transformation than my father did from his father’s time. I am more liberal in outlook than my father. I’ve probably become more questioning...my father got a part of what his father had, and I have only a part of the rituals my father had (167-68).

Kala’s story is also one of progress. She “did the publicity for a big organization” (171). She was in her twenties and single. Her grandfather had started from nothing and had gone on to become an administrator in a princely state. Her mother studied up to class ten and was married. This marriage distorted her life and neither she nor her parents could do anything about it. That is why she brought up Kala to be financially independent. Thus ideals and ideologies changed over a period of three generations and the potential that was neglected in Kala’s mother came to be recognized and valued in Kala.

Prakash hailed from an agricultural family of Bellary and was minister in the non-Congress state government of Karnataka. He had been a lawyer before he entered politics. He spoke of the power that politicians wielded, and the chaos created by industrialization and the green revolution:

During this transition period, we are slowly cutting from the moral ethos of our grandfather’s, and at the same time, we don’t have the westerner’s idea of discipline and social justice. At the moment things are chaotic here. (189)
The old values and morality have become playthings in the hands of politicians, and Naipaul rightly stated:

Legislators were being asked that day to sign a loyalty statement, and there was much of the eternal counting of Gandhi-capped heads. Homespun clothes, once the clothes of the poor, now no longer worn by the poor, worn by the men to whom the poor had given power. (193)

The pundit who worked as *mukhthesar* for the maharaja of Mysore had his own history. His grandfather worked as a cook in the palace and this grandfather sent him to the Sanskrit College in Mysore city where he studied for twenty years. At the end of his education, he was appointed *mukhthesar* by the Maharaja. He served the Maharaja even after he lost his privy purse. After the death of the Maharaja he took up a job as the manager of a marriage hall. He was now no longer the Maharaja’s *mukhthesar*:

Four times a year now he went to the palace, to make offerings to the head of the royal family... But now he didn’t go as an employee or palace servant. He went as a man in his own right. (202)

‘Breaking Out’ portrays people from different walks of life who had come out of the old Hindu world of their parents and grandparents and were working towards new goals, and building up a new concept of selfhood. They were thus ushering into the Indian scene a new growth and development. Working alongside were ‘Little Wars.’ These were movements in South India that sought to break the old order not in a gradual way but as a direct and immediate goal. It was a war between South and North, between Brahmin and non-Brahmin.
The movement in the south had begun with Periyar. It had given people an idea of themselves. The DMK victory in the elections was a great cause of celebration for the non-Brahmins. Periyar, the man behind the cause was iconized. As years passed, breaks occurred even within the DMK. Periyar, being atheist and a rationalist, offered the vision of a world governed by science, free of caste and religion. His war was against caste prejudice and he rejected everything that created caste distinction- be it temples or temple tanks. But his movement was indifferent to the “looting” of temples and to the “replacement of temple icons by fakes” (224). We get a detailed account of Periyar’s life and ideologies and how these came to be imbibed by his followers. Entire passages are narrated by Sadanand Menon and the figure of the writer hardly surfaces. It is through Menon that the reader comes to know how the Periyar movement in the end came to stand for those very things that it had opposed in the first place:

The anti-Brahmin movement was not a movement of all the non-Brahmin castes. It was a movement mainly of the middle castes.... When their government came to power, they became the oppressors. (226)

However, the Periyar movement had touched people in various ways. Gopalakrishnan turned into a rationalist at a very young age. At school he was made to realize his middle caste status that was thought fit only for “grazing cattle” (226). Gradually, Gopalakrishnan moved away from religion and found confidence in Periyar’s movement and literature. He entered publishing business and published school textbooks and books about Periyar’s movement.
The passion of Palani was stronger than that of Gopalakrishnan. The seed of this passion was sown when his brother was shouted at for taking water from a Brahmin hotel. This sense of injustice kept building up, and when Palani came across Periyar he found all his answers. His father was a government clerk but Palani could become an engineer because of the seats that were reserved for students from non-Brahmin castes. He had Periyar to thank for this concession.

From a weaver to an engineer – the story of his family had been one of progress. This was the way in which Periyar’s movement had touched so many lives, so many families.

Passion breeds passion. Kakushthan’s passion was to be a pure and perfect Brahmin. This passion had come to him at a very late stage in life. As a school going child he had to suffer for his Brahmin dress, for the caste-mark on his forehead and for his churki. He had long and heated discussions with his father but he was not allowed to adopt modern ways. He tried to run away, he tried to break away from this Brahmin past but in the end he came back. His only passion in life now was to live the pure life of a Brahmin. This he had done by beginning to make minor and major changes in the old Brahmin lifestyle. That was the way the community could be preserved.

Veeramani was Periyar’s successor, his “Philosophical heir”. His consistent loyalty to Periyar had earned him his position. His marriage was also arranged by Periyar to a girl from an established family so that he could take care of the party without having to worry about his livelihood. He carried on the self-respect movement and his own life was a story of success, financial as well as
social. His father had been a tailor and now his children were all studying abroad. The anti-brahmin movement had catapulted him into glory and fame.

There was another kind of revolution that, for a short period of time, broke out like a war. This was Maoist style revolution started by peasants belonging to the lower castes. They wanted to overthrow the government and kill the landowners. The rebellion was soon controlled by police intervention but it uncovered the failure of the Periyar movement "...Periyar had struggled against caste alone; he hadn't thought of class" (277). The people at the lowest level had been left out and the rebellion was an assertion of their existence and their need to be included in the mainstream.

There are records of revolutions and rebellions at personal as well as public level. This unrest was the way of new beginnings for the non-Brahmin middle and lower castes. For people like Kakusthan and Sugar, it was a struggle to maintain the purity and continuity of the old world. The struggle was on both sides, it was between the old world and the new. Both worlds changed, both adapted and continued. Only this time the continuity also spoke of a new identity among people - an assertion of their newly acquired idea of the self.

'After the Battle' focuses on eastern India and on Calcutta in particular. Like the British architecture in Calcutta, Chidananda DasGupta was also a product of British times: "a Boxwallah." Chidananda worked for ITC and had a comfortable lifestyle. But he was not comfortable with the two sides of his existence: his status and work at the ITC required him to be someone he was not and his yearning for intellectual and creative life called for a different kind of life. His association with Shantiniketan was his life force. In the end he left his job at
ITC and became a film-maker and writer. Rabindranath Tagore and Satyajit Ray formed an important part of his mental makeup.

Ashok was a South Indian Brahmin whose father had settled in Calcutta. He was into the marketing business. He had got into this profession with great difficulty. His generation was passing through an era of change where old values had to be weighed against new values. He rejected the traditional “bride-seeing” and opted for a marriage of his own choice. His professional life was an example of the regeneration on the Indian business scene. The quiet world of the Boxwallah had given way to cut-throat competition and marketing had begun to make tough demands on people. The Marwari businessmen had been gaining a monopoly over the major business houses, while at the other end, the Bengalis were content to display their trade unionism and criticize the Marwaris. The Marwari success story in Calcutta had been fuelled by the Bengali mindset: ...he is indolent, he doesn’t want to work... and he must protect his dignity at all costs. He will publicly despise the Marwari trader, but he wouldn’t do the same job himself. (346)

Dipanjan and his wife Arati both taught in colleges. Both had been associated with the Naxalite movement in Calcutta during their college days. Their marriage had cut across caste barriers evoking much opposition from Arati’s parents. They came from families that had modern education. Arati’s father was a scientist and an IES officer whereas Dipanjan’s father was a Ph.D. in biochemistry and a communist. The Naxalite movement had been the passion of Dipanjan’s life and when the movement met its end, Dipanjan withdrew and started pondering over what had gone wrong. What had seemed to be a wonderful
beginning for millions of people in the villages seemed to have gone astray halfway. Dipanjan's years in jail with other Naxalite prisoners, mainly those accused of urban violence including murders, disillusioned him about the movement. He was released by the Government and he went to London to study Physics. On his return, he chose to teach in an obscure college and avoided meeting his friends from earlier days. The story of Dipanjan and Arati is that of a generation led astray by ideas. It was a generation whose ideas for reform were its undoing.

Debu, who held a high position as an executive, had been associated with the naxalite movement in its earliest stages but had later, developed ideological difference with the leadership. He had his own clear-cut idea about the reason behind the failure of the movement. Debu had been closely involved with the beginnings of the Naxalite movement and had actually believed in its success. He had even tried to reason out Charu Mazumdar's policy of individual killing. Later he fell out with Charu Mazumdar and went underground in April 1970.

Debu's major concern was with the idea of development in India. He was pained by the intellectual decay and the economic crisis of India, especially the sufferings of the poor. He still believed in the revolution and was convinced that a revolution could set things right here and now. Earlier Debu had been pained when, during his lectures on India in America, he had been asked – "how come you're starving and begging for food, if you're so great?" (334). This had led to his joining the radical communist wing. Years after the failure of the Naxalite movement, he still believed in revolution:
The only change—a big change—between then and now is that at that time, in the late 60s, I thought I could be a part of the revolution, and now I know that I shall be witness to it. A supportive witness. I don’t think the need for revolution has changed (333).

Naipaul comments here on Calcutta. With the going away of the British, he sees the Anglo-Bengali intellectual life coming to an end. In the poverty of the urban poor he sees Calcutta in a state of decay. However, amidst the decay, he observes certain spots of regeneration in the cinema of Satyajit Ray and in the optimism of people like Debu.

‘After the Battle’ is Naipaul’s documentation of the movement in the Indian social fabric that occurred in the 1960s and 70s. This movement marks intellectual confusion of the times when the old ideologies were set aside and a search was on for a new set of ideologies to live by. This coupled with economic crisis accentuated the confusion of those times.

‘The End of the Line’ contains the response of Indian Muslims to the partition of India. Naipaul begins with a discussion of Satyajit Ray’s film, The Chess Players. Naipaul uses the film to comment on the decadent Muslim power in the nineteenth century and the annexation of Oude, which stalled Muslim India:

Lucknow was the end of the line for Muslim India... In its historical heart it is like a graveyard from the days of the Nawabs of Oude, full of the ruins of war. The city was shelled and fought over during the Mutiny; afterwards the British preserved the ruins as a memorial, and passed them on to independent India. (351-52)
Naipaul meets Rashid, who even after one hundred and thirty years, carries the scar of defeat at the hands of the British. Many middle-class Muslims had left for Pakistan and all that remained in Lucknow, once known as the epitome of Muslim culture, were people who were “vulnerable, withdrawn and highly strung” (354). With Rashid, Naipaul walks down the market and finds the practitioners of ancient crafts in a state of decadence. The embroiders, the silver-foil markers, lived a life of squalor:

All the jobs here have this soul-destroying quality. They are doing it only because their fathers did it before them. (360)

Rashid came from an old Shia Muslim family. His father had a successful photography business. His shops sold cameras and photographic equipment. This was in 1911. After independence, in 1947, Rashid’s father wanted to shift to Pakistan along with his business. His own nephew who transferred the shop in his own name cheated him. Rashid’s father stayed in India but decided to marry his daughter to a Pakistani Muslim. Rashid got his education at La Martiniere and grew up with two cultures: the secular culture at school and the religious culture at home. After his father’s death, Rashid drifted away. He went to England and worked in a Kentucky Fried Chicken shop. He went to Pakistan, but even Pakistan was disillusionment. Rashid could not belong to the aggressive business minded world of Indian Muslims in Pakistan. He felt stifled by the Islamic laws that had total monopoly over an individual’s life. He returned to India for the scant sense of belonging it still had to offer.

Amir came from an aristocratic Muslim family. His father was a Raja. He wished to instill in his son the truest values of Islam. At the same time he wanted
his son to have a modern education. Like Rashid, Amir also grew up with two
cultures. His father’s oscillations between India, Pakistan, Iran and England kept
him form being rooted. When his father declared his intention of accepting
Pakistani citizenship the family suffered hardships in India. His father’s failure to
be integrated into the mainstream in Pakistan caused deeper confusion in Amir.
His cultural upbringing and his study of astronomy complicated this confusion.

Naipaul notes the violence caused to the Muslim psyche as a result of the
partition of India. The Muslims, so far rooted in India were doubly displaced. In
India, they strove to get away to a place that promised to reinstate their pride and
position as rulers. In Pakistan, they could not be integrated into the mainstream
and were marginalized as mohajirs. This double exclusion is crystallized in
Rashid’s concluding remark:

That sense of belonging, which I had in India, I knew I couldn’t
find anywhere else. Yet I also know that I can never be a
complete person now. I can’t ignore partition. It’s a part of me. I
feel rudderless.... The creation and existence of Pakistan has
damaged a part of my psyche. I simply cannot pretend it doesn’t
exit. I can’t pretend that life goes on..... (387).

Amidst the grim darkness of the worlds of Rashid and Amir, Naipaul
discovers a small ray of hope. This ray of hope is Parveen, who represents those
Muslims who have been integrated into the Indian social fabric, those Muslims
who cherish no religious or cultural yearnings for Pakistan. Parveen came from a
family of landlords and lawyers and had entered active politics. She saw herself as
Indian and blamed the Muslim unrest in India to ignorance and a lack of proper education.

On one hand, Naipaul discusses in finest detail the genesis and nature of the problem of alienation of Muslims in India, and on the other hand, he discusses the ways in which integration can be made possible. Naipaul’s scale tilts heavily towards the gloomy despair of Rashid and Amir. But Parveen stands as a ray of light, and with her stands the hope of millions. Naipaul leaves the possibility open to Parveen.

‘Women’s Era’ shows the change that had come to the Indian woman’s idea of herself and the role played by Vishwa Nath. Naipaul begins with his own difficulties with Russell’s Diary. Through his own example and Rashid’s, Naipaul lays the groundwork for individual responses to literary work. On this groundwork he builds the Indian women’s response to the women’s magazines in India. He sees these magazines as being structured around the psychological needs of a changing population. Vishwa Nath, the editor of Women’s Era was an iconoclast and a conventional man rolled into one. Through Women’s Era, Femina, Savvy and Eve’s Weekly, Naipaul sees different kinds of women, with different sets of priorities and values. The paradox of Vishwa Nath’s mind was the paradox of a vast majority of Indian women who were just entering the outside world for the first time. Therefore Vishwa Nath’s became the most popular women’s magazine.

The striking note here is the gradual change in Naipaul’s opinion of Women’s Era. He lays out the whole process. Initially, he found Women’s Era to be dull. The articles were in fact general instructions on the desired code of
behaviour on social occasions or on health and fitness of the family. Later, Naipaul looks at its target audience and tries to place the magazine in the indispensable informative role it played for its target audience. In this way, Naipaul learns to look at the magazine with a new sense of admiration. Naipaul, in *India: A Million Mutinies Now*, adopts this method throughout. *Women’s Era* shows the clearest working of Naipaul’s new method and in a way summarizes the change in Naipaul’s perspective from *An Area of Darkness* to *India: A Million Mutinies Now*. He begins with a rejection of *Women’s Era*, goes on to analyze the magazine, its editor, and its target readers. He then arrives at a new found admiration for the work being done by this magazine. The pattern of his coming to terms with India is replicated in his treatment of *Women’s Era*.

“The Shadow of the Guru” is a detailed analysis of the psychology of Sikh insurgency in India. Naipaul sees the Sikh militancy as a part of a larger process:

To awaken to history was to cease to live instinctively. It was to begin to see oneself and one’s group the way the outside world saw one, and it was to know a kind of rage ... There had been a general awakening. But everyone awakened first to his own group or community... every group sought to separate its rage from the rage of other. (420)

Gurtej Singh is the main narrator and it is through him that Naipaul explains how a realization of the Sikh identity mutated into insurgency. The origins of the Sikh faith were in militant action against Muslim oppression. The militant streak surfaced and got lost. Earlier, Naipaul had described how the Naxalite movement had gone astray from its ideals and was lost. He repeats the
same about Sikh insurgency. The reader sees the movement in its various stages through the eyes of the people involved in it. Naipaul alternates such accounts with the stories of the Sikh Gurus that form a part of the collective consciousness of the people that narrate their stories.

Naipaul does not reject insurgency but sees it as a part of a larger process of change in the people's idea of themselves. Religious identity is the first step in people's idea of themselves and therefore the insurgency in Punjab started at the religious level. Naipaul has also exposed the break in the unified India or religion that came to people like Buta Singh. The picture that emerges is one of strife as an outlet for pent-up emotions of the past, militancy as a step towards the restoration of the past Sikh glory. While economic advances had quickened the pace of these rebellions, Naipaul believes their impulse originated in the Freedom Movement, which carried the torch of Western concepts of freedom, law, human association, as well as a sense of the value of India's own civilization, and the nationalist spur of humiliation by the British raj.

Independence had come to India like a kind of revolution, now there were many revolutions within that revolution... All over India scores of particularities that had been frozen by foreign rule or by poverty or lack of opportunity or abjectness had begun to flow again. (6)

In the end, Naipaul discusses candidly the psychology behind his first impassioned rage in An Area of Darkness. Naipaul visits Kashmir the hotel Liward and its inhabitants: Aziz and Mr. Butt. Naipaul sees how India has changed and how his eye had changed over the past twenty-seven years. In places where Naipaul had earlier observed decay of tradition, he now saw new creative
beginnings. In the confusion of the immediate period after independence, he found a new sense of organization and he saw India on the move. He saw the socio-political disturbances and the failed attempts at revolution as a part of India’s growth:

What the mutinies were also helping to define was the strength of the general intellectual life, and the wholeness and humanism of the values of which all Indians now felt they could appeal. And — strange irony — the mutinies were not to be wished away. They were a part of the beginning of a new way for many millions, part of India’s growth, part of its restoration. (518).

Though Naipaul says he has now approached India with more objectivity, free from his former neurosis, it is possible to detect in the book a deeply personal need to discover signs of regeneration in post-independence India. An article on the internet “Imperial politics in the progressive gaze” reads like this:

The pervasive negativism is not backed by any research; the locals are never given the chance to speak directly to the reader. Nonetheless, the author claims ultimate competence, omniscient authority, without justifying this claim in any way...Indian reality is ordered from the position of an infallible deity. The painted picture hangs in front of the reader’s eye as an absolute truth...compare this to Naipaul’s India: A Million Mutinies Now, in which Naipaul relativises his impressions of a slum by asking a slum-dweller to describe what he sees, thus dissolving the
Western myth of the slum into a multi-faceted representation.

(hinduonnet.com)

"In 1960 I was still a colonial, travelling to far-off places..." (FC ii). It was around this time that Naipaul was travelling in India for *An Area of Darkness*. His views on India were therefore the views of a colonial. By the time he came to *India: A Million Mutinies Now*, he had ceased to be a colonial. He had arrived at the multiple perspectives offered by post-colonial vision. He had learnt to see India as India saw itself. This brought with it a sense of healing and a sense of homecoming for Naipaul. An article of Suvir Kaul, reads like this:

Is this Naipaul’s final, or even most authoritative, version of India?

He might write on India again, but even if he does not, the contours of Naipaul’s India can only be traced, as here, in a long encounter with all his books on India. His last vision does not support his first- it revises and enriches the former, even briefly apologizes for it... (Gentleman 39)

*A Million Mutinies Now* by Naipaul attempts to paint a picture of the whole and define the crux of what it means to be an Indian. After having followed India over three decades, he does have a handle on the mentality of an Indian, at the same time he relates to the wider world and has a sense of perspective. *A Million Mutinies* presents a collage of people from different parts of India, different classes, castes, religion. He attempts to find out what drives them within the wider social context and how they see themselves, their values and their expectations and how they are standing up to the changing times.
India: A Million Mutinies Now is Naipaul’s third and final stage of the unraveling of the problematic relation between himself and India. The book recalls his earlier books on India and attempts a revision of his earlier judgments on India. The structure of An Area of Darkness and India: A Million Mutinies Now is similar. Both being with a description of the crowds of Bombay, but the difference in tone sets them apart. While An Area of Darkness ends in ‘Flight’ an escape from the painful reality of India, India: A Million Mutinies Now ends with ‘Return to India.’ In India: A Million Mutinies Now India is seen through the eyes of its various narrators. Naipaul, the writer, empathizes with them and thus arrives at a resting place for his overwhelming diasporic concerns for India.

The mutinies, will lead on to liberation from the burden of history, the past and the old civilization. Naipaul sounds hopeful in A Million Mutinies Now as he sees an upsurge of thought, questioning, and an inclination towards challenging the age old systems, and come up with new. There is a restlessness and weariness of the burden of the past. The country and its people seem ready and poised to start off anew. This craving is very positive, especially in a country of India’s status where history is burdensome in its richness. There is a looking inward, rising above sentimentality which is an impediment to progress. Naipaul can feel the pulse of the people and that which had left him frustrated during his previous visits, the dull acceptance of the past, has changed. The reverberations of a million voices, from different regions and strata of society reach the hopeful ears of Naipaul. He is in a positive mood at the changing, forward looking attitudes of the populace. Naipaul seems to accept this India to some extent though not wholly. Naipaul has mellowed down, and happier.
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