Mostly, they are in conflicting situations and “their treatment is sociological” (Mukerji 143). In many aspects, they reflect Naipaul himself, for he expresses his own inner conflicts through the lives of his protagonists. Hence, their failure becomes his failure.

To interpret the human problems, Naipaul’s voice is not a soothing, but a soaring one. He adopts the conventional forms of fiction and moulds them to meet the particular demands of his own sensibility by maintaining a detached tone all through his novels. In presenting his characters as individuals, he acts as a sensitive ironist, who distinguishes reality from facts and character from action. Almost all the characters in his novels struggle for existence and fail to find protection or completeness. They neither reject their Indian heritage nor adjust with the Caribbean and finally fail to reconcile with the metropolis of London. The failure to acknowledge has turned them into something of a permanent disorder. Therefore, “the emotional security and a real sense of identity are unachievable in heterogeneous societies of the Caribbean” (Hassan 253). Hence, in the Westerner’s eye, the people of the non-West are stereotyped inferior, strange and exotic ‘other’ who, in the words of Karl Marx, “cannot represent themselves; they must be represented” (qtd. in Said, Reflections on Exile 335).
CHAPTER V

SUMMATION

Contemporary Third World life still reflects the patterns imposed by centuries of slavery and colonialism. The spiritual, social and psychological implications of this period of domination have been the concern of many native writers. Naipaul is one of the most prolific among this group. Like other postcolonial writers, Naipaul laments the violent disruption of old societies and the manufacture of new ones devoid of constructive cultural, educational and religious programmes.

Naipaul is unique in the history of literatures in English. His record of creative writing is varied and covers both fiction and non-fiction which complement and supplement each other. They reveal his diasporic consciousness to recollect and construct plenty of metaphors to explain the harrowing realities of multicultural and multilingual societies. They connect the past with the present and also address the future. Bijay Kumar Das in Aspects of Commonwealth Literature aptly remarks:

In a way Naipaul becomes the unity of his works. Throughout his writing career, he insists that what he aims at is not ‘fantasy or triumphs of imagination’ but ‘truth of his own experience’. He writes from his experience and his writing gives ‘a new reality’ that transcends distinction between fiction and non-fiction and stakes a claim to permanence. (10)

Naipaul, however, cannot be treated only as a postcolonial writer, he rather belongs to the category of writers theorised by Timothy Brennan as the “cosmopolitans” (46). A.
B. Vajpayee aptly says that, “Sir Naipaul’s literary sensitivity, transcending all barriers has blossomed into an all compassing concern for humanity. His incisive treatment of contemporary realities has never been bereft of humane perspectives” (qtd. in R. K. Mishra 25).

Even though Naipaul writes about several countries, he can be regarded as a spokesman of Trinidad, Tobago and the Caribbean islands at large. As a writer, he is an ‘interpreter’ of the postcolonial Third World; as a traveller, he is something of an ‘expert’. His works are the amalgamation of various thoughts, opinions, ideas and ideals that are prevailing in the postcolonial society. Lillian Feder’s comment can be a good starting point for analysing his fiction, “In his stories and novels, Naipaul transforms actual societies, he has known, their rulers and subjects, into fictional communities that generate narrators and characters more vivid than their models . . . These protagonists are linked to each other and to their progenitor to pursue truths about themselves and their worlds” (10).

Naipaul is an expatriate individual, uprooted and fragmented and his state of permanent exile finds place in his works as manifestation of ‘self’. His restless travels around the world have resulted in more than a score of unforgettable books, but which have not given him any sense of belonging. He has become an alien in the country of his birth, and is not at home in Trinidad. For him, Trinidad is “a place where stories were never stories of success, but of failure” (The Middle Passage 43). Therefore, most of his works are based on the disorder and decaying world of Trinidad. Robert Boyers aptly calls him as “the novelist of disorder and breakdown” (qtd. in Ali and Gopal 3).

The expansion of Colonial Empire has given three centuries a racial tint, which causes pain even after colonialism. Naipaul feels the pain of racial prejudice in Trinidad and writes, “In Trinidad I grew up in the last days of that kind of racialism. And that,
perhaps, has given me a greater appreciation of the immense changes that have taken place since the end of the war, and all the currents of the world’s thought” (The Writer and the World 516). Therefore, his novels are the finest expressions of the dilemmas and struggles of colonised to make both their individual and social lives meaningful in a postcolonial world.

Naipaul’s idea of his community constitutes a deeply felt account of the Indian immigrants’ struggle to find themselves in a totally new world. It is he who first gives a voice to the Indian immigrant in Trinidad through his fiction. Till then the Indians have been largely ignored and remained voiceless and unimportant figures in the fiction of the region. He has become, “The voice of the modern expatriate and of our time in feeling unattached, unillusioned, without purpose, an observer of the world’s follies, especially those problems which have resulted from the end of empire and the withdrawal of European rule from the Third World” (King 6).

Since Naipaul has mapped cultural spaces in his speculative journey around the globe, his writings express the ambivalence of the exile and the feature of his own experience. Naipaul’s perception of anguish at his own displacement and rootlessness is central to his creative talent. It has been the stimulus as well as subject of his work. Naipaul lets his men adapt and adjust themselves to the world. As a result, Naipaul’s creations provide their own testimony and proof for having been what they are. For instance, Ralph in The Mimic Men feels perpetually shipwrecked, cut off from a valid sense of the past and is paralysed by the loss of movement in the whorl of time and achieves self recognition by employing the art of fictional recall. Though he is a victim of circumstances, he also becomes a victim of his own characteristic limitations and fails to assert any control over existence.
With his successful manipulation and brilliant handling of socio-cultural and historical materials like events, race, ethnicity and nation, Naipaul has effectively woven together time past and time present in defence of Third World society and progressive nationalism. While most of his fictional works are the travellers’ tales and the crucibles of his memory, he launches a strong humanitarian drift defying geo-cultural boundaries “in the celebratory romance of the past or by homogenizing the history of the present” (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* 9).

Naipaul’s fiction deals with the fragmentation of the social order, the sense of void, the meaninglessness of endeavour in an immoral universe and the absurdity of man’s situation. In almost all writings so far Naipaul has emphasised the importance of knowing one’s past. Akhtal Jamal Khan in *V. S. Naipaul: A Critical Study* aptly remarks that, “Naipaul has made use of history in order to recreate the past for the review of the present which serves to throw light on the similarity or difference of attitude of the people towards an identical situation” (112).

The way he presents his novel is realistic and simple. Even though the subject is serious, he writes lightly and is being primarily comic in intention. He never loses his neutrality and objectivity, though he adds moral criticism when applicable. He uses wit and satire to assess and comment on the conditions of postcolonial societies. Naipaul’s powerful mastery over the language and vision helped him add new dimensions to his novels. His use of language is as precise as it is beautiful, because he uses simple but strong words. The real strength of his book lies in the narrative structure, which is based on images and symbols. His keen observation of life around him, his authenticity of details and his strong determination make his work real and authentic. Mallikarjun Patil in
“Naipaul V. S.: The Travel-Writer” praises him saying, “There is no other writer in Third World who can excel him in quality as well as quantity” (1399).

Like other great novelists, Naipaul weaves his material through the colourful threads of art, beauty, irony and satire. His tone is undeniably ironic and mock heroic which is a reflection and a chosen definition of the national sensibility. Irony becomes rather bitter in the hands of Naipaul because it elevates his satire to a level of insightful social inquiry, conducted from a point of creative detachment. His bitterness and mercilessness may be the result of his failure to find fulfillment and roots in the society he has been searching for. The ironic point and the factor that turns humour into bitter satire is that frauds such as Ganesh in The Mystic Masseur and Harbans in The Suffrage of Elvira are venerated by the society out of which they grow. The satiric thrust is further forced by the ironic changes that overcome both Harbans and Ganesh at the end of their stories.

The dominant feature of Naipaul’s novels is the prose style. He has managed to develop a singular and expressive literary style of his own. Distorting the age-old form, he begins his novels in the middle and ends them in the middle but he has consciously followed the traditional narrative style, which has been followed by Balzac and Tolstoy. His novels seem to conform to the metaphoric structure, though a bit wanting in proper structural unification as we see in James Joyce’s masterpiece, The Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man. Further, Naipaul’s narratives, moving forward and backward in time and space, delve into some veiled truth and identity. Through the use of memory, he brings to surface those past memories that have vitiated the present and after re-examination allows the protagonist to modify his perceptions and be realigned with the moving stream of life. For instance, in The Mimic Men, while writing his memory, Ralph does not follow any chronological order. He constantly moves backwards and forwards, writes about his
childhood and adulthood, his life in Isabella and in England, his political career and marriage, his education and his experiences to understand himself.

The tone of Naipaul’s novels as a whole is pessimistic except *The Mimic Men*, which ends on an optimistic note, “I have cleared the decks, as it were, and prepared myself for fresh action. It will be the action of a free man” (*MM* 274). The tone is undeniably sombre and negative, and it is both a reflection and a chosen definition of the national sensibility.

The novels under consideration visualise the period of transition from colonial rule to self-government. Each novel lays bare the emotional and passionate reality of despair and hysterical fear which underlines the contemporary human situation which is ignored, dismissed or suppressed by the general optimism generated by immense wealth and power. Therefore, these novels are concerned with “the relationship between the socio-political and the psychological consequences of imperialism” (Thieme 113).

Starting from *The Mystic Masseur* (1957) to *Magic Seeds* (2004) Naipaul has used fiction not only as a way of chronicling life but also as an instrument of analysis of the postcolonial reality – mainly disorder and decay. An indepth study of his works shows that his chief concern has been to cite the grievances of the immigrants or displaced persons.

Naipaul’s works bring out his inability to leave India behind him; at the same time the works simultaneously suffer and prosper from the painful tension which arises out of his inability to integrate his ancestral past with his diasporic present. His triple identity and expatriate sensibility are the only means to understand his approach to Indian life and culture. He assesses Indian life and culture with the Hindu norms of *karma, dharma* and *moksha*, and the western norms of individuality and freedom. His family is bound by
Indian tradition, culture, rituals and customs. He narrates the Hindu culture in *The Mystic Masseur* in detail. Ganesh’s initiation into brahminhood, his wedding with Leela, his recitation of *Gita*, the prayer meetings and his outward performance like wearing *dhoti* and *koorta* remind us of Indian culture in Trinidad.

A detailed examination of Naipaul’s novels shows how extensively and how directly Naipaul transfers his own attitudes, sentiments and experiences to his characters. The sense of abandonment and dereliction becomes increasingly acute in the individual as he tries to achieve success, recognition and identity in a pluralistic, postcolonial and ruthlessly competitive culture in which all the sub-cultures are similar in their disinheriance and dispossession.

Naipaul takes delight in depicting his characters and does it with vividness. Ian Buruma aptly views, “Naipaul writes like a painter . . . whatever his literary form, [he] is a master” (qtd. in M. K. Bhatnagar 140). He enables the reader to see the protagonist as he sees himself with his personal assessment. His protagonist is not only a stranger but an orphan in a world of relationships, which he is keenly aware of. They are “extremely private souls, sensitive about revealing anything of themselves, even to people who are close, to wives and children” (Theroux 21).

Naipaul’s works have acquired popularity for their memorable characters like Ganesh, Harbans, Ralph Singh, Salim, Mr. Biswas, Jimmy, Roche, Mr. Stone and Willie Chandran. They project their actions through an unveiling irony which implies both detachment and sympathy. They are caught between Indian and Western culture, who at last are affected by the decay and disorder of their culture. They have a passion for writing and nurture the ambition to become a writer. Writing helps them to achieve identity and social status in the eyes of the world and impart meaning into their meaningless lives.
They are torn between the double consciousness of their colonial past and postcolonial present.

Naipaul suggests the complexity of the relationship between man and his historical environment and his inability to escape from it. His philosophical exposition operates around a vision of people entrapped in mental prisons, partly formed by childhood experiences and naturalistic conditioning, and partly due to their incomplete self-knowledge and knowledge of the world. The protagonists of his novels, who are alienated from their societies, seem to move without a sense of direction. They are the victim of their environment. They realise their inner strength in coping with the inevitable disappointments of life.

This study focuses on the disorder and decay of colonial and postcolonial societies portrayed by Naipaul in his famous novels *The Mystic Masseur, The Suffrage of Elvira, The Mimic Men, A Bend in the River* and *Half a Life*. Juxtaposing conflicting political, social and personal issues as the differing existential situations in the lives of the narrator and the protagonist, Naipaul conveys his overall vision of a fragmented world in which individuals and societies are trapped in their own unreal realities. Postcolonial society, separated from the metropolitan centre, is a source of disorder and is characterised by self-alienation.

To sum up, the chapters in this study are structured so as to read Naipaul’s works from different perspectives. The introductory chapter explains the concept of the study, the background of the author, his works and his place as an artist in Postcolonial Literature. Further a detailed study of postcolonial writers and their works is carried out, which is followed by the review of literature.
The chapter, **“Social Issues: Fragmentation and Disintegration”** traces the social issues of the Third World countries which is ever evolving and is in constant flux. Naipaul investigates the social mechanism between the colonised societies and the former colonisers, which affect the people decades after the official end of superiority of the colonisers.

The Caribbean is portrayed by Naipaul as a heterogeneous region filled with inorganic, fragmented and unproductive societies that can only mimic the metropolis. Homi K. Bhabha in his essay, “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse” demonstrates that, “colonial mimicry produces not only resemblance, but also difference, thus being ambivalent and therefore potentially subversive” (86). Hence, the Trinidadian society is a colonial, immigrant, multiracial and fragmented society comprising of heterogeneous people. It has misplaced its roots and its religion is reduced to mere rituals and rites without spirit. The society’s hybrid nature “displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination” (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* 159). Therefore, Naipaul describes the Trinidadian Indians as people who are “living in a borrowed culture” (*The Middle Passage* 73).

The primary aim of Naipaul is to drive out the evils from the society and he has shown that, “It has percolated to the very bottom of the society at different levels – caste, class, creed and religion. Though it is a small world, its issues are ‘more complex’ than in any normally civilized society” (Bala 37). Thereby, he does the role of “Social Deconstructionist” (Devi, “Naipaul and His Dialectic on India” 39) to strip the new postcolonial societies of their pretences.

With analytical precision of a sociologist, Naipaul looks deeply into the life of the people, to reproduce it in a novelistic structure, so as to make sure of a thorough
understanding, thereby exposing the inner as well as the outer layers of the society.

Perhaps, his novels are a telling testimony of the universal predicament of disorder of the Third World societies. The novels – *The Mystic Masseur*, *The Suffrage of Elvira*, *The Mimic Men*, *A Bend in the River* and *Half a Life* delineate the postcolonial society resisting the push and the pulls of remnants of colonialism and its evils. Through these novels, Naipaul explores the culture and social history of the Indian community in Trinidad. The Indians in Trinidad by and large, lack cultural ties with their heritage through which Naipaul clearly states, “These people are all helpless, disadvantageous, easily unbalanced; the civilization they have inherited has long gone sour” (*India: A Wounded Civilization* 154).

Naipaul deals with the irretrievable disorder of the new world and a “satirical examination of the economic power structure of fictitious West Indian Island” (Patil, “India and Nobel Laureate, V. S. Naipaul” 255). For instance, the novel, *The Mimic Men*, portrays a hollow society and examines the notions of decolonisation, freedom, achievement and the fact that individuals are limited by the history of a fragmented society. It presents a detached understanding of a violated, colonial society of Isabella which resembles the Trinidadian society in all aspects and considers being a “Biblical land, full of symbols and portents and marks of God’s glory . . .” (93). The society is demoralised and degenerated and Naipaul rightly calls the people ‘mimic men’. They imitate their grand rulers and live borrowed lives. They hide their real names and live with false identities. They have nothing of their own and feel totally empty. They are stuck in the conflict between order and destruction, corruption and truth and the old and the new in which they try to achieve the glory of the colonial culture. The emphatic observation of
Ralph corroborates this idea, “To be born on an island like Isabella . . . was to be born to disorder” (MM 127).

Migrations and immigrations make the people’s way of life even more unstable. Globalisation and industrialisation offers no solution to their problems. Under these circumstances, the people lose all sense of belongingness with their world. In fact, the cultural disorder existing on the island is representative of the cultural chaos affecting people in general. This can happen with any society that has faced a prolonged sense of displacement or rootlessness.

The new President “Big man” in *A Bend in the River* brings about political unrest in Africa. The unrest is due to the inability of the African people to cope with the postcolonial situation, their frustration rise from their confusion and lack of determination on how to live their lives. The novel describes the fall of a Third World country struggling through postcolonisation and its inability to adjust and adapt to the new ways of life:

‘A Bend in the River’ uses the instability of central African politics as the landscape against which to explore a world in which the past has been burnt away for everyone, in which human kind is everywhere homeless, so that the expatriate, estranged from the landscape his ancestors hymned, comes to stand as the representative figure of our time. (Gorra 160)

A close analysis of these novels reveal that the contradictions that make up the mimic men lend themselves to a greater understanding of the kind of postcolonialism that is not governed by the celebration of interconnections, discontinuities and hybridity. Rather, it foresees the loss inherent in such fragmented societies. The social issues which Naipaul describes in his novels are typical to the entire Third World which presents a pessimistic experience of the postcolonial situation. Thus, in analysing Naipaul’s societies
we observe that they are half-made, fractured and unproductive which to him is the colonial legacy. The “colonizers left no stones unturned to shatter the souls of the native people” (Noor 8). We can safely infer that, Naipaul’s postcolonial societies abound in total disorder and confusion.

The chapter, “Political Issues: Disorder and Chaos” delineates how Naipaul visualises political upheavals in the postcolonial Third World countries. His fiction and non-fiction seem significant to new and developed nations because of the mixing of cultures, the collapse of older traditions and rapid political changes that have left most people confused, skeptical and uncertain. Karl Miller in an article “V. S. Naipaul and the New Order” aptly comments, “Politics throughout the world is a way of recruiting those who are not politicians” (121).

Naipaul does not want to be considered a political writer, yet he has succeeded in highlighting political issues through his fictional technique. His canon has been praised for its meticulous political perspective and its interrogation of the political ideologies underpinning society and culture. The focus of his work transcends the temptation of articulating a specific political motive, which he himself has explicitly regarded as prejudice. He defines the political situation in Africa, India and Trinidad through his protagonists. Most of his protagonists realise themselves through political failure. As politicians, they express “the Trinidadian’s greatest conflict with objective reality” (Kamra 55).

Political upheavals serve as a backdrop to the drama of sensibility of Naipaul’s characters. Most of his protagonists realise themselves through political failure. For Ganesh in The Mystic Masseur, Harbans in The Suffrage of Elvira and Ralph in The Mimic Men, politics has meant success of a kind which has absorbed their sense of failure.
The introduction of the theme of politics in *The Mystic Masseur* and *The Suffrage of Elvira* affords an excellent dramatic situation for exploring the goals of individuals. The stories of Ganesh and Harbans provide luminous illustrations of a society whose only motivation for advancement is economic. This is a society geared to material success and lacking in principles which would ensure authentic self-fulfillment. In spite of his well-meaning principles, Ganesh succumbs to corruption and concedes even his identity to the colonial powers. The kind of ineptness that Naipaul discerns in colonial politicians is satirised in the early figures of Ganesh and Harbans.

In *The Mystic Masseur*, Naipaul exposes an opportunistic shade of politics and identifies the fate of the country with the personality of the gradually emerging political leader, Ganesh, whose rise is “a constant remaking and renaming of the world and of individual lives through simultaneous processes of displacement and accumulation” (Gourevitch 29).

The colonial politics is steeped in corruption and bribery. The novel, *The Suffrage of Elvira*, depicts politicians as tricksters who trick the voters into voting for them while, the voters try to exploit the politicians by extracting bribes for votes. Hence, exploitation and bribery of politicians ruin the society in general and the world in wide sense.

In *The Mimic Men*, Ralph aptly remarks, “So long as our dependence remained unquestioned our politics were a joke” (206). Hence, his failure as a politician signifies the failure of Trinidad to be a nation in his eyes. He thinks that political sovereignty in Isabella, which is gained through nationalism and independence, is a solution for colonial disorder.
The postcolonial society turns amok without a strong political head at the helm. In *A Bend in the River* the unnamed place ‘bush’ effuses with chaos and disorder and symbolises, “theft, corruption, racist incitement” (Hardwick 36). After independence, yet under the new President, the country is more enslaved than it was under the Arabs or the Europeans. No one is safe under the present rule, neither the natives nor the foreigners.

The transfer of political power from the hands of the imperial rulers to the natives of these countries has resulted in decadence. The politicians exploit their countrymen just like the colonisers; in the process they themselves become like the colonisers. Total fragmentation of political system has resulted in chaos. Thus, Naipaul clearly asserts that the ‘things fall apart’ and the political stability, peace, wealth are distant dreams for these postcolonial countries.

The chapter, “*Psychological Issues: Of Homelessness and Rootlessness*” brings out the innermost struggle of the characters to achieve his identity in an alien society. The techniques used – flashback, memory and streams of consciousness are in keeping with psychological concerns just as in Anita Desai’s novels. Moreover, Naipaul’s novels combining the accuracy of empirical fact and the objectivity of psychological insight, furnish a coherent view of the human predicament in all its paradoxes and contradictions. Such a world-view is neither pessimistic nor optimistic, but a necessary reminder of the truth about individuals and societies. The individual resorts to over simplification of his situations and seems to view himself as a member of a ‘wounded civilisation’. They are forced to confirm to the mediocrity of a society like Trinidad which neither recognises talent nor allows it to flourish. Placed in such a situation, the talented ones want to escape from the society or to fight against the social order imposed on them.
As a global interpreter of human maladies, Naipaul’s voice is not a soothing, but a soaring one. In presenting his characters as individuals, he acts as a sensitive ironist who distinguishes reality from facts and character from action. Almost all the characters in his novels struggle for existence and fail to find protection or completeness. The novels, *The Mystic Masseur*, *The Suffrage of Elvira*, *The Mimic Men*, *A Bend in the River* and *Half a Life*, present the chaotic, disordered societies which produce fragmented personalities such as Ganesh, Harbans, Ralph, Salim and Willie.

Naipaul’s fiction portrays the Indians in Trinidad as a decadent group who live in a world of cultural confusion. They had to make arduous efforts to establish themselves in an alien society. They are mainly ‘outsiders’ or alienated persons who suddenly become aware of their finiteness, morality, powerlessness, intrinsic isolation and the meaninglessness of existence in a normless world. They are disappointed with their unproductive and unbearable history of slavery, dependency and inferiority. For instance, in *The Mimic Men*, Ralph experiences “ethnic problem of displacement” (Bachchan 159) which refers to his status as an Indian in Isabella. He wants to reconstruct history to establish his identity, however, he realises that such a task is impossible.

Works like Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*, Raja Rao’s *Serpent and the Rope*, Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*, Arun Joshi’s *The Foreigner* and Bharathi Mukherjee’s *Wife* have revealed different aspects of the quest in which the protagonists seek to come to terms with the world around them in an assertive manner. Like them Naipaul’s works reveal the quest for home and root.
Naipaul’s works reflect the Jungian ‘collective consciousness’ to impart a concrete philosophical underpinning to his protagonists’ attitudes and quests. Through his works he reveals both the subconscious and unconscious psyche of his characters. His characters appear to be passive, numb and self-absorbed; sometimes they look like puppets being acted upon by some other forces. They lack the warmth of human relationships and are always suspicious and worried.

Naipaul’s protagonists represent a world which is dominated by greed, conflict and futility. Their personal neuroses place them out of communication with the reality of other selves. Almost all the characters struggle for existence and fail to find perfection or completeness. One can see how Ganesh in The Mystic Masseur and Ralph in The Mimic Men fail to confide to their family members. They are lost in the world of nothingness because they sever their ties with their roots in the process of mimicking the ‘Other’. Ralph is a representation of displaced and disillusioned colonial individuals and colonisation is depicted as a process that takes away his identity, culture, history and sense of place.

All his major protagonists suffer the tragedy of displacement and separation from their land which leads to disorder. They are alienated individuals seeking solace in a world of cultural confusion. Infact, they are the real vision of the contemporary world. Said’s comment on the sad fate of the exile encapsulates the condition of exile in Naipaul’s novels:

Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unbearable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted. And while it is true that literature and history contain heroic,
romantic, glorious even triumphant episodes in an exile’s life, these are no more than efforts meant to overcome the crippling sorrow of estrangement. The achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever. (*Reflections on Exile* 173)

Naipaul delineates the Indian immigrants’ dilemma, their problems and plights in a fast changing world. Each individual dream of personal achievements to enhance his identity. The myriad pressures operating on human beings have resulted in psychic traumas and fragmentation. Said, in *Reflections on Exile*, encapsulates their predicament as “away from family and familiar places, but also meant being a sort of permanent outcast, someone who never felt at home, and was always at odds with environment, inconsolable about the past, bitter about the present and the future” (47). Hence, the individual needs mental strength to assert personal autonomy in the face of social pressures and regulatory forces.

Colonisation and colonial education has made the characters learn to ‘Other’ themselves and their familiarity. Even though they live in a postcolonial world, the ideas that has been already incepted in the minds of the colonised are difficult to erase or kill, nor they are able to forget or accept them. Not being able to relate oneself to any of the two worlds has given Naipaul’s protagonist are in, “a partial presence” (Bhabha, *The Location of the Culture* 126) in both worlds. They neither completely belonged to the colonised nor could they relate themselves with their own native lands. They are in the middle of nowhere.

Through his protagonists, Naipaul tries to bring out the devastating consequences of colonisation on their social and personal lives. He explains how these colonial characters suffer from dislocation, desolation and a distorted view of ‘self’ due to
colonisation and how they are unable to settle down for a stable personal relationship from
the fear of getting abandoned later.

In the fragmented and chaotic postcolonial world, the individual faces an identity
criisis which can be successfully resolved by assimilation irrespective of the society, be it
of the whites or the browns or the blacks. Naipaul arouses sympathy by projecting in the
reader’s mind the dilemma of his protagonists who, in search of dignity, succeed only in
realising themselves as victims of their situation. They not only look for their identity, but
also search for new values and meanings in the world. They are often torn between the
double consciousness of their colonial past and postcolonial present. They neither
completely identify with the colonial world nor could they relate themselves with their
own native land.

For taking refuge and relief in the land of colonial masters, Naipaul’s characters
idealise London as a ‘promised land’, but it turns futile. Later, they realise that they have
been seduced by the colonial fantasy. All his protagonists who are nostalgic about
London are very soon disillusioned at sometime for they remark like V. S. Naipaul
himself, saying, “I come to London and I was lost in London, London was not the centre
of my world, I had been misled: but there was nowhere else to go . . .” (An Area of
Darkness 42). Naipaul’s characters have the similar feeling as that of Naipaul in London.

The popular thinker, Osho, says that every desire is a complaint against existence,
and every desire brings frustration because desires never get fulfilled. Naipaul’s characters
suffer from similar dilemma. They get trapped in exile and loneliness. They are
fragmented on physical, social, political, intellectual, moral, cultural and psychological
level, and all these fragmentations lead them to fragment at the centre of the existence that
is ‘the self’. They not only look for themselves, but also search for new values or meaning
in a world where the gap between professed values and reality become larger and larger. They have to either accept the society as it is in resignation or reject it in despair.

Through his writing Naipaul arrives at a vision of modern homelessness in a typical postcolonial world. Homelessness is an eminent feature that emerges as a result of colonisation where people want to escape from the disordered life in their native land and search for order in the country of their colonial masters. In *A Bend in the River*, in his self-sought exile Salim discovers the ache of homelessness. He explains the constant change, mobility and displacement in his life: “I was in Africa one day; I was in Europe the next morning. It was more than travelling fast. It was like being in two places at once” (268). This description is true not only of the Third World, but of the entire world in the twentieth century.

In *Half a Life*, right from birth, Willie has the sense of half a life, due to the duality of his mixed inheritance. It spoils everything; whether going to school in India or attempting sexual encounters with females in England. Knowing fully that his hybrid existence cannot give him breathing space, especially in a country where caste is everything, he leaves for London. His search is not an escape but an ordering of the chaos and recognition. The final responsibility of order lies with the individual and not with the society, the chaos lies all within and the escape is finally not from society but from the self. Naipaul describes Willie’s alienation, disorientation and emptiness in the ruined and decaying colony of Africa. Willie’s experience and realisation of halfness in life are reflected in his “transcontinental migration and multidimensional socio-cultural environment” (Srivastava and Anil 213).

Naipaul brilliantly presents the common destiny of the contemporary man and creates the personal, distinctive, self-aware, self-centered world of psychological crisis of
postcolonial individuals. These characters give a critical insight into the defeats, deformations and violations of their journey to find their true identity. The journey often proves to be the journey of rejection, however, at the end they meet their moment of reality.

From Naipaul’s works, it is clearly understood that his characters are reflections of his own life. When his novels are approached psychologically, they prove the influence of his personal life in them; however, the predicament dealt by him, besides having a personal touch, is the tribulations of all colonial countries and it is sure to replicate with all expatriates who are forced to compromise their past and ancestry.

Naipaul’s works take the reader on a journey of experiences from the local to the global and from a narrow perspective to a broader and more encompassing vision. Even though the colonisers had left physically, their impact has left an indelible mark in the colonial’s psyche. Like a “postcolonial mandarin” (Nixon, London Calling: V. S. Naipaul, Postcolonial Mandarin 4), Naipaul explains how colonisation has uprooted the colonised from their own roots in such a way that they failed to relate themselves to their roots even after the colonisers have left. The colonised remains strangers in their own land. Their entire culture, tradition, ritual and religion have been replaced by the colonisers. Hence, it is affirmed that colonisation has not only altered the physical and political conditions of the colonised land; the affects are much deeper and intense. It makes the colonised feel that the white people are superior and that every other race is inferior. The heterogeneous society of the Caribbean world does not offer them real sense of security.

People in the Third World country struggle through decolonisation and are unable to adjust to the new life-style. Embracing the borrowed culture, language and life-style throws them into wretchedness. They suffer from extreme alienation and disorientation
from their sordid realities and are always in search of a more dignified life, which becomes the essence of a full life.

We all still live as colonial beings in a very western dominated world. Independence and freedom are just words which hold no meaning to the colonised people. Perhaps the term ‘postcolonialism’ is also a word created by the colonisers which further enhance their field of illusion under which they dominate the colonised.

Political upheaval brings to light the political corruption of third world polity where there is no hope. Eradication of poverty and achievement of power turn to be futile and empty pursuits in the Third World countries. Thus, to a colonial politician, politics holds no meaning; they live in an illusion of power which brings no real sense of identity and control.

Therefore, Naipaul has proved himself as the interpreter of a “disordered and fast-changing world” (Rowe-Evans 53). He “transcends regional and national allegiances . . . he is located within a particular socio-cultural and political milieu which impacts on how he sees, reads and writes the world” (Cader 105). Further, this study proves that Naipaul’s works are expressions of his social and psychic anxiety. To avoid social upheaval in future more administrative and economic measures ought to be adopted.

Thus, this study affirms its objective that the Third World society is characterised by darkness, gloominess, disorder, decay and decline in select novels of V. S. Naipaul. Naipaul’s novels leave us with the feel of the “decaying contaminated landscapes of Africa and the Caribbean” (Cooke 46).

The study has been conducted within its stated scope and limitations. The available critical materials also show other areas of study that can be attempted in Naipaul’s fiction. The select works of Naipaul under the present study are surcharged with abundant scope