

## PREFACE

Sir Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul, the Nobel Laureate of Indian origin, is one of the world class writers and has distinct achievements as a literary giant of modern time. He has a distinctive and conspicuous position in the galaxy of the Diaspora writers and is undoubtedly one of the high profile figures of the postcolonial literature the world in any language. With a literary career of spanning half a century and more than 30 genre-defying books to his credit, Naipaul's entire contribution to literature is a spiraling around the Third World nations and their turmoil and fluidity of existence. He is rather notorious and merciless but a truthful story teller who argues his ways through the treacherous alleys of the half-made colonial societies of the slave countries and his forceful imagination is inseparable from their wreckage of history and civilization. No doubt, he is a writer with a European sensibility but he is defiant and audacious in his observations and assertions as he has a terrifying passion for truth, even if it is sour. As he felt lonely in metropolitan London, he took to travel frequently in the West Indies, India, North and South America and Africa. However, he found every country to be a nightmare for an uprooted man like himself and his oeuvre expatiates this predicament of meaninglessness, dereliction, desperation and nonentity of the peoples of the slave societies amidst the turmoil and chaotic odds of the faltering nations. It is true that he spares neither the colonizers nor the colonized while exposing the naked wounds on the minds and hearts of the second-rated peoples at large.

Through a large number of his fictional and non-fictional works Naipaul dissects the historical perspectives of the countries and the cultures he visits. This literary giant is never restricted by national boundaries; his freedom is accentuated by his existential status as an exile who doesn't miss home. When he remembers any region of the world there is no nostalgia; when he talks about his ancestral land there is no sentimentality; and when he slices up any country or culture he never bothers about his criticism at all. The travelogues expose his relentless truthfulness and mysteriously enchanting delineation of the socio-cultural confusion, moral vacuum, existential despair and fluidity of life in the prevailing situation of the postcolonial world.

No doubt, Naipaul's novels are well recognized for their audacious themes but his travelogues are rather more powerful and vociferous in exposing the truths of the societies and lands visited by him. He maintains a surgeon-like objectivity while dissecting the maladies of the people

irrespective of their caste, community or nationality and this relentlessness is quite sharp in his travel books. The corrosive influence of the materialism and wide spread corruption has resulted in a loss of values and fear-psychosis lest they be dissolved by the oppressive situations and herein lies the root cause of the postmodern malaise in the Third World in particular and the whole world in general. Naipaul's travelogues present the realistic phenomenon of this cultural orphanage and disintegration and herein lies the essence of his exhortations for decolonization and self-reliance to the miserable people who otherwise are moving towards the abyss of oblivion. Naipaul imparts a wisdom to look on all human existence as a baffling mystery and the people have to harness themselves with a Ulysses-like quest for looking at life and the world in a new perspective as the civilizations have undergone a drastic change and the world is what it is. So like other works of Naipaul, his travelogues are to be judiciously analysed in this study for the nourishment of the sense and sensibility of the people of the Third World to enable them to survive amidst the oddities and turmoil of the postcolonial situations.

This research is an honest attempt to present an exclusive analysis of the travelogues of V.S Naipaul who is a highly audacious, relentlessly truthful and mysteriously enchanting delineator of the soul and psyche of the people and the essence of the societies during his journeys across the world. In this study, first of all, there is an analysis of the intimate experiences and influences that went in shaping the splendid vision and sensibility of this literary giant who maintains a surgeon-like objectivity and dexterity while dissecting the maladies of the colonized as well as the prides and prejudices of the colonizers. Then I have made a comprehensive analysis of the travelogues of V.S. Naipaul with a purpose to have a righteous and authentic assessment of his understandings and misunderstandings about the countries and societies visited by him. During the course of this research I intended to resolve the enigma of the humiliation of the colonized people on being shown their weird faces in the literary mirror by our own fellow who proclaims to be truthful and exact. This will ascertain whether the people of the Third World are really incompetent and deficient to shoulder their responsibilities in the aftermath of imperialism or the pampered writer gets only a pseudo-satisfaction in passing derogatory comments. Moreover, as this high profile writer is honoured by the west with the prestigious Man Booker and the Nobel prizes for his relentless vision and voice that compels us to see the presence of the realities, we feel it more necessary to probe into the contents of these travelogues. No doubt, many of the sagacious writers like Dalrymple have rightly condemned him as a spoiled intellectual and have

attributed him the nomenclature of a ‘typical Anglophile’ simply due to his Narcissistic dissention with everything and everyone coming from the second-rated nations. However, none can deny the truth that Naipaul presents a truthful exposition of the ailments of the desperate people of the underdeveloped and developing countries. His much criticized work *An Area of Darkness* is though harsh and shocking, yet he is quite truthful in depicting the real image of his ancestral land. The political turmoil serves as a backdrop to the tragic drama of the sufferings of the people there. Like a war reporter the audacious traveler reports the tragic vision of the mutilation and fragmentation of the sensibilities of the people amidst corruption, violence and disorder in the Third World nations.

Within six chapters of this research work, Naipaul’s definitive travelogues are comprehensively scrutinized to dwell upon some of the most incisive insights drawn from them. He seems to suggest that fluidity of life and existential despair are the harsh realities of the postcolonial era as the whole world is in the grip of upheaval and turmoil and there is no promising land— neither England, the land of the white masters, nor America, the land of all growth and power—that can give any shelter or solace to the people of the Third World nations and so one has to learn to cope with the prevailing oddities and challenges without any grudge or complain at all. He opines that even their past could offer no consolation in the new emerging wilderness of the world and so it is the need of the hour to inculcate a capacity to trample over the dead history and be audacious enough to face the world as it is. The greatest strength of these travel books is the writer’s message for self-assertion and self-reliance and this truth he wants to convey to the people so as to make them audacious and decolonized. An effort has made to bring into consideration all the vital issues highlighted in these travelogues. In this study a trial have been made to probe into the issues raised by this keen observer while traveling across the various parts of the world and so the work is sure to add certain dimensions to the worth of Naipaul as a relentless delineator of the harsh truths of the present world.

This research work is also an attempt to take an overview of Naipaul’s contribution to the postcolonial literature and to assess his position as a writer of an international repute and universal appeal. This fact has to be accentuated because his works—novels as well as travelogues— have become the paradigms of the entire modern world’s experiences of desolation, dereliction, desperation, exile and insecurity. So far as Naipaul’s own lack of

belongingness is concerned, he has converted this weakness into his strength and also into a weapon with which he could slice up the countries or the societies he visits. This power of his literature has attributed Naipaul a high profile as an unforgiving and relentlessly truthful and somehow narcissistic dissenter of the present time all over the world.

The thesis deals with the Socio-Cultural Turmoil and shows how V.S. Naipaul diffuses and orients varied ideas and suggestions through his travelogues and novels. His works concern not only with the questions of identity, cultural difference and displacement brought about by migration but also with his own dilemma as an expatriate about self survival, home and the psychological and political aspects of alienation. Hence this study is considered important and it is hoped to contribute to the basic understanding of the social as well as cultural turmoil in the travelogues of V.S. Naipaul.

The thesis starts with a general introduction followed by other chapters which give basic information about Indian trilogy, Excursion across the muslim nations, travelogues prevailing in the western world and the hierarchy and power in the history of civilization which completely talks about Naipaul's work. Each of the chapters has been written in the form of detailed view about various topics and hence overlapping in writing could not be avoided. The thesis ends with a section on comprehensive summing up/summary.

From the discussion in the thesis I believe that it is possible for one to get the possible understanding of social and cultural turmoil in the travelogues of V.S. Naipaul. And in truth, I could not have achieved my current level of success without a strong support group. Thank you all for their unwavering support.

