CHAPTER – IV
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Any literary genre, especially fictional piece, represents a world of reality. Therefore a fictional work can only be rightly comprehended within a wide framework of social reality. A society consists of a numerous conflicting forces. Different social classes have different cultures, world views and ideologies. The ideologies of the individuals and their society impart significant roles in forming different social institutions such as religious, economic, political and social. The texture of a fictional world either employs such conflicts or distorts such ideas and ideologies. The term ideology communicates the beliefs, values, ways of thinking and feeling of a collective representation of experiences and ideas of individual as well as social groups as contradictory to the material reality on which their ideas and experiences are based. An ideology is, in complex ways, the product of the position and interest of a particular class. Human consciousness is constituted by an ideology. The dominant ideology in any historical era embodies to perpetuate the interest of the dominant economic and social class. According to Marxist critics the different classes represent different ideologies and conflicting social forces.
"In the present era, ‘ideology’ is used in a variety of non-Marxist ways, ranging from a derogatory name for any set of political ideas that are held dogmatically and applied rigorously, to a neutral name for ways of perceiving and thinking that are specific to an individual race, or sex, or education, or ethnic groups."\(^1\)

Due to difference in ideologies, there are conflicts between higher classes and wage-earning working classes, haves and havenots. By describing a contrast between ideology and theory, Machery opines that fictional world stands between these two aspects. Great literary works are considered as the harmonious expressions of the world-views or the privileged forms of ideology. V. S. Naipaul’s account of the colonial and post colonial societies as well as individual self in the Third and First World is an analysis of the social conflicts, contradictions among the different groups and individual to establish the identity for him or for groups in a malignant and dogmatic society of conservative ideas and ideology.

Sir Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul, the Nobel Laureate of India has a unique and conspicuous position in the galaxy of Diaspora writers. Naipaul could find a literary kinship with Joseph Conrad. He shares with Conrad a literary type and his themes such
as his feeling for lost countries and his vision of the world’s half-made societies. As his vision matures, it becomes increasingly pessimistic with own growing sense of disillusionment and displacement. A third generation Indian in Trinidad, V.S. Naipaul was never at ease with his identity as a Trinidadian therefore he has inscribed his determination to leave Trinidad. He actually left after six years, when he won a government scholarship and opted to study English at Oxford. His rejection of his birthplace had something to do with the nature of the Trinidadian society that it was an immigrant society consisting of various races and religions. In the absence of a common West Indian identity there was not even any anti-imperialistic feeling among the Trinidadian but they consider that their belonging to the British Empire gave them a sense of identity.

The primary business of V. S. Naipaul as a fictional writer is to portray cautiously the complex fate of individual, societies and cultures. To him, fiction is an instrument of analysis and ideas are more important than plot. Therefore, most of his novels revolve around the recurring issues of colonial and post-colonial psychosis, individual’s quest for identity and cultural conflict. As a great novelist he tries his best to interweave his material through the colourful threads of fictional art. Naipaul admits:
"I preferred the natural way of describing how, at different stages as one’s life capacities, one looked at one’s place in the world. And one does this through the series of narratives and the linking of theme and emotions."²

As an immense writer of commonwealth literature, V. S. Naipaul has faced many ups and downs in order to establish his identity in disinherited tradition. The secret of Naipaul’s greatness lies not in his personal attachment to the establishment but his creative detachment beyond geography, history and ethnicity. His fictional world provides characters with real home, a true place of belonging so that they will not compare to be homeless wanderers, doubtful of themselves, their fates and their ambiguous identity. Almost all the major works of V. S. Naipaul reflect the theme of identity crisis with his vision and ideology. The characters in his works undergo a lot of trials and tribulations, ups and downs but they wish for a free and fair existence.

The term identity crisis can be defined as a loss of the sense of personal sameness and historical continuity. It is this very feeling that makes people alienated and displaced. They cannot make balance between jumping at opportunities as soon as they are presented to them. They cannot work steadily and patiently
towards their long term goals and they do not feel consistency in
their self image and the image they present to others. They are
always doubtful about the success of what they choose to do and
feel that they have no set of basic social, philosophical or religious
values they can follow and make their perspective.

V. S. Naipaul is enormously considered as the most gifted
fictional writer of the contemporary period. He has adroitly
delineated a very great craftsmanship in handling the multiplicity
of the literary genres. In his fictional world he has employed the
theme of a quest for identity besides a sense of displacement,
alienation, exile, homelessness and enigma of survival of an
individual as well as of society in the legacy of colonial and post-
colonial era. He adopts determined characters in his fictions which
expose their struggle for home and to establish identity. His prose
is strong, and his characters well drawn, but the real strength of his
fictional world lies in the characters: their terror, fear and
marginality.

V. S. Naipaul is the most celebrated international writer and
the question of his identity crops up due to his immigrant past and
the displacement it caused. In his fictional world, Naipaul presents
a subtle and sensitive account of the poignant experiences of the
Third World people- their quest for identity and home in the
microcosm of the colonial and post-colonial era. He has denied
that his identity has been any problem. Naipaul says that, his work is not the exploration of his self but for the discovery of the world. Naipaul is not satisfied with his labeled identity as a Caribbean West Indian or Third World novelist. He believes that such tags which have nationalistic, racial or ethnic connotation strike a political bias and lead to meaninglessness. He wishes to concentrate merely on his career as a full-time writer with his ideology of humanism and simultaneously he rejects political affiliations. He would like to be called an expatriate writer or a rootless or displaced man. But today he adopts the position of an established author who has influenced English reading world.

Naipaul is measured today a great Caribbean fictional writer coming from the family of Indian Hindu indentured labourers settled in Trinidad, who later moved to England which became a second home and the center of his profession as a writer. He remained an outsider there, could not use the material in England for his creativity. He depends only on his past experiences in Trinidad, which he imaginatively recreated for his fictional world. He dreamt of India - his original home - but after his visits there he was disillusioned and hence he remained alienated. He travelled all over the world and finally settled down in England as an expatriate writer. As a Diaspora writer, he explores the issues and problems arising out of such condition.
The Hindu immigrants were known as East Indians in the West Indies and it was extended their East Indian identity to the West Indian but because of the nationalist agitations they were called Hindustanies there and could not be identified with the original Indians that they belong to the New World. For them India remains a memory or nostalgia or a country of their ancients they carried the old world with them and wanted to preserve it in the newly situated place. But in their next generation they accepted the values of the New World and lost the impact of their past gradually. V. S. Naipaul belongs to this generation of the new anglicized form of the immigrant Indian Hindus in the West Indies and even an outsider in England and hence he is in the dilemma of identity crisis forever.

The first phase of Naipaul’s writing career reflects his childhood experiences and his social condition in Trinidad. Through this phase he presents a poignant picture of the expatriate Indians’ quest to preserve their ancient past and their struggle to establish an authentic identity in an alien land. Disintegrated from their own, the characters in these novels are consistently in search of identity and home. These novels explore mainly the identity crisis of the uprooted immigrant societies as well as individuals. These novels are set in Trinidad and focused on the rise of the protagonists in the politics of West Indies. He adopts determined
characters in his fiction who expose their loss of identity in various ways. Naipaul himself is split into his characters that they are manifested subtle shades of his emotions. This phase comprises four novels such as *The Mystic Masseur*, *Miguel Street*, *The Suffrage of Elvira*, and *A House for Mr. Biswas*. *The Mystic Masseur* portrays the life story of successful individual belonging to the pre-independent West Indian community. The representative figure of our time, Ganesh tries to achieve material success while Biswas in *A House for Mr. Biswas* aims at selfhood and identity on this earth. *The Suffrage of Elvira* proposes an idea of slavery and *Miguel Street* analyses the socio-cultural aspects of the island. These two novels are not directly related with the quest for identity.

*The Mystic Masseur*, the first published novel of Naipaul, is the success story of Ganesh Ramsumair. Setting in the Trinidadian background, the novel traces the efforts of a displaced and rootless individual to acquire identity and success for which he plays various roles in the course of the novel. Ganesh has possessed all the indispensable and the most suitable qualities by which he could taste success and implant his identity in the Caribbean society.

"...all the qualities of Ganesh are not really virtuous, but the only working expediency which is most indispensable and suitable for any individual to
succeed in the Caribbean society during the transitional period between the disappearance of the older values and the appearance of a new cultural loyalty and standard."

His life is entirely made up of his efforts that he starts from nothing but a clear and confident recognition of his own potential greatness. He handles every event with success due to his common sense, his self knowledge, intelligence and smartness which are the matter of respect and affection in his society. Later he became famous and honoured throughout the South Caribbean. He was to be a hero of the people and after that, a British representative of Lake Success. But he was forever a struggling masseur. The struggle of that man to establish own identity makes him a hero.

The story of Ganesh is told to us from two points of view, from the imperious expert from his autobiography, 'The Years of Guilt,' and from the point of view of young Trinidadian boy who tells that Ganesh's success in life is a result of series of logical accidents. Naipaul satirizes the Indian community as well as Trinidadian society through this persona. Ganesh worships Goddess Laxmi not for spiritual exaltation but to fulfil his urge for money. His bitter satire ensures from his future to find fulfilment and identity in a society he has been searching for. The complex diversity of Naipaul - Indian Hindu and Caribbean - enables him to
capture the texture of people’s lives at the crack as it were between cultures. Ganesh placed himself against such society and earns admiration through presence of mind and his sharpness which prevent him from being victimized. All his efforts are directed earning an identity in a flux society. Therefore his quest goes ahead and he goes on shifting one identity after the other until he strikes at the final suitable one.

Pundit Ganesh Ramsumair, who settles Fuente Grove after his marriage with Ramlogan’s daughter, Leela and starts life into that place by opening a cultural institute, before it, he had been failure school teacher but saved from starvation by inherited oil-royalties after his father’s death. Then he wanders aimlessly on his bicycle but during such wanderings he meets Mr. Stewart, who shapes his future. For more than two years, the place proves to be unpromising, with Ganesh continuing in his job of a masseur taken up on the advice of his aunt The Great Belcher and his father-in-law. His own disappointment with this trade turns him towards writing career and owns a large library to develop the reputation throughout Trinidad. Fortunately or unfortunately Ganesh’s first book does not gain popularity. He himself writes about it in his autobiography, ‘The Years of Guilt’:

“Everything happens for the best. If, for instance, my first volume had been unsuccess it is likely that I
would have become a mere theologian, writing endless
glosses on the Hindu scriptures. As it was, I found my
true path.”

He was influenced by the teachings of Gita which gave a new
direction to his thinking that he became a great Indologist and
brought many books on Hindu philosophy. The Great Belcher
recognizes that Ganesh has the power to cure people, to cure their
mind and soul. And wasting no time Ganesh nails a signboard of
‘Ganesh Mystic’ on the mango tree and within two weeks all
Trinidad knows about Genesh and his powers.

Ganesh, then, encounters formidable criticism from Narayan,
a reporter of The Hindu. He criticizes Ganesh through the gossip
column ‘A Little Bird Tells Us’ and calls him quack religious
visionary. Ganesh might never have felt Narayan as a threat but be
goes on by launching a paper, The Dharma, the prominent target of
which is to refute the charges of Narayan. As a consequence,
Narayan retires from public life. This helps Ganesh to establish in
the politics and he forms a representative sensitive Hindu League
which sets the tone for his successful emergence as an MLC in the
Island elections. As an MLC, he was always in the papers.

In this way, the key of Ganesh’s rise from teacher to MLC
lies in his ability to communicate successfully, his perfect
awareness of circumstances, his ability to turn failure into success
and his methods suitable for time. His entire life proves to be a search for identity. He seizes every chance that comes his way and elevates himself to the top i.e. M.B.E. The Mystic Masseur may thus be described as a Caribbean success story based on the steady emergence of Ganesh’s fortune.

In The Suffrage of Elvira V. S. Naipaul, traces the awakening of the people of the Elvira state, adopts the satirical treatment of an individual and the means to achieve success in life as found in The Mystic Masseur is extended to the societal level. Naipaul focuses the prospects and possibilities harboured by democracy in the corrupt society. The novel is the account of the political awakening of the village Elvira. Here Naipaul presents both his politicians and the electorate as tricksters and exploiters. Democracy becomes merely a guise for self advancement and for self identity. The politicians make the people more and more racial conscious to meet their ends. Surajpat Harbans, a PWD contractor, and the owner of a quarry and transport service named after him, who now wants to test his fortune in the elections. He is betrayed by the public but his aim seems to be to win the elections. He has strategy to get Hindus and through Baksh he persuades Muslim voters and even Negroes. But after the victory, Harbans leaves Elvira because of disillusionment and forgery.
Miguel Street, Naipaul's first book though published third, presents the narrator boy who reaches a point of strength. In the story 'How I Left Miguel Street'; he is at the airport ready to board the plane which will take him away to the life of desired order and possibility in London. The narrator rejects the Wild West Indian society. He is not like Ganesh Mystic because he tells:

"I don't want to study anything really. I just want to go away, that's all."^5

Thus the implied search for order and identity is explicable in the mind of the narrator.

V. S. Naipaul's A House for Mr. Biswas is the most important fictional work which deals with the theme of a quest for identity in a conservative framework of the colonized society in Trinidad. The novel is an account of a struggle of a man who has a strong desire to own his house. The beginning of the novel tells that Mohun Biswas is a sacked journalist of Sikkim Street, St James, Port of Spain. His birth threatens the family as he is born with six fingers. He is sent to Jairam, a Hindu priest who teaches him Hindi and introduces him various ceremonies. After being great failure to be a Pundit he returned home to his mother.

Mr. Biswas' father, Raghu, died when he was diving into the water to search for Mr. Biswas and Dharis Calf by the cruel design of destiny it is so happened. After his death, the family split at
Parrot Trace, his elder brothers were sent to work in sugarcane estate and Dehuti was sent to serve as a maid at Tara’s House; and Mr. Biwas along with his mother Bipti was to live at Pagotes. Dharies’ conspiracy, who bought the hut and the land, made Mr. Biswas practically a houseless wanderer in searching of house throughout his life. Naipaul writes:

“And so Mr. Biswas came to leave the only house to which he had some right. For the next thirty five years, he was to be a wanderer with no place he could call his own with no family except that he was to attempt to create out of the engulfing world of the Tulsis.”

Hence Mr. Biswas has the lonely fighter against the cruelty and callousness of the rich class who possessed wealth, and estate. A houseless man was destined to live as if he had no private life of his own. Mohun has acquired a job in a rum shop of Ajodha, Tara’s husband. With Ajodha’s success, the importance of shop had declined and it was now run by his brother Bhandat. He accuses Mohun of stealing a dollar from his pocket and hence he returned to his mother at Pagote. Now the fatherless child wanders for a job, for a house. Then Mohun begins his career as a signboard painter. He is satisfied with the work but it is not a regular work. Due to the help of Ramchand, Mr. Biswas went to Hanuman House at Arwacas where he worked in sign-painting at Tulsi Store and
loved Shama, the daughter of the Tulsi. After the death of Mr. Tulsi, Mr Seth was representing the Tulsis in expanding their empire. Mrs. Tulsi and Mr. Seth were successful in trapping Mr. Biswas in marriage with Shama, with no dowry and no house. Tulsi’s family is a typical joint which functions on the same principles as those of the British Empire in the West Indies. It gives shelter but takes away freedom. Very soon Mohun realizes that men are needed in Tulsi’s family only as husbands for the Tulsi’s daughters and as bounded labourers for the Tulsi’s property.

It was rather strange that Mr. Biswas remained lonely in the overcrowded Tulsi house and revolted against the system. For Mr. Biswas revolt, he was forced to move to The Chase as he could not be suited into the Tulsi set-up. Because of his ideas and ideology there was a great conflict in the Tulsi family. This is the cause why he left Hanuman House for The Chase, the shop by which time Shama was pregnant. They were to start their life afresh there. But he felt very lonely, disgusted and uncomfortable there even though he wanted to comfort Shama as such The Chase did not give him any comfort hence he thought of a different life. Both of them tried to build a house very soon. Mr. Biswas had no identity there. Then he was sent to Green Vale as a supervisor of the workers of the Tulsi property. By now Shama, along with the children was living
at Hanuman House. Being fed up with this he wanted to build a house of his own unless he build his house his children would stay at Hanuman House. Therefore he thought of borrowing money from Tara but failed to get. Finally he started his house with a meager amount of hundred dollars. By now his son, Anand was living with him. Mr. Biswas was suffering from mental agony and surprisingly the house was about to collapse because of heavy rain and storm and hence he was completely shaken. He was taken to the Tulsi family for treatment by a doctor. He was now in a dilemma.

Lying in the room he was thinking of his past life and was also thinking about his future. He was thus collecting his internal resources and strength to accept the challenges of life in future. After his illness he left Hanuman House for Port of Spain and was appointed as sign-painter and then reporter for The Sentinel. In course of time he was regarded as the best reporter and his name was published every day on the paper for his writings. As a result the Tulsis were impressed and reconciliation was brought about and Mr. Biswas had a triumph for his struggle. Mr. Biswas and Shama with their children stayed with Mrs. Tulsi for some days. His job made him independent from the Tulsis and he was now in a better condition and moved to Shorthills. Mr. Biswas had now shifted all his ambitions towards Anand, his son. In the meanwhile Mrs. Tulsi was ill and she suggested Mr. Biswas to leave the house
for Owad. He took a final decision to leave the house because of continuous quarrel between Anand and Owad. That is why he decided to purchase a house. In the meanwhile Anand and Savi went to England for higher studies after getting a scholarship. Mr. Biswas came to his own house and lived quite comfortably but fell ill and his illness lasted more than three months. The children were informed about that. Savi returned from abroad but Anand did not. Mr. Biswas, the journalist now breathed his last breath in his own house and Shama was to live with her children without a single thought of going back to the Tulsis. Thus, Mr. Biswas has established his identity by purchasing a house, liberated wife and children from Tulsi’s conservative system and developed strength in Shama to live alone in a practical world. The House in this novel becomes a symbol of order and identity. B.K. Das writes:

“The sense of belonging is a pre-requisite of assuming an identity. The ‘House’ in this novel is a symbol not for ‘rootedness’ but for freedom from slavery and oppression. This much needed freedom explains the predicament of all expatriate, immigrant person who are largely disposed of their past.”

Thus Naipaul’s early novels are the outcome of his attempts to discover his identity and understand his own place in the world.
In the second phase, V. S. Naipaul travels throughout India and Trinidad for receiving fresh experiences and for searching his roots. This phase covers the period of the 1960s and also comprises two novels like The Mimic Men, Mr. Stone and the Knights Companion and two novellas A Flag on the Island and In a Free State. Mr. Stone and the Knights Companion, V. S. Naipaul’s first novel in the second spell, deals with the figure of the outsider experiencing rootlessness in his own society. Mr. Stone is very British and despite his criticism of British middle class life he wants to establish an identity in the same society. He exposes the alienation of the protagonists in the English background. The main characters in the novel are all in different ways and often desperately, lonely. Mr. Richard Stone, the chief character in the novel, who has acquired very less in his life. His house is unable to provide him sufficient facilities and to protect him well. But after retirement Mr. Stone also shows his perseverance and consistency of efforts therefore he works for pensioners. Lastly he establishes his identity by owning a house in England besides his disillusionment and physical suffering.

V. S. Naipaul’s The Mimic Men explores the memoirs of Ralph Singh, a forty year old colonial minister, the narrator who lives in London. Ralph Singh is the person of Indian origin who passes his early life in Isabella, educates and marries in England
and returns his homeland, acquires wealth and tries to establish his identity. Through the presentation of the event in his writing he is able to take control of the past and form them into an autobiography. The Mimic Men is interested in the idea of original identity but more in terms of its loss than its repossession. Ralph Singh’s struggle to negotiate his identity provides a significant post-colonial narrative which explores how colonization has exiled the subject from knowing himself. Naipaul, through the persona, Ralph Singh, seems to be concerned with rootlessness, homelessness and identity crisis of a typical modern man. The novel is in the form of memories of Ralph Singh who is greatly criticized by what he actually reveals about himself. After having been through so many jerks of disillusionment, failure, set back, alienation, the protagonist still has hope:

“I have cleared the decks as it were, and prepared myself for fresh action. It will be the action of a free man.”

Ralph Singh, the narrator, an exiled rather an introvert politician, fatigued by disillusion rather than failure, has been writing memoirs in an aseptic London suburb. He decides to note down his experiences with the optimistic perspective of establishing an order and identity out of the various unrelated adventures and encounters though which he had been. He struggles
to discover some meaning and identity out of the complex state of affairs of his life. Therefore his act of writing autobiography which becomes a discovery, recovery and retrieval of a malignant individual as a free individual. The story he writes down can be explained as tracing his transition from innocence to experience and his passage from external disorder to personal harmony. Thus in *The Mimic Men* V.S. Naipaul attempts social analysis which is not confined to West Indies but to the whole Third World. The narrator imposes a deliberate order on the events and experiences to reconstruct the meaning and identity of his life.

The beginning of the novel exposes the narrator a disgraced colonial politician now exiled in a London suburban hotel who is recording his new experiences of London life which are contrary to his previous experiences. In this first part of the novel, Ralph Singh writes about his educational experiences, his marriage with Sandra, an English girl, his comeback to Isabella and his success in business and politics. Ralph Singh is busy in analysing his own action; he is actually trying to achieve universality and objectivity. In the very opening pages we find Singh is saying that his community lacks order and power and with such impression in his mind about his society, he comes to London to seek order, identity and tries to give shape to his personality. One day he suddenly comes across Sandra and this accidental meeting later ends up in
marriage. He began to find a kind of support and strength in her. He comes to feel that with her resourcefulness, she could guide him through the uncertainties of life. Ralph Singh tended to rely too much on the strengths of his wife with hoping to set right the ruined pieces of his life through a new relationship. But his mother disapproves his marriage with a foreign girl. He rebels against conventions and invites rejection from the family and society which upsets him. With this frustrated and helpless state he diverts all his energies towards his work. He sells away the plots in the Westland he inherits from his grandfather which brings success and status to Ralph Singh and his wife in the form of wealth in the rich and elite society. But with this, their intimacy gradually declines that Sandra exits from the life of Ralph as well as from the island. Thus, the bright prospects act of marriage ends in emptiness. Finally he thought that the responsibility of order and identity is related with the individual and not with the society. The individual must face his own reality instead of escaping from it. According to him failure comes only when one moves out of ourselves hence we have to look for extensions of ourselves.

The most interesting and enlightening second part concerns with Ralph Singh’s childhood and adolescent experiences. In this part Naipaul analyses the mimic tendency of the children in post colonial era in which they escape from their past and reality and
they conceal their real names and live with false identities. Ralph Singh begins to write the second part with a reference to his father. One day he left his job of school teacher, abandoned his home and went to the hills as a preacher. His father becomes a remote figure for him. Ralph Singh then begins to record his memories of school life. He writes that children attempted to deny their own world and they never wanted to identify themselves with the New World. They not only deny their true identities but also give them new names and identities. For instance Ralph Singh’s real name was Ranjit Kripsalsingh. For Ralph Singh, the opportunity to leave the island comes finally when he secures a seat in a London School.

In the third part Ralph Singh writes about his political career. He excels in his brilliant portrait of the political life of his own times in Isabella. Browne designs the political future of Ralph Singh and the Roman House becomes the center of his political activity. His access to political power was not achieved by competing with the established politicians but by putting an end to the old order. After coming to power, he learned about power and then about poverty and about how these two phenomenons was interlinked in colonial societies. And finally, he is made the scapegoat in various affairs of the government and disillusioned. Lastly, he detaches himself from his colleagues and moves to London.
at Hanuman House. Being fed up with this he wanted to build a house of his own unless he build his house his children would stay at Hanuman House. Therefore he thought of borrowing money from Tara but failed to get. Finally he started his house with a meager amount of hundred dollars. By now his son, Anand was living with him. Mr. Biswas was suffering from mental agony and surprisingly the house was about to collapse because of heavy rain and storm and hence he was completely shaken. He was taken to the Tulsi family for treatment by a doctor. He was now in a dilemma.

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Ralph Singh, the narrator, an exiled rather an introvert politician, fatigued by disillusion rather than failure, has been writing memoirs in an aseptic London suburb. He decides to note down his experiences with the optimistic perspective of establishing an order and identity out of the various unrelated adventures and encounters though which he had been. He struggles
to discover some meaning and identity out of the complex state of affairs of his life. Therefore his act of writing autobiography which becomes a discovery, recovery and retrieval of a malignant individual as a free individual. The story he writes down can be explained as tracing his transition from innocence to experience and his passage from external disorder to personal harmony. Thus in *The Mimic Men* V.S. Naipaul attempts social analysis which is not confined to West Indies but to the whole Third World. The narrator imposes a deliberate order on the events and experiences to reconstruct the meaning and identity of his life.

The beginning of the novel exposes the narrator a disgraced colonial politician now exiled in a London suburban hotel who is recording his new experiences of London life which are contrary to his previous experiences. In this first part of the novel, Ralph Singh writes about his educational experiences, his marriage with Sandra, an English girl, his comeback to Isabella and his success in business and politics. Ralph Singh is busy in analysing his own action; he is actually trying to achieve universality and objectivity. In the very opening pages we find Singh is saying that his community lacks order and power and with such impression in his mind about his society, he comes to London to seek order, identity and tries to give shape to his personality. One day he suddenly comes across Sandra and this accidental meeting later ends up in
marriage. He began to find a kind of support and strength in her. He comes to feel that with her resourcefulness, she could guide him through the uncertainties of life. Ralph Singh tended to rely too much on the strengths of his wife with hoping to set right the ruined pieces of his life through a new relationship. But his mother disapproves his marriage with a foreign girl. He rebels against conventions and invites rejection from the family and society which upsets him. With this frustrated and helpless state he diverts all his energies towards his work. He sells away the plots in the Westland he inherits from his grandfather which brings success and status to Ralph Singh and his wife in the form of wealth in the rich and elite society. But with this, their intimacy gradually declines that Sandra exits from the life of Ralph as well as from the island. Thus, the bright prospects act of marriage ends in emptiness. Finally he thought that the responsibility of order and identity is related with the individual and not with the society. The individual must face his own reality instead of escaping from it. According to him failure comes only when one moves out of ourselves hence we have to look for extensions of ourselves.

The most interesting and enlightening second part concerns with Ralph Singh's childhood and adolescent experiences. In this part Naipaul analyses the mimic tendency of the children in post colonial era in which they escape from their past and reality and
they conceal their real names and live with false identities. Ralph Singh begins to write the second part with a reference to his father. One day he left his job of school teacher, abandoned his home and went to the hills as a preacher. His father becomes a remote figure for him. Ralph Singh then begins to record his memories of school life. He writes that children attempted to deny their own world and they never wanted to identify themselves with the New World. They not only deny their true identities but also give them new names and identities. For instance Ralph Singh's real name was Ranjit Kripalsingh. For Ralph Singh, the opportunity to leave the island comes finally when he secures a seat in a London School.

In the third part Ralph Singh writes about his political career. He excels in his brilliant portrait of the political life of his own times in Isabella. Browne designs the political future of Ralph Singh and the Roman House becomes the center of his political activity. His access to political power was not achieved by competing with the established politicians but by putting an end to the old order. After coming to power, he learned about power and then about poverty and about how these two phenomenons was interlinked in colonial societies. And finally, he is made the scapegoat in various affairs of the government and disillusioned. Lastly, he detaches himself from his colleagues and moves to London.
In a Free State consists of three short stories—'One out of Many', 'Tell me Who to Kill' and 'In a Free State' enclosed by a personal prologue and an epilogue. The book offers the vision of placelessness through the solitariness of the characters. They appear to be uprooted, moving about in a free state. Besides the theme of displacement, V.S. Naipaul also concerns here with the sense of rootlessness and the problem of freedom in the modern world. 'One out of Many', deals with the problems of the liberation of Santosh, the protagonist and his identity crisis in the Third World Nation. He escapes his employer and becomes an illegal immigrant worried about deportation and marries a black woman to get citizenship and to establish identity in America. The same kind of sense of loss of identity and despair pervade the second story, 'Tell me Who to Kill'. The protagonist Dayo, often tries to identify himself with others— with film stars, with rich men etc. which leads to his disillusionment. The third story, 'In a Free State', examines the activity of a member of the dominant colonial group within the colonial society. The Africans possess no identity of their own. They do not expose their independent identity. They are products of white culture, incapable of independent thought or economic activity. Bobby and Linda are made to discover their meaning found in crisis of identity. Even the educated Africans are
devoid of an identity of their own, as they tend to efface their own selves in their attempts to assume European masks.

In *A Flag on the Island*, the title novella begins with an accidental coming of Frankie— the protagonist whose ship is forced to dock on the Caribbean island where once, he had been stationed as a soldier. He had bought a house in the street and had casually started living together with Selma. Frankie sets his foot i.e. establishes his identity on the island and is struck by the change that has come over the island and its people. As Frankie goes to the island, he observes that though islanders have now got independence with a flag of their own, which is symbolical with their identity, they have become even more real than before.

The third phase, comprising of two novels *Guerrillas* and *A Bend in the River*, is related to the unpredictability and chaos in deteriorating post-imperial Third World. In these two novels V. S. Naipaul deals with his major themes like identity crisis, displacement, homelessness and marginality. Naipaul explores the rising of the Black Power Movement on the imaginary island in *Guerrillas* and the narrator’s struggle to establish the authentic identity in the town in *A Bend in the River*.

The novel *Guerrillas* highlights the rising of Black Power in the Third World. But their search of power meets with failure just like their quest for identity and freedom. For Jimmy the search
ends in a fiasco and for Jane it proves to be fatal. Roche only just manages to leave the island and saves himself. Lastly, Meredith, the colonial politician who becomes the minister but we cannot derive any positive meaning out of it. This novel merely reiterates the unpredictable and traumatic nature of politics in the Third World Nations.

After having been accused of rape and after having been abandoned by his white supporters Jimmy Ahmad returns from London. Half-Chinese and half-black he is the leader of agricultural community populated by slum youths. Though he is alone in his fantasies and fears, yet he is acknowledged as a threat by Meredith, the sophisticated politician of the island. Jimmy states:

"I'm the only man, that stands between them and revolution, and they know it now, massa. That's why I'm the only man they're afraid of."\(^9\)

Meredith was about forty and had been in politics and had briefly even been a minister, but then resigned when he had certain differences with the party. Jane, publicity manager at the London who comes to the island assuming it to be the center of activity, it does not take long to realize that her choice was wrong. Though she comes to the island with Roche and though she represents the colonial power to Jimmy, she is also one who derives her identity
from the other men. She changes her perspective of life often as she changes her partners.

*A Bend in the River* employs the identity crisis of the expatriates, especially Indians, in the Third World Countries. Naipaul emphasizes here on the individual responsibility and certitude that the individual must reassess his position in the chaotic world. He reveals how in the final movement man has confidence in his own personal strength and resources. The central character Salim is a Muslim from an East Indian family who travels a long way to the heart of the African continent and establishes his identity as a trader in a Central African town situated at a bend in the river.

The town was once an Arab settlement and then built by the Europeans. Now it is without them and resided by Salim’s people but they are closer to the Hindus of North-Western India. The protagonist, Salim, is restless to search some authentic identity and this quest is heightened by the effects of financial instability and conflicts all around. Obviously, depressed by an existential despair, he seems to give up formally his ties with his family at coastal Africa and he goes on a bold journey towards this town to evolve some substitute identity in limbo. Salim attributes his insecurity and pessimism to the loss of his roots or original identity. The disorder and turmoil in the surrounding has caused an
inner fragmentation to him. So Salim departs away from his family to take over a store in the town at the bend of river but he finds himself trapped in a more miserable situation from which he had tried an escape. He encounters at the town two kinds of characters—the representatives of African civilization like Metty Zabeth, her son Ferdinand and Father Huisman; and the East Indians like Nazruddin, Mahesh and his wife Shobha and Inder who are radically experiencing almost the same ordeal in this uncertainty and chaotic world. Through Salim’s consciousness, Naipaul exhibits the relationship of master to slave as an instance of dependency that hides the identity of individuals in subordination. Naipaul’s vision of the independent Africa in the postcolonial scenario is pessimistic, an apocalyptic and a gruesome one. In short Salim is unable to break away from the links of his past and on realizing that his original identity is swallowing, he is also on a persistent search to authenticate his own existence. It is this quest for identity that he moves to the town and vainly hopes to share the progress and glamour brought there at the behest of the Europeans.

"I was waiting for some illumination to come to me, to guide me to the good place and the life I was still waiting for." ¹⁰

Being placeless, expatriate, disaffected and trapped in the world of international disturbance Salim inherits the same existential
dilemma as that of any modern man. He discovers only chaos and meaningless not only in the external world but also within his inner self because the unnamed African state where he builds his home proves to be a concentrated parody of universal guerrilladom where only blind and destructive rage prevails.

The fourth phase is marked with an autobiographical context which presents a vivid account of V. S. Naipaul’s own growth on the one hand and wound and ailment of the immigrant Indians in their life in Diaspora on the other. Though Naipaul discovers himself through his works, they are also an account of the nightmarish experiences of the expatriates and their irresistible search to carve a self esteemed niche for their identity in limbo. In The Enigma of Arrival and A Way in the World – blend of both travel and fictional paradigms – Naipaul presents his unique experiences as a writer and his vision towards life.

The Enigma of Arrival, a powerful fiction-travelogue, tells the autobiographical story of Naipaul fleeing from the painful life in Trinidad, his arrival in Wiltshire and having a gradual settlement to the English milieu and his slow transformation into a prolific and established writer. The novel explores the ordeal and evolution of Naipaul who is born through the process of self-laceration and the labourious pains of creativity. It also makes him consider that his rootlessness and homelessness are no more a
curse but a grace in disguise to establish his identity in the world. The novelogue ends on a note of celebration on resolving the enigma of identity by finding altruist writer to the protagonist. Indeed, this travelogue records how Naipaul could emerge as a giant writer with a broader vision of the post modern world.

This work presents a marvelous amalgamation of autobiography with the material not directly dealt with V. S. Naipaul's own life and personality. It reveals the writer's conscious journey from the Caribbean island to the English surrounding in the countryside of the Wiltshire. The arrival in English countryside of this young Trinidadian writer of Indian origin may derive some meaning, identity and long-cherished self-esteem here - the epicenter of European culture and his creative endeavours. It embodies a complex of conflicting attitude towards his new environment in England based partly on a distinction between the past and the present i.e. emotional suffocation and intellectual inferiority. Life on the island could give him nothing more than deprivation and humiliation and this has resulted in morbidity and shamefulness but this new surrounding enables him to create mysterious sensation in the writer to search his identity as prolific writer in the world.

Naipaul's *A Way in the World* is an extremely confessional account of his travel experiences and autobiographical
reminiscences that spans his writing career. The stories in the book are mainly records of people, some chosen with great care from historical manuscripts and some narrated from memories that go back to his adolescent years in Trinidad, his life in England while he was struggling to establish his identity as a writer and the later years when he came back to the continent of his birth to look at it. The book is not only about the conquered - such as the African slaves, Indian immigrants, the Amerindians - but also the conquerors and displaced colonialists, their greed and conceited ambition.

The book begins with Naipaul returning to Trinidad and contemplating on his adulthood years in Trinidad. He picks one memory from the past and weaves a story out of it. This novelogue also reflects how Naipaul is influenced by the writers when he was in England. Once he met Foster Morris, a character from the British literary establishment and was advised by the same person to read Chekhov, Hemingway and Graham Greene which acted like a tonic on Naipaul that inspired him to make a fresh start as a writer.

"I thought I would turn away from what I had done, and go back to the beginning: try to see whether I couldn’t make writing out of concrete statements, adding meaning in simple stages."
Thus, this book has been his quest of life-time journey, a travel into self, time and space in which Naipaul, the protagonist; the narrative voice and the main character have blended together.

Next phase of Naipaul’s writing career comprises *Half a Life* and *Magic Seeds*. With *A Way in the World* his literary career had come to temporary halt, but in 2001 he published an appealing novel *Half a Life* which restates, depicts the dilemma of the immigrants in the wilderness of the foreign land. In this novel Naipaul has interwoven the tales of three generations of an Indian Brahmin family in search of a familiar face and identity in the mirror of time or in limbo. The novel *Half a Life* is the story of Willie Somerset Chandran, the son of a Brahmin father and a Harijan mother. His name itself raises various questions in his mind and he works hard to reinvent himself. In the journey of his life he suffers from the feelings of unsettlement, frustration and homelessness. Wherever he goes he finds himself an outsider. In his quest for identity and survival, he realizes that life doesn’t have a neat beginning and a tidy end but it is going on. Willie Somerset Chandran, the protagonist of the novel, exposes how his origin and his early life are responsible for the crisis of his identity and he suffers throughout his life because of it. Willie Chandran’s origin and his experiences in early life make him feel alienated and uprooted. All these factors have affected his mind to such an
extent that he is not able to settle down anywhere. He lacks confidence and cannot take decisions at the right time. He always repents for his decisions. His unusual origin and past compel him to recreate his identity and personality hiding his family background. His life becomes aimless, doubtful and confused about future.

Willie's childhood experiences have not been so good that his mind is highly affected by the information of his origin, his parent's status in the society, his education in the missionary school and the society in which he lives. All these factors affect his outlook to look at the microcosm and macrocosm. His past makes him unfit for everything he decides to do and throughout his life he moves from one place to another in the quest for his identity and permanent place where he could feel completeness. The name of a person is an important part of his personality which reveals his background, his distinguished place in the world and his relationship to a particular group or society etc. It is a fact that one's cultural identity is shaped with the combination of his individual identity and his belonging to a class or culture, known as collective identity. His first name announces him as a Christian whereas his surname proclaims his Hindu heritage and his middle name borrowed from the name of famous writer Somerset Maugham. He feels ashamed when his classmates at Mission
School fun at him because of his name. He asks his father one day why his middle name is Somerset. It is this question that leads his father to concern the story of Willie’s origin and his own pathetic life.

Willie’s past prepares the background for his half life in his half-made societies. Disappointed from all sides and displaced from his own culture, he decides to go to London to get away from what he knew with no fixed idea for his future. With his recreated background, he starts his new life in London. He was very glad with his new created life and gradually:

"Willie was become part of the special, passing bohemian-immigrant life of London of the late 1950s."\(^1\)

In spite of all his efforts, Willie Chandran could not adopt the culture of London because of his uprootedness of his own culture.

V. S. Naipaul is undoubtedly a great writer and he remains so with his climax of fictional work *Magic Seeds* in which he employs his vision and ideology through the quest of Willie Chandran for his true self and identity. Towards the end of the earlier novel *Half a Life* Willie seemed to have run out of steam; having fatigued by the possibilities of life in Africa, he abandons his wife and moved to Europe, for the desire of anything better to do. At the beginning of *Magic Seeds* he seems to have found a new
intention, under the influence of his sister Sarojini, he joins the guerrilla revolutionary movements and return to India to take part in the liberation resist. But he cannot rise to revolutionary enthusiasm and Willie’s adventure ends in failure. At last he finds himself in London. In this way the real story of *Magic Seeds* is the story of Willie Chandran. His search for identity moves him once move to another country and back again but it is the journey of self discovery and self identity. He is not entirely without hope, because he is inclined to a belief in impossible dreams, the magic seeds that enable him to abandon reason and reality and to fix on a voyage into fantasy. In his immature way Willie calculates his achievement which strikes Naipaul’s submissive hope about life:

“The world is now being shaken by forces much bigger than I could have imagined. Ten years ago in Berlin my sister Sarojini made me ill with stories of poverty and injustice at home. She sent me to join the guerrillas. Now I don’t have to join anybody. Now I can only celebrate what I am, or what I have become.”

In this novel Willie leaves India voluntarily but he is exiled from Mozambique and Germany that reflect his predicament and construct his ideology. Naipaul has rendered the feelings of homelessness and displacements as the outcome of the colonial and
post-colonial situations made Willie's past identity valueless and forced him to accept the new order and identity.

Quest for identity has a broad spectrum meaning and it has been manifested in various ways in the will to exist despite all odds or to survive with all odds. All the major protagonists of V. S. Naipaul's fictional world suffer from the tragedy of displacement, disintegration, isolation, rootlessness etc. from their land and original identity and their heroic exploit to carve an authentic identity and Naipaul seems to share vicariously this predicament of his struggling heroes. The separation from their land leads to inner conflict and split as the alienated spirits wander in the wilderness of the rootless world and their epical quest for the order and authentic identity in life leads them nowhere to exist in the chaotic world. Naipaul's novels disclose the dramatization of the immigrant's quest for selfhood and identity in alien existence and his progressive protagonists are desperate to carve a new respectable image in the mirror of time and space. This implied thread is the emblem of inter-woven progress and continuity of thematic vision could actually be seen in his fictional world also, since they derive their strength and inspiration from V.S. Naipaul's live experiences. In this way, the protagonists of his novels may differ in many ways but basically they all are the images of one symbolic figure of expatriate Indian immigrant
restlessly searching for some alternate identity in limbo and Naipaul’s confessional statement justifies this notion:

“All my work is really one work. I’m really writing one big book.”¹⁴
REFERENCES

CHAPTER- IV


