Chapter-4
Search for Identity in the Novels of Arundhati Roy and Anita Desai
Chapter-4

Style and Narrative Technique

Style and narrative technique is any standardized method which an author uses to convey his message in his works. When we talk of Naipaul, it reminds us that he himself said: “…of value about me is in my books... I am the sum of books I feel that any stage of my literary career, it could have been said that at the last book contained all the others…”

V.S. Naipaul occupies a unique place in English with his seven travelogues. His travelogues encompass, India, South Asian, Latin American, Mid-East Islamic nations and the Caribbean countries. It lends to his writings an immense range of observation. Naipaul observes, identifies, analyses and then portrays the real, philosophical, social, psychological and personal problems of the third world countries. Naipaul with his observant and piercing eyes, recognizes the universal pattern of life that enables him to trace an almost corresponding link in the life of the people of these countries, where he had travelled. This chapter will study the style and narrative technique in his travelogues, namely: The Middle Passage, An Area of Darkness, The Loss of El Dorado, The Overcrowded Barracoon, India: A Wounded Civilization, The Return of Eva Peron, Among the Believers, Finding the Centre, A Turn in the South and India: A Million Mutinies Now. One of the remarkable features of his travelogues is that he never travels for sights and sounds, but he travels on a theme, and so he is able to penetrate through the upper crust of the societies and their people in a manner which is characteristically his own, his own style and he describes it to us with his own narrative technique. V.S. Naipaul’s travelogues are good, descriptive, interesting, truthful and provocative. They are varied and picturesque. Nicholas Mosley remarks about Naipaul’s travel writings: “A highly skillful writer..., he spins his web, his pattern, not so much to entrap the reader, as to make him think for himself. Mosley Nicholas.”
Naipaul’s major part of writing oscillates and tilts between the areas of experience and growth that have shaped his artistic and intellectual responses. Journeys to Trinidad, Islamic countries, India and South America opened up a new source of experience and observation. The form he chose was travel writings, which is a saga of individual’s soul’s inquiry, questioning, rejoicing, reminiscing and above all recording in a style which is aesthetic. In writing these travelogues he acquires a global persona at times talking of Pakistan and Iran, at other times of India; then suddenly switching on to South America.

In *The Middle Passage* (1962) Naipaul uses the technique of social realism. It is not just documentation and reportage. He also indulges in autobiographical reflections. *The Middle Passage* is a confirmation of his earlier view of Trinidad, it emerges as a restatement and a confirmation of his earlier desire to leave Trinidad. Naipaul uses the technique of description, reflection and observation. He puts his view here as an observer of cultures and people. He also adds description of himself and his reactions. He further gains authenticity for his observations by recording his anger at the brutal histories of colonial slavery and exploitation. He also goes to an extent of providing an unsympathetic analysis of the inefficiency and ugliness of contemporary societies.

In *The Middle Passage* Naipaul incorporates an analytical mode that he has also used in many of his travel writings.

In *The Middle Passage* the norms are more clearly British, as the traveller narrator first defines his identity against West Indians, then against Dutch, the French and even Americans. The traveller puts his view point as such: “… getting tired of the French colonial monkey game... (218) … Dutch sounds so made up that at times it brings on a light headedness in which you feel that anything said in a Dutch accent would be understood...” (178)
Language is one of the points over which the narrator traveller consistently affirms his Englishness. By painstakingly pinpointing the grammatical errors or liberties taken in local idioms, the narrator affirms in contrast the purity of his British voice.

*The Middle Passage* is about clients and consumes who have consumers human beings by turning them to slaves. Naipaul divides the book into six chapters and the book portrays the colonial West Indian and Caribbean societies: Trinidad, British Guiana, Surinam, Martinique and Jamaica. In each chapter he puts the socio-cultural, socio-psychic, socio-economic ills of these colonial societies in relation to their colonial history. *The Middle Passage* confirmed his position as a travel writer.

*In Middle Passage*, Naipaul uses a skillful mixtures of historical information, which is combined with his comic description and sarcastic contempt. His way or attitude, intends the reader in taking sides. He enrolls the readers in a type of battle. In *The Middle Passage* the repeated use of ‘You’ or ‘One’ as substitute pronoun for the first person singular, shows his intentions:

Port of Spain is the noisiest city in the world... You will realize this only after you have left Trinidad: the voices in British Guiana will sound unnaturally low, and for the first day or so whenever anyone talks to you, you will lean forward conspiratorially, for what is being whispered as, you feel, very secret. In the meantime, dance, shouts above the shuffle... you have been here only an hour, but you feel as exhausted as though you had spent a day in some Italian scooter hell. (50)

Naipaul here at one hand tries to develop sympathy and intimacy with the readers but also gives a comic description. The comparison with the Italian “Scooter-hell” is an example of Naipaulian contempt, in which he uses cultural cliché in order to define another. Naipaul’s criticism is always knife edged, which goes to the extend of hunting or insulting. To clear his
point, we can see that he writes in *The Middle Passage* “French Flair for melodrama” (218) are not simply produced for entertainment, but to establish the position from where the traveller means to observe and speak... The use of clichés related to Italian, Dutch, French, American, makes it clear that the narrative is anchored in a British background.

*An Area of Darkness* (1964) Naipaul’s second travelogue, is a different variation of the way or formula that he adopted in the first book. He begins this book with an account of all that India meant to him as a child and as an adult. The book does not express his anthropological, sociological or historical observations, views and discussions. Although Naipaul had never visited India earlier, his first visit in the country was supported by the romantic notions and stories, that he had heard from his parents, relatives or forefathers. He was also fed with fairyland description from his immigrant relatives. Moreover, Naipaul was brought up as a Hindu and his visit to India was motivated by his desire to explore his roots and redefine his position with India.

Naipaul adopts a narrative style in which he first explains the background, that bloomed in his mind about India. He tells that India was the country of his imagination; it is known through the language he spoke at home, the immigrant Indian among whom he lived, and the books he had read about India. He puts: “India was a country out; in the void beyond the dot of Trinidad, and from it our journey had been final. It was a country suspended in time, it could not be related to any other country discovered later...” (27)

It was with such a background that Naipaul travelled to India. He was feeling rootless and was in search of roots in India. As he travelled to India he discovered that the India about which he had known was only a land of his imagination, it was an “imaginary homeland”. The romantic picture of India was embedded deep in his consciousness, the India of the dreams of his childhood. He had built up a dream India. He desired to see was an India revitalized, rejuvenated and at the same time it preserved its ancient culture.
He came to India not only with expectation, but also with a sense of humiliation that his ancestor had to leave the motherland as indentured labourers. His style that he adopted in this travelogue was that of a very inquisitive ethnographist and observes everything very carefully. He also has within him the stance of a western traveller with an imperialist outlook. He was both an insider and an outsider in India. A very striking feature in *An Area of Darkness* is that very often he starts with an objective narration emphasizing the external details but then it gets suspended by his introspective and autobiographical projection.

Naipaul had learnt to have a distinctive existence. He cannot adjust with the idea of living without any distinctiveness which was a part of his being. Naipaul had lived for years with a feeling of difference as in Trinidad, he had intellectual superiority and in England too this difference persisted because of his race and background. But unfortunately in India he too found that he was different. “Difference” everywhere appeared in his existence, and the difference feeling that he gathered in India, came as a shock and agony to him.

Naipaul’s observations turn out to be ironical of times. The writer’s irony might be taken as a means of release in the form of anguish or contempt. He makes a note on an average Indian’s sufferings, be it the discomfort of the airport or train compartment. It can be traced through his emotive narrative style. His range of irony varies from simple to complex. To quote his lines: “You cannot complain that the hotel is dirty. No Indian will agree with you. Four sweepers are in duty attendance, and it is enough in India that sweepers attend. They are not required to clean.” (88)

Naipaul’s narrative technique thus appeared to that of a severe critic of life in India. Naipaul criticizes the Indian films, the lack of hygiene, religious practices, which he found was meaningless. Naipaul is born non-believer and finds that there is a wide gap between the high spiritual claims made and the spiritual bankruptcy that he felt persists in India. He like a severe critic talks about the people spitting and pissing on the streets. He sees beggary and
destinations and then he expresses with a knife sharp style: “Indians defecate everywhere. They defecate mostly beside the railway tracks. But they also defecate on the beaches, they defecate on the hills, they defecate on the river banks; they defecate on the streets, they never look for cover” (70).

Naipaul here gives one of the most striking and wrathful illustrations regarding the hygiene and open-air toilet system common in India. It seems he was more than rattled by the specific Indian toilet system. His criticism tendency reaches at its climax at the start of his third chapter of An Area of Darkness, when he writes “The colonial: Indians defecate everywhere” (70). He repeats the words defecate many times, and this repetition shows his image for India. Naipaul here too along with criticism acquires a sarcastic style, when he says that his visit to India mirrors a contradiction between what he had known, dreamt, imagined and what he actually saw and perceived. He further says that he also finds contradiction between the Indian love for symbolic purity and actual practices. Naipaul elongated the subject of cleanliness, hygiene to such level that it appears that he is a traveller who is obsessed with sanitation factor.

Isn’t Naipaul projecting Indian image to a mere tribal subject of defecate? Isn’t he projecting that Indians are squatting figure, who defecate everywhere. He crosses the limit of any Indian’s patience when the ‘TRUTH’ on which India believes, stresses and works out to a mere tribal cliché constructed by him. But the truth is that Indians do not see squatter. (70) This clearly brings before us the traveller’s, attitude, his way of seeing and his narrative logic.

The subject of the book, An Area of Darkness is not purely travel. Naipaul did not stick to the facts of places visited or keeping an eye to the happenings. Rather he gives his strong attitude to the social, religious, administration, poor sanitation taboos of the place. His attitude and remark can hurt the inhabitants of the place. He writes: “The Indian had not yet
learned how to make cheese, just as they had not yet learned how to bleach news prints…”

(11)

On occasions Naipaul presents the narration, like that of an episodic TV serial. It cuts from a scene to a detailed scene. His observations reflecting a sarcastic tone. “I watched with fascination as he ate hungrily and with relish. He wolfed the very last crumb, biting alternately on the cherred bajra roti and onion. And when he finished the very last mouthful, he licked his fingers clean…” (69)

Naipaul in An Area of Darkness as a traveller classifies new images according to the established emblematic value, he transforms his experience into new cliché through shortcuts. His sarcasm and tendency of denouncing gets clearly visualized when he writes “The briefest glimpse at New Delhi International airport is sufficient (72)”. This is just like a comic cliché towards a country he said his forefathers lived, a country which was his dream land. Naipaul may find India a contradiction between what he had known, read and then experienced but there is surely a contradiction in what he proclaims to be his feeling towards a country where he wanted to search his roots and which he actually reach in a sarcastic, comic, criticism. “Amitav Ghosh” too focuses on this style of Naipaul, where he writes a travelogue with the dust of sarcasm and irony” (129)

In whole, Naipaul’s writing is cryptic, jerky and sarcastic. His picture of India is sketchy. He projects very vaguely and it is sometimes exaggerated. It can be said that his journey to India was fiercely sentimental if not pleasant. Probably he calls India An Area of Darkness on global campus, as he experienced the bitterness of Indian bureaucracy, the politicians, corruptions, the socio-religious taboos. He was unprepared to react such circumstances.

In The Middle Passage and as well as in Area of Darkness, Naipaul had used irony, to enhance and amplify his initial shock or disgust. It also adds to exaggerate a dramatic effect,
as the readers may know his view point or reaction in the situation. He too tries to add humour, in addition to criticism, and sarcasm. His actual preoccupation of inclusion of all style is to communicate to his actual emotion in earnest to the readers more clearly.

Naipaul had another travelogues about India i.e. *India: A Million Mutinies Now*. Here he presents India which has gone through a face of transformation, and so his attitude to it has also undergone a great change. He no more views India as an area of darkness, but he perceives it as an area of awakening. He finds those symptoms in it, which are the signs of better tomorrow. He appreciates the person, who has started rejecting the “darkness”, because darkness symbolizes dogmas, orthodoxy, stagnancy. He finds the better future and promises in India as they have learnt to change their life and solve their crisis themselves.

He mentions that the India where he visited in 1962 was a different country. Now he finds India, which was the India of his fantasy and dream. He felt bad that he wanted to identify himself with Indian identity, but he found that his identity had no existence as the Indians were divided in the name of religion, caste, class and language. He writes, that the image that he had carried…, of India in his first journey, was so shocking that;

… In 27 years I had succeeded in making a kind of return journey shedding my Indian nerves, abolishing the darkness that separated me from my ancestral past. My ancestors had left as indentured servants for the sugar estates of Guyana and Trinidad. I had carried in my bones that idea of objectives and defeat and shame. It was the idea I had taken to India… in 1962; it has the source of my nerves (516).

Later Naipaul witnesses some political, social and religious events taking place in India, but he was not disappointed, and took the variety of movements as the part of creative process. These movements are described as “Mutinies” in this book and they are considered as a part of process of ‘growth’ and ‘restoration’. He feels pleased that people have started
talking about their country and concern about nation’s interest. He also believes that the roots or movements doesn’t affect development, as they are a part of development.

In this travelogue *India: A Million Mutines Now*, Naipaul used the term “Mutiny” as a symbolism, which represents the idea of freedom and a cry for liberation. It symbolizes the spirit of patriotism in 1857. It is the spirit of historical mutiny. Here Naipaul uses it in the broader sense. It is the mutiny of spirit in any sphere of life. He releases the political connotation attached to the term “Mutiny” and connects it with the broader prospects like spirit as he says: “ The Liberation of the spirit has come to India could not come to release alone. In India, it had to come as disturbance. It had to come as rage and revolt …”(517)

This book, by Naipaul is on a very comprehensive work on India. He toured across the country between December 1988 and February 1990, when he met a variety of people from different professions. They were journalists, politicians, businessmen, pujaris, teachers, officers, slum-dwellers mafias and others. He also met people belonging to different caste and creed. He talked with Brahmins, Dalits, Hindus, Muslims, Liberals, Orthodox men, women, and so on, specially keeping in mind to interact the opposite parties, i.e. representing two sides of life to provide authenticity. He met these people from different parts of countries. These things provided objectivity to his works.

Naipaul in his narrative technique doesn’t only give us an account of the contemporary period; he reveals India as it has existed from time immemorial. Whenever he takes any issue, Naipaul probes into history to intellectually go down to its roots to know the reason of crisis. He thus in his narration shows the overall continuous process of development. He adds to it his knowledge of history, geography, philosophy and varied dimension to explore various aspects of Indian life. This definitely enriched his writings, and gave it depth and appeal and justification.
Naipaul in his book even goes to the extent of probing deep into the personalities he had met. He narrates their aspirations, frustrations and progress. He simulates a development on a certain part of the country with that, with the development of the whole country. He points the stories in this travel account with an air of success and achievement. While the negativity i.e. despair, frustrations are given only shaded presence.

He had adopted appealing narrative technique in this travelogue. He investigates, interviews, talks to the subjects and then let these characters narrate their story themselves. He also explores a character perfectly and accurately by gathering information about what others have to say about the character. He makes these characters lively by portraying the background against which the character grows and lives. He also draws detailed picture of the geographical aspects i.e. cities, houses, natural landscape, along with the biographical and autobiographical narrations so that the readers can interact with the characters more accurately. Furthermore he at times, juxtaposes his own experiences with those of others. In doing so, he gives the readers an opportunity to understand the mind of the narrator also.

The book presents many characters, but only a few are portrayed in detail. Naipaul gives the characters fictional dimensions by picturing their background, ideas, feelings and actions. He sketches the characters both from outside and inside. They are shown as representing basic human qualities of their class. He sometimes gives them autobiographical touch. For instance, when Naipaul narrates Rashid’s powerful emotion at the ruins of Lucknow, he states, “My emotions run congruent for a while with those of Rashid” (392).

Naipaul uses several techniques to elevate his characters, so that the readers can feel their presence before them and can feel their human qualities. As a journalist, he keeps in his memory what he observes and hears, and then transforms this material into his fictional and non-fictional characters. His another distinguished technique is that he violates chronology as he does in his novels.
India: A Million Mutines Now is not only a shallow observation of India by Naipaul rather it is an in-depth study of the people, the events. Here he theorizes indirectly that the distinctive events are a part of the creative process. Naipaul’s work is not only the account of his experience but they are equally of his own self. Naipaul employs not much of sarcastic or critical tone as he had done earlier, rather he employs a confessional tone at occasions. He confesses that he had misunderstood India. He states: “Migration to the new world., had made us ambitious ... this India, or this anxiety about where we had come from, was like a neurosis...” (7)

Thus in this trip to India Naipaul had constructed his vision of India. He now, confirms his fusion with India. These lines from the book proves out point:

I was taken far away from the man I had been earlier, that day, and was becoming more and more like that American lady, I had seen [...] standing rigid beside her goods on a barrow. Indian architecture and air travels giving me, as it had given her, the Hindu idea of the illusion of things (139).

In between these two distinguished travelogues about India i.e. An Area of Darkness and India: A Million Mutines Now, which stand as two contradictory thoughts from each other; Naipaul in 1975 made another trip to India. The travelogue that resulted from this trip is India: A wounded Civilization. It was the regime of emergency in India, declared by Indira Gandhi.

This travelogue is once again an act of personal discovery of the writer and provides little insight into the methods employed by the state in order to conduct business and regulate lives during this period. It seems that Naipaul is never really interested in examining the difference, the emergency made to Indian political life. As for him, the India to which Independence came was a land of far older defeat, and the purely Indian past died a long ago. It seemed also that Naipaul’s purpose this time does not seem to be one of a tourists’ interest,
but also one of a more serious critical enquiry. He observes: “An inquiry about India, even an inquiry about the emergency, has quickly to go beyond the politics. It has to be an inquiry about Indian attitudes; it has to be an inquiry about the civilization itself.” (9)

In this travelogue we find the technique used by Naipaul is that of an inquiry, an analysis, a searching of the very foundation of Indian culture and civilization. He also observes at the history of India and finds that the various foreign assaults on the Indian Civilization has only resulted in a number of wounds and it resulted in transforming India into a wounded civilization. He further puts that India has been a country of ruins which accumulated year after year as foreign attacks continued. The result has been that there are layers and layers of ruins everywhere—temple upon a mosque or a mosque upon a temple and many other things.

Naipaul recognizes India to be a Hindu India. He identifies Hindustan with a sarcastic sense of defeat. He writes: “Hinduism hasn’t been good enough for the millions. It has exposed us to a thousand years of defeat and stagnation... again and again. Indian history has repeated itself: vulnerability, defeat, withdrawal...” (129)

Naipaul’s attitude towards India, worked on three dimensions. Living in Trinidad as an immigrant with a strong nostalgic Hindu foundation; he lives in England as an expatriate and when he comes to India, his expatriate sensibility is twice removed from the country of his origin. Naipaul has some nostalgic and romantic memories about India, due to the Hindu souls that is preserved in his household. During his travel in India, he likes and appreciates only those things which confirm to the notion of Hindu life, customs and beliefs which confirm to the nation of Hindu life retained in his mind since his childhood days. However, Hindu self in Naipaul seems to be a limited one. Not being in touch with the country for years, he has not realized the historical and technological changes and development that have taken place in India. The ‘western self’ in him leads to a tone of criticism of several things in
India. He adopted thus a critical style in the narrative of the travelogue. This criticism had been sometimes very harsh, which has been attacked by several Indians in general and by several writers through their writings. As Sudha Rai puts: “Naipaul is alternatively an Indian in India, and a Western in India. Naipaul’s joy exhilaration, exultation came from his former self; his anger and negativity from the latter self. (27)

His criticism is at sometimes, a sincere one, at times a sympathetic one. He comes to India, with sweet memories so it is an exhortation addressed to Indian and at times an outright attack. Naipaul makes his position clear with these lines:

The starting point of this enquiry... has been myself. Because in myself, like the split second images of infancy which some of us carry, they survive, from the family rituals that lasted into my childhood phantasmal, memories of old India which for me outline a whole vanished world... (252)

Looking at the technological advances in India, Naipaul observes that an intermediate technology has come up. This intermediate technology serves not so much of the purpose. He writes about intermediate technology and says that it:

… should mean a leap, a head, a leap beyond accepted solutions, new ways of perceiving... In India it has been circled back to something very like the old sentimentality about poverty, old ways... a fascinating intellectual adventure for the people concerned, but sterile, divorced from reality and usefulness (121)

In this visit too, we get an impact of fury in the attitude of Naipaul. Though he is a global traveller, but his obsession with minute things like defecation is shocking. This visit too, he does not bring about any reconciliation. It brings a sense of further alienation from his root country. It further consolidates his position as an outsider and establishes him as a homeless person. He concentrates too much on superficial things and adopts a wrong attitude
towards India. Naipaul himself comes to realize that he may never be able to relate to any of the societies. The strong language he uses, the harsh judgment he makes, all indicate a preference for the negative or the positive. Thus for Naipaul India is a wounded civilization, being wounded by innumerable foreign rule, being destructed by them. He also writes along with the wound there was economic degradation, intellectual depletion, ignorance, mean-mindedness. His harsh criticism s revealed in these lines: “… It might be said, rather that far too long, as conquered people, they have been intellectually parasite on other civilization.” (134)

After completing his travel to and exploration of the Indian subcontinent and writing about it, Naipaul travelled to the Islamic countries, between August 1979 to February 1980. This travel was the opening of the unfamiliar area which became a source of his next travelogue Among the Believers (1981). It was Naipaul’s journey of an unbelieving observer among the believers. When Naipaul travelled to India, he had a deep background of preconceived notions but Among the Believers did not have such background. He in this travelogue first gives the reason for his choice of his travel to Islamic world. He gives a recapitulation in this travelogue, how he had grown up in Trinidad with native Muslims and had hardly known their religion.

Naipaul’s Among the Believers seems to be an attempt to open out new territories for his writings. It too is the account of journey, to Muslim states, so is subtitled as An Islamic Journey. Here too, Naipaul obsessed with his idea, education, technology, cultural remarks in an ironical way to the Iranian way of life. The idea of travelling to Islamic countries came to him during Iranian revolution, when he was in USA. He went to Iran at that time, when most of the people were leaving the country.

In the narrative style, he adopts an analysis way to the process of revolution. He studies the forces operating in the country. He had noticed split personalities and
contradiction in the Iranians in the U.S. Travelling to Iran, with the opinion thus aheading
derived, he finds everywhere the confirmation of his view. ‘Naipaul within a span of seven
months had travelled several Islamic countries like Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia, Indonesia.

*Among the Believers* is an empirical study of Islam through the situations and characters he
encounters in these countries. He studies the rise of fundamentalism and its impact.

*Among the Believers*, not only studies the encounters, Naipaul faces in the Islamic
countries, but it represents a very important, and very artistically crafted travel narrative.
Here we find an integration of travel strategies and techniques, along with his fictional
elements all coordinated perfectly. The use of various varieties of typical Naipaul’s irony is
highly crafted. Naipaul makes *Among the Believers* an ultimate travel or fiction journey by
giving the travel narrative, a touch of fiction. He uses imagery and tone supplemented with
intense dramatic dialogue. His interviews are transformed into fictional dialogue. This
travelogue had given him an opportunity to place and compare his Western prejudice against
the alternative culture, religion, political ideologies, offered by Islamic fundamentalism. At
this stage Naipaul seems to have arrived at the peak of matured narrative writing technique.
His mastered historical analysis can be seen in this travelogue. Naipaul is at his best in his
landscape imagery along with ethnographic details. All these factors along with his
journalistic reporting is beautifully illustrated in these lines:

> There are resemblances to the Spanish conquest of Mexico and Peru, and they
are not accidental. The Arab conquest of Spain, occurring at the same time as
the conquest of Sind, marked Spain eight hundred years later, in the new
world, the Spanish conquistadores were like Arabs in their faith, fanaticism,
toughness, poverty and greed ... (132).

He further frankly puts:
These women, wives, were workers; they were beasts of burden. Like the women of Dakota, Indians, Parkman saw on the Oregon Trail in 1846. But these Afghans and all those mountain tribes, lived in terrain that only they could master. No one could say of them as Parkman could say of the Dakota Indians, that they were going to be wiped off the face of the earth ... (187)

These two passages are historical in nature, giving the narrative a degree of authenticity that Naipaul wanted to introduce in his writing. There are many similar descriptive passages used by Naipaul, have their antecedent in some well known books. He also includes some journalistic strategies such as quotations from local dailies. He also includes vivid ethnographic details such as when he was offered delicious roties with tarkaries the grotesque imagery of nose picking and many more. He also includes details such as names, dates, signs, images etc along with rhetorical, linguistic and literary constituent makes the narrative rich.

The rich narrative of Among the Believers also includes an account of his planned or chance meetings and encounters with hotel staff, guides, interpreter, important personalities and newspaper officials. The details of the travel are sometimes narrated leisurely along with fictional elements when he describes characters and situations.

Naipaul while describing the characters and situations mainly examines the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. He finds that fundamentalism is incongruous. Naipaul’s inclination towards historical reflections, along with his narrative technique of questioning so as to find a probable solution gets reflected in these lines, where he gives a generalized commentary on Islam:

After the dazzling history of the last fifty years, the world had grown a stage and people floated. Whether they moved, forward into the new civilization; or back like Suryadi’s daughter, towards the pure Arab faith, they were now
always entering into somebody else’s world, and getting further from themselves... (397).

Naipaul adopts a criticism tone in this travelogue too, which resulted in lot of criticism especially from the believers. The natives of Islamic countries also reacted to Naipaul’s criticism. Amin Malak in his article in *Modern Fiction Studies* states that one of the deficiencies in the book is to view individual feelings as general feelings of Islam. It was even pointed out that a practitioner of the Islamic faith alone can judge better. He says pointing to Naipaul: “…it appears to be extremely difficult for a non-sympathetic outsider such as Naipaul to make fine distinction between the claims of irrational individuals repressive institution the clear teaching of the faith…” (561)

Naipaul gives his views on fundamentalism, it can also be valid but not all Muslims are fundamentalist and therefore his criticism seems to be based on uncertainties. Criticism of the book against Naipaul came from both the believers and non believers too. Salman Rushdie, a believer, observes that inspite of “all its brilliance of observation and depiction, it is a superficial book” (375), Inspite of all these, Naipaul’s *Among the Believers* has its position among the travel book for his technique of historical, sociological documentation.

Another important sequel of *Among the Believers* is *Beyond Belief* (1998), which is based on the Islamic conversions in Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia and Indonesia. Naipaul in this book peeps into the life of Muslims and proclaims: “This is a book about people. It is not a book of opinions” (1)

Naipaul following the tradition of travel narrator, promises that “the truth” will be presented to us in an undistorted manner. He promises us that he will be “Less present as a writer and less of an inquirer” He will be in the background trusting to his instinct. *(Beyond Belief, 2).* Naipaul in this travelogue splits into two characters - the voice o the prologue and the voice of the main narrative. Modelling himself on a figure esteemed by nineteenth
century English romanticists the Naipaul of the prologue claims to be a pure, natural and instinctive artist. He does so to assure us that we can rely on the narrator’s objectivity.

It is a literary technique in which the narrator, influences the readers in such a way, that the reader enters the mind of the characters. This literacy technique had its influence in Victorians era or in Modernist Literature as in Nineteenth century literature. Naipaul too uses this technique of narrative displacement and it is repeatedly evident when the narrator encounters Muslims in Beyond Belief. The symptom that Naipaul exhibits are not the typical symptoms of shiver, fainty, sweats that was used in Victorian literature. In Beyond Belief, Naipaul uses Gothic language to portray both Islam and Muslims. In the section of Indonesia, Islam is described in an alarming way: “Islam had come here not long before Europe. It had not been towering force, it had been in other converted places [...] It had not completely possessed the souls of people ...” (24)

If we peep into the preface in Beyond Belief we see V.S.Naipaul returns to the fair converted Islamic nation to examine the effects of the fundamentalist crusade, namely to the land of Indonesia, Iran, Pakistan and Malaysia. In this travel writing, Naipaul meets people, learn their family histories, their intimate secrets and give them scope to talk. His information have the vividness of characters. The book essentially narrates as how faith struggles with globalism. He puts that ancient customs survive but both capitalist modernity and Islam alike are devouring them; leaving people without a home either in the purist dreams of fundamentalist Islam or in the rootless cosmopolitanism of capitalism. When the old customs dc endure, they are uprooted from the context. Beyond Belief is a phenomenology of globalism; how ordinary people, born in primitive and tribal world, undergo the spiritual dislocation of economic revolution.

In this writing, Naipaul refuses to play the role of the analyst. He adopts the style of story teller or at least a manager of other people’s narratives. So the narrative is devoid of any
summary, or larger idea or conclusion, because he prefers not to get in the way of ordinary people’s narrative.

Devout Muslim readers will reject Naipaul’s picture of Islam as they may fail to accept that it is not anti-Islamic, but it is about the discordance between dreams of godly life and ungodly reality. The title *Beyond Belief* implies an ironic distance towards faith. Here Naipaul’s irony is tempered by compassion and also by his own nostalgia for the sacred. He views that perhaps as the new global economy grinds down the old world, the people of Indonesia, Pakistan, Malaysia and Iran cling to the sacred to keep their balance. Naipaul here is an incomparable chronicler of sacred survivals.

Naipaul wrote *Finding the Centre* (1984) after the publication of *Among the Believers*. It took almost two years to jot down his experiences about the Ivory Coast and Yamoussoukro. *Finding the Centre* has Naipaul’s distinctive style and narrative technique. The travelogue consists of two pieces namely: “The personal narrative piece which reveals about Naipaul and secondly it consists of the “Process of writing” with sustained and absorbing intimacy.

The first narrative of *Finding the Centre* is titled “Prologue to an Autobiography”. In this section Naipaul is totally involved in autobiographical sense. In this section, he documents his early trials as a young writer. He discloses that he would give off his literary beginnings which, could begin, quite directly with the writing of his first story a story of discovery and growing knowledge. He writes: “it is not an autobiography, a story of a life or deeds done. It is an account of something less easily seized: my literary beginnings and the imaginative promptings of my many sided - background ...” (VII)

In this section, the autobiographical sense prevails in the narrative. The journalistic comments, observations and landscape observations are used in second narrative, “Crocodiles of Yamoussoukro” this part i.e. the second narrative is a journey exploring Black Africa and
African magic on the Ivory Coast, thereby exhibiting how Naipaul’s writing progresses out of exposure to other people and other states of mind.

The ‘Crocodiles of Yamoussoukro” gives an account of his later development i.e. travelling, and adding to his knowledge of the world, as well as exposing himself to new people and new relationships. The writer discovered the West African people as well as their background. His realization was that his journey enabled him to find relationships of his past with himself; so as he believed that... “a writer after a time carries his world with him, his own burden of experience, human experience and literary experience.” (10)

He narrates that his travel to the Ivory Coast brought him an objective, experience of travel and human discovery. Earlier he had travelled as a writer of fiction but now his travel was not with political, social, cultural intention, not as a colonial, but as an individual observer.

Naipaul thus changed his focus as a novelist to the travel writer. His profound interest in history, people and landscape led him to express it with a different narrative technique. Dissayanake and Wickranagamage observes about narrative technique and its significance, of Naipaul in *Finding the Centre* as such:

… both texts are and can be considered as travel writings because they deal with the notion and act of travelling; one is a journey into memory, this memory (historic and diachronic) being of utmost importance to Naipaul’s writings; while the other deals with a physical journey in the Ivory Coast, and the importance of travel to the writer ...(Ch 5)

In both the narratives, in *Finding the Centre*, Naipaul is at its peak at characterization, use of dialogue, tone and imagery. The vulcanizing efforts of blending to the travel and fictional component is noteworthy. In prologue, he characterizes a conversation that he had
with his mother, and transforms it into a quite sophisticated fictional dialogue. Lets illustrate it:

I said to my mother one day, when I came back from the Port of Spain newspaper library, “Why didn’t you tell me about the sacrifice?” she said simply, “I didn’t remember”, she added, “some things you will have yourself to forget”, “what form did my father’s madness take?” [ I asked]. “He looked in the mirror one day and couldn’t see himself and he began to scream” [she said] (70)

The Naipaulian artistic touch and the descriptive imagery and detail gets reflected in the lines:

… In the lake on either side were the crocodiles. We saw the first just as we left the car; barely noticeable in the muddy water, a mere protuberance of eyes, until its thorny back became clear [...] then we saw eyes and thorny backs everywhere on the surface of the water - the thorns like the thorns on the bark of the baobab tree... (144)

In the above passage we see how Naipaul had a tightly constituted image with ironic overtones. Naipaul had also added certain personal touches, characterization and subjectivity.

*Finding the Centre* is Naipaul’s search for centre, in order of the process of growth of knowledge. To the colonial mind of Naipaul, he carrying with him the set of values and association connected with colonial ideas and along with his irony, brilliance brought out the:

… unbroken correspondence between travel and fiction, between autobiography and imaginary personages and events and clearly observed and critically perceived the seemingly disconnected ‘bits of history and social fact into the fine art of fiction, documentation, reportage and travelogue... (6-7)
A Turn in the South (1989) describes Naipaul’s journey through the Deep South of America. He visits South American countries and it embodies a revision of his old idea about that country. Like his other travelogue it is not just a narration of his travel but also a serious probing into the nature of civilization. In this travel writing, Naipaul inquires about the resistance of South America to modernization. He studies, how the Southern Black people have learnt to adopt to the sweeping changes that have been coming over the country. His writing reflects the black people who have with the white people together. He writes: “Black people, there, Black People there, White people there, Black People, black people, white people. All this side black people, all this side white people, white people, white people, black people, white people ...” (10)

In the prologue of the book, Naipaul describes riding with a black woman through the countryside of North Carolina. Naipaul’s companion, Hetty is intimately familiar with the landscape and its population, local landmarks etc. Naipaul’s perspective is that of an outsider, a visitor, who has initial difficulty in understanding the native accents. As the travelogue unfolds, Naipaul sees his own colonial background and coordinates it with native southerners.

A Turn in the South mimetically recreates racial boundaries. It has carefully constructed irony to point Americans for this racism and Southern for their passivity. The book is a fine tribute to Naipaul’s writing ability for its mimetic and ironic effects and Naipaul’s sociological examination of continued racial inequalities in the American South. A Turn in the South also represents Naipaul’s significant departure from his usual approach to travel narrative. Naipaul’s other travelogues have examined the cultures of Caribbean, India, Africa and other Islamic Cultures as those of Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia, Indonesia and so on. In most cases Naipaul declares his opinion clearly, but in this travel writing, he lets his true guide the reader. He directs his attention also towards the southern states of the United States, so that a small segment of the so called first world comes under his scrutiny. Naipaul in this
travel writing shifts his focus apparently so as to draw a parallel focus between American South and the author’s native Trinidad.

Naipaul also remembers his own childhood and adulthood in a black and white country which serves as a linking factor and a uniting factor. He attempts to understand the slavery question, comparing South America with slavery in Trinidad: He also used a comparison style where he distinguishes between the condition of black Americans, a powerless victimized minority and the self governing black African or West-Indian, especially lure of Trinidad and Tobago.

In this travelogue, apart from comparison of America’s South with Trinidad and his focus towards First World, Naipaul adjusts his style in A Turn in the South. In his other travel narratives, Naipaul himself forms a prominent figure, and his approach to the native people often is very judgmental. In this work Naipaul stylistically removed his own identity from a text that describes his own activities, almost like journalistic reporting. In a review in The Times Literary Supplement, George Fredrickson states that Naipaul’s book was “remarkably free of condescension and irony” (478). The book at times troubled the critics, as it seemed to be too objective, and almost clinically scientific, in its presentation of transcribed conversation with southerners.

Naipaul used this technique of conversation by speaking to a network of characters. These are the characters whom he has met in his travels in chance encounters or arranged meetings. Naipaul’s penetrating insight however, goes beyond the external and sees the reality beyond it. He reflects on several happenings and episodes and makes the narration have a deeper dimension to it. This aspect of his narration makes the book a lively account and a significant book about South America - an area, which is not much written about. Naipaul’s change of technique, his possessing as an outsider, even though showing concern gets reflected in these lines: “A slave is a slave; a master need not think of humiliating or
tormenting him. In the hundred years after the end of slavery, the black man was tormented in the south in ways that I never knew about, until I began to travel in the region” (119)

Naipaul’s apparent objectivity however appears deceptive at times in this particular book. His adaptation of personal silence within the narrative appears to be intensely ironic. He here does not directly state his views, but the decisions, he makes as a writer, the diction, the choice of subject matter, the arrangement of the text, all imply a deeply ironic stance. Instead of writing and objective travelogue, Naipaul creates an ironic indictment of the First worlds self proclaimed superiority. Despite all its rhetoric of democracy and equality, the United States in Naipaul’s book harbors, within its own border, a deeply divided southern subcultures that nurtures and perpetuates racism through rituals of passivity. Naipaul does this skillful use of irony, particularly in this travel writing. The irony gets reflected in the expression of racial matters, in the book. The text at many times points to the racially motivated division. In these lines the ironic stance of racism gets reflected, when Naipaul describes his visit to his friend Howard’s home town where; “[I] here was a small town center, a small rich white suburb attached to that town and then outside that a black area. The differences were noticeable . . .” (5)

Naipaul though points in an ironical way, but in a careful, stylistic manner, avoid describing the differences he notices. His diction suggests an ironic tone, particularly in his use of adjective. Let me illustrate the adjective in bold letter The centre of town is small; the white suburb is small and rich; the black area just is. Naipaul’s implication is that the black area is larger and poorer than that of the white suburb. Naipaul ironically but in his particular style sees irony and points to them; In Atlanta; “…white suburbs could get by quite well without the black-sun city centre...” (28)

North Carolina is bifurcated by railroad: dividing the black town from the white, the side-by-side black shotgun houses from the frame houses and the lawns ...
We can say Naipaul notices racial boundaries and constructs a narrative that mimetically recreates the racial boundaries on its own organizational structure. The mimetic effect is so well executed by Naipaul that it too may go unnoticed along with the irony.

The travel narrative is far from being objective exploration. The book is instead, a much more sophisticated text that offers an intensely ironic castigation of first world racism. Naipaul himself points at racism in these lines:

… in a racially mixed society, especially one where race is a big issue, the different worlds have racial attributes or overtones. Distinctions and differences can have the force of taboo - things sensed rather than consciously worked out. (153) .. I felt that there were two world, views here almost two ways of seeing out feeling that could not be reconciled. And this is depressing… (58)

*A Turn in the South* is definitely a significant book of Naipaul, especially in his narrative technique and style. *The Return of Eva Peron* with the *Killings of Trinidad* consists of four essays, written in different times during the 1970s. These works are the collection of experiences that Naipaul has in his travel to the country Argentina, Trinidad and Congo.

In this travel writing, Naipaul adopts the narrative style of examination, meditation and interpretation. As he himself says:

The novelist, like the painter no longer recognizes his interpretive function; he seeks to go beyond it, and his audience diminishes. And so the world we inhabit, which is always new, given by unexamined, made ordinary by the camera, unmediated on; and there is no one to awaken the sense of true wonder. (245)

The book is ideologically consistent and intrically designed, each essay offers “vision of the world’s half made societies as places which continuously made and unmade
themselves” (233). Through this book, Naipaul penetrates into the analysis of third world corruption. This work holds an appreciation, for its intense truth, his mastery to assess the problems regarding the third world from a Conradian perspective.

Naipaul’s irony is again at its peak and it is easily visible in his opening essay *Michael and the Black Power Killing in Trinidad*. The very little of this part shows that Naipaul takes a stand against both; the murderer and the social forces. He uses rapid irony in this section of his writing. The ironic stances of this portion can be understood by the following lines.

During his time in England Malik had learned a few things; he had, more particularly, acquired a way with words. In Trinidad, he was not just a man who had run away from criminal charge in England. He was a Black Muslim refugee from “Babylon”: he was in revolt against “the industrialized complex. ...(6)

Here Naipaul ironically disdains the spokesperson of Black power and the empty and vague slogans of 1960s revolutionaries. By black man he means Malik, and his English companion Gale Bewson. He also points at Jamal who himself claims to be God. After ironically describing and pointing at the murders and the murderers, Naipaul then adopts a descriptive and explanatory technique, when, he spends rest of the essay explaining why the murder happened. The narrative also seems to be argumentative, when he stresses that Malik’s Black power is an instance of colonial mimicry.

Naipaul had used phrase, had helped him to convey his thoughts in a more perfect way. His use of phrase gets reflected these lines: “Redemption requires a redeem, and a redeemer, in these circumstances, cannot but end like the Emperor Jones. Contemptuous of the people he leads, and no less a victim, seeking an illusory personal emancipation...” (74)
This phrase has a critical intention. He is critical towards the first world as he was of the Third World. He is totally harsh towards Gale Benson and uses phrases like “An outpost of Progress” (231) insignificant and incapable individual, for her. He also points at Jorge Luis Borges, whom he ironically addresses as Argentina’s greatest man” (122), when Naipaul regards as a source of enlightenment in his essay “Borges and The Bogus Post”.

In his third essay “A New King for the Congo : Mobuter and the Nihilism of Africa” use of metaphors is prominent. On totality the technique of narration adopted by Naipaul in his this particular writing is that of harsh criticism, and at other times that of an analytic, focusing on the merits and also flaws. In all to quote Edward Said, about Naipaul “he is so gifted a writer - and I write of him with pain and admiration” (523)

Naipaul’s contribution to the genre of travel writing has significant place in literature. Naipaul has an ever expanding horizon, because he travels, and has a vast expanse of reality inside. He has an “universal civilization” in him, as though he is an expatriate living in London, he is a “citizen of the world”. His travel writings is at times, autobiographical and at times experimental. His travelogues are synthesis of history, sociology, ethnography, autobiography, novel, documentary and reportage. They are purposive writings, after epistemological question, and also a serious exploration and an analysis of his own beliefs. His travel writings are therefore a unique blend of these facets and they acquire a different dimension. Naipaul’s travel writing becomes so different from the original travelogues written all over the world.

Naipaul’s travel writings are simple narrations and accounts of what he saw and heard in distant exotic countries. He had been ironic and critical in his earlier travel writings, but his recent travelogues appears to be sympathetic in tone. For Naipaul, writing textualizing not a part time job, it is a lifelong endeavour, a quest for ‘self” worth and identity. Naipaul’s travel writing has been the quest of a life-time, a journey, a travel into self, time and space, in
which, Naipaul the author, the protagonist, the narrative voice and the principal character have blended together have coalesced.

In his first travel writing *The Middle Passage* (1962), Naipaul’s first travel narrative, he has been autobiographical, biographical and historical. He has tried various narrative techniques and styles in his travelogue. He had used imagery; landscape, and picaresque of social, historical and natural realities.

Naipaul has a narrative authority. He has a way of convincing his readers of his views and perspectives. He convinces us by giving an eye witness experience. He demonstrates acuity of observation. He employs analytical skills. Naipaul also employs particular travel writing strategies that is different techniques and approaches. He uses journalistic technique, detailed ethnographic reporting, including the landscape, geographic and human observation. He also uses historical perspective and style along with autobiographical features and philosophical inquiry. He uses various strategies to textualize his travel. In *Eva Peron* he has employed investigative journalism, supplemented with newspaper article and historical documentation. Naipaulian irony is also accurately crafted in his different travel writings. Naipaul had used different techniques and style in his travel writings, according to the demand of the writing and situation, as Naipaul himself says about his narrative technique and style in a interview: “Because you change ... your knowledge of the world changes, and the forms have to change to meet the demand of the material you’ve accumulated. We cannot be burdened by dead form ... we should rethink all forms, ... in travel books especially.”
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