Chapter-I

Introduction
Travel narratives, in general opinion, are unprejudiced and scientific and they devotedly signify topographical, chronological and social reality. This is an entirely fake conception because travel narratives are entrenched with fictional rudiments and statistics. Fiction incorporates many travel components and fashion and both deal with representations that are many times embellished and imprecise, and at times they are disgraceful and perverted. This is factual in various forms of dissertations, such as historical writings, investigative journalism, political treaties, and natural history writings. Though, the distinction between fiction which is imaginary and travel writing which is factual is false but it also presents caricature, deception, orientalism and search for cheap effects that characterize much travel writing. This altercation centres around the belief that western travel writing is equipped to the notions of colonial narratives and its search for characterizing the metropolitan centre in post colonial societies.
Sir Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul (V.S. Naipaul) was born on 17th August 1932 in Trinidad, hails from an Indian Brahmin descent. He was the eldest son of a second-generation Indian living in Caribbean. His father had to leave his country from India to Trinidad as an indentured servant. Being a non resident Indian, he was on search of his roots. He wanted to explore his core. Divested people residing in a non-western world seek for order in their lives. The hunt of these people is depicted by Naipaul in his works.

Naipaul exhibits a comprehensible picture of social reality of the non-western world. His works depict the problems caused by imperialism and their fatal effects on the people. The colonial people rummage around for their roots; Naipaul himself was one of them. Therefore, his own quest for his roots imitates the quest of the many colonial people. Writers shape their world in their writing and are simultaneously shaped by the world they inhabit. In a Review of Naipaul’s book, *India: A Wounded Civilization*, Donald S. Zagoria wrote:

“V. S. Naipaul is a rare combination of born narrator, who brings to life the places and people he encounters, and thinking traveler who offers stimulating insights.”

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His domain consisted of Indian lineage and racial mix of a colonial island. He got his basic education from Queen's Royal College, Trinidad. Naipaul always wanted to excel and cross the barriers, he enrolled himself for a government scholarship programme in England. At the young age of 17, Naipaul was rewarded by an island scholarship which opened the gates of Oxford University for him.

It was at Oxford that V.S. Naipaul discovered the writer in him. He wanted to be a writer therefore he travelled England, which was then the centre of the world for English-speaking colonials everywhere. It had taken him much time to turnout his writerly desires, and even after a brilliant commencement as a writer he produced five books in just seven years, one of which was the significant achievement of *A House for Mr Biswas*—however, the value of his work was slow to be acknowledged.

In the year 1957, Naipaul published his first book named *The Mystic Masseur* (A. Deutsch). It was a story about a failed Trinidadian who switched over from a masseur to a Hindu spiritual Guru. His first three books named *The Mystic Masseur* (1957),
Miguel Street (1959) and A House for Mr. Biswas (1961) are ironic and satirical portraits of Trinidadian society.

His subsequent novels started characterizing the issues of colonial and post-colonial societies during the period of decolonization which was conducive to his age. His novels are mainly based on the political theme. Some of his novels such as The Mimic Men (1967), In a Free State (1971), Guerrillas (1975) and A Bend in the River (1979) delineate the colonial and post-colonial societies in a very effective and ingenious manner.

He narrated his own life's journey in England in the novel The Enigma of Arrival (1987). He created a historical vignette of the Caribbean which was an experimental narrative. A Way in the World (1994) was an integration of both fiction and non-fiction. In the year 2001, he published a novel Half a Life, which narrated the adventures of an Indian named Willie Chandran in post-war Britain.

He visited India several times in order to explore her essence and spirit. During his exploration, he wrote non-fictional novels dealing with India. When he visited India for the first time in early sixties, apparently, he felt that India was an area filled with darkness. Thereafter, he wrote a travelogue, An Area of Darkness (1964).

He revisited Caribbean and recorded his impressions in the book The Middle Passage: Impressions of Five Societies - British, French and Dutch in the West Indies and South America (1962). His another book The Loss of El Dorado: A History (1969) published in late sixties, was also written on historic Caribbean society.

Naipaul’s fictional and non fictional work outlines a symptomatic denotative response to the need to reveal a well suited literary form to frame an intellectual and symbolic sense of vagrancy. His project, as a writer, can then best be seen as one which is located in the need to come to terms with the effects of a self-imposed literary exile and the misplacements of homelessness created by the 'passing away' of Empire. This has however been less a political interest in the making and unmaking of 'Third world' societies than a metaphysical need to write and rewrite the self within the trauma of that history.

The younger counterparts of Naipaul and Salman Rushdie do not have to deal with the self-imposed literary exile and
homelessness. It could be observed from their works that they do not suffer with the identity related crisis like Naipaul and Rusdie do. Shashi Tharoor easily swallows the plural identity of Indians, he holds:

".....to speak of an Indian identity is really to subsume a number of identities......the singular thing about India is that you can only speak of it in the plural."\(^2\)

Naipaul has frequently exposed that the stories of colonialism and its post-imperial consequence engendered what may be termed as the continuous story of a 'narrative of anxiety' while endeavouring over a long and discriminated career, to re-examine his position as a twice-born immigrant, first within Trinidad and later in Britain and finally, in his discovery of his other 'area of darkness' in India. The procedure of writing itself unlocks the line of track for travel, a performative act of interference and existence. Naipaul alone was not an uprooted intellect rather there are a number of intellects who are uprooted and experienced a phase of Diaspora. The uprooted intellects are Hobbes, Empedocles, Dante, Victor Hugo, Ovid etc.

On the basis of cultural sedimentation, William Safran has carefully listed out the salient features of Diaspora:
“(1) they or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original ‘centre’ to two or more peripheral regions; (2) they retain a collective memory, vision or myth about their original homeland-its physical location, history and achievements; (3) they believe that they are not-and perhaps cannot be fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulted from it; (4) they regard their personal homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would eventually return-when conditions are appropriate; (5) they believe that they should collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and (6) they continue to relate personally or vicariously to that homeland in one way or the other, and their ethno-communal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship.”

Vijay Mishra disagrees with Safran as he was not satisfied by the features of Diaspora characterised by him. Refuting William Safran on the categorization of Diaspora he says:

“Safran’s characterisation does not take into account precisely those points at which ethnicity and diasporas part company”
Mishra’s understanding on Safran’s categorisation of Diaspora is that he does not count the presence of a special and unadulterated community. On the other hand Diasporas are consequent to convergence with the host society and it is the “creation of its own political myths rather than the real possibilities of a return to a homeland,” which is its actual characteristic.\(^5\)

Naipaul writes himself a further through the expertise of writing and at the same time, he re-examines the fragmentary business of his past. Naipaul appears improbable and extra-ordinary, a colonial aiming to portray a larger reality, yet vulnerable with being seen as a regional, West Indian writer. Apparently, Naipaul’s work lacks a natural audience beyond his home island.

He has developed an idiosyncratic susceptibility because he himself has been cut off, turned out of a coherent habitat by birth and circumstances.

Naipaul’s writings draw attention towards the experience of the Non-Western people who have been pulled up by historical currents. Such people seek to find order, given the amorphousness of their lives.
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How their struggles unfold becomes not simply a regional or racial saga, but a human one. Naipaul presents a wider sense of human experience - so broad, in fact, that critics from the social science realms may encounter questionable assumptions or generalizations. Naipaul sometimes defines historical or political facts without paying much heed to it. But that in itself does not contradicts the veracity he corresponds to. Naipaul, in his work, reflects subjective observations rather than objective reality writing as a homeless person. He is a person who has been ethnically pulled up and enforced to structure his own world. The people who were subjected to colonial consequences, now cast on their own resources and in search of distinguishing identity. In the world views of the dispossessed, he finds personal reverberation. Naipaul records the disappointments of developing societies critically and empathically. The expedition for sovereignty and form, intrinsically commendable, divulges prospects for self-deception, for confiscating the reflection of a rational personality or the misapprehension of a just society rather than grabbing their quintessence. Disarray of an illusory order imposed on realism is worse than unstructured survival. As in his own life, there are certain particulars in Naipaul's novels. The most subtle one is the West. Naipaul portrays west as a blurred cluster of
culture and technology and imprecisely English and American. Naipaul has exhausted a modest fraction of his time while writing on the state of affairs of the West’s extension on the objects for colonialism or the lineaments of Western culture itself. Jet planes and Coca-Cola cross the lives of his characters. Democratic ethics and bureaucratic realities demarcate metaphors of liberty. Marxism, the well-situated philosophy of insurgence, symbolizes yet another Western inheritance as though one were gratified to rebel against the West in a prearranged Western way. A historical essay crafted by Naipaul, The Loss of El Dorado (A. Deutsch, 1969), portrays Western charm with virgin, non-Western land. But otherwise, Naipaul articulates slightly about the West’s affirmation of its dominance. The human character must know itself in relation to the land as Naipaul finds himself in India; the land deserts fantasy. Religion and culture signify the history of human dependence on land. Naipaul engrossed a sense of authentic legacy among India’s mountains. Here independence becomes achievable. Here magnificent veracity triumphs. Therefore, for all the dispossessed, a realization of the self’s ambitions can originate only from the innate sense of order set up in nature.
Writers, in the precedent, primarily employed three different types of travel writings, one is fact-oriented, the other is experiential and then there is intellectual-analytical. Fact-oriented travel writing attempts to be more methodical and impersonal and its foremost spotlight is on topographical, botanical, agricultural, economic and ethnographic facets. The landscape and its description and citations are on the face and the authorial voice takes the backseat. The second type of travel writing which is experiential, reviews sentiments and attachments. The writer largely recounts personal emotions. Adventure and drama are mostly highlighted. Unlike the first type of travel writing there is a main character, the traveller and his expression, he is the mainstay and prime focal point and there is a heroic prototype. American narratives of the 17th to 19th century period can be termed to be travel or exploration writings, though some did include ecological and ethnographical details, they are mostly empirical in nature. The third variety of travel writing is intellectual-analytical. Being the most subjective category, it is the most controversial one.

Narrative acts as an intellectual social commentator in this category of writing. The authority is derived by virtue of authorial voice and not from presentation and documentation of facts and
from the insight of observation and intensity of psychoanalysis. Before putting up the travelogue in the midst of his own outlook and comprehensive psychiatry, the author first puts up his name on the sale. Though there are copious overlapping instances from the other two types of travel writing, V. S. Naipaul would appear to be categorized under this last variety.

There is a correlation between Naipaul’s travel writing and his fiction. But, it is not definite that whether there is fictional component in his travel writing or the travel paradigm in his fiction. In Naipaul’s writing, both are integrated together. Travel writing encircles numerous forms such as autobiography, biography and history. Naipaul presents his work with newer approach of textualizing social, historic and natural realities. Travel writing shares its goal with anthropological and ethnographic field work reporting, the realistic portrayal of the third world, and marginal group like cultural and racial minorities. The traveller- narrator gives the colonial gaze while looking down on these people and their backdrop and scrutinizing them as ancient and rearward. Naipaul’s work is put under the last category of travel writing because one can perceive enthusiastic self intervention and it includes intellectual and societal commentary and investigation. In order to comprehend
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Naipaul’s personal vision of what a writer and his writing should aspire, the three significant formal facets should be noted here of Naipaul’s travel writing; the Naipaulian notions, his travel authority and his travel stratagems. Naipaul’s cogitation spearheads the eventual text which is substantially mapped; it embraces several actions such as actual travelling and note-taking, homecoming to London and contemplating, retrospection of original assumption, sketching, restructuring, reassessing, re-fabrication of his voyage experience and finally the actual writing. Final text product cannot be achieved by actual travel experience along with note-taking, it is merely a commencement. The actual text must be generated separate from the actual experiential framework. Naipaul’s writing is accessed from his reminiscence and his travel notes and journal.

Naipaul’s travel narrative finally emerges as a re-creation of his travel experience, the real turn out of the narrative may have different assumptions, and time-space arrangements may be different. Many times his narratives revolve around different time or space points. And they will replicate deeper breakdown from his post travel reviews. A text will always be a demonstration of veracity whether it is in the context of history, travel, fiction or art. This demonstration is a cultural product that is concluded by

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domineering philosophy and worldview. Naipaul’s travel narratives do not entirely emblematize what he exactly saw and perceived in his travel experience. Naipaul’s idea, perception or set of conjecture is replicated by a very crucial excerption of a reality. While reading Naipaul’s travel narratives, it is essential to notice that the text may have a chronographic origin, but the original Naipaulian thought at the time of any particular scene that one reads, is not necessarily the Naipaul of that scene; it is later Naipaul, the author who has sophisticated his experience through writing, the one who has rephrased his postulations and thoughts, who has recontrived and textualized his travel. His writing knows the space and time of the actual travel and the ideas and acquaintance that this evokes. Naipaul has textualized it, systematized and exhibited it more efficaciously harmonizing to his conjectures. Naipaul exercises a narrative assertiveness a technique of persuading his readers or audience of his vision and outlook, a manner of giving authority to his travel narrative as an objective reality. Naipaul sways the reader by giving a corroborating experience, revealing a perspicacity of interpretations, exercising logical proficiency, and tendering the reader a very legible and gratifying narrative. Naipaul sojourned India for long durations on various junctures with the intention to

His travelogues are not consequent to snug sightseeing. They are staid endeavours that beseech much deliberation and study. Naipaul's cognitions has exceptional calibre, they are dedicated, meticulous and precise. With the help of his tractable and susceptible eye of the artist he captured the magnificent splendour of these short summer landscapes in the mountainous regions of the Himalayas. Naipaul uses discernibly his analytical proficiencies while making remarks about people and circumstances. In *India: A Wounded Civilization*, one can admire this enthusiastic examination. The grandiloquent abilities of persuading and engrossing the audience holds immense magnitude to any travel narrator, even if it is, occasionally, consequential to fabricating a delusion, a deceptive text that swivels versions of realism in ethereal modes, creating persistently grotesque and intermittent metaphors. Naipaul exerts specific travel writing tactics that is, various techniques and manners have been heedfully negotiated which include: journalistic techniques; extensive anthropologic exposure comprising landscape, topographic and human observation; chronological perception and
approach; autobiographical attributes and idealistic inquest. It is imperative to note that some of his travelogues entirely focus on one of these paradigms, while at other times, his travel writings contain some of these together, sometimes overlapping, at other times blending.

Robert Nixon included a separate chapter in his seminal thesis, *The Grand Hotel Abyss: A Critique of Naipaul’s Third World Travels*, on Naipaul’s use of techniques of travel, ethnography and autobiography, and his intensive use of these genres or styles which Nixon terms, “amateur Ethnography”.

Naipaul’s text incorporates precise ethnographic observations. He is good at noticing accurate ethnographic facets. By means of this writing approach, he comprises such explanations and observations as landscape, geography and people. The later are portrayed time and again as mere objects and not humans. This is the major stumbling block of this ethnographic method, because colonial gaze is generally used. In the majority of his travelogues, this ethnographic style conveys narrative authority to bear. He also used, to some extent, the historical techniques in the travel narratives such as in India: *An Area of Darkness*. Naipaul blends into the travel
narratives, the parts of historical writings and citations of passages while attempting to impose and confer supplementary narrative authority to his text. Conventionally, historical writings were exemplified as unprejudiced, realistic and trustworthy. Scores of casual readers give this perception and conclusion to historical writings without taking into consideration a variety of dissertations and philosophies. Many of Naipaul’s historical passages fall into his own personal ambit. He adds his own comprehensiveness to the passages. Naipaul’s fiction and travel narratives both reflect historical perception in conjunction with personal thoughts about the Caribbean. Man’s homelessness is not an external fate: Naipaul characterizes it to solid historical situations. Naipaul frequently comes across the foundation for his novels in history, the inconsistency between the character and the historical circumstances become the origin for dramatic actions. Naipaul crafts his novels while blending together literature and history. It also recommend the society a way of ascertaining self, through a communal heritage, the expansion of mutual ideals and a sense of community.

Naipaul’s search for identity is prominent, there is an ardent engrossment with the self, and this is portrayed in every part of Naipaul’s observations and remarks. The narrative is brimming with
confessional avowals, idealistic remarks and his own trepidations and apprehensions about India. Naipaul’s idealistic perception is absorbed in his both fiction and travelogues; in his writings, this substantial idea is spread throughout and every so often it is bonded amid the autobiographical sense. It appears that in most of the passages idealistic ideas are brought out through autobiographical instances. The subsequent chapters aim at dealing with V.S. Naipaul’s travel narratives and his idea of nationhood as they are revealed in his monumental travelogues.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


5. Vijay Mishra, Opcit, p 71