Chapter V

Naipaul's Maturity

*The Enigma of Arrival* is a combination of the elements of fiction and of non-fiction. It describes Naipaul's development as a writer with an elaborate narrative of rebirth in the Wiltshire countryside. It elaborates Naipaul's response to England. It consists of a complex of conflicting attitudes towards England that are based partly on a distinction between past and present, town and country, idea and reality. The writer expresses his views on the process of an initial disillusionment with England. He, as well, appears to retain affection for the idea of England which is enshrined in its literary culture. His ambivalence can be interpreted as a result of colonial condition of cultural dislocation.

The book largely illustrates what arrival (in a physical sense, and in a metaphorical sense of reaching self-understanding) in England means for the writer. While residing in a village near Salisbury, Naipaul had isolated pensive time to meditate on the past (in Trinidad and in England and in all the other places.) There are descriptions of the cosmopolitan writer in the rural landscape of Wiltshire, of the writer's colonial past and the colonizer's heritage. His book elucidates the writer's past as a struggling writer and his present position as an established writer. While Naipaul has his roots in Trinidad, he belongs to England. To quote Naipaul:

> These things always appear much more deliberate, much more planned. I calculated afterward than they actually are. I went to England in 1950.
to go to university and when I came down from Oxford, there was the problem of getting a job. I wanted to go to India, but I couldn’t get a job in India, and I found myself hanging around in London and gradually doing radio work. Then I began writing articles and stories, and, finally books.

The writer has ability to observe and understand the present context. ‘The Journey’, a crucial central section of the narrative, describes the various stages of self-realization through his efforts to become a writer and the different cultural exposures involved in these. The writer gets opportunity to revisit and reconcile himself to his homeland, Trinidad. The final section of the book, ‘the Ceremony of Farewell’, describes his return to Trinidad to attend the cremation of a sister and there he involves in Hindu rituals attending this. There he discovers ‘a sense of place’ (as Naipaul has described it later), different from the sense of place he apprehends in the decay and continuity of rural England. To quote Naipaul:

Our sacred world – the sanctities that had been handed down to us as children by our families, the sacred places of our childhood, sacred because we had seen them as children and had filled them with wonder, places doubly and trebly sacred to me because far away in England I had lived in them imaginatively over many books and in my fantasy set in those places the very beginning of things, had constructed out of them a fantasy of home, though I was to learn that the ground was bloody, that there had been aboriginal people there once, who had been killed or
made to die away – our sacred world had vanished. Every generation now was to take us further away from those sanctities. But we remade the world for ourselves; every generation does that, as we found when we came together for the death of this sister and felt the need to honour and remember.²

Naipaul re-examines his own engagement with the world, and thus he presents significant advances on his prior views and attitudes. The entire book seems a meditation on the writer meditating on his life, the world, and himself. In The Enigma of Arrival, Naipaul seems to suggest that it is a spiritual desire, which is manifested in the communal lives and cohesiveness of different societies, allows all cultural and social differences to work together. Owing to this spiritual desire, human beings do adjustment when that is required and people of different profession seek to accommodate themselves to their environments and each other. Naipaul expresses his views about human spiritual desires and needs, and the place of communal existence, environment and heritage. There emerges a conservative view of society, which describes that individuals and societies are not determining agents, but subject to the larger determining movement of history itself.

Naipaul is of the opinion that people, communities, cultures, and societies are energized by their basic spiritual needs and environments and heritages. Change emerges as a result of the conflicts and clashes within the spiritual needs, environments and heritages of people. ‘The Journey’ offers an account of his first impressions of England, when he
arrived in 1950. He finds here a distance from his idealized notions of metropolitan culture. Naipaul writes this section from the point of view of the writer and explores the process by means of which he has arrived there. To quote Naipaul:

The noblest impulse of all – the wish to be a writer, the wish that ruled my life – was the impulse that was the most imprisoning, the most insidious, and in some ways the most corrupting, because, refined by my half-English half-education and ceasing then to be a pure impulse, it had given me a false idea of the activity of the mind. The noblest impulse, in that colonial setting, had been the most hobbling. To be what I wanted to be, I had to cease to be or to grow out of what I was. To become a writer it was necessary to shed many of the early ideas that went with the ambition, and the concept my half-education had given me of the writer.

So the past for me – as colonial and writer – was full of shame and mortifications. Yet as a writer I could train myself to face them. Indeed they became my subjects.³

Naipaul discusses the images, which surrounded him as a child in Trinidad. As a schoolboy, he had made up his mind to leave Trinidad and to become a writer. For there were no better job prospects for persons like Naipaul, he chose to become a writer, a profession that satisfied his knowledge hunting nature. This section is replete with disillusionment. To quote Naipaul:
I had come to London as to a place I knew very well. I found a city that was strange and unknown – in its style of houses, and even in the names of its districts; as strange as my boarding house, which was quite unexpected; a city as strange and unread about as the Englishness of South Wind, which I had bought in New York for the sake of culture.

The disturbance in me, faced with this strangeness, was very great, many times more diminishing than the disturbance I had felt in New York when I had entered, as though entering something that was mine by right, the bookshop which had turned out to have very little for me after all.4

When Naipaul reached London and faced reality, he explored many variations from his idealized notions of metropolitan culture. An Area of Darkness also points to this disjunction between expectation and experience:

"I came to London. It had become the center of my world and I had worked hard to come to it. And I was lost. London was not the center of my world."5

Naipaul transfers his disappointment to the unnamed narrator of "Tell Me Who to Kill", in In a Free State: "I used to have a vision of a big city. It wasn’t like this, not streets like this."6

Naipaul confirms the view that London is subject to decline, and the Wiltshire sections of the novel rehearse the process of the destruction of an illusory conception of England. He has made of displacement a
subject entirely his own. Naipaul draws on classical analogies to characterize these migrations. To quote Naipaul:

In 1950 in London I was at the beginning of that great movement of peoples that was to take place in the second half of the twentieth century - a movement and a cultural mixing greater than the peopling of the United States, which was essentially a movement of Europeans to the New World. This was a movement between all the continents. Within ten years Earls Court was to lose its pre-war or early-war Hangover Square associations. It was to become an Australian and South African, a white-colonial, enclave in London, presaging a greater mingling of peoples. Cities like London were to change. They were to cease being more or less national cities; they were to become the cities of the world, modern-day Romes, establishing the pattern of what great cities should be, in the eyes of islanders like people and myself even more remote in language and culture. They were to be cities visited for learning and elegant goods and manners and freedom by all the barbarian peoples of the globe, people of forest and desert, Arabs, Africans, Malays. 

The metropolis disappoints him by being invaded by migrants and having gone down in the world, but at least it still has learning and freedom to offer. In “Jack’s Garden”, while surveying the driveway near his cottage, Naipaul makes the following observation:

And the taut lines of barbed wire made me feel, although the life of the valley was just beginning for me that I was also in a way at the end of the thing I had come upon.
How sad it was to lose that sense of width and space. It caused me pain. But already I had grown to live with the idea that things changed; already I lived with the idea of decay. (I had always lived with this idea. It was like my curse: the idea, which I had had even as a child in Trinidad, that I had come into a world past its peak.) Already I lived with the idea of death, the idea, impossible for a person to posses, to hold in his heart, that one's time on earth, one's life, was a short thing. These ideas, of a world in decay, a world subject to constant change, and of the shortness of human life, made many things bearable. 

By "Decay", Naipaul expresses a sense of regret at having missed something, while "Change" expresses the disappointment with the knowledge that what he sought never existed. The theme of the novel is that each person has a different perspective, a unique vision, as a result of individual experience. Each person has his or her own story. The narrator arrives on a rainy day in a village in Wiltshire and meticulously describes
what he sees and discovers as he eventually begins to feel at ease in his rented cottage and his surroundings. The narrator is basically from Trinidad, he has been uprooted. He has been wandering for many years, without feeling at home and is disillusioned and depressed. Here, he feels that his conceptions of and association with his new home have been wrongly influenced by his colonial education and readings in English literature. Now he realizes that he will have to change his attitude and learn to see anew, to understand what he is actually seeing rather than what he expects to see.

Naipaul feels himself a foreigner in Wiltshire and realizes that he is an accident of imperial history. He thinks that his own life is part of a larger historical process which began with the sending of indentured Indian labourers to Trinidad. When Naipaul first went to England as a student and inspiring writer he was baffled and depressed by the actuality. There was no grand imperial land of continuous traditions awaiting him with open arms. His life was pinched and like many other colonial students he felt humiliated.

He had cut his ties with the past and felt he could only be a writer and he could undertake this career only in England. He realized that he could not write as an experienced man of the world. He knew that only his own life and experience could be the basis of his subject matter and themes. It is the enigma that Naipaul faces. *The Enigma of Arrival* implies that Naipaul and other former colonials are now part of, and inheritors of, the English literary tradition.
There can be seen some similarities between *A House for Mr Biswas* and *The Enigma of Arrival*. Like the earlier novel, *The Enigma of Arrival* is a record of the Indian diaspora as exemplified by the life of the Naipaul and his family relations. The first half of the book is a record of seeming failure. Naipaul, like Biswas, moves from house to house and fails to gain the security and independence he wants. He invests his hopes in a major project which ends in disaster and mental distress.

In *The Enigma of Arrival*, we can see the story of *A House for Mr Biswas*. The son is for a time bewildered and defeated by the challenge of freedom, but finally finds a suitable place where he experiences renewal, makes progress and after a time purchases his own house. While, *A House for Mr Biswas* is full of pain of small victories, *The Enigma of Arrival* is a celebration of how:

We had made ourselves anew. The world we had found ourselves in—the suburban houses, with gardens, where my sister’s farewell ceremony had taken place—was one we had partly made ourselves, and had longed for, when we had longed for money and the end of distress; we couldn’t go back. There was no ship of antique shape now to take us back. We had come out of the nightmare; and there was nowhere else to go.  

In *The Enigma of Arrival*, Naipaul describes his relationship to European cultural traditions, especially in the art. For it were European cultural traditions, as well as Indian culture that made him, but such an
education was not so much beneficial to Naipaul, for he learnt it without understanding and it was alien to his experience. To quote Naipaul:

Knowledge came slowly to me. It was not like the almost instinctive knowledge that had come to me as a child of the plants and flowers of Trinidad; it was like learning a second language. If I knew then what I know now I would be able to reconstruct the seasons of Jack’s garden or gardens.\textsuperscript{10}

Gradually Naipaul masters this second language. He learns to see his surroundings as constructed rather than inevitable. In this book, Naipaul has supplied various accounts of his personal history and development as a writer. Salman Rushdie has described how exile intensifies a tendency to retrospection:

It may be that writers in my position, exiles or migrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. But if we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge – which gives rise to profound uncertainties – that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, India of the mind.\textsuperscript{11}

It is the impulse that works behind Naipaul’s repeated need to look back on and to retell the story of his own life. He, therefore, constructs, out of the sacred places of his childhood, a fantasy of home as if home
were unattainable as anything other than an imaginary construction. Naipaul describes his departure from the valley in terms of the death motif. To quote Naipaul:

And I had always known that there was no means of preserving a landscape which—in its particular purity for me—existed for me after that first spring only in my heart. From the first spring I had known that such a moment was going to come. But now that it had come, it was shocking. And as a death, everything here that had been a source of pleasure and surprise, everything that had welcomed me and healed me, became a cause for pain.\(^{12}\)

Naipaul’s object in writing this autobiography is to challenge death— to lend permanence to a transient life, and to make the past live on by means of an enduring record of it.

_A Turn in the South_ (1989), presents a series of interviews conducted by the writer, with contextual details and providing, of course, the writer’s commentary as a kind of voice-over. It can be thought as the script of a documentary film. The interviews, Naipaul chooses, belong to different categories. Naipaul conducted the interviews of Southern Whites from former slave-owning backgrounds—some conservative (like Marion Sass and Jack Leland), some liberal (like Anne Siddons) and some simply neutral. He conducts the interviews of successful blacks (Hetty, ex-slave landowner; Al Murray, the Harlem writer; Hosea Williams, the high prolific civil liberties campaigner, a reputed woman Bapist from Booker T. Washington’s Tuskegee University). Later in the
book, there is a series of characters who are expert because of their experiences, sensibilities or interests, about southern history and local constitutions, about different religious communities, about country music and poverty.

These series of interviews can be read as a continuous argument. Naipaul realizes that race issue, despite continuing and effective social segregation regardless of official desegregation, is gradually becoming a non-issue. Naipaul deals with the issue how the black southerner had learned to survive and adopt. Naipaul likes the role of religion that helps people in making sense of their lives and provides a feeling of community and service. People can express themselves freely on any topic whether they agree or disagree. Sometimes, Naipaul appears more concerned with finding links between his own past in Trinidad and the ways of the south than with analysis. But it is the part that he tries to see reality freshly. To quote Naipaul:

It was always strange to me in Charleston, this harking back to the colonial British West Indies as to a mark of blood and ancestry. That idea, of a colonial aristocracy going back to the foundations, never really existed in Trinidad in my time; and doesn’t exist in the former British West Indies now. The reason is simple: the British West Indian colonies more or less closed down in the 1830s, with the abolition of slavery, and became stagnant. The British Empire moved east; then moved into Africa. And there is no point in the former British West Indies now in claiming to have been among the first there. Perhaps there
cannot truly be said to be an aristocracy in a place that came to nothing-they are just people (like Robinson Crusoe) who went to the wrong place. Whereas Charleston was claimed by the large events of a continental history, and its small-time beginning are now indescribably romantic, when it was on a par with slave colonies like Antigua or Barbados or Jamaica, and looked to them for trade and support.\textsuperscript{13}

Naipaul realizes that his outlook has become broad and is conscious of death. He can now enjoy other ways of seeing and being than those that had governed his feelings in the past. Generally in his books, he is concerned with other people and what their situation has in common with his own. The theme of \textit{A Turn in the South} is 'home'. Naipaul wants to examine-what does it feel like to live in a part of the modern world where people can speak of 'home' and what enables the Southerners, white and black, to have such feelings? To quote Naipaul:

In colonial days in the British West Indies-for about a hundred years after the abolition of slavery-the black people had no heroes. They began to get heroes very late, and these heroes were sportsmen, cricketers mainly. No other kind of hero was possible in that limited society. But then, when a political life developed, towards the end of the colonial period, West Indian blacks acquired leaders, union men in many cases, who then became political leaders and later, in independence, prime ministers.\textsuperscript{14}

In \textit{A Turn in the South} (1989), Naipaul re-examines his former prejudice towards the southern United States. As in The Enigma of
Arrival, he tries to understand a place that he had previously understood through received ideas. Naipaul is puzzled why the southern United States resists to modernization and has its pride in its culture when the culture was build upon the horror of slavery. Naipaul deals with the race issue. All the characteristic movements which were harnessed to set right racial inequality – Martin Luthar King style (civil), liberties activism, academic black studies – have been formalized through the media and rendered superficial. To quote Naipaul:

I began to think of writing about the South. My first travel book—undertaken at the suggestion of Eric Williams, the first black prime minister of Trinidad—had been about some of the former salve colonies of the Caribbean and South America. I was twenty-eight then. It seemed to me fitting that my last travel book—travel on a theme—should be about the old salve states of the American Southeast.

My thoughts—in Dallas, and then in New York, when I was planning the journey—were about the race issue. I didn’t know then that that issue would quickly work itself out during the journey, and that my subject would become that other South—of order and faith, and music and melancholy—which I didn’t know, but of which I had been given an intimation in Dallas.15

Naipaul is of the opinion that the blacks have taken these movements either a meaningless adherence to dated protest gestures, or the acceptance of white-middle-class values, or a sense of void. While the White conservations consider this devolved in nostalgia and an attempt to
ome to terms with the irrationality of a slave-owning past by evading the violence is involved. White liberals think that this has led to an urgent need for self-definition and understanding. All the parties desire to find some sort of spiritual satisfaction, for they express commitment to revealed religion. To describe faith succinctly but sufficiently has become Naipaul’s theme in *A Turn in the South*. It is presented as the ubiquitous phenomenon of the southern American states. To quote Naipaul:

The Church of Christ does an excellent job in meshing traditional values with Christian principles, universal Christian principles. The result is that when one begins to doubt the traditions he is unable to separate his doubt about tradition from his belief in Christian principles. It becomes very confusing. The confusion is at times unbearable. I can understand why Henry has trouble finding words for certain things. There’s guilt and alienation, the idea of abandoning your heritage. I went through a lot of guilt. Guilt is the most critical. The Church of Christ deliberately instills guilt in people. It is extremely judgmental. There is almost the circle-of-wagons that if you attack certain traditions it’s blasphemy. I think I should tell you that I think of myself as a spiritual person. Actually, I think I am more spiritual now than I was.\textsuperscript{16}

In *A Turn in the South*, Naipaul presents his view of history that is cultivated over a range of anecdotal and fictional narratives. He has created some characters like Miranda and Raleigh. In the colonial history this is the colonizer (Raleigh) and the revolutionary (Miranda). Both are determined with their purpose, yet decline to the process of history. The
reality of their times defeats them and that reality of the world in its historical connection. There is continuity in the failure of idealistic and visionary human efforts, as in Raleigh and Miranda in the past.

A Way in the World (1994) is a sequence of nine narratives. It is concerned, centrally with revisiting. It starts with a description of the defamiliarizing effect produced by a six years’ absence from Trinidad. The writer wants to construct an imaginative homeland of his native land and this he does by excavating the island’s and his own past. The stories include memories of Naipaul’s youth and family life, his first attempts to become a writer. He mentions how he was influenced by anti-Indian racism on the part of black politicians. The title of the book refers to the ways people are made by and make their way in the world. It is set in Trinidad, or places, such as America and Africa, which have associations with its history.

In A Way in the World, he has given details of his life through some personal remarks he has made concerning the ways colonialism had limited the possibilities of self realization in Trinidad. He has depicted the historical and ethnic reason for his dislike for the Port of Spain he loved as youth. A Way in the World is an ordered sequence in which the narrator has skillfully intertwined various themes, places and subject matter. It reworks material used in other books. It repeats the subject matter of The Enigma of Arrival, which also portrays return journeys to Trinidad and imparts Naipaul’s feeling of displacement in his native island. In Miranda and Lebrun, Naipaul recognizes himself.
In *A Way in the World*, Naipaul explores the various strata of a complex past in Trinidad, just as he does for the American South in *A Turn in the South*. Lebrun and Miranda mirror the situation of the author. In ‘the New Man’, Naipaul writes how the destruction of the Spanish empire led to a century of disorder in Latin America. In this narrative, he introduced Francisco Miranda, a revolutionary. In ‘History and home again’ Naipaul reveals how politics alienated him from Trinidad. Blair at first accepts the limitations imposed by white colonialism, then flourishes as part of the new movement and finally becomes an international advisor. Naipaul has described Blair’s life as a study of a complex person caught up in the ways of the world.

The narrative ‘History: A Smell of Fish Glue’, tells of a short period, when Naipaul was a seventeen-year-old and worked as a temporary second-class clerk in the Red House, Trinidad’s Registry Office in Port of Spain before leaving for England. When Naipaul reached Port of Spain, he loved the town as a country boy could. He describes Port of Spain affectionately otherwise he presented soured images of the West Indies.

His narrative ‘History’ explains the changes in Port of Spain, noticed by Naipaul when he returned. He noticed that Port of Spain has become a city with contrasting slums and wealthy suburbs. A large number of black immigrants from other islands had settled in slums on the outskirts of the town, while the middle classes had moved to suburbs. Now there is no race to welcome Indians.
When Naipaul returns to Trinidad, the island is in the grips of a political movement. Everyone was wounded and their pain was flowing into a common stream of emotion. On other visits Naipaul finds Trinidad now independent, defined by a division between the Indian countryside and the African town. Although Trinidad now had a black leader, and government, which ruled through a black political party, combining black history with Marxist ideas, yet there were disaffection and there was always a threat of an insurrection within insurrection.

Naipaul imposes a measure of his own distance from the events depicted, so that the growth and spread of a different political allegiance within the island's social composition belongs to both an era and a place with which he has little or no connection. For this, he adopts a view from a far, which gives him a perspective that sees the political transformation from the colonial to the postcolonial as the changes that the town undergoes as urbanization encroaches on the older:

It was as though, with the colonial past, all the colonial landscape was being trampled over and undone; as though, with the past, the very idea of regulation had been rejected; as though, after the sacrament of the square, the energy of revolt had become a thing on its own, eating away the land.  

To express his views on local political awakening in Trinidad, he focuses on two important figures, Blair and Lebrun. Both highlight the seductive and ultimately corrupt power of a politics of race. Lebrun is modeled on the historian C.L.R. James. He plays a significant role in the
oil field strike. Blair is one of the senior co-workers in the Red House, where the narrator fulfils his apprenticeship. Blair represents the narrator's scholarship opportunity for advancement in a larger, more intellectually challenging world. Blair's political career recedes from the narrative's immediate attention and is only alluded to as an unexplorable domain that his death may explain after many years in Uganda.

Naipaul has taken the issue of the failure of cultural hybridity when it does not allow for a connectedness with that which is productive in the constituent traditions. He describes a modern Venezuelan family that is a mixture of many cultural features of the region. Manuel Sorzano in 'The New Man' is a Trinidadian Indian. His wife is Indian who speaks Hindi yet his name is Venezuelan and his children have Spanish names. Sorzano illustrates how Indians abroad have changed. He has been adapted to Venezuela, and his children will no longer have any relationship to Hindu culture and their past. He represents diasporic individuals. Phyllis and Manuel Sorzano adjust with the unsatisfactory situations while British novelist Foster Morris and Lebrun are always dissatisfied with their situations.

In *A Way in the World*, stories are linked by phrases and characters. Blair is a black Trinidadian government employee. He becomes a politician and appears in the second and ninth story. In the starting, Blair accepts the limitations imposed by white colonialism. But after a few years, he becomes a part of the new movement and becomes an international advisor. Blair's life presents the life of a complex person
caught up in the ways of the world. Two stories, ‘History’ and ‘Home Again’ reveal how politics alienated Naipaul from Trinidad.

While Naipaul works for the colonial government, he realizes that the government may prove beneficial to its subject. He has developed a new concept of the British Empire. He realizes that life is cruel and the person who has power becomes indifferent and arbitrary. His concept of life was that it was full of cruelty and violence. He developed it when he saw people using threats, the ways of parents treating children. The cruelties of the extended family and the awareness of the painful history of American slaves and Indian indentured workers were responsible for his new concept.

When Naipaul returns to Trinidad after a gap of six years, he finds that the island is in the grips of a political movement. To quote Naipaul:

I had heard on the steamer that a new kind of politics had come to Trinidad. There were regular meetings in Wood ford Square, across the road from the Red House, Which the Spaniards had laid out in the 1780s as the main city square, and which the British had later embellished; where the destitute Indians, refugees from the plantations, had slept until they had died out; and where later the black madmen had come to camp. In that square now there were lectures about local history and slavery. People were being told about themselves, and black feeling was high.  

Although Naipaul does not mention the names, he is describing Eric Williams’s ‘university’ of Wood ford Square. Naipaul attends a
meeting and realizes that the emotions shared by many black people were part of the private emotions everyone felt. Everyone was wounded, and their tension was now flowing into a common stream of emotion. The nationalist politicians energize the colonized or oppressed by reminding them of their shared history, victimization, resentments, religion, culture and ethnicity or race. Naipaul feels that the movement has started very late. He thinks that this movement is not powerful enough to threaten the local whites. To quote Naipaul:

They had been standing at the edge of the square, noticeable, confident, respectful of the occasion. Perhaps they had gone for the show. But then, like me, they might have felt excluded; they might have felt the ground move below them. White people in the colony were few, though; they were not really threatened. Much of the hostile feeling released by the sacrament of the square would have focused on the Indians, who made up the other half of the population.

The town had been important to me. Its discovery had been one of the pleasures of my childhood: the discovery of fine buildings, squares, fountains, gardens, beautiful things meant only to please people. Yet I had known the colonial town for only ten years. To me it had always been a strange place, a place I had come to from somewhere else, and was still getting to know. Now on this return I felt it had passed to other hands.

Naipaul realizes that Port of Spain had been important to him. His childhood had passed here. But he felt a kind of strangeness here. The
description of the shared emotion at the meeting as a sacrament alludes to the role religion has played in black culture and politics throughout the New World. Naipaul finds that Trinidad is now independent but it is in a state of revolt and it has a division between the Indian countryside and the African town. To quote Naipaul:

It went into independence in its state of black exaltation – almost a state of insurrection – and with its now well-defined racial division: the Indian countryside, the African town. And soon the town I had known began to change.

Black people from the smaller islands to the north came to settle. There had always been this movement of people from the islands; during the war they had come in some number to work on the American bases, and they had then built a sensational-looking, grey-black shanty town, of old wood and packing cases and rusty corrugated iron, on the bad-smelling swamp to the east. This immigration had never been legal, but now it increased. The immigrants.........

The immigrant shanty towns spread, on the filled-in swamp and on the hills above it. To the west, at the same time, the town spread, with new middle-class developments along the coast (where there had been bathing places) and in the valleys of the Northern Range, where there had been plantations of cocoa and citrus until the depression.20

Naipaul finds that Black immigration from the small islands resulted in Port of Spain being partly enclosed on the east by shanty towns on the hills. People lived in huts, while the middle classes
expanded to the west along the coast. Those left behind, especially in the shanty towns, felt defrauded by national independence. They continued to believe in the original dream of racial redemption. Naipaul is thinking of the racial discrimination formerly found in America, especially in the South, and of apartheid South Africa and how they had produced Black Power and liberation movements. To quote Naipaul:

It came for many. But that promise of redemption was so large that some people would have felt defrauded by what had followed. These people would have continued to find virtue in the original mood of rejection; and over the years they would have grafted on to that mood the passions of more extreme and more marginal and more publicized black causes from other places. So disaffection grew, feeding on an idea of an impossible racial righteousness; and there was always the threat of an insurrection within the insurrection.²⁷

Although Trinidad now had a black leader and government which ruled through a black political party and had come to power through rhetoric combining black history with Marxist ideas, yet the government will be challenged by a more radical insurrection driven by passionate feelings of racial righteousness. These are feelings of humiliation and outrage, which Naipaul also finds in the Indian community in Trinidad. It can be described as the humiliation and anger below the surface of any society which has a history of cruelty, slavery, indentured service, poverty, racial hierarchies, alien rulers and which is divided by religions,
languages, cultures, and skin colours as well as by distance from the lands of origins of its inhabitants.

Thus, Naipaul presents a series of narratives that test the parameters of his previous attempts to find the transitions between colonial historical actions, the Caribbean experience, and the consequent ideas embodied within his textual composition of the late twentieth century.

The novels discussed in this chapter throw light on Naipaul’s struggle to create an order in the chaotic situations, for it is essential for his own emotional satisfaction. Today, the concept of freedom stands for a longing for stability, rootedness and continuity and Naipaul’s love of landscape can be seen as his desire for harmony with his surroundings. A way in the World reflects how Naipaul learned to write and how the history of those formerly colonized should be written. Naipaul has confessed that he learned how to write honestly only after he stripped his prose with its inherited British attitudes to ‘plain concrete statements, adding meaning to meaning in simple stages.’

In his early comedies, he has written with a hysteria he felt about Trinidad and about his insecure existence as a writer in London. Later, he realized that his hysteria could be his subject and in A House for Mr Biswas he has found his own personality as a writer. Naipaul has also expressed his views about human spiritual desires and needs and the place of communal existence, environment and heritage. His writing has made it clear to some extent that individuals and societies do not
determine history, but are only subject to the larger determining movements of history itself. In *A Turn in the South*, Naipaul tries to find out that if the race issue was exhausted and was either superseded or subsumed in the other issue such as faith. Thus his mature writings show his focused preoccupation with historical determinism and spiritual needs.
Notes

3. Ibid, p.221.
8. Ibid, p.23.
10. Ibid, 32.
15. Ibid, p.25.
18. Ibid, p.28.
20. Ibid, p.33-34.