

The Futile Struggle for Self- Determination in Naipaul's Protagonists



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ABSTRACT

The paper is an attempt to study V.S. Naipaul's *The Mimic Men*, *Guerrillas* and *A Bend in the River* through the lenses of some of the most prominent postcolonial thinkers like Frantz Fanon, Homi K. Bhabha, Simon Gikandi and Edward Said. It is an effort to compile and put forward the essential dichotomies marking the lives of the colonial subject (the men of color) due to the long tortured absurdity of the so-called civilizing mission of the West and the ambiguity of the 'post-colonial' world. Needless to mention NgugiwaThiong'o who explains the trauma of colonial education which is responsible for developing the colonial ideology. Apart from the study of the social, economic and political dilemmas in the post-colonial world, the colonial hangover that resulted in a distorted psyche of the colonial figure cannot be overlooked. In fact the psychological disorders were greater than the physical subjugation of these people. Living a life of ambivalence the lives of the natives are trapped 'in-betweenness' and 'halfness'. Contradictions between 'self' and 'other', mimicking tendency, alienation, homelessness and the abandonment-neurotic are some of the major concepts that dominate the focus of the paper. Moreover embracing borrowed culture, language and life-style in a vain hope to decolonize them-selves ultimately throws them into the ever-prevailing, ever-tormenting wretchedness which has already been destined for them. Finally this research paper intends to question the authenticity of the term 'decolonization' dismissing the concept as vague and a mission impossible to achieve.

Rising above subjugation: The myth that is 'Post- Colonialism'

My paper aims to explore the colonial and post- colonial times in the novels of V.S. Naipaul and to show how colonial destruction has affected not only the political, economic or social conditions but the minds of these colonized people. Thus my paper is mostly a psychoanalytical research of the major characters, the 'men of color', to understand the meaning behind their actions and to look into incidents that have brought them into committing such actions. I call them 'men of color' and not black because Naipaul's male protagonists, beside blacks are of mixed race and Asians. My paper also looks into the fact, in spite of living in a 'modern', 'independent' post-colonial world, how modernity and freedom remain just meaningless words to the colonized people and they live in a false idea of de-colonizing themselves. Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* describes the false notion of decolonization as:

Decolonization, which sets out to change the order of the world, is, obviously, a programme of complete disorder. Decolonization, as we know, is a historical process: that is to say that it cannot be understood, it cannot become intelligible nor clear to itself. (27)

VidyaSurajprasad Naipaul or more commonly known as V.S Naipaul is one of the most sublime Trinidadian-British writer present. He is known for winning the Nobel Prize awards for literature in 2001 along with many other awards he has won in the past. While writing my thesis I strongly felt that the books Naipaul writes and the character he creates are reflections from his own life. Some of such novels of his are the *Guerrillas*, *The Mimic Men* and *A Bend in the River*. My assumptions grew stronger when I read Naipaul's biography by Patrick French. As we read his biography it is understandable that Naipaul's character Jimmy, Ralph Singh and Salim resemble one significant characteristics of Naipaul him-self; either directly or indirectly. Therefore, in order to understand his novels we need to look into Naipaul's own life and history.

Naipaul writes his novels mostly based on the post-colonial situation of the once colonized land. It is not only enough to read and understand the physical destructions in Naipaul's novel but it is utterly important to realize the psychological damage of people that has been made by colonization. Naipaul's novels require a thorough reading of the psychoanalysis of

the characters. It is their actions that speak up for their mental conditions due to colonization. Patrick French was given unprecedented access to Sir Vidya and his sealed archive to write his biography. From his biography it is clear, Naipaul the famous well-known writer who we know now had also suffered the pangs of colonization himself, has been a colonial subject and had a tortured personal life. For this reason many of his major characters in his novels appear rather disturbed and irritating to the readers. Also they can be defined as lost, confused and desolated and they reflect Naipaul's own anguish, frustration and inner-conflict. Maureen Warner Lewis further adds by saying:

It strikes me as one among several matters over which Naipaul shows a perversity of character. Like so many of his own fictional characters, he insists on speaking of certain things in a way which he knows to be irritating. In his characters, he depicts the satisfaction of hurting as a negative compensation for the pain of being misunderstood and the longing for sympathy. (105)

In order to fully understand the psychological reactions of the characters, we need to understand what actions have brought these reactions. Naipaul's novels exhibit what the characters do in the post-colonial world. A reading of imperialism during the imperial rule will explain why the characters behave the way they do. What reasons have shaped their mentality to bring about such perverse consequences; consequences that are violent, aggressive and vulgar. Naipaul relates the idea of realism and fantasy with dilemma of existentialism.

What Naipaul wants to focus in his novels is the 'barrenness'; barrenness of the colonized land and colonized people. Colonization has not only altered the physical and political conditions of the colonized land; the affects were much deeper and intense. It wounded and distorted the 'soul' of the colonized people. He writes about how these people are left devastated and confused when suddenly they are left free in a world they do not recognize. The 'modern' world was never modern to them; modernity remained just a matter of words. Colonization has uprooted people from their own roots in such a way that these people failed to relate themselves to anything afterwards, even after the colonizers left. They remained strangers in their own land.

It was the harshness of colonization that shaped the lives of the colonized people. Naipaul born to parents of Indian descent and into poverty in colonial Trinidad has been a victim of being a 'non-white' person. French in Naipaul's biography quotes from a letter:

...but the people in authority feel my qualifications fit me only for jobs as porters in kitchens, and with the road gang...these people want to break my spirit. They want me to forget my dignity as a human being. You have the result in me, as I sit in French café not drinking anything. No fire in my room for two days and only tea and toast in my stomach. That is what the whole policy of the Free World amounts to. Naipaul, poor wog, literally starving, and very cold (Naipaul).

The actions taken by the colonizers were to break the spirit of the colonized people. They made the colonized feel and believe that the white people were superior; every other races were inferior and to be dominated. Everything good belonged to the Westerners; everything else falls under the category of the 'Other'. Edward Said adds further insight to our understanding as he writes "Independence was for whites and Europeans; the lesser or subject peoples were to be ruled; science, learning, history emanated from the West"(23). The colonized people were made to believe everything bad, barbarous and mysterious was for the non-Westerns and they needed to be 'civilized'.

"There is no use looking for other, non-imperialist alternatives; the system has simply eliminated them and made them unthinkable. The circularity, the perfect closure of the whole thing is not only aesthetically but also mentally unassailable"(Said 23). This was the mindset that the colonizers inflicted upon the colonized. The colonizers not only captured on their lands and properties, they enslaved the non-white people. They would make the colonized people serve for their purpose, for their benefits. Their entire culture, tradition, ritual and religion everything has been replaced by that of the colonizers. The colonized were forced to cut themselves off from everything that fabricated their existence and adapt to the life style of the colonizers. They were made to believe that the colonized people did not have any culture; they were not born with one. As if they just sprouted out of no-where and there were the colonizers acting to be their saviors.

Therefore, the colonizers had left the colonized people no choice but to embrace whatever was being offered. The proverb 'I think, therefore I exist' did not apply to the colonized people because their thinking capacity was destroyed and overtaken by the colonizers; they could no longer rationalize. The colonized perceived the world through the eyes of the colonizers. The purpose was clear; the colonizers were playing with the colonized minds.

The mental breakdown that the colonizers did was slow and steady but poisonous. One by one they slowly managed to penetrate through everything that encapsulated the lives of the colonized and molded these people into what the colonizers wanted them to become. This they usually did following the two techniques: the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) and the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA).¹

The colonizers had set up educational institutions and forcefully convinced the colonized people to send their children in the colonial school. They targeted the children mostly because the mind of a child was fragile and could be easily shaped. They wanted the colonial child to grow up with the ideologies of the colonizers and thus be their prisoner forever. After family, educational institutions served as one of the fundamental factors that curved the ideologies of a person. In the colonial schools children very basics, their building blocks grew up with the English ideologies of the colonizers. They were taught the culture of the West and enforced to follow them so that these children slowly move away and finally forget their own culture and traditions. NgugiWaThiong'o writes "The most important area of domination was the mental universe of the colonized, the control, through culture of how people perceived themselves and their relationship to the world" (442). Thus a colonial child was "being made to stand outside himself to look at himself" (Thiong'o 443).

All these were done in a way which convinced the colonized people that whatever the colonizers were doing was for their own good. The colonizers had façade their own purpose

¹Louis Althusser was a French Marxist philosopher who wrote about ISA and RSA in his articles on "*Lenin and Philosophy*" and *Other Essays*. Althusser identified the 'Ideological State Apparatus' as the method by which organizations propagate ideology. This is in contrast to the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA), by which compliance can be forced and includes the army, police. Ideological State Apparatuses include those used in religion, law, politics, trade unions, media and the family. Althusser puts education at the top of the tree: "What the bourgeoisie has installed as its number-one, i.e. as its dominant ideological State apparatus, is the educational apparatus, which has in fact replaced in its functions the previously dominant ideological State apparatus, the Church."

behind all these and pretended to help the ‘uncivilized’ people. Salim’s narrative from *A Bend in the River* adds an insight to our understanding:

I fear the lies- black men assuming the lies of white men. Those of us who had been in that part of Africa before the Europeans had never lied about ourselves. Not because we were moral. We didn’t lie because we never assessed ourselves and didn’t think there was anything for us to lie about; we were people who simply did what we did. But the Europeans could do one thing and say something quite different. The Europeans wanted gold and slaves, like everybody else; but at the same time they wanted statues put up to themselves as people who had done good things for the slaves. Being an intelligent and energetic people, and at the peak of their powers, they could express both sides of their civilization; and they got both the slaves and the statues. (18-19)

It was easy for the colonizers to convince some, they were easy to convince because they found the colonizers way lucrative, luxurious, rich and an elevation to power; while others rebelled. Thus the unity of the natives broke down and they became enemies to each other. The colonizers applied the ‘divide and rule’ system which made things even easier to be controlled. Colonial education did not help the colonial child to find a way of emancipation rather they were “being taught the lucrative value of being a traitor to one’s immediate community” (Thiong’o 438); they found themselves even more tangled up, which was the actual intention behind these ‘modern’ schools. This education did not erase the tag of being a ‘colonial’ subject in the English society; they could never become English, they were always the ‘colonial’. Colonial children, no matter how good their English were, were always considered secondary to the English children. Whenever they were compared to the English children the colonial children were looked down. “All the papers were written in English. Nobody could pass the exam who failed the English language paper no matter how brilliantly he had done in the other subjects” (Thiong’o 439). Priorities were always given to the English children, while the colonial children suffered.

Thiong'o writes "in a colonial school, harmony was broken. The language of my education was no longer the language of my culture" (438). Naipaul himself had faced such harassment in his educational life when "the degree results were published. He got a Second" (French) or what Naipaul called "just a bloody, damned, ***** Second". Naipaul's anguish on colonial educational system was also reflected in the characters of Ralph Singh from *The Mimic Men* and Indar of *A Bend in the River*. Ralph Singh who went to London for his education is referred as the "educated elite of a failing state" (French). It is because with his colonial education Ralph Singh could not manage to become successful, nor in London neither in his own Island. He remained a miserably failed politician to whom the idea of power was "vague and unreliable" (*Mimic Men* 43). Naipaul narrates Ralph Singh from *The Mimic Men*:

The career of the colonial politician is short and ends brutally. We lack order. Above all, we lack power, and we do not understand that we lack power. We mistake words and the acclamation of words for power; as soon as our bluff is called we are lost. (10-11)

Indar, from *A Bend in the River* was one such character who chose to embrace the Euro-American colonizers life-style and education "failing to understand the homogeneity of Western culture" (Wise 66). With the urge to become something he went to pursue his studies in England, "thus language and literature were taking us further and further from ourselves to other selves, from our world to other worlds" (Thiong'o 439). He came back to Africa with failure and disappointment. Naipaul quotes from *A Bend in the River* the frustration of Indar as he says:

The Committee was meant to put English boys in English jobs; it wasn't meant for me. I found myself growing false to myself, acting to myself, convincing myself of my rightness for whatever was being described. And this is where I suppose life ends for most people, who stiffen in the attitudes they adopt to make themselves suitable for the jobs and lives that other people have laid out for them. (166-168)

The final hit that the colonizers made was to attack on the native language. The purpose of colonial education was to build up an environment where English would be the only medium of communication. According to the colonizers the natives did not have any language; all they had were dialects, ‘frenzy’. If they had a voice it was of ‘silence’. Therefore, grabbing control over the language was like having ultimate power over the natives because then the colonizers would be able to monitor everything the natives said and did, thus having access over their lives. “Language is both a means of communication and a carrier of culture” (Thiong’o 439), it was the only means through which the natives could relate to each other in a spiritual level because “language was the means of the spiritual subjugation” (Thiong’o 437). With one’s language can only one express properly, the intonation and voice that can be properly used to express one’s emotion in the mother tongue cannot be justified by any foreign language. Thiong’o agrees when he writes “the differences really were in the use of words and images and the inflexion of voices to affect different tones” (437). Thiong’o also argues:

Communication between human beings is also the basis and process of evolving culture. In doing similar kinds of things and actions over and over again under similar circumstances, similar even in their mutability, certain patterns, moves, rhythms, habits, attitudes experiences and knowledge emerge. Those experiences are handed over to the next generation and become the inherited basis for their further actions on nature and on themselves. (440)

Therefore, communication broke down as well as the passing of culture from one generation to other since “language as communication and as culture is then products to each other. Communication creates culture: culture is a means of communication” (Thiong’o 441). This way their entire existence crumbled. Children never got to know about their histories and grew up with English ideologies. The next step the colonizers took was “their most effective area of domination which was the third aspect of language as communication, the written” (Thiong’o 442). Imposing English only over verbal communication was not enough to break the native language completely; they had to change the written form as well. “So the written language of a child’s upbringing in the school became divorced from his spoken language at home” (Thiong’o

442). The colonizers made sure every child obeyed their command. Therefore caught speaking in the native language was one of the most humiliating experiences the child had to go through. The ‘culprit’ was given “corporal punishment- three to five strokes of the cane on bare buttocks- or was made to carry a metal plate around the neck with inscriptions such as I AM STUPID or I AM A DONKEY. The attitude to English was the exact opposite: any achievement in spoken or written English was highly rewarded” (Thiong’o 438). The colonial child was made to feel inferior to oneself and one’s language “where his own native languages were associated in his impressionable mind with low status, humiliation, corporal punishment, slow-footed intelligence and ability or downright stupidity, non-intelligibility and barbarism, this was reinforced by the world” (Thiong’o 443).

The corporal punishment acted as the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) by which the colonizers inflicted control over the natives. The natives’ self- confidence was crushed to a level where an ‘unseen’ fear of the colonizers had been incorporated into their minds. They feared that they were constantly being watched and “observed by an inspecting ‘gaze’ where each person depending on his place, is watched by all or certain of the others” (Foucault 158). To the colonized people, the colonizers acted as the ‘Panopticon’ which “is a diabolical piece of machinery, sparing no one”(Foucault 158), keeping record of their every ‘wrong moves’. The ‘Panopticon’ was an “all-seeing power” (Foucault 152) which gave the native space; a space limited and surrounded by walls.²

Thus a colonial child was “a product of a world external to himself. The harmony was already irrevocably broken” (Thiong’o 442-443). “English became more than a language; it was the language, and all the others had to bow before it in deference. English became the main determinant of a child’s progress up the ladder of formal education. Learning, for a colonial child, became a cerebral activity and not an emotionally felt experience” (Thiong’o 438-442).

The colonizers left no stones unturned to shatter the souls of the native people. They were only happy when these natives lost their capability to relate to anything around them and had any power left to think of their own. They constantly needed the guidance of other men, the colonizers. Thiong’o writes:

²Michelle Foucault: *The Eye Of Power*: A conversation with Jean-Pierre Barou and Michelle Perrot. Jeremy Bentham’s ‘device’- the *Panopticon* is a work published at the end of eighteenth century and since then fallen into oblivion.

The most important area of domination was the mental universe of the colonized, the control through culture, of how people perceived themselves and their relationship to the world. For colonialism this involved two aspects of the same process: the destruction or the deliberate undervaluing of a people's culture, their art, dances, religions, history, geography, education, orature and literature, and the conscious elevation of the language of the colonizers. The colonizers did all of that. The natives became stranger on their own land. (442)

Naipaul born as an Indian in the Caribbean Island of Trinidad has always felt like an outsider. Growing up on the Island of Trinidad among people of mixed race and ethnicity he knew little about his own homeland. Whatever idea he had about his history was curved out by the 'biased' eyes of the colonizers. This feeling of an 'outsider' enhanced when he went to live in England for his education and under exile. It is clear from his biography that Naipaul has always felt the necessity of a 'house' in order to feel him-self belong somewhere. He wanted a materialistic security to relate him-self to his surroundings, to feel in place. During his stay in London, Naipaul was denounced as unworthy and unfit to get a 'proper' job and when he did it was a "job as a radio presenter on the BBC's Caribbean Voices" (French). In his letters, Naipaul made a "furious, acute, self-pitying analysis of his position, describing the everyday racial humiliations he faced in 1950's London, and his epic uncertainty over his future, displaying raw wounds..." (French). During those 'perilous' days of his Naipaul "consumed by his own anguish, poverty and asthma, was of no help, using his preferred method of abdication rather than involving himself in a testing situation" (French). It was the times while Naipaul was living in the 'slum basement' of his cousin's house that his feeling of a lack of a house became prominent. "He was a deracinated East Indian West Indian, with no country he could call his own" (French). It was only when, finally after his job as the radio presenter he managed to buy a house, Naipaul felt himself fall into a position in the society. French quotes "for the first time in my life, there was semblance of a household of my own. It was a very, very moving moment for me, a sacramental moment. It was very beautiful. For the first time I felt a little bit in control"

(Naipaul). Later Naipaul “bought a dilapidated house, a dairyman’s cottage in Salterton, up the valley from Wilsford, and had it converted in just the way he wanted” (French).

Homelessness is a theme evident in Naipaul’s three novels through the character of Jimmy, Ralph Singh and Salim. With home, a place someone can claim as one’s own comes a sense of identity, an idea of ‘self’. The protagonists of these novels like Naipaul, had always been ‘outsiders’ Naipaul agrees that he has written about this moment of despair in his work- “I have probably written about this in other ways in my work” (Naipaul). They suffered from a lack of history. Salim, an Arab-Indian descent living in post-colonial Africa feels himself trapped into a very disadvantageous situation where he was neither an African nor could he call himself an Indian. Ralph Singh, throughout the novel, kept moving to and fro from the Island of Isabella to London, never being able to settle anywhere. Jimmy’s situation was perhaps the worst of all. A half Chinese and half African, who renamed himself as a Muslim suffered greatly from a proper identity. Being of mixed ethnicities himself and living in an ‘unnamed’ Caribbean Island among people of mixed race, he was miserably lost and lived in a state of suppressed hysteria. All three of them suffered from a lack of backbone because they were not aware of their own culture. Born into the Caribbean Islands which the colonial times had brought them to, they never knew about their homeland. They had no knowledge about their own histories or their ancestors because their histories were erased by the colonizers. Whatever imaginary ideas they had about their homeland were by reading books, those even written by the colonizers. Therefore, their sense of ‘self’, identity was developed depending on how the colonizers presented it to them. Salim, from *A Bend in the River* maintains this truth when he says:

All that I know of our history and the history of the Indian Ocean I have got from books written by Europeans. I have got them from the European books. They formed no part of our knowledge or pride. Without Europeans, I feel, all our past would have been washed away, like the scuff-marked fishermen on the beach outside our town. (13)

Not having a true vision of their own land, the protagonists of the novels seek “refuge in the ‘classical’ perspective of horse men, English gardens and a scene of pure pastoral” (Cooke

33-36). Thus “‘Landscape’ is only a word forever on their lips, but they were not capable of relating to them” (Cooke 35).

Long years of being dominated by the imperial powers had made the natives feel themselves as ‘worthless’. They felt like unimportant, negligible ‘creatures’ on the face of the earth. Ralph Singh, Jimmy Ahmed and Salim, being colonial subjects had their different stories which revolved around similar colonial concepts- homelessness, identity crisis, dislocated, desolated, lost and most importantly falsely decolonized. The aftereffects of imperialism were not only limited to physical and geographical changes; the greater impact was on the minds of these ‘men of color’ which turned them into what Fanon terms as the ‘abandonment-neurotic’. Fanon uses the term to describe the psychological damage of these ‘men of color’ and how it effects on their personal relationship. Fanon’s essay in *Black Skin White Mask* on the ‘abandonment-neurotic’ is rich in evocative details:

Affective self-rejection invariably brings the abandonment-neurotic to an extremely painful and obsessive feeling of exclusion, of having no place anywhere, of being superfluous everywhere in an affective sense...”I am The Other” is an expression that I have heard time and again in the language of the abandonment- neurotic. To be “The Other” is to feel that one is always in a shaky position, to be always on guard, ready to be rejected and...unconsciously doing everything needed to bring about exactly this catastrophe. (76)

The above lines explain how an abandon neurotic thinks and feels of one-self. Years of being ‘alone’ and ‘abandoned’ had imprinted the minds of these ‘men of color’ in a way that they devalue their own worth and was reluctant to commit themselves to any relationship. They were convinced that they ‘deserved’ only loneliness, scars and bruises; love was not for them. The feeling of ‘being loved’ was a feeling long lost; the feeling of being hated came to them naturally and that is what they expected for them. ‘Hatred’ was what they nourished; it grew inside them more and more. Therefore, for an abandonment- neurotic, the base of any relationship was never love because they did not know how to love; it was of lust and control.

These ‘men of color’ when left in a post-colonial world where they were supposedly ‘free’ in the so-called ‘modern’ world, found themselves even more lost. They became so used to, to be always told by the colonizers what to do, now when the colonizers left they felt unguarded. They did not know what to do because they could not relate themselves to anything; everything had been so much changed by the colonizers. They always needed the guidance of other men’s eyes. In their desperation the ‘men of color’ started to seek for refuge under the wings of white women. They wanted white women as their lover but their relationship was never out of love; it was for power. The perversities of their actions were extreme. In that state of self-dejection and desperation an aspiration to be like the white men was what these ‘men of color’ desired- “Out of the darkest part of my soul, across the zebra striping of my mind, surges this desire to be suddenly *white*. I wish to be acknowledged not as *black* but as *white*” (Fanon 63). This desire suddenly became the sole motive of the ‘men of color’ as Fanon observes “I found that the dominant concern among those arriving in France was to go to bed with a white woman. As soon as their ships docked in Le Havre, they were off to the houses. Once this ritual of initiation into ‘authentic’ manhood had been fulfilled, they took the train for Paris” (72). Thus, ‘whiteness’ became the symbol of power for the ‘men of color’. The attitude towards their longings to be with white women was felt in an empowered position, was to prove their worth and manhood and to gain security. They felt the ‘whiteness’ of the white women would make them elevate their positions in the society. Since ‘white’ was the color of superiority for the ‘men of color’, being loved by a white woman would make them worthy of love and superior in their own eyes. Their own judgment about themselves was built by the ‘whiteness’ of white women. Fanon writes:

Who but a white woman can do this for me? By loving me she proves that I am worthy of white love. I am loved like a white man. I am a white man. Her love takes me onto the noble road that leads to total realization...I marry white culture, white beauty, white whiteness. When my restless hands caress those white breasts, they grasp white civilization and dignity and make them mine. (63)

The basis of such relationship is a parasitic one. It is not out of love but out of selfishness. Since the colonized have always been misused, they only understand the language of hatred. They do not recognize love and is reluctant to commit themselves to any serious relationship. Even if they are loved by the white women, they will not believe it because they take themselves as unworthy of love for granted. They have faced so much humiliation that it becomes impossible for them to accept that they too can be loved, “the abandonment-neurotic demands proofs” (Fanon 76). The feeling of love is an emotion that suffocates them and they flee away from it. “The essence of this attitude is ‘not to love in order to avoid being abandoned’” (Fanon 76). The feeling of being ‘left out’ haunts the colonized to an extent where he is ready to give up on love for the fear of being abandoned later. He feels love will make him weak and vulnerable to hurt. Thus, almost in all cases the relationship between a ‘man of color’ and a white woman ends in violence, torture and even death.

Naipaul himself had gone through the burden of unpleasant relationships with three women in his life. French in writing Naipaul’s biography portrays Naipaul’s tormenting experiences with his wife and his mistress. There are stark similarities between the three women who were there in Naipaul’s life- Pat, his first wife, Margaret, his mistress and Nadia, his second wife with the female characters Naipaul gives birth in his novels- Sandra, Jane and Yvette. The relationships that these female characters have with the corresponding protagonists seem to reflect Naipaul’s own relationship with his women. Naipaul also falls under the category of Fanon’s abandonment-neurotic. From his biography it is clear that, the famous well known writer had a rather displeasing personal life. Being a colonial subject him-self, Naipaul dismissed the idea of a serious relationship and resisted in getting one. French examines his tortured marriage and his 24-year love affair, Naipaul describes that period of his life as a ‘mental hell-fire’ (French).

When Naipaul married Patricia Hale, his first wife and the first white woman in his life, “he was not sure whether he wanted to be married” (French). “Naipaul was ‘in too deep’ to get out of the relationship; he loved Pat, he needed her, but he was not sure whether he wanted to be married” (French). He married Pat because he needed her and that need slowly turned into suffocation. Nothing that Pat would do would make Naipaul believe in her love. Pat went against her father who knew “the obvious disadvantages of mixed marriage” (French) and left home for

Naipaul. Pat being the more optimistic and stronger of the two tried her best to make their marriage work “I have absolute faith in your ultimate ability to do something great. I am convinced that we are going to be a distinguished couple” (Hale). Naipaul knew Pat kept him emotionally healthy, cooked and worked for him and that was all he wanted from her. It gave him a power over her, over her ‘whiteness’. Naipaul did not present Pat with even a wedding ring which to Pat held certain importance and significance and she “finally bought for herself, a plain gold band” (French). To make up for his weaknesses Naipaul gave such bizarre subsequent justifications to Pat saying “I had no interest in jewellery. I didn’t think it was important” (Naipaul). In reality “a wedding ring represented all that Naipaul wanted to avoid: expense, the trap of marriage, social expectations. He had chosen to marry Pat, but did not want to accept the consequences of doing so” (French). To Naipaul his marriage was meaningless, he was so reluctant towards it that “he lost the marriage certificate” (French). The marriage remained a secret for many passing months and it grew more loveless with time “Naipaul physical attraction towards Pat had never been certain, and after they married it declined further” (French). Naipaul always felt there was ‘wrongness’ about their marriage, “all the time I was with Pat I knew something was wrong. I knew it was wrong” (Naipaul).

Whatever Pat did for Naipaul could not win his love for her. Naipaul started having an affair with an Anglo-Argentine woman of British descent, Margaret Gooding while he used to travel for his work. Then again, this affair was not out of love or affection but again a thirst for control. “I wished to possess her as soon as I saw her. So she came in and I was completely dazzled. I loved her eyes. I loved her mouth. I loved everything about her and I have never stopped loving her, actually. What a panic it was for me to win her because I had no seducing talent at all. And somehow the need was so great that I did do it” (Naipaul). Naipaul was only physically attracted to Margaret and by winning control over her he wanted to prove that he was capable of doing so. But Naipaul was not ready to bear the consequences of his affair as well and he “was always terrified that someone from Margaret family would be waiting for him with a shot gun” (Naipaul). Pat and Margaret both were Naipaul’s inspirations to work. He mused over them and his relationship with them to create his characters for the novel. He used their love for his benefits.

While Naipaul could not care less about what his actions might bring upon Pat, Pat supported him all through. “Naipaul and Pat were unable to have children, and her relationship with her remained close but unsatisfactory” (French). Being the ‘neurotic’ that he was, he turned a blind eye towards Pat love; because his relationship with Pat was such, Naipaul assumed himself to be unworthy of ‘white’ love. He started to have sex with prostitutes “convinced of his inabilities as a seducer, bought sex offered him a form of comfort and release” (French). Pat was more of a confidante for Naipaul than his wife “I was full of grief. I went back to the bungalow and I told Pat, as I might have told my own mother” (Naipaul). Naipaul “expected her to respond to his grief, and she did” (French). Her reaction would make Naipaul feel loved by a ‘white’ woman which would give him a feel of being wanted. “For the next two decades, the triangle between Naipaul, Pat and Margaret persisted, shifting from an equilateral to a scalene depending on his work, mood and location, and the emotional pull exerted by each woman. When Naipaul travelled to research a book, it would often be Margaret, and then he would go back home to Pat” (French). He would want Pat’s physical presence or absence according to his will, in spite of that Pat would return to Naipaul at the first call he made. At one point his relationship with Pat became such that “they did not touch or embrace” (French).

Pat knew about the whereabouts of Naipaul which devastated her but she kept on offering him her silent support till she died. Even when she fell ill for cancer she insisted that “there was nothing her husband should do except continue with his work” (French). Naipaul’s infidelity deteriorated Pat’s condition even faster, moreover her state of mind worsened by the fact that she was dosing herself regularly with Mandrax, an addictive sleeping tablet. Pat remained loyal to Naipaul regardless his ill conduct towards her.

It seems not to have occurred to Pat to leave him, or to ask Naipaul to leave. Silence or complicity was to be her response. Witnessing her husband’s work became a substitute for living. It enabled Naipaul to break her confidence, while at the same time incorporating her into the process of literary creation. He relied on her guidance and support, even while he harried her; he said he could not imagine working without her. So Pat stayed, cooking and

washing for him. Naipaul's unconscious hope may have been that if he were sufficiently horrible to Pat, she might disappear. Pat kept silent, as she had always kept silent, but allowed the knowledge to eat away at her (French).

Even when Pat became seriously ill, she was at the verge of dying any moment, Naipaul remained with Margaret. Naipaul had no regard for the woman who loved and cared for him overlooking his ill treatment towards her. "In his old age, he acknowledged that his love affair with Margaret effectively undid Pat's life" (French). French quotes "I was liberated. She was destroyed. It was inevitable. I think she had all the relapses and everything after that. She suffered. It could be said that I killed her. It could be said. I feel a little that way" (Naipaul). Margaret who was to be his mistress for 24 years and the reason of Naipaul's separation from Pat suddenly was of no interest to Naipaul anymore. "In his head, Naipaul began to reject the mistress who had through decades of harassment chosen to stand by him. Now that he might, if things went badly, have Margaret as his wife, he had a fateful, hateful, fatal sense that he did not want her any more. It was unjust, but as ever Naipaul presented himself as a figure controlled by irreducible needs" (French). French quotes "I feel that in all of this Margaret was badly treated. I feel this very much. But you know there is nothing I can do...I stayed with Margaret until she became middle-aged, almost an old-lady" (Naipaul). Naipaul was interested into this new woman journalist- Nadira whom he met at an occasion. This also happened while Pat was alive but he decided not to tell Pat about his plans about marrying Nadira, "I left that out. Pat was too ill to react" (Naipaul). Naipaul shared about his life with Nadira- "he told me he should have never married Pat, but that she was a great support to his works, that he was sexually deprived but Margaret had changed all that, and that he had come to the end of the road with Margaret but had carried on because it was convenient" (Nadira Naipaul). "And so it was that on the day after he cremated his wife, VS Naipaul invited a new woman into her house-or his house-and the funeral green olives did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables" (French).

Naipaul fulfills Fanon's definition of an abandonment-neurotic. The abandonment neurotic demands proofs, which Naipaul had ample of from Pat but still was not content with it. He kept on jumping from one relationship to another in search of love but in the process lost more love. Naipaul says "I didn't have time to conduct an affair. I didn't have the talent. I didn't

know how you conducted an affair because there was no body to tell me or to guide me”. “V.S. Naipaul has produced works of extraordinary skill-and lived a life of equally extraordinary callousness” (French).

Colonization has divided the colonial people into three categories: the blind imitators of the colonizers, the blind rejection of the colonizers, people who envied them and finally a blending of the national and the natives. In all the three ways, it is not possible to undo the effects of ‘colonization’ whichever way the colonized lived their life. “When there is nothing, there is everything to be made” (Naipaul) could not be applied to the colonial lands or people because they did not have the mind to work on their own. Colonization infected the lives of the natives in such an irreversible manner that the colonized did not know how to cope when they were left free. They were in hopeless effort of decolonizing themselves from the colonizers which was not possible. Their minds were imprisoned by the colonizers. They had no option but to follow the footsteps of the colonizers. Even if they rejected their norms, they still searched for power, control and order in ‘whiteness’. The colonized people lived in a false hope of decolonizing themselves which in reality was not possible. Even though the colonizers had left physically, they kept on ruling on the mental domain of the colonized people. The domination was so strong that the colonized people could not imagine leading their lives free from European rule. Imperialism became a part and parcel of the lives of colonial people. They took domination for granted’ nothing could be thought beyond imperialism. To this Said says that the end of imperial rule was not the end of domination and that “westerners may have physically left their colonies in Africa and Asia, but they retained them not only as markets but as locales on the ideological map over which they continued to rule morally and intellectually” (24).

RanjitKirpalsingh AKA Ralph Singh: A journey through the life of *The Mimic Men* of V.S. Naipaul.

The Mimic Men by V.S. Naipaul is a story that revolves around the life of its protagonist, Ralph Singh. The entire book is an autobiographical product of Ralph Singh where he collected the memoirs of his life. Ralph Singh is the perfect embodiment of *The Mimic Men*. From Singh's narration the readers get an insight into his life and his surroundings, "in *The Mimic Men* Naipaul is primarily interested in the development of Singh's personality as he wrestles with the difficulty of finding reality, conditioned as he has been to settle for mimicry" (Boxill 12). The novel examines the Island of Isabella, a newly independent country in the Caribbean. Though independent, the Island failed to offer its people any sense of identity or national unity. During the colonial period the colonizers have shaped the lives of people with its rich English 'modern' culture; but this modernity did not belong to the people of the Island. It was not something they could relate themselves to. That is why when the colonizers, the people of the Island found themselves into a world they do not recognize. They suffered from dislocation, placelessness, fragmentation and a loss of identity. To read the novel from a political or materialistic point of view is not enough' the psychological damage that is created is very evident in the book which cannot be overlooked.

Mimicry is an effect of colonization that started from the colonizing period and crept into the post-colonial era. "An increasingly important term in post-colonial theory, because it has come to describe the ambivalent relationship between colonizer and colonized" (Griffith 124). The concept of mimicry is heavily discussed by HomiBhabha where he says "colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite" (122). Oppression and frustration of the natives during the colonial period leads them to believe that the whites, Europeans are superior and they were inferior. A blind imitation of the whites would lead them to superiority and an access to the powers they hold. Ralph Singh is the ultimate mimic man of Naipaul to whom London was a 'promised land' where he could find order and 'snow' was his element. His attraction towards whiteness is revealed in the very first page of the novel when Singh expresses his opinions about the white man Mr. Shylock "suits made of cloth so fine I felt I could eat it. I had nothing but admiration. Mr. Shylock looked

distinguished, like a lawyer or businessman. He had the habit of stroking the lobe of his ear and inclining his head to listen. I thought the gesture was attractive; I copied it (7). Bhabha also states, though mimicry to the colonized is the “most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge” (122), it leaves people more confused than ever “the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence” (122). Bhabha also says, that “mimicry repeats rather than represents” thus growth of an individual is not possible if one always haunts what he lacks which explains why at the end of the novel, Ralph Singh mimicry and an attraction towards the white, the English, the foreign disappoints him. Mimicry also becomes a hopeless attempt due to reasons elaborated later in this paper which explains the sufferings of the colonized people. Boxill exclaims “how can a society which is profoundly mimic produce anything which is not itself mimic; how can a man who is not sure what he is produce anything which is genuinely his own” (13).

Homelessness is an eminent feature that emerges as a result of colonization. The protagonist, Ralph Singh suffers from the feeling of being homeless which gives rise to his identity crisis. Born in the Island of Isabella among people of mixed ethnicities he had always been detached from his original homeland, his country, India. During the period of colonial rule, the colonizers provided the people of the Island with the English world and presented the English way of life as a world of discipline, success and achievement. The colonizers have made these people believe that their English ways were superior to the inferior natives of the Island.³ Ralph Singh grew up knowing the English world as a part and parcel of his life. Thus, he took for granted that every culture was like the culture of the English and every world was a subset of the English world. He sought refuge in the ‘classical’ perspective he had of the English world- “and I have visions of Central Asian horsemen, among whom I am one, riding below a sky threatening snow to the very end of an empty world” (81). Having no sense of his original culture and traditions Singh viewed the world through the colonizers eyes and fantasized his own land to similar to the English lands. This is proved true when Singh imagines his grandmother “leading her cow through a scene of pure pastoral: calendar pictures of English gardens super- imposed on our villages of mud and grass” (89).

³ See Introduction esp. paragraphs 4-7. Edward Said gives an elaborate description about the post-colonial situation.

On the other hand, the Island where he grew up could not provide him with any (true) identity as well. The Island which was a melting pot of people of mixed race, mixed culture and traditions did not hold any significance for a particular religion or culture that even when Singh belonged to the ethnicity minority. Moreover, imprinted by the English culture and lifestyle Singh could not relate himself to the variety of people having various conducts, cultures and histories. Singh had Chinese, Black and French people who were natives of the Island, as friends. They were happy with whatever the Island could offer them, but to Singh, anything which was not English held no meaning. To Singh Isabella was a place of disorder where his ‘classical associations’ of the land contradicted to the ‘harsher island significance’. Unlike his friends, Singh could not share any pleasure from the Island which he thought to be infertile. Where his friends “memoirs were individual and romantic, his were historic and sublime” (Cooke 35). While Browne was convinced of the plausibility that the Island stored and could nourish if properly taken cared, Singh was adamant about the unworthiness of it:

I had been able at a certain moments to think of Isabella as deserted and awaiting discovery. Browne showed me that its tropical appearance was contrived; there was a history in the vegetation we considered most natural and characteristic. He told me about the coconut which fringed our beaches, about the sugarcane, the bamboo and mango...in the heart of the city he showed me a clump of old fruit trees. (146)

Browne was among those people who could live contended by blending what has been provided by the colonizers and incorporating them into their native ways, that the “native and Western are linked” (Cooke 37). Browne wanted Singh to see that they had a history, though ‘contrived’ and ‘manufactured, but the Island of Isabella did have some sort of history after all, if one wanted to search for it. He demonstrates emphatically “Our landscape was manufactured as that of any great French or English park. But we walked in a garden of hell, among trees, some still without popular names, whose seeds had sometimes been brought to our island in the intestines of slaves (147). Browne was very optimistic about the idea that there were promising perspectives of the Island from which one can view the nodal points of this history, all they

needed to do is to make this history their own “look above the roofs of the city and imagine!” (147). Browne persuaded Singh to come out of his ‘classical’ perspective and argued “the first task awaiting the islanders, to provide native names and thereby clarify the order which exists in indigenous terms, is implied” (Cooke 36). Singh had a more pessimistic view and he mockingly thought that “Browne’s pretentiousness is actually a mask for his own discomfort” (Cooke 37).

“For Singh, the Western or ‘classical’ tradition must not only be superior but unadulterated” (Cooke 37) and thus Singh wanted to escape from this disordered life in Isabella and search for order in London. Deschampsneufs was another French friend of Singh who shared similar opinions with Browne about the Island. “Deschampsneufs does show, through his love for the texture of the island’s trees and his awareness of a history on Isabella, that it has aspects of an earthly paradise one can claim as one’s own” (Cooke 37). This French friend felt “the sensuous feel for one’s own land can never be recreated” (Cooke 37), that he could connect himself to the Island since they have lived there forever and tells Singh:

You know, you are born in a place and you grow up there.
 You get to know the trees and plants. You will never know
 any other trees or plants like that. You grow up watching a
 guava tree, say. You know that brownish-green bark peeling
 like old paint. You try to climb that tree. You know that
 after you climb it a few times the bark gets smooth-smooth
 and so slippery you can’t get a grip on it. You get a ticklish
 feeling in your foot. Nobody has to teach you what guava
 is. (171)

Deschampsneufs was one who felt with such intensity about the Island; however it was, it was the homeland they knew and had. So he urges Singh to return, “And this island is a paradise, you will discover” (172).

Ralph Singh however kept firm on his ‘classical’ perspective. His ideas of the island refute with both Browne and Deschampsneufs and Singh denies acknowledging the beauty of the island. Moreover to overcome his sense of abandonment from a lack history Singh idealizes his past through the ‘classical’ perspective. He dreams of India as an ideal place containing people

of heroic characteristics. However his fantasies disputed with the real life condition in Isabella. His resentment towards the Island and its people grew when in one incident Singh witnessed the death of three children who drowned in the sea while the fisherman stood there doing nothing to save them- “people were drowning. There in that infernal devouring element people were drowning. The fishermen were begged to go out and save them. The fishermen sat on the roots of coconut trees and mended their nets and stripped lengths of canes for their fishpots” (130). Witnessing this, Singh suffered from shock, shocked from how less humanity was left in mankind. Singh’s suffering is similar to the people of the ‘modern’ world which we find in the poem *Musee Des Beaux Arts*:

In Breughel's Icarus, for instance: how everything turns away
Quite leisurely from the disaster; the ploughman may
Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,
But for him it was not an important failure; the sun shone
As it had to on the white legs disappearing into the green
Water, and the expensive delicate ship that must have seen
Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,
Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on. (Auden)⁴

Icarus who was also seen drowning was not given a hand for survival.⁵ His death did not bring any difference to the people or to the world; the world went on as it is. On the other hand, along with the farmers Singh too did not make an attempt to save the drowning children, even though he was there. Singh was afraid that the ‘modern’ world of post-colonial Isabella had made people spiritually impotent where nobody cared for the other, making him spiritually impotent as well. It was a ‘harsh’ world to him and he wanted to flee. “There are landscapes in the novel which, through the history embedded in them, suggest a means of establishing a sense

⁴ "Musée des Beaux Arts" (French for "Museum of Fine Arts") is a poem written by W.H. Auden in December 1938 while Auden was staying in Brussels, Belgium with Christopher Isherwood. It was first published under the title "Palais des beaux arts" in the Spring 1939 issue of *New Writing*, a modernist magazine edited by John Lehman.

⁵ In Greek mythology, Icarus is the son of the master Athenian craftsman Daedalus. The main story told about Icarus is his attempt to escape from Crete by means of wings that his father constructed from feathers and wax. He ignored instructions not to fly too close to the sun, and the melting wax caused him to fall into the sea where he drowned.

of place. Even though Singh ultimately fails to comprehend them, he does have intimations of their existence” Cooke 35).

Moreover, Singh’s idealism about a heroic past totally collapsed by the actions of his father. Singh’s family life was disrupted when his father went away to choosing a life of ‘*sanyasi*’ living with another woman.⁶ His father wanted to use religion as a tool to secure a place of power for him-self and to retain Hinduism; in the process he destroyed his son’s believe. Also the little fame that Singh’s maternal side of his family enjoyed as the ‘Isabella millionaires’ was because they were local bottlers of the European *Coca-Cola* company, which again made them the slaves of the colonizers. This fame would not help in finding his own identity. Singh was further shocked when his father sacrificed Tamango, the race horse which according to the Hindu religion was an act of sacrifice to secure prosperity and fertility. Since Singh was unaware of his true Hindu culture, this act of sacrifice held no symbolic significance to him; it was purely an act of brutality. This cruelty was not something he had imagined through his ideal ‘classical’ perspective of India. Singh understood that Hinduism has lost its meaning in Isabella as the people had lost connection with India. The Indians in Isabella were doomed to isolation and dislocation. Singh’s heroic thoughts about India crumbled and his own culture becomes meaningless to him. Singh understood that an island so full of viciousness cannot be an epitome for anyone to search for history or have a productive future. Thus, his suffocation grew and his urge to escape became even stronger:

*Asvamedha.*⁷ I had read the texts, I knew the word. The horse sacrifice, the Aryan ritual of victory and overlordship, a statement of power so daring it was risked only by the truly brave; how had my father arrived at it? Was it simply the intuition of the leader?...*Asvamedha.* Tainted oil, raw flesh. Chieftaincy among mountains and snow had been my innermost fantasy. Now, deeply, I felt betrayed and ridiculed. I rejected the devotion that was

⁶Sannyasa is the life stage of the renouncer within the Hindu scheme of āśramas. It is considered the topmost and final stage of the ashram systems and is traditionally taken by men or women over fifty or by young monks who wish to renounce worldly and materialistic pursuits and dedicate their lives to spiritual pursuits.

⁷ The Ashvamedha (Sanskrit: अश्वमेध *aśvamedhá*; "horse sacrifice") was one of the most important royal rituals where the horse must be stallion, that is more than 24 years but less than 100 years.

offered to me. I wished to fly, to begin afresh, lucidly.
(169-170)

Singh travels to London in order to find order as he found Isabella a place associated with chaos. Order and peace were words Singh associated with the English, the whites. Singh feels that his colonial education was one major factor which influenced him to take up a life of dislocation and alienation. As a victim of the colonial education and its curriculum Singh has always been encouraged to imitate the empire and become the 'mimic man'. Singh's colonial education has taught him to that the 'mother' country, England, is a symbol of order and that the English culture is superior than his own culture, if he had any. Singh recognized colonial mimicry but he could not help being a mimic man. At the same time Singh also realized that being a mimic man would not come to much help because he cannot be an Englishman in spite of his colonial education; one has to be born in England to be proper English. "My first memory of school is of taking an apple to the teacher. This puzzles me. We had no apple on Isabella. It must have been an orange; yet my memory insists on the apple. The editing is clearly at fault, but the edited version is all I have" (90). Thus colonial education has made Singh a homeless man with no self- image and a confused mind.⁸

It was in London during his period of education that he met Sandra, who was to be his wife later. Singh's sense of abandonment and domination give birth to Fanon's 'abandonment-neurotic' when he met her.⁹ Ralph Singh's personal relationship with his wife almost resembles Naipaul's relationship with Pat who also met her at the Oxford University. Singh was attracted by Sandra's 'whiteness' and her superior attitudes which distinguished her from the other women: "I had such confidence in her rapaciousness, such confidence in her as someone who could come to no harm- a superstitious reliance on her, which was part of the strength I drew from her-that in the moment it seemed to me that to attach myself to her was to acquire that protection which she offered, to share some of her quality of being marked, a quality which ones was mine but which I had lost" (56). Singh being the 'man of color', an attraction towards English white women who resembled power and position to him was very much expected, "I imagine you'll be coming back with a whitey-pokey bride" (Deschampsneufs 204).

⁸See Introduction esp. paragraphs 8-15. Thiong'o's detail explanations on the colonial education system justifies Singh's saying.

⁹ See Introduction esp. paragraphs 20-23. Fanon's 'abandonment-neurotic' explains Ralph Singh relationship with Sandra.

Singh was always reluctant to be tied into any relationship. He wanted to be in control of his relationship with the white women; it gave him a sense of power. Singh, being a non-English and a non-white, rejection has been the only attitude he received from the colonizers therefore Singh took certain pleasure in rejecting the white woman who came across his life- "I said to a French woman, 'Do you dance?' She at once rose. It was then that out of nowhere the impulse of cruelty came to me. I said, 'I don't.' And I left" (20). Singh had always been deprived of family life and family bonding because of the broken disturbed relationship he had seen between his parents. He lived a divided life, often staying with just one of his parents and away from his siblings. He had never experienced joyous family moments. He feared love and intimacy because these feelings were unknown to him. "Intimacy: the word holds the horror. It was violation and self-violation. These scenes in the book-shaped room didn't always end well; they could end in tears, sometimes in anger, a breast grown useless being buttoned up, a door closed on a room that seemed to require instant purification" (30). The act of love making seemed artificial to Singh, as if it was guided out of any text book or a fairy tale. Singh felt a reason for this was due to the colonial education, where the physical act is only an active part of the mind which does not connect to the soul. Thus love making was rather a 'torture' for Singh and not pleasure which he exerted on the women. Singh's encounter with white women mostly ended in violence, an extraction of his anguish "this remained a shame for some time; for I had actually shouted at the girl. I have been guilty of three or four acts of pure cruelty in my life" (32). Singh knew his personal agony was no excuse for the bizarreness he showed towards these women but he retained some perverse behaviors- "I took to retaining trophies from the girls who came to the book-shaped room: stockings, various small garments, once even a pair of shoes from a girl who had thought of staying the night. Though even now I cannot understand my motives. Nor can I understand why I began keeping a sexual diary. I began it, I remember, out of boredom and idleness; but soon it developed into a type of auto-erotic enterprise" (30-31). The 'left-overs' were Singh's credit, a proof which reminded him of his superiority over whiteness. This again takes us back to Naipaul who "took photographs of Pat's meager possessions: her bed, her spectacles, her shoes, her medicine, and the snow outside" (French) meaning he took pride in the fact that he held control over an English woman that even in an English country.

Singh's marriage with Sandra was not because he loved her, but because he "tend to marry in Europe not so much out of love as for the satisfaction of being the master of a European

woman; and a certain tang of proud revenge enters into this” (Fanon 69). It never occurred to Singh to ask her for marriage with love: “why don’t you propose, you fool?” (Sandra 55). It is clear that Singh felt his position elevated and secured in the presence of Sandra- “it was in her walk, in the bite of her speech, even in the way she ate food which she considered expensive. But how could I resist her quick delight? Her very rapaciousness attracted me. To me, drifting about the big city that had reduced me to futility, she was all that was positive. Her delight strengthened me” (54). Also Sandra was more a confidante for Singh like Pat was to Naipaul and he considered her as ‘good luck’. Singh remembers his marriage as an “absurd ceremony” (58). Besides what Singh felt towards her was lust, “the dark romance of mixed marriage!” (59):

Sandra, I can see, will not be everyone’s idea of a beauty; but she overwhelmed me then; and she would overwhelm me now, I know: her looks were of the sort that improves with the strength and definition of maturity. She was tall; her bony face was longish and I liked the suggestion of thrust in her chin and lower lip. I liked her narrow forehead and her slightly ill- humored eyes-and there was coarseness about her skin which enchanted me. I liked a quality of graining in the skin; it was to me a sign of subtle sensuality. There was a firmness and precision in her movements, and always a slight bite to her speech. She affected a very old and grubby khaki colored macintosh, which it was always a pleasure to help off, for below it, and always a surprise, were soft cool colors, and a body fresh and scrupulously cared for. Not even the macintosh could hide the fullness of her breasts; breasts which in the end madden the viewer because faced with such completeness of beauty, he does not know what to do. Pure joy it was, at the assisted uncovering to discover that she painted the nipple of her breasts. So absurd, so pathetic, so winning. I kissed, caressed, stroked with hands and cheek; inadequate speech was dragged out of me. ‘Lovely, lovely,’ I said. (51-52)

Since the marriage was a loveless one, soon Singh and Sandra both saw “the absurdity of the relationship; the wrongness. And, perhaps the absence of virtue” (29). Singh knew he was a comfort to Sandra who had a difficult father who “argued like a crab” (51)- “it was easy to see how she felt imprisoned and fearful” (53). To his surprise, the women in whom Singh sought to

find a refuge, Singh discovered “though of the city, her position in it was like my own. She had no community, no group, and had rejected her family” (53), thus was not any help to Singh. Singh felt exploited “I came back more exhausted than before, more oppressed by a feeling of waste and helplessness” (49). Sandra’s presumptions about the ‘man of color’ eventually changed which Singh feared all the time, “I suppose this is the most inferior place in the world. Inferior natives, inferior expats” (82). Sandra “had begun to get some of my geographical sense, that feeling of having been flung off the world” (81). “It has since occurred to me that the art of physical love is in keeping of the women, and depends to a considerable extent on the position in society. As this position improves, so the art of love declines” (58). Singh and Sandra shared not love but distress together and thus Singh feels “we were compatible, yet it was this very compatibility that drew her away from me” (81). The loveless marriage grew apart, dishonesty to dishonesty, unease to unease, “we had taken to sleeping in separate rooms so that the sleeplessness of the one might not disturb the other” till Singh felt disgusted toward her to an extent which turned into violence “I should have slapped her on that mouth which it gave me so much pleasure to contemplate” (86).

“The very things I had once admired in her-confidence, ambition, rightness-were what I now pitied her for. Now I was truly appalled. I wished to get away at once, to reflect, to be alone again” (58). Singh did not try stopping Sandra when she went away. It was his own ego, the ego of the ‘abandonment-neurotic’ that stopped him from stopping her. By letting her go Singh tried to show that he did not need her, that she did not make a difference in his life. Moreover Singh knew “Sandra was after all in a position to leave: other relationships awaited her, other countries. I had nowhere to go; I wished to experience no new landscapes; I had cut myself off from that avidity which I still attributed to her. It was not for me to decide to leave; that decision was hers alone” (91). For the rest of the novel we never get to know what happened to Sandra after she left; she just disappears. By choosing to simply eliminate Sandra from his narrative, Singh shifts his own position from being the ‘abandonment-neurotic’ and instead makes her the ‘abandoned’ one, once again asserting his ‘assumed’ sense of control over her.

His broken marriage had left him more confused and with a sense of utter failure. Ralph Singh never found the order he was searching for in London, rather he found himself into greater disorder. He says “we talk of escaping to the simple life. But we do not mean what we say. It is

from simplification such as this that we wish to escape, to return to a more elemental complexity” (43). On returning to his Island, Singh decided to become a politician in order to fulfill his psychological need for order and an identity. “Only with The Mimic Men does the recognition of a national history in the landscape become necessary condition for establishing a stable identity” (Cooke 32). He also took up politics because he wanted get a real view of himself, to rid himself of the “panic of ceasing to feel myself as a whole person” (33). His reasons behind joining politics were not to help his fellow Islanders but to satisfy his own ego and to feel himself in a position of power. As a politician Singh does not concentrate on helping to reduce poverty or the sufferings of the people but he was obsessed with ‘naming’ everything. That showed his thirst for power and ownership “So I went on naming; and later, I required everything-every government building, every road, every agricultural scheme-to be labeled. It reinforced that sense of ownership which overcame me...” (215). Thus Singh was doing the same thing that once the colonizers did to the Island; he was behaving like the colonizers. Singh referred to his political activity as ‘drama’. ‘Drama’ because all his actions as a politician were only a series of experiments that he applied on the Island and the people, to satisfy his ego. It was not a real life experience for him and he was aware that his role as a ‘colonial’ politician was meaningless, it was more of a sarcasm. Singh writes “Politicians are people who truly make something out of nothing. They have few concrete gifts to offer. They are not engineers or artists or makers. They are manipulators; they offer themselves as manipulators. Having no gifts to offer, they seldom know what they seek. They might say they seek power. But their definition of power is vague and unreliable” (43). Singh realized that his sense of ‘drama’ and his pretensions did not bring any peace to the Island and people suffered from social and economic unrest. Under such conditions the only solution they had to stabilize the condition of the Island was the nationalization of the sugar estate, owned by an upper class Englishman, Lord Stockwell. When Singh went to persuade the Englishman, he failed and moreover was humiliated by the English ministers. They refused to take the matter seriously and treated Singh like a child. Singh, not a member of the imperial power was made to feel his status as a politician as inferior and of a failure. Singh knew without the help from the English he could not take any solution back to his country, thus he asked “How can I take this message back to my people?” and Stockwell indicating clearly that he had other things to do than assist the public relations of colonial politicians “you can take back to your people any message you like” (224) and that was the end.

Singh's sense of drama failed and he understands that without the help and guidance of the English, the 'masters', they could not do anything. They lived in an illusion of power, but they could never escape from being the 'colonial' subject, "as with Mimic Men, Naipaul is more concerned about the decay in social relations and about human isolation than with politics per se" (Lewis 105). They were mere puppets in the hands of the colonizers. "My career of the colonial politician is short and ends brutally. We lack order, above all we lack power, and we do not understand that we lack power. We mistake words and the acclamation of words for power; as soon as our bluff is called we are lost" (10-11). When Singh returned to the Island he only saw hatred on the face of his people for him, "I knew that return to my island and to my political life is impossible" (10). He knew his game was over, he was seen as their betrayer and he could no longer wear a façade. It was time to Singh to escape again, "it was necessary to rise and prepare for another departure" (284).

Thus, throughout the entire novel Singh spent all his life traveling from places to places trying to find an order, a final settlement in his life. Singh realized, being the 'mimic man' would not help him find his own identity. Rather by changing his name from RanjitKirpalsingh to an English name, Ralph Singh, he went further away from the identity he searched for. Mimicry took away his own native identity as well as did not help him in becoming the 'white' man, "Almost the same but not white" (Bhabha 128). As the novel approaches an end and thus Singh's narrative a few things are very clear. A heterogeneous society of the Caribbean would not offer Singh any emotional or real sense of security. Moreover, through mimicry he cannot achieve a status equal to the English; he would always remain the mimic man. His marriage failed because it was loveless, he devalued the true essence of a marriage and used it as a ladder for his own benefits. Singh remembers his marriage as 'profoundly fraudulent' (301). To a colonial politician, politics held no meaning; they lived in an illusion of power which brought no real sense of identity or control.

To overcome all these and to find some control over his life, Singh took up writing. Through writing Singh wanted to give a picture to his chaotic mind. Writing was a means of release to him, to put his distorted life on pen and paper so that he could look at it from a better perspective as Rao puts it "problems in the writer's life and/or work have accumulated to the point where they threaten a creative 'block', and only by grappling with them directly can the

writer free himself from them” (61). Writing was his desperate try to bring order and meaning to his fragmented past and put the puzzles together. Some of his ‘hopeful’ moments for example his departure from Isabella, his travel to London, his marriage, the beginning of his political career, all these incidents in his life where he was hopeful of a better life, an ordered future, Singh referred to these moments as ‘that period in parenthesis’. As if that part of his life is long lost, as if the ‘hope’ was never there. That part of his life he could not relate to himself anymore. However, Singh is unable to follow a chronological order in his writing. He moves constantly backwards and forwards, from his life in Isabella to his life in London, his student life and his marriage, his childhood to adulthood and his political career. One moment Singh talks about his present and the next moment he is lost in his past. This lack of synchronization also represents Singh’s internal chaos, his spiritual and psychological disturbances. He kept on jumping from one incident to another having no cohesion between events. In *Degrading the Island*, Singh was unable to find order in London and his blind imitation of the white people failed him. He traveled from place to place in order to find a place where he could settle down but he was always aware of the ‘imminent homelessness’ (249).

Throughout the novel, Singh had undermined the voices of his Browne and Dechampsneufs that his native landscape “is valuable and flows from a discernable past” (Cooke 37). The consequences of rejecting that is indicated at the end of his narrative to which Cooke elaborates:

The novel is the autobiography of Ralph Singh, the most self-conscious seeker in Naipaul’s fiction for a landscape he can claim as his own. He never finds that landscape, and our image of him is of a frenetic traveller seeking a sense of place first in his native Caribbean island of Isabella, then in London as a student, once again in Isabella as a suburban land developer and politician, and finally in London when his political career fails. ‘Landscape’ is a word forever on his lips, but he is not capable of relating to them. His end is stasis and withdrawal; he seeks only to be steady. (34-35).

Thus, mimicry leads Singh ultimately nowhere. The desire to overcome the difference between the natives and the foreign, one’s authorization over one-self which comes from self-control is in question. Bhabha says:

Mimicry does not merely destroy narcissistic authority through the repetitious slippage of difference and desire. It is the process of the fixation of the colonial as a form of cross-classificatory, discriminatory knowledge within an interdictory discourse and therefore necessarily raises the question of the authorization of colonial representations. (129)

At the end we see Singh lacked self- control. Though he understood that mimicry would not serve his purpose, his lack of self-confidence made him the mimic man nevertheless. Singh had found a new insight in his life; he realized that acceptance also came with power. Accepting the fact that mimicry would not help him gave him new directions in life. He said “I have cleared the desks, as it were, and prepared myself for fresh actions. It will be the action of a free man” (125). Thus the novel ends on a positive note where “far from being hopeless about the predicament of the modern West Indian and of modern man, Ralph Singh, by his example, shows how modern man can be transcend and be extended by his plastic world” (Boxill 19).

The perpetual warrior within: Schizophrenic Jimmy: An exploration into the mind of Naipaul's
Guerrillas

“The only way to deal with an unfree world is to become so absolutely free that your very existence is an act of rebellion” (Camus).¹⁰

V.S. Naipaul's *Guerrillas* is a novel about colonialism and revolution and “it is a deeply pessimistic work” (Tiffin 65). The novel is set on an unnamed Caribbean Island during the post-colonial period. As I have mentioned earlier in my Introduction, due to colonization the state of the colonized land and its people were troubled. Troubled because even after the colonizing power had left, their impact had left the colonized psychologically devastated and imprisoned. “You may not be able to make a living in England but England teaches you how to live” (17) was the attitude of the colonizers towards the colonized. The racial discrimination is made evident in the very first page “Basic Black, Don't Vote, Birth Control is a Plot Against the Negro race” (1). In this particular novel, on the troubled Caribbean Island the colonized and their ‘guilty’ colonizers all lived in a state of suppressed hysteria. The tone of the novel is not anger and revenge, its ‘violent’, where “the fire refuses to ignite” (Tiffin 61). Violence echoes from the lives of each character in the novel- “We get everything last hand and they expect us to be grateful” (66). The term ‘guerrilla’ is more used as a symbol to express the insight or the psychological conditions of the characters in the novel where everybody was ready to fight for their survival, for their revenge, “When everybody wants to fight there is nothing to fight for. Everybody wants to fight his own little war, everybody is a guerrilla” (87). Maureen Warner Lewis writes in her review:

Given this essential disorder, the individual is thrown upon his own puny resources to ensure some modicum of survival. Naipaul uses the term ‘guerrilla’ in this existentialist context to refer to each and every character in the novel. The guerrillas who took to the hills in Trinidad after the 1970 Black Power uprising

¹⁰ Albert Camus was a French-Algeria-born French Nobel Prize winning author, journalist, and philosopher. His views contributed to the rise of the philosophy known as absurdism.

are therefore used more as symbols in this novel than as exponents of political beliefs. (105)¹¹

Jimmy Ahmed, the protagonist is the quintessential 'guerrilla' of the novel. He is described as the "cold blooded" (Rao 62) imposter. One just had to "look in his eyes to understand the meaning of hate" (34). His role in the novel which has been vastly influenced by the European domination defines the nature of the guerrilla in him. To understand Jimmy we need to know a little about Michael X, the leader of the Black power movement because "Jimmy Ahmed becomes Naipaul's fictional version of Malik" (Lewis 104).¹² It was an assignment sponsored by the prestigious Times of London which brought Naipaul to Trinidad in the early 1970's. He was commissioned to write a feature article for the Times Sunday Supplement on Michael X. It was then "Naipaul saw in Malik's fascinating personality the germ of a new novel, *The Guerrillas*" (Lewis 104). Lewis writes "It concerned the Trinidadian Abdul Malik, formerly Michael X, born Michael de Freitas, who had been sentenced to death in Trinidad for murder. De Freitas had come to the attention of the British public in the mid '60's when he claimed leadership of a Black Power movement in England. He was taken up by some members of the liberal bourgeoisie, and he also had his foot in the underworld. He was later sentenced for living off immoral earnings"(103). Also, having no identity of his own Jimmy renames himself which takes us back to Michael X. "Jimmy's similarity with Michael X is also found when Jimmy calls himself 'haji' since Michael X's real name was that of a Muslim, Abdul Malik. He calls him-self by a Muslim name and appends the title Haji (pilgrim to Mecca) to it" (Lewis 104).

The few lines I have quoted from Albert Camus at the top of my paper describe Jimmy's attitudes towards the post-colonial struggle and survival. The purpose of colonization was to erase the existence of the natives. Jimmy challenge was to rebel against colonization by merely surviving under such circumstances; that was his strength which had set him free. In a world dominated by the Europeans, Jimmy's outwardly indifference to acknowledge it poses a

¹¹ The Black Power Revolution in Trinidad in 1970 presented a serious challenge to the dominant cultural ideology based mainly on a European model, which had, to a large extent, been left intact from the colonial era. The Black Power Revolution, also known as the "Black Power Movement", 1970 Revolution, Black Power Uprising, was an attempt by a number of social elements, people and interest groups in Trinidad and Tobago to force socio-political change.

¹² Michael de Freitas was born in Trinidad to "an Obeah-practicing black woman from Barbados and an absent Portuguese father. By the mid-1960s he had renamed himself "Michael X" and became a well-known exponent of Black Power in London. He was also known as Michael Abdul Malik and Abdul Malik. Convicted of murder in 1972, Michael X was executed by hanging in 1975 in Port of Spain's Royal Gaol. He was also called "the authentic voice of black bitterness."

challenge to the colonial domination. He denies to be ruled and wants to have authority over his own self. He says “I’m Nobody’s Slave or Stallion, I’m a Warrior and Torch Bearer” (10). Thus Jimmy rebellion nature resembled that of Michael X. Also like Michael X, Jimmy showed traits of leadership attitude in him. Where ‘freedom’ and ‘modernity’ were just words for the natives, Jimmy made a place for him-self in the bush which he called “Thrushcross Grange” where claimed to be the leader of the territory and people’s commune, whereas a ‘commune’ means no leadership. The signboard to his commune read, “THRUSHCROSS GRANGE, PEOPLE’S COMMUNE. FOR THE LAND AND THE REVOLUTION. Entry without prior permission strictly forbidden at all times. By order of the High Command, James Ahmed (Haji)” (4). The purpose of this commune was to “return underprivileged young men to the land” (Lewis 104). Jimmy was well aware that like him many other natives of the Island lived under suppressed rage. Being a support to them, Jimmy claims leadership for him-self and gains control over their minds. This gave him a position of power in the Island which he wanted and a threat to the colonizing powers. Lewis writes “Jimmy Ahmed’s personality is less subtle, just as the forces that produce his psychological distortions are more obvious to see and to analyze. He is the product of racial miscegenation, of poverty, of a colonial and, therefore, inferior political order. His rebellion against all these burdens takes the form of large gestures. He challenges the post-independence political status quo with the threat of an uprising by unemployed black youth” (104).

The very fact that Jimmy named the place of his commune ‘Thrushcross Grange’ contested his own rebellion against colonization. He resented the repercussions of colonization which included naming places of the Caribbean Islands after English names and he did that himself. It was very obvious that Jimmy had read English texts and novels, for example *Wuthering Heights* which came as a requisite under the curriculum of colonial education. He grew up reading these texts, thus, though aggravatingly, he subconsciously becomes a part and parcel of colonization. In addition to that, Jimmy had an imaginary friend as his confidante whom he called his ‘English’ friend. By comparing himself to the dark vengeful figure of Heathcliff, Jimmy expresses his inner desire to be equivalent to the colonizing powers and to become a part of the glory of colonization.

“A general alienation is insured by the composition of the landscape in *Guerrillas*” (Cooke 40). Unlike Isabella in *The Mimic Men* we do not get to know the name of the Island in *Guerrillas*; it is an ‘unnamed’ Caribbean island. Kortennar writes “This is the topos of ‘unnaming’ so popular in the New World as a whole”, thus an Island which has been deprived from its own identity cannot offer any to its natives; this is the extent to which the colonized land and people were neglected. Jimmy’s idea of a homeland was much distorted. Born to parents of mixed race, to a Chinese mother and a Black father he was a ‘bakwaiChinee’, which was the Chinese for nigger and had no real sense of identity or history. Moreover, living among people of mixed ethnicities in an unnamed Caribbean Island he was even more confused about where he belonged, “it’s funny how they talk about their childhoods here. As though it’s so far away. As though it belongs to another century” (158). Therefore, the only knowledge he knew about landscape came from his colonial education. Like Singh, Jimmy had a similar ‘classical’ perspective and he could only conceive the idea of a landscape “in terms of English pastorals” (Cooke 41). Although Jimmy’s wanted a place he could call his own and his work centered on reviving the land, whose commune credo was “All revolutions begin with the land. Men are born on the earth, every man has one spot, it is his birthright, and men must claim their portion of the earth in brotherhood and harmony. In this spirit we came an intrepid band to virgin forest, it is the life style and philosophy of Thrushcross Grange” (10), his imagination of an ideal landscape was of rural English pastorals and he kept referring back to English figures such as Clarrissa, Jane of *Jane Eyre*, Rochester and Heathcliff as him-self. Conversely the reality of the Island was much different than Jimmy’s imagination. It was as disorienting:

The sea smelled of swamp; it barely rippled, had glitter rather than color: and the heat seemed trapped below the pink haze of bauxite from the bauxite loading station... after the rubbish dump burning hunched in the remnant of the mangrove swamp, with black carrion corbeaux squatting hunched on the fence or hopping about on the ground; after the naked children playing in the red dust, the clothes hanging like rags. (1-2)

The environment was as suffocated and hazy as Jimmy’s mind. Thus Jimmy’s idea of home was as disordered as he was. Correspondingly Cooke adds:

The passage tells the history of a city ingesting the land, a city whose creations, like the housing development, are ephemeral. The accretions to the city, which we learn later has no discernable center, seem interminable due to the repetitive structure of the long second sentence, and there is no stated relationship between the elements, it had simply been abandoned: one simply occurs after the other. (40)

As a result in spite of Jimmy's commune credo and his effort to bring about a sense of order, he failed. It is because Jimmy's vision of a homeland was blurred by colonization and he perceived the land through the eyes of his 'classical' imagination, overlooking the real condition of the Island. Whereas Roche, the Englishman and the 'guilty' colonizer who "seemed to have some long view, some vision of the future" (Cooke 42) tried to bring about some development to the Island and its people. It was, as Cooke argues, "Roche's very strength, the sensitivity to see the land as it really was and the ability to put it in a broad historical context" (Cooke 43), his ability to accept the reality initiated him to help these people. Roche was aware that the land offered no sense of place and "the heat and dust, used throughout the novel to evoke the land's suffocating effects, would stifle the will of those who seek through the land itself to revive this wasting society" (Cooke 41); more than this, it was poisonous. "Sun and slime, heat and vegetable decay" (Cooke 43) were the visions which described the Island. Roche being the white English man was not very welcomed by Jimmy and other people of the Island. No matter how good his intentions were Roche failed to convey his motive to the Islanders. While he was trying to make the natives look at all the potentials the Island had to offer "imagining the sunset soon to come, the hills and the royal palms against the evening sky was after all, very beautiful" (231), "Roche learns the futility of trying to change what exists" (Cooke 43). Roche realized that it was not the land but the people whose minds were desolated and thus they failed to see the resources that were already there:

Dead palm fronds, brown and shining, coconut husks in heaps, yellow-green nuts awaiting collection. It would photograph well. The camera would get everything, even the muddy olive color of the stripe of sea beyond the breakers, even the yellow froth of the beach. It wouldn't get the desolation. (180)

Thereupon, Roche was not offered any help in his initiative either by Jimmy or by the Islanders. Since Jimmy worked for Roche outwardly he pretended to support Roche but behind all these, Jimmy had a world of his own where he was his own master. “Jimmy must answer for his agricultural project at Thrushcross Grange to Roche and Jimmy and Roche have competing visions of the project, its direction and significance. Each was trying to fit the other into his own particular narrative” (Kortenaar 327). He would not submit to Roche’s plan with the Island because submission to Jimmy was surrendering to the colonizer. Roche realized that these people were spiritually dead and thus nothing can be expected from them: “that the stagnation will continue, that there can be no ‘revolution’ based on the land” (Cooke 43). “Roche who has the background and the desire to serve on the Island of Guerrillas, finds the land wasted beyond recall” (Cooke 44). However Roche was not demotivated, “Roche was not deterred from continuing to seek Stephens, a youth who showed promises as a leader, by the poisonous aspects of the environment: the heat, dust and enclosure of the area” (Cooke 42). Along with Jimmy the Islanders did not support Roche because they were on Jimmy’s side. One more reason might be because they resented the idea of having another English man, Stephens whom Roche wanted to bring in the Island, as their controller or dictator. Jimmy blindfolded by his ego and rage admitted at one point that he might as well kill Stephens if he had to.

Likewise *The Mimic Men*, writing is yet again a powerful tool in *Guerrillas*. Jimmy’s diary is an important element which reveals Jimmy’s inner conflict with him-self and the world around him. Lewis mentions “Like most of Naipaul’s major character, he vents his creative energies through writing. It is writing which indulges fantasy at the expense of fact” (104). The diary leaves Jimmy naked where the readers can have a psychoanalytical reading of Jimmy’s thoughts. Also, the diary was the only medium which explained Jimmy’s roles and relationships with Jane, Roche and the other boys of the Island. The diary was Jimmy’s only solace where he could confide his desires and just be him-self. Kortenaar has similar opinions about Jimmy’s diary when he writes “The readers of *Guerrillas* are given samples of Jimmy’s literary output and invited to judge” (324). Jimmy’s habit of writing again takes us back to Michael X who was arrested when he was writing his autobiography. To Malik words were important, henceforth Kortenaar writes “With words he remade his past; words also gave him a pattern for the future. According to Naipaul, Malik used the words that he picked up in liberal London to give himself

a character; they were mere tokens he could fill with whatever meaning he chose to give them”(324).

Jimmy being a colonial subject feels the need to find order in his life. It is clear, he longs for power and authority. The false act “to make it appear that somebody is telephoning *him*” would make him feel important (160). He also feels letting his bare emotions and hurt flow on the pages of his diary fills him with a sense of peace and calmness. Writing allowed Jimmy his ‘private’ space to open up, where there was no one to read his weaknesses. Jimmy suffered from what Simon Gikandi called the ‘creative schizophrenia’. He did not show any regard for the colonial domination that oppressed their lives nor did he want to accept him-self as a colonial being; he lived in self-denial who chose “not to choose between self and community” (Gikandi 13). He lived in a world of his own where in his imagination he could become anything he wanted; he created his own self. In his fantasies Jimmy goes as far as denying to recognize his own self when he writes “ever since I arrived here I have been hearing about the man they call Jimmy” (32). He denied the community because he thought he deserved better than a place where “flies buzz around shit” (32) and he was accustomed to the class of London where he was a celebrity. In his narrative “we are meant to see the self-deception in Jimmy’s literary output, masking what is true, his pain” (Kortenaar 325). In addition, Kortenaar furthermore writes “An ability to manipulate words and others’ impressions of him allowed him to create a heroic role for himself” (325). It was through writing that Jimmy pretended to have authority on his own life and a dictatorship over others; it was ‘control’ which he lacked and wanted to gain.

All Jimmy’s thirst for control and power was asserted heavily on Jane. The most important relationship Jimmy which brought Jimmy’s psychological disorders upfront was with Jane. Jimmy was perhaps Naipaul’s most disturbing and perverse character and a true ‘abandonment-neurotic’ in every sense of the word. His perversity and neurotic disorder was revealed at its maximum through his disturbing relation with Jane. It has already been told that the ‘abandonment-neurotic’ cannot love and does not believe in love. He just wants to “revenge him-self on a European woman for everything that her ancestors have inflicted on him throughout the centuries” (Fanon 70). The moment Jimmy saw Jane he desired, not her but her whiteness. He wanted to control her ‘whiteness’ the symbol of power to an abandoned colonial subject. The first time Jimmy appeared in front of Jane, he wanted to make an impression on the

white woman, “he enters the hut, a silhouette against the light of the doorway, the impression he makes carefully orchestrated: the mustache, which suggested a mouth clamped shut, made him seemed button up, tense, unreadable” (16). Jimmy wanted Jane to see him as the man who was “not black, but ‘extremely brown’, like a bronze god with a lovely golden color” (Fanon 69). Jimmy was like the “anxious man who cannot escape his body” (Fanon 65).

Jane, the English white woman is one of the focal characters in the novel. “The character whose psychology Naipaul enters sensitively is not Ahmed but that of a young Englishwoman, Jane” (Lewis 104) because her character is created to many extents by Jimmy and some by Roche. She is the only character who absolutely had no voice. Contradictory to that, Naipaul gives her the maximum privilege because “Jane is given the opportunity to see the totality of island life and thereby to feel ‘in place’” (Cooke 42). Though she was white, Jane was unaware of her own position in a post-colonial society. She came to the Island fascinated by native power and sexuality indifferent to the affects her ‘whiteness’ may bring upon them. She wanted to explore native lives which was different from theirs, “however, this experience foreshadows her destruction” in the end (Cooke 42). Jane suffered the trauma of an unloving relationship with Roche and lack of real experiences in her life. The problems in her personal life disillusioned her and she did not know what she wanted in life. She was always “in the look-out for the truth-- true love, true adventure and true politics” (Lewis 104). “She is quickly disillusioned as she is quickly enthused. Restless, boredom, indecision, contradiction, a recurring sense of decay and futility- these are the hall marks of her personality. She is a creature of moods” (Lewis 104).

Roche, aware of Jane’s naivety accuses Jane of being a “hopeless misreader” (17) and a person without memory. Unlike Jane, Roche was aware of her ‘white’ influence when he said “you have the world in front of your eyes, and yet it’s funny how your mind prints out comic strips all day long” (29). In Roche’s opinion, Jane was a woman whose mind and soul seemed to be detached from her own body, her “action was at variance with desire” (Lewis 104). On one incident when Roche came upon Jane inserting a tampon it seemed “as though she didn’t belong to her body, as though there was some spirit within her that was at odds with the body which she yet cherished and whose needs she ought to satisfy” (117). “The innocence gave her an air of mystery that attracted Roche at first, but that he finally identified as inviolability, imperviousness to her surroundings” (Kortenaar 328).

Jane's gullibility made her an easy catch for Jimmy Ahmed. "The body is the one thing we can control. It's a kind of envelope that contains the soul. It is Jane's seeming detachment from her body that invites others to try to write on it" (Kortenaar328). In the first few pages of the novel we are told, Jane was whiter than the local whites, "white enough to be unreadable" (14). Kortenaar quotes Naipaul recalling Jane's image of a blank sheet:

On these white pages, where my verses unfold, May oft a souvenir, perchance
your heart recall. Your life also only pure white pages behold, with one word,
happiness, I would cover them all. But the book of life is a volume all
sublime, That we cannot open, or close just at our time. On the page where one
loves, one would wish to linger, yet the page where one dies, hides beneath the
finger. (328)

Jane, as described in the novel, was like a blank white sheet waiting to be written on or filled in by others; in other words Jane's whiteness was unreadable. "In the novel *Guerrillas* we have some characters who try to write their own narratives and others who are written upon" (Kortenaar329). It was this 'unreadable whiteness' which Jimmy wanted to read. To Jimmy, Jane was the representative on behalf of the entire colonizing powers, the English, the whites who were supposedly the powerful and superior to the natives. Since the whites were thought to be invincible, to gain authority over Jane is to conquer that power and a way to break the pride of the superiors. Jane, who was on the brink of a sinking relationship with Roche found Jimmy's aggressive nature attractive, "a man of action, a doer" (175). Thus Jimmy's motive was made even easier when he found out that Jane was as disillusioned, desperate and confused as he was—"Jimmy found no secret in her wet kiss"(77). She was also looking for something, not power, but truth.

The relationship between a 'man of color' and the 'white' woman is like "an interracial sex film with the Negro men as star-boys; they were exciting to see but depressing afterwards" (29). Likewise, the abandonment-neurotic went extreme in Jimmy when he failed to read Jane's whiteness thus being unable to explore into her mind. During their moments of 'violent' love-making Jimmy grew even more frustrated because he found Jane's face "characterless, soft, without definition; it could be many faces" (69). Jimmy bound by his neurotic nature wanted to be the first one to claim Jane's whiteness but he knew that was not the case thus Jane's love

appeared superficial to Jimmy “She was only what she did or said at any given moment” (100), Jane was like her ‘virgin’ passport which was never stamped when she entered the country therefore leaving no trace of her past on her white unreadable face. Kortenaar furthermore describes “She reflects the idea of men she is with and has no ideas of her own. As she moves from man to man, what is written on her is erased, to be replaced by something else” (328). Having access to Jane but not her mind turned Jimmy’s love making into a series of violent torture. The guerrilla in Jimmy becomes unthinkable when at one such incident of violent love making, Jimmy found out that Jane resented the idea of sodomy and she had never done that before. From then onwards Jimmy would always choose to sodomize her in spite of Jane’s continuous protest, raping Jane in the process. Jimmy and Jane’s violent love scenes just might be a distorted reflection of Naipaul’s own violent, tortured, sadomasochistic affair with his mistress, Margaret Gooding with whom Naipaul was often “very violent with his hand”. “All the later books in a way depend on her. The books stopped being dry after Margaret. Margaret was to become his mistress for the next 24 years, and their strange, disturbed, disturbing relationship was to provide the bedrock for his later fiction” (French). Likewise, Jimmy would dominate their ‘love’ making and Jane would be in pain and horror. It gave Jimmy pleasure to know that there was something he was doing to Jane for the ‘first’ time, something another man had never done before. This feeling gave him power and authority over Jane. Jimmy used to tell Jane that it was not going to be ‘her way’ and that “he was taking her virginity” (Kortenaar 328) because he was doing something to her for the ‘first’ time.

“By using Jimmy as the focal character of the novel, Naipaul is able to return to one of his favorite themes—the con man, the sham, as symptom of colonial society” (Lewis 104). Jimmy knew that he is not what he wished to be and the imaginary world he had set for him-self gave him false momentary satisfaction of what he desired to become. His imaginary world was like a wall he had put around him-self, his own refuge to escape. Whenever he was forced to come out of his fantasies, the reality punched Jimmy square in the face which turned him even more aggressive. Kortenaar says “We are meant to see the self-deception in Jimmy’s literary output too, masking what is true, his pain” (325). It is because what Jimmy wrote was his fantasy, his imagination and not his reality, the satisfaction of a masked world went away quickly and he was left to suffer in a state of unrest, panic and confusion. When “characters leave their fantasies and attempt to apply themselves to concrete action, failure results” (Lewis 104). Thus he felt a loss of

control because it was not him but his words which controlled him “Jimmy never possesses words; he is at best possessed by them. When he writes fluently it is out of disturbance, out of wonder at himself, out of some sudden clear vision of an aspect of his past, or out of panic. The ecstatic possession by words can slip away from him, however, and then Jimmy begins to feel unsupported by his words, and then separate from his words” (Kortenaar 325).

The irony was as Kortenaar states “Jimmy’s desire to be the ‘author’ of his life is made quite explicit. Jimmy misuses words and thus lacks authority” (326). The ‘English’ colonial education which has been enforced upon the colonized is the ultimate reason the people of the Caribbean Island suffered from rootlessness. Detaching one from their native language, from their mother tongue and forcing to adapt to the ‘superior’ second language is to snatch away everything from them, their whole identity. Thus the colonized people cannot be emotionally connected to each other and themselves. Kortenaar writes “We make that past present by our own use of language. If that past is lost, if the language sheds its allusiveness, then communication breaks down” (326). Jimmy’s improper use of words, his hollowness in expressing himself completely shows his inability to cope with the colonial education. He failed to express himself properly through a language which was not his but infused into him. “That is what he means when he fumes about being the “playboy” of wealthy Londoners. His use of “playboy” when he means to say “plaything” is symptomatic of his lack of control” (Kortenaar 326). For this reason Jimmy’s grasp over the English Language was not fluent, his writing got interrupted and he quickly came out the imaginary world he had set up for him. Kortenaar exemplifies “Naipaul portrays Malik, who sought to make words serve him, as ultimately a victim of words. The words in which Malik found support and satisfaction actually stood between him and reality; they betrayed him. Malik, too, did not so much use words as was himself created by words. Thinking he could fit words with whatever meaning he liked, he found himself changed to fit words” (326). Jimmy’s feelings were similar to that of Malik. Jimmy’s come back to reality from his fantasies was a bitter biting experience for him and his false satisfaction proved to increase his disillusionment and agony rather than help him accept his reality. “Melancholy came over him like fatigue, like rage, like a sense of doom; and when he went back to the desk he found that the writing excitement had broken and was impossible to re-enter. The words on the pad were again just like words, false” (34), no connectedness was there.

Naipaul shows us that when words are not properly respected, communication is impossible, and no respect for self or other is possible either. Jimmy's inability to use the English Language properly did not serve as concealment rather laid his bare hurt, "I feel I could weep for our world and for the people who find themselves unprotected in it" (57) open to the readers. "The hollowness of his words also allowed him to hide even from himself and prevented him from ever expressing himself fully. He is without a personality; he is only a haphazard succession of roles; in the padded-out, picaresque narrative, the passion and the pain vanish" (Kortenaar 325).

Jimmy wished to appear as 'unreadable' as Jane but due to his inability found himself read. "Jimmy can become very upset when something Jane says makes him believe for an instant that she may somehow read what he has written" (Kortenaar 327). Jimmy feared that his writings would reveal his weakness to Jane and he would become vulnerable to criticism. "There is power in being able to read another person, and danger in allowing oneself to be read" (Kortenaar 327). Jimmy's fear is again similar to Naipaul who writes to Pat saying "Promise me one thing, though- read and destroy. I should hate to think that next time in one of your peevish moods, you should read this letter to me mockingly. A man who writes with sincerity usually sounds silly". His frustration grew when Jimmy found out that Jane intended to leave the Island. Jane came to the Island with Roche but now when there was nothing between them and she "no longer believed him capable of passion" (48), wanted to go back to England. Also coming to know Jimmy's true violent guerrilla nature "seeing things in a man that was not there" (49) and knowing she would not find any truth there she had no reason to stay back, "she had a sense now more than heat, she had a sense of desolation: she had the urge now to get away" (10). Jane said "it's so hard for me to remember that when I first came here I was dazzled. I wouldn't care if I ever drove along this road again" (155). Jimmy could not accept the fact that Jane because she was white was a free being who had an option to leave and fetch a better life elsewhere. Whereas, unlike Jane he could not go anywhere else because wherever he would go he would always be the colonial subject; thus Jimmy, the abandoned, was trapped in the unproductive Island forever. Being trapped into nothingness he could not accept Jane's emancipation and that he were once again being abandoned. Forthwith, Jimmy ended up murdering her. His reasons behind killing her were also because "he wanted to be the first to 'stain' Jane's 'blank white sheet'. Jimmy's ambition is to write on Jane's whiteness himself. His rape and murder are the

logical extension of this wish” (Kortenaar 328). Jimmy knew though he could not claim Jane’s whiteness all for him-self and failed to read her he would make sure that no man after him could unlock what he could not. He wanted to be the last man to have a grasp over Jane, to touch her. He would let Jane die with him being the last man and let the unreadable whiteness die along with her. The last erotic sexual scene between Jimmy and Jane measures the extent of its violence:

He covered her mouth with his; and then he spat in her mouth...He said ‘it’s going to be different today, Jane. We are doing it the other way.’ As soon as, moving down from the base of her spine, he touched her where she was smaller, she cried out, ‘No!’ and began to beat her hands on the bed. And when he entered, squatting on her, driving in, his ankles pressed against her hips, she began to wail. She shrieked and shouted with real pain...He said, ‘A big girl like you, and a virgin, Jane? Isn’t it good that you came to see me today? But you didn’t bring your Vaseline you see...It’s better like this Jane with your legs closed. We’re breaking you in today, Jane’. She began to bite her thumb, real tears came. Sobbing, biting, she began to plead, now with a suppressed scream, now with a whisper, ‘take it out, take it out.’ Her body went soft, ‘You made me cry!’ He said ‘there now Jane, you’ve lost your virginity. You are rotten meat. It smells of sex, Jane. Bad, stale sex’. (242-245)

Roche was well aware of Jane’s happening but he could not protest. Kortenaar writes “Roche takes a firm hand in writing the denouement of Jane’s story: although he has some idea of what happened to Jane, he lies and tells Jimmy her murderer that he and Jane are leaving the island. Jimmy acquiesces and Roche’s cowardly narrative is adopted, which allows Jane to disappear without a trace” (329). Neither could Bryant, another colonized unprivileged young man of the Island who helped Jimmy and was involved in Jane’s murder. “She is sodomized by Ahmed and is then hacked to death with a machete by Bryant. This sterile ritualistic enactment of the oppressed gaining power is the version Ahmed achieve” (Cooke 42). It is because Jimmy had won his support from of the Islanders by creating the people’s commune and showing sympathy towards them. In a world where the colonized were only neglected, Jimmy was the only ray of hope in their lives. Jimmy kept them under an illusion of help them and the only one

to understand their agonies. Therefore, these people would never dare to go against Jimmy even in his crimes. Jimmy had total control over the lives of the natives which reflected in his perverse relationship with Bryant where Jimmy used Bryant to tempt his erotic sexual desires. Bryant was like “the man who had died within the body” (36). “All that is left after the death of the inner man is the body on which messages of anger and hate have been written” (Kortenaar 329). Thus Bryant had could not protest Jimmy’s misuses against him, he was more like a ‘tamed’ animal to Jimmy. Roche was well aware of Jimmy’s control over the natives and knew the people were on his side. Thus he dared not say anything against Jimmy. Jane’s death went unnoticed and ignored. From Jimmy’s narratives it is also known that he was once married to an English white woman in London who abandoned him earlier. Jimmy might also be taking out his anguish from an unpleasant broken mixed marriage on Jane by killing sodomizing her and killing her. As readers we could also relate Jane as a probable image of Margaret Gooding, Naipaul’s mistress who was also found to be ‘mysteriously’ dead, “Margaret Gooding was shot, stuffed in a trunk and left to die until someone found her 12 hours later” (Kotz).

In the novel *Guerrillas* “each is trying to fit the other into his own particular narrative. Everybody in the novel is trying to arrive at a final reading of the others. The characters are frequently summed up by each other, reduced to a sentence or a paragraph” (Kortenaar327). In his narrative, Jimmy fantasized on how he would like the relationship between Jane and his “glorified fictional self” (Kortenaar 326) to be which in reality was very different. “When Jimmy tries to fit Jane into narrative of his making, he is not respecting her integrity but treating her as a writer treats a fictional character, making the character serve his larger purposes”(Kortenaar327). Jimmy’s futile attempt to create a heroic figure of himself through his writings goes in vain because “Jimmy Ahmed’s story ends with a murder” (Kortenaar 326) which was not a heroic act. It was Jimmy’s inability or unwillingness to accept the truth, the reality is what stopped him from creating anything productive, “It is because they are unable to read and define this structure that the characters of *Guerrillas* suffer. His fiction is a futile attempt to overcome that despair by “seeing himself from outside, from the perspective of a fictional admirer” (Kortenaar 330). Jimmy’s desire to gain authority by his own narratives failed and he felt himself read. Kortenaar writes “He longed to write something people would read and to make history that people would read about. Instead we read what Jimmy wrote and we read about him, but in someone else’s

narrative who does not accord Jimmy any respect. The excerpts from Jimmy's novel and letters are contained in a narrative that is not his" (329).

Before concluding I would like to add that we are meant to see the "despair and terror" (Kortenaar 330) in Jimmy's narrative. To sum it up, in the *Guerrillas* "psychological disorder is conveyed through Ahmed's heterosexuality, Jane's promiscuity, and through images of pollution, aridity, and bestiality associated with people and the landscape. Psychological disease, the decay of values, the fantasy- all these culminate in murder and the moral complicity of those who are physically innocent of the deed" (Lewis 105). The novel *Guerrillas* is "disturbing and unpleasant" because it shows that in a post-colonial world, "human integrity and freedom are not respected" (Kortenaar 333). As Kortenaar states it "They desire an apocalypse; they look to the end of the world for meaning. But the meaning lies in the beginning" (331).

The fear of connections: Salim's neurosis

A Bend in the River by V.S. Naipaul is a replication of thoughts and findings similar to that of Fanon's "The Man of Color and the White Woman". The repetition of this psycho-sexual desire with the "superior race" is shown through the character of our main protagonist, Salim. It is important to mention, that Salim was not a black man unlike Fanon's protagonists but is more generally regarded as the "man of color". Salim's image as the post-colonial subject develops through his relationship with the white woman, Yvette.

Salim, an Arab-African is the post-colonial subject in 'modern' African. Modern because the time of Africa in the novel was the time after Africa has gained its independence. Although Africa was free from the Europeans rule, it was not "free" in every sense of the word. Vincent in his article writes "the colonized peoples may have destroyed the most visible symbols of the imperialist fantasy, but they cannot so easily get rid of the historical construct it-self" (Vincent 342). Salim states:

Europe no longer ruled us. But it still fed us in a hundred ways with its language and sent us its increasingly wonderful goods, things which, in the bush of Africa, added year by year to our idea of who we were, gave us that idea of our modernity and development, and made us aware of another Europe—the Europe of great cities, great stores, great buildings, great universities. To that Europe only the privileged or the gifted among us journeyed... When we wanted to speak of the doers and makers and the inventors, we all—whatever our race—said 'they'.
(229)

Under the rule of the New President who was commonly known as the Big Man, there was unrest in Africa. The unrest was due to the inability of the African people to cope up with the post-colonial situation, their frustration rose from their confusion, lack of determination on how to live their lives. The novel describes the observation of a failing story of a Third world country struggling through post colonization; people were unable to adjust to the new ways of lifestyle. They were left behind with a lot of modern equipment from the Europeans but they did not know what to do with them. Lives of people in African depended on the whimsical decision

of the President and the president only did what was beneficial to him and could not bother less about the betterment of his people. The President's decisions were very contradictory. Where on one hand he had his "European" posters hung up at every corner of the country, on the other hand he was asking people to stop "running like children after things in imported tins and bottles..." (206). Therefore, the President's flawed effort to the process of "Africanization" were all in vain and there was no such thing as "true" Africa. On one hand, where the President's "New Domain", a city in it-self, was flourishing which only privileged those who had adopted the "modern" lifestyles, the people in the villages and in the town were completely unaware and deprived from all of it. Salim narrates "He was creating modern Africa. He was creating a miracle that would astound the rest of the world. He was by- passing real Africa, the difficult Africa of bush and villages, and creating something that would match anything that existed in other countries" (116). The villagers still wanted to go back to their ancestral ways of life. And thus, there formed a group of people who were against the President but were powerless in front of him. This created the uprising unrest which caused a lot of open and closed killing of innocent people. The President was blending the national and the native hopelessly as Salim mentions "The Domain had been built fast, and in the sun and the rain decay also came fast" (117). No one was safe under his rule, nor the natives neither the foreigners.

Observation of life after independence captured in the novel is a reflection from the point of view of our Asian protagonist, Salim. He has always felt like an "outsider", as if he did not belong anywhere. Salim whose life was "lost" and "trapped" in a helpless situation was always depended on others. Every major decision taken in Salim's life as the story progresses has been made by the actions of someone else. He was never independent, never free to think for his own. Vincent quotes "All I know of our history and the history of the Indian Ocean. I have gotten from books written by Europeans...without Europeans, I feel, all our past would have been washed away...it was the Europeans who taught Africa to see it-self in a new light" (339-340). Therefore, Salim's past and his ideas about his own country were "constructed"; he knew them the way the Europeans would want to show.

Salim's present was on the edge of uncertainty and was depended on the whimsical decisions of the President and his decision of radicalizing all foreigners. And his future was decided beforehand by Nazruddin, whose daughter Salim's was destined to marry, but that even

also in a state of irresponsibility towards his actions, Naipaul narrates “It was in this state of indifference and irresponsibility, that I became engaged to Kareisha” (281). Also in the end, Salim was freed and allowed to flee from the country by the help of Ferdinand, the native commissioner then.

All these made Salim a very pessimistic character. He was resentful to everything around him. He admired and at the same time envied the natives and the English people, often felt disgusted towards them. Once in the novel, Salim expressed his distaste toward Metty having a “black” son with his “toto swinging from side to side” and towards Ferdinand, to whom the colonial past has vanished. Salim also adds that he wasn't just envious of him because Ferdinand was racing ahead of him in education and possibilities. He was also envious because the same world was to Ferdinand new and getting newer while to him it was drab and without possibilities. Whereas, Ferdinand could go farther pursuing his education on a government scholarship since he was a native, Salim could not. Salim’s resentment towards Indar was also due to their differences in education. Indar, who was his friend but could go to England for his education because Indar’s family was financially better than Salim’s. Salim’s feelings towards Indar are thus expressed “Indar had always made me feel so backward. There was London in his clothes...his shoes. And I was in my shop, with the red dirt road and the market square outside” (128). Salim thought Indar held a better position in the society because he was more educated and “education was something only the foreigners could give” (36). Also Salim criticized the portrait of the Belgian Lady saying “It was as if the lady had lost faith in her own junk, and when the independence crisis came, had been glad to go” (41).

The reason of all these resentment in Salim, as Naipaul narrates “My unhappiness was the unhappiness of a man who felt left behind, unprepared for what was coming. And my resentment grew with the insecurity I feel. But we were like ants; we kept on” (100). Unlike Indar, Salim could not “trample over the past” (141) to which Christopher Wise writes “Naipaul’s response to the situation of modern African history mandates the liquidation of traditional or tribal African art”(64). In a country like Africa at that time where the natives themselves were insecure under the rule of the new President, Salim being a foreigner felt his identity threatened. And it was his shaken existence and a thirst to gain him-self a secure position in society that led him to develop a relationship with Yvette.

It is very important to explain the situation in Africa because that pretty much explains the psycho-sexual desires of Salim with Yvette. All of what was going on acted as fuel to develop Salim's psyche. The affair was not a war between sexes neither between masculinity and femininity. It was more of a psychological process rather than imposing superiority, therefore Fanon observes "I found that the dominant concern among those arriving in France was to go to bed with a white woman. Once this ritual of initiation into "authentic" manhood had been fulfilled, they took the train for Paris"(72). It was a psyche which was created by the constant "Devaluation of self"- as Fanon writes "it is this tripod-the anguish created by every abandonment, the aggression to which it gives rise, and the devaluation of self that flows out of it- that supports the whole symptomatology of this neurosis" (73).

Indar was the one who introduced Salim into a world different from the world he knew from the towns in Africa- Indar introduced him into the New Domain. It was in the New Domain that Salim first realized his attraction towards whiteness. The party in the New Domain is significant because, as I have mentioned earlier, every major decision in Salim's life has been taken by someone else. Salim got introduced to Yvette by chance. But the one and only decisions that Salim took actively in his life was the adulterous affair with Yvette; it was completely his desire, he was not pushed by someone else.

Salim was completely enchanted by the mood of the party. Just the way he resented everything about his surroundings in the towns, everything in the New Domain and in the party attracted him. In that dim light of the room, everything appeared expensive and European to him. Salim was even mesmerized by the American girl who was singing a song even though he could not see her face. All he could see were "beautiful feet, and their whiteness was wonderful against the black of her slacks. Her provocative postures, her smile- they became part of the mood of the song, too much to contemplate" (148). Then his attraction towards Yvette "... feet white and beautiful and finely made. I looked at her feet before I considered her face and her blouse, black silk embroidered round the low cut collar- expensive stuff, not the sort of goods you could get in our town" (146). He goes farther saying "it was delicious to me, as the climax to that evening, to press that body close, soft at this late hour, and to feel the silk of the blouse and the flesh below the skin" (159).

After the party, Salim realized that he grew an obsessed feeling towards Yvette and could not get her out of his mind- “I went over the pictures I had of her,...reconstructing, reinterpreting what I had seen, re-creating that woman, fixing her in the postures that had bewitched me, her white feet together, one leg drawn up, one leg flat and bend, re-making her face, her smile...”(162). Everything about the Europeans attracted Salim “everything that was imported; everything that was expensive” (196). Also it was the mental image of Raymond that Salim had developed through the party which attracted him even more toward Yvette. Raymond was, as Salim supposed, was close to the President, he worked and wrote for the President. Raymond was known as the “Big Man’s White Man”. It was this closeness that Salim desired. Through Raymond he wanted to secure a more stable, danger free position for him in the society. Salim assumed that being close to Raymond would keep him in an advantageous position in the eyes of the President, since according to him, power belonged only to the “whites”. To that Wise writes “It was Salim’s necessity of the “thingification”; of creating the individual self”(64).

Yvette was whom he chose as a medium to stay close and good in the eyes of Raymond. Salim’s involvement with Yvette was not because of love but because of gain. He wanted to elevate him-self in the society through Yvette, he says “ was the wish to win the possessor of that body, the body which, because I wished to win its possessor...All my satisfaction lay in that direction; and the sexual act became for me an extraordinary novelty, a new kind of fulfillment, continuously new” (203). He goes farther describing his experience “it wasn’t tender...it became a brute physical act, an act almost of labour; and as it developed it became full of deliberate brutality” (203). Salim, who always felt threatened by the loss of identity, suffered from the feeling of being left behind, being abandoned, wanted to regain his feeling of being important, of being wanted through Yvette as Fanon writes “he looks for appeasement, for permission in the white man’s eyes” (76). Salim then becomes what Fanon describes as the “abandonment-neurotic”. This abandonment becomes a part of his daily life- “affective self-rejection, invariably brings the abandonment-neurotic to an extremely painful and obsessive feeling of exclusion, of having no place anywhere... the abandonment neurotic demands proofs. He is not satisfied with isolated statements. He has no confidence”(76).

It was after the engagement in an adulterous affair with Yvette that Salim realized his desires to be white, to be one of them. Yvette unlocked pleasures in him that he had never felt

before from the brothel or the night club girls. And so, Naipaul narrates Salim's experience- "Until then my fantasies were brothel fantasies of conquest and degradation. I had shrunken from true sex with bought women. . . my obsession with Yvette had taken me by surprise; and the adventure with her that began in the white sitting room was for me quite new" (203). Salim more implicitly described his experience when he says "I felt refreshed, revitalized; my skin felt new. It was like discovering a great, unappeasable hunger in myself. I felt blessed and remade, feeling the newness of my skin" (205). Yvette gave Salim "the idea of manliness he had grown to need" (237). The experiences were all as Fanon describes "to gratify the need of the men of color for white women". It was the hunger of being white, because Salim had used "white" repeatedly to describe his state of mind "in that room with the window panes painted white, a white that now glowed" (204).

Then again, Salim being what Fanon calls the "abandonment- neurotic" searched for proofs of Yvette's attraction towards him. Yvette's love was not enough for him, he demanded proof of him being wanted over and over again- "this housewifely attention reminded me- painfully, already- of attentions like this that she gave elsewhere. That gesture, of kissing my trousers, which elsewhere I would have dismissed as a brothel courtesy, the gesture of an over tipped whore, now moved me to the sadness and doubt. Was it meant? Was it true?" (205). Fanon adds "The abandonment-neurotic has finally deserted. He is called back. He is needed. He is loved. And yet what fantasies! Does she really love me? Does she look at me objectively?"(77).

Relationship within racism was always difficult. As Salim's relationship with Yvette progressed Salim's fantasies came to a halt. As Salim and Yvette drew closer, and Yvette started opening up to Salim, Salim unleashed the unknown mysteries inside Yvette. That was when their relationship started turning sour, Salim's resentment towards Yvette grew and bulged until it resulted in violence, when Salim says "I had my first alarm about myself, the beginning of the decay of the men I had known myself to be" (207). Salim's resentment grew when he finally read Raymond's articles and he realized, Yvette was as hollow and out of place as he was and Raymond's closeness with the President was a make-believe. The President, who once needed Raymond, does not need him anymore when he was in a more powerful position than Raymond. Raymond's pretension and the denial of the truth helped him and Yvette to hide their hollowness,

Salim says “when I understood what Raymond’s position was, the president had once again appeared to zoom away and to be high above us”(217). Salim’s idea about Raymond changed and he realized he was living in fool’s paradise because Raymond “had researched so much. Must have spent weeks on each articles. But he had less true knowledge of Africa, less feel for it...” (182). therefore, Vincent in his articles writes “Salim, too had found the idea of Europe in Africa very seductive: hence his disenchantment with Raymond’s articles. Hence his disenchantment with Yvette, who represented to him the attraction of European glamour and romance”(348). Raymond’s image to Salim was then of a man who “holed up in his study with his papers, too busy to come out into the real world, deserted by the Big Man, deserted now also by the American academic establishment which has moved on to the new enthusiasms, betrayed by his wife- Raymond is the perfect figure of the impotence of the western construct of history as a “science.” The only function he can imagine now is to “carry on””(347). Towards Yvette Salim felt “perhaps in another setting and at another time she would not have made such an impression on me. And perhaps if I had read Raymond’s articles on the day Yvette had given them to me, nothing would have happened the following afternoon when she came to the flat”(215).

Salim found his relationship with Yvette not empowering anymore. He understood that Yvette cannot empower him, nor can she secure Salim in Africa. She was tangled in her own life. Salim was an escape for Yvette from her dull eventful life with Raymond. Salim was a substitute to Yvette for Raymond, with whom she had a very weak family bond. Salim realized that in the process of possessing Yvette he became a pawn him-self; neither could Yvette empower him, nor could he pull her down. To make the matter worse, Salim found him-self standing in the same position where he once stood before the relationship with Yvette. Yvette atleast had Raymond to go back to, when Salim says- “who was she telephoning at this hour? Who could she turn to? Who was she so sure off?” (258). but Salim was all alone and again abandoned. All these crushed Salim and he regretted his relationship as a waste of time, he says “and failure like that wasn’t what I would have chosen to be entangled with. My wish for an adventure with Yvette was a wish to be taken up to the skies, to be removed from the life I had-...it wasn’t a wish to be involved with people as trapped as myself”(215).

Salim’s growing anger and frustration turned into violence, which Fanon calls the “violent overthrow”. Hence, Naipaul describes Salim’s reaction towards Yvette “she was hit so

hard and so often about the face, even through raised protecting arms, that she staggered back and allowed herself to fall on the floor. I used my foot on her then...she turned her face to the floor and remained still for a while; then with a deep breath such as a child...she began to cry, and that wail after a time broke into real shocking sobs”(257). Salim does something which shocks the reader, with the quantity of disgust he grew towards Yvette, Naipaul narrates “and then I spat on her between the legs until I had no more spit. Bone struck against bone again; my hand ached at every blow”(258). Thus the relationship which turned into a series of resentment and violence ended when Salim said “I couldnot do anything with her. I didn’t want her, I didn’t want her”(258).

Therefore in the end, Salim doesnot find a place for him-self. He keeps on floating and an outsider. He becomes the emblements of a man Naipaul describes as he starts the novel “The world is what it is; men who are nothing, who allow themselves to be nothing, have no place in it”(3).

Finding 'Never Land': Colonized decolonization

In my introduction I have tried to draw a synopsis of everything that the colonizers enforced upon the colonized which had left them in a social, political, economic and psychological disaster. In the three consecutive chapters I have tried to justify my stand by doing a psychoanalytical reading of the protagonists, the "men of color" in the three novels. I have divided my chapters among the three protagonists to show how they all suffered from homelessness and an identity crisis which ultimately turned them into abandonment-neurotics, but each in different ways. But one thing that constantly struck my mind was Naipaul's own stand in a post-colonial society, which remains unclear.

On one hand, Naipaul's portrayal of his protagonists in the most repulsive manner would make the reader think that Naipaul shared similar opinions about the natives as the colonizers. That the natives were barbaric and brutal in nature and the colonizers wanting to 'civilize' them serves them right. Naipaul's frequent allusions to English texts in his own novels reflects his own thoughts about the English; that these allusions would authenticate a Caribbean writers writing who does not have enough confidence on him-self. The relationship which Naipaul represents in his novels between the 'men of color' and the white women is of violence, torture and murder. In a way he makes the men of color appear cruel and the 'white' women innocently victimized. He again proves that the 'whites' are the more sophisticated race and everything 'Other' was vicious as the colonizing power painted them to be.

Naipaul is said to be the follower of Joseph Conrad. Conrad, a Polish was also subjected to colonization, had lived through exiles and was made to work for the colonizers. In the process colonization had made Conrad the 'ideal' colonial being. It had done to Conrad what it exactly meant to do; to make the non- English colonized people hate themselves. Conrad became a hard-core racist which reflects in his novel. He made the white people in his novel look good where the natives were barbarous. Naipaul in his novel *Guerrillas* does something similar. He makes Roche, the 'guilty' English colonizer look good to the readers by stating that he wanted to help the natives whereas the natives were not ready to grant his help. Moreover Roche leaves the Island without any sort of protest against Jane's murder. Where Roche was there to help the

natives he leaves the Island turning him-self into a savage just like Kurtz. Kurtz's 'horror' of the natives is similar to that of Roche's, that he is 'going native'. Therefore it can be said, Kurtz represents Roche, where Jimmy represents the savage native. Rao writes "Naipaul commenting on Conrad's own darkness, had given his explanation for his late adoption of Conrad where he writes: To understand Conrad then it was necessary to begin to match his experience" (60).

In almost all his novels Naipaul makes the protagonists narrators of their own story. He acts as only the interpreter of the perspectives through which his protagonists consumed the "new world" (Cooke 46) landscape. As a result "what had seemed the failure of a protagonist, in short, becomes a novelist's vision of the land" (Cooke 38). Their failure becomes his failure. It is as though Naipaul is expressing his own inner conflicts but through the lives of his protagonists keeping himself behind closed curtains. Outwardly Naipaul denies having any emotional connection with his novels; he is just the presenter of the thoughts of his protagonists. In reality he was the script writer and they were just mere actors.

On the other hand it seems that Naipaul writes for the colonized, focusing on their frustration of being a colonial subject in a post-colonial world. Through his writings he wants the agonies of the colonial subjects to be heard throughout the world. Naipaul being a colonial subject him-self had to suffer the pangs of colonization which is evident in his biography. Lewis thinks "It seems to me that Naipaul may very well resemble these perversely arrogant characters he creates so well" (105). Through his protagonists Jimmy Ahmed, Ralph Singh and Salim, Naipaul tries to bring out the devastating consequences of colonization on their social and personal lives. He tries to explain how these colonial characters suffer from dislocation, desolation and a distorted view of 'self' due to colonization. How they were unable to settle down for a stable personal relationship from the fear of getting abandoned later. "In his characters, he depicts the satisfaction of hurting as a negative compensation for the pain of being misunderstood and the longing for sympathy" (Lewis 105). Take Roche, the 'guilty' colonizer for example. In the novel *Guerrillas* Roche appeared to be the white English man who wants to help the people of the colonized Island to develop a better landscape for living. Thus his image is secured in the eyes of the readers. He is depicted as the 'good' English man who was almost driven out of the Island by the savage natives. But if we read between the lines the word 'guilty' may have a contradicted meaning. The first question that arises in the mind is why an English

colonizer whose purpose was to dominate and rule over the natives would want to help them? If we look at Roche deeply, his arrival in the Island was as a failed tortured novelist which means although he was an English man, due to his work he was not very well accepted by his English society. The Island was more like a refuge to him away from his own world where he was unaccepted. Also he was suffering from an almost broken relationship with Jane because he could not offer her any security or emotional connection; he was a passive man. In spite of all these Roche knew with all his failures he was still superior to the natives because he was a white English man. But he was aware of the fact that the natives suffered from suppressed rage within them and he could not assert his superiority, his colonizing powers directly over them in a post-colonial world where the natives were ‘supposedly’ free from the colonizers. Thus having the island as the only option where he could exert the little power left in him bestowed by his race, he chose pretention. He pretended to help the Island and the Islanders so that they would let him stay with them. His sympathy towards the natives might also be because since he had suffered failures, Roche understood the trauma of failing, the pain of being humiliated and neglected that the natives had suffered all their lives. Whatever the cause might be, Roche had his own reasons of helping them. He knew the colonized were modeled in a way that they would listen to a white man no matter what; in the process Roche would be able to control them. Roche was not helping them out of his genuine regret but because he had no other options in front of him. Thus the word ‘guilty’ is a disguise Roche wore if we may see it that way.

Therefore through a secondary image of Roche Naipaul portrays how the natives were manipulated by the English people and to what extent these colonizers acted like hypocrites. In my previous chapters I have tried to draw similarities between Naipaul and the characters he creates. Naipaul’s protagonist may be as well a much distorted, probable image of Naipaul’s own reality. Thus his novels reflect the chaos that “is produced by and reflects the chaos and disorder of the universe and society in general” (Lewis 104).

Like in *Guerrillas* which is Naipaul’s *Heart of Darkness*, we also cannot decide in his other novels, whether the darkness was inside Naipaul or in the English colonizing society. Gikandi explains this condition by writing:

Caribbean writers could not escape the anxieties generated by their historical conditions—they were colonial subjects and they had to write for or against

colonial modernism. Whether they were Eurocentric or Afrocentric, these writers lived in a colonial condition that was, by its very definition, an extreme state of anxiety. (11)

Naipaul, currently living in an English country among the whites cannot possibly write anything directly against them, then again the books he has written purports to be “Naipaul’s own voice, the voice of a world traveler who witnesses the cruelty meted out to the weak and the lost and who is helpless to intervene because he is him-self vulnerable” (Kortenaar 330). We all live in a world of false independence and modernity. But perhaps Naipaul having the might of a pen is in a better position than us to bring this situation forward; the question remains whether he chooses to. “Because we do not know, we cannot judge. So much is left unclear that we are never in a position to dismiss Naipaul” (Kortenaar 332). Perhaps this is what Naipaul wants because whoever he writes for, he cannot dismiss him-self of being the colonial subject and a colonial subject in whichever way always hunts power. Because he is a colonial subject the only power Naipaul can assert is through his pages. Thus by remaining a mysterious writer to the readers Naipaul gains that power. He lets the reader see through his perspective because he has seen through the eyes of the colonizers, the readers reads only what and however he allows them to read. In other words he controls the mind of his reader and this gives him a sense of power because that is what a colonial subject is shown; that control is power. Naipaul’s protagonists though are made to be narrators of their own stories are indeed, unlike Naipaul, powerless because they do not control the minds of their readers. It is because we read them through someone else’s narratives-Naipaul. Therefore there is no direct communication between the characters and readers; the author finally controls how much narratives the reader should know about the lives of his characters Again Naipaul is in control, “as characters become ‘alive’, the author’s message becomes obscured. Naipaul knows this and is careful to maintain a level of ambiguity that prevents our thorough understanding of the text” (Kortenaar 332). While reading many of Naipaul’s novels can be difficult to understand and to keep track of the incidents because there are lots of time switches and overlaps, constant shifts from the past to present. For example “In *Guerrillas*, however, much of the ambiguity arises not from what Naipaul tells us, but from what he refuses to tell us. The ambiguity is not the ambiguity of a rounded character whose psychology we might discuss, if never fully define, but arises from the fact that we are not

shown enough” (Kortenaar 332). We may assume that Naipaul’s characters are probable distorted images of Naipaul him-self because as Kortenaar points out:

Naipaul’s article on Michael X is easier to judge. But there is something missing from Naipaul’s account of Malik’s murder: Naipaul’s own relation to Malik. Also does not Naipaul’s own narrative constitute as much of an attempt to write others as Jimmy’s did? In any case, Naipaul seems as anxious not to be fully read as Jimmy Ahmed himself. Thus my reading of Naipaul the man smacks of incompleteness and misreading; and so it should if the individual is not to be finally read or written down. (332-333)

Ultimately, Naipaul’s authority is in question. His novels are described as the “writing of the decay which ooze out like some insidious leakage from contemporary mankind” (Cooke 46). Finally Naipaul’s capability to leave his readers in an incomplete state of understanding or to leave them wandering about the true sense of his novels is control to him. That is the ‘colonial Naipaul’s’ way of being in power.

“Decolonization is the process of revealing and dismantling colonialist power in all its forms” (Ashcroft 56). At the end of my thesis, the question which remains open-ended is, through the seek for power and control is independence and freedom that the colonized strive for actually attainable? Do the protagonists in Naipaul’s novels succeed in the process of decolonizing themselves? The answer is perhaps, no. My entire theses, the psychoanalysis of the characters were an attempt to prove that the ultimate decolonization is not tough, but impossible. Impossible due to the sequence of brutal events that have made them homeless, a colonial child and finally an abandonment-neurotic; everything which I have described in my introduction.

The titles of the novels hold a lot of significance within themselves. *The Mimic Men* actually describes its protagonist, Ralph Singh who embraced the footsteps of the colonizers becoming a mimic man in the process. In the end he realized, imitating the English men will make him a good mimic man but not an original white person because “mimicry repeats rather than represents” (Bhabha 125); mimicry imprisoned but did not elevate his roles. In spite of his colonial education and vague political powers he would always remain secondary. Though Singh realized at the end that power comes with accepting one’s reality, it is highly questionable to

what extent he applied his newly gained insight on him-self. Because according to Singh he had to 'prepare' himself for new actions. All the preparation takes him back to the mimic man inside him who wants to be 'some-one else' and lacked confidence on taking the world as it comes. The concept of a 'free' man remained ambiguous to Singh. This only proves that even in the colonial acceptance or the colonial denial, decolonization of the mind was not possible. Previously Singh travelled in search of being a true mimic man and now he travelled in search of a true free man, thus unable to settle himself anywhere.

Also Singh felt the urge to isolate himself from the known places and people in order to find his true self. Boxill writes "the freedom achieved by isolation of self is in fact the only effective implement for coping with the world on a basic level" (19). The need to get away from the known, from home, away from the suffocating past which reminds one of a life wasted and throw one-self into the unknown to start a new life is a sign of weakness which is often not possible. Isolation becomes necessary in order to feel light and empty from those things which burdens ones heart and soul. This is often not successful because it shows that the colonial subjects could not deal with their present situation, not being able to accept their reality thus failing in decolonizing themselves.

Isolation is not the answer to decolonize one-self, facing the world is. In order to move forward one has to first accept both the past and the present realities. No matter how horrendous the reality might be, one has to learn to deal with it so that it would not intervene in future development. The reason the colonial protagonists were unable to do so because they either chose to ignore or hate their past, their reality. For this reason the unease within them-selves remained intact which hampered their progress. Jimmy Ahmed is one such example who did not want to accept the truth, therefore truth held no meaning to him. Jimmy lived stuck in a dual world where he felt he belonged no-where. "Words and action are constantly stressed" (Tiffin 64). His narrative, where he created roles for him-self screams out his loathe of being the Jimmy Ahmed which he was in reality; he even denied recognizing Jimmy Ahmed, his own self. He imagined him-self as the 'celebrity' in London and thought very highly of himself, deserving English class and standards. On the other hand, Jimmy created a commune where as a leader he rebelled against the English people and pretended to hate the whites. The title *Guerrillas* defines a Jimmy who was in a war with his own self, his own inner conflicts where he desired something

and expressed something else. Thus, Jimmy's creative schizophrenia does not liberate him rather tangle him further because his imaginations were even colonized. Because the roles he creates for himself contradicts with his reality and reality was something he did not accept. His imagination provided him with "double visions" (Bhabha 126) of him-self where he stood incomplete in both the visions.

Likewise, Salim's character was also a fraudulent one. Like Jimmy, Salim had double visions who did not connect himself with life in the bush the *A Bend in the River*, nor could he fit into the New English Domain though he was attracted by the 'richness' of the Domain and its culture. The basic reason Salim's decolonization was impossible because Salim did not even understand the true concept of the word. Meaning, in order to de-colonize, Salim had to move away from everything that colonized him. But he did the complete opposite. Instead Salim chose 'whiteness' the very color which colonized him, through Yvette in order to secure a position for him in the society, ultimately blocking all the ways of de-colonizing himself.

Not being able to relate one-self to any of the two worlds gave Naipaul's protagonist as Bhabha describes it, a "partial presence" (126) in both worlds. They neither completely belonged in the English world nor could they relate them-selves with their own native lands. They were in the middle of nowhere. Thus for the colonial subjects "not only is it difficult to fulfill oneself-it is even impossible to understand oneself, to be true to oneself" (Lewis 104).

Naipaul saying "when there is nothing, there is everything to be made" is not a phrase applicable to the colonized people. It is because the colonized were unable to do anything without the guidance of the colonizers. They lacked control in their lives. Thus in the post-colonial world when they were given power or at least made to believe in an illusion of power all on a sudden, the colonized people did not know how to use it. They just wanted power but not taught how to use the power. Therefore the idea of power remained vague and meaningless to them. For example, when Singh became a politician or Jimmy the leader of his commune, also the new president in *A Bend in the River* they did not worry or work for the betterment of the people. They were more obsessed to assert their control and domination over them. They did not understand that with power comes responsibility; they used power to fulfill their own purpose. Singh said "without a real political history of their own, colonial politicians are used as political

stooges by the super-powers” (221). They were just doing what the colonizers did to them; in the process they themselves became like the colonizers.

The fact that the colonized people misused power was what made them envious and even more frustrated. These also affected in their personal life for which their relationship almost always ended in violence and murder because they consumed their relationships in terms of war and revenge. Ashcroft in his review writes “The idea of colonization itself is grounded in a sexualized discourse of rape, penetration and impregnation, whilst the subsequent relationship of the colonizer and the colonized is often presented in a discourse that is redolent of a sexualized exoticism” (36).

Power if misused can have devastating consequences which was exactly the case for the colonized people. That was exactly what the colonizers planned. In their act of helping these people, they were doing them more harm than good. Kelley writes Césaire review on colonialism in his introduction:

Césaire reveals, over and over again, that the colonizers’ sense of superiority, their sense of mission as the world’s civilizers, depends on turning the Other into a barbarian. The Africans, the Indians, the Asians cannot possess civilization or a culture equal to that of the imperialists, or the latter have no purpose, no justification for the exploitation and the domination of the rest of the world. The colonial encounter, in other words, requires a reinvention of the colonized, the deliberate destruction of the past-what Césaire calls “thingification”. (9)

Thereupon colonizers succeeded in turning the colonized people into objects or things; they were not even considered humans. The colonized people lived under an illusion, an illusion controlled by the colonizers. They were treated like dogs in shackles whose leash were in the hands of the colonizers. Years of colonial domination ultimately turned the colonial people into the savage, the barbaric because they have only known the language of hatred. Fanon reflects this hatred through the voice of an Algerian child who killed his European friend “because the Europeans want to kill all the Arabs” (217). This hatred primarily rooted from the unbearable tortures that the Europeans had inflicted upon them. For example, a French officer while raping the wife of an Algerian in front of all the other soldiers who were waiting for their ‘turn’ said “if

you ever see your filthy husband again don't forget to tell him what we did to you" (Fanon 205). The hatred was to an extent that it turned these dominated tortured people into the 'guerrilla' where they simply did not care anymore about the consequences of their actions.

In the end nothing worked for Naipaul's colonial protagonist to decolonize them-selves; not Singh's mimicry, neither Jimmy's heroic imagination of him-self, nor Salim's fake relationship with Yvette. Moreover their actions imprisoned them further into being the object. They developed only until they had the guidance of the colonizers, after that point it stopped and never moved forward. It is mainly because their world of fantasy contradicted with reality which they could not cope with. Colonization and colonial education had made them learn to 'Other' themselves and their familiarity; they were like 'hollow men'. Even though they live in a post-colonial world, the ideas that were already incepted in the minds of the colonized were difficult to erase or kill, nor could they forget or accept them. Therefore, Naipaul's colonial characters suffered from an 'arrested development'. On top of that the colonized people were so used to this battered ragged situation of their lives that they were indifferent to it. Tatty, oily, dusty, dead smells are a few words that described the colonial condition; the suffocation just hung in the air for no apparent reason. The colonized people were unable to unlearn what they have already learned from the colonizers; they could not even set up a working political system for themselves. They just implemented their colonial ideas and imagination. It was pointless to look for a true core because they lived under illusion. The phrase "I think, therefore I exist" cannot define the colonized because their power to rationalize was killed.

In the final analysis it is affirmed that decolonization was impossible for the colonized people because their minds and souls were colonized; there was no transformation of the soul. The colonized, understanding their own imprisonment were helpless to liberate them because they could not think anything beyond imperialism. This concept of 'thingification' has a major influence on the novel *Guerrillas* which Tiffin points out:

I could no longer laugh because I already knew that there were legends, stories, history above all historicity. I was responsible...for my body, for my race, for my ancestors. I subjected myself to an objective examination. I discovered my blackness, my ethnic characteristics; and I was battered down by tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetishism, racial defects, slave ships.

Completely dislocated...I took myself far off from my own presence, far indeed, and made myself an object. What else could it be for me but an amputation, an excision, a hemorrhage that spattered my whole body with black blood. (Fanon 112)

Consequently as I have mentioned in one of my earlier chapters, Naipaul's view on colonial life "has moved more and more into the existentialist and absurdist genres" (Lewis 104) which is similar to Camus. Just like Camus has said that life cannot be defined with meanings, everything happens the way it is meant to happen. Naipaul also agrees that there is no point looking for meaning in the lives of the colonized people because even the meanings are constructed by the colonizers.

"Post-Colonial had a clearly chronological meaning, designating the post-independence period" (Griffith 168). The question which kept me wandering and with which I end my thesis is, where does the term 'post-colonialism' place it-self? Is there such a term as 'post-colonialism'? Even if there is, where is the 'post' in it? We all still live as colonial beings in a very Western dominated world. Independence and freedom are just words which hold no meaning to the colonized subject. Perhaps the term 'post-colonialism' is also a word created by the colonizers which further enhance their field of illusion under which they dominate the colonized.

Therefore "Naipaul's novels leave us with the feel of the decaying, contaminated landscapes of Africa and the Caribbean" (Cooke 46). Decolonization remains a meaningless concept to the colonial people. Naipaul's view of a colonial land is a place where "nothing was ever created" (Cooke 46), and his protagonists remain "shapeless to whom the societies allows none of the open possibilities" (Cooke 46).

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