

## A Study of Religious Projections in the Selected Travelogues of V.S. Naipaul

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### **Abstract:-**

A study in the selected travelogues of V.S. Naipaul especially in religious perceptions' will help to recognize, from the point of expatriate diasporic writer V.S. Naipaul, the combined workings of structural, conscious and non-conscious factors in the reconstruction and reproduction of identities and socio-cultural institutions among groups outside of some place of origin. It will lead to conceptualize, interpret and theorize the processes and developments affecting South Asian Religions not only in their own respective countries but also outside of South Asia. The historiographical, cultural, social, political references of the texts will involve different outlook and meaning in context of post modern and post-colonial thoughts and make us understand the connotations of a 'diaspora' situation, which is usually investigated negatively in relation to the forced displacement, victimization, alienation and loss. The domain of political orientations that exhibit divided loyalties to homelands and host countries will be probed because that not only affects social relationships concerning South Asian communities (including specifically religious groups) outside of South Asia but also within the territories of South Asian region. The study of the travelogues from this point of view will recapitulate the core of a variety of global

fundamentalisms, including Islamic and Hindu fundamentalism. Lastly it will recreate the transnational bonds through the mind, through cultural artifacts and through a shared imagination. It will bring awareness of multi-locality and will produce consciousness for multiplicity of histories, communities and selves.

### **Introduction to the Present Research Paper:-**

A cultural and intellectual trend of the twentieth and twenty first centuries characterized by emphasis on the ideas of the decenteredness of meaning, the value and autonomy of the local and the particular, the infinite possibilities of the human existence, and the coexistence of different cultures, perspectives, time periods, and ways of thinking. Post-modernism claims to address the sense of despair and fragmentation of modernism through its efforts at reconfiguring the broken pieces of the modern world into a multiplicity of new social, political and cultural arrangements.

### **Postmodernism and V.S. Naipaul:-**

The term "postmodernism" first entered the philosophical lexicon in 1979, with the publication of *The Postmodern Condition* by Jean – Francois Lyotard. It emphasizes continuity, difference within continuity, the counter-strategies and discursive gaps. It is an attack upon modernity or a complete departure from it. Rather, its differences lie within modernity itself because modernity in the 19th and 20th century was a form of protest against the rules and conventions, it was experimenting in form and style; the art, literature and music of the modern age were for arts sake. But the post modern literature continues modern thinking in another mode.

The term 'postmodern' began to be used during the 1960s, as a means of distinguishing the subversive fiction of writers such as John Barth, Donald

Barthelme, Samuel Beckett and George Luis Borges from the experimental works of high modernism composed during the 1930s.

The post-modern culture centered itself on the inherently political qualities of art. Postmodern sensibility does not lament the loss of narrative coherence any more than the loss of being. The flow of information becomes the means of performative legitimation. It adopts a tone of irreverence towards established icons, installs unexpected figures as cultural icons and interrogates traditions and canons. It rejects the opposition between "high" or elite culture and "low" or mass culture. It questions the criteria by which certain texts/forms/assumptions are canonized, projected and imposed as "good taste", "classics", permanent and universal and which implicitly rejects the mass forms of culture as degenerate. The presentism of postmodernism undercuts the thrust on history and the future in modernism. All knowledge, truths, experience and pleasure are only of immediate value and relevance. Jean Baudrillard, Guy Debord, Fredric Jameson, Jean Francois Lyotard and Pier Paolo are the most prominent postmodern theorists. Post modernity concentrates on the tensions of difference and similarity erupting from the process of globalization. However, it is somehow closely interlinked with post-colonialism. It is a cultural, intellectual, political and literary movement of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries characterized by the representation and analysis of the historical experiences and subjectivities of the victims, individuals and nations of colonial power. Post colonialism is marked by its resistance to colonialism and by the attempt to understand the historical and other conditions of its emergence as well as its lasting consequences. Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) represents discourse analysis and postcolonial theory as

tools for rethinking forms of knowledge and the social identities of postcolonial systems. An important feature of post-colonialist thought is dual emphasis on the common – yet – different denominator of colonial oppression.

The human subject is more or less free to create meanings for itself and rework social institutions. It believes in the active inventory role of the human agency. It focuses on the events in the socio-historical process. It is the New historicist model of "a dynamic, instable and reciprocal relationship between the discursive and material domains" (Montrose). It means historicity of texts and the textuality of history explores the political potential – interrogation of hegemony, resistance counter propaganda and subversion. In this context the notion of "text" and "representation" is embedded in specific material conditions of history, anthropology, ethnography and historiography and they form a link to fore-ground the background of the postmodern work of art.

#### **Post-modern Diasporic Writers and V.S.Naipaul:-**

Several are emerging as significant players in the construction of national narratives, regional alliances or global political economies. In recent years, intellectuals and activists from within these populations have increasingly begun to utilize the term 'diaspora' to assert their typical sensibility. However, the current over-use and under theorization of the notion. of 'diaspora' among academics, transnational intellectuals and 'community leaders' alike, which sees the term become a loose reference conflating categories such as immigrants, guest-workers, ethnic and 'racial' minorities, refugees, expatriates and travelers. The representative writers such as Salman Rushdie, V.S. Naipaul, Kamala Markandaya, Bharati Mukherjee,

and Raja Rao belong to the diverse areas of the diaspora - the South Pacific, the Caribbean, Singapore, Britain, North America, and Africa. Underlying this international body of literature is the haunting presence of India and the anguish of personal loss that generate aesthetics of "*reworlding*."

### **Introduction to Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul:-**

V.S. Naipaul is one of the best-known English novelists of the modern times; his popularity reached its zenith when he received the Noble prize for literature. Naipaul cannot be described absolutely as a social historian, a travel writer, a journalist, a biographer or a novelist. He is regarded a prophet, a soothsayer, a doom-watcher and a teller of unpalatable truths. While he has published several works, it is *A House For Mr. Biswas* that has given him name and fame. His latest novel *Half a Life*, is a piece of literary craftsmanship. He has received several awards; it will be worth mentioning some of these particularly the Rhys Memorial Prize (1958), the Somerset Maugham Award (1961), the Hawthornden Prize (1964). W.H. Smith Literary Award (1968), the Booker Prize (1971), the Benneth Award (1980), and the David Cohen British Literary Award (1993).

Naipaul is an Indian by descent, a Trinidadian by birth, a Briton by citizenship. He has lived in all three societies, and he has bitter feelings about them all: India is unwashed, Trinidad is unlearned, and England is intellectually and culturally bankrupt. At best, each is a "second-rate" country. But he is no more critical of his native lands that of any other. Because of his background, he could be a card-carrying flag-waving member of the third world, but he supports no organization, cherishes no chauvinism. He is as cynical about emerging nations as he is about dying ones. He is a man split by his own contradictions. His most difficult thing to overcome,

for him, was being torn in the crazy resort place Trinidad. In Trinidad, and wherever he has gone, he has been an outsider. His alienation is the source of his malaise, but it is also the source of his art.

The other works of Naipaul are - *The Mystic Masseur* (1957), *Miguel Street* (1959), *A House for Mr. Biswas* (1961), *Between Father and Son* (1999), *Middle Passage* (1962), *India : A wounded Civilization* (1977), *A Bend in the River* (1979), *Among the Believers : An Islamic Journey* (1981), *Beyond Belief : Islamic Excursions Among the converted peoples* (1998). *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987), *The Return of Eva Peron* (1980), *A Way in the World* (1994), *Half a life* (2001), etc.

### **Review of Work Already Done in the Subject:-**

Various approaches and studies that V.S. Naipaul's writing deal with are the cultural confusion of the third world and the problem of an outsider, a feature of his own experience as an Indian in the West Indies, a West Indian in England and a nomadic intellectual in a post colonial world. His writings invite controversies on account of his expatriate imagination over the political, social, historical and cultural situations, and that is usually his self-built or self-explored views, therefore his writings characterize his role as a writer "to look and to look again, to re-look and think".

### **Objectives of the Present Research Paper:-**

1. To integrate rational explanations and conceptions of reality in context of post-modern thoughts.
2. To review the legacy of imperialism claims in reference to post colonial studies.

3. To explore the dependence and inferiority of the South Asian countries and their progress to nationalist revival.
4. To investigate the scope of the semblance of truth that fundamentalism / religion enforces and the shadows of mental imagination that rotten fanaticism constitutes.
5. To discover a more integrative view of human community and liberation.
6. To understand the texts of travelogues in context of the historical categories and identities.
7. To conceptualized the ideological coherence in relation to historiographical, socio-cultural position of the literary texts.
8. To evaluate the psychological and epistemological orientations in the dialogic discouragement of religion.

### **Major Hypothesis in the Field:-**

The present study offers another perspective of analyze V.S. Naipaul not only as a writer but also to seek in him a visionary whose feelings towards humanity undergo in an incorruptible scrutiny. His perceptive narrative sees the existential validity that enforces the contrast between appearance and reality. The illusion of religious

manifestations and acknowledgement of the effectiveness of the phenomena of religion in illusory real manifestations evoke the presence of suppressed histories as well as his creative passion for criticizing the negative aspects for e.g. fundamentalism that has portrayed third world countries unsympathetic and insensitive to human rights cause in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. V.S. Naipaul in the selected travelogues advocates for the religious projections a parallel paradigm in context of "the historically oriented and particularized engagement with the text." Religion in his travelogues inspires the process of seminal cogitation to form dialogic perception. The contradictory social and political forces manipulate religion and myths as back drop for the representational practices operative in the culture and civilization at a given moment in both the history and our own.

### **Religious Projections in Naipaul' Major Travelogues:-**

Religion in *the Area of Darkness* contains insights into the process of apprehension of reason and senses at the initial level, but later it serves mystically as an elucidation of the expression and communication of emotion and feeling. It switches to universalization / generalization or sharing in common. In the travelogues *Beyond the Belief* Naipaul discovers the metaphysical contradictions of the classic conceptions and formulations

of Mughal period's conventional nature both in life and in art. The critical and integral approach to understand religious practices affords illuminating insights and conceptualized the author's perception into a phenomenal work of realistic idealism. The literary text *Among the Believers* indicates the forcefulness of the religious imprint both on the essence and on the existence and that is apparently underscored by inner and inward quality. The anticipatory insistence to savour the communal entity and sensibility is to establish the common standard of cultural sensibility and common possession to internalize the community culture and ethos. *India : A Million Mutinies Now* offers stimulating insights of the huge complexity that is modern India. There are many revolutions within a revolution to disrupt peculiarities of region, caste and clans, yet the growing factionalism has sustained the discourse on creating new communal organisations in places of settlement. It has extended inability and unwillingness among the co-ethnic members to be fully accepted by their own native regions or in other countries of settlement. *India: A Wounded Civilization* conveys the acute sense of dialogic perception of the author. He reinforces his conviction that India, wounded by many centuries of foreign rule, has not overcome turmoil of emotions. India still is endangered by the collision of self, serving myths and religious projections of rites and rituals in a fanatic manner that prevents people from coming to terms with who they really are and to know how to treat one another.

The current research study on Naipaul's work has received attention from scholars and critics on various grounds. However, the theme of the Dialogic perception of religious projections is central to any issue or theme in the writings of Naipaul. Therefore the importance of an in-depth study of the theme of the Dialogic Perceptions of the Religious Projections becomes evident when we think of the restoration and regeneration of transnational social relationships to organize global political cultural production.

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