

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Political Dislocation in V.S. Naipaul's *The Suffrage of Elvira*

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts in English

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July 2011

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Recommendation Letter

This thesis entitled “Political Dislocation in V.S. Naipaul’s *The Suffrage of Elvira*” has been prepared by Madhu Neupane under my supervision for partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in English. She conducted her research from to January 2011. I recommend this thesis for submission.

March 2011

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This thesis entitled “Political Dislocation in V.S. Naipaul’s *The Suffrage of Elvira*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur by Madhu Neupane, has been approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in English by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Acknowledgements

I do not have words to extend my sincere gratitude to my teacher and thesis supervisor Mr. Pam Bahadur Gurung, lecturer at Central Department of English, Kirtipur for his invaluable guidance, suggestions and cooperation to carry out this thesis in this particular area. Without his scholarly support and inspiration, I would not have been able to complete this thesis.

Similarly, I am highly indebted to Dr Amma Raj Joshi, Head of Central Department of English, Kirtipur, for accepting my thesis proposal and encouraging me with scholarly comments and suggestions. I am equally grateful to all the teachers of Central Department of English, T. U. Kirtipur for their valuable support and creative comments and suggestions about the research work.

It would be injustice if I do not remember my husband, Mukesh Kumar Bastola, who provided me with academic suggestions and created environment to carry on my study. I also want to remember my small son Midas Bastola who missed my love when I was busy on working and my cousin Deepak Poudel who created conducive environment for me to work. My thanks are also due to my all family members and well wishers for their direct and indirect support in course the study.

July 2010

Madhu Neupane

Abstract

The present research “Political Dislocation in V.S. Naipaul’s *The Suffrage of Elvira*” made an attempt to analyze the novel from postcolonial perspective by taking different issues of postcolonialism such as postcolonial identity, hybridity, diaspora, language, ethnicity and religion into consideration.

The novel exposes the dislocation, dispossession, and dilemma of the people in newly decolonized country, Trinidad. Basically it shows how democracy can be meaningless in the hand of corrupted leaders with their own vested interests. In the same way it shows that political independence may not be the independence of a colonized nation in a true sense. Furthermore, it shows that the only option for being successful for the people of newly decolonized nation is to imitate the colonizer. Though the setting of the Novel is a small country, Trinidad, the novel raises the issue of global significance that is the aftermath of colonization.

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I. Postcolonial Condition and V.S. Naipaul in *The Suffrage of Elvira*

The present research is an investigation into laureate Sir Vidhiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul's novel *The Suffrage of Elvira*. It explores the political dislocation, its causes and consequences in the life of diaspora as depicted in the novels in different angles. So the research paper throws the light on the sufferings of the community, rather than a specific character from the sense of dislocation and displacement due to the loss of their ties with the old politico-cultural system and the inability to establish the new one. The question for their political location is always difficult for those countries which are freed from the colonial rules.

With the falling of colonial power in the fifties and sixties of the twentieth century, most of the African, Latin American and Asian countries, once colonized by Europeans, emerged from the military colonization. The newly emergent nations tried to define themselves in the form of nation to reestablish their identity and to liberate them from imperialist operation. But such aspirations are difficult to translate in reality because of the corrupt leaders who are always interested in their individual benefits and common people who have negative self image. One of the writers to raise such issues strongly is V.S Naipaul. V.S. Naipaul started his journey of writing from the position of margin, which ultimately led him to have the most dominant position in the West. In this regard Sachs writes: "By his own admission, V.S. Naipaul's situation is odd and suspicious. A novelist and journalist of Indian heritage, he grew up in Trinidad and became a resident of England. . . . His writings highlight the experiences of non-Western peoples who have been uprooted by historical currents" (1). Naipaul's writings, as such, depict the reality of non western people who lack coherent identity. His own search for rootedness can be seen in his own writings reflected in different characters. Naipaul's innovative craftsmanship in exploring human conditions is apt enough

to interpret the post colonial world even if his texts seem detached from any political ideologies.

Highlighting the personality of V.S. Naipaul Atma Ram says: “Naipaul is a gifted novelist who is invariably honest and forthright. . . . Although he starts with Trinidad as the backgrounds of his stories, what he ultimately depicts is the universal human predicament” (52). The cases and characters in the writings of V.S. Naipaul have universal significance. In the novel *The Suffrage of Elvira* the writer describes the situation where the nation is principally free from the power of colonizer and tries to practice democracy concerned to be the best form of government but because of various factors it seems to be meaningless, just a ritual and means to earn benefits for the selected few. It shows the political dislocation in the small country Trinidad.

To justify the need for the research it would be necessary to review the literature available in the field. Different writers have analyzed the novel *The Suffrage of Elvira* from different perspectives. Gillian Dooley has made a Feministic analysis of the novels *The Suffrage of Elvira* (1958). He writes:

In the Trinidad world . . . the women are often more sensible and down-to-earth than the men. Sometimes they are dangerous seducers, but just as often they are the ones who keep everything going. Sometimes they are victims, but sometimes they sensibly take themselves off when their men grow violent and unreasonable. The principal interest of all three novels is in the actions of men, but women are far from unimportant, and they are presented with at least as much sympathy and admiration as the male characters. (21)

Though feminism is one of the subject matter of postcolonial studies, his analysis does not say anything about the politico-cultural situation depicted in the novel.

Mohan analyses the novel from postcolonial perspective and sees it to be the continuation of the previous novels by the writer. He says: "Set during the second general elections, the novel examines the East India community within the context of the newly emerging colonial capitalist society during a period of growing social and political awareness" (34). To prove this continuity he gives certain examples or evidences from the texts. Among such evidences are the characters in the novels and certain events. He observes that "the thrust of the novel is to demonstrate how unsuitable the modern concept of democracy is for a corrupt and divided colonial society, in which democracy loses all meanings and becomes a means for promoting self interest" (35). His analysis focuses on the political aspects rather narrowly and speaks nothing about cultural dispossession of the people in the community.

Weiss points out that, *The Suffrage of Elvira* takes aim at the "mixed up equations of money-mindedness, profit, and enfranchisement in a predominantly East Indian community. It shows a village losing control of its traditions and itself in a period of political and economic transitions" (31). He highlights the satiric nature of the novel by when he says, "The novel's satire depends on the juxtaposition of characters' words and actions with narrator's and author's evaluative comments" (ibid). His analysis does not, however, specify different traditions. It mainly focuses on political tradition.

Szeman sees the subject of the novel *The Suffrage of Elvira* to be the "politics of vote buying in an isolated County in Trinidad during its second free elections in 1950." (100). He observes that "the politics of colonial societies is skewered ruthlessly for its irrationality, decrepitude and finally emptiness" (100). Fawzia Mustafa studies the novel from the linguistic perspective. In this regard he mentions that the fiction "reveal the slippage between

literacy and illiteracy within the communities represented allowing Naipaul to lampoon the affectations of what he later calls “half made societies”, and “burrowed cultures” (34). The ability to read and write Standard English in an Anglophone Caribbean setting, the satirical edge of Naipaul’s early fictions insists, is the only claim to legitimacy. Rainer Schulze also analyses the novel from the linguistic perspective. He says, “In . . . the novel it would be much more problematic to ignore the Creole voice of the characters . . . because the SE narrative voice and Creole is used to satirize the clumsy aspiration of the protagonists in their political or social upward mobility” (149).

Ball finds *The suffrage Elvira* expressing satire toward the “sham authority” (72). The similar practices can be found in different countries. Similarly, Fader sees the wider application of the theme of the novel when he says, “the unsavoury practices that create the brilliant comedy of *The Suffrage of Elvira* are not restricted to the Indian or any of the other communities that make up the population of Elvira” (171).

Dance sees the effect of *The Suffrage of Elvira* “to make rural Trinidad villagers seem the self deluding pawns of acquisitive politicians” 359). He (ibid) also sees the novel to be comedy by saying, “there is hilarious comedy in the interplay of superstition, family feuds, racial bickering, bribery, and lightening shift of fortune”. Wong and Hassan also highlight the comedian nature of the novel by mentioning, “Naipaul’s *The Suffrage of Elvira* (1958) creates a comic Dickensian world peopled with a multitude of characters in a community gearing up for a local election”(19).

Dodiya finds *The Suffrage of Elvira* (1958) to be autobiographical in nature. He writes: “The modern autographer is a literary artist and he is self conscious of Fred and Marx, whose ideas creep in his narrations. He , therefore, assesses himself as a social being and presents both the realities of his life-inner and outer- without which his picture will not be complete” (182). The dispossessed people always have two identities what they are and what

they have become and such identities are presented in the novel. He also sees the novel to be satiric. He says: “In *The Suffrage of Elvira*, Naipaul portrays satirically, from outside, a picture of the society in the light of democracy in general electioneering in particular” (ibid). The focus of the analysis is politics in narrow sense. In this regard this research is also different the present research.

Jussawalla finds *The Suffrage of Elvira* to be satire “set almost entirely in Trinidad’s Indian community. . . .*The suffrage of Elvira* is the broader satire about the coming of democracy to Trinidad, which ends as a quietly shattering comedy of community self destruction” (67). Similarly in Atma Ram’s view, “*The Suffrage of Elvira* is also a pungent onslaught on the popular political regime in Caribbean” (52). Shaffer sees *The Suffrage of Elvira* (1958) able to express both satire and maladies:

Their humour has a double side, however, expressing both a joy of life and a malaise; they celebrate the richness of a multicultural society, yet they also show the trap and dead ends of this colonial world. The Trinidad of these 1950s novels combines an emigrant’s distanced evaluation with a colonial’s old uncertainties and fears. By way of the novels’ split perspectives and polyphony the author can write affectionately about the colony as well as can satirize it. (434)

Wateridge also highlights the satiric nature of the Naipaul’s *The Suffrage of Elvira*(1958) when he says the novel “mocks and delights in rural electioneering practices” (789).

Paravisini-Gebert agrees with other critics and finds *The Suffrage of Elvira* to be “the satire of Trinidadian democracy” (160).

The present research is different from the criticism mentioned above in the sense that it tries to depict the political dislocation from different angles such as postcolonial identity, hybridity, nationalism as well as ethnicity.

To analyze the issue of dislocation, this research paper is divided into four chapters. The first chapter presents the general introduction of the research including the general background of the study, views of the critics on the author and his writing and an introductory outline of the present research. It gives the bird's eye view of the thesis. The second chapter is meant to develop theoretical modality that is to be applied in this research paper. It provides short introduction to postcolonial theory and discusses different issues such as post colonial identity, hybridity, feminism, diaspora and so on. The third chapter of the research is an analysis of the text on the basis of the modality outlined in the second chapter. It contains some extracts from text to prove hypothesis of the study. This chapter is the core of the study. The fourth chapter is the conclusion of the entire study. On the basis of the analysis of the text done in the third chapter it concludes the explanations and arguments put forward in the preceding chapters.

II Debate on Politico-Cultural Dislocation in Postcolonialism

Postcolonialism, a new kind of theory, basically engages with the problem created by colonialism. So, it can be taken as an attempt to understand and address the problems created by European colonialism and its aftermath. It deals most significantly with cultural contradiction, ambiguities and ambivalence associated with the history of colonialism. However, it often covers such a wider area that it includes multiplicity of identities and subjects positioning resulted from displacements, immigration, and exiles. There is debate on what constitute post colonialism. Therefore, it is almost impossible to find a universal definition. But within differences some similarities can be found. Shohat mentions that postcoloniality has double sense that is going beyond anti-colonial nationalist theory as well as movement beyond specific point in history. Here the specific point is end of colonialism. It also shows the beginning of new era and the struggle of the nations to establish their national identity:

Echoing post-modernity, postcolonialist marks a contemporary state situation, condition or epoch. The prefix 'post' then aligns 'postcolonialism' with a series of other 'posts'- 'poststructuralism', 'postmodernism,' 'postmaxism,' 'postfeminism,' 'postdeconstructionism' - all sharing the notion of a movement beyond. . . .The 'postcolonial' implies both going beyond anti colonial nationalist theory as well as movement beyond specific point in history, that is of colonialism and Third World nationalist struggles. (323)

Basically the prefix post in postcolonialism gives the sense of 'after the demise of colonialism. Aschroft et al. have expanded the term postcolonial to include all literary productions by societies affected by colonialism. They say, "[T]he literature of African countries, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Caribbean countries, India, Malaysia, Malta, New

Zealand, Pakistan, Singapore, South Pacific Island countries, and Sri Lanka are all postcolonial literatures. The literature of the USA should also be placed in this category. (qtd. in Shohat 323)

The idea of post colonial as mentioned in the above text put all the countries affected by colonialism in the same line. It does not show the distinction between the countries which felt different degree of domination. Though the India and Canada both were once colonized the condition of the two countries were certainly different. Therefore Shohat says: “[T]his problematic formulation collapses very different national racial formulations” (324). The prefix ‘post’ in ‘postcolonial’ “does not signal an 'after' but rather marks spaces of ongoing contestation enabled by decolonization struggle both globally and locally” (Frankenberg and Mani 349). They mention “in relation to colonialism something are over, others transformed, and still others apparently unreconstructed. What, by the way, has happened to neo-colonialism in all of this talk of the colonial and the post?” (ibid). So for them colonialism is not over. It is still prevalent in the form of neo-colonialism. This formulation gives emphasis to the condition rather than to epoch or period to define the post colonial.

Some writer see the term postcolonial associated with different meanings. The meanings may differ from one context to the other. One among such writers is Dirlik. He says:

Three usages of the term seem to me to be especially prominent (and significant), (a) as a literal description of conditions in formerly colonial societies in which case the term has concrete referents as in postcolonial societies or postcolonial intellectuals; (b) as a description of a global condition after the period of colonialism, in which case the usage is somewhat more abstract and less concrete in reference, comparable in its vagueness to the

earlier term Third World, for which it is intended as a substitute; and (c) as a description of discourse on the above named conditions that is informed by the epistemological and psychic orientation that are products of those conditions.
(296)

Here Dirlik has broadened the concept of postcolonial not only to include the condition of formerly colonized countries but also the conditions of the whole world along with discourses produced in reference to this situation. But 'post' in his description still means 'after'. Ahmad has a bit different view of postcolonial. He does not agree with the patronization and taking in the meaning of after. He says, “[C]olonialism thus becomes a transhistorical thing always present and always in process of dissolution in one part of the world or another, so that everyone gets the privilege ...of being colonizer, colonized and post colonial - sometimes all at once, in the case of Australia, for example” (283). His writing raises an authentic question here. When postcolonial becomes ‘post’? As he says it becomes ‘post’ in different countries in different times. According to him the issues which are focused in postcolonial criticism are (a) the theme of hybridity (b) the theme of the collapse of nation state as a horizon of politics and (c) the theme of globalized postmodern electronic culture. The term postcolonial also gives emphasis on “structural domination” (Mohanty 55).

There is an ongoing debate on what comes and what does not come under this rubric. Some tend to narrow down its scope while others tend to be broader. Nevertheless, it carries the theme of domination and oppression in common. As such it deals with different issues and subject matter. The term related with the post colonial is the postcolonial criticism. So, postcolonial criticism is effective in helping us to see the connections among all domains of our experience. Such domains include psychological, ideological, social, political, intellectual and aesthetic. These categories are very closely linked with our lives. Literally the term

postcolonial is related to the countries which were formerly colonized and politically dominated by the colonizer. But now the colonial criticism has a wider coverage. It deals with the multiple subjects such as: Post colonial identity, universality and difference, representation and resistance, nationalism, hybridity, ethnicity, race, feminism, language, the body and performance, history, place education, production and consumption, Diasporas, globalization, environment and the sacred. As such “post-colonial criticism is both subject matter and critical framework” (Tyson 418). It is taken as a subject matter since it critically analyses the literature produced in response to colonial domination. As a theoretical framework it deals with colonialist and the anti colonialist ideology. As such any literary text can be analyzed by using the framework of post colonial criticism.

Post colonial identity refers to the identity of the people who were once colonized. The impact of the colonizer is deep rooted in former colonies. Even if the countries are not controlled politically by the colonizer they are controlled culturally-- cultural colonization is still there. This refers to the imitation of the British culture, British system of the education and the government, British norms values and ideals. The people of former colonies have negative self image- they do not value their own cultural identity because it was supposed to be inferior, savage, and barbaric. As such postcolonial criticism deals with the problem of post colonial identity that is identity crisis faced by the people of the former colonies. Hall underscores two ways of thinking about cultural identity—group oriented and individualized. “The first, according to him, is the “ shared culture, . . . second . . . critical points of deep and significant difference which constitute what we really are or rather since history has intervened- what we have become” (110-112). Here Hall shows that identity is static and changeable at the same time. This is a paradox. Most of the times, we identify ourselves as members of a cultural group. Cultural hybridity occurs when a person who belongs to a group of culture mix up comes into contact with the people of other group.

Hybridity is also the result of Cultural domination. The colonialist ideology has always underestimated the colonized. According to this ideology the colonizers are civilized, kind, intelligent, and the colonized are just opposite. It provided the colonizers with the ideology and rational for keeping control of the nations they colonized. It put the colonizer at the centre and the colonized at the margin. This is the phenomenon of 'othering'. The terms Eurocentricism or universalism are used to refer to the same concept. From this perspective all the culture are judged on the basis of European culture or using the standard of European culture. Anything that does not confirm the European ideals is said to be the uncivilized, savage, and barbaric and so on. This concept is against the concept of cultural pluralism which says that all cultures are equal in their own right.

Women from the time immemorial have also been colonized by various form of patriarchal domination. In this sense feminism has in common with post colonial criticism. Patriarchal form of domination is similar to colonial domination. Tyson views that, "these parallels between feminist and post colonial concerns also underscore the double oppression suffered by post-colonial women" (423). They were colonized by both imperial and patriarchal ideologies. Katrak agrees to Tyson in this regard that is the double oppression of women in the colonized countries:

Women writers' stances, particularly with regard to glorifying/ denigrating traditions, vary as dictated by their own class background, level of education, political awareness and commitment, and their search for alternatives to existing levels of oppression offer inscribed with in the most revered traditions. Their text deal with and often challenge their dual oppression - patriarchy that preceded and continue after colonialism and that inscribes the concepts of womanhood, motherhood, tradition such as dowry, bride price,

polygamy and worsen predicament within the capitalist economic system introduced by the colonizers. (240)

As mentioned earlier postcolonial feminism deals with variety of issues related to women. Mohanty makes distinction between 'women' (a social construct) and 'women' (a biological construct). She also makes distinction between 'Western feminist' and 'third world feminist'. She says, "The distinction between western feminist re-presentation of women in the third world and feminist self representation ... are made on the basis of privileging of a particular group as the norm or referent" (244). She takes all women as a "category of analysis" since all women are of the "same gender across classes and culture" and form a homogeneous group. This homogeneity is produced on the basis of "sociological and anthropological universal" that is "shared oppression". This view takes that all the women throughout the world have more or less the same problems. The gender differences are the product of oppression which takes women to be powerless and dependent.

It "has helped to define Europe (or the west) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience. Yet none of the orient is merely imaginative" (Said 24). Orientalism is based on the distinction between occident and orient. This is the distinction between 'we' and 'them'. Such type of Eurocentric view was promoted by British schools established in the former colonies. Such schools highly inculcated the British culture and values by making the indigenous people feel that the culture of the colonizers is superior to their own culture. The people who believe that the culture of the colonizer is superior are said to be colonial subjects and they imitate the culture of the colonizers. This phenomenon leads to the double consciousness or the double vision. In other words, their view is divided between two cultures: the culture of the colonizer and their own indigenous culture. Such type of double consciousness produces unstable feelings in colonial subjects which in turn lead to forced migration.

Forced migration results in diaspora. In its basic meaning diaspora refers to 'dispersion from'. The word embodies the sense of centre that is home from where dispersion occurs. It was initially associated with Jews. What lies "at the heart of the notion of Diaspora is the image of the journey' (Barth 443). Such journeys are about setting down or about putting roots elsewhere. Though there are various causes of diasporic situation colonization has been the major factor. Other factors are slavery, expulsion and war or global flow of laborer. The term is associated with "power which differentiate diasporas internally as well situate them in relation to one another" (445). Such people always have a sense of being in crossroad of double identity.

The notion of diaspora of peoples has become increasingly common in describing the combination of migrancy and continued cultural affiliation that characterizes the many racial, ethnic and national groups scattered throughout the world. A diasporic subject looks towards two directions- towards the historical cultural identity, on the one hand, and the culture of the society of relocation on the other. These dual characters are found in a diasporic personality. Such type of feeling creates 'imaginary homelands' (Rushdie). The feeling of being caught between two cultures and belonging to neither of them leads to the sense of 'unhomeliness' in the term of Bhabha. Unhomed here does not mean homeless rather it refers to identity crisis. This is said to be double consciousness. Different terms, dispersion, diffusion and heterogeneity, migration, movement and scattering, and exile are associated with diaspora. Modern imperialism has promoted diasporic situation. There is diasporic feeling in a post colonial subject because they are caught between two cultures. Neither can they fully accept their own culture nor are they accepted by the culture of the colonizer.

Diasporas have come to mean cultural minorities to the construction and reconstructions of individuals in day to day lives. This situation highlights the global trends of creating, constructing and reconstructing identity. Rushdie says:

It may be that writers in my position, exiles or emigrants expatriates are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back even into pillars of salt . . . create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homeland, *Indians of Mind*. (428)

For Hall, as mentioned earlier, there are two ways of thinking about cultural identity: ‘true self’ and ‘what we have become’. The second type of identity what we have become is diasporic identity. This leads to the traumatic character of the colonial experience. Such type of identity undergoes the process of construction and reconstruction. Diasporic identities are “constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference” (Hall 438). Though a person in exile achieves something, his or her achievements “are permanently undermined by his or her sense of loss” (Said 439). The migrated people suffer frustration and misery. The modern age is the age of refugee; the displaced person and mass immigration all lead to diasporic situation. Exiles are cut off from their roots, their land and their past and tend to reconstruct their broken lives in narratives. Postcolonial criticism studies such diasporic situation of the subjects.

Diasporic situation results in hybridity. Most postcolonial writing has concerned itself with the hybridized nature of post colonial culture as strength rather than a weakness. Hybridity occurs in post colonial societies as a result of conscious moments of cultural supuration. Colonial power forces the indigenous people to assimilate the culture of the colonizers by different means. Many postcolonial theorists argue that postcolonial identity is necessarily dynamic, constantly evolving, hybrid of native and colonial cultures. In its positive sense it helps to narrow down the world since the world itself is becoming more and more hybrid. According to this view, colonials embrace the multiple and often conflicting aspects of different cultures. Young highlights the dynamic nature of hybridity by putting forward the idea “here is no single or correct concept of hybridity: it changes as it repeats, but

it also repeats as it changes. It shows that we are still locked into two parts of ideological network of a culture that we think and presume that we have suppressed” (159). In this sense hybridity is a term which goes against essentialism. It is an enticing idea in current postcolonial studies. In its dominant form, it is claimed that it can provide a way out of binary thinking, allow the inscriptions of the agency of the subaltern and event permit a restructuring and destabilizing of power. It is associated with various vocabularies such as diaspora, métissage, creolization, transculturation.

The situation of hybridity or diaspora in colonized countries leads to nationalism or nativism which gives emphasis on indigenous culture with an attempt to eliminate western influences. It is main point of resistance to imperial control in colonial societies. It is the concept of a shared community or “imagined community” (Anderson 123) since a nation lacks a concrete definition. Postcolonial societies have invented the concept of nationalism to combat colonialist oppression. Fanon underscores the aim of nationalism that is, “to fight for national culture” which means “to fight for the liberation of the nation, that material keystone which makes the building of a culture possible” (120). He further says, “[A] national culture is the whole body of efforts made by a people in the sphere of thought to describe, justify and praise the action through which that people has created itself and keeps itself in existence . . .” (ibid). This shows that national culture is the identity of people and postcolonial literature fights for restoration of native culture.

However, national consciousness has many weaknesses because of the weaknesses of middle class bourgeoisie leaders who are ready to serve the mother country rather than solving the real problem of the people. The leaders want to fulfill their own vested interest by turning deaf ear to people’s cry once they are in power. Anderson highlights cultural perspective or value of nationalism when he mentions “nationality, or, as one might prefer to

put it in view of that word's multiple signification nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artifacts of a particular kind" (123). This shows that shared feelings of the nationalism is based on the concept of common culture. Anderson has used three key terms 'limited', 'sovereign' and 'community' to define a nation. Chatterjee has similar view as Anderson who she based her definition of nation on 'cultural systems'. She has talked about three modes of nationalism: "creole nationalism, linguistic nationalism and official nationalism" (126). All three types of nationalisms are found in the third world. Nationalism is a sense which provides them with a sense of belongingness people want to fight for it.

Language is a fundamental site of struggle for postcolonial discourse because the colonial process itself begins with the language. Language is the most powerful instrument for the colonizer to take control of the culture of the colonized. Through language realities are constructed and it is the basis on which all political, social and economic discourses are based. Language is a means by which the distinction between have and notes, civilized and savage, knowledgeable and ignorant are realized. The language has been matter to widen the gap between have and have-nots. Thiong'O sadly expresses his feeling of being compelled to use the English language in school (in colonized Kenya) though his language of love was Gikuyu. He says, "[T]hus language and literature are taking us further and further from ourselves to other selves, from our world to other worlds" (266). He has identified three aspects of language: 'language of real life', 'language as communication' and 'written signs'. In the words of Thiong'O "culture is almost indistinguishable from language" (267). The colonizer by dominating the language dominated the culture of the nation they colonized. Communication creates culture and culture is a means of communication. Language carries culture and culture carries language. Language shapes the perception of our selves. Post-colonialism gives priority to indigenous language. For Kachru, "the English language is a tool of power domination and elitist identity and of communication across continent" (212).

Though the political colonialism has ended, the linguistic colonialism is deep rooted in different parts of the world. He mentions both advantages and disadvantages of the use of English in India. For governments English serves at least two purposes: providing ‘a linguistic tool for administrative cohesiveness of a country’ and providing ‘a language of wider communication’. The disadvantages of using the English according to Kachru are cultural and social implication accompanying the use to an external language. But the native languages are losing in the competition. Rao has a positive feeling towards the English language when he says: “Truth said a great Indian sage is not the monopoly of the English language. Truth can use any language and the more universal the better it is “(Rao 421 qtd. in Kachru). As Ashcroft has put it, “Post colonial writers who write in English have used it as a cultural vehicle through which a world audience could be introduced to the features of culturally diverse post colonial societies. But the use of colonial languages has open up a long running unresolved argument in post-colonial circles” (277).

Postcolonial subjects are also considered to be different on the basis of the differences of their body and voice. Body is the inescapable and visible sign of their oppression and denigration. So the body and performance have been central point of subject matter in post colonial writing. Such type of writing also helps to reject the Eurocentric and logo centric emphasis. Performance here refers to the oral performance which is also judged on the basis of written texts and considered to be inferior. But the oral performances are the part of culture as well as transmission of the culture. Ashcroft Griffiths and Tiffin mention:

At a further metaphorical level the body and the voice often become the sign in post-colonial written texts for alter/naive cultures which can only exist within the written as a description or a gap. Simultaneously unbridgeable and yet bridged by the position of post-colonial texts that seek to record the

continuing presence of oral performative cultures of colonized groups within the predominately written discourse of the colonizers. (290)

Body has also been the literal site for resistance and oppression. Fanon from his anecdotal remarks makes it clear that how a Negro is looked down. The persistent domination of black is highlighted by Fanon when she says “The Negro, however sincere, is the slave of the past . . .” (291). It shows the difficulty in matter overcoming the stereotyping people belonging to different classes and the races. People of certain races and colour have always been subject matter of domination irrespective of nation and culture.

History is also a subject of discussion in a postcolonial discourse or criticism. History of colonialism is the history of othering and annexing non-European world. It has also been means for controlling people. At bases the myth of value free scientific view of the past, the myth of beauty of order, the myth of story of history as a simple representation of the continuity of event, authorized nothing less than the construction of world reality. It would be mistake if we understand the history to be real. It is usually the fiction with real characters that glorifies the powerful ones for they are the ones to write history. In this sense history is a means for the construction of reality. The problem of history becomes particularly crucial for the postcolonial writer. It raises the questions of truth and fiction of narrativity and indeterminacy of time and space of history.

Historical narrativity structures the form of reality. The historical subjectivity is embedded in certain view. In this sense history is said to be fiction with real characters unlike fiction which depicts reality with imaginary characters. The people in power always manipulate the history in their own favor. History itself plays a powerful role for the inclusion and exclusion of certain groups. The history once created becomes a discourse for domination by providing legitimacy to it.

Europe (has) created its dominance by constructing history. As Jose Rabasa has put it even the Atlas can be seen as a palimpsest on which Europe has written its own dominance through the agency of history. “The map of world also carries Eurocentric view.

If Europeans retain the universal key nothing keeps the Atlas from being translated into a non-European Idiom as its ultimate irony within a historical horizon” (Rabasa 324). The tendency of the history to construct the world can be seen as Peter Hulme shows in the historical emergence of the word cannibals. The word is defined as “a man that eats human flesh; a man eater, an anthropophagite, originally proper name of the man eating cribs of Antilies” (325). This shows misuse of Eurocentric power to signify other (non- European).

Hulme doubts the historical accuracy of the Columbus’s journal when he says:

This is not an argument in favor of somehow lifting Columbus and his journal out of history. . . . But it is an argument in favor of bracketing particular question of historical accuracy and reliability in order to see the text whole to gauge the structure of its narrative and to chart the interplay of linguistic registers and rhetorical modalities. (326)

As he says it will be wrong to accept that the journal was not “revised or rewritten and not constructed with a view to publication” (ibid). According to Derek Walcott, “in the New World servitude to the muse of history has produced a literature of recrimination and despair, a literature of revenge written by the decedents of slaves or a literature of remorse written by the decedents of masters” (330). Such a type of history makes the society more feeble and weak. But in his word the truly tough aesthetic of the new world neither explains nor forgives the history. It refuses to recognize it as a creative or culpable force.

The poets of the third world only see nostalgia and incoherence in the history. They reject the scene of the history. Paul Carter’s concept of spatial history goes some way towards

this by rejecting the imperial idea of history as a stage on which it plays out its universal theme of the emergence of order out of chaos.

Post-colonial discourse has made place and displacement as its important features. Place in the post colonial societies is the interrelationship of language, history and environment rather than just the landscape. It has the sense of displacement because of migration, imported language and construction of culture. It causes the sense of dislocation from homeland. It has to do with the separation and relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. In its underlying sense place is language. According to Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, “the major feature of post colonial literature is the concern with either developing or recovering and appropriate identifying relationship between self and place because it is precisely within parameters of place and its separateness that the process of subjectivity can be constructed” (346). Place is a place for writing successive history. In this sense map is also a signifier of domination and control over places.

Education plays a great role in spreading norms, values and beliefs. The systems and values of colonial education still continue in former colonies even after the retreatment of the colonizers. In some cases, the old colonial system of education has given way to neo-colonial education. Such educational patterns are reproduced fundamentally/principally through basic attitude to education itself. Those are the attitude to both its nature and its role to particular nations and cultures. Such system of education has contributed to maintaining the unequal relation, the relationship of controller and controlled in the present day world as well.

Education has been the great means for spreading colonial domination. In Gramsci’s term now colonial education has been ‘the domination by consent’ which is achieved through content and/or method of teaching. Literary education has been proved to be very effective in this context in comparison to other type of education for such texts help to prove and justify the superiority of the civilization of Europeans and state sponsorship of education usually in

the language of the colonizing power. It establishes the literary values of English literary texts to be universal and as such makes the colonized feel inferior being wild, barbarous savage and uncivilized. Therefore the formal literary education has been the matter of contestation in post-colonial literature. British literature is still in the core curricula of many English departments. Gradually other national and non western studies are getting place in the English departments though the domination of English still continues.

The intent of the colonial education becomes clear in Macaulay's argument: "[W]e must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions of whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in Blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect" (375). This shows the secret mission of the secret intention. For Altbach the continued use of European languages in many developing countries is one of the most important aspect of neocolonialism and the impact of colonial heritage on the "Third World". In some cases even if the medium of instruction has been shifted to indigenous languages, European languages are still influential and elitist send their children to private schools where education is given in European languages. This hampers the intellectual and cultural development of the nation in question. Altbach further says that "only when an adequate understanding of modern neocolonialism in its many facets is achieved will it be possible to change the domination of West over East to a more equitable arrangement in an increasingly interdependent world" (384). This view indicates that providing education in English by neglecting indigenous language contributes to strengthen the European domination.

How colonial education has been able to maintain domination even after the retreatment of colonizers is made clearer when Thiong'O says: "[I]f you control the mind of the people you do not need police to control them at any other level" (390). What colonial mode of education does is to control the mind of people. It has made the people feel in exile

in their own homeland by distancing themselves from culture and language of their own identity.

Production and consumption has been a matter of less interest in postcolonial literature. The process of control by which the colonial and neocolonial power continue to exercise a dominant role in selecting, licensing, publishing and distributing the text of post colonial world and the degree to which the inscriptive practices, choice of forms subject matter genre, etc. is also subject of such control is studied in post colonial discourse. As in other cases the colonizer has been the producer and the colonized consumer. As Altbach has pointed out, “unequal distribution of intellectual products results from the complex set of factors including historical events, economic relationships, language, literacy and the nature of educational system”(408). At the same time industrialized nations have been benefited from their controls of the means of distribution of knowledge and have at times used their superiority to the disadvantaged. Intellectual productivity and independence are related to “the patterns of national development, the direction and rate of scientific growth and quality of cultural life” (ibid). Until and unless the so called third world nation can produce sufficient knowledge on their own, they cannot be independent from neocolonialism. Their minds continue to become slave to the idea of colonizers.

Now the whole world has turned into a global village. Information technology has contributed a lot to this. It has affected individual lives and social communities worldwide. The rapidly increasing interest in globalization reflects a changing organization of worldwide social relations in this century. Nations seem to be less important in this globalized era. The structural aspects of globalization are similar to those of nation state system. According to Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin, “the importance of globalization to post-colonial studies comes first from its demonstration of the structure of world power relations which stands firm in the twentieth century as legacy of Western imperialism” (461). The world is under the hegemony

of literary colonialism because the West has been the producer and the Third World the consumer of the knowledge. The producer always produces the knowledge in its own favor.

This issue of globalization has also been a strong means of dominating the local realities. As mentioned by Dirlik the situation created by Global capitalism helps explain certain phenomenon such as "global motion of people; the replication of inequalities and discrepancies once associated with colonialism, simultaneous homogenizations and fragmentation within and across societies, the interpretation of global and local and disorganization of world conceived in terms of three worlds or nation states" (466). The powers of globalization are manipulating less developed and developing countries by maintaining their own superiority and dominant role. It has contributed to the marginalization of four-fifth of global population. According to Appadurai, "[T]he central problem of today's global interactions is the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization" (468). Homogenization can be in national or global level. In national level the government may promote it by dominating cultural minorities. As mentioned by Appadurai Globalization constitutes "a complex overlapping disjunctive order that cannot any longer be understood in terms of existing centre-periphery modals" (468). According to Hikandi globalization and post coloniality have two important things in common. They are:

Concerned with explaining forms of social and cultural organization whose ambition is to transcend the boundaries of the nation-state and they seek to provide new vistas for understanding cultural flows that can no longer be explained by a homogeneous Eurocentric narratives of development and social change. (473)

So the postcolonial criticism takes globalization as Devils bargain. Basically for developing world it has more disadvantages than advantages. The so called global institutions are always functioning in favor of the developed countries.

Colonialism has long lasting effect on global environment. It led to disease; destruction of bio-diversity, deforestation has been the result of colonialism because the only aim of the colonizer was to earn profit. They did not have any concern to the environment. Traditional patterns of crop rotation were often replaced by the growing of cash crops which eventually led to loss of soil fertility and desertification leading to famine. In the words of Grove: “In the second half of the nineteenth century, too, forest conservation and associated forced resettlement methods were frequently the cause of fierce operation of indigenous peoples and became a highly convenient form of social control” (500). Grove claims that the originality of nature or environmental conversation lies in the East but not the West.

It is usually acknowledged that in the process of Eurocentric colonization, the land of the colonized and non-human population who inhabit these lands were often plundered and damaged as an indirect result of colonization of the people. But people generally do not see the direct influence of colonization in non human population. The anthropocentric view of colonization gave less priority to non human population in comparison to human population. Non-human population was othered by keeping the human in centre in the same way Eurocentric view othered people of colonized nation. It considered non-human population inferior to human people. This ideology treated non-human population as “slaves, tools or instruments” (Plunwood 504). He further says, “Anthropocentric culture conceives nature and animals as all alike in their lack of consciousness which is assumed to be exclusive to the human” (ibid.). So this anthropocentric view considers that non-human population can be manipulated in the interest of human population. From above discussion it has been clear that colonialist ideology was against environment for the sole interest of the colonialist was fulfilling human interest. Sayre explains in detail how the beautiful animal ‘beaver’ became victim to serve the interest of the colonizer in France.

Post-colonial criticism examines the effect of colonization in the global environment and its lasting effect on human population.

Religion has also attracted the attention of post-colonial literature. European societies have understood truth as a matter of scientific secular reason alone. The religious beliefs/truths of the colonized or the third world are considered to be myth or just superstitions. This Eurocentric stress on the secular view spread throughout the world along with colonization. Therefore European educated elites whole heartedly accepted the need to reform their oldest cultures by providing rational readings of their oldest cultural modes. In other words they started to question cultural values on rational basis. This became the global consequence of imperialism. So there emerged renewed sense of sacral as an alternative to Eurocentric models of thought.

In this twenty first century race and color seem to be major force in dividing the world population. Along with these, another force which divides people is religion. Now the sacral is emerging again as a part of broader rethinking of indigenous people in settler societies because it provides the people with a sense of belongingness. Post-colonial writers have now stopped to take European thought as modern for granted. They are now rereading the sacred texts of their own cultures and those of their masters. Post colonial writers are rereading sacred texts as a means of resistance to Eurocentric ideology. Donaldson claims that “one cannot overestimate the historical influence of the Christian tradition in disseminating imperialist ideology” (522). Until now there are a lot of missionary works to spread Christian ideology. Along with Christianity comes the superiority of Eurocentric view. The people who convert their religions are provided with several immediate benefits. Balaridge supports this view when he says, “A central agent in colonization of this hemisphere has been the Christian church. Whatever church likes to believe its intentions were or are in making us the object of its missionary endeavors. History shows the missionary system to be colonialism in

the name of Christ” (528). He further says the missionaries functioned and continue to function as “Christ-bearing colonizers” (529). The missionary system is racist. His idea is that the end of missionary system begins with a change of heart, my heart, not the heart of missionary that commission missionary. Richard Kind in ‘Orientalism and Religion’ mentions that west has described the religions of the east to be mystical which helps the west to maintain its modern identity.

Secularist assumptions about secular progress and the decline of religion have hindered the development of an adequate understanding of the importance of religion in the modern world (Veer 534). Sugirtharaja says:

The purpose of post colonial reading is not to invest text with properties that no longer have relevance to our context or with excessive or exclusive claims which invalidate our claims. It seeks to puncture the Christian Bibles western protection and pretensions and to help reposition it in relation to its oriental roots and Eastern heritage. (537)

So, the aim of post-colonial reading of sacred text is to dismiss the dualism modern (Christian) and traditional (other religion). To sum up post-colonial reading of sacred text is to put each religion in equal and to combat Christianity. It seeks to dismantle the hegemonic interpretation of religion.

Representation and resistance has been a matter of great concern for post-colonial literature. These are very broad areas of concern resistance. Mode of production and consumption as well education are areas. Where there is representation as such requires resistance. Universality and hybridity are also concerned with representation and resistance. There are different modes of post-colonial textual resistance of colonial representation. Edward Said has presented three types of resistance: “the insistence on the right to see communities’ history whole, coherently and integrally. Restore the imprisoned nation to

itself” so as to free the nation from print capitalism, “an alternative way of conceiving human history” and “noticeable pull away from separatist nationalism towards a more integrative view no one today is purely one thing because survival itself is connection between things” (97-98). The distinction between ‘we’ (European) and ‘they’ (rest) should be abolished. When this distinction is abolished the distinction between dominant and dominated is also abolished. In the view of Helen Tiffin, “post-colonial resistance is the dismantling of Eurocentric view by interrogating European discourses and discursive strategies and by investigating the means by which Europe maintained its codes in the colonial domination of so much of the rest of the world” (99). Here it will be relevant to quote Tiffin who clarifies the main aim of resistance when he says, “[I]n the light of these things resistance includes rereading and rewriting of the European historical and fictional records. Because of this post colonial literature is subversive in nature. In other words, “[I]t offers field of counter-discursive strategies to dominant discourses” (99). It also challenges the universality of Eurocentric views. Cudjoe and Harlow (qtd. in Lemon 104) define resistance as “an act or a set of acts that is designed to rid a people of its oppressions”. Literary resistance under these conditions can be seen as a form of contractual understanding between text and reader. So the resistance literature struggle for national liberation. It struggles to blur the centre-periphery binarism.

One of the complex issues of post-colonial theory is ethnicity. The concept of imperialism based on center/periphery binarism is that all the people in colonies are marginalized while nobody at the centre can be marginalized. The post-colonial theory sees the idea that only some ethnic groups are ethnic and other are not to be fallacious for it overlooks the actual overlap between the multiplicity of ethnic groups and the dynamic, processual and multi-faceted institution of power. The traditional concept of ethnicity is questioned.

Sollors examines the etymology of the word 'ethnic' and points out that, "the word retained its quality of defining another people contrastively and then negatively" (191).

According to Murdock:

In ethnic name calling tendency persist that a people usually calls itself by a flattering name or by a term simply 'men' 'men of men', 'first men' or 'people'. Aliens on the other hand, are regarded as something less than men; they are stylod 'barbarians' or are also known by some derogatory term corresponding to such modern American ethnic tags as 'bohlink', 'chink', 'dago', 'frog', nigger', sheeny', and wop. This clearly shows that the ethnic are othered and dominant people define themselves by contrasting themselves with the dominated people. (qtd. in Sollors 192)

Now it is believed that the imperial concept of race as a set of permanent differences within the human society is considered to fallacious today. Though in this modern age all people irrespective of race considered to be equal scientifically race continuous excerpt influences social and political affairs. Since race war and has been a cause of oppression, post-colonial writers have taken this issue serious.

Todorove makes distinction between racism and racialism. According to him, racism is an ancient form of behavior that is probably found worldwide; racialism is a movement of ideas born in Western Europe whose period of influence extends from the mid-eighteenth to mid twentieth century. He forwards five propositions of racialist doctrines; the existence of races, continuity between physical type and character the action of group and individual, unique hierarchy of values and knowledge based politics.

As Gates mentions by 1850 race was considered to determine the ways of thinking as well. He further says that "race has become an ultimate trope of difference because it is so very arbitrary in its application" (216). Different people in different context can use it

differently. People are continually being discriminated on the basis of race. Divisions based on race are presented as unbridgeable gaps even though mixing has become common. To overcome such situation, as Gilroy says, “Creative and negative thinking is needed to generate more complex and challenging narratives which can repudiate those truths and be faithful to everyday metropolitan life by reducing the exaggerated dimension of racial differences to liberating ordinariness” (229).

In his word race is just a “virtual reality” rather than the reality in itself. ‘Negritude movement’ in words of Ahluwala, was the movement against the operation of black in France. Though they have been blamed for reaffirmation of racial divisions, “the colonized sought to reverse the representations ascribed to them to turn those negative identities into possible images” (231). As such it has a strong form of resistance. It was a movement of liberation since it helped the black to regain the humanity denied by the colonizers for centuries. Non-white basically ‘black’ communities are denigrated and relegated continually on the basis of race and post-colonial writing fights against it. In this sense, race shares with representation and resistance.

The indigenous people in settled colonies have been an issue of great attention to many writers in postcolonialism. But such way of talking about indigenous people are said to be doing bad to them rather than good. Imperial of narratives naming and knowing indigenous people/groups have imported a notion of aboriginality cultural authenticity which is difficult to eradicate. It has been proved to be useful to maintain the binarism of centre and margin. As many indigenous commentators have re-iterated, all culture and society change and adopt. And the political claims of indigenous people are based on such changing situations.

This is the strategy of colonizer to divide people in different groups as authentic and non- authentic. Post-colonial discourses reject idea of categorizing people and non-

indigenous category on the ground that the categorization is just a political trap. They reject the idea for it is subjective rather than ontological.

One of the issues which highly focused on in post-colonial discourse is stereotyping indigenous people. Stereotyping considers certain characteristics of certain groups of people to be fixed and static this is never the case. “The direction of postcolonial writing”, according to Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, “has been towards an understanding of the increasing complex and shifting subject position of indigenous writers and cultural producers” (164). As such it helps to define the positions of the indigenous writers.

In conclusion we can say that though the term postcolonial means after the end of colonialism, it lacks the universally accepted definition. It has defined differently by giving focus to different aspects. Postcolonial criticism has a wider scope for different issues are studied here. Furthermore, any literary text principally can be studied from postcolonial point of view. In the following section the postcolonial study of the novel *The Suffrage of Elvira* by V.S Naipaul is presented. The novel is studied from different perspectives under the broader heading political dislocation.

III Sense of Political Dislocation in the Novel *The Suffrage of Elvira*

The research paper is an attempt to show the sense of political dislocation in the novel *The Suffrage of Elvira*. The term political dislocation has been used here in much broader sense to include various issues. Basically it addresses the issues such as postcolonial identity, ethnicity and religion, nationalism, and racism.

People of the colonized country are considered to be savage and uncivilized by the colonizer. They are othered and marginalized. The colonized people because of this have “negative self image and alienation from their own indigenous culture” (Tyson, 2006, 419) and try to imitate the culture of the colonized. It makes them dislocated for they are neither native nor accepted in the culture of the colonized. Such type of negative self image is also found in the characters in *The Suffrage of Elvira*. While talking about making a house Baksh says, “ [T]his Trinidad is backward to hell. . . .Think they could build like that in Trinidad. . . ‘Nah!’ ” (14). Even after the colonizer are retreated “what has been left behind is a deeply embedded cultural colonization: the inculcation of British system of government and education, British culture, and British values that denigrate the culture, morals, and even physical appearance of formerly subjugated” (ibid). Imitation always makes the people dislocated. The characters in *The Suffrage of Elvira* are found to be imitating the culture of the colonizer. It can be seen even in giving names. The name of Baksh’s tailoring is

M.BAKSH

London Tailoring Est,

Tailoring and Cutting

Suits Made and Repaired at City Prices. (15)

With this name Baksh considers the dignity of his shop to be high. While giving name he might have thought that ‘London’ and ‘city’ symbolize power and dignity. The colonized also have negative feeling about their dress and usually love to wear the dress of the colonizer.

The cultural confusion is clearly expressed in the cloths that the people of Elvira wear. The clothes are more western. Mrs Baksh wears skirts instead of traditional Indian clothes.

Harbans and Chittaranjan wear shirt and trousers. Even Pundit Dhaniram, the best known pundit in Elvira wears a dhoti only occasionally. Sometimes he wears khaki trousers, yellow sport shirt, brown felt hat and brown patent leather shoes. It is interesting to note that pundit Dhaniram is educated at a Presbyterian school and signs hymns as well. He is even proud of his training in the Christian school because as he says “it makes him see both sides” (68).

Sometimes we can find mismatch in their dressing and which makes them ridiculous.

Harbans seems to be ridiculous in his dress: “His white shirt, buttoned at the wrist, was newly ironed, like his trousers. The only rakish touch in his dress was the tie, he used as the trouser belt” (15). Harbans wears tie but does not know to wear it properly. Though the Muslim women normally wear long dresses to cover their body, Mrs Baksh wears “modern skirt the hem of which fell only just below the knee” (21). Similarly, “Teacher Francis was a red-skinned Negro who dazzled Elvira with his sharp city dress: Sharkish zoot (coat) suit, hot tie knotted below the open collar, two-toned shoes” (38). Imitation at the expense of his own culture can be in Dhaniram’s dress: “No dhoti and sacred thread but khaki trouser. Yellow part shirt brown felt hat and brown patent leather shoes” (128). He has given up wearing dhoti and sacred thread though they are the obligatory things of his cultural attire. Rather than his traditional dress he prefers to wear Western clothes and wants to identify himself with the colonizer.

Similarly, the D.M.O, a young handsome Indian, “had not forgotten his association to England and continued to wear Harris Tweed jacket, despite that heat” (171). Here wearing jacket despite the heat makes the D.M.O.’s dressing style ridiculous. But he prefers to appear to ridiculous rather than not wearing jacket. His dressing style also reflects his view of the colonizer.

Language is the means through which the distinctions between the have and have not's, civilized and savage, and knowledgeable and ignorant are realized. When colonized peoples use the language of colonizer, "it takes them further and further from themselves to other selves" (Thing'O 266). The English language "is a tool of power domination" (Kachru, 212). It can be taken as a form of linguistic colonialism and native languages loose in the competition. The colonizers are able to brainwash the colonized that the English language is superior to their own indigenous language. As far as the use of language is concerned in the novel *The Suffrage of Elvira* the people are out of touch with their Hindi language. All the characters, besides Dhaniram's wife, speak the English language even if it is not their mother tongue. They do not use Standard English rather a sort of Creole English. The newspapers- "Trinidad Sentinel, Gurdains, and Gazett" (39) - are published in the English language. There is no mention of any newspaper published in any vernacular languages. The English language is required for getting a job. Foam did not get a job of advertising for a cinema because "Foam's English was not very good" (39). Lorkhoor speaks "faultless English to his heart content" (ibid). The ones who speak the correct English are considered to be civilized. Therefore in formal occasions people usually speak Standard English. In terms of language they are dislocated. Neither do they speak their own language nor can they speak the English language in standard way.

In the society dominated by materialistic values the customs and tradition also become the subject matter of politics. In *The Suffrage of Elvira* we see the similar interest in the culture. In Hindu tradition it is almost always the father of the son who proposes the marriage but it is just opposite in the case of Chittarnjan and Harbans. Chittarnjan purposes the marriage of his daughter as a bargain to election. The breaking of tradition can also be seen in the elopement of Daniram's daughter- in-law. Who runs away with Lorkhoor and starts her new life.

People of different ethnicity and religions are living in Trinidad. There are Hindus, Muslims, Spaniards, and Christians. Such situation has resulted in hybridity in Elvira. Achebe describes his experience of growing up in hybrid culture: “on one arm of the cross we sang hymns and read the Bible night and day. On the other my father’s brother and his family, blinded by heathenism, offered food to Idols. . . .Those Idols and that food had a strange pull on me in spite of my being such a thorough little Christian” (143). As far as religion is concerned, people of Elvira are not found very much devoted to their own religion. They are standing at “the crossroads” to use Achebe’s word. Baksh, the Muslim leader, “wasn’t a good Muslim. He did not know all the injunctions of the Prophet and those he did know he broke” (13). The influence of different religions can be seen in the way Baksh has named his children. The Bakshs-though a Muslim-have given Muslim as well as Christian names to their children which the writers considers to be “the concession that the Bakshes made to their environment: they choose alternate Christian and Muslim names to their children” (21). The Bakshs celebrate Christian festivals. It becomes clear when they say, “‘Nice biscuits’ Baksh tempted, stubbornly. ‘Have them here since Christmas’” (22). Dhaniram, one of the characters, is Hindu pundit but he was educated in a school of Christian mission: “Paudit Dhaniram had been educated at one of Presbyterian schools of the Canadian mission where he had been taught hymns and other Christian things . . . and even now although he was a Hindu priest, he often found himself humming hymns like ‘Jesus loves me, yes, I know’” (48).

Mrs. Baksh does a Biblical trial to find out the person guilty of doing something wrong which she applies to find out who brought the dog. Mrs Baksh said: “‘By saint Peter, by Saint Paul, Foam bring the dog . . .’” (62). This practice of using biblical trial to find out a person guilty of doing something wrong by a Muslim woman shows how Christianity has circulated in the blood of Muslim. From Biblical trial Mrs. Baksh finds that it is Herbert to

bring the dog in the house. She is confirmed that it is an ill omen so she takes him to a preacher for spiritual fumigation. The cultural disintegration is clearly expressed in *The Suffrage of Elvira* in the following expression of the narrator.

Things were crazily mixed up in Elvira. Everybody, Hindus, Muslims and Christian owned a Bible; the Hindus and Muslim looking on it, if anything, with greater awe. Hindus and Muslims celebrated Ester and Christmas. The Spaniards and some of the Negros celebrated the Hindu festival of lights. . . . Everybody celebrated the Muslim festival of Hosein. In fact, when Elvira was done with religious festivals, there were few straight days left. (66)

The idea expressed in the passage seems to be an illusion when the Suffrage starts there. The feelings of religious and cultural hatred come into surface when Chittranjan and Baksh quarrel about the scandal between Nelly and Foam. The insults they aim at each other expose the racial situation in Elvira: “‘what is Muslim?’ Chittaranjan asked, in his smile frozen, his eyes unshining, his voice low and cutting, ‘Muslim is everything and Muslim is nothing.’ He paused even Negro is Muslim”” (64). His saying shows how he low rates Muslims. His association of Muslims with Negros shows that Negros is even lower rated than Muslims. Lorkhoor, campaign manager for preacher mentions the unity of races and religions and plays records of Hindi songs and English songs while campaigning for Preacher. But this unity is very difficult to find in their day to day behaviour.

The new capitalist order and older feudal order can be seen in the behaviour of Dhaniram as well. He is a Hindu priest but takes delight on reading bible. He takes certain delight in his dual heritage because, as he says, “ ‘ it makes me see both sides’ . . . and even now although he was a Hindu priest, he often found himself humming hymns line, ‘ Jesus loves me, yes, I know’” (48). This is the culture left by colonizer to the colonized. They not

only controlled the nation politically but also spread their religion through missionary schools. They made the indigenous people feel in exile in their own homeland by making them feel that their own culture is not civilized.

The clash between the older and new generation is also shown in the novel. The older generation seems to be adherent to feudalistic thought. The younger generations are given the task of breaking such feudalistic thoughts. They are seeking a freer and individualistic participation within the new social order. Prominent among the younger generation is Nelly Chittranjan, who wants to live a free life by breaking the proscription of older generation like that of her father. Though her father prevents her from going to take classes with teacher Francis, finally her dream of going to Poly is realized and she didn't have to marry Harbans's son who she didn't like though her father wanted to get her married to him. Although the marriage was prevented by Harbans unwillingness, the decision is in favor of Nelly. Nelly Chittranjan has liberated herself from the feudal atmosphere of Elvira. Pundit Dhaniram and his daughter-in-law who was deserted by Dhaniram's son only two months after their marriage also demonstrate this liberation from feudal relation. Although Hindu tradition demanded that the doolain remain with her father-in-law, she deserts him and runs away with Lorkhoor, her new lover, to live "in a dingy furnished room in Henry Street in Port of Spain" (206). She refuses to be bound by feudal obligations.

The gradual dissolution of feudalism in Trinidadian society in 1950 created new problem for its citizens. It required the older generation to discard their old superstitious beliefs as a necessary prerequisite for nationhood and for the younger generation it required courage to adopt the new and freer way of life. They had to be free from their elders to realize their dreams, which is very difficult in reality. "In the old days,' Dhaniram said, talking about Nelly, and sounding Harbans further, 'you coulda trust a Hindu girl. Now

everything getting modern and mix up” (129). The election gives the liberation to Harbans himself rather than to the whole community.

Specifically, the text examines East Indians’ dispossession in the society, the manner in which the Hindu-Muslim conflict mitigated against the liberation of the East Indian from the colonial society, and the relationship of the East Indian to the larger society as its feudal ties begins to unravel. The image in the big drawing room of Chittaranjan, where the Indian leaders of the community Chittranjan, Baksh, Foam and Harbans, have gathered for the first time to develop an election strategy is symbolic in itself.:

There is a large picture of Round Table Conference with King George V and Mahatma Gandhi sitting together, the king formally dressed and smiling, the Mahatma in a loincloth, also smiling. The picture made Harbans easier. He himself had a picture like that in his drawing room in Port of Spain. Then Foam had an accident. He knocked the Negro waiter down and spilled his red sweet drink on the floor. (31)

For Baksh, Chittranjan and others at this meeting, Gandhi’s presence is very important; symbolizing the position he took at the Round Table Conference. At the second plenary meeting, Gandhi stated that the coming of the English and particularly the capitalist relations they engendered among the Indians caused strife among the Indians life. The picture of round table conference also shows the similar situation in Trinidad where the newly introduced democratic system has caused and going to cause a sense of placelessness. They attempted to solve their problem through the election but the election itself is going to be a trouble causing more harm than good. It has created a trouble and a sense of dislocation.

People in Elvira believe in superstitious things which become clear from their association of election with obeah, their belief in spiritual fumigation, their talking of signs

and other things. Their association of election with obeah can be seen in what Lorkhoor says: “Mr. Cuffry I am only trying to inform you that the oppositions are spreading the pernicious propaganda that Preacher is working obeah” (68). The idea of supernatural belief of the people in Elvira is also expressed when the narrator in the story says, “nearly everybody else in Elvira had some experience of supernatural; when the conversation turned to such matters in Ramlogan’s shop, Baksh had to improvise” (72). When Herbert brings a dog at home Baksh gets the subject matter to talk about. He does not need to improvise. It becomes the subject matter of talking throughout Elvira. When Herbert is found to be guilty in a Biblical trial she takes Herbert to spiritual fumigation and is satisfied with what Ganesh pundit did. Her satisfaction is expressed when she says, “the fellow we went to was all right...He jharay the boy well enough” (80).

There is no system of educating girls. Chittranjan has been an exception to this by sending his daughter to teacher Francis for typing and shorthand. He prides himself about his educating his daughter in the presence of Harbans. He says, “When people hear she talk, they don’t want to believe that she only have sixteen years. Taking typing lesson and shorthand from teacher Francis, you know. She could take down prescription and type them out. This doctor son you have” (32). But he also stops sending his daughter to the teacher when Haq talks about her being together with Foam, a Muslim boy, the campaign manager of Harbans in the election. This is one of the systems which has kept the Trinidadian society backwards.

This world where the writer was born and educated made him to suffer a sense of alienation before the self exile in the United Kingdom. The very fact that Naipaul had turn to his colonial Hindu self for his material implies directly that his writing would be built around his diasporic concerns. It is a compelling study of displacement and dislocation.

Mainly the political dislocation is caused by the imitation of British system of government without understanding the essence of it. Democracy is supposed to be a good system of government. Here democracy refers to the western model of democracy. The writer in *The Suffrage of Elvira* shows how ridiculous it can be. The novel describes the second universal suffrage since it became independent from the British colony. Democracy is only seen as a means of making some people the Member of Parliament. There is no mention of the policy of the election and none of the candidates have their manifesto. They just want to get vote by hook or crook. Though there are three candidates: Harbans, Baksh and Preacher the whole story moves around Harbans who finally wins the election. The novel starts with Harbans's journey to Elvira-his constituency, describes his election campaign and end with his victory and its consequences to the common people of Elvira.

Some people see the election as quarrel, fighting and enmity among the people. In this regard it would be relevant to quote the fear of Mrs. Baksh who "saw threats everywhere; this election was the greatest. She couldn't afford new enemies" (22). Their lack of understanding the true essence of democracy is also expressed in Foam's expression: "In Trinidad this democracy is brand new thing. We is a creeping nation" (25). The best means for getting the votes is supposed to be bribing people. Foam mentions that he "is going up for County Council myself" and has a plan to have "a sort of campaign in advance" by buying "sweet drink for different children every day for five years" (26). He thinks that when the children grow old enough to vote they will say, "We going to vote for Foam" (26).

Harbans has appointed Foam as his Campaign manager by giving seventy dollar a month and buying him a loud speaking van. When got appointed, "he worked not so much for the victory of Harbans and the defeat of the preacher, as for the humiliation of Lorkhoor and teacher Francis" (40). Mrs. Baksh continues to express her fear about the election. She says, "nobody ain't listening me. Everybody just washing their foot and jumping in this democracy

business” (40). Vote buying is considered to be legitimate. When Harbans expresses his worries for being compelled to spend a lot of money in comparison of the expense of the candidates in the first election Baksh says, ““what you say about 1946 is true. Nobody did spend much money. But that was only the first election. People just go and vote for the people they liked. Now is different. People learning. You have to spend on them”” (46).

What common people have learned about the election or democracy is that they can get some immediate benefits from the candidate. They do see the democracy or the election something for the betterment of the system of government. The meaning of democracy is giving bribe to people to get their votes. Dhaniram consoles Harbans when he gets worried about the expense by saying that it, ““is not as though you giving things to we pussonal, Mr. Harbans. You must try and feel that you giving the people. After all, is the meaning of democracy” ’ (50). When the committee campaigning for Harbans convince Harbans that giving bribe to people is the best means for getting votes they make a plan to get votes from Negros. The plan is forwarded by Dhaniram. His idea is that, ““here in Elvira the campaign committee must be a sort of social welfare committee, supposing one of those Negros fall sick. We go to them. We go take them to doctor in we taxi. We go pay for their medicine”” (51). Teacher Francis sees “no point in voting” because the people of Elvira, in his view “do not know the value of vote” (85). The writer himself seems to be speaking in the word of Teacher Francis. Throughout the novel the writer wants to show that the people of Elvira do not know the value of their votes. They are just imitating the British system of government thinking that this is best form of the government.

The election seems to have brought many harmful effects in the society in the eye of common people. In this regard Teacher Francis says, ““Elvira was a good friendly place before this universal suffrage nonsense”” (85). In the word of Teacher Francis, ““the ordinary people of Elvira don’t appreciate that voting is a duty and privilege”” (120). Since there is no

political ideology voters, campaigners as well the candidate themselves are found to be changing their sides. Harbans makes the rum account free in Ramlogan's shop. When the election comes near, "everybody it seemed was selling out to somebody" (157). Lorkhoor who is campaigning for Preacher, a Negro candidate, sells eight hundred votes to Harbans in "five hundred dollars" (159) as if votes were something to buy and sell. The most interesting thing is that a person can sell others' vote. There is no objection in this selling. Baksh who himself is candidate gives up his candidacy and starts campaigning for Harbans:

This is the voice of . . . Baksh. Mazarus Baksh here. This is the voice of . . . Baksh asking each and every one of you, the good people of Elvira, to vote for your popular candidate, Mr Surajpat Harbans. Remember good people of Elvira, I Mazarus Baksh is not fighting for the election again. I am giving my support to Mr. Surajpat Harbans. (179)

Mr Cawfee dies two days before election. As per their plan to get Negro vote by buying medicine for sick Negro or by organizing funeral program for the dead, the campaigning committee of Harbans organizes the funeral program of Mr. Cawfee along with the motorcade procession. The expense of the motorcade was so high that, "Harbans wrote and wrote (vouchers). If he stopped to think, he would break down and cry. His wrinkled hand perspires and shook; it had never done so much writing at one time" (181). The agents continue to campaign for Harbans on the day of election in the ballot station. They say, "'you just put your little x by the heart'" (184). When there is a notice of unnecessary delay and people returning without voting, Harbans goes to the ballot station gives "a ten-dollar note" (185) secretly to the agents causing delay. His trick works well to quicken the process. When the election is over ballot boxes are taken to a school and votes are counted. Harbans wins the election by getting "five thousand three thousand and thirty-six" votes (192). After winning the election he left Elvira indenting never to return. But he had to come once

because of the case of whisky which Ramlogan had promised to give to the committee of the winning candidate.

The respect of the people to the colonizer even after the colony is over is expressed when Ramlogan presents a case of whisky to the committee of the winning candidate by wrapping it in Union Jack. On the day of the presentation “the crowd hand spread out in the road and formed a solid semicircle around the case of whisky dapped with Union Jack” (197). Then Foam announces that the whisky is only for the committee. It causes a lot of buzzing among the people. They think that they should also get the value of their votes because it is because of their votes that Harbans won the election. At that time Harichand addresses the crowd:

Ladies and gentlemen, Mr; Harbans has nothing to do with the whisky. I ain't really know how the rumour get around, but this case of whisky, he patted the Union Jack-is for the committee, of which I am proud and happy to be a member. The whisky ain't for nobody else. Is not Mr. Harbans whisky. Is Mr. Ramlogan's whisky. (199)

Though this excerpt talks about whisky, it is symbolic regarding the benefits of democracy to common people. Common people do not get anything or cannot get anything from democracy in the situation where the corrupted leaders are guided by their own interests. Only a selected few are to get benefits. When the crowd gets more agitated Chittaranjan purposes to give something to candidate rather than getting something from him other people disagree. Then there arises the situation of fighting among Hindus, Muslim and Negros. Democracy took root in Elvira, according to the writer, when Harbans won the election but it brought fighting, quarrel, dissatisfaction, and explosion among the people. It only made the people dislocated in terms of their identity and other things. It seems that they would be better off without this democracy and election.

Through the novel *The Suffrage of Elvira* the writer also wants to show that how the so-called nationalism fails in newly decolonized nations. It expresses how only a selected few take benefits by cheating other in the name of nationalism. Nationalism gives emphasis on indigenous culture with an attempt to eliminate western influences. This is “fighting for national culture” (Fannon 120). In the first sight it seems to be very good to fight for indigenous culture or national culture. It seems to be in favor of indigenous people but “it has many weaknesses because of the weaknesses of the middle class bourgeoisie leader who are ready to serve the mother country and fulfill their own needs rather than that of people” (ibid). This situation is very clearly expressed in the novel. Harbans, the winning candidate, wants to win the election by convincing the people to vote for him by any means. When Harbans is worried because of huge expense for the election, Foam consoles him saying, “Don’t worry Mr. Harbans. When we put you in Leg. Co. You going to make it back” (20). Harbans curses Elvira: “Elvira. . . You is a bitch! A bitch! A bitch!” after reaching County Caroni because he has to bribe many people for the election (147). He is very angry with Baksh who takes bribe three times. When he wins the election settles all the bills-taxi drivers, Ramlogan’s rum account, bonuses for agents-“Harbans left Elvira, intending never to return” (194). It explains how selfish the leaders are. It shows the psychology of businessman, not that of captain of industry” (Fanoir 122) in national leader who “turns it back more and more on the interior and on the real facts of its undeveloped county” (ibid). Before independence the leaders have the aspiration of people for independence, political liberty as well as national dignity. But as soon as independence is declared, the leader will reveal the real purpose that getting rich. Their honesty goes away little by little and they indulge in corruption and pleasure. They show no concern to the demand of the people. The same thing happens in the novel *The Suffrage of Elvira*. Though Harbans wants never to return, he returns once to Elvira because of the case of Whisky which Ramlogan had

promised to give to the members of the winning candidate. In the program “Harbans had come in a brand-new, blue and black Jaguar” (196). Even in the short duration people find a lot of differences in him:

He was not the candidate they knew. Gone was the informality of dress, the loose trousers, the tie around the waist, the open shirt. He was in a double-breasted grey suit. The coat was little too wide and too long. . . .He didn't wave. He looked preoccupied, kept his eye on the ground and spat in the gutter, pulled out an ironed handkerchief and wiped his lips...in the funniest way. (197)

He has hard time to convince the people who have gathered around Ramlogan's shop with the hope of getting some whisky free of cost. They set the fire in his new car. With help of the members of his campaigning committee he manages to get out of Elvira unharmed. While leaving he again curses Elvira by saying, “Elvira, you is a bitch” and comes “to Elvira no more” (206).

People of certain colour and race are looked down. The people of so called higher class or race dominate the people of the lower so called lower race. This form of domination can also found in the countries which have never been colonized. In this regard people believe that “the Negro, however sincere is the slave of the past” (Fanon, 291). In the novel *The Suffrage of Elvira* Hindus are found looking down to Negros and Muslim. While talking about the plan for getting votes from Negros, the member of Harbans's election committee Chittaranjan says, “Dhaniram, you talking like if you ain't know how hard these negros is in Elvira. You ever see any Negro fall sick?” (51) as though Negros are never attacked by any diseases. Their culture is considered to be inferior. The Negro “don't get married so often. Most of them living with women. Just like that you know” (52) says Chittranjan. Preacher, the Negro candidate is accused repeatedly for nothing. Mrs. Baksh blames him for doing

obeah in her family. She says, “what more preacher have in mind than all of we come thin, thin like that dog? And then for all ten of we to dead, what more?” (61). Foam scolds Haq with reference of the color of his skin saying, “you so damn black nobody could see you in night time” (88). Hindus in the novel *The Suffrage of Elvira* consider themselves to be superior than others-Muslim and Negros. Chittranjan says: “This democracy is just make for the people like Baksh. Fact I say it just make Negro and Muslim. They is two people who never like to make anything for themselves and the moment you make something they start begging.” (141). Muslims and Negros are considered to be untrustworthy.

In conclusion we can say that *The Suffrage of Elvira* is a novel which exposes different negative impacts of colonialism in a society. Basically it exposes the aftermath of colonialism. It vividly shows how democracy can be a demon when it is handled by corrupted leaders with their own vested interests who are always concerned about their own betterment. It shows that a country cannot be independent in a true sense even if it is politically independent. The colonizers not only colonize the territory but also the mind of the colonized. Though the setting of the novel is a particular place, Trinidad, it exposes the issue of global significance.

IV. Conclusion

This research “Political Dislocation in V.S. Naipaul’s *The Suffrage of Elvira*” is the postcolonial study of the novel. It is an attempt to show the politico-cultural dislocation in the novel *The Suffrage of Elvira*. It analyzed the novel by considering different issues such as post colonial identity, hybridity, ethnicity and religion, feminism, language and so on.

The novel is concerned with the success of a little man. Harbans sells out totally to win the seat and disowns all that helped him- Hindu, Muslim, and Negros. The election transports him to the Port of Spain. He frees himself from the imprisoning environment of Elvira by breaking his cultural ties. He gains a new identity it is in the expense of his old self. Naipaul’s cumulative ironies make it clear that success bought at the expense of spirit must count as a greatest failure. It creates a cultural isolation far more damaging and demanding than the earlier condition.

The people of Elvira are standing at the crossroad. They are confused, disowned, dispossessed, dislocated and stranded politically in broader sense. Their religion has been affected by other religions. Basically the religion of the colonizer, the Christianity, has taken the place of their religion. Their language has lost in the competition. It does not have any prestige in comparison to the English language. They neither speak their own language nor do they speak Standard English. They are dislocated in terms of the language they use. Their dress has made them look ridiculous because they imitate the dress of the colonizer thinking that it is superior to their own. Imitating the political system of the colonizer without understanding the essence has brought them many bad consequences-quarrels, fighting, misunderstanding between different ethnic communities and division among the people.

Naipaul is the first contemporary writer to penetrate the confusion surrounding the plight of brutish colonial minority cultures. The minority colonial who would succeed had a

little choice but to ape the mere forms of his adapted culture. Like Gandhi in India, *The Suffrage of Elvira* suggests that East Indians could solve their problems only by rejecting such feudal practices as the taking of child brides, the proscription against educating girls, and the belief in fate and preordination of events. Until and unless such practices are abandoned the democracy has nothing to do with the betterment of the people.

It also shows that being independent not only means to be independent politically. It means to be independent culturally, economically and intellectually. Without cultural, economical and intellectual independence, political independence is meaningless. Democracy, if it is not democratic in substance, may be worse than autocracy.

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