

## I INTRODUCTION

### V.S.NAIPAUL: HIS LIFE AND WORKS

V (idiadhar) S (urajprasad) Naipaul was born as a son of Surajprasad Naipaul, a journalist on August 17, 1932 at Chaguanas in Trinidad. He was the second son of seven children in a large family of orthodox Brahmins whose ancestral roots lay in Gorakhpur, India. As a city reporter, his father moved to port of Spain. V. S. Naipaul admits this in his literary work *Finding the Center*. (1984): "In 1938, my father was taken on by 'Guardian' again this time " as a city reporter." And we, my father, my mother, and their five children, our own little nucleus within my mother's extended family moved to Port of Spain, to the house owned by my mother's, mother. (34)".

Naipaul's life was unordered because of his father and family. His life was unstable and jumbled; he could not see his father for days. There was a desperate quarrel. Nothing was stable and good in his family. His father died of a heart attack in October 1953 at the age of forty-seven. It was not until 1972, when V. S. Naipaul was forty that he got connected idea of his ancestry and early life. An Indian boy suggested to him to see an old lady. Naipaul notes in *Finding the Center* ". "And in some villages as a charm against the disease there was a ceremony of a sacrifice to Kali, the black mother Goddess. Women went in procession through five villages, singing and asking for alms for Kali, ..... the goat was garlanded, its head cut off, and its blood sprinkled on the alter before the image of the Goddess (58-9)".

Before he met Patricia Hale whom he married in 1955, he had undergone a nervous breakdown that almost made him commit suicide, however, he luckily survived. Their

marriage could not last long as she died in 1965. That led Naipaul to marry a divorced Pakistani Journalist, Nadira Alvin. It is a hidden fact that none of his books (though by now he has already published twenty five books) or his critics seem to throw light on the aspect of his love and marriage. The only reference of his marriage in the introduction by Paul Theroux who assumes that he is married and has no children. He notes: "Readers of the American edition of *An Area of Darkness* know that he is married [...] scrupulous readers may also deduce from this book and from some articles that Naipaul is not all that he is a vegetarian, enjoys cricket, and has no children "(8).

There is also a reference in Landeg White's *V. S. Naipaul, A Critical Introduction*: " He has the same taste with Lorraine, the American girl to whom Naipaul is attracted during his pilgrimage to the cave of Amarnath. Naipaul was accompanied around India with his wife; he never refers to her except once as ' my companion '" (White 180).

#### NAIPAUL'S ART OF WRITING

It is not at all surprising to know that Naipaul in 1950, at the age of eighteen, won a scholarship to study at Oxford University, England from the Trinidad government; he later describes this departure as having been saved from extinction. A resident of England ever since, Naipaul was knighted in 1989.

After his graduation, he started his lifelong career as a freelance writer. It was then for the first time he felt himself a rootless writer, finding himself far from his source culture, language and people. He, however, as a broadcaster for the BBC Caribbean Voice (1954-56), and as a fiction reviewer for the *New Statesman* (1957-61), got nascent cultural impetus in coloring his one of the first novels, *The Miguel Street* (1959) with the

love and nostalgia he had with Trinidad. All of his early novels expose his ambivalent stance as a natal son of Trinidad, depicting the lives of the people as he could sense them from the nearest possible point. The *Mystic Masseur* (1951) and *The Suffrage of Elvira* (1958) set his career as a novelist that ultimately flowers in *A House for Mr. Biswas* (1961), a tragic-comic story of the search for independence and identity of a Brahmin Indian living in Trinidad. The protagonist of the novel, the Mohan Biswas is said to have partly modeled after the author's own impoverished father. The solid basis of existence-a house for him touches the book that ultimately became one of the main themes of his *Letters Between Father and Son* (1999), a record of father-son-correspondence in the early 1950s. Ousby writes about Naipaul and his works as:

Naipaul is a novelist of distinction, whose fastidious, sardonic tone control as profound concern with 20<sup>th</sup> century uncertainties and such damaging effects of imperialism upon the people of the Third World as cultural alienation and deracination. His first three books are satirical but genial: *The Mystic Masseur*, *The Suffrage of Elvira* and *The Miguel Street*. In *A House for Mr. Biswas*, he brilliantly portrays a nonentity, simultaneously absurd and heroic, establishing, barely, a distinctive personality for 'freedom' are illusions [...]. (659)

Naipaul's travels to India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Iran, Africa, South America and the USA in the 1960s and the early 1970s provided immense materials for his novels in which he has extended the range of characters, locales and ideas in his later novels. A quarter of his novels begun in the 1960s deals with exile, alienation and disillusion. These works are *Mr. Stone and the Knights Companion* (1963), *The Mimic Men* (1967), *A Flag*

*on the Island* (1967), and *In a Free State* (1971). In these novels, Naipaul concludes that all individuals are “colonial”, existing in what is ironically known as “free state”. *In a Free State* won the Booker Prize, Britain’s most prestigious literary award. In *Guerrillas* (1975) Naipaul dealt in fictional form with events in the West Indies and Zaire, respectively. *Guerrillas* concerns a would-be West Indian revolutionary. *A Bend in the River* probes the search for identity in a newly independent African nation. Though cast as novel, *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987) and *A Way in the World* (1994) are to a great extent autobiographical, dealing with Naipaul’s recurrent themes of exile and political freedom. In these works, Naipaul is haunted by a landscape that reflects the past yet is marked more and more by profound social change.

In this sense, Rob Nixon calls Naipaul a “homeless citizen of the world” (18). This rhetoric of displacement finds a powerful but often oblique expression in his books. In an interview with Rahul Singh, Naipaul strongly determines that he is not an English, nor a Trinidadian, nor an Indian but his own man (3). It is his philosophy of life that the world has a move and he belongs to many places, and “there are many things that go to make our idea of who we are” (Huntington 74). For this reason he is considered “a voice of dire time” (Jones 50). The issue of identity, displacement, dislocation, mimicry and the effects of colonization haunt both his works and life.

While expanding his settings, Naipaul also alternates fiction with books of travel and history. *The Middle Passage* (1962) records his return to the West Indies. *An Area of Darkness* (1964) describes his first visit to India, his ancestral homeland. *The Loss of El Dorado* (1969) is an attempt to recover and understand the history of Trinidad, *India Among The Believers* (1981) and *Beyond Belief* (1988) are based on his travels to non-

Arab Muslim countries, such as Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia and Pakistan, and offer a critical assessment of Islamic fundamentalism in those countries. Naipaul returned to fiction with *Half a Life* (2001), a novel whose protagonist moves from India to England and on to Africa. *Half a Life* had begun with the line: “Willie Chandran asked his father one day, ‘why is my middle name Somerset?’ The boy at school have turned out to be rich with ironies. Willie, however, had been named after the author. Writes Amitava Kumar in *Himal South Asian*, “In Naipaul’s work, the names of books and authors, and the record of their use, repeat the story of newness, distortion, and often, loss. It would make him more popular among literary-minded readers, readers who like being charmed by the names of Victorian and Edwardian titles”(95). Naipaul gets a number of attacks from the intellectual circles for the views he expressed about the Muslims and the so-called third world. He saw Islam not as a religion but as an *emporium* in his *Among the Believers* (1981) and *Beyond Belief: Islamic Excursions Among the Converted Peoples* (1998). He often regarded that Islam goes beyond the Islamic peoples i.e. to the converted Muslims, and thus makes its imperial demands. Other novels also seek the similar themes bringing civilization, culture, nationality, history, geography, journalism and travels in one conflated amalgam. One of them is *The Mimic Man* (1965), which explores the contemporary problems of identity in a disguised portrayal of he novelist himself. Whereas his *The Middle Passage* (1962), a novel of his reflections, depicts the problems of his native island, Trinidad that experienced as he first arrived there after leaving for London in 1950.

V.S. Naipaul has successfully blurred the boundaries of genres travel, autobiography, narratives, reflection and history, and has established himself as an

international writer. His presentation of the dark sides can aptly be compared to Joseph Conrad's vision of so-called the third world. Like Derek Walcott, Wole Soyinka, Salman Rushdie, Michael Ondaatje, Jamaica Kincaid, Jomo Kenyatta, Alan Paton and some other writers in English from the stance highly debated as 'margin', Naipaul also struggles hard to find his place, culture and history. Phillips Caryl marks this mysterious side of

Naipaul's career in this well known book *A New World Order* (2001) with his comment:

“ Naipaul's supreme qualification is that he has himself been a part of the unreal Conradian darkness, which is his shedding light upon. He, too, has been moored in a lace of no history, but by soon supreme individual effort he has dragged himself to civilized higher ground—to a place of good manners. It causes him great anxiety and stress to continue to gaze upon such bestial places, but he will do so for our sake. It is his duty, his vocation. He has known no other. And we must trust him because he knows.”(216)

About his own life, he says: “My life is short, I can't listen to banalities. If writers just think of oppression and there will be not time for writing”(Kuravillal). It is likely to think that the banality irritates him. Many critics see him and his works differently: Pico Lyer calls him a “literary Sannyasi”(56) whereas Khushwant Singh calls him a “literary mulatto”(86). He is branded as “V.S. Nightfall” in the definition of Derek Walcott (Suroor 54). Evelyn Waugh, a critic at the best time remarked: “Naipaul's mastery of English Language should 'put' to shame his British contemporaries”. Edward Said and Salman Rushdie often criticized Naipaul's views on Islam and the Islamic peoples.

Naipaul, nevertheless, stands out to be one of the celebrated figures in literature and a man of fine prose in English, but still countless secrets linger regarding his biography and rigidity of the opinions, which make an echo in Paul Thoreux's book *Sir Vidia's Shadow* (1988). No one has gone in such depth of closeness with Naipaul, and as a result, Thoreux's book appears to be the outcome of his frustration with Naipaul after their three decade long friendship. And the Nobel Prize of 2001 awarded to Naipaul encouraged Lillian Feder to write *Naipaul's Truth* (2001) that reveals the truth behind his writing.

Naipaul, therefore, is a famous postcolonial writer, displaced from his roots, which tries to recreate his own choices and constraints of his past, history and culture. Apart from the Noble Prize in literature in 2001, Naipaul has also been honored by the Booker Prize in 1971, the W.H Smith Prize, the Howthornden Prize, the Bennett and the T.S. Eliot Award, John Liewelyn Rhys have also honored Naipaul and he was also knighted by Queen Elizabeth in 1990. The peculiar artistic quality related to his afflatus, that is also the creative force in his writing, is that he turned to his own life for materials, writing of his exodus from Trinidad to England. He made his own career and in many of his novels he seeks his own image albeit naïve.

Naipaul currently lives in Wiltshire, London, with his wife Nadira.

#### NAIPAUL'S THEME IN HIS WORKS:

Some twenty seven books of fictions and memoirs that range from *The Mystic Masseur* (1957) to *Magic Seeds* (2004) are written by Naipaul. They are mostly linked by the theme of cultural confusion, sense of displacement, mimicry and problem of culture and identity. "Naipaul's fiction and nonfiction career is one long treatise on postcolonial

cultural nomadism, and intellectual excursion through his own Trinidadian heritage via Indian and European histories and culture", writes Bret Mc Cabe in review of *Magic Seeds*. His more than five decade long fictional writings get a wide variety of responses creating both supportive and unsupportive corpus of criticism. He is often said to be a "racialist", "imperialist" and "colonialist" Feder further writes:

But Nixon and Cudjoe attribute Naipaul's fundamental social and cultural values to his psychological reactions to his immediate and extended family. Although Cudjoe claims in his introduction that his 'books will be an examination of Naipaul's work rather than an attempt to understand him as a person 'his reference to Naipaul's "ego" his "repressed fears" his "neuroses" his almost narcissistic concept for his prose style and the author's own perception of his sexuality which relates to question of his identity contradict his stated aim. (2)

Naipaul has a strong sense of history in most of his fictions and non-fictions. Trinidad is his birth place but he found that it lacks the history and even rejects the idea that his writings have nothing to do with it. The time he got the Nobel Prize in 2001, the credit he gave was to England, his present nation, rather than the nation of his ancestors, India. He reflects the location of his ancestry and its culture in his writing though he denounces his views on Islam and the so called third world nations. He got experiences of different people, places and the conditions of freedom in their lives through his traveling.

"In every country he visited," Feder writes, " Naipaul was concerned with the relation of historical past-event in its seeming absence – to the present. ; the most interpersonal reaction he records is empathy with the heirs of history, of slavery and



colonialism; economic cultural and psychological oppression and especially the assault on individual identity, a legacy with which they still contain"(13).

The choice of main character in their diverse culture, religion, politics and ultimately the civilization are exactly depicted in Naipaul's novels. The West Indian novelist, Pathik says, "is the creation of society which descended from European Landlords, traders and functionaries African slaves and indentured Indian". (129). His *A House for Mr. Bishwas* depicts the exemplary life of Mohan Bishwas, a failed pundit and an accidental journalist, whereas *An Area of Darkness* is an account of his India: her geography, people and culture. For Naipaul, this area is area of darkness, shadow and barbarism." It is a journey from memory to reality to me as a child." S.Prassanarajan continues in 'A prize for Sir Vidya' "the India that had produced so many of the persons and the things around me was featureless and I thought of the time when the transference was made as a period of darkness [...] (51). *The Mimic Men* is a narration of a failed politician and a retrospective Ralph Singh's experience. "The subject of the novel is marriage and race", and " it is nothing less than a vision of disorder-placelessness' and breakdown of human relationship-in the world of "mimic men" (Pathik 141). Ralph Singh is a colonial product:" We pretended to be real to be learning, to be preparing ourselves for life, we mimic men of the new world (*Mimic* 123). Similarly the characters of *In a Free State*, Santosh, Bobby Linda, Dayo and his brother are colonial product. So, what Ralph Singh can do is related to what Bobby does when he finds himself among 'other': "at a time like this we feel excluded and naturally we resent it. I'm sure we would like them a lot more if they were more easygoing". (*In a Free State* 123). One of the most important themes in his writing is his idea of Islam, a religion that has imperial demands.

In *Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey* appeared to be more controversial in the Muslim world. Naipaul in an interview with L.K. Sharma says: “For Hindu, religion is a matter of conscience, for Muslims it is not. It is a matter of laws that have been laid down. There can be no debate, no compromise” (3). *A Bend in the River* explores the problems of a newly emergent African nation more vigorously. Salim identifies his family distinct from other Muslims. Salim says, “We are washed up; here, you know. To be in Africa you have to be strong. We are not strong. We don’t even have a flag” (21). Autobiographically enough, *Finding the Center* bears Naipaul’s personal truth of writing, the obstacles and even the consequences. But his center-seeking tendency is clear in *The Enigma of Arrival*. It is an enigma; he felt when he came to Wiltshire, his home now. Many issues like individual struggle for identity, cultural loss, multiculturalism, diaspora, rootlessness, dislocation, alienation are his chief concern.

His real world is the post-colonial world and he does represent it in his writing as Rob Nixon points “his high profile as an interpreter of the post-colonial world” (4). Nixon sees in his fiction a voice of the post-colonial mandarin who is obviously Naipaul who has his own vision different from other writer (2). Naipaul is a “permanent exile, abandoned by the tradition” (14). Thus, Nixon is encouraged to say that Naipaul is reading his own life (17). Like Naipaul, his characters as Nixon says carry out the themes of “exile, émigré, expatriate, refugee”, and all are displaced ones.

Including Naipaul, the gift of displacement of the Caribbean artists is a special kind of migration that makes them world popular. Phillips Caryl writes:

Migration is not a world to be feared, for Caribbean people are forever moving between versions of 'home', spurred on by the restless confluence of blood in their veins, an impure mixture that suggests transcendence and connectivity. This migratory condition, and the subsequent sense of displacement, can be a gift to a creative mind, and it marks the work of Aime Cesaire, V.S. Naipaul, Edouard Glissant, Derek Walcott, C.L.R. James, Samuel Selvon and countless others. It provides to Caribbean writers and thinkers the opportunity to generate narrative energy out of these tensions and oppositions [...]. (123)

The situation of the characters *In a Free State* is more or less same as Naipaul depicts in his other novels though the setting runs from Bombay through Washington, London to Trinidad and to a newly independent African state. The final point of this fictional travel in this novel is the same 'free state', the title of book *In a Free State*.

## II LITERATURE REVIEW

V.S. Naipaul's Booker prize winning novel *In a Free State* (1971) has been reviewed in various ways. He wrote this novel as a result of his wide range of his experiences of traveling in the 1960's India, Africa, Iran, Pakistan and the U.S.A.

This short novel *In a Free State* is a sequence of five works - two short stories (the prologue and the epilogue), two novellas and a short novel-linked by a common theme. It exposes a diverse range of societies of India, Trinidad, America, and Africa. However, this study attempts to situate Naipaul's *In a Free State* in the discourse of post-colonial studies and cultural identity formation. Naipaul's rootless characters shape and re-shape their identities in the courses of novel. In this regard Davis Shaun Morgan writes, "Each of the protagonists in the novel are placed in supposedly 'free' states, but ironically, they each are trapped in the concept of a free world having relinquished or lost their cultural identities" (4).

Naipaul's *In a Free State* does not show the characters as 'free' rather it shows them in the state of confusion and hopelessness. It is full of miseries and sorrows that he emphasized elsewhere in the book. It touches our heart so strongly that we lose our reason. And so is Paul Thoreux's view. He says, "I had felt so close to *In a Free State* that I could not evaluate it" (205).

In the first story "One Out of Many" Santosh continually relinquishes his sense of place and history in favor of financial success in an increasingly cosmopolitan world. While in India, he had a distinct sense of place in a caste system that limited him to poverty. In America, however, he abandons his cultural values by marrying a "hubsi"

woman and leaving his employers. Santosh finds that he does not gain security with his freedom but trapped by fear that he may be deported, and in attempt to find security, he isolates himself from America. The contrast of Indian society with the American way of life leaves Santosh alienated of cross-cultural assimilation. The terms displacement, dislocation, diaspora and exile are related to 'homelessness'. Someone who has abandoned by tradition is a 'homeless' man who is 'alienated' and haunted by the same" (Nixon 14). Santosh does not understand his meaning of freedom. So, he resigns himself to his new life in Washington DC. As Shirely Geok-Lin Lim conceive the life in American free states:

As immigrants from the Asian continent whose presence in US society was historically unwelcome. Asian Americans share a history of struggle to overcome exclusion. The struggle was not only [political but also social as their cultural beliefs and customs were and are excluded from everyday American life. (123)

Santosh does not feel comfort in the culture of washing-ton Dc. because most of the migrants like him lack cultural similarities. Similarly, Aijaz Ahmad has written: "Most migrants tend to be poor and experience displacement not as cultural plentitude but as torment; what they seek is not displacement but precisely a place from where they might anew, with sense of a stable future" (16). Santosh's background seems to have destined him for a life of an out caste, of not belonging, of always searching for a place where he can live in.

In the second story, "Tell Me Who to Kill" Dayo seeks refuge from the chaos of post-colonial world. He sacrifices the present for the future but finds his hopes slipping

away from him. He turns his hopes to his brother, who fails him and gradually turns into a blue-collar cockney. The older brother becomes angry and bitter, resolving to revenge himself by murdering one of the roust youths. His case as Paul Thoreaux says is "... the India had been thrown out of Uganda by Idi Amin, as he predicted so often, he said, Uganda was turning into a jungle. He blamed the white expatriates, who would take no responsibility for Amin-Yet they had created the situation that had produced Amin" (Sir Vidia 203). Moreover Lilian Feder writes:

The two short stories [One Out of Many and Tell Me Who To Kill] that follow deal with the particularities of the free state as Naipaul explores the psychic cost of being an outsider in both one's nation native and adoptive hands ... the single word-sentence "But" introduces and later elevates Santost's dilemma: caught between the portion that was dealt him and his decision "to be free [...]"<sup>195</sup>

The title story of the novel, "In a Free State" continues to explore the traumatic effects of post-colonial exile by depicting the fragmentation of community that occurs with the rejection of cultural ties. Bobby, who identifies with the African natives, rejects his British background in favour of personal freedom only to find that he is subject to violence and chaos. The freedom of the African state is disorder. Mainly the story is set in a state which is politically free such as the independent postcolonial free state. It describes the 400-mile road journey in the throes of a tribal civil war. Derek Wright writes: "The only part of Africa depicted-here is a decayed, dilapidated settler colony in the eastern part of continent in which the indigenous people in her - it on the day of independence"(69). The Africa, identified mainly by smell, is full of problems for

expatriates. As Caryl, Phillips said in *a New World Order* (2001), “Africa is a bleak, yet beautiful dawn. Our identities are fluid. Belonging is a contested state. Home is a place riddled with vexing question”(6).

Bobby himself calls a government officer in a free-state but which government makes an irony of his existence. “He has no family in Africa, no loyal friend, no memories or association, no sense of continuity ...” (*In a Free State* 204). Naipaul presents his self in his writing and his characters often become the spokesmen of his trauma of cultural obsession and the belonging. Despite the brickbats of many Third world critics and writers, Naipaul has enjoyed a much acclaimed career. And despite his success and his reputation, Naipaul continues to peddle ‘his story’ with an almost pathological vigor.

“We penetrated deeper into the heart of darkness” (63), Marlow says in Joseph Conrad’s *Hearts of Darkness and other Stories* and it is an allusion to Bobby’s fantasy of driving that leads him and Linda in mild in African state. The chaos of Naupaul’s world is established by the prologue (The Tramp at Piraeus) in which a tramp lacks cultural ties and becomes a victim of violence and damage. Not only does the tram have history, but also has no home. Similarly, the epilogue (The Circus at Luxor) ends with a description of soldiers a defeated in the six-day war with Israel, which shows a picture of continuity of strife and suffering in human history.

The characters from different cultural background get a unique interest on Nalpaul’s worldview to present the contradictions and oddities of different societies. Reviewing the characters and the theme of the book, Danny Yee remarks:

All are individual stranded in foreign countries and confronted by alien cultures. In “One Out of Many” an India servant is almost accidentally transported to Washington, where he finds niche for himself but remains profoundly alienated from the world around him. “Tell Me Who to Kill” is the tragic story of a west India who moves to London. The novel *In a Free State* is about expatriate English civil servant in a recently independent African state torn by civil war. And the epilogue and the prologue present the more detached view of an experienced traveler writing in his journal.

(1)

Instead of writing a straightforward novel, why does Naipaul include multiple stories in a single volume entitled as *In a Free State*? Danny Yee remarks that the “use of multiple narratives help him present a more balanced perspective than a straightforward novel would have allowed, the subject in one he had made his own” (1).

Thomas Lask has a bit different view as he connects *In a Free State* with his earlier novels: *The Mystic Masseur*, *A House for Mr. Biswas* and *The Middle Passage*. His stories in three novels “have often enough been touched with tolerant amusement where his attitude is affectionate without being overly kind” (2). He says that the stories of *In a Free State* take this line “one step further”:

He lifts the arguments above and beyond geographical circumvents, beyond material success and social proposition. These new stories focus on the failure of heart, on the animal like cruelty may exhibit to other men and on the avarice that has Chaucer’s pardoner told, is the root of all evil.



Are we in a Free State really? Or, are organisms driven by the violence?

(2)

However, the novel *In a Free State* presents “three separate fictions about a Bombay Indian servant who obtains a very dubious freedom in Washington, about a West immigrant destroyed mentally by his experience of England and about English expatriates in a ‘free’ African State during a political upheal. The theme common in whatever form is that freedom of illusory in the twentieth century” (Blamires 195)”. *In a Free State* is wholly about a long way from home. Fiction begins with the sadly funny story of a small, anxious Indian in Washington, bewildered into a sort of freedom” (Potter1).

### III POSTCOLONIAL THEORY

After the end of World War II, Africa along with many Asian and Latin American nations became independent from colonial domination. There were many problems in the society left by the colonialism. To solve the problems, a new theory was developed. So, it was the post colonial theory that attempted to solve those problems.

Postcolonial theory has most significantly dealt with cultural contradiction, ambiguities and ambivalence associated with the history of colonialism. It has often been used to cover such a wide area that it includes multiplicity of identities and subject positioning which result from displacement, immigration and exiles. It also represents a multiplicity of experiences as described by Ashcraft, Griffith and Tiffin, "Postcolonial theory involves discussion about experiences of various kinds: migration, slavery, suppression, resistance, representation, difference, race, gender, place and responses to the influential master discourses of imperial Europe such as history"(2). It indicates that postcolonial theory is not constructed out of single experience. Rather, it is a mixed experience of all the items, such as migration, slavery, resistance and displacement together.

The present thesis on V.S Naipaul's novel *In a Free State* (1971) is done under the figure of postcolonial theoretical perspective, an umbrella term that includes cultural expression and cultural identity, dislocation and exile and diaspora and ambivalence here.

#### CULTURAL EXPRESSION

The word culture in English is derived from the Latin word 'cultura' which means the act of cultivation of soil. Subsequently, the idea of cultivation was broadened to encompass the human mind or spirit giving rise to the idea of the cultivated or cultured

person. Later, the term is applied to any custom, art, social institution, literature, music, and so on, that is cultivated in society. The idea of culture as a whole way of life came in the late eighteenth century. E. Said in his book *Culture* quotes Mathew Arnold, the nineteenth century critic who described culture as “the best that has been known and thought in the world.” Along Arnoldian line of thought Mitchell quotes English anthropologist E.B. Tylor who defines culture as the “complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. It gives the individuals their identity.”

By the mid-twentieth century, Raymond Williams contrasts the anthropological meaning of culture in the anthropological sense, ‘the whole way of living of people’, and culture in the normative sense, representation of the organic voice of the people, there emerged a third way of using the term culture as “one that refers neither to a people’s organic way of life nor to the normative values preached by leading intellectuals but to a battleground of social conflicts and contradictions” (Graff and Robbins 421). Thus, culture refers to the ideas, attitudes and experiences in various forms of social structure.

With the emergence of postcolonial criticism, the critics formulate their critical revisions around the issues of cultural difference, social authority, and political discrimination in order to reveal the antagonistic and ambivalent moment within the rationalizations of modernity. According to Bhabha, culture is “an uneven, textuality, to give the alienating everyday an aura of selfhood, a promise of pleasure” (*Postcolonial Criticism*” 438). Observing the culture, he further writes:

Culture, as a strategy of survival is both transnational and translational. It is transnational because contemporary postcolonial discourses are rooted

in specific histories of cultural displacement. Culture is translational because such spatial histories of displacement –now accompanied by the territorial ambitions of ‘global’ media technologies--make the question of how culture signifies, or what is signified by culture, a rather complex issue (438).

So, culture is both transnational and translational. The transnational dimension of cultural transformation □ migration, diaspora, displacement, and relocation, makes the process of cultural translation a complex form of signification.

Said gathers some ideas about the general relationship between culture and empire. For him, the power of culture is representing as well as functioning as a form of hegemony, “Culture is never just a matter of ownership, of borrowing and lending with absolute debtors and creditors, but rather of appropriations, common experiences, and interdependencies of all kinds among different cultures”(261-262). So, culture is a powerful means of differentiation, appropriation and domination.

Culture has become not only the means of domination as the creation of ‘orientalism’ but also resistance. Said writes, “Along with armed resistance in places as diverse as nineteenth century Algeria, Ireland and Indonesia, there also went considerable efforts in cultural resistance almost everywhere (*Culture* xiii). In this way, culture not only serves the purpose of imperialism but also serves the purpose of resistance against empire.

Thus, all social institutions, values, people’s attitude and practices give birth to a notion of culture. Awareness about culture brings the sense of sameness and difference

among human beings. Man always tries to express his/her culture and thereby tries to establish his/her belonging and identity. The expression of culture, this way, is bound up with the notion of identity and survival.

## CULTURAL IDENTITY

Identity has become the central area of concern in cultural studies during 1990s. Identity is the process how we describe ourselves to each other. Cultural studies explores how we come to be the kinds of people we are, how we are produced as subjects, and how we identify with description of ourselves as male or female, black or white, young or old, Asians or Europeans. Identities, thus, are not concrete things with Universal qualities; rather they are discursive constructions, the product of discourses or regulated ways of speaking about the world.

Identity is a production, which never completes, always in process, and always constituted within representation. Identities are wholly social constructions, and cannot exist outside of cultural representations. Regarding this Hall writes:

Cultural identity in this second sense is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history, and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything, which is historical, they undergo constant changes. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to the continuous play of history, culture and power. (*Cultural Identity* 112)

Thus, identity is not a fixed but rather changing with history, culture and power for Hall. Identities are the names we give to the different ways by which we are

positioned and position ourselves within the narratives of the past. The dominant or superior culture has the power to influence or dominate the others. So, not only, in Said's 'Orientalist' sense, we are constructed as different and other within the categories of knowledge of the west by those regimes, but also, they had the power to make us see and experience ourselves as 'other'.

Globalization in this long-run has caused the interfusing of identities which can be termed as 'the hybridity of cultural identities.' These identities are not pure but they are product of mixing, fusion and creolization. Hybridity of identities cannot be taken as the product of 'assimilation' of one culture or cultural tradition by another, but the production of something new. This new notion of identity equated with the studies of the hybridity of cultural identity is closely allied to accounts of diasporic identities. These identities are shaped by the sense of having been, in Salman Rushdie's phrase, "borne across the world" of being in but not entirely of the West (17).

The newly emergent identity never gives the people the sense of unity within. The stable identity is lost when there is the fragmentation of the cultural landscapes of class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race and nationality which one gave us a firm location as social individual, undermining our sense of ourselves as an integrated subject. This loss of stable sense of selfdislocation or decentering of the subject –creates a crisis of identity for the individuals.

Identity, in fact, is formed in the interaction between self and society. Whenever there is the disturbance in such relation, the subjects acquire the problems of cultural identity. Hall points the problem of identities in what he calls "structural and institutional change" ("The question" 277). In such a situation, contradictory identities grow within

us, pulling us in different directions, so that our identification is continuously being shifted about. Hall focuses on the impossibility of fixed and unified identity thus:

“If we feel we have a unified identity, from birth to death, it is only because we construct a comforting story or narrative of the self about ourselves. The fully unified, completed and secure and coherent identity is a fantasy. Instead, as the system of meaning and cultural representation multiply, we are confronted by a bewildering, fleeting multiplicity of possible identities- anyone of which we could identify with at least temporarily.”(278)

Thus, one cannot get constant cultural identity as the slight change in Socio-cultural system on the basis of spatio-temporal dimension brings a state of flux in his/her identity.

In this way, cultural identity is a great means of identifying people according to their gender, class, race, nationality, religion, knowledge, behavior, and other social practices. It is elusive and always fleeting according to the change in history, culture and power relations resulting in identity crisis for the individuals. The crisis arises because the cultural dislocation never brings the sense of unity within the individual self and society.

## DISLOCATION

Dislocation is the outcome of willing or unwilling movement from known to unknown location. It is the result of transportation from one country to another by slavery or imprisonment, by invasion or settlement. The term is defined in *Key Concepts in Postcolonial Studies* as:

A term for both the occasion of displacement that occurs as a result of imperial occupation and the experiences associated with this event. The term is used to describe the experience of those who have willingly moved from the imperial 'home' to the colonial margin, but it affects all those who, as a result of colonialism have been placed in a location that, because of colonial 'hegemonic' practices, needs to be 'reinvented' in language, in narrative and in myth. (Ashcroft 73)

Thus, dislocation can be extended further to include the psychological and personal dislocation resulting from the cultural denigration as well as voluntarily chosen status.

Furthermore, “dislocation is related to 'homelessness'. Someone who has been abandoned by tradition is a 'homeless' man, who is alienated and haunted by the same” (Nixon 14-17). People often realize this fact of loss when they are displaced and dislocated. This displacement is dislocation of the subject, which gives them the sense of alienation. In modern society, there are number of internal rupture and fragmentation in cultures resulting in dislocation and displacement. Regarding this Hall writes: “A dislocated structure is one, whose center is displaced and replaced by another, but by a plurality of power centers, no single articulating or organizing principle. It is constantly being decentered or dislocated by force outside itself (The question 278)”.

It is customary for Hall to see the face of society with ruptures, where no stable identity of individuals is possible. Withstanding the instability of identities, the dislocation and the displacement can be created with the social structure itself where the role of representation is vital.



Dislocation makes the individuals feel a loss of their cultural belonging giving a victim a sense of cultural alienation. It comprises the dimension of powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation, normlessness, and self-estrangement of the individuals. Uprooting of migrants from their societies and cultures of origin creates the problems of identity a lot. The problems related to culture and identity can be solved in relation to culture itself. Culture is the defining principle of mankind which provides them their valuable identity. Moreover, culture is the power that is related to both repulsion and attraction. As Huntington says "people and countries with different cultures are coming apart", and at the same time, he insists upon the fact that "cultural identities are the central factors shaping a country's association and antagonism" to others (125).

## EXILE

Exile involves the idea of separation and distancing from either literal homeland or from cultural and ethnic origin. This separation from culture brings a sense of dislocation. "Exile is one of the saddest things" as Said puts it, "Which is sometimes interchangeable with banishment" (representations 47). Exile is that which brings the individuals to a different place and culture and thereby gives the victims a sense of cultural dislocation and displacements. The nature and circumstances of exile have varied from one case to another, the sense of loss of something left is common to all. Said further writes:

Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between self and true home. Its essential sadness can never be surmounted. And while it is true that literature and history contains heroic, romantic,

glorious and even triumphant episodes in an exile life, there are no more that efforts meant to overcome the crippling sorrow of estrangement. The achievement of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever. (173).

It becomes clear that exile is discontinuous state of being. It brings a sense of dislocation, and forces individuals to have their native place creating psychological alienation in them. Exile are cut off from their root, their culture, their land, and their past. Exile is slightly different from expatriation. Exile is originated from in the age-old practice of banishment. Once banished, the exile lives miserable life, while bearing the stigma of being an outsider. Expatriates voluntarily live in an alien country usually for personal or social reasons. Naipaul is not forced to live in England. Expatriates share in the solitude and estrangement of exile, but they don't suffer under its rigid prescription. The expatriate life is comparatively untraumatic. It is less painful, vulnerable and extreme state than exile. Expressing the similar views to the state of exile and expatriation, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin write:

"...The idea of exile, which implies involuntarily constraints, and that of expatriation, which implies a voluntary act of the state. In a sense only the first generation of free settlers could be regarded as expatriates rather than exile. For those born in colonies, the idea of expatriation needs to be revised. (Key Concepts 92)"

Thus, exile is an involuntary state of being banished from the country of his/her origin. It refers to those who cannot return to the place of origin, even if they wish to do so, then exile becomes a characteristic of a number of different colonial conditions. The

situation of the increasing large number of diasporic people throughout the world further problematizes the idea of exile. Where is the place of 'home' to be located for such groups? In the place of birth, in the displaced cultural community into which the person is born, in the nation-state in which this diasporic community is located? The emergence of new ethnicities that cross the boundaries of the diasporic groups, different cultural, geographical and linguistic origins also act to problematize these categories further. Exile was also produced by colonialism in another way, as pressure was exerted on many colonized people to exile themselves from their own cultures, language and traditions.

## DIASPORA

Diaspora is originally applied to the condition of the Jewish people living outside Palestine. With the development of postcolonial theory, it has been extended to cover a range of different cultural and ethnic groups held together by shared cultural or religious commitments and having some sense of exile from a place or state of origin and belonging. The term within studies is used to describe a dynamic network of communities without the stabilizing allusion to an original homeland or essential identity. To live in diaspora is to experience the trauma of exile, migration, displacement, rootlessness and the life of minority group. In this regard, Rushdie argues, "It may be the writers in my positions, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into the pillars of salt"(10). The writers of diaspora create 'imaginary homelands' as a form of transformative change.

People in diaspora have been forced by cultural displacement to accept the provisional nature of all truth. Their identity is at once plural and partial. According to

Radhakrishnan, “ The diaspora has created rich possibilities of understanding different histories. And these histories have taught us that identities, selves, tradition and natures do change with travels”(210). So, identities, perspectives and definitions change when people move. Diaspora is not infertile space to occupy even if diasporic people feel to be torn apart between root culture and adopted culture, and the ground to be shifting and ambiguous. Hall writes:

The diaspora experience (...) is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of necessary heterogeneity, and diversity, by a conception of identity, which lives with and through not despite, difference; by hybridity. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves a new, through transformation and difference.

(Cultural identity 119-20)

Thus, the notion of a ‘diasporic identity’ has been adopted by many writers as a positive affirmation of their hybridity.

The people in diaspora live in between the old world from where they have come, and new world where they are trying to create their own identity. The Indian immigrant writers like Rushdie and Naipaul have an inherent will to preserve and celebrate their culture. It is at this juncture, the struggle takes place where they try to replace a traditional way of life with a modern one in a country, which is not theirs.

## AMBIVALENCE

Ambivalence is a term first developed in psychoanalysis to describe a continual fluctuation between wanting one thing and also wanting its opposite. It also refers to a simultaneous attraction toward and repulsion from one object, person or action. Adopted

into colonial discourse, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin claim, "It describes the complex mix of attraction and repulsion that characterizes the relationship between colonizer and colonized (*Key Concepts 12*). Such a relation of attraction and repulsion both at the same time is ambivalent because the colonized subject is never completely opposed to the colonizer. This is to say that complicity and resistance exist in a fluctuating relation within the colonial subject. It also characterizes the way in which colonial discourse relates to the colonized subject, as it may be both exploitative and nurturing at the same time. According to Bhabha, ambivalence disrupts the clear cut authority of colonial domination by disturbing the simple relationship between colonizers and colonized (86). Ambivalence is, therefore, an unwelcome aspect of colonial discourse for colonizer.

The problem for colonial discourse is that it wants to produce compliant subject who reproduce its assumptions, habits and values – i.e. mimic the colonizer. But instead it produces ambivalent subjects whose mimicry is never very far from mockery. Ambivalence, thus, describes this fluctuating relationship between mimicry and mockery, an ambivalence that is fundamentally unsettling to colonial dominance. In this sense, it is not necessarily disempowering for the colonial subject, rather can be seen to be ambivalent or two – powered. The effect of this ambivalence is to produce a profound disturbance of the authority of colonial discourse. In Bhabha's theory, the colonial relationship is compelled to be ambivalent because it never really wants colonial subject to be exact replicas of the colonizers. Bhabha brings the example of Charles Grant who in 1792, desired to inculcate the Christian religion in Indians, but worried that this might make them "turbulent for liberty" (87). As Grant's solution was to mix Christian doctrines with divisive caste practices to produce a partial reform that would induce an

empty imitation of English manners, Bhabha suggests that this demonstrates the conflict within imperialism itself, Such a conflict will inevitably causes its own downfall. It is compelled to create an ambivalent situation that will disrupt its assumption of monolithic power. The ambivalence decenters authority from its position of power. The authority may also become hybridized when placed in a colonial context in which it finds itself dealing with, and often inflected by other cultures.

The above discussion about cultural dislocation in relation to postcolonial society gives a firm ground to analyze Naipaul's *In Free State* from postcolonial perspective. The people, who are geographically and culturally displaced face the problems of alienation and loss of their identities and freedom. The characters in the novel suffer from the sense of dislocation and displacement as they are culturally and geographically displaced as immigrants.

## IV TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

### SYNOPSIS

V.S. Naipaul's one of the famous novels *In a Free State*, which won the Booker Prize of the year 1977, was written in 1971, and is chronologically eleventh book in his Oeuvre. The book is divided into five parts, where two episodes from a journal are set for prologue and epilogue. The prologue is named as "The Tramp at Piraeus" which is an extract from a journal. It begins with tales of Naipaul's crossing from Piraeus to Alexandria, a trip dominated by the presence of a tramp, an old man who claims to have thirty-eight years of travel and whose view of himself as "a citizen of the world" only confirms the sense that he belongs nowhere. The first story that follows the prologue is named "One Out of Many". It tells a story of Santosh, a poor Hindu who accompanies his employer from Bombay to Washington, where the employer has taken up a diplomatic posting. Santosh used to sleep on the sidewalk in Bombay but it is impermissible in Washington. He misses the chances of sleeping on the Bombay sidewalk under the stars with his friends. He runs away from his boss to whom he owes his plane fare from India and takes a job at a newly opened Indian restaurant. Santosh is terrified by the race riots that erupt in Washington. He meets a Hubsli woman and is disgusted at himself for having sex with her. Santosh has considered himself a "prisoner" all the time he has been in Washington. He becomes wise to the ways of the world and demands a raise from his restaurant boss who has been paying him miserably. All the while he is afraid of his old employer whether he will come to take him back or have him deported. This story is followed by another equally lengthy story "Tell Me Who to Kill". It is a tragic story of a West Indian who moves to London. In the story, the narrator, Dayo, and rest of his family

are products and victims of past and present history. In the changing world, he is an unwelcomed stranger. When the narrator goes to England to care for Dayo, He hates everything he sees. He buys a roti and curry shop, and is almost instantly conscious that he has made a foolish move, and is now the victim of the “prejudice” of inspection and the cruelty of the ‘young English louts’ who torment him. This dreadful story is followed again by the title novella “In a Free State” .It takes us to a newly independent African state where the emergency is underway. The setting of the scene is some four hundred miles to the south still known by its colonial name of the Southern Collectorate. This is a decolonized state, one led by the president and other by the king. They are struggling to rule the state. In this story where two English civil servants, Bobby and Linda, with both fear and hope, undergo a journey in a newly emergent African free state. It describes a visit to a remote hotel deep in the African bush. And the book also contains an Eplilogue from a journal that is named “The Circus at Luxor”. The narrator of this section is going to Egypt from Milan by air. The epilogue ends with a description of soldiers from Sinai, peasants in bulky woollen uniform going back on leave to their village. Seventeen months later, these men or men like them defeated in the sixty-day war with Israel, were to be photographed from Helicopter flying down low revealing them lost, trying to walk back home, and casting long shadows on the sand. He observes the people and identifies their sense of dislocation in different cultural background.

#### SENSE OF DISLOCATION IN DIFFERENT CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Naipaul’s *In A Free State* is the best expression of the trauma of the lack of cultural belonging and the hopeless efforts of the characters to establish their own



belonging. Such a situation of identity crisis and frustration results from the rootlessness and dislocation. All stories are about individuals stranded by foreign countries and confronted with alien cultures. The characters of these stories are not from single country or culture. They are from different countries, cultures and geographical sites i.e. West Indian in England, Indian in the U S, English in Africa. All the stories depict the cultural change in the lives of characters. When their attempts to be assimilated with the new cultures are thwarted, they get confused, frustrated and dislocated. Such confused feeling further fosters in them the sense of dislocation. In the journal report "the circus at Luxor" that serves as the prologue for the book, Naipaul introduces a number of cultural backgrounds. The scene of this extract is dominated by a presence of a tramp where an unidentified and meticulous narrator presents a detached point of view to describe a grim scene. This prologue from a journal reports the Journey from " Piraeus to Alexandria " with the focus of the people of different cultural identity from different geographical sites. Here, the narrator minutely observes the scene giving the overall focus to the tramp.

The tramp, when he appeared on the quay, looked very English; but that might only have been because we had no English people on board. From a distance he did not look like a tramp. The hat and the rucksack, the loved tweed jacket, the grey flannels nets and the book might have belonged to a romantic wanderer of an earlier generation.(8)

He looks like an English man in his hat and jacket. However, the narrator becomes sure about the tramp only when he comes nearer with his clothes ruined. He clearly notices, " the peculiar tramp is an old man with a tremulous worn face and wet

blue eyes "(8). Thus, the narrator by observing the scene describes and even explains almost everything about that strange tramp.

The narrator further pays the microscopic attention to other unknown people of this grim scene there are some Egyptians, some Greeks, some Australians, a Yugoslav, a German girl and some Arabians. The narrator brings forth the tramp who states that he is a citizen of the world having no individual cultural identity (12). Thus, Naipaul with the help of the narrator introduces the characters from different cultural backgrounds having no static sense of cultural identity and origin. Such situation of different cultural ramification is further focused when the narrator says:

No one was in a good mood. The drumming and thumping and bucking of the ship had played havoc with stomachs and nerves; the cold wind outside irritated as much as refreshed; and in the dining room the air was static, with a smell as of that hot rubber. There was no crowd, but the stewards, looking unslept and unwashed, even their hair not well combed, were as rushed as before. (14)

As no one has the unified sense of his/her cultural identity and location, the chaos of Naipaul's world is established by this story in which a tramp who lacks clear cultural ties is subjected to domination as he moves about the new world among those who have distinct national and cultural backgrounds. He is free to travel the world, however he happens to face his identity crisis and domination.

The sense of dislocation and frustration is focused in the second story in the volume entitled "One Out of Many". The title itself reveals the fact that there is a desperate "One" out of many. That "One" is Santosh, now living in Washington "the

capital of the world”(21). Santosh, the narrator of the story presents his position as “ Many people, both here and in India will feel that you have done well. But”(21). This single word sentence “But” introduces Santosh’s dilemma, which is caught in between portion that deals with him and his decision to locate himself in an alien land. Santosh, the narrator of the story is a poorly educated servant to a diplomat. Here Naipaul beautifully relates his home, his culture, and his community. However he leaves India with his master to go to Washington D.C. in search of opportunities and of the land of plenty. His journey from Bombay to Washington not only destroys his painful idealism but also raises important questions about identity and belonging, both cultural and individual. Santosh, who has been displaced to this place, is also facing the same problem like other people are facing.

He as an ill educated, painfully naïve to American ways, learns much about the United States, befriending the black woman, experiencing the Washington race riots, and sadly, becoming more and more alienated from this world he thought he would embrace so perfectly.

The contrast of Indian society with the American way of life leaves Santosh dislocated and frustrated and also reveals his dilemma of cross-cultural assimilation. Santosh, living in metropolitan city, expresses his nostalgia as he remembers:

I was so happy in Bombay. I was respected. I had a certain position. I worked for an important man. The highest in the land came to our Bachelor chambers and enjoyed my food and showered compliments on me. I also had my friends. We met in the evening on the pavement below the gallery of our chambers. (21)

He remembers his past days in Bombay when he was happy, respected, having his own position. He had some friends whom he used to meet every evening on the pavement. But now he develops the sense of dislocation in the land where he confronts different cultures to which he is an outsider. He has lost the fresh air moving from Arabian Sea to India, sense of respect and security that he felt in India but “now all at once destroyed the pattern of my life” (21). “He has been dislocated and frustrated from his culture and geography. He could see people one among the Indians or the foreigners who looked like a domestic”(24). When he was in India; he had listened to many stories about *hubs* but now he finds crowd of such people to his surprise, creating in him a sense of insecurity. He finds some acculturated Indians who have strangely changed their style and appearance. He perceives all the things in this new land turning other wise. He feels like a prisoner in such situation as he says: “Below that imitation sky I felt like a prisoner” (27). The sense of insecurity in a strange land makes him feel dislocated.

As he has the sense of loss of his freedom, culture, people and geography, he desperately moves here and there in search of his cultural roots. He goes to a café or a tea-stall with the hope of finding “domestic congregated” but he does not find. So, instead he is chased away from the place. This shows his longing for his people of similar root. His quest for root is further emphasized when he says “there many people who looked like my own people”, thus creating the sense of “us” and “them” among people” (30). He becomes happy for a while when he listens to some jig dancers “chanting Sanskrit words in Praise of Lord Krishna”, but he is disturbed “because of the half-caste appearance of the dancers” and the “bad Sanskrit pronunciation and their accent” (30).

He further says:

Perhaps, as in some stories they had been brought among the hubsi as captives long time ago and had become a lost people, like our own wandering gipsy folk and had forgotten who they were. When I thought that I lost my pleasure in the dancing; and I felt for the dancers a sort of distance we feel when we are faced with something that should be kin but turns out not to be, turns out to be degraded, like a deformed man, like a leaper, who from a distance looks whole. (30)

Santosh observes meticulously the situation of these people who, once like him, have become strangers now as they have lost their origins. He bears in mind that he has been forced to live a lonely life in the crowd. He thinks himself as an exilic vagrant in the strange land where the sense of insecurity surrounds him.

His poverty is also a cause of his sense of insecurity and dislocation in an alien land. As he is poor he has to work for the Sahib to sustain his life. He is always haunted by the economic crisis. Because of his frustration in the new land, he wants to go back to his home. But he does not get any permission to leave the job from his master. The master threatens him thus, “ Santosh, I’ve paid five thousand rupees to bring you here. If I send you back now, you will have to work for six or seven years without salary to pay me back”(31). It shows the lack of the sense of individual identity due to his low economic status. His plight to be in the new land confronted by strange people and geographical landscapes develops in him the sense of disgust and frustration as he minutely senses the land, people, culture and the scene with a different taste from the window:

The wide window showed the colors of the hot day: the pale blue sky, the white almost colorless, domes of famous buildings rising out of dead-green foliage; The untidy roofs of apartment blocks where on Saturday and Sunday morning people sunbathed; and below, the fronts and backs of houses on the tree-lined streets down which I walked to the supermarket.

(39)

His minute perception of the sky as pale blue, building rising out of dead-green foliage and the roofs as untidy gives him the sense of frustration and alienation.

Everything in his vision seems to be unfamiliar and deserted.

While living in Washington, Santosh has considered himself a prisoner all the time, but now he is inspired by riots, as the blacks burn houses and shops. He feels exhilarated by their power to destroy. Unaware that they are burning the signs and structures of discrimination against them, Santosh welcomes the fires and hopes for destruction so as to escape from his present situation. He does not want to stop the burning: "I wanted the fire to spread and spread and I wanted everything in the city, even the apartment block, even the apartment and even myself to be destroyed and consumed"(40). He shows his anger and frustration towards such situation which neither gives him security nor freedom to him. His state of dilemma and confusion as whether to settle in Washington or to have an escape from there becomes clear in his expressions:

The idea of escape was a simple one but it had not occurred to me before. when I adjusted to my imprisonment I had wanted only to get away from Washington and to return to Bombay. But then I had become confused. I had looked in the mirror and seen myself, and I knew it was not possible

for me to return to Bombay to the sort of job I had had and the life I had lived .I could not easily become part of someone else's presence again.

(41)

His dream to be free from the chain of domination is shattered when he is still dependent upon his master. Such dependency increases, as he does not have courage enough to cope with the present situation and to come out from his confused state of mind. Thus, he is fed up with his remembrance of past and present situation.

One can lessen the trauma of cultural confusion when he/she meets the people of same cultural background and shares the feeling and emotions with them openly. One day, Priya a man from India who is in search of a cook, comes to him as they both have a sort of cultural relation. In this context, Santosh says: "I loved his talk. I had not heard anything so sweet and philosophical since Bombay days. I said Priya; I will cook for you, if you want a cook"(43-44). Santosh, thus, finds sense of belonging when he meets Priya and it is the result of their cultural root.

People often have the sense of cultural confusion when they find themselves in the situation where they can neither totally follow the new way of culture nor can totally forget the old way of living. This is the plight of the individuals like Santosh to be always in the position of inbetweenness. In such a situation, the feeling of cultural belonging is most. A free state for Santosh means that he accepts the role of insider and outsider. He has lost his curiosity and does not want to experience more of the society in which he now lives, its language and people. Since, he does not belong to the culture and people of Washington, he feels himself an outsider. He says that he "did not get along with these people"(46).

Meanwhile, he is caught by the reality that he has no legal visa to stay and work there, since he had escaped from his employer. The sense of insecurity and fear of danger overwhelms him. He remarks, "I understood that because I had escaped from my employer I had made myself illegal in America. At any moment, I could be denounced, seized, jailed, deported, disgraced. It was a complication. I had no green card; I did not know how to set about getting one; and there was no one I could talk to (46) ". Thus, though he leaves his employer and gets a new job in a restaurant, he has still the sense of fear. He feels the sense of dislocation because he becomes illegal in America after escaping from his employer. At any time, he can be seized or jailed. His predicament living as an outsider in the foreign land becomes very much heart touching when he says: "I saw the future as a hole into which I was dropping" (47). This confusion towards his evaluation of the past life is strengthened more. At the same time, he found himself changed over the days that he passed there in Wahington: " I was good looking. I had lost my looks. I was a freeman, I had lost my freedom"(49). His claim of being good looking and free is only illusory. His such realization is instantly shattered when he comes back from Hindi movies: "I was alone, I had not escaped. I had never been free. I had been abandoned. I was like nothing, I had made myself nothing. And I could not turn back"(53). Thus, he cannot get the sense of belonging and autonomy for himself. He always moves along with confusion and frustration.

One cannot remain aloof from his/her original culture. There is direct or indirect attachment of people with their cultural artifacts. Santosh's love for his root becomes clear when he thinks that "how nice it would be of the people in Hindi costumes if the circle were real"(56). He deliberately pronounces the fact that he is a stranger in the



world whose reality he cannot understand. After some days, he gets legality in America but his sense of root and cultural belonging always haunts him:

I was once a part of the flow, never thinking myself as a presence. Then I looked in the mirror and decided to be free. All that my freedom has brought me is the knowledge that I have a face and have a body that I must feed this body and clothe this body for a certain numbers of years. Then it will be over. (57-58)

Thus, he never gets his own identity and freedom in this unfamiliar land. Though he has exercised all the efforts to get his autonomous identity from the chain of distinct social and cultural practices in an alien land, he fails. Only alternative he has now is that of looking at his own image in the mirror and wishing freedom.

“Tell Me Who to Kill” is the second grim story in the book that shows a tragic story of a West Indian who moves to London. For him, the sense of identity and belonging seems an escape from the shame engendered by the poverty and ignorance of his colonial heritage. We first meet him when he is a passenger on a train, looking out of the window at the rain falling on towns. His view of the landscape reflects his despair as he heads for London to attend his brother’s wedding ceremony, and event that concludes lifetime of devotion to visions of love and freedom that inevitably betray him. Like Santosh, the narrator is an exile in the world which is so inhospitable that he feels the same as Santosh.

The story takes us one step further to the bleak cultural confusion from what Sanotsh, the narrator in “One Out of Many”, experiences in Washington. The narrator of

this story "Tell Me Who to Kill" is confused in the new culture and geography in an alien land as he expresses:

Since, I came to this country that is something I cannot do. I can't see where I am going. I can only want to see what is going to turn up. I am going to my brother's wedding, now. But I don't know what bus we will take when we get to the station, or what gate we will get through, and what door we will open into what room. (60)

Here, the narrator shows his confusion to go to his brother's wedding. He does not know how to reach the station, and approach there because it is a new place for him. His anger towards cultural as well as geographical confusion is further highlighted through his remarks: "It is how I think my brother, small and sick, suffering for me; and so pretty. I feel I could kill anyone who makes him suffer. I don't care about myself. I have no life"(61). He assumes that he has no existence: "and I know that at that moment that the love and the danger I carry all my life burst my life finish. It spoil, it spoil"(62). In a sense, the story is more frustrating than the earlier one because the latter carries both love and danger with him.

He finds his brother turning to be a lacon but he has been able to open the mouth. No scream comes out of the mouth. The reason is that he suddenly remembers the fact that he does not belong to them. He further says: "The people we are eating with, I can't see their faces, I don't know what they look. I can't help anybody now (63). As he cannot recognize anybody there, he feels he does not belong to the people there. Such a lack of sense of cultural belonging becomes for him an obstacle to acquire his freedom in new geographical and cultural location.

The narrator, Dayo and the rest of his family are products and victims of the past and present history. In the changing world, the narrator observes, he is an unwelcome stranger when he goes to England to care for Dayo. He hates everything he sees: “ I hate everything I see, houses, shapes, traffic, all those settled people, those children, playing games in fields”(81).In him, Naipaul has created a figure whose increasing rage and frustration against a society that has scorned him are his only defenses against a total descent into madness. The narrator develops in him the sense of “we” and “they” and says, “The mystery land is there, the stranger is you. None of these houses in the rain belong to you. You cannot see yourself walking down those streets set down so that on that cliff. But that is where, you have to go, and as soon as every body gets down in the launch with their luggage the ship hoot (79)”. He becomes like a stranger in the culture in which he no longer belongs to. It is his plight to be and outsider forever in the new geography and culture where he is not sure what happens after each and every stop. Thus, he says: “you are always taking trains and buses to strange place, you never know what sort of street you are going to find yourself in what sort of house will be knocking at” (80). That is why his brother Dayo, is losing confidence in study, “I don’t have confidence, brother. I lose my confidence” (81). His anger and frustration develops in him the sense of xenophobia as he says, “look at these things and people I never did see. They have their life too; the city is theirs. I don’t know where I thought I was, behaving as though the city was a ghost city, working by itself, and that it is something I discover by myself”(85-86). Thus, he realizes that the people and things there are strange to him. He fears the city and people. Instead of playing the role of agent, he bears the role of a sufferer.

His life in London becomes insignificant mixing up with the crowd where no one bothers to care for him who he is. He loses his cultural identity, freedom in the new land and feels alienated in the absence of his cultural root. He experiences his condition by scoring some innocent white boys. These boys stir his strength and now he imagines himself being powerful. But in reality, he is bewildered, frustrated and passive. There remains nothing to be done except praying to the God:

O God show me the enemy. Once you find out the enemy, you can kill him. But these people here confuse me. Who will hurt me? Who spoil my life? Tell me who to beat black. I worked for years to save money. I work like a donkey, day and night. My brother was to be educated one, the nice one. And this is how it is ending in their eating with these people. Tell me whom to kill. (102)

It is obvious that he wants to kill his enemy but the irony is that he cannot identify who his enemy is. So, he is soliloquizing it and asking someone to tell him whom to kill. He is in cultural confusion and in such situation hatred, anger and frustration prevail. Such a state of confusion results from dislocation and rootlessness.

The title story “In a Free State”, depicts the sense of nearly independent Africa, some four hundred miles south from the capital where the two tribes, one led by the king and the other by president, are struggling to rule the state. It describes an adventurous journey to expatriate English Civil servants through African wilderness where the state of emergency is going on. The journey of Bobby and Linda is filled with fear of the unknown. It turns to them to be an adventure in an alien culture and geography, like the protagonists of the other stories *In a Free State*, Bobby is essentially homeless. He has no

family in Africa, no loyal friends, no memories or associations, no sense of continuity. Both Bobby and Linda are separated from their familiar tradition and society. They are mediocrities with nowhere else to go. Here, we see the cultural incommensurability and the broken symmetry of colonial relationships.

Bobby and Linda, two English Civil Servants, head towards Southern Collectorate from the capital of a nameless African state in its aftermath of colonial rule which is caught by civil war. On the one hand, the civilians of the state are confused by their state of political disorder that prevails throughout the country, on the other; the civil servants expose a sense of their cultural confusion and freedom in the 'alien' land. The narrator is aware of the fact that the people are far away from the home, and this sense of having been away from the home frequently haunts them. Their expatriate life is expressed as if it were an exiled experience; where there is no self will.

Two cultures often have a problematic relation. It becomes clear in this story when the unnamed narrator focuses on the relation between European and the natives. Both groups show the sense of hatred and contempt towards another culture which has created distance between them. Such distance between two groups emerges not only because of the broken symmetry between colonizer and the colonized but also because of the two distinct cultural backgrounds. There are a number of uneasy relationships existing between them. Africa for Bobby is the empty space and people who live there are arrogant. Regarding such relationship Bobby and Linda express themselves each other thus:

Bobby said, 'you South Africans are all arrogant'.

‘We are not like your natives here. These people are the most ignorant people in the world. Look at them’.

Bobby looked at Zulu. ‘You must be careful what you say. They might deport you’.

The Zulu fanned himself with his cap and turned away. Why do these people want to be with the natives? A couple of years ago the natives could not even come here. (106)

Bobby and Linda, all through the course, thus show a kind of disapproval and even hatred towards the native culture. They have a feeling of both cultural and geographical dislocation, and therefore a sense of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ mentality that recurrently dominates many of their immediate actions that take place in their picaresque journey. They exhibit same kind of white man’s arrogance towards the native people. Even the native people in turn show a kind of inhostility to them. All these are the abrupt response to the imminent fear and the threat of insecurity from both sides: Civilians and the foreigners. They belong to two different cultures: one western and the other native African which insulates in them the sense of ‘us’ and ‘them’. The narrator says that the place is “empty” for Bobby (109). It is because he has no sense of belonging with that culture. So, he has both fear and hatred, which has carried together throughout the journey. Naipaul in this story has developed Conradian way of representing African geographical blackness. It is not only cultural difference that creates in Bobby the sense of insecurity and fear. But it is also the unknown geographical bleakness that haunts him all the way in his journey. He has sense of being lost there. He perceives the strange geography of Africa as: “The land dropped and dropped. The continent here was

gigantically flawed. The eyes lost itself every colorless distance of the wide valley, dissolving in every direction in cloud and haze” (116).

The colonial impact is still dominant in the ruler himself. The president wears a headdress of the king’s tribe, a gift of the king at the time of independence and it symbolizes the unity of the tribes: “The new photographs showed the president without the headdress. In jacket, shirt and tie, with his hair done in an English style”(108). This is an impact of colonial rule that the native people are imitating others by forgetting their originality. Their original culture is in threat giving them a sense of cultural crisis. Bobby tried to analyze the relationship between the whites and native Africans. Bobby smiles by looking at Africans but Africans do not respond because they have a complicated relation. This is not only the relationship between the colonizers and the colonized, but also the relation between the western culture and the indigenous African culture. These two diverse cultures naturally oppose each other. Such incompatible cultural relation has been clearly shown in what Linda says: “ you know the filthy things they are going to do? The filth they are going to eat? The blood, the excrement, the dirt” (122). It is natural for Linda to hate these black people who are culturally and geographically distinct. She further says: “ What a smell! Absolute gangsters. I am not going to get myself killed simply because I’m too nice to be rude to the Africans”(138). Such a view of Africans as coming out of darkness, eating dirt and filth and giving foul smell is generated because of cultural difference. Both, Bobby and Linda get a total image of neglect in the land where they do not have any belongingness. They frequently think that they have been exiled in this place. The fear of unknown, insecurity and being lost haunt them all through the journey. They feel that they are humiliated in the land of “others”(149). Bobby feels a

sense of self-humiliation, and this humiliation itself sprouts from the “relics of failed colonial plantation” (149).

Bobby and Linda examine the African scene and relentlessly try to establish their belongings, they question their being there, they see other people and hate them. They try to remember their culture, people and geography. They feel a kind of cultural crises and identity problem. It is evident in the oblique expression of Bobby when he speaks to an African:

‘Of course you hate me, and I know you hate me. Last week you killed that South

African. Old, helpless. Didn’t you hate me? Lived here for 20 years.

Married one of your women.’

‘Thief kill him sir.’

‘That’s what they always say, but we know who killed him. It was someone who hated him’. (182)

It is to be generally conceived that there is a cold relation between the white Europeans and the native Africans. They killed the South Africans who are old and helpless. The people who hate them, they killed. Thus, it shows the domination over the South African people or helpless people. The existing cultural difference in between is significantly playing vital role. The narrator makes a meticulous depiction of the land and the people: “He was in a car with a woman whose identity could not be sure of”(197). They were quarreling she everything said was accurate; everything was wounding; and thought to everything there was a reply, he could not explain himself. Bobby and Linda got many



obstacles in their way. They never feel the sense of attachment towards the land. From the very first day of their arrival, they start hating this place (217).

The book contains an epilogue from journal, which is named as “The Circus at Luxor”.

The narrator of this chapter is going to Egypt from Milan by the air. He observes the people and identifies them who they are. Some of them are the Chinese people. Apart from the Chinese people; there are some other people from Greece, Lebanon, and some more other places. The narrator describes their language, clothing, behavior and so on. The focus of the epilogue is the diversity of culture; how people from different cultural background interact with each other. Moreover, he narrates about the people, place, and culture with reference to himself. It makes way to think that he has the same cultural confusion.

In this way, all the major characters in the novel *In a Free State*, Santosh, Dayo, his brother, Bobby and Linda explore the nature and conditions of their geographical as well as cultural belonging. When their activities are marked by the cultural change and their attempts to assimilate with alien culture are thwarted, they are dislocated and frustrated. They find themselves in a new land and culture that gives them a sense of loss of belonging and confused about their original cultural roots. They seek for location and identity but they do not find it nor do they succeed in establishing their meaning of having been there. All the major characters suffer from the sense of dislocation and displacement due to the loss of their ties with the native culture and their inability to assimilate with alien culture and they feel that they are stranded in foreign land.

## V CONCLUSION

V.S. Naipaul, *In a Free State* portrays the experiences of diasporic trauma, obstacles of obtaining independent identity from other's cultural and geographical relation and finding the center. All the major characters are moving from one cultural and geographical land to the other because they are ousted from their homeland. There appears the cultural hullabaloo with such cultural mutation. The characters can not feel the sense of unity among themselves because they encounter with the people of diverse land and culture. In such a situation, they can neither remain unconcerned from their original cultural root nor can absolutely internalize the patronized culture. They are put out of place not only from their root but also from their adopted culture. The major characters in the novel *In a Free State* Santosh, Dayo, his brother, Bobby and Linda move through adversities in the land of alien cultures and geography.

It is strange and alien to the people who move into the land of other. They are entrapped in the complications of cross cultural assimilation because of fear and insecurity. They can't be accustomed with the circumstances and experience the sense of loss. Santosh finds himself an outsider in Washington because he cannot assimilate western culture by heart and establishes his earlier ties with his original culture. Experiencing the cultural turmoil and fear, he is dislocated from India and England. Then, there is nostalgia in him of his root culture which makes him feel more pain. Santosh can't adopt the way of American life style which makes him feel further stranded. Further, he feels that he is stranded because of his confrontation with diverse cultures placing him as an outsider. Then, he feels insecure in alien land and culture which leads him to confusion and displacement. He seeks for the people of similar root

and culture. But the more he tries to find out his root culture the more he becomes stranded and the people of the same root and culture become alien to him.

The paucity of sense of cultural belonging makes people far from the source as well as the target culture. The narrator in the story finds himself an alienated Situation in that strange land when he goes to England to look after his brother, Dayo. He feels that his cultural roots are broken there. So, anger and frustration arise in him. He tries to kill his enemies and get his lost identities but he fails because of his geographical root in that alien culture and land. He feels himself a helpless person there and feels that he is stranded in that strange culture and geography.

When people move from one land to the other, it is almost impossible to gain their identity and belonging in the new land. In the novel *In a Free State*, English civil servants Linda and Bobby undergo a journey to a newly independent African state. On the way, the journey is always filled up with the fear of unknown because Linda and Bobby are dissociated from their family, society and culture. They feel isolated because they don't have anybody to share their feelings, pain and sorrows. When they are in Africa, there arises the sense of hatred towards the alien culture because the alien culture cannot incorporate them and feel that the alien culture has created a gap between them. Then, they experience that they are further stranded culturally and geographically.

The ambivalent relation between the whites and the native Africans brings the people in a difficult situation. They have the relationship of the colonizer and the colonized. So, there is confrontation between the western culture and indigenous African culture. So, these two diverse cultures oppose each other. At this gap between the two

opposing cultures Linda and Bobby think that they are exiled in this place. In such a situation, they feel that they are unwanted and stranded.

Finally, it can be said that the novel *In a Free State* is the search of identity of the stranded people when they are away from their native culture. The characters are from diverse culture and geography. Their entrance to alien cultures and geography brings more frustration and confusion. In such a confused and frustrated situation, they cannot reclaim their lost identity and root culture or origin. Instead, they fail to incorporate the alien culture. In this ambivalent situation, the characters ironically remain further stranded both culturally and geographically.

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