The Sense of Belonging in Postcolonial Literature
V.S Naipaul’s The Mimic Men, a Man’s Search for Identity and Home

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Introduction

Postcolonial theory is useful because it raises a complicated question, as it deals with the effect and after-math of colonialism on the ex-colonized societies. The era of imperialism has finally ended, however independence has not been out of its theoretical frame, it remains a word rather than an experience, therefore the concepts of national identity and unity are yet unattainable, which means that the analysis of postcolonial societies works with the sense that colonialism is the only history of these societies.

Postcolonial theory seemed to acquire a noticeable popularity and respectability among the other post words: post-modernism, post-structuralism. Postcolonialism as a field began to gain popularity and receive critical attention with the publication of Edward Said’s book *Orientalism* in 1978. Its studies are a product of changing social conditions. Postcolonialism achieved prominence during the 1980’s, and it became a settled academic field during the 1990’s. It is somewhat an intellectual field that maintains together a set of concepts in all aspects of life such as politics, architecture, science and especially literature. Those theories are a reaction to the cultural legacies of colonialism and the unconscious changing of culture. In other words Postcolonial theory deals with the effect colonialism had on societies and especially culture. Furthermore, it also provides discussion about experience of various kinds such as: Immigration, slavery, difference, race, gender, place, resistance…etc which means that, Postcolonial writing should be understood as a literature giving voice to the oppressed people.
In addition, postcolonial discourse has entered several disciplines in the social sciences and humanities. Nowadays aspects of postcolonialism can be found not only in approach to history, literature, and politics…etc but also to approach of culture, identity, and sense of belonging. That is to say that postcolonial literature focuses on issues of human identity and sense of belonging in a colonial and postcolonial world.

My work is in fact framed by the postcolonial discourse which was the result of the work of several writers such as Homi Bhabha, Frantz Fanon, Ngugi Wathiango, Edward Said, V.S. Naipaul, among others. The latter, being my center of interest in this dissertation, has created much postcolonial controversy about his views of the so called third space world societies. He has been severely attacked and even accused as being a non postcolonial writer. Chinua Achebe admits:

I do admire Mr. Naipaul, but I am rather sorry for him. He is too distant from a viable moral center, he withholds his humanity, he seems to place himself under self-denying ordinance, as it were, suppressing genuine compassion for humanity (qtd.in Chang 2).

Moreover, Edward Said severely criticizes the way Naipaul sees the third world, and how he hardly writes about the third world with affection and humor and he accuses him of being a racist “he is a very convenient witness. He’s a third worlder denouncing his own people, not because they are victims of imperialism, but because they seem to have an innate flaw, which is that, they are not white” (qtd. in Chang 3). However it seems impossible to agree with these critics, and in this study I will try to examine how Naipaul handles themes of postcoloniality by analyzing a number of his selected works, and
precisely his novel *The Mimic Men*. The dissertation in particular examines his works through analyzing the characters and events that are closely related to the themes of postcolonialism. Such analysis will be in reference to the theoretical perspective of postcolonialism. The dissertation aims to answer questions such as how do Naipaul’s selected works deal with related themes of sense of belonging, identity crisis, marginalization and cultural conflicts? Is Naipaul a postcolonial writer? To what extent did Naipaul succeed in advocating the issues of sense of belonging in his works?

Through following an analytical advocatory process, and in order to answer the previously stated questions, this dissertation is divided into three chapters. In the first chapter, merely theoretical, the meaning of identity and sense of belonging, as well as the definition of sense of place and the main difference between the concept of place and space is fully discussed. Then, a definition of the terms colonialism and imperialism, in addition to their differences is also presented. Finally, a definition of postcolonialism as a term and theory will be also clarified as well as the definition of some postcolonial concepts which are mostly related to my work.

The second chapter describes the background of the Caribbean area, as well as the life of V.S. Naipaul. Then, my work submerges in illustrating the autobiographical elements which appear to be one of the important genres of postcolonial literature. Finally, Naipaul’s most known works are analyzed to trace how his works deal with themes which stand under the umbrella of the concept of sense of belonging such as Alienation, dislocation, homesickness, identity crisis, homelessness…etc.
The third chapter investigates in detail the themes discussed in the second chapter and relates them to the major theme which is the sense of belonging. It relies heavily on *The Mimic Men* as being the most important one as it concentrates mostly on cultural and political dilemmas in a colonial and postcolonial Caribbean country. Moreover, the novel tells the story of a displaced and disappointed colonial individual who is questing his sense of belonging and identity which have been divested by the process of colonization in a fascinating way.

My work ends up with a conclusion that sums the main findings of this research. Among the results sorted out through the analysis of Naipaul’s works and especially *The Mimic Men* is that Naipaul is a typical postcolonial writer because almost all of his writings focus on colonial and postcolonial situations and dilemmas of the third world countries. Then had it not suffered from time, space; and academic restrictions, my work would have been better in analyzing one of the noble prizes winner.
Chapter One: Postcolonialism: A Background

Sixty years ago “Colonization refigured the terrain everywhere” (Chriyankandth36) and half of the world was overwhelmed with mainly European empires. In 1921, eighty four percent of the earth surface had been colonized since the sixteenth century and following the organization of Group of Nations mandates over formerly Ottoman and German territories in Africa, the Middle East, and the Pacific, there were as many as one hundred sixty eight colonies (36). Colonial powers came to foreign states and destroyed the main parts of native tradition and culture, they continuously replaced them with their own. The native inhabitants must struggle with the newly arrived culture and all of its beliefs, values, and traditions that have been integrated with their own lives. Even though by the second half of the 20th century most of the former colonies were, at least officially, independent, free to be themselves again; the experience of the following decades revealed how much “the phantom of colonization still loomed over the post-colonial globe” (36).

The era of imperialism has finally ended and most of the colonies are independent now, however this has led to the beginning of a new chapter which is the examination of the significant impact imperialism has had on the postcolonial political and cultural development. After the decolonization, the ex-colonized found themselves in a totally alien culture facing different cultural difficulties and contradictions threatening their identity and sense of belonging. As generations had already adopted the western culture and traditions of the colonial rule, they were unable to reunite under a one nationwide identity, in other words the ex-colonized couldn’t get rid of the western traditions and they couldn’t also manage to create a new one either, and a struggle to be identified with a culture took a
place, so a search for identity and a sense of belonging has become a crucial task of many nations. Furthermore the ex-colonized societies and regardless to their contemporary condition are still identified through their colonial background as undeveloped, traditional, pre-modern and conventional. It’s this reality which confirms that a colonization of mind persists through the divisions that geopolitical powers made: North/South and West/East. This is what has led to the rise of the postcolonial theory\(^1\) especially in the field of cultural studies (36).

Cultural studies are very helpful in understanding today’s complexities of culture within the multiple “post” realities of today: post structuralism, postcolonialism and post modernism (Simon 44). Postcolonialism as the newest participant seemed to acquire a noticeable popularity and respectability among the other academic post words (Dirlik 329). It is a somewhat an intellectual field that maintains together a set of concepts in all aspects of life such as politics, architecture, science, and literature those theories are a reaction to the cultural legacy of colonialism and the unconscious changing of culture. In its use as a critical approach, postcolonialism refers to “a collection of theoretical and critical strategies used to examine the culture (literature, politics, history, and so forth) of former colonies of the European empires, and their relation to the rest of the world” (qtd. in Siegel). Many critics and writers agreed on the idea that “Post-colonial literature and criticism arose both during and after the struggles of many nations in Africa, Asia, Latin America and elsewhere for independence from colonial rule” (Habib 738). Postcolonialism which “deals with the effect of colonization on cultures and societies” (Ashcroft et al. “The Empire” 186) has turned into a well known issue in literature and later through literature in various fields of
universal relations and sociology. Furthermore its discourse has entered several disciplines in the social sciences and humanities. Nowadays aspects of postcolonialism can be found not only in approach to history, politics, and literature but also in approach to culture, identity and sense of belonging, which means that the Postcolonial literature narrows the focus on the issues of human identity and belonging in a colonial and postcolonial world. Like other postcolonial issues, the sense of belonging is greatly discussed because it is clearly found in most postcolonial works and narratives.

Identity and belonging are crucial aspects to understanding and defining who we are and what everyone needs. Having a respectful and thoughtful relationship is very important and helpful in creating a strong identity and sense of belonging. Character, family and culture may cause a direct effect on the sense of belonging. Particularly, the family, the religious affiliation, and the race form a vital ground of identity and sense of belongingness. So let’s explore what is Identity and Belonging?

Identity, which is often connected to the sense of belonging, is a basic human right. The human character is made up of distinct qualities, and the instinctive human sense of self initiates with birth. Furthermore, the cultural environment and people’s individual qualities have an impact on their identities. People’s knowledge, experiences and perception of their sense of self do partially shape their sense of belonging. Most of the times, a person’s experience and the degree they believe they belong to, have a direct impact on their identities and sense of belonging (Clarke 513). Finding and building an effective sense of identity and belonging may be a difficult task, since we ask ourselves, who are we? What do others want us to be? And where do we belong? Where do we fit in?
This point in our lives marks the individualism at its finest; it denotes the impact of our personal perspectives on our decisions. Identity and belonging as a question, has been, and will comprise human generations for so long.

Identity has turned into the center of many and various studies and researches. It’s studied in various areas and fields such as psychology, sociology, and literature …etc. Studies of identity “aim to understand the ways we socially constitute our selves while considering the link between society and self-identity” (Coupland 2210). Identity “is sometimes used to refer to a sense of integration of the self, in which different aspects come together in a unified whole” (Deaux 1). An identity is who or what a person is. It is a self-representation of somebody interests, relationships, social activity and much more. Identity is multi-faceted it’s composed of many traits forms it means that people possess multiple identities. Defining identity depends on how and in what context identity is formed, adopted by a person, and perceived the bearer and society. So what’s actually needed is definition of identities rather than identity.

Identities are seen “as social constructs – culturally and interactionally defined meanings and expectations – and as aspects of self-processes and structures that represent who or what a person or set of persons is believed to be” (Vryan 2216). In his chapter Identity: Social Psychological Aspects Vryan focused on three types of identity. The first is Social identity or role identity is one's sense of self as a member of a social constructed group. This type is mostly related to “sex/gender, family, race and ethnicity, nationality, religion, occupation, sexuality, age, and voluntary subcultural memberships” (2216). Sociologists use the concept of social identity to explain how people understand who they
are and why they act in a given way. People classify and identify themselves as members of a specific group in contrast to others. For instance, Jew may define herself/himself as Jewish and as therefore different than Christians and Muslims. Sociologist assumes that the identity of a member of a specific group can relatively lead to various expectations about its bearer; therefore identity can explain behavior from many angles. So it is possible for an individual to “possess many social identities, but those identities will vary in their importance, centrality, or salience within different contexts, in turn affecting behavior differentially” (2216).

The Second type is situational identity which emerge out of a particular interactional situation, therefore it doesn’t match social identity in stability since this latter endures as long as the social relations do; situational identity is a hostage of the situation and the surrounding circumstances and its bearer acts accordingly. The notion of situational identity is a dynamic one, in contrast to that of fixed identity. In real world, people easily switch between different situational identities. The bearer of the situational identity –in various interactions- analyses the atmosphere accurately (participants and their behaviors) then sets his course of action.

The third type is personal identity, which is a person’s sense of individuality and uniqueness; it is connected with a name, body, personal history...etc. What mostly sets personal identity apart from the two other types is the long endurability and uniqueness, and as a person grows up in a family and within a social atmosphere she/he influenced by many aspects of his/her life like friends, personal interests and environment (2216). Personal identity studies emphasize on the individuality of person whereas social and
situational identities focus on people within a group or category. In other words the personal identity is the individual identity whereas the social and situational identities are seen as the collective identities. Hence, a personal identity identifies the individual as unique; it is unlikely to find out two people sharing the same personal history and identical traits. The impact of these identities on self-conceptions, intrapsychic structures, the attitude of its bearers and the others feedback on their acts is considerable to the colonial and postcolonial studies on the ground that the contemporary world is distinguished by rapid social changes, personal and cultural identity crises, and cultural mobility (2217).

Cultural identity is one of the central concerns of postcolonialism. In colonial context, identity can be understood through self/other, civilized/native, us/them dichotomies. Cultural identity is “the notion of identity as shaped not just in relation to some other, but to the Other, to another culture. The notion of cultural identity becomes much stronger and firmer when we define our ‘selves’ in relation to a cultural Other” (Clarke 511). In addition Boehmarg argued that “identity is based on a distinction of the self from what is believed to be not self” (76). To explain more “all post-colonial societies realize their identity in difference rather than in essence. They are constituted by their difference from the metropolitan and it is in this relationship that identity both as a distancing from the center and as a means of self-assertion comes into being” (Ashcroft et al. “The Empire” 167). To make it simple an identity is constructed based on difference from ‘others’, as Edward Said proposed in his Orientalism (1978), “a culture, a self, a national identity, is always produced in relation to its Others”. Said insists that “the development and maintenance of every identity, culture requires the presence of another, different and competing alter-ego”
(323). Therefore, in analyzing postcolonial texts, we need to consider whether they assert a distance from the colonial centre and undermine a sense of ‘otherness’. Furthermore, Stuart Hall, in *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* describes two different aspects of cultural identity. Firstly, cultural identity can be seen from the communal perspective, where individuals locate themselves in a shared culture, and secondly, that cultural identity is flexible and fluid and is always in process. Hall adds that Cultural identity is affected by the context, that is, affected by the location and the community we live in but it is not determined by it. Therefore, an individual’s cultural identity can be seen as a dialogue constructed from both the past and the present (3).

As for the definition of sense of belonging, John done said once “No man is an island, entire of itself”, this means that no one is by himself, we are all connected to each other: to other men, women or children. This is where the concept of belonging comes in. From this quote we understand that the need to belong is a basic aspect of being human. Humans have a curve to belong and this sense of belonging can emerge from relations we make with other people, groups, and cultures and connections we made with places. Social identity or belonging refers to the way people define themselves as members of a social group. Therefore “social identity is something that links us to the social world and provides the pivot between the individual and society.” (Pitonyak 7).

The notion of belonging or social identity is, in diverse domains of cultural studies literature and other distinct studies, considered to be a senior matter. Sense of belonging has also been a subject of education, psychology, sociology, social-psychology, religion due to its great impact on people’s lives. Sense of belonging is integral to our understanding of
how individuals give meaning to their lives. Our identity is established on social connections that show our relatedness to specific groups through shared beliefs, values, or practices. For example building relationships with people, religious perspectives, neighborhoods we acquire…etc all of these help us to be part of communities, groups, family which make up the human society. Sense of belonging is defined in various ways. According to Hagerty and associates the sense of belonging is “the experience of personal involvement in a system or environment so that persons feel themselves to be an integral part of that system or environment” (794), it means that the sense of belonging can emerge from the connections we make with people, places, groups and culture. It can be contextual and we can experience different types of belonging or connection with our family, friends, work place or community. Furthermore, Deci and Ryan suggested that the need for relatedness “encompasses a person’s striving to relate to and care for others, to feel that those others are relating authentically to one’s self, and to feel a satisfying and coherent involvement with the social world more generally” (243). A sense of belonging, writes Dr. Kenneth Pelletier of the Stanford Center for Research and Disease Prevention, “appears to be a basic human need – as basic as food and shelter. In fact, social support may be one of the critical elements distinguishing those who remain healthy from those who become ill” (qtd. in Pitonyak). In addition, a study of Michigan University has shown that “people with more social support who feel more of a sense of belonging report less depressive symptoms” (Ubani 15). Another study of Rhode Island University has shown that “adolescents who find group membership important and have a positive sense of group belonging have significantly fewer behavior problems than those who see group membership as very important, but do not have a positive sense of group belonging” (Ubani
So a sense of belonging is very important, it’s one of the most important needs of the human being; a human without roots or belonging will suffer for the whole of his life, and will feel neglected wherever he goes or travels.

The point behind identity and belonging is connected to people in a certain progressive manner or path to figure out who they really are, besides having the sense that they are worthy appreciated and upheld as an integral piece of the family and community. From birth people develop an idea of who they are. Their identities are built through their relationship with their family members, friends and members of their communities. In fact people’s identity is shaped by their characteristics, their behavior, and their understanding of themselves, their family and others so belonging is about having a protected connection with a particular group of people. When people feel a sense of belonging and sense of pride in their families, and their communities, they can be emotionally strong, self-assured, and able to deal with challenges and difficulties. This creates an important foundation for their development. So a sense of belonging easily means a positive and good feeling that you are a member of something, like your family or a social club or a group of friends. In his paper, “A Theory of Human Motivation” American psychologist Abraham Maslow cited belonging as the third most important human need on his hierarchy of human needs, after only physiological and safety needs. It’s better to note that in any discussion about sense of belonging Maslow comes up in the conversation (Ubani15).

Abraham Maslow⁴ is famous for his theory on the hierarchy of needs from *Motivation and Personality* (1954). His book is a graphic depiction of the certain group of needs the individuals strive for in their lives. These needs start at the most basic level of physiological
needs, then safety needs, next love and belonging needs, after that self-esteem needs, and finally actualization. Abraham Maslow (1943) sought after perceiving human motivating factors. He asserted that motivation is an instinctive feature that is detached from rewards or unconscious desires, of the human kind. Maslow reported that people look up to attain certain requirement whenever the previous are achieved. The hierarchy of needs\(^5\) (1943, 1954) of Maslow’s portrays five (5) motivational needs, often shaped in a hierarchical scales within a pyramid a subdivision of this hierarchical scale can categorize the needs in two ranges: basic needs (physiological, safety, love, and esteem) and growth needs (self-actualization). Self-actualization is the peak point among all the needs, to reach this level, one ought to fulfill the lowest basic needs fairly and eventually targeting the growth needs rationally. On the way of progression towards the self actualization, one may encounter several barriers that would cause him to split up, divorce and unemployment, for instance would prevent the individual from achieving lower level needs which implies an unexpected end. During his study, Maslow noticed that the percentage of those who became completely self actualized doesn’t exceed 1%, and this is due to the fact that our society rewards motivation primarily based on esteem, love and other social needs (Mcleod)\(^6\). Maslow believes that the most difficult needs to be fulfilled and which cause a lot of problems for people are the belonging needs. He wrote of belonging, “We have very little scientific information about the belongingness need, although this is a common theme in novels, autobiographies, poems, and plays” (43). Unfortunately it would appear that this statement is still true. Maslow described this need as, “hunger for affectionate relationship with people in general, namely, for a place in his group or family” (43).
Through the definitions displayed above, the essential concern has been to show how engagement and membership in social groups widely helps to create and enhance a sense of belonging in human being. This sense of belonging is important to people’s life because it’s the source which tells them who and what they are. To make it clear, as social beings people need to feel that they belong to various groups and this need to belong is significant because they draw from these groups a sense of identity. Thus “by becoming integrated into a social group they feel they belong to it and they are able to define themselves in terms of the groups to which they belong” (Novak), so it’s the group membership which gives people a sense of identity. Even though belonging and identity can’t be synonyms, “it can’t be denied that a sense of belonging to a particular group, place or community contribute to establishing a specific sense of identity” (Novak). Therefore it’s better to say that identity is closely linked to the sense of belonging.

Alongside social interactions, physical space is an important marker of belonging. Just as social identity and sense of identity relied on group membership and social interactions, sense of place or sense of belonging to a place has also relied on geographical demands and imperatives. Sense of belonging to a place appears to be one of the most important senses of belonging for people’s well-being, this latter plays a great role in creating and maintaining an ongoing sense of identity and sense of belonging. Further, it is also important to the development of a sense of morality and human identity. The Department of Human Resources and Skills Development of Canada has found that “a sense of belonging with one’s country and community can positively influence one's sense of identity and how much they participate in society and it can also improve physical and mental health” (Ubani 15). The question of what it means to belong, identify with and have
a root in particular place has greater significance in an increasingly globalized and postcolonial world. In fact sense of place writings which take into consideration the impact place has on culture is one of the oldest threads, but it’s likely to mention that in recent years the concept of sense of place began to gain popularity and receive critical attentions in almost all the fields.

Starting from the 1970’s sense of place writings extended outside the human geography field, it’s now used in Economics, history, cultural studies due to its relevance to issues of race, ethnicity, gender, identity and other social relations. Sense of place is also an important aspect of postcolonial studies due to the increased dilemmas caused by globalization and colonialism. This latter played a great role in decreasing the uniqueness of places and their individual identities and led to the feeling of alienation, dislocation, homelessness and placelessness, homesickness. All these concepts stand under the umbrella of the broader concept “sense of belonging”. Before exploring the meaning of the concept of sense of place it is important to shed light on the principal concepts which help in clarifying this concept, those key concepts are Space and Place.

Researches from both the physical and social sciences suggest that human are not separate from nature (Roberts). People develop certain unbreakable bonds with particular landscapes. It is these bonds which serve to develop an expansive and deep sense of belonging and fix their social identities. The human-landscape relationship and perception is based on two modes. The first mode is landscape perceived as space whereas the second one is landscape perceived as place (Hunziker et al. 48). In space mode and according to Hunziker et al, space is the landscape which people “perceive primarily in terms of their biological needs; that is, they focus on the instrumental use of the landscape” (49).
However in place mode, place is the landscape which people “perceive primarily in terms of self-reflection (experiences, achievements) and social integration (values, norms, symbols, meanings)” (49). That is to say the landscape which is considered as space is the one which is perceived mostly through its physical characteristics, while the landscape which is considered as place is the landscape which is perceived mostly through the cultural and meaning given to it (Hunziker et al. 49). One might then ask the question: which landscape will be easily remembered and has an impact on people?

In order to answer this question one must first know the definitions of space and place and understand the differences between those two concepts. Space and place has been defined by various thinkers and in different fields. The Philosopher Yi-Fi Tuan defined space as the physical or geographical location which appears to be inauthentic, abstract and infinite entity (6). Space can be described as a location which has no social connections for a human being. No value has been added to this space. According to Tuan “it is an open space, but may marked off and defended against intruders” (4). “It does not invite or encourage people to fill the space by being creative. No meaning has been described to it. It is more or less abstract” (Tuan 6). In this context then, Space “tends to be generic and moveable, more a matter of enclosure than rootedness” (Siverly and McDowell 44) which means that space can be described as an area with no strong identification or authentic value, an area with no social connection or real meaning. Furthermore Tuan argues that a space can only become a place if it’s defined by human beings through their experiences, memories and the meaning which is given to it (149). Tuan adds that place “is concerned with the meaning and people’s attachment, while space is detached from human
experiences” (149). So from this we notice that the difference between space and place lies on the meaning and importance human beings give to a specific area.

In contrast to space, a place can be seen as space that has a meaning, and it’s only through human engagement with places that those places become meaningful. Place is the smaller portion within space which appears to be more valuable, emotionally and personally significant. It refers to how people are aware of or attracted to a certain piece of space. The importance of place to the existence and soul of the human being has been recognized since ancient times. Aristotle for example described place as the landscape that “marks the beginning of the outside world…it’s the first thing that a person is” (Morisson 142). Furthermore The Roman considered every river, forest and city as a home to a spirit that “gave identity to that place by its presence and its actions” (Relph18). The word place has been used since ancient time but it’s only since the 1970’s that has been perceived as a location which has an authentic meaning and strong attachments. Malpus (1999), a leading philosopher, talks about the importance of place to human identity and their existence on earth he argues that “there is no possibility of understanding human existence . . . other than through an understanding of place” (15-16). Hence, Tuan defines place as, “centers of felt value where biological needs, such as those for food, water, rest, and procreation, are satisfied” (4). Tuan adds that space, like place, can fulfill biological needs, but place is unique because of its meaning, moral and emotional support (4). Therefore place “is more than a location; it involves human experiences, emotions, and meanings attached to the lived environment” (Tuan 4).

Places vary in meaning and importance but the most significant place for all people is their country. Finally, places are practiced. People do things in place. What they do, in
part, is responsible for the meanings that a place might have, thus human beings become
related, connected and attached to places and develop what Tuan refers to as “affective
bonds” with places and experience a sense of belonging in and to places, especially their
country. It’s this affective bond which is referred to as a sense of place.

The emotional attachment or effective bonds and the importance people give to a
specific place are called the sense of place. In his Space and Place Tuan argues that Place
becomes a center of meaning or field of care as individuals and groups experience the
setting and attach meaning and importance to it. Accordingly a sense of place can be seen
as a “human activity that happens in a specific setting, human social and psychological
processes that are rooted in it” (Tuan 14). Sense of place or rootedness is often used
 interchangeably with “place attachment” and “community sentiment” (Low and Altman 1-12).
Jorgensen and Stedman (2001) states that many variables such as place attachment,
insidness and place identity may stand under the umbrella of the general concept of a sense
of place. In the one hand Setha Low’s concept of place attachment is defined as:

Place attachment is the symbolic relationship formed by people
giving culturally shared emotional/affective meanings to a
particular space of piece of land that provides the basis for the
individual’s and group’s understanding of and relation to the
environment.....Thus, place attachment is more than an emotional
and cognitive experience, and includes cultural beliefs and practices
that link people to place (165).
Through this definition Low shows that besides the cognitive meaning and emotional bonds other factors such as cultural beliefs and practices have also a significant role in linking people to places, consequently developing a strong place attachment. Through being born, growing up and living in a place and practicing various activities such as working, studying … etc people give a significant meaning and become attached to their environments. Low argues that “this meaning isn’t inherent to places, but it is created by social groups and activities” (8). In other words place attachment is not made by the place only, but also through various social factors such as people, experiences, ideas, and culture. Thus, Low adds that “Places are, therefore, repositories and contexts within which interpersonal, community, and cultural relationships occur, and it is to those social relationships, not just to place qua place, to which people are attached” (Low and Altman 7). She argues that the process of place attachment which is brought about by those cultural relationships can be grouped into two categories. The first category which is linked to familial, historical and economic ties includes genealogical attachment, attachment through destruction or loss of place and economic and political attachment. Genealogical attachment which is related to family and historical ties, it’s mainly concerned with the experiential and historical bonds people develop with their land such as being born into a place, living in a place for a long time, marrying into a place…. etc. Attachment through destruction or loss place is based on the memories and experiences people gain in a place and the impact of losing this place may cause several reactions such as the nostalgic feelings, mourning, sadness, homesickness, alienation and depression which is developed toward places that only exists as memories. In addition Low argues that an economic tie that people develop within a land occurs through the ownership of place for living or
working (165). The second category which is the Ideological ties is founded on beliefs and values on how people should relate to a setting. This category includes the Cosmology and narratives engagements. The cosmology ties are related to the spiritual beliefs practices such as pilgrimage and spiritual teachings that places embody. The narratives ties are linked to the stories that inform us about places such as myths, family histories, fictional accounts, local lore, moral tales, national myths, and political accounts (166).

Moreover, Low adds that the concept of place attachment may be confused with the concept of place identity due to the great contribution it plays in enhancing and building a deep individual or community sense of identity, self-esteem, and self-worth (low and Altman 10). People don’t only attach themselves to places, but they become part of individuals and thus contribute to the self-esteem and identity of people. Furthermore, Brown and Perkins argue that place attachment “reflect and shape people's understanding of who they are as individuals and as members of groups” (280). Therefore place attachment is considered as the solid marker of identity and integral to people’s comprehension of themselves as well as of others.

In the other hand and as a definition of sense of place David Hummon, in his “Community Attachment: Local Sentiment and Sense of Place” argues that:

By sense of place, I mean people’s subjective perceptions of their environments and their more or less conscious feelings about those environments. Sense of place is inevitably dual in nature, involving both an interpretive perspective on the environment and an emotional reaction to the environment.... Sense of place involves a personal orientation toward place, in which one’s understanding of
place and one’s feelings about place become fused in the context of environmental meaning (253-278).

According to Hummon, sense of place refers to the strongest, enduring relationship people develop with a single place, and the psychological and spiritual emotion that a place evokes. In addition the sense of place is “a holistic concept which doesn’t include only, but also the physical setting, human practices, experiences, and psychological processes that are rooted in a place” (280). In other words it’s the environment, experiences and meaning or attachment which influence people’s sense of place and attachment. From this definition we notice that the concept of place attachment and sense of place elaborate on the relationship between the physical environment and individuals or groups with an emphasis on the meaning, feelings and emotions a place evoke (Iow 233). So, it is hard to clarify the difference between sense of place and Low and Altman’s concept of place attachment.

Many researchers have stressed the subjective nature of the process of building a sense of place, Tuan argues that “What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value” (6). Sense of place is built through the meaning people give to a place in addition to the experiences and memories people gain from a setting, furthermore, Ralph stresses that a sense of place is the combination of the senses people experience in a setting such as “sight, hearing, smell, movement, touch, memory, imagination and anticipation” (19). Similarly, Wallace Stegner in A Sense of Place describes how people develop a sense of place “Some are born in their place, some find it, some realize after long searching that the place they left is the one they have been searching for” (qtd. in Siverly and McDowell). Simone Weil a French philosopher in her
book *The Need for Roots* listed sense of place or rootedness as one of the most important senses of human soul she says:

To be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognized need of the human soul. It is one of the hardest to define. A human being has roots by virtue of his real, active and natural participation in the life of a community which preserves in living shape certain particular treasures of the past and certain particular expectations for the future. This participation is a natural one, in the sense that it is automatically brought about by place, conditions of birth, profession and social surroundings. Every human being needs to have multiple roots. It is necessary for him to draw well-nigh the whole of his moral, intellectual and spiritual life by way of the environment of which he forms a natural part (41).

What Weil means by this quote is very clear; she believes that this sense of rootedness is an intimate linkage between people and place. In other words she believes that this rootedness is brought about by place, a place that people are attached and connected to, a place in which they had born; a place and a person’s level of attachment, identification and involvement with the community, past experiences and future expectations, and their assessment of the place. Weil adds that the problem of rootlessness is not just geographical or even cultural but spiritual as well. According to her identification with a place is one of the most spiritual needs which appear to be as important as any physical need.

Through the definitions presented above it is worthy to notice that the sense of place is something that cannot be purchased or incorporated into the program of people’s life in a
single day, a sense of place takes time, thought, and reflection, a sense of place is very important in building a sense of belonging, indeed a sense of place builds a sense of belonging, many people are moving around the world but they still strongly identify with and remain attached to the place in which they grew up, this strong linkage and attachment make their sense of belonging stronger and give them the power to build a strong identity as well. Once this attachment or sense of place is established, any loss or disruption of it can result serious and unwanted impacts such as a deep sense of loss, uncertainty, stress, depression, exile …etc. The sense of belonging and human identity is heavily threatened today due to this postmodern or postcolonial world which is the result of the long term of colonialism and imperialism.

Colonialism has been a widespread and an integral component that shaped the human history over decades from the Roman period to the phase of decolonization. There exist many empires in world history since early times to name few: the Roman Empire, Inca, Aztec, Ottoman, Chinese and more recently the European empire. While ancient empires were seen as “pre-capitalist, their colonial practices were limited to the extraction of tributes, goods and wealth from countries they conquered” (Mohan 2), the European colonialism was “propelled by many things; capitalist striving for profit, the colonies were valves for overpopulation, the spirit of exploration, scientific interest, and religious and ideological impulses up to Social Darwinistic and racist motives” (Stuchtey 1). To explain more the imperial powers sent many settlers to the conquered places in order to gain new grounds for economy, and new places for living. Thus, colonial period started. Colonialism refers to the long process most concentrated in the 19th century which is the expansion of the major European powers into the rest of the world, and establishing of foreign territories and
settlements. The European colonization was the most significant and unique one, it refigured the terrain everywhere and it almost touched the entire globe. By 1930 the ex-colonies and colonies had covered 84.6 percent of the earth surface. So what is this phenomenon of colonialism?

Colonialism is a term universally condemned due to its painful and unwanted memory, people believe that it is always connected with a national humiliation, military occupation and a full obeying of the imperial colonizer because he is in a powerful position and can’t be disobeyed. Knowing how people think about colonialism doesn’t tell us what it is. Yet colonialism is considered as one of the most influential process in human history, there is no widespread accord on what colonialism is. This means that defining colonialism is not an easy task. According to the Oxford English Dictionary the word Colonialism comes from the Roman ‘Colonia’ which means ‘farm’ or ‘settlement’ and it referred to Romans who settled in other lands but still keep their citizenship, Accordingly, the Oxford English Dictionary defines colonialism as:

A settlement in a new country, a body of people who settle in a new locality, forming a community subject to or connected with their parent state, the community so formed consisting of the original settlers and their descendents and successors as long as the connection with the parent state is kept up.

In addition, and according to Horvath the term colonialism refers broadly and generally to the “form of domination, the control by individuals or groups over the territory/or behaviors of other individual groups” (45). Horvath in his Definition of Colonialism distinguished
between two types of group domination: intergroup and intragroup domination. “Intergroup domination refers to the domination process in a culturally heterogeneous society” (46); whereas intragroup domination take a place in a culturally homogenous society (46). Britain had both intergroup and intragroup domination. Intergroup domination is clearly understood in the British domination of the Scots, Irish and Welsh. While the intragroup domination is the one based on ideological, social, and material structures of power established under it; these strategies give the colonizer authority to claim an imperial state on the colonized (46).

Another problem occurs here which is the relation between the term “imperialism” and “colonialism”. Colonialism and imperialism are often used interchangeably, but they are two different words having different meaning. The term imperialism implies command or superior power. The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as follows “Imperialism is the role of an emperor especially when despotic or arbitrary; the principal or spirit of empire; advocacy of what are held to be imperial interests”. In addition, according to Horvath the main difference between colonialism and imperialism appears to be “the presence or absence of significant numbers of permanent settlers in the colony from the colonizing power”, for example the domination of North America, Australia was seen as colonization, while the domination of Africa, Asia was seen as imperialism because the colonies were dominated but not settled (47). So, in the one hand colonialism is “a form of intergroup domination in which settlers in significant numbers migrate permanently to the colony from the colonizing power” in the other hand imperialism is an “interagroup domination where in few, if any, permanent settlers from the imperial homeland migrate to the colony” (47).
Furthermore in her *Postcolonial Literature in Context*, Mullany argues that Colonialism is defined as “the practice of planting and securing colonies, initially for capital and commercial gain as in the operations of the British East India Company in the eighteenth century” (3). While, imperialism refers to “the attitudes, structures, philosophies or processes that facilitate the practice of colonialism” (3). Another distinction between the two terms is made by Edward Said. Said argues that “imperialism comprises the practice, the theory and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory, whereas colonialism is almost always a consequence of imperialism and implies the implanting of a settlement on a distant territory” (8). So, colonialism can be thought as a practice, while imperialism as the ideological force driving the practice.

Colonialism is perceived as a strange illness causing harm to the world, spirits and culture of colonized people. However colonialism is not only understood as a sickness, but it also understood as the cause of new illnesses to emerge such as: individualism, stress, fear, loss, negligence and alienation… etc. So, in the one hand colonialism is considered as sickness while in the other hand it is considered as the source of sickness. Accordingly it is apparent that colonialism was more than just a military conquest it was “a cultural project of control” (qtd. in Mohan 5). Colonialism “displaced traditional cultures and left a deep scar on the psyche of the colonized people, who found themselves in the excruciating of betweenity” (Mohan 5). It’s these realities which led to the rise of a new discipline called Postcolonial studies.
The term Postcolonialism is defined in various ways and by various scholars and theorists. Postcolonialism which “deals with the effects of colonization on cultures and societies” (Ashcroft et al. “The Empire” 186) has been used by scholars since the Second World War, but most critics argue that the field of postcolonial studies would not be what it’s today without the work of Edward Said’s *Orientalism*. Postcolonial theory has gained prominence with the publication of Edward Said’s *Orientalism* in 1978. Said’s book is considered as a revolutionary book, it changed the way postcolonial studies were going through. Postcolonial study has the Western origin. Before the publication of Said’s book the western knowledge created a non-existed entity “the orient” and forced colonized people to fit into this paradigm. *Orientalism* is managed to erase the inadequate, misrepresentation and misunderstanding of the Orient culture and history (Khan 5).

The obvious understanding of the term postcolonial is that it refers to the period following the decline of colonialism or the end of formal colonial rule. But this sense of ending complicates the meaning and the historical period of postcolonial movement. So from this we notice that “post-colonialism is a form of writing which is difficult to pin down in chronological time” (Childs and Williams 3). As the prefix Post implies, postcolonialism refers to the period after decolonization. However, much of what has been identified as postcolonial did not really belong to this period. Many critics argue that even the literary works which are produced during colonial period may be classified as postcolonial due to their hostility toward colonialism. So from this we notice that:
We use the term post-colonial, however, to cover all the cultures affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day. This is because there is a continuity of preoccupations throughout the historical process initiated by European imperial aggression (qtd. in Childs and Williams 3).

The expression “continuity of preoccupations” here highlights the other meaning of ‘post’, which is the persistence of colonialism. The truth which is mostly common is that the soul of colonialism is gone but it’s never dying zombie still exists. Colonialism today is represented in new form known as “Neo-colonialism”. As Gayatri Spivak argues that today “We live in post-colonial neo-colonized world” (qtd. in Childs and Williams 4). Neo-colonialism is considered as the particular phase or modality of colonialism, it refers to the period after decolonization, the end of colonial control and the beginning of the Western powers indirect control which took place via political, cultural and economical ideologies (Child and Williams 3). Accordingly, a country maybe both: postcolonial in the sense of politically independent, and neo-colonial because it is economically and culturally dependent on the former colonizer. To explain more, the end of colonialist rule doesn’t mean that the ex-colonies are completely independent but “they still subject in one way or suitable forms of new colonial domination or Post-colonial haunt in the form of its language and cultural interactions”(Mohan 2).

Obviously, Postcolonialism appears to be a various and wide topic. It is a range of critical practices or approaches which provide a deeper examination of colonialism and its aftermath. Hence its discourse shifted from the forms of resistance to the colonial and
imperial power toward the main cultural changes and interactions between the dominant culture and that of the colonized one. So, it’s this mixture of the imperial culture and the native one which resulted in propounding the “postcolonial literature”. Postcolonial literatures are “a result of this interaction between imperial culture and the complex of indigenous cultural practices” (Mohan 2). Those interactions and changes appear to be the most and essential concern of the postcolonial literature. That’s to say that postcolonial literature “concerns itself primarily with the hybrid socio political culture which has been established by colonial control” (Mohan 3). Furthermore, due to the fact that postcolonial literature is a textual expression of resistance of colonialism which aims to unveil and deconstruct colonialist power structures; It rejects binaries created by Western powers such as First world and Third world, Black and White, West and East. It also aims at recovering the marginalized excluded or otherwise silenced voices of colonial or subaltern voices. In addition Postcolonial literature deals with untouched and minority studies such as Feminism and marginalization. Moreover it extended over the domains of gender, race, ethnicity, and class (Mohan 2). Accordingly Stephen Slemon defines Postcolonial literature as a form of “cultural criticism and cultural critique; a mode of disidentifying whole societies from the sovereign codes of cultural organization, and an inherently dialectical intervention in the hegemonic production of cultural meaning” (qtd. in Mohan 2). Correspondingly, Postcolonial literature is a wide and range field due to the various theoretical issues it deals with. It is also a significant one because it “generates new literary avenues and opens up new vistas for the once colonized and to the past imperial forces”, in addition postcolonial literature serves as a “mighty intellectual force emerging with a power to check the resuscitation or reamalgamation of the powers of the yester years” (Mohan 4).
In order to analyze literary works produced in colonial and postcolonial period key concepts appearing in postcolonial literary criticism should be remembered. Within the postcolonial theory, Mimicry is said to be an interesting term owing to the fact that it depicts the ambivalent connection between the colonizer and the colonized. Naturally the colonizer persists to impose its ideologies, values, institutions, assumptions and culture to obliterate the colonized’ identity, thus provokes the colonized to react in a mocking way to deform the colonizer’s culture. The result of this is a “blurred copy of the colonizer that can be quite threatening” (Ashcroft et al. “Postcolonial Studies” 48) from the point of view of the colonizer because such a person might be perceived as a “crack in the certainty of the colonial dominance” (48). Subsequently, mimicry causes a split in the overall dominance and generates threatening troubles in control (48).

Hybridity is one of the most important and employed terms in postcolonial literature. It refers to “the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization” (Ashcroft et al. “Postcolonial Studies” 96). This term is mostly associated with Bhabha’s analysis of the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, “which stresses their interdependence and mutual construction of their subjectivities” (96). In addition Hybridity has both positive and negative implications. On the one hand, it can be considered as a positive process, in a way that it enriches our culture. Bhabha has called this ‘the third space’ which means that hybridity is a dialogue between different cultures. On the other hand, hybridity can have a devastating effect on cultural identity and lead to what has been termed in-betweeness which is a state of alienation, as the process of hybridity has caused the individual to become an outsider in both cultures. Furthermore, Bhabha argues “Once it is understood that cultural identity which emerge in this
contradictory and ambivalent space of enunciation,” it becomes clear that “inherent originality or ‘purity’ of cultures are untenable” (37). In addition, ‘Ambivalence’, is adopted to colonial theory by Bhabha, refers to “the complex mix of attraction and repulsion that characterizes the relationship between colonizer and colonized” (Ashcroft et al. “*Postcolonial Studies*” 12). The ambivalence in the relationship results from the fact that the colonized subject is “never simply and completely opposed to the colonizer” (12). So, it should not be supposed that “some colonized subjects are ‘complicit’ and some ‘resistant’,” but instead, as ambivalence suggests, it should be recognized that “complicity and resistance exist in a fluctuating relation within the colonial subject” (12-13). This term is also used to refer to the “way in which colonial discourse relates to the colonized subject” because it may be “both exploitative and nurturing, or represent itself as nurturing, at the same time” (13). According to Bhabha’s theory, on the other hand, ambivalence is “an unwelcome aspect of colonial discourse for the colonizer” because it “disrupts the clear-cut authority of colonial domination” by means of disturbing “the simple relationship between colonizer and colonized” (13). Therefore, the ambivalent nature of the colonial relationship “generates the seeds of its own destruction” which means that this relationship “is going to be disrupted regardless of any resistance or rebellion on the side of the colonizer” (13). Ambivalence is closely related to hybridity because, “just as ambivalence ‘decentres’ authority from its position of power, so that authority may also become hybridized” when placed in a colonial and multicultural context (14).

Postcolonial literature also uses a term called “Dislocation”. It is a result of the imperial tyranny exercised in colonies, this term is used to draw a subtle description of those who have been intentionally transported or exiled into colonial margins, and the term
comprises also the experiences of people who, due to the colonial hold and full ascendancy, need to be reinvented in language, in narrative and in myth (Ashcroft et al. “Postcolonial Studies” 73-75).

Another important term is ‘Diaspora’. It signifies the political as well as individual consequences of cultural alienation, a strong sense of exile and a terrible reality of homelessness, resulting in the loss of boundaries (Komalesha151). “Diaspora” is used to refer to the dispersion of expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants, and ethnic and racial minorities, the concept is also used in a discussion of both the African Diaspora, which could be said to have begun with the enslavement of Africans by the Europeans in the Americas and the Jewish Diaspora that has retained a strong sense of community, connection to the Holy Land, and cultural traditions. The authors further note that diasporas are of importance to postcolonial studies because the descendents of these people have come to produce highly unique cultures that both maintains and builds on the perceptions of their original cultures (Ashcroft et al. “Postcolonial Studies” 68-70).

Furthermore, postcolonialism also uses a term called “exile”

An exile is a person compelled to leave or remain outside his country of origins on account of well-founded fear of persecution or for reasons of race, religion nationality, or political opinion; a person who considers his exile temporary (even though it may last a lifetime), hoping to return to his fatherland when circumstances permit, but unable or unwilling to so as long as the factors that made him an exile persist (Tabori 2)
Exile was also caused by colonialism in certain twisted ways as in the case of people who leave seemingly of their own accord but really due to circumstances beyond their control.

In the end, it’s assumed that postcolonial literature concerns itself with the experience of former colonized people; and that it sheds light on those cultures that were affected by the imperial process. Postcolonial literature is considered as a reflection of the difficult cultural conditions the ex-colonized people face after the decolonization for example identity crisis, non-belonging, alienation, dislocation exile…etc. Questions of place and displacement, rootlessness and identity have been taken up by many contemporary writers. The noble prize winner Vidyadhar Suraj Prasad Naipaul is a good model of those aforementioned postcolonial cultural problems.
Notes

1 The critics are not in agreement whether the term should be used with or without hyphen: i.e postcolonial and postcolonial have different meanings. The hyphenated term post-colonialism marks a historical period as is suggested by phrases like: after colonialism, after independence, after the end of empire. Whereas the term postcolonialism referring to all the characteristics of a society or culture from the time of colonization to the present. According to this, in my study, I will use the unhyphenated term for a broader scope.

2 John Donne, leading English poet of the Metaphysical school, is often considered the greatest loved poet in the English language.

3 this quote is taken from his poem No Man Is An Island.

4 Abraham Maslow (April 1, 1908 – June 8, 1970) was an American psychologist who was best known for creating Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Maslow was a psychology professor at Brandeis University, Brooklyn College, New School for Social Research and Columbia University. He stressed the importance of focusing on the positive qualities in people, as opposed to treating them as a "bag of symptoms."

5 The Hierarchy of Needs is a model in which Maslow attempted to capture these different levels of human motivation. It represents the idea that human beings are propelled into action by different motivating factors at different times – biological drives, psychological needs, higher goals.

Yi-Fu Tuan is a Chinese-American geographer famous for pioneering the field of human geography and merging it with philosophy, art, psychology, and religion. This amalgamation has formed what is known as humanist geography. It studies how humans interact with space and their physical and social environments. It also looks at the spatial and temporal distribution of population as well as the organization of the world’s societies. Most importantly though, humanistic geography stresses people’s perceptions, creativity, personal beliefs, and experiences in developing attitudes on their environments. In addition to his work in human geography, Yi-Fu Tuan is famous for his definitions of space and place.

is a former president of the American Anthropological Association, a professor in environmental psychology, and the director of the Public Space Research Group at the City University of New York. Low also served as a Conservation Guest Scholar at the Getty Conservation Institute. Low received a B.A. in Psychology from Pitzer College, Claremont, California in 1969 and her M.A. and Ph.D. in Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley in 1971 and 1976.
Chapter two: Sense of belonging in V.S Naipaul works

Postcolonial literature can be defined as the writing which has arisen out of experiences which result from contact with Western empire and reflects the effects of colonialism which is “a cultural project of control” (qtd. in Chaturvedi), as it displaced the native cultures and left a very dangerous scar on the psyche of colonized people. Postcolonialism may include diverse areas of focus and involves discussion about experience of various kinds: immigration, slavery, suppression, resistance, representation, difference, race, gender, place and responses to the influential master discourse of imperial Europe.

Migrants have left their homes for adventures, or because they were forced to do so. Or they simply had no choice in the matter: they were kidnapped by metropolis powers and enslaved (case of most of the Africans). Others were desperate in their homelands so they migrated to the colonial centers seeking for a better and new life for example (case of East Indians and Chinese in the West Indies). While, others migrated because they were seeking for higher education, or they were political exiles and war refugee. Elleke Boehmer points out that due to the large-scale migrancy that began in the late twentieth century; migrant writing is increasingly regarded as representative of postcolonial writing. Migration brings with it questions of identity and rootlessness, and cultural differences. This led to the emergence of a large group of writers among the migrants who dealt with the exile’s problems of self and home. Boehmer argues that “Postcolonial migrant literature is
literature written by elites, defined and canonised by elites” (“Colonial and Postcolo” 239). Furthermore he has observed of this group:

The late twentieth century has witnessed demographic shifts on an unprecedented scale, impelled by many different forces: ant-imperialist conflict, the claims of rival nationalisms, economic hardship, state repression. As Neil Bissoondath has darkly reflected in his short stories, the populations of Western cities tend now to be formed out of the constant sedimentation of diverse movements of transcontinental drift (Digging up the Mountains, 1985). In post-independence literature, the result has been that the cosmopolitan rootlessness which developed in urban pockets at the time of early Twentieth-century modernism has in a sense ‘gone global’. Cultural expatriation is now widely regarded as intrinsic to the end-of-century postcolonial literary experience, impinging on writing and the making of literature worldwide….For different reasons, ranging from professional choice to political exile, writers from a medley of once-colonized nations have participated in the late twentieth-century condition of migrancy…. In the 1990s the generic postcolonial writer is more likely to be a cultural traveler, or an ‘extra-territorial’, than a national. Ex-colonial by birth, ‘Third World’ in cultural interest, cosmopolitan in almost every other way, he or she works within the precincts of the Western metropolis
while at the same time retaining thematic and/or political connections with a national background (232-233).

One of the famous migrant writers who dealt extensively with themes of cultural conflict rootlessness and questions of identity is V.S Naipaul, an important West Indian novelist of the post-imperial crisis. He was born on August, 17, 1932 in Chaguanas, a small town in the central sugarcane belt of Trinidad, to a family descended from East India; His ancestors travelled “the Middle Passage” as indentured laborers from India to Trinidad to work on the sugar plantations in the New World colony. Naipaul was educated at Great School in Trinidad, and in early 1950’s he won a scholarship to the Oxford University in England where he educated, married and resided.

V.S Naipaul is considered as a “mouthpiece of displacement and rootlessness by the critics and scholars of the field” (TAŞ 1), because most of his novels deal with the complexities which are inherent in colonized societies and represent a clear image about the third world corruption and problems such as: exile, refugee, alienation, identity crisis.....etc. Naipaul himself proves this when he says “When I speak about being an exile or a refugee, I am not just using a metaphor, I am speaking literally” (qtd. in TAŞ 1). Furthermore his literature which depicts his personal experience of being a displaced person shows that he did not receive any sense of belonging. V.S Naipaul had a volatile, unstable life, where India was the land of his ancestors; Trinidad was the family haven and England represented his residence and school, consequently this had generated a sense of expatriation and a crisis of non-belongingness that had ulteriorly a touch of great effect on his writings. His departure from Trinidad to England opened up new horizons to his comprehension, he later
on stated that the colonial society is the fruit of colonizers and their culture has come from outside (Chaturvedi 2):

He hated the narrow, circumscribed brutal life which surrounded him in colonial Trinidad with its limited possibilities, small range of profession, notorious political corruption and social and religious conflict. ..... Indians among whom he was raised lived in a social world of their own uninvolved with the races. The Trinidadian of African descent appeared to have not traditional culture of their own and modeled themselves on the English.....The local whites had produced nothing of lasting values, were drunkards, uneducated and privileged (qtd. in Chaturvedi 2 )

Growing up in the Indian Diaspora, he experienced difficulties regarding his sense of belonging. He recognized the restlessness of migrants in Trinidadians of Indian descent such as himself. As an Indian descent born into British colonies in the West Indies, Naipaul is an author who straddles three cultures but unable to locate himself with any culture, this reality is clearly represented in his works which shows his constantly cultural morning. Even after the many years he spent in England, Naipaul had always felt like a stranger, he had that sensation of not knowing much about England and had few friends if comparing to how things used to be in Trinidad (Chaturvedi 2). He says that he still suffer from solitude and strangeness “I still had that nervousness in a new place, that rawness of response, still felt myself to be in the other man's country, felt my strangeness, my solitude” ( qtd. in TAŞ 1). To make it clear, we will analyze some complex issues of the society described in the novels of V.S. Naipaul, and
explore his portrayal of a rootless and exilic condition from the perspective of his own cultural displacements and minority position in Trinidad as an Indian and subsequently in England as a Caribbean.

As a Caribbean from an Indian ancestry, Naipaul produced many works in which, he explored the re-positioning and Diaspora of the Indian migrants in the Caribbean. The latter was discovered in 1498, the colony was a French government under the Spanish reign, but in 1797 the British took it over. Blacks were the major labor force in the colony until slavery was abolished in 1834, British then looked for alternatives to work on the plantations; those alternatives were sought from China and India; consequently, this marked the first Indian presence in the colony. In the early 20th century numbers of the Indian labors grew to the extent and reached forty percent of the Trinidadian population. Although multi-raciality was embedded in Trinidad and Tobago when it gained its independence from the United Kingdom in 1962, racism kept penetrating as a social and cultural force. Therefore, the experience of Indian workers who left India to work on the plantation was a very difficult one. In addition to the migrants terrible situation, East Indian felt totally alienated and exiled (Mohan 8-10).

The East Indian form an important element in the population of Trinidad, However they remained neglected in the West Indian literature for a long time. Naipaul is believed to be the first truly representative of this section of society as Gerald Moore declares:

But in all this opening of a new region for the novelist and reader, the great East Indian section of people, especially strong in Trinidad, has largely remained submerged. The new writers, for the main part black or colored, have been content to give us such
figures as Jagadir, the Indian clerk, in A Morning at the Office, who is the most genuinely outcast person in the book. What is his world? What are the values, culture, daily life of his people? We have no inkling unite the arrival of V.S Naipaul. In two remarkable novels he has given us the very smell, taste, and tempo of life in the Indian locations of Trinidad (qtd. in Mohan 13).

The Indian “Diaspora” is almost reflected in all Naipaul’s works. For H.S. Komalesha “the term ‘Diaspora’ signifies the political as well as individual consequences of cultural alienation, a strong sense of exile and a terrible reality of homelessness, resulting in the loss of boundaries” (151). Diaspora is the result of the colonial aggression and it leads to cultural dislocation; and alienation. In his novels such as the Mystic Masseur (1957); the suffrage of Elviva (1958), Miguel street (1959) and A House for Mr Biswas (1961); Naipaul deals with East Indian experience in the Caribbean and their inability to integrate with its culture. Naipaul presents a “poignant picture of the East Indians struggling to preserve their identity in an alien environment” (Mohan 13).

The fictions of V.S Naipaul represent themes of exile and rootlessness in various ways. All his protagonist experienced a sense of alienation and angst, to name few, Mr Biswas a protagonist from his novel A House for Mr Biswas, is searching for a house of his own, Ralph Singh from The Mimic Men, is living in a world full of chaos and Salim from his A Bend in the River is living half a life (Gupta90). As we notice all of Naipaul’s protagonists are in search of “security and identity that only tradition can provide, but their own tradition has been lost in a limbo of dislocation and exile” (Gupta 90). A considerable amount of critics came to the point that Naipaul’s rootless characters are no
more than an incarnation of the author himself (Gupta 90). Furthermore in his first novels Naipaul has made use of his personal and his father experience as East Indians in the West Indian society. When reading Naipaul’s works one notice that his autobiographical elements are present in almost all of his works as Helen Hayward points: “The autobiographical element forms a substantial component of Naipaul’s output, appearing not only in explicitly autobiographical works, but also in fiction and travel books” (qtd. in Qasim 1).

Autobiography is an important sub-genre of postcolonial literature; this genre has evolved within African and Indian writings, including those of Diaspora. Georges Gusdorf, in his 1956 essay Conditions and Limits of Autobiography defines autobiography as “the mirror in which the individual reflects his own image” (qtd. in Qasim 14). Philippe Lejeune’s in his Autobiographical Pact (1973) defines the genre of autobiography as: “A retrospective prose narrative produced by a real person concerning his own existence, focusing on his individual life, in particular on the development of his personality” (qtd. in Qasim 14). Furthermore, the autobiography writings are a representation of broader social and psychological issues in Postcoloniality. They underline more than any other genre a stronger quest for identity, self-knowledge and self-recognition. Autobiography apparently is an important motif in Naipaul’s works. In his The Mystic Masseur (1957) Naipaul’s first published novel, “is a dramatic fictional biography in which the autobiographical elements are blended in a way that, Ganesh, the protagonist of the novel, represents events and actions that are real in the life of both Naipaul and his father” (Qasim 1). The novel was set in Trinidad; through the novel’s protagonist Naipaul depicts a lot of his memories and experiences. Naipaul studied at
Queen’s Royal College, where he struggled because of his Indian traditions. This is clearly depicted in the Mystic Masseur; Ganesh the novel’s protagonist who, like Naipaul was sent to study at Queen’s Royal College, was also ashamed of his Indian cultural background and Indian identity. In the novel Naipaul depicts an embarrassing situation Ganesh experienced at the Queen’s Royal College he writes “But the episode is significant. His head was still practically bald when he went back to school, and the boys laughed so much that the principal called him and said, Ramsumair, you are creating a disturbance in the school. Wear something on your head” (qtd. in Qasim 2). Naipaul himself as a Hindu migrant student experienced this situation Ganesh is experiencing in the novel. In addition Naipaul expressed the same personal experience through Anand in *A House for Mr. Biswas* that “during the long holidays… Anand, shaved and thoroughly Brahmin, but ashamed of showing his bald head, stayed in Port of Spain, and no boy with a shaved head could go to a predominantly Christian school” (qtd. in Qasim 2).

Furthermore Naipaul’s strong belief in predestination and karma is depicted clearly in the novel. Like Naipaul; Ganesh believes strongly in predestination and believes that it is the reason behind his success:

> The autobiography shows that he believed strongly in predestination; and the circumstances which conspired to elevate him seem indeed to be providential. If he had been born ten years earlier it is unlikely, if you take into account the Trinidad Indian's attitude to education at that time, that his father would have sent him to the Queen's Royal College. He might have become a pundit, and a mediocre pundit. If he had been born ten years later his father
would have sent him to America or Canada or England to get a profession - the Indian attitude to education had changed so completely and Ganesh might have become an unsuccessful lawyer or a dangerous doctor (qtd. in Qasim 6).

The touch of the dispersing memories of Naipaul’s life is noticeable in his works. In the present novel, as the story goes, the governor invited Ganesh for a dinner on the occasion of his election as a Member of the newly Legislative Council of Trinidad in 1946, Gansesh fears falling into the embarrassing situation of not knowing any of the modern table manners “Nah, nah. Fish knife, soup spoon, fruit spoon, tea spoon - who sit down and make up all that? The governor’s wife is deliberately cruel with her inexperienced guests” (qtd. in Qasim 9). As soon as the waiter brings the meat soup: “Take it away”, Ganesh said with quick disgust, so Ganesh found the menu irritating and eventually went back home hungry.” The meal was torture to Ganesh. He felt alien and uncomfortable. He grew sulkier and sulkier and refused all courses” (qtd. in Qasim 9). Actually, in 1949, when Naipaul was invited to the Old Boys’ Association Dinner, it happened that he had come across the same confusing situation. He notified his elder sister Kamla Naipaul in a letter about this incident:

I can count those hours as among the most painful I have ever spent. In the first place, I have no table manners; in the second, I had no food. Special arrangements, I was informed after the dinner, had been made for me, but these appeared to have been limited to serving me potatoes in various ways - now fried, now boiled. I had told the manager to bring me some corn soup instead of the turtle
soup that the others were having. He ignored this and the waiter
brought up to me a plateful of pale green slime. This was the turtle
soup. I was nauseated and annoyed and told the man to take it away.
This, I was told was a gross breach of etiquette. (qtd. in Qasim 9).

*A House for Mr. Biswas* is regarded as an embodiment of Naipaul’s experiences in
Trinidad. Mr. Biswas personifies Naipaul’s father model, Seepersad and Anand are
and Son: Family Letters* (1999), that there is an evident resemblance between his
relationship with his father and that of Mr. Biswas and Anand. In fact, one can easily
perceive how similar the real and fictional fathers and sons are whilst reading the novel.
Naipaul’s father and Mr. Biswas share multiple features, for instance both were born in a
village, and both haven’t had a stable type of life until getting their own houses,
moreover both lived with wealthy relatives, and married moderate daughters of
conservative rich Hindu families (Shegufta 2).

Naipaul, Speaking about *A House for Mr. Biswas* says that it was “very much my
father’s book. It was written out of his journalism and stories, out of his knowledge he had
got from the way of looking Mac Gowen had trained him in. It was written out of his
writing” (qtd.inShegufta). In addition in the New York Review of Books Naipaul argues
“Of all my books *A House for Mr. Biswas* is the one closest to me. It is the most personal,
created out of what I saw and felt as a child. It also contains, I believe, some of my funniest
writing” (qtd. in Shegufta). He adds “When I was eleven, in 1943, in Trinidad, in a setting
and family circumstances like those described in the book, I decided to be a writer. The
ambition was given me by my father”. He adds “In Trinidad, a small agricultural colony, where nearly everyone was poor and most people were uneducated, he had made himself into a journalist” (qtd. in Shegufa). It seems reasonable to conclude that, through using autobiographical elements, Naipaul is exposing the problem of the postcolonial world. In other words Naipaul’s autobiographical works reflects his homelessness, quest of identity, self-knowledge and self-recognition. Furthermore Naipaul’s autobiographical writings establish his persona as a postcolonial commentator. Simultaneously, through stepping into the world he depicts in his books and using such elements of personal experiences, Naipaul is showing his postcolonial tendency. In addition,

The emphasis is important because Naipaul’s use of biographical information in his writing constructs an over-determined relation between notions of the Author and the multiple usages of what is called the colonial subject. It is a deliberate and brilliant ploy that allows his anxiety about being a Writer to substitute for a more historically exacting engagement with his topics (qtd. in Qasim 10).

V.S. Naipaul plays a significant role in the postcolonial writings. Themes of homelessness, alienation, and dislocation are characteristics of his novels. That’s to say that most of his works demonstrate “the colonial’s predicament and their struggle for a place in the world stemming from their feeling of alienation, isolation, homelessness, rootlessness, and placelessness” (Ping Lai 157). Furthermore, his works discuss numerous problems of the Indian Diaspora and it’s noted how the sense of alienation had an impact on much of his novels, his “fiction is designed to convey to the readers the experiences of a particular
situation in which alienation and absurdity occur in contemporary life” (qtd. in Chaturvedi 3).

In his *House for Mr. Biswas* (1961), Naipaul presented common themes associated with postcolonial literature mainly: Alienation, rootlessness, and dislocation. Kenneth Ramchand argues that “*A House for Mr. Biswas* is a novel of Rootlessness par excellence” (qtd. in Ping Lai 3). The conditions of dislocation, rootlessness and alienation are so difficult and complicated situations that one may face, as they create a sense of not belonging to a place or find home of their own. Andrew Gurr suggests that “deracination, exile and alienation in varying forms are the conditions of existence for the modern writer the world over. The basic response to such conditions is a search for identity, the quest for a home, through self-discovery or self-realization” (14).

All through the novel, Mr Biswas the protagonist of *A House for Mr. Biswas*, is looking for his own place in a hostile universe. A sense of place and self which was difficult for East Indians in Trinidad to have. In all Naipaul’s work the word “Home” is so difficult to define, the word home is linked with identity. Hence, his works often focus on search of identity and displacement. The problems of displacement and rootlessness are clearly depicted in *A House for Mr. Biswas*. In addition, the West Indian identity is constituted ambivalently in the novel. As a consequence of history's intervention, the West Indian subject is positioned in such a way that his identity cannot be totally separate from the colonizer's but neither can it be the same. This is the postcolonial problem of difference that *A House for Mr. Biswas* traces. In his novel Naipaul represents excluded Indians who have been alienated and uprooted in Trinidad and who are in a search for identity. The feeling of being uprooted and displaced is called “Unhomliness”, a term coined by Homi
Bhabha and other postcolonial theorists, it is the sense of adopting a situation in between two or more than two cultures, furthermore, an unhomed person lacks the sense of belonging because “s/he is in a psychological limbo which generally ends in some psychological disorders and cultural displacement” (TaŞ 2). However being unhomed doesn’t necessarily means being without a home, according to Lois Tyson states in Critical Theory Today, “is to feel not at home even in one’s own home because you are not at home in yourself; that is, your cultural identity crisis has made you a psychological refugee” (qtd. in TaŞ 2). In this regard, the novel is a depiction of the strong feeling of unhomeliness and dislocation Mr. Biswas is suffering from (TaŞ 2).

Right from the beginning, Mohun Biswas was declared unlucky person in his horoscope as he was born with an extra finger. This sign is a symbol of bad luck for his father and his family; hence it caused him to become an alien even in his own family and consequently an outsider in his own Indian world. Naipaul depicts the complicated relationship between a man and his origins and his failure to escape from it. Aware of his loneliness and dilemma, Mr. Biswas tells his son, “I am just somebody. No-body at all” (Naipaul “House for” 279). Due to all these dilemmas Mr. Biswas is suffering from, he decides “to set out to make his own particular fortune. With the help of an old friend he gets a job as sign-painter, where he meets Shama, a daughter of the Tulsi family (a wealthy family in the island), whom he later marries” (Prag 4).

After his marriage, Mr. Biswas realizes that life is more than just a romance, but an act of responsibility. Without money and a house to live in, he decides to live with his in-laws at Hanuman House where he becomes unhappy with his wife and his in-laws. Biswas considers the Tulsi family as a mimic family, he considers it as a “typical joint family
which function on the same pattern as the British empire in the West Indies” (Prag 4) and as a slave society where the Tulsi family take advantage of the homelessness and poverty of a man like Mr. Biswas to improve their influence and economy. In a novel dominated by the house metaphor, Hanuman House is described as follows:

An alien white fortress. The concrete walls looked as thick as they were and when the narrow doors of the Tulsi Store on the ground floor were closed the House became bulky, impregnable and blank. The side walls were window less and on the upper floors the windows were mere slits in the facade. The balustrade which hedged the flat roof was crowned with a concrete statue of the benevolent Monkey God Hanuman (Naipaul “House for” 80-81).

At Hanuman house Mr. Biswas realizes that he was treated “with indifference rather than hostility” (Naipaul “House for” 188). Furthermore, when he finds out his unimportance and in the Tulsi family and that men are only needed as husbands and laborers his inner self rebels thus, the idea of owning a house of his own and his struggle for economic independence from the oppressive household leads the plot. Thus his personal battle for freedom and recognition starts. For example when Govind, one of Tulsi sons-in-law, asks him to leave his job as a sign-painting and work as a driver for the Tulsi family he directly replies: “Give up sign-painting? And my independence? No, boy. My motto is: paddle your own canoe?” (107). For Mr. Biswas to work as a sign-painting means freedom and recognition, and for him, a work which he chooses by himself has become a part of his identity. In addition in order to show his freedom from the Tulsi, he joins the Aryans and starts advocating the acceptance of conversion and women’s education, on the one hand,
and the abolition of the caste system, child marriage, and idol worship, on the other, knowing that these doctrines will anger the Tulsis” (Prag 4). This marked the first step toward his quest for freedom and recognition. After that Mr. Biswas moves to the “Chase” with the hope to begin his independent life with Shama, However even in Chase his feeling that he is unwanted and his sense of alienation proceeds and that “real life was to begin for them soon and elsewhere” (Naipaul “House for” 147). That is to say that Mr. Biswas diasporic past still haunts his diasporic present. In other words and in the case of Mr. Biswas, the diasporic condition is narrated as being ambivalent: “far away enough to experience the sense of exile and loss, close enough to understand the enigma of an always postponed ‘arrival’” (Hall 490). The theme of arriving here means simply that the novel’s main character is attempting to arrive at an identity which is authentic and whole. After moving to “Chase” Mr. Biswas thinks that life there will help him recognize his selfhood, however at “Chase” his sense of alienation grows large and he fails to find his true identity; so he argues that “Chase was a pause, a preparation” (Naipaul “House for” 147). At this moment, Mr. Biswas discovers that he doesn’t want to be the mimic man he was at Hanuman house, neither the alienated person he is at “Chase”, furthermore he becomes obsessed again with the idea of owning his own house and it becomes a symbol of his independence, value and a place to strike a root, “As soon as he saw the barracks Mr. Biswas decided that the time had come for him to build his own house, by whatever means” (206). Biswas “never ceased to feel that destitution was very nearly upon him” (21) until late stages of his life. Due to this dolorous psychological background, he is doomed to go back to the Tulsis, his wife's dominating family, secure haven. The Tulsi family has noticeably two contrasting phases in connection with Biswas, paralleling and opposing. The
Tulsi family and Biswas share a common feature in their relation towards the English colonials, by means of they are both middlemen or mimic men. In contrast, the Tulsi family tends to take control over Biswas. Thus, the Tulsi family is actually reproducing the old colonial suffocating regime. Then Biswas’s swinging situation between “paddling his own canoe” (105) and running back to the “security of colonialism”(103). This situation demonstrates the struggle of Biswas to gain his independence and identity. As Bruce King argues:

Naipaul examined the difficulties of the Trinidadian Asian Indians in finding the economic means to become independent individuals. Yet without such independence, symbolized by Biswas's need for a home or his own place in society, they could not really be part of the New World and would remain homeless, angry exiles dependent on a decaying past. (212)

Eventually, Mr. Biswas succeeds. In the end, he finally has a house of his own. The meaning of A House for Mr. Biswas is clear in the following prologue:

How terrible it would have been, at this time, to be without it; to have died among the Tulsis; amid of the squalor of that large, disintegrating and indifferent family; to have left Shama and the children among them, in one room; worse, to have lived without even attempting to lay claim to one’s portion of the earth; to have lived and died as one had been born, unnecessary and unaccommodated (Naipaul “House for”14).
In the end, and as Carol Boyce Davis argues that “Homesickness or homelessness, the rejection of home or longing for home become motivating factors …Home can only have meaning once on experience a level of displacement from it” (qtd. in prag 7), this was much the situation the Protagonist of the novel is facing. Through his A House for Mr. Biswas; Naipaul presents the traumas of a corrupted and troubled past and the efforts to find a purpose in life, it analyses the sense of alienation and exile, experienced by the main characters, and depicts the struggle of an Indian to find his own root in the Trinidadian community.

In addition, Naipaul’s *Half a Life* (2001) is said to be a typical model of the diasporic literature that focuses on the dislocation of an individual or race and consequent alienation. Alpana Mishra in her article “V. S. Naipaul’s *Half a Life*: A Critical Study” explores the novel as “*Half a Life* reads as a study in estrangement and inner exile” (qtd. in Shegufta4). Furthermore it’s regarded as “a melting pot which mixes Naipaul’s main concerns with key issues of the colonial and postcolonial worlds, especially the problems of man’s loss, placelessness, isolation, and alienation” (Ping Lai 8). The masterpiece is partially autobiographical; and it depicts Willie Somerset Chandran's search for his roots. During William’s search for roots, his story stretches over post-independent India, then London and then he travels to pre-independent African country which is quite shaped on Mozambique and eventually wind up the trip in Berlin for a brief period (Chaturvedi 3). The novel depicts Willie’s inability to construct a solid and fixed identity as he is the product of multiple cultures. Stuart Hall speaks of unfixed identity, he claims that identity makings are “never singular but multiple constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions” (qtd. in Pin Lai 5). All through the novel,
and just like the concept of identity Hall explained, Willie is drifting without a solid and
fixed identity hence, his identity is multiple, unfixed, and changing because of his multi-
background. Furthermore and due to the fact that he’s been traveling from one place to
another, Willie “the Indian immigrant loses not only his native cultural heritage but also his
sense of place. He identifies neither with his homeland, an old world, nor with the new
world he desires” (Ping Lai 9). In his “Travelling Cultures”, James Clifford speaks about the
significant effect traveling has on one’s sense of place and home, Clifford sometimes
considers “travel” equivalent to “displacement”, he argues that “Travelers are comfortable
with more than one culture, so the question is not where are you from? But where are you
between?” (109). To explain more “Travelers are affected by the sites they travel to;
traveling and dwelling conjointly affect (and help to determine) one’s identity” (Ping Lai
5).

In addition, Willie was born in India in 1930’s, but his big hate to the Brahmanism traditions made him travel to London in 1950’s in order to construct his own subjectivity. Through moving to London Willie drifts into bohemian circles and feeling lost. He tries to create his own identity, but it only seems that he was cheating himself. In London Willie constructs his own subjectivity by learning to create his identity. This performance of creating an identity is similar to that of Homi Bhabha’s concept of “Third space”, “the content of the third space is what Bhabha called “hybridity,” through which other, non-Western-centric positions may emerge to articulate and set up new structures of authority, new political initiatives” (Ping Lai 10). Hybridity is the production of “something different, something new, and unrecognisable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation” (qtd. in Pin Lai 10) this is much the situation Willie faces in London.
Furthermore, traumas and frightening experiences featured his life; he suffered from emptiness and alienation, moreover his cultural background and his awareness of his incompleteness obstructed any kind of personal progression. Naipaul stressed on his shocking sexual encounters that ended up on discovering his sexual incompetence, but despite these concussions, Willie realized that is sexual frustrations are not his own; they are the frustrations of a society, of a race and of a culture, “Willie realized that his own failures mirror those of his father's and that these personal failures mirror the failure of colonialism; Britain losing Indian and Portugal losing Mozambique” (Naipauln”Half”125).

All of Willie’s anxieties and depression flew away after meeting Ana in a hostel room. Willie has been a little tense before her arrival. But “as soon as he saw her, all his anxieties fell away, and he was conquered” (127). Ana is a mixed race girl from Africa and in her Willie discovers a kind of reciprocity. While reflecting on Ana's admiration of his book Willie thinks: “It was possible that she belonged to a mixed community or stood in some, other kind of half and half position” (124). This incident was a matter of a senior importance to Willie because it was the first time he met someone who accepted him completely. At home his life had been ruled by his mixed inheritance. It spoilt everything. Even the love to his mother has become quite blended with the pain he felt for their circumstances. Willie’s love experience with Ana made him assume that it would bring him the fulfillment.

As he failed to obtain a place of his own in England, Willie decides to go to Africa with Ana. Yet In Africa he remains a stranger and outsider his predestination as a shipwreck becomes even worse in this African country where he expected no sense of
belonging and suffers an even greater sense of alienation he declares “I don’t know where I am. I don’t think I can pick my way back. I don’t ever want this view to become familiar. I must not unpack. I must never behave as though I am staying” (135). Naipaul’s description of Willie's arrival in Africa is quite limbotic since all he sought and achieved in Africa was “Sensuality”. Willie wants to discover some purpose in life through his sensual associations and sexual encounters in Ana’s Africa, “Willie’s submission to sexual desire is wholly believable for the very reason that he has previously been stunted into half life by the constrictions of caste in India and class in England. Africa releases him into sensuality” (Kamra 39). Willie becomes a ‘Nowhere man’; he does not belong anywhere. Lack of the sense of belonging makes him indecisive and despite initial reluctance he stays for eighteen years. Describing his life to Sarojini (Willie's sister) he remembers that in Africa instead of succeeding in finding a place for himself, he had lost whatever little autonomy he had in London. In London at least he was known as Willie Chandran but in Africa he becomes simply “Ana’s London man.” (Naipaul “Half” 145). He is unable to find a place for himself in Africa; worse, he loses his self-government. Consequently, “living with Ana in Africa only mirrors for him (in her) the intrinsic limitations of his half-life” (Ping Lai 13), at this moment Willie realizes that he has wasted part of his life by being Ana’s London man, and that he has forgotten his origin and his roots so that he becomes very curious for finding roots. He does not want to live there without identity therefore; Willie decides to leave Ana for the sake of looking for his own true identity and roots:

- “I mean I’ve given you eighteen years. I can’t give you any more. I can’t live your life any more. I want to live my own.”
“It was your idea, Willie. And if you leave, where will you go?”

“I don’t know. But I must stop living your life here.” (Naipaul “Half” 136).

After leaving Ana, and moving away from Africa, Willie decides to go to Germany where his sister Sarojini lives. On the streets of Germany, he meets a group of Tamil Boys “who raise funds for the great Tamil war” (Ping lai 14):

They were of another generation, but Willie saw himself in them.

He thought, “That was how I appeared in London. That is how I appear now. I am not as alone as I thought” Then he thought, “But I am wrong. I am not like them. I am forty-one, in middle life. They are fifteen or twenty years younger, and the world has changed. They have proclaimed who they are and they are risking everything for it. I have been hiding from myself. I have risked nothing. And now the best part of my life is over” (Naipaul “Half” 138).

At this moment, Willie realizes that it’s the time to create his own identity, starts a new future and forgets about the half life he has been living, and faces any possible challenges in the future. The novel stops here and the rest of it is left open.

Naipaul’s latest novel Magic Seeds (2004) picks up where Half a Life left off, Willie living with his sister in Berlin. Willie still concerned with the same questions, he still uncertain and confused, he still suffers from extreme difficulty in creating his authentic self and identity. Further, all his previous desires now seem to him to have been ‘False’ as they were not part of himself as they were the product of his alienated condition. For this reason,
Willie’s sister Sarojini urged him to take a journey to India and she was in a way a source of inspiration when she asked him to go the “real place with real people” (Naipaul “Magic” 16). It is a very significant statement of rootlessness and homelessness.

In India, Sarojini admires a revolutionary named Kandapalli, and Willie looks to join his movement. Naturally, things go wrong from the start, and he actually winds up a member of a different faction, Willie's world is one where mistakes are not corrected, but accepted and embraced, Willie knows he's with the wrong crowd, but he sticks with them for some seven years which filled his heart with the sense of homelessness instead of leading him any the sense of fulfillment, Willie says “I’ve forgotten myself. Now I’m truly lost. In every way. I don’t know what lies ahead or behind. My only cause now is to survive, to get out of this” (125).

In the succeeding events, Willie escapes and gives himself up to the police. Willie was redeemed from a prison life sentence when one of his old English colleagues named Roger, an attorney, persuaded the authorities to release him on the basis that a long-forgotten book of stories has established Willie as a “pioneer of Modern Indian Writing”. Eventually, Willie finds himself again in London looking for a home:

Willie felt old stirrings, the beginning of old grief. But then he thought, I have been there. I have given part of my life and I have nothing to show for it. I cannot go there again. I must let that part of me die. I must lose that vanity. I must understand that big countries grow or shrink according to the play of internal forces that are
beyond the control of any one man. I must try now to be only myself. If such a thing is possible (Naipaul “Magic” 176 - 177).

His return to London is the last stage of Willie’s journeys around the world. Willie during his entire life keeps looking for his roots everywhere. Willie said, “It is the one thing I have worked at all my life, not being at home anywhere, but looking at home.” (Naipaul “Magic”74). “There seems to be no magic in the life of Willie Chandran but history is being repeated. Displaced life is not going to cease at all. The quest for roots still continues” (Madhusudhana 5).

Another novel which dealt extensively with themes of mimicry, ambivalence, and identity crisis is *A Bend in the River* (1979). The novel was set in unknown African country immediately after gaining its independence from the British Empire. The story is narrated by Salim who is the protagonist simultaneously; the author centered his plot on discussing the clash of two distinct cultures, western culture versus native culture, and tended to demonstrate the ambivalence and contradiction in the postcolonial world throughout Salim’s perspective. Since “Postcolonialism is concerned with what exists and happens after the end of colonial rule” (Dobie 186). *A Bend in the River* symbolizes a proper case of postcolonial community. The novel depicts the post-independence strife and struggles of this African country which, in many ways, afforded morbid experiences. The first cause a postcolonial community would step into is creating a postcolonial identity. Naipaul notices that the best way to observe the issue of identity and the workings of identity formation is from distance, which explains introducing Salim as an outsider immigrant, from an East African Muslim Indian family, in all communities he lives in. As observer, Salim is on the
ideal position to observe, notice, judge and analyze certain issues better than others, however this capacity in his marginalization. Furthermore, it’s the author’s will to give Salim this privilege of observation to draw a pure portrayof this newly independent African country (Chang 1).

*A Bend in the River* is a story of Salim’s endeavors to acknowledge unquestioningly the nationalistic discourse of the nation where he comes to live and his disappointment to do so. As hard as Salim tries, he never figures out how to escape the realization that independence is a lot more problematic than anybody around him wishes to accept. In the novel, we see a continuous crumbling of a newly independent country that leads to a regularly developing violence.

So from an early age I developed the habit of looking, detaching myself from a familiar scene and trying to consider it as from a distance. It was from this habit of looking that the idea came to me that as a community we had fallen behind. And that was the beginning of my insecurity. I used to think of this feeling of insecurity as a weakness, a failing of my own temperament, and I would have been ashamed if anyone had found out about it. I kept my ideas about the future to myself (Naipaul “A Bend” 14-15).

Naturally, Salim’s background is crucial to determine his position in society, to dominate or to be dominated; with the sequence of events, it is obvious that he has a better life than the natives through the respect and appreciation he acquires though he’s not on the same rate with the Europeans who were the real dominators in this African community. Salim said “I
was without the religious sense of my family. The insecurity I felt was due to my lack of true religion, and was like the small change of the exalted pessimism of our faith, the pessimism that can drive men on to do wonders” (Naipaul “A Bend” 15). This statement is an evident index of the loss of identity which is a very important aspect of postcolonialism.

In fact, a set of circumstances and characters were behind making whom Salim was, a man who never shows any kind of interaction towards his own culture on the pretext of having no hope but “he has rather shown others’ strife to create and keep their own culture. During his quest for meaning and identity, Salim encounters different characters” (Chung 2-3).

The novel concentrates on four sets of characters or groups. Salim, Indar, Mahesh, representing the diasporic Indians. Father Huismans, Zabeth, representing the native African civilization and history. Ferdinand and his friends, representing the “New African Men”. Yvette, Professor Raymond representing the “Big Men’s White Men”. All these characters represent the African Nation, its natives, immigrants, history, culture, its racial struggle and political dilemmas (Idris 4).

The protagonist Salim is an Indian Muslim who has never been to India that’s why he considers Africa as his home due to the fact that he is living in it since his birth. However the racial segregation in this post-independent African country has identified him as an Indian, though he considers himself to be an African. The “Big Man” the new governor of this unknown African country aimed to separate the natives from the outsiders through his “nationalization mission” (Naipaul “A Bend” 23) which identifies all the migrants as outsiders and inferior. Due to this mission, the place that Salim and the other migrants used to know becomes an unfamiliar and strange one for them. Therefore, this unexpected
outsider condition caused a severe identity crisis to Salim and the other migrants (Idris 6), as Salim argues:

Africa was my home, had been the home of my family for centuries. But we come from the east coast, and that made the difference. The Coast was not truly African. It was an Arab-Indian Persian-Portuguese place, and we who lived there were really people of the Indian Ocean. True Africa was at our back . . . But we could no longer say that we were Arabians or Indians of Persians; when we compared ourselves with these people, we felt like people of Africa (Naipaul “A Bend” 12).

Later on, Salim could not get accustomed with these political conflicts, so he moved from a place to another, in order to recreate his identity and find a place to live in peacefully. Furthermore his psychological trauma becomes clear when he declares “Africa is a prison for me” (21) and when he declares “I had to break away. I couldn’t protect anyone; no one could protect me. We couldn’t protect ourselves; we could only in various ways hide from the truth” (22). This depicts Salim’s identity crisis at its finest. In addition, Salim adds that “The world is what it is; men who are nothing, who allow themselves to become nothing, have no place in it,” (3). It is a clear allusion to the loss of identity that Africans suffered from, thus they have no place to live in, peacefully, neither in Africa nor elsewhere. Like Salim, Indar, an Indian young man living in Africa, who grew up with Salim on the East coast, has been through the same experience. He left his ancestral home and went to England to study, looking for a brighter future. However he returned home.
later on as he has been identified by the Europeans as “a man of two worlds . . . [Africa and India]” (168). Therefore, Indar neither felt Africa was his home nor England.

When moving to speak about the characters that represent the “New African Man”, Ferdinand is among these characters, an African student who is regarded by natives as a spark of their hopes, but he was nevertheless a sample of post colonialism at its finest; Salim comments: “Ferdinand and his friends . . . were young men . . . [who] would soon become administrative cadets in the capital, serving the President [Big Man]. . . . In the Domain they were in the presence of foreigners who had a high idea of the new Africa” (138-139). These young sparks of hope were taught to imitate the European ways of life, they “become African only by skin color and European by taste, attitude and education” (Idris 7). Salim argues “against the white trousers [their] skin was black” (Naipaul “A Bend” 42). Ferdinand’s western culture imitation made him assume he was adequate and superior to others. Furthermore, and due to the fact that “Colonial subjects practice mimicry – imitation of dress, language, behavior, even gestures – instead of resistance” (Dobie 189), it is noteworthy how it matches Ferdinand’s case, but on the other hand he feared losing his own culture, his identity, his values and beliefs which also fit another standard of postcolonialism which is ambivalence. In addition, Ferdinand tended to mimic different characters in the story, starting with Salim and ending up with the Europeans, but as a matter of fact, he couldn’t set his position in his society. In fact, what led him to vanity and egotism was the illusion of having a boundless potential that is literally inspired from the western culture. Naivety is a recurring theme; chain of events shows later how Africans were content with the ridiculous things they had, and how they accepted to live in such a
small world as in the example of Mahesh, a native who took over the Big Burger franchise and turned into arrogant because of the pride and glory he thought he achieved, whereas his career actually meant nothing to the foreigners including Salim. Although the natives claimed and fought for their independence and assured their willingness to preserve their culture, however it was seemingly harsh due to the fact that the culture they embraced is a hybrid one itself (Chang4).

“The analysis of postcolonial literature characteristically explores the complex interactions and antagonisms between native, indigenous, pre-colonial cultures and the imperial cultures imposed on them” (Leitch 26), it’s evident how Africans seek retrieving their self-identities by wearing somebody else’s shoes, they wanted to demonstrate their worth throughout showing off trivial attitudes, Ferdinand for instance, was very proud and conceited about joining the New Domain project which was no more than a big lie, so essentially Africans lacked points of reference and even a model to follow, a wise guidance to provide them with flawless examples and instructions of what and how to do instead of parroting the western culture. In brief, mimicry was their only way to express themselves. This cultural conflict compelled the Africans to adopt either the Western or the traditional culture; the majority preferred the western side and this might be due the colonial background.

Huisman is an unobserved character in the story; he was devoted to collect local African artworks and showed much enthusiasm towards his occupation. Huisman represented the class of outsiders who considered themselves as so-called sympathetic with spirit and beauty of Africa, “On other occasions, the ‘other’ is deemed to have a natural
beauty, to be the exotic other” (Dobie 189). Salim, remarks on Huismans’ exertion for protecting the last relics of the "true" Africa that is continually subsiding:

And to Father Huismans colonial relics were as precious as the things of Africa. True Africa he saw as dying or about to die. That was why it was so necessary, while that Africa still lived, to understand and collect and preserve its things. . . . Father Huismans sees himself at the end of it all, the last, lucky witness. (Naipaul “A Bend” 72-73).

In the end of the story, it was apparent that the control was still hold by foreigners. The president, Big Man’s activities bear the testimony of a colonizer although he is an African, and through the narration it is remarkable how this president was in charge of all the chaos, disorders and corruption in the life of the innocent Africans, in fact he headed the state superficially, he was no more than a puppet in the hands of the Western regime.

The brutality of the war rushed Salim’s Departure, through his last description of the chaotic situation; he portrayed the uneasiness of living there, the burst of violence and viral twist things curved into. He noted the frustration that people had to live with every day, and assumed that they couldn’t break the colonial cage no matter how hard they try (Chang 7). Naipaul, in A Bend in the River depicts how the failure of the national leader throws the individuals living in the country into an identity crisis. Furthermore Naipaul stressed on one of the most controversial issues of postcolonialism, clash of cultures and its contradictions. He implies that the cultural colonization was crucial and decisive in taking control over the
colonies; he also demonstrates how Africans could never escape the colonization although they have disposed of the physical side of it.

It seems reasonable to conclude that most of Naipaul’s works mark a reaction toward colonial powers. In addition they beautifully address problems of postcolonial identity, alienation, homelessness, rootlessness, exile..etc, as it has been shown through the analysis of a number of his selected works above. It is clear that Naipaul uses his writings as a form of resistance not only to colonial hegemony but also as a means to explore and express his identity crisis, doubleness, exile and alienation. In this respect, and for a better illustration; an analysis of one of his most famous books “The Mimic Men” is provided in the next chapter.
Notes

1. Migrants why isn’t called immigrants. In an interview, Rushdie claimed not to like the word ‘immigrants’ as it seems to have acquired a whole body of cultural and political baggage; whereas migrancy on the other hand highlights the possibility of constant movement, the refusal to be contained by any one position. While every immigrant is literally a migrant, and vice versa, the choice of which of these two labels to affix to an individual is dependant not on the position of the person (whether they are in the space of arrival or the space of departure), but on the class and social positions of the individual being labeled, and the need and obligation – or lack thereof – to travel with cultural and political baggage. The immigrant is weighed down by the ‘baggage’ of having to secure a job and livelihood, whereas his cosmopolitan counterpart, freed from such baggage by his wealth, has the possibility of constant movement.

2. A group of ‘protestant’ Hindu missionaries from India, they support women’s education, and the abolition of the caste system, child marriage, and idol worship.

3. Brahmanism was an early religion in the Indian sub-continent that was based on Vedic writing. It is considered an early form of Hinduism. Vedic writing refers to the Vedas, the hymns of the Aryans, who if they actually did so, invaded in the second millennium B.C. otherwise they were the resident nobles. In Brahmanism, the Brahmans, who included priests, performed the sacred offices required in the Vedas. To read about the change from Brahmanism to Hinduism, see "From 'Brahmanism' to 'Hinduism': Negotiating the Myth
Chapter three: V.S. Naipaul’s "The Mimic Men":

The Desire to Belong

Themes of place and displacement which lead eventually to a successive identity crisis; are major themes of any post-colonial literature. The notions of “self” and the notion of “home”, in addition to the ideas of place and displacement, coupled with the identity crisis of the individual, are central and recurrent themes of the Noble prize winner V.S Naipaul’s The Mimic Men (1967) novel.

The novel is Naipaul’s first narrative set outside Trinidad; it is also the first novel in which he uses the first person narrator for the first time. The story of The Mimic Men is told in a very complicated way, and its structure is somewhat complicated with its continuous use of juxtaposition of separate time, place, events, and also through the use of flashbacks. He does not follow any chronological order in his writing but he constantly moves backwards and forwards. The story takes place at an imaginative island called Isabella in the Caribbean. When looking at the geographical, historical, social and cultural background of this imaginative island, one may notice that they are quite similar to that of Trinidad, the Caribbean island where Naipaul was born. That’s to say that Isabella the fictional island is actually a representation of Naipaul’s birth place Trinidad.

Jean-Pierre Durix argues that some postcolonial novelists need to write “against ready-made representations and reclaim their personal image of the past before they can be comfortable with contemporary subjects. Because their past has been eclipsed or devalued, they need to reclaim their colonialized youth before they can move on to their
postcolonial adulthood” (12). This passage enlightens Naipaul’s motive and message in *The Mimic Men*. The novel tells the story of a sensitive middle-class Caribbean East Indian. It brings the questions of memory and writing into close proximity. Ralph Singh is both the first person narrator and the protagonist of the novel. It is a fictional memoir written by Singh, a colonial official exiled from the small Caribbean island of Isabella, tends to rearrange his life by liberating himself from any sense of dislocation and displacement and essentially to retrieve his identity through recording his memoirs, that is to say, Singh symbolizes a wide category of the displaced and disappointed colonial individuals whereas the colonization corresponds the image of a process that divest their identity, culture and sense of place. Therefore, the novel takes into consideration the link that connects both socio-political and psychological effects of imperialism. In other words, politics and the impact colonialism had on the psychology of the colonized people combined are quite essential to the comprehension of the novel, and the disregard of one aspect on the count of the other would certainly destroy the significance. Champa Rao Mohan comments on this connection:

The themes of alienation, homelessness and mimicry still preoccupy Naipaul but the perspective has changed. They are now viewed as a universal condition of the modern world afflicting both colonized and colonizers alike. Besides the familiar themes that still haunt Naipaul’s pen, there are themes that appear for the first time- the broader post-colonial themes of power and freedom and neocolonialism (qtd. in Harode 2).
Furthermore, through writing his memoirs Singh is trying to re-evaluate his life in a hotel room in a London suburb. Singh is both questing and questioning his cultural origins in order to construct his own identity. Singh’s process of identity formation begins from the negation of his mother country to the anxiety towards the inability to integrate with the metropolis cultural background, the process continues with the stage of mimicry, ambivalence, alienation and the necessity to find the self out of all these complexities. Furthermore he devotes a lot of time to rectify his condition, he turns his attention to the pursuit of achieving order because he considers his homeland disordered and chaotic. In other words, through writing his memoirs Singh is trying to give order to his chaotic life as the place in which he was born is associated with chaos: “to be born on an island like Isabella, an obscure New World transplantation, second-hand and barbarous, was to be born to disorder” (Naipaul “Mimic” 118), and reconstruct again his identity out of the multi-cultures. Self-objectification is essential of Naipaul’s narrator and his failure to see himself whole; “he feels abandoned personally, culturally, racially, and has the feeling of abandonment at the end of the empty world and is driven by restlessness and the need for a new idea of self through the act of writing” (Weng 4). The novel narrator Ralph Singh, early in the novel makes the following statement:

It was my hope to give expression to the restlessness, the deep disorder, which the great explorations, the overthrow in three continents of established social organizations, the unnatural bringing together of peoples who could achieve fulfillment only within the security of their own societies and the landscape hymned by their ancestors, it was my hope to give partial expression to the
restlessness which this great upheaval has brought about...But this work will not now by written by me. I am too much a victim of that restlessness which was to have been my subject (Naipaul “Mimic” 38).

From this statement, it is clear that Singh considers his writing as a failure. He believes that he was unable to cope with the problems of postcolonialism, and explains the postcolonial situation to the people of his island due to his fragility of history. The discussion of ideals and ideologies of freedom, Independence, and identity are useless due to lack of historical background. Man’s identity is well formed through his home, society, ancestry, society, history and nation. It’s the historical perspective which turns the disordered into order. So due to Singh’s fragility of history he turns to the task of biography to write about himself, his life, and his dreams in order to reach a self-definition and self-recognition, instead of writing the history of the Caribbean region, the restlessness and disorder that the island is suffering from. However he finds out that this task is also difficult to achieve, as he discovers that he is an incomplete, and that he himself is a victim of that restlessness and disorder which was to have been his subject.

In addition, with the aid of his writings, Singh could visibly spot the reasons of his failure. His writings reveal the manners by which the colonial experience had an effect on his life, and how it molded his personality. As Singh’s birth was surrounded by chaotic circumstances, he longs to take control over his life and thus, turns his attention to writing which grows to be a “means of releasing” from the “barren cycle of events” (qtd. in Harode 3). As Kelly Richard has mentioned that Singh knew how to diminish the soreness of his teasing situation as a displaced colonial man: putting his memoirs down on paper
was the accurate way to cope with his sense of dislocation since it was his virtual refuge that enables him to manage his life and his past’s fragments to shape them into a spiritual and psychological autobiography (90).

Through the use of flashbacks, Singh’s memoirs contain his childhood in the island of Isabella, his University days in London, and finally his chaotic and restless political career back in Isabella. *The Mimic Men* is divided into three parts; though the novel events follow a disordered sequence, here is a chronological organization of the events. The chronological sequence of events begins with Ralph’s childhood memories in Isabella, then his move to England, and his life with Lieni in the boarding house, his unhappy marriage with Sandra an English women, then it narrates his life as a bourgeois landowner when he returns to the Island of Isabella, and his political involvement with his friend Browne, his divorce from his wife Sandra, then the failure of his political career in Isabella and his return back to England and finally his life as an exile in the old boarding house in the metropolis where he starts writing his memoirs. Suman Gupta comments on the non-chronological order Singh follows to write his memoirs she argues:

Singh’s narrative follows the rationale of his writing of it: the memories are committed to paper apparently as they arise, and the act of reading his narratives traverses this sequence of memories in all their haphazardness. In *the Mimic Men* the act of writing and the act of reading merge into an identical unchronological and unlinear process:
almost metaphorically the writer and the reader reach a harmonious relationship which is deliberately outside the simple logic of linear narrative (30).

Singh tries out to draw a full image of his life by using shifts in time, place and situations; furthermore, the concepts of colonization, decolonization, history, culture, race, and politics were taken into consideration to give significance to his life. Thus, the novel demonstrates Singh’s need to find out “what it means to be a colonial subject in a postcolonial society” (Cudjoe 99). The alternation use of the past, the present, and the future may be perhaps a sign of his inner disorder, confusion and chaos; as John Thieme has pointed out that this technique fits showing “social and psychological disturbances” (114), though the sarcastic side of it is Singh’s inability to pursue a chronological outline in his writings.

According to Thieme, there are certain details that suggest a connection between Naipaul and his protagonist Ralph Singh. He believes that Singh is a fictional representative of Naipaul himself; he presents in the following passage certain details which suggest this connection:

Singh’s education at Isabella Imperial parallels Naipaul’s at Queen’s Royal College, his father becomes known as Gurudeva; he serves as an acting second-class clerk in a government department after leaving school; his disillusionment with London is very close to sentiments expressed by Naipaul on more than one occasion; and he orders his experience and achieves a kind of
personal emancipation through the activity of writing (Thieme 110).

He also argues that Naipaul invented Singh as “a formal correlative of his disjointed, fragmentary life which has hitherto consisted of enacting a series of roles, which tell his story in a disordered chronological sequence” (114). Furthermore, Thieme argues that the non-chronological order is more effective in reflecting psychological and cultural dilemmas than the chronological one. In addition, he also argues that Naipaul’s use of “the first person narrative point of view enables him to set up several ambiguities as well as creative tensions in the story” (111). The critic Shashi Kamra, argues that the non-chronological order Naipaul follows in *The Mimic Men* allows him “to establish the vulnerability which thrusts a man and a nation further into an existing alienation and hence anonymity” (qtd.in Cudjoe 96). She adds:

Naipaul’s narrator, subverting the chronological and objective order he has created through subjective ordering of his protagonist’s life and by questioning the order in his tone of irony and satire; creates the terror of placelessness and timelessness as a void-a pit without a bottom (qtd. in Cudjoe 100).

In *The Mimic Men*, Naipaul puts on show the situation in a Caribbean recently independent country, the island of Isabella; he portrays also how the formerly colonized people lacked the power to run their new institutionalized country after gaining their independence. Owing to the colonial experience that had exposed the English civilization as a supreme and majestic culture, a status of order and a pillar of prosperity and achievement, the natives deemed their culture and traditions as a second-rate if comparing
to the prestigious English culture, and desperately seek to identify themselves with the kingdom. In view of the fact that they were distant from their homeland, they buried their own original culture and considered it worthless, so in other words they could not overcome their cultural social submissiveness to their master and simultaneously it was also quite impossible to fully associate themselves with the colonizer either. Singh’s narrative explicitly represents the metropolis civilization as the symbol of rationality, order, certainty, reality, stability because it’s built on a strong, rich and stable cultural historical heritage, while he depicts Isabella’s civilization as the irrational, unreal, uncertain, and the disordered as he argues “To be born on the island like Isabella, an obscure New World transplantation, second-hand and barbarous, was to be born to disorder … Now I was to discover that disorder has its own logic and permanence: the Greek was wise” (Naipaul “Mimic” 118). Singh believes that the Isabellan society lacks of the essential cultural and historical formation and social institution. Because it’s a nation which had gone through slavery, imperialism and finally freedom, descendants from slaves, migrated Indians. All of these different race and sects form a one nation, one country. They are conscious where they belong in the social structure, yet uncertain where to fit in, as Ralph argues:

Everyone was an individual, fighting for his place in the community.

Yet there was community. We were of various races, religious, sets and cliques; and we had somehow found ourselves on the same small island. Nothing bound us together except this common residence… It was only our Britishness, our belonging to the British, which gave us any identity” (73).
The loss of socio-ethnic values and socio-political reality result into ‘mimic’ and ‘shipwrecked’ condition of the displaced figures. In addition, the cruelty of the experiences people of Isabella faced such as dislocation, placelessness, fragmentation, and loss of identity gave rise to the occurrence of mimicry, the natives subsequently turn out to be mimic men who blindly imitate the colonizer’s life style, customs and values. Since the independence was not the absolute cure to these psychological troubles, independence therefore has not been out of its theoretical frame, it is a word rather than an experience. The concept of national identity and unity are yet unattainable. Therefore, there is nothing left for the ex-colonized except to try to identify themselves with the colonizer practices and codes. However and as Derek Walcott states “Perhaps powerless leaves the Third world, the excolonial world, no alternative but to imitate those systems offered to or forced on it by the major powers. Most Third World politicians are trapped in the concept of a world proposed by those who rule it” (qtd. in Chaudhari 38). Walcott argues as they are different from the master in cultural, traditional, racial, and religious backgrounds, they can never successfully associate themselves with the colonizer. So, they start to imitate and mimic the colonizer values, perspective and way of life, in brief the colonizer civilization. In a turning point Ralph speaks about the conditions of the mimic men is Isabella he argues:

We, here on our island, handling books printed in this world, and using its goods, had been abandoned and forgotten. We pretended to be real, to be learning, to be preparing ourselves for life, we mimic men of the New World, one unknown corner of it, with all its
reminders of the corruption that came so quickly to the new (Naipaul “Mimic” 175).

The reason why Ralph and his friends are pretending to be real and learning is because the Isabellan inhabitants lack a true and authentic culture, because the history of the colony as mentioned before is one of slavery, indentured servitude and colonial oppression. It is these realities which prevent them from producing their own real culture, consequently they become borrowers rather than producers and this results in the process of mimicking and imitating the colonizer. Furthermore, Singh adds that this situation is absolutely their own fault; as they preferred to become borrowers and mimic men rather than struggling to create and produce their real and authentic culture. Moreover, Singh argues that mimicry is behind the disorder and corruption of the island, as it prevents people from becoming creative and destroys their capacity for collective thinking and renewal as Homi Bhabha argues that “Mimicry emerges as one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge” (85). Furthermore, he adds that mimicry is behind the psychic and social traumas they suffer from such as: placelessness, loss of identity, dislocation, and fragmentation, hence it leads them to become marginalized and alienated as they have to live under the surveillance of their colonial masters.

In addition; Singh argues that Isabella’s educational background takes also a considerable part of the causes of his sense of alienation and dislocation. As he attended the colonial school on his childhood, he was indoctrinated how to imitate his masters, and was taught to be a “mimic man”: 
My first memory of school is of taking an apple to the teacher. This puzzles me. We had no apples on Isabella. It must have been an orange; yet my memory insists on the apple. The editing is clearly at fault, but the edited version is all I have (Naipaul “Mimic”90).

Additionally, the colonial educational system has worked on ingraining the English culture by means of implementing a change in the innate values, attitudes and behaviors of the people in the island. At school the colonial children are prepared to be “Mimic Men” of the New World, the colonizers teach the natives since their early age that England is a slogan of order. At school Singh is taught to imitate the colonizer through taking an apple to a teacher rather than an orange. In this case, Ralph is learning to distinguish between “oranges” and “apples” and though he thinks the “orange” version is more correct he cannot convince himself to believe so. As a result Singh considers his own culture as minor if comparing to that of the colonizer; so notably, the colonial education has raised his tragic condition as a homeless man and demolished his ego. Singh constantly wonders whether he is a fruit of the colonial education. He often acknowledges and criticizes colonial mimicry simultaneously; after all he cannot change anything about him being a mimic man in view of the fact that he is “a specific product of a particular socioeconomic formation called colonialism” (Cudjoe100).

Later in the novel, Singh speaks about the process of changing his name from “RanjitKripalsingh” into “Ralph Singh”, which marks the ambivalence at its finest:

RALPH: Ranjit is my secret name. This secret name is my real name but is ought not to be used in public.

SCHOOL TEACHER: But this leaves you anonymous.
RALPH: Exactly. That’s where the calling name of Ralph is useful. The calling name is unimportant and can be taken in vain by anyone (Naipaul “Mimic” 113).

The name “Ranjit Kripal singh” is Ralph’s Indian name which represents his blood and history of the family; and therefore his Indian identity. By changing his name to a Western one; though he considers it unimportant but useful, Ralph is refusing and denying his Indian identity. This represents the loss of his original culture and consequently his identity loss in the land of Isabella.

In addition to his belief that Isabella is a land of disorder and mimicry Singh’s take us back to his childhood, he acts in response to his sense of rejection by dreaming of India, his land of origins. He grabs books on Asiatic and Persian Aryans^2 and dreams of knights and other various myths (Naipaul “Mimic” 98). He goes after inspiring a new ideal and epic past, out of his fantasy, and which is unsurprisingly different from his real life in Isabella. In his fictional haven, he witnesses the death of three children in the sea whilst the fishermen do nothing to rescue them:

Then I heard. People were drowning. There in that infernal devouring element people were drowning. The fishermen were being begged to go out and save them. The fishermen sat on the roots of coconut trees and mended their nets and stripped lengths of canes for their fishpots. Their lean Carib-black faces were like masks. I imagined myself drowning. And in this imagining I became detached; feeling no anger against the fishermen who, as I
could hear now, were talking among themselves in their patois; feeling only the feebleness and absurdity of any attempt to rescue those persons, already bodies, hidden in that turquoise water beyond the breakers (68).

And that’s where he becomes conscious of the fact that Isabella cannot be the space of scenery he is looking for. Therefore, it is perceptible how this beach scene is decisive to Singh; it spots the existing gap that detaches Isabella from his true, pure world. In addition, Tamango’s sacrifice is another enraging incident for Singh; Tamango is a race horse, and despite Singh’s familiarity with the significance of this kind of rituals but it was quite a tough trauma. The horse’s sacrifice was a critical moment for Singh, the ideal Hindu past, which he had constantly glorified and praised, has just broken down because of his misperception of Hinduism as Thieme has noted (133). The sacrifice has changed Singh’s notion about the Indian world that is, to a far extent, detached from his ideal delusional realm. In Isabella, Hindu rituals are no more worthy as people become disconnected from the Indian culture, customs and traditions. Hence, by their departure from India and settlement in the Caribbean islands, the Indians are predestined to live in isolation and dislocation. As Bruce king argues that:

The process of losing one’s Indianness started with leaving India. That was the original sin, the fall. After that Indian traditions could only either decay into deadening ritual or become diluted, degraded and eventually lost through outside influences and intermarriage with others (68).
In accordance with what Rob Nixon argues Singh has a “genetic” dislocation which is originated from the condition of the East Indians in the Caribbean. They came across the Kala Pani, black water, and consequently their Indianness was laid on the line. Further, his affiliation to an ethnic minority makes it inevitable to experience “ethnic displacement” which stands for his case as an Indian in Isabella. Singh intends to renovate history in order to establish his identity, but he eventually realizes that it is unachievable and beyond his reaches which releases him from his illusions. Singh was not the only one who suffers from displacement in Isabella, for example Hok, is Ralph’s Chinese mate who consecrates his time to reading books on his own origin, China, and frequently praises his past; he is thereafter humiliated when discovering that his ancestors were blacks. In like manner, Browne who is a black friend of Singh is also bragging about his origins and his room is fully covered with black leaders’ portraits. Dolly Zulakha Hassan states that each boy is, in essence, obsessed with his own racial origin and the ethnic group he belongs to, so the novel therefore, demonstrate how it is impossible to achieve a real sense of identity in heterogeneous societies of the Caribbean. Moreover, while writing his memoirs Singh mentions a dream that has caused him to leave the island:

I had dreamt I was a baby again and at my mother’s breast what joy! The breast on my check and my mouth: a consoling weight, the closeness of soft, smooth flesh, it had been at dusk, in a vague setting, no lights in a back veranda, all around a blue of dark bush. My mother rocked and I had the freedom of her breast. A dream?
But no, I was not dreaming. What pain then, what shame, to awaken
(Naipaul “Mimic” 72).

Singh starts to inspect his psychic life by examining one of his recurring dreams. This
dream symbolizes his unconsciousness. The recurrence of infanthood in his dream displays
the fulfillment of his curbed wish in the hope of achieving unity with his mother (England).
By identifying himself with his mother, he evidently wishes to pull of the pains and
dislocation he is suffering from in Isabella, and therefore he wishes to break down the bond
between him and his mother; as he realizes that he has no sense of belonging nor a sense of
place in the “shipwreck island of Isabella” as he considers it small and unimportant. He adds
that it’s this sense of displacement that makes him a non-existent person. Thus, shortly after
having this dream, he decides to go to England seeking for his sense of belonging and
identity he declares “I was too far sunk in the taint of fantasy. I wished to make a fresh,
clean start. And it was now that I resolved to abandon the shipwreck island and all on it….I
was consciously holding myself back for the reality which lay elsewhere “(Naipaul
“Mimic”141).

After leaving the island of Isabella, Singh tries to give order to his disordered life and
creates a meaningful identity he argues “Coming to London, the great city, seeking order,
seeking the flowering, the extension of myself that ought to have come in a city of such
miraculous lights” (Naipaul “Mimic” 19). However, and due to the fact that he is no more
than a colonial immigrant student in London, who strives hopelessly to make contact with
the city; he was unable to complete his journey of self-making and realize his ambitions he
explains:
In the great city, so three-dimensional, so rooted in its soil, drawing colour from such depths, only the city was real. Those of us who came to it lost some of our solidity; we were trapped into fixed, flat postures. And, in this growing dissociation between ourselves and the city in which we walked, scores of separate meetings, not linked even by ourselves, who became nothing more than perceivers: everyone reduced, reciprocally, to a succession of such meetings, so that first experience and then the personality divided bewilderingly into compartments. Each person concealed his own darkness (20).

Singh goes to London only to realize that the city does not promise anything to an East Indian colonial subject as he can never identify himself with it. In London, Singh realizes that he can never be an Englishman in spite of his public school education, and that one can be English only if he is born in England. Thus, Louis Simpson has pointed out that the West Indians can only face dislocation in the metropolis:

The descriptions of the immigrant’s life in "The Mimic Men" show how disillusioning that life could be. Nothing would have prepared the West Indian for the English climate or the dreariness of living in a boarding house. Confronted with greasy wallpaper and a gas meter into which you had to feed shillings to keep warm, he would have had long thoughts (qtd. in Harode 8).

This quote describes the situation Singh is living in London. As he has failed to identify himself with his people on the island of Isabella, Singh goes to London, looking for a new
start, seeking for his self-recognition and trying to build a strong and new identity. However, even at London he is unable to accomplish his dream of constructing an identity in the land he was dreaming of, and therefore get rid of the sense of non-belonging to any place and the feeling of displacement. At London he states that he has “the panic of ceasing to feel myself a whole” (Naipaul “Mimic” 20). Ralph escaped from the disorder of Isabella, but he again begins to feel the disorder and suffers from a bitter experience of identity crisis and non-belonging in the metropolis. His student days in London show the beginning of his identity crisis he states:

In London I had no guide. There was no one to link my present with my past, no one to note my consistencies or inconsistencies. It was up to me to choose my character, and I chose the character that was easiest and most attractive. I was the dandy, the extravagant colonial indifferent to scholarship (Naipaul “Mimic” 16).

As he possesses no sense of identity and in order to get rid of his sense of disorder, meaningless and displacement, Singh tries to identify himself through other people, he needs other men’s advice and becomes what he sees of himself in the eyes of others in England; Being disillusioned and lost he becomes a mimic figure, a “mimic man”, the person people expect him to be. Furthermore, “The way of enforced movement, adventures and encounters triggers a re-fabrication of the self and Ralph comes to be a nomad, a new being”, living in between two spaces, an old space which is constructed only in his memories and a new one that “begins to heterogenize him and his past” (Weng 9). This situation is known as the “beyond” and Bhabha defines it as:
The ‘beyond’ is neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past. . . . Beginnings and endings may be the sustaining myths of the middle years; but in the fin de siècle, we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion. For there is a sense of disorientation, a disturbance of direction, in the beyond; an exploratory, restless movement caught so well in the French rendition of the words au-delà hereand there on all sides fort/da, hither and thither, back and forth (Bhabha 3).

The concept of “beyond” denotes a sign of anxiety, restless movement, and a sense of disorientation. Additionally, it’s similar to the “in-between” spaces that launch the original signs of any identity and generate the conflict and displacement of various domains. Consequently, this in-betweeness situation blocks any direct access to a fundamental identity or acquired traditions and it has tough connection with the fluidity of places and identities. In London, Ralph embraces London as the “great city, centre of the world, in which, fleeing disorder, I had hoped to find the beginning of order” (Naipaul “Mimic”18).

He is fascinated by the city lights, and tries his best to adapt himself to the metropolis culture. Furthermore, the city lights have illuminated the solidity of his scenery and his inherited memories and substitute them; in other words, in London Ralph is being remade.

Another incident which proves that Singh was just a mimic figure in London, when he states “[Mr. Shylock] had the habit of stroking the lobe of his ear and inclining his head to listen. I thought the gesture was attractive; I copied it” (Naipaul “Mimic” 7). This quote
shows that Singh is completely lost and suffering from an identity crisis. The process of mimicking the white man refers to the lack of self-recognition and self-esteem he was suffering from in London. Furthermore, it is clear that Singh becomes obsessed by the idea to be a white man and to be part of the English society. However, he suffers from extreme difficulty in creating his authentic self and identity because he lives in a society which increases his status as an inferior person; a society which impose its superiority and makes him feel that he belongs to an inferior race, and thus increase his sense of exclusion, alienation, and mostly the feeling of having no place anywhere. Moreover, Singh’s attempts to be part of the English society continue through marrying an English woman in London. “To attach myself to [Sandra] was to acquire that protection which she offered, to share some of her quality of being marked, a quality which once was mine but which I had lost” (31). This marriage serves Singh’s desire to attach himself to the British culture; he thinks that through marrying Sandra which is a part of the English society, he will realize his dream to be part of the British culture too. But he gradually begins to realize that he can never be part of it through bleaching and mimicry. Furthermore; he also begins to believe that the relocation to a more developed region of the world is not sufficient to build a positive and authentic identity, so he becomes disillusioned, when he could not identify himself with the city of his dreams, and wants to go back to the certainties of Isabella, to which now he thinks he belongs:

I had tried to give myself a personality. It was something I had tried more than once before, and waited for the response in the eyes of others. But now I no longer knew what I was; ambition became confused, then faded; and I found myself longing for the certainties
of my life on the island of Isabella, certainties which I had once dismissed as shipwreck (19).

After his unsuccessful and unhappy experience in London; he goes back to Isabella. As a result of his psychological need for identity and fulfillment, Singh becomes a politician. He tries to achieve order, meaning, and success as a political figure. In other words, Singh needs a real view of himself and of the world around him so he participates in politics. Singh’s political career is then potentially a means by which he can satisfy his ego. He refers to his political activity as a “drama” and examines its effects on himself but he does not concentrate on his people or on the shoe shops, filling stations, and schools that are established on the island with his help. Singh’s obsession with naming clearly shows his psychological need for power and ownership:

So I went on, naming, naming; and, later, I required everything - every government building, every road, every agricultural scheme - to be labelled. It suggested drama, activity. It reinforced reality. It reinforced that sense of ownership which overcame me whenever I returned to the island after a trip abroad ... (Naipaul “Mimic”132)

By naming roads and buildings, Singh reinforces the reality of his power and political career, and by renaming himself, he redefines his own reality (Cudjoe100-101). However, the irony is that by changing his name, Ranjit Kirpal singh in fact has changed the very identity for which he is searching so desperately. In his attempt to define himself through his political activities, Singh realizes that he has become separated from his people and has
to play a role to preserve his position. He feels incomplete because he is aware of the meaninglessness of his role as a colonial politician. To him, politicians in Isabella seek power and order without knowing the real meaning of those concepts:

Having no gifts to offer, they seldom know what they seek. They might say they seek power. But their definition of power is vague and unreliable. ... The politician is more than a man with a cause, even when this cause is no more than self-advancement. He is driven by some little hurt, some little incompleteness. He is seeking to exercise some skill which even to him is never as concrete as the skill of the engineer ... (Naipaul “Mimic”37)

Singh is very well aware of the fact that the “drama” has not brought peace and order to the island but only created a dramatic illusion of order he argues

We were a colony, a benevolently administered dependency. So long as our dependence remained unquestioned…our politics were a joke. . . . We offered drama. . . . We didn’t know whether we had created the movement or whether the movement was creating us. . . . We began in bluff. We continued in bluff (Naipaul “Mimic” 116).

And that island society still suffers from social, internal power and racial unrest...in a society like ours, fragmented, inorganic, no link between man and landscape, a society not held together by common interests, there was no true internal source of power, and that no power was real which did not come the outside. Such was the controlled chaos we had…”)
(224), and mostly from economic problems. Under such conditions the government decides that the nationalization of the sugar estate, owned by an upper class Englishman called Lord Stockwell, is the only way of solving the economic problems and uniting people. Consequently, Singh is sent to England to carry out the negotiations. However, he fails to persuade the English to help his government and is also humiliated by one of the English ministers in the meeting:

His manner indicated clearly that our game had gone on long enough and he had other things to do than to assist the public relations of colonial politicians. ... I said, “How can I take this message back to my people?” ... He said: “You can take back to your people any message you like.” And that was the end. (Naipaul “Mimic” 224).

Moreover, Lord Stockwell refuses to talk seriously about labour problems and sugar estate; instead he treats Singh like a child and says that he has got nice hair. Both the minister and Lord Stockwell, the representatives of the imperial power, impose their superiority on Singh who is reduced to a child. Hence, by refusing to consider Singh as a political figure or acknowledge the importance of his task, they in fact, push Singh to an inferior status, and finally to a sense of political dislocation and failure. Without any help from the English, Singh is unable to find any solution to his country’s problems, and thus, nationalization becomes a word and finally Singh faces his “private loss” as he cannot act without the master’s approval or help: “My sense of drama failed. This to me was the true
loss. For four years drama had supported me; now, abruptly, drama failed. It was a private loss ...” (Naipaul “Mimic”221).

Isabella’s lack of a political awareness makes its politicians absurd characters who suffer from their own insignificance and displacement. With no political reality there is no real sense of identity and without that the island politicians suffer from non-existence as politics does not have any real meaning on the island that has been controlled, ruled, and exploited by the empire. Therefore, without a real political history of their own, colonial politicians are used as political stooges by the super-powers. After the failure of his negotiation, Ralph went back to Isabella, but he finds that “massive, contradictory but a satisfying case”(Naipaul “Mimic”260) to humiliate him publicly and ask him to leave. Eventually, Ralph accepts to leave due to the massive race riots which exploded in Isabella and he accepts an “offer of a free and safe passage, to London again, by the air, with sixty-six pounds of luggage and fifty thousand dollars” (264). Before leaving to England he makes the following statement “I struggled to keep drama alive, for its replacement was despair. . . I would have nothing to return to. . . I longed to leave” (135-136). After leaving to London he tries anxiously to find his own place in the world he argues:

So this present residence in London, which I suppose can be called exile, has turned out to be the most fruitful. Yet it began more absurdly than any. I decided, when I arrived, not to stay in London. It had glittered too recently; and I wished to avoid running into anyone I knew (153).
Singh does not find a complete solution to his psychological problems. Hence, his writing reflects moods of displacement, disillusionment, and sadness. Alienated from his own society, Singh travels to different places to overcome his feeling of isolation but he is aware of his “imminent homelessness” (Naipaul “Mimic” 153):

Daily, by erratic bus services, making difficult connections, I travelled from small town to small town, seeking shelter with my sixty-six pounds luggage, always aware in the late afternoon of my imminent homelessness. I consumed the hours of daylight with long waits and brief periods of travel. Money, of which I was at last aware, was leaking out of my pocket (153).

Although Singh cannot completely solve his psychological problems, he reaches a conclusion through writing his memoirs. He realizes that his experiences and his feeling of abandonment and displacement cannot be separated from his colonial backgrounds (Naipaul “Mimic” 50). Without a real and identifiable historical background, Singh has become desolate and that is why he constantly tries to impose order on his past, present, and future. To Robert Morris, Singh’s final state is a real “final emptiness” as he has lost everything at the age of forty (66-67). However, to Hena Maes-Jelinek, the very emptiness refers to his detachment from the events and proves that he is now ready to start a new life (513). In other words, he is now aware of how and why he finds himself in the condition of a homeless citizen of the world, and concludes that he has achieved a new perception of himself.
In *The Mimic Men*, Singh examines and analyses the colonial and postcolonial periods, historical, cultural, and political backgrounds, economic problems and psychological conflicts and finally concludes that writing can be decolonization itself. He realizes that colonial societies like Isabella suffer from lack of cultural, historical, and racial homogeneity. Although he fails to reconnect himself to India, the homeland, or to connect himself to London, the metropolis, by writing his memoirs, Singh finally takes control of his sense of dislocation as he realizes that there is no ideal place with which he can identify himself. His final detachment is an expression of a “distance from any clear-cut national identity or notion of home” (Nixon 3). Furthermore, In addition to the pessimistic tone which became prominent in this novel, and the postcolonial political tendency which became clearer, *The Mimic Men* is one of the most popular and important novels as it dealt greatly with issues of sense of belonging and identity and shows his postcolonial creativity and tendency.
Notes

1Isabella is not a real place. Naipaul’s decision in calling his fictional island ‘Isabella’ implies a historical irony. Isabella is originally the name of the first island in the Caribbean Sea founded by Christopher Columbus in honor of Queen Isabella of Spain. It proved to be a calamitous settlement, a total failure. Isabella is too small and lacks the economic resources, skills and knowledge to be free of domination by the West. It lacks the homogeneity of population, culture and traditions that might provide unity of purpose. Because the nationalist movement has been driven by racial hurt, nation and race have become confused, and those who do not share in the dominant vision are treated as enemies. While the whites move to safety elsewhere, the Asians, especially the Indians, are left as victims of the new black rulers.

2 The term arya is often found in Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain texts. In the Indian spiritual context it can be applied to someone who has mastered the four noble truths and entered upon the spiritual path. The religions of India are sometimes called collectively arya dharma.
Conclusion

To conclude, Postcolonialism is a representation of the full situation, that really describes the tension between the colonizer and colonized people, as it deals with the themes of identity, sense of belonging, immigration, and a host of others discourses. Postcolonial literature is the medium through which marginalized people show express their cultural conflicts, sense of belonging, and identity crisis in a postcolonial world. V.S Naipaul is one of those writers whose narratives dealt extensively with these problems. However this latter has been severely criticized by various postcolonial writer such as Homi Bhabha and Edward Said as being a non-postcolonial writer because he shows no sympathy toward his characters and, also has been described as a racist and a loyal to the colonial hegemony. Yet through the analysis which is done through this study; the views of those critics attracted me and raised my attention towards reading Naipaul and investigating his works.

Through the analysis which is done through my three chapters my aim was to answer the following questions: How do Naipaul selected works discuss themes of sense of belonging, identity crisis, marginalization; and cultural conflicts? Is V.S Naipaul a typical postcolonial writer? And to what extent did Naipaul succeed in advocating issues of sense of belonging in his works?

Naipaul is obviously one of the noticeable postcolonial writers. His works give us a glimpse of the making of contemporary identity. Moreover, examining his works can help us understand the dilemmas and struggle in identity making and sense of belonging issues in a context of a colonial and postcolonial world. Taking his father experiences as well as
his own experiences as raw materials make his narratives true postcolonial masterpieces. The complex of the society described in the author’s novels and his portrayals of a rootless and exilic condition is taken from his own cultural displacement and minority position in Trinidad as an Indian and subsequently in England as a Caribbean. In my opinion these realities helped Naipaul in representing those dilemmas successfully as he is writing from his own experience, which means that Naipaul rootless characters are no more than incarnation of the author himself. Furthermore I already mentioned in my second chapter that autobiographical elements appear in almost all Naipaul’s work. The autobiographical elements are an important sub-genre of postcolonial literature and the presence of these elements in any literary works makes it a postcolonial work par excellence as they underline more than any literary genre a strong quest for the sense of belonging, identity and self-recognition.

Furthermore, I found that Naipaul is an outstanding writer in postcolonial literature. All of his fiction represent and reveal the struggle of oppressed people and immigrants, who have lost their cultural roots in the postcolonial era. To explain more, psychological, economic, political, as well as cultural dilemmas have been represented skillfully in most, if not all, of his fiction. For example, *A Bend in the River*, a novel which I already dealt with in my second chapter, gained him great popularity as it described in a graceful way the hardship of a life of a rootless immigrant from India in a strange culture.

For further illustration, in his narratives *The Mimic Men*, Naipaul succeeded in showing the life of an exile figure that is considered as second generation of immigrants living in England. The novel represents convincing themes of the desire to belong, mimicry, dislocation, alienation. The process of mimicry appears clearly in the behavior of
the novel protagonist as well as the people of his island Isabella. Sometimes the reader can feel how the protagonist “Ralph Singh” is suffering from being dislocated, and how he feels that he is not from pure origin. He tries all the time to assimilate with both the Caribbean culture and with the English one but he fails; and he passes the rest of his life in exile with a strong sense of dislocation and identity loss. So to make it clear, Naipaul’s collection of fiction describes in a skillful way issues of identity and belonging, the life of displaced people, immigrants struggle with a strange culture, alienated people in places full of hostility……etc, which means that Naipaul mostly focused on the history and postcolonial situation in the third world countries. So he is a typical postcolonial writer. In addition, I think that Naipaul has succeeded in presenting themes of identity and sense of belonging crisis through his narratives which deals beautifully and extensively with the dilemmas of a postcolonial world; and that’s what makes him an excellent postcolonial writer.
Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my family and Friends
To the memory of my father. who gave me the gift of laughter.
To my mother, who has deeply touched my life with her kindness, strength and generosity.
To my sisters: Noudjoud, Lilia , Radiah, Wahida who are my dearest friends and partners in life.
And to my Friends: Asma, Nabil, Meriem Sarah, Islah , Youcef who fill my life with joy and meaning.
You are my lifeline
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Words cannot adequately express my appreciation for the ongoing efforts of two individuals in particular. To Feracdi Nabil who patiently tolerated my technological ineptness rescuing me on more than one occasion from the midst of computer chaos. I sincerely thank him for his unwavering patience, assistance and sense of humor. He never failed to make me laugh, especially at times when I needed it most. I am indebted to my sister Noudjoud for her advice and reassurance over the duration of this research. She gave literally hours of her time listening as I worked through this process.

Finally, I am forever indebted to my family, friends and colleagues, whose love, support and friendly presence helped me through the ups and downs of the writing process.
Abstract

This research attempts to explore the representation of the sense of belonging in V.S Naipaul’s works. V.S Naipaul has emerged as the most significant contemporary English novelist, his status reaffirmed by the 2001 Noble Prize for literature. This study aims to investigate the postcoloniality of V.S. Naipaul. As an exile from Trinidad, Naipaul’s main concern as a novelist is to project carefully the complex fortune of individuals in a multicultural community. However it appears that he is a controversial writer, he is blamed and even hated for having no loyalty to his culture, and for showing no sympathy for the oppressed. Through The Mimic Men, I will trace how Naipaul’s work dealt with a man’s curve to belong, in addition to the complexities of constructing an identity, complexity of colonial dilemma, sense of alienation, an dislocation, among other devices reflected in the aforementioned novel, I will argue that while he is likely to be blamed for having no loyalty for his culture and that he is not considered as a postcolonial writer, he plays an important role in the postcolonial writings, and that his novels have beautifully described colonial and ex-colonial societies, and that he has an urge to express his fluid, various and unstable identities in terms of his unique postcolonial cultural perspectives.
Résumé

Ce projet a pour objectif d’explorer la représentation du sentiment d'appartenance dans les œuvres de V.S Naipaul. V.S Naipaul est apparu comme le plus important romancier Anglais contemporain, son status est réaffirmé par l’obtention du prix Nobel de littérature en 2001. Cette étude vise à enquêter sur le concept de postcolonialité de V.S Naipaul. En tant qu’un écrivain exilé de Trinidad, Sa préoccupation principale est de projeter soigneusement le patrimoine culturel complexe des individus dans une société multiculturelle. Toutefois, il semble que V.S Naipaul est un écrivain controversé, il est souvent un sujet de desapprobation et critique pour n'avoir montré aucune loyauté envers sa culture, ni sa compassion pour les opprimés. A travers ce roman ‘The Mimic Man’, je tracrerai la façon dont les oeuvres litteraires de Naipaul ont traité le cas d’une lutte pour s'intégrer ; en outre, problèmes rencontrés lors de la construction identitaire, le dilemme colonial, le sentiment d'aliénation et dislocation. A travers d’autres motifs reflétés dans le roman susmentionné, je veux souligner que malgré le fait qu’il est blâmé pour n’avoir montré aucune loyauté envers sa culture, ainsi qu’il n’est jamais considéré comme un écrivain postcolonial, en effet il a largement contribué à la littérature postcoloniale en décrivant les sociétés coloniales et les sociétés précoloniales d’une façon captivante, de plus, il a une envie continue de manifester ses émotions en termes de son unique perspectives culturelles postcoloniales.
ملخص

البحث الذي بين أيدينا يسعى للكشف عن صور الشعر بالانتماء في الكتابات الأدبية للكاتب فديل...

سوراجيراساد نيبول يصنف نيبول في خانة أبرز الروائيين الإنجليزيين المعاصرين، وقد تعرّضت منزلته بعد حصوله على جائزة نوبل للأدب سنة 2001. هذه الدراسة تهدف إلى تقسيم مظاهر الفترة المعاصرة في أعمال الروائي نيبول. باعتباره كاتباً مهماً من ترينيداد، كان من أهم انشغالاته كروائي، تسليط الضوء بدقة على المفارقات الثقافية المعقدة لأفراد مجتمع متعدد الثقافات. مع ذلك، فقد كنّا جلباً أنه مؤلف مهم للجذب حيث كان في الكثير من المواضع عرضة للتهكيم والانشقاقات. يجدر أنه لم يستعرض أي حس بالولاية أو الوعي الثقافي كما لم يظهر أي تعاطف تجاه المضطهدين. من خلال رواية `الدمى` سأحاول افتقاء الطريقة التي تعامل بها هذا العمل الأدبي مع رجل كافح من أجل الانتهاء، وكالنفعيات التي لازمته من أجل بناء شخصيته، إضافة إلى المعضلة الاستعمارية؛ التشريح بالعزلة، مشاكل التنوير الذاتي، تعقيدات أخرى ظهرت في الرواية المذكورة سابقاً. كما سأحاول أن أبرز أن، بالرغم من كونه مخل انساقياً واسعاً لافتداء لروح الوفاء، تجاه ثقافته، وعدم إدراجه ضمن كتاب فترة ما بعد الاستعمار، إلا أنه في واقع الحال، لعب دوراً محورياً في الأعمال الأدبية لهذه المرحلة التي وصف من خلالها بمجموعة فائقة كلاً من المجتمعات الاستعمارية، المستمرة سابقاً، كما أن لديه دافعاً قوياً للتعبير عن جوهره إظهاره للشخصيات متقلبة، مصورة في إطار تقافي تعكس منظور الكاتب.
# Table of contents

Dedication ...........................................................................................................i
Acknowledgments ..........................................................................................ii
Abstract .........................................................................................................iii
Résumé ..........................................................................................................iv
Abstract Arabic ............................................................................................v
Table of contents .........................................................................................vi

Introduction.....................................................................................................1

**Chapter One: Postcolonialism: A Background** ......................................... 5
Notes.............................................................................................................35

**Chapter Two: The Sense of Belonging in Naipaul’s works** .........................37
Notes.............................................................................................................67

**Chapter Three: V.S. Naipaul’s *The Mimic Man*: The Desire to Belong**......69
Notes.............................................................................................................94
Conclusion....................................................................................................95
Work Cited....................................................................................................98
Work Cited

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