

Research Paper

The Psychology of Marginalization in Diasporic Location in *A Bend in the River*

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The paper discusses Naipaul's dealing with the psychology of marginalization of characters in diasporic location. They are described as fragile and powerless, trapped in the political atmosphere associated with the transfer of power at the advent of decolonization. The idea of rootlessness is one of Naipaul's common themes in his writings. The negative aspect of the idea of rootlessness dominates in his writings. Contrary to the characters' expectation to satisfy their desire for freedom in foreign countries, their freedom is denied because of the political condition. Their sense of imprisonment is also depicted spatially. For instance, their living space is often fortress guarded from the indigenous population. Furthermore, such spatial depiction generates an atmosphere of separation with the expatriate characters removed from the indigenous population, reflecting Naipaul's pessimism about cultural interaction in the postcolonial era.

Keywords: Diaspora, Exile, Decolonization, Identity crisis and Subaltern.

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RESEARCH PAPER

Diasporic writing captures the two invariables of their experiences: exile and homeland. All diasporic literature is an attempt to negotiate between these two polarities. The writings of exiled/immigrant writers undertakes two moves, one temporal, and one spatial. It is, as Meena Alexander puts it, "writing in search of a homeland" (4).

The diasporic characters in Naipaul's writings are depicted as being deprived of man's essential needs of independence and freedom and having restrictive lives because of the politically unstable situation. In Naipaul's writings the sense of displacement gives rise very profoundly to a certain imaginary plenitude, recreating the endless desire to return to lost origins, to go back to the beginning. And this return to the beginning can neither be fulfilled nor requited, and hence is the beginning of the

symbolic of representation, the infinitely renewable source of desire, memory, myth, search and discovery. Sometimes this search and discovery or rediscovery of land in a terrain of anxiety, ecstasy and frustration as the very individual or author discovers the homeland different from what he had been dreaming of and what he had been told of the purity of the homeland.

V. S. Naipaul has this discovery as his recurrent theme. So, the core genesis of perception and understanding behind the realm of a diasporic writing or diasporic discourse of Naipaul principally relates to the historical and socio-cultural junctures. He has given some dimensions through which the populace of a country has undergone alteration and transformation in the critical process of immigration, adoption and the kind of inner

conflict and tension germinating out of this critical process.

Stuart Hall in his attempt to define diaspora and diasporic identity claims that “diaspora does not refer to those scattered tribes whose identity can only be secured in relation to some sacred homeland to which they must at all costs return, even if it means pushing other people into the sea” (159). Discussing and analyzing the hybridities and heterogeneities in diasporic identities, which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves a new through transformation and difference, Hall goes on to claim that it is because this New World which is constituted for us as place, a narrative of displacement that gives rise so profoundly to a certain imaginary plentitude, recreating the endless desire to return to “lost origins”, to be once again with the mother, to go back to the beginning.

Diaspora refers to a community of individuals living outside their homeland, who identify themselves in some way with the state or people of that homeland. The components of a diasporic identity are a history of dispersal, memories or myths of a homeland, ongoing interest in the homeland, retaining sense of its uniqueness, alienation in the host country, and desire for an eventual return to the homeland. Judith Shuval stresses:

A diaspora is a social construct founded on feeling, consciousness, memory, mythology, history, meaningful narratives, group identity, longings, and dreams, allegorical and virtual elements all of which play an important role in establishing a diaspora reality. At a given moment in time, the sense of connection to a homeland must be strong enough to resist forgetting, assimilating or distancing. (43)

The literature of diaspora revolves around the concept of homeland, which has been variously defined in different generation of diaspora writers. The construction of homeland in the writings of the diasporic writers depends upon their category to which they belong. In the case first category that is the older diaspora we see disconnectivity with the motherland due to the lack of economic means to make frequent journeys to the homelands. The distance of their motherland was more psychological than physical and it was wide that the motherland remained unnoticed in the diasporic imagination. The distance was revived by the emotional and spiritual in the writings of the older diaspora writers revitalizing memory and imagination. Vijay Mishra talks about the process of connecting to the lost homeland in V. S. Naipaul:

The narrative of diaspora movement is, however, not continuous or seamless as there is a radical

break between the older diasporas of classic capitalism and the mid-to late 20th century diasporas of advanced capital to the metropolitan centers of the Empire, the new world and the former settler colonies. (56)

As mentioned in the introduction that the postcolonial literature includes the literature produced by the countries affected by colonial process. It refers to a “historical phase undergone by Third World countries after the decline of colonialism” (Boehmer 166). The colonized writer in diaspora texts maintains the standard mimic responses— while appealing as the “other”. In these writings “colonial claimed interpretation agency, centre v/s margin relationships were disturbed” (Boehmer 166). Writers living in exile possess this quality. The past history of a writer plays a significant role in nostalgic writings. His birthplace, education, cultural roots, community and tradition affect his writings. Living in an alien land he finds himself uncomfortable and dislocated. Nostalgic writings give him solace and help him to overcome such dilemma.

Naipaul expressed his view that after 1950s the societies everywhere have been fractured drastically by change. The whole world now requires another kind of imaginative interpretation. So, keeping this fact in mind, the writer made an attempt to give a new interpretation of society.

In this way these accounts are fairly nostalgic in tone. He talks of various incidents, situations and experiences in fragments by mingling fantasy with reality, the environment and the geographical conditions of his native land in a descriptive manner. He reflects his feelings and emotions through his characters. History plays a vital role in these writings. In these texts history is linked with reality as it also emphasizes a particular period of his personal life or events pertaining to history. Being real and appropriate they are read and accepted as the real and authentic accounts:

The text is a tissue of meaning, perceptions and responses which inhere in the first place in that imaginary production of the real which is ideology. The “textual real” is related to the historical real. Not as an imaginary transposition of it, but as the product of certain signifying practices whose source and referent is, in the last instance, history itself. (Mishra 29)

Language in this texts has been used as major tool to express nostalgia. Language is the most effective medium to communicate with each other among human beings; and if the language fails then the individual feels handicapped. Living in an alien land an individual cannot speak his native language. He is unable to communicate with the fellow people. Diasporic writers use their native

language in their writings. The characters speak in their mother tongue. There may be a frequent use of words, through which one comes to know to which nation an individual belongs to. These texts express Naipaul's diasporic stature variously giving a vivid account of his autobiographical and universal predicament of being cast into an alien world.

A Bend in the River displays an acute awareness of transitional complexities of belonging and identity entailed in the diasporic experience. It turns the reader's attention to the underprivileged diasporic being, and those who find themselves in the midst of a global space to which they cannot relate. It is not the attachment to home that concerns the diasporic characters in the novel, but rather the dramatic loss of home and the desire to be at home. Naipaul highlights the state of subaltern being neither-here-nor-there of peoples of the diaspora, who trouble the idea of citizenship and national belonging on the one hand and represent the new force of cosmopolitans on the other hand. In *A Bend in the River*, diaspora and cosmopolitanism appear closely related as ways of understanding transnational identities. Diasporic and cosmopolitan lifestyles constitute overlapping repertoires that offer complementary identifications for immigrants, especially those with prior experiences of (post) colonial contact zones, in diverse cultural settings.

In the novel having African setting, Naipaul is in the grip of a complex vision which enables him to portray the ambivalence among the denizens of those unfortunate countries that have just toppled out of a tribal past, or freed themselves from colonial rule but cannot reach the uncertain blessings of modernity. He is obsessed with the hollowness of these proclaimed liberations. Thus, Africa provides Naipaul with a setting within which he can further ascertain and develop his propositions about the collapse of the Third World. Its setting provides Naipaul with what happens to be another testing ground for his theories. The dilemma of belongingness itself converts an expatriate into a state of subaltern when Salim says:

Africa was my home, had been the home of my family for centuries. But we came 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. Many miles of scrub or desert separated us from the up-country people; we looked east to the lands, with which we traded— Arabia, India, Persia. These were also the lands of our ancestors. (*A Bend in the River* 10-11)

According to Bruce King, the novel *A Bend in the River* covers a decade roughly from 1965 to 1975. The novel is based on Naipaul's observation of Zaire and East Africa.

Many incidents in the novel are suggested by previous writing about Africa, especially what Naipaul has termed the literature on Imperialism where Africa is a backdrop for the crisis of some European or African character. The novel is set in a newly independent Francophone central African state governed by dictatorial former Army officer Big Man.

In this state Big Man has restored the peace and law and order, as he carries an impressive staff representing power of an African chief. Big Man sold a "little Maoist green book" to the general population of Africa and transformed its youth in a "national youth brigade" which marches while shouting slogans. To put in Bruce King's words "colonial mimicry of Europe" in Africa now "includes mimicry of Maoist China" (118).

Moreover, Salim from a rootless diasporic community without any impressive educational background, is twice displaced and transplanted in Africa, as he voluntarily escapes from his home and community to live in another African country. In this sense, he epitomizes absolute rootlessness. Then, the main issue about rootless people like Salim who voluntarily cut off their already diasporic racial and social ties seems initially to be that of detachment or involvement, passivity or action, flight or integration. Is the ideal detachment or rootlessness that the old cosmopolitanism advocates psychologically and socially viable? Is there equilibrium between detachment and attachment, rootlessness and rootedness?

Salim introduces himself as an exile and stranger in a state of detachment and insecurity in his own family and community. He says:

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 (17).

He recognizes the un-protectedness and weakness of the Indian diaspora in Africa in the face of the struggle for power following the withdrawal of the colonial order. He explains his insecurity about the fatalism of his decaying and static community as his temperament. In fact, his lack of religious consciousness is largely responsible:

My own pessimism and my insecurity was a more terrestrial affair. 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. (18)

In most of Naipaul's novels the central characters are exposed to colonial power and are left with no protection against the imperial forces. Their lives undergo the rapid changes and consequently become easy victims of the instable postcolonial condition. Salim, an East Indian trader in central part of Africa does not know about Ferdinand's (his little Negro assistant) intention, yet he

observes the changes in this little black boy.

Although Naipaul does not attempt to create black African characters in depth, Salim says he does not know what is going on in the mind of Ferdinand and has no acquaintance with village life – “the Africa of corruption, a new insecure bourgeois, tribal conflict, food shortages and tyrannical government is present” (King 118). Here Naipaul draws closer to the classic writers of Africa such as Achebe and Wole Soyinka who have portrayed an impressive picture of Africa from an indigenous point of view, yet his commitment to Africa of not so intense as of those who long for pure African writings. His deepest sympathies are with the Indian threatened by African nationalism and political disorder. But such disorder is found to be universal, partly the result of the withdrawal of the older imperial order, partly a continuing process throughout history. Salim is alienated by the racial differences and therefore he is harassed by the natives several times due to his Indian-Arabian lineage. He feels helpless about the teen Africans despite knowing them as the rebellious youth. He thus becomes a self-alienated particularity in his own community. Salim not only refuses to associate himself with but also feels disappointed at his community's shared tastes and values.

Salim decides that breaking out of his social and racial ties and being rootless is the only way out. He explains:

I had to break away from our family compound and our community. To stay with my community, to pretend that I had simply to travel along with them, was to be taken with them to destruction. I could be master of my fate only if I stood alone. (*A Bend in the River* 22)

The “wonder” that Salim does, driven by his pessimism, is to take over a shop that Nazruddin offers him in a far-off African country. He chooses to cross from the east coast right through to the centre of the continent, and to start his new life there alone. Salim's boundary-crossing journey at the opening of the novel is an indication that his identity will be a constant in-betweenness in perpetual becoming through his negotiation with different spaces.

Bruce King calls *A Bend in the River* the big bang novel as Naipaul focuses on the postcolonial situation in Africa here. It deals with the civil war of Africa, power shift, and role reversal between whites and blacks and the theme of homosexuality in the troubled times of Africa. The protagonist of the text feels like an outcast thus it also has the shreds of diasporic literature. Salim has Indian lineage but equally feels attached with Africa as he considers it his “home”. His family had been living here for centuries with a difference that they came from east coast which was not truly African. Rather it was Arab-Indian-Persian-Portuguese place, and his family was Muslims. Salim says, “We were a special group. We were distinct from the Arabs and other Muslims of the coast; in our customs and attitudes we were closer at the Hindus of North-Western India, from which we had originally come” (*A Bend In the River* 17).

Salim belongs to Africa and has nowhere to go, yet he feels detached to African culture due to his racial and Indian links. Talking about his ancestral link with India and Africa, he understands his grandfather's inability to relate himself with the dates of past. For him past was simply the past. Apart from this, whatever else he knew; it was through the book written by Europeans without which he thinks “all our past would have been washed away” (18). He also traces the history of two slave families living in his family's compound. But now the present was all changed and they were now merely servants. The idea of Africa as a country came through British administration. Salim due to his strange relationship had to adopt certain strategies to survive painlessly. He says:

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 security. (*A Bend in the River* 22)

In Naipaul, the feeling of insecurity is to a great extent, affiliated to imperialism and colonial invasions. Salim too feels insecure due to his racial difference which was an outcome of his grandfather's immigration. This insecurity came to a sharp surge by decolonization and African tribal wars. It is looked at as a weakness and a failing of his own temperament.

He felt exposed and helpless if his migrant status is revealed in any conversation. He compares his ancestors and Arabs who once conquered and ruled Africa before Europeans. He finds that his people had fallen prey to the changes occurred to the land and were feeling vulnerable to the rising tribal powers. There is a racial disparity which he opines, resulted in white supremacy of the Europeans who could assess themselves. Salim finds that the European were better equipped to cope with changes than we were. He also says:

When I compared the European with us that we had ceased to count in Africa, then really we no longer had anything to offer. The Europeans were preparing to get out, or to fight, to meet the Africans half-way. We continued to live as we had always done, blindly. (23)

In the above passage Salim echoes Naipaul's opinion about Islam, as stated variously in his two books dealing with Islam, *Beyond Belief* and *Among the Believers*. Naipaul condemns Islam as “catastrophic, a belief-system that, like colonialism, attempt to enslave or destroy other cultures” (Mittapalli 69). Salim too feels that it is the restrictedness of Islamic culture that made them shrink in a part of Africa.

Salim's family was of traders, businessmen, who could "assess the situation" and sometime took very bold risks. When things went wrong there was always a consolation of religion. It was the time African unrest in North, which even British felt unable to put down. Due to bloody rebellion, it was the time for departure for mixed race population. As the nationalists and youth brigade of Big Man getting powerful, natives had stood as a big threat for Hindus and Muslims. Inder, Salim's rich friend says, "We're washed up here you know. To be in Africa you have to be strong. We're not strong. We don't even have a flag" (24).

Salim's decision to stay back in the heart of Africa, despite his sense of insecurity and inability to protect anyone makes him the subject of ridicule for Inder. He decided to "break away" from his family and become the master of his own fate which was possible only if he stood alone. For Salim it was a little difficult to be firm on his decision to live alone as African coasts were trying to save themselves from racial disparity and bloody tribal rebellion.

Nazruddin, an elderly man of Salim's community, was known for his European manners and did his Arab business "in the centre of the continent, at the bend in the river" (26). In Salim's words he was an exotic as he kept on selling his property at one place and buying at another. Uganda is a new destination for him which can fetch gold to him. He advised Salim, yet not offered anything openly, to move to Uganda as it was more peaceful where native struggle was not there. Salim chooses to be a businessman in one of his old shops in the centre of Africa at the bend in the river against the wishes of his family and the friends.

The town that Salim finds over there was populated by Belgians, Greeks, Italians, Arabs, and Africans. The grandeur of the city explained by Nazruddin was fairly the part of the relics, it was like the site of a dead civilization as the sun and rain and bush had made the site like old. Though Africa has been ruined and as now a vainglorious thing, yet there are people like Father Huismans who don't think themselves as the part of the "bush", instead they feel the immense flow of history in Africa. They consider themselves as the part of that history. Everyone in Africa was living with his own idea of the place and civilization. For Salim it was the bush devoid of culture; for the Father, it was the part of Europe and it was difficult to delineate from its European colonial impact.

He felt insecure because he stressed his Europeanness, therefore holding the imperial hangover in the centre. His love of Africa gives space to Conradian spirit of adventure. For Father Huismans colonial relics were as precious as the things of Africa. He saw true Africa as dying or about to die. He consumed himself with the love of collecting pieces of dying Africa, yet he had immense love for the things which were related to Europe. His desperation to be affiliated with the stepping

of European colonial power and "stupendous idea of the future" made him see himself as "the last, lucky witness" (70).

The "river" which signifies the "flow of culture and civilization" has always been the place of settlement for outsiders. John Cooke, as quoted in Serafin Roldan Santiago's article "V. S. Naipaul's *A Bend in The River: Caricature as social and Political Criticism*", observes that, "a river's flow represents the passage of time; the hyacinth-choked river is an image of cultural stagnation. The vain attempts of the villagers to remove the hyacinths show the futility of trying to bring this town into history" (Mittapalli 142).

The city has been completely turned into ruins due to the "depth of that African rage, the wish to destroy, regardless of the consequences". Now there was nothing like a social life. "The expatriate weren't welcoming". For a trader like Salim it was quite difficult to survive and unwise to stay there. Everywhere there were relics of "colonial days." In these devastating circumstances of the city, people were feeling uncertain about everything as their social milieu was dwindling day by day. Power shift was another cause of fear among them. The oppressed people had adopted the role of oppressors. Now Metty alias Ali no more liked to be called Salim's servant; instead he preferred to be an independent like Ferdinand. Salim feels a little shocked by the changing behavior of these African lads as they ceased to hesitate from asking for the favor from him despite having evil intention for him.

Metty after adopting the free atmosphere of the city started redefining his relationship with Salim. Now he called him his "patron" instead master. Salim allowed it to happen as there was nothing he could do to prevent him "doing indecent things" such as dancing, and coming late in the night. Salim took it in another way. Metty had a free talk with every native that helped him to enhance his business. Along with it he also helped him.

Racial differences become more acute when sergeant Iyanda was killed openly by white soldiers in the rebellion. Sergeant Iyanda belonged to the socially abominable slave tribe of Africa and therefore was disliked by the local people. Here Naipaul brings the slim line of distinction among the Africans which heightens the racial difference among the Blacks and defies Negro unity. As an impact of imperialism whites are preferably respected and followed by the locals. They imitate their "master" which speaks of colonial hegemony as a sign of progress. Salim understands the reason of the subsequent zeal and enthusiasm among the African over the matter. He wonders about "the news of his execution would have pleased the local people. Not that he was a wicked man; but he belonged to that detested slave-hunting tribe, the rest of his army, like his colonial" (*A Bend in The River* 82).

Tabish Khair finds this as an indication of the Africans

being childish or “immature” as they are “irrational” and are doing “mimicry” in the lack of “history”. There is a semblance of alienation in Salim due to persistent “cultural conflict” in his mind. His views about Africa were quite different from that of a common African or a professional business man. He thought that “there was treasure around us, waiting to be picked. It was the bush that gave us this feeling (102). For the first time he started sharing the boom and peace of Africa. Though he considerably feels himself separated from an average man as in his “own mind I separated myself from them”. He still thought of himself as a man just passing through. He is completely clueless about the future unlike Nazruddin. In his separate world he was surrounded by his own “anxieties and became almost dissatisfied and restless” which was an outcome of outside pressure as well as his “solitude” which has become his permanent temperament.

Under the terror Salim feels that the “free-for-all of independence had come to an end” as the legally unrecognized army was sent by the president himself to slay the innocent population of the area. He was igniting and participating in the inter-racial and tribal was himself due to his personal prejudices. He wanted to create another Europe in Africa in the form of “New Doman”. There is a sharp contradiction between the traditional Africa and the modern vision of the Big Man:

The Bend was written in Wiltshire where Naipaul was among the ancient Druid and Roman ruins of England contributed to his feeling of history as consisting of repeated cycles of the rise of cultures and empires which will end in decay. One of the themes of the novel is the contradiction between wanting a traditional culture rooted in the village life of the past and wanting a modern Europeanized state, European technology and comforts. This conflict, which is inherent to most nationalist movements, is a theme of Naipaul’s writings. (King 126)

Colonial system has made the mindsets of the African people rigid and fixed some or the other ways. The Big Man has modulated New Domain in an imitation of Europe and America. Yvette, the wife of white historian Raymond, who is very close to the president, express her view on the colonial dress code popular in Africa in postcolonial times, “I wish he would change boy’s uniform, the good old colonial style of short trousers and a jacket, but not the carnival costume of short trousers and jacket” (*A Bend in The River* 140).

At the centre of the novel is Salim, a Muslim of an Indian family which has lived for several generations in a coastal town, trading quietly, and pitted in traditionalism. He identifies his family as Muslim, but as “a special group distinct from the Arabs and other Muslims of the coast; in

our customs and attitudes we were closer to the Hindus of North-Western India, which we had originally come” (*A Bend in the River* 17).

Both from the narrative voice and dominant consciousness, Salim is a decent impressionable, thoughtful, but not at all intellectual. He is an outsider, watching with the outsider’s nervousness. Salim’s escape from small, restricted society for a new life in Central Africa is hardly rewarding as it is more suffocating and endangered than the life he has fled. In the new environment, his only contacts are with a few other aliens and expatriates. He develops an intimate relationship with an Indian couple—Mahesh and Shoba who live enclosed self-centered lives of their own, cut off from the African world which surrounds them. This couple has escaped the foes of inter-caste love match, fearing family relation. Now they live only for themselves, obsessed as they are with the romance of their extraordinary union in a world preoccupied with the idea of racial discrimination and casteism. For them, the idea of nation and national identity has lost the meaning. A nation, according to Ernest Renan:

Is a soul, a spiritual principle one lies in the past, one in the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present day consent, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage that one has received in an undivided form. The wish of nations is, all in all, the sole legitimate criterion, the one to which one must always return. (19-20)

Big man’s policy of radicalization of business belonging to foreigners destroys property rights and introduces a further disorder and injustice beyond the simple corruption and violence depicted earlier in the novel. This is conscious corruption and perversion of truth and order. African are given business they do not own and the owners become managers and everyone becomes hysterical to amass wealth before the imminent chaos as the country slides quickly towards another rebellion. After his business is given to Theotime, for whom he now works, Salim increasingly becomes aware that he is defenseless and an easy prey for others. As he needs to save money to escape, Salim stops being able to help Metty:

I could no longer offer him the simple protection he had asked for Theotime made that plain during the course of the day. So the old contract between Metty and myself, which was the contract between his family and mine came to an end our special contract was over. He seemed to understand this, and it made him unbalanced. (*A Bend in the River* 273-74)

By the end, the Big Man has radicalized the country and assigned Salim's little shop to Citizen Theotine, who, according to Salim, wants himself to be acknowledged as the boss. Arrested and thrown into jail, Salim is finally saved by the town's new commissioner, Ferdinand, only yesterday a stumbling boy from the village.

Raymond feels a little insecure about the statement and assures that it is surely not the same colonial replica of army dress but everybody in uniform has to feel that he has a personal contact with the president. It is a matter of fact that in the countries like Africa where pre-colonial civilization was either tribal or in primitive state, it is almost impossible to eliminate the sense of mimicry as now in post-colonial times it has assumed a form of identity. Yet Raymond finds a very obvious dichotomy among them.

They may be adopting and accepting colonial manners and dress codes but they wouldn't agree to be ruled by a colonial ruler. They need an African to rule Africa, "which the colonial did not understand and had to leave the land" (141). The Africans now identify themselves with the president in new Domain. The portrait of the president is considered as the portrait of the "self" by a common African. The outsiders will in any case be treated as the outsiders.

The novel explores the adverse times of the continent when political turmoil is a thing of only concern. Whites feel insecure, Indian migrant people feel tortured and African see themselves as the new race going to dominate the entire landscape. There also lurks the theme of homosexuality, as it gives a hint that Africans are no more left in the dark world, they have adopted all those things which are the sign of western culture or "progressive deformity".

In the above mentioned novels this is evident that Naipaul has minutely studied all the societies he has traveled through. Because of cultural and racial differences, he finds a common constituent forming almost all global societies in postcolonial era. Each of the novels refers to entirely different communities yet they have a strikingly similar social construction due to their colonial past. They have suffered the historical setbacks recently and in remote past, subjugation, domination, expatriation and displacement are a common destiny of the people in these countries. There have been jubilant efforts to prove their intellectual potential and attempts to write back to the empire by these third world societies recently.

The people being distinctly aware of class struggle clash with each other to achieve prominence in the social hierarchy in the post colonial societies of Africa and Caribbean. Thus, it would be logical to conclude that these novels have profound foregrounding in class struggle and put the subaltern in the margin in a socially and culturally fragmented society.

The principal characters in *A Bend in the River* are aliens. They are Asians, European settlers or expatriates, members of different tribes/ ethnic groups, or people of a mixed ancestry that denies them authentic status. This displacement has always been one of Naipaul's themes and, for him; it serves as a device that allows him to narrate the events from an outsider's point of view. In these novels he elaborates the tension and conflict among the expatriates owing to their different identities. He is obsessed with the idea of presenting the chaos of inter-mixing of cultures. According to Bhabha:

The regulation and negotiation of those spaces that are continually, contingently, 'opening out', remaking the boundaries, exposing the limits of any claim to a singular or autonomous sign of differences where difference is neither one nor the other but something else besides that emerges in-between the claims of the past and the needs of the present. (219)

Sentiments of love and sex are hardly valued among the displaced colonials like Salim. He experiences a unique sense of ecstatic joy and satisfaction in his involvement with Yvette. His past experience of "brothel sex" has produced only contempt for himself and his partners. But his relationship with Yvette is invigorating in which he feels the emergence of a new self. As he is preoccupied with the idea of winning Yvette, he is frightened by a vision of the decay of the man he has known himself to be. After his serious involvement and disillusionment with Yvette, Salim realizes that had he "understood more about Raymond earlier, he might have seen Yvette more clearly her ambition, her bad judgment, her failure and would not have become involved with people as trapped as myself" (*A Bend in the River* 199).

Naipaul condemned orthodox Indian traditions and became agnostic and non-believer. He also regretted the lack of native traditions in Trinidad. He felt that the Indian immigrants in Trinidad lived in double exile. In his works, one finds recurrent themes of diasporic concerns and a psychology of marginalization, homelessness, spiritual isolation and perpetual exile. His creative talent has been shaped by continuous perception of rootlessness, deracination and displacement.

Naipaul's predicament of dislocation and alienation from his traditional history leaves him into a kind of cultural friction. The friction which he always wanted to cast off persists throughout his works. Naipaul feels comfortable and secure as a colonial in Trinidad therefore adopts an attitude which aims at pointing out the destitution and political and cultural mimicry of the Third World.

To conclude, in the above novels the writer is very close to have a rather mature outlook because now he finds the diasporic ambivalence prevailing everywhere in

colonial world and imperial world. Naipaul here attains a universal understanding after his long stay in London and understanding the journeys in almost all the parts of the world. Understanding all his nostalgic diasporic longings and desire to belong either to Trinidad, India or England, now he defends assimilation of cultures, though it is quite an obscure idea for an expatriate. His defense of assimilation is based on his understanding of the postcolonial world after traveling far and wide. He seems to have reached to the conclusion that ambivalence, frustration, isolation, up-rootedness, alienation, homelessness and sense of insecurity are common traits in all cultures in the modern time and the search for stability is a burning issue due to politics of ethnicity.

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