



***A Writer's People* and A Metropolitan Postcolonial Man's Ways of Looking and Feeling: A Critical Study**

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Abstract:

This write-up intends to negotiate and analyze a writer who is a postcolonial by birth and metropolitan by profession and location. In the opening of *A Writer's People: Ways of Looking and Feeling*, we get a glimpse of V. S. Naipaul, a metropolitan postcolonial man and his acknowledgement of his struggle to get into the world where circumstances compelled him since his childhood to move around, to feel accommodated and settled in the unsettled postcolonial world, be it Trinidad or Metropolitan England. His struggle is also a struggle of a postcolonial writer to get a start in the writing profession, unlike most other writers including his contemporaries who lacked proper ways of looking and feeling. He wanted to be a writer with a different world-view. The book in question is a commentary on the different ways of looking and feeling of his contemporaries, the different writers and political figures including Mahatma Gandhi and their many ways of looking and feeling, seeing and not seeing that had altered the configuration of the world.

Keywords: Naipaul, postcolonial, Trinidad, England, India, looking and feeling.

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Introduction:

It may not be necessary to engage much in this piece of writing about the biographical details of V. S. Naipaul, the 2001 Nobel laureate in literature. Most of us who are fond of literature, and particularly, the literature of the diaspora, are well acquainted with him and his Indian-Trinidadian connection. This paper aims to analyze Naipaul, the writer who is a postcolonial by birth and metropolitan by profession and location. Naipaul is one of those postcolonial migrants who have left their country of birth, mostly former European colonies to the metropolitan centre[s] of the world for a writing career.

At the very start of *A Writer's People: Ways of Looking and Feeling* (2007), in a section which serves as a prologue, we get a glimpse of the metropolitan postcolonial man's acknowledgement of his struggle not only to get into the surroundings of his grandmother's house in Port of Spain, Trinidad where his homeless father was accommodated along with other members of his grandmother's extended family but also to get on as a writer in metropolitan England. They were a small agricultural community of Indian indentured immigrants completely insulated and shut out from outside world which was a mixed colonial society that, as a child, Naipaul only could look at the street and the people, their clothes and voices but never mingled or spoke to them; it was a kind of looking and feeling that after more than a decade and a half, after his university days and exhausting the scholarship money, at a darker time in London, the memory of the street of his childhood comes to his rescue to get started as a writer of his first book *Miguel Street* written in 1954, but published in 1959 after his two other books, *The Mystic Masseur* (1957) and *The Suffrage of Elvira* (1958).

The Struggle of a Metropolitan Postcolonial Man:

The struggle of the postcolonial man is not only for getting started as a writer, it was also a struggle to maintain the balance between one's circumstances, ambivalence and uncertainty of existence in a fragmented postcolonial world. Therefore, in order to fulfil his lifetime ambition to be a writer with a different world-view, he had to adept to proper ways of looking and feeling. In *A Writer's People*, Naipaul writes:

I had lived all my writing life in England; that had to be acknowledged, had to be part of my world view. I had been a serious traveller; that had to be acknowledged as well. I couldn't pretend as a writer I know only one place . . . All my life I have had to think about ways of looking and how they alter the configuration of the world. (A Writer's People 2)

It may be argued at this point, how one's ways of looking and feeling can alter the configuration of the world. This essay, however, does not intend to go deep into that debate. The book does have five chapters, but, most of these chapters are commentaries on the different ways of looking and feeling of his contemporaries, the different writers and political figures, including Mahatma Gandhi, and their many ways of looking and feeling, seeing and not seeing that had altered the configuration of the world.

The first chapter, 'The Worm in the Bud,' opens at a time, early in 1949 in Trinidad, when Naipaul was at the end of his schooldays in Queen's Royal College, that, they came to know about the publication of a book of poetry by a young poet who belonged to the island of St Lucia. Interestingly, it surprised many, including Naipaul, in Trinidad, that how such a young poet published such a 'marvellous' book of poetry and that too, from such a small island. The poet is Derek Walcott, the man who worked for the Trinidad *Sunday Guardian* for some time, before

getting the international reputation. Walcott, finally won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1992, nine years before V. S. Naipaul.

The frustration of Naipaul, the postcolonial man who felt insecure and restricted to fulfil his ambition in Trinidad, is clearly understandable. The cultural emptiness, poverty and the racial divides among various communities, including their own, he believed, had hindered their intellectual growth. Even buying a copy of Derek Walcott's poetry book seemed an extravagance. Their existential insecurity, together with cultural and intellectual emptiness echoes time and again not only here in this chapter of *A Writer's People*, but also in his other works as well. He writes:

We were a small, mainly agricultural colony and we said all the time, without unhappiness, that we were a dot on the map of the world . . . we were really very small . . . racially much divided. On the island, small though we were, the living half cultures or quarter-cultures of colonial Europe and immigrant Asia know almost nothing of one another. (*A Writer's People* 3)

For Naipaul, if Trinidad was a 'dot' on the map of the world, St Lucia was a dot on that dot. Naipaul had no feeling for poetry, and, this is because the Indian community there, was not open to the English language. They had a Hindi-speaking background and "English was a language [they] were just coming into" (*A Writer's People* 8). Therefore, at an early age, Naipaul expressed his feeling that English prose would be the object of his writing ambition. When he was in sixth form or so, poetry stopped for him with Francis Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*.

Elleke Boehmer makes an interesting study of the migrant writers in her brilliant book *Colonial & Postcolonial Literature* (1995), in which she underscores the significant contribution made by the migrant writers in the field of postcolonial literature. They were acquainted with a language, the creolized English language, that had become a process of mass literary transplantation.

Boehmer's description of a postcolonial man and a writer is interesting in the sense that he/she is likely to be a 'cultural traveller,' an 'extra-territorial' who is an "Ex-colonial by birth, 'Third World' in cultural interest, cosmopolitan in almost every other way, she or he works within the precincts of the Western metropolis" (Boehmer 227). Naipaul is no less than a cultural traveller who claims to possess a different world-view, a world-view that does not match with others, whose ways of looking and feeling have remained in deep scrutiny.

Naipaul's obsession to become a writer, a writer of prose, to be precise, had been there even from his Port of Spain days while he was in Queen's Royal College. However, the lack of affordability to obtain the Derek Walcott book of poetry during those days, together with his ambition to get away from the plantation colony, Trinidad, the 'dot' on the map of the world, made him desperate to start, for a writing career. It was only in 1955, after five years of his stay in England, Naipaul came across the Walcott book. After the university and exhaustion of scholarship money, he had been living in poor circumstances. Luckily, his part-time job with BBC Caribbean Service as editor of their weekly literary programme *Caribbean Voices* brought him some financial security and literary acquaintances. However, while dealing with Walcott's poetry, he realized the similarity between him and Walcott with regard to social, racial and intellectual limitations in the islands they both belong to. In the first chapter of *A Writer's People*, Naipaul writes:

It was something we with literary ambitions from these islands all had to face: small places with simple economies bred small people with simple destinies. And these islands were very small, infinitely smaller than Ibsen's Norway. Their literary possibilities like their economic possibilities, were as narrow as their human possibilities. (*A Writer's People* 16)

The islands, Trinidad and St Lucia, Naipaul states, had nothing Norwegian human wealth, such as, bankers, editors, scholars and high-reaching people. These islands didn't give fiction-writer or a poet much to write about.

However, both Naipaul and Walcott's ways of looking and feeling for the islands, their landscapes and their people significantly differ. Naipaul is critical of Walcott for the latter's use of words such as 'black,' 'beauty,' 'beach,' 'sun,' etc. in his poetry, as he says that the idea of the beauty of the islands (beach, sun and coconut trees) was not as easy as the poet thought. It was an idea, he believes, that had developed much later during the twentieth century, as he says:

The idea of beach and sun and sunbathing came in the 1920s with the cruise ships . . . So the idea of island beauty, which now seems so natural and correct was in fact, imposed from outside . . . It was an overturning of old sensibility, old associations. Until then, the islands were thought of as ancient plantations, places of the lash . . . (A Writer's People 20)

Naipaul is of the view that the poet Walcott might have suffered from 'spiritual emptiness,' which is why in his early poems, the landscape is unpeopled despite the 'flock of new faiths,' the idea of the 'black,' the 'skin prison' in which the very joys suffer. The spiritual emptiness, Naipaul observes, was a problem for everyone from the plantation territories who wanted to write. Thus, many of them were either destroyed or silenced by this spiritual emptiness. However, Naipaul later observes that Walcott found his own way around that emptiness and began to fit his island material to older, foreign work and made his international writing career to be recognized as a wonderful 'black voice' in the United States.

Naipaul then mentions three other writers from the region who were not so lucky. They are Edgar Mittelholzer, Samuel Selvon, and his own father, Seepersad Naipaul. Edgar was born in

Guyana almost two decades before Walcott and published a novel *A Morning at the Office*, in 1950, the year after the publication of Walcott's *25 Poems* in Barbados. Interestingly, both Edgar Mittelholzer and Derek Walcott are mulatto, of mixed descent, but, as Naipaul observes, the former didn't put himself on the 'black' side, unlike Walcott. The writers of the islands struggled to get themselves going with the materials available in the islands: Trinidad, St Lucia, Guyana, etc., some of them, had to borrow foreign materials, as Walcott did.

Samuel Selvon was a Trinidad Indian who was born in 1923, nine years before V. S. Naipaul. But, unlike Naipaul and his father, he didn't come from the "more rooted Indian community" (A Writer's People 29); whereas, Selvon's Indians were semi-urban people 'shaken loose' from the rural community and hence, "losing their traditions fast" (A Writer's People 29). Before going to England in 1950, a few months earlier than Naipaul, he also worked in the *Trinidad Guardian*. A bright man with a good sense of feeling, he published his first novel, *A Brighter Sun*, in 1951, six years before Naipaul's first published book *The Mystic Masseur*. For Selvon's talent, observes Naipaul, Trinidad was the subject best suited, whereas, in far-off London, it faded, and this was visible in his second book, *An Island Is a World*.

The case of Naipaul's father, Seepersad, as a writer, was challenging. It was challenging because, unlike Edgar and Walcott, Seepersad was a descendant of Indian indentured immigrants and hence, his literary scope and acceptance as a writer was limited, so as, his writing materials. Seepersad Naipaul was a self-educated man who wished to be a writer, but, the condition and the limited opportunities in the plantation colony in Trinidad did not permit him to realize his dream. Hence, he wished his son V. S. Naipaul to cherish the idea of a writing vocation, and, for V. S., their colonial island was not suitable to pursue that kind of vocation. Therefore, it was necessary to get away, since the wish to be a writer and the literature that had given him the wish, "came

from another world, far away from [their] own” (Literary Occasions 106). In one of his essays, captioned ‘Reading and Writing,’ published in *Literary Occasions* (2003), V. S. Naipaul maintains that his journey to England was not solely for a degree; it was rather only to get away from the plantation colony: “I decided to go to Oxford and do the three-year English course. I didn’t do this for the sake of Oxford and the English course; I knew little enough about either. I did it mainly to get away to the bigger world and give myself time to live up to my fantasy and become a writer” (Literary Occasions 12). It is beyond doubt, that, unlike his father, who remained in the plantation colony, and tried his hand in writing, despite small opportunities and audience he had, V. S. Naipaul, since his childhood, wanted only to get away from the island to fulfil his writing ambition. He writes in *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987) that his insecure past, peasant India and colonial smallness did not consort with the grandeur of his ambition despite his half-English education in colonial Trinidad:

The noblest impulse of all—the wish to be a writer, the wish that ruled my life—was the impulse that was the most imprisoning, the most insidious, and in some ways the most corrupting, because, refined by my half-English half-education and ceasing then to be a pure impulse, it had given me a false idea of the activity of the mind. The noblest impulse in that colonial setting had been the most hobbling. To be what I wanted to be, I had to cease to be or to grow out of what I was. To become a writer it was necessary to shed many of the early ideas that went with the ambition, and the concept my half-education had given me of the writer. (The Enigma of Arrival 167)

In the opening chapter of *A Writer's People*, Naipaul talks about a story of his father, published in a green-covered booklet in 1940, which was sent by Edgar Mittelholzer sometime in early 1965 to Naipaul while he was already in his fifteenth year in England. The story is a painful account of the wretchedness, helplessness and sheer poverty the first-generation Indian indentured immigrants had to undergo. His father had written the story in painful circumstances, as they had been reduced to living in one room in his grandmother's house in Port of Spain at that time. Naipaul replicated his grandmother's house as 'Hanuman House' in his famous fictional work, *A House for Mr. Biswas* (1961). Back again to the topic, the material of the story, as Naipaul tells us, was precious to his father. It was an account:

of the wretchedness that attended his birth: his mother chased away by his father and going in her destitution, perhaps walking all the way, to have child at the mother's. Everyone in this story of 1906 was very poor indeed, unprotected, close to helplessness . . . (A Writer's People 27)

Seepersad, as Naipaul puts it, handled this wretched background of poverty and pain in his own way: he overlaid it with the 'beauty of the old ritual' that had to follow the birth of a child, and this would have made it easier for him to write. Yet, at the same time, he must have thought that more than forty years after the time of his story, he was still 'unaccommodated' in the world. Such deep crises of home, identity and belongingness, resulting from colonial migration and transplantation have been the subject of many postcolonial writers, including Naipaul. Seepersad did only a handful of stories and, like Walcott and Selvon, he too worked for the *Trinidad Guardian* but, unlike them, he never got away. Naipaul's father wrote about Trinidad Indian life and saw it as self-contained, though in most of his stories, the other races do not appear. Nevertheless, he is 'possibly the first writer of the Indian diaspora, the first to write of its

transplanted people, unprotected peasants, seeking as if by a necessary instinct to recreate the society they left behind' (A Writer's People 31).

Writers' Worldview and Literary Vision:

In literature, a writer's outlook and worldview significantly matter. It shapes the writer's career and literary acceptance. In the chapter, 'An English Way of Looking,' Naipaul talks about a few writers of his acquaintance, particularly Anthony Powell and the English literary world. Naipaul got to know Powell in 1957 when the latter was fifty-two and at the peak of his reputation. He was only twenty-five, struggling to make a foothold as a writer with only one published book. Naipaul is critical of Powell's multi-volume autobiographical novel *A Dance to the Music of Time* (1974), because it did not meet his expectations, and, despite Powell's English upbringing and the latter's pride as an English writer. In some of the volumes of that mammoth book, Naipaul observes:

There was less and less care in the writing; everything was over-explained; the matter became more nakedly autobiographical; and there was a strange new vanity in the writer, as of a man who felt he had made it . . . There was no narrative skill, perhaps even no thought for narrative. (A Writer's People 37)

Therefore, Naipaul had this feeling about Anthony Powell that he 'might have written books, might have lived the literary life, but wasn't the kind of writer he wished to be' (A Writer's People 39). Interestingly, this feeling of Naipaul was strengthened after he read one of Powell's pre-war books, *From A View to A Death* (1933), where there are 'too many words' and everything is 'over-explained' despite his careful description of English country manners. Besides all these criticisms, Anthony Powell was a great friend of Naipaul, a father-figure, an important part of his education and training as a writer.

In this second chapter of *A Writer's People*, Naipaul discloses the purpose of his writing this book, which is neither literary criticism nor biography. His only purpose or wish was to set out the writing to which he was exposed during his career in a personal way. By writing, Naipaul specifically means 'vision,' which is a "way of seeing and feeling" (*A Writer's People* 41). Every kind of writing, he believes, is "the product of a specific historical and cultural vision . . . But the self-serving 'writing-schools' of the United States and England think otherwise. They decree that a certain artificial way of writing narrative prose is the correct way" (*A Writer's People* 41). The base of feeling and cultural knowledge, for Naipaul, originated from the idea of India of his childhood:

I grew up on an island like Walcott's. Other races were close, but for my first five or six years, in the 1930s, I lived in a transplanted peasant India. This India was being washed away by the stringencies of our colonial life, but it still felt whole, and this gave me a base of feeling and cultural knowledge which even members of my family who came later didn't have. This base of feeling has lasted all my life. I think it is true to say that, in the beginning, living in this unusual India, I saw people of other groups but at the same time didn't see them. (*A Writer's People* 42)

Such a feeling made him receptive to his father's stories of a self-contained local Indian life. Those stories were among his first literary experiences, and, being attached to those stories, which not only gave him an example of literary labour, they also gave him an idea of his background and his past.

In the chapter captioned 'Looking and Not Seeing: the Indian Way,' Naipaul talks about the different ways of looking, and his grief of a past. At a very early stage of his stay in England, he

tells us that he became aware of different ways of seeing because he came to the metropolitan centre of the world from a far-off plantation colony; and this is because, as said before, he didn't have a past, a past he could enter into. He knew only his father and mother, and beyond that, he couldn't go, because his ancestry was 'blurred.' His father had no house of his own, and, the sense of homelessness, together with crises of identity and individual freedom which, reverberate in his other works too. Naipaul's ancestral migration had taken place in-between the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. As a child, he felt that, India would have been within the memory of many adults, but, unfortunately, there was hardly any talk of India. It remained as a kind of faded memory just as the mattress-maker in his grandmother's house who could only remember about India that: 'there was a railway station' (A Writer's People 84) and, nothing else. The immigrants, as Naipaul puts it, lived 'instinctively' and that 'undefined instinctive life' made it possible for them to travel far from home with their civilization. Thus, it was for that reason that "the transplanted civilization, existing mainly in the mind, was fragile, liable to perish or grow faint after one or two generations" (A Writer's People 82). With these people, thus, India and the past had been wiped out. The talk of India came from the people of the new generation, educated in the new way, who travelled to that 'private' India:

There was more to say about the railway stations: the cries, for instance, of the vendors for *bidis* and pan and cigarettes. But the people who brought back these stories had been made by their birth abroad, their education and travel; they could assess themselves, in a way the mattress-maker wouldn't have understood; and this gave them another way of looking. (A Writer's People 85)

Naipaul consumes a great deal of pages on Rahman Khan, M. K. Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave, Nehru, Flaubert and Nirad Choudhuri in the following chapters of his book. Rahman Khan, as the

author puts it, was a contemporary of the mattress-maker, but, unlike the latter, whose world-view could not go beyond the 'railway station,' Rahman went to Surinam from India as an indentured labourer. Yet, despite being a Muslim Pathan, he was a Hindu scholar, and, after his five-year contract, he started teaching *Ramayana* to the Brahmins of Surinam, a Dutch colony. It was surprising for Naipaul to come to know of an autobiographical book *Jeevan Prakash* i.e. 'The Light of Life,' a high-flown religious book which presented a composite Hindu-Muslim culture of the United Provinces in North-Central India during his first visit to India, the country of his ancestors. Though Rahman had written the book in Hindi in the early 1940s, it was later translated into Dutch and then into English with the title *The Autobiography of an Indian Indentured Labourer*, that appeared on the review pages of *The Hindu* newspaper in India. However, in Naipaul's point of view, Rahman's book is a 'primitive piece of book-making,' and, in this simple autobiography, one can notice that the narrator has 'something of the mattress-maker's incompleteness' and "no feeling for the physical world about him" (A Writer's People 88).

Mohandas Gandhi was born in Gujarat, five years before Rahman, but, as Naipaul puts it, he was born to "a view of the world that was dimmer than Rahman's" (A Writer's People 97). Gandhi, before going to England to study law, was not much prepared, besides, the religious objections of some members of his family and caste, to his crossing the black water. Moreover, one may find it difficult to accept what Naipaul writes about Gandhi, that, he "hadn't read anything about India," had "never read a newspaper" and had "no idea of the history of India" (A Writer's People 99). For Naipaul, both Rahman and Gandhi were 'untutored' country boys seeking to make their way. However, unlike Rahman's, Gandhi's journeys out of India, first to England and then to South Africa, "made him see that he had everything to learn' and, it was the 'basis of his great achievement'" (A Writer's People 100). Despite Naipaul's initial attempt to belittle Gandhi on his

physical appearance, yet he cannot deny that Gandhi was a man of truth and a self-made man: an “emaciated small man in a dhoti with a shawl over his bare shoulders was a creation; he had been created step by step, personal experiment by personal experiment — in London, South Africa and India” and his autobiography *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* was the story of that creation (A Writer's People 105). Gandhi was a self-made man, and unlike other Indians, for example, the volunteers at Ripon College who pretended not to see the latrines and feel the stink, he took out the broom himself and started cleaning the latrines. Gandhi was, in fact, the ‘soul’ of peasant India.

Nehru, in his autobiography *The Discovery of India* (1946), also covered Gandhi in close-up detail. He was twenty years younger than Gandhi. He was, as Naipaul puts it, a logical, educated man and, at times critical, but, always at the bottom, had adoration for Gandhi. Going by his autobiography, Naipaul is more critical about Nehru, than Gandhi. He observes that, despite his seven-year stay in England, studying at Harrow and Cambridge, he was at the end of this period a ‘perfect blank,’ and, he had “very little to report about London or Harrow or Cambridge” (A Writer's People 118). Both Gandhi and Nehru had differences in their respective worldview, yet, in spite of the differences, Nehru too had made a journey like Gandhi's ‘from not seeing to seeing’ (A Writer's People 118). Though Nehru's journey, as Naipaul puts it, began by chance in 1920 when a peasant movement erupted in the United Provinces, near his hometown, Allahabad, and, if two hundred of the desperate peasants, ragged and starving, had not thought one day of walking the fifty miles from their villages to Allahabad to put up their case to Nehru, he would not have known about their movement and his life would have taken a different turn.

While discussing the idea of India, particularly for those who made a final journey until 1940s, like the mattress-maker or even Rahman, besides his own grandfather and maternal grandmother's families, Naipaul opines that as long as India was beyond reach, it was easy for this unreachable

India of 'fading memory' to be turned into 'a land of myth.' But, as soon as India became reachable, after the Second World War, and with ease and opportunities of travel, India became something else. It became a different place, different from the mythical India of their memories, and, this happened due to a particular way of looking, and, this way of looking, didn't come to everyone at the same time. For instance, when some of Naipaul's mother's sisters went to India to see their father's family in the distressed Gorakhpur area of Eastern Uttar Pradesh, "Little by little the India of myth was chipped away, and India became a place of destitution from which we were lucky to have got away" (A Writer's People 123-124).

The chapter, 'Disparate Ways,' deals with the idea of a literary 'vision' which the author gives the utmost importance. He talks a great deal about the French novelist Gustave Flaubert and his two major works: *Madame Bovary* and *Salammbô*. Naipaul, with his gift of a literary 'vision' views both the works and praises the former for its 'narrative splendour,' while in *Salammbô*, he observes, Flaubert missed the true literary 'vision' and ended up with a hollow historical narrative whose prose feels detached and over-explained and, where he seemed to be a different writer, "someone coarser, steeped in nineteenth-century orientalism and melodrama" (136). It seems the author's tone in this borrowed historical novel is 'self-congratulatory,' and his story is, as Naipaul puts it, is, shallow and never convincing. This is the result of what Naipaul calls the "classical half-view, the ability to see and not see" (A Writer's People 166). The writers must not, therefore, hide from reality.

Back to India again, in the fifth chapter, Naipaul looks at Gandhi, partly in Aldous Huxley's lens, particularly, Gandhi at the Kanpur session of Indian National Congress, and, partly in his own assessment. Huxley, as Naipaul points out, might not be aware that the "excessive simplicity of dress was Gandhi's own idea" (A Writer's People 168), as he was trying to fit himself less like

a lawyer and more like peasants and labourers for whom he had become spokesman, and this made him 'Mahatma.' Naipaul opines that, there was 'no completeness' in Gandhi, he was rather "full of bits and pieces he had picked here and there" (A Writer's People 168), and he had 'intellectual confusion' and, if his political cause is taken away, one can see all the unrelated impulses. Gandhi's many causes, therefore, made him appear more universal than he was.

Naipaul's greatest criticism falls on Nirad C. Choudhuri, the author of *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* (1951). His principal subject, observes Naipaul, is the civilization that developed with the new learning of Europe in Bengal, with the British rule, between 1860 and 1910. For Naipaul, Choudhuri did nothing noteworthy in his working life except the fact that he had dedicated his book to "the memory of the British Empire in India...." However, the early part of his book looks brilliant, but overall, it has the "shape and neutral tone of an ethnographic study" (A Writer's People 178); his stories show that his admiration for English civilization was separate from his knowledge of English people. Naipaul questions Choudhuri's reputation as a scholar because the latter had no idea what scholarship meant. He "turned his back on the Indian nationalist movement, on Gandhi and Nehru and all the rest" (A Writer's People 190) for his 'Oxford apotheosis' to look contented sitting in an armchair like an Indian regency figure.

The author seems to be a little biased at India's intellectual life. He calls it the problem of intellectual confusion in India, saying that, "India has no autonomous intellectual life" (A Writer's People 191), because, a 'great chunk' of liberated Indians, after independence, look away from India, for ultimate fulfilment to Britain and the United States. However, this is not the case only with India. Most former colonies, including India, had gone through the postcolonial experience of mass migration, intellectual relocation, and literary transplantation. Naipaul is critical of the new writings: a crop of novels, which are by and large, autobiographical family stories of the

Indian expatriates who have come out of India's improved English education. He asks whether these writings are just 'old-fashioned Indian boasting?' or are they a part of a new literary awakening? because, "no national literature has ever been created like this, at such a remove, where the books are published by people outside, judged by people outside, and to a large extent bought by people outside" (A Writer's People 192). It may be argued here that in the case of Naipaul himself, the memories of his own people, the street which he left behind for England, comes to his rescue for his start-up as a writer in metropolitan England. He seems to have a much favourable view of the Russians, and goes on to argue that unlike Dostoevsky, Turgenev and Gogol who wrote in Russian for Russian readers, there is no equivalent creation in Indian writing: "India remains hidden, Indian writers . . . seem to know only about their own families and their places of work. It is the Indian way of living and consequently the Indian way of seeing" (A Writer's People 193).

Conclusion:

It is beyond doubt, that, V. S. Naipaul is a postcolonial migrant writer who has struggled throughout his life to make himself a metropolitan British writer. Unfortunately, his ethnic, cultural and indentured background came as barriers on his way to becoming that. He has travelled extensively to various continents including the Caribbean, the continent of his birth, Africa, and India, the country of his ancestors. He has a world-view, a peculiar way of feeling and looking at things that has made him a man and a writer he wished to be. *A Writer's People: Ways of Looking and Feeling*, therefore, is a commentary on people's attitudes, world-views, ideas of scholarship and intellectuality, literary writing, criticism and judging. However, his analyses and judgement on Indian writing and intellectual life remain contested and give scope for further research and intellectual study.

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