

## The Concepts of Home and Exile in *The Mimic Men*, a Novel by V.S. Naipaul

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## ABSTRACT

*The aim of this research is to analyze the presence of the concepts of "Exile and Home" in raising the identity crisis in V. S. Naipaul's novel *The Mimic Men* (1967). It examines Edward Said's theoretic contention of exile's influence in creating identity crisis and in the view of Naipaul's writing as an attempt to resolve the dilemma of the protagonist Ralph Singh's identity. The chapter shows Ralph's responses in endeavoring to form an individual identity while struggling from the burdens of colonial heritage. It is an irony or quiet paradox to apply, as this dissertation does, postcolonial theory to the postcolonial novels, or those novels depicting ex-colonial subject resistance to colonial traditions while living in the very heart of the colonial center, i.e., London; nevertheless, such an application reveals the conflicting sides of the characters' identity, which has grown in part from attempting to fit in: "The mimic is a contradictory figure who simultaneously reinforces colonial authority and disturbs it" [1].*

**Keywords:** Post colonialism, Identity, Exile

## Introduction

Exile as an awful experience, must be considered as a separate idea. This is the incurable enforced separation of the self from its native place and culture. The indispensable sadness of the separation persists forever. While history and literature depict romantic, heroic, glorious, even successful episodes during an exile's existence, these do little more than imply an attempt to conquer the crippling sadness of separation [2].

Within Naipaul's works this "incurable separation compelled between a native place and a person, between the self and its real habitat," [3] estranged within the colonial encounter of the colonizer and the colonized, has been a regular thematic worry. The exceptional Caribbean space forms the origin of the writer and his work. This space has developed as a multicultural and racially mixed social order because of the confluence of social, historical, cultural, and political impacts of four continents. Because of its proximity to the America and its supportive climate for sugar farms, European colonizers employed the Caribbean as a nodal position and a resettlement camp for the "seasoning" of Asian indentured workers and African slaves. This space grew, mainly populated by immigrants, as a result of the context of dislocation caused by demands of the imperialist financial system. These immigrants, voluntary or not, nostalgically looked back to their motherlands, from which they were permanently displaced. Naipaul, within his works, both fiction and factual, points to this experience of homelessness arising from dislocation and relocation. Particularly within his novel, *The Mimic Men*, Naipaul imaginatively shows the standpoint of his own cultural dislocations and peculiarity, foremost in Trinidad and after that within England. He was born and reared inside a colonial British system in Trinidad. He was a third-generation heir of Indians who had moved to Trinidad to labor within the Caribbean sugar farms as indentured workers. Subsequently, he moved to England during the early 1950s on a scholarship from Oxford University. Thus Naipaul is an outcome of the colonial conditions, according to Rob Nixon, who condemns his incapability of getting rooted in a specific cultural setting as "willed destituteness" [4], despite being a British national.

Nevertheless, Paul Theroux, Naipaul's companion and censor, supports the writer placing himself within a luminal space, the space of the exile. In his own phrases, he is "without predecessors," "without a history, a little absurd and doubtful." His lives in a state of destitution; the sole benefit of his condition is that it facilitates him in growing into a laboring resident—a resident within India just like a resident elsewhere. Also, it offers him a depth of opinion that is deprived of the metropolitan. Every nation is a likely provisional home for the travelling individual, but for Naipaul there is no going back, to one's history or to a place. He is the earliest of his kind without a home or tradition [5]. It is from this vantage point that Naipaul narrates his stories, the point of the exile knowingly located at the edge of the dominant dialogue and culture of the earlier hub of the imperial framework.

## 1. Background

Naipaul has investigated the interaction of the matrices of ethnicity and ancestry from the start of his vocation, in determining the interfaces of character creation of persons in relation to the Caribbean scenery following the collapse of the colonial order, and depicted within his works in diverse combinations and permutations. Necessarily, he carries "a notion of his self, of the colonial who had been brought up amid a narrow-minded Indian society on a small, backward island within the Caribbean and subsequently with the ethnically varied population of Port of

Spain. This is the man who had to find out the planet he had been hurled onto when trying to understand the several strands that comprised his self;” the man who was with no clear history or relationships[6]. This “detection,” by the writer of a self-provoked Naipaul, persists in exploring in his fiction both settings and characters obtained from the Caribbean cultural environment. The detection strives to endure in the more recently regrouped postcolonial Caribbean space by surpassing the barricades of tradition.

The writer investigates his artistic involvement with the exceptional spatio-temporal aspects of the Caribbean character within the majority of the narratives through the exploration of people who develop their character by negotiating their destitution within the Caribbean scenery through the standpoint of a displaced person. Naipaul’s protagonists struggle with the descriptions of character and the rational self-development through complicated subject places and standpoints within novels that seem to interrupt the limits of continuity and linearity. The characters unavoidably interrelate with individual and political relationships that impinge on their being within their relevant settings in this process. Singh faces what might be termed the “problem to belong” within his individual conduct, just like other Naipaulian identities.

## 2. Home and Identity Formation

The development of Singh, in *The Mimic Men* results from the wish to attempt to locate oneself within a home and not simply a house. Singh’s building of his character comes out as further interesting research. This is because he fails to fit within either of the two, despite his close relationship with life in London and the Caribbean, the previous edge and the hub of the earlier colonial tools.

For Singh, nevertheless, who deemed that “the initial necessity for satisfaction was to be born inside a famous town” [7], the bad luck “to be brought up on an island such as Isabella, a strange New World of transplantation, barbarous and secondhand, was to be born to sickness” (p. 127). The implication of the island on which he is born and brought up as “strange,” “recycled,” “barbarous,” and “disorganized,” focuses on its colonial heritage, which Ralph discovers is extremely hard to accept. Certainly, the identity of this fictional setting strengthens its colonial relationships. This is because selecting the identity Isabella for an island directly created his indigenous Trinidad. The reader is compelled by Naipaul to recall Trinidad’s colonial history—first defeated by the Spanish prior to its lengthy British colonization (1797–1962). Representatively, to the account of detection and removal within the Caribbean, the relationship with a royal queen identified as a key supporter of Columbus’s expeditions lines up the fictive isle of Isabella.[8].

This withdrawal affects Isabella together with its dwellers, among them Ralph, who, incapable of altering the truth of their background, attempt to let it be: “Years ago, I decided that this background was not mine” [9]. The colonial mission starts to affect and influence Singh’s life during his infancy and teenage years. The writer Ralph discovers himself skeptical in his own recollections, while studying one of the first memoirs of his life in school on the island:

Presenting an apple to the instructor is my initial memoir of school and this amazes me since there were no apples in Isabella. My recollection maintains that it’s the apple even though it should have been an orange. Although the edited edition is all I hold, the editing is evidently a mistake. [10]

The argument as to whether the fruit was an orange or an apple starts the recollection for an interesting review. The “strangeness” of the apple in the Caribbean setting allegedly motivated from Newton’s hypothesis of gravity, adding to it the European Enlightenment and its certain relationship with the Biblical account of the fall of man, renders the apple a specific sign of the European self-proclaimed dominance of religion and knowledge, two extremely vital weapons applied for colonization.

A notable revelation regarding Isabella’s colonial history is faced by Ralph Singh years afterward while his friend Browne notes an extremely vital aspect of the Caribbean scenery, which Ralph had never taken seriously.

It was revealed to me by Browne that its tropical manifestations were artificial; within the vegetation we deemed mainly characteristic and natural, there was history. He talked to me regarding the coconut that fringed our beaches, concerning the bamboo, sugarcane, and the mango. He talked to me regarding our flowers, whose colours we observed afresh within the postcards that were starting to emerge in our stores. He showed me a bunch of aged fruit trees within the hub of the town: the slave supply base site. Look over the roofs of the town from this position, and

visualize! Similar to any superior English or French park, our scenery was created. We, nevertheless, walked within a garden of hell, amid trees, some motionless with no familiar names, whose seeds had at times been supplied to our isle inside the slave's intestines. [11]

Ralph is shocked by the idea of transporting tree seeds inside the "intestines of slaves" and the creation of French or English parks on Caribbean ground, the colonized compelled to withstand the middle passage throughout the procedure of displacement from their motherlands onto this "novel" land. This threatens the colonial model that effectively grafted both people and vegetation onto selected sceneries to attain its objectives. Moreover, the family setting of the protagonist imported permanent impressions on him throughout his decisive years. The first criteria that shows as Ralph's loyalty, even at an extremely tender age, to any of his parents' relatives, was money and its resulting social benefits.

The attachment to his father's relatives is not extremely encouraging:

It was a shame to be poor on Isabella while I was a kid. . . . A permanent line of the uninspired, unenterprising and subjugated, had at all times appeared to me to be a reason for deep disgrace for one to be inherited from a generation of failures and idlers . . . . My father was a poor school educator. [12]

Since Ralph's father had wedded the daughter of the local representative for Coca Cola on the Island, a proprietor of the Bella Bella Bottling Works, Ralph is anxious to see himself as part of his mother's family: "I chose to lay claim to the family of my mother. Within the island they were amongst the wealthiest and were part of that small team identified as 'Isabella millionaires'" (Naipaul 1967, p. 89). Ironically, Ralph does not hesitate to reap the privileges of similarity with the business of his mother's family, even though his father hates his in-laws and by expansion, their product, Coca Cola:

Within Coca-Cola, therefore, I took an approximately proprietorial concern at an early age. Even though it was a torture to me then to be mysterious, I loved going to the bottling works. I yearned to get identification from the workers or even some indication of overlordship . . . [13]

The obvious improvement of his social place within the Isabella community due to his maternal family's ties to Coca-Cola, demonstrates Ralph's wish to negotiate a fruitful personality for himself at this phase of his life. Maturing on Isabella, together with his cousin Cecil and his infancy associates Deschampsneufs, Evans, Hoks, and Browne, Ralph grows up in a process of playing at responsibility and mimicry. In his school days, he sees his friend Hok, a product of varied parentage; attempt to evade recognizing his mother openly since she is a negro. One schoolboy says,

"Sir, Hok moved past his mother barely now and he did not talk to her at all." The educator, showing unanticipated depths, was shocked. "Is this real, Hok? Your parent, young man? We searched for the mother, the concealed being whom Hok came across each day, had bid goodbye to her that dawn and was to come across her once more within two hours or so during lunch hour. She was certainly a shock, a Negro woman of the persons, short and stocky, quite unexceptional. She toddled away, unmoved herself to the son she had simply moved past. [14]

Ralph and the rest of the boys observe Hok's embarrassing "disloyalty into ordinariness" and his disqualification from "that individual environment where rested his real life" (p. 104) when the educator compels Hok to speak to his mother. The attempted rebuff by Hok of his mother because of her distinctive ethnic personality, and Ralph's wish to show off his maternal relatives, undermine the wish the boys sense to accept or discard significant factors of their personality so as to obtain the utmost benefit.

Still, Ralph's name contains an interesting past. Within one of the earliest self-awareness actions in developing his own personality, Ralph decides to change his name to echo his companion Deschampsneufs (the child of a French family that altered their profession from the slave breeders to horse breeders) whose identity, apart from the surname, comprised five brief and normal French terms whose "collection of the normal wonderfully recommended the unexpected" (100). He alters his first name, Ranjit Kripal Singh, to Ralph Ranjit Kripal Singh, abridged to R. R. K. Singh or Ralph Singh, within the civic domain. Initially, this change remains unrecognized both within his family

and at school: “. . . I was merely Singh R. From eight years of age until twelve years of age. This was one of my deep coverts. I dreaded detection at home and at school.” (p. 100)

When his birth document eventually reveals the difference in Singh’s name, he justifies himself to his surprised schoolteacher: “My covert identity is Ranjit,’ I stated. ‘It is a tradition amid Hindus of definite social groups. My true name is the covert name but it must not be employed in public’” (Naipaul 1967, p. 100). Thence rests essentially the inclusion of “Ralph” as his “calling identity,” so insignificant that it “may be used in vain by any person” (p. 101). An authentication from the father of the protagonist to change the name in line with the so-styled Hindu rite of employing diverse names for independent and public utilize is needed. The father is “. . . not happy at having to sign a sworn statement that the child he had born into the planet as Ranjit Kripalsingh had been changed into Ralph Singh” (p. 101). The capability to persuade his condemning elders and the effective change of his name generally stresses Ralph’s ability to use others to advance his own concerns, even as a kid.

Ralph similarly does not hesitate to exploit his father’s meteoric but temporary soar to fame at a later phase in his life, one that is immediately changed to dishonor within the communal and faith structure of the island. To Ralph, the father had departed his work rapidly and transformed into the Gurudeva, the religious head who sacrifices to his disciples

a sort of Hinduism that he explained; a combination of the logical and the mad. To several persons, he gave something; but it was his case and his existence instead of his teaching that mattered. His campaign spread similar to fire. [15]

The Gurudeva family—that is, Ralph, his mother, and sister—in spite of their reluctance, discover themselves covered inside the folds of the fresh-found eminence of the Gurudeva that persists to expand until the event of the horse offering. Together with his servants, Gurudeva allegedly offers Deschampsneufs’ award-winning race horse, Tamango, as a section of a rite for the “aswamedha.” Tamango’s dissected body, garlanded by means of flowers, was “offensive and obscene to every person on that sport-crazed isle. . .” [16]. Rapidly, this event reduces Gurudeva’s stature, and he draws into a lonely life. The father’s temporary public fame nevertheless serves its role afterward when the child exploits the majority of his East Indian genealogical decline and the Gurudeva’s open request that he begin his own political vocation on the isle.

Ralph’s mastery of deciding whether or not to highlight or to overlook, or attempt to change specific features of his personality, for maximum benefit in his youth, therefore, foretells the incidents of his later life. The place he has dwelled forms another cornerstone of his personality he badly desires to change. The rustling and swaying of coconut trees and the hissing and crashing of the white waves on the broad sandy beaches during a family tour to a beach house of Cecil’s father seem unable of provoking Ralph’s receptivity. He views the ocean as the “living, damaging component . . . Not my component. I favored land; I chose snow and mountains” (p. 114).

In Ralph, a personality crisis is instigated by the sea scenery around Isabella, which adds to his sense of destitution. His overwhelming wish from which he suffers in his adolescent years, to manipulate his origin and get away from the island, stays detained to the realm of his vision, unlike the successful change of his identity, which Ralph had completed during his school years.

Getting up in the mornings to rain and mist and harmful climate, in a planet of infinite plains, tall naked mountains, white with snow at their apex, amidst wanderers on horseback I led a covert life. I could vision that all over the plains of Central Asian the horsemen searched their chief and I was a Singh. A wise man after that approached them and stated, “. . . Your true chief lies farther away, stranded on an isle, such people as you cannot envision.” [17]

Ralph’s relentless wish for both location and lineage in this vision comingles within the image of the stranded person, an image that repeats throughout diverse scenes within the narrative. Within the roles of both orator and central character, Ralph underlines his persistent wish to get away from Isabella from the outset of his novel. “Moreover, what was an unharmed young man doing here, stranded tribal chief on an Unidentified coast, awaiting liberate, awaiting vessels entrance of curious form to return to his hills? Poor boy, poor ruler” (p. 11).

An additional desire Ralph has less awareness of in early life is his desire to escape. Terms such as “ruler” and “chieftain” predict his future career as a politician. During a sports event at his school, his constant desire to get

away from the Caribbean space begins to take form in effect when he decides to employ education as an alternative to achieving at the slightest one of his irresistible wants: "I desired to create a fresh, clean beginning. Furthermore, it was now that I decided to seek my ruler ship within that actual world and to abandon the stranded island and everything on it. . ." ( p. 118). This wish faintly shows the slow maturation of the former stranded leader wanting to aggressively "depart" the isle and wait inactively "to be liberated" as the tribal chief. The chance to swap sandy coasts for sceneries of plains, rivers, mountains, and snow occurs when Ralph starts his first cruise to London, going to do higher level research on a sponsorship. "Fresh air! Get away! To greater fears, to huge men, to greater lands, to continents having hills five miles tall and rivers so broad you could not notice the other side. . . . Farewell to this surrounding soiled sea!" (p. 179).

Ralph embraces London like the "great town, centre of the planet, wherein, fleeing disorder, I had anticipated to discover the starting of order," departing behind the "soiled" sea encircling Isabella (Naipaul 1967, p. 18). He attempts his greatest feat, to get used to himself in the former city of the Empire, although he cannot correct his letdown at not being born inside a renowned city. When he observes snow for the first time, he is besieged: "Snow. Eventually, my element. Further these were the chips, the airiest trampled ice. Further than crushed: trembled" (p. 4).

Nevertheless, for Ralph, snow and not the ocean as his element remains tricky because the purity and perfection that he realizes within the snow leaves him in confused: "Still what was I to accomplish with extremely complete a splendor?" (Naipaul 1967, p. 5). Ralph's eagerness for the scenery as he perceives the disparity between the sunset in the Caribbean and the sunset in his new background, nevertheless, is not diminished by his doubt to react to the fullness of the splendor of the snow-enveloped scenery of England:

"there is no light similar to that of the temperate region. Such was a light that attracted colour out from the objects' heart and offered firmness to everything. From the tropics, the place day was succeeded by night suddenly, to me dusk was fresh and charming." (p. 17)

The lights' effect of the "temperate zone" on nearby objects at this point makes them seem multi-colored in Ralph's "tropical" visualization.

Nevertheless, to his disappointment, Ralph soon finds out that, within the London cityscape, the glow that lit up the firmness and color the scenery also revealed its emptiness:

. . . there was the town, the planet. I waited for the blossoming to get nearer to me. The canal was pierced and edged with light reflections of blue, and yellow and red. While every man went back to his own cell, the tram was packed with individuals. The warehouses and factories were empty and deceitful, whose outer lights garlanded the river. While I stood on bridges and walked bare roads I would play with prominent names. However, the charm of names soon weakened. There that renowned building, here was the stream, here the bridge. Nevertheless, the god was covered. My chants of names stayed unanswered. So concrete in its light, inside the great city that offered colour still to unrendered solid—to me as pale as decaying wooden hedges and fresh corrugated-iron roofs—inside this metropolis existence was two-dimensional. [18]

In the eyes of Ralph, the loss of meaning of the English buildings, streets and bridges and the loss of color now renders inevitable that he questions his view of the Caribbean scenery and look back at Isabella through a changed lens.

Disappointed so quickly following his physical severance from the Caribbean, slowly Ralph starts to notice that simply moving to a further developed area of the planet is inadequate for painting his personality in a more positive light. The incredible change of his character Ralph had envisioned would take place within London does not come to pass, causing him a sense of insecurity:

For the entire ongoing awareness of completeness and sanity, we can observe how distant we had turned out to be unclear. Moving to London, the vast city, looking for order, seeking the blossoming, the expansion of myself that should have reached me within a city of such incredible light, I had attempted to speed up a procedure that had appeared subtle. I had attempted to offer myself an individuality. More than

once previously, it was something I had attempted and waited for the reaction within other peoples' eyes. However, now I no longer understood what I was; objective became bemused, then weakened. . . Stranded. Before, I have applied this term. It was the term that at all times came to me amid my island setting. Once again in that great city, this is what I sensed I had experienced: this sense of being wandering, a cell of insight, little further, that may be changed if simply rapidly through any encounter. [19]

Ralph retreats to his island setting following the failure to discover a new character for himself and the effects of the weakening of his long-treasured goal. He suffers a "shipwreck," once more, since geographically England and Isabella are both islands. His futile attempt to relate his character to the locale he occupies, which formerly caused him hate the "tainted" Isabellan seascape, now compels him to attempt to come to agreement with the locale he was born and reared in: "I discovered myself yearning for the assurances of my existence on the Isabella island, assurances that I had once disregarded as shipwreck . . . I got rid of sceneries from my memory. I got rid of every scenery that I could not link myself to and yearned simply for those I had recognized. I considered escape but it was to get away to what I had so currently sought to get away from (pp. 26, 27,31).

This yearning for the "assurances" of his life on Isabella, when positioned inside London, echoes his earlier longing for the fantasy retrieval of the space inhabited by his ancestors of Central Asia. Ralph's feeling of destitution on Isabella, due to his longing for a land he had simply envisioned as a part of rivers and mountains, is replaced in London by his nostalgia for the island he was more accustomed to. As a result, his direct conflict with the English space of London changes Ralph, desperate to just retrieve those scenes with which he was well acquainted. His former desire to get away from his place of origin becomes the desire to "return back" to his own nation. His ambivalence and duality with both the English and Caribbean setting at this phase of his life increases his feelings of dislocation and destitution.

He had renounced the sea earlier and acknowledged the snow as his "component." At the moment he asserts a dual likeness with such components: ". . . therefore, I had by now made the duo trip between my two sceneries of snow and sea" [20]. Nevertheless, Ralph fails to experience "at home" in both settings and this incapability compels him to remove himself from one to the other in quick progression: "I experienced I had recognized a double let down, and I experienced I persisted to exist between their double risks" (p. 32). Ralph persists to alternate between these two places on numerous occasions in search for the spatial aspect of his personality, unidentified to him at this moment in time. "I believed I had bid farewell to each, at the initial parting because I had got to understand each within my own manner" (p. 31).

Ralph returns to London as a politician from Caribbean; his ultimate exile is foretold in going back to Isabella. Naipaul demonstrates the stage of Ralph's life between his ultimate exile to London and his return to Isabella as a "duration in parenthesis" [21]. Accompanied by his English wife Sandra, his return to Isabella marks the starting point of a vital episode in his life. Ralph, now forty, looks back on his wedding as an "episode" (p. 42). From the start of this relationship, the seeds of the ultimate collapse of the "dark love of the varied marriage" (p. 51) are there. Ralph's memory of his "textbook case of misguided marriage" (p. 42) starts by recognizing Sandra as the inventor of this temporary union: "And actually marriage was her thought" (p. 42). Ironically, Sandra's command over her speech (p. 45), separation from her community and family (p. 46), and "capability for creating events" (p. 46) seemed to Ralph as the "correct foundation for an affiliation" (p. 47), right from their first unintentional meeting close to the notice-board of their school. This, in spite of having "looks that were of the sort that enhances with the power and maturity definition" (p. 44). The physical closeness Sandra offers him Ralph now views as her determination and dutifulness (p. 50).

The few individual particular responses to Ralph and Sandra's marriage emphasize the conflicting public view of this union. The anticipation for the couple's joy of Ralph's landlady, Mrs. Ellis, who is misguided by Sandra to trust them as wedded even prior to the celebration occurs, is weakened by her downplayed uncertainty concerning Ralph's choice of a bride ( p. 49). Likewise, the registrar of marriage worries for Sandra provokes him to offer her the "address of an organization that gave information and security to British women abroad" (p. 51). The wedding celebration underlines his suspicions of Sandra's choice of a husband. Particularly, the unfavourable response of Ralph's mother to her English daughter-in-law, during the pair's disembarkation at a dock in Isabella, compels Ralph to look for shelter inside a hotel. A transitory and temporary residence, the hotel helps the couple to create ties with an "unbiased, fluid group" of youthful and "emigrant" Caribbean experts who have educated and married overseas (p. 57). This relationship persists even following the couple's move to their marital residence. Meanwhile,

Ralph's birthright of "a 120-acre of badlands simply outside the town" (p. 60), from his maternal grandfather, helps him to make a living developing this ground into "Kripalville—that was the identity I offered the development, rapidly ruined to Crippleville" (p. 61). Ultimately, Crippleville "obtained a reputation that was to endure" (p. 63) and turn out to be a successful industry project for Ralph.

Nevertheless, Ralph's monetary achievement begins to become the inverse of the breakdown of his union with Sandra. "What forms a marriage? What renders a residence having two persons vacant? For sure, we were well-suited, even corresponding. However, it was this very well-suited that moved her farther from me" (Naipaul 1967, p. 71). The pair start to sleep in separate rooms since Ralph slowly perceives his feeling towards his wife altering: "The exact things I had at one time liked in her—rightness, ambition, confidence—were what I currently sympathizes her for" (p. 71). Sandra starts to argue with the majority of their friends and at last finishes: "I propose this should be the mainly inferior locale within the globe . . . . Inferior persons and expats, dreadfully inferior and dreadfully happy. The two should go as one." (pp. 71-72)

Sandra as well is uncomfortable, as is Ralph, both in the former colony and in the city. Matching Ralph's dissatisfaction at being born on Isabella, and his ineffective efforts to experience the sense of being "at home" in London, Sandra looks on England as "the nation she had desired to escape from," since in London, "no group or relatives awaited her" (Naipaul 1967, p. 72)[21] and the hired house in Isabella did not give her a healthier option. At last both Sandra and Ralph begin to accredit the unhappiness of their union to the impact of the hired residence where they dwell. Ralph employs the symbol of colonization to underline their incapability to transform the residence into their home:

Was it the residence? . . . Both of us considered it appealing but for some ground we had not at all thrived in colonizing it. Big parts of it stayed vacant; it experienced similar to a rented residence that rapidly has to return to its possessor. It had not at all appeared vital to us to own a residence of our own. I had no sense for the residence as home, as individual formation. I owned no items, no resources, no set even of books, no household gods, like Sandra would have stated; and despite a few school rewards, neither had she. (p. 74)

The temporary nature of their possession of a house, caused by this incapability of making the house into a home, provokes Ralph to construct his own residence at Crippleville, imitating the Roman houses of Herculaneum and Pompeii (Naipaul 1967, p. 74). Nevertheless, even the building of the Roman house does not succeed to cement the gaps endangering the union of Sandra and Ralph. Ralph starts to look for physical closeness in extramarital connections and he suspects that Sandra as well takes remedy in the same ways.

My school days habits that had never completely died were now renewed. I had become familiar with several women of different races, of greatest caution on the island; like previously, what had been a lavishness turned out to be an obsession, but now remorseful and clinical. (p. 74)

Sandra at last separates from Ralph, who looks on her exit as the logical result of his worsening association with her. After all, Sandra was in a place to depart; other relations awaited her, other nations. I had no place to move to; I desired to see no fresh sceneries; I had detached myself from that greed that I yet accredited to her. The choice to leave was hers only since I did not contribute all. [24]

Prior to her departure, nevertheless, Sandra makes an extremely ominous declaration that might be understood as summing up her marriage to Ralph. She declares: "The Niger is a branch of that Seine" ( p. 84). The Seine is the key river of Northwestern France; the Niger trickles on the western region of Africa. At this period the rivers are not yet distantly linked to every other; the link between the two, however, emerges when situated against the setting of imperialism and colonialism. The majority of the African region by which the Niger River streams was the section of the French colonial region identified as French West Africa. Thus Sandra's declaration brings into glaring focus the diverse socio-cultural backdrop of Sandra and Ralph and their relevant locations within the postcolonial settings. Moreover, it underlines their racial disparity, one that results in Ralph's family's disapproval of Sandra and, subsequently, the marriage's ultimate collapse.

Following Sandra's departure Ralph advances to the next step of building his vocation as a politician. "My wedding and the political vocation that succeeded it and appeared to trickle from it, I have stated that all that active section of my existence happened within a sort of afterthought [25].



His childhood friend Browne serves as the catalyst that inspires Ralph to attempt his fate as a politician. Ralph agrees to write a piece concerning his father for a daily, known as *The Socialist*, following Browne's persistence that marks the start of the project. Ironically, although it turns out to be the scene of Ralph's initial political and literary activity, the Roman house has failed to maintain his marriage: "Our agreement was made there inside the Roman residence—the place I had readied the site for an event with an overall diverse matter (p. 203). Ralph's article's publication marks the start of his political vocation, a profession begun successfully as compared to the Roman house background.

The moment of truth rested within the Roman house. Furthermore, it rested within our irrefutable achievement. We drew encouragement from all classes and all races. As it immediately emerged, we offered in excess of discharge from resentment. Drama is what we offered. (p. 213)

Ralph attempts to blend in with the position of politician under Browne's guidance: "He offered me my responsibility and I did not rebuff him" (Naipaul 1967, p. 204). The creativeness of the blend of Browne and Ralph gave the islanders an option to the seasoned Isabela politicians:

. . . we were a case of what was possible and desirable. In intellect we had the assets and offer of endorsement to put the system in question itself. We deprived of rivalry; and certainly there was no competition. Browne, myself and *The Socialist*, just by coming forth jointly—we brought the old to an end. It was just that. (p. 207)

Under Browne, Ralph develops a public figure for himself that builds on the basis for his first political achievements:

I had turned out to be a public image and an appealing one. That was the character Browne had observed: the wealthy man having a definite name who had stood for the poor, who seemed to have turned his back on his former friends and on making money. Therefore, in the unfavorable states the London great was revived. During those early days, it was appealing simply to be this self. I had not known anything similar to it. [26]

Browne's adroit and effective administration of Ralph's public figure to attain most political gain ". . . resulted in the unavoidable: the achievement of voting night, the flag-waving, the cheering, the drinking" [27]. This skillfully organized electoral success indicates the tone of Ralph's vocation as a politician. He takes contentment in the privilege of his role as a politician, initially to name roads, streets, documents, government buildings, and anything else that coincides with his beliefs. Moreover, he "dedicates his effort to ribbons cutting and launching roads, schools, laundries, filling stations, and shoe-shops and guarantees his visibility by pictures with foreign citizens to enhance his public figure (pp. 234-235). This turn in his personhood reproduces his childhood wish to ally himself with the Bella Bella Bottling Works to improve his social place.

Nevertheless, as the euphoria of electoral success declines, Ralph notices that underneath the personality of the "public great, the political schemer and the planner," he is not a politician like Browne, since the prospect of a view within Isabella "exhausted" him [28]. He notices the politician's helplessness in accomplishing the pledges he and his party gave to the natives who elevated him to victory. Throughout their election campaign, the men of Browne and Ralph's party, in a swap for votes, have pledged to "eradicate poverty within twelve months," to "eradicate bicycle permits," to offer "farmers superior prices for copra and cocoa and sugar," to "renegotiate the bauxite payments," to "take over every foreign-run estate," and yet to "send the whites into the ocean and return the Asiatics to Asia. They pledged; they guaranteed..." (p. 216). Now, encountered with truth that makes him unable to achieve those pledges, Ralph recognizes two causes that render the "colonial" politician a "simple subject of satire" compelling him to "revisit his own sayings" and "let himself down" in such a way that "in the conclusion he has no reason to secure his own continued existence. The backup he has drawn, not perfect to perfect, but resentment to resentment, he lets down and crushes; emancipation is not likely for everyone" (p. 228). The initial cause is the constant reliance of the lately autonomous postcolonial country on its earlier "centre of authority," which enables the persistence of the previous colonizer's prevalence (neo-colonialism) within the internal issues of the new nations. "A colony we were, a compassionately administered reliance. Our politics were a funny tale as long as our reliance stayed unquestioned" (p. 206).

The subsequent cause Ralph notices is the failure of the bigger social framework of the freshly independent community to produce its own internal authority source:

. . . within a community such as ours, divided, inorganic, no connection between background and man, a community not held jointly by universal concerns, there was no real internal power source, and that no authority was true that did not come from the exterior. With such eagerness, such was the regulated chaos we had ushered on ourselves. [29]

This reliance on the external power source to resolve the managerial troubles of his nation foretells Ralph's ultimate letdown and shame as a politician. He encounters three duties in the politician's capability of raising challenges that try his abilities to the highest. His initial difficulty is in handling the monetary strain on the nation's economy, brought about because of the costs suffered for endorsing the English expatriates hired within the managerial area of the island country's public service. "Every emigrant priced us double as much as a native person" (Naipaul 1967, p. 228)[29]. To solve the issue, Ralph and his associates manipulate the community opinion and shift the focus from the costly white workers to the equally costly and, further, unpleasant colored public workers who have drained away the nation's riches for their individual gain (pp. 228-229).

The subsequent trial comprises the re-bargaining of the bauxite treaty with the independent corporations that have mined bauxite on Isabella. Ralph is tactfully snubbed when he attempts to relay the local demand to the suitable quarter by the corporations who compare the inefficient bauxite grade of Isabella with the superior affordability and quality of Jamaican, South American, and Australian bauxite. Ralph, taking the cue successfully, counteracts his countrymen by quietly underlining the effects of offending these corporations that own the reigns of the nation's financial system:

We were risking with our future by creating too much problems; still like it was, there was so much to cease the entire corporations departing Isabella, and after that the citizens might play providing they were satisfied with the red soil. . . Besides, for the construction of an alumina firm, any level of doubt concerning the future may bring about the abandonment of strategies well under way. An investment of several millions it was. [31]

Ralph achieves his highest political accomplishment through this victory. "Decline was to be fast following this" (p. 238). He is incapable of maintaining his role and power within the community and the third trial hastens his decline, similar to his father before him. "I was at the core of proceedings that I could not manage. I was conscious of feeling concentrating on me (p. 239).

While Ralph's character has deepened he inevitably finds himself ensnared into the role of completing a duty that London had decisively excluded to him as unfeasible. To maintain appearances and regulate the explosion of the local masses that have started assuming a racial personality, a delegation including Ralph is relayed to London (p. 239). This second trip to London, now in his official capability, conflicts deeply with his former journey as a student, to find a home within the city. "Of course, there would be a come back but that would be within the form of a visit, an assuring of what I understood would be there (p. 242). The delegation arrives at London and is accommodated at the temporary site of a hotel where they linger for three days ahead of their timetable to meet the officials from England.

Ralph's memoir contradicts the ambience, glamour, and amenities of his temporary house, the hotel that "exudes its magic to the metropolis" [32] for its dwellers with its hint of a plain workplace for all its workers. Ralph uses his time contradicting his previous recollections of London to its current reality, whereas his aides get occupied in discovering the city. "I attempted to be a traveller within the city that once had educated me the unfeasibility of get away" (pp. 243-244). The delegation is finally given audience and after that sent away by the English representatives who stipulate their unyielding position of anti-nationalization in apparent and precise terms. Ralph pulls one final desperate effort to persuade an English official in what becomes a short but embarrassing incident. The official's approach shows evidently that the game has continued long enough and he has other matters more important than helping the public affairs of colonial politicians.

He painted so dynamically, in around forty-five seconds, an image of the effects of any intemperate activity by the Isabella government that I sensed individually rebuked. After that I stated the sentence that

tormented me approximately immediately I had stated it. It was this that no hesitation made the consultation very painful in memory. "How can I get this news back to my natives?" I asked. "My citizens": because of that I merit all I got. He stated: "You can relay back to your natives any news you wish." That marked the end. [33]

The conclusion of the unproductive meeting preserves the future of Ralph. While the rest of the representatives return to Isabella, Ralph remains in London to restore his friendship with Lord Stockwell and his relatives. Stockwell had twice met "the Gurudeva" and his sugar farms are as well threatened in the issue of the nationalization that affects Isabella. Ralph even gets involved in a temporary affair with Stella, the daughter of Stockwell, drawn by her "capability for delight, for instance I had discovered in Sandra, but with no Sandra's suffering" (Naipaul 1967, p. 252).

Ralph returns to the Roman residence in Isabella after around eight days to discover that a "vast, conflicting but a fulfilling case" has been created against him to shame him openly. "My individual life—my systematic money making, the ethnic exclusivity of my improvement at Crippleville, my affiliation to Wendy, my wedding to Sandra, my jaunt with Stella—the entire this was applied to advance the image of my public masquerade" (p. 260). Abandoned by all his associates, as well as Browne, and the ensuing race riots within Isabella compels Ralph to accept from the fresh regime, the "offer of a secure and free shift, to London once more through the air, with a luggage of sixty-six pounds and fifty thousand dollars" (p. 264).

On this third trip to England, Ralph attempts frantically to get a place for himself: "when i arrived, I chose not to reside within London. . . I desired to evade meeting any person I knew" [34]. His desire for a lasting house outside London guides him to travel persistently across the scenery of Britain:

I moved from small city to small city every day, through unreliable bus services, making complex links, looking for shelter alongside my luggage of sixty-six pounds, always conscious during the late afternoon of my looming destituteness. I spent the hours of day time with short durations of travel lengthy waits. Funds, of which I was eventually conscious, was spilling out of my pocket. [35]

His unfruitful trip goes on until he notices that for a man "standing at the maximum of misery having sixty-six pounds of baggage within two Antler suitcases, focusing on the instant" (Naipaul 1967, p. 273), there was no healthier city to reside in apart from London. He returns to the metropolis that he had recognized as a student, a politician, and finally as a refugee-immigrant (p. 266), and gets a room in Mr. Shylock's lodging house-come-inn on Kensington High Street. This trip symbolizes for Ralph his loyalty to the fourfold separation of life explained by his Aryan descendants, for he has developed from student to a house owner, then to a man of relationships who has lastly morphed into an outsider (p. 274).

Quite the opposite of those who use the hotel as a place of humanity, Ralph "suits in" the hotel together with the other long-term inmates, several who had remained there for twenty-three years.

Ralph's extended stay at the hotel starts to promote a "logic of belonging" within him that all his earlier homes within Isabella had botched, and he starts to discover himself with the "non-place" as his dwelling.

I used to consider of this existence as the life of the disfigured when I foremost came here. However, we who fit in here are neither disfigured nor extremely aged. Three-quarters of the males in this hotel are of my age; they hold respectable jobs to which they leave in their vehicles each morning. We are the individuals who for one cause or the other have ran away from our relevant nations from the metropolis where we discover ourselves, from our relatives. We have got away from pointless roles and affiliation. We have made our existences simple. I cannot trust that our establishment is exceptional. It consoles me to consider that within this city only there should be hundreds and thousands similar to us. [36]

This recognition with place assists Ralph's advance from the singular "I" to the plural "we." He not only finds a place to attach his own personality, but as well discovers how to share that room with the other "prisoners."

Immediately Ralph learns to position himself within the steady site granted by the hotel. He obtains a writing bench from the hotel, positions it next to the window and starts to write his recollections, instilling order on his own account through transcribing his “dynamic life” of forty years inside a narrative structure. During this procedure, he is capable of defeating the shapelessness of his experiences mainly because of the order, series, and reliability of the hotel background.

It never occurred to me that I would have grown to relish the constriction and order of hotel life, which previously had driven me to despair; and that the contrast between my unchanging room and the slow progression of what was being created there would give me such satisfaction. [37]

Ralph takes three or so years to cover his narrative in a story outline. When he begins writing he imagines the likelihood of employing his writing like a foundation to make a new vocation for himself:

The monetary support at the end would be little, I understood. However, I considered there was an excellent opportunity that publication may bring about some kind of uneven, pleasant employment: articles and reviews on “third world” issues or colonial . . . even on incident to involve in the safe banter of a radio debate . . . several little place in television. . . . [38]

Finally, when he finishes his recollection, Ralph’s first objective alters considerably: “It never happened to me that this book writing may have turn out to be a conclusion in itself, that the transcribing of a life may become an expansion of that existence” (Naipaul 1967, p. 267)[38].

Naipaul’s stance of estrangement, exile, and homelessness with England, Trinidad and “the solitary life of the writer, along with an awareness that he was becoming a voice of the postcolonial world and its discontents, found expression in *The Mimic Men*, which gained the W. H. Smith Prize.” [40] Andrew Gurr summarizes the decision of Ralph’s personality crisis, claiming that within his exiled state writing turns out to be an act of liberation. Within the novel’s setting this personality liberates him from the responsibility of the colonial mimicker, the title’s definition . Throughout his life, Ralph had looked for authentication of his own personality within the eyes of others. Therefore, he rendered himself flexible enough to suit the responsibilities others formed for him, imitating them so as to evade the battle of developing his personality on his own conditions. It is only when he detaches himself fully throughout his exile that he gets to agreement with his own self. Gurr relates the detection Ralph’s self together with that of his inventor: “following numerous years of globetrotting as an expert reporter, Naipaul’s logic of personality took shape in *The Mimic Men* about the banished writer’s eventual protection, artistic liberty. Just art can provide a truthfully logical order to undergo” (Gurr 1981, p. 85). Thus, for both Ralph Singh and Naipaul, ensnared within them the postcolonial settings located at the edge of the city, literature offers the private room they “yearn to fit in.” As Said claimed, “when it is real that history and literature has heroic, glorious, romantic, even victorious incidents within an exile’s existence, these are not much more than attempts destined to conquer the weakening sorrow of rift” [41].

### 3. Exile, Identity and Estrangement

The world has witnessed diversity of exiles, expatriation, mass refugees and resettlement, which have changed the forms of national and individual identities and traditions following the decline of the British Empire and the rise of America as a superpower in the twentieth century. The Third World writing of the twentieth century printed by the emigrants used the dilemmas of the diaspora with its distinct attributes since every age generates writing which supports and motivates it. A number of these professional novelists, who live as emigrants in either England or America in the postcolonial age, put in to the development of the emigrant writing as well as cope with their homelessness, exiled condition, displacement, and estrangement. An individual living outside his country without legitimate citizenship or feeling the social and cultural void of exile is called an expatriate.

Regardless of his marriage and extended stay in England, V. S. Naipaul, could not liberate himself from his constant feeling of exile, estrangement and displacement. Naipaul is completely separated and thus a citizen of everywhere and nowhere. His world of fiction is a clear manifestation of his emigrant feelings and his pursuit for recognition. Naipaul is endorsed expression of displacement as Paul Theroux states:

"He classifies with resettled individuals who belongs to no country in particular. They move since they don't belong to anywhere; they settle not, as they are endlessly travelling... They are rootless; . . . a certain pain

emanates from their homeless condition, just like every other traveler, they asked, "Where do you come from?" and no straightforward answer is achievable: every scenery is foreign."

The description of his expatriate responsiveness and his self concept reveals the discomforts of his displacement and estrangement while at the same time renders him skeptical about other inclusive traditions of the Indian culture. Apparently, V. S. Naipaul had permanent causes for his emigrant life and is giving an account of self exile. He experiences emotional and physical displacement from his mother country. In the 1880s, Naipaul's grandfather had moved from India as a contracted worker. He took on the art of a novelist from his father and developed his aspiration to become a reputable writer. His movement from Trinidad to some other centers was dictated by his father's unsuccessful life. It was in Chaguanas where Naipaul's family became the heart of an entire system of Hindu veneration. The residents would often come to the Chaguanas home to bring gifts of food, to give out invitations, or to pay their tributes even though they were alone unconfirmed by that Chaguanas nation of Trinidad. His religious background could not permit him to classify his life with the Chaguanas and therefore his sense of estrangement and exile is contributed by his marginal life. His emigrant feeling explains his chosen destitution with minimum chances of ever going back to Trinidad. Speaking factually and not just employing the image of refugee or exile, Naipaul cautions on his choice of exile. He claims, as an artist without roots, to have an exclusive chance to reside in more than two continents even with his strong disapproval of the races. As an absolutely separated individual, he took refuge as a writer to collect immense experiences and support fictional writings.

The subject of estrangement and exile is permeating into the writing of twentieth century that it may be referred to as the literature of exile. It demonstrates the disappointment characterized by the two post-war eras and profound religious seclusion suffered by man in a world where he sees himself as insignificant and foreign. Obviously, numerous of intellectual exiles are the significant literary names of this age. It is only in literature that one recalls instantly of Rushdie, Selvon, and V.S. Naipaul.

The Naipaul's original literary work describes his autobiographical life in Trinidad and also investigates the exile, alienation and separation of Ralph Singh during postcolonial and colonial eras. In his memoirs, *The Mimic Men*, gives an account of the idea of exile alongside its consequence including the issues of displacement, identity, cultural disparity, rootlessness, alienation, pointlessness, and integration.

*The Mimic Men* commences with Ralph Singh, who is a deported politician, exhausted by cynicism more than weakness, putting down his autobiography in a London suburb. He is the symbol of an age that acquires authority at independence and is able to only imitate the legitimacy of the personality. He gives an account of his infancy and maturity, his marriage and political vocation, his life in England and in Isabella, and his schooling so as to describe his history and to appreciate himself. By writing his autobiography, Ralph Singh attempts to restructure his personality, enforce order on his life, and dispose of the crippling sense of exile and displacement. In actual sense, colonization can be defined as a process that removes one's sense of place, identity, past and culture and that Singh represents the disheartened and displaced colonial victims. Ralph Singh, a London's expatriate, an optimistic champion of the autobiographical of *The Mimic Men* contemplates on the scraps which constitute his life and contributes to politics to a larger extent although he is unable to give in and thus is compelled to migrate in humiliation. He gives up all ambitions due to the denial of all social aspects of success including money, friends, wife, leadership, home, status and children. Ralph Singh's range of weaknesses at the personal level of life account for the failure of Isabella, the island, since there is left the infertile emigrants in London. Ralph Singh remarkably states: "To be born on an island similar to Isabella, a vague New World transplantation, and second hand and barbarous was to be born to confusion."

Like an authentic exile and appreciating the notion of being provisional as an expatriate, Singh drew in his writing the conclusion that the exile foreigners in London such as himself are the individuals who for one cause or another have left their families, their cities and their original homelands. As a novelist, in the *The Mimic Men*, he expresses his own experiences into literary form to adjust to his own exile. The subjects of exile, displacement and estrangement still haunt Naipaul although the viewpoint has altered.

The theme of exile, displacement and estrangement is pervasive in the modern writing. V. S. Naipaul is disturbed by the countless movement, displacement, estrangement, exile, the idea of being unstable and dislocated and the mystery of humiliating experience in the volatile and the distressing certainties of the contemporary world. He is an itinerant intellectual in the Third World ground and a perpetual stranger, a West Indian in England and an Indian in

West Indies. He respects his Hindu identity, being a Brahmin traveler, and as a novelist he faces the anguish of isolation but efforts to set up his self by transforming challenges into pitiful writings on the custom and traditions of England, Trinidad and India. His sensibility of exile, displacement and alienation is principally the consequence of the both crisis of Diaspora feeling in London where he resided for thirty years and disconnection from Trinidadian people among whom he was born and struggled to declare his writing ability in spite of exile, dislocation and estrangement sensibilities. Owing to the sense of marginality, V. S. Naipaul sees himself as an expatriate and believes that London is his business center.

As a multifaceted global novelist, V. S. Naipaul, is endorsed a representative of exile, dislocation, estrangement and homelessness because his Trinidadian Brahmin family is rooted in the Eastern India but he himself was born in the West Indies then went to school and lived in London. His identity issue develops as a result of his refugee conditions and these subjects consisting of exile, alienation and displacement preoccupied his work. He is an expatriate by preference who opted to alienate himself from the people, cultural recognitions and nations, wherever he travels. To him, the entire world appears to be foreign landscape. He at all times experiences a basic dispossession, despite the fact that he has his own residence in England. He is an individual to whom the whole world is as a foreign land and to whom all nations are as his local home. Indeed, the remarkable landmark in V. S. Naipaul's fictional world is the life in exile. He perceives exile as a position to the minority people who fight to realize their identities.

#### 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the protagonist profoundly appreciates that he must grab a chance to build his identity since he has led a life of diversion for too long. V.S. Naipaul, for instant, is aspiring to commence a new life. Naipaul left his audience in suspense; his remaining account left hanging. He will keep on looking for his subjectivity and his own native home in the world. While building his identity, V.S. Naipaul tackles the feeling of displacement and realizes that it is impossible to come up with a permanent identity. For that reason, he understands that self is not fixed but constructed with time as in the case of the declaration of the post-colonial discussion. He will acquire widen and various perceptions to study his experiences. The restructuring of his subjectivity will be carried on in process. To end with, V.S. Naipaul will reconstruct a new home, hence of a sense identity, through a thoughtful approval and coping with his status as an everlasting expatriate.

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